

CIRCA 1780

# Design Guidelines

For

# Rehabilitation and New Construction



Chatham Borough, New Jersey  
Main Street Historic District



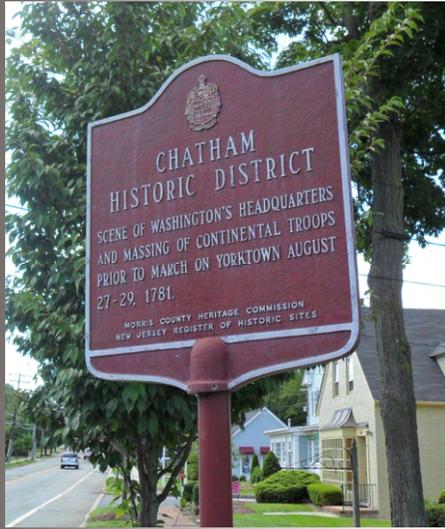
## Why Preserve?

As a town proud of its 18th-century roots, Chatham has long sought to preserve the historic structures and environments which give our community much of its physical appeal and special character. It is not surprising then, that the town should feel especially protective of its Main street, identifying it as an Historic District. For here the architecture, more than any other collection of buildings in the Borough, summarizes Chatham's history.

Here we find buildings of many different styles and ages. From the pre-revolutionary and Federal-period architecture of East Main Street, to the commercial blocks characteristic of the early 20th century, a variety of building materials, building shapes, and decorative trim delights the eye and makes the District a pleasure to inhabit.

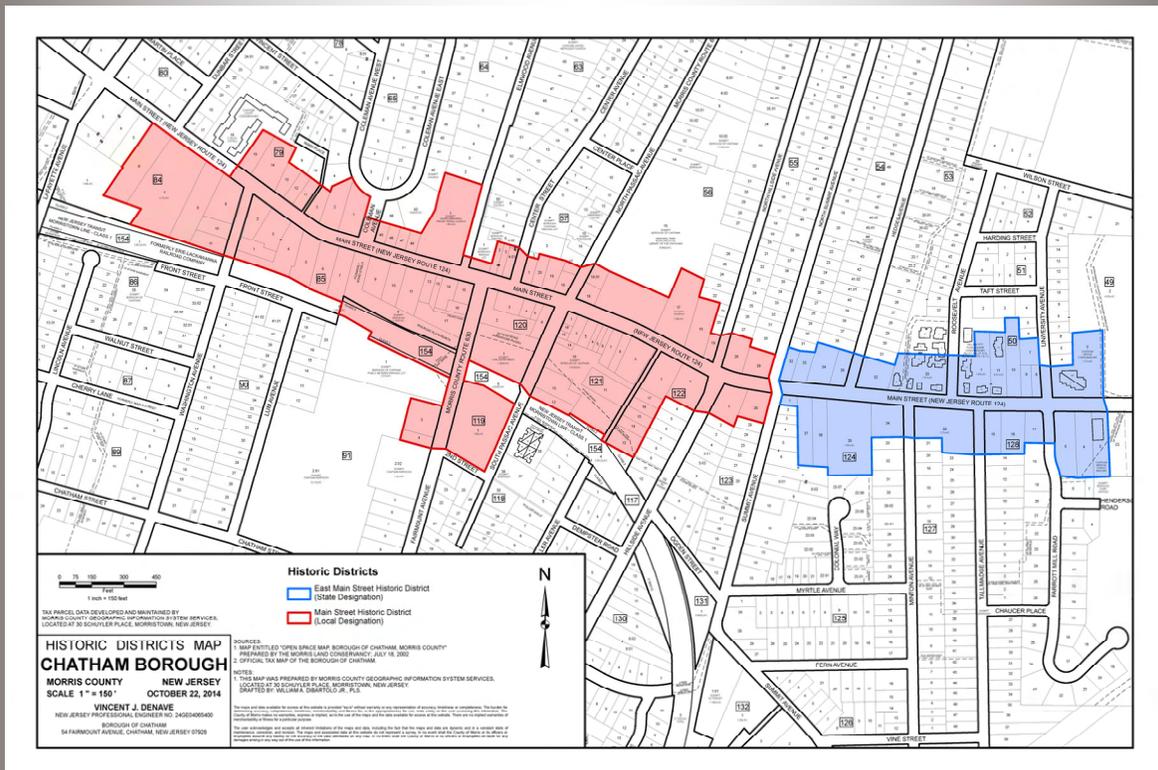
It is this variety that our design guidelines are meant to enhance and promote. Those who came before us helped create a cultural resource we recognize and value. It is our responsibility, through the use of these guidelines and related means, to exercise responsible stewardship that protects and adds to that resource in a creative manner.

# Design Guidelines & the Historic District



In 1992, recognizing the importance of the town's architectural heritage, the Chatham Planning Board adopted into the Chatham Master Plan an Historic Preservation Element identifying the Main Street Historic District. The boundaries of the District were defined by a cultural resources survey completed in 1990, and the Historic Preservation Commission has developed the following design guidelines for maintenance, rehabilitation, and new construction within the District.

Officially established in January of 1969 by the Chatham Borough Council, the Preservation Commission is charged with advising the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment on whether applications for development within the District will be appropriate to the historic character of the District and/or the building in question.



**MAP OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

While this design guidelines manual has been developed by the Commission to aid property owners, retailers and developers, as well as the Commission itself, in that process, it is also intended to help in projects of a seemingly minor nature, such as repainting masonry, designing a sign, or choosing a new screen door. "God! Is in the details," remarked Mies



Van Der Rohe about his own buildings. The same is never truer than in small towns such as Chatham, where impressions are necessarily made quickly, and where a few "mistakes" can tilt an overall image from good to bad.

The Commission encourages property owners and tenants to become familiar with their particular building's history and architectural assessment. This data is recorded in the cultural resources survey, which is included in the Historic Preservation Manual, Chatham, New Jersey. Each property within the District in the survey

was judged to be either "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the District, based on an evaluation of the historic significance, archeological significance, and architectural integrity. In addition, in order to be considered a contributing historic building, a structure must be at least fifty years of age. But those involved with non-contributing buildings will also find many of the guidelines instructive, for changes to those properties should always be compatible with surrounding buildings in the District.

To be judged "contributing" can prove to be helpful when, during renovations, the building code might require a structural change which has a negative impact on the historic character of the building. Owners should be aware that the Uniform Construction Code is flexible in the case of historic buildings; i.e., Section 513 permits interpretation by local construction officials with regard to historic structures.

Electronic copies of the Design Guidelines are available on the Borough of Chatham Website, and hard copies are available in the Borough Clerk's Office. A map of the Chatham Historic District is also available on the Borough of Chatham Website.





## History and Architecture

Through its architecture, Chatham's Main Street Historic District gives the community the fabric of its history of both the town's early settlement and its commercial and community development. Even Main Street's various names through the years relate town history: The Minisink Trail, Day's Crossing, the King's Highway, the Morris Turnpike, and State Route 24. Revolutionary armies, Conestoga wagons, livestock, stagecoaches and trolley cars have all traveled its length.

The earliest travelers, and sometime residents, across the region we now call Chatham were the Lenni Lenape, whose Minisink Trail found an easy fording of the Passaic River close by the location of today's Main Street bridge. In venturing into the area, the first white settlers followed this well-worn path, and sometime in the 1720s, the brothers John and Daniel Day cleared land for farmsteads near the crossing. As inns and mills also became established on the river's banks the settlement flourished and was known rather casually, as "Passaic," or "On Passaic River."

In 1773 villagers, tired of not having a "particular name," voted to formally name their hamlet "Chatham." In so doing, the people were honoring Britain's Earl of Chatham, Sir William Pitt, who was a staunch defender of American rights in parliament. They were also making an early statement of rebellion, presaging Chatham's active role in the revolution. A Village at War, Donald White's prize-winning book, vividly describes the wartime experiences of Chatham's inhabitants.

Chatham's final involvement in the war opened the last chapter of the Revolution. In August of 1781 General George Washington moved his army of between two and three thousand men to the fields surrounding the Village. From his temporary headquarters (63 Main Street, see then and now photos, right) he plotted for several days to deceive the enemy into believing an attack on New York was imminent. Instead, Washington marched his troops silently out of Chatham in the early morning darkness of August 29; the army was well on its way to Yorktown and final victory before the British realized they had been tricked.

For a time after the war Chatham returned to the quiet of a country village. But with improving means of transportation--the Morris Turnpike in 1804 and the Morris & Essex Railroad in 1837—times began to change.



**63 Main Street, then and now**



**Squire Lum House, 295 Main**

By the 1850s' Squire Lum's large brickyard, located on land behind today's Municipal Building, was the leading local industry (his house at 295 Main, left) and five mills and a machine shop flourished beside the Passaic. Strung out along the length of the main road were almost all of the villager's homes, together with two churches, a school, three hotels, blacksmith shops, a distillery, a shoemaker, and various stores, most borrowing space from their owner's dwellings.



THE FAIRVIEW HOUSE CHATHAM, N.J.

## Village Growth

When the new railroad depot was completed in 1868, just east of Fairmount Avenue, the focus of the town was shifted away from the river; Chatham's first commercial buildings were soon being built nearby on Main Street. Nelson Kelley's grocery (246 Main) and Dr. Swaim's pharmacy (262 Main) are among those initial buildings which remain to represent that early "downtown."

Improved train service introduced two distinct, and distinctly different Chatham eras. Thankfully, the "boom town" years of coal freighting and rowdy train crews were relatively short-lived. In their stead came the resort era, when passengers alighted from the train to stay at one of several boarding establishments and enjoy Chatham's "salubrious" air. The grandest of these was the Fairview Hotel (photo above), which was built about 1870 on the land now occupied by the Library of the Chathams. Still standing as a reminder of that gentle life is the 1910 building which served as Mrs. Harvey Kelley's "Old Homestead" boarding house (44 Fairmount Avenue, next to the railroad parking lot; see center pic. of next page).

Equally genteel was the turn-of-the-century industry which employed a number of Chathamites in the business of rose growing. Thirteen greenhouse “ranges” were located about town, the largest just off Main Street on the grounds of the present Middle School.

In the last decade of the century, the village withdrew from Chatham Township, which had also originally included the area of Madison, Florham Park, and Chatham Township. When



**Old Homestead Boarding House, 44 Fairmount Avenue**

the town officially became a borough in 1897, monies could at last be directed to much needed public improvements. Water from the town's plant began to flow in 1898, and electricity was available from the municipal light plant by 1901.

Other amenities came quickly, often with the impetus of the Chatham Improvement Society, which had been organized in 1891. Residents were now enjoying a town park at the railroad depot, various recreations at a fine gentleman's clubhouse, improved library services, a fire department, and a proper town hall. The grand Fairmount Avenue School opened in 1911, and with the addition of a trolley service and an improved commuter train service, the local Board of Trade could be righteously boastful in its brochures.

The last Main Street residences were built in the 1920's, for by then eager real estate speculators had laid outside street developments over much of Chatham's farm and estate properties. Many of the summer resorters chose to buy houses and become full-fledged residents and commuters. Chatham's 20th-century role as a classic suburban commuter community had begun.



## **Architecture: Main Street Houses**

Both the architecture of Main Street's buildings and the local history associated with those buildings make the District significant. For every era of village development there are buildings which typify certain styles or construction modes. Some of these buildings are related to people and events important locally. Others are significant on their architectural merits alone.

In addition to their early settlement and Revolutionary War associations, for example, the buildings of eastern Main Street represent Colonial house types typical of the English Culture Region of Morris County. Representative are the Captain William Day House (see 70 Main Street, see photo next page) the Vanderpool/Crane/Day House (76 Main, see photo next page), the George T. Parrot House (47 Main) and the Ward/Budd House (127 Main). This area of Main Street has been listed as an historic district on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places since 1973.



**Capt. William Day House (70 Main), then and now**

Chatham's earliest religious persuasion is represented by the Dusenberry House (186 Main, see photo next page), which was the 1848 Presbyterian manse (greatly expanded in 1912]. It is the sole survivor on Main Street of the Greek revival style and is currently the lone Borough property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dating from the years immediately after the Civil War through the end of the 19th century are a number of architecturally eclectic houses that incorporate Gothic Revival, Stick style, Carpenter's Gothic and Queen Anne features. Examples include the David Hinton House (55 Main, photo next page), the Edward G. Harris House (331 Main, photo next page) and the Benjamin P. Lum House (295 Main) with its impressive brick carriage house to the rear.



**Vanderpoel/Crane/Day House (76 Main)**



**Dusenberry House (186 Main)**



**Edward G. Harris House (331 Main)**

## Architecture: Central Business District



The “downtown” identity of the District is expressed primarily in commercial blocks which date from the late 19th century through the early 20th. In terms of their architectural significance, these buildings are identifiable by their uncomplicated rectangular plans and simple expression of function: large plate-glass display windows downstairs and direct walk-up access to living quarters above.

Typical of buildings of their era, they are as significant for their efficient combination of uses as they are for their surprising variety of sizes, styles and building materials. They are dressed in Tudor Revival (258 Main), Mediterranean (228-236 Main, above) and Neo-classical (269 Main) garb, but their functional requirements and expression are mostly identical.

In addition to these standard commercial buildings the area offers a few anomalies, like the Chatham diner (left) an excellent survivor of a New-Jersey-made diner from the Golden Age of diner manufacture. and the building which now houses “Drip Coffee (262 Main, see photo next page), a restored example of what Main Street commercial buildings looked like at the end of the 19th century in contrast to those built during the first third of the 20th.





**262 Main**

Even as Main Street began its transition from residential to commercial before and after World War I some residences continued to be built there, and they serve to remind us of the sensible middle-class architecture which transformed communities like Chatham into thoroughly suburban places.

Here are the Colonial Revival and small Period Revival houses of a kind represented in much greater numbers in the Borough's residential neighborhoods. Examples include the Colonial Revival Women's Club (375

Main), and the Craftsman/Dutch Colonial Krauss/Shipler House (353 Main).

The last category of architectural significance in the District includes the few semi-monumental, institutional buildings that function as District focal points: old Borough Hall (right), vernacular Neoclassical in style: the Ogden Memorial Presbyterian Church, Romanesque: The Library of the Chatham's, the Chatham Municipal Building, Colonial Revival: and the Chatham Railroad Station(NJ Transit), Renaissance Revival (see photos below).



**The Old Municipal Building (14 Fairmount)**



**Chatham Train Station (NJ Transit)**

## REHABILITATION AND REPAIR

“Rehabilitation” is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

It is essential, therefore, to identify those building features which contribute to the character of Chatham's Main Street Historic District and to provide guidance for their retention and repair (or replacement if required) in the rehabilitation process.

The set of criteria for rehabilitation used nationwide is one developed by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. Known as The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, they include the following:

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 alterations 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: 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 original design, color, texture, 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 structure would be left unimpaired.



### **REHABILITATION: Exterior Walls and Surfaces: Wood**

- The majority of buildings in the District are sheathed in traditional, horizontal clapboard.
- Retain original cladding materials. Repair or replace in kind as necessary. Replacement elements should match the original siding and trim in dimensions, details, and application methods.
  - Often original siding materials have been covered with later materials. If possible, these materials should be removed, and the original siding repaired, patched in kind and painted.

- When removing deteriorated paint from wood siding, the recommended methods are hand scraping, hand sanding, and electric hot-air guns. Avoid destructive renewal methods such as sandblasting and water blasting.
- Aluminum and most vinyl sidings are not recommended, especially those that imitate a wood-grain imprint. While there are exceptions, most synthetic or composite sidings results in a flattened-out appearance that robs a building of its surface character.
- If vinyl or other composite clapboard siding must be used, it should be in keeping with the width of the original clapboards, and applied only to walls not within view of the street. Employ proper wood-trim details to give an authentic appearance. Window, door and corner trim boards should be used, and siding must not cover up cornice or eaves details.

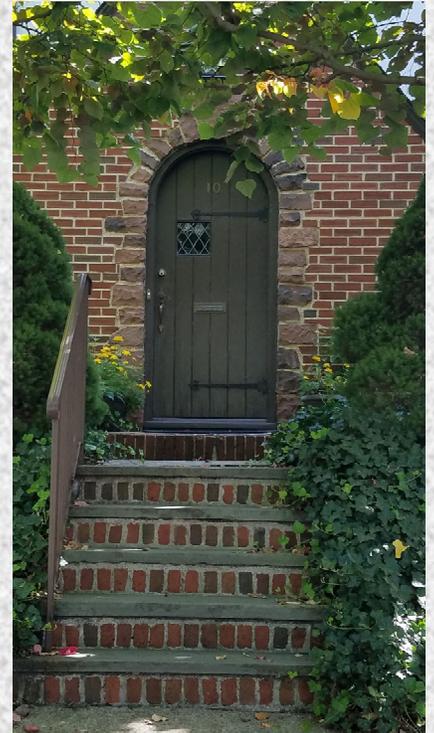


### **REHABILITATION: Exterior Masonry Surfaces**

Second in number in the district are buildings exhibiting masonry exteriors, primarily brick. Other masonry exteriors include stucco and stone. Original brick and stone foundations should also be considered an important exterior feature.

- Whenever possible, original masonry should be retained without applying any surface treatment.

- Avoid applying paint to brick that has not been painted. Painted brick is generally impossible to return to its original appearance.
- Do not apply paint to stone as painted stone will usually peel. Paint can be removed from stone using paint removers specially made for this purpose.
- Facings such as EIFS (exterior insulated finishing systems) and artificial stone or brick veneer should not be applied to historic buildings in the Historic District.
- Mortar joints should be repointed when there is evidence of disintegrating or cracking mortar, loose bricks, or moisture retention in the walls.



- The new mortar should duplicate the old mortar in composition, strength, profile, color and texture. Consulting a historic building professional or conservator is highly recommended in these instances, as using the wrong mortar can cause permanent damage to the masonry.
- White deposits on masonry walls occur when natural salts within the walls are released by water which has entered the wall. Such deposits can be removed with appropriate cleaners, but first the location of water infiltration into the masonry system should be determined and addressed to prevent further damage. First check for a leaking roof or damaged parapet flashing or copings.



- Clean masonry and mortar only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling, using the gentlest method possible, such as low-pressure brushes. Sandblasting, caustic solutions, and high-pressure water blasting should not be used. These methods erode the surface and accelerate deterioration.
- Painting or cementing foundations that survive in original condition is not recommended. Removal of paint or cement to restore original foundation materials must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## REHABILITATION: Windows

Although usually taken for granted, windows are one of the most important character defining features of any historic building. Traditional double-hung sash predominates in the District, with a small number of buildings displaying casement-type windows. (The subject of display windows is included in the discussion of storefronts.)

- The number, size and location of existing window openings should be retained. Replacing two residential sash-type windows with one large display window is especially common, and especially damaging to historic appearance. A 1980s restoration of the c. 1790 Hard/Budd House (photos below), restored the original number of windows and sash to the facade.
- If original windows are removed and replaced with incompatible modern windows, the basic character of the building will be altered substantially.
- Retain the original number of windowpanes in a sash. Replacing a six-over-six— pane window with a one-over-one for example, removes its historic appearance.
- It is equally damaging to "early-up" a later building by adding a multi-paned "Colonial" sash where one did not exist.
- Under no circumstances are metal or snap-in plastic muntins appropriate substitutes for true divided lites, however, in some instances, simulated divided lites may be appropriate. Whether the window sashes are to have truly divided lites or simulated divided lites, care must be taken that the muntins in new windows are an appropriate width and profile.
- Storm windows must fit window openings precisely and should match or harmonize with the color of the original sash. Raw aluminum windows are inappropriate.
- Retain all existing window elements. Repair is often cheaper than replacement, especially when dealing with non-standard historic window sizes. Epoxy consolidation can save many wooden windows that might seem deteriorated beyond repair.



## REHABILITATION: Doors



More than any other architectural feature in the Historic District, doors exhibit a wide variety of types and styles. As architectural focal points, doors are important character-defining features.

- Retain original doors whenever possible. This includes not only the door panel but hardware, glass, surrounding trim, etc.
- If a new door must be installed, avoid an "all-purpose" version of a historic design: i.e., a "Victorian" or "Colonial" door should not be added to a 20th-century building.
- Carefully evaluate the need for storm/screen doors. They may hide original detailing and are often unnecessary on buildings that now serve retail or office uses. If required, they should be simple in design with ample glass area for maximum visibility of the main door.



## REHABILITATION: Roof and Roof Features



The roof, its shape, decorative features, and material, is an important identifying element in a building's historic character. The gambrel roof of the c. 1790 George T. Parrot House (47 Main, photo left) and the decorative modillions at the roof cornice at 76 Main Street (photo below right) are distinctive features.

A weather-tight roof is also essential to maintain the soundness of the entire structure, and so the protection and repair of the roof is fundamental to rehabilitation projects.

- Retain existing roof shape and pitch.
- Make a special effort to retain unusual cladding materials not found in new construction.
- New roofing materials, when visible, must be compatible with the design of the building and its surrounding neighborhood.
- Retain all architectural features that contribute to the character of the roof. These may include, but are not limited to the following: Dormers, cornices, brackets, chimneys, weathervanes, and lightning rods.
- Additions to roofs such as dormers, skylights, and mechanical equipment should be placed so they are inconspicuous from the public view.



## REHABILITATION: Porches



For the District's mid-19th and early 20th-century houses, front porches were a nearly universal feature. Porches not only serve as a useful transition zone between indoors and out, they are important to how we see the proportions of a facade. Quite simply, a house shorn of its porch will not present the appearance its designer intended.

Porches that extend the length of a facade or even wrap around a corner are typical of the second half of the 19th century. Square posts, balustrades, and brackets are common features; lathe-turned columns are less common in the District.

Smaller porches, sometimes called entry porticos, were frequently used on houses built during the early 20th century. Colonial Revival versions of these were often added to earlier houses.

- Retain original porches. Replace missing or deteriorated elements with duplicates based on surviving elements from the subject property or a similar property. Do not replace wood posts, columns, or balustrades with stock lumberyard elements or ironwork.

- Avoid replacing wooden porch floors and steps with concrete, brick, flagstone, or similar materials. Certain composite materials may be considered (consult Chatham Historic Commission for a list of these materials).
- Enclosing perches to increase usable square footage is not recommended.
- Never add a rustic, unpainted porch using pressure-treated lumber or other inappropriate materials. Problem: The building code often calls for porch railing heights higher than traditional balustrades. When exemptions for those District buildings classified as “contributing” cannot be negotiated with the Construction Official, careful design adjustments will be necessary.



## REHABILITATION: Storefronts



The storefront is the most important architectural feature of commercial buildings in the central business area of the District. The large display windows, separate transom windows, recessed entries, and wooden doors with tall narrow glass panels are the traditional storefront features which contribute to Chatham's Main Street historic character.

However, a number of storefronts have been “modernized” as businesses have moved in and out and sought to create a new image. Some have experienced several changes in their life. These changes happen slowly, but often have an unsightly cumulative effect, little related to the storefront's original form.

The owner should determine if the existing storefront is the original or a later alteration. This can often be accomplished by (1) obtaining archive photos of the storefront (Chatham Historical Society and the Chatham Library are good sources for this information) or (2) standing across the street and looking at the upper and storefront levels of the building. Is there a shared appearance or integration between the upper facade and the storefront? If so, value this integrity.

- Preserve original materials or details and the shape of original openings, otherwise the proportions of the facade will be lost.
- Commercial doors in the District are almost invariably of the simplest kind. The standard design is a single, full-length vertical pane of glass flamed by wooden stiles and rails. Do not replace glass-panel doors with solid wooden doors or with jalousie-type horizontal “awning” glass.

- Retain old door hardware when possible.
- Avoid the temptation to add fake muntins; Chatham's historic display windows were not meant to be subdivided. Retain original elements such as transom windows, tiled entryways, leaded glass, decorative terra cotta, and slate and tile roofs. Maintenance of display window frames, doors and bulkheads is often deferred. Keeping these elements in good condition can prevent the need for expensive repairs or replacements. Original kickplate materials should always be maintained or uncovered when possible.

If there is little relation between upper and lower facade, a Complementary modern design or a restoration of the original storefront is in order. Occasionally, a remodeled storefront is of equal value architecturally as the original.

- Retain alterations if they are well designed and constructed, even if they are of a style different from the building.



- Do not attempt to make a building look older than it is while undertaking a renovation. Most reproduced details are made at an improper scale and their application can result in an awkward visual effect.

- Recessed entries are encouraged for new storefront construction. Commercial storefront entries were typically recessed. This provided more area for display space, a sheltered transition area to the interior, and emphasis to the entrance.

- More recent additions of mansard-like roof overhangs, wood shakes, coach lanterns and non-operable shutters are historically inappropriate and should be removed.

- Filling in display windows to create smaller windows or a solid wall surface destroys the character of historic buildings.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

The shops, offices, churches, and public buildings in the Main Street Historic District represent many styles and eras. Together they speak of Chatham's past, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to today. Chatham invites design excellence for new buildings or additions which will add to this rich diversity. The challenge is to create innovative architecture which complements older neighbors but does not attempt to mimic them.

Discussions of new architecture in historic environments invariably speak to compatibility of size, scale, and appropriate materials. While obeying these verities can help avoid the worst architectural abuses, it cannot guarantee good design. The only way to achieve good design is to employ a good architect.

Nevertheless, it is important for those contemplating new construction in the District to understand some of the basic assumptions about design compatibility.



### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Style

Buildings in the Main Street Historic District reflect variations of a number of residential and commercial building styles. It is this variety which delights the eye and which these design guidelines are meant to enhance and promote. Chatham's goal is not to impose an arbitrary sameness based on generalizations about what is "historic" but to encourage new design that recognizes the value of Main Street's past.

- Accept the Chatham Historic Preservation Commission's invitation to owners and developers to discuss ideas and intentions before design begins.

- New design should reflect its context while expressing the contemporary nature of the building and its use.
- Avoid creating a false historical appearance by strictly producing past architectural forms. Such inappropriate designs include stock “Colonial” and “Victorian” buildings.
- Avoid standardized, off-the-shelf corporate designs intended for replication in many different locations.
- Resist employing such elements as cupolas, inappropriate shutters (see Section on “Buildings Operations”) and catalog “gingerbread” millwork.



### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Rhythms and Patterns

Streetscape rhythm is created by similar size and placement of buildings and by the repeated elements on neighboring buildings or the streetscape. Although the district exhibits a rich variety in many of its characteristics, there are important rhythms to be maintained.

- In planning for new construction, the various rhythms and patterns of the District should be analyzed and incorporated into the design.
- Front setbacks, required by regulations in all but the central business zone, are the single most distinguishing characteristic of Chatham’s Main Street. New construction should also maintain a uniform alignment with neighboring facades.



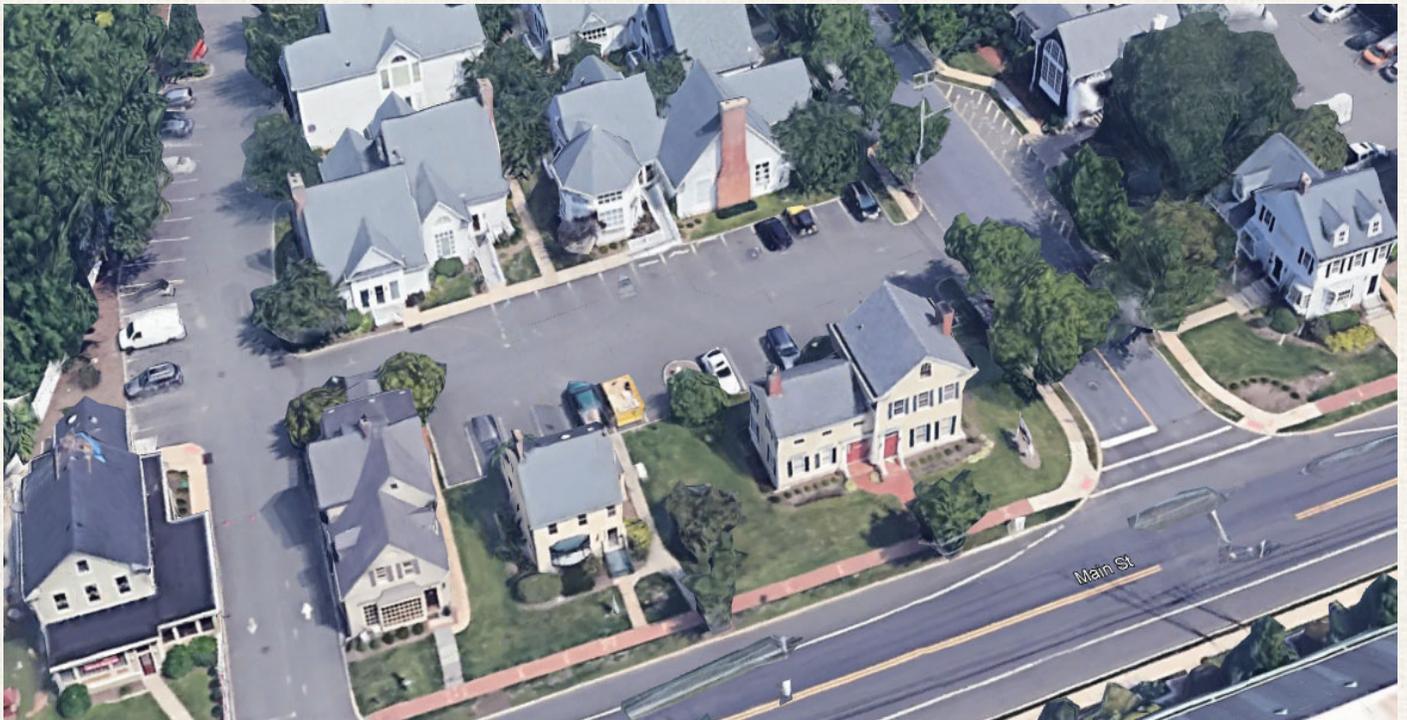
- Side-yard setbacks are also a defining pattern in the areas outside the central B-4 zone; local regulations govern the dimensions.
- Larger projects can present a more compatible building width through the use of setbacks and changes in materials.
- The traditional window-to-wall ratio in the District should be repeated: new construction should also respect the vertical proportions of the predominate double-hung sash.

- The pattern of primary building entrances facing the street should be maintained.
- Numerous traditional and modern (dyed acrylic) fabric awnings in the central business area provide a strong shared horizontal element and are encouraged.
- Trees and landscaping are key distinguishing characteristics of the streetscape and should be maintained and enhanced. (See Section on “Site and Landscape Design”.)

### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Size and Scale

Buildings of residential size and scale predominate in the Historic District and are important to the “small town” characteristics prized by Chatham. Accordingly, Chatham’s zoning regulations carefully limit building size and height.

- New construction should conform to the prevailing massing, proportion, volume, scale, and height of neighboring buildings.
- The first-floor height and floor-to-floor height of existing buildings provide a basis for developing the height of new construction. The floor-to-floor heights are an often-neglected source for bringing proper scale to new construction.



### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Roofs

The most common roof shape in the District is the gable. Although pitches vary with period, the simple gable roof is distinctive and unmistakable. Less common roof shapes are the gambrel and the hip. In the central business area, the traditional commercial buildings are primarily flat roofed behind a parapet.

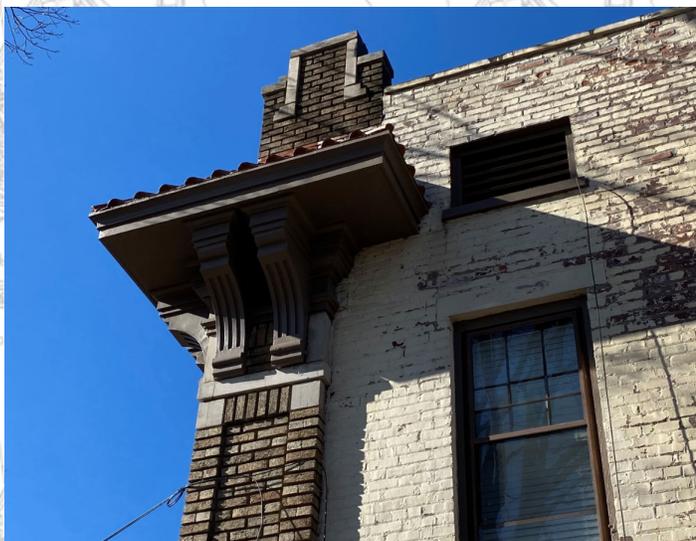
- It is important that the height of a building and the form of a new roof conform with the predominant types of roofs in the area.
- Numerous District roofscapes are made up of the primary form of the main building roof fronting the street together with the secondary forms of the roofs of additions, porches, entries, bay, projections, etc.



- This kind of aggregate growth, both in the building mass and roofline, is an important characteristic and is recommended in the design of new buildings and major additions to existing buildings.
- Roofing materials for a new building should reflect what is common in the neighborhood. The materials for an addition, when visible, should match in color and texture the type used on the existing building.

### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Materials

The majority of buildings in the District are sheathed in traditional, horizontal wooden clapboard with the second largest class of historic buildings exhibiting brick exteriors. A few stone shingled or cemented/stuccoes walls are exceptions to these customary surfaces.



Chatham's historical preferences for sidings of wood or brick are generally "safe" choices today.

While wood siding is always preferred over composite siding materials such as vinyl, fiber cement, PVC, and polymer. Such synthetic sidings may sometimes be acceptable, but only in areas not visible from

the street. Avoid siding with an exaggerated "woodgrain" texture or excessively wide or narrow profile. In addition, the design should include sufficient detail and trim. Aluminum siding is never appropriate.

Brick wall surfaces of traditional appearance are most often acceptable. Painted brick, contemporary glazed brick and light-colored brick are more likely to be inappropriate.

#### NEW CONSTRUCTION: Additions

Many owners and architects believe that the best way to respect an historic building is to design an addition indistinguishable from the original. However, such an approach is not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards. Ideally, it is desirable to design additions so they are compatible with the existing building but readily distinguished from it. (Photo below: Addition to rear of Library of the Chathams.)

Together with the guidelines already listed for new buildings, the following should be kept in mind for additions:

- Site major additions away from the principal elevation or facade.
- Differentiate an addition from the original building by using setbacks, negative space, and different roof levels. Merely extending roof lines and walls will produce a structure out of scale with itself and the neighborhood.
- If possible, make additions to the rear of existing buildings slightly narrower than the original structure so they will recede from sight down the property line.
- Do not remove, destroy or cover up existing architectural detailing.
- Do not reproduce historic trim such as brackets and porch balustrades to decorate additions.



## BUILDING DETAILS AND OPERATIONS

An otherwise fine building can be spoiled by inappropriate attention to the design of functional details and operations. This may be even truer for the more modest buildings in Chatham's Historic District where seemingly inconsequential changes, such a non-compliant awning or an unfortunate choice for a storm door--become the proverbial sore thumb.

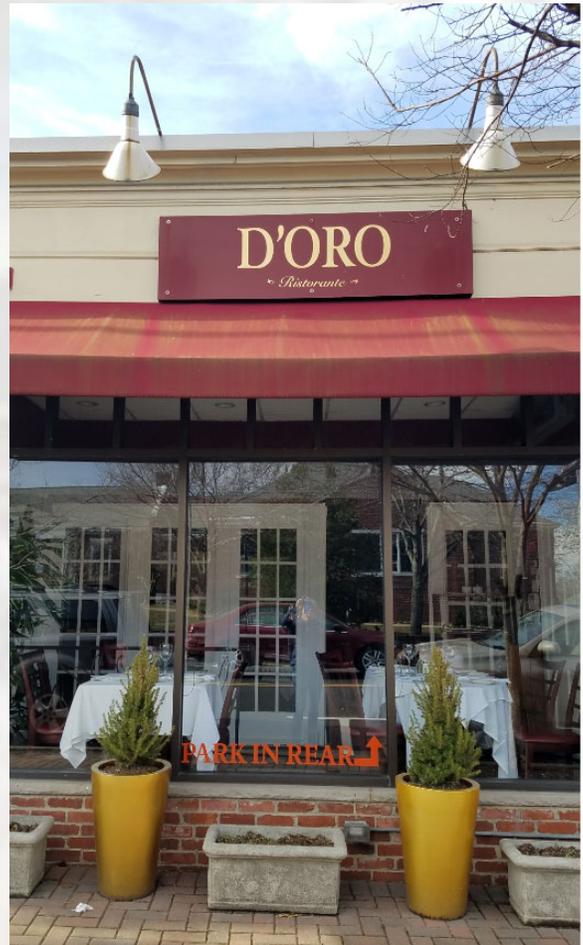
### Lighting:

It is critical to take advantage of all the possibilities offered by lighting. Along Chatham's Main Street, lighting should reflect the different characters of the commercial areas of the District.

- Storefront facades do not need dedicated lighting. At night display windows should be lit from within; this makes the merchandise display a form of advertising, adds interest to the sidewalk, and provides security and visibility for the store.
- Restrict facade lighting to the light that comes from the building sign, the street fixtures, and the internal display and window lighting.
- Uplighting exterior architectural features and landscaping is not acceptable. Dark night skies are a vital park resource and it is very important to protect the dark night skies and reduce light pollution. Light pollution is often caused by excessive or misdirected outdoor lighting.
- Use lighting only when necessary (addressing safety and security issues). Timers, photocells, and motion detectors are an effective way of maximizing light during the hours it is needed most. Direct light only where needed and avoid over lighting.
- Specify full-cutoff luminaries to direct most light downward.
- Minimize use of incandescent lighting. Consider using LED (light emitting diode) lamps.



- Color rendering and color temperature of lighting is very important. CRI (color rendering index) levels above 80 are recommended. Warmer color temperatures are appropriate for illuminating architectural elements: A range of 2500k to 3000k is recommended. Landscape lighting may be somewhat cooler: A range between 3000k and 3500k is recommended.
- Keep landscape lighting subtle; this should be restricted to lighting pathways and walks and high-lighting major landscape features.
- Integrate security lighting with architecture (soffits, overhangs).
- Light fixture designs should be appropriate to the style of the building.
- Exposing electrical conduit should be avoided, but when conduit is exposed, paint it to blend with the facade colors.
- Provide security lighting for side and rear service areas with shielding to prevent direct and indirect light glare from disturbing adjacent properties.



### Mechanical and Electrical Systems:

The location of new heating and cooling equipment and other mechanical devices should be carefully planned in both rehabilitation and new construction as these elements can detract from the appearance of both the building and its surroundings.

- Rooftop mechanical units, television and radio antennae, and satellite dishes should not be visible from the public way.
- Electrical, telephone and cable service should be placed underground whenever possible.
- Do not install mechanical systems in a way which covers up or obscures exterior details and features of the facade.
- Place through-the-wall air conditioning units on side or rear elevations, and screen them with fences and landscaping.
- Install through-wall air conditioning and heat pump units away from facades when possible; they should be aligned with other elevation features.

## Gutters and Downspouts:

Gutters and downspouts are important design features, particularly on sloped roofs.

- The profile of eaves-hung gutters must be integrated into the design of the cornice.
- Ogee-shaped gutters (Drawing, left) add a classic profile to the eaves and mirror the design of more elaborate trim; box and semicircular gutters give a cleaner and less noticeable appearance.
- Locate downspouts along natural vertical lines and corners of the building.
- Preferred materials for gutters and downspouts are painted galvanized metal, or prefinished aluminum. Color should match the color of the adjacent building material.

## Hardware:

Exterior building hardware should respect the history and style of the building.

- Use door pulls, mailboxes and mail slots, door knockers, knobs, hinges and other contemporary necessities in a subtle and unobtrusive manner. Shiny brass and chrome may be conspicuously inappropriate on Chatham's older buildings.
- Street numbers and store hours are important and inexpensive details for doors. Street numbers should be a minimum of five inches high for legibility.



## Window Displays:

Window displays are an important element of the overall appearance of a storefront, as well as providing a form of advertisement.

- An interesting display of merchandise should be arranged to provide passing pedestrians an open and attractive view to the rest of the store.
- Window displays can be organized by using large items of merchandise or through a system of shelves for smaller items.
- Arrange special sale announcements and posters neatly and remove them promptly when outdated.





### Shutters:

Many of the residential-style buildings in the District were once equipped with shutters and many have survived. They can be important character-defining features but are among the most misunderstood and misused architectural elements.

- Make every effort to preserve existing shutters. If replacements are necessary, choose wooden shutters to match originals (even if not operable). If necessary, alternative composite materials can be used provided shutter detailing is appropriate.
- Choose accurate size and install so that shutters look operable. This means shutters must be dimensioned so they would fit inside the window frame if closed and would completely cover the window opening.
- Shutters must be hung from hinges attached to the frame and not attached directly to the wall.
- Do not add shutters without evidence they were once used.



### Awnings:

Awnings are traditionally used to protect passersby from the weather and merchandise from the sun. In addition, they provide color and a three-dimensional quality to a building. Properly designed and maintained they can add to the character of the Historic District and are especially welcome in the central business district for the unifying horizontal design element they add to the streetscape.

- Traditional shed-style awnings are strongly preferred. Avoid barrel, bubble, or umbrella types.
- While heavy canvas materials can still be utilized, the newer dyed acrylic synthetic materials have proven to be more durable. Metal and "wet-look" vinyl are not appropriate.
- Awnings may either be retractable or built on permanent pipe frameworks. The valance of the awning should measure between ten and twelve inches high.
- Construct canopies and awnings in materials, design and colors that are compatible with the building facade. Signage and graphics may be a component of the awning, but lettering and graphics must be somewhat restrained, and are subject to approval by the Borough of Chatham Signage Committee.
- Awnings for upper-story windows should extend at least half-way down the windows and should complement the street level awnings in color and style.

## Storm Windows and Doors

- Carefully evaluate the need for storm/screen doors. They are often unnecessary on buildings that now serve retail or office uses.
- When required, storm and screen doors should be simple in design with ample "open" area for maximum visibility of the main door; avoid fussy moldings or monograms. Wood screen and storm doors are preferable on older structures.
- If metal storm/screen doors and windows must be used, the finish should have a baked enamel or anodized finish to match the trim color of the building. Existing metal doors and frames can usually be painted.
- Locate storm sash within the window frame.



## EXTERIOR COLOR

The choice of color of buildings, signs, and building elements is one of the most important and difficult decisions in the design or rehabilitation process. The color of a building makes the first impression on a viewer; only after this does the rest of the design begin to have an effect.

In addition to the following guidelines the Commission can provide some general information and sources for help.

- The building wall is the largest and most dominant expanse of color and can provide a unifying background. The color of this material should reflect the overall color context of the streetscape.
- Consider the overall color scheme for the entire building. Coordinate between storefront, signs, walls, and trim.
- Limit the number of colors used on a building; as the number of colors increases, coordination and legibility suffer. There should be one base color and one or two trim colors. Additional colors can be used sparingly for accent.



- In unshaded areas such as the central business area, white is discouraged because of its glare.
- As a general rule, violets, pinks, oranges and bright yellows should be avoided on Main Street. The use of some greens is questionable as they become pastel. Natural earth and muted colors such as warm grey, blue grey, beige, terra cotta, ocher, cream and tan are recommended as base colors. Owners are encouraged to review “historical color” options produced by some of the major paint manufacturers.

## SIGNS

Your storefront sign is a permanent advertisement of your business. Its function is to call attention to your business. In addition, the design of the sign expresses the nature and quality of the goods or services offered.

Poor signage detracts from even the most attractive storefront and diminishes both the historic character of the building and its surroundings. Two of the most common signage mistakes involve size and amount of information. Legibility and communicative power bear no relation to size alone, and the simplest message is usually the best.

All advertising signs require a permit from the Chatham Permitting Official and must meet the zoning regulations for size, placement and number. In addition to meeting these requirements good signage will:

- Identify clearly and attractively the nature of the business.
- Enhance, and be subordinate to, the building on which it is located.
- Contribute to the appearance of the shopping area. To achieve these goals, a sign should address the factors of simplicity, comprehension, size and color.
- The name of the business should be the only message on a principal sign. Secondary signs in display windows are appropriate in the central business area.
- On commercial buildings, signs should fit within the existing features of the facade. On most buildings, bands of decorative moldings create natural frames for signs. Where possible, align signs with other signs on adjacent storefronts.



- Materials should be compatible with the materials on a building facade. Plastic signs are rarely appropriate on Chatham's Main Street.
- Small fabric banners mounted perpendicular to storefronts may be acceptable.
- Colors should be limited in number and should complement building colors. The use of dark colors on a white background is a tired cliché. Reversing this traditional scheme can produce a rich-looking and distinctive sign.
- Avoid bright white and glossy backgrounds. They reflect glare and reduce legibility.
- Lettering style should reflect the type of business activity, with legibility being the most important requirement. Basic, classic letter styles are usually best.
- A name painted directly on the inside of a display window can be one of the most elegant and cost-effective of all sign types. Gold leaf or pale paint are best for legibility.
- Lighting of signs by external sources, such as small spotlights or floodlights, is preferable. LED with carefully calibrated color characteristics provide a truer color rendition than fluorescent. Light should be contained within the sign frame and not spill over to other portions of the building.
- Internally illuminated signs are not appropriate in the Historic District.
- Franchises and chain stores can and should adapt their graphics to meet local guidelines. Their stock signs are usually inappropriate because they are designed for malls or highway strips and do not relate to the styles and sizes of buildings found in Chatham's Historic District.
- On buildings originally built as residences, large signs mounted on facades are inappropriate.
- Signs should never be mounted to roofs or mounted above the roof line.
- Outside the central business area of the District:



Free-standing signs are preferred. The pedimented “colonial” signboard has been overused in the District. A simple, rectangular panel is recommended.

If more than one business is located on a zoned lot, the free-standing sign may be a directory sign. An alternate approach is to use a building's street number or name on the free-standing sign and mount small identification panels for the tenants at entrances.



## SITE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

One of the most positive characteristics of Main Street is its considerable amount of greenery. Upon entering the Borough, the visitor's pleasant view of trees and lawns, in addition to the historic buildings, gives an immediate separate identity to Chatham--a sense of place. We can be seen as a community which values its historic character and the landscaping necessary to enhance it

Chatham has accomplished this in large part through adherence to appropriate setback and coverage requirements in the various zones along Main Street. The following standards are designed to help the property owner or developer plan the landscaping and site development to the benefit of both the town and the property itself.

## Streetscape Trees:

Shade trees are one of the most valuable elements of Chatham's streetscape, not only because of their attractiveness, but also for the physical comfort they offer to the shopper and the driver in reducing heat and glare. In addition, trees help reduce the airborne pollutants generated by vehicular traffic.

Maintenance of the street trees along Chatham's main thoroughfare became problematic in the 1980s when the State DOT discontinued planting trees along its highways. Because the Chatham Shade Tree Commission directs its funds to residential streets only, the planting of trees along Main Street has generally been left to the fundraising efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and local residents.

- Shade trees should be planted near or within the street right-of-way when a site is being developed. Zoning regulations (Section 506) require that a minimum of eight nursery-stock trees, of a minimum caliper of two inches, be planted per acre of lot. The species must be approved by the governing board with the advice of the Borough Shade Tree Commission.
- Where appropriate, new trees should be chosen from species that will attain enough height to offer an eventual canopy of shade to the street.
- The use of differing species of trees provides visual interest and avoids the problems associated with species-specific diseases. The planting of evergreens which can be allowed to reach tree height should also be considered for locations in the front setback area in order to provide winter greenery to the streetscape.
- Zoning regulations state: "A conscious effort shall be made to preserve all worthwhile trees which exist on a site. Stripping trees from a lot or filling around trees shall not be permitted unless it can be shown that grading or construction requirements necessitate removal of trees, in which case those lots shall be replanted with trees to reestablish the tone of the area in conformance with adjacent lots."



## Plantings:

In addition to trees, plantings which add color and texture are important to the streetscape.

- All areas not utilized for buildings, parking, loading, access aisles, driveways or pedestrian walkways are required by the Land Use Ordinance to be "suitably landscaped with shrubs, ground cover, seeding or similar plantings and maintained in good condition." Paved areas in front yards are never recommended.
- Plantings should be considered as building elements to be balanced and proportioned in accordance with the building they surround.
- Naturalized hedges (of shrubs not normally kept pruned) are a useful and largely overlooked landscape feature in the District. They are especially appropriate for buffering parking lots and side yards and visually breaking up bare walls.
- The use of low-maintenance flowering annuals, bulbs, and/or perennials provides an inviting appearance. Flower containers and window boxes furnish an additional opportunity for color and should be considered as well.
- Exotic and unusual plant materials, foreign to the traditional Main Street environment, are not recommended.
- Grass or groundcover should be used between curb and sidewalk. Use of asphalt "hardens" and detracts from the streetscape.

## Acknowledgements:

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This new digital version of the Design Guidelines for the Main Street Historic District was completed in 2020 by the Historic Preservation Commission with help of the following past and present commissioners:

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