

Rutherfordton Historic District Design Guidelines

Rutherfordton Historic District – Historic Preservation Commission
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INTRODUCTION

Why Historic Preservation?

As described in the town Ordinance which created the Commission, “the historic heritage of the state of North Carolina is one of our most valued and important assets”. The North Carolina General Statutes [N.C.G.S. 160A-400.1 – 400.14] authorize municipalities throughout the state to safeguard that heritage on a local level. The stated objective of those statutes is to preserve any district or landmark that embodies important elements of that heritage – in its culture, history, or architecture – and to promote the use and conservation of such district or landmark for the education, pleasure, and enrichment of the residents of the town and state as a whole.

Designation is an honor, indicating the community believes the property or district deserves recognition and protection. The preservation of such districts actually stabilizes and *increases* property values, by maintaining the neighborhood’s character. This in turn benefits the community by enhancing business recruitment potential, which can result in a positive economic impact in our area. It benefits individual property owners by protecting them from inappropriate changes made by other owners which might destroy the special qualities of that neighborhood.

We are all part of a living community, in a town that was created more than two centuries ago. Each property is part of a continuing timeline of human events. It is our responsibility to ensure that significant features of our culture and history are kept alive and maintained for future generations. Many of the properties within our designated historic district are a source of community pride; their destruction would constitute an irreplaceable loss.

Purpose

The primary purpose of these design guidelines is to provide guidance to property owners in protecting and maintaining the historic integrity of their property, and to assist as they plan changes which are appropriate to the special character of Rutherfordton’s historic district. These guidelines will also assist the Rutherfordton Preservation Commission in impartially reviewing the appropriateness of such changes and in offering useful suggestions for preserving the beauty and historic value of our community.

The Historic District of Rutherfordton

The initial Rutherfordton Historic Preservation District, composed of nearly 200 properties, incorporates all of the historic downtown area, with a significant number of commercial buildings dating to the turn of the last century. There are over 75 merchandise and office buildings that pre-date the end of World War II, many of them with original storefronts of considerable architectural interest.

The district also embraces some thirty homes and churches that are an integral part of the early downtown history. These lovely old homes include noteworthy examples from the Victorian and Gothic Revival eras of the 19th century up through the Bungalows of the early 20th century and the various Colonial and Classical Revival eras that thrived in the decades before World War II. The architectural jewels in this municipal district include handsome public buildings such as the impressive granite courthouse, a small cluster of remarkable antebellum houses, a charming Greek Revival chapel in use since 1847, and the town cemetery – an enduring witness to generations of inhabitants since the town’s founding in 1787.

This initial historic district encompasses nearly two centuries of commercial and residential architecture in the center of town, the very heart of the growing environs of Rutherfordton. Beyond the principal buildings, the context and setting created by the district landscape and a variety of accessory buildings, such as carriage houses and sheds, also contribute to the distinctive character of Rutherfordton's historic district.

Rutherfordton Historic Preservation Commission

The Rutherfordton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established by the Town Council in 2007, and includes Rutherfordton residents who have demonstrated special interest, experience, or education in architecture, history, archaeology, or other preservation-related fields. The Historic Preservation Commission serves as both an advisory body to the Town Council and as a quasi-judicial body that makes decisions about proposed changes in the historic district. Its mission is to recognize, appreciate and protect the many architectural resources unique to this community.

Design Review Process

Local historic districts like Rutherfordton's are being created throughout the state in cities and towns where the residents take pride in their community, recognizing and appreciating the beauty and value of their historic resources. Historic districts are not established to prevent change, but rather to ensure that future changes to properties are consistent with the historic and architectural character of the district. The Historic Preservation Commission does not require property owners to make changes to their properties. Owners' changes to a building's interior, and routine minor repairs and maintenance of the building's exterior that do not change its appearance or materials are not reviewed by the HPC. Its review process is limited to owner-initiated exterior changes. Specifically, the commission is established to review any proposed exterior alterations involving changes in exterior building materials, new construction and additions, significant site changes as they affect the historic district setting, and relocation or demolition of properties within the historic district. With regard to demolition requests, the HPC may delay demolition for up to one year while alternatives to demolition are explored.

In general, the section of Rutherfordton's design guidelines related to the rehabilitation of existing buildings is an expansion of the United States Department of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically tailored to Rutherfordton's historic district. These ten national standards describe appropriate preservation treatments with an explicit priority given to retaining and repairing historic features, rather than replacing them. The most current [version](#) of the Secretary's Standards is included in the Appendix.

The Rutherfordton Historic District Design guidelines also specifically address new construction and additions, the historic district setting, and relocation or demolition of existing buildings. With regard to demolition requests, the HDC may delay demolition for up to one year while alternatives to demolition are explored.

Certificates of Appropriateness

The design review process provides a system for the timely review of proposed exterior changes before the work is begun. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews the proposed changes to determine if they are consistent with the character of Rutherfordton's historic district and thus appropriate to undertake. Property owners are advised to contact the HPC staff early in the

planning stages to obtain a copy of the design guidelines and an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Typically, a completed application form will include photographs of the existing property and scaled drawings that illustrate the proposed work. Since the range of projects varies in complexity and scale, the HDC staff will advise property owners as to what information and drawings are necessary for the specific proposed change. The commission reviews completed COA applications at their monthly meetings. Approved applications are issued Certificates of Appropriateness. For proposed work requiring a building permit, this certificate must be obtained before a building permit can be issued. COA application forms can be obtained from the Rutherfordton Planning Office.

Map of Rutherfordton's Historic District



Exempt Works

To expedite the review process, some less substantial exterior work items are categorized as “exempt work” and are usually reviewed by the commission staff, eliminating the need for commission review (unless the staff feels the proposed work warrants full HDC review). Contact the HDC staff or refer to the Appendix of this document to determine what exterior changes are classified as minor work.

Commission Meetings

The Rutherfordton Historic District Commission typically meets on the third Monday evenings of each month. An application must be received at least 10 days before the commission meeting to be included on the agenda. The commission staff can verify the date, time, and location of commission meetings.

Compliance and Appeals

Within the historic district, exterior work that is performed without a Certificate of Appropriateness is a violation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance so it is always best to contact the HDC staff well in advance to initiate the COA process for any contemplated exterior changes. Any work begun without a Certificate of Appropriateness must be stopped until a COA is issued. The penalty for undertaking work without a COA is a fine of \$100 per day and may also require the removal of the unapproved alteration and restoration historically correct. Appeals of a granted or denied Certificate of Appropriateness can be made to the Board of Adjustment if the applicant feels the Historic District Commission did not follow its rules and procedures properly or did not base its decision upon the design guidelines.

CHANGES TO EXISTING BUILDING EXTERIORS

Masonry

Masonry plays a prominent role in the Rutherfordton Historic District. Masonry can be found in building and site features such as foundations, exterior walls, roofs, chimneys, support columns, steps, retaining walls, driveways, and other construction details. Masonry consists of brick, all types of stone, (granite, limestone, marble, slate, etc.), concrete, concrete block, terra cotta, clay tile, stucco, and other similar building materials. Masonry materials contribute texture, color, scale, and pattern to buildings and sites throughout the district.

Considerations

Masonry materials are generally quite durable and require minimal maintenance. Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for masonry surfaces include the following:

- Inspect surfaces routinely for signs of deterioration due to moisture damage, structural cracks or settlement, vegetation, missing or loose masonry units, and deteriorated mortar joints.
- Ensure drainage of surfaces is adequate to prevent water from collecting along foundation walls and on horizontal masonry surfaces or decorative elements.
- Clean heavily soiled surfaces to prevent their accelerated deterioration by using the gentlest effective method.
- Repoint deteriorated mortar joints to prevent damage caused by moisture penetration.
- Repaint previously painted masonry surfaces as necessary.

Although masonry surfaces develop a patina over time, they do not require cleaning except when a heavy soil build up or stain is retaining moisture on the masonry surface resulting in accelerated deterioration. Frequently, gentle washing with low pressure water, a natural bristle brush and detergent are all that is needed for the task. In some cases, a chemical masonry cleaner may be necessary. Such cleaners should always be pre-tested on an inconspicuous area. The recommended application procedure for the specific masonry material should be followed carefully and then the surface neutralized and thoroughly rinsed to stop any further chemical reactions. Sandblasting, power washing, and other abrasive cleaning methods will permanently damage historic masonry surfaces and are *not* appropriate to use. Rather than remove paint films through chemicals or abrasive cleaning methods, repainting previously painted masonry surfaces is recommended.

The most common masonry repair is the repointing of masonry joints when deteriorated mortar is allowing moisture to penetrate the wall. The process involves carefully removing damaged or cracked mortar with hand tools, replacing it with mortar that matches the original mortar in strength, color, texture, and composition, and finishing the mortar joint to match the width and profile of the original joint. Similar care in matching the physical and visual characteristics must be taken in patching historic stucco with new stucco. If brick or stone units are damaged or missing, replacement in kind is not usually a problem—given the wide selection available today. Replacement masonry units should match the original in material, color, dimension, texture, and finish as well as overall bonding pattern or design.

Masonry: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve masonry features that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district building or site including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve masonry materials and surfaces that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site.
3. Maintain and protect masonry features, surfaces, and details through appropriate methods.
4. Clean masonry surfaces using the gentlest effective method. If low pressure washing with detergents and scrubbing with natural bristle brushes proves ineffective, consider the use of chemical strippers. It is not appropriate to use destructive stripping or cleaning methods such as sandblasting, power washing, or high-pressure water blasting. Pretest any paint-removing or cleaning technique on an inconspicuous sample area well in advance.
5. Repaint masonry surfaces that were previously painted in colors appropriate to the building or site. It is not appropriate to paint or coat unpainted masonry surfaces that were not coated or painted historically.
6. Repair masonry features, surfaces, and details using appropriate repair methods including repointing, consolidating, piecing in, and patching.
7. Replace in kind any portion of a masonry feature that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Limit replacement to the damaged area if possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
8. If a masonry feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, size, color, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
9. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to masonry features, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

WOOD

Wood is a common building material for both structural and decorative purposes in the Rutherfordton historic district. Wood frame structures and houses clad in wood siding are found along district streets. These buildings are found in a variety of architectural styles representing different eras and contain wooden features that range from very simple to quite ornate. Wood siding, milled wood windows, wood paneled doors, turned wood porch columns, wood cornices and a host of other architectural wood trim works are represented and all attest to the popularity and diversity of wood as a building material.

Considerations

With proper care and a sound coat of paint, exterior wood elements and surfaces can last for a century or more. Protecting a wooden surface from prolonged exposure to dampness is critical to extending its life. The use of flexible sealants and caulks can prevent moisture penetration as wood joints shrink and swell.

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for wood features include the following:

- Inspect surfaces routinely for signs of moisture damage, mildew or other fungi, and termites or other insect infestation.
- Ensure drainage of surfaces is adequate to prevent water from collecting on horizontal surfaces or decorative elements.
- Keep exposed and vertical wood joints properly caulked or sealed to prevent moisture penetration but do not seal horizontal, lap siding joints.
- Slow the decay of traditionally unpainted wood features by treating them with an environmentally-safe chemical preservative.
- Prevent damage due to ultraviolet light and moisture by maintaining protective paint films on exterior wood features.
- Clean painted wood surfaces regularly using the gentlest effective method and repaint as necessary to maintain a sound paint film.

Wood is a relatively soft material and must be cleaned accordingly prior to repainting. If the paint film is still intact, low-pressure washing with a mild household detergent and an anti-mildew additive can usually accomplish the task. Hand-scraping and sanding is also typically necessary before repainting. However, if multiple layers of paint are peeling or failing, then more aggressive techniques, such as the selective use of heat plates and hot air guns, may be necessary. Harsh alkaline paint strippers, sandblasting, power washing, and gas-fired torches will permanently damage a wood surface and leave a raised grain appearance. For this reason these techniques are not appropriate for historic wood features.

Typically repair and replacement of deteriorated wood features includes selective replacement of sections in kind by splicing or piecing. For minor repairs of decorative elements, consolidation of the deteriorated feature with wood epoxy repair products may prove more cost effective than replacement in kind.

Wood: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve wood features that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district building or site including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve wood materials and surfaces and their finishes that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site.
3. Maintain and protect wood features, surfaces, details, and finishes through appropriate methods.
4. Prepare previously painted wood for repainting using the gentlest effective method. If low pressure washing with detergents and scrubbing with natural bristle brushes proves ineffective consider the use of chemical strippers. It is not appropriate to use destructive stripping methods such as sandblasting, power washing, and using butane or propane torches.
5. Repaint wood surfaces in colors appropriate to the building or site.
6. Repair wood features, surfaces, and details using appropriate repair methods including reinforcing, consolidating, piecing in, and patching.
7. Replace in kind any portion of a wood feature that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Limit replacement to the damaged area if possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
8. If a wood feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, size, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
9. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to wood features, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

Architectural Metals

Standing seam metal roofs, aluminum gutters and downspouts, pressed metal roofs, cast iron fences and grillwork, wrought iron railings, brass hardware, copper flashing, and decorative pressed metal cornices are all examples of architectural metal elements found in the Rutherfordton historic district. The longstanding tradition of using architectural metals to imitate wood or stone features on building exteriors is especially apparent locally in the commercial portion of the district. Architectural metals include copper, brass, bronze, tin, [tern plate](#), steel, wrought iron, cast iron, stainless steel, chrome, and aluminum. Whether cast, pressed, wrought, extruded, or rolled, each metal fabrication process creates distinct physical and visual properties.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for architectural metal features include the following:

- Inspect surfaces routinely for signs of moisture damage, structural fatigue or failure, corrosion, paint film failure, and galvanic action.
- Ensure drainage of surfaces is adequate to prevent water from collecting on horizontal surfaces or decorative elements.
- Clean metal roofs, gutters, and downspouts as necessary to keep them free of debris and leaves.
- Maintain protective paint films or lacquers on ferrous metal surfaces to prevent corrosion.
- Clean metal surfaces to remove corrosion and to prepare for repainting using the gentlest effective method.
- Repaint previously painted surfaces as needed to maintain a sound paint film.

The ability of copper and brass to develop a protective green patina and of stainless steel and aluminum to resist atmospheric corrosion makes the inherent finish of these metals desirable. In contrast, the inherent finish of ferrous metals—such as steel and iron—rapidly corrodes when exposed to moisture in the atmosphere requiring a protective paint finish to eliminate or delay the resulting formation of rust. The best method of permanently preventing rust, provided the item may safely be removed and returned, is a powder coated paint finish. Even brass and bronze hardware doorknobs and kick plates are sometimes coated with a clear protective lacquer to prevent their discoloration over time.

Determining the appropriate method for cleaning a specific metal surface is tied to how malleable, or soft, the metal is. Soft metals—such as copper, tin, lead aluminum, brass, and zinc—should be cleaned with non-abrasive chemical cleaners. While hard metals—including steel and cast or wrought iron—can best be cleaned through the abrasive action of a brush or hand scraper, but should be done with great care and with the protection of other surrounding materials. In some cases, it may be necessary to use harsher abrasive techniques like low-pressure grit blasting to clean hard metal surfaces.

Contact between two dissimilar metals can cause corrosion of the weaker metal through galvanic action. For this reason, it is best to confirm the compatibility of nails and fasteners for metal roofs and to replace specific metal elements in kind rather than introduce a different metal. Minor patching of damaged decorative painted metal features can sometimes be done with fiberglass or wood.

Architectural Metals: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve architectural metal features that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district building or site including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve architectural metal materials and surfaces and their finishes that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site.
3. Maintain and protect architectural metal features, surfaces, details, and finishes through appropriate methods.
4. Clean architectural metals using the gentlest effective method. Use chemical cleaners to clean soft metals after pre-testing. It is not appropriate to clean soft metals with harsh abrasive techniques such as grit blasting. For hard metals, remove corrosion and paint buildup by hand scraping and wire brushing. Consider low-pressure grit blasting for hard metals only if gentler methods are not effective.
5. Repaint previously painted architectural metal surfaces in colors appropriate to the building or site. It is not appropriate to paint architectural metal surfaces that were not coated or painted historically.
6. Repair architectural metal features, surfaces, and details using appropriate repair methods including reinforcing, splicing, and patching.
7. Replace in kind any portion of an architectural metal feature that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, detail, and texture. Limit replacement to the damaged area if possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
8. If an architectural metal feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, size, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
9. The addition of conjectural features should be avoided when dealing with historically significant structures, and when dealing with buildings of less architectural significance should only be used in a manner which complements the structure and is compatible with contiguous buildings.

PAINT & EXTERIOR COLOR

The variety of paint color palettes in the Rutherfordton historic district is as wide-ranging as the architectural styles and periods of the buildings it includes. The palettes reflect shifting aesthetics, changes in technology, and the preferences of the property owners. In addition to its decorative role, paint has always played an important functional role in protecting wood and ferrous metals from deterioration due to exposure to the elements.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for painted features include the following:

- Inspect surfaces routinely for signs of moisture damage, discoloration, paint film failure, mildew, vegetation, or heavy dirt film.
- Clean painted surfaces regularly to extend the life of the paint film using the gentlest effective method.
- Prior to repainting, properly prepare the surface by cleaning and removing deteriorated paint layers down to the top sound paint layer using the gentlest effective method for the underlying material.
- Prime any exposed wood or metal surface and ensure that the surface is clean and dry prior to repainting.
- Repaint previously painted surfaces as necessary with compatible paint products.

Proper, thorough preparation is critical to the successful bonding of a paint film to any surface. That preparation includes the removal of any loose or deteriorated paint layers to provide a clean, sound paint film for recoating or an exposed material surface for priming. To prevent the formation of new corrosion on exposed ferrous metal, the surface must be primed immediately after it is cleaned with a zinc-based primer or other rust inhibiting primer. For exposed wood surfaces, it is important to apply a high quality exterior primer and caulk all vertical joints prior to applying the finish coats in a compatible high quality latex or alkyd resin exterior paint. Any mildew must be eliminated and the surface must be clean and dry prior to repainting.

Historic masonry surfaces, such as brick or stone walls, have inherent color and texture that is concealed by the application of paint. For this reason, painting an unpainted masonry surface is not recommended. It also begins an ongoing cycle of maintaining the paint film. In cases where a masonry surface has already been painted, repainting is recommended over the abrasive or chemical removal of the paint films.

Property owners interested in recreating a building's original paint scheme can work with architectural conservators or restoration specialists to analyze the physical evidence provided through paint scrapings. Alternatively, property owners may select new color schemes appropriate to the building's architectural style and era. Many contemporary references provide information on historically appropriate paint schemes. A vast array of colors would be considered suitable, however, there are some colors and color combinations which would be considered inappropriate.

Paint & Exterior Color: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve painted features that contribute to the overall historic character of a district building or site.
2. Retain and preserve intact historic exterior finishes including paints, stains, lacquers, and decorative finishes.
3. Maintain and protect painted exterior finishes through appropriate methods.
4. Clean painted surfaces using the gentlest effective method. It is not appropriate to clean or remove paint films with techniques that are destructive to the underlying surface material.
5. Reapply paints or stains to previously painted or stained surfaces in colors that are appropriate to the building and site. It is not appropriate to paint or coat unpainted masonry or architectural metal surfaces that were not coated or painted historically.
6. Reinforce and enhance the architectural materials and features of a district building and site through the appropriate selection and placement of paint color.

EXTERIOR WALLS

Exterior walls establish the overall form and design of buildings, and set the tone of a building's curb appeal. Shaping features such as projecting bays, recessed storefronts, ornamental trim, and decorative brickwork reflect the architectural style of the building and create interest. The exterior cladding and its inherent joinery details add pattern and texture, whether it is clapboard, vertical board-and-batten, sawn shingles, stone, stucco, or various configurations of brick bonding. Each of these features and styles are represented in the historic architecture of the Rutherfordton Historic District.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for exterior walls and trim should include the following:

- Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, structural damage or settlement, corrosion, vegetation, and insect or fungal infestation.
- Ensure adequate drainage so water does not collect on flat, horizontal surfaces and decorative elements, or along foundations.
- Retain protective paint or stain coatings that prevent deterioration.
- Use the gentlest effective method to clean exterior wall and trim surfaces to remove heavy soiling or prior to repainting.
- Repaint or re-stain exterior wall and trim surfaces as needed to maintain a sound, protective coating.

Wood siding can last indefinitely if it is kept free of excessive moisture and coated with a sound paint film. However, improper scraping, caulking, and painting techniques can result in failure of the paint film and subsequent deterioration of the wood. The presence of deteriorated lead paint on exterior walls requires additional precautions and procedures to ensure a lead-safe site and building. Neglect over time often leads to a need to selectively replace sections of siding. Fortunately, wood siding and trim are available in a variety of widths and configurations making replacement in kind a straightforward solution. More information on wood repairs and paint can be found in the relevant sections of these guidelines.

Replacing or covering over wood siding with a substitute siding such as vinyl, aluminum, asbestos, asphalt, or fiber-reinforced cement board is not appropriate in the historic district because it significantly compromises the architectural integrity of the historic building. Since they do not fully replicate the qualities of wood siding or stucco surfaces, these contemporary materials are not considered appropriate substitutions for the materials they imitate. In addition to eliminating or damaging the original siding, the installation process often results in the removal or concealment of architectural trim and details.

While the substitute sidings may temporarily eliminate the need to repaint the original siding, they may often conceal ongoing moisture problems, insect damage, or structural deterioration allowing such problems to go undetected. In addition, some vinyl claddings discharge hazardous gases during fires. Therefore, artificial and composite materials are discouraged in the historic district; their possible approval by the Commission will be determined on a case by case basis. The primary determining factor will be the condition of the original siding and the exterior wall materials of adjacent structures.

For brick and stone buildings and foundations, occasional cleaning, routine repairs and traditional re-pointing are described in the masonry guidelines, as are stucco repairs.

Exterior Walls: Guidelines

Appropriate structural maintenance and repair should comply with the following guidelines:

1. Retain and preserve the overall form and design of exterior walls that contribute to the historic character of a district building, including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve exterior wall materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of exterior walls through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of exterior walls using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of an exterior wall that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Limit replacement to the damaged area if possible. Consider substituting compatible exterior wall materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If an exterior wall feature or detail is completely missing, replace it with a new feature or detail that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. It is not appropriate to compromise the architectural integrity of a building by introducing or removing windows, doors, bays, chimneys, or other exterior wall features on character-defining walls.
8. It is not appropriate to conceal or remove material surfaces or details of historic exterior walls including wooden shingles, brackets, corner boards, panels, band boards, and other trim work.
9. It is not appropriate to cover over or replace historic exterior wall materials, such as clapboards, shingles, bricks, or stucco, with contemporary synthetic coatings or substitute sidings such as aluminum, vinyl, or fiber-reinforced siding. Nor is it appropriate to paint or coat unpainted historic exterior walls.
10. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to exterior walls, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows and doors contribute to the architectural style and character of buildings within Rutherfordton's historic district through their location, size, proportion, shape and pattern of placement. These openings visually connect the interior and exterior of a building, providing opportunities for daylight, ventilation, and views. The proportion and sash subdivisions of the prevalent double-hung wood windows vary according to the style and era of construction. Entry sidelights, overhead transoms and fanlights, dormer windows, and French doors embellish the facades of many district buildings. Wood paneled doors in a variety of configurations with or without glazing also reflect the period and style of the houses. Commercial buildings expand the vocabulary of window and door types to include large storefront display windows below bands of smaller upper story windows and fully glazed aluminum or chrome entrance doors.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for windows and doors include the following steps:

- Inspect units routinely for signs of moisture damage, deterioration, paint film failure, air infiltration, mildew or other fungi, termites or other insect infestation, and corrosion.
- Re-glaze and re-caulk units as necessary to ensure they are weather tight and will resist wind and rain.
- Increase the energy efficiency of units by installing weather-stripping.
- Clean units regularly to remove soiling or to prepare for repainting using the gentlest effective method.
- Repaint units as necessary to maintain a protective paint film.

Windows and doors require relatively high maintenance to keep them fully operable. However, if they are well maintained and promptly repaired, they will continue to function indefinitely. If they are allowed to deteriorate to the point of requiring replacement, it is important to replace them with new units that match the original in dimension, design, material, sash and/or panel configuration, detail, texture, and color. In some instances it may be necessary to have the replacement unit custom made. It is always preferable and usually more cost effective to preserve original units rather than replace them.

The pattern and rhythm of window and door openings on any elevation of a historic building— but especially the front façade— are important components of its architectural character. Consequently, adding or removing window and door openings to a prominent exterior elevation is not appropriate. If new openings are necessary, they should be located discreetly on rear elevations or other locations that are not visible from the street.

Windows and Doors: Guidelines

Appropriate structural maintenance and repair should comply with the following guidelines:

1. Retain and preserve the overall form of original windows and doors that contribute to the historic character and form of a district building including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve window and door materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of windows and doors through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of windows and doors using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a window or door that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, sash or panel configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If an exterior wall feature or detail is completely missing, replace it with a new feature or detail that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. If a window or door is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
8. It is not appropriate to compromise the architectural integrity of a building by introducing or eliminating historic window or door openings on character-defining elevations.
9. It is not appropriate to conceal or remove material surfaces or details of historic windows and doors—including sidelights, transoms, shutters, beveled glass, art glass, and architectural trim.
10. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to windows or doors, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation

Note: See the Guidelines for Utilities and Energy Retrofit for related guidelines on energy efficiency measures for windows and doors.

ROOFS

The visual prominence of the roof form and pitch makes their preservation critical to preserving the overall character of a historic building. The diversity of roof forms found throughout Rutherfordton's historic district—from simple hip, gable, and shed roofs to complex combinations all three, as well as commercial structures with flat roofs concealed behind their parapets—reflects the variety of building types and architectural styles it contains. Beyond its form, the functional and decorative features of a historic roof contribute to its character. Such features include chimneys, dormers, boxed gutters, parapets, cornices, and cresting. The roofing material itself can also be distinctive in its appearance; slate, tile, and pressed metal shingles add to the visual character of some roofs in the district.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for roofs include the following steps:

- Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, structural damage, corrosion, and paint failure.
- Ensure adequate drainage by routinely cleaning debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Replace deteriorated flashing with first quality flashing.
- Use the gentlest effective method to clean metal roofs and repaint as necessary to maintain a sound, protective paint film.

The obvious primary role of the roof, to provide shelter from the elements, requires diligence in routine maintenance and timely replacement of deteriorated shingles or flashing. Gutters filled with leaves and downspouts clogged with debris can quickly lead to moisture damage. Because built-in gutters are concealed from view behind decorative boxed cornices, their deterioration may go undetected if not checked regularly. The flashing, which seals joints, created when dormers or chimneys pierce the roof plane are key areas of water infiltration and require careful monitoring.

Over the years, deteriorated roof shingles have often been replaced by more contemporary composition shingles. Such roofing materials are not distinctive enough to require precise matching when replacing, but darker shingle colors that more closely resemble historic roofing materials should be used. Tile and slate roofs, however, are visually distinctive and do warrant the extra effort to carefully repair them and selectively replace deteriorated sections in kind. A properly maintained slate or tile roof can last for a century—far longer than the thirty-year lifespan of a high quality, contemporary fiberglass shingle. Metal roofs also require conscientious maintenance of a sound paint film to prevent corrosion, but they too can last a century if well cared for.

Although roofs often provide convenient locations for the installation of new mechanical, communication, and utility equipment, their introduction can compromise the architectural integrity of a historic building and also damage historic roof materials. Consequently, locating new mechanical units, ventilators, solar panels, skylights, satellite dishes, and other contemporary elements on historic roofs should only be considered if there is a location that is not visible from the street and if no significant historic roof features will be damaged or concealed.

Roofs: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve roofs that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district building including the roof shape, line, pitch, overhang, and functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve roof materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of roofs through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of roofs using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a roof that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Limit replacement to the damaged area if possible. Consider substituting compatible roof materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If a roof feature or detail is completely missing, replace it with a new feature or detail that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. It is not appropriate to compromise the architectural integrity of a building by introducing or removing dormers, chimneys, built-in gutters, vents, or other character-defining roof features and details.
8. Install new gutters and downspouts, if needed, with care so that no architectural features are damaged or lost. Select gutters and downspouts that are painted or coated with a baked-enamel finish in a color that is appropriate to the building, unless they are copper. Replace half-round gutters and cylindrical downspouts in kind.
9. It is not appropriate to install solar collectors, skylights, ventilators, and mechanical or communication equipment on roof slopes that are visible from the street or in locations that compromise the architectural integrity of a building.
10. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to roofs, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

PORCHES, ENTRANCES, & BALCONIES

From the delicate vertically proportioned porches of the Federal style houses to the broad horizontal lines and exposed structure of many bungalow porches, the front porch or entrance is usually one of the most distinctive features of houses in the Rutherfordton Historic District. Many porches and entrances are constructed of wood and supported by masonry piers or foundations. Tongue and groove flooring, beaded board ceilings, and turned or boxed wood columns connected by balustrades of similar stylistic detailing are common porch features. Front stoops or modest brick porches with simple metal columns and rails are more typical of the later ranch houses within the historic district.

Considerations

Appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for porches, entrances, and balconies include the following steps:

- Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, structural damage or settlement, deterioration, paint film failure, corrosion, vegetation, and insect or fungal infestation.
- Ensure adequate drainage so water does not collect on flat, horizontal surfaces and decorative elements, or along foundations.
- Re-caulk vertical wood joints as necessary to ensure the features and surfaces are weather tight to resist wind and water penetration.
- Retain protective paint or stain coatings that prevent deterioration.
- Use the gentlest effective method to clean surfaces to remove heavy soiling or prior to repainting.
- Repaint surfaces as needed to maintain a sound, protective paint film.

Porches, entrances, and balconies are extremely vulnerable to weathering and moisture damage because they are so exposed to the elements making timely repair, repainting, and vigilant maintenance essential.

The repair of porches, entrances, and balconies varies depending on the specific element and material. The repair of masonry porch steps and foundations is the same as those described in the guidelines for masonry. The repair of wooden features parallels those for exterior walls. Patching existing columns and decorative trim work with a wood epoxy repair product is often a preferable and cost-effective alternative to removal or replacement although more substantial repairs to columns or railings may require splicing in new wood to match the original.

Given their prominence, it is not appropriate to alter or remove a front porch, balcony, or entrance. Likewise, it is best to accommodate new entrances or porches on rear elevations or other unobtrusive locations. It is sometimes possible to enclose or alter a side or rear porch or balcony if its overall character is retained.

Porches, Entrances, & Balconies: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve porches, entrances, and balconies that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district building including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve porch, entrance, and balcony materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of porches, entrances, and balconies through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of porches, entrances, and balconies using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a porch, entrance, or balcony that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If a porch, entrance, or balcony is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. It is not appropriate to compromise the architectural integrity of a building by introducing or removing historic porches, entrances, and balconies on character-defining elevations.
8. It is not appropriate to conceal or remove material surfaces or details of historic porches, entrance, and balconies—including columns, pilasters, brackets, balustrades, steps, floors, ceilings, and trim work.
9. It is not appropriate to enclose a front porch, entrance, or balcony on a character-defining elevation. Consider enclosing a porch or balcony on a side or rear elevation only if the design will preserve the historic character of the porch or balcony as well as the historic building.
10. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to porches, entrances and balconies, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

ACCESSIBILITY & LIFE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Some flexibility for historic properties is provided by both the North Carolina State Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in meeting current standards for life safety and accessibility. Code or accessibility compliance can be triggered by a change in use, a substantial rehabilitation, or a need for public access. While the commission does not review or comment on proposed changes in use, it does review proposed changes to historic building exteriors and their sites to determine if the changes are consistent with the design guidelines for Rutherfordton's historic district.

Considerations

It is important for property owners to maintain the historic character of the building and site while accommodating life safety and accessibility requirements. Generally, such requirements can be met by more than one design solution. By working with the commission and local code officials early in the planning process, property owners can identify successful design solutions that meet or exceed the relevant standard while preserving the architectural and historic integrity of the property.

Accessibility to historic buildings is often thwarted by the raised foundations of so many historic properties. Accommodating the change from the site to the front door is often provided by the addition of a ramp, or less frequently by a mechanical lift. Life safety requirements may include the addition of fire exits, fire stairs, or elevator towers. If carefully located and sensitively designed, the visual impact of such additions on the historic building and site can be minimized.

It is especially important to provide public access to commercial and institutional buildings. The replacement of door hardware, the modest widening of an entrance, or the introduction of a slight slope to a recessed entrance to eliminate a raised threshold are all examples of relatively simple modifications that can dramatically improve accessibility to existing buildings. The bibliography in the Appendix provides a source for more specific information on compliance with the ADA.

Accessibility & Life Safety Considerations: Guidelines

1. In reviewing proposed changes to a historic building, consider the related accessibility and life safety code implications carefully to determine if the proposed change is compatible with the historic building and its site.
2. Meet accessibility and life-safety code requirements in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site and its significant features.
3. Meet accessibility and life-safety code requirements in ways that preserve the historic character of the building and its significant architectural features.
4. Introduce new or alternate means of access to the historic building, if needed, in ways that do not compromise the appearance of a historic entrance or front porch.
5. Design accessibility features, such as ramps, handrails, and mechanical lifts, so they are compatible in design, scale, materials, and finish with the historic building.
6. Minimize the visual impact of life safety features, such as fire doors, elevator additions, and fire stairs, through discreet siting and design. Locate new life safety features in locations that do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building and are not visible from the street. Design such features to be compatible in scale, materials, proportion, and finish with the historic building.

UTILITIES & ENERGY RETROFIT

Traditional energy-conserving features of historic buildings and their sites are found throughout Rutherfordton's historic district. Mature shade trees provide welcome relief from the intensity of the direct summer sun for some buildings. For others, projecting porches accommodate shady outdoor living, mediating the difference in outdoor and indoor temperatures. The opening of double-hung windows and operable transoms allows for the exchange of fresh air and the opportunity to pull cool breezes inside. Retractable awnings or hinged shutters also allow some property owners to control the penetration of sunlight. Raised foundations with ventilated crawl spaces, tall attics, gable vents, and high ceilings are other traditional features of historic buildings that reflect an understanding of the local climate.

Considerations

While continuing to capitalize on inherent energy-conserving features, it is important to adopt a proactive approach to maintenance to ensure weather tightness. For example, the replacement of deteriorated weather-stripping, caulking of joinery, and re-glazing of loose window panes will all substantially reduce air infiltration. The addition of storm windows and doors can further reduce air infiltration. Energy retrofit steps with no visual impact include the installation of insulation in crawl spaces and attics and the replacement of inefficient mechanical systems. Insulating exterior walls with blown –in insulation can cause moisture problems and damage historic fabric and also is not as effective in improving energy efficiency as insulating crawl spaces and attics.

If choosing to add exterior storm windows, it is important to install them properly to minimize their visual impact and to prevent unnecessary damage to the window sill and frame. Narrow-profile storm windows sized to fit the opening with a painted or baked enamel finish in a color compatible with the sash color are an unobtrusive choice. Selecting operable storm windows units that align with the sash rails of the window will provide the homeowners with the option of opening the windows. It is essential that the ventilating holes at the base of the storm window be kept clear to prevent potential damage to the sill and window due to moisture condensation.

Wooden storm or screen doors with a full light—one large pane of glass—conceal less of an existing door and are more compatible in material and detail with the historic character of district residences that predate 1945 than metal storm/screen doors. Their visual impact can be further lessened by selecting a painted or stained finish in a color compatible with the existing door.

The visual impact of mechanical units, communication equipment, solar panels, skylights, and utility meters can be minimized through inconspicuous siting in rear or side yard locations and screening with plantings or fencing. If attached directly to the historic building, locate them only on a non-character-defining elevation or roof slope that is not visible from the street.

Utilities & Energy Retrofit: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve the inherent energy-conserving features of historic buildings and their sites.
2. Improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings by following appropriate maintenance practices including weather-stripping openings, caulking, and re-glazing loose window panes. Consider installing storm windows and doors and, if historically appropriate, operable shutters or awnings.
3. Install narrow-profile storm windows so they do not obscure or damage the historic window sash and frame. Minimize their visual impact by aligning the meeting rails of operable sash with the existing sash division of double-hung windows and select painted or enamel finishes that are compatible with the color of the sash. It is not appropriate to install storm windows with a bare aluminum finish in the historic district.
4. Install full-light wooden or metal screen/storm doors so they do not obscure or damage the historic door and frame. Minimize their visual impact by selecting painted, stained, or baked enamel finishes that are compatible with the color of the existing door. It is not appropriate to install bare aluminum storm doors on district properties that predate 1945.
5. Replace deteriorated or missing wooden shutters with new wooden shutters that match the originals in design and are sized to fit the openings and mounted so they can be operated. It is not appropriate to install shutters in locations where they were not used historically.
6. Install fabric awnings, if desired, in historically appropriate locations such as over window, door, storefront, or porch openings. Install awnings with care to ensure that historic features and details are not obscured or damaged.
7. Install low-profile ridge vents only if they will not destroy historic roofing materials and details.
8. Install mechanical equipment, such as heating, air conditioning units, communications equipment and utilities in areas and spaces that require the least amount of alteration to the appearance and materials of the building. Screen from view.
9. Minimize the visual impact of new mechanical and communication equipment and utilities by locating them inconspicuously in areas not visible from the street and by screening them from view.
10. It is not appropriate to install condensers, solar collectors, skylights, ventilators, and mechanical or communication equipment on roof slopes or building elevations that are visible from the street or in locations that compromise the architectural integrity of a building.
11. It is not appropriate to replace operable windows and transoms with fixed glazing, to replace clear glazing with tinted glazing, or to replace multiple paned doors or windows with single thermal sash with flat, applied muntins.

Accessory Buildings & Garages

Throughout Rutherfordton's history, its many residences were often complemented by an assortment of accessory buildings for specialized activities and storage in the backyard. Detached kitchens, privies, well houses, carriage houses, and various sheds and small storage buildings were far more common a century ago. Over time, the types of accessory buildings have changed. Today, the most common surviving secondary structures are garages and carports. Detached single bay garages and car sheds have expanded to double-bay structures.

Original accessory buildings, garages, carports, storage buildings, sheds, privies, detached kitchens, and other accessory structures are all historic buildings that warrant preservation. Beyond their architectural value, these secondary structures contribute to the overall spatial and visual character of individual sites and the historic district as a whole. They also provide a broader understanding of the activities and lifestyles associated with previous residents of the historic district.

Considerations

The routine maintenance and repair of accessory buildings and garages parallels that of the primary buildings in the historic district. Likewise, replacement of deteriorated materials and features is covered under the relevant design guidelines in this section.

(Design guidelines for New Construction of Accessory buildings and Garages are addressed the next section.)

Accessory Buildings & Garages: Guidelines

1. It is not appropriate to compromise the historic integrity of a district property by eliminating historic accessory buildings or garages.
2. Retain and preserve accessory buildings and garages that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property including their functional and decorative features and details.
3. Retain and preserve the historic features, materials, details, and finishes of historic garages and accessory buildings – including their overall form, roof, foundations, siding or masonry walls, windows, doors, and trim work.
4. Protect, repair, and maintain the functional and decorative features of garages and accessory buildings through routine inspections and appropriate maintenance and repair methods.
5. Repair deteriorated garages and accessory structures and their distinctive features and materials by preservation methods appropriate for the specific materials.
6. Replace in kind any portion of an accessory building or garage that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, sash or panel configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible by limiting replacement to the deteriorated section only. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
7. If an accessory building or garage is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district. See design guidelines for New Construction of Accessory buildings and Garages on page ____.
8. It is not appropriate to conceal or remove material surfaces or details of historic accessory buildings or garage including doors, windows, siding, masonry, and architectural trim.
9. Introduce compatible new garages and accessory buildings, if needed, with care so that the overall historic character of the principal building, site, and district is not compromised or diminished. Ensure that the location, orientation, height, scale, and form of new garages and accessory buildings are consistent with that of historic garages and accessory structures in the district.
10. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to accessory buildings and garages, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

STOREFRONTS

A variety of storefronts representing different eras add interest and vitality to the commercial area of Rutherfordton's historic district. For most historic commercial buildings, the storefront is the most prominent architectural feature. Connecting the building façade to the sidewalk and street, the storefront is typically distinguished by large display windows flanking the primary entrance. A change in building materials below a mid-cornice also differentiates the storefront from the rest of the street façade. Some storefront entrances are recessed to provide a more gracious transition from the sidewalk to the building interior. Traditional storefront features include transoms, signboards, awnings, and bulkhead panels beneath the display windows. Historically, materials for the bulkhead area range from wood panels, to brick, stone, ceramic tiles, and enameled metal panels. Over the years, storefronts were often altered to reflect a more up-to-date image to the public. If previous unsympathetic alterations conceal original transoms, decorative tile work, and other features, the owner may choose to reveal and repair those features.

Considerations

The maintenance and repair of storefronts is similar to that for any other windows, doors, and entrances. Given the visual prominence of the storefront, every effort should be made to retain and preserve original storefronts. It is important to match original materials in dimension, pattern, scale, detail, and color. The removal of a historic storefront significantly diminishes the architectural character of a commercial building as does the replacement of original materials and features with incompatible, modern materials.

Some original storefront entrances can present challenges in providing accessibility to those with disabilities due to raised or recessed entrances. The guidelines for Accessibility and Life Safety Considerations provide more information on accessibility issues. In addition, see the guidelines for Signage for more information on appropriate signage and the guidelines on Exterior Lighting for more information regarding appropriate lighting.

Storefronts: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve storefronts that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a district commercial building including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve storefront materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of storefronts through appropriate methods.
4. It is not appropriate to compromise the architectural integrity of a building by introducing or eliminating storefronts on character-defining elevations.
5. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of storefronts using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
6. Replace in kind any portion of a storefront that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, sash or panel configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
7. If a storefront is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
8. It is not appropriate to conceal or remove material surfaces or details of historic storefronts — including transoms, signboards, display windows, entrance doors, ceramic tile entries, awnings, bulkheads, and architectural trim.
9. It is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development by making changes to storefronts, such as adding conjectural features based upon insufficient historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.
10. Install fabric awnings over storefronts, if desired and historically appropriate, so that historic features of the building are not damaged or obscured.

III. NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

NEW CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY BUILDINGS

The introduction of new buildings that respect and enhance the visual and spatial character of Rutherfordton's historic district can contribute to its ongoing vitality and viability. It is not necessary or desirable to directly mimic historic building designs in the historic district; rather, compatible contemporary designs are encouraged. The compatibility of any proposed new construction must be evaluated in terms of both the building and its siting.

Considerations

The proposed siting of a new building on a specific lot within the district must be consistent with the setback and spacing of the surrounding buildings. Within the district, most residential and commercial buildings are oriented to the street with the front façade running parallel to it. However, in the C-1 commercial area, historic buildings abut the sidewalk and in the residential areas setbacks from the street front lawns provide a buffer from the public right-of-way. Because lot size, lot coverage, and building placement vary tremendously within Rutherfordton's historic district, siting decisions must relate to the immediate context. The physical and visual characteristics of the proposed building site including its topography and landscaping should also be considered in the design of a new building's compatibility with the historic surroundings. New construction projects trigger site modifications such as driveways, landscaping, lighting, and walkways. All related site changes must be reviewed according to the pertinent design guidelines found in the Historic District Setting section.

Beyond site considerations, the design of the proposed building must be reviewed for compatibility with surrounding buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district. Fundamental compatibility criteria include height, roof form, massing, and scale. By analyzing the buildings that surround a proposed site in these terms, it is possible to reveal how significant each of these criteria is. It is especially important to ensure that the overall proportion of the street façade and the roof form, as viewed from the street, are similar to those of neighboring historic buildings.

Scale refers to the size of the construction units and their architectural details in relation to the size of humans. Like scale, height consistency is an important compatibility criterion.

Building materials, features, openings, details, textures, and finishes characteristic in the historic district provide additional criteria for assessing the compatibility of the proposed building design. Front porches, chimneys, bays, raised foundations, and storefronts are all examples of historic building features found within the historic district. Particular attention should be paid to the spacing, scale, placement, proportion, and size of openings and the design of the doors and windows that fill them. The selection of materials and textures that clad the building and related exterior trim and details offer additional opportunities to relate proposed new construction to its immediate context within the historic district.

The use of synthetic and composite materials for the exterior of new primary buildings is discouraged. Their possible approval for new construction will be determined on a case by case basis. The primary determining factor will be the materials of adjacent structures.

New Construction of Primary Buildings: Guidelines

1. Site new primary buildings so they are consistent in terms of setback and orientation from the street and spacing between buildings, which contribute to the historic character of the streetscape.
2. Design the primary building so that the overall character of the adjacent streetscape and the building site, including its topography and any significant site features, are maintained.
3. Follow the relevant design guidelines under Historic District Setting in planning related site modifications.
4. Minimize any grading or site disturbance during construction to prevent damage to significant site features and unknown archaeological resources.
5. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources, from damage during—or as a result of—construction.
6. Design new primary buildings to be compatible in height, roof form, scale, massing, material, detail, and proportion of the street facade with surrounding buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district.
7. Locate and size door and window openings in new primary buildings so they are compatible in placement, orientation, spacing, proportion, size, and scale with those of surrounding buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district.
8. Select doors and windows for new primary buildings that are compatible in material, proportion, subdivision, pattern, detail, and finish with those of surrounding buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district.
9. Select materials and finishes for new primary buildings that are compatible in composition, texture, scale, pattern, module, detail, finish, and color with those of surrounding buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district.
10. Design new primary buildings to be compatible with but differentiated from historic buildings in the district. Unless the building is an accurate reconstruction, it is not appropriate to create a false sense of historical development through the duplication of historic features or details from an earlier era on a new primary building.

New Construction of Accessory Buildings and Garages

Throughout Rutherfordton's history, its many residences were often complemented by an assortment of accessory buildings for specialized activities and storage in the backyard. Detached kitchens, privies, well houses, carriage houses, and various sheds and small storage buildings were far more common a century ago. Over time, the types of accessory buildings have changed. Today, the most common surviving secondary structures are garages and carports. Detached single bay garages and car sheds have expanded to double-bay structures. On some post-1945 houses, the garage or carport became a more prominent feature directly connected to the house and far more visible from the street. The challenge in adding a new garage or accessory building is to determine the most appropriate design solution given the specific site and the architectural era of the house.

Considerations

The design and siting of new accessory buildings, garages, sheds, carports, and other accessory buildings within the historic district requires careful analysis of the specific site and primary structure. While a wide range of accessory buildings is found within the district, not all types are appropriate for all sites and the design solution must be appropriately tailored. For example, an attached double bay carport or garage may be quite appropriate for a post 1945 ranch house, but would not be appropriate for a Greek Revival house. In terms of siting, earlier garages or carriage houses in the district are often set back behind the principal structure at the end of a single lane driveway. Small storage buildings were often constructed towards the rear property line, far from the house. Later, the garages and the modern carport moved closer to the houses and expanded to accommodate two cars—eventually connecting directly with the house in full view from the street.

Beyond the pivotal questions of siting and overall form, the size and height of the secondary structure must be carefully considered. What is appropriate will vary depending on the size of the lot and the principal structure. Existing accessory buildings or garages for similar houses on similar lots can offer direction as well. Without question, however, accessory buildings should always defer to the primary building and never visually overwhelm the house or site. As with any new construction project, additional criteria for evaluating the compatibility of proposed new accessory buildings and garages with the primary building on the site and with other accessory buildings or garages in the district include the placement and design of windows and doors and the composition, texture, scale, pattern, detail, finish, and color of materials. The use of artificial and composite materials for the exterior of new garages and accessory buildings is discouraged. Their possible approval for new construction will be determined on a case by case basis. The primary determining factor will be the materials of adjacent structures and visibility of the new structure from the street.

Occasionally, the need for additional storage on site may best be met by a simple utilitarian building if the structure can be discreetly located on the site so that it does not diminish the historic character of the primary building or site. A number of stock prefabricated storage buildings are readily available for this purpose. It is important to select one that is simply detailed and is compatible with the primary building in roof form, scale, and materials, and color.

New Construction of Accessory buildings & Garages: Guidelines

1. Site and orient new accessory buildings or garages in locations that is compatible with the traditional relationship of accessory buildings or garages to district houses of similar architectural style and sites of similar size.
2. Design new accessory buildings and garages to be compatible in roof form, scale, massing, material, and detail with the historic character of the primary building on the site and with other historic accessory buildings or garages in the district. Maintain the traditional height and proportion of historic accessory buildings and garages in the historic district.
3. Select doors and windows for new accessory buildings and garages that are compatible in placement, material, proportion, subdivision, pattern, and detail with doors and windows of the primary building on the site and with other accessory buildings and garages which contribute to the historic character of the district.
4. Select materials and finishes for new accessory buildings and garages that are compatible in composition, texture, scale, pattern, detail, finish, and color with the primary building on the site and with other accessory buildings or garages in the district.
5. Minimize any grading or site disturbance during construction and limit the use of heavy construction equipment to prevent destroying unknown archaeological resources.
6. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources, from damage during—or as a result of—construction.
7. Introduce simple, utilitarian storage buildings only in locations that will not compromise the overall historic character of the primary building or the visual and spatial character of the site.
8. It is not appropriate to site a new outbuilding or garage in a location that will require the removal of a significant site feature or building element.
9. It is not appropriate to design new accessory buildings and garages that visually overpower the primary structure due to their size, height, or siting.
10. It is not appropriate to introduce a prefabricated outbuilding in the historic district if it is not compatible in height, size, scale, materials, proportion, and details with historic accessory buildings in the district.

DECKS

The contemporary version of the terrace or patio, a deck typically expands the living area into the backyard. Decks are generally constructed of wood and rise above the building's foundation to align with the first floor level of the house. Often, a set of steps connects the deck to the yard.

Considerations

While it is certainly possible to discreetly add a deck to a historic building without compromising its architectural integrity, care must be taken in determining its location, scale, and design to ensure it does not visually overpower the building or site. Locating a deck on a rear elevation generally makes it less visible from the street while enhancing the sense of privacy for the homeowner. Insetting the deck at least six inches from either rear building corner further minimizes its visual impact and also avoids damage to exterior trim work. Further, it is important to design the deck so significant building features, such as a bays or porches, are not destroyed, and mature trees and other key site features are not lost. By constructing the deck to be structurally self-supporting, connections to the historic building and related damage of historic fabric can be minimized. In terms of scale, it is best to keep the size of the deck modest to avoid overpowering the building or site.

It is wise to construct decks of naturally decay-resistant wood, such as cypress, redwood, pressure-treated lumber or composite materials to increase their resistance to the elements. Likewise, painting or staining them will help protect them from the deteriorating effects of ultraviolet light and moisture. At the same time, the use of a compatible color of paint or stain will soften the impact of the deck addition as will the screening of the deck structure with foundation plantings or lattice panels. Generally decks are high enough above ground level to require a railing for safety and to necessitate steps. Since the deck is a contemporary feature, it is not desirable to imitate original railings or steps of the historic building to make it appear historic. Rather, homeowners should select simple details that are compatible with the historic building in scale and proportion for the rails and steps.

As with any construction work in a historic district, care should be taken to minimize the impact of the construction activity on the site. Mature trees should be protected from damage and the use of heavy machinery that disturbs or compacts the soil should be avoided.

Decks: Guidelines

1. Introduce decks inconspicuously in areas that are not visible from the street—usually on the rear elevation, inset from either rear corner. Locate the deck with care so that it does not damage or conceal significant historic features or details.
2. Minimize the visual impact of the deck by limiting its size and scale. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck if it will visually overpower the building or site or substantially alter the site's proportion of constructed area to un-built area.
3. Minimize the damage to the historic building by constructing decks to be self-supporting. Attach them to the historic building with care so that loss of historic fabric is minimized.
4. Design and detail decks and the related steps and railings so they are compatible with the scale, material, and proportions of the historic building.
5. Paint or stain decks in colors that are compatible with the color of the historic building.
6. During construction of a deck, protect significant site features, such as mature trees from damage by minimizing ground disturbance and limiting the use of heavy construction equipment.

IV. Historic District Settings

SITE FEATURES & PLANTINGS

The setting created by the plantings, topography, and site features of Rutherfordton's Historic District provides an essential context for its historic architecture warranting the ongoing preservation of that setting. Mature trees, gardens, hedges, fences, retaining walls, terraces, hills, streets, walkways and vistas are all a part of that setting. Of course, plantings continue to grow and landscapes evolve and they cannot be maintained at a specific size and age like built site features. However, they can be maintained through routine pruning, fertilizing, and treatment for disease.

Considerations

The protection of site features and plantings is essential in preserving the historic character of the district. Whenever a mature tree or hedge is removed—whether diseased, storm damaged, or healthy—the character of the district is diminished. Replacement in kind or with a like species is important unless an academic period landscape restoration plan calls for a different treatment.

It is crucial during new construction or other site work that mature trees and other historic site features be protected from damage while the work is executed and from delayed damage as a result of the work. Removal of any tree—larger than twelve inches in diameter at four feet above the ground requires a COA as does site work related to new construction or parking areas. Existing constructed site features, including terraces, fountains, patios, arbors, and gazebos, should be preserved and maintained. It is also important when adding similar new site features to site them so they enhance rather than detract from the character of the site and district as a whole.

The introduction of a contemporary site feature—such as a swimming pool, dumpster, playground equipment, or storage unit—must be carefully considered in terms of its intrusiveness on the character of the site and the district. In some cases, screening and discreet siting can reduce the negative impact of the contemporary feature on the historic district. Sometimes, however, a proposed feature may be too inconsistent with the character of the site or the district to be successfully incorporated.

Site Features & Plantings: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve site features and plantings that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property or the district.
2. Retain and preserve the historic site features and plantings that relate the buildings to their settings; such as site topography, retaining walls, mature trees, hedges, paths of circulation, and foundation plantings, where appropriate. It is not appropriate to substantially alter the topography of a district site by excavating, grading, or filling.
3. Maintain and protect functional and decorative built and landscape site features through appropriate maintenance as well as pruning of plants and trees. Prune or trim trees in a manner that preserves the existing tree canopy. It is not appropriate to radically change the shape of mature trees by “topping” them.
4. Repairs to the features, material surfaces, and details of deteriorated site features should use repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a built site feature that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If a built site feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. Replace significant site plantings—such as a mature tree, hedge, or foundation plantings—that are diseased or damaged with new plantings that are similar in species. Select replacement plantings that will create a similar appearance and size to the originals when they mature. It is not appropriate to remove a planting that contributes to the overall character of the historic district unless it is diseased or damaged.
8. Introduce new site features or plantings, if necessary, in traditional locations that do not compromise or diminish the overall historic character of the building, site, or district.
9. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources from damage during—or as a result of—construction.
10. Introduce contemporary site features—such as swimming pools, mechanical units, solar panels, storage buildings, playground equipment, and telecommunication equipment—only in locations that are not visible from the street and where they do not compromise the historic character of the building, site, or district.

FENCES & WALLS

Fences and walls are important constructed features of the landscape that help give definition to building sites. They serve both utilitarian and decorative functions. In Rutherfordton, the traditional front yard fences are made of wood pickets, cast iron, or wrought iron. Numerous rock or brick retaining walls have been used over the centuries to maintain the integrity of the street plan despite Rutherfordton's varied topography. Less ornate privacy fences and stone or brick walls were sometimes used to enclose rear and rear side yards in the district.

Considerations

Ongoing maintenance and repair is essential to preserving existing fences and walls. The life span of both wood and iron fences can be extended if the bottom edge can be protected from ground moisture and if they are protected by a sound coat of paint. Pickets are typically painted white, stained, or painted in a color that complements the house colors. To prevent rust and corrosion of iron fences, loose paint and rust should be removed with a wire brush and the fences primed immediately with an appropriate metal primer prior to painting in a traditional dark green, black, or brown. If replacement is necessary, a variety of traditional iron fencing is readily available today. Stone or brick walls should be maintained as exterior masonry building walls are. Information on their repair can be found in the guidelines for masonry. Retaining walls can begin to lean, crack, or settle if they are not properly supported and drained. In the historic district, proposals for new fences to enhance the site, improve security, or increase privacy are reviewed in terms of their siting and their design. The compatibility of proposed materials, height, configuration, scale, detail, and finish with other fences and walls in the district is reviewed as is the proposed configuration for the specific site. Typically, front yard fences do not exceed four feet in height while rear yard fences may be six feet tall. For rear yards, simple picket fences and solid privacy fences constructed of vertical wood uprights are considered appropriate choices. Incompatible contemporary fence types and fencing materials such as vinyl or metal chain link fencing are not appropriate in the historic district for locations that are visible from the street.

Fences & Walls: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve fences and walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve materials that contribute to the overall historic character of fences and walls.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of fences and walls through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of fences and walls using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a fence or wall that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If a fence or wall is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. Site new fences or walls, if necessary, in locations that are compatible with the traditional relationship of fences or walls to district properties of similar architectural style and sites of similar size.
8. Design new fences or walls to be compatible in materials, height, configuration, scale, detail, and finish with other fences and walls in the district.
9. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources from damage during—or as a result of—construction.
10. Introduce simple utilitarian fences, if necessary, only in rear or rear side yard locations where they do not compromise the historic character of the site or district. It is not appropriate to introduce contemporary style vinyl or metal chain link fences in locations that are visible from the street.

WALKWAYS, DRIVEWAYS & OFFSTREET PARKING

The paths of circulation for pedestrians and automobiles also help define the character of Rutherfordton's Historic District. Stone or brick steps and concrete or brick walkways lead from the sidewalk to many front porches. Narrow driveways lead to parking behind or beside most homes. Driveways are surfaced in different materials including gravel, concrete runners, and asphalt.

Considerations

Regular maintenance and repair of deteriorated walkway and driveway surfaces helps preserve the historic character of the historic district. Proposals for new walkways, driveways, and curb cuts should be designed to enhance the existing neighborhood character and compliment other historic site features. As a result of the growing need to accommodate more automobiles, off-street parking areas can have a significant impact on the residential areas of the historic district. When located as inconspicuously as possible and screened through the use of plants and fences or walls, new parking areas can sometimes be successfully integrated into larger rear yards. Existing trees should be protected whenever possible and new trees can diminish the impact of glare, heat, and noise. Planting islands or medians can reduce the visual impact of large paved areas. Parking areas should be paved with appropriate materials such as crushed stone, gravel, brick, or asphalt. It is critical to limit the area of new paving on any property so that the ratio of built or paved area to green space is not significantly altered. New parking in residential areas should never abut the principal building on a site but should allow an area for green space.

Walkways, Driveways & Off-street Parking: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve materials that contribute to the overall historic character of walkways, driveways, off-street parking areas.
3. Maintain and protect the features, material surfaces, and details of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through appropriate methods.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
5. Replace in kind any portion of a walkway, driveway, or off-street parking area that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and color. Retain as much original fabric as possible. Consider substituting compatible materials for the original only if it is not technically feasible to replace in kind.
6. If a walkway, driveway, or off-street parking area is completely missing, replace it with a new feature that is based upon accurate documentation of the original or is a new design compatible in scale, material, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
7. Site new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas, if necessary, in locations that are compatible with the traditional relationship of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas to district properties of similar architectural style and sites of similar size. In residential areas of the district, it is not appropriate to locate new off-street parking areas in locations that are visible from the street, if the paving will abut the primary building, or if the site's proportion of constructed area to un-built area will be substantially altered.
8. Design new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas to be compatible in materials, scale, and configuration with the specific site, the building, and the district.
9. Design new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas so that the general topography of the site and significant site features are not altered, damaged, or lost. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources from damage during or as a result of construction.
10. Screen new off-street parking areas in residential areas of the district from view and minimize their visual impact on adjacent properties through the use of perimeter plantings, fences, walls, or hedges. Subdivide large parking areas with interior planting medians or islands to lessen their visual impact.

PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

The overall historic character of Rutherfordton's historic district is defined not only by the individual buildings and sites but also by the public areas that connect them. These public areas include the public parks, cemeteries, streets, streetlights, street and traffic signs, sidewalks, and street trees. The Town of Rutherfordton and, for some streets, the North Carolina Department of Transportation are responsible for the public right-of-way and its ongoing maintenance.

Considerations

Although the public right-of-way has evolved and changed over the years, much of its historic character remains. Mature street trees, concrete sidewalks, retaining walls, and even the irregular topography of the streetscape are all examples of public right-of-way features that enhance the historic district. Proposed changes to the streetscape should respect its historic character.

Beyond routine repairs and ongoing maintenance, new plantings, signage, benches, utility equipment, sidewalks, and other changes to the public right-of-way should all be reviewed to assess their compatibility in terms of materials, location, design, scale, and color.

To minimize the introduction of street side post-style mailboxes within the district, the local postmaster reviews requests for continued house delivery of mail on a case by case basis.

It is important to retain the existing tree canopies along streets within the historic district by replacing damaged or diseased mature trees with trees of similar species and carefully pruning mature trees so their shape is not dramatically changed through "topping" or excessive pruning.

Public Right-of-Way: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve public right-of-way features that contribute to the overall historic character of the historic district including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve materials that contribute to the overall historic character of the public right-of-way. Replace in kind any damaged or deteriorated historic features.
3. Trim or prune trees in the public right-of-way in a manner that preserves the existing tree canopy.
4. Limit signage in the public right-of-way to signs necessary for traffic and pedestrian safety. Site and locate signs to minimize their impact on the historic character of the district.
5. Protect significant site features in the public right-of-way, including mature trees and known archaeological resources, from damage during, or as a result of, construction.
6. Introduce elements such as benches, mailboxes, trash receptacles, and newspaper racks in locations that minimize their impact on the historic character of the district. Select street furniture, such as benches, and street lights that are compatible with the historic district in terms of design, material, and scale.
7. Minimize the introduction of new utility poles, transformers, cables, and wires in the public right-of-way so that the historic character of the district is not compromised by a proliferation of these elements.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

The material evidence of any past human activity found below or partially below the ground is considered an archaeological resource. Given the broad time span of Rutherfordton's historic district, archaeological features can provide useful information about the history of the district and the lifestyles of the previous inhabitants. Arrowheads, old wells, cisterns, foundation stones, piers, walkways, privies, soil stratifications, and even buried rubbish piles can offer insight into the locations of earlier additions and accessory buildings, fence lines, garden patterns, and pathways. The exposure of such archaeological features endangers them by exposing them to the elements, accelerating their deterioration. Therefore, protecting and preserving archaeological resources is best accomplished by leaving them undisturbed—in situ.

Considerations

Regarding a site, excavating for new construction, or even landscaping projects can uncover archaeological features as the ground is disturbed. For this reason, ground disturbance in the historic district should be minimized. If a minor project, such as adding a drainage path or walkway, should reveal archaeological evidence, the property owner is encouraged to document the features through photographs before continuing with the work. For large construction or excavation projects, the planning stage should include an archaeological review by a professional archaeologist to determine if the project will likely destroy significant archaeological resources. The Office of State Archaeology in the North Carolina Division of Archives and History will provide this assistance to property owners.

Archaeological Features: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve known archaeological features that are significant to the site or the historic district.
2. Maintain and protect known archaeological features from damage during—or as a result of—construction or site work. It is not appropriate to use heavy equipment or machinery on district sites containing significant archaeological features.
3. Minimize grading, site disturbances, and other changes in terrain within the historic district to reduce the potential danger to known or unknown archaeological resources.
4. If a significant archaeological feature cannot be preserved in place, work with professional archaeologists using current archaeological methods to plan and execute any necessary investigation.
5. If archaeological resources are exposed during site work and cannot be preserved in place, record the archaeological evidence.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Much of Rutherfordton's historic district predates the introduction of electrical lighting. Even as late as the mid-twentieth century, exterior lighting in residential areas was quite minimal with occasional street lamps and simple porch or entry lights.

Considerations

Concerns with safety and security often lead to increased use of exterior lighting within the historic district. It is important when introducing porch, entry, or security lighting that adequate illumination is provided without detracting from the historic building or site. It is also important not to allow exterior lighting of one site to cause problems by invading adjacent properties. The selective use of low-level lighting in key locations and the use of directional fixtures can prevent the over-illumination of individual properties and the district as a whole. Foot lights, recessed lighting, and lights on modest height posts are all appropriate choices within the historic district. Supplemental site lighting should light the path or steps instead of the entire yard. The use of timers or motion sensors can also minimize the impact of exterior lighting and save energy.

Exterior Lighting: Guidelines

1. Review proposed new lighting to determine its compatibility in terms of orientation, location, brightness, height, scale, material, and configuration with the historic character of the building, site, and district.
2. Retain and preserve exterior lighting fixtures that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property including their functional and decorative features and details.
3. Retain and preserve materials, features, details, and finishes of historic lighting fixtures.
4. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of historic lighting fixtures.
5. Replace deteriorated, damaged, or missing exterior lighting fixtures with new fixtures that are compatible in design, scale, material, finish, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
6. Introduce new exterior lighting, if necessary, in traditional locations that do not compromise or diminish the overall historic character of the building, site, or district. Design the new lighting to be compatible in orientation, location, brightness, height, scale, material, and configuration with the historic character of the building, site, and district.
7. Introduce new low-level lighting, if necessary, in residential areas of the district to ensure safety and security. Minimize their visual impact on the site by using discreet, unobtrusive fixtures—such as recessed lights, footlights, directional lights, and lights on human-scale posts. Locate such fixtures with care to prevent site lighting from affecting adjacent properties.
8. It is not appropriate to over-illuminate the facades or front yards of district houses or to introduce indiscriminate lighting. It is not appropriate to create a runaway effect along front walkways by introducing multiple lights.
9. It is not appropriate to introduce period lighting fixtures from an era earlier than the historic building in an attempt to create a false historic appearance.

SIGNAGE

Historic signage that is incorporated into the architectural detail of commercial and institutional buildings contributes to their historic character of the building and warrants preservation. Signage is often incorporated into the display windows or mid-cornices of historic storefronts or was added as a suspended signboard.

Considerations

New signage within the commercial area of the district should be consistent with traditional locations for signage and should be designed and located so it does not conceal historic architectural features. It is always important to consider the design of the sign, including materials, legibility of the typeface, color, overall size, and means of support or attachment. Screening or stenciling signage onto awnings or storefront, transom or doorway glass can often provide an inexpensive and effective means for adding signage to commercial buildings. Signs should be not larger than is necessary to identify the property they serve and they can be designed to complement the architecture of the building as well.

In the residential areas of the district, it is equally important to incorporate signage without damaging or concealing significant architectural features and details. Often freestanding signs on low posts or bases adjacent to the front walkway or driveway can minimize their impact. Landscaping and directional low-level lighting can further enhance their effectiveness. Small plaques, historic markers, or wooden identification signs can usually be added near an entrance without compromising the historic building as well.

Incompatible contemporary signs – including billboards, plastic signs, internally lighted signs, and flashing signs – are not compatible with the character of the historic district. Signs within the historic district are subject to the local sign ordinance and to the same size limitations as signs throughout Rutherfordton. Neon signs should be historically styled and in keeping with the character of the district.

Signage: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve historic signs that contribute to the overall historic character of a district property including their functional and decorative features and details.
2. Retain and preserve materials, features, details, and finishes that contribute to the overall historic character of signage.
3. Repair the features, material surfaces, and details of historic signage using repair methods appropriate to the specific material.
4. Replace deteriorated, damaged, or missing signage with new signage that is compatible in design, scale, material, finish, and detail with the historic character of the building and district.
5. Introduce new signage, if necessary, in traditional locations that do not compromise or diminish the overall historic character of the building, site, or district. Design the new signage to be compatible in orientation, location, height, scale, material, and configuration with the historic character of the building, site, and district.
6. Site new freestanding signage in residential areas of the district on low posts or bases that are compatible with the pedestrian scale of district. Mount small identification signs on building facades in locations that do not damage or conceal significant architectural features or details.
7. Fabricate new signage out of traditional materials, such as wood, stone, or metal, or apply lettering to glass or awning fabric. It is not appropriate to introduce signage in contemporary materials, such as plastics, or internally lighted signage that are incompatible with the overall historic character of the historic district.
8. Building occupants may implement window lettering and logos without the need to submit a COA for approval under the following conditions: They are applied to the street level windows. Up to 2 lines of text may be scaled at a total height of up to 10% of the glazed area height, not to exceed 8". Up to 3 lines of additional text may then be applied, at a scale of up to 50% of the total height of the larger lettering. Glazed surfaces must remain 75% uncovered by decals. Logos and additional non-graphics lettering not described above must be submitted as a COA for approval. Examples of lettering that would fall within automatic compliance would be: A) Storefront window 5'w x5'h (60 inches wide x 60 inches high): Application of up to 2 lines of lettering totaling 6" high (10% of window height), and additional lettering of up to 3 lines at 3" height. B) Window 4'w x7'h (48 inches wide x 84 inches high): Application of up to 2 lines of lettering 8" high (maximum allowed), and additional lettering of up to 3 lines at 4" total height. **(Amended 11/4/14).**

V. RELOCATION AND DEMOLITION

RELOCATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Moving a historic building may result in a loss of integrity of context and setting, seriously compromising the significance of the relocated building. It also is a complicated, time-consuming, and expensive process that requires thorough investigation and evaluation. However, moving a building within the historic district should be considered under the following situations:

1. as a last alternative to demolition.
2. as part of a larger community revitalization plan that will result in a more compatible setting for the building.

Considerations

It is critical that a move be thoroughly planned and carefully executed to avoid damage to the historic building and to any significant site features along the route. Working with contractors experienced in successfully moving historic buildings will help avoid some of the potential problems. Protecting and securing the building during and after the move is essential. To preserve as much of the architectural and structural integrity of the building every effort should be made to move the building intact—as a single unit. If the building is relocated within the historic district, the siting and all related site modifications must be approved by the commission.

Relocation of Existing Buildings: Guidelines

1. Record the historic building in its original setting and document the existing site conditions through detailed photographs prior to its relocation.
2. Protect the historic building during and after the move by taking the following steps:
 - thoroughly evaluate the structural condition of the building to determine if it is structurally sound enough to withstand the move,
 - take all necessary precautions to prevent damage to the structure during the move,
 - work with contractors who have experience in moving historic structures,
 - protect and secure the building from damage due to vandalism or exposure to the elements.
3. Protect significant site features from damage during or after the move:
 1. at the original site,
 2. along the route of the move, and
 3. at the new site.
4. If the building is relocated within the historic district, select a new site that is compatible to the original site in visual character and that can provide a similar setting for the historic building in terms of setback, orientation to the street, and spacing from other buildings. It is also desirable to identify a new site where the solar orientation of the building is similar to that of the old site.
5. If the building is relocated within the historic district, review the compatibility of its proposed siting with surrounding buildings.
6. If the building is relocated within the historic district, review related proposed site modifications according to the relevant design guidelines under Historic District Setting.

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Demolition of a building within the historic district requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. The demolition of a building that contributes to the special character of Rutherfordton's historic district is an irreversible act that is strongly discouraged by the Historic Preservation Commission. Statewide enabling legislation gives the HPC the authority to delay requests for demolition for up to one full year so full consideration can be given to alternatives to demolition. During the delay, the Commission and other interested parties will work with the property owners to identify viable alternatives to razing the building. Property owners are encouraged to work with the Historic Preservation Commission and other interested parties to explore all viable alternatives to demolition.

Considerations

In reviewing a demolition request, the Commission assesses the impact of the proposed demolition on adjacent properties as well as on the historic district as a whole. Serious consideration is given to the following questions:

- What is the threatened building's contribution to the historic district?
- Could the property be sold to someone whose needs it would meet?
- Could the building be adapted to meet the property owner's needs?
- Could the building be moved to another site?
- Will the proposed new use of the site compensate for the loss of the building?

When a request for demolition is submitted, the property owner must also submit a proposed site plan illustrating how the site will be modified following demolition. The property owner is also responsible for documenting the historic building to ensure a permanent record of the building survives. Such documentary photographs and drawings are retained in the Commission's files.

Demolition of Existing Buildings: Guidelines

1. Work with the Historic District Commission and other interested parties to seek viable alternatives to demolition.
2. Record the historic building in its original setting and document the existing site and building conditions through photographs and/or drawings prior to its demolition.
3. Salvage, or allow others to salvage, prior to demolition architectural materials and features that could be reused.
4. When requesting a COA for demolition, submit a site plan illustrating the proposed post-demolition site treatment.
5. Protect significant site features, including mature trees and known archaeological resources from damage during, or as a result of, the demolition.
6. Following demolition, promptly clear the site of all debris.
7. Implement the pre-approved site plan in a timely manner following the demolition.

VI. APPENDICES

RESOURCES

Local Resources

Rutherfordton Historic Preservation Commission
Town of Rutherfordton Planning Department
129 North Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139
Phone: 828-287-2008
Fax: 828-287-2005
Email: jmcwhorter@rutherfordton.net

Rutherford County Historical Society

Rutherford County Heritage Council

State Resources

State Historic Preservation Officer
North Carolina Division of Archives and History
4618 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4618
Phone: 919/733-4763

To obtain information on the National Register program and historic structures, contact the Survey and Planning Branch at 919/733-6545.

To obtain technical restoration assistance and information on preservation tax credits, contact the Restoration Branch at 919/733-6547.

To obtain information on archaeological sites, contact the Office of State Archaeology at 919/733-7342.

Website: www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/

Preservation North Carolina
200 Fayetteville Street Mall
Suite 300
P.O. Box 27644
Raleigh, NC 27611-7644
Phone: 919/832-3652
Fax: 919/832-1651
Email: presnc@mindspring.com
Website: www.presnc.org

National Resources

Heritage Preservation Services
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20240
Office of the Director: 202/208-4621
Office of Public Affairs: 202/208-6843
Preservation Assistance Division: 202/343-9578
Website: www2.cr.nps.gov

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202/588-6000
Website: www.nationaltrust.org
Southern Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
456 King Street
Charleston, SC 29403
Phone: 843/722-8552

For information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), contact:

US Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Disabilities Rights Section
P.O. Box 66738
Washington, DC 20035-6738
ADA Information Line:
800/514-0301 (voice)
800/514-0383 (TTY)
ADA Home Page: www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use the property for its originally intended purpose.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, site, or its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, color, design, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve architectural resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.
9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
10. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

Suggested References

National Park Service Publications

The National Park Service publishes an ongoing series of technical briefs, books, and leaflets on appropriate preservation treatments and rehabilitation techniques. Ordering information stock numbers and prices may be obtained from A Catalogue of Historic Preservation Publications requested from the National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127. Information on the Park Service's

Technical Preservation Services and its programs is available at their website: www2.cr.nps.gov .

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EXEMPT & MINOR WORKS

Exempt Works

The following acts of regular maintenance, or of a temporary nature do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Street, sidewalk and underground utility work, which does not change the appearance of the streetscape. This includes but is not limited to the burial of overhead lines, replacement of water and sewer lines, replacement of sidewalks, and the replacement and/or installation of standard utility boxes. This exemption is also extended to utility meters for gas, water, electricity, and the like.
2. Painting the same color as existing paint, including slight variation in shade of the same base color.
3. Replacement of roof or roofing material, if the shape, dimensions, and color are the same as those previously existing, including slight variations in materials and colors as determined by the Zoning Officer.
4. Temporary signs and flags listed as exempt in Section 8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. One residential occupant sign per lot not exceeding 4 square feet with the address, occupant's name, name of structure, and dates located in the front or side yard outside the public right-of-way. These signs must also be constructed of wood, painted or stained to match the house and not exceed 3 feet in height.
6. Historical markers placed by the Historical Society or the State of North Carolina.
7. Play equipment (not exceeding 300 square feet in area) and movable play houses (not exceeding 100 square feet) when located in the backyard.
8. Outside furniture, except public facilities. The Charleston style bench is pre-approved for public facilities.
9. Installation of window HVAC units at rear or side of private or residential structures.
10. All minor landscaping which includes but is not limited to maintenance trimming, removal of unhealthy plants, and creation of new landscaped areas.
11. Removal of trees smaller than 12" in diameter at 4 feet above the ground that have been severely damaged or brought down by disease or extreme weather.
12. Radio and television antenna, but not towers or satellite dishes.

Minor Works:

The following works of a minor nature do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness but may require permit by the Town Zoning Officer or the County Planning Office:

1. Removal of artificial siding when the original siding is to be replaced or repaired and painted or stained.
2. Installation of foundation vents on side and rear only, soffit and roof vents, gable end vents, replacement of wood access doors, and installation of foundation access doors that cannot be easily seen from the street.
3. Installation of mechanical equipment such as heating and air conditioning units that are screened from general public view (setback must be met).
4. Fences located behind the front line of a house, made of wood, not taller than 4 feet, and of the picket, post and rail or split rail style. To qualify as a minor work, fences must also be painted or stained white or house trim color
5. Pet enclosures of any non-opaque fencing material that are not attached to the house and behind the rear line of the house, and enclose less than 25% of the lot.
6. Red brick or stone walkways of width between up to 5 feet.
7. Red brick or stone patios in the backyard not exceeding 600 square feet.
8. A flagpole (not exceeding 25'), flagpole base (not to exceed 25 square feet).
9. Replacement of missing, deteriorated, or damaged portions of structures, provided there is little change in appearance and dimension, with new materials that are identical or closely similar in color and composition to those previously existing. Extensive repair or replacement of any structure or portion of a structure requires Commission review if the Zoning Officer determines the change in appearance or dimension to be significant.
10. Landscaping that does not alter the streetscape. This includes but is not limited to the installation of garden furniture, trellises, arbors, and the like behind the front line of the house or as part of an existing hedge, retaining structures that do not exceed 2 feet in height, and removal of trees that are smaller than 12" in diameter 4 feet above the ground. Removal of healthy foundation plantings, hedges, or extensive landscaped areas visible from the street requires Commission approval.
11. Minor alterations to existing private drives such as maintenance grading, resurfacing, re-alignment, and the repair of gravel, concrete or asphalt.
Resurfacing of public streets.
12. Installation of above ground fuel tanks (propane, oil) for residential use when not located in the Number 1 fire district and screened from general public view.

13. Repair/replacement of awnings canopies and shutters.
14. Installation/addition/removal of gutters and downspouts.
15. Installation of house numbers and mailboxes.
17. Pruning of hedges and planting screens.
20. Removal of dead, diseased or dying trees.
22. Alteration/addition/removal of existing patios, if they are not visible from the street.
23. Alteration of flat roof coverings.
24. Installation of satellite dishes, 20” or less in diameter, not attached to the front of the house or not visible from the street or television antennas.
25. Removal of storm windows.
26. Removal of any prohibited element.

ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

Archaeological Resources - archaeological artifacts or features; objects made by people or materials altered by human activity; usually recovered from or found at a historic or prehistoric site.

Architectural Character - the overall appearance of the architecture of a building including its construction, form, and ornamentation.

Architectural Integrity - a measure of the authenticity of a property's architectural identity. For example, a building with high architectural integrity would not have been altered much over the years.

Art Glass - decorative glass, also called leaded glass that is composed of patterned and/or colored glass pieces arranged in a design.

Balustrade - a railing and all the small posts or spindles supporting it.

Band Board - a flat piece of trim running horizontally in an exterior wall to denote a division in the wall plane or a change in level.

Beveled Glass - glass panes whose edges are ground and polished at a slight angle so that patterns are created when panes are set adjacent to one another.

Boxed Gutter - a gutter that is enclosed within a soffit or cornice trim work and thus concealed from view.

Building Element - any portion of a building's structure or decoration

Bulkhead - a low wall or panels below the display windows of a storefront.

Cast Iron - iron formed by casting in foundry molds.

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) - authorization from a local preservation review board (such as the Rutherfordton Historic District Commission) to alter, move, or demolish a historic property or to construct a new building in a historic district.

Certified Local Government - a local government certified by the National Park Service to participate in the national framework of historic preservation programs administered by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Character Defining - architecturally refers to features or details of a building that are significant in defining its architectural or historic character.

Compatible - congruent, harmonious.

Conjectural Features - in a restoration or rehabilitation, refers to building elements or details that are based upon conjecture or speculation versus documentation.

Consolidating - to stabilize or repair a deteriorated building feature by infusing it with another material, such as injecting epoxy resins into rotten wood.

Context - all aspects of the larger environment of a historic building.

Cornice - projecting, ornamental molding along the top of a wall, originally intended to extend the eaves of a roof beyond the outer wall surface.

Cresting - decorative iron tracery or jigsaw work placed on the ridge of a roof.

Extruded Metal - metals formed by pushing heated metal through an opening in a precision-made die, a process that can create an infinite variety of uniform precision products.

Façade - any of the exterior faces, or elevations, of a building.

False Historic Appearance - an appearance that misrepresents the history of a building; such as applying architectural trim work that predates the original building.

Federal Style - an architectural style that flourished in the United States between 1780 and the 1830s based upon classical Roman architecture, typically symmetrical in design.

Ferrous - containing iron.

Flashing - a thin layer of impervious material used in construction to prevent water penetration, especially between a roof and wall, or within a roof valley.

Form - the shape or configuration of a building or part of a building.

Gable - the vertical, triangular part of a building with a double sloping roof, from the cornice or eaves up to the ridge of the roof.

Galvanic Action - a chemical reaction that occurs between two dissimilar metals causing corrosion of the more anodic metal.

Georgian Style - a classical architectural style built by British settlers along the Atlantic coast from 1700-1776, characterized by symmetrical elevations and plans with axial entrances.

Greek Revival - mid-nineteenth century architectural style that was a revival of forms and ornament from ancient Greek architecture, characterized by low-pitched gable or hip roofs, pedimented gable ends, simple architrave bands at the eaves, and entries with Doric style columns and pediments.

High Style - the ornately detailed version of a particular architectural style as opposed to a simpler or more vernacular version.

Hip, or Hipped, Roof - a roof formed by four sloping sides, instead of vertical ends, as well as a ridge line.

Historic Character - the form and detailing of the architectural materials and features that give a building or site its historical significance.

Historical Development - the chronological evolution of a building, site, or district over time.

In Situ - in its original place or position.

Joinery - the way in which two or more materials or pieces are joined.

Lap, or Lapped Siding - horizontal wood boards, laid so as to cover a portion of a similar board underneath and to be overlapped by similar one above.

Massing - the overall configuration or composition of the major volumes of a building exterior.

Muntin - a bar or member supporting and separating panes of glass in a sash or door.

Original Fabric - materials that are original to the building rather than later replacements.

Parapet - a low wall along a roof, directly above an outer wall.

Patina - the surface corrosion, due to exposure to the atmosphere that discolors copper or bronze elements to a green or brown color over time.

Pilaster - a shallow pier or rectangular column projecting only slightly from a wall, also called an engaged column.

Pitch - the slope of a building element, such as a roof, in relation to the horizontal.

Pressed Metal - sheet metal that is pressed into a raised design or pattern.

Proportion - architecturally refers to the ratio of width to height of an object. For example, a vertically proportioned window is taller than it is wide.

Quasi-judicial - refers to a commission, board, or other appointed body that is charged with hearing evidence, determining relevant facts, and then applying the law. Quasi-judicial procedures require sworn testimony.

Repoint - to remove old mortar from courses of masonry and replace it with new mortar.

Rolled Metal—metal bars or sheets that are shaped by passing heated metal through a series of rollers.

Rutherfordton Historic District Commission - a commission of local residents appointed by the Town Board to serve both to advise and to make decisions about proposals for exterior changes to or demolition of existing properties and new construction within the Rutherfordton historic district.

Sash - the framework in which panes of glass are set in a window or door.

Scale - architecturally refers to the size of construction elements or details in comparison to the size of a human being.

Setting - the physical environment encompassing a historic property.

Shed Roof - a roof that slopes in one direction.

Sidelight - a narrow window adjacent to a door or wider window, typically one of a pair of windows flanking an entrance door.

Site Plan - a scaled plan of a property site that locates buildings and other key features and often indicates changes in grade.

Spatial Character - three-dimensional, visual character.

Tern plate -sheet metal coated with terne metal (which is an alloy of iron containing up to 20 percent tin).

Topography -the shape of the surface of the ground.

Topping—refers to the practice of cutting off the top portion of a tree resulting in a disfigured tree crown.

Transom -a glazed panel above a door or a storefront, sometimes hinged to be opened for ventilation.

Vernacular - refers to architecture that is based upon traditional or regional forms and is not designed by an architect or someone with similar training.

Wrought Iron -iron that is rolled or hammered into shape, never melted.

