

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Wilmington Commercial Historic District

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This guide was created utilizing “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings”. Reference the guide for the complete list of standards and guidelines. (Morton, W. Brown, et al. “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.”, U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Heritage Preservation Services, 1976.)

Wilmington Commercial Historic District

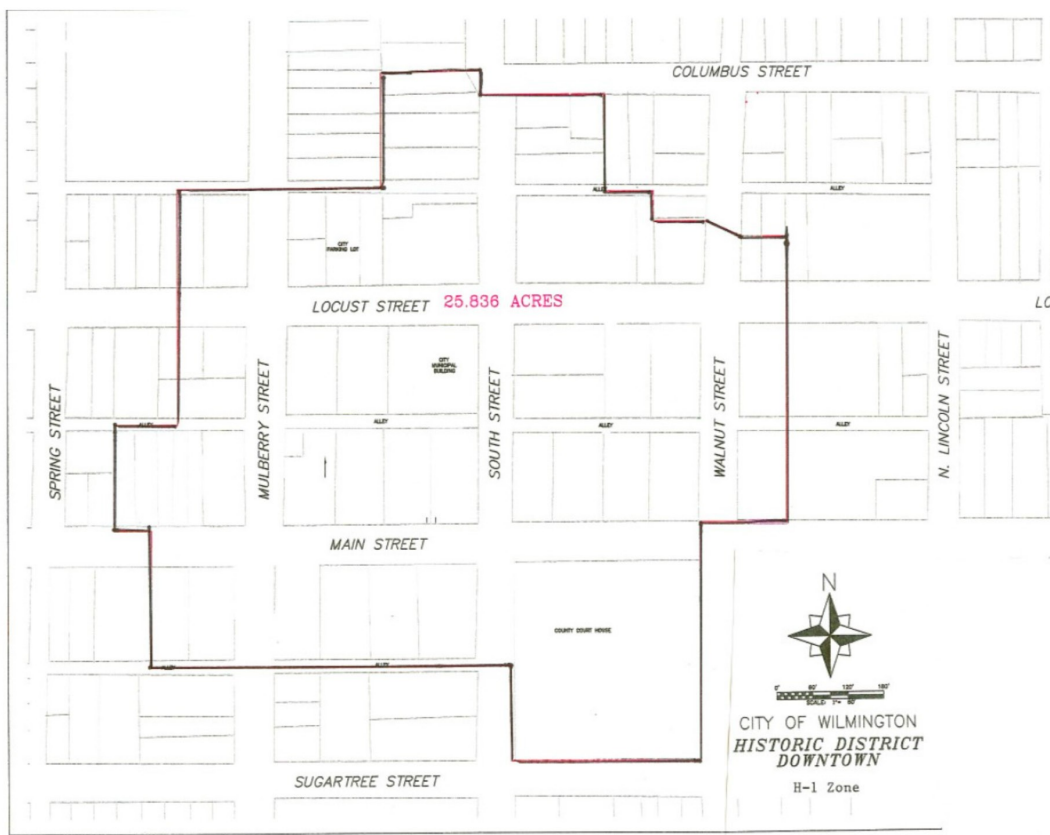


For over twenty years, the City of Wilmington and its downtown businesses have partnered in creating a unique environment in which to do business—the Wilmington Commercial Historic District (H-1 Zone). Historic preservation of exterior architecture adds value to buildings and businesses by creating a sense of place. Without design review, valuable architectural features of downtown buildings would be lost. Any change, defined as “any demolition, construction, reconstruction, or restoration of the exterior; placement of new landscaping; erection of new signs; as well as any material alteration in the landscaping; signage, exterior color or external architectural features of any property within the district,” requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. These design guidelines are to be utilized as a resource for buildings located within the historic district.

National Register Significance

The Historic District is on The Secretary of the Interior’s National Register of Historic Places. The district is significant due to its architectural style, specifically the late 19th and early 20th century revivals and the late Victorian style ranging from 1800-1949.

Historic District Map



Rehabilitation Standards

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be



Color

- ✓ Research original building and signage paint colors as a starting point.
- ✓ Create color schemes that are fairly simple and appropriate to the building's age and style.
- ✓ If historically accurate, black, white, and metallic colors may be used as trim colors, as accent colors, and on signage.
- ✓ The building trim should be painted in different, complimentary colors that complement abutting buildings.
- ✓ Murals and significant works of art make exceptions to use of the historical color palette.
- ✓ Utilize historical paint collections such as created by...

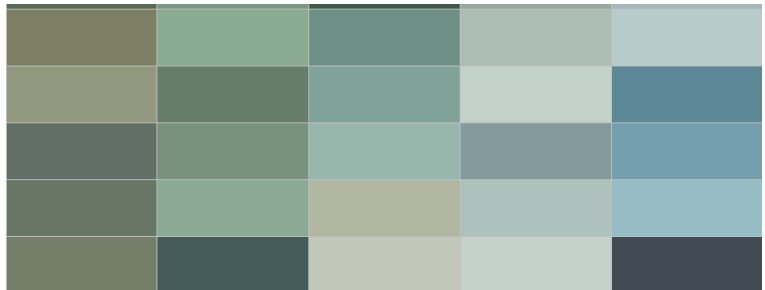
[Sherwin Williams](#)

[Valspar](#)

Benjamin Moore

[Historical Collection](#)

[Historical Colors](#)



[This image was taken from Benjamin Moore's "Historical Colors" Collection]

An example of a Main Street color palette.



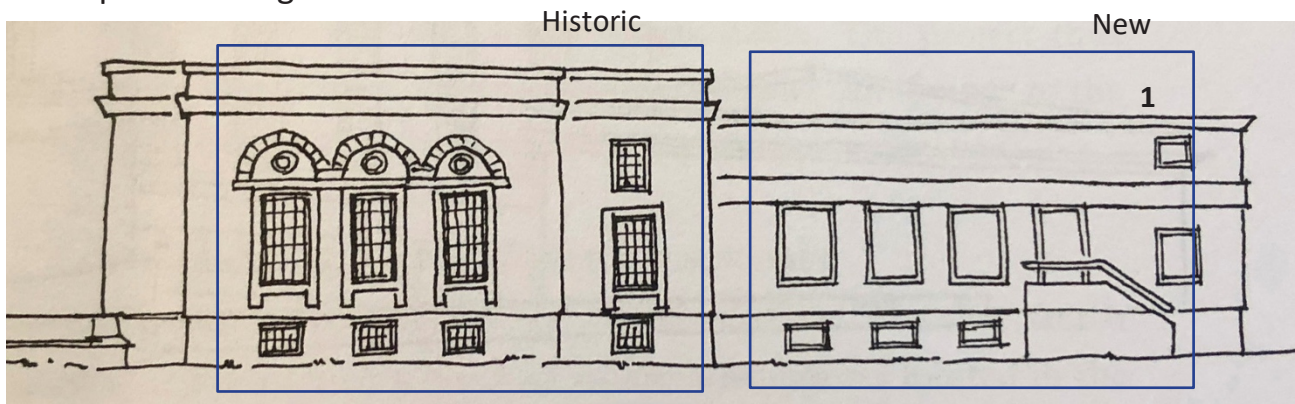
Trim - Red

Body - Yellow

Site/Structure Appearance & Compatibility

- ✗ The distinguishing original qualities of character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed.
- ✓ Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site, and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- ✓ Architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced, whenever impossible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.
- ✓ Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical or pictorial evidence.
- ✓ Surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible.
- ✗ Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
- ✓ Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.
- ✓ Wherever 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.
- ✓ Design in a way so what is historic and what is new is clearly defined.

Compatible Design



1: Tyler, Norman, Ted J. Ligibel, and Ilene R. Tyler. Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice. New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2009.

Wood

- ✗ Removing or radically changing wood features which are important in defining the historic character of the building is prohibited.
- ✗ Never use substitute materials to replace wood that does not convey visual appearance of surviving wood elements.
- ✗ Don't strip the paint to bare wood and stain to create a "natural look".
- ✓ Protect wood features by allowing proper water drainage to avoid standing water. Retain coatings that protect wood from moisture and ultraviolet light, such as paint.
- ✓ Remove damaged paint to the next sound layer using the gentlest means possible (hand scraping /sanding.)
- ✓ Only replace elements that are deteriorated or missing parts of features where there are surviving prototypes
- ✓ Only replace an entire feature when it is too deteriorated to repair. Use physical evidence as a way to reproduce the feature.

Masonry

(Sandstone, marble, granite, limestone, slate, fieldstone, etc.)

- ✗ Repointing with synthetic caulking compounds is prohibited.
- ✗ Removing or replacing elements which would alter the historic character of the building is prohibited.
- ✗ Sandblasting, using harsh chemicals, or utilizing high pressure washing to clean masonry is not allowed.
- ✗ Don't apply paint where there wasn't paint before.
- ✓ Clean masonry only when necessary utilizing the gentlest means possible. Test a small area before cleaning the entire surface.
- ✓ Repair areas only when and where there is evidence of deterioration.
- ✓ In the case of deterioration, cut back damaged concrete block to remove source of deterioration and carefully apply a new patch to match.
- ✓ Repair mortar carefully by hand-raking joints. Duplicate mortar in strength, color, texture, and composition.

Architectural Metals

(Cast iron, steel, pressed tin, copper, aluminum, zinc, etc.)

- ✗ Avoid removing character defining features.
- ✗ Removing the patina of historic metal should be avoided. The patina may be a protective coating on some metals that is a historically significant finish.
- ✓ Only remove and replace deteriorated elements.
- ✓ Provide proper water drainage to avoid standing water.
- ✓ Identify the type of metal to determine the most appropriate cleaning method for the material.
- ✓ Clean when appropriate to remove corrosion prior to repainting or applying other protective coatings.
- ✓ Repair deteriorated areas by patching, slicing, or reinforcing
- ✓ There should be a limited replacement with compatible substitute materials.
- ✓ Replace only elements too deteriorated to repair utilizing physical evidence as a mold to reproduce the feature.

Health, Safety & Accessibility

- ✓ Remove toxic building materials only after thorough testing has been conducted and less abrasive methods have been proven to be inadequate.
- ✓ Work with personal protective equipment.
- ✓ Upgrade historical stairways and elevators to assure preservation and to retain historical features and finishes.
- ✓ Comply with barrier free access requirements by preserving character defining spaces.
- ✓ Design new or additional means of access that are compatible with historical property and setting.

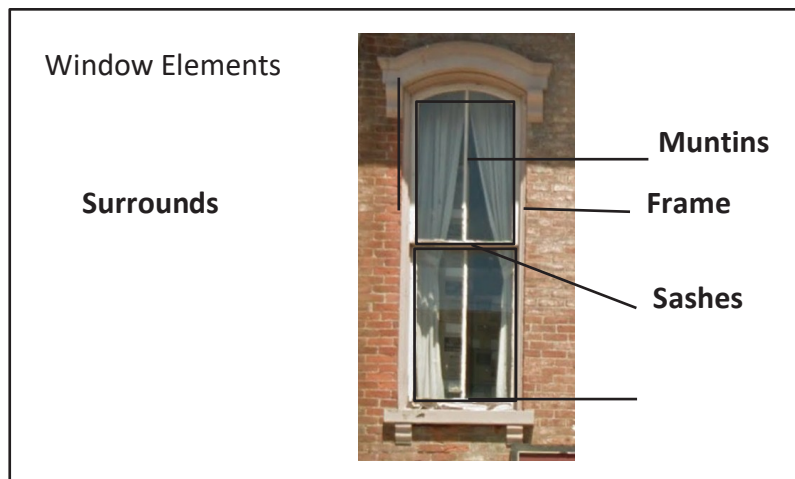


Roofing

- ✗ The visual appearance of the building should not be changed.
- ✗ Avoid damaging or obscuring character defining features.
- ✗ Don't allow roof fasteners to corrode or material to deteriorate.
- ✓ Retain the shape, decorative features, material, size, color, and patterning.
- ✓ Clean gutters, downspouts, and replace deteriorated materials.
- ✓ Protect a leaky roof with plywood and building paper until it can be properly repaired.
- ✓ Repair by reinforcing historic materials. There should be a limited replacement with compatible substances.
- ✓ When replacement is necessary, use physical evidence to mold and reproduce features. (If not technically or economically feasible to duplicate materiality, compatible substitute materials may be used.)
- ✓ Add alteration/additions such as mechanical and service equipment so they are in conspicuous from the public right of way.

Windows

- ✗ When installing new additions don't duplicate the pattern or detailing of the character defining elevation.
- ✗ Never change the number, size, and location of windows.
- ✗ Avoid stripping windows of historic material.
- ✗ Don't replace windows solely because of peeling paint, broken glass, stuck sashes, or high air infiltration.
These conditions don't portray the window is beyond repair.
- ✓ Protect and retain wood and architectural metals that compromise window frames, sashes, muntins, and surrounds through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, milted paint removal, and reapplication of protective coating systems.
- ✓ Repair deteriorated materials by patching, slicing, consolidating, reinforcing or replacing missing elements when there are surviving prototypes.
- ✓ Replace windows when they are beyond repair with compatible substance material keeping visual appearances the same.



Storefronts

- ✗ Commercial buildings should not be made to appear residential.
- ✗ Introducing elements that can't be documented historically is prohibited. Identify, retain, and preserve functional and decorative features.
- ✓ Remove inappropriate non-historic cladding and other decorative features to reveal the historic character of the building.
- ✓ Protect the materiality of the building.



Entrances & Porches

- ✗ Never remove or radically change entranceways and porches.
- ✗ Avoid strip of areas of their historical material.
- ✗ Don't remove entrances because the building has been accommodated for new uses.
- ✗ Cutting new entrances on a primary elevation is prohibited.
- ✗ Don't altar utilitarian or service entrances so they appear to be formal.
- ✓ Identify, preserve, and retain entrances and their functional and decorative features.
- ✓ Protect and maintain the materiality.
- ✓ Repair deteriorated areas by reinforcing historical material. Limit replacement with compatible substance materials.
- ✓ Replace areas too deteriorated to repair using form and detailing (if evident) to reproduce. If not technically or economically feasible to duplicate materiality, compatible substitute materials may be used.
- ✓ Alterations or additions should be designed so that if enclosures are necessary the historic character is preserved.

Lighting

- ✗ Lighting shall not be a nuisance to surrounding properties or a viewing danger to the safety of motorists or pedestrians.
- ✗ Light types of limited spectral emission including, but not limited to low-pressure sodium or mercury vapor lights, are prohibited.
- ✗ Stand-alone outdoor lighting shall not exceed 20 ft in height whether mounted on poles or walls.
- ✗ Lighting fixtures attached to buildings, structures or walls shall not extend above the top of the building, structure, or wall.
- ✓ Illumination of outdoor seating areas, building entrances, and walkways should be accompanied by use of ground-mounted fixtures not more than 4 ft in height.
- ✓ Lighting sources shall be color-neutral types such as halogen or metal halide.
- ✓ Wall-mounted lights shall be fully shielded luminaries (such as shoe box or can style fixtures) to prevent the light source from being visible from any adjacent residential property of public street.
- ✓ On-site lighting may be used to accent architectural features but shall not be used to illuminate entire facades of a building.
- ✓ Lighting fixtures that illuminate signs shall be aimed and shielded so that direct illumination is focused exclusively on the sign face.

An example of sign lighting.



Landscaping

- ✓ Retain the historical relationship between buildings, and landscape features.
- ✓ Unhealthy and dead plants should be replaced within one year.
- ✓ Plants shall be non-invasive and should be selected based on insect and disease resistance and long-life expectancy.
- ✓ Landscaping shall be installed in locations such that, when mature it does not obscure traffic signs or obstruct access to fire hydrants nor interfere with adequate motorist sight distance of overhead utility lines.

Awnings

- ✗ Never conceal architectural features such as cornices, columns, pilasters, or decorative details.
- ✗ Metal and aluminum awnings are not permitted.
- ✗ Awnings should not be under-lighted.
- ✓ Fixed or retractable awnings are permitted if they complement the buildings architectural style, material, color and detailing.
- ✓ Select diagonal, concave, or umbrella shaped awnings.
- ✓ Awnings may be made of solution dyed acrylic, canvas, or marine fabric. The material may be opaque.
- ✓ Paint any visible supporting framework a dark color corresponding to either the awning or the awning building.
- ✓ Select striped patterns or solid colors
- ✓ Paint any visible supporting framework a dark color corresponding to either the awning or the awning's building.
- ✓ Awning signage text may be screen printed on the skirt or sewn using the same fabric type of white or translucent color.
- ✓ Utilize colors in the approved color palette.
- ✓ Awnings over an entrance shall be centered on the entrance with a minimum seven-foot clearance between the bottom of the skirt and the pavement of ground.
- ✓ Perpendicular canopies shall match the slope of any existing stairs or ramps.



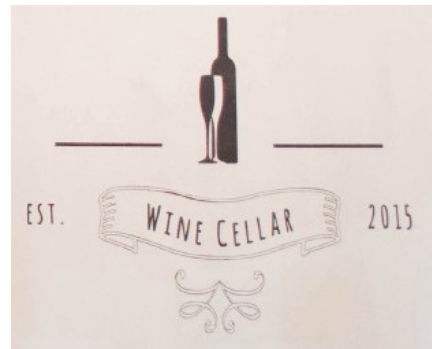
Awning Examples



Signs

- X Undisguised contemporary materials such as aluminum, plaster, fiberglass and glass shall not be used.
- X No florescent colors.
- ✓ A max of two styles and a max of three sizes of lettering should be used for any sign, including characters or trademarks used for identification.
- ✓ The number of items, letters, symbols, and shapes should reflect simplicity, avoid visual clutter and improve legibility.
- ✓ Signs should be basic geometric shapes, usually a rectangle, unless historically accurate.
- ✓ Signs should complement the building and adjacent buildings by being designed and placed to enhance the architecture.
- ✓ A max. of five colors, including black, white and metallic colors, should be used on any sign.
- ✓ Utilize colors from the approved color palette.
- ✓ Signs shall have a continuity of design with the style of sign generally consistent throughout the building or block.
- ✓ A sign should be constructed with a minimum of different types of material so as to provide a consistent overall appearance.
- ✓ Materials should be consistent with those of the building or of older origin such as brick, stone, masonry, and wood.
- ✓ Signs must follow Wilmington sign code ordinances.

Sign Examples



Sign Regulation Quick Reference Guide

General Signage

- ✗ No signs which are internally illuminated are allowed, except for those with channel lettering.
- ✗ Illuminated signs or lighting devices should not be placed where they may direct beams and illumination upon a public street, highway, sidewalk, or adjacent premises so as to cause glare or reflection that might constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance.
- ✗ Signs should not have moving devices, such as streamers, ribbons, or spinners.
- ✗ Signs should not be placed on or above the roof.
- ✓ Signs are limited to names of owners, trade names, products sold, and business/activity.
- ✓ Signage should fill less than 25% of a window surface.
- ✓ Professional name plates should have an area smaller than 5 square feet.
- ✓ Wall signs are allowed to be 1 square foot for each 1 linear foot of building frontage (up to a max of 150 square feet).

Window Signage



Ground Signs

- ✓ The sign should be placed no closer than 10 feet from adjoining property lines and public right of ways. Place signs at least 5 feet from sidewalks.
- ✓ The maximum area allowed is 32 square feet.
- ✓ The maximum height allowed is 6 feet.
- ✓ Should only have two sides or faces utilized for display.

Ground Sign Example



Projecting Signs

- ✓ Must stay at least 1 foot from the curb
- ✓ Should not extend farther than 6 foot from the building
- ✓ A minimum of 8 foot must be left between the ground and the bottom of the sign.
- ✓ Must be attached at a 90-degree angle.
- ✓ Max sign area is 9 square feet.

Projecting Sign Examples



Projecting Sign Placement



Flag Signs

- ✓ Flags bearing the insignia of any local, state, or federal government or agency, including the American Flag do not need a sign permit.
- ✓ Flag signs must be attached to a side of the building projecting outward in a diagonal fashion, the highest point should not be taller than the highest eave of the building

Temporary and Portable Signs

(Any movable sign not permanently attached to the ground or any building and any sign that is easily removable using ordinary hand tools, such as sandwich boards, balloon signs, and banner or flag signs is considered temporary or portable.)

- ✗ No sign shall interfere with any sight distance area or obstruct the loading or unloading of any passenger or commercial vehicle.
 - ✗ No portable sign shall be placed where the unobstructed space for the passageway of pedestrians is reduced to less than three feet.
 - ✗ Signs should not be placed in the public right of way.
 - ✓ Sign permits for temporary signs are valid up to 60 days and no more than 2 sign permits for same sign may be applied for within 1 year.
 - ✓ All temporary signs located within the regulated historic district must follow the same regulations as general signage including but not limited to review and approval by the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission.
 - ✓ Portable signs shall be placed on the sidewalk at least one foot from the curb.
 - ✓ Along streets with parallel parking, a two-foot step-out zone shall be provided ensuring that the signs are placed on the sidewalk at least two feet from curb.
 - ✓ Signs should be placed at least 20 feet from an intersection and 5 feet from a crosswalk or fire hydrant.
 - ✓ Portable signs should be freestanding and stationary on the ground, with no moving parts.
- Portable signs should only be displayed outside a commercial business, directly in front of the applicable business, during business hours
- ✓ Must be constructed of materials that present a finished appearance and edging.
 - ✓ Each face has a maximum area of 12 square feet.
 - ✓ Maximum sign height is 6 feet.

Portable Sign Example -
Sandwich Board Sign



THANK YOU!

Main Street Wilmington



This document was made for Main Street Wilmington in correspondence with Energize Clinton County and the 2018 Clinton Community Fellows Program.