

**Supplemental Design Review Guidelines
for the
Northside and Geneva St.
Opelika Historic Districts**

The Opelika Historic Commission is dedicated to working with the property owners of the Opelika's Historic Districts to maintain the historic, aesthetic and architectural ambiance of these areas. The members of the Commission welcome support for the overall intent of the Opelika City Council and Commission to preserve Opelika's heritage. With this goal, these design guidelines have been developed.

*Developed in accordance with Section 5 – Article H
of the
Opelika Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ord. #110-97)*

*Adopted January 13, 2005
for the Northside Opelika Historic District*

*Adopted September 13, 2007
for the Geneva Street Opelika Historic Districts*

Last revised September 10, 2009

DESIGN GUIDELINES

DEFINITION

Design Guidelines are criteria and standards which the Opelika Historic Preservation Commission must consider in determining the appropriateness of proposed work (as defined in this document) within the Northside Opelika historic district.

AUTHORITY

These guidelines were developed in accordance with the Opelika Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section Five, Article H, (Guidelines and criteria for Certificate of Appropriateness) and are in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Historic Preservation" and "Standards for Rehabilitation".

PURPOSE

To guide the Opelika Historic Preservation Commission in determining the appropriateness of work and to establish a uniform procedure for use in providing for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, landscape features and works of art having special historical, cultural or aesthetic interest or value in accordance with the provisions, goals and objectives of the historic ordinance. These guidelines are not intended to stop change in the district but to regulate that change and apply uniform standards that all residents can use.

APPLICATION

Design guidelines apply to all matters in the designated historic districts relating to the environment, building site, archeological features, building structural systems, existing buildings, additions, new construction, demolition and relocation.

GOALS

To preserve and protect the historical and/or architectural value of buildings, structures and the environment in designated historic districts.

To regulate exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used within the designated historic districts to ensure compatibility.

To create an aesthetic appearance complimenting the historic character of the designated historic districts, fostering civic beauty and pride.

To stabilize and improve property values as well as strengthen the local economy.

To promote the use of the designated historic districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the present and future citizens of Opelika, Alabama.

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY IN DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Definition: A change in building material; the addition or elimination of any architectural feature of a structure; a repair that reconstructs any part of an existing building using material other than the original; an addition that extends or increases any part of an existing building; an addition that extends or increases floor area or height of any building or construction of an appurtenance.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

These guidelines shall apply only to the exteriors of buildings, structures and to areas of lots visible from the public rights-of-way in designated historic districts of the City of Opelika, Alabama.

Proposals for exterior work to be done on public facades, fronts and street-related elevations, shall be more carefully reviewed than that to be done on other facades. Non-public facades shall mean those facades not visible from the street.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environments shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an incompatible architectural style shall be discouraged.

Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the historic development of a building, structures of site; and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and this significance should be recognized and respected.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from others buildings or structures.

Rehabilitation means 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.

Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which required minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties will be considered when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

WHEN A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS IS NOT REQUIRED

The local Building Inspector may issue a building permit without a Certificate of Appropriateness in the following cases for all contributing and non-contributing structures in designated historic district:

- A. Painting of buildings and structures when in accordance with Article E., paragraph 8. Exterior Finishes, a. through d.
- B. Re-roofing of a building or structure when using the same type of material as existing or replacing gutters.
- C. Ordinary maintenance or repair of any architectural or environmental feature to correct decay, deterioration, damage that does not involve a material change or change in appearance.

TYPES OF APPROVAL

Staff approval of Minor Works

In some cases, the city staff may issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for items considered 'minor works'. 'Minor works' are usually exterior repairs where there is little or no change in the appearance such as repairing a rotted porch floor. For non-contributing resources, staff may also approve minor renovations, alterations, or repairs as well as site work for pools, decks, and accessory structures.

Commission Approval

Projects that involve major alterations to the original historic fabric of a building or property must be reviewed at the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) monthly meeting. The HPC typically meets the 2nd Thursday of each month. The deadline for submittal of application is two weeks prior to the meeting date in order to be included on the agenda.

A. THE ENVIRONMENT:

1. The environment consists of all exterior features in the designated historic districts which are visible to the public and includes structures, outbuildings, landscaping, streets, appurtenances, trees, mass and spacing between structures, scale, mass, color and materials of buildings that give a neighborhood its distinguishing character and contributes to its historic district designation.
2. Significant landscape features such as public parks and gardens, street lighting, signs, street benches, sidewalks, streets, alleys and building setbacks that have traditionally been maintained in the historic district and that contribute to its historic character should be retained. Existing streets should not be widened, existing street trees should not be removed without a plan for replacement; paving material should not be changed to a different texture and color. Inappropriate new streets or parking lots incompatible with the neighborhood should not be constructed.
3. New plant materials, fencing, walkways, housing and other outdoor lights, signs, benches, etc. should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material and color.
4. Plant material should be maintained so as not to become a hazard to the public, public property or shall not be allowed to cause deterioration to structures.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Back yard Tree house, swing sets and trampolines
- Benches and other outdoor furniture and accessories
- Sculpture and other outdoor artwork
- Pools and patios
- Tree pruning, clearing of overgrown bushes, vines, saplings, etc.
- Tree removal (less than 4" diameter at breast height or diseased).
- Planting new trees, shrubs, ground cover, etc.

- Landscape edging
- Flower, vegetable and rock gardens
- Flower pots, planters, window boxes, birdbaths, bird houses, etc.
- Adding gravel to existing driveways
- Patching deteriorated concrete or asphalt pavement, walks, steps, etc.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes to stone walls and other historic site features
- New or expanded parking areas/lots
- New and expanded driveways and walkways
- Staff approval for change of materials (i.e. gravel to concrete)

B. BUILDING SITE:

1. Landscaping in an important part of the historic district and important landscape features such as old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, out-buildings and other elements of historic or artistic merit or that reflect the property's history and development should be maintained and preserved. Old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, out-buildings and other exterior elements should be maintained until their importance in the property's history and development has been evaluated. This evaluation should consist of actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, newspapers, tax records, fire maps, etc. Complete removal of significant and historic plants and trees should be avoided and where necessary, pruning and cutting back should be encouraged instead of complete removal.
2. Plant material which is in very close proximity to a historic structure and which is causing deterioration of the historic fabric of the structure may be removed or pruned back to eliminate damage to the structure.
3. Drainage around historic structures is important and proper site and roof drainage should be maintained. Water should drain away from building foundations and should not be trapped or allowed to stand adjacent to building foundations. Roof drains and gutters should not be allowed to clog up and cause water to pond on the roof or in interior gutters.

C. BUILDING STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS:

1. It is important to recognize the special problems inherent in the structural systems of historic buildings, especially where there are visible signs of cracking, deflection or failure. To leave known structural problems untreated that will cause continuous deterioration and shorten the life of a contributing structure in a historic district shall be cause for "Demolition by Neglect" and the structure shall be stabilized by the City at the Owner's expense if the Owner refuses or is financially unable to correct the problem after proper notice and procedure by the

City. A lien shall be placed on the property by the City until their expenses are recovered or the property is sold.

2. It is recommended that historically important structural members not be replaced unless necessary for the preservation of the structural integrity of the building.
3. It is recommended that existing structural systems that are damaged or inadequate be supplemented where possible rather than being replaced.

E. EXISTING BUILDINGS:

1. Masonry:

- a. Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible.
- b. Surface treatment of masonry; such as applying waterproof or water repellent coatings or surface consolidation treatment should be avoided unless required to solve a specific problem that has been studied, evaluated and identified. These coatings can accelerate deterioration of the masonry.
- c. Repointing of Mortar Joints:
 1. Repoint only mortar joints that show evidence of moisture problems or where sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand in the mortar joint.
 2. When removing deteriorated mortar in preparation for repointing, extreme care should be used and mortar joints should not be enlarged by the process. The mortar should be removed approximately one inch from the face of the brick
 3. Mortar used for repointing should match composition, color and texture of original mortar with modern mortar of high portland cement content as this can cause accelerated deterioration of the masonry due to differing coefficients of expansion and the differing porosity of the material and the mortar.
 4. Repointing work shall duplicate old mortar in joint size, method of application and joint profile. Repointing work shall take into account the weathering of the masonry material and care should be used to test, adjust standard mortar colors and allow the test mortar to dry sufficiently prior to selecting a match to the existing mortar. Repointed mortar joints shall not be wider or larger than the original mortar joints and the new mortar shall be quickly cleaned off the face of the existing brick without using acid cleaning solution.

- d. Existing stucco should be repaired, when necessary, with a stucco mixture that duplicates the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.
- e. Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove graffiti and stains. Clean masonry with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes.
- f. Sandblasting, including dry and wet grit and other abrasives, of brick and stone surfaces is not recommended. This process erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration.
- g. Do not use chemical cleaning products that would have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry materials, such as acid on limestone or marble.
- h. Where repairing or replacing original material is necessary, utilize new material that duplicates the old material as closely as possible. Do not install or use new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed. Artificial brick siding, artificial synthetic stone or brick veneer are modern materials which detract from the historic nature of the buildings. Cast stone made from actual stone dust that duplicates the original color and texture of the original stone is appropriate and cast concrete is not appropriate to replace stone.
- i. Missing significant architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings and trim that can be documented should be replaced with similar material to the original.
- j. Significant architectural features such as cornices, brackets, railings, trim, window architraves, doorway pediments, etc, shall be maintained and preserved and stabilized.
- k. The original or early color, texture or paint on masonry surfaces, including early signage, should be retained and stabilized wherever possible. Brick or stone surfaces may have been painted, whitewashed or stuccoed for practical and aesthetic reasons and this should be investigated and documented before a decision is made. The indiscriminate removing of paint from masonry surfaces may subject the building to damage and change its appearance.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Re-pointing masonry and stone surfaces
- Installation/removal of metal chimney caps
- Repair of stucco

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Tuck pointing masonry and stone surfaces
- Chimney removal

- Rebuilding original foundation
- Removal of original chimney caps

2. Wood:

- a. Significant architectural features should be retained and preserved. Deteriorated material should be repaired or replaced with material that duplicates in size, shape and texture the old material as closely as possible. Composite and other materials may be used so long as these materials duplicate the original in size, shape and texture and do not cover any existing wood materials.
- b. Do not remove architectural features such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, doorway pediments, trim, shutters, etc. These are an essential part of a building's character and appearance and illustrate the history of the building.
- c. Do not resurface frame buildings with new material that is inappropriate or is incongruous with the architectural style or materials of the asphalt shingles or siding. Aluminum or vinyl siding overlaid over wood siding, wood soffit or wood fascia is not allowed on contributing structures in historic districts (see <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief08.htm>). It may be allowed on non-contributing structures in historic districts, subject to the guidelines above and on a case by case basis. In no event shall vinyl or aluminum material be permitted to cover existing wood detailed trim such as door and window casings, wood cornice and frieze boards, brackets, window architraves, doorway pediments and wood columns.

3. Architectural Metals:

- a. Architectural metals such as cast iron, steel, pressed tin, aluminum and zinc shall be retained whenever possible.
- b. It shall be prohibited to remove architectural metal features that are an essential part of a building's character and appearance. These materials shall be stabilized and preserved intact on the structure.
- c. Where it is necessary to clean these architectural metals, they should be cleaned with a method that does not abrade the surface and which will not alter the color, texture and tone of the metal. After cleaning, the metals shall be coated with an appropriate protective coating. Do not expose metal which was originally protected from the environment.

4. Roofs and Roofing:

- a. Original roof shape and pitch should be maintained.

- b. Provide adequate roof drainage and insure that the roofing materials provide a weather tight covering for the structure.
- c. Retain the original roofing material whenever possible.
- d. Replace deteriorated roof covering with new materials that are compatible with the period of the structure and appropriate to the structure. Fiberglass asphalt shingles may be substituted for original roofing when it is not economically feasible to replace or repair with original materials or when the original roof is beyond repair. The color and texture of fiberglass-asphalt shingles should be appropriate to the architectural style and period of the structure.
- e. Built-in gutters may be covered over when it is not economically feasible to maintain or replace or repair with original material. Care should be taken to provide for the drainage of water away from the structure if built-in gutters are covered over.
- f. Preserve or replace where necessary, but do not remove, all architectural features that give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting and weather vanes.
- g. Do not introduce new roof features, such as dormers where none existed before. Low profile skylights may be used on the side or rear facades not facing a street.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Installation of gutters and downspouts when original features are not altered or removed
- Replacement of existing asphalt composition roofing shingles

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes in roofing material including the removal and replacement of slate, terracotta tile and standing seam metal roofing materials

5. Windows:

- a. Retain and repair existing windows including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, pediments, hoods and hardware. If new sash are used, duplicate the original material, design, size and hardware of the original window. Do not change window size, sash size or window pane size.
- b. Do not introduce or create new window openings into the front principal elevation of the structure and do not enlarge or reduce original window openings to fit new stock window sizes.
- c. The original number and arrangement of panes should be maintained.

- d. Storm windows should be visually unobtrusive and should not damage existing window frames. Storm windows should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without damage to the original fabric of the structure. Storm windows should be compatible in color and design with the original windows. For example, mill finished aluminum storm windows should not be used with painted window sash.
- e. Plastic, canvas or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not compatible with the architectural style of the structure should not be used.
- f. Where existing shutters are replaced or reinstalled when missing, the new shutters shall be sized to fit the window opening, in height and width, whether the shutters are fixed or operable. Composite materials are allowable for shutters so long as they duplicate the original in shape and texture.
- g. New window openings should not be introduced unless they match the existing window configuration and their placement harmonized with the existing rhythm of openings.
- h. Original windows should not be filled in.

6. Doors:

- a. The original size and shape of door openings should be maintained. Original doors and door hardware should be repaired and reused in place. Original transoms, sidelights and doors should be maintained.
- b. Replacement doors when necessary should be compatible with the original doors in terms of style, texture and size.
- c. Shiny aluminum storm doors and screen doors are not appropriate. Full view storm doors, painted to match the door are appropriate.
- d. New door openings should not be introduced on the front, principal façade of the structure.
- e. Original door openings should not be filled in.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Re-glazing of windows or replacing broken panes of glass
- Repairs to original wood windows and doors when there is no change in appearance and material
- Painting of window frames and sashes
- Installation of full view (glazed) storm windows and doors – either wood or aluminum with baked enamel or painted finish are acceptable

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Replacement of original windows
- Removal or addition of a window or door opening
- Exposing a previously covered window units with a replacement according to the guidelines

7. Entrances, Porches and Steps:

- a. Porches and steps that are appropriate to the building and its development should be retained. Porches or additions that reflect later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity and wherever possible, should be retained.
- b. Original material and architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns, brackets and roof decoration shall be preserved. Where necessary to replace deteriorated pieces, the new material should match the original in texture, shape, size and color.
- c. Original details and shape, outline, roof height and roof pitch should be retained.
- d. Enclosing of front porches is inappropriate if done in a manner that destroys their intended appearance.
- e. The enclosing of side and rear porches may be considered appropriate if the visual openness and character of the original porch is maintained.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Minor repairs to materials and features when repaired to match the original
- Porch flooring and ceilings, trim boards, railings, brackets, etc.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Removal or addition of porches
- Screening of side porches according to guidelines (staff approval)
- Screening of front porches according to guidelines (commission approval)
- Enclosure of porches

8. Exterior Finishes:

- a. It is recommended that investigation be made into the historic paint colors and finishes of the structure and that repainting with these colors be considered to illustrate the distinctive character of the property. Do not paint unpainted masonry. Once painted, it is often better to repaint rather than remove paint. *(rev 07/13/2006)*

- b. Removing paint and finishes down to the bare surface is not recommended. Strong paint strippers whether chemical or mechanical can permanently damage the surface and stripping also obliterates evidence of the historical paint finishes.
- c. Buildings should be repainted with colors that were identified on the building or that are documented colors from the period of the construction of the structure or from the period of the last major addition or alteration to the structure.
- d. A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for painting structures if paragraphs a., b. and c. above are followed. The Opelika Historic Preservation Commission will recommend appropriate paint colors if requested.

The following commonly requested projects DO NOT require a COA:

- Re-painting painted surfaces.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Painting of unpainted surfaces.

9. Architectural Details:

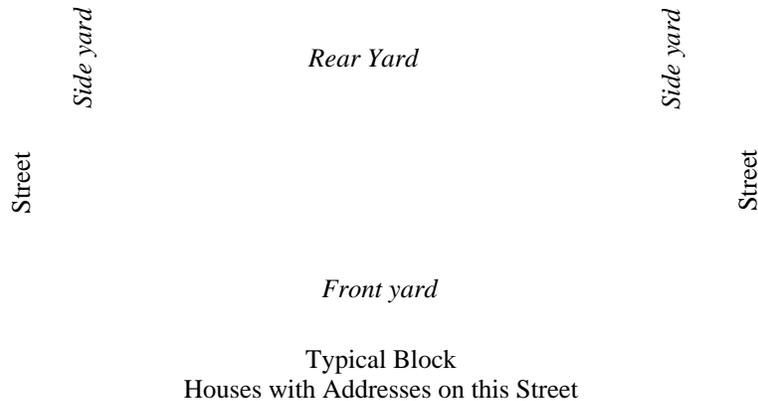
- a. Original details shall be maintained.
- b. The replacement of missing original details should be based on accurate historic, physical or pictorial documentation and should be a close visual approximation of the original.
- c. Architectural details of any period or style not original to the building should not be introduced.
- d. Changes that have taken place in the course of time which are evidence of the history and development of a building and its environment may have acquired significance in their own right; their significance should be recognized and respected.

10. Appurtenances:

- a. Appurtenances related to a building (fences, walls, outdoor lighting, steps, paving, sidewalks and signs) should be visually compatible with the environment to which they are related.
- b. Fences:

The size, scale, and transparent quality of the fence shall be considered in the design to minimize the impact on the historic fabric on the neighborhood. The orientation and location of the fence shall also be considered, with the structural members located on the interior of the fence (pretty side out) and

the location and size such that it does not block views of the buildings from the street.



Front, side and rear yard area will be determined on a case by case basis from a site plan showing the footprint of house and proposed fence, due to the variety of lot and building shapes. Generally speaking, the front yard is the portion of lot between the street and the rear edge of the building; the side yard is the portion of lot behind the house, between the sidewalk and the rear corner of the building, on corner lots; and the rear yard is the portion of lot behind house

1. Low retaining walls in front and side yards should be kept where they exist. If new retaining walls are required, they should match the existing or match a documented example correct for the period of the structure.
2. Existing period fencing should be maintained and repaired. Where necessary to replace period fencing, it should be replaced with compatible fencing of the same material, size and appropriate design.
3. Materials:
Where a fence is desired to be installed, it should be appropriate for the period and architectural style of the structure. Materials and size of the fence should be documented as correct for the period of the structure.
 - i. Appropriate materials: wood, iron, wire, stone or plants.
 - ii. Inappropriate materials: chain link, concrete block, unfaced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, plywood, slatted "snow" fences and mesh "construction" fences
 - iii. Chain link fences may be used in rear yards, if visible from the street, shall be camouflaged with vegetation.
4. Heights:

Generally, low fences should be used at the fronts and visible street side yards near public sidewalks. Taller fences and solid walls may be used in rear yards and side yards when set back from the sidewalk.

- i. front yard fences should not be taller than 4 feet
- ii. side yard fences should not be taller than 6 feet
- iii. rear yard fences should not be taller than 8 feet

Requests for new fences must have a site plan, with proposed fence heights clearly marked.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Repairs to existing walls and fences and other historic site features

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes to stone walls and other historic site features
- All new fences and walls

c. Lighting:

1. Original lighting fixtures should be retained.
2. Where new lighting fixtures are required, they should be compatible or unobtrusive with the architectural style of the structure.
3. Yard and house lighting shall be compatible with the neighborhood and not overly bright (less than 1 foot candle as measured at the property line).

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Motion detector lighting

d. Signs:

1. The appearance, size, position, method of attachment, texture of materials, color, and design of signs shall be in keeping with the collective characteristics of the structures surrounding the property on which the sign will be located.
2. Off-site signs shall not be permitted.
3. Signs shall be limited to one sign for each street frontage per premise and if placed in the yard, less than five feet in height.
4. The maximum area of any sign located in a historic residential district shall be four (4) square feet; the maximum area of any sign in a historic commercial district shall be limited to twenty-four (24) square feet, unless acceptable documentation proves that original signage from the date of construction of

the building or the most significant architectural renovation of the building was larger.

5. No sign that flashes, blinks, revolves or is put in motion by the atmosphere shall be permitted. No visible bulbs, plastics or luminous paints will be permitted as a part of any sign.
6. Buildings and signs may be illuminated by remote light sources, provided that these light sources are shielded to protect adjacent properties.
7. Signs attached to the structures shall not cover any architectural feature.
8. Real estate signs shall be removed not more than ten (10) calendar days after the closing of a sale of a house, building, or lot.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Real estate signs
- Home security signs
- Temporary signs and banners

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- All new building/business identification signage
- Replacement signs that differ in dimension, design, material or location from the existing

F. ADDITIONS:

1. Additions are areas that increase the living or working space of a structure. This does not include the addition of architectural elements.
2. Additions should be compatible with the architectural style of the structure and should not obscure, remove, conceal or replace significant architectural features of the existing structure. Additions should be compatible in scale, mass, proportion, materials, texture and color to the existing structure.
3. Additions should follow the guidelines for new construction

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Installation of temporary/emergency wheelchair ramps when they are not attached to the building

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Installation of temporary wheelchair ramps (staff approval)

G. NEW CONSTRUCTION:

1. Definition: The construction of any free standing structure on any lot or addition to an existing structure.
2. General Principles:
 - a. These guidelines shall apply only to the exteriors of buildings and to areas of lots visible from public right-of-way.
 - b. The public facades, front and street-related elevations, of proposals for new buildings shall be more carefully reviewed than other facades.
 - c. New buildings should be compatible with other architectural styles in the historic district, but are not required to imitate the past architectural styles of the historic district. They should reflect the era of their own construction.
 - d. Since construction in a historic district has usually taken place continuously from the nineteenth century to the present, a variety of building types and styles result which demonstrate the changes in building tastes and technology over the years. The special architectural character of the majority of the buildings in the historic district is responsible for this designation and new buildings should complement and be compatible with the prevailing architectural styles of other buildings in the historic district.
 - e. Reconstruction may be appropriate when it reproduces facades of a building which no longer exists and which was located in the historic district if; the building would have contributed to the historical and architectural character of the area, and if it will be compatible in terms of style, height, scale, massing, and materials with the buildings immediately surrounding the lot on which the reproduction will be built, and if it is accurately based on pictorial documentation.
 - f. New buildings should related to an established pattern and rhythm of existing contributing buildings, both on the same and opposite sides of a street, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted.
 - g. New construction should be consistent with existing contributing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, setback, and rhythm; relationship of materials, texture, details and color; roof shape; orientation and proportion and rhythm of openings.
 1. Height: New buildings should be compatible in height with the height of adjacent buildings. This shall not mean that new construction must be the same height as adjacent structures, but that new construction should be of similar heights as adjacent structures. New construction

may not be over one story higher than adjacent structures or more than one story lower than adjacent structures.

2. Scale: The size of a new building; its mass in relation to open spaces; its windows, doors, openings and porches should be visually compatible with the surround buildings.
 3. The relationship and use of materials, texture, details and material color of a new building's public facades shall be visually compatible with and similar to those of adjacent buildings or shall not contrast conspicuously.
 4. The roofs of new buildings shall be visually compatible, by not contrasting greatly with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.
 5. The setback from front and side yard property lines established by adjacent buildings must be maintained. When a definite rhythm along a street is established by uniform lot and building width, infill new buildings should maintain the rhythm.
 6. Orientation: The site orientation of new buildings shall be consistent with that of adjacent buildings and shall be visually compatible. Directional expression shall be compatible with surrounding buildings, whether that expression is vertical, horizontal or non-directional.
 7. The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids to voids in new buildings shall be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.
3. Additions to Existing Buildings:
- a. Additions to existing buildings should be kept to a minimum and should be compatible in scale, materials, and texture. Additions should not be visually jarring or contrasting
 - b. Additions should not be made to the public facades of existing buildings. Additions should be located to the rear or sides of existing buildings in ways which do not disturb the main public facades.
 - c. The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front façade porch is inappropriate and should be avoided.
4. Outbuildings:

- a. Garages and storage buildings should reflect the character of the existing structure and surrounding buildings and should be compatible in terms of height, scale, roof shape, materials, texture and details.
 - b. Garages, if visible from the street, should be situated on the lot as historically traditional from the neighborhood.
 - c. The location and design of outbuildings should not be visually disruptive to the character of the surrounding buildings.
5. Appurtenances: Appurtenances related to new buildings, including driveways, sidewalks, lighting, fences, and walls, shall be visually compatible with the environment of the existing buildings and sites to which they relate.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Maintenance repairs to garages and accessory buildings when there is no change in the design and material

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Garages and accessory structures not larger than 8' x 12' in rear yards and not visible from the street (staff approval)
- Garages and accessory structures larger than 8' x 12' or that are visible from the street (commission approval)

H. DEMOLITION:

1. Definition: The tearing down of a building by active means or by neglect resulting in the structural decay of the original building fabric. Neglect means not maintaining a weatherproof, watertight, secure building, structurally stable and/or maintaining vegetation around the structure or structures on the property.
2. Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district is inappropriate and shall be avoided. This means demolition by active means or by neglect in failure to maintain a property. This also includes any structure that contributes to the architectural character of the historic district, not just the most outstanding architectural structures in the district, but the ordinary period structures as well.
3. Demolition is inappropriate:
 - a. if a building is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest.

- b. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district.
 - c. if a building is of such old or unusual or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced without great difficulty and expense.
 - d. if its proposed replacement would make a less positive visual contribution to the district, would disrupt the character of the district or would be visually incompatible.
 - e. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district or qualifies for any of the above a through d, and can be feasibly stabilized and no new compatible structure is proposed to be built on the site. An existing structure shall not be demolished for a parking lot or vacant lot. The applicant for demolition must demonstrate financial resources for stabilizing the site after demolition and the construction of a new building or new structure. Stabilization plans as well as Architectural plans and specifications for the new construction along with a schedule for their completion shall be presented to the Opelika Historic Preservation Commission prior to a COA for demolition being issued.
4. Demolition is appropriate:
- a. if a building has completely lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance and has become structurally unsound and its removal will not result in a more negative, less appropriate visual effect on the district.
 - b. if a building is not listed as contributing to the historical or architectural character and importance of the historic district and its removal will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district.

I. RELOCATION:

1. Definition: The moving of a structure in a district from one site to another, or from outside the district into the district.
2. The moving of an existing building which retains architectural and historical integrity and which contributes to the architectural and historical character of the district should be avoided.
3. The moving out of the district of a building which does not contribute to the historical and architectural integrity of the district of which has completely lost all architectural integrity due to deterioration, fire, neglect, etc. shall be appropriate on a case by case basis.

4. Relocated buildings must be carefully rebuilt to retain and maintain original architectural details and materials.
5. A building may be moved into the district if it maintains a sense of architectural unity in terms of style, height, scale, massing, materials, texture and setback with existing buildings along the street.
6. A building may be moved from one site to another in the district if:
 - a. the integrity of location and setting of the building in its original location has been lost or seriously threatened.
 - b. the new location will be similar in setting and siting.
 - c. the building will be compatible with the buildings adjacent to the new location in style, height, scale, materials and setback.
 - d. the relocation of the building will not result in a negative visual effect on the site and surrounding buildings from which it will be removed.

J. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

1. The district contains buildings with a variety of uses including residential, commercial and institutional.
2. The Downtown Historic District, immediately adjacent, is composed of buildings which were built in the same time period, but primarily 'zero-lot line' commercial structures.
3. There may be instances, particularly with the adaptive reuse of a building, or construction of infill structures, when the Downtown Historic District Design Review Guidelines may provide the basis for an appropriate design criteria review.