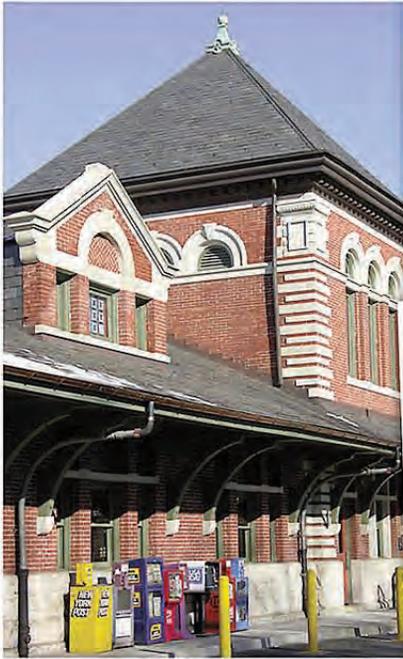
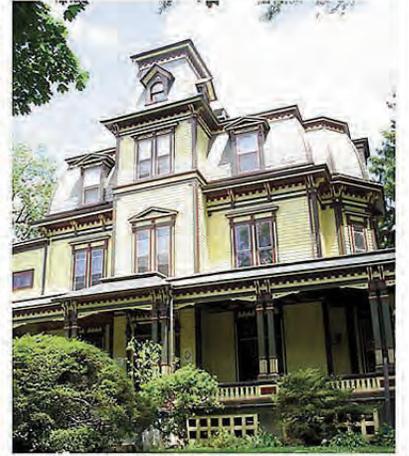
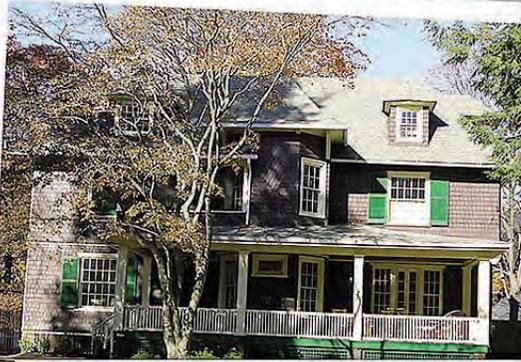
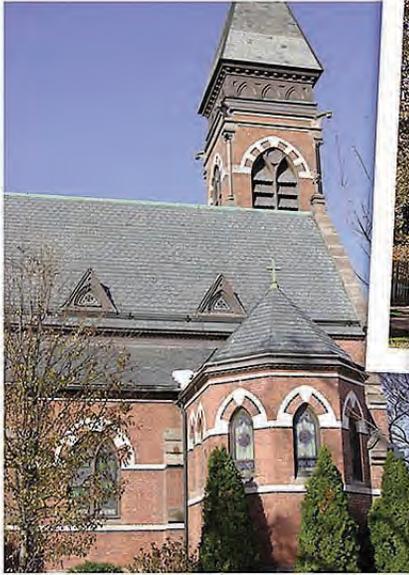


*Design Guidelines
for
Historic Districts & Sites*



City of Plainfield, New Jersey

City of Plainfield, New Jersey

Design Guidelines for Historic Districts & Sites



A Project of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission
and the Plainfield Division of Planning

515 Watchung Avenue
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

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Prepared by Gail L. Hunton
2007

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Introduction

This publication is a revised, expanded and re-designed edition of the Plainfield Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites originally published in 1988 and used by the Historic Preservation Commission and property owners for over fifteen years. The revised edition of the Plainfield Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites continues the advancement of historic preservation in Plainfield.

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are intended to further appreciation of Plainfield's historic buildings and places, to ensure consistency in local decision-making, and to benefit property owners by clarifying community expectations. These Design Guidelines are the legally adopted standards against which the HPC will review proposed projects. They offer information on rehabilitation and appropriate new construction to assist property owners in planning and designing their building projects. As such, they provide a common body of knowledge for all participants in the review process – property owners, commission members, architects and contractors, and city planning and zoning officials.

The Historic Preservation Commission recognizes that administering these design guidelines is often a challenging task. Design Guidelines can provide an objective basis for the Commission's decisions, can increase public awareness of historically appropriate design, and discourage the worst kind of insensitive building. Design Guidelines, however, cannot guarantee that all change and construction will be of good quality or meet the expectations of the Commission and city residents. Good architectural design cannot be achieved solely through the application of a set of rules. The challenge for the Historic Preservation Commission and property owners alike is knowing how to use the Design Guidelines to make good judgments that will preserve our historic resources, while allowing expressions of change and adaptation.

How this Publication is Organized

The design guidelines themselves are the core of this publication, and are found in the chapter entitled *Design Guidelines for Repairs, Additions and New Construction*. In addition, this publication contains a variety of useful reference material for Plainfield residents.

In the chapter on *Historic Preservation in Plainfield*, you will find information about the City's long-standing historic preservation program, the duties and powers of the Historic Preservation Commission, helpful advice on planning your building project, and how to get the required approval from the Historic Preservation Commission for your project.

A Short History of Plainfield provides an overview of the City's origins and growth, as background for understanding Plainfield's historic sites and districts.

In the chapter on *Building Styles in Plainfield*, the major architectural styles in Plainfield are described and illustrated. The stylistic descriptions will help you to learn about the architecture and history of your own property, and to identify the features that give a particular building its historic character and that should be preserved in building projects.

At the end of the book, in *Helpful Information*, there are lists of organizations, websites, and publications to obtain more information about historic preservation and Plainfield's history. In this book there are many architectural terms that may be unfamiliar; see the *Glossary of Architectural Terms* for help.



Watchung Avenue

“What do some 2,300 local historic districts have in common? In each one, a majority of its residents have decided they want to keep the look and feel of the place they call “home” by adopting a local preservation ordinance, then creating a local preservation commission to administer it. Local legislation is one of the best ways to protect the historic character of buildings, streetscapes, neighborhoods and special landmarks from inappropriate alterations, new construction, and other poorly conceived work, as well as outright demolition.”

– National Park Service, Working on the Past in Local Historic Districts

Historic Preservation in Plainfield

Reminders of the City's past are evident today in its residential neighborhoods, churches, schools, civic buildings, parks and commercial areas. These historic resources are not just a legacy of the past, but assets for the present and future. In contrast to recent sprawling suburbs, Plainfield has all the basic ingredients so heralded in town planning – a strong core of well-constructed and architecturally distinctive buildings; a street system and lot sizes that were laid out with a pedestrian scale and a sense of neighborhood in mind; and a town center where shopping, civic and cultural activities, and mass transportation are within proximity to all city residents.

Historic preservation is a fundamental part of the City's efforts to preserve its housing stock and neighborhoods, revitalize its downtown, and support dynamic cultural institutions. The community has recognized the importance of its historic resources through its master plan and zoning regulations, historic preservation commission, designation of historic districts and sites, and support for restoration of City-owned historic structures.

Spearheaded by citizen activists and neighborhood associations, the City Council enacted its first historic preservation ordinance in 1979, and in 1980 established a Historic Review Committee to guide the City's efforts in historic preservation. (The Historic Review Committee was the forerunner of the Historic Preservation Commission that exists today.) By 1981 the first four historic districts had been designated – Crescent Area, Hillside, North Avenue, and Van Wyck Brooks. These districts also were successfully nominated to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

During the 1980s and 1990s Plainfield established itself as a leader in New Jersey through expansion of

its historic preservation program. A series of projects, many initiated by the City's Division of Planning, resulted in these accomplishments:

- The *Plainfield Survey of Historic Building Resources* was completed in 1985. The historic resources survey is the foundation for municipal historic preservation planning. The city wide survey provides historical documentation for almost 300 structures, and recommends individual properties and historic districts for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as well as local designation under the City's historic preservation ordinance.
- The historic preservation ordinance was revised and strengthened in 1986 to create the existing Historic Preservation Commission. (*See below on the Historic Preservation Commission.*)
- In 1986 Plainfield became one of the first municipalities in New Jersey to be granted Certified Local Government status. The Certified Local Government Program, a federal program administered by the Department of the Interior through the State Historic Preservation Office, affords eligible local governments preferential funding for historic preservation projects and participation in State and National Register reviews.
- With grant assistance from the Certified Local Government Program, the City prepared and adopted the first *Plainfield Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites* in 1988 to assist the Historic Preservation Commission in its review of proposed work on properties in the historic districts, and to guide property owners in planning and designing their construction projects. The resulting publication won a New Jersey Historic Sites Council Historic Preservation Award in 1989.



City Hall, Plainfield New Jersey

- ▶ Four additional historic districts were designated in the 1980s and 1990s – Putnam Watchung in 1987, Netherwood Heights in 1988, Broadway in 1992, and Civic Historic District (including City Hall) in 1993. In addition, six new sites were added to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, including the Plainfield Railroad Station, Netherwood Railroad Station, St. Mary’s Catholic Church Complex, Plainfield Fire Dept. Headquarters, Fire House No. 4, and YWCA of Plainfield-North Plainfield.
- ▶ In 1992, the City was awarded a historic preservation grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust to restore the cupola on Plainfield City Hall, which was built in 1917-1918 and is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers

of Historic Places. Following the successful completion of the cupola restoration, the City received a Historic Preservation Award from the New Jersey Historic Sites Council in 2002. The New Jersey Historic Trust awarded a second grant to the City in 2004 to complete the restoration of the exterior of City Hall.

- ▶ In 1998 the City adopted a new Master Plan with a Historic Preservation Element on equal standing with other community planning concerns. In April 2007, the Planning Board adopted a Master Plan re-examination report.

Today there are over 600 designated historic properties in Plainfield that are protected and regulated by the City’s historic preservation ordinance. Many more properties are eligible for designation as historic districts and sites.

More recently, the City has undertaken new historic preservation initiatives, including:

- ▶ Updating and strengthening the historic preservation ordinance (adopted in 2002 and incorporated into the City's Land Use Ordinance).
- ▶ A brochure and website for the Historic Preservation Commission (visit us at www.plainfield.com)
- ▶ Listing of Green Brook Park (in 2004) and Cedar Brook Park (in 2007) on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places.
- ▶ Designation of 12 additional historic sites in 2006.
- ▶ Completion of the revised edition of the Plainfield Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites in 2007.

The Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

The Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was created in 1986 by municipal ordinance to promote historic preservation in Plainfield, to advise the Planning Board and Zoning Board on applications for development within Plainfield's historic districts and sites, and to review building permit applications for proposed repairs, additions, alterations, new construction, demolition and relocation. Comprised of nine volunteer citizen members appointed by the Mayor, HPC members have expertise in architectural design, construction, and local history.

The HPC reviews all work that will change the exterior appearance of designated historic properties, including principal buildings, garages, carriage houses, gazebos and other auxiliary buildings, fences, walls, driveways, sidewalks, signs, and parking lots. The HPC issues Certificates of Appropriateness if it finds that the work proposed

is appropriate to the historic district and conforms to the Design Guidelines.

The Commission strives to assist applicants with their projects. **Applicants are encouraged to schedule an informational meeting with the HPC prior to submitting an application, particularly if the project is a large addition or new construction.**

Obtaining HPC Approval for Your Project

A Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the HPC is required if a property is located within a historic district, or is an individual historic site, before any of the following work can begin:

- ▶ Exterior work that requires a building permit. Examples include roof repair or replacement, porch repair or replacement, new siding, decks, and additions.
- ▶ Exterior repairs, replacements, or removal of features including windows, doors, stairs, railings, and any other trim.
- ▶ Adding, replacing, or changing fences, walls, signs, solar panels, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots.
- ▶ Moving a structure.
- ▶ Demolishing a structure.
- ▶ The removal of living trees measuring 18 inches or more in diameter at breast height located in the public right of way.

The following work on historic sites does not require HPC approval:

- ▶ Any work to the interior of buildings.
- ▶ Any work that is not visible from a public street.
- ▶ Ordinary maintenance that does not require replacement of existing materials.
- ▶ Painting your building.

To Apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC:

The HPC holds regular monthly meetings, and the schedule is posted in City Hall and on the website. All required forms are available in City Hall, in the Division of Planning. You may also download the forms from the HPC's website at www.plainfield.com.

- ▶ Plan your building project (see advice in Planning Your Building Project below).
- ▶ Gather a detailed list of all proposed work, building plans prepared by your contractor or architect, and photographs of the building and site.
- ▶ Apply for a construction permit (if required).
- ▶ Fill out the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- ▶ Notify all neighbors within 200 feet of your property line, completing the Affidavit of Service of Notice.
- ▶ When your application is complete, attend your scheduled HPC public hearing to present your proposed work. Bring plans, photographs, sample materials, catalog cut sheets and any documents necessary to illustrate the proposed design and construction details.
- ▶ Upon approval, the HPC will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness within 10 working days of the hearing. The Certificate of Appropriateness is required before a construction permit can be issued.
- ▶ When a structure or improvement requires immediate repair to preserve the continued habitability of the structure and/or the health and safety of its occupants or others, consult the Division of Planning to see if emergency repairs may be performed in accordance with city codes without first obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness. An application and an appearance before the HPC will still be required to document the emergency work.



Restored house in Crescent Area Historic District.

Planning Your Building Project

- ▶ **Check Available Documentation.** Knowing the history of your building can help you make informed decisions about your project. Check with the Plainfield Library and other sources to find out about your building's origins and changes over time, and to see photographs and views of the building in the past.
- ▶ **Consult Preservation Publications.** There is a wealth of readily available material, in libraries and on the Internet, on preservation do's and don'ts, as well as practical guidance on repair techniques and where to find products and materials for historic buildings. (*See Helpful Information.*) Learn from the experience of others so you don't make mistakes!
- ▶ **Evaluate the Historic Character and Physical Condition of the Building.** Identify the materials and features of the building that contribute to its historic character, and that need to be preserved. Are there any physical problems that threaten the structure? Are there historic features hidden behind later alterations?
- ▶ **Plan for the Work.** Hire an architect or contractor who has experience with historic building work. Review the Design Guidelines, and consult with the HPC before you complete your designs to make sure that your project will meet the Design Guidelines.

Choosing an Appropriate Treatment for Your Historic Building

The four treatment approaches are Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction, defined below:

Preservation is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Choosing the most appropriate treatment for a building requires careful consideration about a building's historical significance, as well taking into account its physical condition and proposed use. What is the existing condition — or degree of material integrity — of the building prior to work? Has the original form survived largely intact or has it been altered over time? Are the alterations an important part of the building's history? Preservation may be appropriate if distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and convey the building's historical significance. If the building requires more extensive repair and replacement, or if alterations or additions are necessary for a new use, then Rehabilitation is probably the most appropriate treatment. These key questions play major roles in determining what treatment is selected.

Proposed use. An essential, practical question to ask is: Will the building be used as it was historically or will it be given a new use? Many historic buildings can be adapted for new uses without seriously damaging their historic character; special-use properties may be extremely difficult to adapt to new uses without major intervention and a resulting loss of historic character and even integrity.

Source: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*, 1995. www2.cr.nps.gov

A Short History of Plainfield



Quaker Meetinghouse.

Although Plainfield's first settlement dates from the late 1600s, the City as we know it today was shaped largely in the sixty years between 1870 and 1930, when the railroad and the accompanying demand for new housing in the New York metropolitan area transformed the small farming and milling village into a fashionable commuter suburb of tree-lined avenues and comfortable homes. These commuter-workers and builders have left the City with an irreplaceable stock of valuable housing, residential neighborhoods, churches and civic buildings, as well as commercial areas within walking distance to residents. Plainfield's historical development is summarized here as background for understanding the City's varied historic resources.

Rural Settlement and Mill Village: 1680-1869

European settlement in Plainfield dates from the 1680s, when a number of ethnic Scots from Perth Amboy established farmsteads along Cedar Brook. English Quakers began moving into the area in

the early 1700s, and a Quaker meeting was formed by 1736.

Throughout the 1700s population was sparse, numbering less than one hundred persons by the time of the Revolutionary War. Settlement was comprised mainly of dispersed farms and landholdings, with gradual linear development along what is now Front Street, an old route that ran along the east bank of Green Brook. This stream also provided the waterpower for milling, which determined the location and early development of the town's center. Two gristmills, one near present-day Somerset Street and another downstream near Sycamore Avenue, were built in the mid-18th century.

In the early 1800s, with the upper mill complex as its central figure, a village of small dwellings, tradesmen's shops, and stores grew along Front Street between what is now Madison Avenue and Watchung Avenue. Hat and clothing manufacturing became mainstays of the town economy, in addition to the mill and shop trade, which serviced

the surrounding farms. The first railroad was completed through Plainfield in 1837.

Between 1800 and 1835 Plainfield's population increased tenfold to 1,030. The ethnic and racial composition of early Plainfield has not been well studied, but certainly African Americans numbered among Plainfield's early residents, as both free blacks and slaves are enumerated in the censuses prior to the Civil War.

While Front Street continued to be the town's major axis, growth spread south on a rectangular grid layout. By the mid 19th century, building and population (excluding related growth in what is now North Plainfield) was concentrated in the area bound by Green Brook, Plainfield Avenue, Sixth Street, and Roosevelt Avenue. The rest of the town was still predominantly agricultural, but the 1850s and 1860s saw the first appearance of stylish country estates on the landscape, sign of impending social and economic change that would alter Plainfield dramatically.

There are only a small number of surviving structures in Plainfield that date before the Civil War, and consequently they assume a greater significance because of their rarity. Examples include the Quaker Meeting House (Watchung Avenue), Fitz-Randolph House (1366 Randolph Road), Webster House (11 Brook Lane), Drake House (564 West Front Street), Stelle House (981 Central Avenue), Lampkin House (850 Terrill Road) and others documented in the *Plainfield Survey of Historic Building Resources* (1985).

Victorian Railroad Suburb: 1869-1900

Plainfield was incorporated in 1869, shortly after the rail connection with New York City was completed. The latter event catalyzed Plainfield's transformation, within fifteen years, from a rural village into a fashionable commuter suburb of 15,000 inhabitants. Plainfield's pastoral attractions and its accessibility to New York City – combined with the post Civil War rise in business fortunes and an affluent middle class – produced this momentous change.

A wave of land development and building activity hit Plainfield in the 1870s and 1880s, producing compact residential neighborhoods filled with substantial Victorian dwellings from pattern book designs of the period. Larger residential properties, including a number of sizable country estates, characterized new development along several major corridors that cross the city (such as Seventh and Eighth Streets, Front Street, Central Avenue, Grant Avenue and Watchung Avenue). Netherwood, a residential section of winding roads with a park-like hilltop setting, was laid out in 1878 with a large resort hotel as its centerpiece. Netherwood is an early example in New Jersey of a planned development based on romantic planning ideas.

The scale, architecture and function of the central business district also changed dramatically during the late 19th century. Downtown streets, which had been lined with low-rise wooden shops and stores intermingled with wooden dwellings, were replaced by larger brick stores and office buildings to serve the growing population. An important concentration of these late 19th century commercial buildings remains in the North Avenue Historic District.



East Seventh Street, Plainfield Public Library Postcard Collection

Civic boosters of the late 19th century proclaimed Plainfield as a “City of Homes,” the domain of prominent businessmen and millionaires, and boasted of elegant residences and broad paved avenues under continuous archways of maples and elms. Notwithstanding this affluence, the City has always had more socio-economic diversity than its



North Avenue in the early 20th Century.

historical image as an elite suburb presupposes. The demand for service workers, construction work, and most importantly, the emergence of large-scale industry along the railroad corridor, provided sources of new working class employment. The size and ethnic composition of Plainfield's working class population increased significantly during this period, due to migration of African Americans from the South as well as immigration from countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Poland. Neighborhoods of modest houses developed in proximity to the entire railroad corridor and infilled the older sections of the city. Mount Olive Baptist Church, the City's oldest African American church, and St. Mary's Catholic Church, originally a parish of Irish immigrants, are associated with this demographic development.

Suburb to City: 1900-1950

Though Plainfield is recognized for its Victorian-era buildings and neighborhoods, an almost equal number of historic resources date from the early 1900s. The City filled out its residential neighborhoods with distinctive single-family homes, and improved its public infrastructure, including the erection of City Hall, the Fire Department head-

quarters, a large Carnegie-endowed addition to the public library (now gone), and other notable civic buildings and schools. Green Brook and Cedar Brook Parks, designed by the prestigious Olmsted Brothers firm, created open space and recreational facilities for all. The period saw the construction of many of the store and office buildings that stand today.

During the first three decades of the 20th century, Plainfield evolved from an outlying suburb to a regional hub of transportation, trade and industry, a change that mirrored growth patterns in Union County and northern New Jersey as a whole. Plainfield's central business district enlarged to its present-day scale and land area. Industrial activity along the railroad corridor also expanded. A large Mack Truck plant on the west end became a major employer in the area, and Plainfield emerged as a regional center for automobile sales, service and parts. While local jobs in business and the professions increased, a substantial portion of Plainfield's residents continued to commute by railroad to workplaces in New York City and Newark until after World War II.



The Craig A. Marsh House, one of Plainfield's many Victorian Mansions. Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

Residential development of the early 20th century equaled the scale and grandeur of Victorian era building in selected areas of the City, notably in the Van Wyck Brooks and Netherwood areas. But despite the continuation of mansion building, the number of upper-income residences declined in proportion to the middle-class housing that was constructed throughout the City. Until about 1920, there was still ample farmland and open space on the edges of the City to the north, east and south. During the 1920s, however, some of the remaining farm properties and 19th century country estates were subdivided for housing developments.

Following the 1930s Depression and World War II, the return to prosperity and peace created an enormous demand for new housing. Plainfield's large estates were subdivided during the post-war years, and the former estate grounds were built up with new cape cod houses, ranch houses, and apartment complexes. In addition, many other Victorian mansions in older neighborhoods were demolished in the 1940s and 1950s. By the mid 20th century, the result of these changes was a suburban city with a greater density and a more urban character and physical form that characterizes the City today.

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Building Styles in Plainfield



Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

Plainfield's houses, churches, stores and public buildings represent more than a chronology of architectural styles. They embody three centuries of creating home and community in Plainfield. Understanding building styles is the foundation for appreciating Plainfield's historic character. Awareness of what gives a building or landscape its historic character allows us to take these features into account and treat them with sensitivity when we undertake repairs, additions or new construction.

What follows is an overview of the major building styles found in Plainfield, beginning with the earliest remaining buildings from the late 18th century and ending with the mid 20th century structures. This is intended as a guide for identifying the prevalent building forms and fashions in Plainfield,

indicating when they were popular and their significant identifying features. Remember, though, that buildings can reflect combinations of styles rather than pure textbook examples. Also, later alterations and additions can make it difficult to neatly label a building's style.

Excellent guidebooks on American architecture are available for the general public, but a comprehensive book on New Jersey's building traditions has not yet been written. (See reference books on architectural history in Helpful Information.) In addition, the Plainfield Room of the Plainfield Public Library, and the Historical Society of Plainfield, have strong local history collections of books, documents and photographs that can help you understand the history and design of your building and your community.



FitzRandolph House

Early Vernacular

The building history of Plainfield begins with the Scottish and English settlers who used and adapted their European traditions to construct their own houses, barns, shops, and churches. These buildings were the work of local carpenters, and are called “vernacular” because, like a dialect, they are the product of local people in a particular region.

The rich diversity of early traditional building in New Jersey is no longer found in Plainfield, in part because the area was so sparsely settled in the 18th century, and in part because most early buildings in the town center were torn down as the city grew. Plainfield’s earliest surviving buildings, dating from the 18th and early 19th centuries, include a handful of vernacular houses and the landmark Quaker Meeting House. These buildings are defined by their form, plan and construction rather than by stylistic details.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ 1-1/2 or 2 stories, of modest scale, with gable roofs and clapboard or wood shingle siding.
- ▶ Hand-hewn heavy timber frames with mortise and tenon (“pegged”) joinery.
- ▶ Several plan types exist. The so-called English cottage is a 1-1/2 story one-room-deep dwelling with either a one room or two room (hall and parlor) plan. It often has a central door flanked by two windows, and the chimney is on the interior gable end. The I-house is a 2-story dwelling, one room deep and two or more rooms wide, with internal gable end chimneys.
- ▶ Double-hung wood sash windows, usually 6/6 or 9/9 panes; knee wall windows often appear on early 19th century examples.
- ▶ Some early vernacular houses have numerous, sometimes puzzling, additions and alterations that make them difficult to date with certainty. Later wings, porch additions, and dormers are common.

*Sanger-Pike House*

Greek Revival

The Greek Revival Style was the most dominant building style between 1830 and 1860, rising out of the new republic's nationalistic spirit and popular fashion for all things related to classical antiquity. Assisted by the builder's guides that popularized the style, carpenters constructed low-pitched gable or

hip roofed dwellings with classical ornament based on the Greek and Roman orders. Columns, capitals, friezes, and moldings were adapted freely from classical precedent, and building facades often emulated the form of a Greek temple, with a pedimented front-facing gable and a columned portico.

*Stelle Farmhouse*

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ Clapboard siding.
- ▶ Side-gabled roof with chimneys on the interior end gables; pronounced roof cornice may have returns at the eaves, paneled frieze and dentils.
- ▶ Symmetrically arranged double-hung wood sash windows, usually 6 panes per sash; may have attic windows in the frieze below the eaves.
- ▶ Doorway framed with pilasters and sidelights.



Netherwood Heights Historic District

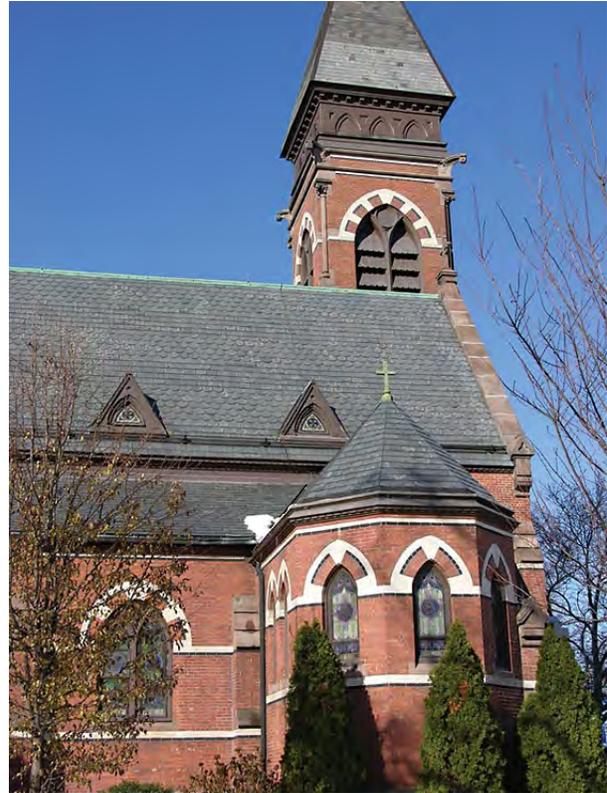
Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival style was popular between 1830 and 1870 for houses, but lasted well into the 20th century for church architecture. Gothic Revival churches adapted Gothic forms and elements in a variety of ways; some churches were wholly original designs while others were closely modeled after medieval churches in Europe. A later phase of the style, known as High Victorian Gothic, was mainly employed in churches and public buildings. Complex pinnacled plans and polychromatic exterior treatments (using contrasting bands of color and textures) are identifying features of the High Victorian Gothic.

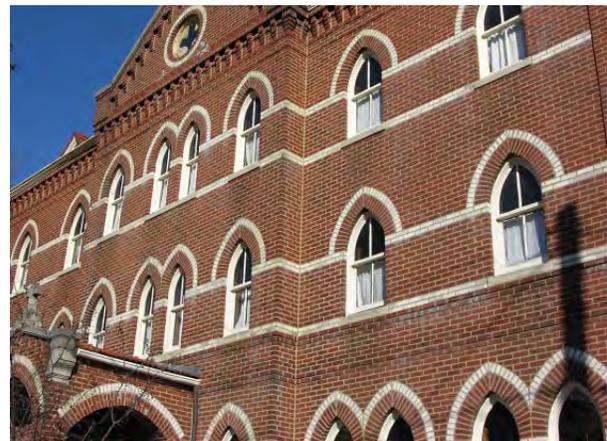
With a few notable exceptions, most of Plainfield's Gothic Revival houses are later examples of the style, dating from the 1870s and early 1880s. These houses are identified by their heavy turned and carved trim on the gables, eaves and porches, in contrast to the lighter "gingerbread" of the earlier Gothic Revival.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ Brick, stuccoed, or clapboard sided exteriors (only a few early examples have board and batten siding).
- ▶ Steep-pitched cross gable roof, with wide overhanging eaves and decorative vergeboards and trusses in the gable peaks.



St. Mary's Church



St. Mary's Church Convent

- ▶ Tall and narrow windows, often paired. 2/2 sash most common. Use of pointed arch "Gothic" window.
- ▶ Paneled doors, often double-leafed, some with Gothic-arched panels.
- ▶ Heavy Gothic-influenced carved trim on gables, eaves and porches. Flattened Gothic arches often used on porch trim.



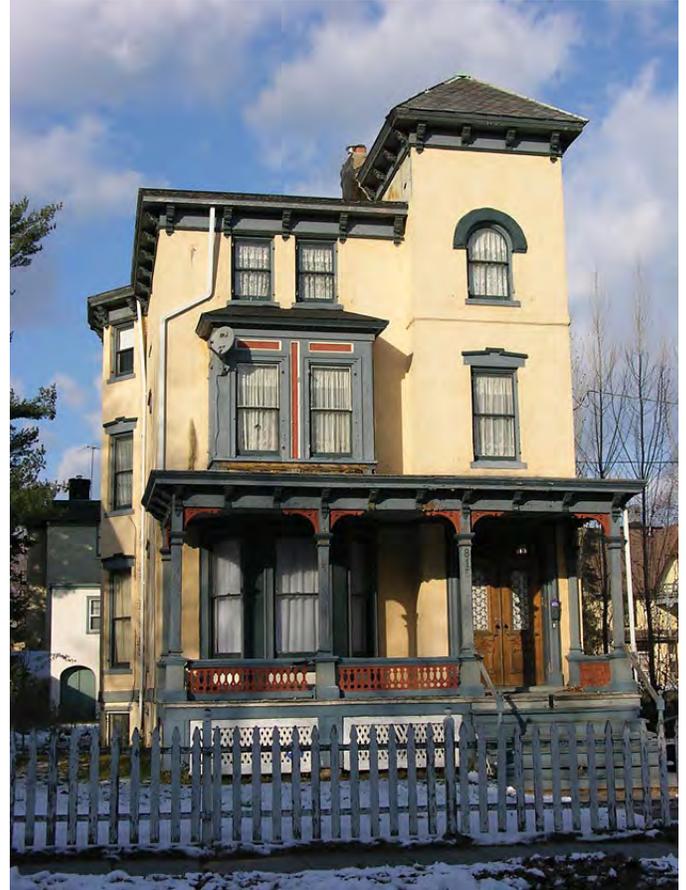
North Avenue Historic District

Italianate

Italianate is a broad term for a popular 19th century residential and commercial style inspired by the villas and palazzos of rural Italy. Built in great numbers in Plainfield from the 1860's through the 1880's, Italianate houses have low-pitched hipped or gable roofs with wide overhanging eaves, often with a rooftop cupola or a square tower. The commercial counterpart, called Commercial Italianate, is chiefly a storefront design characterized by ornate bracketed cornices and a variety of arched window treatments.

Local Characteristics:

- 2-1/2 or 3 stories. Plan variants include a rectangular box shape with low-hipped roof; a front-gabled rectangular or L-shaped plan; or a center-gabled rectangular plan.
- Porches occur almost universally, either as small entry porches or across the full width of the façade.
- Stuccoed brick walls or clapboard siding.
- Heavy decorative wood brackets under the roof eaves and over windows and doors
- Tall and narrow wood sash windows, often paired, with straight, round, or curved arches. 1/1 and 2/2 panes are most common; extensive use of bay windows.
- Heavy paneled doors, often double-leafed. Arched doorframes and transom lights are common.



Crescent Area Historic District

French Second Empire

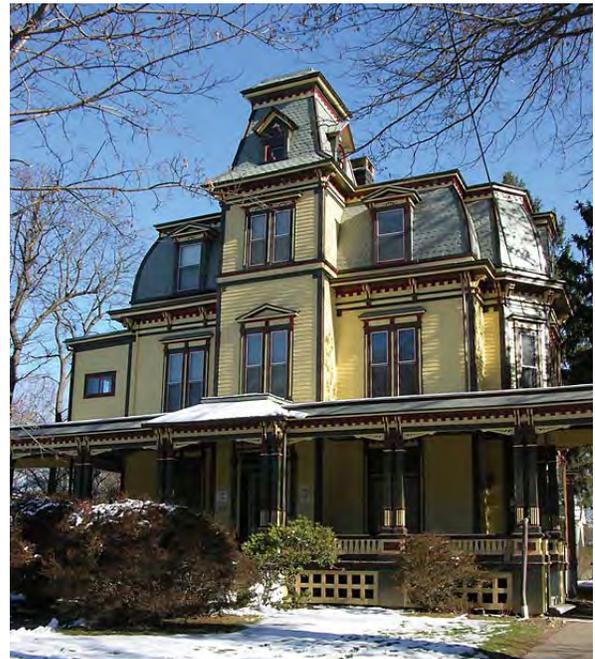


Hillside Avenue Historic District

The Second Empire Style was fashionable in this country during the 1860s and 1870s. Along with the Italianate style, it was the most prevalent residential building style in Plainfield during the building boom of the 1870s. The hallmark of the Second Empire Style house is its mansard roof, which has a double slope, the lower slope usually longer and steeper than the upper slope. The mansard roof was named for the 17th century architect Francois Mansart, who developed the roof type in France. Beneath the distinctive mansard roof, Second Empire houses share similar characteristics with the Italianate Style.

Local Characteristics:

- ▮ Mansard roofs with either a straight, concave or convex profile. Typically features dormers, slate roof tiles, molded cornices and decorative brackets.
- ▮ 2-1/2 or 3 stories. Most have symmetrical rectangular plans, with a centered gable or central square tower. T-shaped plans also occur.



Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

- ▮ Usually clapboard sided; a few brick and stuccoed examples.
- ▮ Windows, doors and trim similar to Italianate Style, with ornate moldings, brackets, and bay windows.

Queen Anne

The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition helped to create a taste in America for rural medieval English houses, on which the early Queen Anne style was based. From the 1880s and until about 1910, the Queen Anne style introduced elaborate combinations of materials, shapes and textures to American houses. Towers, turrets, balconies and projecting bays further characterize this style. The later phase of Queen Anne, known as “Free Classic,” acquired a less medieval appearance and emphasized classical details.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ 2-1/2 stories. Irregular plans and complex massing, often with a front-facing gable and extensive porches.
- ▶ Combinations of brick, stone, stucco, clapboard, and patterned shingles on exterior walls.
- ▶ Roofs often a combination of multiple gables and hipped roofs, with round or polygonal towers.
- ▶ Variety of window shapes and sizes. Double-hung wood sash windows with multi-panes above and clear glass below are common, as are stained glass feature windows and projecting bay windows.
- ▶ Doors are often elaborately detailed, many with glazed upper portions.
- ▶ Extensive use of brackets, decorative moldings, sawn and turned porch posts and balustrades, spindle work on porches, and decorative half-timbering in gables.



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Crescent Area Historic District

Shingle Style

The Shingle Style, a suburban and resort style of building that is unique to this country, developed from the Queen Anne style and drew inspiration from the traditional shingled houses of New England. Shingle Style houses, which date from the 1880s to about 1915 in Plainfield, are typified by a uniform sheathing of unpainted or dark stained wood shingles. The roof is a dominant element, and may sweep down over a large porch.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ 2 or 2-1/2 stories. Complex plan and asymmetrical façade, but overall composition is less “busy” than the Queen Anne style.
- ▶ Wall cladding and roofing of continuous wood shingles; stone and brick used as accent materials.
- ▶ Large gambrel and gable roofs.
- ▶ Double-hung sash windows, often with small panes above and clear glass below; grouped windows in two’s and three’s; Palladian windows and bay windows.
- ▶ Decorative detailing on cornices, porches, windows and doors is usually restrained and classical; simple classical columns are common on porches.



Putnam Watchung Historic District



Hillside Avenue Historic District



Netherwood Heights Historic District

Colonial Revival

The term Colonial Revival refers to the national rebirth of interest in American colonial building traditions. The Colonial Revival was the most dominant building style from the 1890s through the first half of the 20th century. Colonial Revival designs drew upon Georgian, Federal, and traditional regional buildings such as Dutch Colonial. Most Colonial Revival structures were free interpretations inspired by colonial prototypes, while others were carefully researched copies of original 17th and 18th century buildings with historically correct proportions and details. The Colonial Revival was the favored style for Plainfield's public buildings in the early 20th century, as seen in Plainfield City Hall and many of the city's schools of the era. Typical features include colonial-derived materials and design elements, but larger in scale than colonial buildings.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ Symmetrically balanced plans and massing are typical, but buildings are larger in scale than colonial precedents.
- ▶ Houses usually sided with clapboard or wood shingles; public buildings are brick and stone.
- ▶ Prominent gable, hipped, or gambrel roofs; boxed classical cornices with modillions and dentils are common.
- ▶ Double-hung wood sash windows, usually with multiple panes in upper or lower sash; windows often arranged in pairs, and Palladian windows are used as feature windows.
- ▶ Accentuated front doors, paneled or glazed; typically with pediment, fanlight, sidelights, and/or pilasters.
- ▶ Ample porches are common, trimmed with classical porch columns and balustrades.



Hillside Avenue Historic District



Hillside Avenue Historic District

Tudor Revival

The Tudor Revival was part of a larger revival of historic period architecture during the early 20th century. Period Revival buildings, popular between 1900 and 1940, were patterned after such diverse historical sources as English Tudor manor houses, rural English cottages, Mediterranean villas, provincial French dwellings, and Spanish colonial missions. Quotations from the historical past were employed freely to produce houses that were modern in plan and composition.

Tudor Revival buildings, loosely based on English Tudor or medieval English building traditions, are the most numerous among Plainfield's Period Revival buildings.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ High-pitched gable roofs, often with cross gables; large elaborated chimneys.
- ▶ Stuccoed and brick walls, often with decorative half-timbering.
- ▶ Tall, narrow windows, frequently grouped in two's and three's; wood or metal casements, some with diamond panes and leaded glass.
- ▶ Simple round-arch or Tudor-arch doorways with heavy vertical paneled doors are prevalent.



YWCA of Plainfield-North Plainfield



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Prospect Avenue

Craftsman



Hillside Avenue Historic District

Craftsman houses are part of the American Arts and Crafts movement of the 1900-1930 period. Craftsman houses exhibit the use of natural materials, rustic simplicity, and craftsmanship as publicized extensively by the magazines and building pattern books of the craftsman movement.

Local Characteristics:

- ▶ Include both 1-story bungalows and 2-story houses.
- ▶ Low-pitched gabled roofs on bungalows; gable or pyramidal roofs on 2-story examples. Wide overhanging eaves, large dormers, and exposed roof rafters are common.
- ▶ Wall cladding may be clapboard, wood shingles, stucco, or brick. Fieldstone or cobblestone often used on chimneys and porch bases.
- ▶ Truss work in the gables.



Broadway Historic District

- ▶ Front porches supported by square tapered porch posts.
- ▶ Double-hung wood sash windows; upper sashes often have various geometric patterns.

Barns, Carriage Houses and Garages

Historically, many Plainfield residents kept carriage and wagon horses, and on outlying farms, perhaps a cow and some chickens. A variety of barns, stables, sheds, privies and other domestic outbuildings shared the backyard space with fruit-bearing trees, and vegetable and ornamental gardens. By the late 19th century, carriage houses were constructed to match the styles of new Victorian houses in town, combining an up-to-date plan for housing horses and carriages with new architectural fashions. A few short decades later, the automobile introduced the garage into the landscape, and older carriage houses were often adapted to new uses as automobile garages. Today, a variety of 19th and early 20th century carriage houses and garages remain in Plainfield. These have assumed greater significance as the number of outbuildings in the City has declined.



Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

Hillside Avenue Historic District



Design Guidelines for Repairs, Additions and New Construction

The Design Guidelines are the criteria by which the Historic Preservation Commission will review applications and determine the appropriateness of proposed work on designated historic properties.

The Design Guidelines cover repair and alteration of existing buildings, and construction of additions and new buildings. The underlying principle of these guidelines is respect for the historic built environment. A building design should carefully

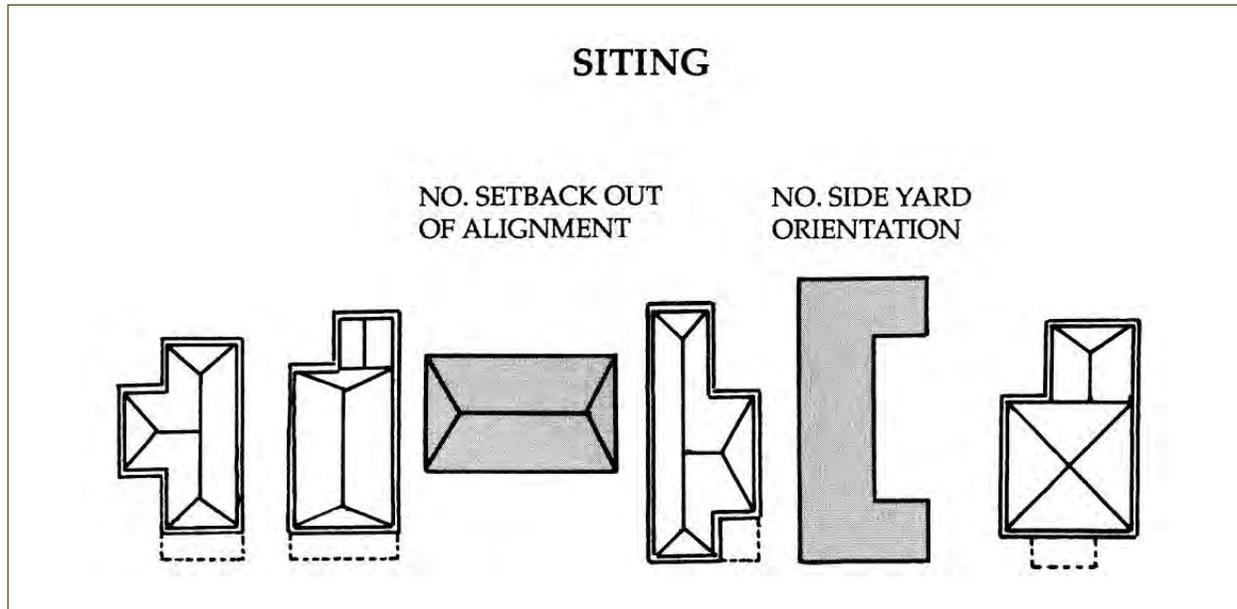
relate to its site, its neighbors and its heritage. Designs should maintain significant existing features, while integrating compatible new features. These should build upon the best of earlier building traditions, but not necessarily imitate them. Siting, scale, proportion, massing and materials are more important than recreating a particular historical style in achieving an appropriate design for Plainfield's historic properties.

Principles of Preservation: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission is guided by The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction. As rehabilitation is the most common treatment approach, the Standards for Rehabilitation are cited below. The Standards are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect our Nation's cultural resources, and are used nationwide for planning and reviewing work on historic properties. The Standards do not offer specific answers for each site or building, but they do provide a philosophical framework for treatment of historic properties, and for the Design Guidelines herein.

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural elements or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*
- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*
- 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Site and Streetscape



The relationship of buildings to each other, setbacks, spaces between buildings, fences, views, driveways, walkways, and other landscape features create the character of an individual parcel of land, streetscape, and neighborhood. The historic features of a particular site and its surrounding environment should be a fundamental consideration in any project involving additions or new construction. Within Plainfield's historic districts there exists a strong pattern of setback from the street, alignment, façade orientation, placement of the house and accessory structures, parking, driveways, and other site features. The zoning regulations for Plainfield's historic districts have been tailored to help preserve the historic building pattern and streetscape. *Chapter 17 of the Land Use Ordinance of the City of Plainfield specifies allowable lot sizes, setbacks, lot coverage, building height, and accessory structures.*

Building Site – Additions and new construction shall be compatible with the site characteristics of the individual property and the buildings to which it is visually related. Compatibility of setback, orientation, alignment, and rhythm of spacing between buildings is of foremost concern. Within Plainfield's historic districts, principal elevations of

buildings characteristically face the street with a strong sense of entry. New buildings having a courtyard arrangement, or otherwise turning their backs to the street, are not permitted.

Garages and Accessory Structures – Historically in Plainfield's residential areas, garages have been detached from the house and situated to the side of the lot behind the house. New garages shall be detached from the historic house and positioned farther back on the lot than the main wall of the house. Placement of the garage to the rear of the lot is preferred in areas where this is the historic pattern. The design of garages and other accessory structures, like other new construction, should be compatible in scale and material to the principal house and with neighboring accessory structures. Parking spaces should be as inconspicuous as possible and screened from the street with landscaping.

Driveways and Parking – Residential driveways in Plainfield's historic districts typically align with the side lot line. While the increased number of vehicles per household poses parking challenges, driveways should maintain their historic width from the apron at the street to the rear yard. Parking areas should be sited carefully to minimize impact on the historic site.

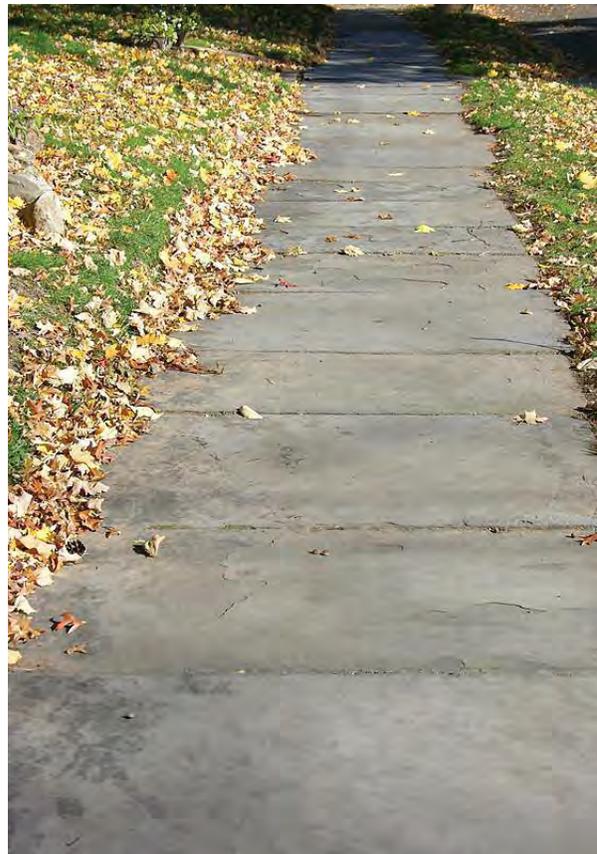


Van Wyck Brooks
Historic District

Walkways – Bluestone, slate, and brick sidewalks and walkways are still prominent in Plainfield. Retain historic walkway materials, and re-set when necessary. When replacing concrete with concrete, match texture and color. Bluestone, slate, brick, and concrete are all appropriate materials for new walkways in the public view. Decorative concrete pavers that simulate brick and stone are not appropriate new materials.

Landscape

Topography, trees, shrubbery, hedges and other landscape plantings are of primary importance to the visual image of the City, and to its historic character as well. Modern landscape schemes and inappropriate plant materials can detract from even the most carefully restored older building. While the Historic Preservation Commission does not regulate residential plantings, it recommends that older trees and plant material be considered before they are removed. New plantings that complement the building architecture are also recommended, in order to create harmony between structures and their natural landscapes.



Putnam Watchung Historic District

Fences – Historic fences vary with the age and style of buildings. Constructed fences and natural forms of enclosure define the boundary of a yard or garden, and can be a prominent decorative element. Historic fences in Plainfield include wooden picket fences, and wrought or cast iron fences; low hedges and low retaining walls are also found in some neighborhoods. Historic fences should be retained and repaired. Replacement of deteriorated fencing should match the material, size, shape, texture and color of the original fence as nearly as possible. Opaque fencing such as tall board-on-board wooden fences, high berms, and modern fence types such as chain link, split rail or vinyl/plastic fences are not appropriate. These may be permitted only when they are not conspicuous from the public view.



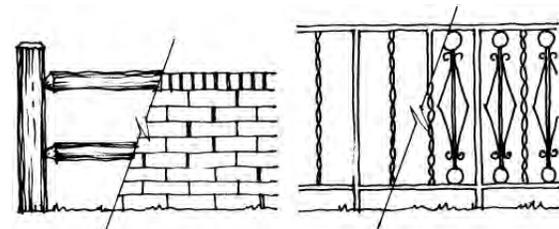
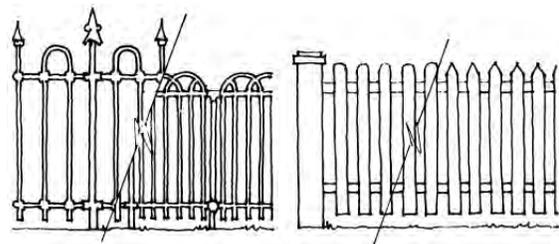
Crescent Area Historic District

Home Grounds and the Landscape

Although older homes may closely resemble their earlier appearance, few yards, or “home grounds” as they were often called, are still found as they were originally landscaped. Ornamental landscaping became a popular pastime beginning in the mid-19th century. Homeowners were assisted by a widely available collection of gardening and landscaping books and periodicals, including those by Andrew Jackson Downing and R. Morris Copeland. These disseminated information on topics such as planting design, horticultural specimens, ornamental fences, and grafting techniques.

Detecting remnants of 19th century landscape design can be difficult. Maps and old photographs are a good source of information about the former appearance of home grounds for the interested contemporary homeowner. Today, evidence of earlier landscape design can still be found in details such as paths and walks, the occasional stone retaining wall or post, fences, garden structures such as arbors and gazebos, and the species and placement of older trees and plantings.

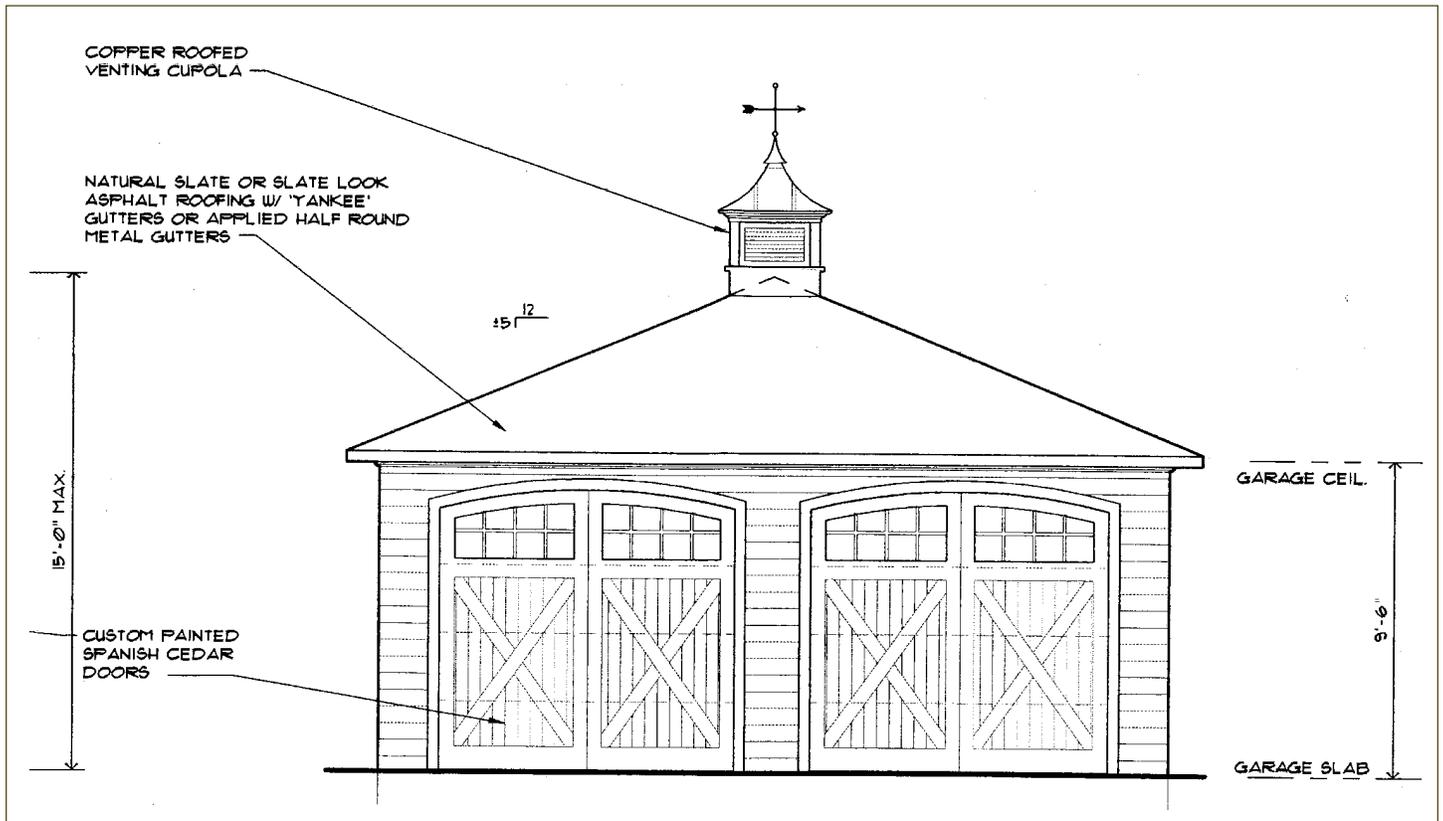
Historically Appropriate Fence Types



Inappropriate Modern Fence Types

Courtesy of Cynthia Howard, A.I.A.

Additions and New Construction



Design for new garage in the Crescent Area Historic District

Additions to existing buildings and new construction within the historic districts can enhance the existing character, and can add depth and contribute interest to the street and neighborhood.

The success of new construction within the historic districts does not rely on duplication of existing building forms, features and details; these provide a vocabulary, but not necessarily a copybook, for new buildings. Successful new construction does depend, however, on an understanding of architectural character – the patterns of siting (setback, orientation, spacing) as well as building size, massing, proportion, directional expression, materials and design features.

Site new construction to be compatible with site-specific features of the individual property and surrounding buildings. Conform to the design guidelines in Site and Streetscape.

Size, massing, proportion, and directional expression are essential considerations when designing an addition to a historic building or a new building in a historic district. Other important architectural elements – roofs, surface materials, doors and windows – are covered in subsequent sections of the Design Guidelines.

Size – Size includes the height, width and overall bulk of a building. On a street of generally aligned facades, new buildings should be within the range of building heights and widths along the block. The overall bulk of additions and new construction must not overwhelm the original building size or the places to which it is visually related. Chapter 17 of the Land Use Ordinance of the City of Plainfield regulates the specific height and area coverage of buildings allowed in the historic districts.

Massing – The massing (shape and form) of additions and new construction should harmonize with the original building and the buildings to which it is related, but also should be discernible from the original structure. Additive massing – the attachment of smaller volumes of related shape – is recommended. Single boxlike forms should be broken up into smaller varied masses with articulated facades. To preserve the historic character of a building’s mass, additions should be extended to the side and rear; the integrity of the street façade must be maintained.

Proportion – The proportions of a building façade are important because the front is the most visible part of the building and is viewed in relation to adjacent buildings. The proportion – relationship of height to width – of a building’s primary façade must be visually compatible to the buildings and

places to which it is visually related. Proportion also pertains to window and door openings. The relationship of width and height of windows and doors on a façade must be carefully considered.

Directional Expression – The shape of a structure, placement of openings and other architectural details provide an overall directional expression to a building façade. Buildings may have a vertical, horizontal or non-directional emphasis. Relate the vertical, horizontal or non-directional façade character of new buildings to the predominant directional expression of nearby buildings. If, for example, a proposed new building appears too horizontal in relation to more vertical adjacent structures, consider dividing the façade into smaller masses with vertical elements in order to conform to the streetscape.



Roofs

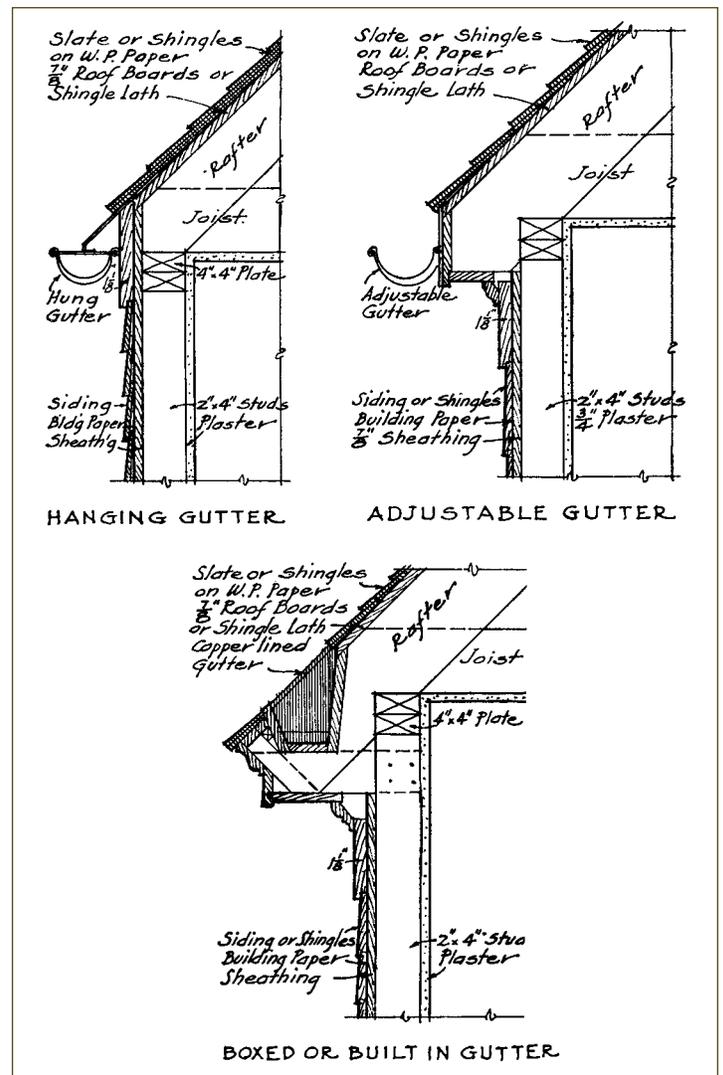
The roof is an essential cover for any building, important for maintaining the soundness of the entire structure. On many older buildings, complex roofs with ornate decoration are a key part of the stylistic character. The shape of the roof, the size, color and pattern of roofing materials, decorative features, chimneys, dormers, eaves and gutters are all important elements to consider in repairs, additions and new construction.

Historic roofing materials include wood shingles, clay tile, slate, metal (sheet metal, tin plate, copper, lead and zinc), and in the 20th century, built-up or roll roofing, concrete and asphalt shingles.



Crescent Area Historic District

1. Retain the original shape, pitch, configuration, and material of the roof. If patching a roof, match existing materials. When replacing an entire roof, use of compatible substitute materials may be considered if the historic roofing material is too expensive to replace. Asphalt and fiberglass shingles, for example, may be used to replace slate if the style, shape and color are chosen carefully to resemble slate.
2. Preserve the decorative and functional features of the roof, such as eaves, cornices, chimneys, dormers, cupolas, gutters and flashing. If a feature is too deteriorated to repair, the replacement should be of like construction, matching as nearly as possible in material, size, shape, texture and color.
3. Eaves and gutters are of particular concern in roofing projects. Maintenance of intact and functional gutters and leaders is critical to the overall preservation of buildings. Structural deterioration and water damage often result from failing to maintain roof drainage systems. Many older buildings have built-in gutters that are integrated into the design of the eaves and cornice; these are an important part of the historic roof and must be maintained. External gutters, which



are hung at the edge of the roof, are not permitted on structures with built-in gutters. Where hung gutters are appropriate, they must be installed so that they do not interfere with the architectural detail; gutter straps should always be placed underneath the roofing shingles. Half-round gutters are preferred.

4. Additions to roofs must not damage or obscure the historic character of the roof. The roof pitch, plane and detailing of an addition must be compatible with the main roof. Locate new chimneys, vent stacks, dormers, skylights, mechanical and service equipment, and solar collectors so that they are inconspicuous from the public view. Construct new chimneys of masonry, either brick or parged concrete, with a

traditional ground-level base, not cantilevered over the foundation of the house. New roof dormers must be carefully designed and located to be in scale, proportion and balance with the roof and the building. A dormer should complement, not destroy, the roof plane in which it is placed. Dormers should not be placed on the front elevation, and large dormers that extend the entire length of the roof are not permitted.

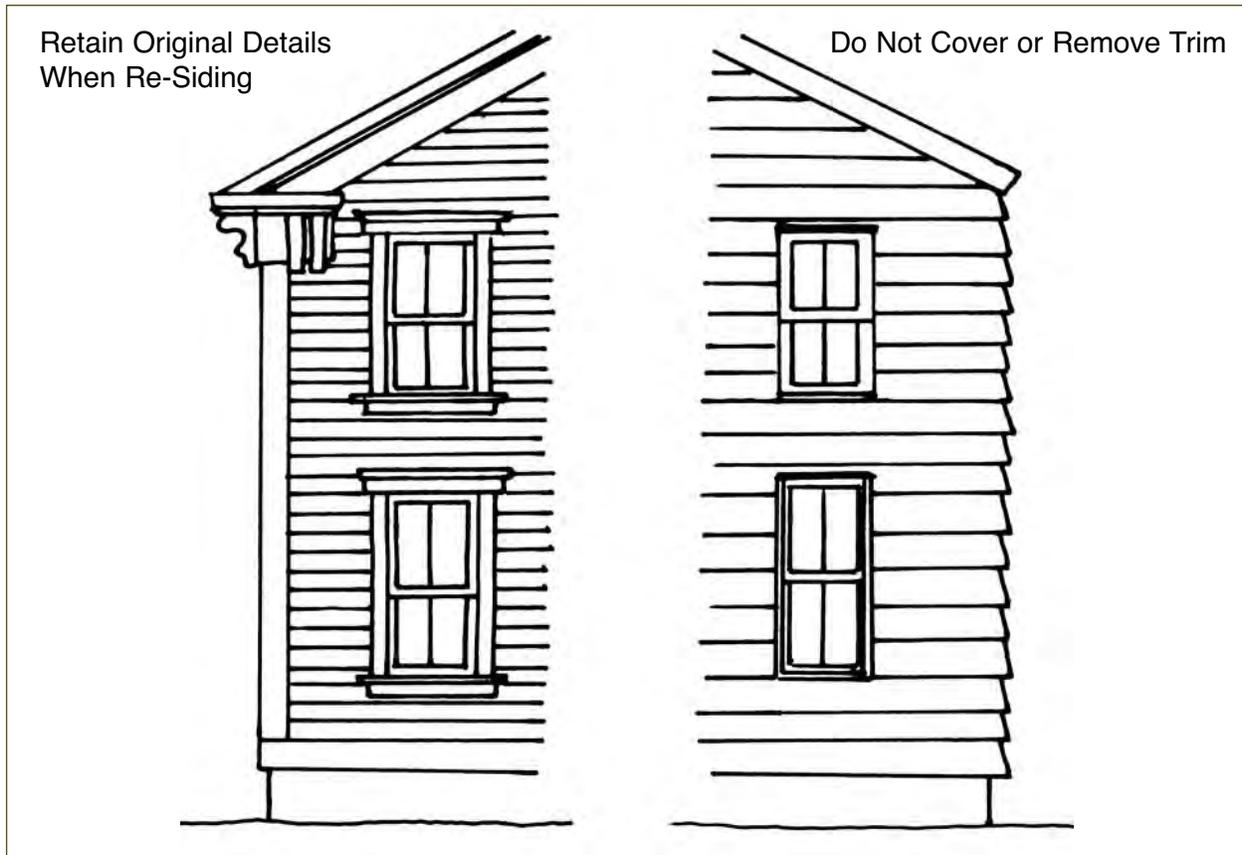
5. Roof designs for new construction must harmonize with the shape and rhythm of roofs along the street. Where an area shows a predominant roof type, new roofs should be guided by the existing character.



Crescent Area Historic District

Exterior Walls and Siding

The wall surface is the skin of a building, a barrier to the weather and an expression of age, style and craftsmanship. The vast majority of Plainfield's historic buildings are clad with wood; siding materials may be clapboard, weatherboard, shingles, or board and batten. Masonry wall surfaces include stucco, brick, natural stone, terra cotta and concrete.



1. Original surface materials shall be retained and repaired whenever possible. Recommended repair techniques for wood siding and masonry walls are widely available in publications on home renovation, and on the Internet. When removing deteriorated paint from wood siding, avoid destructive removal methods such as sand-blasting. Recommended methods include hand scraping, hand sanding, electric hot air guns, and chemical strippers. Historically painted wood siding must not be stripped or stained to create a “natural” effect.
2. If wood siding is too damaged to repair, replace it with wood material of like construction, matching as near as possible in size, shape,

profile, and texture. Where a non-historic artificial siding has been previously applied to a building, restoration of the historic siding material is preferred. Replacement of existing synthetic siding with new synthetic siding will be approved only if the following conditions are met: (1) the substitute siding will not endanger the physical condition and structural life of the building; (2) the substitute siding can be installed without irreversibly damaging or obscuring any of the architectural features and trim of the building; and (3) the substitute material can match the historic material in size, profile and finish. Cement board siding (such as HardiPlank) is preferred over vinyl or aluminum.



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Historic District*

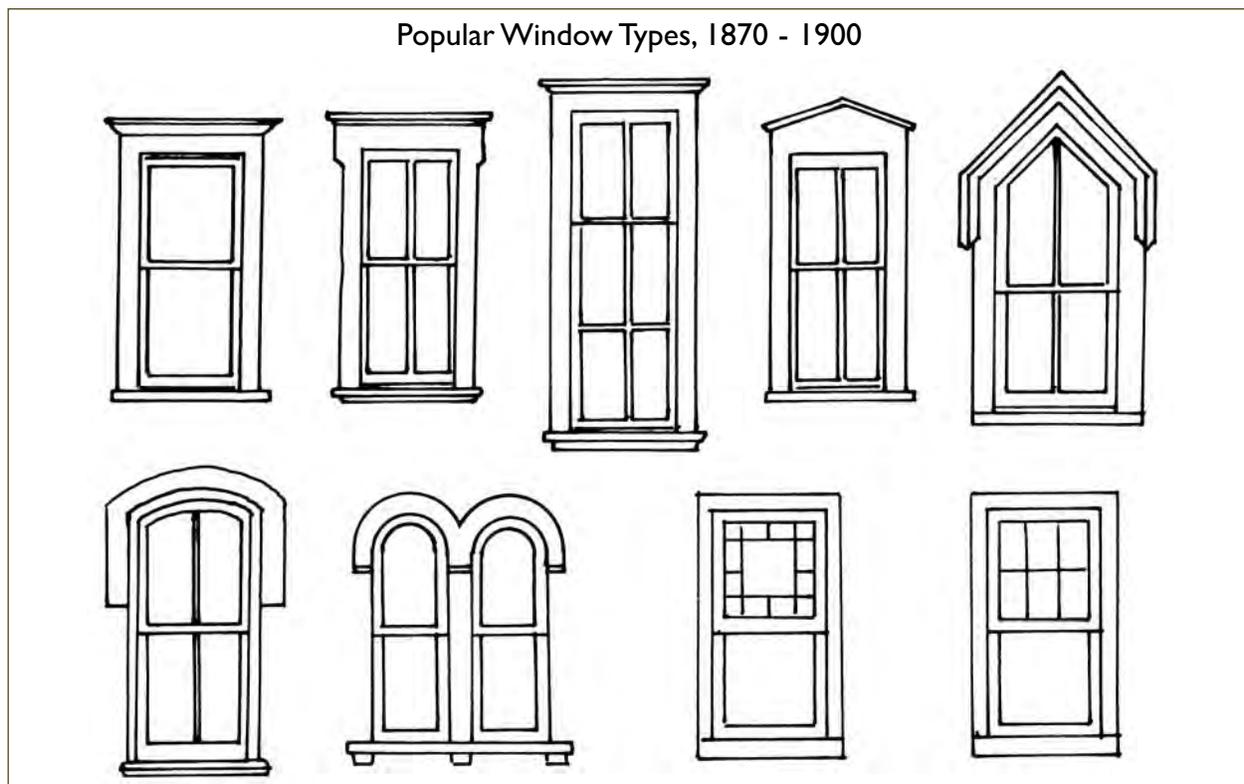
3. Maintain the original color and texture of masonry walls. Stucco or paint must not be removed from historically painted or stuccoed masonry walls. Likewise, paint or stucco must not be applied to historically unpainted or unstuccoed masonry walls.
4. Clean masonry or mortar only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling, using the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure brushes. Sandblasting, caustic solutions, and high-pressure water blasting must not be used. These methods erode the surface of brick and stone, and accelerate deterioration.
5. Repoint masonry walls when there is evidence of disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, or moisture retention in the walls. The new mortar must duplicate the old mortar in composition, bonding strength, profile, color and texture.
6. If a masonry wall surface is too damaged to repair, replace it with material of like construction, matching as nearly as possible in size, shape, texture and color. Materials such as artificial stone (“Permastone”) and artificial brick veneer (“brickface”) are not permitted for re-surfacing historic masonry buildings.
7. The wall surfaces of new additions and new buildings in the historic districts shall be sided with the materials of historic wall surfaces found on adjacent buildings and in the historic district. Cement board siding (such as HardiPlank) is, however, an acceptable alternative to the use of wood siding on new buildings.

Windows

The size, arrangement, materials, design and craftsmanship of windows are all important to the historic character of a building. Each building has distinguishable windows that reflect its historic period and style. On most buildings, windows comprise a significant percentage of the overall wall area. For these reasons historic windows deserve special consideration. If original windows are removed and replaced with incompatible modern windows, the basic character of the building will be altered substantially.

Wooden double-hung sash windows are the predominant window type in Plainfield’s older buildings. The size, number of windowpanes, and glazing pattern of sash windows vary with the age and style of the building. Wooden or steel-framed casement windows are found on later houses, as well as on commercial and industrial structures.

1. Maintain the number, size, shape and locations of existing windows. Do not “block in” windows to reduce the size of the opening or to fit stock sizes. New window openings must not be added to the front elevation.
2. Retain and repair window frames, sash, decorative glass panes, sills, heads, hoodmolds, and moldings. New or replacement windows on historic buildings must be appropriate to the period and style of the building, duplicating the material and design of the older feature. Replacement sash of wooden windows must be wooden. True divided light sash or simulated divided lights are acceptable, but snap-in muntins are not. Replacement sills and window frames should be constructed to true historical dimensions to match existing. Where duplication of an original window is not technically or economically feasible (such as replacement of an elaborate leaded glass window), a simplified version of the original may be acceptable as long as it has the same size and proportion.
3. Some later windows may have acquired significance in their own right (such as Colonial Revival changes on older houses) and should be respected because they are evidence of the building’s history.

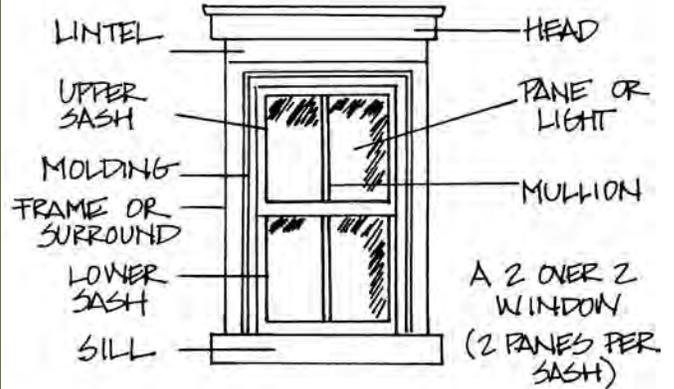




DuCret School for the Arts

4. Modern window types, which are inappropriate, include large picture windows, sliding glass doors, casements and bow windows unless they are original to the building.
5. Preserve and repair window shutters and blinds. Replacement shutters on windows must be wooden, and sized to cover the entire window when closed. Fasten shutters to the window frame, not to the siding. Fake non-operable synthetic shutters and blinds are not appropriate. Shutter hardware such as hinges, holdbacks, and latches are valuable and should be retained.
6. Wood-framed storm windows are preferable; if metal storm windows are used, they should be anodized or painted to blend with the trim.
7. On a new addition or in new construction, windows must harmonize with the material, scale, proportion, placement and rhythm of windows on buildings to which they are visually related. The use of historic window types is not required, but is encouraged, on additions and new construction.

Parts of a Window



Wood Window Replacement

All too often, replacement of historic wood windows is the quick fix for problems that can be repaired, such as peeling paint, a rotten section of sash, loose glazing, broken sash weights, or inoperable sash. If you have original or early windows on your building, consider repair before replacement. Most wood sash windows and steel-framed windows can be repaired, insulated, weather stripped and re-fitted for about the cost of a good quality replacement window. Older windows are often needlessly replaced because of the promised insulating qualities of new windows. But weatherization of historic wood windows – a combination of new weather stripping and exterior storm windows – is an economical alternative to replacement windows and will greatly improve the thermal performance of existing windows. In fact, an older wooden window with a high quality storm window is about 15% more energy efficient than a new double thermal paned vinyl replacement window. In addition, the components of vinyl replacement sash have a relatively short life span compared to historic wooden windows. The vinyl and PVC materials, and plastic and neoprene sealants in these windows degrade within a much shorter timeframe than wooden window components.

Doors

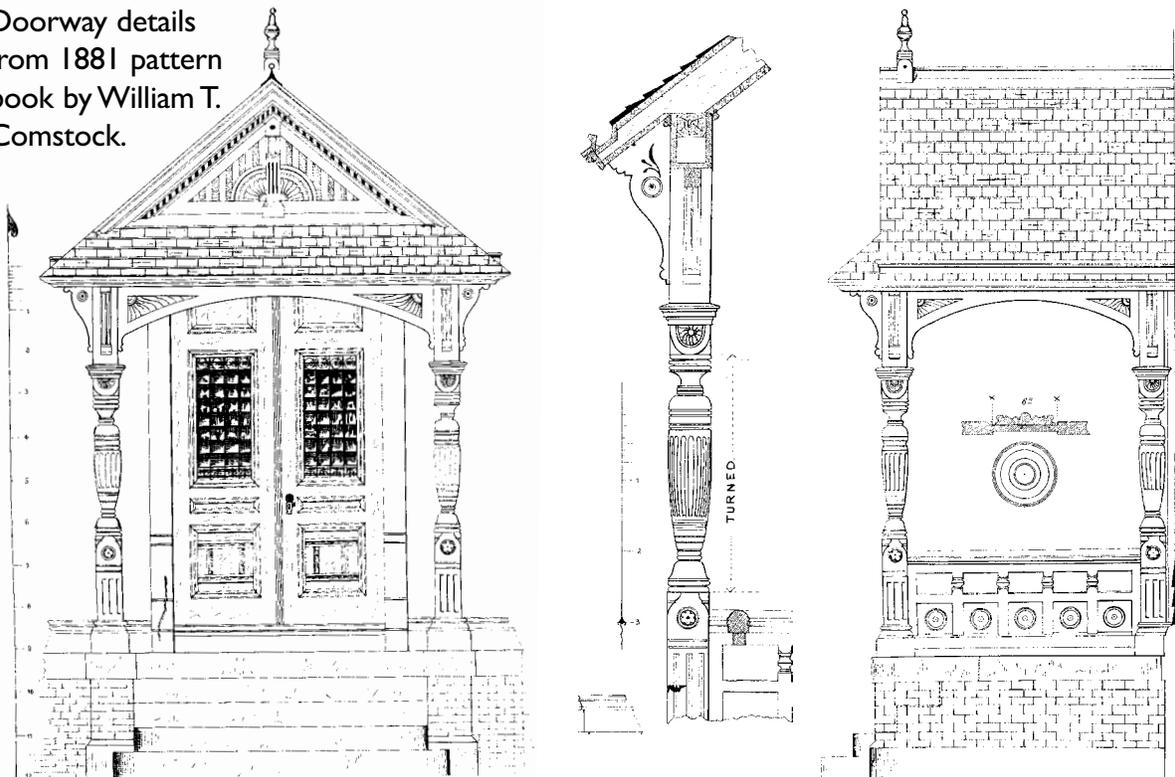
Doorways are often the central focus of historic buildings, and integral to the overall design. Each building has doors that reflect its age and style. In Plainfield, doors range from traditional six-panel doors to double-leaf arched doors with ornate moldings, and can be highly decorative and characterized by fine craftsmanship. Removal and replacement of original or early doors will diminish the historic integrity of older buildings.

1. Maintain the number, size, shape and locations of existing entrances visible from the public street. Primary entrances must not be moved, and new door openings must not be added to the primary elevation. Do not “block down” doorways to reduce the size of the door opening or to fit modern stock door sizes.
2. Preserve doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, doorframes, and finish hardware. All the doorway details – moldings, decorative glass, hinges and doorknobs – add substantially to the



Victorian doorway, Crescent Area Historic District

Doorway details from 1881 pattern book by William T. Comstock.

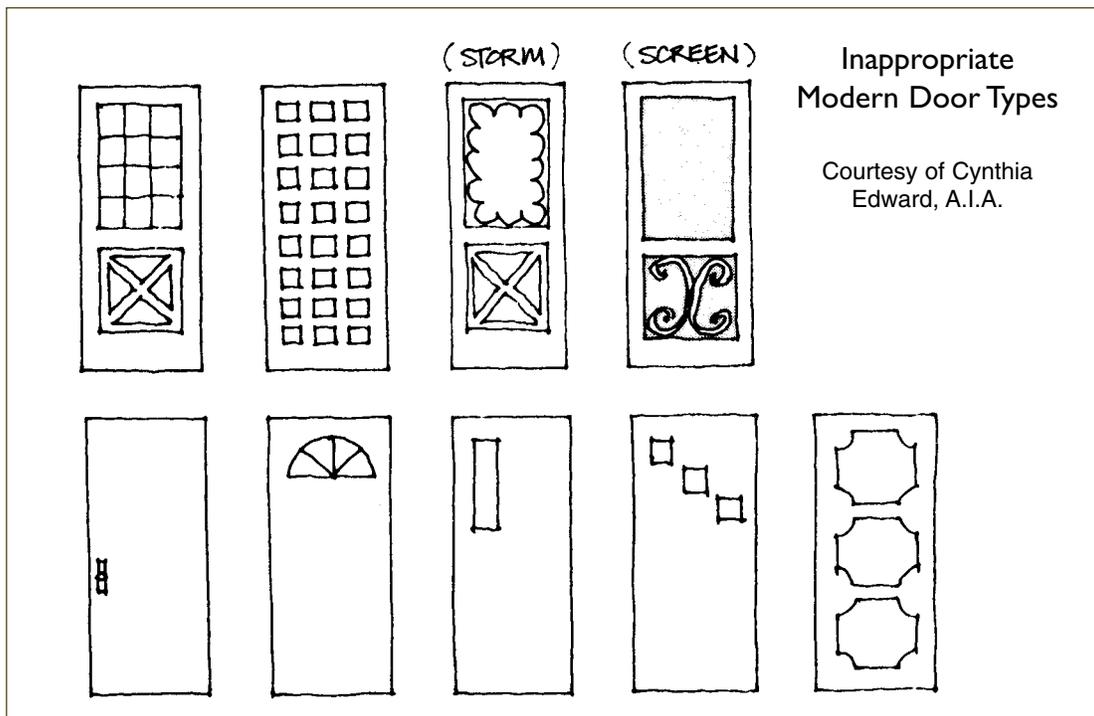


character and value of your building. Repair of historic wood doors is always preferable to replacement. Patching and repairing, using epoxies and splice repairs can be a cost effective alternative to replacement.

3. If a door or any of its decorative elements is too deteriorated to repair, use the existing door (or evidence of the building's original or early door) or door element as a prototype for replacement. New or replacement doors on historic buildings must be appropriate to the period and style of the building, duplicating the material and design of the older feature. Salvage yards are often a good source for good old doors. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, a compatible substitute may be considered on a case by case basis.
4. On a new addition to an old building, or in new construction, the use of historic door types is encouraged. Doors on a new building should be constructed of wood and must harmonize with the scale, proportion, and placement of doors on buildings to which they are visually related.



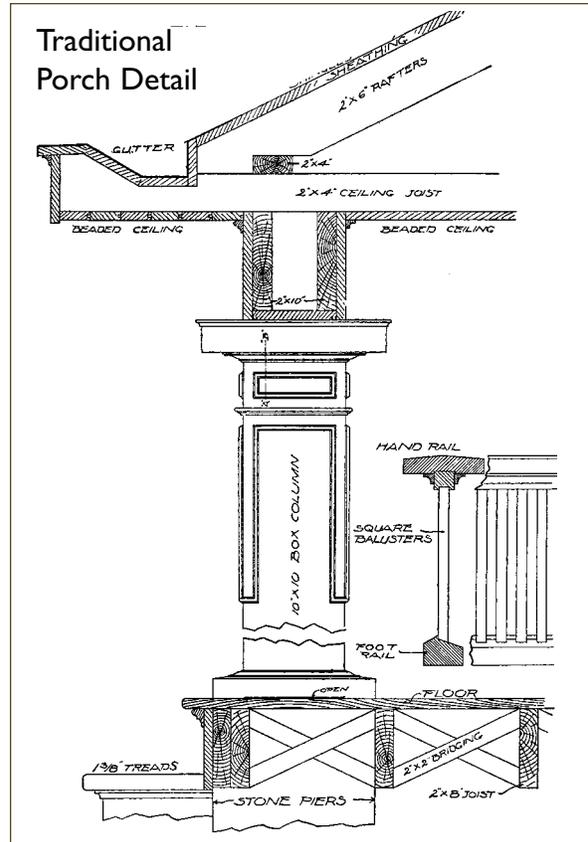
Colonial Revival doorway, Hillside Avenue Historical District



Porches

Rows of projecting front porches are a consistent visual element in Plainfield’s historic districts. Roofed porches of all sizes and kinds are found on many 19th and early 20th century houses, ranging from simple bracketed hoods or columned porticos over the doorway to expansive highly decorated porches that wrap around two or three sides of the house. Side and back porches became increasingly popular in the 20th century.

1. Historic porches must never be removed. Retain original porch features – the porch roof and its decorative cornices, the porch columns, railings and balustrades, as well as the flooring, steps, and base all combine to create a porch’s historic character. Do not remove or discard elements if they can be repaired and re-used. Dutchman repairs and epoxy consolidation are cost effective, time-tested methods for repairing damaged sections of posts or trim without replacing the whole component.



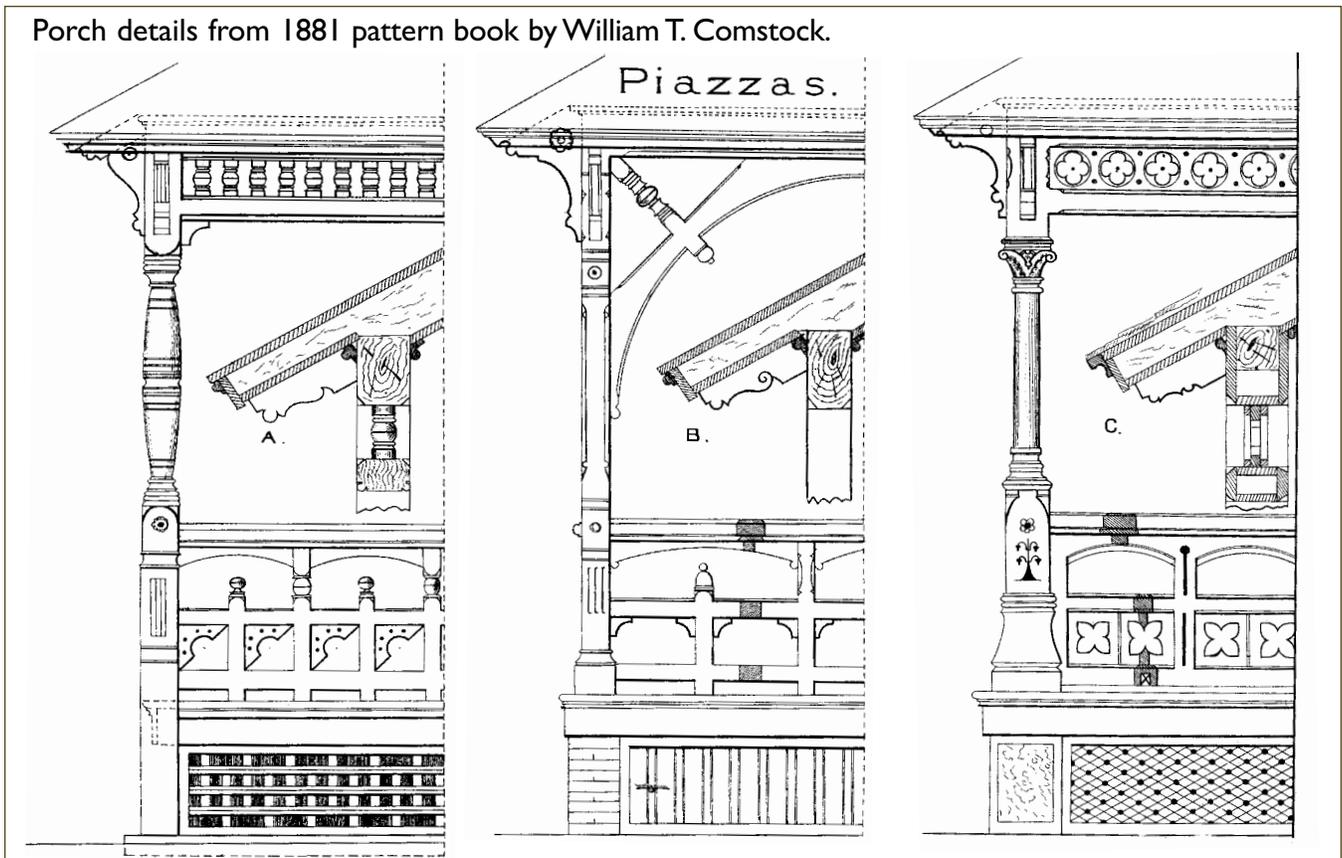
Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

2. Some porches are later replacements or additions on older houses, and should be preserved because they are part of the building's history.
3. Open front porches may not be enclosed with opaque walls or materials. Screened or glass-in porches are acceptable for side porches if well detailed.
4. If it is necessary to replace deteriorated original porch elements such as posts, balustrades or flooring with new material, the replacement must match in material and design. Use the original feature as a basis to remake replacements. Restoration of original features such as porch posts is always preferred to simplified replacement versions. Brick, concrete and pressure-treated decking materials are all unsuitable for porches with historical tongue and groove woodflooring. Extensive replacement of porch elements may be avoided by an approach that includes selective repair rather than wholesale replacement.



Putnam Watchung Historic District

Porch details from 1881 pattern book by William T. Comstock.





Crescent Area
Historic District

Trim

Trim refers to the ornamental details applied to a building such as cornices, brackets, pilasters, railings, corner boards, finials, bargeboards, and window and door casings. Historic trim materials may include wood, cast iron, terra cotta, stone, tile or brick. Architectural trim elements are indicators of a building's historic period and style, and may exemplify skilled craftsmanship that cannot be duplicated today.

1. Removal of an older building's historic trim diminishes its historic and financial value. Retain and repair, rather than replace, the trim elements on your historic building.
2. Where it has been determined that features are too deteriorated to repair, replace trim with material that is similar in composition, size, shape, texture and color. Certain synthetic or substitute materials (such as fiberglass columns) will be considered on a case-by-case basis where they are compatible in size, proportion, style, and texture.

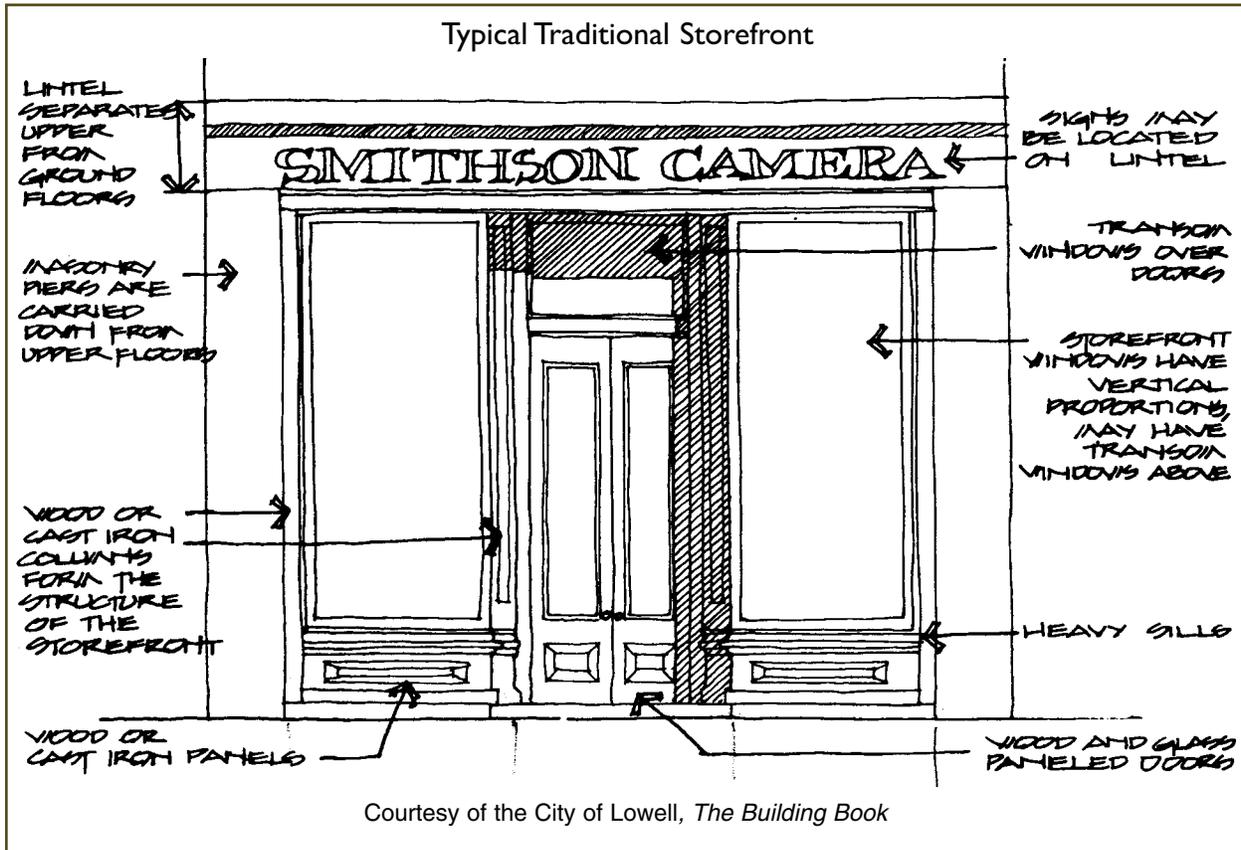


Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

See also sections on Roofs, Windows and Porches for guidelines on Trim.

Storefronts

The storefront is the most prominent architectural feature of most commercial buildings. Alterations to storefronts are common because storefronts play an important role in advertising and merchandising. These alterations, however, can completely change or destroy a commercial building's historic character. Conversely, sensitive rehabilitation of historic storefronts will enhance the character of the overall building and make the storefront more attractive to shoppers.



1. Maintain the size, shape, spacing patterns and alignment of openings (windows and doors) on the façade.
2. Retain and repair the functional and decorative features of the storefront, including windows, sash, doors, transoms, kick plates, rooflines, cornices, and signs. Replacement features should match the size, scale, materials and design of the original.
3. Accurate storefront restorations based on historical research and physical evidence are encouraged but not required. Where original or early storefronts no longer exist, or where there is no evidence to document the storefront's original or early appearance, the design of a new storefront should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the building.
4. Conjectural designs that have no historical basis, or designs that copy traditional features from other buildings, create a false historical appearance and are not permitted.
5. Do not introduce inappropriate historical themes on storefront rehabilitations. Small windowpanes, colonial doors and mansard overhangs are examples of stylistic elements that do not belong on most 19th and 20th century storefronts.

Signs

Appropriately designed signs enhance the building façade while contributing to the visual harmony of the streetscape. Signs also play a crucial role in advertising and attracting business. On the other hand, poor signage detracts from even the most attractive storefront and diminishes the historic character of the building and its surroundings.

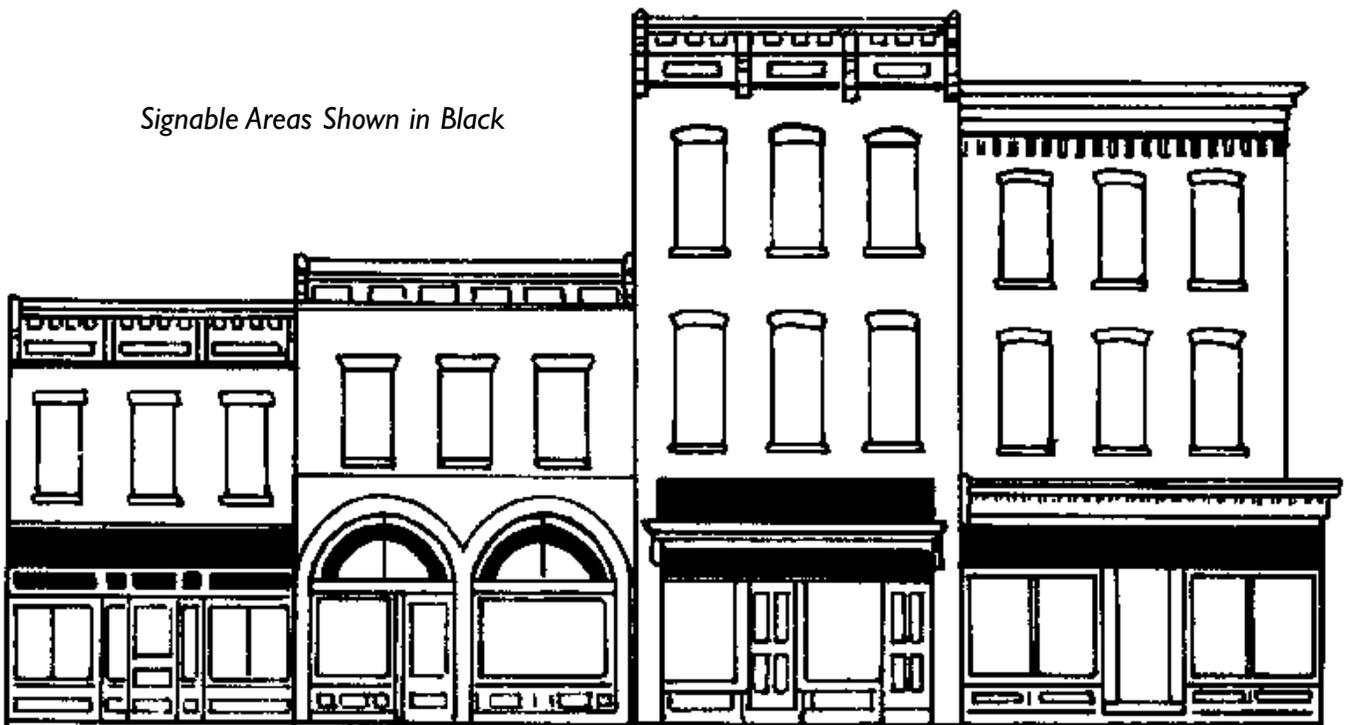
The size, placement, and materials of signs are also regulated in the zoning ordinance.

1. The size, shape, materials and placement of signs should complement the design of the building and neighboring buildings. Signs should not conceal important architectural detail, overpower or clutter the façade, or otherwise detract from the historic character of the building.
2. In general, painted wood signs with raised letters are most appropriate for 19th century

commercial structures. Lettered signs painted on the window glass of the storefront are recommended. Signs may be illuminated from an indirect light source, but plastic signs and internally lighted signs are not permitted.

3. Signs should fit flush with the existing façade, and should fit within the features of the façade. On most late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings, the lintel above the storefront and the configuration of the storefront itself create natural frames for the placement of signs. Signs that project over the sidewalk are not permitted in Plainfield's zoning ordinance; otherwise they would be historically appropriate.
4. Later signage may have acquired significance in its own right, such as signs painted on walls and older neon signs. These signs should be retained whenever possible.

Signable Areas Shown in Black



Paint

A good paint job is fundamental to the preservation of a historic building, and establishes its architectural personality. Before painting, consider the underlying reasons for paint wear, proper surface preparation, and an appropriate color scheme.

Prior to repainting, determine if any problems exist that would shorten the life of a new paint job. Moisture problems, incompatible paints, or poor surface preparation will cause paint deterioration. Proper surface preparation is the key to a good paint job. Removing old paint is time consuming but will prevent problems in the years to come. There are four recommended removal methods: hand scraping, sanding, chemical removers, and burning with a heat gun or plate (but be careful!).

When choosing a color scheme, first consider the period and style of the building. Where historically authentic colors are desired, microscopic paint analysis will reveal the original and subsequent paint schemes. Paint analysis is best done by a conservator, who will take the samples and interpret the findings. For most paint projects, however, a familiarity with period colors and their placement is sufficient to determine an appropriate color scheme. Most major paint manufacturers also offer paint charts illustrating combinations of historic paint colors. There are readily available publications on historic paint types and colors.

Note: The Historic Preservation Commission does not regulate paint colors, but provides assistance on historic paint colors and placement.



Netherwood Heights Historic District

Helpful Information

Organizations to Guide You

Local Organizations

Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission
Plainfield City Hall
515 Watchung Avenue
Plainfield, NJ 07060
(908) 753-3580
www.plainfield.com

The Historical Society of Plainfield
602 West Front Street
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
(908) 755-5831
www.drakehousemuseum.tripod.com

Plainfield Library
Local History Collections
850 Park Avenue
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
(908) 757-1111
www.plainfieldlibrary.info/

State Organizations

Historic Preservation Office
NJ Department of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 404
Trenton, NJ 08625-0404
(609) 292-2023
www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo

New Jersey Historical Commission
225 West State Street, 4th Floor
Trenton, NJ 08625-0305
(609) 292-6062
www.newjerseyhistory.org

New Jersey Historic Trust
P.O. Box 457
Trenton, NJ 08625-0457
(609) 984-0473
www.njht.org

Preservation New Jersey, Inc.
30 South Warren Street
Trenton, NJ 08608
(609) 392-6809
www.preservationnj.org

National Organizations

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 588-6000
www.nthp.org

National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
NC400
Washington, DC 20240
(202) 343-9500
www2.cr.nps.gov

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Green Brook Park. Plainfield Public Library Postcard Collection.

Glossary of Architectural Terms

Adaptive use – changing an existing, often historic, building to accommodate a new function; may include extensive restoration or renovation and removal of some building elements.

Apron – panel or wide trim under a windowsill.

Architrave – beam running on top of a row of columns; also, moldings around doors and windows.

Asbestos shingle – an exterior shingle composed of cement reinforced with asbestos fibers; popular siding material in the early to mid 20th century.

Asphalt shingle – a shingle composed of rag felt or (after 1970) fiberglass, saturated with asphalt.

Baluster – a spindle or post supporting the railing of a balustrade.

Balustrade – a railing with upper and lower rails and spindles or posts that is installed on a porch or above a roof cornice.

Bargeboard – decorative or plain trim attached to the eaves of a gable.

Bay – the regular external division of a building marked by windows or other vertical elements (as in a three bay façade). Also an external projecting feature (a bay window).

Bracket – a curved or saw-cut projecting element which supports a horizontal member such as a cornice, window or door hood.

Capital – the top element of a column or pilaster.

Cast iron – molten Iron that is poured into a mold to achieve a design.

Classical – pertaining to the architecture of Greece and Rome, and to the styles inspired by this architecture (Georgian, Greek Revival, Neoclassical).

Column – a vertical pillar or shaft, usually supporting a member above.

Corner Boards – mitered or butted vertical trims at the junction of two walls.

Cornice – a projecting molding at the top of a roof, wall or other element.

Cupola – a small structure projecting above the roof that provides ventilation or is used as a lookout.

Dentil – molding composed of equally spaced rectangular blocks; from the French for tooth.

Dormer – A small window with its own roof projecting from a sloping roof.

Eave – the projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Façade – the front face or elevation of a building.

Fanlight – semicircular window with radiating muntins, often placed over a door or window.

Fascia Board – trim covering rafter ends at the end of a roof pitch.

Finial – projecting ornamental element at the top of a gable, spire or pointed roof.

Frieze – the middle part of the deep flat boards under a classical cornice.

Gable Dormer – gable-ended structure with a window that projects from a roof.

Gable roof – a roof with a central ridgepole and one slope at each side. A gable is the triangular section of wall under the roof edge.

Gambrel roof – a roof with a central ridgepole and two sloping roof sections.

Hip roof – a roof with uniform slopes on all four sides of a building.

Hood – shallow overhang above a door or window.

Lattice – open work produced by interlacing of laths or other thin strips of wood used as screening, often on the base of a porch or on fencing.

Leaded glass window – composed of pieces of glass that are held in place with lead strips; the glass can be clear, colored, or stained.

Light – transparent portion of a window; also, single pane of glass.

Mansard roof – a roof having a double slope on all four sides, the lower slope being much steeper than the upper slope.

Meeting Rail – top member of lower sash and bottom member of upper sash in double-hung window.

Modillion – an ornamental horizontal block or bracket placed under the overhang of a cornice.

Mullion – a vertical divider in a window.

Muntin – the wood dividing strips between the panes or “lights” in a multi-paned window.

Newel – Decorative structural post at either end of a stair rail. The post at the top or bottom of a flight of stairs, supporting the handrail.

Newel Cap – Decorative element atop a newel.

Palladian Window – assembly of windows in which two lights flank one with an arched top.

Parapet – low wall or barrier railing at a balcony or roof edge.

Pediment – the triangular gable end of a roof; also, any similar crowning element used over doors and windows, usually triangular but may be curved.

Pier – load-bearing element that rises from a footing.

Pilaster – A shallow pillar attached to a wall, resembling a classical column; used commonly on windows and doors.

Portico – a columned entrance porch.

Preservation – 1. the protection of a material from physical deterioration or disintegration because of natural elements or human activity by various technical, scientific, or craft techniques. 2. the process of protection and enhancement of historic sites, structures, and objects.

Rail – horizontal structural member of a door or sash.

Raking Cornice – molding that follows the slope of a pediment or gable.

Reconstruction – the process of duplicating the original form, materials and appearance of vanished building or structure at a particular historical moment through historical research.

Rehabilitation – the act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those features which are historically significant.

Restoration – the process of product of returning an existing site, building, structure or object to its condition at a particular time in its history.

Riser – vertical part of a stair step.

Sash – the frame in which a window is set; may be moveable or fixed; may slide vertically (as in double-hung window) or pivot (as in casement window).

Sill – the lower horizontal member of a door frame, window frame or wall.

Soffit – the exposed underside of any overhead component of a building, such as the undersurface of an arch, cornice, eave, or stairway.

Spindled Frieze – band of spindles attached under the eaves of a porch.

Stile – vertical structural member of a door or sash.

Transom – windows or panels, usually operable, above a window or door.

Transom light – a small window over a door or another window; may be rectangular, fan-shaped or elliptical.

Tread – horizontal part of a stair step.

Turret – curved projection with windows, often topped with a conical roof.

Water Table – horizontal drip-edge that prevents water from running down a wall.

Wrought Iron – heating iron until it can be hand beaten and twisted into a design.

Source: Dictionary of Building Preservation, ed. Ward Bucher (John Wiley & Sons, 1996)



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