

CITY OF FROSTBURG REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES GUIDELINES

Masonry

These guidelines are based on Standards for Rehabilitation written by the National Park Service. The Historic District Commission has adapted the following information with the hope of making the process of review and approval of work on properties located in the Historic District as clear and simple as possible.

Utilization of "Not Recommended" materials and/or techniques will increase the difficulty of approval, may increase the amount of time it takes to get approval of an application, and may ultimately result in the denial of the landowner's application.

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

Recommended

- Painted masonry surfaces which are to be repainted should be carefully scraped, repainted in necessary areas, primed, and repainted.
- New brick used in an old wall should match old brick in color, size, and texture.
- New bricks inserted into an old wall should be pointed with soft lime mortar.
- New masonry work should match old bonding pattern.
- Duplicating old mortar in composition, color, and texture.
- Repainting 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.

Not Recommended

- Repainting a masonry building repeatedly without cleaning the subsurface.
- Repointing with mortar of high Portland cement content which 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.
- Repainting with mortar joints a differing size or joint profile, texture, or color or content.

Recommended

- Cleaning masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration, always use the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes.
- Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible.
- Replacing missing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railing and shutters.
- Retaining the original or early color and texture of masonry features, wherever possible. Brick or stone surfaces may have been painted or whitewashed for practical and aesthetic reasons.

Not Recommended

- Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces; this method of cleansing erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration.
- Using chemical cleaning products which could have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry materials, i.e., acid on limestone or marble.
- Applying new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial brick siding, artificial cast stone or brick veneer, aluminum or vinyl siding.
- Removing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, window trim and doorway pediments.
- Applying waterproof or repellent coatings to masonry. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry.

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Siding, Trim

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Utilization of “Not Recommended” materials and/or techniques will increase the difficulty of approval, may increase the amount of time it takes to get approval of an application, and may ultimately result in the denial of the landowner’s application.

Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is needed, the new material should match the material being replaced in color, composition, texture, design, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing 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 sources.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a structure or site should not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive features should be avoided.

A. Siding

Recommended

- Repairing or replacing wood siding when necessary with siding that duplicates the old in size, shape and texture as closely as possible.
- Retaining and preserving architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, window trim, and doorway pediments.

Not Recommended

- Resurfacing frame buildings with new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as, artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, and vinyl or aluminum siding.
- Removing distinctive architectural features or covering trim.

B. Trim

Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is needed, the new material should match the material being replaced in color, composition, texture, design, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing 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 sources.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building shall be treated with sensitivity.

Recommended

- Retaining original decorative details on porches, cornices, windows, and doors by replacing and repairing existing material.
- Replace missing trim with exact duplication if possible or try to match mass and rhythm of the original.

Not Recommended

- Avoid decorating a building with inappropriate "gingerbread" trim which never existed on the building.
- Avoid "colonializing" any building by adding pedimented doorways, pent roofs, columns, shutters, etc. which never existed on the building and detract from its true architectural style.
- Removing paint and finishes down to the bare surface; strong paint strippers whether chemical or mechanical can permanently damage the surface.

For more information on this topic read:

Preservation Briefs: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings by John H. Myers

Preservation Briefs: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork by Kay D. Weeks

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Roofs, Windows, Doors, Entrances

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

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

A. Roofs

Recommended

- Retaining the original roofing material whenever possible and replacing deteriorated roofing with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, and texture.
- When replacing slate on a slate roof, follow the pattern used as closely as possible.
- Adding dormers, skylights, vents, etc. only when necessary in an appropriate style to the character of the building.
- Preserving the original shape of the roof.

Not Recommended

- Replacing roof material with materials that significantly alter the appearance of the structure.
- Stripping the roof of important architectural features, such as cresting or finials.
- Substantially changing the character of the building by adding dormer windows, skylights, or vents which can detract from the architecture of the building.

B. Windows and Doors

Recommended

- Retaining and repairing original window and door openings including window sash, glass lintels, sills, trim, doors, pediments, steps, and hardware
- Duplicating the material design and the hardware of the older window sash and doors if new sash and doors are used.
- Installing storm windows and doors with painted finish to match surrounding trim. Installing interior storm windows.
- When awnings are needed, install weather proofed canvas type or vinyl.
- Replacing and repairing original shutters which have been removed or damaged.
- Shutters should be able to close and cover window and have enough room to lie flat against building when opened.
- Repairing rather than replacing doors.
- When necessary, replacing existing doors with wood four, six, or eight panel doors or single glass panel doors.

Not Recommended

- Altering the size of the window or door openings.
- Adding new window or door openings to the facade of the building.
- Adding new trim to door or windows where it never existed.
- Installing with mullions not in line.
- Changing the size of the window panes or sash.
- Installing metal or plastic strip awnings.
- Installing shutters around windows and doors where they never existed.
- Installing aluminum or ranch type shutters.
- Painting the surface of the window panes.

C. Entrances, Porches and Steps

Recommended

- Retaining porches or additions reflecting later architectural styles important to the integrity of the building.
- Repairing and replacing when necessary original decorative features.

Not Recommended

- Removing or altering porches or steps appropriate to the building's development and style.
- Removing original material, such as handrails, balusters, columns, and brackets.

For more information on this topic read: *Preservation Briefs: Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings* by Baird M. Smith, *AIA Preservation Briefs: Roofing for Historic Buildings* by Sarah M. Sweetser *Preservation Briefs: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows* by John H. Myers

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Landscaping, Walls & Fences

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Utilization of "Not Recommended" materials and/or techniques will increase the difficulty of approval, may increase the amount of time it takes to get approval of an application, and may ultimately result in the denial of the landowner's application.

Landscaping should be undertaken to beautify a building, highlight special architectural features, for screening unattractive areas from public view, and for creating privacy.

It should be accomplished in such a way that the overall effect harmonizes with the established look of the neighborhood and should complement the architectural style of the building.

A. Landscaping

Recommended

- Planters should be appropriate to the setting of the building.
- Window boxes should be in proportion to the window elements.
- Retaining plants, trees, fencing, walkways, streetlights, signs and benches that reflect the property history and development.
- If changes in site are made they should be carefully evaluated in light of the past appearance.

Not Recommended

- Placing or leaving plant materials or trees in close proximity to a building which may cause deterioration of the building fabric.
- Window boxes should not cover or deface architectural elements.
- Destroying the relationship of buildings and their environment by changes that are incompatible with the character of the neighborhood or site.

B. Walls and Fences

Recommended

- Retaining existing walls or fences which reflect the property's history and development.
- Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material that duplicates in size, shape and texture the old as closely as possible.
- Cast iron, picket, straight board, brick walls, and board and batten fences in materials and design with adjacent structures.
- Painting the exterior surface on all wooden fences and gates.

Not Recommended

- Using new construction material that is not harmonious with existing fence or wall material.
- Removing original fencing or walls
- Rustic fences split rail or post and rail design
- Chain links, snow fences, wire mesh fences and concrete block are modern materials not compatible with the character.
- Destroying the relationship of buildings and their environment by changes that are incompatible with the character of the neighborhood or site.

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New Construction

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Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use of a property which requires minimal alteration of the structure or site.

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties will 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 or neighborhood.

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.

Recommended

- Using contemporary designs that blend with the architectural design of the area.
- New construction material should blend with existing buildings in type of material, texture and colors used.
- Protecting architectural details and features that contribute to the character of the building.
- New buildings should be constructed within 10% of the average height of surrounding structures.
- Placing television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners, in an inconspicuous location.

Recommended

- The width, scale, spacing, and rhythm of new construction should be compatible with adjacent buildings in the area or district.
- Rooflines should be compatible with those of surrounding structures.

Not Recommended

- Introducing new construction that is not compatible with the character of the district or site.
- Designing new work which is incompatible with the earlier building and the site in materials, size, color, scale or texture.
- Imitating an earlier style or period of architecture in new additions, except in rare cases where a contemporary design would detract from the architectural unity of an ensemble or group. Especially avoid imitating an earlier style of architecture in new additions that have a completely contemporary function such as a drive-in bank or garage.
- Adding new height to the building that changes the scale and character of the building. Additions in height should not be visible when viewing the principal facades.

Not Recommended

- Placing television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners, where they can be seen from the street.
- Adding new floors or removing existing floors that destroy important architectural details, features and spaces of the building.

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Commercial Buildings

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A. Store Fronts

Recommended

- Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as, display windows, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, and entablatures.
- Protecting and maintaining masonry, wood, and architectural metals which comprise storefronts through appropriate treatments, such as cleaning, rust removal, and reapplication of protective coating systems.

Not Recommended

- Removing or radically changing storefronts and their features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Changing the storefront's main entrance.
- Stripping storefronts of historical material.
- Changing the storefront so that it appears residential rather than commercial in character.
- Bringing recessed entryways flush to the sidewalk, in order to modernize the look of the building. This will destroy the historic integrity of the building.
- Modifying the size of the original window openings.
- Filling transoms in with wood or brick.
- Adding new height to the building that changes the scale and character of the building. Additions in height should not be visible when viewing the principal facades.

C. Signage

Recommended

- Preserving historic signage which greatly contributes to the character of a commercial historic district. Typical historic signage includes: Painted façades and fascia signs; material inlaid into the building's façade, such as brick or enamel; Hanging signs and older neon signs; and goldleaf or gilded lettering in storefront windows.
- New signage on historic buildings can be appropriate if the signage compliments the historical integrity of the original building.
- Locating projecting signs along the first floor level of the façade. Positions near the building entrance are encouraged.

Not Recommended

- Obscuring original signs or applying new signs that disrupt the historic character of the building.
- Applying signage to the historic building in a manner that would cause physical damage or a loss of historic integrity.
- Back lighting of signs.

D. Cornices

Recommended

- Retaining and preserving the original cornice features and materials that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Incorporating original materials in any repairs whenever possible.
- Referring to historic photographs of the building in order to maintain the original design of the cornice or parapet.

Not Recommended

- Removing or radically changing a cornice and its features which are important in defining the historic character of the building.
- Covering any cornice or parapet with modern signage or a false façade.
- Removing any original cornice or parapet, as this will destroy the historic integrity of the building.
- Replacing a damaged cornice or parapet with inappropriate materials that distract from the building's historic character.