

# Historic Design Guidelines

City of Binghamton , New York

## FINAL REPORT

September 2011



 **Bergmann**  
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architects // engineers // planners

HERITAGE *strategies*

  
**City of  
Binghamton**  
*Restoring The Pride*



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## City of Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines

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# Chapter 4: Regulatory Process



## OVERVIEW

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The City of Binghamton has a long-standing commitment to historic preservation. The Commission on Architecture and Urban Design was established in 1964 and the City became a Certified Local Government in 1988. The City contains three Local Historic Districts and four National Register Historic Districts. Additionally, the City contains over 200 Local Landmarks, as well as individual properties listed on the National Register. The regulatory process associated with historic resources in the City focuses on those with local designations, whether landmarks or historic districts. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the Regulatory Process required for historic properties, sites, structures and neighborhoods within the City of Binghamton, including a summary of roles and responsibilities.

### Binghamton's Preservation Ordinance

In 1978 the City of Binghamton adopted Article XII, Landmarks Preservation Commission, which was amended and adopted in April 2010. In general, the purpose of this Ordinance is to:

- Protect and enhance the landmarks and historic districts, which represent Binghamton's heritage;
- Foster civic pride;
- Enhance Binghamton's attractiveness to visitors and support the local economy; and
- Ensure new and remodeled buildings in historic districts are harmonious.

The ordinance establishes the Binghamton Historic Preservation Commission, which serves as the Commission on Architecture and Urban Design (CAUD). The powers of the Commission, its membership, and specific responsibilities are detailed in the ordinance and include the designation of

Local Landmarks and Historic Districts, review of demolition applications for all properties over 40 years old, and the review of alterations and modifications to locally designated historic properties.

## Properties Subject to Review

The Commission on Architecture and Urban Design has the responsibility to review proposed exterior changes to all properties listed on the Local Landmarks list or that fall within the boundaries of a locally designated historic district. In addition, CAUD reviews demolition applications for any property within the City of Binghamton boundaries that is 40 years old or greater. See Chapter 1, Applicability for further information regarding Local Landmarks and Historic Districts subject to the requirements described herein.

## Levels of Designation

The National Register of Historic Places and local landmark and historic district designations are two very different programs that recognize and protect historic properties. Some historic properties and districts have both designations in the City of Binghamton. However, there is no direct correlation between National Register listing and local designation.

### National Register Designation

Whether an individual property or a district, National Register listing is primarily an honor, meaning that a property has been researched and evaluated according to established procedures and determined to be worthy of preservation for its historical value. The listing of a historic or archaeological property in the National Register does not obligate or restrict a private owner in any way unless the owner seeks any federal benefit such as a grant or tax credit. The National Register of Historic Places is overseen by the National Parks Service and serves as an official recognition by the federal government. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides a building, site, or district protection from any threats which involve the federal government or federal monies and may also afford access to some federal financial incentives.

### Local Landmark and District Designation

Landmark designations in Binghamton apply to individual buildings, structures, sites, or areas that are deemed to have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural value. Designation is an honor, meaning CAUD and the City believe the property deserves recognition and protection. Designation also indicates a specific level of local review is required prior to making exterior alterations or changes to ensure they are consistent with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Contrary to what many people believe about historic designation, local designations are subject to the highest level of review, as well as the highest level of protection against threats.



## REVIEW PROCEDURES

The City of Binghamton has identified a clear and comprehensive process for the review and approval of projects impacting locally designated historic properties. No work should be initiated until a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is issued. Impacted properties, types of projects requiring review, and a step-by-step overview of the process are described in this section.

*Please note, additional reviews by departments outside of Planning, Housing and Community Development (PHCD) and the Commission on Architecture and Urban Design (CAUD) may be required for your project. The summary of review procedures highlighted in this document is not intended to be comprehensive for all projects. Please refer to the City's Building Code and Zoning Ordinance for any additional requirements, or consult a representative from the City's Building Department.*

### Properties Requiring CAUD Review

Are you required to submit an application to CAUD?

- Is your property a Local Landmark?
- Is your property within the boundaries of the Rail Terminal Historic District?
- Is your property within the boundaries of the State and Henry Street Historic District?
- Is your property within the boundaries of the Court Street Historic District?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you are required to obtain a COA from CAUD before proceeding on a project that involves a change to the exterior of your property.

Refer to pages 3 and 4 for additional information associated with applicability of the Historic Design Guidelines.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**Historic Preservation Planner**  
Provides technical assistance and guidance to applicants and owners of historic properties. Conducts a preliminary review of applications to CAUD. Directs and leads all historic preservation planning efforts in the City.

**Commission on Architecture and Urban Design (CAUD)**  
Members oversee the establishment and preservation of historic landmarks and districts. Authorized by City ordinance to review exterior alterations to all Local Landmark buildings and properties within historic districts.

**Planning Commission**  
Members review proposed development and projects within the City, often serving as lead agency for SEQOR, which includes impacts to historic properties.

## Projects Requiring CAUD Review

Any project modifying the exterior of a Local Landmark or building within a Local Historic District is required to obtain a COA, regardless of whether a building permit is required. The following is a partial list of example projects that must be presented and approved by CAUD:

- Exterior painting
- Window or door replacement
- Fencing and walls
- Signage
- Awnings
- Additions or new construction
- Porches
- Modifications to building materials (including siding)
- Demolitions (all buildings over 40 years of age)

The following projects are not required to get CAUD approval:

- Any interior changes
- Site changes not visible from the public right-of-way
- Any changes to a building not listed as a Local Landmark or within the boundaries of a designated Local Historic District

## CAUD Review Process for Exterior Alterations

The following steps must be followed in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from CAUD. Failure to comply with these review procedures may result in project delays.

- ❑ **Meet with City Historic Preservation Planner** | The City's Historic Preservation Planner (HPP) will be the applicant's primary contact throughout the CAUD review process. The HPP is available to assist applicants' in preparing the application. They will also provide guidance on what might be considered acceptable by the Commission.
- ❑ **Fill out and submit the CAUD Design Review Application and supporting materials** | A copy of the application is included in Appendix 7 and is also available from the City of Binghamton Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development or on-line at the Department webpage. The application is intended to provide a basic understanding of the nature and intent of the proposed project. The specific submittal requirements will depend on scale of proposed project and can be discussed with the NPP prior to a formal submittal. Additional submittal requirements may include but are not limited to, product samples, product literature, architectural drawings, photographs, or any other information deemed necessary to make an informed decision. The completed application and all supporting materials should be submitted

to the City's Historic Preservation Planner. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for completion prior to submittal to CAUD.

- Review Staff Report** | After submittal and acceptance of the application, the HPP and other city staff members involved in the review of the proposed project will submit a report on the property to the Commission which will summarize the proposal and outline their findings. The HPP will typically visit the property prior to the development of the report to document existing conditions.
  - CAUD Project Review Meeting** | You will be notified when your project has been placed on the agenda for the monthly CAUD meeting. Although attendance at the meeting is not required, it is highly encouraged. At the meeting applicants have the opportunity to present their case to the Commission.
- CAUD Meeting Schedule**  
Meetings are held the last Tuesday of every month at 12:00 PM in the Planning Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall.
- Receive CAUD Ruling on the Project** | At the meeting CAUD will vote on the proposal. The Commission has four rulings they can issue: 1) Approval, 2) Approval with Conditions, 3) Tabling, or 4) Denial. See *explanations of CAUD Rulings, below*. If the project is Approved or Approved with Conditions, the applicant can proceed to the permitting phase of the project.
  - Apply for Building or Sign Permit** | Once an applicant has received a Certificate of Appropriateness from CAUD they can apply for their building or sign permit. A copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness should be presented as part of the permit application. A building or sign permit will NOT be issued without a Certificate of Appropriateness if your property is located within a historic district or is listed as a Local Landmark.

## Explanation of CAUD Rulings

The Commission will vote on all proposals and provide one of four rulings. Explanations for each ruling, as well as next steps after the ruling, are summarized below:

**Approval** | The project may proceed as proposed. Notice will be given to applicant, other necessary parties, and a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) will be issued. Staff will monitor progress to ensure project is implemented as proposed.

**Conditional** | The project may proceed with conditions or amendments identified and imposed by the Commission. The conditions must be followed, and staff will monitor project progress to ensure conditions are being followed. Notice will be given to applicant and a COA will be issued.

**Tabling** | The project is tabled for later consideration. This occurs when the Commission feels that it does not have enough information to make a ruling. The applicant will be notified of what additional

information the Commission is requesting before a decision can be made. The proposal will be scheduled for a subsequent meeting after the additional information is submitted to the Commission.

**Denial** | The project is found to be inappropriate based on the Commission's review and findings. Notice will be given to the applicant and other necessary parties detailing the reason for the denial. If a proposal is denied, there are four options that could be pursued:

- Modify application and resubmit to CAUD;
- Identify another project or use for the property;
- Abandon the project; or
- Appeal to City Council within 15 days of notification.

### Determination of No Historical Significance

In addition to reviewing and approving projects, the CAUD is responsible for determining the historical significance of buildings within the City of Binghamton. Any requests for a permit involving the demolition of a building over 40 years old must obtain a Determination of No Historical Significance from CAUD. Similar to project reviews for historic properties, a demolition permit will not be granted without a positive determination from the Commission. The overall process is similar to the process for Design Review projects, with the final step being an application for a Demolition Permit. A copy of the application is included in Appendix 8 and is also available from the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development or on-line at the Department webpage.

### Local Resources to Inform Preservation Projects

Although the City of Binghamton and Commission on Architecture and Urban Design (CAUD) have review authority and are an important resource for property owners undertaking a historic preservation project, there are a number of other local resources that can provide technical assistance to help individuals make informed decisions about their projects. Individuals should also consider soliciting information and assistance from the following local resources:

- Architects and designers;
- Local historians and individuals associated with history museums;
- Contractors, particularly those trained in historic preservation work;
- Preservation Association of the Southern Tier (PAST);
- American Institute of Architects Southern New York;
- National Trust for Historic Preservation;
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and
- Historic Resource Center at the Binghamton Library.

Contact information associated with key organizations is listed in Appendix 9.

Section 2:  
Historic Preservation Guidelines

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# Chapter 5: Guidelines for Building Materials

The Guidelines for Building Materials include recommended solutions for addressing problems that commonly affect historic buildings as a result of deferred maintenance or the regular aging and deterioration of materials. The guidelines provide not only direction for maintaining and preserving materials, but also identify activities that may be harmful to historic materials and should be avoided.

Common Binghamton building materials covered in this chapter include:

- Masonry
- Metals
- Wood and Siding
- Paints and Coverings

As discussed in Section 1, guidelines and treatment approaches associated with each of these materials are formatted to be stand-alone handouts so information can be easily tailored to an individual project or request.

## Basic principles for preserving historic structures

- Identify character-defining features and retain these features when repairing, maintaining or altering a building
- Repair rather than replace whenever possible
- Consider all alternatives when replacing building features
- Replace features deteriorated beyond repair with new features that match original
- Replace missing features with new features that match original
- Use contractors and craftspeople experienced in historic materials work

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## MASONRY

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Binghamton has a large concentration of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial, civic, and ecclesiastic buildings that use masonry in a variety of creative ways. Most common are stone, brick and concrete block structures. In the storefronts of downtown brick and occasional stone combine to form ornate cornices, bulging pilasters, and arched windows. Many of buildings near the courthouse square use various stones in a variety of finishes for their exteriors. Many of Binghamton's buildings can even be dated by the particular masonry used in their: foundation walls, natural rubble stone, brick, concrete block, and cast concrete.



*The Binghamton Press Building is distinguished by its high contrast limestone and red brick exterior.*



*Christ Episcopal Church uses stone for its window tracery, walls, buttresses, and even its steeple roof.*



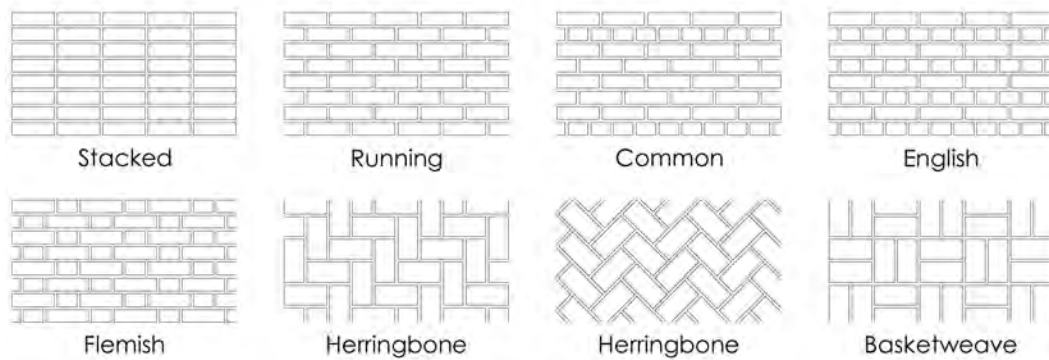
*The delicate balance of brick and stone work make the Proctor Building highly unique.*

Masonry is the most durable of all historic building materials. Although it requires little maintenance, general upkeep is necessary. Deterioration is most commonly the result of water damage, inappropriate repairs and the use of abrasive cleaning methods. Regular and basic inspections should be made to masonry buildings to look for mortar deterioration resulting from water penetration, growth of vegetation on building surfaces and cracks from building settlement. In addition to its use as an overall building material, masonry is commonly seen on site features in Binghamton, including walls.

### General Guidelines

- Existing masonry materials should be repaired not replaced.
- Documentary evidence should be used to reproduce highly-deteriorated or missing historical architectural elements.
- New masonry features should not be constructed or added to a building if they appear to be falsely historic or are generally incompatible with the building size, mass, color, or scale.

- The removal or rebuilding of masonry walls should be avoided if it will adversely impact the structure's historic integrity.
- Original masonry exterior surfaces should be retained or restored if they have been covered by alternative materials.
- Exterior insulation and finish systems, such as Dryvit, or other artificial materials, including vinyl siding, should not be installed over masonry. Exposed masonry should remain exposed.
- Historic brick bonding patterns, examples shown below, should be maintained.



## Mortar

- Mortar joints deteriorate faster than masonry and require periodic repointing.
- Unsound mortar should be removed with a hand tool narrower than the joint. Power tools should not be used as they can scar adjacent masonry. Unsound mortar should be removed to a depth of two-and-one-half times the width of the joint.
- Only joints that are unsound should be repointed. It is more important to leave sound joints alone, than to remove all joints in an effort to achieve a uniform appearance. The large-scale removal of mortar joints can cause significant damage to historic masonry.
- When repointing, mortar joints should match in color, texture, size, profile, and hardness. The new installation should match the existing installation. Install samples for approval until a proper match is achieved.
- A mortar analysis should be completed to determine the composition of historic mortar. Composition of replacement mortar should be compatible with historic masonry and equivalent to, or softer, than the original. Modern mortars are typically harder than their historic counterparts and can cause moisture to get trapped in the joint. Use no stronger than a commercial class N

### Repointing

The replacement of a mortar joint. Typical life cycle of a mortar joint is one-hundred years.

cement mortar when historic analysis is not possible. Never use synthetic caulking compounds to repoint historic masonry.

## Painting

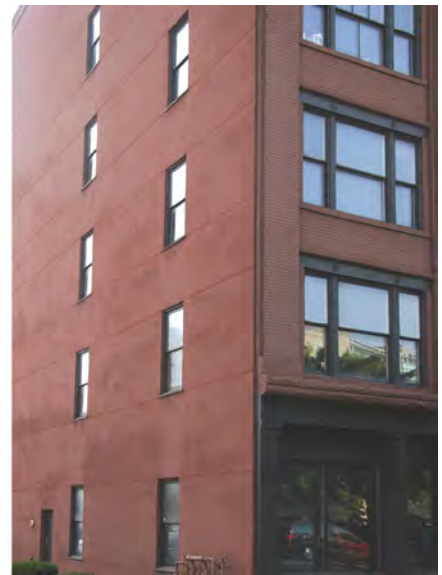
- Do not paint masonry that has not historically been painted.
- Previously painted masonry should be painted a color that is similar to the existing or historically appropriate.
- Only masonry paint should be used. When prepping surface for painting, only removed deteriorated paint to the next sound layer. Paint firmly adhering to the masonry serves as a protective coating and should be left intact.
- Due to the likelihood of lead in historic paint, all necessary precautions should be taken when removing or working with historic paint. Federal, State and local regulations should be reviewed and adhered to for the protection of workers and proper disposal.



*This residence's porch has been compromised through the removal of original brick and replacement with incompatible modern red brick.*



*The bricks of this building have begun to spall significantly because of inappropriate cleaning methods and exposure of the originally painted brick.*



*The covering of the exterior wall of this structure with stucco is not historically appropriate.*

## Cleaning, Repair and Replacement

- As a general rule, it is better to underclean historic masonry than overclean. Clean masonry only when heavy soiling causes deterioration
- Cleaning should always be done using the gentlest means possible, such as low pressure water spray (100-400 psi) and natural bristle brushes. Metal brushes should not be used to clean historic masonry.

- Sandblasting or high pressure wash (over 400 psi) should never be used as they will erode the masonry surface and dislodge mortar. The brick used in early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century is considerably softer than modern day brick. Eroding the surface exposes the soft inner core and causes deterioration.
- A variety of chemical cleaners are available for use on masonry. When applying chemical treatments, ensure that all manufacturer’s instructions are explicitly followed.
- Do not clean masonry buildings with deteriorated mortar joints. Due to the risk of water penetration, deteriorated joints should be repointed prior to cleaning.
- Masonry cleaning should be completed when there is no risk for freezing temperatures for at least three days. Optimally, the temperature should be above 50 degrees.
- Masonry repair and replacement can be very complex and should only be undertaken by experienced craftsman skilled in masonry preservation techniques.
- When the infill or replacement of historic bricks is necessary, matching historic bricks should be used to the extent possible. When use of new replacement bricks is necessary, they should match the existing in color, size, and shape.
- Horizontal surfaces, such as the top of a cornice, are the most common location of deterioration as they are most susceptible to water penetration. Horizontal surfaces should receive sealant to prevent water infiltration. Never use sealant in a vertical joint.



*The Security Mutual Building is a local example of a masonry structure that has been well maintained.*

## METALS

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The use of metal on historic buildings is commonly seen as part of an architectural feature, as opposed to an entire building. In Binghamton, prominent and typical metal features include commercial storefronts, railings, light fixtures, fences, and canopy hoods. The two most common metals used in Binghamton are copper and cast iron. Many of Binghamton's most prominent buildings incorporate metal in prominent aesthetic and functional features.



*The Perry Building's cast iron façade is both decorative and structural.*



*Copper adorns the extravagant dome and pediment of the Broome County Court House.*



*The rare cast iron roof cresting of the Phelps Mansion is a character defining element.*

While metal is a durable material, weathering and corrosion can contribute to its deterioration over a prolonged period. Metal features should be inspected regularly for surface deterioration. Cast iron and steel elements should have a coating for protection from water and weather elements. Rust and discoloration of metal is a sign of internal deterioration.

### General Guidelines

- Metal architectural features that contribute to the historic character or integrity of a building should not be removed. Do not remove deteriorated features and replace them with an element that lacks the same visual integrity.
- Do not expose metal features that have been previously coated and require protection from the elements.
- Paint previously coated features using historically appropriate paint colors. Use a paint made especially for the type of metal surface you are coating.
- Do not apply paint coatings to metals that, historically, were meant to be exposed. Such metals include copper, bronze, and stainless steel.
- New metal features should be compatible to the historic building in size, scale, material, and color.



*This iron gate and fence has deteriorated, as evidenced by rusting, from lack of proper painting maintenance.*



*The original bronze railings of this building were replaced by inappropriate steel railings.*



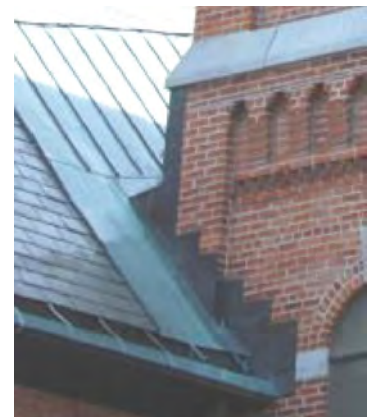
*Rust staining is evident on the roof of this structure, resulting from deferred maintenance of its metal roof features.*

## Deterioration and Replacement

- Small patches of deterioration should be first addressed with sanding, priming and painting.
- Replacement should only be considered when a feature exhibits significant deterioration and cannot be repaired. Replacement should be limited, with all sound portions left intact.
- When an in-kind replacement is not possible, a visually and physically compatible substitute should be used. Synthetic replacement materials, when used, should have equal or better durability than the original material.
- Replace missing metal features with new elements based on historical or physical evidence. Replicate existing features in size, shape, texture and appearance.

## Cleaning

- Only clean metal features when it will not result in damage. Cleaning treatments should be tested in an inconspicuous area.
- Soft metals, such as tin, lead, copper and zinc, should be cleaned with appropriate chemical methods.
- Hard metals, such as wrought iron and steel, may be cleaned with a wire brush. When further cleaning is required, low pressure grit blasting may be used.
- Do not damage the historic color, texture, or patina of metal features when cleaning.
- After cleaning, reapplication of a coating system or paint is necessary. Failure to reapply a protective coating will result in accelerated deterioration.



*The United Methodist Church has maintained its historic character through the in-kind replacement and repair of its exposed copper flashing and gutters.*

## WOOD SIDING AND TRIM

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Wood siding is used as the outer layer of a building, intended to provide a protective layer to prevent the deterioration of underlying structural elements. In addition to siding wood is commonly used in Binghamton for various trim, porch railings, floors, and columns, decorative brackets, roof eaves, decorative carvings, bargeboard and half timber work. Wood is also a common material associated with historic windows and doors; due to their complexity, specific guidelines for these features are identified in separate sections.



*This Riverside Dr home is distinguished by its elaborate half-timber work and large bargeboards.*



*This Chapin St home utilizes wood in almost every possible way, from porch columns and brackets to cornices and eaves.*



*This Main St home uses wood in geometric Stick Style work, roof brackets, and elaborate Gothic Revival bargeboard.*

When well-maintained, historically appropriate siding materials, such as wood clapboard and shingles, can last indefinitely. Deterioration of wood materials and features is typically the result of water caused by deteriorated paint or roof and drainage issues. Water damage and related rotting can lead to a variety of other issues, such as insect infestation and mold. Modern synthetic sidings, such as vinyl and aluminum, are not appropriate for historic buildings, especially on primary facades.

### General Guidelines

- Wood features, including siding, decorative cornices, and trim, should not be removed as they contributed to the overall historic character of a building.
- Wood elements should be inspected regularly for peeling paint, loose joints, water penetration, rot, and infestation. It is much easier and cost-effective to address a problem early.



*The integrity and character of the Greek Revival cottage at left has been severely compromised by the replacement of its original wood siding with inappropriate synthetic shingles.*

## Siding

- Damaged wood siding should be repaired rather than replaced.
- Retention of wood siding is always preferred over synthetic siding options.
- Wood siding should be oriented horizontally unless there is historic documentation otherwise.
- When replacement of siding materials is required, use compatible contemporary wood siding which has the same visual appearance as historic siding.
- Artificial stone, asphalt shingles and vertical plywood siding are not appropriate materials for historic buildings.
- Synthetic sidings, such as vinyl and aluminum, are not appropriate on historic buildings. These materials should never be used on a primary façade of a historic building and are not recommended for secondary facades. Synthetic sidings do not deteriorate, limiting the knowledge of what is happening to materials underneath the siding. Synthetic siding also prevents proper ventilation of the wall, causing water to condense and build up on the interior.
- Sealant should be installed at vertical joints where wood meets a dissimilar material. Do not apply sealant to horizontal wood joints because it will trap moisture and cause deterioration.

## Paint

- Refer to Paint and Coatings section of City of Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines for more information.
- Due to the likelihood of lead in historic paint, all necessary precautions should be taken when removing or working with historic paint. Federal, State and local regulations should be reviewed and adhered to for the

## What You Need to Know About Lead Paint

Many buildings constructed before 1978 are at risk of containing paint that contains high levels of lead. Lead from paint, chips and dust can pose serious health hazards if not properly taken care of. Federal law requires contractors disturbing painted surfaces in homes, schools and child care facilities built before 1978 to be certified in working with lead paint.

## Renovating a Building With Lead-Based Paint

- Contain the work area. Seal off work area or temporarily move out of the structure while work is being done. Cover floors and furniture.
- Avoid renovation methods that create dust. Do not use a belt-sander, propane torch, heat gun, dry scraper or dry sandpaper.
- Turn off and seal HVAC systems to prevent dust from entering vents.
- Clean up thoroughly, including using a HEPA vacuum to clean up dust and wet wiping and mopping.

Call 1-800-424-LEAD for additional information on what to do when tackling a renovation project.



protection of workers and proper disposal. See Appendix 9 for additional resources on lead paint.

- Wood surfaces should be cleaned of all loose paint, dirt and debris prior to painting.
- Removal of paint from wood surfaces by the gentlest means possible, such as hand scraping, hand sanding, and mild chemical strippers. Do not use propane, sandblasting, waterblasting or electric sanders to remove paint.
- Abrasive methods, including sandblasting and water-blasting, should not be used. These techniques can physically damage wood and cause long-term moisture problems.
- Damaged materials should have their cause of deterioration identified and treated before they are covered with paint or other coating.

### Sandblasting

*Surface treatment in which steel grit, sand, or other abrasive material is blown against an object to produce a roughened surface or to remove dirt.*

### Cleaning, Repair and Replacement

- Damaged wood should be repaired with epoxy wood consolidants to the extent possible.
- Repair flashing, gutters and cracks in siding to reduce deterioration of historic wood siding and other elements as a result of water penetration.
- Only wood features that are deteriorated beyond repair should be replaced. Historic materials should be retained to the greatest extent possible.
- In-kind materials should be used wherever possible when replacement is required. If substitute materials are necessary, they should convey the same visual appearance of the original feature, including size, shape and texture.
- Do not strip historically painted wood features to bare wood, leaving them in an unfinished state.



*The buildings depicted to the right showcase extremes relating to wood. The top image shows a structure with diminished historic character due to inappropriate siding replacement, window and door replacement, and a two story porch addition. On the bottom, the entryway of a Greek Revival home has been beautifully restored and sympathetically amended with a well designed stoop.*

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## PAINT AND COATINGS

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Paint is typically the final layer of finish applied to the exterior of a historic building. In addition to defining a building through its color, paint has the functional use of protecting the underlying material which it is coating. Painted exteriors are common in the City of Binghamton. Another historic building coating, stucco, is not as common in Binghamton. Stucco is a form of mortar used to give walls a smooth, finished appearance and protect underlying materials from exposure.



*The Dunk House's distinctive Gothic Revival exterior has been preserved through careful painting.*



*This Court Street commercial building's ornate brickwork is highlighted and protected by an appropriate paint job.*



*This Vincent Street Tudor Revival home is distinguished by its stucco façade's high degree of integrity.*

Painted surfaces should be checked and maintained annually to prevent deterioration of both the paint surface and the underlying material. Paints made for interior use should not be used on exterior surfaces as they will degrade quickly. Specially-formulated exterior paints should be used to paint and coat exterior features.

### General

- All surfaces should be clean and dry before painting and all surface areas should be primed. Primer should always be used as a basecoat to help combat deterioration caused by moisture. Generally a primer coat and two finish coats are recommended.
- When painting over existing paint, the same type of paint should be used or is likely to fail. For example an oil-based paint should be used over an oil-based paint.
- Wood porch elements, such as railings and floorboards, should not be left exposed and should be painted to protect them from weathering and exposure to moisture.
- Hardware should not be painted.

- Do not paint masonry surfaces that have not historically or previously been painted.
- When painting wood windows and doors, remove hardware prior to painting and reinstall after paint is fully dry.
- Gutters, downspouts, storm doors, storm windows and fire escapes should be painted to match the roof or trim color of a house. This reduces the visibility of these features.

## Colors

- Appropriate historic colors are always encouraged.
- Historically appropriate paint colors may be determined using photographs, books, and color palettes from commercial paint manufacturers.
- One or two paint colors is appropriate for most buildings, particularly residences. In certain instances, for example on a Queen Anne structure with distinctive detailing, three or more colors may be appropriate.
- Appropriate paint colors vary depending on the style of a building, period of construction and materials. See sidebar for guidelines for color selection that may be considered in concert with historic documentation.



*This home on Fayette Street showcases appropriate use of color to highlight its decorative elements.*

## Removal

- Never remove paint from wood surfaces using abrasive methods such as sandblasting.
- Due to the likelihood of lead in historic paint, all necessary precautions should be taken when removing or working with historic paint. Federal, State and local regulations should be reviewed and adhered to for the protection of workers and proper disposal. See Sidebar in Wood Siding and Trim section for additional information.

## General Guide to Appropriate Historic Paint Colors for Key Architectural Style

**Federal & Greek Revival**  
Neutral, muted colors such as white, cream and pale grey. Wood trim should be similar, non-contrasting color. Green on window shutters.

**Gothic Revival, Italianate and Second Empire**  
Pale earth tones including grey, brown and light red-brown hues. Wood trim in similar muted colors, typically several shades darker than primary color.

**High Victorian and Queen Anne**  
Range of vibrant colors, including greens, oranges, citrine and olive. Trim done in starkly contrasting colors, typically darker hues. Two and three toned trim creates depth and relief.

**Shingle**  
Deep, natural red, brown and green tones for main body and trim work.

**Colonial Revival**  
Light pastel colors for main structure, typically with white trim and green shutters. Common pastel hues include white, light blue, grey, and yellow.

# Chapter 6: Guidelines for Building Features

The Guidelines for Building Features discusses treatments for individual building features found on residential and commercial structures in the City of Binghamton. These guidelines provide an approach for the maintenance, restoration, repair, and replacement of character-defining building elements. This section also discusses how to sensitively incorporate contemporary building needs, such as accessibility and sustainability, into a historic building project.

Building features discussed in this chapter include:

- Windows
- Doors
- Roofs
- Porches and Porticos
- Chimneys
- Accessibility
- Sustainability

As discussed in Section 1, the guidelines and treatment approaches associated with each of these topic areas are formatted to be stand-alone handouts so the information can be easily tailored to an individual project or request.

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# WINDOWS

Windows are one of the most recognizable features on a building façade. Like doors, windows serve a functional purpose and also contribute to the overall character and appearance of a building, specifically as they relate to a building's proportion, mass, and rhythm. Historic windows in the City of Binghamton are varied with common types including traditional double-hung windows in varying configurations, as well as bay, fixed, casement, dormer and decorative windows.



*This Oak Street Greek Revival cottage is distinguished by its historic six over six double-hung windows.*



*The rhythm of fenestration and thin, dark window frames of this Henry Street building extol its Neo-Classical Styling.*



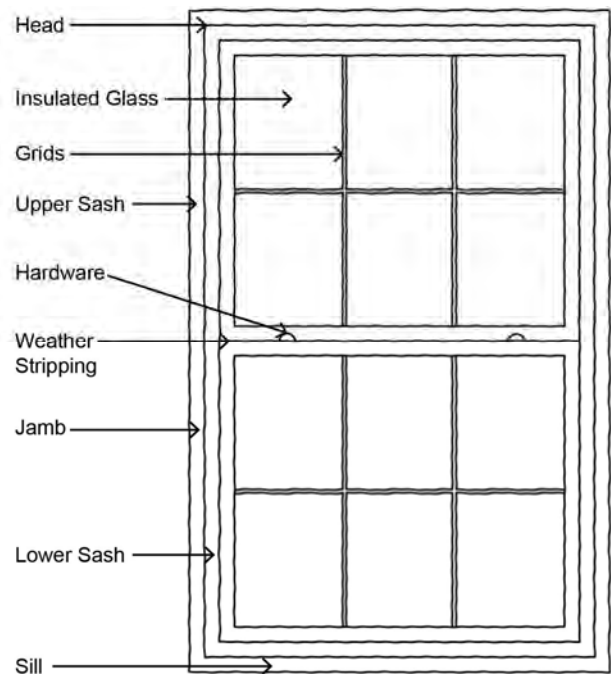
*The Bundy Museum's diverse fenestration and multi-paned windows are integral to its Queen Anne styling.*

Historic windows can last indefinitely, particularly when they receive regular maintenance and care. Historic windows should not be replaced unless they are deteriorated beyond repair. Due to their design in component parts, they can be disassembled and repaired. Historic windows are generally better constructed than contemporary windows, which have a limited lifespan. Weatherization of historic windows can provide the same energy efficiency as the installation of replacement windows.

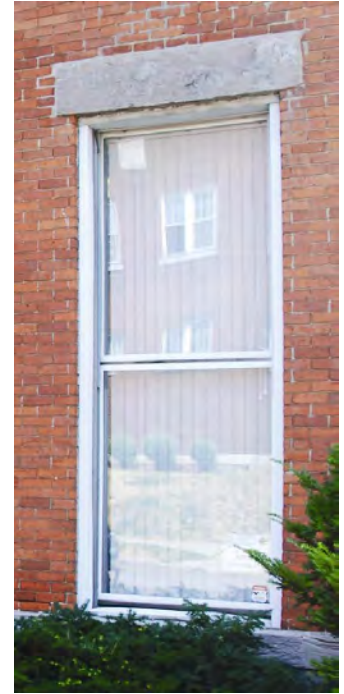
## General

- The introduction of new window openings should be avoided. When required, new window openings should be located on a secondary elevation.

## Parts of a 6 over 6 Double Hung Window



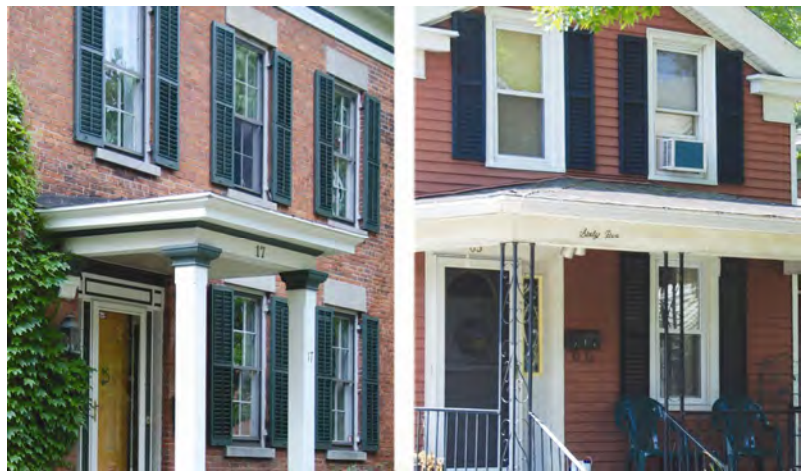
- Permanently blocking existing window openings should be avoided.
- The number, size, and configuration of windows should be retained.
- New interior floors should not be installed that block the glazed area of a window.
- Do not cover historic window frames or trim with vinyl or metal siding material.
- Do not cover or paint the glass in windows, including transoms, sidelights or fanlights.
- Window pane configurations should be retained. If previously altered, they should be returned to original configuration whenever feasible.
- The overall size and shape of window openings should not be altered.
- The installation of exterior storm windows over historic windows is an acceptable treatment. Sash sizes and color should match the historic window. Interior storm windows are preferred as they preserve the exterior appearance of the building.
- Do not alter a window frame to accommodate an air conditioning unit. Window mounted air conditioning units are discouraged on primary facades.



*This vinyl clad single paned replacement window clashes with the original brick and stone lintel.*

## Repair and Replacement

- Perform routine window maintenance, such as repainting, weather-stripping, hardware repair and frame repairs.
- Windows should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Replacement should only occur when windows are deteriorated beyond repair.
- Damage to one component of a historic window does not require the removal of the entire window. Repair wood windows by splicing, patching and reinforcing existing materials.
- Repair metal windows by removing light rust using the gentlest means possible. Do not



*The residence on the left has preserved historic shutters and hardware which complement the original window sash. The character of the residence on the right has been compromised with replacement windows and inoperable vinyl shutters.*



burn rust off as this can distort the metal.

- Window specialists should be consulted prior to beginning work on any sizable window repair project.
- Remove excess layers of paint, by chemical stripping or hand scraping, to improve window operation.
- If window replacement is necessary, new windows should match the originals as closely as possible with respect to materials, configuration, operation and dimension.

## Shutters

- Shutters should only be used when their historic presence can be documented through physical evidence or photographs.
- Repair shutters with in-kind materials. If repair is not possible, replacement shutters should match the visual appearance, materials and configuration of the original.
- Replacement shutters should measure the full height and width of the opening, should be constructed of appropriate historic materials, and should be mounted so they are operable with appropriate hardware.

## Window Repair Versus Replacement

A great debate in the world of historic preservation is window repair versus replacement.

Windows are a dominant part of historic buildings, helping to define the overall character. The visual impact of new, replacement windows can be quite dramatic. The debate almost always focuses on energy efficiency and cost. **HERE ARE SOME FACTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Most older windows, especially wood windows, can be easily repaired by a contractor. Older windows perform very well when maintained.
- Most older windows can be made energy efficient by sealing gaps with caulk, replacing glazing compound, fixing broken glass, repairing loose parts and installing weather stripping.
- Replacement windows are not truly “maintenance free”. They have a short life expectancy of less than 20 years.
- Old windows can last 100+ years.
- Don’t think the entire window always needs to be replaced. Sometimes just individual components need to be replaced.
- Replacement windows cost between \$700 and \$1,000 each, on average. Restoring an existing window and adding storm windows costs between \$150 and \$750 per window, on average.
- The minimal energy savings associated with new replacement windows, on average, takes 20 to 40 years to recoup.

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# DOORS

Doorways are an important feature of a historic building, typically the first architectural element that one comes into direct contact with. They are both functional and decorative. They contribute to the overall style and character of the exterior of the structure, and set the tone for what is to follow in the interior. A doorway is not just the door itself, but the detailing, windows, and treatments that surround the door. As depicted below, doorways in Binghamton range from ornate and complex, to basic and utilitarian.

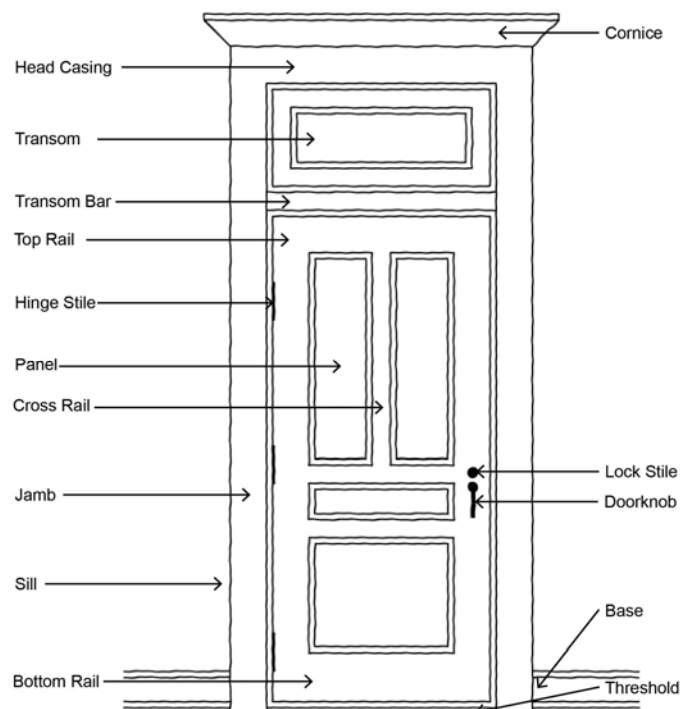


Representative images of historically intact doorways and entries found within the City of Binghamton.

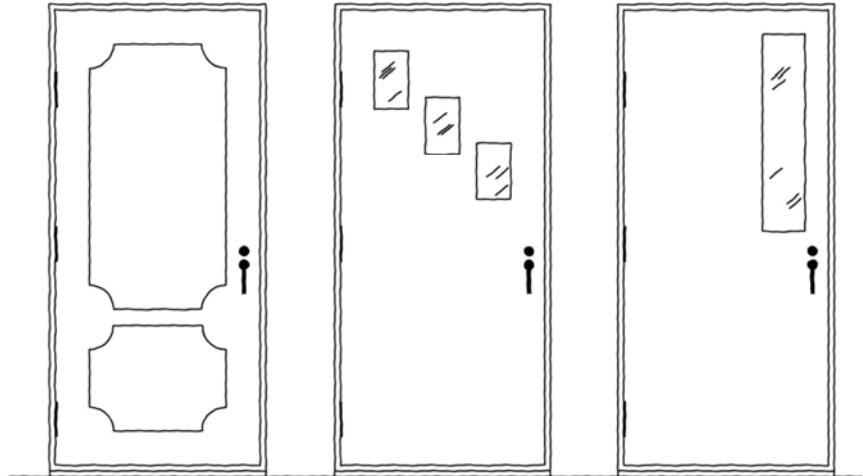
The functionality of doors is often the primary cause of their rapid deterioration. Heavy use and small problems, such as sticking doors and worn finishes, can lead to more serious deterioration over time. Proper and regular maintenance is important to ensure the historic doors are preserved. Regular maintenance can be as simple as cleaning, care of hardware, limited paint removal, and application of protective coatings.

## General

- Features associated with a doorway that contribute to the architectural integrity of the building should be retained. This includes transoms, fanlights, sidelights, hardware, hoods, columns, and any other features present. Do not add these elements to a door when there is no historic precedent.
- Door pane configurations should be retained. If previously altered, they should be returned to original configuration whenever feasible.



- Do not fill in or cover historic door openings.
- Do not paint door hardware.
- Screen and storm doors should be avoided. When necessary, wood storm frames are preferred. Metal screen and storm doors should be avoided to the extent practicable.



*The screen and storm door styles depicted above are typically not appropriate for a historic building.*

## Repair and Replacement

- Doors should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible.
- When a door is damaged beyond repair, replacement doors should match the original in dimension, materials, operation and design.
- Non-original, non-historic doors should be replaced with new doors appropriate to the age and era of the building.
- Avoid decreasing the size of the door opening to accommodate modern stock doors. The size and shape of doorways should always be maintained.
- Flush doors that lack paneling are not appropriate for most historic buildings.
- Do not replace historic double-leaf doors with a single door.



*On the left, the front door of a transitional Greek Revival has been compromised by installation of an inappropriate aluminum door, unproportional sidelights, and the replacement of the original fanlight transom with a piece of wood.*

*On the right, the character of a Second Empire commercial building was restored with appropriately designed and detailed entryways. The use of large sidelights and transoms, grand glass paneled doors, mahogany woodwork, and brass hardware, captures the essence of the building.*

## ROOFING AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

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The roof can arguably be considered the most critical feature of any building. When thinking about a roof, it is equally important to consider the other building elements that contribute to the overall roof system, including drains, downspouts, and gutters. They serve a functional purpose while also serving as an important design element. Historic buildings in the City of Binghamton showcase the diversity of roofing systems in materials, shape, height, and decorative elements. Steeply pitched roofs are commonly seen on religious institutions, while residential homes have a variety of styles and materials associated with various periods of development.



*This home on Campbell Road has a new cedar shake roof and copper step flashing which are appropriate to its Norman Revival styling.*



*The proper maintenance of West Presbyterian Church's steep slate roofs and built-in gutters has helped to preserve its beautiful stonework.*



*The Phelps Mansion's character defining roofline showcases how ornamental roof elements contribute to the overall character and style of a building.*

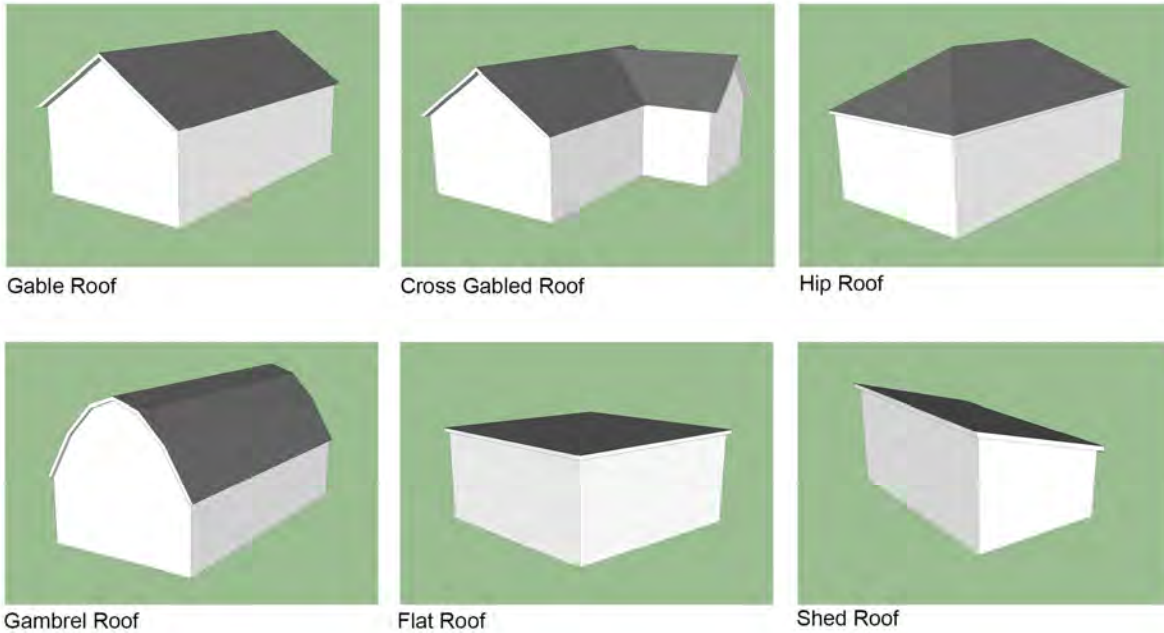
The most important design, maintenance and repair consideration for roofs is providing a weather-tight roof and properly functioning drainage system. When a roof system is not properly maintained, it can cause significant damage both on the exterior and on interior systems. Unfortunately, damage to concealed building structures can go undetected for years, and can be costly once identified. Water filtration is the cause of most issues associated with roof systems, contributing to the rotting of wood, rusting of metal, and deterioration of masonry. Regular and ongoing maintenance is critical to the preservation of building materials.

### General

- Roofs and roof elements that are significant to the character of a building should be preserved. This includes roof form, shape, materials and decorative features, including towers, dormers, chimneys, and finials.
- Only roof elements that are not historic should be removed.

- Deteriorated roof features that require replacement should be replaced with in-kind features that match the material, form, shape, color, and size of the original.

### Common Roof Styles in Binghamton



### Gutters and Downspouts

- Trim overhanging tree branches when they touch roofs or gutters.
- Missing gutters and downspouts should be replaced to avoid damage to walls, the building foundation, trim and interiors.
- When required, new gutters and downspouts should match the existing historic gutters and downspouts in size, configuration, color and finish.
- Historic building details should not be impacted, covered or removed when new gutters or downspouts are installed.
- Gutters and downspouts may be added to a historic building, with no historic precedent, when the installation will prevent damage to other historic building materials and features.
- The style and material of new gutters and downspouts should be considerate of and appropriate to the historic roof characteristics, including roof edge, cornice, and trim. Half-round gutters and downspouts are generally preferred.

## Rooftop Elements

- New roof-top additions should be avoided.
- Any new rooftop mechanical or service equipment necessary to be placed on the roof should be towards the rear to reduce visibility.
- Skylights should be flush with roof. Skylight window frames should match the color of the roof. Skylights should not be visible on the primary façade.
- Dormers should not be installed on primary facades if they were not historically part of the building.
- New dormers constructed on a secondary façade should be appropriately scaled to maintain dominant roof form.
- Paint roof vents to match the color of the historic roofing material.
- See subsection on Chimneys in Chapter 6 for design guidelines specific to chimneys.



*The deterioration of the roof and gutters of this building has caused roof elements to have significant corrosion issues in addition to water damage to the brick wall below.*

## Maintenance and Repairs

- Gutters and downspouts should be cleaned of debris every fall and spring.
- Deteriorated sections of roofing should be repaired through selective replacement rather than a complete roof replacement.
- When faced with a leaking roof, protect materials with temporary fixes, such as plywood or tarps, until permanent repairs can be made. Temporary fixes can help slow deterioration of surrounding building materials.

## Replacement and Reconstruction

- Replace historic roofing with in-kind materials whenever possible.
- When replacing materials with a substitute material, they should be visually and physically compatible with the remaining historic materials.
- Adjacent building elements, including chimneys, trim, and gable windows, should be carefully protected when replacing all or portions of a historic roof.

- Historic roof materials are preferred to modern, synthetic materials. However, if modern materials must be used, they should closely match the original in color, texture and profile. There are materials being developed that closely replicate historic materials, including slate and wood. The use of these materials should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- When replacing a historic metal roof, copper, and terne metal are appropriate replacement materials. When painted, terne metal can last upwards of 90 years.
- Replacement roofs should generally reflect the character of the original roof. For example if an original metal roof had vertical emphasis, replacement shingles with a horizontal emphasis should not be used.
- New roofing should never be applied over old roofing.
- Reconstruct missing roof features using physical evidence or historical documentation. When evidence is not sufficient, design new roofs and roof elements to be compatible with the architectural character of the building.



*This distinctive Romanesque tower was restored with new copper ridging and matched slates, along with the relining of its built-in gutter.*



*While the cornice of the building has been restored, the integrity of its roof has been compromised through the improperly installed skylight, asphalt shingles, and removal of its roof ridging.*



## PORCHES AND PORTICOS

Porches are a significant character-defining feature of historic residential buildings in Binghamton. The preservation, or loss, of porches on historic buildings can dramatically change the character of an entire street or neighborhood. Similarly, porticos are prominent of numerous noteworthy non-residential structures in Binghamton and also contribute to the overall character of the streetscape and individual buildings. Porches and porticos are an important transitional space on a building where the exterior space and interior space intersect, and are one of the most frequently altered features on a historic building.



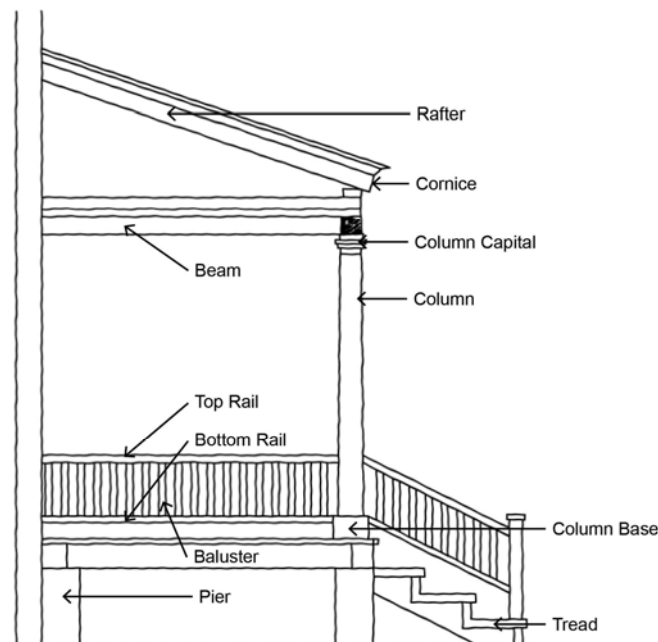
*This Chapin Street apartment building's distinctive pedimented portico is part of its unique Arts and Crafts design.*



*The House on Main Street showcases ornate Italianate ironwork throughout its large wrap-around porch.*



*This Arts and Crafts Foursquare home on St. John Avenue has a large, simply elegant asymmetrical front porch.*



Typically, a porch or portico contains common architectural elements, such as columns, a pediment, stairs, or pilasters. Often, the features of the porch or portico reflect the architectural style and treatment that is prevalent on the remainder of the building. Porches and porticos contribute the architectural integrity of a building and should be preserved. Often constructed of wood, porches can deteriorate quickly due to exposure to the elements. This is especially true in Binghamton due to the weather cycle. Regular maintenance and upkeep is necessary to address deterioration before it escalates to a large-scale issue.

## General

- Historic porches and entry features should not be removed. Porch features should be repaired, not replaced.
- Existing porches should not be enclosed to create extra living space.
- Porches should not be added to a primary façade if the building did not historically have a porch or portico.
- Do not add ornamentation or decoration to porch structure if it was not historically a part of the porch or is not consistent with style of the building.
- When a door hood is present in lieu of a full porch, it should be retained as it is a character-defining element.



*This new portico, while replicating some historic details, falls short in its proportions, arrangement and railings.*



*This primary facade of this Italianate double has been compromised by the addition of an inappropriately designed and placed porch.*



*This High Gothic Revival style porch, was fully restored using photographic evidence, and in-kind materials.*

## Repair and Replacement

- Repair of deteriorated parts is always preferred over replacement.
- Limited replacement of parts is always preferred over comprehensive replacement of the entire porch.
- Any replacement elements should be compatible with remaining porch, including materials, design, scale, level of detail and color.
- When repair of materials becomes impossible due to scale of deterioration, the porch should be reproduced with original as a model. Replacement porch should be constructed in same style and with same materials.
- Replacement railings and balustrades should match the original to the extent feasible.

- Replacement elements should be the same material as the original. A wood railing and balustrade should not be replaced with wrought-iron, for example.

### Porch Steps

- Deteriorated steps should be replaced with in-kind materials.
- Replacement steps should have the same dimensions as original.
- Historic stone steps should only be replaced when the stone is no longer usable or creates a safety hazard.
- Rock salt or halite should not be used to melt snow and ice on stone or brick steps. Calcium magnesium is an alternative to traditional deicing salts.

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# CHIMNEYS

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Chimneys are one of the most prominent features of many historic homes. While serving a critical function of expelling smoke and fumes from fireplaces and furnaces, chimneys were often highly integral to the overall design of the house and roofscape. Many masons in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century used the chimney as a showcase of their work through elaborate brick and stone designs. Nevertheless, chimneys can develop both aesthetic and functional issues if not properly maintained.



*This Queen Anne style home on Main Street has a distinctive stone and partially enclosed chimney.*



*This Virginia Avenue home's prominent multi-tiered chimney is a signature element of its Tudor Revival style.*



*This Dutch Colonial Revival on Laurel Avenue reveals its Arts and Crafts style influence through its broad stone and brick chimney.*

## General

- Chimneys should be inspected annually. Ideally, inspections should be conducted from the roof during dry weather. Preliminary inspections can take place from the ground.
- Missing chimney materials should be matched in-kind.
- Cap unused historic chimneys with an appropriate material, such as flagstone, to keep water out. The capping material should not be visible from the ground.
- Contemporary cap flashing is not appropriate for historic buildings.
- Where chimney caps are a visible design detail, replace the historic materials to match existing.

## Repair and Replacement

- Chimney repairs and replacement should always be done by a professional experienced in historic masonry.
- Retain ornamental brickwork, corbelling and other decorative features during chimney repair.
- Stucco veneers can show cracks and holes over time. These should be patched immediately as they can quickly lead to larger cracks where moisture can accumulate.
- Evidence of movement, leaning, or cracking should be addressed immediately. These issues can lead to other material and architectural problems.
- If a chimney appears unstable, a structural engineer should be consulted to determine an appropriate treatment and course of action.
- Where severe structural issues are present, causing a safety concern or building issue, the chimney should be documented, demolished and reconstructed to match the original. Existing materials should be salvaged when possible for use in the reconstruction.

Corbelling  
Building out by  
projecting over the  
masonry or block below.



*On the left the corbelling and details of an Italianate house's chimney have been compromised by a coating of stucco. This coating has resulted in water damage to the chimney top and wall below.*

*On the right the distinctive double flue chimney of a Tudor Revival home has been well maintained.*

## ACCESSIBILITY

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Making historic buildings accessible to all individuals, including those with physical constraints and disabilities can be challenging when also seeking to ensure that design guidelines associated with materials and features are met. Typically, the New York State Building Code allows for addressing accessibility in creative ways which can often be done sensitively in a historic context.

### Barrier-Free Access

- Barrier-free access should be provided at historic buildings and sites to the highest degree possible, while also preserving historic fabric and design features.
- Barrier-free accessibility improvements should be designed and incorporated into all projects as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), New York State codes, and City of Binghamton codes.
- To the extent practicable, barrier-free access should strive to be compatible with the historic character of the building. Access features should seek to complement the materials, proportions, and detailing of the building onto which it is being incorporated.
- When feasible, locate barrier-free access on a secondary elevation, adjacent to parking areas.



*The ramp on the left, while not visually invasive, could have been more appropriately constructed with stone and sympathetic metal details.*

*The ramp on the right as part of a church complex addition blends with the Tudor Revival residence it attaches to with appropriate materials and well designed woodwork.*

- Use historically appropriate landscaping techniques to screen ramps or other elements used to provide barrier-free access.

- Barrier-free elements installed on a historic building should be reversible such that, if removed, original historic features and finishes would remain intact.



# SUSTAINABILITY

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Sustainability is one of the most powerful movements in the history of architecture. Preserving and reusing historic building stock is perhaps the most sustainable action that an individual property owner, or a community, can take. Aside from keeping building materials out of a landfill, adaptively reusing buildings helps to reinvigorate urban centers and utilizes existing infrastructure, while simultaneously limiting suburban sprawl. There are many solutions to ensure that historic buildings contribute as much as possible to energy conservation and sustainability. These solutions can be performed without negatively impacting historic building fabric. One of the key reasons for keeping older buildings is because they are an exceptional way to save resources and energy.

Few historic buildings in the City of Binghamton allow for the implementation of each and every sustainable design recommendation. Every project in the City will have its own unique characteristics that will allow for the implementation and incorporation of some degree of sustainable design practices. The degree to which these can be applied will relate to the historic significance, existing conditions and integrity of the building.

*Note: As some of the guidelines identified below are intended to be implemented on the interior of a structure, not all will be used by CAUD in their evaluation of project proposals. However, they all have the potential to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings, reduce energy waste, and contribute to monetary savings of building owners.*

## General

- Retain any elements of a historic building that, in their original form, are energy efficient. This includes porches, recessed entryways, and louvered shutters.
- Always consider the life-cycle costs and value of historic materials. While historic materials are often easy to repair, modern counterparts must often be replaced in their entirety.
- Selectively replace non-historic building elements with new, energy efficient materials that are compatible with remaining historic fabric.
- Reuse historic building materials for renovations, additions, or site alterations.
- Exterior building cleaning, site management, pest maintenance, and fertilizer applications can be adapted to conform to more environmentally safe procedures.

## Water Efficiency

- Insulate hot water pipes and ductwork where exposed to maximize a building's heating efficiency.
- Replace standard water heaters with a tank-less water heater.

- Historic fixtures and plumbing, if still in acceptable condition, should not be replaced until they are no longer usable.

## Energy Efficiency

- Ensure that window frames are square, have weatherstripping, and that window panes do not rattle when the window is closed to ensure maximum air tightness. Weatherstripping should be applied around door frames and window sash to ensure an air tight fit.
- Window glazing should be repaired where needed to keep both air and moisture out.
- Open windows during the night to utilize natural ventilation as a cooling mechanism.
- Install high quality storm windows, if none exist. See Window section of the City of Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (common) or LED bulbs (preferred). This small task can lower energy consumption.
- Replace old furnaces with a new high efficiency furnace.
- Install a geothermal heat pump as part of HVAC system to improve heating and cooling efficiency from 300-600%.
- Insulate attic rafters or attic floor along with the ceiling of the basement to reduce a building's heating and cooling load.
- Install a white membrane roof on a flat roofed building to reduce summer heat gain.

## Site Practices

- Utilize rain barrels to collect runoff water from roofs to reuse for watering gardens, lowering fresh water consumption.
- Plant drought resistant vegetation and drip hose irrigation.
- Use permeable paving (flagstone, pavers, gravel, brick, etc.) for pathways and driveways to help reduce water runoff.
- Use naturally based or organic cleaners throughout the home, including products for restoration or maintenance work on historic structures.

## Quick List for Maximizing the Energy Efficiency of Your Old House

- Ensure your HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) equipment is working as efficiently as possible.
- Insulate your attic. Over 30% of heat loss occurs through your roof!
- Add weather stripping to your windows and doors.
- Install interior or exterior storm windows.
- Use your fireplace to reduce heating costs.
- Update your furnace if it is still original to your historic house, or is not performing to capacity.
- Close windows and curtains during the day to keep your house cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
- Install door sweeps at bottom of doors to keep out cold air in winter and hot air in summer.

# Chapter 7: Guidelines for Commercial Buildings & Storefronts

The Guidelines for Commercial Buildings & Storefronts focuses on treatments for building features that are common to commercial structures in the City of Binghamton. The guidelines are intended to define an approach for the maintenance, restoration, repair, and replacement of character-defining building elements commonly seen in the City's commercial areas.

In Binghamton's downtown, the character and feel of the streetscape is arguably the most important part of the experience. Contributing to the positive or negative experience of the streetscape are the storefronts and building facades that line the street. A storefront has many roles; it is an architectural feature, a marketing strategy and an advertisement tool. Binghamton, like so many other urban centers, has seen its commercial corridors and downtown change dramatically over the years. As ideals and vision have changed, many storefronts have been altered, resulting in changes that have destroyed the architectural character and integrity of these important commercial establishments. As more people are beginning to understand the value of historic architecture, the rehabilitation of storefronts has been linked to the creation of a greater sense of place and enhanced economic revitalization. Historic preservation activities are also eligible for Federal Historic Tax Credits, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Historic storefronts should be retained to the extent possible and previously altered storefront should be restored to their original design whenever feasible. Binghamton has a wide range of commercial structures, from three to four-story 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry buildings to large early-20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings. The diversity of these buildings contributes to the unique character of the city.

Commercial building features discussed in this chapter include:

- Commercial Facades
- Storefronts
- Awnings
- Signage

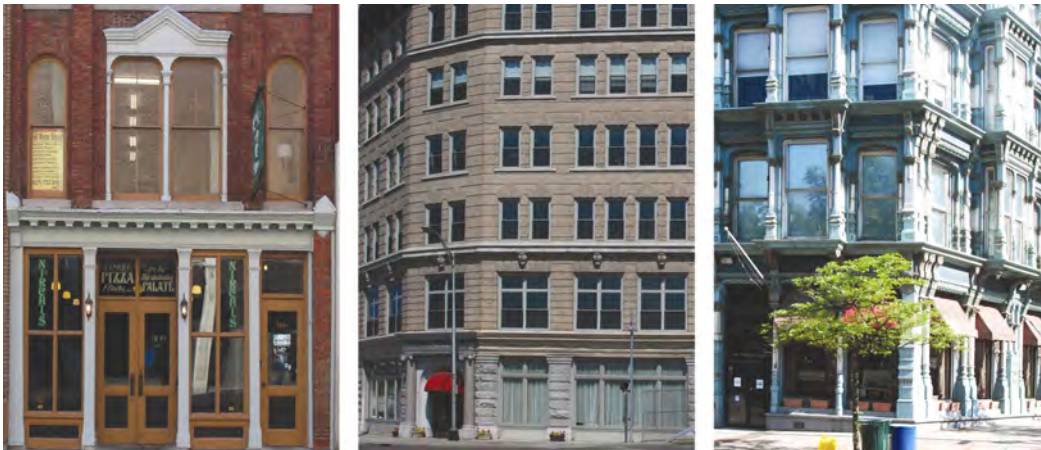
As discussed in Section 1, the guidelines and treatment approaches associated with each of these topic areas are formatted to be stand-alone handouts so the information can be easily tailored to an individual project or request.

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## COMMERCIAL FACADES

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Commercial structures in Binghamton should be preserved and protected as they are important in expression of the character and legacy of the city. The variety of buildings around the Court House square is an exemplary example of the diverse architectural heritage of Binghamton. The Beaux Arts extravagance of the Security Mutual Building and Old City Hall, stands alongside the Romanesque Stone Theater, the load-bearing all cast-iron Perry Building and the Greek Revival and Italianate storefronts of Court Street. Today, many of these structures, both small- and large-scale, are being adaptively reused and converted to mixed-use spaces. This not only ensures the preservation of the structure, but enhances the viability and activity in the downtown by bringing more people back to the core of the City. Guidelines associated with preserving and protecting common architectural features found on the City's commercial structures are defined below.



Representative images of historically intact commercial storefronts found within the City of Binghamton.

### General

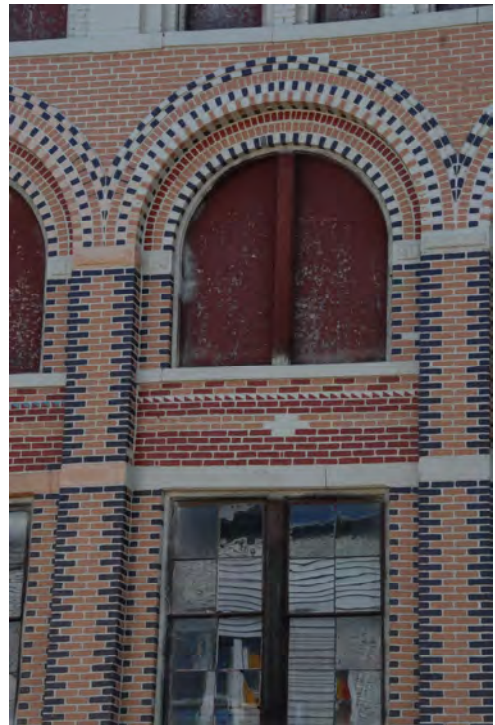
- Retain and repair original features of the historic facades of Binghamton's commercial buildings. Reference materials and building features sections of the City of Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines for further guidance.
- Preserve the historic features that distinguish a commercial building or storefront, including general arrangement such as recessed entries, large windows and transoms.
- Preserve architectural features that were used to distinguish the first floor from upper stories, such as horizontal lintels.
- Preserve decorative elements. Refrain from adding decorative elements where they did not historically exist.

## Upper Story Windows

- Retain existing windows whenever feasible. Repair of historic windows is often more cost effective than replacement.
- Window patterns on the upper stories of buildings should be retained as they contribute to the overall unity and harmony of the commercial façade. Deteriorated windows should be repaired, not replaced.
- Historic window surrounds and architectural detailing should be preserved.
- Windows should be of historic design and should fill the original openings. For example, arched openings should have arched windows.
- Existing historic openings should not be filled in or blocked.
- Do not cover upper floor facades or remove detailing.
- For commercial spaces where windows are retained, consider using interior storm windows for energy efficiency.
- Replacement of vulnerable windows on upper story commercial facades is an acceptable treatment in major adaptive reuse projects. Replacement windows of maintenance free materials, such as coated metal, should match historic sizes, configurations and profiles.



*The upper stories of this building are intact with rhythmic and proportional fenestration.*

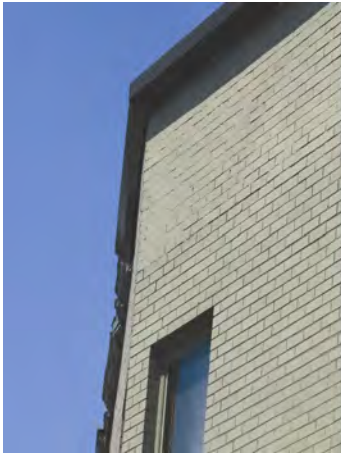


*Window openings have been inappropriately filled in on this structure at 190-200 State Street.*

## Cornices and Decorative Features

- Historic cornices and decorative features should be preserved.
- Cornices should not be added when there is no historic precedent.
- Cornices may be replaced when evidence exists that a building historically had a cornice treatment. Replacement cornices should match the original, including materials, size and profile.
- Contemporary materials may be used in place of historic materials for maintenance purposes but should match historic configurations.

- Avoid the use of elements that are historically inappropriate, such as casement windows, diamond shaped windows, colonial doors and inoperable shutters.



*The decorative cornice of this building has been covered by aluminum flashing. The flashing has subsequently caused irreversible damage to the original cornice.*



*The visual border cornice of this 1920s storefront has been compromised by an inappropriate repointing job.*



*The cornice of this Neo-Classical storefront is historically intact due to good maintenance.*

## Materials

- Avoid use of materials that were not available at the time the building was constructed. This includes vinyl, aluminum siding, tinted glass, mirrored glass, brick veneer, and artificial stone.
- Do not paint surfaces that were not historically painted.

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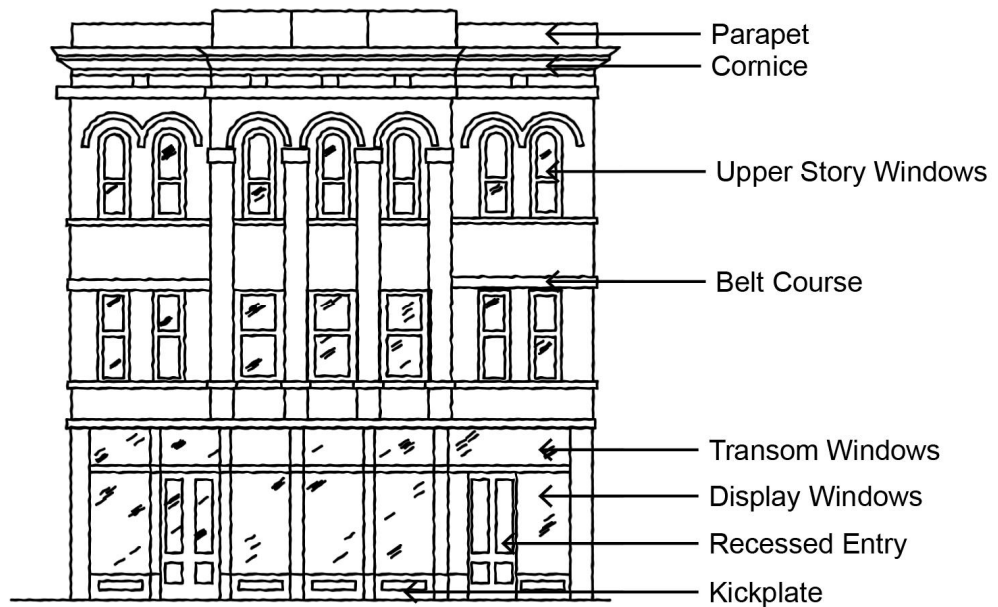


# STOREFRONTS

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In general, guidelines associated with commercial storefronts focus on retaining and repairing original design and materials. The integrity of some commercial storefronts in Binghamton have already been compromised and efforts should be made to restore these storefronts to their original condition.

## Elements of a Storefront



## General

- Preserve existing historic storefronts and storefront features whenever they still exist, even when they have been damaged or covered by later treatments.
- If the original storefront no longer exists or is deteriorated beyond repair, the storefront should be recreated or restored based on historical research and physical evidence.
- When historical evidence is not available, incorporate a “modern interpretation” that retains the overall character and design aesthetic of the historic building. An alternative storefront should convey the traditional characteristics of a Binghamton storefront, including transparency, materials and architectural details.
- Preserve the character of existing storefronts even when internal use has changed.
- Undertake regular cleaning, limited paint removal, painting and inspections.
- Respect the scale and proportion of the existing building in the re-designed storefront.
- Storefront sills should be no higher than 24” above grade.

- Consider the architectural merits of the existing storefront, even if it does not date from the original construction of the building.
- Repair individual elements before considering the replacement of an entire storefront.
- When large buildings are divided among different owners or tenants, an effort should be made to treat the façade in a consistent manner. Separate uses can be differentiated without harming the integrity of the building or streetscape.

## Materials

- Select appropriate materials. Traditionally materials used for storefronts include wood, cast iron, and glass.
- Contemporary maintenance free materials may be used when storefronts are recreated or replaced provided they replicate historic character.



*The character and integrity of this commercial structure has been compromised with an inappropriate first floor storefront modification, including use of incompatible materials, modifications to the building entry and a reduction in window transparency.*

## Doors and Entry Features

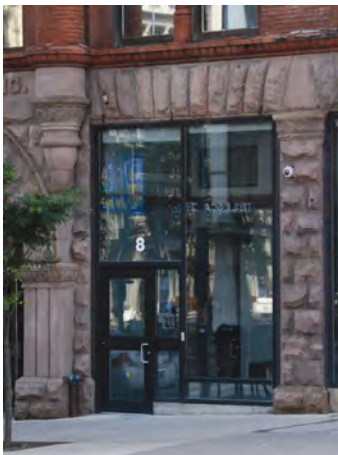
- Historic entrances and doors should be preserved. They are often more than functional entryways, also serving as an important architectural element.
- Missing elements should be replaced in kind and the door's original size, profile and configuration should be preserved.
- Regular maintenance for historic doors should include regular cleaning, rust removal, paint removal and the application of appropriate protective coatings.
- Wood used in older doors is often heavier and harder than the soft woods used in new doors. Repair of an existing door is often more cost-effective than replacing it with a new one.
- Traditional storefront doors that provide transparency are most appropriate in a historic context. Traditional storefront doors may include wood panels on lower portion and large glass panes in upper portion.
- Recessed entries should be retained.
- Differentiate the primary entrance from any secondary entrances, such as one that leads to



*The building above has retained elements of its original doorway features, including sidelights and a fanlight.*

upper story uses. Primary entrances should be highlighted by distinct architectural features, such as recessed entries, awnings or lighting.

- Entrances should be located in the same place as the original entrance, to the extent possible.
- Replacement doors should match the original in design, placement, and materials.
- Modern aluminum storefront doors and frames should be avoided unless the entire storefront is being recreated in compatible modern treatment.
- Opaque doors of any material should be avoided.
- Sidewalk doors that open to a basement were frequently installed on commercial buildings. They should be retained or replaced with in kind materials or new systems that are appropriately painted.
- In addition to the door itself, other features associated with a doorway's character should be retained. Such elements include door hardware, fanlights, sidelights, pilaster, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and steps.
- When reconstructing an entryway, use historical, pictorial or physical documentation. If there is not sufficient information, a new design should be prepared that is compatible with the architectural character of the building and district. Falsely historic designs are not appropriate.



*The character of this Romanesque building has been diminished through the addition of a flat aluminum and plate glass storefront.*



*This reconstructed entryway to a Second Empire building complements the original façade with appropriate materials, arrangement, and details.*



*The distinctive recessed doors and heavy detailing of the entryway on this Beaux Arts building are defining components of its character.*

## Display Windows

- Historic display windows should be preserved to maintain the open character of the storefront area. If windows need to be screened, use a non-permanent means such as blinds, shutters or curtains.
- Storefronts should be transparent to the greatest extent possible. New storefronts or modifications to existing storefronts should permit maximum visibility into commercial spaces.
- Existing windows, including transoms over doorways, should not be concealed. All existing windows on historic buildings should be retained.
- Retain window elements that contribute to a building's architectural character. Such elements include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, hardware, heads, hoods, shutters and blinds. Removal of these features diminishes a building's architectural integrity.
- Regularly inspect windows to identify problems before they can damage window elements. See Chapter 6 for additional information on Windows.
- Windowless, blank walls are highly discouraged.
- False or simulated windows which are commonly tinted, frosted, reflective or opaque are not appropriate on historic storefronts. Only clear glass should be used.
- Mullions should be constructed of wood, copper, bronze metal, cast iron or steel.
- Mirrored or tinted glass should be avoided.



*The series of commercial buildings above have retained their original arrangement of display windows, allowing for a high degree of transparency.*

## Kickplates

- Kickplates should be retained as a decorative element.
- If the original kickplate has been covered with another material, remove new material to expose original.
- If removed or deteriorated, the kickplate should be replaced with a sympathetic replacement.
- Wood is the most commonly used material for historic kickplates. Metal and masonry may be appropriate in Binghamton when consistent with overall building material and style.



*Nirchi's Pizza at 166 Water Street in downtown Binghamton has a well preserved commercial facade and storefront.*

## AWNINGS

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Awnings are a defining feature of historic commercial buildings and have a notable impact on the overall character of the streetscape. When they are poorly designed or inappropriately added to a building, they can detract from the character of the streetscape. Conversely, when they have a historic precedent and are incorporated in accordance with the design guidelines described below, they provide both practical function and enhance the aesthetic of the street.

*Note: A permit from the Department of Building and Construction is required prior to the installation of an awning. In addition, CAUD approval is required for awnings installed in historic districts or at historic properties. Permits must be obtained before the awning is installed.]*



*The character of the building at left has been diminished by the installation of an oversized, tall, fixed vinyl awning in addition to the reconstruction of its storefront.*

*The Neoclassical building at right incorporates appropriate operable cloth awnings to shade the outdoor eating area without compromising the original character of its grand arched façade.*

### General

- Awnings should be installed in a manner that results in minimal impact to the historic fabric of the building. Do not cover or obscure architectural details when installing a new awning.
- Awnings should orient to the pedestrian.
- Historic awnings should be preserved.
- Cloth and canvas are preferred materials for awnings.
- Awnings should be installed on a metal frame. Fixed plastic, wood and metal awnings are inappropriate to the historic character of buildings.

- Awnings should be supported by the building to which they are attached. Awnings should not be supported by free standing poles.
- Functional awnings with a retractable frame are desirable.
- An awning should cover approximately 1/3 of storefront when measuring from the top of the display windows to the sidewalk.
- Awning placement should not encroach on the public right-of-way or create an impediment to pedestrian movement.
- Awnings should complement the scale of the building and not overwhelm or dominate the façade. The design, size and placement of an awning should respect the architectural style of the building.
- Awnings should not cut across vertical elements of a building, such as columns.
- Shed awnings are preferred. Bubble and convex forms are generally not appropriate in a historic context unless they are intended for arched windows.
- Awnings should be shaped to fit within their openings. Square or rectangular windows should have a similarly shaped awning.
- Internally lit awnings are not appropriate.
- Historic colors are preferred and inappropriate bright colors are discouraged.

### Door and Window Awnings

- Door and window awnings should not be added to a façade or primary elevation which has not historically had an awning.
- The top of the awning should always conform to the shape of the doorway or window opening and should be contained within the opening.
- Simple door awnings may be appropriate on secondary and rear elevations, even when there is no historic precedent.

# SIGNAGE

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The quality of signage has a significant impact on the character of a historic district or neighborhood. Signs can either enhance or detract from a streetscape. Signage in the City of Binghamton is regulated in Chapter 410, Zoning of the Code of the City of Binghamton. Requirements associated with signage are defined in Article XI, Sign Regulations (see Appendix 5 for copy of Ordinance). All proposed signage must be in conformance with Article XI. The design guidelines provided below should be considered, in addition to the requirements of Article XI, when considering signage on historic buildings and in historic districts. The regulations address signage size, height, types of signs, and special regulations pertaining to specific zoning districts. Although no specific regulations are identified for designated Local Landmarks or Local Historic Districts, the ordinance does note that signage proposed in these areas is required to be reviewed and approved by CAUD.

*Note: A sign permit from the Department of Building and Construction is required for all signage. Permits must be obtained before signage is installed.*

## General

- Historic signs should be retained to the extent practicable, including signs painted on the walls of a building.
- Sign design, scale, color, and materials should be complementary to the historic character and features of the building.
- Signage should be placed on a building where they were historically intended to be located. Typically these areas may include large display windows, transoms, cornice bands, awnings, blank walls over a storefront cornice, and other unadorned areas of a façade.
- Signs should be designed and installed in a manner that does not damage or obscure materials or significant features on the building. New signage should not cover or obscure architectural details of the building.
- Signs flush with the building's façade or perpendicular to a storefront are preferred.
- Sign size should be within context of building size. It should not overpower the façade of the structure but should not appear so small that it appears disproportionate.
- Signage should be simple and easy to read. Complicated logos and inappropriately scaled graphics on signage should be avoided.



*The building above represents both inappropriate storefront modifications and excessive signage.*

- Signage above first floors is discouraged.
- Colors, font and size and design features should be carefully considered for readability at a distance.

## Signage Types

- Generally, moving, changing, and flashing signs are discouraged.
- Hanging signs can add character to a streetscape and inform pedestrians of uses. The brackets may be decorative and must be installed in a manner that does not damage historic fabric or detailing.
- Neon signs may be appropriate inside first floor windows.
- Roof-top signs, billboards, and large projecting signs at upper story levels are not appropriate. Tall flag or pole signs are generally not appropriate in a historic district.
- Panel box signs illuminated from inside are not appropriate in a historic context.



*This sign's design clashes with its building's style and may cause damage to the stonework through its excessive network of bolts, plates and cables.*



*This sign, while complimentary in design to its Art Deco building, is inappropriate due to its size and building attachment.*



*The signage on this building is appropriately sized and is limited to the display windows and entry awning.*

- New signs that are painted directly on a brick façade are typically historically appropriate. Painted signage is more appropriate on buildings with minimal detail. Painted signage should only be located when it does not detract from the historic architecture of the building. Blank sidewalls are particularly appropriate locations for painted signage.
- Painted window signs should be permitted but should not exceed one-third of the storefront window area.
- Freestanding signs are typically not appropriate for commercial areas but may be appropriate in a residential neighborhood when a structure has been converted to a commercial use.



## Lighting

- When lighting of sign is desired, down-lit gooseneck lights are recommended.
- Lighting should not obscure the sign or have a negative impact on the character or fabric of the building.
- Internally lit signs are generally inappropriate for historic buildings and districts.



*The building at left has been compromised through the inappropriate reconstruction of its storefront, signage that covers the upper transom and large fluorescent lighting.*

*The building at right has maintained its original character with the retention of its storefront and transom along with the sympathetic addition of a high quality sign and goose neck lighting.*

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## Chapter 8: Guidelines for New Construction

The Guidelines for New Construction defines treatments for new construction projects, including additions and adaptive reuse, within a historic district, neighborhood or site. The guidelines are intended to define an approach incorporating new construction in a compatible and sympathetic manner, ensuring that the character and integrity of surrounding historic resources are preserved.

New construction in the City of Binghamton has been largely concentrated on infill sites in the downtown core. While there are limited tracts of land available within historic districts for large-scale new construction projects, smaller infill projects and adaptive reuse projects are expected to continue. New development projects outside of historic districts are also expected to continue in targeted areas and should also be cognizant of the Guidelines for New Construction as they promote sound planning and design principles for all development, not just projects on historic sites and within historic districts.

Common types of new construction discussed in this chapter include:

- Additions, Alterations & Adaptive Reuse
- Infill & New Construction

As discussed in Section 1, the guidelines and treatment approaches associated with each of these topic areas are formatted to be stand-alone handouts so the information can be easily tailored to an individual project or request.

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## ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS & ADAPTIVE REUSE

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As uses and occupants change, buildings must evolve to accommodate new needs and promote economic vitality. Many historic buildings in Binghamton, particularly commercial buildings and residences in working class neighborhoods, were smaller in design than today's contemporary counterparts. The needs of businesses, families and building owners have changed over time and as a result, additions and modifications to historic structures become necessary to accommodate changing uses or increase usable floor area. The appropriate adaptive reuse of historic buildings is essential to maintaining the overall integrity and character of historic districts, streetscapes and individual sites. When not done correctly, adaptive reuse projects, including additions to historic structures, have the potential to harm the integrity, style, size, design, height, and materials of the original building. When considering an adaptive reuse project and designing additions to historic buildings, care should be taken to ensure the addition and associated modifications are sensitive to the historic context and to minimize harm to historic fabric.

### General

- Retain historic character-defining features when planning alterations and additions to a historic building.
- Additions should be subordinate to the primary historic structure. They should not overwhelm the original structure. Additions should be designed in such a way that they minimize their visual impact on the building.
- Design additions so there are subtle, distinguishing characteristics between the historic portion and new addition. This may include simplifying details, changing materials or modifying proportions.
- Additions should have the same relationship of solids to voids as the historic portion of the building. Windows and doors should relate in size, shape, scale and proportion.
- Complementary materials and detailing should be utilized on new additions.
- Do not design additions to be falsely historic. They should never appear as old, or older, than the original building. Design additions so it is clear what is historic and what is not. Where an addition replicates the historic character of the main building, create subtle differences to clearly distinguish it as a later structure. Contemporary designs are appropriate when they are compatible with the overall character of the original building.

### Building Orientation and Features

- Additions to the primary, front façade of a historic building should be discouraged. Additions should be located on secondary elevations.
- The original orientation of a building should not be altered by an addition. For example, the addition should not result in a secondary façade becoming the primary façade.

- An additional full floor should never be added to the top of an existing historic building. Partial height additions at the rear of the structure may be appropriate if they are not visible from the street.
- Respect original roof forms. Roofs on additions should complement existing roof profile and shape.
- Do not cause the loss or removal of character-defining features, such as chimneys, porches, or decorative details.
- Additions should not obscure the existing principal entrance or other key features of the primary elevation.
- Fire stairs and barrier-free access should be placed on secondary elevations to the extent possible. See Accessibility subsection for additional information.

### Size and Dimensions

- The total square footage of additions should be limited to no more than 50 percent of the square footage of the existing historic structure. For instance, a 5,000 square foot commercial structure would be permitted an addition not to exceed 2,500 square feet.
- The height and width of an addition should not exceed that of the original building.
- Floor-to-ceiling heights should be maintained or should incorporate exterior detailing that suggests consistent floor-to-ceiling heights.



*This Tudor Revival home has a well executed one story addition. This rear addition is complimentary to the original house through its detailing, materials, and massing.*



*The character and façade of this traditional home have been altered by an inappropriate front rooftop addition. Its prominent placement, inconsistent windows and change in rhythm detract from the original design.*

## INFILL & NEW CONSTRUCTION

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New construction projects within historic districts or adjacent to individual historic buildings and sites should be undertaken in a manner that does not harm, or detract from, the character and integrity of existing historic resources. New construction should be compatible within its historic context. It is important to note that new construction should not seek to replicate historic buildings, but should reflect current building trends and styles while being sensitive to the overall character of the City's historic resources.

The character of historic districts and streetscapes relies on the visual continuity established by the presence of similarly designed and harmonious buildings. New construction should play an important role in continuing and maintaining the existing rhythm of the streetscape. New projects should respect the City's architectural traditions and ideals while incorporating modern ideals. Consulting with designers experienced in historic preservation will be critical to the success of a new construction project within a historic district or neighborhood as they will understand the overall context.

*Note: These are general preferred design principles for new construction. Specific bulk and use regulations as identified in Chapter 410 must be followed and supersede any guidelines contained within the City of Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines.*

### General

- New construction projects must conform to the regulations of Chapter 410, Zoning of the City of Binghamton Code.
- Historic structures and landscape features should not be demolished to make way for new construction projects.
- New construction should provide barrier-free access consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Identify the character-defining features of surrounding historic buildings. New buildings should visually relate to the surrounding historic environment and respect established design precedents.
- New construction should be considerate of surrounding buildings.
- New construction should maintain existing views and vistas.
- The rhythm of the façade of new infill buildings should reflect the characteristic rhythm of surrounding buildings, including fenestration, rooflines and floor-to-ceiling ratios. Window and door openings should be similar in size to historic counterparts.
- New secondary structures, such as detached residential garages and sheds, should complement the scale, roof, form, setback, and materials of the primary building and surrounding, historic secondary structures.

## Contemporary Design

- New construction should be harmonious with surrounding buildings. Height, scale, and materials should be compatible with surrounding historic buildings.
- Contemporary architectural design that reflects its current time, place and use is acceptable. The contemporary design should be compatible with the character of the district or neighborhood in which it is constructed.
- Radically contrasting building designs are discouraged.
- New construction should not seek to replicate a historic building or building techniques. Replication diminishes the value and integrity of surrounding historic buildings and confuses old and new. New buildings with similar materials, form, massing and features are appropriate as long as they are distinguishable from the historic buildings.



*This recital hall addition to a historic theatre uses limestone cladding, complimentary vertical and horizontal banding, and a large curving façade, to create an appropriate contemporary interpretation of the original building's design.*

## Scale and Massing

- The height of new construction should be within one story of surrounding properties. Where there is significant variation of building heights within the immediate neighborhood, new buildings should seek to relate to the predominant pattern.
- Infill construction should be compatible with the average massing, height, setback, and width of surrounding buildings.
- Floor-to-floor heights of new infill buildings should be within 10 percent of the floor-to-floor heights of immediately adjacent historic buildings.
- Building mass should have a similar sense of weightiness or lightness as surrounding historic buildings, as determined by the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (windows and doors).
- Design rooflines to be compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.

## Site Design

- Setbacks for new construction should be within 10 percent of neighboring buildings when there are varied setbacks. In areas where there is an established consistent setback, the setback of the new construction should match that of surrounding properties.



- Retain established setback patterns, as well as street and alley widths. Buildings on corner lots should continue the established setback along both street frontages.
- Incorporate character-defining site features into the design of new construction projects.
- Design new construction to follow the existing pattern of building widths and spacing between buildings.
- Primary entrances and facades of new buildings should have a similar orientation and street presence as other buildings within the neighborhood.
- Locate secondary structures, such as garages and sheds, in a manner consistent with existing secondary structures.
- New construction on corners and abutting public spaces should pay close attention to the design of entrances and publicly visible facades, that complement their public context.
- Infill development should enhance the pedestrian experience, both in commercial and residential areas.
- The historic topography of sites should be maintained. Topography should not be altered to accommodate new construction.
- Ground disturbing activities should be limited to the extent possible in accommodating new construction.



*The building on the left, while using appropriate materials at the street level detracts from the overall rhythm of the block with its large two part façade, versus the tri-partite arrangement present on the remainder of the streetscape. The incorporation of the complex and contrasting tower further disrupts the overall composition and rhythm of the streetscape.*

*The building on the right, while modern, compliments the rest of the block with its tri-partite composition, multi-story glass and brick façade, and cornice.*

## Materials

- Exterior building materials should be compatible and complementary to materials seen on surrounding historic buildings. Materials should be of a complementary color, size, texture, and level of craftsmanship to promote continuity within the existing historic neighborhood.
- Traditional materials, including wood, brick and stone, are generally preferred.
- When there is a predominant building material in a specific area, such as brick, utilize that material in the new design.
- Materials and features that should be avoided in new construction projects include chain-link fencing, glass block, picture windows, aluminum and vinyl siding, and unpainted wood. These are typically visually incompatible in a historic context.

## Building Features

- **Doors and windows** on new construction projects should be similar to the fenestration of surrounding buildings. Frame dimensions, proportions, and configurations should be comparable. For doors, use of comparable panel and light configurations, including the presence of sidelights and transoms, is recommended.
- The orientation of the **main entrance** of a building should be similar to the orientation of other buildings in the immediate vicinity or neighborhood. The main entrance should enhance the connection between the street and the building interior.
- The orientation of the main **roof form** should be consistent with other roofs on a street when roof forms are relatively consistent and are a character-defining feature. Follow the precedent set by adjacent buildings when designing rooflines for infill construction. Roofs of new buildings should relate to those of neighboring historic buildings in pitch, complexity, size, scale, color, and material.
- **Porches** should be incorporated into new buildings in locations where they are a character-defining feature of the streetscape. Design of new porches should be compatible with the form, scale, and detailing of those of surrounding buildings. In locations where traditional historic porch columns are prevalent, new columns should be constructed in a manner compatible with historic types.
- Design and place **garage** entrances to be compatible with the character of surrounding buildings. Do not place garage entrances on the primary façade when there is not historic precedent.

# Chapter 9: Guidelines for Site Features

The Guidelines for Site Features discusses the treatments for proposed changes to the visible elements of historic landscapes, including streetscapes and parks, as well as individual site and landscape elements. The guidelines are intended to define an approach for ensuring that site features are considered as part of an overall historic preservation project, as site design elements can have significant impact on the overall integrity and of the historic landscape project. While historic preservation activities are often focused on historic buildings, the landscapes surrounding them are important character-defining elements of the community. The integration of site features as part of a historic preservation project is important to creating a cohesive and comprehensive project.

Site features discussed in this chapter include:

- Streetscape Features
- Parks and Cemeteries
- Trees and Plantings
- Circulation Elements
- Fences, Walls & Decks
- Accessory Structures

As discussed in Section 1, the guidelines and treatment approaches associated with each of these topic areas are formatted to be stand-alone handouts so the information can be easily tailored to an individual project or request.

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# STREETSCAPE FEATURES

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Streetscapes are key organizing elements within a historic district or neighborhood and are defined as the area between the front façade of buildings and the roadway. The width of the roadway, sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping and the spatial organization of buildings contribute to the overall character and experience associated with the streetscape.

## General

- Preserve major streetscape elements, including road width, tree lawn, sidewalks and setbacks.
- Preserve the scale and massing of building forms that line the public right of way.
- Preserve historic site furnishings where they still exist, including street signs.
- Retain the pattern, organization, and rhythm of building entrances along the sidewalk.
- Support ground level uses that contribute to the vitality of the street.
- Retain historic pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns.
- Encourage street tree plantings where there is a reasonable expectation that their health can be sustained and where there is historic precedent.



*This urban streetscape has been enhanced by the use of appropriate street trees, high quality seating, and pedestrian scaled lighting.*

## Site Furniture

- Retain historic street furniture wherever it is a character-defining feature.
- Ensure site furniture is designed and sited to promote and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Garbage cans, dumpsters and similar elements should be located at the rear of the property or along a secondary elevation that is not visible from the street.
- Enhance the pedestrian scale of streets with well-designed and compatible street furnishings. Limit the installation of street furniture to avoid over-cluttering the streetscape.
- Metal, wood and imitation wood products are recommended for street furniture.

## Streetscape Lighting

- Retain existing historic light fixtures where they are a character defining element of the landscape or neighborhood.
- Pedestrian scale lighting, no greater than nine (9) feet in height, should be utilized whenever possible. Provide the minimal street level lightings necessary for public safety while avoiding light pollution.
- New light fixtures should direct light to the ground and away from surrounding properties. Lamps should be shielded from direct view.
- In general, do not install lighting on historic buildings. If installation on buildings is necessary, minimize damage to the historic building fabric.



*These views from the same residential neighborhood depict the importance of retaining historic lighting features. On the left the original street lights have been replaced by inappropriate vehicular oriented, aluminum, lights. On the right the original concrete, pedestrian scaled, harp lamps enhance the streetscape composition.*



*Examples of the vehicular and pedestrian oriented light fixtures in downtown Binghamton.*

## PARKS AND CEMETERIES

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The City of Binghamton benefits from its expansive waterfront where open spaces, parks and trails are located for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Multiple pocket parks, in residential neighborhoods and in the downtown, provide additional opportunities for passive recreation in the City's urban setting. Historically relevant parks and open spaces should be preserved, and new parks should seek to highlight and promote historic features, events, and context which contribute to the sites significance. The City of Binghamton is also home to many historically significant cemeteries, including Spring Forest Cemetery which dates back to the Civil War, and serves as a dramatic open space amenity.

### Parks

- Preserve landscape features that contribute to park form and historical identity.
- Consider site context in the design of new parks.
- Preserve and protect views in, out, and around parks and designated open spaces. Park views have an enhancing value on surrounding properties. Consider the impact of views when incorporating new design elements.
- Maintain existing pedestrian walkways when they have historic value. Consider the impact on historic circulation patterns when creating new, or removing, walkways, trails, and sidewalks.
- When historic accessory structures are present, such as fountains or pavilions, ensure they are preserved and maintained. When new accessory structures are required, such as restroom facilities, they should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible.
- When new building additions are planned, consider the impacts to circulation, spatial organization and landscape setting.
- Monitor trees and plantings to track potential encroachment of disease and pests. Diseased or dead trees should be removed and replaced. See Trees and Plantings subsection for additional guidelines associated with replacement landscaping and landscape maintenance.



*The Court House Square with its mature trees, planting beds, light fixtures, and sidewalks is an example of a well preserved passive park and open space in the City of Binghamton.*

## Cemeteries

- Preserve, protect and maintain existing historic cemetery landscape features. These include walkways, plantings, fences, gates, monuments, memorials and grave markers.
- Maintain the condition of perimeter walls and fences both for their historical value and for security of the site. If vandalism occurs, store broken materials in a secure location on-site until restoration is possible.
- Control weeds and overgrown shrubs. Maintain historic plantings.
- Avoid the use of fertilizers and landscape equipment that can cause damage and the deterioration of monuments, grave markers and headstones.
- Stabilize loose, leaning, or deteriorating grave markers and headstones.
- Repair cracked or broken masonry. Avoid the use of hard mortars on weathered masonry. See Masonry subsection for additional guidelines.
- Evaluate the need to clean grave markers and headstones. Light soiling and minimal biological growth is expected and some surfaces may be too delicate to clean without the potential for causing damage. The removal of overgrown vegetation can effectively stop some forms of soiling.
- When cleaning is necessary, use the gentlest means possible. Standard household cleaners should never be used. See Masonry subsection for additional guidelines.



## TREES AND PLANTINGS

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Trees and plantings have a measurable positive impact on the experience of the urban environment. Street trees are historically appropriate throughout Binghamton, though the space available for street trees and plant materials varies from location to location. The preservation, maintenance and in some instances, addition of trees and plantings should be a priority. The City of Binghamton has a Tree Management Plan and a Shade Tree Commission that should be referred to for specific landscaping requirements associated with species, size, location of plantings, etc.



*This historic divided parkway retains many of its original street trees, light posts, curb stones, and residential setbacks. Where new infill trees were needed, the same species of trees as the originals have been planted.*

- Preserve large canopy trees whenever possible as they are character-defining elements of the streetscape. Enhance established street patterns by planting additional trees along public rights-of-way and on private property. Trees may be added to any streetscape where there is space to sustain healthy growth.
- Decrease runoff and heat island effect by using greenspace and landscape elements in lieu of impervious pavement whenever possible.
- Do not overprune existing trees or shrubs. Selectively prune branches within the canopy to preserve the overall form of the tree. Do not “top” or “crewcut” the canopy. Prune or remove and replace trees if they threaten public safety, property or utilities.
- Replace dead or diseased trees with a like species, unless the species is expressly inappropriate.

- Foundation plantings are not appropriate for most historic buildings. Trees or shrubs that grow high or wide should not be planted near historic buildings. Roots and branches can cause damage and leaves can clutter gutters and downspouts, leading to moisture and material problems.
- Do not allow ivy, wisteria or other vines to grow directly on building walls as they can trap moisture and accelerate deterioration of the wall. If vines are desired, train vines onto trellises or other climbing structures.
- Avoid the installation of non-native and intrusive species. Select plant materials that are suited to the local climate and growing conditions.
- Develop planting plans based on historical or physical evidence, when appropriate.
- Select plant materials that accent architectural forms rather than overshadow them.
- Do not remove historic garden features and landscape materials during new construction projects.
- Maintain existing relationships between historic buildings and landscape features.

## CIRCULATION ELEMENTS

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Circulation elements address the site features associated with pedestrian and vehicular movement and circulation. Circulation elements include streets, alleys, parking areas, service areas, sidewalks, trails and walkways. Vehicular circulation networks define how buildings and properties are ultimately designed and configured. Streets in Binghamton range from major regional arterials to quiet neighborhood streets and service corridors. Similarly, pedestrian circulation also ranges from informal walkways to defined and formal waterfront trails and an urban sidewalk network. When undertaking new construction or any type of site improvement, the potential impact on the character of individual streets and alleys should be assessed.



*This historic divided residential parkway is defined by its street trees, median and its extensive fully restored entrance gateway.*

### General

- Retain historic circulation patterns, gateways and entrances wherever they are character-defining features of the landscape.
- Reinforce existing patterns of open space and enclosure created by historic walkways, paths, courtyards, fences, walls and plant materials.

### Streets

- Retain historic street alignments, widths and configurations. Avoid widening roadways when it will negatively impact historic landscape features or will modify the historic setting of a building.
- Retain existing property lines, block patterns and setbacks.

- Preserve historic paving materials where they still exist. If historic paving material has been covered, investigate feasibility of uncovering.
- Assess the impact of street construction projects on adjacent historic landscapes and structures. If negative impacts are possible, identify and implement protective measures.

## Sidewalks and Walkways

- Retain historic sidewalks and circulation patterns. They are significant features of historic neighborhoods and contribute to the overall character, sense of safety, and enjoyment of residents and visitors.
- Preserve alignment, widths and configurations of pedestrian walkways in historic districts or anywhere they are a character defining feature.
- Preserve historic materials where they still exist. When replacement of materials is necessary, replace in-kind utilizing materials that are similar in appearance and composition. Use traditional paving materials that are compatible with the architectural character of adjacent buildings.
- New or replacement paving should be consistent with the character and appearance of historic paving.
- The addition of new sidewalks, walkways or trails within a historic district or neighborhood may be desirable and necessary to enhance pedestrian access and connectivity. New pedestrian routes should be compatible with the existing pedestrian circulation patterns.
- Avoid excessive use of de-icing salts on historic paving materials as they can escalate deterioration. Alternative de-icing materials should be used when possible, including sand, cat litter, or non salt chemical de-icers, such as calcium magnesium acetate.



*Top image: The parking lot presents a common and inappropriate approach of a demolished building or vacant lot being fully covered in asphalt.*

*Bottom image: The parking lot uses brick pavers, extensive landscaping, and significant setback to help it blend into the historic streetscape while reducing water runoff.*

## Parking Areas

- Design new parking areas to be as unobtrusive as possible. Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of properties to the greatest extent possible.
- Ideally, at least 20 percent of a parking lot's surface

area should remain unpaved and planted.

- Parking lots should include wheel stops and raised edging to keep vehicles from damaging fences and landscape plantings.
- Parking lots should be screened from the street with planted islands to visually break up paved areas. Screening may include shrub plantings or historically appropriate walls or fences that are at least three feet in height. Shade trees may be incorporated to reduce heat and glare.
- When new parking structures are required, their design should be considerate of the scale, materials, massing and rhythm predominant in surrounding historic structures. When possible, incorporate retail and other ground level uses into the design of parking structures when they are located in a commercial area.
- Appropriate paving materials include asphalt, concrete, stamped asphalt, stamped concrete, brick, and paving stones. Loose gravel is not preferred. Stones such as slate and limestone are not recommended for driving surfaces as vehicle weights can cause the stones to crack.

## Driveways

- Driveways should be located to the side or rear of properties to the greatest extent possible.
- New driveways should be designed to be as narrow as possible.
- In commercial areas, encourage shared driveways to the extent practicable to minimize the impact to the streetscape and conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

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## FENCING, WALLS & DECKS

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### Fencing and Walls

- Retain historic fencing materials in areas that are not visible from the street.
- Do not install front yard fencing or walls where there is no historic precedent.
- When replacing a limited portion of a fence or wall, use in-kind materials and match height and detailing.
- When choosing fence materials, consider the style of the building. In general, wood fences and stone walls are appropriate with wood houses, while masonry walls are more appropriate to masonry and stucco buildings. Vinyl fences may be appropriate if they appear to be indistinguishable from wood or iron fencing from 2 feet away.
- Chain-link fences and concrete block walls should not be installed where visible from the public right-of-way.
- Masonry and stone walls are generally appropriate in Binghamton when they have a stacked and mortared formal appearance.



*The fence above, while using brick, is inappropriate due to its height, lack of transparency, and relation to the adjacent historic home.*



*The fence above utilizes the original stone base in a historically accurate reconstruction of the original wooden fence.*

### Decks

- Decks should not be constructed on the front façade of a historic building. Decks should only be constructed on rear elevations and should not be visible from the street.
- Decks should be made of wood and should be painted or stained.

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## ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

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Accessory structures include garages, sheds and other outbuildings that are associated with the primary building on a lot. Accessory structures are often significant due to their siting, scale, design, materials and function.

### General

- Preserve and maintain existing historic accessory structures and outbuildings where they remain.
- Repair deteriorated accessory structures using in-kind materials. When replacement materials are proposed, new materials should match the existing in durability, texture, and color.
- Replace accessory structures only when they are deteriorated beyond repair. Replacement structure should be similar in size, siting, proportion, materials, and color.
- Reconstruct missing accessory structures only when there is historical documentation and evidence that the structure existed.
- New accessory structures should be designed to complement the primary building in form, materials and architectural details.
- New accessory structures that are not based on historic precedent, including garages and sheds, should be constructed in rear yards and should be as unobtrusive as possible.
- Do not construct accessory structures to convey a false sense of historical development. New structures should not be confused with remaining historic buildings and elements on a site.

### Service Areas

- Service areas should be located to the rear of properties to the greatest extent possible.
- Screen dumpsters and other large service equipment with vegetation, fencing or other acceptable material.
- Locate service areas away from residential properties to the extent possible.
- Encourage shared service areas when appropriate.

### Fire Escapes

- Fire escapes should be installed on secondary elevations.
- Fire escapes should be painted to match the color of adjoining wall.
- Fire stairs should be kept to the minimum functional size.

- Ensure local and state building code requirements are adhered to as they relate to providing fire access. Specific forms of fire access are often required depending on building use,
- Secondary means of fire access should be incorporated in a manner that minimizes impacts to the historic building.

### Rooftop Equipment

- Roof-top mechanical or service equipment should be avoided if visible from the public right of way. Any new rooftop mechanical or service equipment necessary to be placed on the roof should be towards the rear to reduce visibility.

# Chapter 10: Guidelines for Demolitions

The Guidelines for Demolitions, including historic building relocations, discusses the criteria considered by the Commission on Architecture and Urban Design when an application for a demolition permit is submitted for consideration. The process of “Mothballing” a building is also discussed, which is always the preferred alternative to demolition of a building and limits the occurrences of demolition-by-neglect.

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## RELOCATION

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The relocation of a building can have a significant impact on both its original neighborhood, and the neighborhood in which it is relocated. Specific criteria have been established when considering the relocation of historic buildings in the City of Binghamton.

### General

- Buildings should not be relocated from a historic district if it has significant impact on the setting and character of the district, neighborhood or block in which it is located.
- A historic building should not be relocated when there are no plans for new construction. The proposed new construction must follow the Historic Design Guidelines and be compatible with the historic character of surrounding buildings.
- A historic building should not be moved if significant architectural and building features will be lost. Any damage to materials and features should be minimized.
- Do not relocate a historic building to an incompatible site. For example, a historic commercial building should not be relocated to a residential neighborhood. The proposed relocation site should be similar to the historic site in age, architecture and setting.

## DEMOLITIONS

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The Commission on Architecture and Urban Design is charged with reviewing and considering all demolition applications for buildings over 40 years of age in the City, regardless of location in a historic district or listing as a Local Landmark. The following are the general criteria considered when reviewing applications for demolitions of historic buildings in Binghamton.

### General

- Do not demolish historic structures that have historic or architectural significance within the City of Binghamton.
- Do not demolish a building that contributes to the historic setting and character of a district.
- Do not demolish a building that contains historic building materials or evidence of historic craftsmanship that would be difficult or impossible to replicate or reproduce.
- Do not demolish a building that is a rare example of its type, style, period of construction or historic associations.

- A building should not be demolished without definitive plans for the reuse of the property. The reuse of the property should never be a parking lot, which would generally have a negative impact on the overall character of a street.
- Do not demolish a building when reasonable efforts can be made to maintain its structural integrity.
- If a historic building is active and is earning a reasonable economic return, it is not appropriate to demolish the building, even if the return is not deemed to be the highest and best use.

## MOTHBALLING

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Mothballing is essentially the closing and securing of a building to ensure its stabilization while it remains in an inactive, unutilized state. Ideally, the mothballing process begins with documentation of the building and a conditions assessment prepared by a professional knowledgeable about historic architecture. Additional discussion of mothballing is in Chapter 2 of the Historic Design Guidelines document, *Common Preservation Issues in Binghamton*. A detailed approach to mothballing a historic building is included in Preservation Brief No. 31, as issued by the National Park Services, Technical Preservation Services.

### General

- Secure and maintain the exterior of the structure to prevent damage from moisture, maintain the integrity of siding, windows and doors, and prevent damage from ground moisture. Ensure the roofing is intact and periodically inspected to prevent leaks and water infiltration.
- Stabilize the building in order to slow the continued deterioration of a building while it is vacant.
- Ensure the structure is free of rodents, pigeons and pests that could cause further damage.
- Secure the building from unwanted entry, including boarding up windows and doorways and reinforcing entry doors.
- Ensure adequate ventilation is provided to the interior. Without air exchange, a buildings humidity level will rise, creating greater chance for mold and rotting of materials. In Binghamton, the biggest concerns are cold weather and dampness. Ventilation can be achieved through window louvers.
- Secure utilities and mechanical systems.
- Identify a maintenance and monitoring plan and notify the local police and fire departments that the building will be vacant.