

Historic Main Street Wadsworth Design Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Downtown Wadsworth, Inc., a community advocacy group dedicating to both revitalizing Wadsworth's historic and traditional downtown and preserving and reusing its historical buildings of architectural significance, became a designated Main Street USA[®] community, through the Ohio Main Street program, which is administered by Heritage Ohio, the State's official historic preservation and Main Street organization.

The Main Street program was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and based in historic preservation as a means to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of American communities' built environment; but has since transformed into a powerful economic development tool as well.

The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of a community's downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun, attractive and viable place to work, live and visit are just as critical to a downtown's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings and improving streetscapes, parking options and signage.

By building on a traditional downtown's inherent assets, such as rich architecture, personal service, traditional values, and most of all, a sense of place, the Main Street program has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern.

Fostering economic development and sustainability through the preservation of historic buildings; revitalizing downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts; and promoting cultural tourism are key goals of the Main Street program and all designated Main Street communities.

In recognition of its status as a Main Street community and to reflect its commitment to the Main Street approach, Downtown Wadsworth, Inc. changed its name to Main Street Wadsworth, Inc.

Since the Main Street program is rooted in historic preservation, all Main Street communities must show that the measures to rehabilitate or alter existing structures, or the construction of additions to existing structures have been undertaken in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. It is the purpose of these Design Guidelines to show how the City of Wadsworth and Main Street Wadsworth, Inc. interpret and apply the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation at the local level.

CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The purpose of the Historic Main Street Wadsworth Guidelines is to assist property owners, tenants, architects, designers, contractors, city administration and review boards and Commission throughout the design review process as it relates to proposed rehabilitation, alterations or additions to landmarks (defined as properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places) and buildings within the historic central business district. The guidelines are also designed to ensure new buildings and structures erected in the historic central business district and visually and functionally compatible with the existing built environment.

Purpose of Design Guidelines

Design guidelines create a basis for fair decisions and consistency in design review, provide for protection of historic resources, create incentives for investment in downtown, and support the overall objectives of the Main Street program. These objectives are:

- To safeguard the heritage of the Wadsworth by preserving and revitalizing sites and structures which reflect elements of the Wadsworth's cultural, social, economic, political, archeological, or architectural history.
- To stabilize and improve property values.
- To enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity and interest of Wadsworth.
- To foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past.
- To promote the use and preservation of historic and archeological sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of Wadsworth.
- To take necessary measures to safeguard the property rights of the owners whose properties are declared to be "landmarks".
- To allow for new construction that is designed compatibly with the existing building environment.

The adoption of Design Guidelines and a design review process benefit the community in several ways:

1. Reinforces and Protects Community Identity. The evolution and compilation of historic buildings, sites and settings within the City of Wadsworth has created a unique community identity, pedestrian environment and sense of place that cannot be replicated. Design review protects these important components and community identity.
2. Enhances and Protects Property Values. Design guidelines and review protects and enhances private and public investments by providing predictability and stability as the value of real estate is not confined to property boundaries but is interrelated with the other buildings and public spaces surrounding it. Design guidelines and review are particularly important in the downtown area, where maintaining an image of vitality is critical.
3. Demonstrates Public Commitment. Design guidelines and review demonstrates public commitment to maintaining designated landmarks throughout the City and preserving the traditional character of downtown through preservation and adaptive reuse, thus assuring owners of such properties that their investments in these properties will be maintained.

4. Promotes Economic Development. Utilization of design guidelines allow for economic development strategies that both preserve and promote the unique historic community identity and quality of life in downtown Wadsworth and beyond. Properties in revitalized, thriving downtown districts typically create higher tax yields than similar properties located outside of downtown.
5. Promotes Energy Conservation. Design guidelines and review encourage the wise use of resources. Preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings, promote conservation of the natural environment and open space by “recycling” the existing built environment. Reuse of historic buildings and materials conserves the energy required to extract, process and transport discarded building materials, thereby reducing landfill refuse.

Approaches to Preservation Through Design Guidelines and Design Review

The Secretary of the Interior has outlined four basic approaches to the practice of historic preservation. Determining the appropriate treatment requires consideration of the (local) historical significance of a particular site or building; the existing physical condition of a building; its proposed use; and the intended interpretation of the structure or site.

1. Preservation. The primary emphasis is on retention of all historic fabric through maintenance, stabilization, and conservation. The focus is on maintenance and repair of existing historic materials, and retention of a property’s form as it has evolved over time.
2. Rehabilitation. Involves the repair of an existing building in order to bring it to a good and useable condition with minimal change to the building fabric. Returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration while preserving historically significant portions or features of the building is the goal of rehabilitation.
3. Restoration. This is the process of depicting or returning a property to the way it looked at a particular point in time; usually the period of its greatest historical significance. Alterations, additions and renovations evoking other periods of time are typically removed.
4. Reconstruction. The reproduction or duplication of a vanished building to its original materials, form and appearance as it looked at a particular moment in the past. Reconstruction projects involve historic research to provide evidence to support how the structure actually appeared and then rebuilding to that form using traditional or modern construction techniques.

Applicability

The Historic Main Street Design Review District shall consist of:

1. All designated historic landmarks listed with the National Trust for Historic Preservation located anywhere within the City of Wadsworth, and

2. All commercial properties located within the geographic boundaries of Historic Main Street Design Review District, as described on the map in Appendix C.

The City of Wadsworth's Architectural Design Committee (ADC), shall be designated and serve as the Historic Main Street Design Review Board. In the application of these Historic Design Guidelines, the responsibilities of the ADC shall include:

- Review applications and issue a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for exterior changes, alterations or additions to designated landmarks located anywhere in the City of Wadsworth.
- Review applications and issue a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for exterior changes, including alterations and additions to landmarks and other buildings and structures within the boundaries of the Historic Main Street Design Review District that demonstrate compliance with these Design Guidelines and the provisions of §§154.071 and 154.082.
- Review applications and issue a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for new structures and other infill development within the boundaries of the Historic Main Street Design Review District.
- Review applications and issue a "Certificates of Appropriateness" for new signage and changes to existing signage at properties within the boundaries of the Historic Main Street Design Review District.
- Provide recommendations to City Council for the designation of historic landmarks and other site of local historical significance.

CHAPTER 2 – DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

When is Design Review Required?

Design Review shall be required for any of the following activities to ensure that the intent of the Design Guidelines is being met:

- Any alteration, modification or renovation to an existing landmark located anywhere in the City of Wadsworth or to any commercial building or structure located in the Design Review District, including any Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements. In an effort to create an accessible downtown, Main Street Wadsworth strives to follow the ADA guidelines provided on pages 24-27 of this document.
- The construction of any new commercial building or structure or an addition to any existing commercial building or structure located in the Design Review District.
- The installation of any new or replacement or modification of any sign, light fixture or other architectural elements of any commercial building or structure located in the Design Review District.

No construction may commence until the ADC has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness, which provides evidence that a project has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the intent of the Design Guidelines.

Exemptions from Design Review

The following activities are hereby exempted from the Design Review Process:

- Alterations, repairs, additions and maintenance to one, two and three-family residential dwellings and their accessory structures.
- Minor repairs and maintenance to commercial buildings and structures that do not alter the physical appearance of a commercial building or structure.

Submission Requirements for Design Review

Applications for Design Review approval and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness will follow a very similar process to what commercial projects must now follow as per the City's zoning code. While more information regarding the ADC review process, meeting dates, submission dates, etc., can be found on the Building and Planning Department's pages of the City's website, the following section summarizes the submission requirements and effect of the ADC's review. A complete application shall consist of:

- (a) One (1) completed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, and

- (b) Four (4) copies of all plans, profiles, elevations, specifications, list of materials used and color palettes for any modification or addition, including signage and other fixtures that impact the exterior of the building or structure.
- Applications shall be submitted to the City of Wadsworth Building & Planning Department. A properly completed application will be placed on the ADC's meeting agenda. Currently, the ADC meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month and completed applications and other submission materials must be received seventeen (17) days prior to the meeting date. A meeting date & deadline submission schedule is prepared annually by the City's Building & Planning Department and a copy can be obtained from them directly or downloaded from the City's website.
- In its deliberation and review of applications submitted for Historic Design Review, the ADC shall be guided by the authority granted to it under §§154.071 and 154.482 and by the recommendation of these Design Guidelines.
- Upon review of an application, the ADC may approve; approved with modification or conditions; or disapprove the application:
 - (a) The Board's issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness is evidence that the proposed project complies with these Design Guidelines and allows the applicant to obtain other building and zoning permit approvals that may be required in order to begin the project.
 - (b) The Board's denial or rejection of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be *prima facie* evidence that the proposed project does not comply with these Design Guidelines.
- All actions of the Design Review Board may be appealed by the applicant to the City of Wadsworth Planning Commission as per §154.482(E)(2) of the City of Wadsworth Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission shall have the authority to affirm, modify or reject the Board's decision. An applicant may appeal the decision of the Planning Commission to the City of Wadsworth's Board of Zoning Appeals in the manner proscribed by §§154.560 through 154.570 of the City of Wadsworth Zoning Ordinance.
- Failure to comply with the provisions of these Design Guidelines shall be considered a violation of §154.584 of the City's Zoning Ordinance and subject to enforcement and penalties as described in §§154.585 and 154.999.

CHAPTER 3 - MAIN STREET WADSWORTH DESIGN GUIDELINES

It is the intent of these Design Regulations to preserve the historic integrity, significance and character of landmarks, buildings and structures by ensuring that:

- (1) The original historic shape, form, height, massing, building materials, and exterior details of a historic building are to be retained whenever possible.
- (2) Character defining features of individual historic buildings such as decorative millwork, window and door trim, shutters, siding types, frieze bands, cornices, arches, brackets, brick coursing, foundation walls and aprons are identified and retained.
- (3) Character defining elements of surrounding historic architecture, settings and spatial relationships are identified and respected in the design of new construction, additions, alterations and streetscape improvements.
- (4) The traditional pedestrian-oriented character is maintained.

These four goals shall be known as the Defining Principles for Rehabilitation.

When reviewing a project for conformance with the defining principles, the Design Review Committee shall be guided by the considerations set forth in the following section.

ALL PROJECTS

The two key elements to all projects in the design review district are:

1. Character, Significance, and Integrity. Identifying the elements that create the visual character of a historic building, landmark or district is the basis for design review. “Character” is the visual elements and physical features that define a particular district or building.
 - (a) The character defining elements of a building include the overall shape, symmetry, materials, roofline, window and doors, trim, craftsmanship, and other decorative details which convey architectural style and type.
 - (b) The character defining elements of a district include the architectural style of the buildings; their relationship to the site on which they are located; their relationship to other buildings on the street or in the district in such aspects as height, mass and scale; as well as their relationship to their surroundings, both natural and man-made.
2. Site Design and Layout. Site design takes into consideration the alignment, orientation, and spacing of the buildings and features that surround it, incorporating basic characteristics and setback patterns.

Design Guidelines for Character, Significance, Integrity, and Site Design

- The original historic shape, form, height, materials and exterior details of a historic building should be retained whenever possible.

- Character defining features of historic buildings should be identified as retained. Such features include decorative millwork, door and window trim, shutters, frieze bands, cornices, arches, brackets, brick coursing, foundation walls, etc.
- The defining elements of historic structures, including architecture, settings and spatial relationship with its surroundings should be identified and respected when design new construction, additions, alterations and streetscape elements.
- The traditional pedestrian-oriented character should be maintained by orienting building entrances towards the street and locating off-street parking to the rear of the building.
- Consistency in building style, size, density, and vertical or horizontal proportions (massing) should be maintained, relative to the other properties in the design review district.
- The massing and scale of alterations, additions and new construction should not overpower surrounding historic buildings and properties.

ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

For purposes of these Design Guidelines, an *alteration* is “any exterior design, material or color modification to features of a structure or site element.” An alteration should preserve and complement historic character while using a simple design. It should be distinguishable from the historic elements and features of the building or site without detracting from the overall architectural character of the building or site.

Maintenance and repair, which is defined as the process of fixing a structure or site element over time to prevent deterioration is generally not considered an alteration and is therefore exempt from these guidelines, unless such repair involves replacing elements of the structure or site.

Design Guidelines for Alterations

Exterior Materials

- Whenever possible, deteriorated architectural features and their original materials such as walls, piers, columns, railings, steps, cornices, lintels, sills, and chimneys should be repaired rather than replaced. Replacing sound but repairable historic material is not recommended.
- Aluminum or vinyl cladding over historic materials is not recommended.
- Substitute materials must match the historic materials in size, profile and finish so as not to change the character of the historic structure or site element. The use of substitute material may be considered in the following circumstances:
 1. Historic materials that provide a good match in color or texture and where such color and texture are derived from the material itself – such as with brick and masonry products - are not readily available.

2. Skilled craftsmen required to perform intricate ornamental work with such materials as carved wood, carved stone, wrought iron, cast iron or molded terra cotta, are not readily available.
3. There are inherent flaws in the original materials.
4. Building code changes related to public health and safety (ex: asbestos, lead) make it difficult to achieve code compliance with the use of historic materials.

Roofing

- Retain and preserve the original roof form of a historic building in terms of slope, height, depth of overhang at the eaves, and orientation to the street. Roof alterations should be compatible with the form, pitch, plate height and massing of the historic roof.
- Specialty roofing materials such as slate, tile and metal are an integral part of building character, and a change in these materials warrants design review. Attempts should be made to preserve the type, unit scale and texture of original roofing (i.e., replace metal roofs with metal, tiled roofs with tile, etc.). Re-roofing with in-kind (identical) materials is considered to be maintenance.
- Whenever possible roof detailing such as brackets, cornices, parapets and bargeboards should be retained and repaired.
- Existing dormer windows should be retained and maintained, and not enlarged or altered to change their secondary relationship to the main roof. New dormer windows should be compatible in size, scale and style with existing dormers and with the main roof form. New dormer window ridgelines must be lower than the main roof. Two new smaller dormer windows may be more appropriate than one large dormer.
- Mechanical units and other roof-mounted equipment should be located on non-character defining roof areas; inconspicuously on rear roof slopes away from a public street; or hidden behind existing parapets. These items should not be located within public view, which is defined as being visible at street level within one city block.
- New skylights installed on a historic roof should be unobtrusive and not within public view. A flat skylight that blends into the roof is preferred over a sculpted or bubble type skylight.
- Solar collection panels should be located so as not to alter the historic profile of the roof. They should be flush mounted on rear facing and/or flat roofs, or located on the ground in an inconspicuous location.
- Green roof plantings and fixtures should be located behind a parapet and should not be within public view.

Porches, Balconies and Decks

Although not common to historic commercial structures, these are common features to historic houses, which may have been converted to commercial uses. Therefore, guidelines are provided.

Porches are a primary feature of historic buildings and contribute significantly to the overall architectural character of a building and neighborhood setting, providing scale and detail. They invite neighborhood interaction, socialization and enhance a pedestrian environment. However, due to direct exposure to the weather, they are often the first features to deteriorate on historic buildings. One of the most drastic alterations to a historic building causing a potential loss of historic integrity is removal of the front porch. Balconies are primary features contributing to the architectural character of a building. In contrast, decks are modern expression of porches and not found on historic buildings.

- Original porches and balconies should be preserved retaining character defining elements including piers, columns, balustrades, steps, brackets and trim.
- Repair of deteriorated porches and balconies is encouraged in compliance with recognized preservation methods.
- Enclosure of historic porches and balconies is discouraged and negatively impacts the character of a historic house and the neighborhood.
- If a rear or side porch is enclosed, the enclosure should not obscure the architectural details of the porch or building using a simple design and materials.
- Rebuilding of a missing porch or balcony is encouraged with documentation of the original front porch.
- Introduction of porches or balconies that were not historically present is inappropriate.
- Porches and balconies on new buildings and additions should be compatible with the architecture of the building, incorporating traditional scale and proportions with updated design details.
- Locate decks in inconspicuous areas, usually to the rear or least character defining elevation of the building.
- Design deck railings to be compatible in material, scale and detail with the historic building.
- Construct decks so that they can be removed in the future without damaging the historic building.

Windows & Entrances

The replacement of historic window components should be carefully considered and used only if the fabric of the window is beyond repair. The energy efficiency of old windows can be improved and a comprehensive energy audit is recommended to identify energy efficient improvements holistically. Air sealing, additional wall and ceiling insulation and the adjustment of mechanical systems are generally more effective than focusing only on the repair and replacement of windows.

- Historic windows and doors should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Note: contemporary doors normally open to the outside for safety; historic doors would open toward the inside for snow removal purposes.
- If energy loss is a concern, consideration should be given to installing storm windows and wood storm doors, or retrofitting insulating glazing units into existing sash. Retrofitting historic windows to make them more energy efficient may be appropriate. Typically, a window retrofit preserves most of the historic wood, glass or metal components and includes insulating weight pockets and weather stripping of the sash and frames.
- Historic “wavy” glass is an example of historic fabric. If a window is divided into several panes of glass and must be replaced, a similar true-divided-light window of matching dimensions, profile and detailing of the original is most appropriate.
- The location of the window sash within the opening should be maintained. Window sash should be placed within the historic opening and retain its relationship to the opening jamb. Reducing the size of the opening with in-fill material is strongly discouraged.
- Building entrances within public view are important character defining elements of a historic building. An entrance is defined by the front door, details of the door, door surround and placement. The replacement of historic entrance materials should be carefully considered and sympathetic when accommodating ADA accessibility requirements.
- Avoid changing the structural and proportional dimensions of a window or door opening by making it smaller or larger than it was historically.
- Retain and preserve the functional and decorative features of a primary entrance, which includes the door and frame, sill, head, jamb, moldings, transom and any flanking windows.
- Window components should be matched including molding, trim, sash, glass, lintels, sills, shutters and hardware.
- Historic building photos, if available, should be referenced for replacement of missing windows and doors.
- Shutters are not appropriate unless they were historically used on the building.
- Generally, the more significant a window or door is to the building as a whole, the less likely that a retrofit or replacement will be appropriate. Table 1 provides a guide for design review consideration regarding preferred treatment for doors and windows.

WINDOW AND DOOR SIGNIFICANCE PREFERRED TREATMENT			
	Character Defining Historically Significant Window or Door	Historic Window or Door	Non-Historic Window or Door
Primary Elevation	REPAIR	REPAIR	REPLACEMENT PERMITTED
Secondary Elevation	REPAIR	REVIEW ON CASE- BY-CASE BASIS	REPLACEMENT PERMITTED
Tertiary Elevation	REPAIR	REPLACEMENT PERMITTED	REPLACEMENT PERMITTED

Table 1 – Window & Door Treatments

Paint

The primary purpose for painting wood or any other building material is to exclude moisture penetration, which is one of the main causes of deterioration. Paint helps protect the exterior siding, decorative features and ultimately the underlying structural members of a historic building from deterioration. Another important purpose of paint is to define and accent architectural features and improve appearance. Masonry brick and stone were most often not historically painted except for wood trim elements around doors or windows and at gable ends or in the use of signage. Painted masonry is likely the result of covering up incompatible building materials, building additions, patches or damage.

Removing paint from historic buildings—with the exception of cleaning, lighting scraping and hand sanding as part of routine maintenance—should be avoided unless absolutely essential. Sand-blasting, for example, is destructive to brick and not recommended. Once conditions warrant removal, paint should be removed to the next sound layer with the gentlest means possible without damaging historic material. When selecting a paint color, consider using the original color scheme. The original paint can often be discovered through analysis of samples of original materials. Today, paint stores can match a paint shade taken from an old paint chip sample. If it is not possible to identify the original colors, a color scheme should be based on historic precedent within the area. It is suggested that the color scheme should be applied to a sample section of the building before making a final selection. This can be done by applying paint to a large sub state like cardboard, which can be moved around, viewed in different lights, and will not cause damage. Most paint companies offer historic paint palates, with a few companies providing digital sampling by uploading a photograph of the building and historic paint selections.

While these Design Guidelines do not “promote” one specific paint color or palette of colors, most paint manufacturers have a selection of historic traditional or period colors that were popular in a specific era or at a specific point in time. The use of colors that were popular and in

common use either at the time a structure was built or when the structure was at the peak of its historic significance is appropriate and recommended.

Murals

A painted wall mural is considered to be an exterior alteration and subject to design review. A mural is considered to be artwork which does not convey a commercial message, thereby distinguishing it from signage.

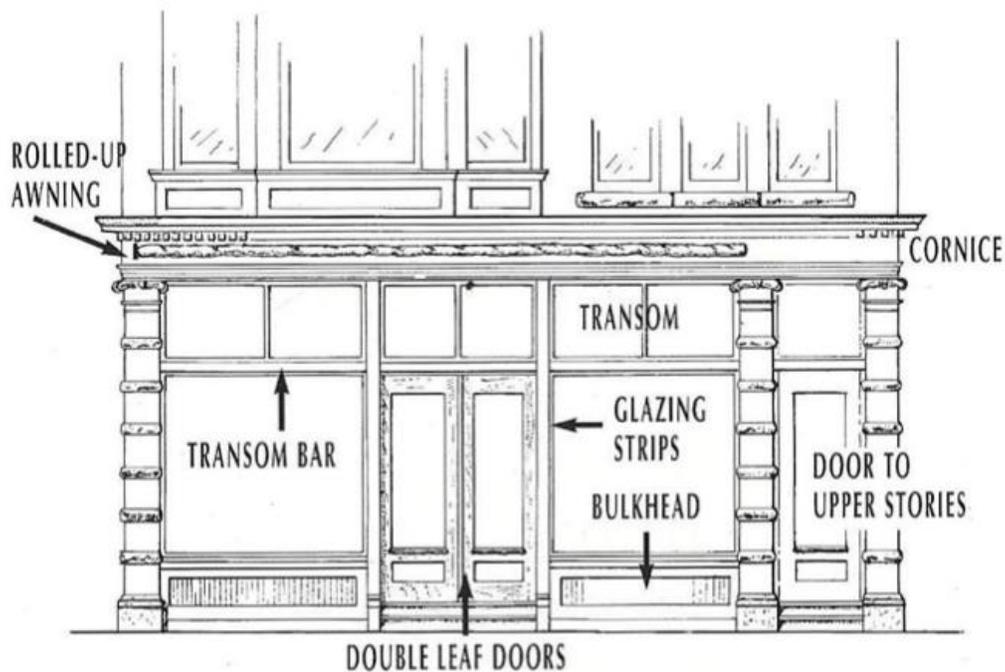
- Retain and preserve murals which contribute to the overall historic character of a building, site or district.
- A mural should be subordinate to the overall building and not damage, cover or obscure architectural details of the building or its windows.
- A mural should not permanently alter the building or site, such as paint on unpainted masonry.
- A mural should not detract from the historic character of the building, site or district nor should confuse the public regarding the period of significance of the building or district.
- Murals can often be painted on to a physical sub state, which is then attached to a building.

Storefronts

A storefront is often the most defining architectural feature of a historic commercial building. It is often altered to accommodate a store's advertising and merchandising strategy. It is essential to identify and evaluate storefront construction materials, architectural features, and the relationship of those features to the upper stories. Historic photographs are helpful.

Character defining storefront features often include: construction materials; supporting columns/piers; display windows and transoms; entrances and their location; decorative elements such as molded cornices, column capitals, fascia boards, brackets, signs, awnings and canopies; and, the relationship of the first floor to the remainder of the building.

- If the original or significant storefront no longer exists, another design should be undertaken that is compatible with the remaining building in scale, design, materials, color and texture which retains the commercial character of the building. The new storefront design should be secondary and respect the existing historic character of the overall building.
- A new design that copies traditional details or features from neighboring buildings or other structures of the period may give the building a historical appearance that blends with its neighbors, but which never existed. For this reason, use of conjectural designs, even if based on similar buildings is generally not recommended.



- If documentation exists for showing the past design of the storefront, reconstruction of this historic style is encouraged.

Awnings

Awnings were a familiar image in earlier urban and residential American life, often defining a business storefront as well as the visual character of historic streetscapes. Awnings shelter passersby, reduce glare and conserve energy by controlling sunlight entering store windows. Historic colors, patterns and valance shapes were varied, some dyed a solid color, with shades of slate, tan and green especially popular; others were boldly striped.

Folding arm awnings operated either vertically or horizontally in addition to the 19th century fixed arm awnings. Covers included canvas duck fabric which was highly flammable and tended to stretch, fade and mildew. Vinyl plastic coatings increased fade and water resistance after World War II.

By the 1960s, vinyl resins, acrylic fibers and polyester materials were used to provide a longer lasting awning cover. Homeowners employed fabric awnings as early as the late 1800s. During the 1950s aluminum awnings became popular with homeowners. In the 1960s flat metal canopies came in to vogue and often used when remodeling earlier commercial storefronts.

- Where there is historic precedent, fabric awnings are the preferred type in the design review district and the use of weather resistant, non-shiny acrylic fabric that approximates the look of canvas is appropriate.

- Awnings should be installed with care not to damage historic fabric or visually impair distinctive architectural features. Clamps and fasteners used to attach awning frames should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick or masonry surfaces. If new backboards or rollers are installed, care needs to be taken not to damage cornices, transoms or surrounding historic material.
- Awning placement, size and shape must be compatible with the historic character of the building.

ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Additions to historic buildings solve the need for additional space, especially when rehabilitating the existing interior space becomes costly, impractical and will not yield desired results. Additions should be carefully considered because of their potential to negatively impact the historic character of a building and destroy significant materials, features and spatial relationships.

A new addition should be compatible with the historic building, but differentiated so as not to create a false sense of history. An addition should not detract from the overall historic character of the primary historic building. The focus of design review will be on new construction that is within the public view.

Design Guidelines for Additions

Protection of Historic Buildings

Protection of the character and setting of the historic building, surrounding setting, spatial relationships and the design district is the primary concern when reviewing additions.

- Additions should be constructed with the least possible loss of historic fabric, and care taken that character defining features of the historic building are not destroyed, damaged or obscured.
- Additions should be constructed so that they may be removed at a later date without damaging the primary historic elements.
- It is not appropriate to construct an addition that will overpower or detract from the primary historic elements and character defining features, or if it will require the removal of significant building elements or site features. Therefore, additions that are taller than the original building are generally not appropriate.

Differentiation

An addition should be clearly distinguishable from the historic building. It should be compatible, but subordinate to the historic building and recognizable as new construction.

- The preferred location for an addition is to the side or rear of the historic building. Setting the addition back slightly at the façade to give the historic building precedence is strongly encouraged.
- Historic architectural style and elements should not be duplicated, but instead interpreted in a simpler and distinguishable design for the addition. The addition should pick up design “cues” from the historic building including fenestration pattern and proportions, overall size, scale, massing, form, and type of ornamentation, but with a simplified style of its own.

Visual Compatibility

While an addition should be distinguishable from the historic building, it should do so while still being visually compatible with the original building as well as its surroundings. In other words, additions should promote the visual continuity of the design district.

- An addition should be constructed of materials or colors compatible with those of the historic building. Traditional materials such as brick, wood siding or stucco are appropriate when compatible with the historic texture of its surroundings.
- It may be appropriate to construct an addition using modern materials, such as glass and steel, that complement the original architecture.
- Additions should respect the alignment, orientation, spacing, massing, scale, and general proportion of both historic and non-historic buildings.
- The use of salvaged architectural materials from another historic building for an addition is discouraged.



NEW AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

New construction may take the form of a single building or a series of attached or semi-attached buildings to “fill in” a gap between buildings. The design goals of new construction are similar to those for additions: to create a new structure that can be distinguished from the historic buildings while simultaneously being visually compatible.

New construction should not attempt to replicate historic styles, but instead be designed to relate to the fundamental characteristic of the existing structures in the design district in terms of alignment, orientation, spacing, shape, massing and scale.

Design Guidelines for New and Infill Construction

- The primary design goal of new construction is visual compatibility with the surrounding setting, site, and buildings, using modern materials, finishes, and techniques. While the use of traditional building materials is appropriate for new construction, the replication of historic architecture is not inappropriate.
- New construction in the Historic Business District should employ scaling and detailing to promote a pedestrian friendly environment with building entrances oriented towards the public street so as to define the street edge and contribute to a dynamic pedestrian and street environment.
- The use of salvaged historical materials creates a false sense of age and historic character, and is discouraged. Instead, modern compatible interpretations of historic styles and elements should be incorporated into new construction.
- When connected to existing historic structures, new buildings should be carefully located to minimize connections points with the historic so that if the building were “disconnected” in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original building would remain intact.
- New construction should be similar in height, width and proportion to that of adjacent and nearby buildings, especially the façade. The building facade should be oriented to the public street and have a high level of transparency.
- The fenestration rhythm of solids and voids between window and door openings, and wall areas should be similar to nearby buildings.
- Architectural features including roof pitch, cornice lines, balconies, porches, shutters, dormers, eaves and decorative detail should be similar in proportion to nearby buildings.
- Secondary building elevations which are visible from a private right of way, parking area or public circulation area should have architectural features such as fenestration, piers, columns, bays, recesses or projections of the building to maintain pedestrian scale, rhythm and visual interest.
- Mechanical equipment should be well screened.

- New construction should conform to the “Design Guidelines for Character, Significance, Integrity, and Site Design” as noted earlier in this document.

ACCESSORY BUILDINGS & OFF-STREET PARKING

Accessory buildings contribute to the architectural and historic character of the community. Historic accessory buildings include for example, barns, sheds, carriage houses, and garages. These accessory structures were historically used for storage of equipment, animals or carriages. Many have been adapted for the present day storage of cars. The relationship of these secondary buildings to the main building, street, or alley with which they are associated with is important. They are subordinate in size and detailing to the primary building and often located to the rear of lots with alley access.

Present day automobile use and zoning codes typically require that parking be accommodated into historic neighborhood, institutional and commercial settings. However, the City of Wadsworth’s zoning regulations recognized that public parking is frequently available in the downtown and exempts certain commercial uses from off-street parking requirements when said properties are part of a parking district and are subject to an assessment or fee for using public parking facilities (see §154.408(K) of the City of Wadsworth Zoning Ordinance).

Therefore, off street parking and the construction of privately owned surface parking lots are not encouraged in the downtown. When such facilities are deemed to be necessary, they should be located behind the historic buildings and accessed from secondary alleys where they will be the least disruptive to the traditional land use development pattern. Off-street parking facilities in front of primary buildings are not appropriate for the downtown.

Design Guidelines for Accessory Buildings and Off-Street Parking

- Retain historic outbuildings with special attention to maintenance and repair. Architectural features that are character defining elements of outbuildings, including foundations, siding, masonry, roofing materials and wood trim should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Dilapidated or other unsightly outbuildings in a state of disrepair should be improved to contribute to the look and feel of Main Street Wadsworth. If repair and rehabilitation are deemed to be cost prohibitive, such structures should be removed.
- Replacement outbuildings should comply with the “Design Guidelines for New and Infill Constructions” in this document.
- New outbuildings and parking garages should be simple in design and not detract from the historic character of the primary building or create a false sense of history.
- Outbuilding, parking garages and surface parking lots should be located behind the historic buildings and accessed from secondary alleys where they will be the least disruptive to the traditional land use development pattern.
- Off-street parking facilities in front of primary buildings are not appropriate for the downtown.

BUILDING & SITE ENHANCEMENTS

Building and site enhancements are those detailed features that are visible by the public and give a building or site its unique character and inform the public as to what type of business or activities take place within the building or on the site. Signage, lighting, landscaping and fencing are the typically enhancements regulated by these design guidelines.

Design Guidelines for Building & Site Enhancements

Signage

While the specific elements of signage (allowable display area, sign types, illumination, etc.) are regulated by the City of Wadsworth Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of the design guidelines is to ensure that in the design review district, signage performs its function without detracting from the architectural character and heritage of the district.

Commercial signs create an individual image, attract attention, and convey information to various end users and the compilation of signs erected by all of the business operators creates an overall impression or image of a particular district. Large signs trying to “outshout” – or outshine - one another detract from the overall character and harmony of our historic district. Scale and proportion of a sign relative to the building and the district are of primary importance. Signs designed for historic buildings should not detract from or obscure character defining features or other architectural elements of the building. Historic signs that contribute to the overall historic character of the building or the district should be retained and preserved.

While it is not the intent of these guidelines to regulate the content of any sign, the sign message should be simple, easy to read, understandable and easily recognizable to pedestrians and motorists passing by. Sign content can be comprised of words to describe a business and its products; numbers that designate an address alone; a logo, symbol or other copyrighted graphic image of a recognizable corporate entity; or some combination of these. The sign content (graphics and lettering) should be in scale, proportion and harmony with the proposed sign display location, the building, the site and the district as a whole.

- A sign should not overwhelm the building structure or site with which it is connected. Use the architecture of the building to emphasize and enlarge the impression of the sign.
- Appropriate signs types for downtown include wall, awning, projecting and window signs.
- Painted signs or other graphics on side elevations will be strictly reviewed.
- Sign materials should be durable and color-fast. The use of traditional materials such as wood, stone or metal are appropriate and their use is encouraged. However, the use of modern materials that mimic the look and feel of traditional materials may be appropriate.
- Sign colors should be compatible with the building and surrounding site. Materials and colors should be historically appropriate for the time frame of the building or structure. A simple color scheme is recommended.

- Appropriate locations for signage on historic building include: the fascia band or “signboard” area between a storefront and the second floor; the horizontal band between rows of windows across the upper facade; “historical” signage painted on a building; hanging or projecting signs, including plaques, shields or ovals – that are designed primarily for pedestrian viewing and can be easily replaced as tenants change; window, door and transom graphics; awning valances and canopy fascii.
- Generally, externally illuminated signs are appropriate for historic buildings and structures. The light source should be inconspicuous and not distract from attention from the sign or building.
- Pole signs, internally illuminated box signs and other types of signage prohibited or not specified by the City of Wadsworth zoning code are not permitted in the design review district.

Lighting

Lighting is an important consideration in all commercial districts. It is more functional or utilitarian in commercial strips and highway interchange areas; however, when located in downtowns and on historic buildings, lighting also functions as a key design element and due care should be taken before installing new or replacing existing fixtures. Lighting shall not cause glare at the eye-level of motorists and pedestrians.

- Retain and preserve historic exterior light fixtures whenever possible.
- New exterior lighting and light fixtures should be compatible with the building and surrounding environment; and, assessed in terms of design, material, color, use, size, scale and intensity. Bulbs, including LED, should be in the “2700”-“3200”K (ideally “3000”) range for optimal color, rather than a color temperature of “5000,” which appears blue.
- Architectural lighting fixtures should be discreet and not cause damage to historic features and elements of the building.

Landscaping and Fencing

Due to the lack of yard areas in historic commercial districts, landscaping and fencing tends not be extensively used on commercial sites. However, there may be individual properties where the installation of landscaping and fencing is possible, so the type and scale of these features should be considered for what is appropriate within the design review district.

Fencing and landscaping are probably more important considerations for public properties, such as around public parking lots, so they will be also be considered in the next section: Streetscapes.

- Avoid landscaping that has the potential for damaging a historic structure such as climbing ivy or any trees, bushes or flowers planted too close to the building.

- New landscaping and landscape features should be compatible in scale and density with the site and its surroundings. Tree canopies and branch shape and spread must not create dangerous obstructions or conditions, such as concealing street signage.
- Retain and preserve historic fence elements and details where possible.
- Wrought iron or similar metal fencing is appropriate for the design review district and is encouraged. Vinyl and chain link fencing are discouraged. Wood fencing may be appropriate but might require additional expenditures to maintain.

STREETSCAPES

Just as important to the look of historic district is how design elements are applied to elements within the public realm. Streetscape improvements and other enhancement should be designed to complement and highlight the historic structures in the design review district and to enhance the experience of the users and visitors to the downtown. The public and private realms should respect each other.

Design Guidelines for Streetscapes

- Landscaping and fencing are appropriate features for screening and buffering surface parking lots from the public view. The use of metal fences; hardscape materials such as stone and brick for pillars and gateways; and low shrubbery and plantings are appropriate for enhancing the perimeter of surface parking lots.
- The use of landscaping and fencing, in appropriate materials, may also be effective for delineating or demarking the boundary between the public and private realms meet or to secure a vacant site until future development occurs.
- New landscaping and landscape features should be compatible in scale and density with the site and its surroundings. The use of landscaping materials that have the potential to damage a historic structure should be avoided.
- Alleys should be illuminated in the evenings with low-wattage lighting that is downward focused for safe pedestrian travel.
- Wayfinding signage should be installed at appropriate heights and at appropriate locations to guide pedestrians, motorists and other users to and from parking lots via public alleys and sidewalks; and to direct pedestrians to key features or uses in the downtown. Such signage should be consistent and complement the existing built environment.
- Readily accessible trash receptacles make an important difference in controlling sidewalk litter, particularly in high volume pedestrian areas. These receptacles should be appropriately spaced apart. The design and color of receptacles should coordinate with other street furniture of Main Street Wadsworth.
- Seating in the public realm should be provided at frequent intervals to encourage people to linger in downtown. Seating can take the form of freestanding benches or other design components, such as planter can be design to incorporate integrated seating. Seating should

be located to face the street or arranged in relation to street trees where benches can face each other in a sheltered space that encourages conversation.

- To promote bicycle traffic and provide a secure place where bikes can be stored, bike racks should also be installed at appropriate locations in downtown. A unique design should be selected for bike racks to add interest to the sidewalks, or local artists could be engaged to design custom racks as pieces of public art that contribute to the special character of downtown.
- An area of the sidewalk should be designated as the “amenity strip”, which is where features such as trash receptacles, public seating and bike racks should be located in order to keep sidewalks clear for pedestrian traffic.
- A uniform approach should be taken with all streetscape improvements and features, including wayfinding signage, in order to create consistency in design and appearance through downtown. The design, materials and colors used for streetscape improvements should complement and enhance the historic structures, as such improvements, in and of themselves are secondary to the actual structures.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Considerations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires places of “public accommodation” to provide access to people with disabilities. Alternations to historic properties should comply with ADA standards to the maximum extent feasible without threatening or destroying the historic significance of a property. Because ADA modifications have a significant visual impact, their location, design, scale and material used, should be carefully considered.

A three-step approach to identify and implement accessibility modifications is recommended:

1. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features.
2. Assess the property’s existing and required level of accessibility.
3. Identify and evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.

Accessibility Priorities

Once a property’s significant character-defining features have been identified and existing and required levels of accessibility established, access solutions can be developed. An accessible route from the parking lots, sidewalk and public street to the entrance of a historic building is essential and should strive to be the same circulation route used by the general public. The critical elements of the access route that should be considered when designing a solution include the width, slope, cross-slopes and surface texture. Also, the distance between arrival and destination should be as short as possible.

If it is not possible to use the main entrance to the building for ADA access without permanently damaging the character-defining features, a secondary entrance for ADA access, *with* directional signage, should be provided. Use of a rear or service entrance for ADA access should be avoided. Conveniently located and specially designated ADA parking spaces and curb cuts (both

on private properties and within the public right-of-ways), can improve accessibility for the disabled population.

Accessibility Solutions

ADA access should be through the primary public entrance, whenever possible. Steps, landings, doors and thresholds often pose barriers to accessibility by handicapped persons. Typical solutions that can mitigate these barriers include ramps (both exterior to and interior within the building); installing wheelchair lifts; creating new entrances and modifying existing doors, hardware and thresholds.

1. Entrance Steps & Thresholds

- Entry steps that are not considered a highly significant architectural feature of a structure could be re-graded to provide a smooth entry to the building. The commercial building code may allow for a slightly steeper ramp or incline for a historic building in order to overcome one step.
- If an ADA improvement will cover existing steps that are constructed of historic masonry or other significant material, they should be left in situ and buried, instead of being removed.
- The ADA improvement should be constructed so that it does not destroy the original entry and can be removed at a later date without further damage to the original materials.
- If a new streetscape is being planned, consideration should be given to adjusting the grade of the sidewalks in order to lessen the slope to the building entrance or make the entry flush with the sidewalks.
- A door threshold that exceeds the allowable of height of a 1½” can be altered or removed to comply with accessibility requirements. Bevels may be added to each side of the threshold to reduce its height; or the threshold may be replaced with a historically and visually compatible one that meets ADA requirements.

2. Ramps

- Ramps are a common solution and should be located at primary public entrances, whenever possible, while minimizing the loss of historic fabric at connections points such as railings, steps and windows.
- Generally, the steepest allowable ramp slope cannot exceed 8% (1 to 12 degrees). To accommodate fairly large changes in elevation, longer ramps may be necessary and also require an intermediate landing to maintain an allowable slope.
- Ramps should be faced with a variety of materials that are visually compatible with and complementary to, the historic structure, such as wood, brick and stone. Due to its appearance as being a “temporary” structure, ramps constructed of pressure-treated wood are not visually compatible with historic buildings are not appropriate in the design review district.
- Railings should be simple in design and visually compatible with the structure.

- The use of a portable ramp is only appropriate as a temporary solution while a permanent ramp is under construction. The use of a portable ramp as a permanent one is not recommended.
- All ramps shall be designed and constructed to comply with applicable commercial building and fire codes.



Credit: City of Wooster Design Guidelines ©2016

3. Wheelchair Lifts

- Both platform and incline lifts can be used to overcome elevation changes from roughly 3 – 10 feet. However, these devices can only accommodate one person at a time and usually have a significant visual impact on the historic structure.
- In addition to limited capacity and visual impact, other drawbacks to mechanical lifts are that many cannot be operated independently but the user and often require frequent maintenance to keep in operable conditions.
- Wheelchair lifts may be appropriate if they can be located to minimize their visual impact and not impede general access to the building. For instance, a wheelchair lift at the back entry of a building that is easily accessed from neighboring parking lots may be appropriate, even though it is not at the primary entrance.

4. Other Accessibility Solutions

- **Create a New Entrance.** When it is not possible to modify an existing entrance, a new entrance may be created with an entirely new opening in an appropriate location or by converting a secondary window into an ADA accessible entry. This should be considered after other options have been explored.
- **Retrofitting Doors and Adapting Door Hardware.** Historic doors are character defining elements of a building and should generally not be replaced, nor should door frames be widened. If a building's historic doors have already been removed, there may be greater latitude in designing an ADA compliant new entrance. Most ADA accessibility standards require a minimum clear opening width of 32" with manageable door opening pressures. Altering door hardware by replacing standard hinges with offset hinges may increase the

width of the “clear opening” if the door opening is close to the ADA standards. The best solution is to retain historic doors and hardware and installation automatic and power-assisted door openers.

- **New Additions as an Accessibility Solution.** A new addition can be constructed to incorporate modern amenities such as elevators, restrooms, fire stairs and mechanical equipment. A new entry directly into the addition may provide the ideal location to provide ADA access.

For more information about the ADA, Medina County's Online Guide to Disability Rights Laws is available here: <http://medina.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/library/article.aspx?id=1539>.

CHAPTER 4 - DEMOLITION, “MOTHBALLING” AND RELOCATION

Demolition

Demolition includes the complete or partial removal or destruction of any structure or site element. Demolition of an historic structure or site element should not be detrimental to the character of the area or the City; and instead result in an improvement to existing conditions.

Demolition can also occur when alterations, additions and new construction effectively demolish the historic identity, scale, features and character of a historic structure or site element. “Demolition by construction” is not acceptable in the design review district.

Conversely, “demolition by neglect” occurs when a property owner fails to maintain and repair a building and its elements to keep it falling into a state of disrepair or abandonment. If exposed to the elements long enough, a structure could deteriorate to the point of being unsalvageable and unoccupiable without a significant amount of reinvestment. However, the failure of an owner to provide basic maintenance or the building in compliance with applicable building, fire and property maintenance codes, in and of itself, should not be used as justification for demolition. Ongoing investment in property maintenance is essential. The value of property increases with the uniqueness, historic value, and the condition of structures located on it.

Mothballing Vacant Structures

When all means of finding a productive use for a historic building have been exhausted, it may be necessary to temporarily close up a building to protect it from weather and vandalism. This process is known as mothballing and can be an effective means of protecting a building while planning its future. If a vacant property has been declared unsafe by building officials, stabilization and mothballing may be the only way to protect it from demolition.

Relocation and Significance of the Building Site

Building location is an element of historic integrity and provides historic context. Relocation of a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) may sanction de-listing by the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office. Relocation should be considered only after all other options have been exhausted. Coordination with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office is required when relocating a structure listed on a National Register property in order to mitigate de-listing.

Guidelines for Demolition, Mothballing, and Relocation

- Demolition of historic structures and site elements should be carefully considered and avoided where possible.
- Mothballing is an alternative to demolition and should be examined based on historic significance of the building.

- Historic accessory buildings such as barns, carriage houses, sheds and garages provide character and are coveted assets to historic property. Serious consideration should be given to retaining these buildings or at least relocating them on the property. Demolition should only be considered after every other option has been explored.
- Structures must be at least minimally maintained whether they are occupied or vacant. Minimal maintenance includes the means necessary to keep the structure dry and safe. This includes regular maintenance and any necessary repairs to the structure, roof system, gutters, downspouts, and exterior paint.
- A demolition should not be detrimental to the character of the area or the City; and instead result in an improvement to existing condition. Consideration should be given as to what will replace a structure or site element proposed for demolition.
- Alterations, additions and new construction that effectively diminish the historic character, scale and identity of a historic structure are not acceptable.
- Demolition of an historic structure for a privately-owned surface parking lot is not appropriate.
- A demolition request may be granted for a past addition deemed to be inappropriate or out of character with the historic structure or for a portion of a structure that is not historically significant as long as the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the structure that are significant and the demolition will not adversely affect the character of the area.

CHAPTER 5 - MAINTENANCE & REPAIR

Maintenance and repair of historic resources is strongly encouraged. Means and methods should be determined in consultation with a licensed professional or tradesman specializing in historic buildings. A building assessment is available from a licensed historic preservation architect or professional; a list of professional resources is available in Appendix E.

Guidelines for Maintenance and Repair of historic buildings can be found through the U.S. Department of the Interior under the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Definitions – Architectural & Other Terms Used in these Guidelines

APPENDIX B: Secretary of the Interior’s Standard’s for Rehabilitation

APPENDIX C: Map – Design Review District

APPENDIX D: Design Review Application

APPENDIX E: Bibliography, Reference Materials and Other Resources

APPENDIX F: History, Landmarks, Architectural Styles, Anatomies (Windows, Storefronts)

APPENDIX G: National Register of Historic Places/Landmarks