

ORDINANCE 2009-05

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, TEXAS, ADOPTING RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES TO PRESERVE HISTORICAL INTGERTY.

WHEREAS, the historic core of Mount Vernon has served as the cultural center of the community for over a 100 years;

WHEREAS, the residential structures of historic significance enhance the quality of life as well as the economy of the community;

WHEREAS, the character of development in the historic districts therefore deserve special consideration as well;

WHEREAS, design guidelines for the historic area will help ensure appropriate development, renovation and redevelopment in the historical districts;

WHEREAS, design guidelines for the historic districts draw upon the basic design traditions of that area will help ensure appropriate development, renovation and redevelopment in this area;

WHEREAS, the existing Landmark Commission has knowledge of the application of design guidelines;

WHEREAS, the Zoning Ordinance does not currently contain designated residential design guidelines;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon finds it to be in the best interest of the citizens of Mount Vernon to adopt the attached Historic Residential Design Guidelines.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED on the 14th day of April, 2009.

J. D. BAUMGARDNER – MAYOR

ATTEST:

TINA ROSE – CITY SECRETARY

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS OF MT. VERNON, TEXAS

Guide to Rehabilitation, Restoration and
New Construction (Including Demolition and Removal)

CITY OF MT. VERNON, TEXAS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the property owner and the Landmark Commission of the City of Mt. Vernon in determining the types of alterations, renovations, and changes that will maintain the special qualities of historical residential districts in Mt. Vernon, Texas.

The guidelines apply only to the exterior of properties in the historic residential districts of the City of Mt. Vernon, Texas, and will guide the Landmark Commission for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness. Nothing in these Guidelines shall change the requirements for issuance of a Building Permit through the City of Mt. Vernon.

There are several points to remember when using the guidelines. Every building is unique. Even buildings that look identical have a few details or a setting that distinguishes them from any other buildings. This means that what is appropriate for one building may not be appropriate for another. Each building must be reviewed on an individual basis both by the property owner and by the Landmark Commission.

Over the years, some buildings have been altered or details have been removed. Although it may be preferred to restore these buildings to their original appearance, the guidelines and the Landmark Commission acknowledge that an exact restoration is not always practical economically.

The purpose of Design Guidelines for the historic residential districts of Mt. Vernon:

- Protect, enhance and perpetuate landmarks and districts of historical, cultural, architectural or archeological importance that reflect distinctive and important elements of the unique historical heritage of Mt. Vernon.
- Foster civic pride by recognizing accomplishments of the past.
- Protect and enhance the attractiveness of the City to tourists and visitors and support and stimulate the economy.
- Insure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and development of the City
- Promote the economic prosperity and welfare of the community.
- Promote stabilization and increase in property values.
- Encourage the stabilization, restoration and improvement of property. Maintain a generally harmonious outward appearance of both historic and modern structures, which are compatible and complimentary in scale, form, color, proportion, texture and material.

These guidelines are presented to aid residential property owners in Mt. Vernon to protect and enhance the historic resources of the community. The standards describe design ideas for appropriate alterations and new construction, and also provide basic maintenance tips.

A History of the Town of Mt. Vernon and the three historical residential districts adopted by the City of Mt. Vernon subject to administration under the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of Mt. Vernon

The town of Mt. Vernon grew up as a settlement near the Fanning Springs (Holbrook Street south of the present town square). By 1848 the United States government established a post office; a formal townsite was laid out on land donated by Stephen and Rebecca Keith in April 1849 and the town was laid out in its present configuration with lots and blocks around a town square. Since there were two other Mount Vernons in Texas the post office was called Keith (1848-1849) and then Lone Star (1850-1875) before the name Mount Vernon became available in 1875. Franklin County was carved out of Titus County in 1875 and Mt. Vernon was named the county seat. The arrival of the railroad in 1887 led to the city's growth as a center for transportation. The town of Mt. Vernon was incorporated as a city in 1910.

The county's economy has been based in mixed agriculture, commencing with cotton farms, followed with over 500,000 peach trees in production in the 1920's; watermelons in the 1930's; and the state's top record production of cane syrup in the 1940's. The 1936 discovery of oil in the north part of the county led to diversified economy with oil production continuing today combined with light industry, manufacturing, and diverse agricultural endeavors.

The Cherokee Trace runs along the eastern edge of the county south toward Nacogdoches. The Choctaw Trail runs through the center of the county toward Dallas. The Bankhead Highway (early east-west transcontinental automobile route through the United States – 1919) remains as Mt. Vernon's Main Street.

The earliest homes still standing in the town of Mt. Vernon date from the 1870's; there are four ante-bellum homes in the county. Over 60 homes built before World War I are marked with attractive signs designating the original owners and year of construction. Tour maps are available. There are over 20 official state historical markers. The present courthouse was erected on the north side of the square in 1912.

The three historic residential districts are described as follows:

(1) The 1841 – Village/ Fanning Springs/ New Liberty in the W.S. Keith Survey. This district includes the area in the W.S. Keith Survey on the east side of Holbrook Street; the property basically follows the “town branch” or Denton Creek from its headwaters at Fanning Springs to the north. A high ridge provided a secure site for houses, churches and the first school in the village; the original development in this “village” would have been haphazard and the first settlers were squatting in an area near where a major Indian massacre occurred. The commercial buildings at this location were burned during the Civil War which precipitated the movement to the present town square. The African-American community here has churches on sites occupied since the Civil War and a cemetery started at the same time. This early village includes both the African-American community on the south and the Anglo community to the north.

(2) The 1849 – Early Mount Vernon Community. The gift by Stephen and Rebecca Keith of 24 acres for formation of a town led to the movement from the original village to a formal

townsite. The formal commercial center was laid out at the northeast corner of the 24 acres. Land to the south and east was sold off for residential development and this area of about 20 acres has many early homes.

(3) The 1885 – Silk Stock Row area. After the railroad arrived, the area along Main Street west of town and then north of Main Street developed with “new” houses and became the premier residential area in the town.

The boundaries of the three districts are set out in Appendix A with a map attached as Appendix B hereto. Architectural terms and styles are reflected in a glossary and then in line drawings attached as Appendix C and Appendix D hereto.

The predominant building type throughout all three historic residential districts is the single-family residence, with wood frame bungalows being the most common configuration. Variations on the Four Square form are scattered throughout the District. Growth in the Districts generally reflected proximity to downtown and the transportation routes with the earlier homes being the closest to the downtown.

Different neighborhoods within all three districts do have a consistent, unified feeling with variations in scale. Any construction, restoration or adaptation with the boundaries of the three historic residential districts requiring a building permit under the building codes of the City of Mt. Vernon, Texas, shall be pursuant to these guidelines and shall be made to conform to the historic integrity of the neighborhood and district.

The dominant impression in the three historic residential districts is of block upon block of houses, set back from the street in constant rows. Garages were commonly constructed at the backs of lots, accessed by a narrow drive passing between houses from the street. Although alleyways were platted, few are open or in use. Shade trees occur in places throughout the Districts, but there is no regular pattern of landscaping. In the 1841 Village District, all construction was configured to follow the boundary of the W.S. Keith Survey (present Holbrook Street) so that all construction is laid back from this defined boundary. In the 1849 Village District, the roads follow meandering lanes which served various functions, with Leftwich Street running directly into the center of the 1894 Depot and Hunnicutt Street and Fleming Streets arising out of lanes left for milk cattle maintained in small barns behind early homes to wander to pasture and water.

The earliest homes in the 1841 Village and in the 1849 Village have Greek Revival and Victorian influences dominant in residential architecture throughout the turn of the century.

Since all three districts developed before there was a real concept of a subdivision, the house styles are varied. There are consistent mixes where numerous grand Victorian Houses were demolished to allow for construction of modern Ranch Style brick homes; sometimes standing next to much newer construction (even Geodesic Domes in two historic districts). An earlier photographic legacy documents the houses which are now gone and their location against the historic houses which still remain.

In the 1849 Village, two homes on Kaufman Street still have barns and other outbuildings intact from the time when horses and cows were stabled behind the owner’s homes. A house

on Leftwich has its original well evidencing the need for water wells before public water became available in the 1920's. A house on Miller Street and several other homes in the historic districts include pastures of three to five acres where a horse could be maintained before the advent of the automobile negated the continued need for maintaining a horse and carriage for transportation. An aerial view of the town shows numerous green spaces and an unusual configuration of land use which predates modern town development patterns.

Old magnolia trees still stand to mark the location of several homes which were built to face the railroad soon after tracks were laid in 1887 in deference to this new mode of transportation.

There are true Victorians, Queen Anne Victorians, four square houses and ultimately bungalow cottages, all mixed together with construction that "filled in" spaces as people needed smaller lots as horses and cattle lots were removed; or as homes burned or were demolished and new homes built. The three districts all demonstrate a real evolution with no real consistency of construction. There are Arts & Crafts style bungalows with the exposed rafter tails or eave brackets that are this style's main identifying elements.

A few churches stand in the various middle-class neighborhoods they served. The real loss is in the 1849 Village which was truly filled with fine gingerbread Victorian houses; in the 1950's through the 1970's all but two have been demolished.

Programs for Recognition of the Three Historic Residential Districts

The National Park Service

National Register listing does not place any restrictions on the property owner unless grant assistance or tax incentives are involved. Also, financial advantages are available in the form of federal investment tax credit for income producing buildings, which are listed in the National Register.

Texas Historical Commission

The Texas Historical Commission is the State agency responsible for coordination of preservation activities in Texas. As the statewide preservation agency, it offers services to individuals and organizations regarding National Register nominations, Tax Act certifications, technical assistance and other preservation related inquiries. Structures in the districts may also be eligible for the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation. This special status conveys various benefits such as grant programs administered by the Architecture Division of the Texas Historical Commission. Other benefits include access to Historic Preservation grant-in-aid assistance for non-profit organizations and Texas Historic Preservation Grant funding.

The City of Mt. Vernon and the Landmark Commission

The City of Mt. Vernon has adopted numerous tax incentives designed to promote historic preservation. Property owners will want to check with the city office of economic development to obtain information regarding benefits available based on their ownership of

properties within the districts. The City of Mt. Vernon Landmark Commission oversees Application procedures for Certificates of Appropriateness pursuant to these guidelines. Again, forms and information are available through the city offices.

Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

The Secretary of Interior uses the standards below to determine whether a project qualifies for Federal tax credits. The City of Mt. Vernon Landmark Commission will use the standards as a guide to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness for rehabilitation projects in the historic residential districts. When applying the Secretary's Standards, the overall aim should be achieving a building improvement that meets the owner's needs and the city's goal of quality rehabilitation.

The following standards are to be applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be given 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 historical significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, 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 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.

Redevelopment Principles

To capitalize on Mt. Vernon's heritage and character, the following principles shall serve as a guide for rehabilitation and development in the historic residential districts. The Landmark Commission is to offer wider latitude for development of open spaces currently lying within the bounds of the historic residential districts and shall consider applications for development (for a Certificate of Appropriateness) on a case-by-case merit as allowed by the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance 2008-05 of the City of Mt. Vernon), to the end of encouraging development within the confines of the historic residential districts in a manner consistent with the character of such districts.

Building Height

Building heights shall not exceed two stories

Building Setback and Orientation

(1) The required setback from the front and side yard property lines shall be a distance equal to the setback of the main building on the next adjacent lots within the block face.

(2) It is the intent of these Guidelines that all new additions, alterations, infill and new infill construction recognize and maintain the established setbacks within the block face, thereby being visually/compatible with the surrounding buildings or structures and maintaining the established rhythm and setback spacing.

(3) The site orientation of new buildings or structures shall be compatible and consistent with the orientation of existing buildings or structures on the next adjacent lots within the block face.

(4) It is the intent of these Guidelines that consideration be given to the historic precedence for previous site configuration. In as much as outbuildings such as garages and storage buildings are historically set upon the lot line in this District, these Guidelines shall consider this configuration to be proper for new additions, alterations, infill and new infill construction.

(5) A new commercial structure shall not be oriented toward a residential block face. Residential block for new construction is defined as a block face having at least 50% residential use at the time the new structure is proposed.

Driveways

(1) The purpose of the driveway shall be to create a paved surface for the movement of vehicles to their designated parking areas. The driveway shall be defined as the paved area within the property line extending from the back of the sidewalk or lot line to the garage, out building or porte-cochere.

(2) The driveway shall be no wider than one car width or ten (10) feet maximum.

(3) The driveway shall extend along the side of the residence or structure through the porte-cochere if applicable, to the garage or out building or to the rear yard.

- (4) No circular driveway through the front or side yards shall be allowed.
- (5) No driveway shall be permitted to extend within the main sidelines of a residential structure; thus, it may only extend outside and parallel to the main sidelines of the structure and continue around or behind the building.
- (6) On a corner lot, the driveway may extend from the side street to the garage provided that the garage is oriented toward the side street. All other width and approach regulations shall apply to driveways on corner lots.
- (7) Ribbon driveways are permitted, but only if the paved ribbons are at least one (1) foot wide but no greater than two (2) feet wide each.
- (8) Any new driveway constructed through a front yard must be spaced a minimum of one (1) foot from an existing driveway on the adjacent lot.

Paving Materials

- (1) The paving of driveway and sidewalks shall be of natural concrete, brick, cut stone, pavers, natural rock or asphalt.
- (2) All new sidewalks and driveways shall be constructed to be compatible in texture, color, style and size with the main structure and existing paving on adjacent lots.

Lighting

Placement of outdoor security lights shall be such that no light shall spill over across the adjacent property line.

Building Facades and Materials

- (1) Exterior building façade materials are wood and masonry. All wood and masonry materials and their use must be typical of the style and period of the structure and adjacent structures.
- (2) The existing building façade materials on a structure shall be respected and shall not be changed or concealed by the introduction of a different material.
- (3) When the existing façade materials have been introduced to the structure at a later date and are not the original material type, then such materials may be removed so long as the resulting façade material is returned back to the original material type.
- (4) Exterior building columns must be of a style and materials typical of the period and style of the structure.
- (5) All new chimneys shall be of a style, proportion and materials compatible with the period and style of the structure and adjacent structures. Any new construction or additions shall not conceal or destroy existing chimneys.
- (6) Materials, structural and decorative elements and the manner in which they are used, applied or joined together must be typical of the style and period of the existing structure or, in the case of the additions, alterations and new construction, shall be compatible with other structures on the block face.
- (7) The overall relationship as to the size, width, height and number of doors and windows on the exterior building facades shall be visually compatible with the adjacent structures and with other structures typical of the style and period.
- (8) All windows and doors must be typical of the style and period of the structure. Such elements shall be proportionally balanced, sized and located in a manner typical of the style and period of the structure and compatible with adjacent structures.

(9) Storm doors and storm windows shall be permitted so long as they do not damage or conceal significant features and are visually compatible in size, style and color with the structure and adjacent structures. Metal storm doors and storm windows shall have a factory painted finish or shall be painted to match the window color. Aluminum or bronze anodized finishes are not permitted.

(10) Metal and corrugated or slatted plastic awnings are not permitted. The shape, size and color of awnings shall be compatible with the structure and not conceal or damage any architecturally significant details on the structure. No awning shall extend closer than two feet to the face of the curb line or more than two-thirds the distance from the face of the structure to the nearest curb or property line. No awning shall be lower than eight feet above the sidewalk.

Screening of Parking Areas

(1) All parking lots for more than five vehicles having frontage on a public street shall be screened from the street by an evergreen hedge not lower than three feet nor higher than four feet tall. If a hedge is not desired, then an earth berm or masonry wall or combination thereof may be substituted for the hedge.

(2) No hedges or walls shall be closer than four feet to an entrance or exit serving the parking lot to permit safer vision of traffic as vehicles enter and leave.

Lighting of Yards and Parking Areas

(1) These Guidelines regulate the spillover of light and glare on operators of motor vehicles, pedestrians and land uses in proximity to the light source. Both the nuisance and hazard aspects of glare are regulated.

(2) No flickering or flashing lights shall be permitted.

(3) Light sources shall not be located in the buffer yard except on pedestrian walkways. No light shall spill across the property line of an adjacent property used for residential purposes.

Massing

Structures built within the historic residential districts shall conform to recognized architectural styles which exist within the three present residential districts. The City of Mt. Vernon recognizes three residential historic districts: (1) The Historic Village which dates from about 1841 with construction of houses and styles within the district covering the entire range of historic structures permitted herein; (2) The Historic Townsite which dates from 1849 with the organization of the actual town into lots and blocks with designated streets and which also includes the range of houses and styles permitted herein; and (3) The Silk Stocking Row dating from 1885 and which covers a range of styles after but not including the Greek Revival style. Various styles are described in these Guidelines as a model for consideration by property owners and by the Landmark Commission. (See – Appendix A for boundaries for districts; Appendix B for copy of map of historic districts of the City of Mt. Vernon; Appendix C for statement of architectural terms; and Appendix D for line drawings exhibiting various architectural styles referenced herein for use by property owners and the Landmark Commission).

Roof Forms

Roof styles consistent with the styles for historic homes described in these Guidelines should be used on residences and dependent or service structures built within the historic residential districts.

Walls and Fences

Simple wood picket fences, wood rail fences, and decorative wrought iron or wire fences are appropriate in residential areas and should be complimentary to any existing fences on neighboring properties. If replacement of an existing historic fence or wall is required due to deterioration or any other cause, only the portion that is damaged beyond repair should be removed and replaced in kind, matching the original. If replacement is necessary of non-historic fences or if new fences are proposed, then the fence shall be designed to compliment the historic character of the property and the neighborhood.

Service and Mechanical Areas

Provide screening of appropriate design to shield service and mechanical areas, garbage and equipment storage, from street and pedestrian view. Do not locate mechanical equipment, including satellite dishes, in front or corner side yards. If roof mounted, set back from the edge of the roof and provide screens so as not to detract from the historic character of the building.

Metal Roofs and Siding

All original and existing architectural metal that adds to the character of structures should be protected from corrosion by installing and/or maintaining protective coatings and providing for proper drainage of water. Repair historic metal by patching or replacing in kind where necessary. If cleaning is necessary use caution, since sand or water blasting, and harsh chemical cleaners may damage historic metal surfaces.

Adaptive Reuse

The adaptive use of a residence for a commercial or office use, if permitted by the City of Mt. Vernon under zoning ordinances, must be designed so as to have the least impact on the historic character of a neighborhood, some of which may be residential in character. The primary goal of the design should be to preserve the original residential character.

Thereafter, building uses that are closely related to the original use are preferred, such as a bed and breakfast, professional office, or personal service business.

Exterior Facades/Building Materials

The following general principals shall govern in these Guidelines:

- Building facades shall conform to the historical house styles described in these Guidelines.
- Window and door openings shall have a vertical orientation and align vertically between floors. The primary building material shall be consistent with the house style and subject to review by the Landmark Commission in connection with the application and issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of Mt. Vernon.
- Burglar bars shall not be used on the front sides of homes facing primary streets.

Additionally, the following specific principals shall be considered in Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for construction, restoration, rehabilitation or any other work on property within the three historic residential districts of the City of Mt. Vernon:

- (1) Exterior building façade materials are wood and masonry. All wood and masonry materials and their use must be typical of the style and period of the structure and adjacent structures.
- (2) The existing building façade materials on a structure shall be respected and shall not be changed or concealed by the introduction of a different material.
- (3) When the existing façade materials have been introduced to the structure at a later date and are not the original material type, then such materials may be removed so long as the resulting façade material is returned back to the original material type.
- (4) Exterior building columns must be of a style and materials typical of the period and style of the structure.
- (5) All new chimneys shall be of a style, proportion and materials compatible with the period and style of the structure and adjacent structures. Any new construction or additions shall not conceal or destroy existing chimneys.
- (6) Materials, structural and decorative elements and the manner in which they are used, applied or joined together must be typical of the style and period of the existing structure or, in the case of the additions, alterations and new construction, shall be compatible with other structures on the block face.
- (7) The overall relationship as to the size, width, height and number of doors and windows on the exterior building facades shall be visually compatible with the adjacent structures and with other structures typical of the style and period.
- (8) All windows and doors must be typical of the style and period of the structure. Such elements shall be proportionally balanced, sized and located in a manner typical of the style and period of the structure and compatible with adjacent structures.
- (9) Storm doors and storm windows shall be permitted so long as they do not damage or conceal significant features and are visually compatible in size, style and color with the structure and adjacent structures. Metal storm doors and storm windows shall have a factory painted finish or shall be painted to match the window color. Aluminum or bronze anodized finishes are not permitted.

Architectural Design Guidelines

Redevelopment Options

Several alternatives are available to property owners of distressed structures. The most important first step, however, is a positive maintenance program. Small repairs left unattended develop into major problems until the economic viability of the property and of the business district are adversely affected.

It is extremely important to prevent potential major damage by establishing a responsible maintenance program. Repair minor roof leaks that might grow into serious water damage. Caulk, paint and weather-strip windows and doors as required. Normal cosmetic attention to the exterior trim (painted surfaces) is essential.

Buildings of architectural and historic importance should receive serious consideration for restoration. Restoration by definition is the reinstatement of the original architectural integrity. This does not mean that the original use of the building must be retained. The city of Mt. Vernon has allowed variances for single family residences to become duplex apartments, restaurants or tearooms, antique shops, and bed and breakfasts. Additionally, the addition of interior plumbing and modern kitchen facilities is recognized as a necessity for modern use of historic residences. To function effectively, restored buildings must meet contemporary demands both architecturally and economically. Restoration maintains the heritage of the area in an exciting and functional manner.

Many of the residences and structures in the historic residential districts do not fall under a classification demanding restoration, as they may not have historic or architectural significance. Yet together with the other buildings in the historic residential districts, they become extremely important. Some of these buildings are either in a state of disrepair or their appearance has been poorly and dramatically altered.

The best attention to these buildings would be renovation. As opposed to restoration, renovation is merely an upgrading either to the exterior, to the interior or both. Under the Preservation Ordinance, the City has retained the right to act to prevent Demolition by Neglect. Any action taken to prevent such "Demolition by Neglect" shall utilize the standards set forth in these Guidelines.

The original architectural character of the building might be retained or might have certain contemporary features integrated into the facade. Any modifications, however, should be in keeping with the overall integrity of the historic residential districts.

Renovation of the structure (residential or service building such as a garage or other outbuilding) should not be limited to the street side of the structure. The entire building façade including upper floors should be taken into account.

Exterior Siding and Trim

Most of the sixty plus (60+) pre-World War I Homes in the City of Mt. Vernon within the three historic residential districts are beautifully maintained and in sound condition. Some are poorly maintained and should be restored.

Plastic, aluminum or other types of siding were sometimes installed on residential exteriors because of its modern appearance and low price. The continued use of siding which is not in keeping with the historic integrity of neighborhoods should be discouraged or not approved under Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness in historic residential districts.

Windows that have been blocked in or covered should be restored to their original appearance. In some cases where original wooden frames cannot be duplicated, aluminum frames of similar profiles can be used. Factory painted finishes for aluminum are available. Never use clear aluminum window frames or screens.

When windows were covered to conceal dropped ceilings, the windows can be restored while the dropped ceiling is set back from the inside of the window. The setback can create an

architectural feature of interest allowing for natural light.

Shutters are not recommended for windows unless consistent with the architectural style of the residence.

Where they still exist, original doors should be retained. If original doors are not available, new doors of similar design should be obtained for historical accuracy. Avoid modern aluminum doors.

Burglar bars should not be used but may be permitted upon application to the Landmark Commission for consideration on a case-by-case basis.



Awnings

Awnings may be permitted when consistent with the architectural style of the residence upon proper application to the Landmark Commission, subject to the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of Mt. Vernon (Ordinance 2008-05).

Flat, fixed metal awnings and sloped, slatted aluminum awnings are not recommended. Where awnings are needed for glare, carefully designed vinyl, cloth or canvas awnings that are compatible with the architecture should be used. Modern awning canvas fabrics are of synthetic fibers and colorfast. These fabrics are far more durable than early canvas and are recommended. Color, style and placement are all issues for consideration. The color should be compatible with the façade. Either a retractable awning or a rigid metal frame with a slope of 45 degrees is normally recommended for most historic buildings.

- The awning shall fit the opening in which it sits.
- Internally illuminated awnings shall not be used.



Signs

- (1) A non-illuminated sign with the address or name of the occupant of the residence may be either attached or detached and shall not measure more than one square foot.
- (2) Signs shall not obscure significant architectural features of a building or structure. The material, shape, color, design and lettering style of all signs shall be compatible with the style and period of the structure and District as a whole.
- (3) Signage in the historic residential districts must comply with all applicable Signage Ordinances of the City of Mt. Vernon and State of Texas.

Color

Color schemes should be simple, while complementing building colors.

The color selected should relate to the colors that are present in the residential façade or in the surrounding environment. Colors can flatter or distract. Avoid bright or raw primary colors or the use of two colors of the same intensity. Select colors compatible with the neighborhood.

Keep the color scheme simple. The original colors of the historic structure should be used if at all possible. Color can unify the exterior appearance of the structure.

Do not paint the outside to match the inside. Use a semi-gloss finish for masonry surfaces and a high-gloss finish for wood and metal. Flat finish is not recommended

Unpainted brick shall not be painted.

See the following section regarding Painting for further Guidelines regarding color options and restrictions on the use of specific metallic and florescent paint on residences within the historic residential districts.

Development Ideas

New Construction / Infill

New construction is essential to a growing healthy economy for the historic residential districts. It is most important that such construction be architecturally compatible with the character of the existing residences and service buildings and outbuildings in these residential districts.

New buildings shall complement the surrounding neighbors. Color and texture, space and size, material and site placement all are critical to architectural compatibility with the older residences. New construction shall reflect a harmony of rhythm and scale with the neighborhood. Height, width, and rooflines shall all tie into a pleasant and unified streetscape. Trees and landscape features shall be preserved consistent with the applicable laws of the City of Mt. Vernon (specifically including any Tree Preservation Ordinance which may be hereafter adopted by the City of Mt. Vernon).

Building setbacks consistent with the building codes for the City of Mt. Vernon shall be followed in all construction within the three historic residential districts. The original character and feeling of the street and neighborhood involved in new construction should be maintained. Any application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (necessary prior to obtaining a Building Permit) shall set forth the exact plans regarding the setbacks for the construction/rehabilitation on a tract of land within any of the historic residential districts.

Maintenance & Repair Guidelines

Visual Building Inspection

- Is the masonry/stucco clean, without any noticeable cracks?
- Is the wood trim sound, without any noticeable rot/deterioration?
- Is the paint on the wood and / or metal trim in good condition, with no obvious peeling?
- Are there any unconnected wires or signs?
- Are the downspouts all in perfect order, with no rust and / or clogs?
- How about vegetation – is there any sprouting from the walls?
- If you have an awning, is it clean?
- Are your lights in working order?
- Are your upper floor windows intact – meaning no broken glass, rotting caulking and especially, no plywood coverings?
- Is the weather-stripping around your entry doors in good shape?
- Are your transom windows visible, or are they covered up?
- Are any parts of your building covered over?

When inspecting your building, the place to start is at the top. The roof is the first point of entry for wind, rain, snow and ice. Maintenance of the roof is essential in preventing costly damage to the rest of the building. The flashing needs to be tight and gutters and downspouts unclogged. From ground level, water needs to drain away from the building.

Painting

The benefits of repainting are numerous. Paint can be the single most effective improvement to the building, and is relatively inexpensive. Certain planning should be undertaken before painting starts. Before selecting colors and types of paint, preparation and priming must be carefully considered and executed.

Preparation involves removing loose paint, fine sanding of scraped and rough surfaces, light sanding the smooth base to give tooth, nailing, puttying and caulking as required, and cleaning of dust and dirt. Primer should be applied to all exposed surfaces. Penetrating primers such as oil or alkyd based products are recommended for wood.

Paint shall be selected to be compatible with the primer. Consideration should then be given to color, type (oil or latex base), and finish (gloss, semi-gloss or matte).

Unpainted brick shall not be painted. Painting brick may trap the moisture inside the wall and cause deterioration. If the building has already been painted and repainting is desired, carefully examine the condition of brick and mortar and make essential repairs such as brick replacement and repointing prior to painting.

Florescent and metallic colors are not permitted on the exterior of any structure within the District. Paint does not require a building permit provided it is consistent with the neighborhood or is the accurate original color of the house. Painting with a permitted color that is not metallic or florescent is not subject to prior review by the Landmark Commission.

The Landmark Commission will have delegated representatives from the Commission available to give guidance to any resident or property owner within the three historic residential districts. Appropriate colors are those, which are complimentary to the style and period of the structure, as well as the overall character and colors of adjacent structures.

Repointing Mortar Joints

When the mortar of a masonry building deteriorates, repointing sometimes becomes necessary. Repointing (pointing-tuck pointing) is the process of removing the mortar and replacing it. Care must be exercised to prevent damage to the masonry and to not alter the appearance of the building.

If repointing appears to be necessary a consultant should be engaged to ascertain the cause for mortar deterioration. Normally age is not a factor in mortar deterioration. Most often the problem is due to moisture either from leaks from above in the roofing, flashing or gutters, or from rising capillary moisture from ground water.

Careful research must be done to analyze existing mortar and brick materials as well as original construction techniques. Range of color should be matched rather than individual

brick. Brick color and pattern should be matched and ordered as early as possible to allow the manufacture of special brick. Used brick or brick salvaged from elsewhere on the same project may be considered.

There are several pointing styles for mortar joints, including various profiles, different treatment for horizontal and vertical joints and colored mortar. Properties of the mortar must be analyzed and determined. Sand color and texture can be most closely matched if the original sandpits still exist. Color can also be modified by addition of quality, colorfast mortar pigments.

Early mortars were not manufactured as finely as today and may have to be duplicated. A high content lime mortar is recommended in any case because of its inherent qualities to self-seal small cracks and voids. Also, such a mortar is more flexible and has low volume change due to weather conditions.

Competent consultants and masons will be able to review individual situations and advise owners. Where accurate mortar mixes cannot be matched, competent masons will start with quality mixes and modify them as required for the closest match possible.

The actual work will demand more supervision than normal construction. Careful protection of the brick is more important than rapid progress. The contractor should be prepared to stop work for additional research, if unexpected conditions are revealed.

Normally, old mortar should be removed to a minimum depth of one inch. All loose and disintegrated mortar beyond this depth should also be removed. A clean square corner at the back of the cut should be left. Power grinders should not be used. It is essential that no brick be damaged when removing mortar.

Mortar should be mixed properly and pre-hydrated in accordance with quality construction methods. Use of additives is not normally recommended. Remove all loose particles from the joints with air pressure and wet the brick and old mortar just prior to commencing placing new mortar.

Apply mortar in several layers 1/4" deep, compact each layer and allow to become thumb print hard before applying the next layer. Tool the final layer to match the existing joints. The surrounding masonry should be kept reasonably clean as the work progresses. Final cleaning should be done with water and bristle brush only.

Cleaning Masonry

Houses of brick, stucco, rock or other similar materials in the historic residential districts may need occasional cleaning, but consideration and care must be exercised before such an effort is undertaken. Inappropriate cleaning is a major cause of deterioration in historic buildings.

What may appear to be dirt may actually be weathered masonry. Some harmless dirt should be left alone. A brand new look should certainly be avoided. Most importantly, improper cleaning could trigger or accelerate the deteriorating effect of dirt and pollutants.

Many cleaning processes are available but the type and source of the dirt should be determined to effectively select a cleaning method. Paint, soot, smoke or bird droppings each will require a different technique of removal.

Other construction materials of the building must be considered since certain cleaning methods could have detrimental effects on non-masonry surfaces. Certain natural stones such as marble and sandstone are not compatible with masonry cleansers. Also, certain cleansers can have a harmful effect on glass, wood and paint.

There are three basic types of masonry cleaning. Water can be used with bristle brushes under high or low pressure or even as steam. Chemical cleaners provide an accelerated reaction that is intended to soften the dirt such that it can be rinsed away with water. Mechanical methods consist of blasting, such as by sand, glass beads or other abrasives and by grinding and sanding. Potentially harmful problems are associated with each of these methods.

Low pressure water cleaning is generally the simplest, safest and least expensive method of cleaning if it can adequately do the job. High pressure water cleaning should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on buildings. All masonry joints must be sound to minimize moisture penetration to the interior. Although unlikely, extremely porous masonry could absorb enough excess water to damage building interiors.

In limited cases, efflorescence can form when excess water brings soluble salts within the masonry to the surface. Even the water itself can contain certain chemicals such as iron or copper that might discolor masonry surfaces. Water cleaning should not be done during or one week prior to cold weather since water soaked masonry can crack or fragment should the water freeze.

Numerous chemical cleaners, some capable of removing paint, are available for masonry cleaning. Care must be taken in selecting the appropriate cleaner. Water based cleaners present the same potential problems as water cleaning. Some chemical cleaners have an adverse reaction with components of mortar or brick or can damage adjacent surfaces of other building materials. Muriatic acid is the most commonly used masonry cleaner and has caused more damage to masonry than any other method of cleaning.

Mechanical cleaning, such as sandblasting will erode the building surface while dirt is being removed. Although the quickest and most positive method of cleaning, it absolutely should not be considered as a viable technique. Even power-washing will erode and damage building surfaces.

No matter which method of cleaning is used, a test patch in an unobtrusive location should be prepared well in advance of the actual work. Several methods should be tested and allowed to weather for a realistic evaluation.

Other problems must be considered beyond selection of cleaning systems. Damage to nearby trees and shrubs, buildings, automobiles, pets and the environment in general is possible due to run-off or wind-drift.

Waterproofing Masonry

Waterproof and water repellent coatings for above grade masonry are generally not recommended. The presence of such coatings can create more problems than they cure. Often moisture in the wall is present from overhead leaks or damprise rather than from surface absorption. Therefore, coatings tend to trap water in the wall rather than keep it out. Usually it is when the surface integrity of the masonry is already destroyed that a water-repellent treatment is needed.

Buildings that have masonry deterioration due to damprise must have the passage of moisture interrupted at the foundation. The conventional technique is expensive and involves the removal of one course of brick a few brick at a time to install the waterproofing membrane. Caution must be taken to maintain the integrity of the structure above as the brick is removed.

Another process developed through oil well drilling technology could possibly be less expensive. A gel type grout is pumped under pressure below grad where it would seal the foundation wall against moisture penetration. A waterproofing contractor could advise each property owner regarding various techniques.

DEMOLITION CRITERIA

The removal through demolition of a structure which contributes historically or architecturally to the District shall be prohibited.

(A) Demolition of a structure will not be allowed if:

(1) A structure is of architectural or historical interest and value or its removal would be

detrimental to the public interest or

(2) A structure is of old or unusual or uncommon design and materials and it could not be

reproduced without great difficulty and expense or

(3) If its proposed replacement would not make a positive visual contribution to the District, would disrupt the character of the District or would be visually incompatible.

(B) Demolition of a structure would be allowed if:

(1) The building has lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance and its

removal will not result in a negative, less appropriate visual affect on the District;

or

(2) A structure does not contribute to the historical or architectural character and importance of the District (such as a noncontributing structure), and its removal will

result in a positive, appropriate visual effect on the District.

DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT

The Landmark Commission and the City of Mt. Vernon have reserved rights under the Preservation Ordinance and other rights allowed by State Law to prevent demolition by

neglect. These guidelines shall serve as a basis for enforcement standards of those reserved rights to prevent demolition by neglect.

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