

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

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## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Design guidelines balance the applicant's rights and the welfare of the entire community. In creating and utilizing design guidelines, the National Park Service advises that design guidelines are not meant to prohibit owners from making changes to their property, but to ensure that those changes enhance what makes the historic district a special place in which to live and work.

These building Design Guidelines support the Preservation Board's decisions and are based on best practices in historic preservation. While the Preservation Code establishes standards for new construction and changes to historic structures, the Design Guidelines provide interpretation of the Appropriate Treatment standards set forth in the Preservation Code. The Design Guidelines apply to the exterior features of all structures in the Park and have been grouped into categories for ease of reference. The existence of non-conforming features shall not create a presumption that an in-kind replacement will be approved.

The historic preservation principles underlying the Design Guidelines are that additions should be compatible with the existing historic structures and any new construction should be compatible with its neighbors and with the historic district. Additions and new construction should be distinguishable from the historic building to ensure that the evolution of the building is evident. Additions and new construction should reflect the era in which they are built and should not create a false sense of history. Additions and new construction should not overwhelm or destroy historic resources or the historic integrity of the property.

### **A. SITE PLANNING: FOOTPRINT, PROPORTION, SCALE**

On projects involving reconstruction, the applicant should replicate elements of the cottage as they existed originally only when old photographs, drawings, or other documents are available that describe the building as it was originally constructed. On projects involving rebuilding or new construction, architectural styles as shown in the Thousand Island Park Historic Preservation Handbook should be considered.

Any new construction or addition should be comparable in scale to nearby structures. In particular, setbacks of the nearby buildings from the street and their massing and spaces between them should be considered. These factors contribute to the rhythm and continuity of the buildings as seen together. Where buildings are predominantly aligned and create a unified edge or wall

space, the front, back and sides of new construction should be aligned with the general visual line of its neighbors.

1. Setback

Setback lines should be consistent with the streetscape; structure massing should be appropriate to the neighborhood.

2. Footprint and Exterior Proportions

Expansion or new building project footprints should not exceed 125% of the average footprint of the structures in a 150-foot radius of the proposed footprint. The maximum footprint area shall be 1,600 square feet unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. The footprint of a cottage (including porches and new additions) should not exceed 1,600 square feet, regardless of the number of contiguous lots leased by the cottage owner. This figure was calculated based on the idea that, to maintain open space, the footprint should not exceed 50% lot coverage of a 40' x 80' lot.

The exterior proportions of any new construction should be compatible with the proportions of the surrounding structures. The building should be compatible with adjacent buildings in its dimensional character, horizontal, and vertical. The aspect of a building is established by several factors in addition to height and width: specifically, roof face and pitch, placement of doors and windows, porches, and architectural detail. For an addition, the integrity of the original structure must be maintained, along with original materials and trim. New additions that increase the footprint of the cottage must respect both the size limitations of the lot and the original structure and design.

3. Scale

Any new construction should be of a scale compatible with that of surrounding structures. Also, the scale of spaces between buildings must be considered. The size of a building in relation to open spaces, windows, doors, porches, and other architectural elements should be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings. Where current zoning allows building of greater scale than was historically constructed in the Park, design elements should attempt to reduce the

sense of mass and scale so that new construction is compatible with surrounding buildings.

4. Massing

The massing of new construction should employ characteristics of one of the five traditional forms predominantly found within the Park. The integrity of older structures should be maintained. Any additions should harmonize with the massing, style and details of the original buildings and its neighbors.

5. Height

Any new or reconfigured structure shall not be more than ten percent (10%) taller than surrounding structures within a 150' radius.

Excluding chimneys, spires, and antennas, no new construction or addition shall be more than ten percent (10%) taller in either its facade or overall height than the main ridge of the tallest building. At all times, the views of others must be considered.

6. Roofs

The roof shape should be visually compatible with the adjacent buildings. All roofs on structures should be sloped. New roofs should be guided by the character of the design style chosen. Roofs on additions to existing buildings should be appropriate to the period and style of the original structure. The roof pitch, design, materials, and detailing of all additions should be compatible with the main roof, overhang, and soffits. See SECTION B, EXTERIOR DETAILS AND MATERIALS, regarding appropriate roof materials.

7. Demolition and Relocation of Structures

Demolition and relocation of structures is generally prohibited, particularly where the structure is original or of historic or architectural significance.

B. EXTERIOR DETAILS AND MATERIALS

Applicants should restore elements of the cottage as they existed originally only when old photographs, drawings, and other historic documents can describe the building as it was originally constructed. Otherwise, the

recommended preservation approach is to replace existing elements and materials in kind (with the same materials).

When considering changes to structures for modern functionality and weather mitigation, placing associated structural and mechanical components in a discrete location is essential to maintain the historic appearance of structures and the streetscape of Thousand Island Park. Efforts must be made to choose the least obtrusive method while respecting both modern needs and historic preservation standards. The type, mounting, and location of components should be the least visible to the main public-facing areas. Typically, this means avoiding the front façade, but other sides of the structure may be highly visible and thus may need to be avoided. Components are considered discrete when they blend into the structure and landscape by applied color, structural or vegetative screening. The type and placement of new components must be approved by the Preservation Board. The provisions below and elsewhere in these Design Guidelines are intended to facilitate these goals.

1. Surface Materials: Wall Surface

On a historic building the wall surface material should be visually appropriate to the period and style of the building and in terms of dimensions, sill board, corner board, cornice, crown molding, and other window and trim detailing.

Aluminum and vinyl siding and trim are not appropriate, nor is changing the texture of the siding, such as replacing clapboard with shingles. Repairs to match pre-existing aluminum or vinyl siding may be approved.

2. Trim and Miscellaneous Detail

On all structures and additions, the trim and ornamentation shall be appropriate to the style and period of the building. Replacement trim must match the existing trim as closely as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, window trim, ornamentation, skirting, porch detailing, rafter tails, eave overhangs, and soffits. Where severe deterioration has occurred, or trim is missing, application of simplified trim appropriate to the style of the building will be considered. It is not appropriate to remove trim without replacement of the same type, nor can trim be masked with other elements such as screening.

### 3. Roofs

In addition to the shape and pitch being compatible with adjacent and connected buildings, roof materials must be either mineral fiber roofing, metal roofing (standing seam), or asphalt shingles in appropriate colors that resemble wood and harmonize with the colors of the cottage and the Park as a whole. Rolled roofing is not appropriate, nor are asphalt shingles of an inappropriate color such as white.

#### a. Skylights

Skylights should have a flat configuration parallel and as close to the roof plane as possible. Skylights should not be placed on the front roof plane or the street facade.

#### b. Solar Tubes

Solar tubes should be as close to the roof plane as possible. Solar tubes should not be placed on the front roof plane or the street facade.

#### c. Chimneys and Stove Venting

Original chimneys should be repaired and restored if possible. Any new venting should be discreet and blend into the character of the building in placement, material, and size. Any new chimney should be of a design appropriate to the design of the building, especially in its placement and size. The visual impact of chimneys should be minimized. It is not appropriate to have unclad pipes or vents/chimneys in the front plane or front view of the cottage.

#### d. Gutters and Downspouts

Originally, most buildings in the Park did not have gutters, relying instead on the steep roof slope and wide overhangs to keep water away from walls and footings. Accordingly, installation or replacement of gutters is generally not permitted absent a documented structural need, including but not limited to prevention of foundation damage, water ingress, or the like. Where such need can be demonstrated, the following guidelines shall apply:

- i. Pre-war Structures: On structures built in the pre-World War II era or structures built in the style of structures from that era, including additions to such structures regardless of when constructed, gutters must be in the half-round style with round downspouts. K style gutters are generally not permitted on pre-war structures.
- ii. Post-war Structures: On structures built in the post-World War II era, and additions thereto, half-round gutters with round downspouts remain the preferred style, but K-style gutters may be permitted if used to an extent and in a manner consistent with the style of the structure in question.
- iii. Materials and Mounting: In all instances where gutters are permitted, the gutters and downspouts must be copper, aluminum or galvanized metal. Every effort must be made to avoid installation of gutters or downspouts on or near the main public-facing areas. Moreover, downspouts should preferably be round in cross-section (corrugated or smooth) or non-corrugated rectangular. Wherever downspouts are placed, they should be inconspicuous, ideally placed contiguous to existing vertical design features so as to mask their presence. Gutters and downspouts should be painted in the same color(s) as the component to which or adjacent to which they are mounted. However, copper downspouts need not be painted.

#### 4. Windows

Fenestration is an important aspect of Park structures; wooden windows are a character-defining feature of Park cottages and buildings. It is strongly recommended that existing windows be repaired rather than replaced. In addition, authentic divided lite should be considered over simulated divided lite windows, as these are important character-defining features of the Park.

a. Existing Dwelling

Existing architecturally appropriate windows shall be repaired rather than replaced, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Preservation Board that the window is not repairable. The Corporation Office has a worksheet to help evaluate window conditions.

b. New Installation/New Construction

On a new addition to an existing building, only windows that are in keeping with the original windows in terms of materials, size, proportion, scale, and frame type shall be used. In all cases, they shall be arranged in an orderly manner, as observed in buildings of similar age and style. Contemporary window types, such as sliding glass doors, picture windows, bay windows, flex-vents, and horizontal tilt-out windows, having little similarity to period windows, are strongly discouraged.

The window size and placement on a new building shall satisfy the functional requirements of the building while harmonizing with the scale, proportion, and rhythm of the window size and their placement in relation to the neighboring buildings. Care should be taken with the amount of glass used in a wall of a new building; an over-large ratio of glass to wall is not appropriate to the general architectural characteristics in the Park. Painted metallic or vinyl-clad wood windows may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All non-ornamental windows will be of clear, non-tinted glass.

c. Storm Windows

Wooden storm/screen windows are preferred. Aluminum/vinyl clad combination storm/screen windows (triple track) are not appropriate for enclosing space in any District. Their use is appropriate when they are applied over existing windows to be used as storm windows, providing that the aluminum/vinyl is painted or factory coated with a compatible color and the window is trimmed in wood.



5. Entries

The openings of a building are an integral part of its design, and any alteration affects the whole structure. A door or doorway shall not be altered except to maintain or restore its character as is appropriate to the style and period of the building. The materials shall be of wood and appropriate glass. Sliding glass doors, metal, or non-wood doors are not appropriate.

a. Screen/Storm Doors

Wood screen/storm doors that are appropriate to the style of the building are allowed. Decorative wood doors are appropriate if appropriate to the building style. Aluminum screen/storm doors are not permitted in any District. Colonial-style doors with a scalloped upper panel or a cross-buck lower panel are not appropriate.

b. Shutters

Many cottages did not have shutters, but they were, at times, a part of the design itself or were added to enclose the cottages in winter. If shutters are to be used, they should be functional, made of wood, and they should extend from just below the lintel to just above the sill and meet in the center when closed. They should be at least one inch (1”) thick, and they should be affixed to the window frames. Shutters should not be made of metal or vinyl.

6. Porches

The front porch is a vital and integral feature of many buildings in the Park and is a character-defining element that contributes to the visual charm of this historic district. As such, porches should be maintained in existing buildings or incorporated into any new design. New porches should be of a size, style, and placement that will enhance the integrity of a building. As with any addition, porch detailing should be compatible with the period and style of the main structure. The relationship of the roof of the porch to the other massing of the building is an important consideration. Although wood porch elements are preferred, substitute materials of appropriate color to blend with the cottage will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Screens and related framing, when approved, should be placed inside any rails, posts, and/or gingerbread detailing on porches when replacing or installing new.

Year-round or permanent enclosure of porches by non-screen panels is not appropriate.

a. Posts, Columns, and Trim

Wood, shingles, and concrete masonry units (“CMU”) or other molded concrete or cement blocks (depending on the style of building and original materials) are appropriate, along with wooden posts, which are sized and shaped appropriately for the style of building. Brick, concrete, and aluminum are not appropriate.

b. Porch Ceilings

Tongue and groove or other forms of board, including open wood rafters that are painted, oiled, or stained, are appropriate. Sheet rock or vinyl is not appropriate.

c. Porch Floors

Wood tongue and groove or other forms of boarding that are painted, oiled, or stained are appropriate. Cement and brick flooring are not appropriate.

d. Railings

Railings must be compatible with the overall structure, original construction, and ornamentation. Depending on the character of the structure, the following categories of railing systems are eligible for approval:

- Molded and shaped wood rails, painted to match the structure or trim;
- Wood turned or jigsaw balusters;
- Wood square 2” by 2” balusters set 4” on center;
- Iron pipe rails are permitted on certain buildings.

- It is not appropriate to have railings of dimensional lumber (e.g., 2" by 4" boards) or thin rectangular balusters or to have the baluster placed in front of or behind rails.
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7. Decks: Patios, Platforms and Exterior Stairs

All decks, patios, platforms, and exterior stairs shall exhibit an attention to detail that is in keeping with the main structure design.

The placement and size of a deck and its railings, patio, platform, or ramp are important considerations. They shall be located where they will be the most inconspicuous and will detract the least from the building's historic character, except to the extent required by statute or ordinance.

Rail systems shall exhibit an attention to detail that is in keeping with the main structure design.

Exterior stairs need to follow the guidelines for the appropriate treatment for porches and railings. Stairs should align with the width of the doorway or original porch opening, and should be made of wood boards painted, oiled, or stained to match the rest of the cottage. Railings and trim are to match the main structure in design, with material painted to match.

8. Piers, Foundation, and Skirting

Most buildings in the Park are built on piers. Piers must be covered with decorative wood boards, siding, or framed lattice that corresponds with the rest of the structure. Stone foundations need not be screened. It is not appropriate for a cottage to have unscreened piers, open skirting, vinyl or other artificial lattice, or tar paper covering.

C. LANDSCAPING

When installing plantings or other vegetative treatments, care must be taken not to import invasive species into the Park. Plantings that will exceed four feet (4') in height require Corporation Office or Tree Committee approval. In all cases, care needs to be taken that plantings do not block neighbors' views or otherwise disrupt the fabric of the street. Foundation plantings and hedges are generally not appropriate as they were not present in the Park in the 19<sup>th</sup>

century. The principal forms of landscape decoration were flowerbeds, flowering shrubs, vines, and trees.

1. Fences and Hedges

Fences or hedges are seldom allowed, and each application is decided on a case-by-case basis. Wooden fences may be allowed for screening. It is not appropriate to fence a front yard, use masonry walls, post-and-rail, vertical board, stockade fencing, or wrought iron.

2. Driveways and Parking

Any changes or additions of driveways or parking areas must consider natural approved materials as well as sizing and placement appropriate to the lot and location of the structure on the lot, and approval by the Preservation Board will consider these factors. Driveways and parking areas shall be constructed of either native granite crushed stone/gravel (with a crushed stone base in the case of gravel), or native granite or sandstone flagstones closely spaced with grass infill. Flagstone is preferred due to its durability and greater aesthetic appeal. While less expensive, gravel and crushed stone are subject to erosion and will require regular maintenance and replenishment. The width of the driveway or parking area shall be in scale with the main structure but no wider than 8' from the street to the parking area and 16' (approximately two car widths) in the parking area. Alternatively, the aforementioned materials may be laid in two spaced strips roughly the width of a tire. Parking is only allowed along the side or rear of property and for no more than two vehicles (where appropriate space is available) at the cottage site. Natural and preferably native plantings are strongly encouraged to shield the parking area.

[Updated as of 06/18/2025.]

3. Drainage

Runoff from unvegetated areas (bare earth) should be minimized, and erosion control should be employed to prevent soil from running off each site. Conveyance of stormwater through pipes, yard drains, and unvegetated swales should be avoided. Direct discharge of runoff into surface waters and onto adjacent properties should be avoided.

## D. AIR CONDITIONING UNITS, HEAT PUMPS, AND OTHER MECHANICALS

The principles expressed above in the preamble to Section B regarding discrete placement of exterior details apply with equal force to mechanical components such as air conditioning units, heat pumps, heat exchangers, mini-splits, generators, whole house batteries, and other HVAC, power supply, and related components. Exterior mechanicals are discouraged and need approval of the Preservation Board, and each permission will be contingent upon neighborhood and community impact. Detachable window units are allowed, but not on the main public-facing side of the structure. To obtain approval for the installation or replacement of mechanicals, compliance with the guidelines below is required. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in these Design Guidelines is meant to supersede other laws, regulations, or codes with regard to the installation and use of mechanicals, including building codes and the 70 decibel limits imposed by the Preservation Code and Land Use Regulations, Appendix B (Appropriate Treatments). Compliance with the sound limit and the Design Guidelines set forth herein will be assessed with careful regard to the impact on neighboring properties.

1. Placement: Mechanical units must be placed on a concrete pad located on the least conspicuous side of the structure, which is usually the back side. Some flexibility will be afforded in regard to car charger placement, given the need for proximity to parking areas. Any lights or light-emitting elements must be obscured on car chargers and other mechanical units.
2. Screening: Architectural screening of mechanical units is required, and must be in a style and color so as to mimic that of the structure adjacent to which the unit is located. Sound mitigation must be considered when designing screening, with acoustic panels or other sound-deadening materials employed when feasible. Landscaping may be placed around the screening, but it is not required and is not a substitute for architectural screening.
3. Peripherals: Peripheral components like conduit must be installed in the least conspicuous manner practicable. Minimizing disruption to exterior aesthetics must be prioritized, and drawings showing precise proposed

placement of all peripherals must be provided at the time approval is sought. Whenever possible, horizontal conduit should be run under the home, in the attic, and/or behind skirting, and vertical conduit should be placed inside the walls. If absolutely necessary, visible conduit should be limited to the side of the structure where the main unit is located, and should be mounted inconspicuously, including by mounting it contiguous to existing architectural features where possible to help conceal its appearance. Any visible conduit must be painted in the color(s) of the component(s) against which or adjacent to which it is mounted.

E. SHEDS, GARAGES, AND CARPORTS

Sheds and carports are permitted in all Districts provided they adhere to these Design Guidelines. When permitted, sheds and carports must comply with the regulations for new construction in placement, size, material, and design for that area of the Park.

New sheds shall have a maximum footprint of 10 feet by 12 feet unless otherwise approved. Rooflines shall mimic the main structure. Larger structures will be considered if the applicant has at least three consecutive lots and will be considered using criteria applicable to residential structures.

Garages are discouraged in all areas of the Park and may only be constructed with Board of Directors approval.

Greenhouse-style structures are generally discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

F. SIGNS

Nameplate identification and house number signs, including signs indicating the age of a building or structure, shall be permitted in any District. No other signs shall be constructed, erected, or maintained on any property or structure in any District except as follows:

1. Structures or properties used for permitted commercial uses may erect upon such property one (1) sign provided that it does not exceed four (4) square feet in area. No neon signs may be permitted, nor shall any sign be illuminated so as to cause light to fall upon adjacent buildings, properties, highways, or waterways.

2. “For Rent” and/or “For Sale” signs (including realtor signs) may be placed upon any property during the time when such property is offered “For Rent” or “For Sale,” provided that such sign does not exceed four (4) square feet in area.

G. SATELLITE DISHES AND ANTENNAS

Satellite dish antennas exceeding 18” diameter shall not be permitted in any District, nor shall it be permissible to construct ground TV antennas or satellite towers. Roof antennas and satellite dishes are allowed with minimum visual impact from the street.

H. SIDEWALKS, WALKWAYS AND FOUNDATION PERIMETERS

Sidewalks, walkways, and foundation perimeters shall not be constructed of materials other than wood, crushed stone of natural color (gray or brown) gravel or concrete of natural cement color (gray). Pavers shall be square or rectangular in shape.

Sidewalks and walkways shall end at the lot line unless approved by the Board of Directors.

Maximum width of sidewalks, walkways, and foundation perimeters shall be forty-eight inches (48”). Maximum height of sidewalks and walkways shall be six inches (6”).

I. GENERAL SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards denote that substitute materials should match the original materials in appearance. This can be accomplished by replacing materials “in kind” (with the same material) or, in some cases, using substitute materials.

Existing elements should be replaced in kind whenever possible, and the replacement material should be as close in appearance to that which is being replaced as possible.

Substitute materials may be considered by the Preservation Board. Substitutes will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Factors for determining whether a substitute material will be allowed include whether the element being replaced is original to the structure, historically significant, and located prominently. The Preservation Board will also

consider whether repair is a practical alternative to replacement, given the condition of the element(s) proposed to be replaced.