

Guide to Central West End Historic District Standards

CWE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FALL 2015

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by the Central West End Association as an introduction to the Central West End Historic District. It is intended to serve as a guide to property owners, design professionals and contractors who are considering renovations or alterations to the exterior of structures located within the Central West End District. Realtors, building managers, and trustees of private places and block associations may also find this information useful. Please see the map to determine if your property falls within the District.

While there are many factors that have contributed to the dramatic revitalization of the CWE over the past few decades, it is generally recognized that the quality of the built environment ranks high on that list. The protection and preservation of that legacy is a civic responsibility. We trust you share that understanding and will take great care with your project.

Established in 1974, the Historic District is defined by the map and an accompanying set of standards whose objective is to maintain the distinctive character, quality of construction and individual architectural integrity of structures within it. Unlike some other historic districts within the City, the CWE is not characterized by one prevalent architectural style or a dominant building material. Rather, its diverse styles, sense of scale, richness of detail and quality of construction give the neighborhood a unique, pedestrian-friendly sense of place.

It is important to note that these regulations are not intended to discourage contemporary design that, through careful attention to scale, materials, siting and landscaping, is harmonious with existing historic structures and streetscape. New buildings that mimic historic ones or alterations to existing buildings that use conjecture to add "historic" features compromise the true historic authenticity of the District.

OBTAINING PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The permit process need not be onerous or time consuming. Delays and difficulties can occur due to the owner or contractor being unaware of the process. Understanding the standards and the agencies involved will minimize delays and frustration. Please review these standards before design work begins or contracts are signed for construction materials or services. Should you have any doubt as to whether your project is subject to the Historic District Standards, please call the Cultural Resources Office (CRO) for guidance.

Be aware that work subject to review by the Cultural Resources Office but undertaken without its prior approval may result in the City issuing a Stop Work Order. Non-conforming work may be required to be reversed.

The CWE Historic District Standards can be found here: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/documents/upload/CWE-Historic-Standards-Dec-181.pdf>

A listing of the categories of work addressed by the Standards can be found on page 1 of the document. A list of definitions can be found in section 2 of the Standards, pp. 2-6.

The following is a list of relevant agencies and a description of the role of each in the permit process.

Cultural Resources Office. 314-657-3865
www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources

Generally speaking, any proposed alteration, addition or modification to the exterior of any structure located within the District is subject to prior review and the issuance of a permit by the Cultural Resources Office of the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency.

St. Louis Building Division. 314-622-3313
www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/public-safety/building/
Applications for construction projects ranging from a deck addition to an interior remodel to erecting a multi-storied high-rise building are all addressed by the same office. Application should be made in person in Room. 425, City Hall.

PERMITS CONT...

CWE Planning and Development Committee. 314-367-2220
Meets regularly for the purpose of reviewing plans for proposed projects within the Central West End Historic District and offering recommendations to property owners and to the Cultural Resources Office and the Preservation Board regarding compliance with the CWE Historic District Standards.

The St Louis Preservation Board. 314-657-3865
<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/preservation-board/>

Appeals of denial of a permit by the Cultural Resources Office may be made to the Preservation Board. It is comprised of citizens appointed by the Mayor and meets monthly.

REPAIRS & REHABILITATION TO HISTORIC COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

On historic commercial buildings, original architectural elements should be repaired rather than replaced. The Cultural Resources Office should be contacted for guidance. Addition or removal of decorative elements, e.g., window pediments, bracketed hoods over doors, door surrounds, etc. normally is prohibited unless replacement would return the building to its original design.

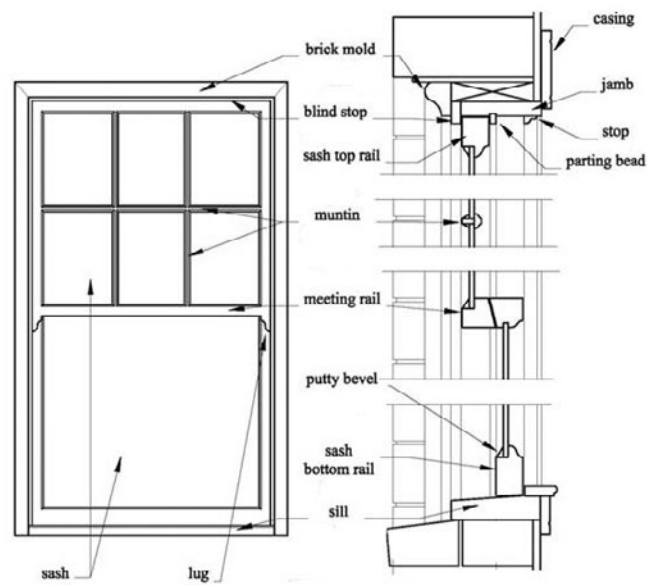
Proposed exceptions shall be subject to review for design suitability and approval by the Cultural Resources Office staff. Please consult the full CWE Historic Standards for issues of signage and other issues related to historic commercial structures (located on page 19 of the Standards).

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING STRUCTURES

Each structure within the District shall be regarded as a physical record of its time and place. Consequently, as a general rule, original and historically significant materials shall be maintained and repaired rather than replaced. Where repair is not possible, materials should be replaced in-kind, i.e., new materials should match the original in type, size, shape, profile, and material. The following is a list of projects frequently undertaken by building owners. The related comments are intended to provide an overview of the pertinent sections of the Central West End Historic District Standards. Please consult these Standards prior to commencing any project.

WINDOW REPLACEMENT

Retention of the historic character of a building is best accomplished by the preservation of original or historic sash and trim through maintenance and repair. That approach should be the first choice when windows require attention. For enhanced energy efficiency, historic preservation best practice calls for the use of either exterior or interior storm sash. However, if replacement is undertaken, the type, location and visibility of windows determine what is appropriate. Existing window openings in a street-facing façade shall not be altered in length or width. No new window openings shall be created in a street-facing façade. Historic brick mold and window frames shall not be obscured or sheathed in any way. As always, please consult the CWE Historic District Standards for further requirements.



Historic double hung windows with true divided light sash

INSTALLING & REPLACING STORM WINDOWS & DOORS

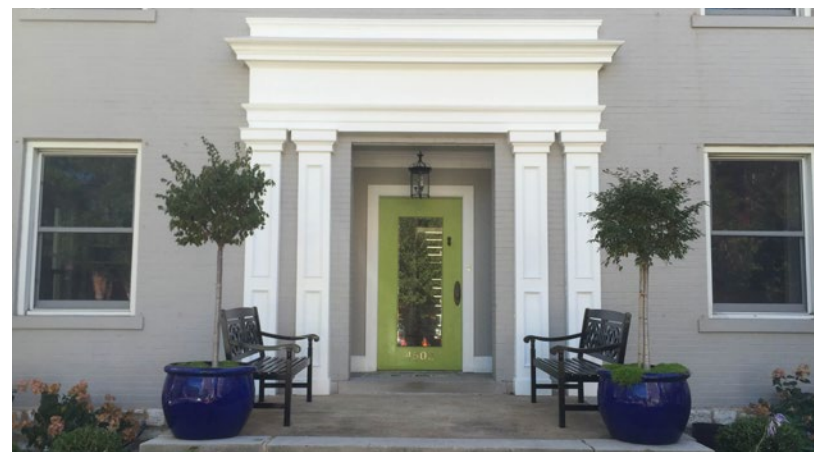
Exterior storm windows designed and installed correctly are encouraged as they serve to protect the original materials. Storm sash must fit within the frame of the existing window and match its glass area: e.g., the horizontal division of the storm window (if any) must align with the meeting rail of a double-hung window. Raw or unfinished aluminum is not permissible for storm windows or doors. Historic brick mold and window frames shall not be obscured or sheathed in any way to accommodate storm windows.

NEW WINDOW SHUTTERS

New shutters shall not be installed where there is no evidence that shutters were originally there. Replacements shall match original historic shutters in appearance and shall be constructed so as to be, or appear to be, operational and shall have appropriate hardware. Most importantly, shutter dimensions and shape shall conform to those of the window opening.

REPLACEMENT OF DOORS VISIBLE FROM THE STREET

Whenever possible, such doors shall be preserved through in-kind repair and maintenance. If original doors have been removed, or cannot be repaired, replacement doors shall be wood and appropriate in design and proportions to the style of the building. Plate glass in doors, side lights, and transoms shall not be replaced with leaded glass, art glass, colored glass, or reflective glass unless it can be demonstrated that such glass was original to the structure. Use of plate glass was characteristic in buildings that date from the District's period of significance (ca. 1890-1930). Entry vestibules originally designed as open, i.e., without doors, shall not be enclosed.



Recessed open entry vestibule and historic door with plate glass panel

REPAIRING PORCHES, BALCONIES & ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Porches and balconies are considered to be character-defining features on buildings in the Historic District, and shall be preserved through repair and maintenance when visible from the street. This includes their component elements such as columns, pilasters, handrails, balusters, pediments, fascias, cornices, brackets, dentils, steps, etc. Should replacement of architectural components be justified, they shall replicate the originals in material, size, dimensions, proportion, profile, shape, geometric pattern, color, and, in the case of column shafts, taper or entasis. Alternate materials may be used with the prior approval of the Cultural Resources Office. If an original or historic detail or component element has been removed, it should be replicated when evidence (e.g., an historic drawing or photograph) or identical building design with original detail in place is available to document what was originally there. In the absence of historic evidence, speculative re-introduction of such architectural components or details shall not be undertaken.



Historic side porch showing original architecture details

TUCKPOINTING & MASONRY REPAIRS

Work should be performed by experienced craftspeople using appropriate materials. In addition to aesthetic concerns, poor workmanship may result in structural damage and diminished property value. It is recommended that contractor references be obtained. Sandblasting of masonry, either for cleaning or paint removal, is prohibited. Other cleaning and paint removal techniques require a permit and shall be submitted to the Cultural Resources Office for review. Previously unpainted brick or stone shall not be painted. Information regarding the proper care of masonry within the District can be found in "Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings" published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and found on-line at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/1-cleaning-water-repellent.htm>

REPAIRING STUCCO

Repair existing stucco with stucco that matches the original in strength, color, texture, and composition. Prefabricated and panelized materials that resemble stucco (E.I.F.S., for example) shall not be used to replace historic stucco.

SIDING REPAIR & REPLACEMENT

Whenever possible, replace damaged siding with materials that match the appearance of the original in size, thickness, exposure, and profile. Imitative materials such as vinyl and aluminum siding are not appropriate for historic buildings and their use is not permitted on historic buildings in the District. Cementitious siding may be used for replacement of an entire wall area or in upper-story areas.

REPAINTING TRIM & ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Although there is no specific palette of "approved colors," it is recommended that the color of paint used be appropriate to the style of architecture, the character of the adjacent buildings, and the neighborhood. The "painted lady" approach, sometimes applied to wood frame buildings designed in the high Victorian style, is not appropriate for the District's buildings that date from a later period.

SITWORK

Front yards in the District are often distinguished by terraces, the intermediate grade level above the sidewalk but below the building entrance or front porch. Such terraces shall be preserved and shall not be altered or interrupted by the introduction of retaining walls, landscape ties, architectural or landscaping concrete block, etc. Wherever such retaining walls have compromised historic terraces, removal of the walls and restoration of the historic terraces is encouraged.



Historic earth terrace

FENCES & WALLS

Original or historic walls, iron fences and gates, gatehouses, and other enclosures, as well as arches and other historic architectural features, shall always be preserved through repair and maintenance. New walls, fences and other enclosures shall be brick, stone, stucco, wood, wrought iron or evergreen or deciduous hedge when visible from the sidewalk or street. Opaque fences or walls are permitted only along alleys or enclosing the side and/or rear yard of the primary structure. No opaque fence shall be erected in front of the primary structure on the lot. An exception to this prohibition may occur at corner properties on heavily traveled thoroughfares, where a side yard fence set back from the property line a minimum of three (3) feet to create a landscape area with appropriate evergreen and deciduous planting would be acceptable. Transparent fences and/or evergreen or deciduous hedges may extend beyond the front building line, subject to height limitations imposed by applicable zoning and/or building codes.

DECKS

Given the urban context of the neighborhood, the relative narrowness of building lots, and the general interests of privacy, terraces or patios at grade are preferable to elevated decks. When it is desired to construct a deck, such construction shall be at the rear of the structure. Where visible from the street, design and construction shall be compatible with the building to which it is appended, and the deck shall be constructed of finished materials, be of a shape and scale similar to that of an historic porch or patio, and be partially screened with landscaping or opaque fencing to limit visibility.

NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

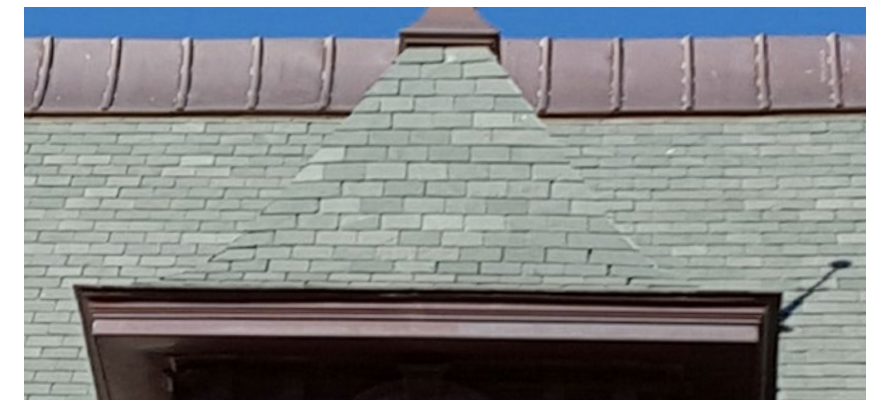
Additions to historic buildings shall be compatible in height, scale, mass, and materials to the historic fabric of the original building. Similarly, when new construction is proposed, consideration of the "streetscape" and compatible relationships between the new structures and existing ones are of utmost importance. It is not the intention of these regulations to discourage contemporary design so long as it attends to the above guidance. The historic character of the District is not enhanced by new construction that attempts to mimic the historic.

ROOF REPAIR & REPLACEMENT

The visible form of the roof, as in its shape and pitch, and the presence or absence of dormers and other roof elements, shall not be altered. Original or existing slate, tile and metal roofs shall be preserved through repair and maintenance. If the original or historic material is unavailable, the proposed substitute material must first be approved by the Cultural Resources Office. Skylights and solar panels shall not be introduced where visible from the sidewalk or street. Existing historic skylights should be restored or replaced in kind.



Historic clay tile roof



Slate roof



Asphalt shingle roof