



HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION OF PITTSBURGH

DESIGN GUIDELINES:
MANCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

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DESIGN GUIDELINES: MANCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

A. Introduction

1. The following "Guidelines for Rehabilitation" shall be used by the HRC of the City of Pittsburgh (as constituted under City Council under Ordinance #20 of 1979), when determining a recommendation for issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness by the City Council of the City of Pittsburgh.

2. These "Guidelines for Rehabilitation" have been developed by the HRC. Furthermore, these guidelines substantially incorporate the "Standards for Rehabilitation" used by the Secretary of the Interior when determining if rehabilitation projects qualify as "certified rehabilitations" pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1976 (Section 36, Code of Federal Regulations, part 67).

3. The "general" guidelines are designed to help individual property owners formulate plans for the rehabilitation, preservation, and continued use of old buildings consistent with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior's "Standard for Rehabilitation." The guidelines pertain to buildings of all occupancy and construction types, sizes, and materials. They apply to permanent and temporary construction on the exterior of historic buildings, as well as new attached or adjacent construction, although not all work implied in the Standards and the Guidelines is relevant to each rehabilitation project.

B. General

1. The Manchester District streets contain examples of a variety of styles and periods of construction. Many structures have undergone one or more major alterations or additions during their existence.

2. There will be no attempt to standardize one period's details over all others. No one style is seen as being more appropriate than others.

3. The character of the area is seen as developing out of the results of its individual structures and not as being an overall appearance standard to be imposed over those individual structures.

4. The desirability of a solution will be reviewed in relation to the integrity and appearance of the individual structure in question and its immediate neighbors.

5. The foregoing, while recognition of variety and change, will not be interpreted as approval of continued unsympathetic alterations of structures or the destruction of replacement of details or other features.

6. Period storefronts may be retained and restored, or the facade may be rebuilt to proportions of period residential style. Use of materials compatible to the surrounding

residential character on all commercial buildings shall be encouraged (brick, stone or wood).

7. Architectural appointments may be restored or duplicated to existing or similar appearance. The repair of existing features with inappropriate materials, such as aluminum jamb casings and bracket tinwork, shall be avoided.

8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to use a structure for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use, which will require minimum alterations to the structure and its environment.

9. Rehabilitation work shall not destroy the distinguishing qualities or character of the structure and its environment. The removal or alteration of any historic material or architectural features should be held to a minimum.

10. 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 the composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of original features, substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural features from other buildings.

11. Distinctive stylistic features or example of skilled craftsmanship which characterize historic structures and often predate the mass production of building materials shall be treated with sensitivity.

12. Changes, which may have taken place in the course of time, are evidence of the history and development of the structure and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

13. All structures shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged. However, contemporary design for additions to existing structures or landscaping shall not be discouraged if such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the neighborhood, structures or its environment.

14. Existing additions may be removed or replaced only with Historic Review Commission approval.

15. There shall be no demolition of any structure without the approval of the Historic Review Commission.

16. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.

C. The Environment

1. The Historic Review Commission recommends:

- a. Retaining distinctive features such as the size, scale, mass, color, and materials of buildings, including roofs, porches, and stairways that give a neighborhood its distinguishing character.
- b. Retaining landscape features such as parks, gardens, street lights, signs, benches, walkways, streets, alleys and building setbacks that have traditionally linked buildings to their environment.
- c. Using new plant materials, fencing, walkways, street lights, signs, and benches that are compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material, and color.

2. The Historic Review Commission will not review positively proposals that:

- a. Introduce new construction into neighborhoods that is incompatible with the character of the district because of size, scale, color, and materials.
- b. Destroy the relationship of buildings and their environment by widening existing streets, changing paving material, or introducing inappropriately located new streets and parking lots incompatible with the character of the neighborhood.
- c. Introduce signs, street lighting, benches, new plant materials, fencing walkways and paving materials which are out of scale or inappropriate to the neighborhood.

D. Building Site: Landscaping

1. Sensitive approaches to the building site should include:

- a. Identifying plants, trees, fencing, walkways, outbuildings and other elements that might be an important part of the property's history and development;
- b. Retaining plants, trees, fencing, walkways, street lights, signs, and benches that reflect the property's history and development;

c. Basing decisions for new site work on actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, newspapers and tax records. If changes are made they should be carefully evaluated in light of the past appearance of the site.

2. Making changes to the appearance of the site by removing old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, outbuildings and other elements before evaluating their importance in the property's history and development, or giving a site an appearance it never had, are approaches which should be avoided.

3. Due to the desirability of rear yard space or landscaping, the delicate balance between neighboring structure and the effect of additional structures on existing light and air, the construction of new additions beyond the existing structure will be discouraged. Necessary fire escape and entrances have special consideration.

4. Fences or yard enclosures shall be brick, stone, metal picket, or wood. Heights shall be as limited by the zoning ordinance. Chain link is discouraged.

5. Sheds or other outbuildings in rear yards may be incorporated into fence structures using compatible materials, but not more than the height of the fence.

6. New construction of garages shall utilize standard neighborhood building materials. No aluminum carports.

E. Masonry

1. Retain original masonry and mortar whenever possible, without the application of any surface treatment.

2. Duplicate old mortar in composition, color texture, joint size, method of application, and joint profile.

3. Repair stucco with a stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

4. Cleaning masonry will be approved only when necessary to halt deterioration and always with the gentlest method possible, such as low-pressure water and soft natural brushes.

5. Deteriorated masonry work shall be repaired to be inconspicuous and compatible with the existing. Brickwork shall not be sandblasted and may be cleaned with hydrofluoric acid in concentration of not more than 5% or equivalent, as recommended by the National Park Service. Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces as a method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Using chemical cleaning products can

also have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry materials, i.e., acid on limestone or marble.

6. Applying waterproof or water-repellent coatings or other treatments, unless required to solve a specific technical problem that has been studied and identified, is frequently unnecessary, expensive, and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry.

7. Repointing with a mortar of high Portland cement content can create a bond that is often stronger than the building material. This can cause deterioration as a result of the differing coefficient of expansion and the differing porosity of the material and the mortar.

8. Existing unpainted masonry surfaces should remain unpainted.

9. In some cases, stonework which has no significant architectural detail may be approved for sandblasting.

10. Masonry surfaces, which have been painted in the past, should, in most cases, be repainted.

11. Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material should attempt to duplicate the old as closely as possible; as should efforts to replace missing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings, and shutters.

12. Applying new materials, which are inappropriate or were unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial cast stone or brick veneer, is discouraged.

13. Removing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railing, shutters, window architraves, and doorway pediments, is prohibited.

F. Wood: Clapboard, Weatherboard, Shingles and Other Wooden Siding

1. Owners are encouraged to repair, restore and, if necessary, replace existing wood siding with similar wood materials. However, replacement using other materials, such as wood paneling, or aluminum or vinyl siding in appropriate scale and finish, is not prohibited. Where those materials are used, appropriate trim details will be retained or duplicated.

2. Asbestos siding will not be approved as a siding material for new work and owners are encouraged to remove existing asbestos siding and restore or replace the underlying wood surface. Asbestos siding is a fire hazard.

3. Removing architectural features such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments is prohibited. These are, in most cases, an essential part of a building's character and appearance, illustrating the continuity of growth and change.

4. Resurfacing frame buildings with new material which was inappropriate or unavailable when the building was originally constructed (such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, plastic or aluminum siding) can contribute to the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insect attack. Therefore, repair or replace where necessary deteriorated material with new material that duplicates in size, shape and texture the old as closely as possible.

G. Architectural Metals: Cast Iron, Steel, Pressed Tin, Aluminum and Zinc

1. Retain original material whenever possible.
2. Clean when necessary with the appropriate method. Cast iron and steel are normally not affected by mechanical cleaning methods, while pressed tin, zinc, and aluminum should be cleaned by the gentlest method possible.
3. Removing architectural features that are an essential part of a building character and appearance, illustrating the continuity of growth and change is prohibited; as would be the exposing of metals which were intended to be protected from the environment. Do not use cleaning methods, which alter the color, texture, and tone of the metal.

H. Roofs and Roofing

1. Preserve the original roof shape. Existing dormers and chimneys shall be retained; repair or reconstruction shall be to presently existing dimensions. New dormers shall be compatible in size, placement and overall construction to their neighbors. Existing roof pitches are to be retained.
2. Retain the original roofing material, whenever possible. Roof materials, where existing from the street facade, shall be standing-seam metal, dark shingles, or slate.
3. Changing the original roof shape or adding features inappropriate to the essential character of the roof, such as oversized dormer windows or picture windows; or applying new roofing material that is inappropriate to the style and period of the building and neighborhood can severely damage the architectural integrity of a structure.
4. All box gutters shall be retained. All facade downspouts shall be copper or aluminum (painted or anodized) or galvanized and painted appropriately.
5. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color and texture.

6. Preserve and replace, where necessary, all architectural features that give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, and weathervanes.

7. When replacing deteriorated roof covering, do so with new materials which do not differ to such an extent from the old in composition, size, shape color and texture that the appearance of the building is altered.

I. Windows and Doors

1. Existing window and door openings shall be retained, including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, and doors, pediments, hoods, architraves, steps, and all hardware. Owners of structures whose window and doors openings have been altered (in the past) to reduce glass area or to provide picture windows or standard door openings shall be encouraged to restore these openings to their original sizes or to approximate those of their neighbors (duplicating the material, design, and hardware of the older window sash and doors if new sash and doors are used).

2. All window and door casing, sashes, and muntins on the front facade shall be painted, stained or vinyl clad wood.

3. Infilling of window and door openings to accommodate smaller or stock window units shall not be permitted on the front facades.

4. Exterior mill finish aluminum storm windows shall not be permitted on the facade. Vinyl clad and others may be permitted if the basic shape of the original window is not altered.

5. Windows on the front facade may be replaced with units historically compatible with neighboring buildings and the existing facade. Window styles on the front facade shall be either one over one or two over two unless stained, beveled or fancy glass exists in the original or is used in the replacement.

6. Window shutters shall be operable and, if installed, must be installed on all floors or the first floor only. Wrought iron "burglar bars" shall be allowed to cover up to the lower half of window openings on the front facade.

7. Introducing new window and door openings into the principal elevations, or enlarging or reducing window or door openings, is generally prohibited. Altering the size of window panes or sash changes and destroys the scale and proportion of the building. Inappropriate new window or door features such as aluminum storm and screen window combinations that require the removal of original windows and doors or the installation of plastic or metal

strip awnings or fake shutters that alter the character and appearance of the building are also prohibited.

J. Entrances, Porches, Porte-Cocheres, and Steps

1. Retain porches and steps, which are appropriate to the building and its development. Porches or additions reflecting later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity, and, wherever possible, should be retained.
2. Sidewalk, stoop, and step materials shall be stone, brick, or poured concrete. Wrought iron railing shall be permitted.
3. Existing transoms and other embellishments characteristic of the structure shall be retained, restored or duplicated.
4. Appropriate exterior lighting above or flanking the front entrance shall be encouraged.
5. Doors on the front facade shall be a historically appropriate wood panel construction.
6. Repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated architectural features of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile, and brick. Stripping porches and steps of original material and architectural features, such as hand rails, balusters, columns, brackets and roof decoration of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile and brick, and enclosing porches and steps, destroy their intended appearance.

K. Color and Exterior Finishes

1. Retain the original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces wherever possible (brick or stone surfaces may have been painted or whitewashed for practical and aesthetic reasons). The indiscriminate removal of paint from masonry surfaces may subject the building to harmful damage and may give it an appearance it never had.
2. Discover the original paint colors and finishes when possible; repainting with colors based on the original when appropriate will result in the distinctive character of the property. It is inappropriate to strip down to the bare surface without some evidence of original exterior surface.
3. All buildings in an area have color. Each element of the facade has a color and thus color is another important aspect in establishing the image of a district. Color selection becomes important in the maintenance of the architectural details such as trim, sills, headers, balconies, metal work, storefronts, signs, etc. In general, if any of these elements like headers and sills are stone or brick, they should be kept natural and cleaned. If not, the following should be remembered in the selection of colors: color will emphasize the details;

intense colors distract from a harmonious design; light colors bring out details while dark obscures them; utilize a gloss or semi-gloss paint which can be easily cleaned; and seek professional advice before painting.

4. The following should be guidelines in the selection of colors:

- a. Keep masonry natural and clean it, including sills and headers (if masonry), and select colors for trim, etc. to harmonize with the masonry. Scrape down the trim and other painted surface to find out what the original colors were, as these will usually relate best to buildings as a whole.
- b. Select colors for trim that contrast with brick, i.e., light vs. dark but in the same range of color.
- c. Keep colors to a minimum number.
- d. Carry facade colors into storefronts and signs. Utilize trim color for lettering of signs.
- e. Signs colors should relate to trim above, being most effective if light letters are on a dark background. Most striking and appropriate for traditional buildings is gold letters on a black or dark colored background.
- f. It is suggested that exterior body and trim colors be selected from historical selections, such as "Pittsburgh Paint Historic Colors" or a similar source. Owners of adjoining houses of substantial similarity should consider identical or coordinated color schemes.
- g. Repainting with colors which cannot be documented through research investigation to be appropriate to the building period, an architectural style or the historic district in general, is not recommended.

L. Storefronts

1. Storefronts communicate to the customer the nature of the merchant's business. The storefront materials, signs, window displays, and lighting establish an image for the merchant and the outside world. The character of the storefront within a district thus becomes an important aspect.
2. The relationship between the traditional facade above and the storefront itself is important. In general, storefront facades that are maintained, restored, or remodeled with this relationship in mind will establish an atmosphere of harmony and the identity of the store will be more clear. Therefore, storefronts should include the following:

- a. The storefront should be kept neat and clean.
- b. It should convey directly what is offered inside.
- c. The existing pilasters should be carried through.
- d. Materials should be compatible with what is above. The use of masonry and wood should be considered over modern siding.
- e. Remove materials that cover traditional elements.
- f. It should relate to the traditional elements of the facade above.
- g. If appropriate, consider the re-establishment of the lintel(s) and cornices above the storefront to define the store.
- h. Maintain lighting levels in windows that create attractive displays.

M. Awnings

1. Awnings are appropriate to commercial buildings, but may only be constructed of a canvas or canvas-like material, should be retractable, should be sloping and angular rather than rounded, and may only be utilized at the ground floor level.
2. Color and placement of awnings shall be reviewed to insure that installation does not obscure existing architectural elements, and therefore, relates to the existing architecture and its environs.
3. Aluminum awnings shall be prohibited.

N. Signs

1. Signs communicate the identity of a business, and also create an image for the district. A district with a clutter of signs, with large and uncoordinated graphics, tends to give an area a poor image.
2. Signs should be easily seen and clearly intelligible, without being garish or loud. Materials and design should relate to the architectural features of the building, the storefront, and/or other buildings, signs and storefronts in the area.
3. Signs should in general use upper and lower case lettering; be illuminated from indirect source (integrated into the building's architecture where possible); and utilize a maximum of

three colors, light letters on a dark background, with a ratio of letter-height to background of 3:4 maximum.

4. Signs should never overpower the building nor obscure architectural features.
5. Sign types may be: framed on a background, painted on the building or mounted on board; individual letters cut out and mounted; and small and unobtrusive plaques (which conform to City of Pittsburgh Building and Zoning Codes).
6. Awning signs are compatible with traditional buildings if awning design and color conforms to the guidelines for color and awning design.
7. Etched or painted signs on glass, covering no more than 30% of the glazing area, are appropriate.
8. Backlit signs are generally not appropriate on traditional buildings.

O. New Construction Criteria

1. Building Height: New buildings should be constructed to a height within ten percent of the average height of adjacent buildings for infill or to a height within twenty percent of the average height of surrounding buildings for large scale developments.
2. Elevation Proportion: The relationship between the height and the width of the front elevation of a new building should be within ten percent of the proportions of adjacent buildings for infill or within twenty percent of the proportions of surrounding buildings for large scale developments. Any new building that has a width greater than 30 feet and a length greater than 60 feet should be freestanding.
3. Proportion of Openings: The relationship of height to width of windows and doors of a building should be within 10 percent of the proportions of the windows and doors of adjacent buildings.
4. Rhythm of Solids to Voids: The rhythm of solids to voids in the front facade of a building should be similar to adjacent buildings.
5. Horizontal Lines: Basement sills lines, and header and sill lines of buildings should follow the horizontal lines of adjacent buildings.
6. Set-Back: Buildings should not be set back from the sidewalk more than ten feet. (A set back of less than 25 feet will require a zoning variance.) If porch structures predominate in

surrounding buildings, it should be considered as a major design element in the front facade of new construction.

7. Building Materials: Buildings materials should be compatible with the materials used in surrounding buildings. Glazed bricks, wood shakes, vinyl, aluminum siding, and stucco are not allowed. Also, refer to Manchester Historic Facade Specification Source Book available through the Manchester Citizens Corporation.

8. Color: The predominant color a building and the color of its trim should be compatible with the colors of surrounding buildings. A list of acceptable colors can be found in the Manchester Historic Facade Specification Source Book available through the Manchester Citizens Corporation.

9. Roofs: The shape, style, and material of the roof of a building should be similar to the roofs of surrounding buildings. The majority of buildings in the Manchester area have gable, mansard, or flat roofs.

10. Landscaping: Trees traditionally planted in the area should be selected: Locust, Oak, Catalpa, Linden, Sycamore. Landscaping should not include columnar trees or Honey Locusts.

11. Architectural Detail: The use of specific architectural elements and details such as porches, dormer windows, cornices, brackets, and lintels, though not mandatory, can strengthen the relation of new construction to existing architecture. However, such detailing cannot suitably relate a structure to its surroundings that is otherwise unrelated in terms of massing, rhythm, and proportions.

P. Safety and Code Requirements

1. Comply with code requirements in such a manner that the essential character of a building is preserved intact.

2. Install adequate fire prevention equipment in a manner that does minimal damage to the appearance or fabric of a property.

3. Provide access for the handicapped without damaging the essential character of a property.

4. Add new stairways and elevators that do not alter existing exit facilities or other important architectural features and spaces of the building.

Q. Mechanical Services: Heating, Air Conditioning, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Protection

1. Place television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners, where they are not visible from the street. Permanent window air conditioning units shall not be permitted on front facades.
2. Install necessary building services in areas and spaces that will require the least possible alteration to the plan, materials, and appearance of the building.
3. Install the vertical runs of ducts, pipes, cable in closets, service rooms, and wall cavities where they will not be a visual intrusion.
4. Avoid cutting holes in important architectural features, such as cornices, decorative ceilings, and paneling.
5. Select mechanical systems that best suit the building.
6. Installing "dropped" acoustical ceilings to hide mechanical systems sometime has the effect of destroying the proportions and character of the building.
7. Rewire early lighting fixtures.
8. Have exterior electrical and telephone cables installed underground.

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