

# CHESTNUT/MEEM HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES



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# CHESTNUT/MEEM HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Adopted by  
the City of Gaithersburg Historic District Commission  
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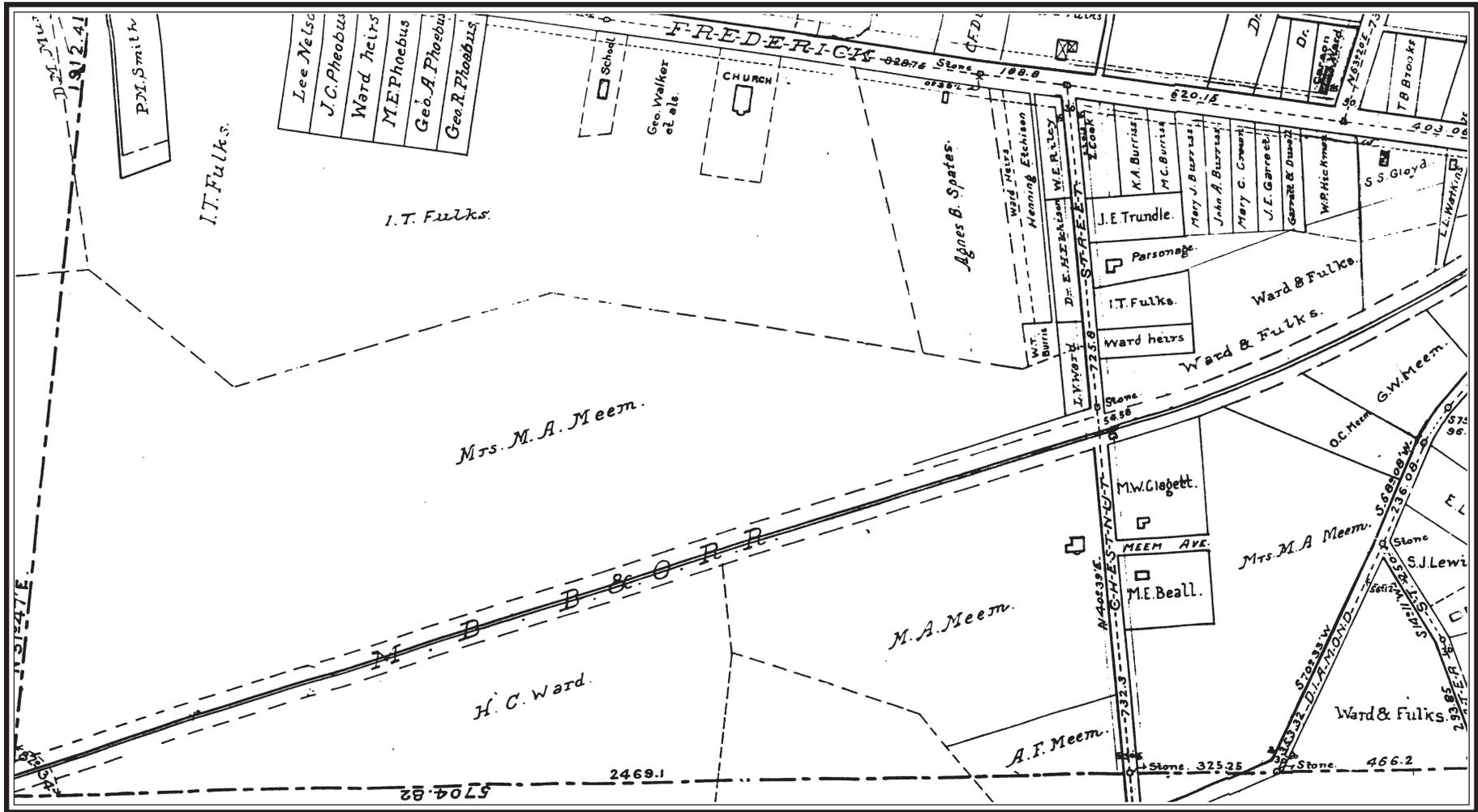
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Part of Map - Gaithersburg Showing Corporate Limits. Survey by C. J. Maddox Jr., August 1894.

# HISTORY OF THE AREA

*Taken from "Martha Meem's 200 Acres" by historian Judith A. Christensen.*

This residential area, with its mature trees and variety of housing styles, lies in a pocket of the City, connecting Gaithersburg's beginnings to 20th century life. Although this area visually illustrates three development periods, it retains its dominant overall Victorian quality. The two and one-half story Victorians are sited on large half-acre lots and dominate the smaller one-story ramblers and cape cods which form the modern infill.

Long, narrow house lots, with equally spaced houses, border both Chestnut Street and the residential half of Meem Avenue. A high amount of daily traffic passes through the neighborhood using the same streets and railroad tracks as the earliest settlers. The district is part of the original 200-acre farm purchased by Martha A. Meem in 1863.

## **First Stage (1846-1896)**

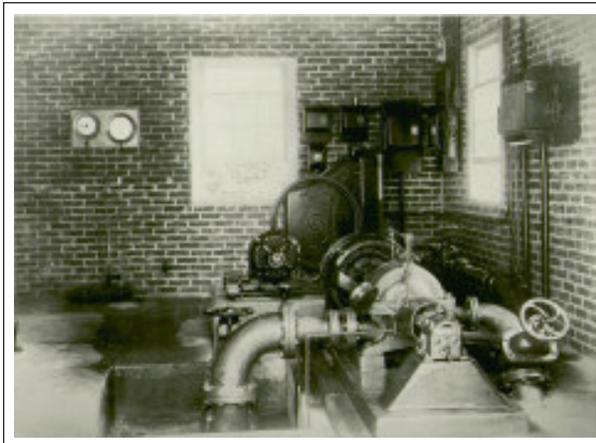
At this time, the area was largely forested, with small clearings for farming, and had abundant wildlife. After the War Between the States(1861-1865), a few farms or estates, dotted the area. Several rough roads, once Indian trails, followed the ridges and valleys etching the base for current day Frederick Avenue and West Diamond Avenue. The land was attractive for farming because of its fertile land watered by numerous springs and streams and for its accessibility to freight, mail, and stage coach service on the Georgetown-Fredericktown Road.

In 1873, the railroad was built and waiting sheds for passengers appeared along its tracks. Commercial activity rapidly increased and a short cut through Martha Meem's 200-acre estate that connected Frederick Road and Barnesville Road (now West Diamond Avenue), grew into a dirt road which was to become Chestnut Street. Victorian houses were built along these roads around 1891, and the first few telephone poles and wires appeared.

## Second Stage (1896-1948)

During this time, some additional houses were built on parts of the larger estates as the children of the original families married, had families of their own, and built close to their parents. Many of these homes were smaller and built in the vernacular, foursquare, and Craftsman bungalow styles. Chicken houses and gardens were common, and some residents kept milk cows and horses up to the 1920s.

In 1913, electricity came to the City, and wires and poles were strung along the streets which were still dirt and gravel. A large commercial building was constructed along the railroad tracks in 1917 to house the Thomas Cannery. Its simple lines reflected its practical use. In 1926, the brick pump houses and metal water tanks were built by the Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission (W.S.S.C.) along West Diamond Avenue to bring water and sewerage service to the City. The area around Meem and Chestnut developed a utilitarian and somewhat hodge-podge appearance, but the large Victorian houses and mature trees remained unchanged during this “modernization” of the neighborhood.



*Gaithersburg Water Pumping Station. Pumping Unit,  
June 25, 1929.  
Courtesy of W.S.S.C.*

## Third Stage (1949-1995)

In 1949, the Montgomery County Agricultural Center (the Fairgrounds) was established on the property adjacent to the B & O Railroad between Chestnut Street and Perry Parkway. This 64-acre tract, once part of the Meem family’s 200 acres, received its first brick and concrete buildings in 1949 when the County Fair was moved from Rockville to this new location. The quiet rural quality changes each August when thousands throng to the fairgrounds for the annual County Fair.

The Chestnut/Meem area, as a whole, remained sparsely developed until the 1950s when the land was resubdivided into smaller lots to accommodate the growing City’s housing needs. This wave of housing was mostly one-story ramblers and cape cod residences which still exist today. The smaller ramblers and bungalows, neatly and equally spaced along rural-like streets, some of which have no sidewalks or formal curbs and guttering, complement the original Victorian homes which still dominate the streetscapes. Tall oak trees shield the small houses from the heavy railroad and highway traffic.

# HOUSE STYLES

There are several basic styles of homes among the contributing resources in the Chestnut/Meem area. Each will be addressed in turn and details of that style included.

## LATE VICTORIAN



*French and Second Empire Revival Style.  
Drawing by John Bauer.*

### French and Second Empire Revival

The distinguishing feature of the Second Empire is the mansard roof, a double slope on all four sides. Between about 1855 and 1885, this new style from France was enthusiastically adopted in America. The Second Empire style often has Italianate features: a low pitched roof or low hipped roof with large, supportive, and decorative brackets. Second Empire structures are usually at least two or three stories high, sometimes four, not counting the attic story. While masonry was the preferred building material for mansions, most mansard-roofed houses were of light, balloon-frame construction with wooden siding. Ample windows set in bays and oriels let in light. Other features include: bay windows on the side, floor-length windows, gabled dormers, and louvered shutters.

The Chestnut/Meem neighborhood has one French and Second Empire Revival influenced house at 104 Chestnut Street (c. 1879).

## Queen Anne

The Queen Anne displays the entire panorama of Victorian decorations. Built between 1880 and 1910, the style is characterized by: irregular house shapes; multiple projections from walls, including bay windows, towers, turrets, porches, and balconies; decorative trim, including patterned shingles, brackets, and belt courses. Stained, leaded, and etched glass were common. The style emphasized vertical lines, with plenty of steep gables, and very few flat wall surfaces. Often present is spindle work, a 19th century American ornament which features short turned wooden posts. Along with an efficient railway system, the newly invented turning lathe made it cheap and easy to decorate houses. It was important to have not just one roof, but several, peaked or hipped or both. Roofs may have finials, verge boards, brackets, and ironwork cresting. Chimneys are tall, often with carvings or terra cotta panels.

The Chestnut/Meem neighborhood has one Queen Anne house, at 102 Chestnut Street (c. 1902).



*Queen Anne Style. Drawing by John Bauer.*

## FOURSQUARE

This style may be seen as a stripped down version of late 18th and 19th century forms. The roofline is pyramidal or hipped, and not usually gabled. The Foursquare is simple, with four rooms on each of two floors. The house usually has a front porch, which may turn the corner on one side. The simplest have two single windows on the second floor. More elegant ones may have two double or triple windows. There may be a low, small dormer with a flat or pyramidal roof. Foursquares were most commonly built in frame and stuccoed frame, but are also found in stone and brick. Other common features are: cubicle massing, center hall symmetry, a full-width veranda, and modest classical or colonial detailing.

The Chestnut/Meem neighborhood has two Foursquares, at 108 (c. 1920) and 115 (c. 1911) Meem Avenue.

*Foursquare Style.  
Drawing by John Bauer.*



*Bungalow Style.  
Drawing by John Bauer.*

## BUNGALOW

Built between 1900 and World War I, these homes are often considered to be “the perfect small house.” The true bungalow is a relatively long, low, one or one-and-one-half story building with a conspicuous roof, overhanging eaves, and an ample front porch included under the main roof structure. It was intended to relate in scale and color to the surrounding shrubbery and trees, so was built snug to the ground. The bungalow was usually covered in shingles or shakes in natural earth tones, less commonly with clapboard or stucco. Dormer windows, porches and pergolas were common. Low, sweeping gable roofs often shelter the front porch. Piers and posts were commonly battered or sloped wooden posts.

The Chestnut/Meem neighborhood has three bungalows, at 106 (c. 1919) and 104 (c. 1917), and 114 (c. 1937) Meem Avenue.

## COTTAGE

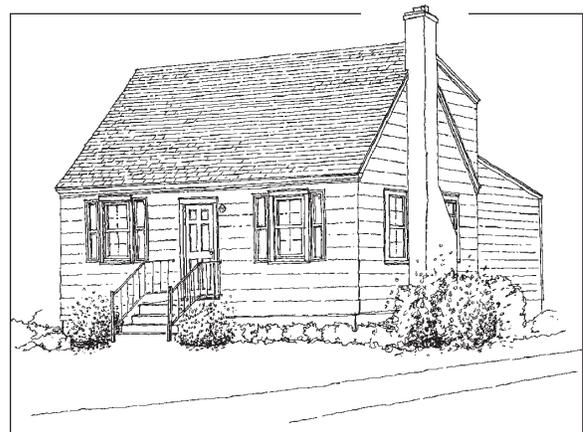
These are usually one or one-and-one-half story buildings and frequently have a large upstairs. The style was inspired by the shingle style of the 1870s. In contrast to the bungalow, cottages are more vertically oriented. They are most often built in frame or stucco over frame, and only occasionally of brick or stone. The front porches are standard, but may not extend across the front of the building. The plan may be rectangular or L-shaped, always with an informal and picturesque effect. The windows are varied, tending to be more vertical than horizontal. When ornamented, it may be in the style of Queen Anne.

### Cape Cod

Cape Cods are small, white, one or one-and-one-half story clapboard cottages with no front porch, very little ornamentation, and a simple gable roof with dormers. The chimney is centered and thrusts through the ridge of a steeply pitched, wood-shingled roof. Unlike contemporary Cape Cods, in the early style the door did not line up exactly with the centered chimney. Instead, the door was centered and flanked by two pairs of windows, which typically had shutters and small panes of glass.

By 1740 the Cape Cod cottage could be seen throughout New England; they made their way to the Midwest by 1830. The Cape Cod usually featured Greek revival details, although many existing today have a Colonial Revival influence. The Cape Cod cottage style is found all across America because it is simple and durable and was adapted to mail-order housing after World War II.

The Chestnut/ Meem neighborhood has two Cape Cods, at 107 (c. 1938) and 109 (c. 1938) Chestnut Street.



*Cape Cod Style. Drawing by John Bauer.*

### Craftsman Influence on Cottages

The Craftsman influence is seen on homes built from 1890 to World War I. The style developed in response to the American middle-class demand for affordable, efficient, and attractive suburban homes. Borrowed from the American Shingle Style, English Arts and Crafts, and the Colonial Revival, these homes emphasized functionality, simplicity, and use of local materials. They are characterized by exposed rafters, exterior chimneys, and wood shingles.

The Chestnut/Meem neighborhood has two Craftsman influenced cottages, at 105 (c. 1910) and 115 (c. 1911-1913) Chestnut Street.

### References:

- Massey, James C. and Maxwell, Shirley. *House Styles in America*, 1996.
- Sinclair, Peg B. and Lewis, Taylor B. *Victorious Victorians*, 1985.
- Gowans, Alan. *Images of American Living*, 1964.
- Pomada, Elizabeth and Larsen, Michael. *The Painted Ladies Revisited*, 1989.
- Erickson, Janet Doub. *Old House Journal*, Jan/Feb, 1991.

# OTHER BUILDINGS

## WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITATION COMMISSION (W.S.S.C.) SITE

Three small brick buildings and a water tank remain of Gaithersburg's first water plant built in 1926-1928. Located along West Diamond Avenue, the existing structures are tucked in among mature trees and dot the grassy area which surrounds a modern, brick building used as a day care. The green-colored metal water tank is approximately thirty feet in diameter, about one story high, and has an entrance door visible from the current parking lot. It is a squatty, round structure, with a lightly sloping top, and can hold about 50,000 gallons of water.



*Washington Suburban  
Sanitary Commission Site, 1998.*

The small brick buildings are identical to one another, each being about ten feet square and one story high with slate hip roofs. The sides of the buildings are one bay each; one facade has an entrance door; the rear is solid brick; and the other two sides each have one window (currently boarded up, but probably originally six-over-six). These mimicked the design of the largest pumping station, now demolished for the widening of West Diamond Avenue.

## THOMAS CANNERY

Thomas and Company Cannery, built in 1917, was the first, largest, and longest operating food cannery in Montgomery County. It provided a local market for area farmers and jobs and income to the community.

*The extent to which the Thomas Cannery dominated its surrounding economy, from cultivated farmland to road traffic to employment to sewage management, makes it an important example of the seasonal frenzies that once characterized Maryland vegetable canning.*

*Beyond its economic and social symbolism, the architecture of the Thomas cannery provides good clues to the nature of Maryland canning. The double-thick exterior brick walls and vented clerestory speaks of the permanence built into this facility, unlike the wood-frame sheds thrown up in other agricultural regions and now quite gone. The once strong and pervasive presence of Maryland vegetable canning can now be found only in such surviving structures.<sup>1</sup>*

Fire damaged the cannery building in 1962 when local agricultural production was waning in favor of suburban development, and the cannery operation was not resumed. The brick cannery and storehouse building, now vacant, retains its characteristic World War I era industrial architectural features and is ready for restoration and rehabilitation.

<sup>1</sup> David H. Shayt, Specialist, Arts & Trades, National Museum of American History, February 20, 1990.



*Thomas Cannery, 1998.*

## CARRIAGE HOUSE

This structure is at the rear of the Chesline Apartments and was built about 1890. It is about a story and a half high and inside is divided into a carriage storage area and a second portion that has a stall, steps, and a hayloft. The cupolas have been removed for safe keeping until plans for restoration materialize.



*Carriage House, 1998.*  
*Judith Christensen, photographer.*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

## STREETSCAPE

Streetscapes are the interface between the public space and the private space along a road, street or avenue. Sometimes there is a rigid demarcation between the public and private space, other times the spaces are combined as one. The Chestnut/Meem streetscapes combine the private and public space. There are no fences, hedges or barriers between the public spaces (streets and sidewalks) and the front yards. Most of the plantings are for shade, accent or pleasure rather than to screen or block views.

- The streetscapes should remain open with canopy trees or understory trees randomly placed along the space.
- The planting of large deciduous trees is encouraged.
- Any hedges or large massing of plant material should not block or screen views along the streetscape and adjacent side yards.

Long term care of the trees in the streetscape is an important part of the maintaining the overall feeling of the neighborhood.

## LANDSCAPE

Trees and plants play a major part in defining the neighborhood. There are a number of trees of notable size and the loss of any major tree will have a strong visual impact. The loss of one canopy tree would greatly affect light, space enclosure, and view sheds of the neighborhood.

- Removal of live trees two inches in caliper and larger require a permit.
- Removal of a tree may require a replacement tree of two and one-half inches caliper which, if advisable, should be planted close to the original location.

A planting plan, designed for the long term growth of the trees and shrubs, should highlight and accent the house, not screen or hide it. Native material should be selected and if possible, match the period and character of the neighborhood.

Suggested plant list:      Large deciduous trees: oaks, hickories, ashes, elms, poplars  
   Understory trees: dogwoods, redbuds, witch hazels, cherries, plum, magnolias  
   Shrubs: rhododendrons, azaleas, viburnums, spirea, weigela, pieris, roses

Reference:                      City Arborist, Planning and Code Administration  
   Maryland Historic Trust Web Page  
   *Gaithersburg City Tree Manual*

## STREETS, DRIVEWAYS, AND ALLEYS

Street widths are very important to any neighborhood, not only visually, but for traffic control. Chestnut Street dates back to the very earliest days of the neighborhood and as a street has an interesting history. In order to preserve the residential character, the following are recommended.

- Street and alley widths should not be expanded past their current sizes.
- Curb and gutter should be of concrete, brick, or stone.
- Changes to driveway materials should be avoided, unless changes would present a historically accurate appearance.
- Any new or replacement public sidewalks should be compatible with those being installed in Olde Towne.

## RETAINING WALLS

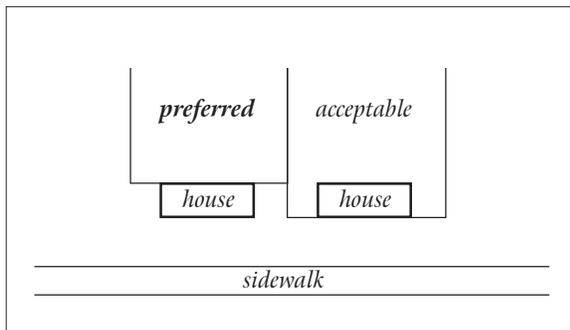
While retaining walls are not common in the area, they exist and there might be an occasion when they might be necessary.

- Retaining walls which are visible from the public way should be of natural materials, such as brick, wood, and stone or decorative concrete block

## FENCES

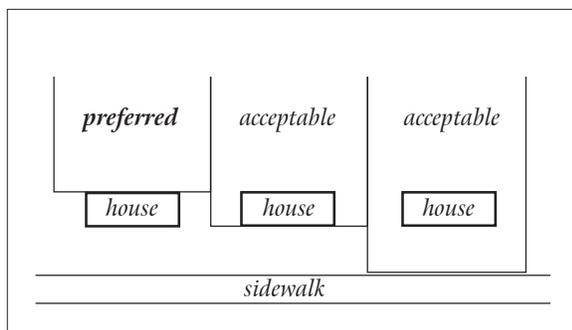
There are no fences, hedges or barriers between the public spaces and front yards.

### Front Yard Fence Placement



- *Meem Avenue*

Fence placement begins at the front or rear corners of the house and extends to the rear.

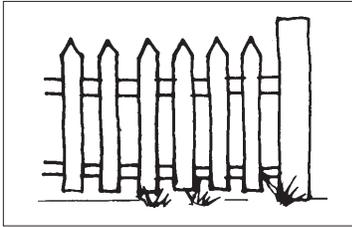


- *Chestnut Street*

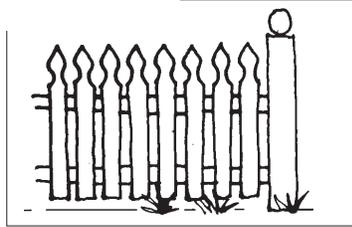
Fence placement begins at the front or rear corners of the house and extends to the rear. Additional placement adjacent to the front sidewalk may also be permitted due to traffic and other concerns affecting Chestnut Street residences.

## Front Yard Fence Styles

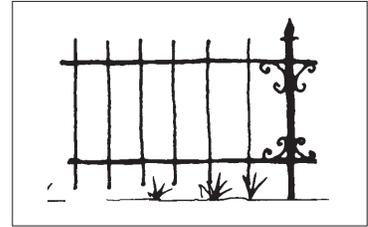
- Fences are quality wooden picket or wrought iron. Wood must be painted or stained a consistent color compatible with the house. Height should not exceed three feet.



*Wooden pickets*



*Wooden pickets*

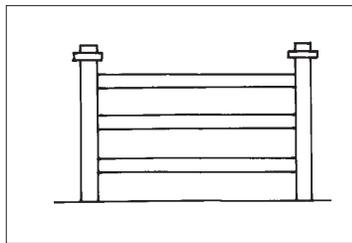


*Wrought iron*

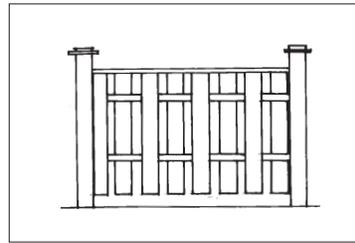
## Rear Yard Fence Placement and Styles

- Privacy fencing over five feet and of a style which will block sight lines is unacceptable. Exceptions may be for property lines at the boundary of the district.
- Chain link fences should not be replaced in-kind. Replacement should be with a style appropriate to the district.

### *Acceptable Fence Styles*

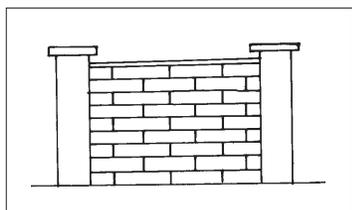


*Open 3 rail fence combined with wire for pet containment*

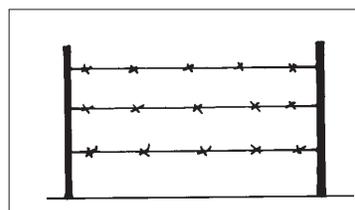


*Open board on board*

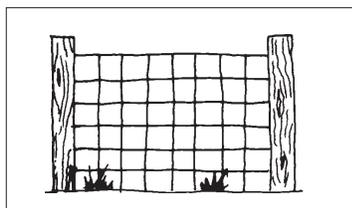
### *Unacceptable Fence Styles*



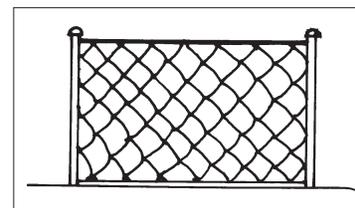
*Masonry brick or block*



*Barbed wire*



*Turkey or chicken wire*



*Chain link*

- Fencing may not be reviewed as being in the category of a yard ornament.
- Vegetation is preferred to fencing, and hedges should follow the directives for fence placement.

Reference: *Gaithersburg City Code*, Chapter 24, Section 24-167.  
*Respectful Rehabilitation: Answers to your Questions on Historic Buildings*. National Historical Trust, Washington, D.C.  
 Freeman, John Crosby. "Fences and Gates for Post-Victorian Houses," *Old House Journal*, March, 1986.  
 Labine, Clem. "The Disappearing Wood Fence," *Old House Journal*, June, 1983.  
 Poore, Jonathan. "The Best Way to Build a Fence," *Old House Journal*, June, 1983.

## HOUSE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Gaithersburg's historic homes are noted for simple, solid lines of a conservative, semi-rural past. The larger homes on Chestnut Street, in particular the Meem House, demonstrate that Chestnut Street was clearly intended to be a prestigious area of grand homes.

- New, additional, and replacement construction work on existing houses should be compatible with the style descriptions of the contributing resources.
- Contributing resources are encouraged to restore their properties to their original features, or alternatively, to explore the full potential of the described style.
- Mixing elements from different styles and periods is unacceptable.

Each home should be documented in detail, including written descriptions, in photographs, and slides. Efforts should be made to maintain the original exterior of the home. It is encouraged to rebuild details and features lost over time.

Reference: Preservation Brief 17: "Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
 Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.  
 See pages 5-10 "House Styles" in this book.

## MATERIALS

A historic home is a “living” example of the past. It can offer the public a view of the styles and materials from an age of quality and craftsmanship. These homes serve as an inspiration to future generations to strive for beauty and quality.

- 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.
- 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, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Reference: Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

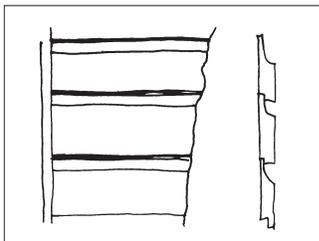
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## SIDING

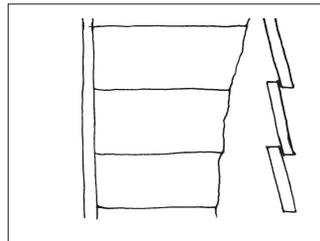
Original siding is predominantly wood in the German, lap, or beveled lap styles. Many of the older homes have been covered over with synthetic siding.

- It is strongly encouraged to remove synthetic siding and restore the original.
- Synthetic siding, such as aluminum, vinyl, and others, is not acceptable because these materials are visually incompatible with original district materials and can negatively affect original features such as windows and trim.

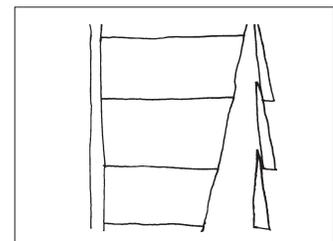
There are several homes originally clad in siding that is now considered hazardous, i.e. asbestos shingle. The replacement of this material, if necessary, should be carefully considered. If a material is developed in the future that can provide an appearance that is historic, it may be used on a case-by-case basis.



*German siding*



*Lap siding*



*Beveled lap siding*

Reference: Preservation Brief 8: “Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## PORCHES

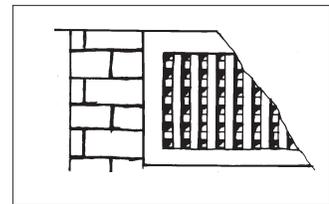
The open front porches contribute to the open feeling in the area.

- Front porches, including wrap-around, should be open. They may not be enclosed or screened in.
- Porches should have appropriate railings and/or columns if part of the original design.
- Side porches, *if not part of a wrap-around porch*, may be enclosed and made into living space provided:
  - the enclosure has the same siding as the house.
  - the windows and doors are proportionate in size to the house.
  - the windows and doors are of similar design and material as the main house.

Reference: Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## LATTICE

- Latticework porch underskirtings are made of 1/4” thick wood strips, nailed at 90 degree angles and enclosed in a frame. Either diagonal or vertical orientation is acceptable. Modern prefabricated heavy-weight lattice enclosed in wood frames may be substituted if approved.

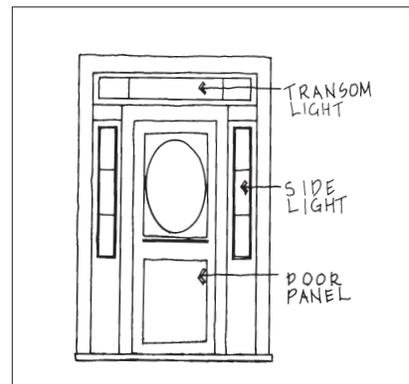
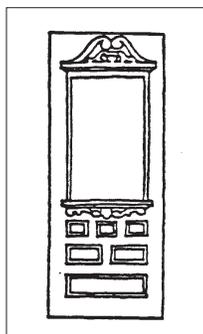
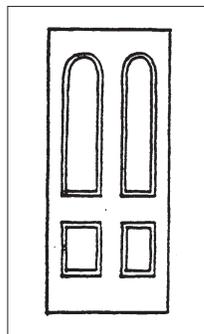
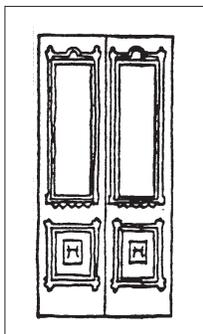


Reference: Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## DOORS AND STORM DOORS

Home owners are encouraged to consider the style and character of the house when planning changes to the front and storm doors. Front doors are of wood, some with elegant carved ornamentation and others with simple wood panels. Glass panes in the doors range from simple to ornate, single to multiple.

- Front doors should be of wood and in the style of the house.



- Storm/screen doors should allow the front door to be visible.

If a screen door is to be installed, select a door with as much open screen/glass area as possible to minimize interference with the appearance of the original and lessen contrast.

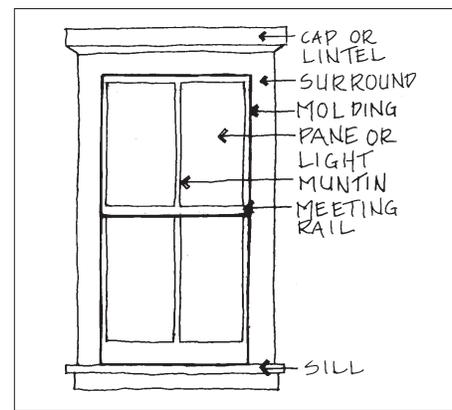
- Retain, repair or duplicate original door frames, molding, and hardware.

Reference: Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
 Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.  
 Preservation Brief 3: “Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

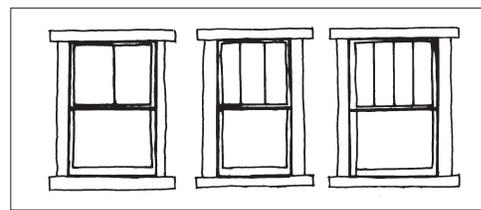
## WINDOWS AND STORM WINDOWS

The real determination of the level of significance of a window should be made within the context of the whole building. After all the factors have been considered, windows become significant to a building if they:

- are original,
- reflect the original design intent for the building,
- reflect period or regional styles or buildings practices,
- reflect changes to the building resulting from major periods or event, or
- are examples of exceptional craftsmanship or design.



*Most common windows*



*Less common windows*

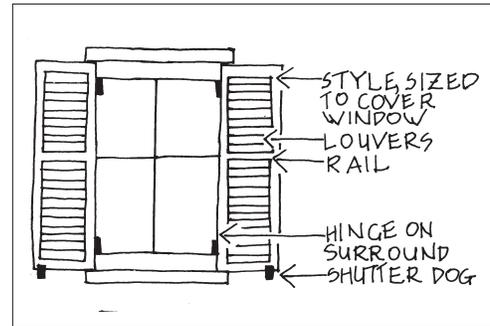
- Windows vary in number of lights (panes) characterizing their respective home styles. Retain, repair or duplicate original sash, glass, and lintels.
- Storm windows need not be of wood, and should minimize interference with the appearance of the original window. They should be finished to match the color of the window and frame and be inset. The meeting rails of the storm sash must align with those of existing windows.

Reference: Preservation Brief 3: “Conserving Energy in Historic Building.”  
 Preservation Brief 9: “The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows”  
 Preservation Brief 13: “The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows”  
 Preservation Brief 17: “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
 Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.  
 The Window Handbook, available for reference at Gaithersburg City Hall.  
 Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions Handbook, available for reference at Gaithersburg City Hall.

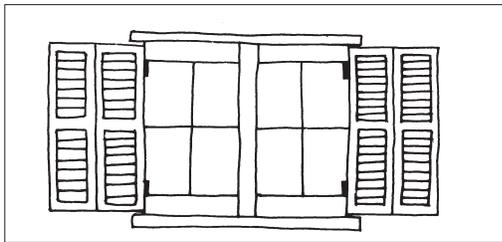
## SHUTTERS

Many structures are equipped with shutters. When replacing or adding shutters to a structure, be sure that they appear to actually work. Vinyl shutters are decorative only and therefore cannot function as protection from the weather. Aluminum shutters do not resemble wood, dent easily, and wear quickly.

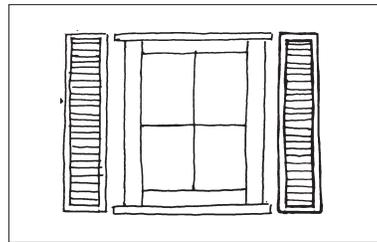
- Shutters should be sized, placed, and attached to appear functional.
- Shutters should be of wood and attached to the wood casing.



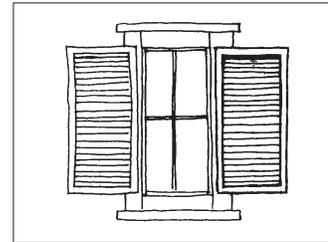
*Properly installed*



*Properly sized*



*Too long and narrow*



*Shutters too wide*

Reference: Shutter Source book, *Old House Journal* May-June, 1993.  
Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions Handbook, available for reference at Gaithersburg City Hall.  
Preservation Brief 17: "Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## ROOFING

In the Chestnut/Meem district there are few examples of original roofing materials remaining. Care should be exercised prior to replacing these with modern materials.

- Original materials should be retained/matched/restored, if possible.
- The size, shape, and texture of the original materials should be matched, if possible.

Reference: Preservation Brief 4: "Roofing for Historic Buildings." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Preservation Brief 17: "Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## PAINTING

The choice of color is traditionally not reviewed in the City's historic areas.

- Color selection is the property owner's choice. Historic accuracy is encouraged.
- The original color and texture of masonry surfaces should be maintained.

Reference: Preservation Brief 10: "Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Preservation Brief 17: "Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character." National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
Note: This brief also contains a checklist and questionnaire.

## ACCESSORY BUILDINGS/OUTBUILDINGS

These are important to the site and context of the neighborhood as is the main house and should be well maintained. These include various types of garages, outdoor storage sheds, trash receptacles, and children's playhouses.

- Garages and storage sheds should be similar in architectural style as the main house.
- Screen or conceal trash receptacles.
- Erect children's play equipment in the rear yard.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

Homes may be added on to, and in the event of destruction of existing homes, or resubdivision, new homes may be built in the historic district using the following guidelines:

### *New Homes*

- New work must harmonize with the character and scale of the neighborhood and, whether infill or as replacement for an existing structure, be compatible with contributing existing single family homes in height, scale, materials, elevations, texture, color, and details.
- Setbacks of new construction should correlate with the existing physical setbacks and lot widths to preserve the current streetscape.

### *Additions*

- New work must harmonize with the character and scale of the existing house. The new work shall be differentiated from the old. It shall be compatible in height, scale, materials, elevations, texture, color, and details.

### *Second Story Additions*

- New work must harmonize with the character and scale of the existing house. It should be compatible in scale, materials, elevations, textures, color, and details.

Reference: Preservation Brief 14: “New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns.” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
“Respectful Rehabilitation: Answers to your Questions on Historic Buildings.” National Trust, Washington, D.C.

### **SIGNS**

Signage is an important visual entity. A separate sign permit is required for the installation of any sign, except for political, for rent, or for sale signs. The City Code lists size, height and other requirements.

- The signs for home occupations shall be non-illuminated and not exceed a total area of two square feet. They may be affixed to the building and should not protrude more than one foot beyond the building.
- Wood is the preferred material.

Reference: *Gaithersburg City Code*, Section 24-116, c.4.

# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT INFORMATION

## *Is my property designated historic?*

To confirm the status of your property, refer to the map of the historic district or contact the Planning and Code Administration.

## *What makes a property historic?*

Any resource which contributes to the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural values of the City is considered to be “historic.”

## *How do I know if my property in the designated district is “contributing” or “non-contributing,” and how does that affect the historic area work permit review process?*

Contributing resources are those older buildings which contribute to the historical sense of the place of a neighborhood. (These are identified on the map of the district. See page 1.) The non-contributing resources are the newer buildings (less than fifty years old) that are in the district. All sites in a designated district are reviewed for changes to the exterior as listed below, with a stricter review being given to the historic sites.

## *How does the designation of “contributing” or “non-contributing” affect tax credits?*

Contributing resources, both residential and income-producing, are eligible for Montgomery County and Maryland State tax credits. Commercial and “income-producing” historic properties may also be eligible for the federal tax credit. Non-contributing resources in a designated district in Montgomery County may be eligible for the Montgomery Ten-Percent Property Tax Credit. Criteria for the tax credits must be met.

## *What should I think about when I consider changes to my home?*

- Try to retain as much of the original materials, details, and design as possible.
- Eliminate modern elements which would diminish the features that define historic character.
- Avoid using styles from earlier periods to “age” your home.
- Take before and after photographs.

## *When don't I need a work permit?*

You will not need a historic area work permit for interior work, regular maintenance of the exterior, such as painting, repair, replacement work with materials of like-kind and design, or for temporary sale signs or political advertisement.

## *When must I acquire a historic area work permit?*

You should apply for and acquire a historic area work permit before you do any “constructing, reconstructing, demolishing, or in any manner modifying, changing or altering the exterior features.” (City Code Sec.24-288 a.1)

Specifically, a historic area work permit is needed for all sites in a designated district for:

- demolishing the building or any part thereof
- new construction or enlargement
- removal or enclosure of porches
- basic alteration of materials

- installation or removal of fences
- permanent removal of shutters
- modification of paving materials
- removal or installation of signs
- removal, modification, or alteration of exterior architectural features
- painting or removal of paint on masonry items
- infringement on archaeological sites
- removal of live trees

***Who reviews and decides on the historic area work permits?***

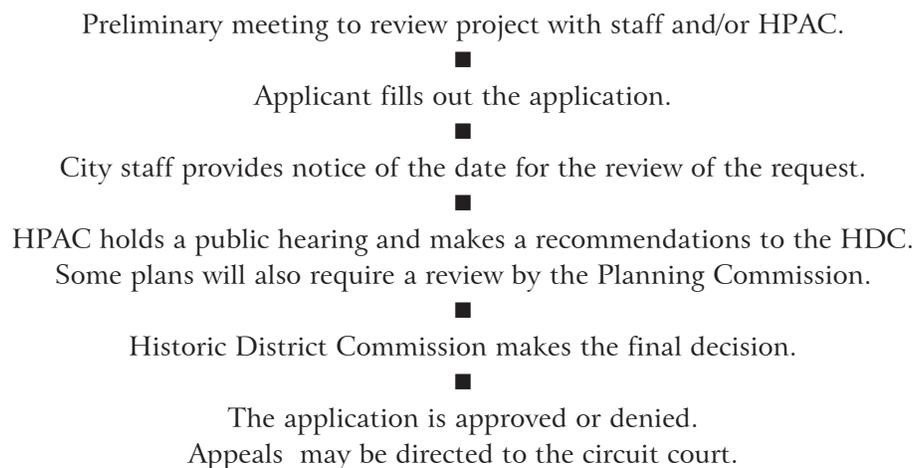
An advisory committee called the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC), made up of citizens with expertise in a range of preservation related fields, holds a public hearing on the application and makes a recommendation to the Historic District Commission (HDC) who makes the final decision.

***How do the HPAC and HDC decide on approval?***

Approval of your project is based on:

- The preservation of the historic, archaeological, architectural, and cultural significance of the site and its relationship to the setting.
- Criteria in these Design Guidelines.
- The relationship of the exterior architectural features to the remainder of the structure and setting.
- The compatibility of the exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.
- Any other factors which the Commission deems pertinent.
- Photographs documenting original features.

THE HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT PROCESS



# THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

*Washington, D.C. The National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, revised 1990*

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 historic 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 archeological 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 unimpaired.

# GLOSSARY

**ADDITION.** To add a new part such as a win, ell, or porch/deck to an existing building or structure.

**ALTERATION.** To make a visible change to the exterior of a building or structure.

**BALLOON FRAMING.** A system of framing a building in which the studs extend in one piece from the top of the foundation sill plate to the top plate; floor joists are nailed to the studs and are supported by ledger boards (horizontal boards).

**BATTERED.** Thicker at the bottom than at the top.

**BAY WINDOW.** A projecting window from an exterior wall surface and often forming a recess in the interior space.

**BRACKET.** A wooden or stone decorative support beneath a projecting floor, window, or cornice.

**CLASSICAL.** Pertaining to the architecture of Greece and Rome, or to the styles inspired by this architecture.

**CRESTING.** A decorative ridge for a roof, usually constructed of ornamental metal.

**CORBEL.** A projecting block, sometimes carved or molded, that acts as a means of support for floor and roof beams as well as other structural members.

**CUPOLA.** A small dome rising above a roof.

**DORMER.** A small windows with its own roof projecting from a sloping roof.

**EAVES.** The edge of the roof that extends past the walls.

**FACADE.** The front face or elevation of a building.

**FINIAL.** An ornament at the top of a gable or spire.

**GABLE.** The triangular portion of the end of a wall under a pitched roof.

**GABLE ROOF.** A pitched roof form where two flat roof surfaces join at a straight ridge, forming gables at both ends.

**HIPPED ROOF.** A roof with slopes on all four, instead of two, sides.

**INFILL BUILDING.** A new structure built in a block or row of existing buildings.

**LIGHT.** A glass pane. See PANE.

**LINTEL.** A horizontal beam over an opening carrying the weight of the wall.

**MANSARD.** A roof form of two slopes on all four sides, the lower slope being longer and at a steeper pitch than the upper.

**MOLDING.** A continuous decorative band.

**ORIELS.** A bay window located above the first floor level; usually supported by brackets or corbels.

**PANE.** A framed sheet of glass in a window or door.

**PERGOLA.** An arbor or passageway of columns supporting a roof of trellis work on which climbing plants are trained to grow.

**PATINA.** The appearance of a material's surface that has aged and weathered. It often refers to the green film that forms on copper and bronze.

**PITCH.** The degree of a slope of a roof.

**PRESERVATION.** To sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure and the existing form and vegetation of a site.

**REHABILITATION.** To return a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

**REMODEL.** To alter a structure in a way that may or may not be sensitive to the preservation of its significant architectural forms and features.

**RENOVATION.** See REHABILITATION.

**RESTORATION.** To accurately recover the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work and/or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**SASH.** The movable part of a window holding the glass.

**SETBACK.** The distance that a building is placed from the front edge of its lot.

**SILL.** The horizontal water-shedding member at the bottom of a door or window.

**STANDING SEAM METAL ROOFS.** A roof where long narrow pieces of metal are joined with raised seams.

**TERRA COTTA.** A fine-grained fired clay product used ornamentally on the exterior of buildings; may be glazed or unglazed molded or carved; usually brownish red in color.

**TURRET.** A small and somewhat slender tower, often located at a corner of a building.

**VERANDA.** A porch or balcony usually roofed and often partly enclosed, extending along the outside of a building.

**VERGE BOARD.** The edge of a tiling that projects over a roof gable.

**VERNACULAR.** Indigenous architecture that generally is not designed by an architect and may be characteristic of a particular area.



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