



River Road Historic District

Design Guidelines

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I. Project Background & Purpose

In 2017, St. John the Baptist Parish (St. John Parish) passed Ordinance No. 17-27. This ordinance established local historic districts, identified local historic landmarks, and created the Historic District Commission. The Commission is responsible for the “preservation and stewardship of designated historic districts” in the Parish; the ordinance gives the Commission the authority to review building and development activity within the historic districts and for designated local landmarks, including using design guidelines to manage and evaluate these activities.

St. John Parish retained Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC (Row 10) for the purposes of developing district-specific guidelines for four local historic districts: Garyville Historic District, LaPlace Historic District, Reserve Historic District, and the River Road Historic District. Previously, St. John Parish had relied on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and other preservation guidelines to direct decisions regarding the demolition, renovation, and construction within its historic districts. St. John Parish sought specific guidelines that took into account the unique architecture and settlement patterns of the parish and these historic districts to provide a more tailored approach for its historic fabric.

Row 10 relied on previous surveys, survey reports, and parish inventories to tailor these guidelines to the unique characteristics of each district, particularly as related to the historic building types and notable architectural styles. To supplement these inventories, Row 10 referenced resources such as *Louisiana Speaks*, Virginia McAlester’s *A Field Guide to American Houses*, and other texts. Widely accepted preservation guidelines, such as the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, the National Park Service *Preservation Briefs*, and other historic district guidelines from across Louisiana, were also used to inform relevant sections of the guidelines.

These guidelines are for the River Road Historic District.

II. History of the River Road Historic District



Figure 1: Evergreen Plantation in the River Road historic district.

The River Road Historic District encompasses the structures along the River Road in the historic towns of Edgard, Lucy, and Wallace as well as other smaller neighborhood enclaves. This road is the primary artery for these communities on the west bank in St. John Parish. Most of the built environment in the River Road Historic District is Creole architecture from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, despite the area's history as a German immigrant hub. However, only a handful of Creole buildings remain today.¹

Wallace, initially a haven for Acadian settlers, is notable for its church—Woodville Baptist Church and cemetery. In and around Wallace are several Creole Cottages along River Road. Edgard, originally named St. John after its Catholic church, was established as the parish seat in 1848. The church, St. John the Baptist, was established in 1792.² Near the church were a small cluster of public and commercial buildings, including the Parish Courthouse and two stores built by the Caire family in 1855 and 1897.³ These two stores are examples of rural general stores. While once numerous, these stores declined in number in the mid-twentieth century. Another notable feature in Edgard was the Edgard-Reserve ferry landing. The ferry was the only tangible connection of the west bank of St. John Parish with the east bank of the parish. The first settlement in the parish was Lucy, and it was the original parish seat. Unfortunately, breaches in the

¹ The West Bank River Road Beautification Plan, Section I: A West Bank Overview Along River Road, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, pp. 52; 63.

² West Bank River Road Beautification Plan, p. 55.

³ Ibid, p. 54; Louisiana SP Caire, E.J., & Co. Stores, National Register Nomination, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/73974698>.

levee in 1909 and 1912 flooded the area and caused a loss of architectural materials from before that time.⁴

The smaller neighborhood enclaves are typically familial-founded streets on ancestor-owned land.⁵ They typically sit far apart from one another or the other established communities. Several of these neighborhoods are roads that dead end off of River Road that have very little commercial property and thus are connected via Catholic or Baptist churches or benevolent societies established by community members. An example of one such neighborhood is the Rousseve enclave, united with a large icehouse and general store.⁶ While many of the neighborhoods have old Creole Cottages scattered throughout, much of the architectural material dates from the early through the mid-twentieth century, and there is a great deal of blight affecting the homes in the area.⁷

⁴ West Bank River Road Beautification Plan, p. 53-55.

⁵ Ibid; Brooke Robichaux, "Reflections: Wallace ancestors were community-minded," *L'Observateur*, September 14, 2022.

⁶ West Bank River Road Beautification Plan, p. 52-53.

⁷ Ibid, p. 53.

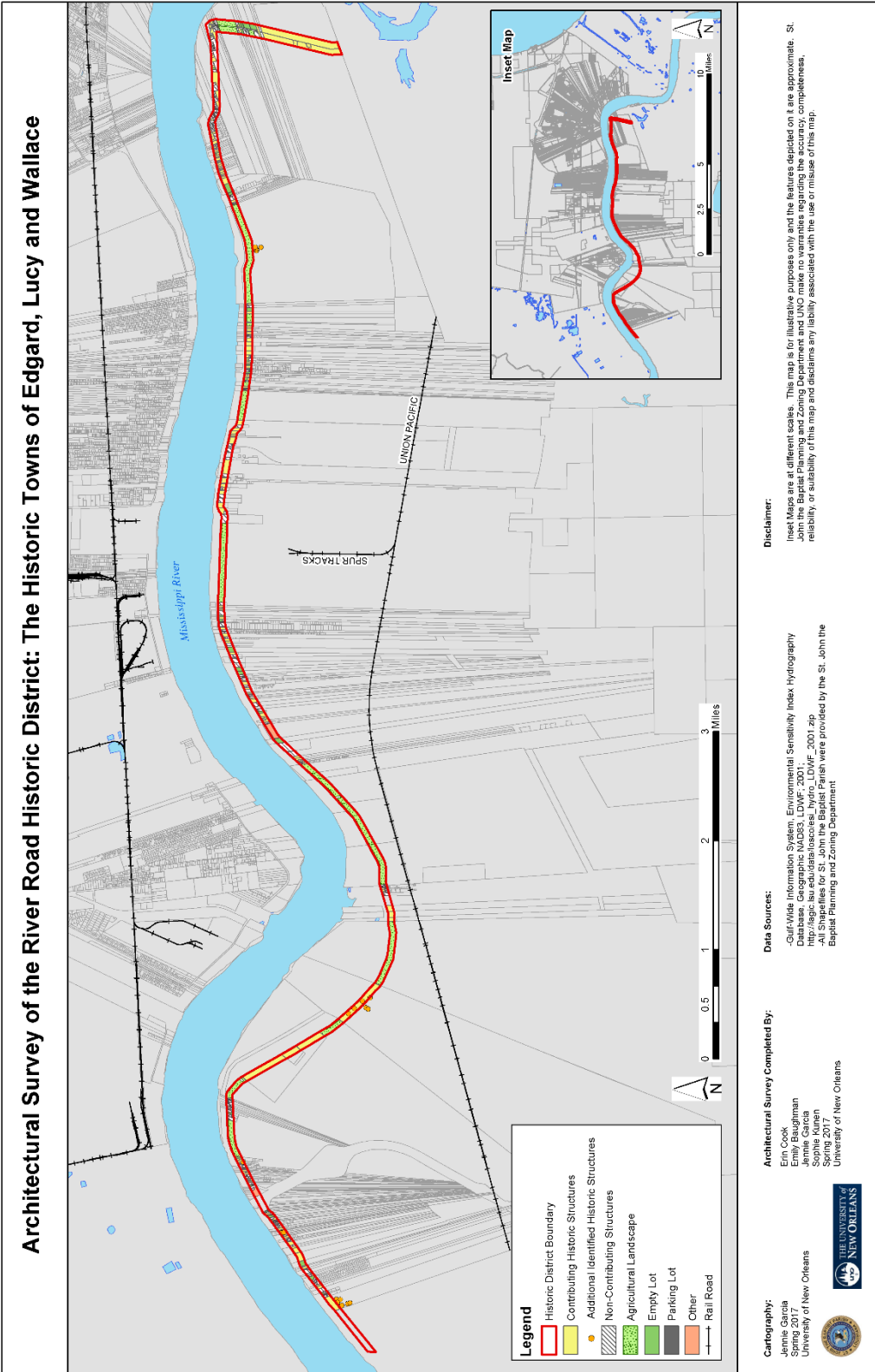


Figure 2: Map of the River Road Historic District.

III. Characteristics of the River Road Historic District

The River Road Historic District is a linear district stretched out along LA Highway 18, from parish line to parish line. The district encompasses numerous agricultural fields, modern utilities structures, institutional buildings, former plantation complexes, and modern commercial buildings. Both early (early nineteenth century) and later (mid-twentieth century) architectural house types and styles are interspersed along the Mississippi River in various communities. These various house types and architectural characteristics remain evident to this day, and are an important part of the historic fabric of the River Road Historic District.

The River Road Historic District does not have a current historic building inventory; the following draws from an abbreviated windshield survey of what was seen in the district plus typical historic building types and styles of southeastern Louisiana. The district may contain additional building types, such as multi-family residential, industrial, and agricultural buildings, and architectural styles found outside the following examples. More information on individual buildings may be available at the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department or the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office’s Historic Preservation Cultural Resources Map (available online [here](#)).

Many of these properties may also have associated outbuildings, such as sheds, garages, and other small, utilitarian buildings. These buildings may or may not contribute to the district.

The following historic building types and architectural styles describe character-defining features to assist the Commission in recognizing significant features of historic buildings in the historic district. Buildings of a particular type or style may not possess every feature listed below, but the information below will help the Commission identify important historic and architectural features of a building.

Type vs. Style

A building type is the basic form of the building. A building’s architectural style is the decorative features that are draped over the form.

Historic Building Types

Building type: Creole Cottage

ca.1790s – 1870s



NB: The gray Creole cottage is located in New Orleans, LA.



The Creole cottage is an iconic Louisiana house form, combining French and Spanish influences to create a vernacular building to meet local housing needs. Early Creole cottages were often built of brick between wooden posts, but later ones were entirely wooden construction.

Character-defining features:

- Symmetrical façade
- Side gable roof, often steeply pitched
- Deep overhang that shelters façade
- Stucco or clapboard siding
- Usually 1 to 1 ½ stories
- May be either raised on piers or have slab foundation

Building type: Shotgun / Double Shotgun

ca. 1830s – 1940s



NB: These shotguns are located in New Orleans, LA.

Shotgun residences have been popular in Louisiana since the early 19th century. Their name derives from the arrangement of their rooms, with each room opening into the next room. Double shotgun refers to two shotgun residences sharing a party wall and single roof.

Character-defining features:

- Long, narrow rectangular footprint
- 1 room wide for single shotguns, 2 rooms wide for double shotguns
- Usually 1 story
- Wood frame construction
- Balanced or symmetrical facades
- Gable or gable-on-hip roofs
- Full width porch across facade

Building type: Bungalow

ca. 1900 - 1950



NB: The above bungalow is located in Hammond, LA; the bungalow to the right is located in New Orleans, LA.

Bungalows became a popular residential building type throughout the United States during the early 20th century and were economical to build, practical, and easy to adapt to the climate of Louisiana. They share many characteristics with cottages with the addition of certain aspects that became popular during the Arts and Crafts movement.

Character-defining features:

- Asymmetrical facades
- Irregular floorplan
- Usually 1 story, sometimes 1 ½ stories
- Prominent porches often incorporated under the main roof
- Often have Craftsman (see below) details

Building type: Minimal Traditional Cottage

ca. 1930s – 1950s



During the Great Depression, vernacular residential housing tended to be simple in style, with minimal architectural detail. This continued into the post-World War II housing boom that saw an emphasis on quantity rather than artistic style. Minimal traditional cottages were faster and more affordable to construct than Craftsman bungalows

Character-defining features:

- Usually 1 story
- Modest scale
- Minimal stylistic features
- Shallow gable roofs with little to no overhang

Building type: Ranch House

ca. 1940s – 1970s



Ranch houses originated in California in the 1930s but spread nationwide in the 1950s and 1960s. Ranch house construction relied on standardized building materials, such as sheetrock and lumber, and methods developed during rapid construction methods developed during World War II, such as concrete slab foundations.

Character-defining features:

- 1 story height
- Concrete slab foundation
- Asymmetrical façade with strong horizontal emphasis
- Low pitched gable or hip roofs
- Garages and carports integrated into house plan

Building type: Commercial / Business

19th and 20th Century



Commercial buildings are often found at intersections near earlier-built churches and schools, with concentrations being near the river and near the railroad tracks. Early commercial properties in St. John Parish tend to be small, one story buildings of wood frame or brick construction. However, the wood frame buildings often have a brick façade. Construction methods changed to reflect trends and tastes over time.

Character-defining features:

- Primary commercial in function, but may have residential quarters.
- Used historic buildings materials common at the time of construction, such as brick or wood.
- Range of historic architectural styles.
- Open floor plan for primary commercial space.

Architectural Styles

Historic architectural style: Creole

ca. 1790s – 1840s



This architectural style is closely associated with Creole cottages, but can be found on larger buildings as well. Designed to accommodate the sweltering heat of Louisiana, these houses feature deep porches that often wrap around the building.

Character-defining features:

- Symmetrical façade
- Paired French doors
- Wood or stucco exterior
- Prominent porches with turned or chamfered columns

Historic architectural style: Greek Revival

ca. 1820s – 1870s



NB: Photo of E. J. Caire store, date unknown, Photographer: Charles Daigle. Image provided by St. John Parish.



This popular architectural style of the early 20th century reflected a renewed interest in Greek and Roman architecture. The Greek Revival style was popular for commercial and public buildings as well as houses. Influenced the development of the front gable house, a popular vernacular house form in both urban and rural areas.

Character-defining features:

- Prominent porches with classical columns
- Symmetrical
- Gable or hipped roof with a pronounced cornice
- Elaborate door surrounds
- Greek and Roman-inspired architectural details, such as Greek keys and egg-and-dart molding

Historic architectural style: Queen Anne Revival / Eastlake

ca. 1870s – 1900s



NB: The Queen Anne Revival-style shotguns above and to the left are in New Orleans, LA.

Queen Anne Revival-style homes are known for their architectural detailing such as decorative wood cutouts (“gingerbread trim”), irregular massing, shingle cladding, and use of bow windows. They became popular in the United States in the late 19th century. This style is often seen in simple expressions, such as decorative brackets on porches and irregular footprints.

Character-defining features:

- Steeply pitched roof of irregular shape.
- Patterned shingle siding, particularly fishscale shingles.
- Cutaway bay windows or other irregular massing.
- Asymmetrical façade with partial or full-width porch.
- Round, square, or polygonal towers.
- Projecting gables.
- Palladian or rounded windows.
- Corner brackets.
- Elaborate spindlework, often concentrated at the porch and gable.

Historic architectural style: Craftsman
ca. 1900s – 1940s



NB: The Craftsman cottage to the left is located in New Orleans, LA.

Craftsman became a popular architectural style across the United States at the turn of the 20th century and was common through the 1930s. The style was heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and became one of the most popular smaller house styles across the country.

Character-defining features:

- Low pitched gabled roof with an unenclosed eave overhang.
- Exposed roof rafter ends.
- Decorative beams or braces under gables.
- Full or partial width porches with decorative columns supporting the porch roof.
- Double or tapered columns on column bases.
- Dormers common.
- One or one-and-a-half story, wood framed construction is more common than two-story homes.

Historic architectural style: Ranch

ca. 1940s – 1970s



Ranch homes became the most popular style of American home by the 1960s. Influenced by the earlier Prairie-style architecture, high style examples may have leaded or stained-glass windows, original doors with decorative glass, and heights of two stories.

Character-defining features:

- Recessed entrance with door covered by main roof.
- Double-hung or awning windows with horizontal panes.
- Picture windows, often with a single large central pane.
- Brick exteriors are common.
- Simple masonry planters integrated into facade, often near entry.
- Partial width porch.

Character-defining Features of the River Road Historic District



Figure 3: View of River Road Historic District.

Organization

The River Road Historic District linear district organized along LA Highway 18. The buildings are generally oriented towards LA Highway 18; most of the buildings are sited south of the main road, but a handful are north of the road and adjacent to the levee. The buildings are often clustered together and interspersed with agricultural fields.

LA Highway 18 lacks continuous, comprehensive sidewalks.

Setbacks

The River Road district has irregular setbacks; some buildings are set in close proximity to the road while others are set farther back on their lots. Residential buildings generally have greenspace between the road and the building, while commercial and institutional buildings have a mix of greenspace and parking lots.

Landscaping

For the most part, the River Road historic district lacks cohesive landscape features. Several of the former plantation complexes within and adjacent to the district retain some significant landscape features, but those are distinctive to the respective historic properties and not a defining characteristic of the River Road historic district. Individual buildings generally have minimal landscaping associated. A scattering of mature trees can be found in the district.

Street furniture

The historic district does not have any notable street furniture, such as historic lampposts, benches, or bus stops. Street signs are utilitarian.

Driveways

Many of the district's properties have driveways associated with them. The district has a mix of paved and unpaved driveways for residential properties. Commercial and institutional properties in the district have larger driveways and curb cuts to accommodate increased vehicular access.

Fences

The River Road historic district does not have consistent or uniform fencing. Most properties do not have fencing. Modern chain link and wooden picket fences are both present in the district.



Figure 4: View of River Road Historic District.

IV. Design Review Process

The following outlines the steps in the design review process, including the role of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA).

Ordinance 17-27

Ordinance 17-27 establishes the Historic Preservation Commission, its role in historic preservation in St. John Parish, and the design review process. The ordinance passed in 2017 in response to the loss of historic building stock in the Parish in recent years.



Figure 5: E. J. Caire & Co. store, LA Hwy 18.

Ordinance 17-27 grants the Commission the authority to “preserve, protect, and enhance” St. John Parish’s historic districts, including via design guidelines and a design review process. The Commission consists of seven members, with three members appointed by the Parish President and four members appointed by the Parish Council. Each member serves a four-year term; the position is volunteer and unpaid. The Commission members are made up of representatives of the historic districts, individuals with a background in historic, cultural, educational, archaeological, architectural, artistic, and preservation organizations, and electors of St. John Parish.

The ordinance also establishes the four historic districts in St. John Parish, identifies the Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) process, the appeals process in regards to a CoA, steps related to any violations, and other preservation-related matters for the Parish.

Ordinance 17-27 is available [here](#).

Certificate of Appropriateness Process and Role of the Historic Preservation Commission

One of the chief activities of the Commission is issuing CoAs. To complete work on a historic building within the River Road historic district, a property owner must obtain a CoA. The CoA certifies that the proposed work is in keeping with historic preservation and the historic district guidelines of St. John Parish.

A CoA is required for the following types of work within historic districts, design review corridors, or local landmark sites:

- Demolition of a historic building or structure.
- Alteration, renovation, or rehabilitation of a historic building, contributing building to a historic district, or a local landmark if the building is within a design review corridor, if the work is beyond

ordinary maintenance and repair. CoAs are required for alteration, renovation or rehabilitation projects that affect the exterior of a building; solely interior work does not require a CoA.⁸

- New construction and additions within a design review corridor or involving a local landmark.
- New signs or alterations to existing signs.

A CoA is obtained by submitting a Historic District Application (available [here](#)) to the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department. The Historic District Application identifies the supporting materials a property owners must submit for review by the Historic District Commission, including photos, elevations, and floor plans. Upon receipt of a full and complete application, the St. John Parish Historic District

The Historic District Commission has monthly scheduled meetings to review applications; a complete Historic District Application must be received approximately 3 to 4 weeks prior to the relevant Commission meeting. The schedule for the Commission meetings and associated Historic District Application due dates is available from the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department and online [here](#).

The Commission will discuss the Historic District Application at a public meeting; the property owner must attend the meeting. If the Commission finds the proposed work complies with these guidelines and other standards referenced by the Commission, a CoA is issued, and the property owner can proceed with the work once he or she obtains all other necessary permits. If the Historic District Commission rejects the proposed work, the property owner has the opportunity to revise the proposed work and resubmit.

Some work, such as routine maintenance measures, may be approved by Planning and Zoning staff and not require Commission approval; a full application package must still be submitted for review.

A tenant may complete a Historic District Application and apply for a CoA, but documented permission from the property owner must accompany the Historic District Application.

Any work, including demolition, conducted without a valid CoA will receive a stop work order from the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department. If the issue is not resolved via the issuance of a CoA, additional steps will be taken.

Appeals

If the property owner wishes to appeal the decision of the Commission, an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Planning and Zoning Department; the appeal must be received within ten days of the written decision of the Commission. The appeal is considered by the Parish Council, who can confirm or reverse the decision of the Commission.

⁸ If a property owner is pursuing Historic Preservation Tax Credits, interior features are included in reviews for that program. The Historic Preservation Tax Credit program is not operated by St. John Parish or the St. John Parish Historic District Commission but by the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office; for more information see [here](#).

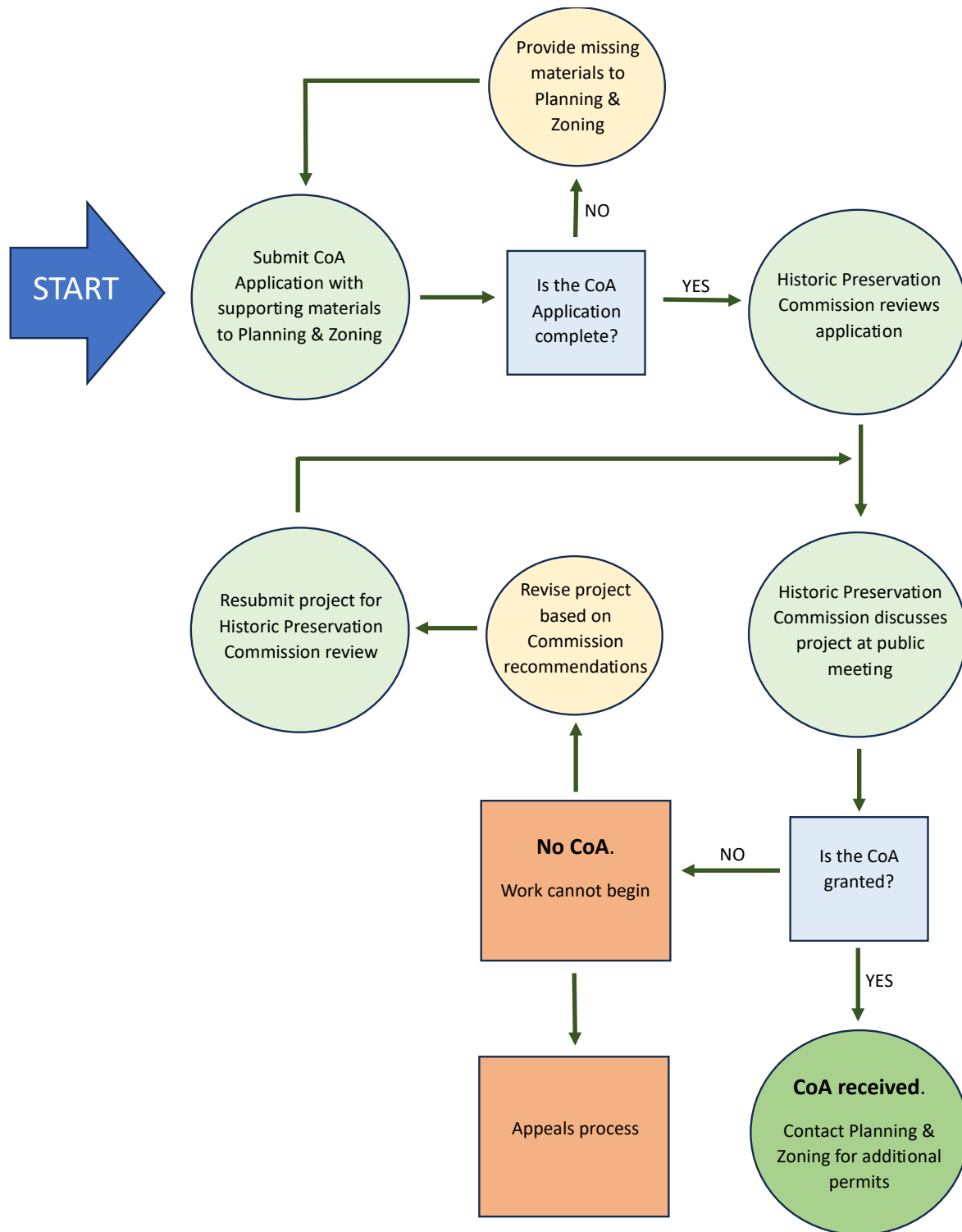


Figure 6: The process for obtaining a CoA.

V. Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation underpin these guidelines and provide guidance for appropriate treatment of historic properties. The Standards for Rehabilitation allow for flexibility in rehabilitation projects by taking into account the financial and technical viability of a project as well as recognizing the unique set of circumstances that accompany renovating historic buildings. The following Standards should be used to make appropriate decisions for repairs, alterations, and additions to historic properties:

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.

VI. Roofing

General Recommendations

Roof repairs or replacements should retain the historic appearance and characteristics of the historic roof. Consider the roof configuration, slope, and materials. Adding new features or changing the characteristics of the roof is not appropriate unless there is evidence in historic photographs or drawings that the building had these features in the past.

Historic decorative features or details on a roof should not be permanently removed. If they must be temporarily removed during repairs or other roof work, when replaced, they should maintain their historic location and orientation.

If there is damage to a roof due to high wind or hurricanes, temporary roof coverings should be installed as soon as it is safe to do so. Tarps are useful in this situation, however, roll roofing that carefully patches the damaged portion of the roof can allow time to document the roof materials, current conditions, and order appropriate materials.

Materials

Roof repairs and replacements should be done with in-kind materials. i.e., replace slate tiles with slate tiles of similar shape, size, and appearance as the historic tiles. Materials should not just match in color but should match in material as well.

If not possible to replace with in-kind materials, modern materials that mimic historic materials—such as synthetic slate—would be considered appropriate if they resemble the historic materials and have an appropriate degree of longevity.

Replacement with a different, historically appropriate material is an option if the material is sympathetic with the building's architectural style and/or historic evidence (such as an old photograph of the house) shows the material was present at one time.



Figure 7: Example of synthetic slate roof

Slate Roofs

- Use slates that match in appearance, including color and texture, along with size and scale to replace any missing slates.
- Maintain any distinctive decorative patterns or designs on the roof; any replacement slate should not interrupt the original pattern.
- If a slate roof requires replacement, and a synthetic slate material is chosen as a replacement material, choose synthetic slate that closely matches the original slate roof in color and appearance.

Tile Roofs

- Use tiles that match in color, appearance, size, scale, and shape to replace any missing tiles.
- Patch any cracked tiles with roofing cement tinted to match the color of the historic tiles.
- Select tiles that match the color, shape, scale, and size of the historic roof if a tile roof requires full replacement.

Asbestos Shingle Roofs

- Involve a certified asbestos contractor in any project that requires removal or replacement of an asbestos shingle roof.
- Assess the condition of the shingle attachments; any loose or rusted nails require replacement. Reattach any loose shingles.
- Match any replacement shingles in size, shape, and general appearance to the original shingles.
- When replacing an asbestos roof, ensure the project complies with local and environmental regulations, including disposal of the old shingles.

Asphalt Shingle Roofs

- Match any damaged or missing asphalt shingles with replacement shingles that are of the same size, color, appearance, and scale.
- Assess shingle condition; any loose nails should be replaced or reattached to ensure the security of the shingles.
- If an entire asphalt shingle roof requires replacement, match the original shingles in size, scale, color, and general appearance.

Metal Roofs

- Protect metal roofs from rust and/or deterioration by repainting as needed (if applicable).
- Use materials of similar appearance to patch any holes or gaps in the roof.
- Patch any damaged, missing, or corroded areas with compatible materials that visually match the roofing materials.



Figure 8: Example of a ridge tiles on an asphalt roof



Figure 9: Example of an asbestos shingle roof



Figure 10: Example of an asphalt shingle roof.



Figure 11: Examples of a modern metal roof, brick chimney, and dormer.

Chimneys

- Maintain any decorative features of a chimney, such as chimney pots or corbeling. Any repair projects should ensure these features are retained in their original location.
- Use mortar that matches in appearance and composition to the original for repointing any open or weakened mortar joints.
- Use compatible materials of the same size, texture, color, scale, and materials to replace any missing or deteriorated chimney components.
- Removing an interior fireplace should not result in removing the exterior chimney.

Dormers

- Retain any existing dormers, including the style, window frame, and roof shape.
- Avoid adding dormers to a historic building that did not previously have one.
- Consider removing non-historic dormers on a historic building unless the dormers have become a historic feature of the building.

Gutters and Downspouts

- Install new gutters and/or downspouts in a manner that is minimally intrusive to the historic character of the building.
- Ensure the installation does not unnecessarily damage any historic materials.



Figure 12: Example of a gutter and downspout

VII. Cladding

In keeping with the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, the goal is to keep as much historic material as possible, repair as much as you can, and, if replacement is necessary, choose new materials that match in material and appearance. This guidance applies to any type of siding on the house, even if there is more than one type of siding. Historic decorative features of the siding should be retained, replaced, or replicated.

General Recommendations

- Use replacement materials that match in size, shape, thickness, and general material.
- Replicate any distinctive patterns or styles in the siding.
- Don't encapsulate architectural features under new cladding.
- Use the gentlest approach to cleaning historic cladding. Do not utilize sandblasting, metal brushes, grinders, or high-pressure power washing, as these methods can damage historic material.

Paint

- Paint is not only a decorative feature of your building but also a protective element of exterior woodwork and stucco, extending the life of the material. Paint can be destructive when non-permeable paint is applied to historic masonry or stucco, trapping moisture and weakening historic masonry, stucco, and grout.
- Maintain the painted surface of historically painted buildings or features. Choose colors based on the age and architectural style of the building.
- Avoid painting a previously unpainted masonry building.
- Use the gentlest means possible when removing old and failing paint. Removing paint by hand, through scraping, using hand tools, moderate heat, steam, or sanding is recommended to avoid damaging the underlying historic material. Sandblasting, high-pressure power washing, blowtorches, and paint thinning solvents will damage the surface of the historic material, decreasing its lifespan.
- If existing paint is protecting damaged masonry or other surface materials from disintegration, it should not be removed.
- Buildings built prior to 1978 are likely to contain lead-based paint. Ensure removal is undertaken in compliance with local and environmental regulations in order to protect yourself, family, and pets. Keep children and pets away from any paint removal projects and use caution around any dust generated by the removal process.



Figure 13: Examples of various types of wooden siding - drop siding (L), clapboards (center), and decorative shingles (R).

Wood

- Maintain and repair exterior woodwork. If only a small area or component is damaged or rotted, patch as needed with wooden materials of the same size, shape, thickness, and general appearance.
- If replacement or repair materials are required, ensure any distinctive features are replicated or reproduced on the replacement materials, such as a beaded edge on a clapboard.
- Match any replacement shingles with the same size, shape, materials, thickness, and general appearance. Ensure the shingle pattern is maintained and replicated during any repair or replacement projects.
- Do not encapsulate existing historic woodwork under synthetic siding, such as vinyl or aluminum.
- If the exterior woodwork requires full replacement, choose a new siding that replicates the existing woodwork in size, shape, profile, and appearance. Match the historic pattern and orientation. Never replace shingle siding with lap siding.
- Do not use fiber cement siding, such as Hardieplank, on historic buildings as the material is incompatible with historic wood siding in dimension and appearance.

Masonry

- Replace any missing or damaged historic bricks with bricks of similar size, color, and shape. Maintain the original brick pattern and any decorative brickwork.

- Clean historic masonry with mild detergent and a soft brush. Avoid cleaning a historic masonry wall with sandblasting, metal brushes, or grinders, as these methods are likely to damage the surface of the masonry.
- Do not paint a previously unpainted brick surface. Modern paints can damage historic brick by trapping water behind the paint surface, and masonry details such as decorative brick patterns should not be covered or concealed.
- Replace missing or damaged concrete blocks with blocks of similar size, color, and shape.
- Do not paint a previously unpainted concrete block wall.
- Modern mortar mix can damage historic brick. Ensure the mortar mix is compatible with the age of the brick and existing mortar by consulting a mortar mix or historic masonry professional.
- Use the gentlest possible manner when removing loose or powdery mortar prior to repointing.
- Match new mortar to cleaned, historic mortar in both color and joint profile. Be careful to not damage historic brick when removing old mortar. Removal of mortar is safest when done with hand tools.
- Do not alter the width of the mortar joints during repointing.

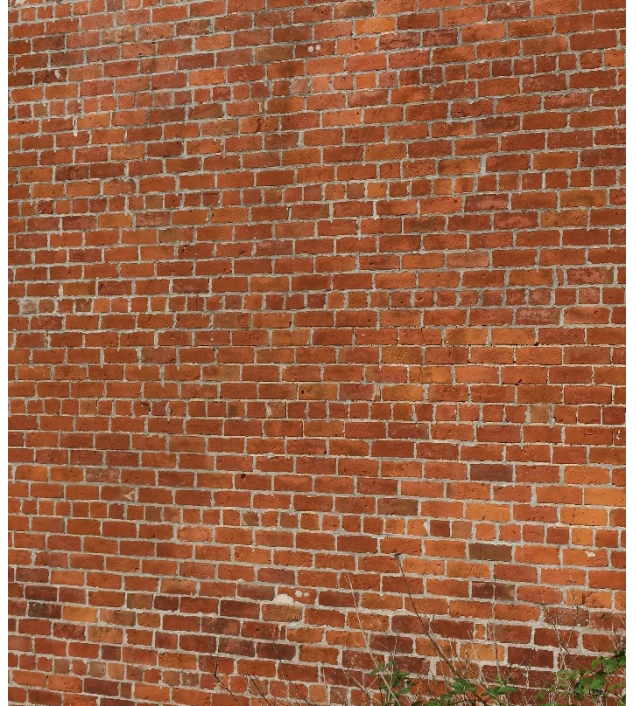


Figure 14: Example of a brick wall laid in common bond with sixth row headers

Stucco

- Patch damaged existing stucco where feasible. Match patching material in color, consistency, and finish to historic stucco finishes.
- Do not remove historic stucco from the exterior of a building.
- Do not add a stucco finish to areas that previously did not have stucco.
- Do not encapsulate historic stucco behind new cladding. Trapped moisture will damage the stucco and the framing behind the stucco.



Figure 15: Detail of a stucco clad wall

Synthetic

- When replacing vinyl or aluminum siding, match the style and pattern as closely as possible.

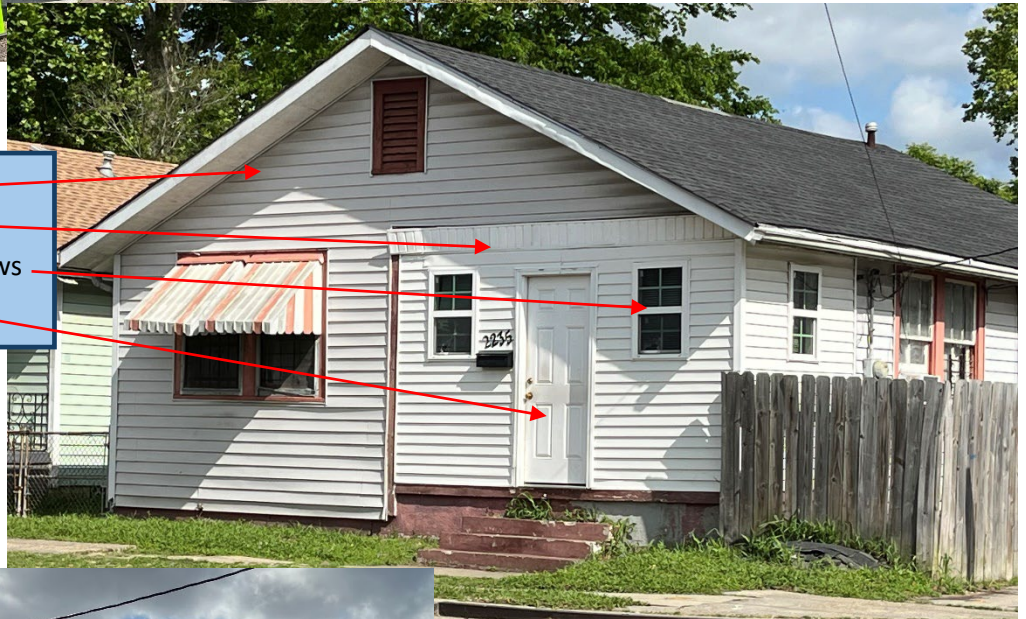
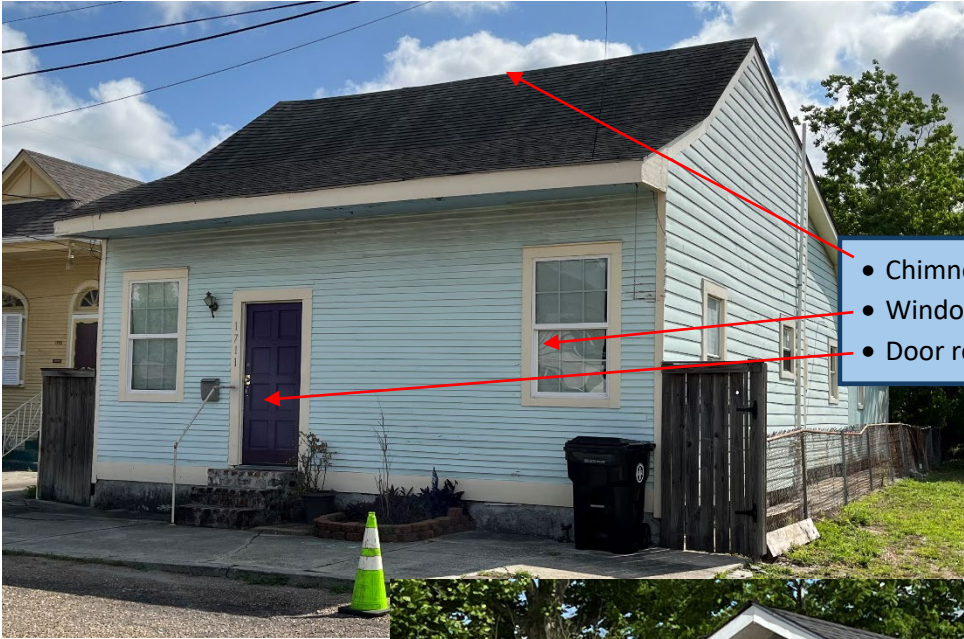
Other

- Asbestos siding shingles are hazardous to remove. Ensure removal is undertaken in compliance with local and environmental regulations in order to protect yourself, family, and pets. Keep children and pets away from any asbestos removal projects, and use caution around any dust generated by the removal process.
- Replace or reattach any loose or rusted nails attaching asbestos shingles to the wall.
- Replace missing or damaged asbestos shingles with non-asbestos shingles that match in size, style, and shape.



Figure 16: Example of aluminum siding (L) and asbestos shingle siding (R)

When Bad Decisions Happen to Good Buildings



VIII. Windows

Historic windows have distinctive features and characteristics that contribute to the overall architectural style of the house, and these details should be retained. Windows may have a variety of configurations, such as casement, double-hung sash, triple-hung sash, or hopper types. Prioritize repair, instead of replacement, of these historic windows. The configuration, materials, appearance, and number of windowpanes, frames, mullions, and muntins are all important parts of historic windows.

General Recommendations

- Repair historic windows instead of replacing them.
- Do not install windows bought off the shelf from “big box” home improvement stores. These windows are generally incompatible with the architecture, materials, and appearance of a historic building.
- Seek out salvaged windows to replace a damaged window or sash.
- Match new windows in size, shape, configuration, and general appearance to the historic windows.
- Do not alter the opening to accommodate a new window.

Repair of Wooden Windows

Full replacement of wooden windows should be avoided, as wooden window components are often easily repaired. Cracked or broken glass, missing putty, and rotten rails can all be repaired and are not indicative the entire window requires replacement. A damaged upper or lower sash can be replaced with a sash of similar size and appearance, thus maintaining the historic character of the building. Addressing any damaged or broken window components in a timely manner will help extend the life of historic windows.

- Monitor for rot, insect damage, missing glazing putty, or cracked panes of glass and repair as needed.
- Repair and replace missing components, such as glass, glazing putty, muntins, and sash cords.
- Replace clear glass with clear glass; avoid using colored or beveled glass in a window that previously had clear glass.
- Repair and retain window surrounds, trim, and hardware.
- Maintain the muntin pattern and glass type and configuration.

Replacing Windows

- Choose windows with clear glass. Avoid installing windows with colored or beveled glass if the previous windows were clear. Frosted glass may be appropriate in certain circumstances.
- Find a salvaged window of the same size, materials, and appearance as the historic window. Salvaged windows are preferable over new windows.
- Source a high-quality replacement window if an appropriate salvaged window cannot be located. Any new window must match in size, appearance, and profile as the historic window.
- Ensure any replacement or salvaged windows are installed at the same position within the wall. Avoid installing new windows flush with the exterior wall if the historic windows were set back.
- Keep any hardware, historic trim, drip cap, trim and other historic features as part of any window replacement project.

- Do not change the location, size, or shape of a historic window opening to accommodate a replacement window. Do not install infill panels between a smaller new window and the historic opening.
- Do not modify the type of window, i.e. do not replace a double-hung sash window with a casement window.
- Do not modify the shape of a window, i.e. do not replace an arched window with a flat window or a flat window with a bow window.
- Do not install modern vinyl or aluminum windows; these window types are generally incompatible with most historic buildings.
- Do not add blackout or mirrored privacy films to historic windows; these finishes are incompatible with most historic buildings.

Shutters

- Do not install fixed shutters.
- Match shutters to the architectural style and historic character of the building.
- Match the shutters to the windows. Ensure any shutters correspond to the size, shape, and opening of the windows, i.e. don't use shutters that are too small for the windows.
- Retain any historic shutter hardware, such as shutter dogs.
- Maintain operable shutters.
- Do not install roll down hurricane shutters on historic buildings.

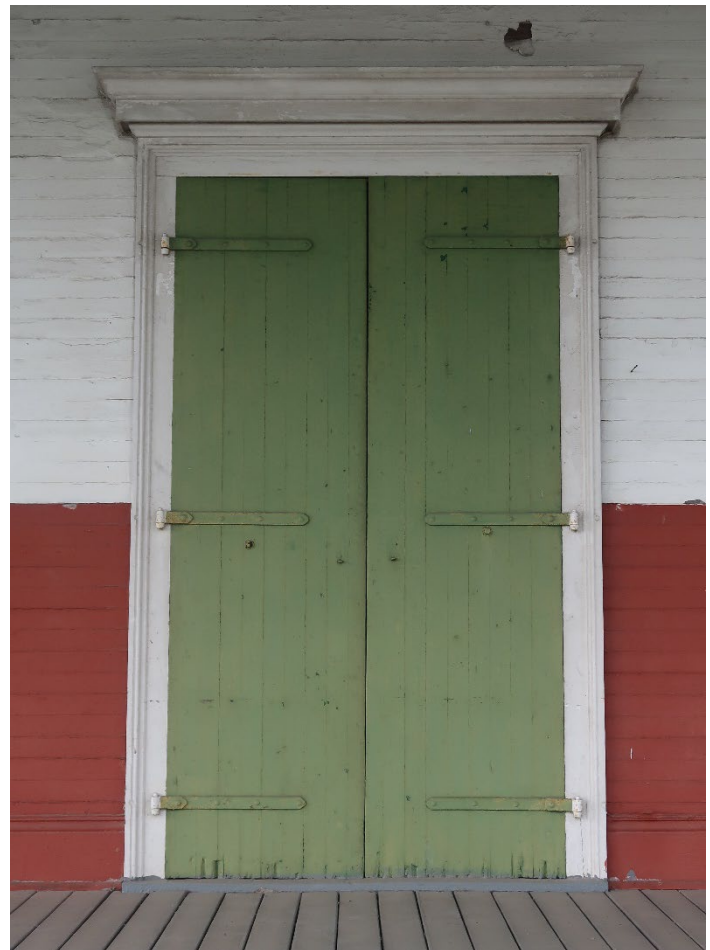


Figure 17: Example of wooden shutters.

IX. Doors

Historic doors are a significant part of a building's historic character; they contributing to the building's architectural style, are character defining features of the building and neighborhood, and provide valuable information on the history of building.

General Recommendations

- Retain and maintain historic doors.
- Retain and maintain historic door surrounds, transom lights, sidelights, and hardware.
- Attempt repairs before replacing an historic door. Repair methods should retain the historic appearance and as much historic fabric as possible.
- If replacement is required, utilize a salvaged historic door similar to the door being replaced in size, material, thickness, style and configuration. Ensure the replacement door is of corresponding architectural style as the building.
- Do not change the style or size of an historic doorway.
- Replace any missing glass in a door with clear or uniformly frosted glass unless the missing or damaged glass was colored and/or decorative.
- Clean and reuse historic hardware, even on a replacement door.
- Repair and maintain historic screen doors and shutters.

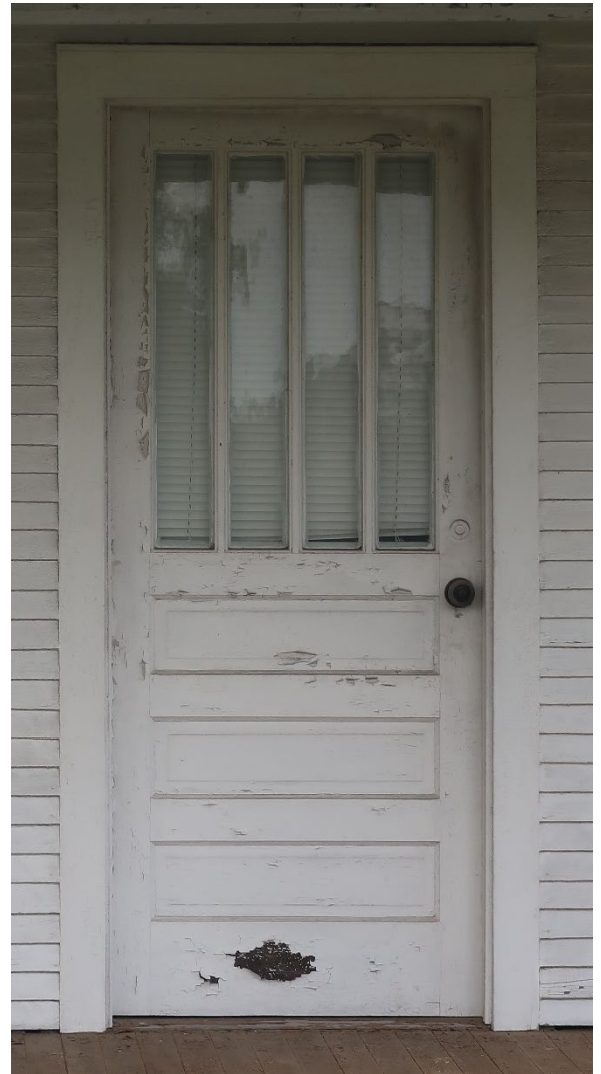


Figure 18: Example of a Craftsman style door.

X. Porches

Porches, balconies, and galleries are distinctive architectural features of many Louisiana buildings, particularly on homes built before the widespread use of air conditioning.



Figure 19: A porch with intact historic details.

General Recommendations

- Retain and maintain historic porches, including the architectural details, dimensions, size, and scale.
- Repair deteriorated or damaged porches, including replacing missing features and elements.
- Repair missing or damaged porch components with materials of the same general appearance, size, shape, and material.
- If a railing or column has deteriorated to the point it must be replaced, ensure the new railing or column matches the historic component in appearance, shape, size, and architectural characteristics. Do not replace an historic component with one of a different material, height, or architectural style.
- Do not enclose a porch with exterior cladding. When enclosing a porch with screening, minimize the visual changes to the porch by setting screen framing behind railings and columns. Design the screen door to blend with the scale and style of the building.
- Do not lower the porch floor to grade.
- If rebuilding or replacing a missing porch, reference the original architecture of the building in terms of scale, design, and architectural features. Consult historic photographs or drawings of the building to inform the design for a replacement porch. If these materials aren't available,

reference historic porches on buildings of similar architectural style, building type, and age in the surrounding neighborhood.

- Do not add a porch, balcony, double gallery, or similar feature on a building or building type that did not previously have such a feature or if it would be historically inaccurate.
- Installation of new light fixtures on a porch should keep with the historic character and scale of the historic building.

XI. Architectural Details

Architectural details are the quoins, spindles, fretwork, brackets, and other features that contribute to the buildings architectural style, appearance, and historic character. These decorative features are important parts of historic buildings and require attention while maintaining and preserving a historic building.



*Figure 20: San Francisco Plantation House, Reserve, LA. Spring 2016, Photographer: Charles Daigle.
Image courtesy of St. John the Baptist Parish.*

General Recommendations

- Retain historic architectural details; avoid permanently removing any significant and historic details of a historic building.
- If a project requires temporarily removing any architectural details, replace the details in the original location and orientation. Do not move them to new locations.
- Do not obscure or hide any architectural details under siding or other materials.
- If the condition of an architectural detail is deteriorated, prioritize repair of the feature over replacement.
- If an architectural element is missing or cannot be repaired, find a replacement feature. A salvaged element is preferable. Whether the replacement piece is new or salvaged, ensure it is period-appropriate for the building and matches in general characteristics and appearance, such as size, scale, and material.
- Use historic images to determine the appearance of any missing or damaged historic architectural elements. If historic images cannot be located or are not useful, use historic buildings of a similar age and architectural style to determine an appropriate replacement.

XII. Additions

Additions often allow historic buildings to adapt to modern usage, but any additions must maintain the historic character of the building. Large additions that overwhelm the original building are incompatible with historic buildings and historic districts. Nor should the additions be indistinguishable from the historic portions of the building. An addition may prove to be a beneficial change if it prevents loss of significant and historic interior details of a historic building.

General recommendations

- Design and construct additions smaller than the existing buildings; additions should not overwhelm the original building in scale or size.
- Use similar form and massing for additions.
- Maintain significant architectural and construction details consistent with the original buildings, such as roof slope, fenestration patterns, and trim.
- Prioritize locating additions to the rear of the building. If an addition is located on the side of the building, place it towards the rear to the extent feasible.
- Avoid constructing additions on the front of a historic building.
- Do not fabricate or create a false historic appearance, such as adding a double gallery porch addition on a building that would not have had one.
- Use compatible building materials for exterior cladding of additions.
- Minimize intrusion and removal of historic building fabric, to the extent feasible.

XIII. Commercial Buildings

The following recommendations address commercial buildings as well as former residential buildings converted to commercial use that are located within the LaPlace Historic District.

General Recommendations

- Maintain historic storefronts, including the window and door style and configuration, period-appropriate materials, and general appearance. Avoid enclosing or removing any historic features of the storefront.
- Reopen and restore previously infilled windows on historic storefronts.
- Restore missing or damaged storefronts, including restoration or replication of any missing ornamental features. Refer to historic images or drawings of the building to accurately recreate the historic façade and storefront. If these images aren't available, draw on similar examples from the LaPlace district of the same approximate age and architectural style.
- Maintain and repair large display windows, if applicable, on storefronts. Use clear glass for any repairs.
- Maintain and repair historic doors. Avoid altering the size of doorframes.
- Replace any missing doors, windows, or architectural features with period and style appropriate elements.
- If the building was formerly residential, retain the residential features and characteristics of the building.
- Replacement awnings and canopies should be of similar size, design, and shape as historic precedents for the building's age and style.
- Locate external modern equipment and utilities, such as electric meters, HVAC equipment, solar panels, antennas, and satellite dishes, on the roof or rear of the building to minimize visual intrusion to the historic architecture.
- Install exterior light fixtures that are appropriate to the building's age and architectural style.
- Do not obscure or damage architectural features with exterior light fixtures.

Signage

- In accordance with Ordinance No. 17-27, the following types of signs are prohibited in historic districts:
 - Electronic variable message signs,
 - Billboards,
 - Portable or changeable letter signs, and
 - Flashing signs or signs with intermittent or fluctuating lighting.
- Preserve and maintain historic signage, including ghost signs.
- Design and locate signs in keeping with the historic architecture of the building and in proportion with the façade.
- Where applicable, anchor signage and light fixtures in mortar instead of masonry. Do not anchor signage in historic architectural features or remove architectural features to accommodate signage.
- Signs with exposed bulbs must be approved by the Commission.

XIV. New Construction

Design new buildings to fit within the general size, scale, setback, height, and appearance of adjacent buildings within the historic district.

Relocating a historic building, either within or out of a historic district, is considered new construction under the Code of Ordinances of St. John Parish and requires a permit to authorize the move. The relocation may also require a CoA, depending on the current and new locations of the building. Relocating a historic building must take into account the condition of the building and the impact to the character of the historic district. For more information, contact the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department.

General Recommendations

- Design new buildings to be visually compatible to adjacent buildings in the historic district.
- Maintain current setbacks.
- Orient new construction in a manner similar to adjacent historic buildings.
- Do not copy historic buildings, but reference historic buildings for materials, fenestration patterns, height, and configuration of the façade.
- Use similar scale, form, and massing as adjacent buildings for new construction.
- Reference historic character of the neighborhood in any designs for new construction.

XV. Demolition

Demolition of a building within a historic district should be avoided; loss of a contributing building irrevocably alters the historic district and contributes to the loss of historic character of St. John the Baptist Parish.

In evaluating the demolition of a historic property, the Commission may take into consideration the significance of the building, the alternatives to demolition presented by the property owner, condition of the building, proposed plans for the future use of the property, and the importance of the building to the historic character of the district and the Parish.

Demolition without a CoA is considered a violation and will result in a stop work order being issued by the St. John Parish Planning and Zoning Department. If the issue is not resolved via the issuance of a CoA, additional steps will be taken.

In cases of Demolition by Neglect, Parish code enforcement inspectors will review the building upon receipt of a complaint, including assessing deterioration of the walls, flooring, framing, roof, chimneys, finishes, and other features. The property owner will receive a notice of violation; the property owner then has 30 days to apply for a CoA. The Parish may pursue emergency measures if the building presents a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the St. John Parish. More information is available in Ordinance 17-27, located [here](#).

General Recommendations

- Demolition of the building cannot take place until a CoA has been issued.
- Salvage and donate historic building materials for reuse.
- Develop a plan for future use of the property.
- Secure and maintain the property between demolition and new construction.

XVII. References and Resources

For more information on historic building types and architectural styles, see:

Keller, Gerald J. *Precious Gems from Faded Memories: A Pictorial History of St. John the Baptist Parish*. Dexter, MI: Thompson Shore Publishing, 2007.

NB: Available at St. John the Baptist Parish Library.

McAlester, Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. New York: Knopf, 2013.

Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, *Louisiana Architecture: A Handbook On Styles*, 1998.

NB: Available online [here](#).

Urban Design Associates, *Louisiana Speaks*. 2007.

NB: Available online [here](#).

The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office maintains a list of preservation consultants and professionals, such as architects, craftsman, and masonry repairs, [here](#).

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties provides guidance on preserving, restoring, and rehabilitating historic properties. The full text of the Standards can be found [here](#).

The National Park Service provides information on maintaining and rehabilitating historic buildings via a series called Preservation Briefs. The full list of Preservation Briefs is [here](#). Specific Briefs relevant to St. John Parish are also linked below.

[Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings](#)

[Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings](#)

[Roofing for Historic Buildings](#)

[Repair of Historic Wooden Windows](#)

[Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork](#)

[Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts](#)

[New Exterior Additions of Historic Buildings](#)

[Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors](#)

[Repairing Historic Flat Plaster – Walls and Ceilings](#)

[The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco](#)

[The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs](#)

[Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigations](#)

[Preserving Wooden Porches](#)