

*Design Guidelines for Historic  
Properties in Rockford*



*Rockford Historic Preservation Commission*  
*October 1999*

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In preparing these guidelines, we gained added insights from review of design guidelines from a variety of other jurisdictions, primarily the following: Elgin, Illinois; Rock Island, Illinois; Newport, Kentucky; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Charlotte, North Carolina; Greensboro, North Carolina; Salisbury, North Carolina; Providence, Rhode Island; and Staunton, Virginia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Rockford has a rich history embodied in its historic sites and buildings. In order to protect that visual evidence of its past, the City of Rockford enacted its first historic preservation ordinance in 1978. Since then, it has designated roughly 500 properties as either landmarks or as part of a historic district. To make designation by the City meaningful, it brings with it the requirement that anyone wanting to make exterior changes to any of these properties must first obtain a *Certificate of Appropriateness* from the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission (RHPC). This is a statement signed by the RHPC Secretary verifying that the Commission has reviewed and approved a request to alter or demolish any improvement on a landmark site or within a local historic district. A Certificate must be obtained before any building permits or a zoning clearance will be issued. Certificates are

- ❑ **Required** whenever any change in design or materials is proposed for any structure within a historic district or on a landmark property designated by the City of Rockford when that change is visible from the public right-of-way (which includes the Rock River and alleys.) This includes demolition, new construction and additions.
- ❑ **Not required** for ordinary maintenance when such maintenance does not result in a change in the material and/or design of whatever's being maintained, or when proposed changes are not visible from a public right-of-way.

For our purposes here, "change" means a change from the structure's current condition. For example, if you have a house with an asphalt shingle roof and want to return to what was originally on your house, a slate roof, you will need a Certificate. If, on the other hand, you simply want to replace it with a matching asphalt shingles, then you do not need a Certificate.

Once you obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness, you must still obtain all the usual approvals, primarily a building permit and — when new construction, a fence, or additions of any sort are involved — a zoning clearance.

### Steps for Obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness

- ❑ Get application from the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission, in the Department of Community Development, Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- ❑ Check to see when the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting will be.
- ❑ Review the instructions that come with the application form to see what documentation is required for your project.
- ❑ Submit your application along with the required documentation at least one week before the Commission meeting.
- ❑ Attend the Historic Preservation Commission meeting, if at all possible, to answer any questions that may arise about your project.

The purpose of these guidelines is to give owners, residents and contractors a clear idea of what the Commission generally considers acceptable. The guidelines may also be used as a reference source for the rehabilitation of vintage structures not located within a designated historic district. Section III will be used to review all applications, regardless of the use of the property. Section IV applies to residential properties only, while Section V applies to non-residential properties.

## **I. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

Rockford's Historic Preservation Ordinance refers to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These are very general standards that our Commission, and most other preservation commissions across the country, use as a basis for their decisions. These general standards read as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired.

Because these standards are so general, and because they do not address many of the specific issues that the Commission deals with regularly (such as decks and fences), they can be difficult to apply in many situations. To ensure that everyone — Commission members and property owners alike — has an equal understanding of what standards are applied here in Rockford, the Commission has prepared the following set of guidelines. They have as their basis the Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed above, past actions by the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission, and input from residents and owners of locally designated properties.

## II. ROCKFORD'S LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS

As of the publication of this document, the City of Rockford has 19 individual landmarks and 5 historic districts. Reasons for designation vary, but the following pages provide a brief summary of the significance of each.

### ROCKFORD'S LANDMARKS

**Graham-Ginestra Home**, 1115 South Main Street: Built in 1857; an example of the transition between the Greek Revival and Italianate architectural styles. Only two families owned and lived in it from the time it was built until it became a house museum. Also on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Herrick-Logli Cobblestone House**, 2127 Broadway: Built in 1847 in the Greek Revival style; one of the oldest surviving buildings in Rockford and one of only a few surviving cobblestone houses left in Illinois. Also listed on the Illinois and the National Registers of Historic Places.

**Lake-Peterson House**, 1313 East State Street: Built in 1873; considered one of the finest intact structures in Illinois built in the Victorian Gothic style. Also significant as the residence of two of Rockford's pioneers, John Lake and Pehr A. Peterson, both leading industrialists. Also on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Coronado Theatre**, 312-324 North Main Street: Built in 1927; one of the best preserved atmospheric "movie palaces" of the 1920s. Contains a mixture of motifs — Spanish, Italian, and French architecture; Italian sculpture; and Chinese, Egyptian and Persian art. The theater was virtually untouched until a major renovation started in 1999. Also listed on the Illinois and National Registers of Historic Places.

**Freeman School**, 910 Second Avenue: Built in 1893 in the Romanesque Revival style; the second school building to be constructed on this site. The first, the Adams School, was razed in 1893 and the existing building constructed. Named for Henry Freeman, principal of the Adams School from the mid 1860s to 1880.

**Midway Theatre**, 721 East State Street: One of the largest movie houses built when it opened (1918) with seating for 2,000. Constructed in the Spanish Renaissance style; originally contained a movie theater, 4 storefronts, 20 apartments on the upper floors, and a basement that contained a bowling alley and recreation area for Camp Grant soldiers during the last part of World War I. It functioned as a movie theater until August 1980 when it was almost destroyed by fire. It is important as the home of the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and of other special events. Part of the East Rockford [National Register] Historic District.

**Anderson Building**, 803 North Church Street: Built in 1867; an elaborate example of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Italianate style. Restored as close to its original design and character as possible in the late 1970s and served for a time as part of the once nationally famous Rockford enterprise, Connie's Flowers & Dress Shop. Served as offices of Anderson Consolidated Industries Inc. for about 20 years.

**Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum**, 411 Kent Street: Built in 1869 as the home of Robert H. Tinker, a leading Rockford businessman of the time; an exceptional example of the vernacular, picturesque cottage style. The 26-room frame cottage is situated high on a bluff overlooking Kent Creek near the site of Rockford's first industry, Germanicus Kent's sawmill. Designed by architect George Bradley, founder of the well-known local firm of Bradley & Bradley. Most of the Cottage's original furnishings remain. Also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Burpee Natural History Museum**, 737 & 813 North Main Street: The two buildings were actually separate museums when they were designated landmarks in 1983. The building at 737 North Main housed the Burpee Art Museum, which has since been moved into the Riverfront Museum Park and renamed the Rockford Art Museum. The 737 building then joined the 813 building as home of the Burpee Museum of Natural History. 737 was built in 1854 by local craftsmen as the home of John S. Coleman, a local banker and member of City Council. Subsequent owners were John P. Manny and William Nelson, both Rockford industrialists. The Burpee family bought it in 1935 with plans to develop it into an art center for Rockford. A new wing designed by A. Reyner Eastman was added in 1939 to serve as an auditorium, meeting room and additional gallery space. This was removed in 1998 and a much larger addition designed by Gary Anderson & Associates constructed. 813 North Main was built in 1893 by William Fletcher Barnes, one of the founders of W. F. & John Barnes Company. Mr. Barnes and his family were the only people to actually live in the house until it was sold to the Rockford Park District in 1937. It provided office space for the Park District as well as museum space until 1971 when the entire building was turned over to museum use.

**John Erlander Home**, 404 South Third Street: Built in 1871 as the residence of John Erlander, one of Rockford's earliest settlers, and a business and civic leader. Excellent example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Italianate architectural style. Since 1952, it has served as a museum of Swedish artifacts, early Rockford-made furniture and historical records. Located in the Haight Village Historic District.

**Times Theatre**, 222-230 North Main Street: One of two remaining examples of Art Moderne movie theaters in Rockford, the Times, which includes storefronts on Main Street and a tavern entrance on West Jefferson Street, was built in 1938. At its opening in 1938, the Times boasted of "up to the minute" acoustical treatment and automatic temperature control, as well as 1,000 seats in the theater that were moth proof and fireproof.

**Seventh Street Train Depot**, 701-703 Seventh Street: Passenger depot built in 1911. Its significance lies in the fact that it is one of two older remaining train depots in Rockford, and the only passenger depot. It is the last restorable Chicago and Northwestern Depot in the Kenosha District (northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin). Designed by renowned railroad architect Charles Frost and constructed by local builder Emil Schmeling.

**Four Squires Building**, 203-207 West State Street: Actually two buildings combined in the 1920s by W. T. Grant when they replaced the original commercial Italianate design with the existing Art Deco façade. Its significance lies partly in the quality of the Art Deco design, through which it represents a period in our history when retailers tried to express a positive corporate statement through architecture, in contrast to the anonymity of 1990s "big box" retailers. Also important as the centerpiece of the last block of West State Street in downtown that is still intact.

**West Middle School**, 1900 North Rockton Avenue: Originally built as West High School as part of a WPA project in 1939. Before then, there had only been one high school in the Rockford School District, Central High School on South Madison Street. While the basic design was by Gilbert Johnson, the exterior façade was designed by Jesse Barloga and is an excellent example of the Art Moderne style. Its local significance also lies in the fact that it was fully integrated from the time it opened.

**East High School**, 2929 Charles Street: East High School was built at the same time as West, also as a WPA project. The same basic design by Gilbert Johnson was used, but this time the exterior façade was designed by Willis Hubbard. East was also considered an excellent example of Art Moderne architecture, and a focal point for the community from its beginning.

**Garrison School**, 1105 North Court Street: Built in 1887 with a Romanesque façade and Queen Anne details. Although the school has had additions made to it that are not compatible with the original design, the fact that the original part of the school is an excellent example of a late Victorian elementary school coupled with the fact that the original portion of the school is intact provided sufficient grounds for its designation as a landmark.

**Liebling Building**, 330 North Main Street: Better known locally as the home of Jackson Piano Building; an excellent example of the Art Deco style, and a stunning tribute to the artistry of terra cotta masons at the time it was built (1930). Art Deco elements present in the building include its overall vertical design, stylized decorations and extensive use of terra cotta. Interior incorporated into the Coronado Theatre during its 1999-2000 renovation.

**Shumway Market Building**, 713 East State Street: A unique Rockford structure; built in the 1920s. This is partly a function of the purpose for which it was built — to serve as a public "comfort station" — and partly from its simple but elegant design. Its importance also lies in its connection to the Shumway Farmers Market that has operated in the area behind the building since Robert Shumway donated the land to the City of Rockford for that purpose in 1904. Completely restored in 1987 by the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau; currently houses the Rockford Area Arts Council. Located in the East Rockford [National Register] Historic District.

**Illinois Central Freight Depot**, 815 South Main Street: Built in 1888 on land donated to the railroad by Robert Tinker, within sight of Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum. An excellent example of Italianate architecture of the period, as it was applied to railroad depots.

#### **ROCKFORD'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS (See maps on next page.)**

**Haight Village Historic District** Rockford's first local historic district, Haight Village includes the area bounded by South Madison, Walnut and Kishwaukee Streets and the railroad to the south. This area formed the southeast corner of newly incorporated Rockford in 1839. It is the only section of the original square mile settlement to remain intact as a residential area. Also on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Garfield Avenue Historic District** Homes in the 600 through 900 blocks of Garfield Avenue represent a variety of architectural styles, but all are professionally designed and built with outstanding workmanship. Early owners included several prominent industrialists, doctor, attorneys and professional men, including G. David Sundstrand (Sundstrand Corporation), Guy Smith (Smith Oil Company), and William Barnes (W. F. & John Barnes Company).

**Indian Terrace Historic District** The significance of the Indian Terrace Historic District lies partly in its unique street pattern and the siting of its buildings, and partly in its physical integrity. With the exception of one vacant lot, it exists today as an intact, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban neighborhood. Its derives its character not from a large number of structures of landmark quality, but from a blend of architectural styles with similar massing, scale and proportion, all tightly spaced with some lots as small as 35' x 85'.

**Brown's Hills/Knightsville Historic District** This District was settled in the 1850s and 1860s by Horace Brown, for whom Brown's Hills was named, and Major Elias Cospers, who subdivided his land with the aid of B. A. Knight and established Knightsville in 1889. The latter was a Swedish community established for the sole purpose of providing housing adjacent to the Skandia Furniture Company (which was located across North Second Street where the greenhouse and recreation path are now) for the Swedish workers. In 1922, Brown's Woods, south of Knightsville, was subdivided and became the address of many of Rockford's prominent citizens. Together, these two areas form a

closely-knit enclave that is physically isolated from the rest of the City by natural boundaries such as the Rock River and by two cemeteries and the Sinnissippi Golf Course.

**Northeast State & Main Historic District** Rockford's most recently created historic district differs from the other four in that it is comprised solely of commercial buildings as opposed to predominantly residential ones. Its primary significance is that it contains the last block on downtown West State Street that is still intact with pre-Urban Renewal buildings. Collectively, the buildings represent a period of history when individual buildings with their own individual architectural integrity stood side by side. Individually, they possess a variety of historical and architectural qualities.

### III. GUIDELINES FOR ALL DESIGNATED PROPERTIES

#### MAINTENANCE & REPAIR

Rockford's ordinance requires that all historic structures receive reasonable care, maintenance and upkeep appropriate for their preservation, protection, perpetuation or use. The ordinance lays out very specific procedures to be followed when the RHPC perceives that properties do not meet minimum maintenance standards. The types of things they look for as indicators of inadequate maintenance include

- Peeling paint on major portions of the structure;
- Scaffolding left up past the end of a construction season;
- Absence or poor condition of exterior siding material;
- Evidence of water damage;
- Broken or boarded up windows and/or doors;
- Presence of fallen trees or limbs, abandoned vehicles or debris on the site; or
- Failure to repair fire damage in a timely fashion.

The intent of this portion of the ordinance is twofold. First and foremost, it is designed to protect Rockford's historic resources and prevent what is known as demolition by neglect. This occurs when a structure is neglected to the point where the City would have no alternative but to allow its demolition. It's also intended to protect the frequently substantial investments that people have made in their property in Rockford's historic districts. Even the best maintained structure will suffer in value if the one next to it shows serious signs of neglect.

#### PAINTING

The RHPC **encourages** but does not generally require owners to submit plans for paint preparation and selection of colors. (The Commission is, however, available for advice at an owner's request.) **RHPC approval is required when previously unpainted brick, stone or other masonry is to be painted.**

The following guidelines for surface preparation and paint selection are included for the information of and use by owners of historic properties.

#### SURFACE PREPARATION

Paint preparation and application of paint films are critical in preserving most historic exterior wood and metal surfaces. In addition to its protective role, paint provides an opportunity to reinforce a historic building's architectural style and accentuate its significant features through the appropriate selection of paint color.

Maintaining wood surfaces that were previously painted requires routine cleaning of the surface. Often the perceived need to repaint may be the result of accumulated dirt that can be taken care of with conventional washing. However, repainting is called for if the paint film itself is deteriorated or damaged. Proper preparation includes removal of all loose or detached paint down to the first sound paint layer. It's not necessary or even desirable to remove additional sound paint layers to expose bare wood, particularly if the wood will remain uncoated for any length of time.

#### ***Guidelines for paint removal and surface preparation***

- ❑ Determine if repainting is necessary or if simply cleaning the surfaces will suffice.
- ❑ If repainting is necessary, remove loose paint layers down to a sound paint layer using the gentlest means possible. If water is used, use it at no more than 200 p.s.i. to remove flaking or peeling paint.
- ❑ Take precautions when removing old paint layers since they may contain lead.
- ❑ Ensure that all surfaces are dry and free of dirt, grease and grime before painting.
- ❑ Prime surfaces if bare wood is exposed or if changing types of paint, such as from oil-based to latex.
- ❑ Do not apply latex paint directly over oil-based paint as it may not bond properly and can pull off the oil-based paint.
- ❑ Use a high-quality paint and follow the manufacturer's specifications for preparation and application. One important part of this is weather. Both temperature and humidity levels impact paint's ability to cure.

### ***Suggested guidelines for paint color selection and placement***

- ❑ Select colors that are in keeping with the period and style of construction of the building.
  - ❑ Choose colors that blend with and complement the overall color schemes on the street. Do not use bright and obtrusive colors.
  - ❑ Do not paint masonry that is unpainted. If you decide that you want to paint masonry, you must first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the RHPC.
  - ❑ Limit the numbers of colors you use.
  - ❑ Color palettes for residential buildings can differ according to the particular architectural style. Here are some suggested guidelines:
  - ❑ Greek Revival: Walls and trim are usually white with deep bright green trim or yellow walls with white trim and green shutters and doors.
  - ❑ Italianate: Walls are natural earth and stone colors with trim in a contrasting shade of the basic color.
  - ❑ Queen Anne: Deep, rich colors such as greens, rusts, reds and browns can be used on the exterior trim and walls of late-Victorian era homes. Keep in mind that some darker colors may chalk and fade more quickly than lighter colors. The objective is to respect the many textures of these highly ornate structures. Shingles can be painted a color different from siding on the same building. It is best, however, to treat similar elements with the same color to achieve a unified appearance rather than an overly busy and disjointed one.
  - ❑ Folk Victorian and American Foursquare: These buildings generally have very simple designs with plain detailing. One color should be used for the trim and a contrasting color for the wall.
  - ❑ Bungalows: Natural earth tones and stains of tans, greens and grays are most appropriate for this style.
  - ❑ Prairie: Buildings in this style usually have lighter colors, such as yellow, tans and off-white, with contrasting shades for trim and accents.
  - ❑ Colonial Revival: Softer colors should be used on these buildings and the trim is usually painted white or ivory since the style is a return to classical motifs. Walls are white, yellow or tan. Shutters are green, black or dark blue.
  - ❑ Basic color guidelines for non-residential buildings:
    - ❑ Select colors that complement the predominant hues of surrounding buildings.
    - ❑ Keep color schemes simple.
    - ❑ Use brighter and darker colors sparingly for accent or to draw attention to details, such as a door.
    - ❑ Consider the original color scheme when restoring a building, if possible.
- **One final note on painting. Before seeking Commission approval to install aluminum or vinyl siding because a building won't hold paint, make sure that all the things that can cause a paint job to go bad have been checked and, where needed, remedied. If you have a problem and**

are not sure what's causing it, contact the RHPC office at 987-5600 and we'll help you figure it out.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE SITE & SETTING

The relationship between a historic building and its environs is important in defining the overall historic character of the building and the surrounding area. In some cases, layout or design of the district as a whole may play an important role in defining the character of the district. Examples of this would be the horseshoe in the Indian Terrace Historic District and, to a lesser extent, the cul-de-sac at the west end of Garfield Avenue.

### STREETS & SIDEWALKS

A variety of surfaces have been used to construct roads, streets, alleys and sidewalks. Local streets have been built of everything from cedar blocks to today's concrete and asphalt. (The first concrete street in Illinois — Orchard Park — was built in Rockford in 1915.) In many cases, the original brick paving still exists under several layers of asphalt or concrete. Significant historic materials help lend a sense of character to a site, street or district.

#### *Guidelines for streets*

- ❑ Significant historic paved surfaces should be retained/maintained.
- ❑ Significant historic sidewalk, curb and street patterns and paving materials should be retained/maintained.
- ❑ New paved surfaces should not be visually dominant, intrusive or suggest a false sense of history.
- ❑ Street widths within historic districts should not be increased unless there are compelling safety reasons for doing so.

#### *Guidelines for sidewalks*

- ❑ Sidewalks should be smooth concrete that matches any original sidewalks that may exist in details, dimensions and placement. Other materials that may be acceptable are brick pavers, or pavers that replicate brick.
- ❑ Aggregate or pebble-surfaced concrete are generally not appropriate materials for sidewalks in visible areas. Sidewalks made of asphalt are not acceptable.

### ACCESSORY BUILDINGS, INCLUDING GARAGES

Early garages were typically single-bay structures located in the rear yard at the end of the driveway or off the alley. Early storage buildings and sheds were usually small frame structures sited toward the back of the rear yard and were generally not visible from the street.

New secondary buildings such as garages and sheds should be simple in design and sited in traditional locations. Construction materials should be similar to those of the primary dwelling.

#### *Guidelines for existing garages, carriage houses and outbuildings*

- ❑ Those that contribute to a property's historic character, or are original to the property should be preserved and maintained. Original features should be repaired to match the original.
- ❑ Those that are original to a property should not be moved to another part of the lot.
- ❑ Original doors should be maintained to the greatest extent possible, but may be retrofitted with modern hardware and custom garage door openers. If doors must be replaced, the new doors should be wood with raised panels and glass window sections and as similar to the original design as possible in appearance.

### ***Guidelines for construction of new accessory buildings***

- ❑ Do not locate accessory buildings in front or side yards.
- ❑ New accessory buildings should be detached from and smaller in scale than the main building.
- ❑ New construction should be simple in design but reflect the general character of the associated dwelling. For example, a garage should have the same type of roof (e.g., gabled) as the main building.
- ❑ New accessory buildings should be built at traditional locations for outbuildings in the district. These are usually at rear lot lines, adjacent to alleys, and at the rear of a dwelling.
- ❑ The exterior material should match that of the main building if it is visible from the right-of-way. An exception may be made if the main building is brick, stucco or stone; then wood or synthetic siding may be used as an alternative on the garage or shed.
- ❑ Use wood paneled garage doors with windows.
- ❑ Windows should be similar in material and design to those on the main building; service doors should be similar to rear or service doors on the main building.
- ❑ Prefabricated accessory buildings may only be used where they will not be substantially visible from the public right-of-way.

### **DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING AREAS**

Rockford's locally designated districts were largely developed in the days of horses and horse-drawn vehicles and the early days of the automobile. Some streets were laid out with rear alleys to provide access to barns, carriage houses and sheds. These buildings were generally located directly adjacent to these alleys. With the rising popularity of the automobile, many of these original outbuildings were either replaced with or converted to garages. Today, vehicular access to Rockford's historic dwellings is by driveways off the street or through the rear alleys. The addition of garages and parking places in areas other than rear yards is thus not consistent with traditional streetscape design.

### ***Guidelines for driveways and parking areas***

- ❑ When adding new driveways, match the spacing, width, configuration and materials of existing driveways along the same block.
- ❑ Locate new driveways so that a minimum of alteration to historic site features, such as landscaping, walkways, and retaining walls is necessary. New driveways or parking areas should not directly abut a principal structure.
- ❑ Driveways in the front or side yards should be of brick, concrete or concrete tracks (narrow strips). Textured concrete or asphalt designed to look like brick pavers are also acceptable.
- ❑ Parking lots should be screened through plantings of hedges, shrubs, trees or fences at edges and in medians within. Note: Parking lot landscaping must be approved by both the RHPC and by the Rockford Zoning Office.
- ❑ Parking lots should be located in rear yards. If placement in a side yard is required, they should be no closer to the street than the front wall of the building.
- ❑ Parking lots on vacant lots between buildings should align edge landscape screening with the front facades of adjacent buildings.
- ❑ In lighting parking areas, follow the guidelines on page 13 for exterior lighting.

### **FENCES, WALLS & RETAINING WALLS**

The RHPC reviews applications for new fences according to the appropriateness of their design, materials, size, details and, in some cases, color, as well as the appropriateness of their location and height. A site plan locating the fence and a scaled drawing or photograph of any proposed fencing

are also required. (The Rockford Zoning Office also requires a site plan before they will issue a zoning clearance for a fence.)

In selecting the type of fence to install, remember that fences are an extension of the architecture of the building on the site. Your fence should relate to the size and scale of the building as well as the time period in which it was built.

Sometimes it's necessary to use fencing for other than decorative purposes, such as marking boundaries, privacy or security. Fencing for utilitarian purposes sometimes requires using materials which are not of the period or character of the house or business. Non-conforming fencing materials may be considered for use in the rear yard.

Retaining walls made of various types of materials can be found in virtually all of Rockford's historic districts. Some are of concrete construction and were built at the same time as the building on the property. Others were built in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when concrete sidewalks were first installed. New retaining walls must be reviewed by the Commission if they are visible from the public right-of-way.

### ***Guidelines for existing fences and walls***

- ❑ Retain and preserve
  - Any original fences or walls;
  - All architectural features that are character-defining elements of original fences or walls, including gates, stone pillars, hardware, and decorative pickets; and
  - Historic fence and wall material whenever possible. If replacement is unavoidably necessary, use new material that matches the historic material in composition, size, shape, color, pattern, and texture. Consider substitute material only if the original material is not technically feasible.
- ❑ Protect and maintain fences and walls in appropriate ways:
  - Inspect fences and walls regularly for signs of deterioration or moisture damage.
  - Keep all joinery adequately sealed to avoid moisture damage.
  - Maintain a sound paint film on all elements that have traditionally been painted.
  - Remove any vegetation that is uprooting posts or causing other structural damage. (See guidelines for landscaping on page 12 for further details on this.)
  - Maintain hedges by trimming them and eliminating vegetation that threatens their health.
- ❑ If replacement of a fence or wall element is unavoidable, replace only the deteriorated element, matching the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
- ❑ Do not apply paint or other coatings to unpainted wall or fence materials that were not historically coated. An exception may be made for existing chain link fencing.
- ❑ Screen existing chain link fences with vegetation, such as climbing vines, ivy or shrubbery.

### ***Guidelines for new fences and walls***

- ❑ All new fences and walls must receive zoning clearance from the Zoning Section, Department of Community Development, as well as a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- ❑ Base the design for a new fence or wall on accurate documentation of a historic fence or wall on a similar property, or create a new design compatible with the historic character of the building and district.
- ❑ Remember: Picket fences are not meant to serve as privacy fences, so new ones should be at least 50% open (space between the boards = the width of a board). They should be made of wood and finished in a color in keeping with the house.
- ❑ Don't add elements or details to a fence or wall in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.

- ❑ Acceptable materials for new fences are painted or stained wood, and cast or wrought iron.
- ❑ Chain link, louver, split rails, concrete block, basket weave, horizontal board, stockade and shadowbox design fences are generally not acceptable within historic districts or on landmark sites where the fence would be visible from a public right-of-way. Where chain link is allowed, it should be either painted or vinyl coated in dark brown, dark green or black.
- ❑ Traditional plantings such as hedges and shrubs are acceptable as alternatives for fences in historic districts.
- ❑ Retaining walls intended to serve a structural purpose should be designed by a qualified engineer or architect to ensure that wind loads, grade changes and foundation requirements are properly accommodated.
- ❑ New walls should be of concrete or in stone designs such as cut stone, random rubble, course rubble, or cobblestones. Retaining walls of brick are less appropriate, but may be allowed.
- ❑ New walls of timbers, railroad ties or artificial stone should not be constructed in front yards.

## LANDSCAPING

Trees, bushes, flowers and ground coverings have a strong visual impact on a property. Natural landscape materials add color and texture to a yard, while at the same time providing pleasure, shade and privacy. Significant elements of the landscape, such as grassy lawns, mature trees, hedges, foundation plantings, fences, walls ground cover, should be retained. When new trees and bushes are planted, they should be placed where they will not infringe on the building or on other plant materials when they reach mature size. Balance and proportion should also be considered.

The RHPC will review landscape plans for properties in historic districts and landmarks when requested. By ordinance, however, only the two following items relating to landscaping are listed in the ordinance as requiring RHPC approval:

- ❑ If another City permit or approval is required (such as landscaping required by zoning for parking lots); or
- ❑ If you want to cut down a healthy tree that is more than 18 inches in diameter. (Trees of that size have existed long enough to be considered an important element of the overall environment of a landmark or historic district and hence are worth protecting.)

Removal of large trees will be allowed if one of the following criteria is met:

- ❑ An arborist, landscape architect or cooperative agent provides written certification that the tree is diseased and/or dying;
- ❑ The tree (or its root system) poses a hazard to a building on the site or to a sidewalk or driveway; or
- ❑ The tree is a species generally considered to be a nuisance, such as a mulberry tree.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is also required for any landscaping improvements that include physical improvements other than plant materials. This would include such things as retaining walls, changing the grade on a site, berms and planters. Guidelines for these are as follows:

- ❑ Grade changes and berms should generally be avoided on historic properties. In addition to changing the visual character of the property, they may also result in damage to the structure, or erosion and drainage problems on the property or the one next to it.
- ❑ Grade changes or berms should not result in the obscuring or concealment of a building, nor should they change the character of the streetscape or the relationship of buildings to their sites.
- ❑ Planters, if visible from the public right-of-way, should be of a design that would have been used at the time the building on the lot was constructed.

### ***Guidelines for landscaping landmark sites or properties in historic districts***

The RHPC suggests the following guidelines for maintaining and developing appropriate landscaping on your property:

- ❑ Retain and maintain specific landscape features that are character-defining elements of a historic district or landmark site, including large trees, hedges, foundation plantings, grassy lawns, ground cover, trellises, patios, terraces, fountains and gardens.
- ❑ If a large tree or hedge must be removed because of disease or storm damage, replace it with a new tree or hedge of the same species or with a similar appearance.
- ❑ When introducing new landscape features, keep them consistent with similar elements in the historic district.
- ❑ When locating new landscape features, keep their locations consistent with the location of similar elements in the district.
- ❑ Avoid placing trees and shrubs next to building foundations where they can encourage water to penetrate the building, causing deterioration, or where their root systems can ultimately damage a building.
- ❑ Incorporate existing large trees and other significant landscape elements into plans for additions and new construction.
- ❑ Regularly prune and maintain existing shade trees.
- ❑ Regularly prune trees and shrubbery so as not to conceal, obscure or damage the building.

### **LIGHTING**

The character of Rockford's historic districts can be reinforced and even enhanced by the selection of appropriate exterior lighting. Warm-spectrum light sources and unobtrusive lighting fixtures are recommended. Lighting levels should provide adequate illumination for safety concerns, but should not detract from or overly emphasize the building or the site.

All proposals for new exterior lighting fixtures that would be visible from a public right-of-way, including the introduction of porch and entrance lighting fixtures and security lighting, require a Certificate of Appropriateness. The compatibility of proposed exterior lighting and lighting fixtures is assessed in terms of design, material, use, size, scale, color and brightness. Review of proposals for exterior lighting may require a scaled drawing or site plan. For post-mounted fixtures, the following information may be required: the location and height of each pole; the number of light fixtures to be located on each pole; the type and wattage of all lamps; the area to be illuminated; and the aiming angle of each light fixture.

### ***Guidelines for exterior lighting***

- ❑ Preserve and maintain fixtures original to the building or site.
- ❑ Fixtures introduced to the exterior of a structure should be compatible with the style, scale and period of the structure.
- ❑ Security lights, flood lights and foot lights should be small, simple in design, and their number kept to a minimum where readily visible.
- ❑ Use directional lighting to avoid spilling light onto adjacent properties.
- ❑ Screen façade lights from public view.
- ❑ Do not introduce or remove exterior lighting fixtures that would alter the historic or architectural character of the structure, the property or the historic district.
- ❑ Small, landscaping bollard lights aren't original to historic properties and should not be used.

### **GARBAGE COLLECTORS**

Garbage collectors (dumpsters) should be located at the rear of buildings or along alleys. Large garbage collectors that serve apartment buildings, office buildings, churches, or other nonresidential buildings should be screened with landscaping or fencing. These require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

## **OUTDOOR MECHANICALS**

Outdoor mechanicals such as air conditioners should be located as inconspicuously as possible to the rear of the building. They should be invisible from the street, and landscaped if possible.

## **SATELLITE DISHES & ANTENNAS**

Satellite dishes have become common additions to both residential lots and nonresidential buildings. The older dishes span ten to eleven feet while the newest type of DBS dish measures only 18 inches in diameter. These are the types of things that become problematical in historic districts or on landmark sites. They clearly are not historical in character or appearance, but they have become common features in modern life, not unlike garages.

### ***Guidelines for satellite dishes and antennas***

- ❑ Ground-mounted dishes or antennas should not be installed in front yards or in readily visible side yards, nor should they be installed at readily visible rooflines.
- ❑ The smaller, 18-inch dishes are more appropriate than the larger ones.
- ❑ No more than one dish or antenna, regardless of size, may be installed on any residential property with less than ten units; no more than two dishes or antennas may be located on a residential property with ten or more units.
- ❑ Ground-mounted dishes or antennas should be mounted as low to the ground as possible and screened by landscaping or fencing.
- ❑ Dishes or antennas should be a neutral color, black or gray in most circumstances. Other colors may be considered neutral if they blend with the surrounding dominant color, such as a white dish against a white house; if the color helps to camouflage the dish or antenna; and if the color is neither bright, reflective nor metallic.
- ❑ Dishes may not display advertising in any form except for a six-inch square area displaying the manufacturer's or distributor's name.
- ❑ Rooftop dishes or antennas must be installed so as to avoid damage to the roof covering. When they are removed, the roof covering must be appropriately repaired to maintain weather and water tightness.

## **YARD FEATURES**

Substantial yard structures such as pergolas, gazebos, sculptures or fountains may be appropriate in some locations. Designs for these should be based on historic designs appropriate for pre-1945 buildings. Wood construction should be used rather than brick, concrete, metal or glass.

Outdoor furniture, yard and recreation items will be reviewed by the Commission if they are visible from a public right-of-way and permanently installed in some manner, such as with concrete footings. These items include benches, gazebos, summer houses, bird baths, play sets, etc. Outdoor furnishings should be compatible with the period of architecture of the main structure on the property.

## **SWIMMING POOLS**

The installation of in-ground or aboveground swimming pools in rear or side yards is acceptable, as long as they are effectively fenced or screened from view. Fencing or screening around pools must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the RHPC.

## **GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

The focus of design guidelines for new construction is on ensuring the compatibility of the new with what already exists in the immediate vicinity. Compatible means reinforcing typical features that buildings display along the block such as spacing and orientation of buildings, similar roof forms, materials, window and door sizes and placement, porch size and location, and foundation heights. However, compatible does not mean replication; compatible contemporary designs rather than historic duplications are encouraged.

The following site elements of any new construction should be consistent with those of existing buildings along the block on which the building is to be located:

- ❑ The front and side yard setbacks;
- ❑ Orientation of the proposed building's front elevation to the street; and
- ❑ Location and design of all site features and secondary structures, including garages, fences, walls and landscaping masses.

Similarly, the following building features should be compatible with those of existing buildings on the block:

- ❑ The height of any new buildings should not vary more than 10 percent from the average height of existing buildings on the block.
- ❑ The ratio of height to width of the proposed building's front elevation ;
- ❑ Roof shape and pitch;
- ❑ The proportion, shape, position, location, pattern and size of windows and doors;
- ❑ Location and proportion of porches; and
- ❑ Predominant material.

Overall, any new construction should not copy from historic buildings but should be compatible with them in height, proportion, roof shape, material, texture, scale, detail, and color.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITION**

Since demolition is an irreversible step, it must be carefully evaluated before being allowed. Demolition of a structure alters forever the character of the site on which it is located; it may also alter the character of a larger area, depending on its size and historical significance. For this reason, demolition of a structure in a historic district or on a landmark site should only be considered as a last alternative when all other avenues have been exhausted.

Demolition is not permitted within historic districts or on landmark sites unless one of the following conditions exist:

- ❑ The demolition request is for an inappropriate addition, a nonsignificant portion of a building, or a nonsignificant accessory building or buildings which are significant as determined by the RHPC.
- ❑ The demolition request is for a noncontributing building and the demolition will not adversely affect the character of the district.
- ❑ The building official of the City of Rockford certifies that demolition is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.
- ❑ A Certificate of Economic Hardship allowing the demolition is obtained.

If demolition is approved by the RHPC, then the following guidelines apply:

- ❑ Make a permanent record of any significant structure before demolition occurs. The record shall consist of black-and-white photographs taken just before demolition takes place, and any other documents, such as drawings, that may exist that describe the architectural character and special features of the building. The Commission determines on a case-by-case basis the precise documentation of a specific building that is required and the person who is responsible for producing the documentation. The documentation must be submitted for review by the Commission before the demolition permit may be granted. The record is retained by the City of Rockford.
- ❑ Work with the Commission to identify salvageable materials and potential buyers or recipients of salvaged materials. The removal of all salvageable materials before demolition is encouraged, and may be required, depending on the significance of the building.
- ❑ Submit a site plan showing proposed landscaping and any other site development to be completed after demolition. A demolition permit will not be issued until such a site plan has been reviewed and approved by the RHPC.
- ❑ Clear the structure quickly and thoroughly.
- ❑ Plant the site or appropriately maintain it until it is reused. If the site is to remain vacant for over one year, it should be improved to reflect an appearance consistent with other open areas in the district.

## **GUIDELINES FOR MOVING BUILDINGS**

There are a few vacant lots within Rockford's historic districts which are appropriate sites for the relocation of pre-1945 dwellings. However, moving contributing structures from a historic district to a site outside a district should only be considered as a last resort to avoid demolition.

An application for moving a building onto a lot within a historic district should include not just information about the building to show how it is compatible with its neighbors, but also how it will be situated on the lot. The application should also show any other features that will be on the lot, such as driveways and garages.

### ***Guidelines for moving buildings***

- ❑ Moving a building into a locally designated historic district may be acceptable if it is compatible with the district's architectural character through style, period, height, scale, materials, setting and placement on the lot.
- ❑ Moving buildings that contribute to the historic and architectural character of a district out of the district should be avoided unless demolition is the only alternative. The first choice for relocation in this case should be to another lot within the historic district. If one is not available, then relocation outside the district will be considered.
- ❑ Moving buildings such as garages or other outbuildings from one location to another on the same lot is acceptable if the relocation is not readily visible or if it can be shown that the new location is more historically correct than the initial one.
- ❑ Before moving a building:
  - Document original site conditions using photographs and other written or graphic materials such as site plans to record the original setting.
  - Assess the structural condition of the building to minimize damage during the move.
- ❑ Work with contractors experienced in successfully moving historic structures.

## IV. GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION OF AND ADDITION TO RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

### FOUNDATIONS

The foundation ties the historic building to its site, usually raising the body of the structure above ground level. The height, materials, features and details of a building's foundation can all contribute to its historic character.

#### *Guidelines for foundations*

- ❑ Retain and preserve
  - The original form, pattern, color and texture of historic foundations.
  - All architectural features that are character-defining elements of the foundation, such as decorative vents and grilles, access doors, lattice panels and steps.
  - Historic foundation materials whenever possible. If repair or replacement is necessary, use new materials that match the original in composition, size, shape, color, pattern and texture. Consider substitute materials only if it is not technically feasible to use materials matching the original.
- ❑ Repair deteriorated mortar joints appropriately by removing loose, crumbling or cracked mortar and repointing the mortar joint with new mortar of comparable strength, color and composition. The new mortar joint should match the original in appearance and profile.
- ❑ Protect and maintain historic foundations appropriately:
  - Provide adequate ventilation of crawl spaces to prevent moisture problems.
  - Provide adequate drainage of surface water by grading the site away from the foundation.
  - If necessary, install drains around the foundation to eliminate surface water problems.
  - Maintain foundation plantings so that they do not hinder adequate ventilation and drainage of the foundation.
  - Eliminate any vegetation that may cause structural damage to the foundation.
  - Follow the guidelines for maintenance of masonry (pages 20-21) where applicable.
- ❑ Locate new utility and mechanical connections through foundations on non-character-defining foundation walls or inconspicuously on side or rear walls where they will not be visible from the street.
- ❑ Do not apply paint or other coatings to unpainted foundation material that was historically not coated. Paint previously painted foundations in dark colors that best reflect the foundation material.
- ❑ Remove paint from painted masonry foundations only if the masonry is of high quality and was intended to be exposed. For proper cleaning methods, see the section on cleaning of masonry on page 20.
- ❑ Do not introduce new foundation features, such as vents or access doors, if they would diminish the original design of the foundation or damage historic foundation features or materials.
- ❑ If you want to fill in spans between masonry piers, recess and detail the panels so that the original piers are still the prominent feature.

### EXTERIOR WALL SURFACES

A building's historic character derives from a combination of its design, setting and materials. In virtually every building, historic or not, the walls form the single most visible feature. The form, materials and details of these exterior walls contribute greatly to a building's historic quality. Their

pattern, texture, color and detail give distinctiveness and scale to these buildings, sometimes with the added help of architectural details such as cornerboards, brackets and quoins. For all of these reasons, it is important to retain or restore to the greatest extent possible original materials and features on Rockford's historic structures.

## **WOOD SIDING**

Wood is a traditional building material with good insulating qualities that lasts indefinitely if maintained properly. Paints and coatings on the surface protect it from deterioration due to ultraviolet light as well as moisture. The guidelines for paint (pages 7-8) provide more information on the preparation and maintenance of painted surfaces. Use caulk or flexible sealants to seal any cracks that may appear in the wood, but do not seal lap joints.

Stains or evidence of mildew indicate that a wood surface is remaining damp, inviting insect and fungal attacks as well as rot. Wooden elements should be sloped to shed water, with roof and gutter systems providing additional protection to the surface. Chemical treatment of wooden members either during manufacture or following installation can enhance wood's ability to resist rot and insect infestation. Some chemical treatments result in an initial resistance to surface paint films, requiring a weathering period of a few months before painting. Chemical treatment is particularly advantageous if the wooden element is in direct contact with the ground.

### ***Guidelines for wood siding are as follows***

- ❑ Retain and preserve
  - Original wood siding, trim and details.
  - All wooden features that are character-defining elements of a historic building, such as shingles, brackets, cornices, balustrades, columns, pediments and architraves.
- ❑ Protect and maintain wood surfaces and elements in the following manner:
  - Inspect wooden surfaces and features regularly for signs of damage from moisture, insects, fungi or mildew.
  - Monitor the condition of wood surfaces and features. Note: Both the peeling of paint and the widening of wood joints may create the false appearance of deteriorated wood.
  - Keep wooden joinery adequately sealed to avoid water penetration.
  - Maintain a slope on horizontal wood surfaces, such as porch flooring or window sills, to ensure that water does not collect but runs off.
  - Maintain roofs, gutters, and downspouts to protect wood surfaces and features from water damage.
  - Prime all exposed wood surfaces before painting.
  - Maintain a sound paint film or other coating on wood to prevent damage from ultraviolet light and moisture.
- ❑ Repair original wooden elements and details by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing deteriorated sections.
- ❑ If replacement of a wooden element or detail is necessary, replace the deteriorated element only, matching the original in size, scale, proportion, material and detail.
- ❑ Do not clean wood surfaces with high-pressure methods, such as sandblasting or waterblasting, or overexpose wood surfaces to caustic chemical strippers that will raise the grain of the wood and roughen the surface texture.

Like most other preservation commissions, the RHPC is frequently asked to allow the use of either aluminum or vinyl siding. These requests are usually denied, for two reasons. First, since the most common reason given for wanting new siding is that the owner is having to repaint every four or five years, there is clearly an underlying problem that needs to be addressed. Covering the building up with aluminum or vinyl does simply that — covers it up. The root source of whatever the problem is

remains, with the now-added disadvantage that you can't see the damage it's doing under the siding. Secondly, synthetic materials can never have the same patina, texture or light-reflective qualities as wood, brick or stucco.

For these reasons, the Commission does not endorse the residing of structures with a material other than what was used originally. It is the policy of the Commission that the original fabric of the building should be repaired or replaced where necessary with the original building material.

### ***Guidelines for use of synthetic siding on existing buildings***

- ❑ Avoid applying synthetic siding. In addition to changing the appearance of a historic building, synthetic siding can make maintenance more difficult because it covers up potential problems that can become more serious. The underlying wood may be exposed to an increased amount of deterioration due to entrapped moisture, deterioration that you won't be able to see. And siding, once it fades, needs painting just as frequently as wood. In addition, aluminum siding is vulnerable to denting, and partial replacement may be impossible if the manufacturer changes the design or color specifications of his siding.
- ❑ Remove synthetic siding and restore original building material, if possible. If this is not possible, for example if the original siding is gone or deteriorated to the point where it would have to be replaced, then synthetic siding may be considered.
- ❑ If a decision is made to use synthetic siding, it should be used only on buildings the RHPC determines to be noncontributing or of lesser architectural importance, or buildings constructed after 1950 (when aluminum siding became generally available). In these cases, the siding should match the size, type, style and surface appearance of the original material as closely as possible. Ensure that any moisture, rot, or infestation problems are corrected before covering up these areas with synthetic materials. Decorative elements, trim, features, and special surfaces should be retained when adding synthetic siding. Strong consideration should be given to retaining the original materials on the primary elevations of the building and using synthetic siding only on secondary elevations.
- ❑ Approval for synthetic siding requires completion of a special application form which includes the following information:
  - The property owner must submit a signed letter stating in detail the intent and scope of the proposed use of synthetic siding. The letter should identify any deterioration or problems occurring relative to the existing siding. If known, the cause and extent of the deterioration and any steps taken to resolve those problems should also be clearly stated.
  - The property owner or contractor must submit a detailed written description (including drawings and photos) of exactly how all the proposed residing materials and trim cladding are to be installed. This should include an explanation of the method of installation and the type of underlayment used so as to prevent moisture buildup behind the new siding. Material and color samples are to be submitted with this written description.

The Commission recommends that the owner and a representative of the contractor be present at the meeting when the Certificate of Appropriateness is reviewed. It is likely that the contractor's representative will be questioned in detail as to the proposed method of installation.

### **MASONRY**

Masonry includes such things as brick, stone, terra cotta, concrete stucco, tile and mortar. It is used on cornices, pediments, lintels, sills and decorative features as well as for wall surfaces. Color, texture, mortar joint type, and patterns of masonry help define the overall character of a building.

Masonry surfaces are relatively long lasting and require little maintenance. The most common cause of deterioration in masonry is moisture, which can in turn be compounded by use of an

inappropriate mortar mix when making repairs. If water can enter the wall, the roof or the foundation through loose masonry joints or cracks, it will cause additional damage as it works its way through the structure. Typically, mortar joints deteriorate slowly over a period of years because of exposure to the elements. This deterioration allows moisture to penetrate brick walls or foundations. Heavy soiling or vegetation that allows moisture to remain on a masonry surface contributes to the deterioration of masonry.

#### ***Guidelines for maintenance of masonry***

- ❑ Retain masonry features such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window surrounds, pediments, steps, and columns that are important in defining the overall character of the building. The size, texture, color and pattern of masonry units, as well as mortar joint size and tooling should be respected.
- ❑ Monitor the condition of the mortar and the masonry units and ensure that improper water drainage is not causing deterioration. Prevent water from gathering at the base of a wall by ensuring that the ground slopes away from the wall or by installing drain tiles and/or downspout feed aways.
- ❑ Prevent rising damp by applying a damp-proof course just above the ground level with slate or other impervious material. This work may require the advice of a historical architect.
- ❑ Repair leaking roofs, gutters and downspouts; secure loose flashing.
- ❑ Repair cracks, which may indicate natural structural settling or deterioration and allow moisture penetration.
- ❑ Caulk the joints between the masonry and window frames to prevent water penetration.

#### ***Guidelines for cleaning masonry***

Clean masonry only when it is necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling. Use knowledgeable contractors and check their references and methods. Look for damage caused by improper cleaning such as chipped or pitted brick, washed-out mortar, rounded edges of brick, or a residue or film. Cleaning of masonry should follow these guidelines:

- ❑ Clean unpainted masonry with the gentlest means possible. The best method is low-pressure (500 pounds per square inch or less or a flow rate of 4 to 6 GPM) water wash with detergents and natural bristle brushes.
- ❑ Test the cleaner on a small inconspicuous part of the building, beginning with the gentlest method and moving to harsher treatments only if necessary. Let the masonry in the test patch dry thoroughly and look for surface deterioration or discoloration. Older brick may be too soft to clean and can be damaged by detergents and by the pressure of the water. **Note: Building owners applying for federal historic preservation tax credits must conduct test patches before cleaning masonry.**
- ❑ Do not use abrasive cleaning methods such as sandblasting or excessively high-pressure water washes. These methods remove the hard outer shell of a brick and can cause rapid deterioration. Sandblasted masonry buildings cannot receive federal tax credits.
- ❑ Use chemical cleaners cautiously. Do not use chemical methods that damage masonry and do not leave chemical cleaners on the masonry longer than recommended.
- ❑ Avoid using water or water-based chemicals in freezing conditions.

#### ***Guidelines for repointing of masonry***

Disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, or damaged plaster work may signal the need for repair of masonry. There are two steps to repointing masonry, removing the deteriorated mortar and then duplicating it as closely as possible in the new mortar replacing it.

- ❑ Remove deteriorated mortar by carefully hand raking the joints to avoid damaging the masonry. Do not remove mortar with electric saws or hammers that damage the surrounding masonry.
- ❑ Duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
  - **Strength:** Do not repoint with mortar that is stronger than the original mortar and the brick itself. Brick expands and contracts with freezing and heating conditions. When this change occurs, old mortar moves to relieve the stress. Most pre-1920 dwellings have soft mortars and require similar mortar compounds when repointing or repairing. The use of hard mortars such as Portland cement can cause brick to crack and break when it can't expand and contract with hot and cold weather. Portland cement was used for dwellings after 1920 and this type of hard mortar will be generally appropriate for dwellings from this period. Do not repoint with a synthetic caulking compound.
  - **Composition:** Mortar of older brick buildings has a high lime and sand content. Replacement mortar should be composed primarily of lime and sand with some Portland cement for workability. In newer buildings, the lime content would be decreased and the Portland cement content increased.
  - **Appearance:** Duplicate old mortar joints in width and profile. Cut out old mortar to a depth of one inch. Repoint to match original joints and retain the original joint width.

#### ***Guidelines for other types of masonry repairs***

- ❑ Repair damaged masonry features if possible by patching, piecing in, or consolidating to match the original instead of replacing an entire masonry feature.
- ❑ Repair stucco by removing loose material and patching with a new material that is similar in composition, color and texture.
- ❑ Patch stone in small areas with a cement-like material which, like mortar, should be weaker than the masonry being repaired and should be mixed accordingly. This type of work should be done by skilled craftsmen.
- ❑ Use epoxies for the repair of broken stone or carved details. Application of such materials should be undertaken by skilled craftsmen.

#### ***Guidelines for masonry painting and waterproofing***

- ❑ Generally leave unpainted masonry unpainted. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained before unpainted masonry can be painted.
- ❑ Remove deteriorated paint to the next sound layer by hand scraping. Do not completely remove paint that is well adhered, as breaking that bond could damage the masonry.
- ❑ If masonry needs repainting, follow these steps:
  - Clean with a low-pressure water wash (garden hose) if the building is dirty.
  - Allow masonry to dry for at least 14 days before applying paint.
  - Prime with an appropriate masonry primer.
  - Repaint with an appropriate masonry paint system recommended by a paint manufacturer.
- ❑ Use water-repellant coatings that breathe, but only as a last resort after water penetration has not been arrested by repointing and correcting drainage problems.

## **ROOF REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT**

One of the most important elements of a structure, the roof serves as the “cover” that protects the building below it from the elements. Good roof maintenance is absolutely critical not just for the preservation of the roof, but for the preservation of the structure as a whole.

The protective role of roofs requires attention to the integrity of the roofing material — especially where changes in roofing planes or penetration of a chimney or a dormer interrupts the roofline — as

well as continuing maintenance of all gutters, downspouts, flashing and coping. Concealed, or built-in, gutters require routine monitoring and maintenance to avoid damage from unseen leaks in their decorative cornices. Roof and soffit vents facilitate the drying of wet attic or soffit areas caused by leaks or condensation.

#### ***Guidelines for protecting and maintaining roofing systems***

- ❑ Repair leaks promptly to limit related damage to the roof and the building.
- ❑ Provide temporary protection to a leaking roof before repairs.
- ❑ Clean gutters and downspouts regularly.
- ❑ Eliminate any vegetation that may cause deterioration of the roof, gutters or downspouts.
- ❑ Replace deteriorated flashing with first quality flashing.
- ❑ Inspect the roof sheathing for signs of insect infestation or moisture damage.
- ❑ Provide adequate ventilation of the attic space to prevent condensation.
- ❑ Provide adequate anchorage for roofing material to guard against wind and moisture damage.

#### ***Guidelines for roof repair and replacement***

- ❑ Retain and preserve
  - The original shape, line, pitch and overhang of historic roofs.
  - All architectural features that are character-defining elements of the roof, such as cupolas, chimneys, dormers and turrets.
  - Historic roofing material whenever possible. If replacement is necessary, match original materials as closely as possible in composition, size, shape, color, pattern and texture.
- ❑ Roofs on some of Rockford's historic buildings are made of slate. Before replacing slate with new slate or a substitute material, make sure that it is the slate that is deteriorating and not the roof flashing or slate hangers. Some slate lasts 175 years or longer if properly maintained, but the hangers may rust causing the slate to slip and leaks to develop. If this is the case, rehang the slate with new fasteners. If only some of the slate needs to be replaced, check with contractors about salvaged slate. If an entire roof needs to be replaced, salvaged slate and some of the newer substitute materials that give the appearance of slate may be considered.
- ❑ Locate roof ventilators, antennas, skylights and solar collectors on non-character-defining roofs or inconspicuously on rear slopes where they will not be visible from the street. They should not be located on front or street elevations.
- ❑ Do not introduce new roof features, such as skylights, vents and dormers, if they would diminish the original design of the roof or damage historic roofing materials or features.
- ❑ Do not to paint or apply coatings to roofing materials that were not historically coated.
- ❑ Generally, it is not appropriate to replace concealed, or built-in, gutters with exposed gutters.
- ❑ If new gutters and downspouts are needed, install them so that no architectural features are damaged or lost.

## **CHIMNEYS**

Chimneys are a common element of older homes in Rockford, with some featuring decorative brickwork or designs which form part of a building's architectural character.

#### ***Guidelines for chimneys***

- ❑ Chimneys should not be removed or altered if original.
- ❑ Clean and repoint chimneys according to the masonry guidelines (pages 20-21) to match the original in materials, colors, shape, and pattern. Chimneys that have been extensively repointed resulting in mismatched colors and texture may be painted in brick colors such as dark red or brown.

- ❑ If a chimney requires rebuilding, it should be rebuilt to match the original design, including banding details, corbelling and patterned masonry. In the absence of any documentation of the original, replacement chimneys should be in keeping with the chimney design of the period and the architectural style of the house.
- ❑ Chimneys should not be covered with stucco or other materials if they have never been covered in this way before.
- ❑ Additional chimneys must match existing ones in material and basic design.

## DORMERS

Dormers are generally added to provide space, light and ventilation to the attic, thus making them a functional part of the house. They are most easily characterized by their roof shapes, the most common in Rockford being gabled, shed and eyebrow dormers.

### *Guidelines for existing dormers*

- ❑ Maintain existing dormers unless you can show that they were not part of the original structure and that they have not become significant parts of the design of the structure, or of its history.
- ❑ Retain/maintain original dormer size, shape and placement.

### *Guidelines for new dormers*

- ❑ Match the original architectural style and materials of the structure.
- ❑ Locate new dormers so as to preserve the original balance and massing of the structure.
- ❑ New dormers should be compatible with existing ones in proportion, slope and design.

## PORCHES & DECKS

### PORCHES

The functional components of porches and entrances, such as steps, balustrades and columns, embellish historic buildings while providing scale and detail. However, be aware that because of their prominence, front porches were sometimes altered over the years to reflect more current architectural styles than the house.

Because of the exposed nature of porches and entrances, maintenance is a continuing concern. Ensuring their water-shedding ability is essential. Keeping a sound paint film on all wooden porch and balcony surfaces to prevent moisture damage is critical as well.

### *Guidelines for porches*

- ❑ Maintain and repair original porches where possible in their original design, with original materials and detailing. Retain and preserve all architectural features that are character-defining elements of porches, including piers, columns, pilasters, balustrades, rails, steps, brackets, soffits and trim. Appropriate maintenance includes:
  - Maintaining the slope of the floor and the steps to ensure that water does not collect;
  - Maintaining a sound paint film on all elements that were traditionally painted;
  - Checking the condition of wooden elements regularly for signs of water damage or rot;
  - Keeping wooden joinery adequately sealed to avoid moisture damage; and
  - Inspecting masonry piers or foundation walls regularly for signs of deterioration or moisture damage.
- ❑ If the original porch is missing, base the design of any new porch on photographic or physical evidence. If such evidence does not exist, base the design on historic porches of similar dwellings from the same time period and architectural style.
- ❑ If new handrails are required for concrete staircases and steps by the Building Code during a renovation, the preferred approach is a simple metal handrail going up the center of the steps, assuming that the steps are wide enough.

- ❑ Porches on the fronts of dwellings should not be enclosed with wood, glass or other materials that would alter the porch's open appearance.
- ❑ Porches may be screened if the structural framework for the screen panels is minimal and the open appearance of the porch maintained. Screen panels should be placed behind any original features such as columns or railings.
- ❑ Wood trellises may be added to porches.
- ❑ The material used for porch steps should match the flooring of the porch: wood steps with wood porch floors, not brick or concrete; and poured concrete steps for porches with poured concrete floors. New staircases should also have newel posts and balusters to match the porch construction.
- ❑ Porches with open areas in the foundation should be filled in as traditional for the type and style of the house, or with decorative wood framed skirting, vertical slats or painted lattice panels.
- ❑ Do not add new porches, entrances or balconies to primary elevations where none previously existed.

## **DECKS**

Decks, which first gained popularity in the late 1950s and early 1960s, are common additions to older homes as alternatives to more traditional patios and terraces. However, they are particularly difficult to fit into the style and setting of an older home. They can be acceptable additions to historic buildings if they are located in inconspicuous locations and screened from public view.

### ***Guidelines for new decks***

- ❑ Decks should be located in inconspicuous areas, usually on the rear or least character-defining elevation of the original building, and they should be screened from public view.
- ❑ Construct decks so there is the least possible loss of historic fabric, and so they can be removed in the future without damaging the original structure.
- ❑ Construction of a new deck should not result in removal of significant features or elements of the building, such as a historic porch.
- ❑ New decks should not be made of standard treated lumber that is left unpainted, nor should railings be of plain 2 x 2s. Paint or stain decks in colors compatible with the color of the building.
- ❑ Deck railings should be similar in material, scale and detail to porch railings that would have been put on a porch on a house of similar architectural style at the time the home was built.
- ❑ Vertical elements, such as railings, should be painted so as to be compatible with the main structure; decking may be stained or it may be painted to match the railings.
- ❑ The height of the deck should be aligned with the floor level of the building. If applicable, install compatible skirt boards and, where appropriate, painted lattice panels to screen deck framing.

<h2><b>HANDICAPPED ACCESS</b></h2>
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Ramps are probably the most commonly used means of making an entrance accessible. Given the foundation height of most older buildings, especially homes, accessibility to the entrance via wheelchair is a common problem. These may require ramps over 20 feet in length. Introducing such a large feature on the exterior of a historic building without destroying or diminishing significant architectural features presents a clear challenge.

### ***Guidelines for handicapped access ramps***

- ❑ Ramps should be located at the rear or sides of structures where they will not be readily visible from the street. Ramps should be added in such a way that original historic materials are not removed and that the ramp construction is reversible.
- ❑ Ramps should be of wood construction in a simple traditional design and configuration, or designed to match the original porch railing in materials, dimensions, and detailing. Ramps should be painted to match the color of any porch railings or to match the overall paint scheme of the building.

## WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows and doors, by their proportion, shape, positioning, location, number, pattern and size can contribute significantly to a building's historic character and are particularly indicative of stylistic periods.

### MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

With routine maintenance and repair, original wooden windows and doors can be preserved. Windows become less weatherproof and energy efficient as the caulking and glazing putty that seal the glass panes within the wooden sash dry and crack apart. Weatherstripping around a sash or a door can deteriorate over time and need replacement. Wood itself must be protected from moisture and ultraviolet light by paint or protective sealers.

Preserving original windows and doors is always more desirable and generally less expensive than replacing them. Frequently, repair or replacement of only the damaged portion of the frame, sash, sill or threshold will eliminate the problem. A number of wood consolidants on the market can restore a section of rotten or damaged wood.

If total replacement of a window or door is necessary, a unit should be used that matches the original in dimension, configuration, material and detail. Replacement units should never require alteration of the original door or window opening. If double glazing in a new unit is desired for energy efficiency, it is not appropriate to compromise the architectural character of the building by choosing snap-in muntins in place of true divided lights.

### DOORS

Doors, the hardware on them and the door surrounds combine to make an immediate impression on anyone entering or just viewing a dwelling for the first time. For that reason, as much of the original door and its various parts as possible should be preserved and maintained.

#### ***Guidelines for exterior doors visible from the right-of-way***

- ❑ Original doors and/or door features such as surrounds, sidelights and transoms should not be removed or altered. The original size of the door opening should not be changed.
- ❑ New door designs should not replace original doors at the front entrance or at side entrances that are readily visible from the street.
- ❑ Doors which are missing on the front or on readily visible side facades should be replaced with new doors appropriate for the style and period of the building. Replacement doors should be similar to the original in style, materials, glazing and lights. If you're not sure what would be appropriate, call the Commission office and the staff will be happy to help you out. NOTE: Metal doors are generally considered inappropriate on historic buildings.
- ❑ Doors should not be added where they did not originally exist. If, however, new doors are needed to meet safety codes or to enhance the use of the property, they should be added at the

rear or sides of buildings where they would not be readily visible and where they would do minimal damage to the historic fabric of the building.

- ❑ New doors should be compatible with existing units in proportion, shape, positioning, location, pattern, size, materials and details.

## **SCREEN AND STORM DOORS**

Screen and storm doors can be appropriate for historic dwellings if they do not block the visibility of historic doors. Storm doors can help lower energy costs and should be full-view design or have minimal structural framing.

### ***Guidelines for screen and storm doors***

- ❑ Screen and storm doors should be correctly sized to fit the entrance opening without changing the size of the original opening.
- ❑ Screen doors should be preserved and maintained if original.
- ❑ New screen doors should be wood and full-view or with structural members aligned with those of the original door.
- ❑ Storm doors should be full-view design or have minimal structural framing. They should be made of wood, but aluminum doors with baked-on enamel or anodized finish in colors complementary to the building are acceptable.

## **SECURITY DOORS**

Security doors have the appearance of storm doors but function differently because of much stronger construction. Security doors are non-historic additions to buildings. Their addition on the rear or sides of buildings which are not readily visible is acceptable.

### ***Guidelines for security doors***

- ❑ As with storm and screen doors, security doors shall be correctly sized to fit the entrance opening. Door openings should not be changed for new door installation.
- ❑ Security doors are less appropriate for the front entrances of buildings than at the rear and side facades that are not readily visible from the street. Security doors added to the fronts of buildings should be full view design or have minimal structural framework to give the historic door behind it maximum visibility, and to give the appearance of a storm door.
- ❑ Ornate security doors with extensive grillwork or decorative detailing are not appropriate for entrances on the fronts of buildings.

## **WINDOWS**

Windows add light to the interior of a building, provide ventilation, and allow a visual link to the outside. They also play a major role in defining a building's particular style. Because of the wide variety of architectural styles and periods of construction within Rockford's historic districts and landmark properties, there is a corresponding variation of styles, types and sizes of windows.

### ***Guidelines for windows***

- ❑ Retain and preserve the number, location, size and glazing patterns of original windows wherever possible, as well as unique features such as curved or bent glass, stained glass, leaded glass, and unusual shapes.
- ❑ Retain original windows if possible. Ensure that all hardware is in good operating condition, that caulk and glazing putty are intact, and that water drains off the sills.

- ❑ Protect and maintain existing windows in appropriate ways:
  - Maintain caulking and glazing putty to prevent air or water infiltration around glass.
  - Weatherstrip windows to prevent moisture and air infiltration.
  - Check sills to ensure that water runs off and does not collect.
  - Maintain a solid paint film on all wooden windows.
  - Monitor the condition of wooden windows. Note that wood that appears to be in bad condition because of peeling paint or separated joints often can be repaired.
- ❑ Uncover and repair covered-up windows where they have been blocked in. If the window is no longer needed, the glass should be retained and the back side frosted, screened or shuttered so that it appears from the outside to be in use.
- ❑ It is preferred that existing damaged or deteriorated window frames and sash be repaired rather than replaced. Follow these guidelines when repairing window frames or sash:
  - Use matching material for any new frames or sash.
  - Repaired or new window frames or sash should match the pattern of the old members.
  - Deteriorated wood may be repaired with epoxy wood consolidants.
  - The Commission may approve the use of custom formed panning covers to cover deteriorated wood.
- ❑ Replace windows only when they are missing or beyond repair. When replacing windows, follow these guidelines:
  - Retain the dimension of the original window. If the window has been partially covered or blocked in some way, return to the original size. If an interior ceiling must be dropped below the full height of the window, provide a setback in the ceiling design to allow the full height of the window opening to be preserved.
  - The recommended replacement is a window that matches the original in material and design. Windows of anodized aluminum or aluminum with baked-on enamel are acceptable at the rear or sides of dwellings which are not readily visible from the street.
  - Windows that are originally of steel or aluminum should be repaired with materials to match the original. If repair is not feasible, replacement should be with new windows that match the original as closely as possible in materials and dimensions.
  - When replacing windows with true divided lights, do not use snap-on or flush muntins. True divided muntins should be used to retain the historic appearance.
- ❑ Do not change the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows by cutting new openings, blocking in windows or installing replacement sash that does not fit the window opening.
- ❑ Windows with decorative glass which are not original to the building should not be added to primary facades or to secondary facades where they would be readily visible.
- ❑ Double glazing may be acceptable if the muntin widths and profiles match the original.
- ❑ Improve thermal efficiency with weather stripping, storm windows, caulking, interior shades, and, if appropriate, blinds and awnings.

***Guidelines for storm windows, screens and security windows***

- ❑ They should not damage or obscure the windows, nor should they cover historic trim or molding.
- ❑ They must match the size and overall design of the window.
- ❑ Gothic and curved head windows may not have horizontal muntins or divisions added to the sash to accept standard rectangular storm windows.
- ❑ Wood storm windows are most energy efficient and most appropriate for historic wood windows.
- ❑ Screens for storm windows may be half or full frame design. A wood screen frame is preferable over an aluminum screen.
- ❑ Aluminum or vinyl clad storm sash may be allowed if it is painted or has a baked-enamel finish in a color appropriate to the color of the building.

- ❑ The installation of security windows on the fronts of buildings is discouraged; however, they may be installed if they are full-view design.
- ❑ Window bars should not be added to windows that are readily visible from the street. However, they may be allowed on the rear or sides of buildings that are not readily visible from the street.

## SKYLIGHTS

Skylights are often used to help create usable space in upper floor areas or attics. Their installation is acceptable as long as they are placed on rear rooflines, behind gables or dormers, or at other roof locations not readily visible from the street. Skylights which are flush with the roofline or lay flat are more acceptable than those with convex or bubble designs.

## SOLAR COLLECTORS

As a non-historic addition, solar panels should be sited at rear rooflines or at freestanding locations adjacent to a dwelling. They are not allowed in locations visible from the public right-of-way.

## ADDITIONS

Additions to historic buildings should not visually overpower the original building, compromise its historic character, or destroy any significant features and materials. The integrity of the original building can usually be maintained by placing additions on inconspicuous elevations and limiting their size and height. It is important to differentiate the addition from the original building so that the original form is not lost. While an addition should be compatible with the original building, it should not be indistinguishable from the original — it should be possible to tell what's new from what's old. And finally, as with any new construction project, the addition's impact on the site in terms of loss of important landscape features must be considered.

### ***Guidelines for additions***

- ❑ An addition should be located at the rear of the building, not on the front or other readily visible areas, and should impact the exterior walls of the original building as little as possible.
- ❑ An addition should be smaller and simpler than the original in scale, design and placement. It should not visually overpower the original building.
- ❑ Ensure that character-defining features of the original building are not obscured, damaged or destroyed in constructing an addition.
- ❑ Design of the addition should be in keeping with the original building's design, roof shape, materials, and color. Size, proportion and placement of windows and doors should be similar to those on the original building.
- ❑ Either reference design motifs from the original building or introduce a contemporary design that is compatible with the original building.
- ❑ Use materials that are compatible with the original building or that have a historical basis. For example, additions to brick structures were sometimes frame construction. Contemporary substitute materials, such as vinyl siding, are generally not acceptable unless they have already been used on the building or unless the main structure was built after 1950.
- ❑ Match the original in the amount of foundation that shows. Masonry mortar in the new foundation should match the original in joint width and profile.
- ❑ Do not imitate an earlier historic style or architectural period in an addition. For example, an 1880 Queen Anne style porch addition would not be appropriate for a 1920s bungalow.
- ❑ An addition should have the same floor to floor height as the original building.
- ❑ It should impact the exterior walls of the original building as little as possible.

## V. GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION OF AND ADDITIONS TO NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

### BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

Owners of historic buildings can comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) in a variety of ways. Access to buildings open to the public must be provided from public sidewalks, parking or public transportation. Possible ways of providing barrier-free access include installing an entrance ramp, widening entrances, and providing accessible parking spaces.

#### *Guidelines for barrier-free access to nonresidential buildings*

- ❑ Ramps for handicapped access should be:
  - Located at public entrances used by everyone whenever possible, preferably where there is a minimal change in grade.
  - Located to minimize the loss of historic features at the connection points — porch railings, steps and windows — and should preserve the overall historic setting and character of the property. Larger buildings may have below grade areas that can accommodate a ramp down to an entrance. Below grade entrances can be considered if the ramp leads to a publicly used interior space, or if the building has a public elevator.
  - Faced with materials compatible with the building, with acceptable choices being wood, brick or stone. Unpainted pressure-treated wood should not be used for ramps because it is not visually compatible with most historic properties.
  - Have railings that are simple in design, distinguishable from other historic features and that extend one foot beyond the sloped area.
  - Detailed with an appropriate edge and railing for wheelchair users and visually impaired individuals.
- ❑ Regrading a site leading up to an entrance to render it accessible may be allowed if it would involve only a minor change in grade.
- ❑ Entryways may be widened by using the most appropriate of the following means:
  - Installing offset door hinges.
  - Installing an automatic door opener for a historic double door.
  - Replacing double-leaf doors with a single leaf off-center door and fixed side panel.
  - Widening existing doorway openings if no other option is feasible.

### BUILDING FACADES

Very few historic nonresidential buildings retain their original façade. In some cases, such as some of the churches that are located in historic districts, alterations may be minimal with changes to some windows and/or doors. In other cases, the original façade may be entirely covered making it virtually impossible to know what the building looked like when it was built. The general thrust of the following guidelines for nonresidential facades is to retain original materials and design where they exist, or to return them to what they were during the building's period of significance where they do not.

#### **BASIC GUIDELINES**

- ❑ Individual building façades visually shares the block with other buildings on that block, and any changes need to be viewed within that context. Storefronts, signs, windows, materials and colors all play a role in the successful design of each building. The way these individual elements on all the buildings on a block work together is critical.

- ❑ For those cases where the applicant is applying to the City of Rockford for a downtown façade rebate, the entire street façade of a building must be treated. The visual integrity of a structure diminishes significantly if the street level storefront is renovated while the upper story façade is left untreated.
- ❑ Usually, the best approach to renovating a building's façade is the conservative one. Simple renovations that respect the original design of a building can be classic in character and never go out of style.
- ❑ Building facades should create interest for the passerby at the street level. It's at this level that the pedestrian is most conscious of his surroundings.

## **MATERIALS**

- ❑ Retain and/or restore original building materials whenever possible.
- ❑ If replacement is necessary due to removal, deterioration or damage to original materials, use materials to match those that were used originally as closely as possible. Do not use materials that were unavailable when the building was first constructed.
- ❑ For specific guidelines for maintenance, cleaning, and repair of masonry, see pages 20-21.
- ❑ For specific guidelines for wood, see pages 18-19.

## **RHYTHM**

The repetition of similarly positioned elements in building facades establishes the rhythm of a streetscape. These elements may be bays, pilasters, windows or doors of equal proportion or placement. Elements such as cornice lines or belt courses establish a horizontal rhythm in the streetscape. Every effort should be made to retain and/or restore those features that create rhythm on the facades of existing buildings.

## **MASSING**

Where possible, the volume or mass of an existing building should be maintained, unless previous changes have taken it out of context with its neighbors.

## **ROOFS**

- ❑ Roof form must be consistent with the original style and construction of the building.
- ❑ Retain architectural features that give the roof its essential character. These include dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, and chimneys.
- ❑ If rooftop features such as solar panels or satellite dishes are to be installed, they should be located where they will be least visible from the street. They must also be installed so as to avoid damage to the roof covering. Satellite dishes may not display advertising in any form except for a six-inch square area displaying the name of the manufacturer or distributor.
- ❑ Whenever possible, the original materials of the roof should be restored or replaced with new material that matches the original as closely as possible in composition, size, shape, color and texture.

## **WINDOWS AND DOORS**

- ❑ Retain original window and door openings if they have not been eliminated by past façade changes.
- ❑ Where openings have been partially or totally bricked in or closed off in some other way, they should be reestablished with the original dimensions.
- ❑ Replacement windows should be the same style and detailing as the originals.

- ❑ Raw aluminum should not be used in replacement windows. Extruded aluminum window mullions and frames should have a dark anodized finish.
- ❑ Do not remove existing lead, stained, prism or cut glass from existing windows or doors.
- ❑ New openings for windows or doors should not alter the scale and proportion of the building.
- ❑ Do not use inappropriate features such as aluminum insulating glass combinations that require removal of original windows and/or doors.

### **ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS**

- ❑ Retain important architectural details such as decorative cornices, columns, and gargoyles.
- ❑ Do not add details that are not authentic or are from a different period than the building.
- ❑ If original features are missing, they may be replaced with accurate recreations based on pictorial, historical and physical documentation; or they may be replaced with a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, material, color and era of the building.

### **ADDITIONS TO NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS**

- ❑ Additions should be compatible with the original building in scale, proportion and rhythm of openings, and size.
- ❑ Rooftop penthouses or additional stories should not be added unless they will not be readily visible from the street or other pedestrian viewpoints. Roof additions should be set back from the main façade.
- ❑ Use exterior materials that match those of the existing building as closely as possible.
- ❑ Build additions in such a way that they result in minimal removal of original walls and details from the rear or side of the building. Try to connect the addition with the original building through existing doors or enlarged window openings.
- ❑ Design additions so that foundation height and eaves lines generally align with those of the original building.

### **SIGNS**

Signs are one of the most prominent visual elements on a street. Well designed signs add interest, color and variety to building facades and streetscapes; poorly designed signs can cause visual clutter and be a major distraction from a well designed storefront or converted residential building. Although signs should be clearly visible, they should be scaled to pedestrians, not automobiles, in historic districts. Exceptions may be made to this for commercial historic districts whose period of significance falls after 1920. Signs that are simple and consistent in terms of size and location from one storefront to the next make it easier for pedestrians and drivers to locate businesses.

The design of all proposed exterior signs in a historic district or on a landmark site are subject to approval of the Commission, and the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Rockford Code of Ordinances ("Advertising") and of Article XV of the Rockford Zoning Code ("Sign Regulations").

#### ***Guidelines for signs***

**Type:** The following types of signs may be acceptable: painted or applied wall signs, projecting signs hung perpendicular to the wall on a decorative bracket, signs on awnings or canopies, and freestanding signs. Lettering on window or door glass and interior window signs are permitted without Commission review.

**Location:** A sign should not obscure architectural details. Most commercial buildings are designed with sign bands in the storefront; these are the most appropriate locations for wall signs. Residential buildings converted to commercial or office use probably will not have a designated sign band, so

appropriate placement of a wall sign becomes more of a concern. In these cases, other sign types, such as projecting signs or signs on awnings may be considered. The sign location should be coordinated with signs on adjacent storefronts or buildings where they are of the same style and vintage.

- Overhanging or flat signs should generally be placed below the second story windows of a building.
- Educational signs, including those that feature the name of the business/building, historical data or a daily menu, may be attached flush to the building façade as long as they do not project more than six inches from the façade or conceal any of the building's ornamental or architectural features.
- Window signs that identify a business shall be permanently painted or decals applied to the glass. Signs shall not exceed 15 percent coverage of the glass area. A sign located in an upper floor window is permitted to identify a business in that floor of the building. Window signs for product advertising shall not exceed 10 percent of the glass area for permanent advertising and 15 percent of the glass area for temporary advertising. All signage should be directed toward pedestrian traffic. The combination of business and product advertising signs should not exceed 30 percent coverage of the glass area.
- Awning/sign location may vary based on the architectural style and design of a building. Variations may occur based on architectural conditions and subject to approval by the RHPC.

**Material:** Wood is the most traditional sign material; lettering may be carved, applied or painted. A variety of other materials may be considered by the Commission, including brass, granite, marble, and slate. Plastic and fiberglass are generally inappropriate materials for signs on historic sites.

**Colors:** Sign colors should be compatible with the building and surrounding buildings. A sign is more easily read when the letters or graphics contrast with the background color.

**Lighting:** Signs may be lighted indirectly with exterior fixtures. Internally lit signs (back-lit plastic) are incompatible with Rockford's historic districts and are not acceptable.

**Corporate standards:** Corporate standards for logos, colors, dimensions, sign types and locations, and lighting may not be acceptable where they are inconsistent with the historic character of the property and its surroundings. In these cases, signs should be designed specifically for the property on which they will be placed.

**Master sign plans:** When a building houses multiple commercial tenants or activities requiring signage, or signs will be installed on multiple properties by a common owner, a master sign plan governing locations, types, dimensions and materials should be developed and followed by all tenants. Applications for master sign plans will be reviewed by the Commission.

**Mounting:** Mounting brackets and hardware should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.

**Historic signs:** Historic signs are primarily in the form of wall advertisement and business signs that add to the record of a community's heritage or the sign industry in general. These signs should be preserved, maintained and repaired.

**Prohibited signs:** Large signs on upper facades, roof top signs, mobile signs, and additional billboards and other outdoor advertising signs painted or mounted on structures, are prohibited.

**Other regulations:**

- Projecting signs must have at least a 9-foot clearance from the sidewalk to the bottom of the sign, and must be at least 3 feet from the curb.
- Awnings, canopies and marquees should be at least nine feet above the sidewalk.
- If the building has a zero setback, a projecting sign or awning can extend outward from the building no more than four feet and the bottom of the sign or awning must be at least nine feet above the sidewalk.
- If the building's setback is greater than zero, awnings or projecting signs can project no further than one foot inside the public right-of-way.

**The following information must be included with any application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign:**

- Completed application form describing existing conditions and proposed changes, signed by the property owner and, if different, business owner.
- Photographs of the building showing the entire elevation and clasps of the area where the work will be done.
- Scaled elevation drawing (for wall signs, freestanding signs and awnings), section drawings (for projecting signs and awnings), and/or site plan (freestanding signs), showing the proposed sign(s) in place on the building or in relationship to the building and other site features, including the property line.
- Scaled drawing of the sign, indicating its type, dimensions, materials, colors, graphics and lettering, method of attachment and any illumination.