MEMPHIS LANDMARKS COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES
August 1988

Applicable to the following Historic Preservation districts: Annesdale Park, Gayoso-Peabody, Collins Chapel, Cotton Row, and Maxwelton

I. PURPOSE

These Design Guidelines are criteria and standards which the Memphis Landmarks Commission must consider in determining the appropriateness of proposed work within designated historic preservation districts.

Appropriateness of work must be determined in order to accomplish the goals of historic zoning, as outlined in the guidelines and bylaws of the Memphis Landmarks Commission.

(a) To promote the educational, cultural, and economic welfare of the people of Memphis;

(b) To preserve and protect the historical and architectural value of buildings, other structures, or historically significant areas;

(c) To ensure the compatibility within the Historic District by regulating exterior design, arrangement, texture, and materials;

(d) To create an aesthetic appearance which complements the historic buildings or other structures;

(e) To stabilize and improve property values;

(f) To foster civic beauty and community pride;

(g) To strengthen the local economy;

(h) To establish criteria and procedures to regulate the construction, repair, rehabilitation, relocation, or other alteration of structures within any Historic District or zone, and;

(i) To promote the use of Historic Districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Memphis.

II. NEW CONSTRUCTION

Definition: The construction of any free-standing structure on any lot, including new construction which utilizes existing party walls or major additions to existing buildings.

General Principles

These guidelines will apply only to the exteriors of buildings, to areas of lots visible from public rights of way, and to principal elevations.

The principal facades- front and street-related elevations- of proposals for new buildings will be more carefully reviewed than other facades.

New buildings should not imitate past architectural styles; they should reflect the era of their own construction, since it is usually impractical to accurately imitate architecture of the past and it creates pseudo-old buildings.

Since construction in a historic district has usually taken place continuously from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a variety of building types and styles result which demonstrate the changes in building tastes and technology over the years. New buildings should continue this tradition while complementing and being compatible with other buildings in the area.

Because new buildings usually relate to an established pattern and rhythm of existing buildings, both on the same and opposite sides of a street, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted.

New construction should be consistent with existing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, setback and rhythm of existing buildings, both on the same and opposite sides of a street, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted.

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Height

New buildings should be constructed to the same number of stories and to a height which is compatible with the height of adjacent buildings.

Scale

The size of a new building, its mass in relation to open spaces, and its windows, doors, openings, and porches should be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.

Setback and Rhythm of Spacing

The setback from front and side yard property lines established by adjacent buildings should be maintained. When a definite rhythm along a street is established by uniform lot and building width, infill new buildings should maintain the rhythm.

Relationship of Materials, Texture, Details, and Material Color

The relationship and use of materials, texture, details and material color of a new building's principal facades should be visually compatible with and similar to those of adjacent buildings or should not contrast conspicuously.

Roof Shape

The roofs of new buildings should be visually compatible, by not contrasting greatly with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.

Orientation

The site orientation of new buildings should be consistent with that of adjacent buildings and should be visually compatible.

Proportion and Rhythm of Openings

The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids to voids in the new buildings should be visually compatible with the surrounding structures.

Additions to Existing Buildings

New additions to existing buildings should be kept to a minimum and should be visually compatible in scale, materials, and texture; additions should not be visually jarring or contrasting.

Additions should not be made to the principal facades of existing buildings. Additions may be located to the rear of existing buildings in ways which do not disturb the principal facades.

The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front facade porch is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Outbuildings

Garages and storage buildings should reflect the character of the existing house and surrounding buildings and should be compatible in terms of height, scale, roof shape, materials, texture and details.

The location and design of outbuildings should not be visually disruptive to the character of the surrounding buildings.

Appurtenances

Appurtenances related to new buildings, including driveways, sidewalks, lighting, fences and walls, should be visually compatible with the environment of the existing buildings and sites to which they relate.

III. DEMOLITION

Definition: The tearing down of a building.

General Principles

Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Demolition is inappropriate:

- if a building is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest;

- if a building is of such old or unusual or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty and expense; or

- if its proposed replacement would make a less positive visual contribution to the district, would disrupt the character of the district, or would be visually incompatible.

Demolition is appropriate:

- if a building has lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance and its removal will not result in a more negative, less appropriate visual effect on the district;

- if a building does not contribute to the historical or architectural character and importance of the district and its removal will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district; or

- it is demonstrated that demolition is economically necessary and justified as determined by the Memphis Landmarks Commission in accordance with its bylaws and guidelines and with the laws of the City of Memphis and State of Tennessee, including, but not limited to the following guidelines of the Memphis Landmarks Commission:

1. Owner's Knowledge of Restrictions at the time of purchasing the property. (A relatively new owner is assumed to have investigated these at the time of purchase);

2. Current Economic Return ("The reviewing body should therefore require an applicant... to produce information regarding the price originally paid for the property, potential rental or lease income, and the net profit derived from the landmark, if any, over the last several years");

3. Owner's Attempt to Rent or Sell the Property (Reviewing commission may require proof of these efforts), and,

4. Feasibility of Profitable Alternative Uses (Owner should be required to make a case that there are no economically viable alternatives to demolition. Outside interested parties may also be given an opportunity to present economically viable alternatives.)

A completed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness must be submitted to the Memphis Landmarks Commission at least two weeks prior to its regularly scheduled meeting. A completed application will be heard at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Memphis Landmarks Commission. The Memphis Landmarks Commission will, within thirty (30) days following the hearing of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with or without attached conditions or deny the certificate, and will state the grounds for denial in writing; and every effort should be made to ensure that all relevant issues and information are identified and presented in full to the Commission for consideration and that all interested parties are given notice of this presentation and are allowed to present their comments during the public hearing on the Certificate of Appropriateness.

IV. RELOCATION

Definition: Moving a building into the district or from one site to another within the district.

General Principles

Moving an existing building which still retains architecutral and historical integrity and which contributes to the architectural and historical character of the district should be avoided.

Moving a building which does not contribute to the historical and architectural integrity of the district or which has lost architectural integrity due to deterioration and neglect is appropriate if its removal or the proposal for its replacement will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district.

Guidelines for Relocation

Relocated buildings must be carefully rebuilt to retain and maintain original architectural details and materials.

A building may be moved into the district if it maintains a sense of architectural unity in terms of style, height, scale, massing, materials, texture, and setback with existing buildings along the street.

A building may be moved from one site to another in the district if:

- the integrity of location and setting of the building in its original location has been lost or is seriously threatened;
- the new location will be similar in setting and siting;
- the building will be compatible with the buildings adjacent to the new location in style, height, scale, materials, and setback; and
- the relocation of the building will not result in a negative visual impact on the site and surrounding buildings from which it will be removed.

V. ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY

Definition: A change in building material; the addition or elimination of any architectural feature of a structure; a repair that reconstructs any part of an existing building; an addition that extends or increases floor area or height of any building or construction of an appurtenance.

General Principles

These guidelines will apply only to the exteriors of buildings, to areas of lots visible from public rights of way and to principal elevations.

Proposals for exterior work to be done on principal elevations will be more carefully reviewed than that to be done on other facades.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site, and its environment should not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

All buildings, structures, and sites must be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance will be discouraged.

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 must be recognized and respected.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site should be treated with sensitivity.

Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should visually match as closely as possible the material being replaced in design, color, texture, and, if possible, composition. Replacement of missing architectural features is encouraged. 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.

Surface cleaning of structures should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage historic building materials must not be undertaken.

Every reasonable effort must be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties will not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy or diminish significant historical, architectural or cultural material or features; and when such design is compatible with the size, scale, material and character of the existing building and property, neighborhood, or environment.

Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should 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.

A. Building Features

The features of a building include such things as porches, doors, windows, masonry, roofing, siding, paint colors, and other exterior design elements. These individual elements often make clear statements about the age and history of a building. Removing or changing them, or adding additional features, can drastically alter the character of a significant structure.

1. Entrances, Porches, and Steps

Recommended	Not Recommended
Retaining porches and steps that are appropriate to the building and its development. Porches or later additions reflecting later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity and, whenever possible, should be retained.	Removing or altering porches and steps that are appropriate to the buildings development and style.
Repairing or replacing 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, terra cotta, tile, and brick.
Enclosing side porches, if the visual openness and character of the original porch is maintained.	Enclosing front porches and steps unless done in a manner that preserves their intended appearance.

2. Windows and Doors

Recommended

If possible, retaining and repairing existing window and door openings including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, doors, pediments, hoods, steps, transoms, side lights, and all hardware.

Visually duplicating the design, hardware, and if possible the material of the older window sash and doors if new sash and doors are used.

Installing visually unobtrusive storm windows and doors, where needed, that do not damage existing frames and that can be removed in the future.

Using original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired and reused in place.

Not Recommended

Introducing new window and door openings into elevations, or enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock door sizes.

Altering the sizes of window panes or sash. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.

Installing inappropriate new window or door features such as aluminum storm and screen window insulating glass combinations that require the removal of the original windows and doors.

Installing plastic, canvas, or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that detract from the character and appearance of the building.

Discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired and reused in place.

3. Architectural Features

Recommended	Not Recommended
Retaining original material whenever possible.	Removing architectural features that are an essential part of a building's character and appearance, illustrating the continuity of growth and change.
Repairing or replacing where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that visually duplicates the old as closely as possible.	Applying new material or features which are inappropriate.
	Removing architectural features such as cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, window architraves, and doorway pediments.

4. Architectural Metal

Recommended	Not Recommended
For architectural metals, such as cast iron, steel, pressed tin, aluminum, and zinc, cleaning, when necessary, should be with the appropriate method. Metals should be cleaned by methods that do not abrade the surface.	Exposing 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.

5. Exterior Finishes

Upon request, the Memphis Landmarks Commission will advise on the appropriate historic paint color combinations.

6. Wood Siding

Recommended	Not Recommended
Retaining and preserving significant architectural features, whenever possible.	Removing significant architectural features such as siding, cornices,

6. Wood Siding (Cont.)

Recommended	Not Recommended
Repairing or replacing, where necessary deteriorated material that visually duplicates in size, shape and texture the old as closely as possible.	brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments. These are, in most cases, an essential part of a building's character and appearance that illustrate the continuity of growth and change.
Removing aluminum, or asphalt siding that was added some time since the original construction.	Resurfacing frame buildings with new material that is inappropriate such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asphalt or cedar shingles, and plastic or aluminum siding. Such material can also contribute to the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insects.

7. Masonry

a. Repair and Replacement

Recommended	Not Recommended
Masonry, such as brick, stone, terra cotta, concrete, stucco, mortar, the original masonry, mortar, and stucco, should be retained whenever possible.	Resurfacing with new material that is inappropriate such as veneer, or asphalt shingles, and plastic or aluminum siding. (Such material can also contribute to the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insects.)
Repairing stucco with a stucco mixture that duplicates the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.	

b. Cleaning

Recommended	Not Recommended
Cleaning masonry to halt deterioration or to remove graffiti and stains and always with the gentlest possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes, or appropriate chemical cleaners.	Sandblasting, including dry and wet grit and other abrasives, brick or stone surfaces. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Using chemical cleaning products that would have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry materials, e.g., acid on limestone or marble.

c. Painting and Water Proof Coatings

Recommended	Not Recommended
Retaining the original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces, including early signage, wherever possible (brick surfaces may have been originally painted or whitewashed for practical or aesthetic reasons). If painting of brick becomes necessary, latex paint in original, natural colors should be used.	Removing paint from masonry surfaces indiscriminately. This may subject the building to damage and change its appearance. Applying waterproof or water repellent coatings or surface consolidation treatments unless required to solve a specific technical problem that has been identified and studied. Painting of brick unless it is mismatched or so deteriorated that it cannot withstand weather. Painting of stone is not recommended. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive, and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry.

d. Mortar Joints

Recommended	Not Recommended
Repointing only those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand in the mortar joint.	Repointing mortar joints that do not need re-pointing. Using electric saws and hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick.
Visually, duplicating old mortar in composition, color, and texture.	Repointing with mortar of high Portland cement content. This can often create a bond that is stronger than the building material and can cause deterioration as a result of expansion and the differing porosity of of the material and the mortar.
Duplicating old mortar in joint size, method of application and joint profile.	Repointing with mortar joints of a differing size or joint profile, texture or color.

8. TV Antennae - Air Conditioners

Recommended	Not Recommended
Placing television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners, in an inconspicuous location or in a manner which shields the equipment from view from public rights of way.	Placing television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners where they can be seen from the public right of way.

9. Roofs and Roofing

Recommended	Not Recommended
Preserving the original roof shape.	Changing the essential character of the roof by adding inappropriate features such as dormer windows, vents, or sky-lights which would be
Retaining the original roofing material, whenever possible.	

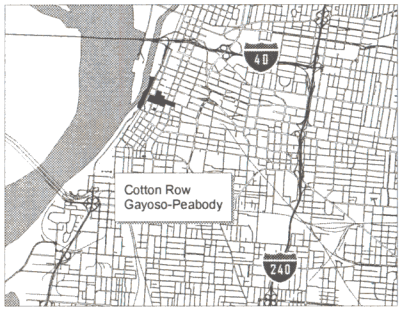
9. Roofs and Roofing

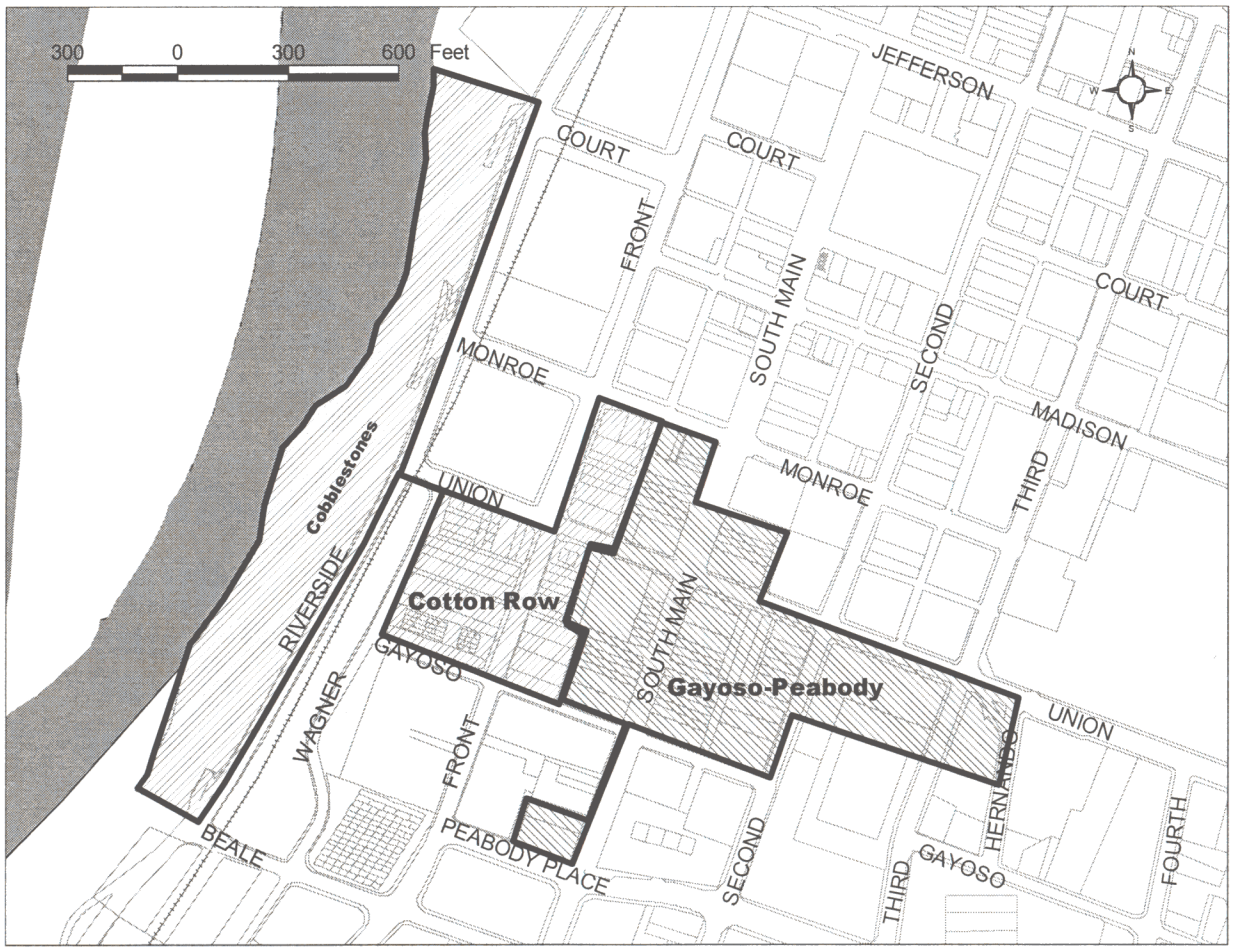
Recommended	Not Recommended
Providing adequate roof drainage and ensuring that roofing materials provide a weather tight covering for the structure.	visible from public rights of way.
Replacing deteriorated roof coverings with new material that visually matches the old in size, composition, shape, color and texture.	Replacing deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that visually differ from the old in composition, size, shape, color, and texture to such an extent that the appearance of the building is altered.
Preserving or replacing where necessary all architectural features that give the roof its essential character such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, and weather vanes.	Stripping the roof of architectural features important to its character.
Removing dormer windows, visible from public rights of way that were not part of the original roof line.	Applying new roofing material that is inappropriate to the style and period of the building and neighborhood.

10. Signs and Plaques

Recommended	Not Recommended
Affixing historic plaques to each structure contributing to the historic character of a district.	Affixing historic plaques to non-conforming architecture located within a historic district.
Removing historic plaques from structures that have been altered in such a way as to destroy the structure's historic character. Using historically appropriate scale, materials, lettering, color, placement, attachment and design for all signage.	Using signage that hides or detracts from significant architectural details.
	Using billboards on roofs of historic structures.
	Using large plastic backlit signs or large projecting signs.

COTTON ROW AND GAYOSO - PEABODY HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICTS





To ensure preservation of the Cotton Row and Gayoso - Peabody Historic Preservation Districts, all exterior new construction, building alterations, demolition, relocation, and site improvements visible from the street must be reviewed and approved by the Memphis Landmarks Commission (MLC).

The MLC issues Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) for work that meets the design guidelines adopted for the district. The Commission meets once a month to review and approve projects. Call 576-7191 for COA application information. See reverse side for work that requires MLC approval in the historic preservation district.

MEMPHIS LANDMARKS COMMISSION

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Work Reviewed by the Memphis Landmarks Commission
In Historic Preservation Districts*

New Construction:
new primary structure
new accessory structures
garages
carports
outbuildings
additions

Demolition:
buildings
features
additions
outbuildings
porches

Relocation of Structures:
into a district
out of a district
within a district
within a property or site

Alterations: *(Any exterior alteration needs review and approval even if a building permit is not required. The list below are examples and is not exhaustive.)*

Doors, Windows, Entrances

AC window units
aluminum or metal doors
aluminum windows
awnings
fire exit stairs
security bars
security doors
stairways (exterior)
storm doors or windows
storefront alterations

Masonry and Siding

aluminum or vinyl siding
cleaning masonry
painting unpainted brick or stone
repointing mortar joints
sandblasting masonry, cast iron, or wood surfaces
siding replacement
waterblasting brick

Site Improvements

decks
driveways
driveway gates
fences and walls
light posts
parking lots/parking pads
permanent planters
satellite dish placement
sidewalks and walkways
signs and billboards
swimming pools

Roofs, Cornices and Dormers

brackets or eave alterations
cornice alterations
dormer alterations
eave alterations
roof – change in material or shape
skylights

Porches

column replacement
enclosure of porches
floor replacement
light fixture replacement
screening
railings or decorative trim alterations

* Excludes buildings or improvements that cannot be seen from a public street. Contact our office at 576-7191 to have this verified and exempted from review as applicable.