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CHAPTER 3 OLD TOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Old Town is a diverse, primarily residential district that encompasses development from before the turn of the twentieth century. Homes range from grand, Victorian mansions to humble, minimal traditional homes and everything in between. Residents have emphasized that the diversity inherent in the development patterns of Old Town is a character-defining feature that must be preserved. These Guidelines will preserve the character-defining features of Old Town while also facilitating new development that is of its time and compatible with the character of the district.

Chapter 3 begins with a description of the existing character of Old Town before proceeding with Guidelines regarding the public realm, site development, landscaping, parking and driveways before describing building-specific recommendations and, finally, Guidelines for new construction within Old Town.

The Old Town Overlay District should continue to reflect the traditional character, which is predominantly single-family residential.

Design in Old Town

To assure the preservation of the unique character and historic significance of the Old Town Overlay District, a series of design goals are established for the area.

The Old Town Overlay District should continue to develop in a coordinated manner so that an overall sense of visual continuity is achieved. The dominant character of this area should be that of residential neighborhood with occasional, small scale non-residential development.

The design goals for Old Town are:

- 1 To preserve historic structures.
- 2 To continue the use of traditional building forms and materials in new construction.
- 3 To maintain the residential character of street facing façades, streets, and front yards, and the overall residential character of the area.
- 4 To preserve the character of historic houses that may be adapted to new uses.

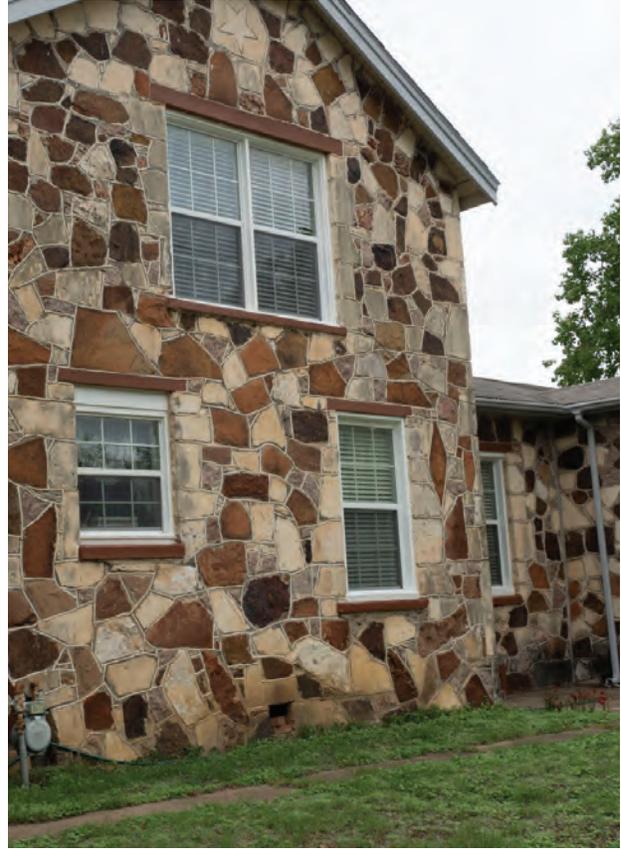
Summary of Key Characteristics

- 1** Buildings have similar setback alignment along the street.
- 2** One- to two-story, traditional residential buildings, with an occasional third floor for the grander houses.
- 3** Masonry and wood are the primary construction materials.
- 4** First floor porches and multiple windows on all façade sides and floors.
- 5** Pitched roofs.
- 6** Primary building entrance that faces the street with a walkway connected to a sidewalk along the street.
- 7** Sidewalks and typically on-street parking.
- 8** Parking accessed via a driveway with parking area or detached garage located to the rear of the main building façade.
- 9** Traditional landscape features such as large trees, shrubs, and other plantings visible from the street.
- 10** Detached garages and accessory structures.
- 11** Open and connecting front yards. Front yard fences are rare.

This area has a history of residential buildings, with some institutional uses such as churches and school, with later development of small commercial uses such as offices and small convenience retail. The residential lots were originally large, but over the years have been subdivided. This accounts for the diverse range of age styles within a single block. Non-residential uses were developed at a relatively low density, with substantial areas devoted to parking for the use. Most office uses are located within former residential structures.



Queen Anne example in Old Town.



L-R: Examples of historic homes in Old Town.

3.1.A Architectural Styles found in Old Town

A variety of architectural styles exist in Old Town. On the following pages the primary styles are described in detail-their character defining features are what make Old Town a special place. The Nominations for the Belford National Register Historic District, Olive Street National Register Historic District, and the University & Elm Street National Register Historic District offer additional insights into the unique Old Town architectural styles.

QUEEN ANNE

CIRCA 1870-1910



The Queen Anne style is typically a richly decorated style with many variations, most often with an asymmetrical design. Queen Anne houses commonly have steeply pitched roofs with irregular shapes. They frequently have towers, turrets, wrap-around porches, and other romantic, complex details. The style was based on “decorative excess” and variety. This excess was made possible by power tools and mass-produced trim work.

Characteristics:

- Steep roof
- Complicated, asymmetrical shape
- Front-facing gable
- One-story porch that extends across one or two sides of the house
- Round or square towers
- Wall surfaces textured with decorative shingles, patterned masonry, or half-timbering
- Ornamental spindles and brackets
- Bay windows
- Stained glass decoration

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



ASYMMETRICAL
Façade



TEXTURED
SURFACES



FRONT-FACING,
STEEPLY PITCHED
ROOF



OVERHANGING
EAVES



HALF-TIMBERED
WALLS

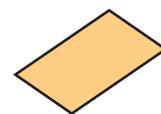


BAY WINDOWS

COMMON MATERIALS



WOOD (PAINTED)



WOOD SHINGLES

FOLK VICTORIAN

CIRCA 1870-1910



The Folk Victorian is a more middle-class, affordable version of the Queen Anne style, with basic symmetrical floor plans and simpler details. This was a common type at the turn-of-the century when mass-produced wood features were available in smaller towns because of railroad expansion. Trim and ornamentation was added to traditional folk houses. Unlike Queen Anne, typically there are no towers, bays, or elaborate moldings.

Characteristics:

- Square shape
- Porches with spindle work or jig-sawn detailing
- Gable-front and side wings
- Brackets under the eaves
- Details with Queen Anne or Italianate inspiration
- Low-pitched, pyramid-style roof

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



SQUARE SHAPE



NATIONAL FOLK
FORMS



GABLE-FRONT AND
SIDE WINGS



BRACKETS UNDER
THE EAVES



DETAILS WITH
QUEEN ANNE
OR ITALIANATE
INSPIRATION



LOW-PITCHED,
PYRAMID STYLE
ROOF

COMMON MATERIALS



WOOD (PAINTED)

CRAFTSMAN/ARTS AND CRAFTS/BUNGALOW

CIRCA 1905-1930



The Craftsman style is defined by simple design with low-pitched gable roofs with broad eaves, large front porches, and exposed wooden structural elements. Craftsman houses were bungalows that incorporated locally handcrafted wood, glass, and metal work. The style incorporates a visible sturdy structure with clean lines and natural materials. Craftsman houses include those that came from mail-order house catalogs, such as Sears.

Characteristics:

- Low-pitched roof lines, gabled or hipped roof
- Deep overhanging eaves with exposed rafters
- Open front porches
- Columns supporting the roof
- Hand-crafted design details
- 1 to 1½ stories
- Double-hung windows with multiple lights in the upper window and a single pane in the lower, some stained or leaded glass
- Wood, stone, or stucco siding
- Exterior stone chimneys
- Built-in cabinets, shelves, and seating
- Exposed rafters and beams with elaborated ends and/or supported by knee boards

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



GABLE ROOF



DEEP OVERHANGING EAVES



COLUMNS SUPPORTING THE ROOF



DOUBLE HUNG WINDOWS



VAULTED CEILING WITH EXPOSED BEAMS



EXTERIOR STONE CHIMNEY

COMMON MATERIALS

WOOD (PAINTED)



BRICK



PRAIRIE INFLUENCED

CIRCA 1893-1920



The Prairie style has low, strong horizontal lines and open interior spaces. They are one and two story houses with a central portion that rises slightly higher than the wings. Prairie houses are typically long and low with broad, overhanging eaves and broad covered porches.

Characteristics:

- Low-pitched, hip roof
- Broad overhanging eaves
- Horizontal lines
- Prominent central chimney
- Open floor plan
- Extending walls form sides of terraces and balconies
- Clerestory windows
- Ribbons of windows
- Stylized, built-in cabinetry
- Wide use of natural materials, such as wood and stone.

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



LOW-PITCHED
ROOF



BROAD OVER
HANGING EAVES



HORIZONTAL
LINES



CLERESTORY
WINDOWS



EXTENDING
WALLS FORM
SIDES OF
TERRACES



WIDE USE
OF NATURAL
MATERIAL

COMMON MATERIALS

WOOD (PAINTED)



BRICK



RANCH STYLE/AMERICAN RANCH/RAMBLER/RANCHER

CIRCA 1920-1970



The Ranch style originated in the United States and became extremely popular with the booming middle class of the mid-twentieth century. It is noted for its long, close-to-the-ground profile and minimal use of exterior and interior decoration. The design fuses modernist ideas and styles with notions of the American West working ranches to create an informal living style.

Characteristics:

- Single story
- Long, low roofline
- Asymmetrical rectangular, L-shaped, or U-shaped design
- Simple, open floor plans
- Attached garages
- Sliding glass doors opening onto a patio
- Large windows, often decorated with shutters
- Vaulted ceilings with exposed beams
- Exteriors of brick, wood, or stucco
- Large overhanging eaves
- Cross-gabled, side-gabled, or hip roof
- Simple and/or rustic interior and exterior trim

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



SINGLE STORY



LONG NARROW
ROOF LINE



ASYMMETRICAL
RECTANGULAR



LARGE
WINDOWS



LARGE
OVERHANGING
EAVES



EXTERIORS OF
WOOD

COMMON MATERIALS

WOOD (PAINTED)



HORIZONTAL
ASHLAR STONE



COMPOSITION
SHINGLES



MID-CENTURY MODERN

CIRCA 1933-1965



The Mid-Century Modern style derived from a further development of Frank Lloyd Wright's principals of organic architecture combined with many elements reflected in the International and Bauhaus movements and employs the goal of bringing modernism into America's post-war suburbs. It is noted for an emphasis on creating structures with ample windows and open floor plans with the intention of opening up interior spaces and bringing the outdoors in. Many of these houses utilized then-groundbreaking post and beam architectural design that eliminated bulky support walls in favor of walls seemingly made of glass. Function is as important as form with an emphasis placed specifically targeting the needs of the average American family.

Characteristics:

- Rectangular shape
- Flat planes and roofs
- Large glass windows
- Open interior space
- Both single and multi-story
- Most commonly used materials are glass for the façade, steel for exterior support, and concrete for the floors and interior support.
- Contemporary interiors
- Attached garages or carports

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS



RECTANGULAR IN
SHAPE



LARGE GLASS
WINDOWS



FLAT PLANES



ATTACHED
GARAGES OR
CARPORTS

COMMON MATERIALS

WOOD (PAINTED)



BRICK



3.2 Retain and Preserve

The best way to preserve historic building materials is through well-planned maintenance. Wood surfaces should be protected with a good application of paint. In some cases historic building materials may be deteriorated. When deterioration occurs, repairing the material rather than replacing it is preferred. Damaged materials can be patched or consolidated using special bonding agents.

In other situations, however, a portion of the material may be beyond repair and require replacement. The new material should match the original in appearance. It is important that the extent of replacement materials be minimized, because the original materials contribute to the authenticity of the property as an historic resource. Even when the replacement material exactly matches the original, the integrity of an historic building is to some extent compromised when extensive amounts of original materials are removed.

Rather than replace original materials, some property owners consider covering them. Aluminum and vinyl siding are examples of materials that are often discussed. However, using any material, either synthetic or conventional, to cover historic materials is inappropriate. Doing so would obscure the original character and change the dimensions of walls, which are particularly noticeable around door and window openings. The extra layer may in fact cause additional decay by its method of attachment, because it may trap moisture inside the wall and because it also creates cavities in which insects can live. For similar reasons, if original wall materials are presently covered with a more recent siding, consider removing the outer layer and restore the original. When damaged, these materials can also be more difficult to repaint, repair, or replace.

Building materials and their characteristics such as scale, texture, and finish contribute significantly to the character of a structure. The best way to preserve many of these features is through well-planned maintenance.



Original historic window.



Detail of deteriorated wall on building.

3.2.A Original building materials should be preserved in place, whenever feasible.

A.1 Maintain existing wall materials and textures.

- a. Remove only those materials that are deteriorated and must be replaced.
- b. Avoid rebuilding a major portion of an exterior wall that could be repaired. Reconstruction may result in a building that is no longer historic.
- c. In many cases, original building materials may not be damaged beyond repair and do not require replacement. Repainting wood, ensuring proper drainage, and keeping the material clean may be all that is necessary.

3.2.B Deteriorated building materials should be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible.

B.1 When deterioration occurs, repair the material and any other related problems. It is also important to recognize that all materials weather over time and that a scarred finish does not represent an inferior material, but simply reflects the age of the building. Preserving original materials that show signs of wear is preferred to replacing them.

3.2.C Repair deteriorated primary building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the materials.

C.1 Avoid the removal of damaged materials that can be repaired.

C.2 Isolated areas of damage may be stabilized or fixed, using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair. Also, special masonry repair components may be used.

3.2.D Use technical procedures that preserve, clean, refinish, or repair historic materials and finishes.

D.1 A professional experienced in the cleaning of historic buildings should be consulted to advise on the best, lowest impact method of cleaning that is appropriate for a project.

D.2 Perform a test patch to determine that the cleaning method will cause no damage to the material's surface or to surrounding materials. Many procedures, such as sandblasting, are not appropriate as they permanently erode building materials and finishes and accelerate deterioration.

D.3 If cleaning is appropriate, a low-pressure water and detergent wash, using plastic or fiber bristle brushes, is encouraged. A steam wash may also be considered.

D.4 Clean masonry only when necessary to arrest deterioration (but not for cosmetic reasons).



Restoration of existing structure with new compatible materials.



Detail of historic preservation of a window.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings, published by the National Park Service.



Restoration of existing structure.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors, published by the National Park Service.

3.2.E Original building materials that have deteriorated beyond repair should be replaced in kind.

E.1 While restoration of the original material or feature is the preferred alternative, in some situations a portion of the original building material may be beyond repair. Replacement should occur only if the existing historic material cannot be reasonably repaired.

E.2 Match the original material in composition, scale and finish when replacing it on a primary surface.

a. If the original material is wood clapboard, for example, then the replacement material should be wood or fiber cement. It should match the original in size, the amount of exposed lap, and finish.

b. Replace only the amount required. If a few boards are damaged beyond repair, then only replace them and not the entire wall.

c. Do not use synthetic materials, such as aluminum, vinyl siding, or panelized brick, as replacements for primary building materials on an historic structure.

d. Where foundation skirting or underpinning has been damaged beyond repair or replacement, replace with the same material as the original. If the original material is not known or not available, foundation skirting may be replaced with fiber cement siding that is compatible with the style of the historic structure. If a foundation skirting material is known to be characteristic of an architectural style or builder's style,

replace with the original material or a fiber cement product with an appearance similar to the original appearance.

3.2.F The covering of original building materials is not appropriate.

F.1 Historic building materials or features shall not be covered.

F.2 No material shall be applied as a covering to historic materials. Synthetic stucco, panelized brick, vinyl, aluminum, or other composite siding materials are not appropriate.

F.3 Consider removing materials that cover original siding.

a. Removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance is encouraged.

b. In some instances a later covering may have achieved historic significance, especially if it was applied early in the building's history. When this is the case, the later covering may be maintained on the structure.

c. Once the covering siding has been removed, repair the original underlying material. If the underlying material is damaged to the extent it must be replaced, replacing with the original material is preferred. Fiber cement siding and trim may be used as replacement siding when the primary wood siding material has been damaged or has deteriorated to the point that repair or partial replacement are not feasible. The fiber cement siding and/or trim should match the original siding in profile, dimension, and texture as closely as possible.



Detail of original porch.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings.



Detail of wood siding.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork, published by the National Park Service.

3.2.G Original wood should be protected against moisture and deterioration.

Wood appears frequently in Georgetown. It is used for siding, trim, windows, doors and porches. To preserve the wood, it is important to maintain its painted finish.

G.1 Protect wood features from deterioration.

a. Provide proper drainage and ventilation to minimize rot.

b. Maintain protective coatings to prevent drying and ultraviolet damage. Exterior wood walls should be painted, not stained. If the building was painted historically, it should remain painted, including all trim.

G.2 Plan repainting carefully.

a. A frequent repainting may cause a buildup of paint layers that obscures architectural details. When this occurs, consider stripping paint layers to retrieve details. However, if stripping is necessary, use the gentlest means possible, being careful not to damage architectural details and finishes.

b. Good preparation is key to successful repainting, but the buildup of old paint layers is an important historic record of the building. The removal of old paint, by the gentlest means possible, should be undertaken only if necessary to the success of the repainting.

c. Old paint may contain lead. Precautions should be taken when sanding or scraping is necessary.

d. Prepare a good substrate and use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond well to earlier oil-based paints without a primer coat.

3.2.H Masonry construction should be preserved in its original condition.

Many buildings include brick or stone for structural walls, foundation piers, and chimneys. Although it is a very durable material, masonry is not invulnerable. Therefore the proper maintenance and preservation of masonry is important.

H.1 Preserve the original mortar joint and unit size, the tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color of masonry surfaces. Original mortar, in good condition, should be preserved in place.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #1: **The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings**, published by the National Park Service.

H.2 Repoint only those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing.

- a. Duplicate the old mortar in strength, composition, color, texture and joint width, and profile.
- b. Mortar joints should be cleared with hand tools. Using electric saws and hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick.
- c. Do not use mortar with a high percentage of Portland cement or white masonry cement content. It will be harder than the masonry and will not allow for expansion and contraction. The result is deterioration of the material itself.
- d. A mortar formula containing lime should fill the joint but should not overfill it, and it should not be smeared on the faces of the masonry units.



Detail of stone siding.

NOTE: See also Preservation Briefs #1: **The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings**, published by the National Park Service.

See also Preservation Briefs #1: **The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings**, published by the National Park Service.



Example of EIFS covering historic limestone. Not appropriate treatment.

3.2.I Masonry that was not painted historically shall not be painted.

Painting masonry walls can seal in moisture already in the masonry, thereby not allowing it to breathe and causing extensive damage over the years.

3.2.J Protect masonry from water deterioration.

Provide proper drainage so that water does not stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in decorative features.

Neighborhood-wide design guidelines

The Design Guidelines are intended to help maintain and enhance the character of Old Town by providing direction for the design and construction of structures within the entire neighborhood.

The Guidelines laid out in Chapter 3 represent the overall character of Old Town and therefore apply throughout the neighborhood. They represent the essence of the design character of the entire area.

The guidelines deal first with the larger issues of the public realm, then move to the design of the site/lot, and then finally to the design of the structure on the lot. This pattern of addressing how the design fits into the neighborhood, then into the block will hopefully put the design of the structure into perspective.

If the design aligns with the patterns of the neighborhood, and is in context with other structures on the block, then the design has already come a long way towards being compatible. Then the architectural style and detailing can be discussed in a productive manner. The long and arduous task of using the architectural details to solve a fundamental siting or scale issue can be avoided.