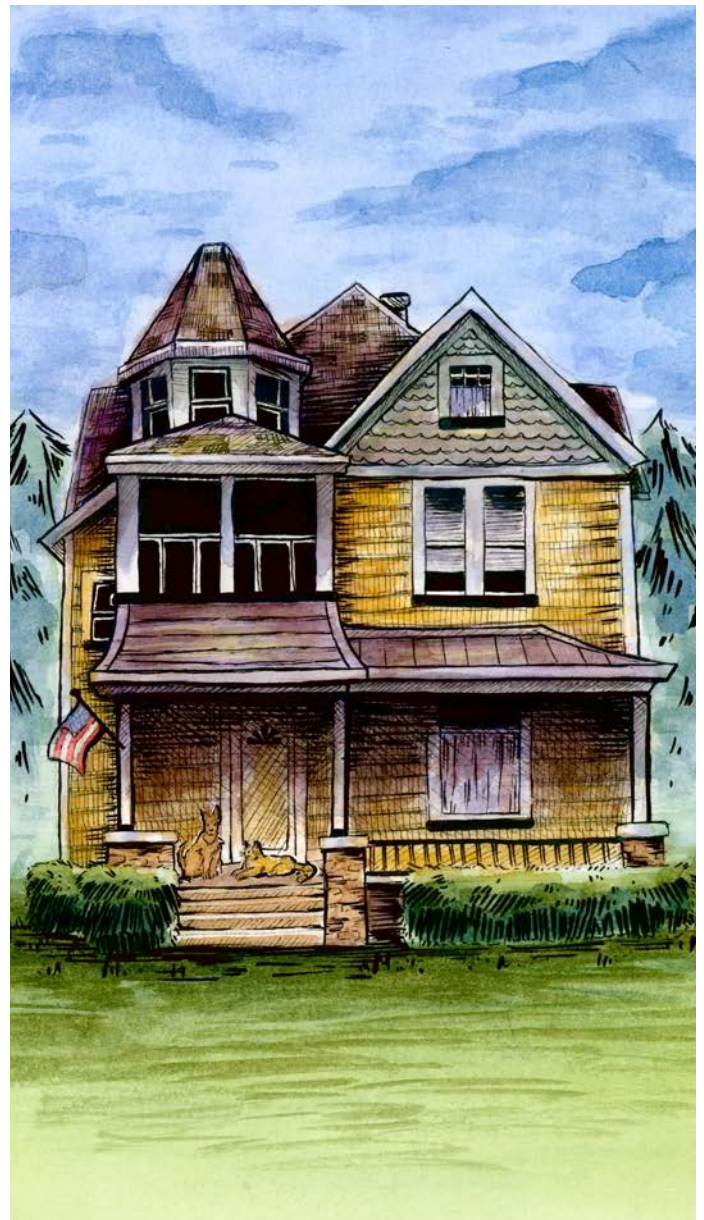
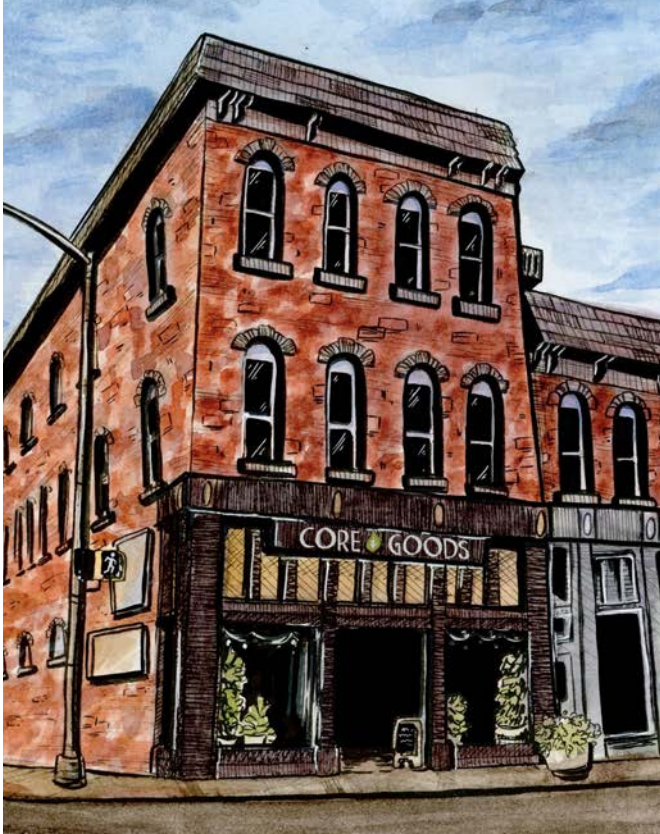


SUMMER 2023

OIL CITY DESIGN GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

At the confluence of Oil Creek and the Allegheny River, Oil City extends over the valleys with beautiful historic buildings, streets, and parks. The town's oil boom and industrial might, beginning in the 1860s, built homes, shops, and corporate headquarters of elegance and style. More than 100 years have passed since most of those buildings were constructed; the town and its inhabitants have changed significantly, while many historic buildings have retained most of their charm. These significant buildings are encompassed by the historic districts of Oil City, which have been recognized by the National Register of Historic Places as worthy of preservation.

Historic buildings and neighborhoods have great value for Oil City and its residents, but they also have challenges. Maintaining, restoring, adapting, and even understanding these buildings can be difficult. Whether you are a first time homeowner, a community leader, or an experienced commercial property manager, this Design Guide has the information and tools you need, specific to Oil City. It is a voluntary resource to support and enable historic preservation and to encourage Oil City to flourish.

COMMON TERMS

WHAT'S A HISTORIC BUILDING OR STRUCTURE?

A building or a structure, such as a bridge or a monument, that is at least 50 years old and has meaning to the community's past due to its architectural design or connection to a person or event of historical significance.

WHAT'S A HISTORIC DISTRICT?

The National Park Service defines a historic district as "A geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, landscapes, structures, or objects, unified by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical developments. A district may also be composed of individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history."

WHAT'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

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

SPONSORS, TEAM AND PROCESS

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

Funding for this Design Guide was supported by a Keystone Planning Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Additional funding was provided by the National Park Service via the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism; Hart Family Fund for Small Towns of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Northwest Charitable Foundation, Inc.; Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Suhr, Jr.; and Take Pride in Oil City.

The Oil City Main Street Program spearheaded the Design Guide project. A steering committee composed of residents and business owners from the three historic districts, local elected officials, and local community organizations oversaw the Oil City Design Guide process and development. The steering committee met with the consultant team, citySTUDIO and T&B Planning, regularly during the process to provide feedback and suggestions, and to publicize the Design Guide public engagement efforts. The committee recognizes the efforts of Kathy Bailey, Oil City Main Street Program Manager (2011 – 2023), for seeing this project through. Her hard work and dedication to the Program greatly benefited the Oil City community.

Public input was provided via an online survey in Summer 2021. Public feedback on the second draft of the Design Guide was supplied during a public meeting in Spring 2023 and public comments on the final draft of the Design Guide was provided in Summer 2023 during a second public meeting.

Cover art created by Raven Nespore, Oil City Main Street Program Intern.



Spring 2023 Public Meeting



Spring 2023 Public Meeting

PURPOSE OF A DESIGN GUIDE

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this voluntary Design Guide is to provide guidance for property owners, tenants, contractors, design professionals, tradespeople, local government officials, and community organizations to promote and ensure the integrity of the historic districts and buildings in Oil City for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

- Understand the important architectural and design features of older and historic buildings
- Provide maintenance recommendations – seasonal and long-term
- Understand technical building elements specific to historical periods
- Provide an informative resource for owners of historic buildings and individuals interested in purchasing a historic property in Oil City
- Encourage and foster good stewardship of historic buildings by providing accessible knowledge

FOR OIL CITY

- Enhance the cohesion and the integrity of the three historic districts by maintaining the authentic character of the buildings and landscape and preserving the neighborhood settings
- Build upon the aesthetic improvements already completed in downtown Oil City by the Oil City Main Street Program
- Promote cultural tourism and increase economic development by strengthening the aesthetics of the historic districts

- Attract new residents and economic investments by improving, maintaining, and strengthening the identity of Oil City's historic districts

FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS, DEVELOPERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- Recommend improvements to public rights-of-way and recreational spaces in and around the historic districts
- Recommend tools to avoid demolition, assess when it is unavoidable, and document and salvage components of demolished buildings
- Provide design guidance for new construction to maintain continuity within the historic districts

BENEFITS

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

This Design Guide aims to benefit the community of Oil City and its stakeholders. When properly utilized, the Design Guide mutually benefits property owners, tenants, historic districts and the community.

- More homeowners maintain and restore their buildings, encouraged and enabled by the Design Guide
- Historic districts experience observable improvement, and inspire more improvements
- Historical related tourism and entrepreneurial development builds stronger commercial districts
- New residents are attracted to the historic districts and invest in properties, including blighted properties
- Historic preservation builds property values, tax revenue, community pride, and neighborhood strength



Improves to Historic Homes in Oil City

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DESIGN GUIDE OVERVIEW

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

This Design Guide is divided into eleven sections based on the stakeholder input. Section 1 explains the historic districts and provides an overview of the Design Guide, and its purpose and benefits.

Sections 2 through 8 apply to private properties and are geared toward property owners, tenants, contractors, design professionals, and prospective buyers. Section 2 gives a historical narrative of each historic district in Oil City. Section 3 describes the major architectural styles found in these districts. Section 4 covers general information for existing buildings. Section 5 focuses more specifically on commercial buildings. Section 6 details information for before and after property demolition. Section 7 specifies ways to best construct new buildings or additions in the historic neighborhoods. Lastly, Section 8 outlines landscapes within the three historic districts.

Sections 9 and 10 provide resources and points to consider for officials and community organizations. Topics include connecting features—such as streets, sidewalks and public signage—and recreational features—such as city and neighborhood parks, and trails.

Lastly, Section 11 provides additional resources, historic tax credit programs, and related resources available to property owners, directory, and glossary.

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USING THE DESIGN GUIDE

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Begin by reviewing **Section 1: Introduction** and **Section 2: Historic Overview** to gain a better understanding of historic preservation in Oil City, the purpose and benefits of this Design Guide, and an overview of Oil City's history.

FOR PROPERTY OWNERS AND TENANTS

Section 3: Architectural Styles describes styles in Oil City and identifies stylistic features so that owners can consider which details to preserve and which may not be original.

Section 4: Existing Buildings applies to residential and commercial property owners or tenants.

Section 5: Commercial Building provides information about commercial properties. Both sections define features and provide maintenance information.

Section 7: New Construction and Additions will be relevant to property owners who would like to expand their building's footprint or develop vacant land. This section describes overall design choices that create cohesion between new construction and historic buildings in historic districts.

FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC ENTITIES

Section 9: Connecting Features: Streets and Sidewalks and **Section 10: Recreational Features** are specifically geared towards public improvements. These sections describe the current conditions, issues and opportunities, and potential improvements that would enhance the public realm.

FOR BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES

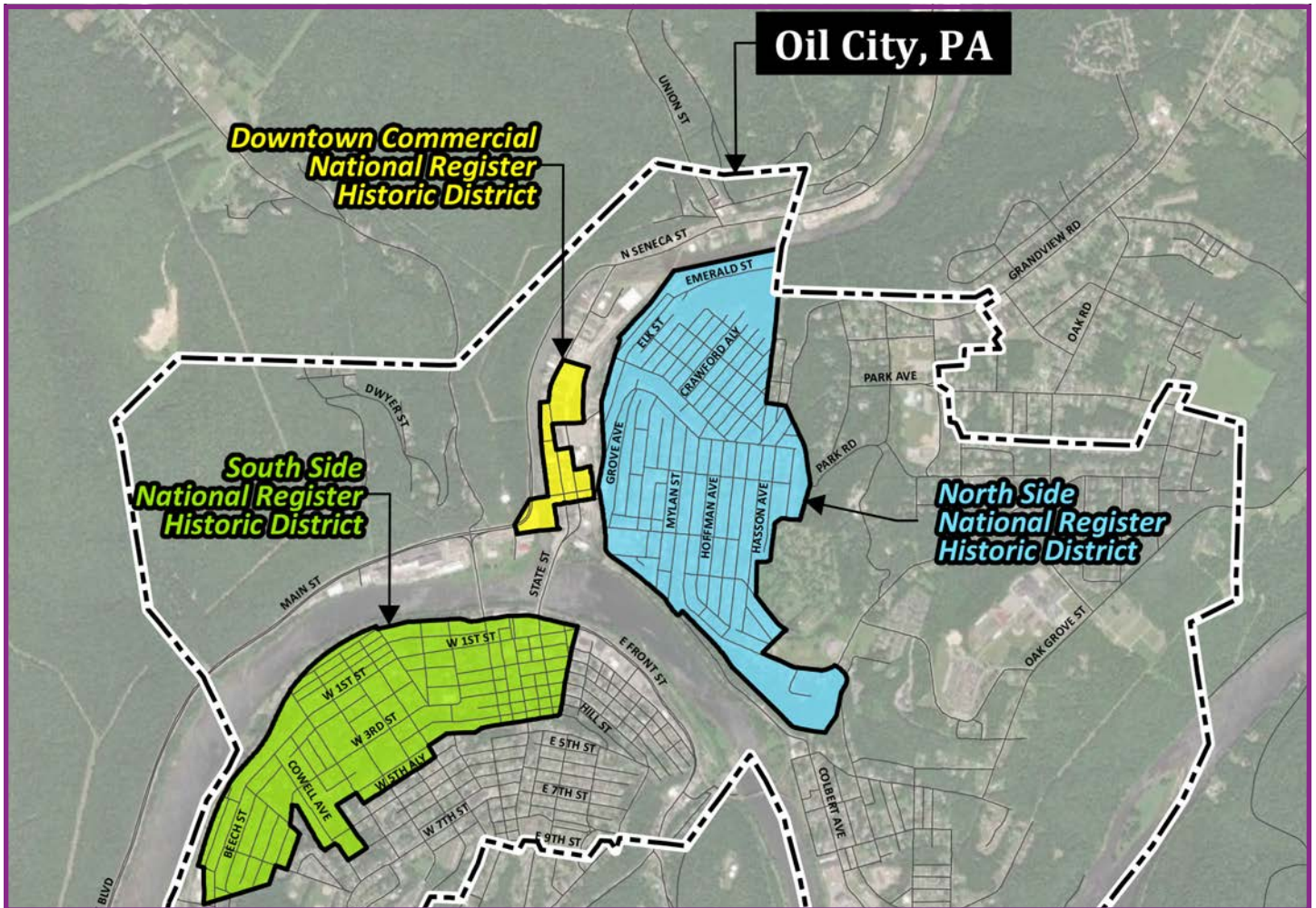
Section 6: Demolition applies to property owners who believe a building is beyond repair and endangers public health. This section helps property owners determine whether demolition should truly be a consideration, and what actions to take before demolition. The section also suggests strategies for community organizations and public entities to lessen unnecessary or preventable demolition, and strategies for sites after demolition.

Section 8: Landscaping addresses landscape elements that are appropriate in Oil City's historic districts and landscape improvements that strengthen the community's ecological health. The subsections benefit property owners, community organizations, and public entities.

Section 11: Additional Resources supports the Design Guide document by defining key terms and providing information regarding potential funding sources and a directory with key preservation organizations.

OIL CITY HISTORIC DISTRICTS

SECTION I INTRODUCTION



Map of Oil City's Three Historic Districts

Oil City's industrial history is reflected in its architecture. Each of Oil City's three National Register of Historic Places-listed historic districts, Oil City North Side Historic District, Oil City South Side Historic District, and Oil City Downtown Commercial Historic District, represent different aspects of Oil City's history. The majority of the properties in the North Side Historic District represent workers' housing; the South Side Historic District depicts the residences of industrial leaders; and the Downtown Commercial Historic District contains commercial buildings, former oil company headquarters, and manufacturing structures.

Oil City's three historic districts were listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1997. A historic district is listed on the NRHP for one or more of the following four criteria: an association with an event that has a broad contribution to history, an association with lives of significant persons, architectural significance, or the potential to yield important information related to prehistory or history. In Oil City, the three districts were listed because of their architectural significance and their association with the historic significant event, the oil boom.

OIL CITY HISTORIC DISTRICTS

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

Nomination of a historic district entails documenting each resource within the district boundary and determining whether the resource is contributing or non-contributing to the district. A contributing resource means it contributes to the historic significance and integrity of the district. Typically the resource must be at least 50 years old and not have experienced dramatic alterations, such as removal of most architectural details, extremely modified windows, or unsympathetic additions. Non-contributing resources are located within the district, but have not maintained their historical and architectural integrity or were built outside the district's period of significance. A contributing property can be re-classified as non-contributing due to inappropriate modifications, or proper restoration can make a building contributing again.

Listing on the NRHP is mostly a symbolic designation. NRHP designation does not protect the property or district from alteration, neglect, or demolition. However, a local municipality can create regulations to govern historic preservation. One such way is a historic district overlay as part of a municipality's zoning ordinance. The overlay typically contains more oversight on building demolition, exterior renovations, and rehabilitations, and a Historic Architectural Review Board oversees the adherence of the regulations. Oil City does not currently have a historic district overlay in any of the three historic districts, but may consider enacting regulations, if wanted in the future.

"Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps | Penn State University Libraries." *Penn State University Libraries*, 26 September 2022, <https://libraries.psu.edu/about/collections/sanborn-fire-insurance-maps>.



Downtown Oil City, 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



Oil City's North Side, 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



Oil City's South Side, 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

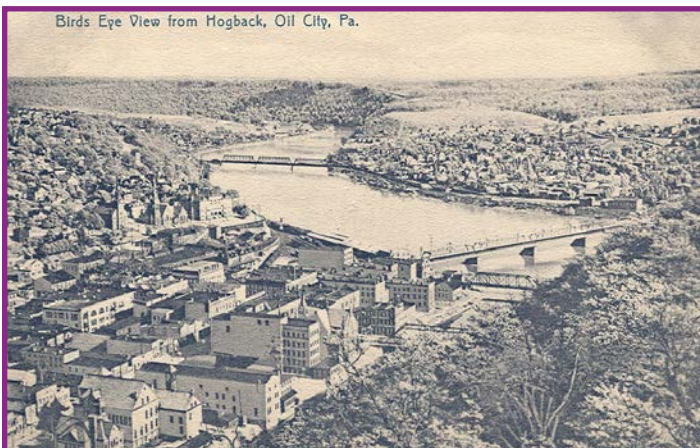
HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Oil City, including its three historic districts, rests on the “gift” tract, one of three tracts of land granted to Seneca Nation Chief Cornplanter in the 1790s for his service during the Revolutionary War. The land changed hands several times preceding the community’s development. The first major development was as a rural settlement that occupied the land for agriculture and logging resources. The community transformed dramatically after Edwin L. Drake drilled the first successful commercial oil well near Titusville in 1859. The small community at the confluence of Oil Creek and Allegheny River grew from 12 families in 1860 to 6,000 people in 1865, and at its height, 1930, the population rose to 22,075.

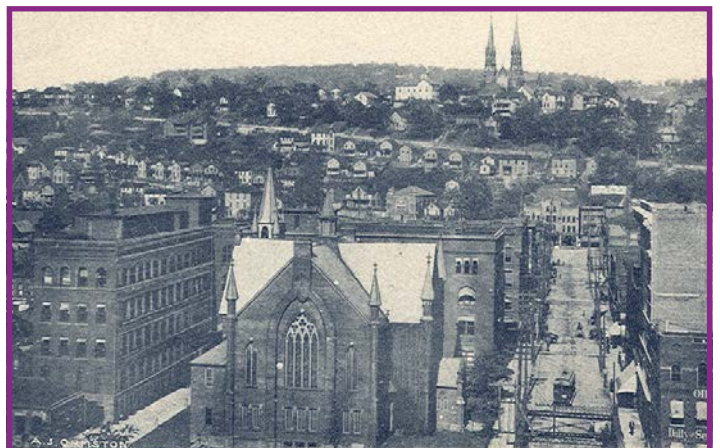
Early settlements were on the flat, easy to develop land along the river and creek. As the oil industry emerged, these expansive, flat areas with easy access to water transportation shifted to manufacturing and commercial land. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the oil industry became the dominant trade for the area. The success from the oil boom heightened Oil City’s prominence; and Oil City became the home to three major oil companies. The three headquarters and the trade’s success in the area gave notoriety to Oil City as an influential place for the petroleum industry. The city became known as the “hub of oildom”.

As manufacturing developed along the waterways, the residential dwellings moved to the nearby hills. The pace of the oil industry’s expansion coincided with the quality of residential construction. Dwellings were rapidly erected during the early boom years. As the industry evolved and residents gained wealth, the dwellings became more refined, and the cultural offerings and institutions arose.

In the 1950s and 1960s, portions of Oil City experienced urban renewal efforts. One project was the East End Redevelopment, which began in late 1956 and ended in 1963, that encompassed the area between East Front and East Second streets. This area was cleared and replaced with a four-lane highway (US 62), new commercial buildings and a new U.S. Post Office with parking lots, and a landscaped parcel with a fountain. In the early 1960s, buildings on the city’s North Side, including railroad-related structures, were razed and replaced with new buildings, including a five-story hotel.



Bird’s Eye View of Oil City.
© Oil Region Library Association



Oil City’s Commercial District Facing North Side.
© Oil Region Library Association

OIL CITY

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW



Topography and Residential Area of Oil City

As was happening throughout the nation, Oil City's industrial base began an increasingly rapid decline in the mid-1970s with the loss of thousands of jobs over the next three decades. U.S. Steel's Oil Well Supply division in Siverly employed nearly a thousand workers in 1980 and was shuttered a couple of years later. In that same time frame the Foster Forbes Oil City Glass Works closed with the loss of nearly 500 jobs. The Pennzoil refinery closed in 2000 with the loss of 300 jobs. There were other closures and significant declines in employment among other manufacturers.

But Oil City's losses were not just in manufacturing. Oil City was home to United Natural Gas (UNG), a regional utility, and two large regional banks – First Seneca and Northwest Pennsylvania Bank (not to be confused with today's Northwest Bank). All were lost to mergers – UNG in the late 1970s and

the banks in the 1980s. Pennzoil had also moved out the last of its corporate-level operations in that same time frame. In 1995, Quaker State, a Fortune 500 company, announced it was leaving Oil City for Texas.

In the first decades of the 21st century, many of the grand homes and large downtown commercial buildings of Oil City were vacated, repurposed for different uses, or razed. In recent years, new owners have purchased these properties to rehabilitate them for residential and/or commercial purposes. Historic buildings in Oil City are often more affordable and available than similar properties in larger cities; therefore, attracting renovators to the area. One of the goals of this Design Guide is to assist owners with the continued rehabilitation of these significant resources.

DOWNTOWN

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW



Downtown Oil City

The Downtown Commercial Historic District was originally part of the tract of land granted to Cornplanter in 1796. The first non-native settlement occurred roughly 3 miles north of Oil City in 1796 by Nathaniel Carey. Industrial activity, lumbering, and rafting logs on the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh, began in 1801, and the first recorded settlers to the area were Francis and Sarah Halyday in 1803.

In 1820 the tract of land, where Oil City is located, was transferred to two men who established an iron furnace. The small village had one hotel; the Moran House, several taverns, a boarding stable, and a store. For the next 40 years, little development occurred in the modest settlement, called Cornplanter, located at the mouth of Oil Creek, until Edwin L. Drake drilled for and struck oil in 1859 near Titusville. The oil well changed the sleepy village into a gateway to the oil fields,

known as "Oilville." In 1861, the Post Office changed the town's name from Oilville to Oil City. The community followed suit in 1862, when the area became incorporated into the Borough of Oil City; nine years later in 1871 it was chartered as a city under Pennsylvania law.

The 25 flat acres north of the Allegheny River became the primary commercial hub for the area. The downtown grew further when Oil Creek Railroad and the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad began rail service on the eastern portion of the district to transport goods, passengers, and crude oil.

The booming downtown changed dramatically in 1892 when heavy rains raised Oil Creek, breaking Spartansburg Dam more than 40 miles north; sweeping barrels and tanks of oil, distillate, and naphtha (a byproduct of oil) into the water;

DOWNTOWN

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW

flooding downtown Oil City and igniting a vaporous gas caused by the naphtha. The flood and fire killed 57 people and destroyed 75 homes and 20 downtown buildings.

Downtown reconstruction began immediately and the area expanded further as small-scale oil refineries emerged in the area. Eventually, the small operations merged into three major refineries: Pennzoil, Quaker State, and Wolf's Head. The oil industry's influence shaped the downtown's development as a number of buildings in the district were built specifically for the oil industry or an ancillary industry, and the majority of commercial buildings served the people who worked in the oil industry.

Oil City's downtown developed densely in a north-south and east-west grid pattern with no alleyways. The two main north-south streets, Seneca and Elm streets, run parallel with Oil Creek on its eastern bank. Some of the buildings on the west side of Seneca Street extend to Oil Creek's banks and the buildings on the east side of Seneca extend the entire depth of the block to Elm Street, making two primary addresses and frontages.

Generally, the district contains commercial and industrial structures built with stone, brick, or terra cotta at a height of one to five stories with no front or side setback. One historic church (Trinity United Methodist Church) and two historic bridges (1939-1940 Center Street Bridge and 1892 Erie Railroad Bridge) also occupy the district. The district's period of architectural significance was from 1870-1945 with Italianate, Chateausque, Neo-Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Art Deco, and Vernacular being the prevalent building styles.

Locally and regionally famous architects and builders designed and built some of these edifices.

Oil City architect Joseph E. Brenot designed the Chateausque style Downs Building (201 Center Street) in 1894, the Cowell Building (210-212 Center Street), the Elks Lodge (109-115 Sycamore Street) in 1910, and the former Pennzoil Service Station (217 Elm Street) in 1928. In the 1890s, New York architect Enoch A. Curtis designed one of the finest office buildings in the district: the National Transit Company building at the Corner of Seneca and Center streets. The National Transit Company also constructed an annex office building. Both buildings are architecturally significant and listed in the National Register individually. Another Philadelphia architectural firm, Charles W. Bolton and Son designed the 1924 Late Gothic Revival style Trinity United Methodist Church (2 Center Street). The iconic downtown building is the Oil City National Bank Building, a 1926 granite Neo-Classical Revival style building at 203 Center Street.

The vibrancy of Oil City's downtown began to wane from the 1960s-1980s. 1960s urban renewal projects removed buildings in the southern portion of the district to create parking lots and a hotel, and the passenger and freight depots in the east side of the historic district were demolished. Pennzoil, Wolf's Head, and Quaker State maintained corporate offices in Oil City until Pennzoil acquired Wolf's Head, and in the 1970s and 80s, Pennzoil and Quaker State moved to Texas. This coupled with 1970s development of a regional mall had a major adverse impact on the vitality of the central business district.

SOUTH SIDE

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW



Houses in Oil City's South Side Historic District

The 222-acre South Side Historic District rests on the south bank of the Allegheny River at the convergence of Allegheny River and Oil Creek. Benjamin Thompson and James Hollis first acquired large tracts of land originally granted to Cornplanter. In the 1850s, the South Side was little more than a small-scale settlement of temporary housing along the river.

Henry Bastian purchased a portion of the Thompson and Hollis land for farming in 1853. Other investors, including Charles Lee and Thomas G. Downing acquired and controlled several hundred acres. Lee and Downing platted their lands and named their communities Leetown and Imperial, respectively. William Lay purchased the Bastian Farm in 1863 and also began platting the land for commercial and residential building lots. Lay named his newly developed land, which comprised a large portion of the current South

Side Historic District, Laytonia. Another farm, Moran Farm, was subdivided into building plots by the Orange Oil Company in 1865.

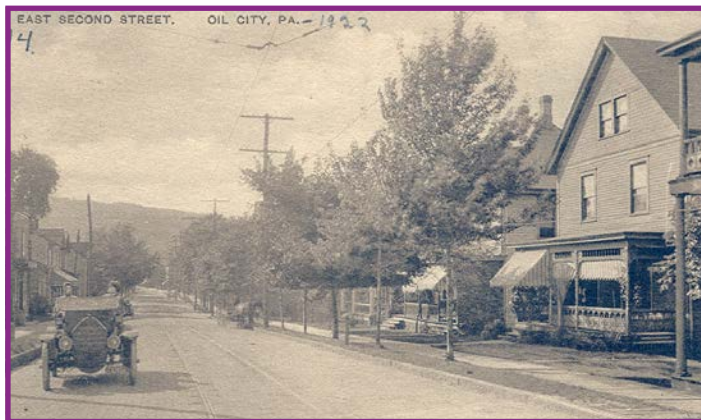
Significant change happened in 1866 as citizens of Leetown, Imperial, and Laytonia petitioned the Venango County Court to unite their communities; the new town was named "Venango City." Also in 1866, Venango City and Oil City became linked by the construction of the Oil City Petroleum Bridge, which induced South Side growth. Even after being physically linked, the municipalities remained separate communities until 1871. South Side growth occurred largely in the commercial area along First and Front streets until the 1890s. This original commercial area developed to compete with downtown Oil City. Although major stores, offices, and governmental buildings were located in Oil City's downtown, this commercial area flourished as a neighborhood-scale "downtown" for the South

SOUTH SIDE

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Side district. The historic South Side commercial district is characterized as dense with no front setback and little vegetation.

Around this same time, the hill portion of the South Side, referred to as “oil lands” on early surveys, continued to be undeveloped. Close to the end of the nineteenth century, residential development began to move outward from the core of First and Front streets. This new development turned into the most desirable residential section of the community because it offered the ability to lay out spacious lots due to the more moderate slopes than on the North Side. The area’s character has medium density with mature trees, large yards, and middle- and upper-class dwellings. Prominent industrial leaders—oil developers, refiners, and industrialists—established these expansive estates by purchasing multiple lots to erect large scale residences. Some of these homes were designed or constructed by locally or regionally renowned architects and builders. Architecture fashion swayed toward smaller, manageable homes instead of stately homes in the twentieth century. As a result, most of these larger lots were subdivided and smaller homes were built in-between. The district’s period of architectural significance is between 1863 and 1945. Half of the historic buildings in the district were constructed before 1900 and the other half were built in the twentieth century.



East Second Street, South Side.
© Oil Region Library Association



West Second Street, South Side.
© Oil Region Library Association



West First Street, South Side.
© Oil Region Library Association

NORTH SIDE

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW



Houses in Oil City's North Side Historic District

The North Side Historic District, situated north of Oil City's Commercial Downtown Historic District, spans over 250 acres and overlooks Oil Creek and the Allegheny River. After Cornplanter, oil producers Graff, Hasson, and Company owned a large portion of land in the North Side. The area initially had little development and was scattered with industrial structures from the oil industry. Primary development occurred on the flood-prone flat lands along the Allegheny River and Oil Creek. However, after the first recorded flood in 1862, residents chose to move to safer, higher land.

In 1863, Charles Haines and Joseph Marston purchased a portion of the Graff, Hasson, and Company property and laid out building parcels along Grove Avenue. Due to the first, small dwellings on Grove Avenue, the neighborhood was coined "Cottage Hill," but none of these hastily constructed homes survived. The remaining

hillside was acquired from Graff, Hasson, and Company by the United Petroleum Farms Association (UPFA) in 1864. UPFA made a more permanent neighborhood by creating plats for building development and grading the land for streets.

Even with the neighborhood's hilly topography, most streets are in a gridded pattern meeting at perpendicular intersections with the exception of a few streets that are topographically oriented. The rigid grid pattern placed on the slopes of two intersecting hills generated unopened or undeveloped streets and buffers of woodland, produced by "volunteer" trees, on the steep portions of the neighborhood. The abrupt hills were not ideal for large expansive lots. Instead, the building plots were small, creating a dense residential neighborhood. Even in the dense neighborhood, shade trees canopy some streets,

NORTH SIDE

SECTION 2 HISTORIC OVERVIEW

others have new trees, and others are devoid of vegetation.

The neighborhood initially housed workers because of the modest building lots and easy access to many of the manufacturing plants in the area. The first settlers were immigrants from the British Isles, followed by Polish immigrants. The northern section of the neighborhood earned the nickname “Polish Hill” because of the surge of Polish immigrants. The Polish Hill portion of the North Side is characterized as more simplistic than the area southwest of Plummer Street.

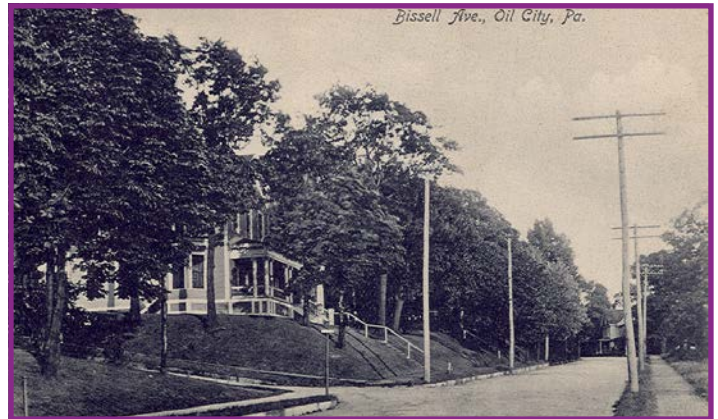
Nearly all of the buildings are residential with a few commercial buildings, schools, and churches dispersed throughout. Pearl Avenue contains the oldest resources and the construction becomes newer moving toward Cedar and Linden avenues. The majority of dwellings are humble, framed structures of two or two-and-a-half stories. Most, built by carpenters, have no reference to any formal style and are either vernacular cottages, gabled ell homes, or are simple gable-fronted dwellings.

Alongside the working-class vernacular homes on Bissell and Harriott avenues exist grandiose homes, built by oilmen who began as workers. These more elaborate residences derive architectural characteristics from Italianate, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival with vernacular adaptations. Early twentieth century examples are Bungalows or American Foursquare styles with one 1950 Lustron house designed by Chicago architects, Morris H. Beckman and Roy B. Blass.

A focal point of the North Side is the twin-spired St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church. The church casts prominence throughout Oil City due to

its location atop the hill on Pearl Avenue, which makes the spires visible throughout the city. Completed in 1894, the Gothic Revival style church was designed by German-born church architect Adolphus Druiding.

The North Side Historic District reflects the history of Oil City and of the oil industry in Western Pennsylvania. Although not the grandiose homes of the industrialists, the dwellings in the district are comparable in importance because they represent the workers who grew the oil industry.



Bissell Avenue, North Side.
© Oil Region Library Association



North Side Historic District.
© Oil Region Library Association

PROMINENT ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN OIL CITY

Architectural styles classify buildings by their features or notable characteristics. A building's architectural style is defined by features such as building form, roof form, building materials, pattern and type of windows and doors, and detailing. A building's architectural style reveals a moment in time by reflecting the history, economic circumstances, technology, culture, and geography. By preserving the integrity of a building's architectural style, a community tells the story of its history and culture.

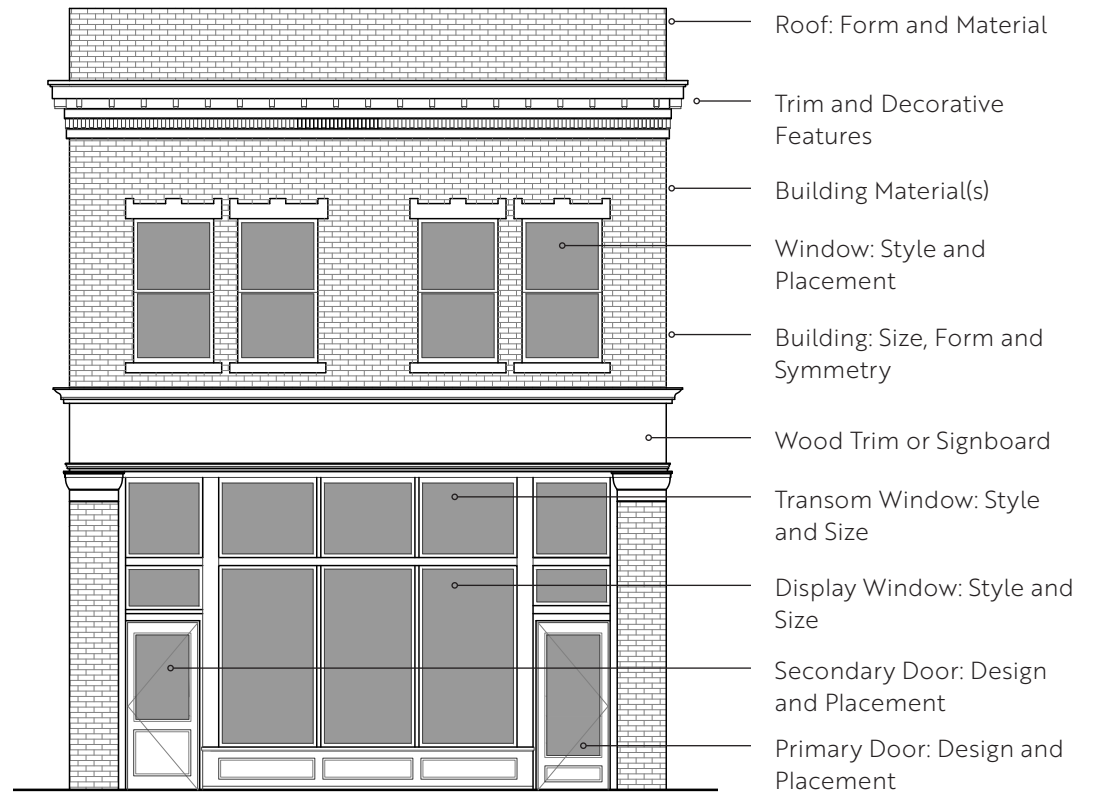
Oil City has many architectural styles throughout its historic districts. Popular styles of the era reflect the major development period in Oil City from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. The most common styles are Romantic during the mid-1800s, Victorian during the late 1800s, Revivals during the early 1900s, and American Movements during the early 1900s.



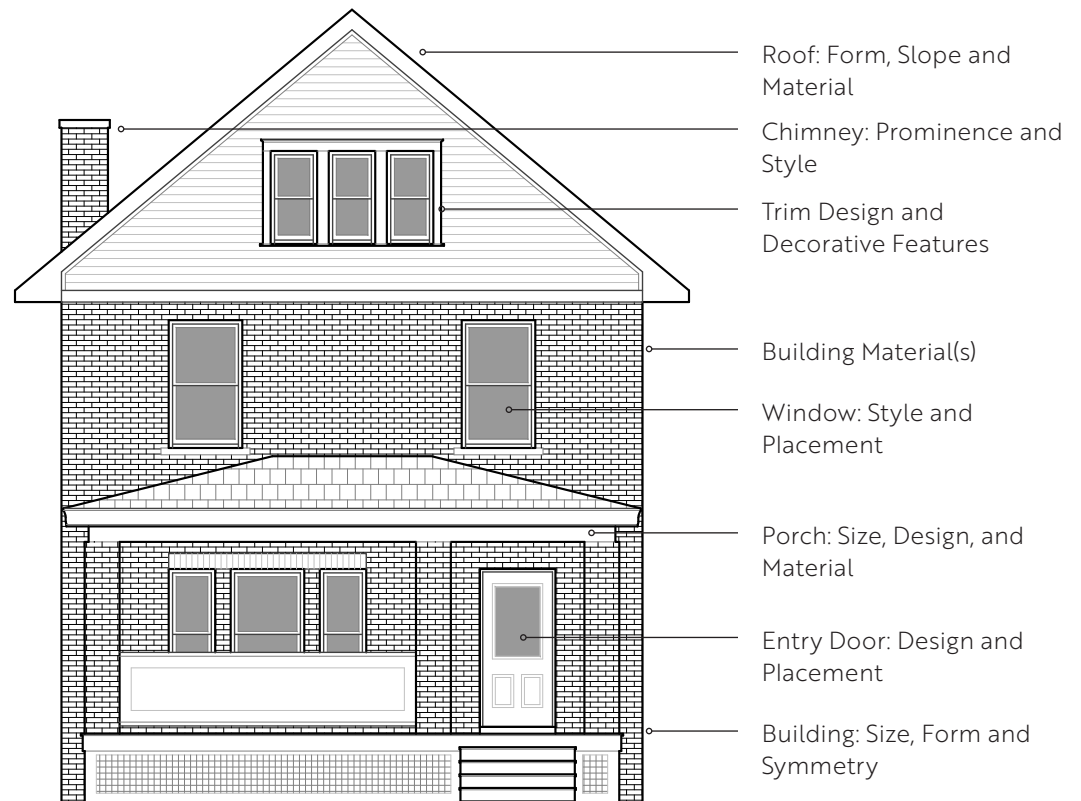
Vernacular Architecture in Oil City

BUILDING FEATURES

SECTION 3 ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN OIL CITY



COMMERCIAL BUILDING ELEMENTS



RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ELEMENTS

ROMANTIC STYLES

1820-1885

The Romantic period of architecture refers to an idealized or picturesque version of the past or a region. The styles during the Romantic period derive inspiration and detailing from Medieval or Roman architecture. While inspired by the past, the buildings do not replicate iconic buildings (for example The Pantheon). Several Romantic architectural styles developed simultaneously from different historic architectural styles. The most common Romantic styles in Oil City are Gothic Revival and Italianate.

These styles emerged through pattern books written about medieval architecture and the Italian Renaissance. Self-trained carpenters and architects used these influential pattern books as a guide to design and construct buildings. During the Romantic period, multiple architectural styles on a given street became popular. Before this time, a streetscape typically had one style exclusively.



Gothic Revival



Italianate

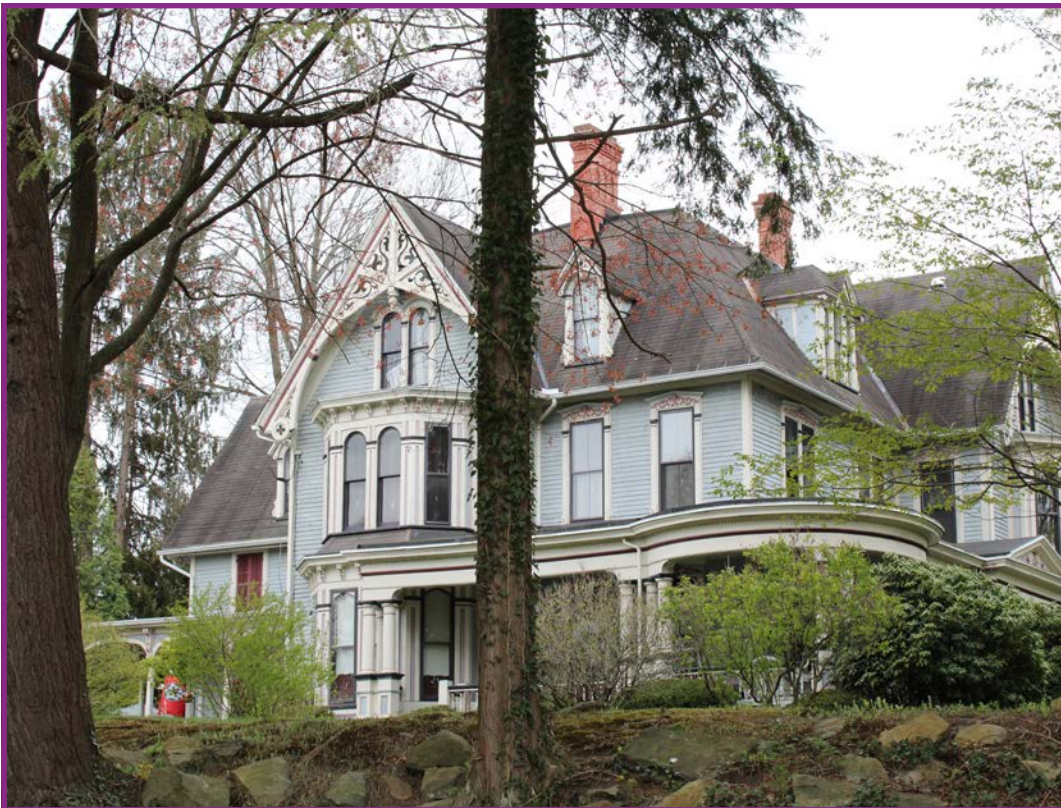
GOTHIC REVIVAL

ROMANTIC STYLE 1830-1860

Fashionable during the same period as the Greek Revival, but developed slightly later, the Gothic Revival grew as an opposition to classical architecture. The building's room layout reflected the owner's needs and the site's characteristics rather than conforming to the form and symmetry of classical styles. Gothic Revival design features drew inspiration and influence from medieval design and was promoted as an ideal style for natural landscapes, such as rural areas and small towns. Churches were also frequently constructed in the Gothic Revival style.

STYLE FEATURES

- Complex, irregular shape and form
- Towers
- Parapets (crenelated)
- Tracery windows
- Gothic arches (windows and entries)
- Vertical board and batten
- Wooden siding
- Steep roofs
- Front-facing gables
- Bargeboard
- Incised wooden trim (gingerbread)
- Turned posts or columns
- Spires
- Crowns/drip mold
- Finials/cross bracing
- Slate roof
- Bay window



GOTHIC REVIVAL South Side Historic District, 305 West Fourth Street (William J. Innis House)



Bargeboard



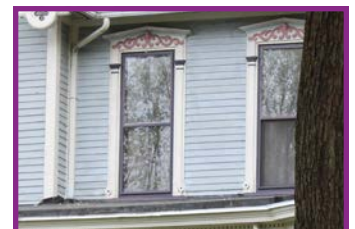
Steep, Front- Facing Gable Roof



Bay Window



Gingerbread



Window Crown or Drip Mold

ITALIANATE

ROMANTIC STYLE 1840-1885

Italianate architecture was modeled after Italian Renaissance architecture and medieval farmhouses in Italy. Italianate architecture first developed in England and later spread across the eastern United States through pattern books by Andrew Jackson Downing. Italianate was promoted as an alternative style to Gothic Revival. This style was also thought to be ideal for rustic settings and easily adaptable for different budgets and building functions. The Italianate style can be found on institutional buildings, commercial and residential buildings, and in both urban and rural settings.

STYLE FEATURES

- Irregular shaped
- Cupola/square tower (belvedere)
- Bracketed cornice
- Wide/overhanging eaves
- Tall/narrow windows
- Elaborate hoods
- Segmental arched windows topped with pediment or entablature with brackets
- Single-story columned porticoes or porches
- Low pitched roofs
- Quoins



ITALIANATE South Side Historic District, First Street



Slender Columns



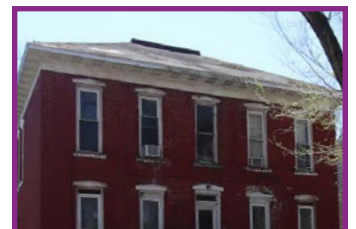
Bracketed Cornice



Elaborate Window Hoods



Tall, Narrow, Arched Windows



Low Pitched, Hipped Roof

VICTORIAN STYLES

1860-1910

The Victorian period of architecture spanned 1860 through 1900. The Victorian architectural period refers to the period's namesake British Queen Victoria. The Victorian styles exhibit decorative detailing, asymmetry, steep pitched roofs, and complex forms and floor plans. Rapid industrialization and railroad networks caused major changes in housing design and construction. Industrialization and railroads resulted in the mass production and transportation of machinery and materials that made more elaborate detailing and building forms easier to create. Published pattern books also elicited Victorian architecture's popularity. Books of house plans and detailing allowed craftspeople, architecture programs, and journals to disseminate the building trends and architectural history. The most common Victorian styles in Oil City are Stick, Queen Anne, Second Empire, Romanesque Revival, Shingle, and High Victorian Gothic.



Stick



Queen Anne



Second Empire

STICK

VICTORIAN STYLE 1860-1890

Stick architecture is a transition between Gothic Revival and Queen Anne. Stick buildings feature similar detailing as Gothic Revival, but with the form and shape of the Queen Anne style. Like Gothic Revival, inspiration for Stick style came from medieval architecture. The main stylistic difference between Gothic Revival and Stick is the treatment of façade surfaces. Stick style regards walls as an additional decorative element with multiple textures. Walls were commonly clad with wood although high style buildings used masonry in decorative brickwork patterns, unlike Gothic Revival which only used doors, windows, cornices, and porches as decorative elements. Another defining feature of Stick architecture is the decorative roof trusses, which mimic the exposed structure on medieval half-timbered houses. These exposed roof elements display an honest structural system by showing the supportive building structure. Stick style did not become as popular as Queen Anne.

STYLE FEATURES

- Steep pitched gable roof
- Cross gables
- Decorative trusses at gable peak
- Overhanging eaves with exposed rafters
- Wood exterior with clapboards
- Horizontal/vertical/diagonal decorative wood trim
- Porches with diagonal or curved braces
- Towers



STICK South Side Historic District, Third Street



Decorative Wood Clapboard



Steep Front Gable



Decorative Gable

QUEEN ANNE

VICTORIAN STYLES 1880-1910

The Queen Anne architectural style began in England and was popularized by nineteenth century English architects. Although named after the English Queen Anne, the architectural style emulates Medieval and Jacobean architecture rather than Renaissance architecture that was popular during Queen Anne's reign. In the United States, pattern books popularized the style. Residences and large public buildings—like schools, churches, and offices—were erected in the Queen Anne style. In Oil City, Queen Anne architecture is found primarily on residential buildings.

STYLE FEATURES

- Expansive porches (full or partial length)
- Asymmetrical
- Cross gable
- Steep pitched roof with irregular shape
- Corner tower
- Distinctive form
- Decorative detail
- Spindlework (could be mass produced)
- Round or polygonal front corner towers with conical roof
- Wall materials: patterned shingle to half timbering, panels of pebbles,
- Single pane windows with decorative panes or stained glass
- Turned columns/posts
- Projected bay windows



QUEEN ANNE South Side Historic District, Third Street



Expansive Front Porch



Asymmetric Design



Patterned Cladding



Turned Columns and Spindlework



Corner Tower with Conical Roof

SECOND EMPIRE

VICTORIAN STYLE 1855-1885

The Second Empire or French Second Empire received its name from the reign of Napoleon III during France's Second Empire. The style, considered modern instead of a revival style at the time, began in Paris exhibitions in 1855. By 1867, the style spread throughout France and later to the United States. The key identifying feature for a Second Empire building is the mansard roof, designed by and named after French architect Francois Mansart. Both fashionable and functional, mansard roofs provide more usable attic space.

STYLE FEATURES

- Mansard roof
- Patterned shingle roof
- Iron roof crest
- Decorative window surrounds and dormers
- Eaves with brackets
- One-story porch
- Tower
- Quoins
- Balustrades
- Round arched windows
- Columned porches or porticoes
- Elaborate detailing
- Slate roof



SECOND EMPIRE South Side Historic District, First Street



Mansard with Dormers



Round Arched Windows



Slate Mansard Roof



Bay Window with Lead Glass



Eaves with Brackets



Elaborate Detailing and One-Story Porch

ROMANESQUE REVIVAL

VICTORIAN STYLE 1880-1900

Romanesque Revival, a European architectural style inspired by ancient Roman buildings, grew in prominence by American architect Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson exploited Romanesque Revival by utilizing features from other architectural styles to create a more dramatic design. He sought inspiration from the late Gothic Revival buildings and Syrian arches. He emphasized building individuality and sculpted shapes. Even after Richardson's death, Romanesque Revival grew in popularity because of the publications on his work and pattern books. Romanesque Revival is commonly found on public buildings and mansions.

STYLE FEATURES

- Masonry construction
- Round arches at entrance and windows
- Heavy/massive appearance
- Polychromatic stonework on details
- Round tower
- Squat columns
- Decorative plaques
- Tile roof



ROMANESQUE REVIVAL South Side Historic District, First Street



Round Arched Windows



Masonry Construction



Round Towers



Decorative Brickwork & Plaque



Masonry Construction with Stonework

SHINGLE STYLE

VICTORIAN STYLE 1880-1910

The Shingle Style began in New England. The style evolved from the Queen Anne style and drew from the early shingle buildings of New England colonies, although it never gained the same prominence as the Queen Anne style. Shingle style received its name from its defining characteristic, shingle cladding. Shingles clad the walls, roof, and may cover columns, gables, or towers. The unpainted shingles gave a monochromatic appearance to the building. Occasionally, brick or stone cover the ground floor. Shingle style minimizes detailing at the doors and windows and instead emphasizes the irregular form. Throughout the style's popularity, the designs maintained a high-fashion architectural style and seldomly adapted to become vernacular architecture. Famous architects like Henry Hobson Richardson and Frank Lloyd Wright employed the style.

STYLE FEATURES

- Decorative detail used sparingly
- Wood shingle walls and roof
- Asymmetrical façade
- Irregular roof lines
- Moderately pitched roofs
- Cross gables
- Extensive wide porches
- Small sash or casement windows with many panes
- Round or polygonal shingled towers



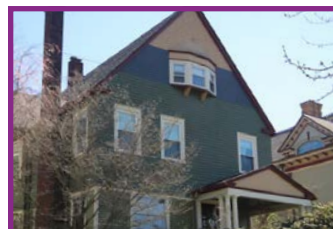
SHINGLE STYLE South Side Historic District, First Street



Wood Shingles



Shingle Walls



Modest Detailing



Cross Gable

REVIVAL STYLES

1880-1955

After the experimental and eclectic nature of the Victorian era, a desire grew for more pure, traditional architecture. Designers and builders began to reexamine historical architectural precedents when designing these nineteenth century and twentieth century revivals. The inspiration drawn from early American architecture came from Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, and Roman Revival architectural styles. The ancient buildings from the Romans and Greeks influenced these early American styles. However, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Revivals sought to create more accurate versions of the ancient buildings from the Romans and Greeks. The most common Revival styles in Oil City are Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical or Classical Revival, and Tudor Revival.



Colonial Revival



Classical Revival



Tudor Revival

COLONIAL REVIVAL

REVIVAL STYLE 1880-1955

The name Colonial Revival refers to an affinity for the early English and Dutch colonial houses. The style references early colonial American styles, Georgian and Federal. The earlier styles tend to be simplistic, one or two stories, rectangular, and symmetrical. Each has stylistic variations. Federal, the later style, has more delicate, refined detailing and more elaborate forms. Colonial Revivals, however, rarely replicate the earlier styles in a historically accurate fashion. Rather the style combines design aspects of Federal and Georgian architecture. The style gained popularity from its promotion during America's Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia of 1876 and The World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Colonial Revival is the most frequently reproduced housing styles in the United States. Between 1910 and 1930, 40% of houses built in the United States were Colonial Revivals. This period of Colonial Revivals has more accurate detailing than earlier or later examples. Post-World War II Colonial Revivals have more simplistic details. The style is popular for public buildings and houses.

The Dutch Colonial Revival is a sub-style of Colonial Revival. This sub-style, also inspired by early Dutch colonial architecture, can be typically identified by its iconic gambrel roof.

STYLE FEATURES

- Columned porch or portico
- Front door sidelights
- Pediment door, porches, windows, and dormers
- Broken pediment over front door
- Pilasters
- Symmetrical façade
- Double-hung windows often multi-paned
- Bay windows
- Paired or triple windows
- Wood shutters
- Decorative pendants
- Side gabled or hipped roofs
- Cornice with dentils or modillions
- Fanlight
- Wood shingle roof
- Palladian window



COLONIAL REVIVAL South Side Historic District, Cowell Avenue



Palladian Window



Dutch Colonial with Gambrel Roof

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

REVIVAL STYLE 1895-1950

With a renewed interest in classical form from promotion during the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, Classical or Neo-Classical Revival style became one of the most common architectural styles in America. Classical Revival buildings look formal and monumental. The detailing derives from earlier Greek Revival buildings with massive, full-façade-height columns, column capitals in Corinthian, Doric, or Ionic styles, and front-facing pediment. During the 1900s-1920s, Classical Revival buildings featured hipped roofs and accurately proportioned, elaborate columns. Classical Revivals built between 1925 and 1950, more often feature side-gabled roofs and slender columns.

STYLE FEATURES

- Formal symmetrical design with center door
- Front façade columned porch
- Full height porch with classical columns
- Front-facing gable on porch or main roof
- Broken pediment over entry door
- Decorative door surrounds/columns/sidelights
- Side or front portico or entry porch
- Dentilled cornice
- Rectangular double-hung windows
- Roof line balustrade



CLASSICAL REVIVAL South Side Historic District, Third Street



Front Porch with Brackets



Symmetrical Façade



Cornice with Brackets and Dentils



American Foursquare with Classical Detailing



Classical Two-Story Columns

TUDOR REVIVAL

REVIVAL STYLE 1890-1940

The Tudor Revival style builds upon early English building tradition: loose adaptations of Medieval English and early Renaissance English architecture. Tudor Revival also incorporates elements of Craftsman detailing. Unlike the more formal Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles, the Tudor Revival floor plans govern the design. Floor plans taking precedence creates symmetrical and asymmetrical designs. This causes the façades to have more flexibility and freedom of window size and placement. Like other styles, Tudor Revival became more simplistic after World War II. The style is more common among residential dwellings, but some public buildings were constructed in the Tudor Revival style.

STYLE FEATURES

- Steep pitched roof (typical side gable with front gable and hipped less common)
- Cross gables
- Decorative half-timbering
- Prominent chimneys
- Narrow multi-pane windows (typically casement)
- Diamond window panes
- Sometimes double-hung windows
- Entry porches or gabled entry
- Patterned stonework or brickwork
- Overhanging gables or second stories
- Parapeted or Flemish gable
- Round or Tudor arch entry doors
- Slate roof



TUDOR REVIVAL South Side Historic District, First Street



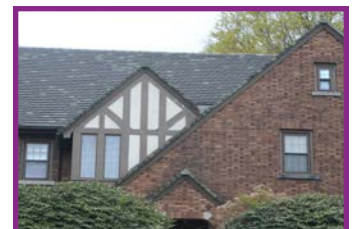
Stone Entry Porch



Round Arch Entry with Decorative Stonework



Decorative Half-Timbering



Slate Roof and Cross Gables

AMERICAN MOVEMENT STYLES

1900-1930

The styles of the American Movement featured design and elements that had no reference to previous architectural styles or traditions. These styles were considered to be the precursor to modern architecture. New building technology and the desire to relate architecture to the natural environment contributed to changes during the American Movement. Pattern books cultivated the interest in these styles, and their popularity can be seen throughout the country's first suburbs.



Craftsman



American Foursquare



Vernacular

CRAFTSMAN/BUNGALOW

AMERICAN MOVEMENT STYLE 1905-1930

The evolution of the Craftsman style began in Southern California and was made famous by brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. The style, influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement and oriental wooden architecture, embraces nature by blending interior and exterior spaces and has low horizontal lines. The dominant building type for the Craftsman style tends to be small homes and bungalows. The smaller homes made the style more affordable for the middle class. This affordability and its tie to nature made it ideal for the developing suburbs. The style quickly spread across the country with the publication of pattern books, mail order house kits, and popular magazines. However, by the 1940s, the style's prestige faded.

STYLE FEATURES

- One or two stories high
- Overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, bracket or braces
- Front-facing gables
- Multi-pane windows
- Low pitched gable or hipped roof
- Full or partial front porch with sturdy columns (commonly square and tapered)
- Prominent gabled or shed roofed dormers
- Wood shingle roof



CRAFTSMAN North Side Historic District, Cedar Avenue



Wood Shingle Cladding



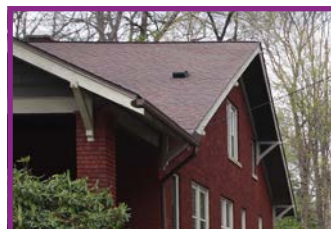
Front, Gable Dormer



Large Front Porch



Exposed Rafters and Sturdy Columns



Brackets



Low Slope Roof

AMERICAN FOURSQUARE

AMERICAN MOVEMENT STYLE 1900-1920

American Foursquare (vernacular version of Prairie Style) earns its name from its square-ish shaped floor plan. Four rooms typically divide the first floor plan: an entry with staircase, living room, dining room, and kitchen. The American Foursquare, a vernacular version of Prairie Style architecture, has little ornamentation and commonly uses other architectural styles as detailing. The use of other architectural detailing, like Colonial Revival, Italianate, Spanish Revival, Craftsman and Classical Revival, make the American Foursquare more difficult to identify stylistically. Similar to Craftsman style homes, American Foursquares blend interior and exterior spaces with large porches and windows. They also could be bought in pre-ordered house kits and were an affordable option for the early suburbs of the twentieth century. The style's simplicity made constructing without an architect easy to accomplish.

STYLE FEATURES

- Square shape floor plan
- One-story porch across entire front façade
- Low pitched hipped or pyramid roof with dormer(s)
- Wide overhanging eaves with box gutters
- Emphasis on horizontal lines (Prairie Style)
- Massive square porch columns
- Paired double-hung windows
- Two stories
- Balanced façade



AMERICAN FOURSQUARE North Side Historic District, Bissell Avenue



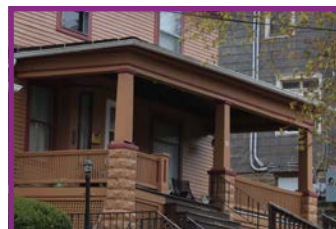
Pyramid Roof



Massive Porch Columns



Double-Hung Windows



One-story Front Porch Across Entire Façade



Symmetrical Façade



Dormer

VERNACULAR AND OTHER STYLES

AMERICAN MOVEMENT STYLES

Vernacular architecture represents buildings that do not prescribe to a specific architectural style, rather the construction techniques were typically simplistic in style and constructed by local builders without formal architectural training. Vernacular architecture utilizes forms, elements, and materials that are well-suited to the local conditions and environment. Like the buildings constructed in a particular architectural style, these vernacular buildings are worthy of preservation because they are unique and mirror the local circumstances of Oil City.



Gable-Front



Gable-Ell



Gable-Front



Cottage



VERNACULAR North Side Historic District, Bissell Avenue



VERNACULAR North Side Historic District, Bissell Avenue

EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Preserving historic buildings comes with many benefits to the community and the property owner. Proper maintenance and renovation preserve the historic architectural and structural elements. Commonly these historic elements have detailing and use quality materials that cannot be easily replicated. Retaining these elements protects the authenticity of the building's architecture, which maintains or improves the community's architectural integrity and character. Addressing general building maintenance when problems are small and manageable prolongs the quality of the building and its materials, spreads the improvement costs over the lifetime of the building, and prevents costly repairs. Extending the lifetime of building materials reduces debris in landfills, reduces consumption of materials, saves energy otherwise needed to produce new materials, and reduces pollution and energy from the transportation of new and demolition materials.

COMMON TERMS

APPROPRIATE an element that is suitable for historic buildings

HISTORIC elements and buildings that are at least 50 years old and have meaning to the community's past

INAPPROPRIATE an element that is not suitable for historic buildings

IN-KIND change with the same or very similar

PRESERVATION act of sustaining or maintaining the existing integrity of a historic property

RECONSTRUCT remove damaged or inappropriate element and reinstate architectural character by replicating original historic element

REDESIGN design element in a different way

REFINISH OR REFACE apply a new coating of surface finish (e.g. stain, paint, or glaze)

REMODEL to change the existing structure through structural demolition and constructing new

REMOVE eliminate the element

RENOVATION improving an existing structure that may be damaged, broken, or outdated

REPLACE change the element for a similar element of new or restored construction

RESTORE OR REPAIR fix damaged or deteriorating portions of the element

RETAIN AND PRESERVE maintain the element and its characteristics

SUSTAINABILITY

- Preserving existing building is more sustainable than producing new buildings, and maintains the community's history and character.
- Compared to constructing new buildings, building reuse reduces material consumption and keeps debris out of landfills.

- Building reuse conserves the energy that would have been used to produce and transport new materials.
- Maintaining a building also conserves the energy that would have been consumed when demolishing the building.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

Ongoing maintenance is important to the life of a historic building. Proper preventative maintenance always costs less than the repair and replacement necessary when a part of the building is damaged. This list is a general overview of the items to inspect and maintain every year. See specific building element sections for more details regarding stylistic element features, relevant terms, repair, and replacement.

LANDSCAPE

- Rake fallen leaves around buildings to avoid excess moisture near structures.
- Every fall and spring, clear exterior drains of debris, and ensure that water drains away from buildings without obstruction.
- Prune trees and shrubs so that they do not touch or overhang structures.



Prune Trees and Shrubs near Structure

MASONRY AND CHIMNEYS

- Inspect the perimeter of the foundation for any cracks or settlement. Seal or make repairs as needed.
- Inspect masonry and chimney for deteriorated mortar and brick. If the mortar between the brick joints is missing, or more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inches behind the face of the brick, it is likely time to make repairs.
- Binoculars or a drone, if available, can be used to inspect chimneys and hard to reach areas. Out of sight areas are often neglected until the bricks start falling down.
- If repairs are required, hire a mason experienced in historic masonry to repoint or replace masonry. New mortar should match the color, strength, and, ideally, composition of historic materials.



Masonry Before and After Repointing

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

WOOD TRIM AND CLADDING

- Gently wash wood; avoid power washing or harmful chemicals. Washing exterior wood every 1-3 years prevents buildup of harmful dirt, mildew, or debris, and preserves the paint's integrity.
- Inspect wood for deterioration. If any deterioration is found, determine the cause before proceeding to the repair. Common causes of wood deterioration are termites, water damage from roof or downspout failure, water damage from poor drainage at the ground, and ordinary wear and tear.
- If wood repair is needed, hire a qualified professional who can identify the species of wood and make a repair that matches the historical materials and style. Every wood cladding material found in Oil City can still be sourced today, but not necessarily at "big box" stores.
- If wood stain or paint is deteriorating, remove damaged material and create a sound wood surface by gently hand-scraping or hand-sanding the area. To create paint that has lasting durability and integrity, the surface must be cleaned well and sound. Once a sound wood surface is created, reapply protective coating such as stain or paint. Painting over previous, sound layers of paint, helps protect wood from moisture and ultraviolet light. Specialty paint companies such as Sherwin Williams and Benjamin Moore can help select the right primers and paints to apply over historic paints. High-quality paints, such as Sherwin Williams' Duration® can cost twice as much as cheaper products, but are much more durable.



Wooden Porch and Cladding in Need of Repair



Before and After of Painted Wood Trim and Detailing

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Clean windows, screens, and doors. Wash frames, jambs, and sills, and remove any debris or buildup that might prevent water drainage.
- Open and close all windows and doors, and test hardware. Regular operation helps prevent windows from becoming permanently stuck. A window and door specialist can make any repairs needed.
- Inspect all putty and sealants. At corners and where different materials meet, various types of putty and sealants are used to keep everything weathertight. Cracking, peeling, or missing materials can let in water and cause significant damage. Repairs can be made by a painter, or by consulting historically specific do-it-yourself (DIY) instructions, such as This Old House or Old House Journal.
- Check for wood cracking, warping, and moisture damage. Inspect weather stripping and gaskets.
- Check painted surfaces. Scrape and repaint any cracking, bubbling, or peeling paint. See the Suggested Color Palettes section of this Design Guide for paint color ideas. Use a top-quality exterior paint, such as Sherwin Williams' Duration®. High-quality paints have longer lifetimes than their cheaper competitors.
- Stained wood doors and windows should be cleaned regularly with warm water and mild soap and maintained with a wax based polish when dry (or other product that is compatible with the door or window's finish). Stained exterior wood needs to be refinished every three to five years by sanding lightly and applying an exterior polyurethane or other exterior finish.

- Weather-stripping, caulking, and sealing windows and doors keeps them weathertight and more thermally efficient. Properly maintained historic wood windows will last decades longer than modern replacement windows. Annual maintenance costs much less than window replacement.



Preparing Wood Surface for Paint by Scraping and Sanding Wood

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

ROOF

- Inspect roofs for leaks, damage, or missing tiles or shingles. Secure roofing material by checking nails and clips for corrosion and damage.
- Clean out clogs, leaves, and debris from gutters and downspouts. Check for leaks and loose or bent parts of downspouts and gutters.
- Make sure all downspouts carry water away from the structure without leaks or backups.
- **Water and moisture are the number one cause of building damage, and making sure roofs and gutters are in good repair is the best investment property owners can make in their buildings.**



Clean Gutters and Inspect Roof Shingles

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

- Inspect structural elements of buildings by checking for movement, structural deterioration, water infiltration, or uneven settlement. These issues may cause cracks, leaning, bulging, or collapsing, and are most visible at openings, changes in wall materials, ceilings, visible framing members, and masonry. Issues can be seen on the interior and exterior. If structural damage is present, consult an architect, engineer, or contractor experienced in historic properties.



Structural Elements. The Porch Roof Rests on a Beam, and the Beam is Supported by Columns

HIRING A PROFESSIONAL

See Section II Additional Resources for information and tips about hiring a professional.



Structural Elements. New Two-Story Frame Wall, Studs (Vertical) and Band Joist (Horizontal)

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

Regular seasonal maintenance and inspection is important to the upkeep of historic buildings. Below is a suggested maintenance schedule. See the prior section for more detail.

FALL

LANDSCAPE

- Rake leaves
- Drain and store hoses
- Insulate outdoor faucets and pipes
- Patch cracks in pathways and driveways

MASONRY AND CHIMNEY

- Inspect brick, chimneys, and mortar
- Clean fireplace flues and inspect chimneys

ROOF

- Inspect roofs
- Clean gutters and downspouts
- Evaluate downspouts discharge

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Examine window and door operability
- Clean windows, screens, and doors
- Evaluate for damage, moisture, and gaps
- Apply protective coating and window putty
- Make doors and windows weather-tight

WOOD TRIM & CLADDING

- Gently wash wood
- Inspect wood for damage and repair
- Apply a protective coating

SPRING

LANDSCAPE

- Remove insulation from outdoor faucets and pipes

MASONRY AND CHIMNEY

- Inspect brick, chimneys, and mortar

ROOF

- Inspect roofs
- Clean gutters and downspouts
- Evaluate downspouts discharge
- Evaluate and repair flashing

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Examine window and door operability
- Clean windows, screens, and doors
- Evaluate for damage, moisture, and gaps
- Apply protective coating and window putty
- Make doors and windows weathertight

WOOD TRIM & CLADDING

- Gently wash wood
- Inspect wood for damage and repair
- Apply a protective coating

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

- Inspect structural elements of buildings

WINTER

ROOFS

- Evaluate roofs and downspouts discharge at the beginning of the winter

LANDSCAPE

- Gather any necessary snow and ice melting equipment at the beginning of the season

SUMMER

LANDSCAPE

- Prune trees and shrubs

WOOD TRIM & CLADDING

- Examine wood for wood-eating insects

ROOFS AND CHIMNEYS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS: FIRST PRIORITY IN BUILDING MAINTENANCE

ROOF GLOSSARY TERMS

- Bracket
- Low Slope Roof
- Cornice
- Parapet

A building's roof provides shelter and covers the building's structural elements, protecting them from the weather. **Roof maintenance is critical for maintaining the structural integrity.** Stylistically, a roof's form and material define the architectural character and denote the building's use. Understanding of the characteristics of a building's roof enables building owners to appropriately repair and replace the roof without dramatically altering the architecture. Additionally, understanding the historic roof styles, form, and materials helps better integrate new buildings in historic districts. See the "New Construction and Additions" section of this Design Guide for more information about incorporating new construction in the Oil City historic districts.

ROOF MAINTENANCE

Roof maintenance is often the most important building maintenance. Left untreated, a small crack or damage in the roofing material can cause moisture to enter the building. The crack can lead to a leak, followed by mold and mildew problems. Over time, a small leak can damage the integrity of the roof and building's structure.

In most cases, roof maintenance needs to be the initial repair of a building. Repairing or replacing the roof ensures other building renovations or repairs are protected from the elements and additional moisture infiltration.

Initially, use binoculars to evaluate the roof's condition. Check the roofing material for cracks, missing, disjointed, separated, or damaged pieces.



GABLE ROOFS form a triangle shape when two roof planes meet at a top roof ridge. The two roof planes angle at various slopes, from a low slope to a steep slope. The slope's steepness helps indicate the building's style. For example, the Tudor Revival style has steep slopes, while the Craftsman style commonly has low slopes. A gable can be a front, side, or cross gable. A front gable means the triangle shape is visible on the front and rear façades of the building. A side gable, shown in the above photo, means the triangle shape is visible on the building's side walls. A front gable and a side gable bisect to create a cross gable. The cross gable may create an L-shape or a T-shape. The triangle shape typically contains the attic or a bonus space. In Oil City, gable roofs are very common in the North Side and South Side Historic Districts.



HIPPED ROOFS have slanted roof planes on each of the building's sides. If the building footprint forms a square the hipped roof makes a pyramid shape. When the building footprint appears as a rectangle, shown in the photo, then the roof creates a ridge similar to a gable, but the ends are slant roof planes instead of triangle shapes. Hipped roofs, found on Italianate and American Foursquare style buildings, have moderate to low slopes. Hipped roofs sometimes have a center tower called a cupola (circular) or belvedere (square).

ROOFS AND CHIMNEYS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS: FIRST PRIORITY IN BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Inspect flashing on roof, chimney, openings, and material changes for corrosion, holes, seam separation, and cracked or missing caulking. Patch small flashing damage or replace deteriorated flashing. Reseal and caulk flashing. Evaluate the gutters and downspouts. Look for clogs, debris, cracks, or loose pieces. Make sure all downspouts have downspout elbows, underground pipes, trays, or rain barrels to direct water away from the building's foundation. Avoid water discharging within five feet of the foundation. Inside the attic, examine wood sheathing and rafters, or plaster ceiling, for rot, moisture, or stains.

A capable homeowner can perform minor repairs, or contact a professional familiar with historic architecture: an architect, an experienced roofing contractor, or a craftsman to examine the roof more thoroughly and create a plan for repair. A professional will be able to determine the roof's condition, major roofing issues, necessary repairs or replacements required, and the correct materials to use.

When maintaining an original roof, consider repairing damaged areas. When necessary, replace patches of the original roof instead of fully replacing the roofing material. Many times, original roofs are a defining architectural feature and with proper maintenance can last much longer than other roofing products. With proper maintenance, slate and tile roofs have a lifespan of 50-100 years. When patching the roofing material, use in-kind or similar materials that are compatible in composition, pattern, and color. Avoid materials that contrast with the original roofing material.

If roof replacement is necessary for an original tile or slate roof, consider replacing the material in-kind. Although the initial cost is expensive, selecting a tile or slate product lasts a lifetime



GAMBREL ROOFS often evokes a barn roof. Gambrel roofs have slanted roof planes on two building sides similar to a gable roof. The difference between a gable and a gambrel roof is that a gambrel has two slopes per side. The steeper bottom slope meets a shallower upper slope and the two shallow slopes on each side of the building touch to make the roof's ridge. Gambrel roofs can be side or front gambrels. A gambrel roof is a defining feature of Dutch Colonial Revival.



FLAT ROOFS are not actually flat. They are more accurately described as low slope roofs, directing water to gutters or scuppers. Most often the slope descends towards the rear, subordinate façade. Other roof styles can be covered with roof materials like tile, shingles, or slate because the roof's slope aids in moving precipitation quickly off of the roof. A flat roof, however, uses a waterproof membrane, and/or sealant like tar to better protect the structure from water infiltration because the shallower slope does not shed water quickly. To create a polished edge to the roof, the façade walls extend above the flat roof's plane, creating a parapet. The roof membrane and/or tar runs up a portion of the parapet, protecting the parapet from water infiltration. The edge roof membrane is protected with flashing and caulking. The parapet is a cap with stone or metal. Many flat roofs can be found on Oil City's commercial historic buildings.

ROOFS AND CHIMNEYS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS: FIRST PRIORITY IN BUILDING MAINTENANCE

and will not need to be replaced in 20-30 years like asphalt shingles would. Synthetic tiles or slate can be a viable alternative to slate and tile. The benefits of synthetic tiles and slate are that they are more durable than asphalt shingles, less expensive than natural tile or slate, and their appearance imitates natural tile and slate.

CHIMNEYS

Chimneys are important architectural elements that define some architectural styles, such as Tudor Revivals, and are functional building components. Preserve and maintain the chimney height, dimensions, and detailing to retain the building's architectural style. See the masonry paragraphs in the "Building Maintenance" section and the "Materials" section of this Design Guide for more information about chimneys.

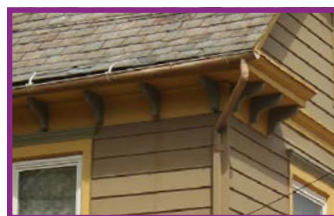
SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

- Solar panels (photovoltaic panels) on historic building roofs can harness renewable energy. Opinion is divided on whether solar panels are appropriate on historic buildings.
- When considering solar panels for a historic building, determine the ideal roof placement for harvesting sunlight and whether the location will not have a prominent position on the structure.
- If the ideal location IS NOT prominent, place solar panels so that they match the roof form and color of the building.
- If the ideal location IS prominent and will affect the architectural character of the building, consider other photovoltaic options, such as solar screens, solar paint, and solar panels mounted on the ground or on ancillary structures.



MANSARD ROOFS, developed in France and popularized by the roof's namesake Francois Mansart, defines the Second Empire style. The roof is similar to a gambrel roof because it has steep bottom slopes and shallow upper slopes. However, unlike gambrel roofs, each side of the building has slanted slopes meeting in the middle or becoming a flat center portion instead of creating a roof ridge. The roof style allows for additional living space in the attic level without needing extra building height.

ESSENTIAL ROOF FEATURES



Bracket



Chimney



Dormer



Exposed Rafter Tails



Parapet



Cornice



Box Gutter



Jerkinhead Gable

PORCHES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

PORCH GLOSSARY TERMS

- Baluster
- Pilaster
- Column
- Trim

A porch is a transitional space between indoors and outdoors, and between private and public spaces. Porches contribute to the street and neighborhood character. Preserving a front porch is vital to the streetscape and building integrity.

EVALUATE

Porches are susceptible to deterioration from moisture, insects, rot, and foot traffic. Before making any repairs or modifications, review the existing historic structure and historic photographs of the porch and others like it. Historic photographs may be found from Oil City Heritage Society, Oil City Library, Facebook groups, Venango County Historical Society, the National Archives, and Sanborn maps. Alternatively, observe the building's detailing and the detailing on similar historic porches for insight and inspiration. From these sources, determine key porch features, such as original size, location, form, and detailing. Evaluate which features or detailing may not be historical. Common concerns are removing porch detail, enclosing the porch, maintenance neglect, and inappropriate repairs.

When beginning a porch repair, **start by examining the porch's foundation**. The porch may have footings that are separate from the house or an integrated foundation with a crawl space or basement area below. Inspect the foundation for sinkage, cracking, leaning, or crumbling masonry or mortar. If these are observed, contact a professional to establish a course of action and necessary improvements.



HISTORY Porches originated as a method of screening the building from weather elements, such as rain, snow, wind, and sunlight. In the second half of the nineteenth-century, porches became a space for socializing and breathing in fresh air. By the early twentieth-century, porches became less popular with the invention of the telephone and automobiles. These new inventions allowed people to socialize with neighbors and friends via the telephone and drive to places for recreation and entertainment. The invention of televisions and air conditioning in the middle of the twentieth-century made porches even less popular and uncommon on new construction. Instead, designs opted for backyard patios with more privacy than front porches.

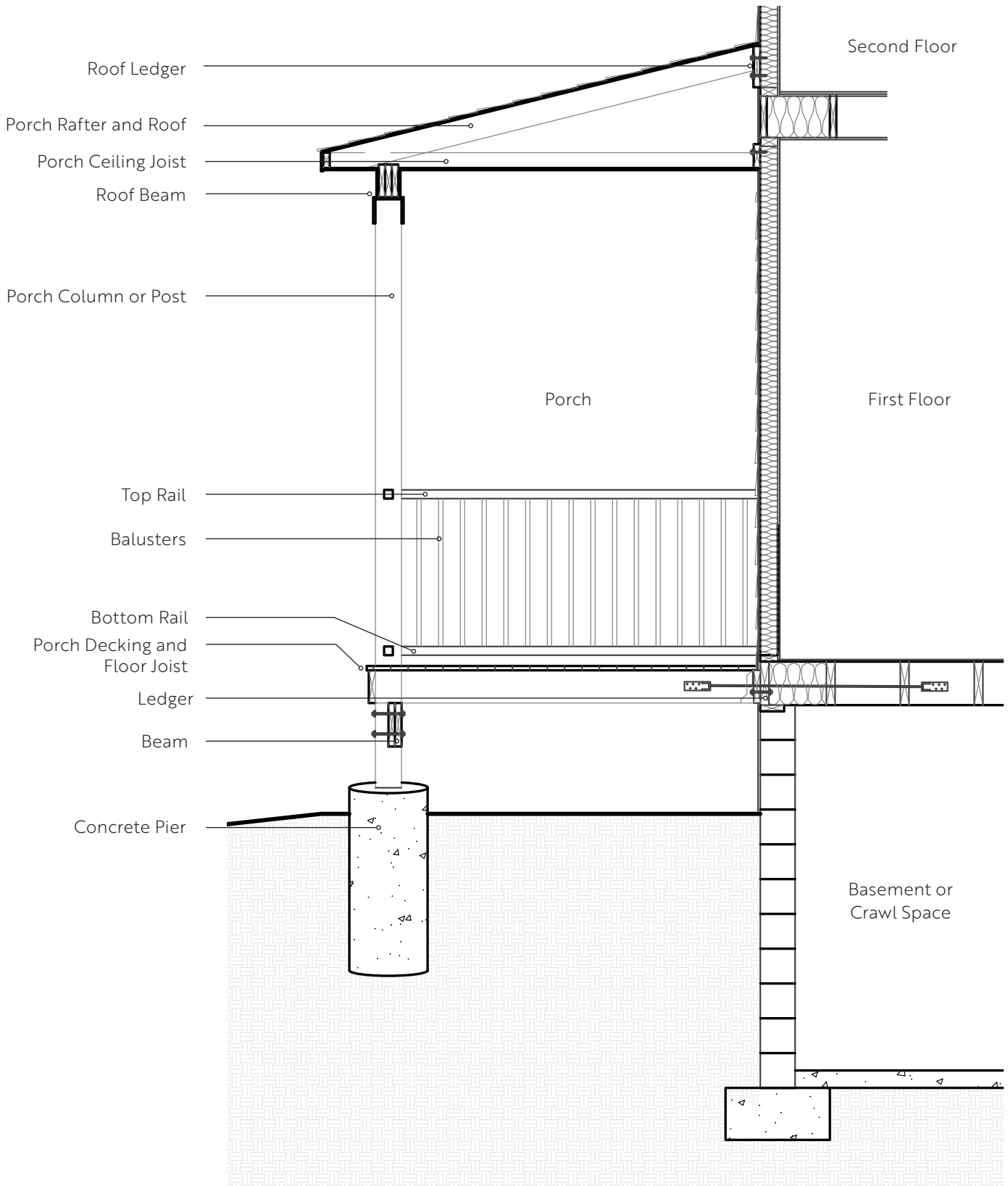
After the foundation's inspection, **evaluate the porch's structural members**. Inspect stability of the porch's ledger (the wood connecting the building to the porch joists), the joists, beams, and posts.

Evaluate other wood components such as decking, railing, and architectural detailing. Issues may be caused from wood rot, wood-eating insects, mold or fungus, and moisture damage. Damaged elements may require consultation with building professionals (architects, engineers, or contractors).

The landscape around a porch is also vital to the porch's stability. The ground or grading near the porch must shed water away from the structure to prevent excess moisture on the foundation. Do not plant trees and shrubs too closely to the porch. Tree and shrub roots can damage the foundation. Trees can create too much shade on the porch, leaving excess moisture and humidity. When tree

PORCHES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



PORCH STRUCTURAL DIAGRAM Reflecting Modern Best Practices for Structurally Renovated Conditions

PORCHES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

branches get too close to the roof, they brush on the roof or allow debris to fall, which can wear or break the roofing material.

MAINTENANCE

Regularly clean the porch of dirt and leaves by sweeping and gentle hosing or lightly mopping. For wood floors, avoid directly covering the flooring with mats, carpets, or pots that trap moisture on the wood surface. Do not allow vines or plants to grow on or beneath the porch, as that prevents air circulation and damages wood. Remove light snow with a broom. For heavier snow, use a hard rubber or plastic shovel. Avoid salting wood surfaces and instead use sand or kitty litter to prevent slipping, and sweep debris off regularly.

Inspect gutters and downspouts for clogs, debris, leaks, or loose pieces. Prevent porch damage by removing debris from downspouts and gutters, repairing leaks and loose pieces, and positioning downspout outlets at least ten feet from the porch structure. See the “Roofs” section of this Design Guide for more information.

Spot paint and seal wood surfaces yearly. Inspect wood for deterioration. If noticed, inspect further to determine the cause of the decay. Create a sound wood surface by gently hand-scraping or hand-sanding flaking, cracked paint. Once a sound wood surface is created, reapply a protective coating such as stain or paint.

For exposed cracks and gaps in joints, clean the wood surface by removing paint or stain a few inches from the gap. Clean out old caulking and examine wood for any decay. After a sound surface is created, apply a wood preservative and later place caulk or sealant in the crack. Lastly, reapply new stain or paint.

In large areas of decay, an experienced craftsman can remove decay and make a wood Dutchman or splice patch of the same species and grain. Wood can be new or old, but needs to be treated, seasoned, and dried before using. Once the new piece is glued into place, the surface can be sanded, primed, and painted. For **smaller patching**, remove decay and fill in patches with a wood filler or epoxy. Abatron LiquidWood and WoodEpoxy can make larger repairs (see the “Materials, Wood” section for more details). Once filled, patches act similar to wood and can be cut, sanded, or nailed. However, if staining, select wood filler rather than epoxies which do not absorb stain.

Historic **balusters** are susceptible to breaking or becoming loose. Many times, the balusters are covered, altered, or replaced. Determine the appearance of historic railings by examining historic photographs or similar historic railings. If original balusters exist on the porch, examine their soundness. Loose balusters may need to be resecured with new stainless steel or galvanized fasteners. Split wood or wood decay may need to be addressed with a repair methods above.

Other common issues on porches include missing balusters, decaying column bases, decaying wood floors, and missing or decaying porch aprons. These items may require an experienced craftsman, contractor, architect, or engineer to repair or replicate. Some items may be found at architectural salvage shops.

MORE INFORMATION

More information regarding suggested wood types, porch enclosure ideas, building code for historic porches, and replacing porch elements can be found online in the [National Park Service, Preservation Briefs](#).

MATERIALS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

The building envelope protects the interior of the building from climatic elements and provides refuge from extreme temperatures. The exterior material or building cladding creates the building's character and signals the building's architectural style. See the "Architectural Styles" section of this Design Guide for period appropriate materials. The exterior material also shapes the character of the neighborhood and city. The materials create continuity or eclecticism to the streetscape pattern, which provides an architectural identity for the community.



Wood Siding



Wood Shingles



Half-Timbering



Brickwork



Stonework

MATERIALS

WOOD

WOOD GLOSSARY TERMS

- Bracket
- Cladding
- Column
- Cornice
- Crown
- Dentils
- Façade
- Frame
- Trim

The area's lumber industry made wood an easily available material, and wood cladding tends to be the primary residential building material in Oil City. A variety of architectural styles employ wood siding and/or wood shingles. Wooden trim and decorative elements also adorn many buildings.

Clean wood materials regularly to prevent dirt, mildew, and mold on wall surfaces. Clean by hand or with water from a hose, a pressure washer will damage old wood. Look for brittleness, discoloration, cracking, or peeling paint once the surface is clean.

To prepare wood for painting, clean wood with water and gentle detergent, using a brush or hose as needed. Remove all loose materials, and repair any damage. When painting over historic paints, an oil based primer coat is usually necessary. Sherwin Williams Duration® is a recommended exterior paint product.

Spot paint and seal wood surfaces yearly. Inspect wood for deterioration. If noticed, inspect further to determine the cause of decay. Create a sound wood surface by gently hand-scraping or hand-sanding flaking, cracked paint. Once a sound wood surface is created, reapply a protective coating such as stain or paint.

For exposed cracks and gaps in joints, clean the wood surface by removing paint or stain a few inches from the crack or gap. Clean out

old caulking and examine wood for any decay. After a sound surface is created, apply a wood preservative and later place caulk or sealant in the crack. Lastly, reapply new stain or paint.

In large areas of decay, an experienced craftsman can remove decay and make a wood Dutchman or splice patch of the same species and grain. Wood can be new or old, but needs to be treated, seasoned, and dried before using. Once the new piece is glued into place, the surface can be sanded, primed, and painted. **For smaller patching, remove decay and fill in patches** with a wood filler or epoxy, like Abatron and West System epoxies. Abatron LiquidWood and WoodEpoxy can make larger repairs. Once filled, patches act similar to wood and can be cut, sanded, or nailed. However, if staining, select wood filler instead of epoxy which does not absorb stain.

When repairing wood cladding is not feasible, **replace wood siding or shingles in-kind** with wood of the same species, profile, thickness, and width. Many local lumber yards may not stock the specific cladding, but can order it upon request. An appropriate wood alternative is fiber-cement cladding like James Hardie fiber-cement products. Select products that are similar in size, profile, and texture as the original wood material.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Clean wood regularly
- Spot paint or stain, yearly
- Patch small damage or decay with wood filler or epoxy

See the Building Maintenance section for more tips.

MATERIALS

WOOD

APPROPRIATE



Original Wood Window Crowns, Brackets, Cladding, and Cornice



Original Porch Gingerbread, Posts, Railings



Wood Cladding and Rafter Tails

INAPPROPRIATE



Vinyl Siding on a Historic Home Lacks the Character of the Original, Especially in the Trim Around the Windows and in Other Areas



Vinyl Replacement Porch Columns and Railings Often have Incorrect Proportions and Styles



Aluminum Wrap Covering Existing Wood Trim was Heavily Marketed for Decades, but has Significantly Less Detail than the Original

MATERIALS

MASONRY

MASONRY GLOSSARY TERMS

- Brickmould
- Cladding
- Column
- Corbeled Brick
- Façade
- Lintel
- Parapet
- Parge
- Party Wall
- Repoint
- Stone Marque
- Wythe

Masonry cladding protects the interior of the structure from climatic changes and creates a thermal barrier. Masonry resists damage and decay better than other building elements like wood, but still requires maintenance.

In Oil City, masonry tends to be seen on a few historic mansions or on early- to mid-twentieth century homes. Older historic homes employ multi-wythe brick construction in which multiple layers of brick create a solid, load-bearing wall (a wythe is a vertical section of a masonry wall that is one unit thick). In the early to mid-twentieth



century builders began constructing homes with brick veneer, which is one layer of brick on the exterior and a wood framed wall on the interior. Brick embellishments on homes in Oil City come in various sizes, colors, patterns, and textures. Masonry cladding features decorative elements like corbels, arches, lintels, and soldier courses.

Occasionally, **masonry needs cleaning from soot, smoke, or dirt**. Although masonry appears as a strong, sturdy material, improper cleaning can easily damage the masonry's finish. **Do not use sand blasting, high pressure water, or harsh chemicals to clean brick**. The brick's finish caused by firing or fire-skin can be worn down from these methods, making the brick brittle and prone to deterioration. Begin by assessing the mortar joints for cracks and missing portions. Do not clean the masonry if joints are not sound and watertight. Only clean brick during warm weather to avoid frost or freezing. Use low pressure or medium pressure water from a hose and scrub softly with a natural or soft synthetic bristle brush. Start from the bottom working upward and keeping the lower portion wet while cleaning above. For more oily soot, use non-ionic detergents appropriate to the specific application. Prosoco has a full line of masonry cleaners for historic applications with good literature to explain appropriate usage.

Refrain from painting masonry unless already painted. The masonry's porosity allows the masonry to breathe. Painting traps moisture.

Do not attempt to remove paint. Similar to harsh cleaning treatments, removing paint can damage the brick's finish and cause the brick to deteriorate. If there are compelling reasons to remove paint from brick, chemical and heat are often the only options, as abrasives often ruin the brick finish.

MATERIALS

MASONRY

Test products and methods in a small unobtrusive area. Once the hard finish of a brick is removed, it can never be restored.

Mortar fills in the gaps between masonry, holding the masonry pieces together and distributing the structure's weight on the wall. Mortar joints typically last 20-30 years, at which time the joints need to be repointed. Evaluate the masonry's mortar joints by noting the type, color, hardness, joint raking style, and bonding style before repointing. Examine the mortar joints for cracking and missing pieces. If **mortar joint issues** are observed, determine the cause. More serious issues such as foundation problems or moisture issues need to be ruled out before repointing the joints. If minor mortar issues exist, clean the area and remove loose pieces before repointing. Select the correct mortar type. Historically, lime mortar was used to bind historic masonry. More modern mortars such as Portland cement have different strength and moisture properties that may damage historic stone, brick, and mortar. Portland cement does have better wearing characteristics than lime. Type N or Type O lime mortar is recommended and has industry specified proportions of hydrated lime, Portland cement, and sand. After cleaning, repoint with a compatible mortar type and in-kind technique.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Gentle clean masonry when necessary and during warm weather
- Assessing the mortar for cracks and missing portions.
- Consult mason, architect, and/or engineer for issues
- Avoid painting masonry
- Do not remove paint from masonry

See the Building Maintenance section for more tips.



Washed Out Mortar Requiring Re-pointing to Preserve Long-Term Structural Integrity



Rusted Steel Lintel Causing Masonry Damage and Water Infiltration into the Building's Structure



Gently Clean Masonry of Soot and Dirt

MATERIALS

MASONRY

APPROPRIATE



Well Maintained Masonry



Repointed Masonry



Rebuilt Railing and Column

INAPPROPRIATE



Historic Stone Commercial Building with New Inappropriate Stone Clad Storefront Infill (Bulkhead/Knee Wall)



Storefront Clad in Inappropriate Stone Veneer



Dwelling Clad in Brick Veneer

DOORS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

DOOR GLOSSARY TERMS

- Bottom Rail
- Brickmould
- Crown
- Fenestration
- Frame
- Hinge Stile
- Jamb
- Lintel
- Lock Stile
- Muntin
- Panel
- Sidelight
- Storefront Door
- Threshold
- Top Rail
- Transom Window
- Trim
- Upper Floor Door

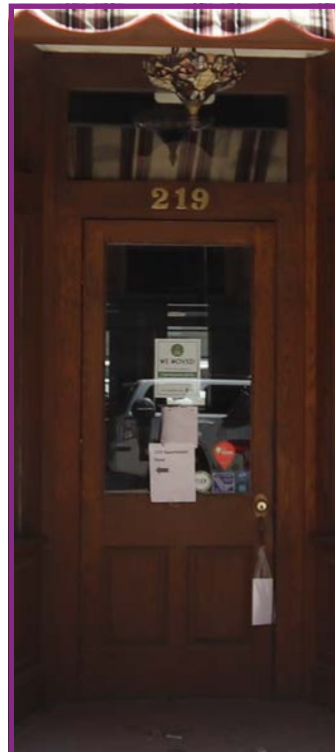
Doors produce a barrier and connection between interior and exterior spaces. Although not the main purpose, doors create opportunities for ventilation, daylighting, and visibility. Historic doors contribute to a building's architectural style by displaying stylistic detailing. The door and its surround are character-defining features and their preservation and intactness are important to a building's integrity.

Generally, historic buildings feature visually prominent and attractive front doors or storefront doors that welcome visitors into the building. To indicate the main entrance, more detailing adorns **residential front doors** and their surrounds than the side or back door.

Similarly, storefront doors have more glass to provide a visual connection between pedestrians and the retail space. To create an inviting entrance, **storefront doors** tend to have prominent locations and larger sizes. To distinguish from public storefront entrances, upper-level, private doors are commonly smaller with less glass and less prominence. Maintain or restore the storefront or front door's visual prominence and hierarchy of doors on the building to retain the building's historic integrity.



Historic Residential Door



Appropriate Commercial Doors for a Historic District

DOORS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

MAINTENANCE

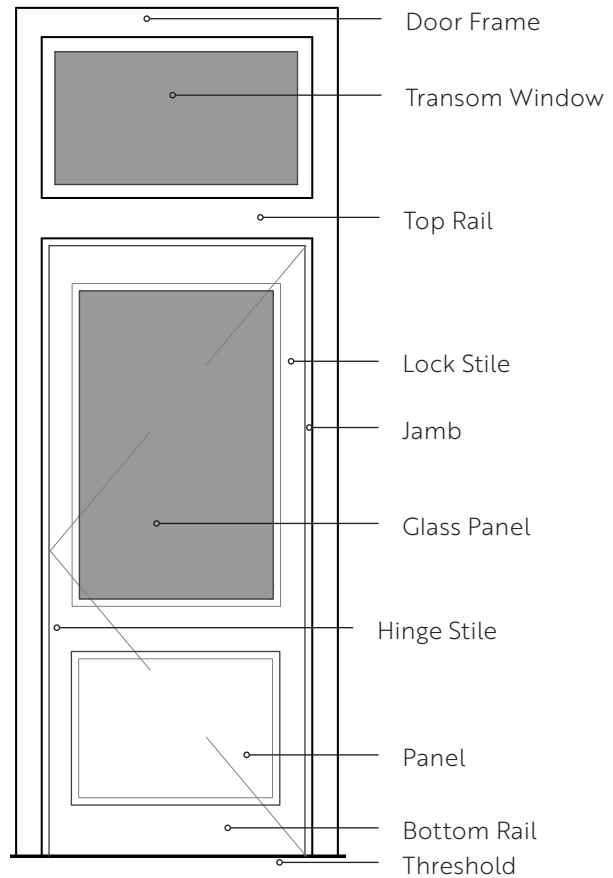
Clean doors, screens, and sidelights annually using warm water and gentle detergent. While cleaning, check door hardware and operability. Inspect the door for cracking, warping, wood decay, wood-eating insects, or moisture damage. Determine if any adjustments or repairs are needed.

Fill gaps or cracks with caulk, exterior epoxies, or wood putty. After cleaning the doors, remove cracking or peeling paint. Sand until sound wood is exposed. Reapply protective coating as needed. Weather-strip doors and caulking gaps in fixed portions of the frames to make weathertight and more thermally efficient.

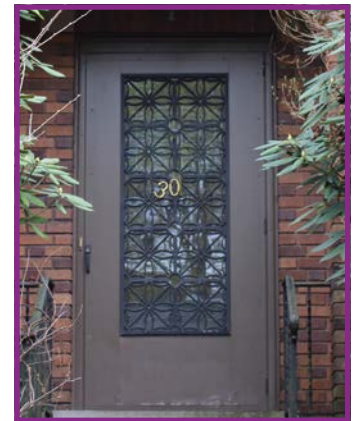
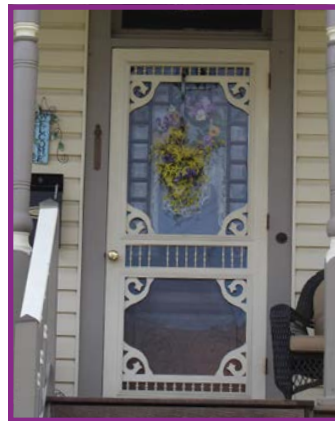
Repair hardware when possible, and if needed, replace hardware with like materials to improve the door's functionality. Before replacing a historic door, contact an experienced craftsman to determine if repair is possible. Original doors can often be reclaimed, and restoring an original door is likely more affordable than purchasing a new door that replicates the historic door. When a door is beyond repair, consider replacing it with a salvaged architectural door that has a similar style to the original. If locating a salvaged door is not possible, replace it with a door of in-kind style and material.

STORM DOORS

On residential properties, a storm door protects the architectural door from elements, creates a weather barrier between the indoor and outdoor spaces to enhance indoor comfort, and transfers more daylight and ventilation when the architectural door is open. Maintain the original storm door whenever possible. If replacing or adding a storm door, select a storm door that showcases the architectural door or complements



Door Diagram



Historic storm doors that complement the building's architectural style

the building's architectural style. Avoid a storm door that masks the architectural door or detracts from the property's architecture. Do not use a storm door on commercial properties; instead opt for an interior vestibule.

DOORS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

APPROPRIATE

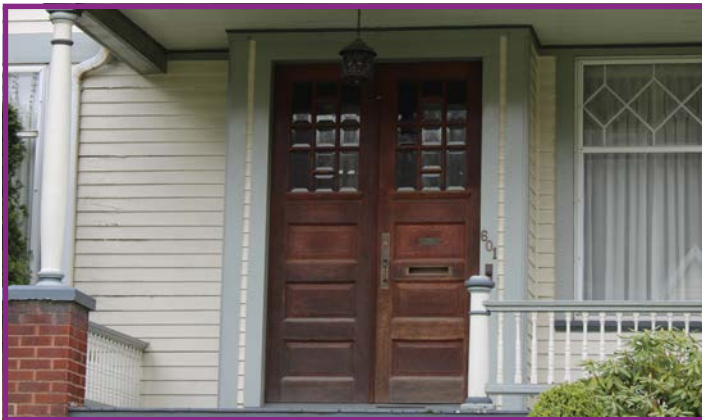


Historic Wooden Door with 2/3 Glass and Sidelights on Both Sides of the Door

INAPPROPRIATE



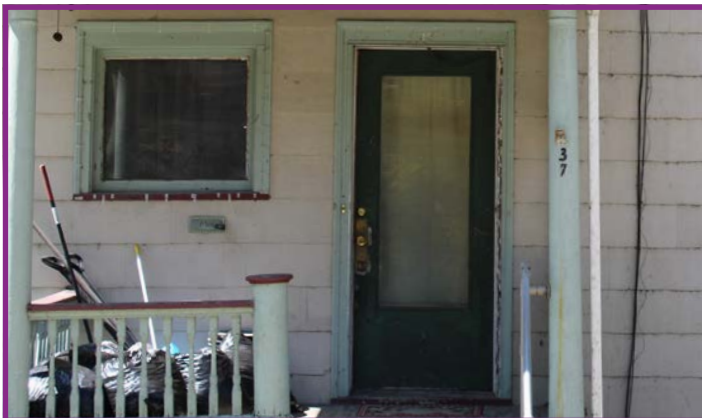
Inappropriate New Entry Door, Not Historically Accurate Style and Inappropriate for the House's Architectural Style



Historic, Wooden, Double Doors with Paneling and 1/3 Glass



Original Door Opening Filled with Standard, Inappropriate Style Door



A Historic Single Door that is Modest, Wood with 3/4 Glass



New Inappropriate Storefront Door for Historic Commercial Building

WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDING

WINDOW GLOSSARY TERMS

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| • Brickmould | • Meeting Rail |
| • Crown | • Muntin |
| • Display Window | • Piano Window |
| • Double-Hung Window | • Sidelight |
| • Fenestration | • Sill |
| • Frame | • Transom Window |
| • Lintel | • Trim |
| • Lower Sash | • Upper Sash |

Window features such as the size, shape, proportion, operability type, muntin pattern and fenestration pattern represent particular architectural styles. Maintaining the window characteristics support the building's architectural style and character. Historic windows are aesthetically significant, but windows have many functional purposes. They provide daylight, allow visibility to outside activity, ventilate, capture views, connect interior and exterior spaces, and give a sense of security about the surroundings.

Maintaining historic windows allows them to keep their functionality, operability, energy efficiency, and aesthetics. **Repairing original windows is more feasible than owners realize**, and using interior or exterior storm windows with weathertight original windows can also be as energy efficient and more affordable than replacement windows.

Observe a building's historic windows before repairing, altering, or replacing them. The main principles of window design are pattern, size, proportion, operability, building rhythms, style, and shape. **Window pattern** refers to the location of the windows on the building's façade. The pattern describes the overall composition, not the window itself. The patterning can be symmetrical or asymmetrical or can display

a prominent window. Window patterns vary based on architectural style and the architect or craftsman's vision.

Window proportion describes the height-to-width ratio of the window and the amount of glass versus window frame. **Window proportion** closely relates to window size and shape. The design of the window proportion, size, and shape are key to maintaining architectural integrity. When replacing windows, the replacements need to replicate the original windows' proportion.



SINGLE-HUNG WINDOWS are similar to double-hung windows, however, only one sash moves vertically instead of both sashes. Single-hung can be found on Colonial Revivals, Classical Revivals, and Italianate. Typically, single-hung windows on Italianate buildings have a segmental arched upper sash.



DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS are the most common window type in Oil City. Both the upper and lower window sashes move vertically on a track in the window frame. As one sash moves, it overlaps the other sash. These windows are most popular on Colonial Revivals, Italianate, and Classical Revival style, but can be seen on other styles.

WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDING



FIXED WINDOW has a sash that does not open, and thus is fixed in place. A fixed window allows daylight, but not ventilation into the building. Fixed windows come in a variety of sizes. A common fixed window in Craftsman and Four-square homes is a piano window, a short, wide window commonly placed above a piano. A picture window is a large fixed window, commonly seen on Craftsman, Ranch, or modern style buildings. Fixed windows can be seen in a variety of styles.



AWNING AND HOPPER WINDOWS also swing on a hinge like casement windows. The hinges attach to the top (awning window) or bottom (hopper window) of the window frame instead of the left or right side of the frame. These windows are less common, but can be found in various architectural styles. Some churches have awning or hopper windows in the narrow side wall windows.



CASEMENT WINDOWS attach to the left or right side of the window frame and swing outward on hinges, swinging similar to a door swing. Casement windows tend to be narrow and smaller than double-hung windows. They are commonly seen on Shingle, Tudor Revival style buildings.



TRANSOM WINDOWS are windows located above a door or window. Often the transom window is fixed. However, the transom may pivot or be an awning or hopper window, especially historic transom windows. Operable transom windows allow airflow through the building, which originally was a passive cooling technique. Maintain operability of transoms to retain passive cooling capability.

WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



BAY WINDOW does not indicate a particular type of window frame, but rather the placement of windows on the building. Three or more sides of the building's walls angle to form a projecting space. The windows placed on the projected walls are called a bay window. If the projection forms a rectangular shape, the space is called a box-bay. In Oil City, bay windows tend to be seen on Colonial Revival and Queen Anne style buildings.



OX-EYE OR OEIL-DE-BOEUF WINDOWS are oval or circular windows can be seen adorning a few properties in Oil City. They are primarily found on Neo-Classical/Classical Revival buildings, and most often are decorative, fixed windows.



PALLADIAN WINDOWS are fairly common in Oil City. Palladian windows have three window sections. The center window forms an arch and the two side windows have a rectangular shape. On occasion, the center window has a rectangular top, but rises above the side windows. These windows are found on Neo-Classical/Classical Revival houses.



DORMERS are windows, located in the attic or highest level, that project from the roof. A dormer window can be in a variety of window styles, shapes, and sizes. Daylighting and ventilating the attic are the main purposes of dormer windows.

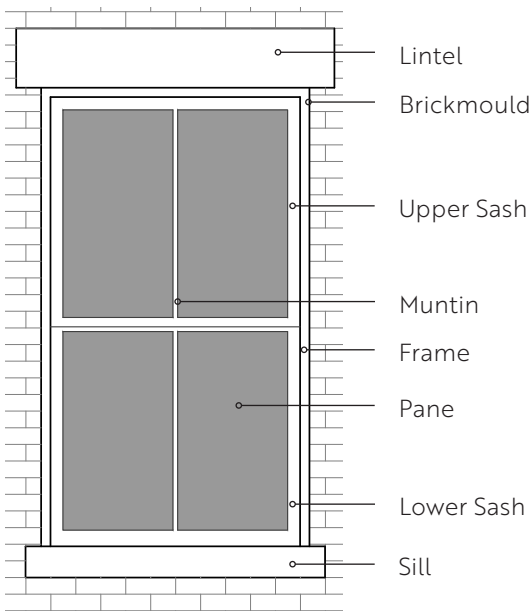
WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDING

Window operability style indicates how and if the window opens and closes. Some window operability styles are double-hung, single-hung, casement, awning, hopper, and fixed. The window style describes the number of panes of glass, type of glass, and unique features.

MAINTENANCE

Maintain the original windows or install windows that replicate the original windows. **Prioritize repairing original windows instead of replacing them as much as possible.** Even when portions of the windows fall into disrepair, experienced craftspeople may be able to use in-kind materials to repair the window. If the damaged window cannot be repaired, replace windows with in-kind windows, salvaged windows, or if possible, move original windows from less prominent façades to the primary façade and order new windows for less prominent façades. Maintain window details such as transoms, muntins style, pane style, sills, lintels, brickmould, and window trim and crowns.



Window Diagram

Clean windows and screens annually. Check window operability and hardware, and determine if repairs or adjustments are needed. After cleaning window frames, remove cracking or peeling paint by scraping or using chemicals. Do not use heat to remove paint because heat can crack the glass. Replace broken glass and replace old window putty as needed. Then, reapply a protective coating of paint or stain and window putty as needed. Inspect windows for poorly sealed joints and cracks. Fill appropriately with caulk, exterior epoxy, or wood putty, making sure to not fill operable joints. Weather-strip windows to make weathertight and more thermally efficient, which increases indoor comfort and decreases energy consumption.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Clean windows and screens annually
- Check operability and hardware annually
- Apply protective coating and wood putty to clean surfaces as needed
- Use weather-stripping to make more thermal efficient

See the Building Maintenance section for more tips.

STORM WINDOWS

A storm window is an operable or fixed window placed on the interior or exterior of an existing window to increase energy efficiency and increase interior occupancy comfort. **Consider using storm windows on historic buildings to help maintain the original windows and detailing.** Storm windows, created with modern technology, can be as energy efficient as a new window replacement. Storm windows with low-e glass, a more insulated and reflective glazing, can increase energy efficiency and save on heating and cooling costs by 10-30% (www.energy.gov).

WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

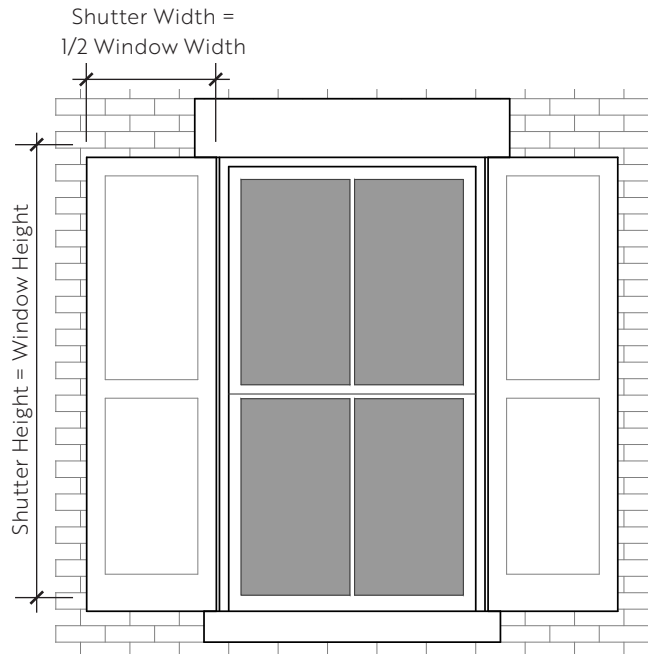
Exterior storm windows are most common and less expensive. However, interior storm windows are more appropriate for historic buildings because the interior storm windows do not obscure the building's character or detailing.

SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to storm windows, installing weatherstripping and caulking to windows can create a more weathertight building and can improve thermal comfort and reduce energy consumption.

SHUTTERS

Shutters frame windows when open, and screen them when closed. Functionally, they block daylighting while allowing ventilation and protect windows during severe storms. **Use shutters only if the building historically had shutters or if they are appropriate for the architectural style.** When installing shutters, opt for functional shutters instead of fixed shutters. Correct shutter proportion is important. Width-wise, shutters need to completely cover the window when



Shutter Diagram

closed, and the height of the shutters needs to be the same height as the window. Historical bay windows, picture windows, and doorways would not be shuttered because functionally, they are unnecessary. If the window arches, the shutter should mimic the window with arched shutters.

SPECIALTY WINDOWS



Fanlight



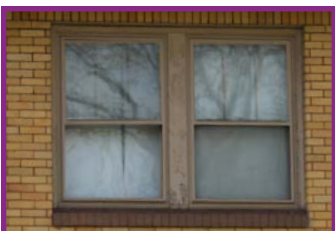
Lead Glass



Arched Window



Oculus Window



Exterior Storm Window



Queen Anne Style Windows



Stained Glass Window



Luxfer-Glass

WINDOWS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

INAPPROPRIATE



Inappropriate Window Replacement. Match Window Style with Original Style if Replacing or Restore Original Windows



Infilled Window with Mismatching Brick



Historic Commercial Building Altered by Inappropriate Fenestration Pattern



Altered Storefront Window that has Inappropriate Style and Form for a Historic District



Window Opening Filled with Mismatching Brick (Color, Finish, Texture) and Mortar



Original Window Openings have been Partially Filled with Brick to Alter the Windows' Size

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



Sleeping Porch



Trusses in Gable



Pointed (Gothic) Arch



Quoins



Spindlework



Ornamental Gable



Hood Entry with Bracketed Pediment



Box Bay Window



Decorative Shingle Cladding



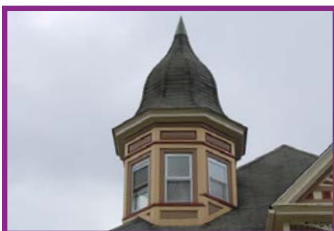
Decorative Wood Cladding



Half-Timbering



Round Arch



Hexagon Tower



Masonry Pier and Column Porch



Window Crowns



Square Tower



False Thatched Roof



Scroll Dormer Head



Bracketed Portico



Ornamental Porch Detailing

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS

TIPS FOR ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

CRAFTSMAN Multiple earth tones or neutral colors

TUDOR Neutral tones paired with an accent color. A dark color on the wood and light color on the stucco for half-timbering

COLONIAL Two high contrast colors, a light neutral color or white and a dark color. Creates an Americana style

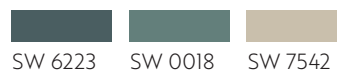
CLASSICAL White or light neutral color with a possible accent color

ITALIANATE Multiple bold colors to accent architectural details

VICTORIAN Multiple vibrant colors, sometimes monochromatic with an accent color, to highlight architectural details

COLOR SELECTING TIPS

- Colors appear lighter on exteriors than in interiors
- Select two to three colors per building
- Coordinate the color of the brick or other non-painted materials when selecting a color scheme
- Consider typical color schemes for specific architectural style
- Test colors on the building before deciding on colors
- Accent colors can highlight a building's detailing. They tend to be used on window frames, brickmould, shutters, doors, and small architectural details
- Colors codes are based on Sherwin Williams colors



Still Water
SW 6223



Teal Stencil
SW 0018



Naturel
SW 7542



Verde Marron
SW 9124



Sheraton Sage
SW 0014



Palm Leaf
SW 7735

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 7749 SW 2829



SW 6128 SW 6130 SW 7734



SW 7749 SW 2829 SW 6128



SW 2829 SW 6128 SW 7734



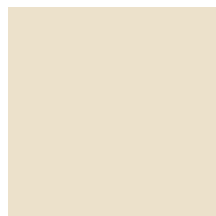
Bunglehouse Gray
SW 2845



Laurel Woods
SW 7749



Olive Grove
SW 7734



Classical White
SW 2829



Blonde
SW 6128



Mannered Gold
SW 6130

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 2801 SW 0049 SW 7008



SW 2845 SW 0049



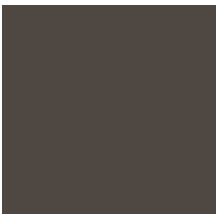
SW 0001 SW 0049



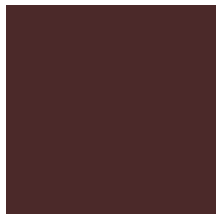
SW 7020 SW 0049



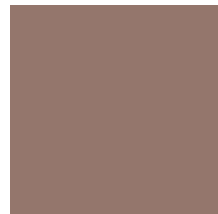
SW 7008 SW 0049



Black Fox
SW 7020



Rookwood Dark Red
SW 2801



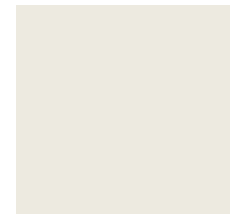
Mulberry Silk
SW 0001



Bunglehouse Gray
SW 2845



Silver Gray
SW 0049



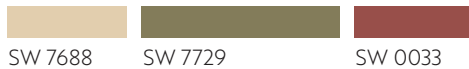
Alabaster
SW 7008

SUGGESTED COLOR PAlettes

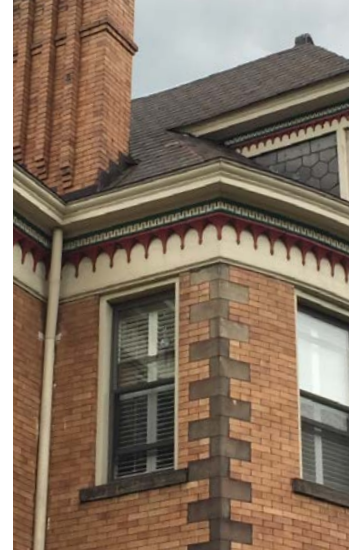
SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 7729 SW 7688 SW 7584



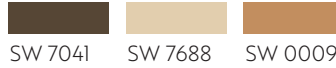
SW 7688 SW 7729 SW 0033



SW 7584 SW 7688 SW 7041



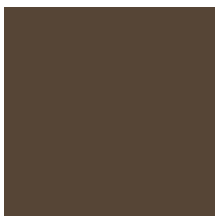
SW 7584 SW 7688 SW 0009 SW 7729



SW 7041 SW 7688 SW 0009



SW 7584 SW 0033 SW 7688



Van Dyke Brown
SW 7041



Edamame
SW 7729



Eastlake Gold
SW 0009



Sundew
SW 7688



Red Theatre
SW 7584



Rembrandt Ruby
SW 0033

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



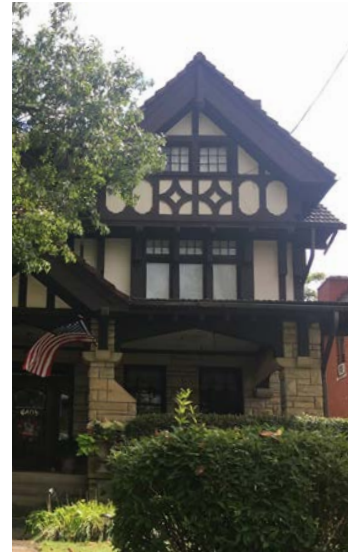
SW 7645 SW 7698 SW 7599



SW 7645 SW 2815 SW 6154



SW 7698 SW 2815 SW 7645



SW 7645 SW 6154



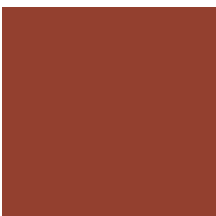
SW 7698 SW 7645 SW 6991



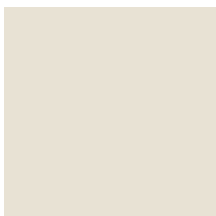
SW 7599 SW 6154 SW 7698



SW 7645 SW 7698 SW 6991 SW 7599



Brick Paver
SW 7599



Nacre
SW 6154



Straw Harvest
SW 7698



Renwick Olive
SW 2815



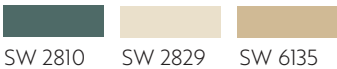
Thunder Gray
SW 7645



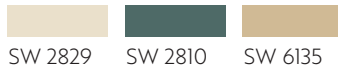
Black Magic
SW 6991

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 2810 SW 2829 SW 6135



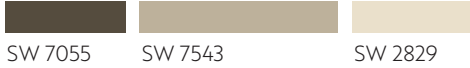
SW 2829 SW 2810 SW 6135



SW 7700 SW 6135 SW 2810



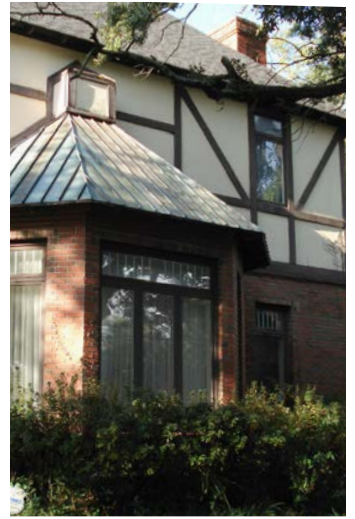
SW 7055 SW 7700



SW 7055 SW 7543 SW 2829



SW 7700 SW 7055



SW 7055 SW 2829



Olde World Gold
SW 7700



Ecru
SW 6135



Classical White
SW 2829



Avenue Tan
SW 7543



Enduring Bronze
SW 7055



Rookwood Sash
Green SW 2810

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 7048 SW 9132 SW 7637



SW 6244 SW 6187



SW 7624 SW 6244



SW 7637 SW 6244



SW 7637 SW 7624



SW 6244 SW 7637



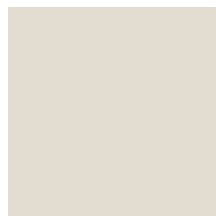
Urbane Bronze
SW 7048



Acacia Haze
SW 9132



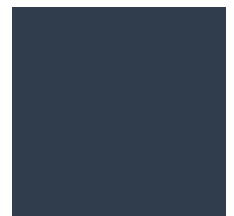
Rosemary
SW 6187



Oyster White
SW 7637



Slate Tile
SW 7624



Naval
SW 6244

SUGGESTED COLOR PALETTES

SECTION 4 EXISTING BUILDINGS



SW 2829 SW 0019 SW 7615



SW 2829 SW 0029



SW 0015 SW 7615



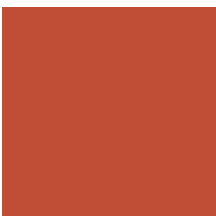
SW 0015 SW 0029 SW 2829



SW 0075 SW 0064



SW 2829 SW 7615



Cayenne
SW 6881



Gallery Green
SW 0015



Acanthus
SW 0029



Classical White
SW 2829



Festoon Aqua
SW 0019



Sea Serpent
SW 7615

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial buildings are similar to residential buildings in many ways: they all have foundations, roofs, walls, doors and windows. They are also very different. They use different architectural language to communicate their purpose, they sit flush to the sidewalk with large openings that invite the public in, they are often much larger with completely different structural and life safety systems. This section focuses on a variety of topics unique to commercial buildings, but does not duplicate items presented in the residential sections of the plan.



COMMERCIAL BUILDING ELEMENTS

COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

COMMERCIAL GLOSSARY TERMS

- Bulkhead
- Corbeled Brick
- Cornice
- Dentils
- Display Window
- Fenestration
- Lintel
- Overlighting
- Parapet
- Party Wall
- Sandwich Board Sign
- Signboard
- Stone Marque
- Storefront Door
- Transom Storefront Window
- Upper Floor Door



Traditional Setback for Historic Main Street Buildings

COMMERCIAL SETBACKS

A setback in the distance between the building and the property line (the distance it is “setback” from the front, rear, side, etc.). Local zoning codes can specify minimum and maximum setbacks. Also, buildings in a block are commonly built with the same setback, regardless of requirement.

Oil City’s Zoning District C-2 Commercial has a minimum front, side, and rear setback of zero feet (“Lot, Yard and Height Area and Bulk Requirement Table”, §310-15 The Codified Ordinances of the City of Oil City). The C-2 Commercial zoning district aligns with traditional setbacks of a main street commercial district, which historically have zero-foot setbacks, creating an energetic, walkable main street. Setbacks are a major way to make neighborhoods feel consistent (and historic). They should be matched whenever possible when there is new construction or a building is modified.

STOREFRONT DESIGN

The ground floor level of many commercial buildings contain a space that is oriented to the public, such as retail space, restaurant, clinic or office. The public access is denoted by a



Inappropriate Setback for Historic Commercial District, Maintain the Historic Setback



New Appropriate Commercial Storefront in Existing Historic Building

COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

transparent façade, which invites passersby into the establishments. Because storefronts are often modified for the tenant, and can be built of less durable materials, they are frequently in poor repair or inappropriately designed. Proper renovation or reconstruction of storefronts begins with understanding the historical architectural style, materials, proportion, and detailing appropriate for the individual building.

See Signage section for more information regarding business signage.

STOREFRONT WINDOWS

Commercial storefront windows display retail merchandise or restaurant space to pedestrians. Historically, these windows were used to advertise goods within.

To create the most aesthetically appealing commercial district and building, replicate the scale, proportion, materials, and detailing of surrounding historic storefronts, and maintain transparency. Do not tint, obscure, or create opaque windows with film, blinds, curtains, signage, or paint. Avoid resizing or expanding the historic storefront windows. Match historic proportions of knee wall, windows, transom, and signboard as present.

COMMERCIAL TRANSOM WINDOWS

A commercial transom window is a window located above a storefront door or storefront window. Most often the transom window is fixed; however, the transom may pivot or be an awning or hopper window, especially historic transom windows. Operable transom windows allow airflow through the storefront. Transom storefront windows commonly were lead, clear, frosted,

or stained glass. **Keep, replicate, or reinstall transom storefront windows.** See the “Signage” section of this Design Guide for window signage opportunities and styles.



APPROPRIATE Storefront Windows



INAPPROPRIATE Fenestration Pattern and Window Style



Transom Window on a Historic Storefront

COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

STOREFRONT ENTRANCES

Generally, historic commercial buildings feature visually prominent and attractive storefront doors that welcome visitors into the building. To indicate the main entrance, storefront doors have more glass to provide a visual connection between pedestrians and retail space. To create an inviting entrance, storefront doors tend to have prominent locations and larger sizes. To distinguish the public storefront entrance from the private, upper-floor doors, the upper-level doors are commonly smaller with less glass and less prominence. Maintain or restore the storefront or front door's visual prominence and hierarchy of doors on the building to retain the building's historic integrity.

STOREFRONT LIGHTING

Commercial areas in Oil City have more lighting than residential areas, but maintain a local neighborhood commercial feeling. Some businesses have lighting for the façade, entrance, or signage.

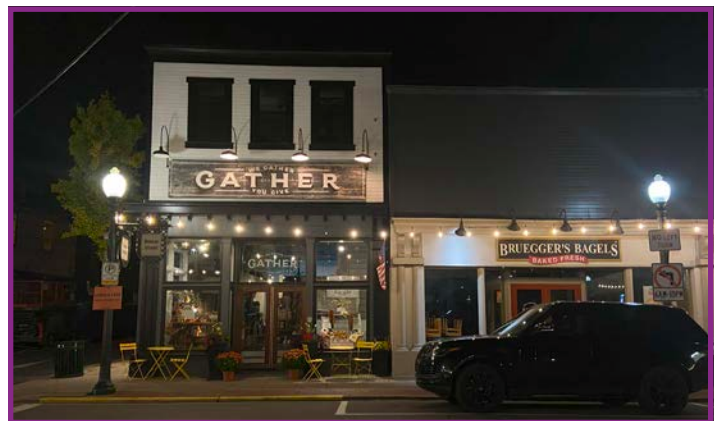
Place lights at entrances, steps, and areas that are difficult to navigate at night, as well as on signage. Replace existing light bulbs with LED bulbs to save energy. **Select LED bulbs that have a warm white color (a low Kelvin color temperature of 2700K) to replicate historic light bulbs.** Repair existing historic light fixtures whenever possible, and find salvage fixtures or new replicated or historically appropriate fixtures when replacing or adding light fixtures. Avoid overlighting (nuisance lighting that detracts from the overall environment) the building and site by not using too many, too bright, or poorly directed lights. An architectural lighting supplier should be willing to design and model lighting if they will be supplying fixtures for a large lighting project.



Commercial and Residential Entrances on Historic Building



Inaccessible Historic Entrances Present Challenges, Address Accessibility Issues with an Architect



Appropriate Light Fixtures for a Historic Commercial District

COMMERCIAL MAINTENANCE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

FAÇADES

Commercial façades often contain materials infrequently found in residential buildings, including structural and veneer stone, terra cotta, ornate brick, projecting cornices, and large expanses of glass. These systems can be difficult to understand and/or can contain hidden components such as masonry ties that have an unknown composition and therefore an unknown lifetime.

- Regular inspections: **Periodic inspections are the only way to identify infrequent maintenance needs, and are necessary for public safety** in tall buildings adjacent to pedestrian areas. See commercial inspections sections for more information.
- Water management: **Most building damage is caused by water in one form or another.** Good maintenance of caulking and sealants, pointing and mortar joints, and other water conveying and shedding systems is the best investment to preserve the building's integrity. Oftentimes water from hard to see or access places creates significant damage, such as high cornices, unsealed window sills, and failing roof flashing. Water leaking through small cracks can corrode fasteners or shatter masonry in freezing conditions.

ROOFS

Commercial roofs are usually made of the same systems as residential roofs, but feature a higher proportion of low slope roofs, internal drain systems, and complicated flashing systems. Tall buildings and compact downtown streets make access, maintenance and replacement more complicated and expensive, but **the roof is almost**

always the most important item to maintain in a building. Items such as flashing and roofing details on parapets can have moisture management details that are complicated to understand.

Roofs should be inspected in the spring and fall for damage and gutters and drains cleared. This work can be done by a licensed architect or engineer, or roofing contractor with experience in that type of roofing system. Regular inspections can also help building owners know the expected lifetime of the roofing system and plan for its replacement.

When fully replacing the roof of a commercial building, current codes require an architect or engineer to review the roof material and structure for structural adequacy, and compliance with other code requirements. A licensed professional with experience in roofing and historic structures can ensure that the new roof will appropriately meet the complicated needs of your building.

MAINTENANCE PLAN

All commercial buildings should have a regular maintenance plan that includes the following elements. An architect or engineer or other expert in historical preservation and building management can help prepare this plan.

- Inspection schedule: A detailed schedule of all building items to be inspected when, and by whom. Some items can be inspected by maintenance staff, but others require specialists. See commercial inspections below.
- Maintenance schedule: A well-considered schedule groups maintenance tasks by specialty and access requirements so that, for example, an expensive lift does not need to return year after year. Instead, the mason evaluates and repairs

COMMERCIAL MAINTENANCE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

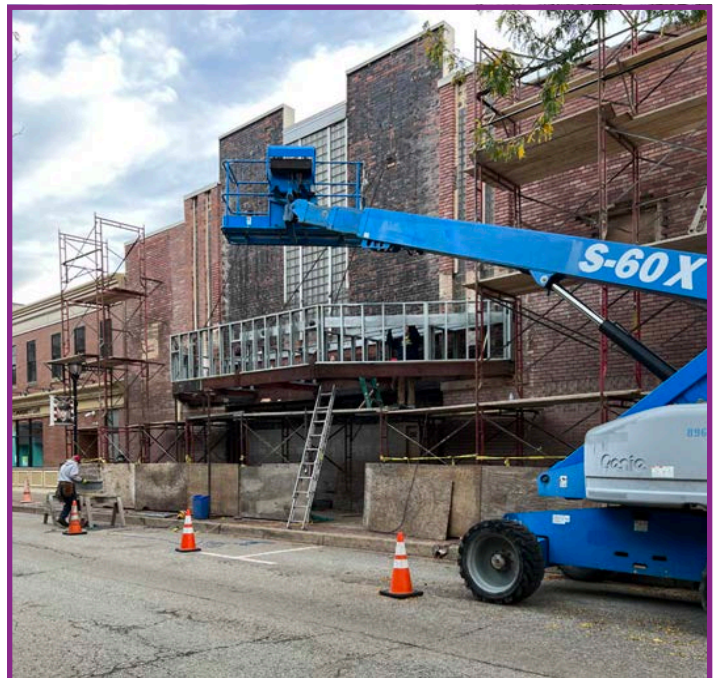
the entire building and does not return for five years, etc. Planning for maintenance, rather than reacting, better protects building systems and gives better budgeting guidance.



Inspect Brickwork, Mortar and Stonework



Inspect and Repair Wood Windows



Inspect and Maintain Façade to Lessen Major Repairs

COMMERCIAL INSPECTIONS

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

COMMERCIAL INSPECTIONS

Commercial inspections: Specialized inspections are a necessity in downtown districts.

- Façade inspections should be done by licensed professionals experienced in the particular cladding system of your building. Many inspections are now done by drone, and may also require access by lift and even removal of building elements to review hidden components. All inspections should provide a detailed report with photos, recommendations, and conclusions.

A façade inspection will review all elements of the façade in detail, including cladding, windows, doors, sealants, flashings, caulking, pointing, and all other components.

Façade inspections should be completed at least every ten years, and more frequently if there are any hazards or areas of concern. For example, any masonry building that has experienced shifting or movement of masonry units should be on a three year or more frequent schedule.

- Roof inspections should be done twice a year, and include walking on low slope roofs as is safe and practical, and visually inspecting sloped roofs. This can be done by a licensed professional or a roofing contractor with experience in the particular systems being inspected. Written reports are not always compiled for regular roof inspections when problems are not found. At least every ten years a more comprehensive inspection with a report should be prepared.
- Commercial inspection reports do not focus on interior parts of a building, but on major building systems including foundations, major structural components, electrical service, mechanical

equipment, plumbing, fire sprinkler, and life safety equipment. Also, elevators require regular inspection.

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

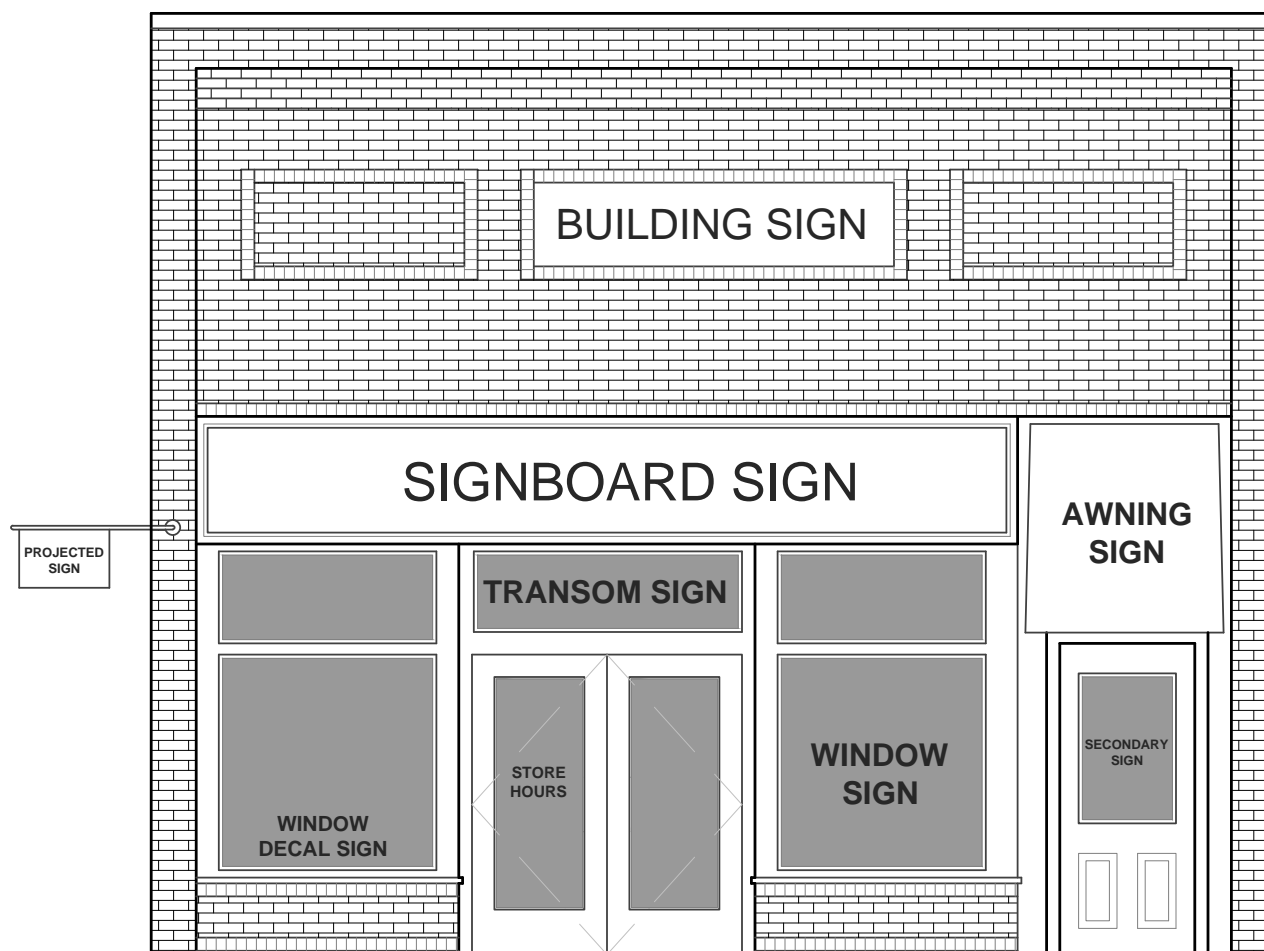
A business sign indicates a logo or name and marks the business's physical location. These indicators help inform passersby about the type of business and the location of the entrance. In historic districts, historic business signs were tailored to pedestrians wandering through the district.

Historically, business signs hung from an area of the façade called the signboard, which is located above the storefront windows and below the second-story window sills. Alternative locations for historic signs were on the windows or awnings.

Determine the best sign placement from historic photographs if possible (Oil City Heritage Society, Oil City Library, Facebook groups, Venango County

Historical Society, the National Archives, and Sanborn maps). When designing a new sign, create a mock sign or mock photo of the building with the proposed sign placement. View the mock sign from multiple vantage points, multiple modes of travel (pedestrian and automobile), at different distances, and at various times of day before determining the best placement and to ensure readability for the target customer.

In modern times, business or other signage located in a historic district should complement the historic architecture and have continuity with the overall style of the district.



SIGN DIAGRAM Appropriate Sign Locations for Historic Commercial Buildings (Note: Not All Locations Should Be Used Simultaneously)

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGNAGE DESIGN

- Cater signs to pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers.
- Place signs so they are seen from the street, in view for a passing pedestrian or motorist.
- Create a sign large enough to be seen by a motorist, but not too large that it overwhelms the building's architecture. Per Oil City zoning code, "Wall signs, provided that the total of such sign shall be limited to 10% of the wall upon which it is mounted."
- Make the sign's size compatible with the building's size, features, and architecture.
- Avoid damaging the building's architecture and detailing when installing a business sign.
- Make signs legible by using simple, easy to read typeface, and place lettering on a contrasting, but complementary color background.
- Select sign colors that complement the building and district's color scheme.
- Complement the historic district's characteristics by using sign materials and style that are compatible with historic buildings and historic signage. Per Oil City's zoning code, "All signs, including temporary signs, shall be constructed of durable material and kept in good condition and repair."
- Do not place signs above the building's roofline, covering architectural details, or covering windows.



Multi-Tenant Sign

FOR MULTIPLE TENANT BUILDINGS

- Per Oil City's zoning code, "Multitenant building. Where more than one tenant exists in a building, each tenant shall be allowed a sign consistent with the requirements of [the zoning ordinance]."
- Promote the ground floor main tenant space with a large, prominent sign, and use smaller less prominent signs for secondary retail spaces or upper floor tenants. A sign hierarchy helps visitors understand the location of the business.
- Place signs near relevant commercial entrances. In the case of one entrance for multiple businesses, use an exterior sign directory and place it near the relevant entrance.

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

APPROPRIATE SIGNS

The signboard is the most common location for historic business signs. Historically appropriate signboard materials are wood or metal, such as steel, aluminum, or wrought iron. Transom windows are sometimes placed in the signboard area. These transom windows let in additional daylight and sometimes had the business sign etched or painted on the glass. Additional appropriate sign designs are wall plaques, small sandwich board signs, awnings, window decal signs, projected signs, and wall mounted signs.

- Do not cover the entire storefront window with a sign or paint, and instead allow pedestrians to see through window decal signs into the interior of the retail space or the display window.
- Create simple, canvas awning signs that complement the building's style.
- Hang projected wall (blade) signs above the display window and below the sill of the second floor windows. The Oil City zoning code aligns with this placement, stating to attach the bottom of the blade signs higher than seven feet and the top of the sign below ten feet.
- Place sandwich board or flag signs outside only during business hours, and do not block the sidewalk's circulation plan or building's entrance.

INAPPROPRIATE SIGNS

Inappropriate business signage for historic districts like those in Oil City include vinyl banners, illuminated cabinet signs, internally illuminated signs, flashing light signs, neon signs, and inflated signs.

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: BLADE SIGNS §310-24-C-4

Blade signs attached to a wall which project in such a manner that the faces of the sign form an angle of 90° with the wall shall be permitted in commercial districts, subject to the following regulations:

- Such signs shall not project more than four feet from the wall.
- Only one such sign shall be permitted per public entrance.
- Such signs shall be nonglaring and nonmoving.
- There shall be a minimum height from the curb level to the bottom of the sign of seven feet and a maximum height from the curb level to the top of the sign of 10 feet.
- Signs shall have a maximum area of nine feet on each face.

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: AWNING SIGNS §310-24-A-10

- The awnings/canopies/marquees that contain signs cover a display window or main entrance/exit to the structure.
- The sign(s) contain only the name, monogram or street address of the business being advertised; no trademarks or product names shall be used in the sign unless such is included in the registered name of the business.
- All sign lettering placed on any awning/canopies shall not be larger than two feet in height and 20 feet in length. Lettering placed on theater marquees may extend up to 24 feet in length.
- The lowest portion of the marquee shall be a minimum of nine feet zero inches above the sidewalk elevation. The marquee shall project to no more than three feet from the street side of the street curb; nor shall the marquee project more than 10 feet from the building to which it is attached.

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

APPROPRIATE SIGNS



Signboard Sign with Gooseneck Lighting

INAPPROPRIATE SIGNS



Vinyl or Temporary Signs



Blade or Projected Sign Hand Painted and Not Internally Lit



Window Sign That is Too Large with Graphics



Window Decal Sign That is Simple, and of a Detail That Could Be Hand Lettered (Even If It is Not)



Illuminated Cabinet Sign

ILLUMINATED SIGNAGE

SECTION 5 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

ILLUMINATING SIGNS

When considering sign illumination, begin by evaluating the district's lighting in the evening. The area may have adequate street lighting or building lighting and may not need any additional or very little sign lighting. Alternatively, a business may not need advertising in the evening. Not every business sign needs to have dedicated lighting. Signage lighting can offer benefits like the ability to locate a sign, and therefore a business, during dusk and evening hours, or bringing awareness of the business to passersby even when the business is closed.

Regarding illumination, Oil City zoning code states, "Signs may be lighted with nonglaring lights or may be illuminated by shielded floodlights. No red, green or amber lights shall be permitted, and lighting shall be screened from adjacent properties. No flashing lights shall be permitted."

After evaluating the existing evening lighting conditions and the zoning code, select the intensity, color temperature, and direction of any new light. Select lighting that does not detract from the building or district. Avoid light pollution by limiting glare, uplighting, light trespassing, and overlighting. Use a simplistic lighting solution for the sign or to highlight any architecture.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information regarding Oil City's signage requirements, visit [Oil City Zoning Ordinance](#)

APPROPRIATE SIGN LIGHTING

- Internally illuminated letters
- Halo illumination, letters or a logo lit from behind, which casts a halo of light around the sign
- A light fixture directed on sign, such as a gooseneck light fixture.



Halo Illumination



Gooseneck Fixture

INAPPROPRIATE SIGN LIGHTING

- Illuminated cabinet signs
- Flashing signs
- Neon signs except in original historic applications (such as a theater marquee)



Flashing and Too Bright Sign



Illuminated Cabinet Signs

DEMOLITION



Razed Buildings in a Historic District Leave Gaps in the Street's Facade Continuity

Whether due to deterioration and neglect, or new development, thousands of historic buildings are sadly demolished each year across our country, and many historic districts cease to exist.

In Oil City, the chief reason for demolition is excessive deterioration of buildings, whether due to lack of knowledge, economic reasons, or neglect. Education is the best way to prevent demolition. Educating owners gives them an appreciation of the value of historic buildings and the resources to perform necessary maintenance and improvement. When a demolition permit application is submitted to the municipal code official, it is often too late to do anything to save the building.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEMOLITION

POLLUTION Can introduce pollutants to the environment. Wind can carry dust and debris which can have an adverse effect on public health, and pollutants can seep into soil and pollute groundwater

DEBRIS Increase size of landfills

ENERGY LOSS Loss of embodied energy from original production, transportation and assembly of the materials. Energy loss from demolition of the structure

DISCONTINUITY Missing buildings creates a disjointed streetscape or streetwall, which appears like a smile with missing teeth

NUISANCE Vacant lots can attract undesirable activity, become a nuisance if not monitored

LESS WALKABLE Can inhibit walkability of the neighborhood because pedestrian feel less comfortable walking past vacant lots and the distance between places can seem farther

CHARACTER LOSS Once razed a building with historic character can never be replaced

CULTURAL LOSS Demolition structures can suppress history and community stories

PREVENTING DEMOLITION

SECTION 6 DEMOLITION



Furniture, Aluminum Siding, and Lumber Being Recycled or Salvaged from Building Undergoing Demolition

The best time to prevent demolitions is before a property has significantly deteriorated. Here are some strategies to reduce and prevent demolitions:

- This Design Guide gives building owners the tools to understand their buildings and make good maintenance decisions
- General outreach to property owners, including training workshops, publicity promoting the value of historic districts, and resources available
- Ongoing identification of at-risk properties, and properties with high risk maintenance needs (i.e. failing gutters, missing shingles, overgrown landscape)
- Specific outreach to owners of deteriorating properties with resources and options, including the existence of potential buyers
- Municipal maintenance citations can spur crucial maintenance. Citations may create friction and in excess can even hurt a neighborhood, so citations need to be focused on critical issues

like damaged roofs, gutters and downspouts.

- Gathering a pool of buyers for historic properties, whether individual, non-profit, or municipal, and marketing their existence and successes

Sometimes demolition is the right choice. When a structure has deteriorated to a point where it is difficult or impossible to restore, and it blights the neighborhood around it, demolition can be a necessary and even fruitful option. A number of structures in Oil City are in poor condition, and appear to be good candidates for demolition to increase the stability and strength of the district by increasing the percentage of historic properties that are repairable and in good condition.

CONSIDER BEFORE DEMOLITION

SECTION 6 DEMOLITION

When considering demolition, here is a list of ideas to review.

- Is the building historic?
- Does the building positively contribute to the historic character of the district?
- Is the building unique in its history or architectural character?
- Would the loss of the building significantly harm the historic district by eliminating an exemplary structure or by disrupting the architectural pattern established on the block or the street which could not be replaced by new construction on the empty lot?
- Is the building repairable with a reasonable financial investment?
- Is the deterioration of the structure creating an immediate or reasonably foreseeable danger to life or property?
- Are there stabilization strategies that might protect a significant building from further damage, while awaiting funding or interest for its restoration?



Deteriorated Structure that Poses a Danger to Life



A Building with Unique Architectural Character that is in Need of Stabilization



Architectural Salvage, Largely Recovered from Demolished and Renovated Buildings is Sold for Reuse

STEPS BEFORE DEMOLITION

SECTION 6 DEMOLITION

Demolition is typically undertaken by the property owner or in some cases, the municipality. Items that are not required by code in Oil City can be adopted as standard practice for municipal demolitions and suggested to private owners. Communication and coordination with historic societies for photo documentation and regional architectural salvage companies (Erie, Mars, Pittsburgh) can enable those services at no cost to the owner.

When the items from “Consider Before Demolition” have been scrutinized, and demolition appears the best course, then the following steps should be taken before demolition:

- Structural review: sometimes it is not clear if a structure is safe or can be saved. A structural engineer, with expertise or training specifically in older construction, is often the best person to make that assessment.
- Municipal permitting requirements, including environmental testing and remediation and disposal requirements for hazardous materials, application, and plan review.
- Photo documentation: Photograph all sides of the building’s exterior, architectural details, and the building in context with its surroundings.
- Architectural salvage and recycling: Whether by the demolition contractor or a third party, salvage significant architectural materials, including doors, windows, trim and brick. Many areas have for-profit and nonprofit architectural salvage companies.
- Historical demolition permitting: While not required in Oil City, some municipalities have special permitting requirements for demolitions in historic districts, which can strengthen

historic districts with limited inconvenience to property owners and expose property owners to resources and alternatives to demolition.

- Notice period: One very common historical ordinance, however not required in Oil City, is a notice period in historic districts. Proposed demolitions are publicly posted for a period of time (30-90 days) so that stakeholders can consider and propose alternatives. These can also be proposed electively.

STRATEGIES AFTER DEMOLITION

SECTION 6 DEMOLITION



The historic Brody Block was demolished to make Oil City's Town Square, which is a public park and gathering space for community events.

Where a building has been demolished, municipal staff and local preservation organizations can provide important support to any future developer of the vacant lot by offering the following:

- Education and advocacy for preservation: Even after a building is lost, photographs and history can be a powerful motivator for future preservation work.
- Redevelopment strategies: The site of a single demolished residence in a neighborhood can be absorbed as a residential side lot. After a municipal demolition, the title can be

cleared by a tax sale and sold to a new owner. Larger sites need more detailed strategies for redevelopment. The "New Construction and Addition" section of this Design Guide explains strategies for redevelopment.

- Development advocacy: If a parcel will be redeveloped, photographs and plans of the historical building can help inform the new development on how to be contextual to the historic fabric of the neighborhood. Local historic preservation organizations can partner and advocate for appropriate redevelopment.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

New construction that complements the historic context can revitalize and strengthen the historic district by bringing vibrancy and new residents to the area, while preserving the historic character of the district. Infilling vacant lots with new construction fills in gaps along the streetscape and stitches the block together.

Before constructing a new building or adding an addition to an existing building, evaluate the context of the historic district. Within the district, determine architectural styles and features, such as mass, form, proportions, fenestration pattern, height, and materiality. Integrate new design into the historic context by selecting features that complement the surroundings. Selecting an architectural style already present in the district can help unify the new construction and the district; however, new buildings should not give a false appearance of being historic. In other words, new structures should not be mistaken for actual historic buildings. Also, new construction should not be designed to attract attention and stand out, but rather to blend in with the styles and character of adjacent and nearby historic buildings. Selecting architectural features that emulate and complement historic architectural features already present in the district from its historic period of significance will help unify the new construction and historic district.

For additions on historic properties, note the important architectural features of the primary structure before planning any alteration. Protect the architectural character of the building by placing the addition where the least amount of damage will be done to historic details and building features. Most of the time, this is the rear or secondary façade rather than the primary façade. Before construction, strategize how the addition may be removed in the future without causing major damage to the historic structure. Make a distinction between the historic building and the new addition by designing an addition that is compatible in massing, form, proportion, scale, and features. To help blend with the historic building, consider using the same or similar roof form and building materials. Salvaged building materials can also be an effective way to complement the historic architecture.

The following topics provide more guidance on uniting the new infill and additions with historic buildings.

NEW CONSTRUCTION GLOSSARY TERMS

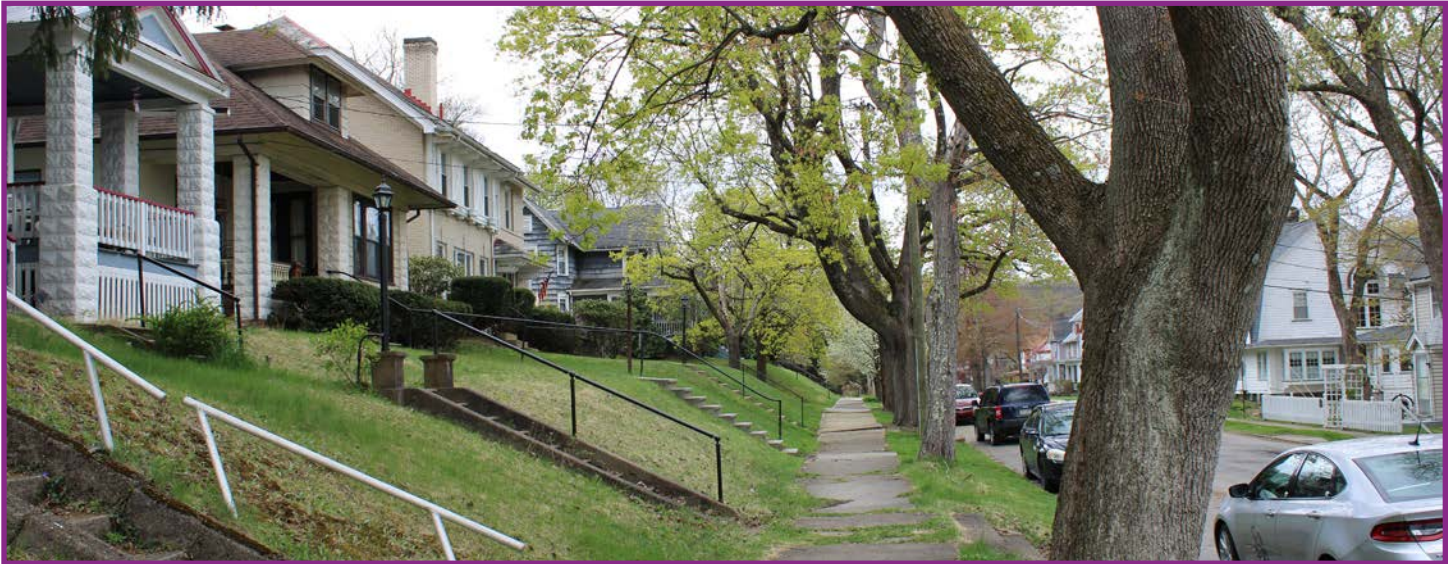
- Architectural Style
- Building Profile
- Contextual
- Elevation
- Façade
- Fenestration
- Finishes
- Historic
- Infill Construction
- Massing
- Party Wall
- Proportions
- Reconstruction
- Redesign
- Scale
- Site Placement

NEW CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Visit Section 4 Existing Buildings, Materials to learn more about appropriate building materials for historic districts.

SETBACKS

SECTION 7 NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS



SETBACK CONTINUITY Preserves Street Wall

A setback is the distance a building must be located from the property line according to local zoning laws and development codes. Typically, there are front, rear, interior sideyard (adjacent to another property), and exterior sideyard (adjacent to a street or right-of-way) setbacks, each with different distances. The setbacks are minimum distances, but some zoning codes determine the setback (especially the front) based on the abutting properties.

Historic commercial main streets historically have zero-foot setbacks, creating an energetic, walkable main street. Residential setbacks typically vary based on the density of the area, the era that the dwelling was constructed, and economic circumstances. Large setbacks generally are found on older properties that preceded the neighborhood's construction or on grand estates. Smaller setbacks tend to be found in denser and more walkable communities. In Oil City, most front setbacks tend to be a moderate distance, neither large nor small.

When constructing a new building or an addition, place the structure based on the abutting properties' setbacks. If there is a large discrepancy between setback distances, place the building at an average distance between the properties. When establishing the building on a site, also erect the building parallel to the street, follow the natural topography, and avoid major disturbances to the grade. Review the specific zoning district's requirements in The Codified Ordinances of the City of Oil City §310-15 "Lot, Yard and Height Area and Bulk Requirement Table" before construction.

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: §310-15 LOT, YARD, HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE-FAMILY) ZONING DISTRICTS

- Minimum front yard: 25 feet (all districts)
- Minimum side yard: 5-10 feet
- Minimum rear yard: 25-40 feet

COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

- Minimum front yard: 0-25 feet
- Minimum side yard: 0-5 feet
- Minimum rear yard: 0-25 feet

HEIGHT

SECTION 7 NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

A building's height is typically defined as the number of building stories and/or the height to the top of the roof, as measured from the abutting ground. For commercial and residential properties in a historic district, make the heights for new buildings compatible with the surrounding buildings. Observe the number of stories, but also note the height of each level. In commercial areas, do not deviate more than two or three stories higher and avoid one-story buildings as much as possible.

For residential properties, make new dwellings and additions a compatible height to the surrounding context. Do not deviate by more than one story, and make heights of each level as similar as possible to heights of nearby historic residential buildings.

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: §310-15 LOT, YARD, HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE-FAMILY) ZONING DISTRICTS

- Maximum height: 35 feet (all districts)

COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

- Maximum height: 35-60 feet



INAPPROPRIATE BUILDING HEIGHT Construct New Buildings that are Similar in Height to Surrounding Buildings



To Create a Cohesive Commercial District, Use Setbacks on Upper Floors to Diminish the Visual Size of the Building



New Residences that Complement the Height of Historic Homes in the District



New Construction has Similar Height as Adjacent Building and Steps Down in Height at the Corner, Creating a Rooftop Deck

MASS AND FORM

SECTION 7 NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

In architecture, mass refers to the building's size. Weight and form refer to the external, three-dimensional shape of the building. Scale describes the relationship between the proposed construction and other objects. For example, a building has a human scale, meaning that the building's size and elements relate to the size of a human body.

All new construction in historic districts, whether additions or infill, needs to complement the scale, massing, proportion, and level of detail of surrounding properties. In Oil City, the scale and massing of historic properties range from workers' cottages to large, formal estates to large office buildings and warehouses. Proposed construction must relate to the context of the neighborhood and blend into the streetscape.

Once an architectural style has been selected for the proposed design, create a structure that uses the proper proportions for the selected architectural style. Most styles utilize traditional forms, but some styles are more complex, such as Queen Anne. In line with creating a building form that supports the architectural style and building use, construct a roof form that coordinates with the architectural style. Roof form refers to the type of roof design, the roof slope, and roof elements.

Additions should be subordinate to the main building, meaning the addition has a smaller mass and less ornamentation than the main building. This makes the main building appear to be the most prominent. Determine the compatible size, scale, proportion, and massing of the addition compared to the main building. Maintain the same or a compatible roof pitch and style as the main building.

For more assistance, hire an architect or designer

who is skilled at designing buildings and additions that take into account the form, massing, and proportions of the building.



New Construction with Appropriate Building Massing and Height for a Historic District. Fenestration Patterns, Form, Setbacks, and Materials are Inappropriate



New Construction with Inappropriate Building Massing and Roof Form for a Historic District



A New Home with Appropriate Massing and Form for a Historic District

PRIMARY FRONTAGE

SECTION 7 NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

Frontage refers to a length of the building's façade. The primary frontage specifies the most visible and public frontage. Most commonly, the primary frontage faces a public roadway or roadways if the property is on a corner lot.

Maintain consistency along a streetscape by creating a new building that orients its primary frontage in the same manner as the other contextual buildings on the street, thereby maintaining the historic frontage. Keep the primary frontage parallel to the roadway, unless historically the buildings were oriented differently. When constructing an addition, avoid locating the addition on the primary frontage or modifying the primary frontage. Instead, build additions or make building modifications on the side(s) or rear of the property.



Building Maintains Primary Frontage and Entrance on the Main Street and Only Visible Connection on the Secondary Street



Inappropriate Frontage for Historic District, Entrance Removed on Main Street and Garage Doors on Side Street



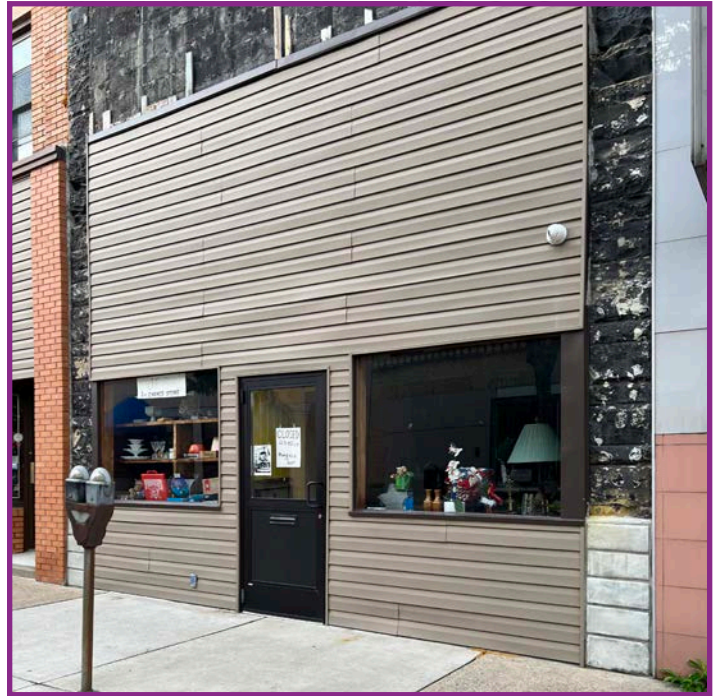
New House on a Corner has a Wrap-Around Porch to Address the Secondary Frontage, but is More Prominent on the Primary Frontage

FENESTRATION

SECTION 7 NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

Fenestration describes the building's openings—windows and doors—on the building elevations. Fenestration pattern describes the pattern created by the building openings' placement. The openings' size, shape, proportion, location, and configuration determine the fenestration pattern.

Reference the building's style to determine fenestration characteristics. For example, the Colonial Revival style has a symmetrical, regular fenestration pattern, and Tudor Revival has an irregular, asymmetrical fenestration pattern. When considering fenestration, place openings so as to not infringe on neighbors' privacy. Consider how fenestration placement might affect daylight, ventilation, views, and solar heat gain.



Inappropriate Fenestration Pattern for Historic Commercial Building



New Storefront with Appropriate Fenestration Pattern for a Historic Commercial Building

LANDSCAPING



Residential Landscape in the South Side Historic District

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

Stormwater management is defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the effort to reduce water runoff from rainfall or melting snow and to improve water quality. In the past, stormwater filtered into the soil naturally. However, as communities grew the impermeable surfaces increased (especially concrete and asphalt) and more buildings were constructed, thus stormwater could not immediately infiltrate the soil naturally, causing excess stormwater runoff. Curbing stormwater runoff by allowing water to filter into the soil, or retaining it so that it drains slowly into the sewer system, prevents flooding in local streams, creeks, and rivers. Reducing the amount of runoff also decreases soil erosion caused by runoff flowing on the soil's surface. Improving stormwater infiltration into the soil also replenishes the groundwater surplus, improving water quality and protecting the drinking water supply.

Property owners and tenants can improve stormwater management on their properties through small- or large-scale interventions, many of which are attractive. One of the easiest solutions is installing rain barrels on downspouts to collect and store water for later use on gardens, lawns, or indoor plants. Installing and utilizing permeable surfaces instead of impermeable surfaces also reduces runoff. Permeable surfaces allow water to drain through the material to the soil below. Examples of permeable surfaces are pebbles, gravel, rocks, mulch, porous pavers, groundcover, and planting areas. Bioretention gardens or rain gardens retain water in depressions that are planted with native plants and grasses. These depressions allow the water to drain into the soil slowly. Bioretention gardens can be placed in public rights-of-way, adjacent to streets and parking lots, or on private residences.

A large-scale intervention is a rainwater cistern, which collects rainwater from a rooftop and stores the water in an underground tank for later use. Properly treated water can be utilized in the building, or untreated water can be used for plants, similar to a rain barrel.



Existing Rain Garden in Downtown Oil City



Stormwater Management Area in Downtown Oil City

SUSTAINABILITY

Good stormwater management strategies reduce water runoff, reduce soil erosion, replenish groundwater surplus, improve water quality, and protect drinking water supply.

PLANT PALETTES

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

NATIVE PLANTS (RECOMMENDED PLANTS)

Native plants evolved in Pennsylvania for hundreds or thousands of years and have adapted to the region's climate and conditions. They have acclimated to the soil and persisted through the region's frost and drought conditions. Planting native species is recommended for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, native plants maintain the native biodiversity and preserve native habitats. The benefit for property owners is that the native plants require low maintenance because they are easy to care for once established and require less water and fertilizer than non-native plants. The key to successfully growing native plants is choosing the correct plant for the location. Is the area wet or dry? Does the location receive sun, partial sun or mostly shade? What is the soil acidity?

SUSTAINABILITY

Native plants are more sustainable than other plants because they've adapted to the local environment and require less water, fertilizers, maintenance, and money to maintain.

INVASIVE PLANTS (NOT RECOMMENDED PLANTS)

Unlike native plants, invasive plants were introduced to Pennsylvania from afar and did not evolve in the region. Invasive plants grow and spread quickly, competing with native plants for their habitat. By competing and overtaking native plants' habitat, invasive plants also reduce habitats for native wildlife. For property owners, invasive plants can require more maintenance, water, and fertilizer.

PENNSYLVANIA NATIVE PLANTS

- Red Maple
- Red Bud
- Blackgum
- Hop-Hornbeam
- White Oak
- Sassafras
- Eastern Red-Cedar
- Eastern White Pine
- Serviceberries
- Black Chokeberry
- Red-Osier Dogwood
- Winterberry
- Blueberries
- Spicebush
- Wild Columbine
- Blazing-Star
- Cardinal-Flower
- Bee-Balm
- Switchgrass
- Beard-Tongue
- Goldenrods
- Wild Blue Phlox
- Wild Ginger

INVASIVE PLANTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Mimosa Tree
- Sycamore Maple
- European Black Alder
- Tree-of-heaven
- European & Japanese Barberries
- Butterfly Bush
- Burning-bush
- Shrub & Japanese Honeysuckles
- Chinese & Shrubby Bushclovers
- Privets
- Guelder Rose
- Wineberry
- Jetbead
- Doublefile Viburnum
- Multiflora Rose
- English Ivy
- Japanese Hops
- Chocolate Vines
- Chinese & Japanese Wisteria
- Kudzu
- Mile-a-minute Weed

MORE INFORMATION

For more information visit [Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#) website for a list of [native plants](#) and [invasive plants](#).

SCREENING AND BUFFERS

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

SCREENING

Screening conceals spaces from the view of passersby. Screening can be created by plants, trees, low brick walls, fences, or a combination of these items. Ideal locations for screening are around dumpsters, parking lots, and private or unsightly areas. It is recommended that all existing and new parking lots be screened from the street with at least a five-foot buffer, unless specified by a city ordinance, between the parking lot and rights-of-way. Include sidewalks at the edge of the parking lot and design for pedestrian paths and tree islands within the parking lot. Avoid screening with chain link fences or invasive plants.

BUFFERS

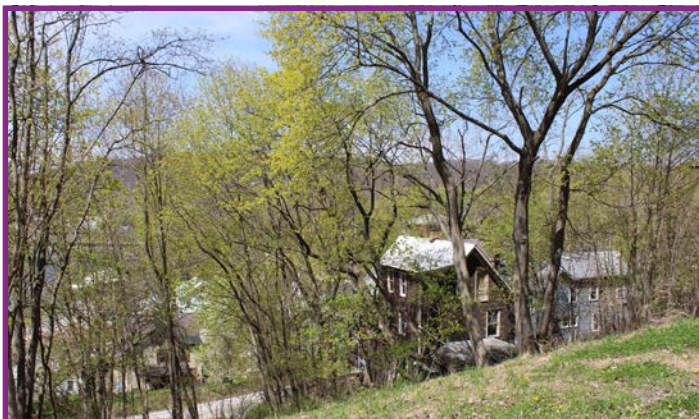
Buffers—areas with native plants, trees, shrubs, and grasses—protect undevelopable land, typically steep slopes or land adjacent to waterways. Buffers also separate areas such as incompatible land uses, buildings, roadways, agriculture land, or natural habitats. Buffer zones provide privacy, control and prevent erosion, filter and clean water before it enters a waterway, diminish noise, and reduce air, water, and light pollution. In Oil City, buffer zones exist along railroad tracks, roadways, and on undevelopable, steep slopes.



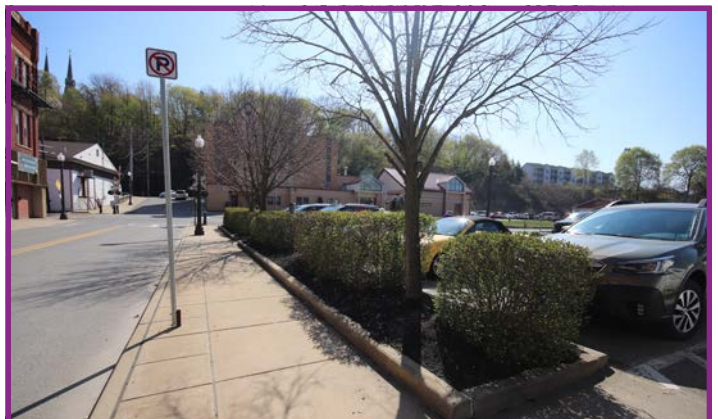
Plant Landscaping within Parking Areas to Enhance the Aesthetics and Environment



Use Permanent Fencing that Complements the Style and Materials in the Historic Districts



Buffer area in the North Side Historic District



Use Landscaping to Block Parking and Unsightly Elements

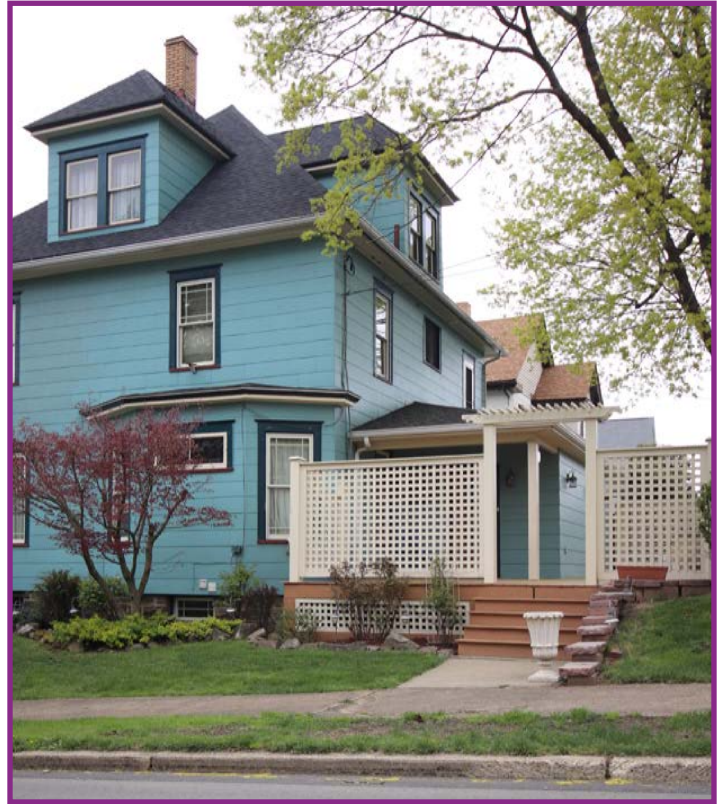
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

Two of the most common types of residential site designs are vernacular landscapes and designed landscapes. A vernacular landscape indicates that a person living or working on the site developed the site's landscape. A designed landscape signifies that a landscape architect, master gardener, designer, or other landscape professional designed the site. Most places in Oil City would be considered vernacular landscapes.

Although not designed by a professional, vernacular landscapes have historic significance. Before modifying the landscape, consider researching the property's landscape design through historic and aerial photographs and maps (Oil City Heritage Society, Oil City Library, Facebook groups, Venango County Historical Society, the National Archives, and Sanborn maps).

- Determine the quality of existing vegetation and trees, and the condition of site elements, such as fences, railings, retaining walls, light fixtures, and water features.
- Replace historic vegetation with in-kind vegetation and refurbish historic site elements. If site elements need to be replaced, consider replacing them with salvaged, historically appropriate site elements. Alternatively, replace site elements with replications or historically appropriate new fixtures.
- When vegetation requires replacement, plant native species while preserving the landscape's historic features. Maintain and prune large shade trees, as needed.
- Avoid removing large trees unless the tree has a disease or extreme deterioration. If removing a tree is necessary, plant a replacement shade tree in a similar area. Do not replace large shade trees with an ornamental tree.



Screening and Arbor

SITE ELEMENTS

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

TOPOGRAPHY

Preserve the view of the property from the street by maintaining the natural and historic topography. When adding new additions or site elements, be cognizant of the site's contours by integrating elements into the topography rather than drastically altering the landscape. Before creating new site elements or an addition, consider the neighbors' privacy and refrain from blocking views from adjacent properties.

PATIOS AND PATHWAYS

In Oil City's historic districts, many paths and patios were made with natural stone or concrete. Maintain existing pathways and patio materials whenever possible. When replacing or installing a new path or patio surface, consider a material that is found on other areas of the site or is a historically appropriate, sustainable material like natural stone or permeable pavement. Permeable surfaces allow water to drain through the material to the soil below. Examples of permeable surfaces are pebbles, gravel, rocks, mulch, porous pavers, groundcover, and planting areas. Avoid impermeable materials such as asphalt and concrete whenever possible.

RETAINING WALLS

The slopes in Oil City cause some properties to need retaining walls, most often made with brick or natural stone. Maintain, repair, or replace the walls with in-kind, historic materials. Avoid using concrete block walls or concrete walls, especially when visible from a public right-of-way. Retaining walls should be kept less than four feet high to maintain sightlines and a human scale, unless historically taller.

FENCING

If fencing is desired for a property, only place it on the side and/or rear yards. Keep the height of fencing between four and six feet high. Select compatible fencing that complements the property's architectural design. Commonly, historic fencing was constructed with wrought-iron, brick, or wood. Avoid chain link and vinyl fencing.

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: §310-19-C FENCES

- In residential districts, a wall or fence less than six feet six inches in height and paved terraces without walls, roofs or other enclosures may be erected within the limits of any rear yard.
- Fences may be permitted in front yard areas, provided they are no higher than four feet and do not obstruct the required free-sight triangle at intersections.
- In commercial and industrial districts, a wall or fence may be erected to a maximum height of eight feet in front, side and rear yards for screening and security purposes.
- Fences shall be constructed in accordance with City building codes.

SITE ELEMENTS

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING



Stairs Built Into Slope



Stone Retaining Wall



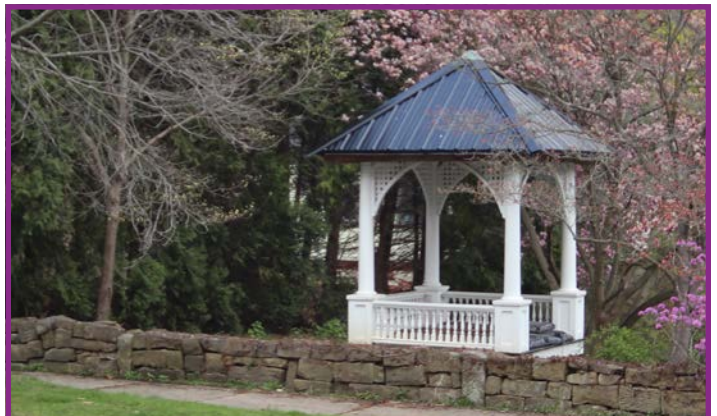
Vegetation on Steep Slope



Boulder Retaining Wall



Brick Paving



Gazebo and Dry Stack Stone Fence

SITE ELEMENTS

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING



Wrought-Iron Fencing



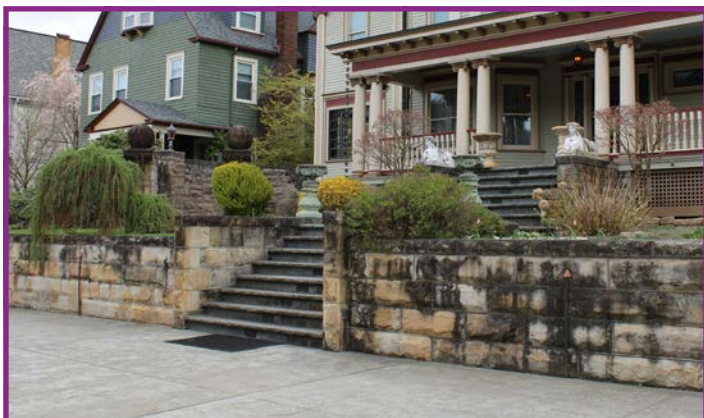
Concrete Steps



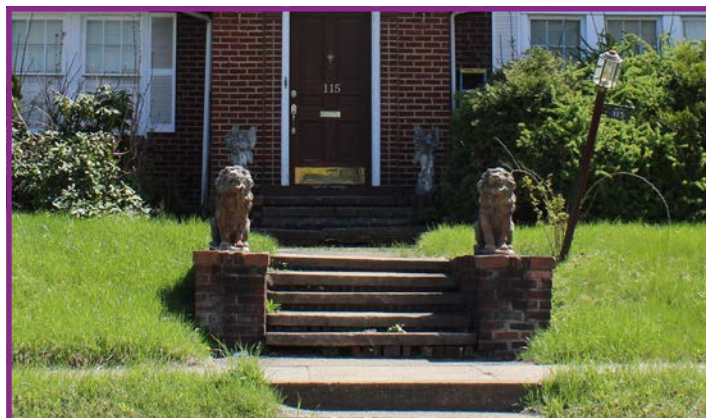
Wood Fencing



Steps Built Into Stone Retain Wall



Stone Retaining Wall



Brick Piers Framing Steps

SITE ELEMENTS

SECTION 8 LANDSCAPING

LIGHTING

The residential areas of Oil City have street lights at key intersections and along main arterial streets. Otherwise, the dwellings have lighting at porches and steps. The commercial areas have more lighting than residential areas, but still maintain a quaint small-town feeling. Downtown has acorn style street lights that complement the historic architecture. Some businesses have lighting for the façade, entrance, or signage.

Place lights at entrances, steps, porches, areas that are difficult to navigate at night, and on signage. Replace existing light bulbs with LED bulbs to save energy. Select LED bulbs that have a low Kelvin color temperature to replicate the warm, white color of historic light bulbs. Repair existing historic light fixtures whenever possible, and find salvage fixtures or new replicated or historically appropriate fixtures when replacing or adding light fixtures.

Avoid overlighting the building and site by using too many lights or aiming the lighting in unnecessary directions. Overlighting disturbs nocturnal animals, impedes views of the night sky, wastes energy, and creates nuisance to neighboring properties or passersby. Common issues with incorrect lighting are light trespassing, where lighting emanates over the property line; uplighting, where lights illuminate the sky in addition to the intended direction or feature; and glare, intense lighting that is directed in the area of one's field of vision.

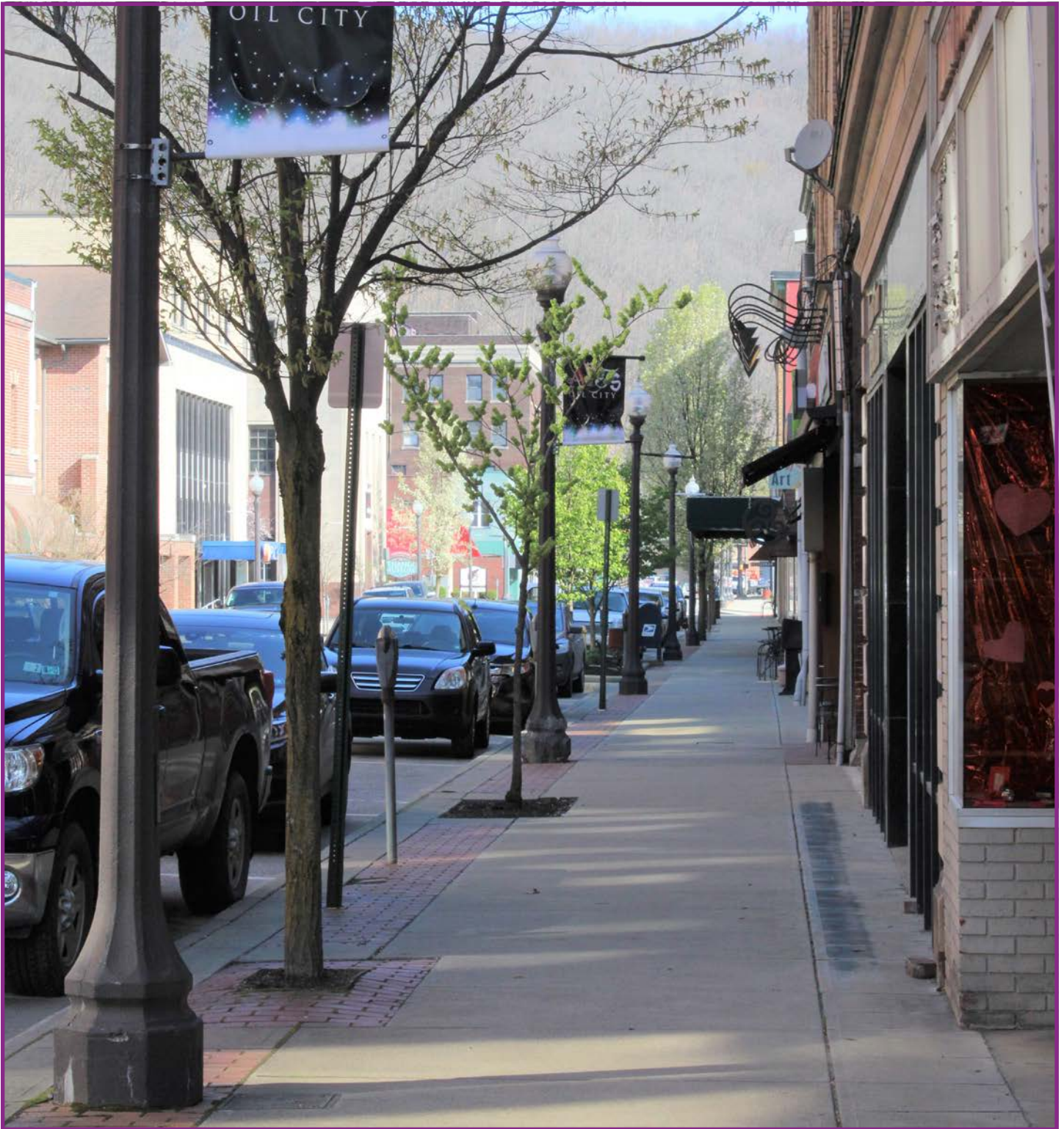


Existing Street Lights

OIL CITY ZONING ORDINANCE: §310-31 LIGHTING

Any lighting used to illuminate off-street parking or loading areas shall be arranged so as to reflect the light away from the adjoining premises of any residential district or use and away from roads or highways. Fully shielded fixtures are required.

CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS



Seneca Street in Downtown Oil City

BICYCLE AMENITIES

SECTION 9 CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Oil City has wonderful bicycle amenities. A cyclist can find a bicycle repair kiosk at the corner of Seneca Street and Clifford Street, multiple bicycle racks, bicycle route signage, bicycle lanes, and sharrow lanes (marked traffic lanes encouraging shared use by bicycles and automobiles). Visiting cyclists are able to enjoy a variety of dining and retail establishments, a museum, and a boutique grocery store within the historic districts.

Other potential amenities for cyclists could be water refill stations, public restrooms, a place with kitchen and laundry facilities, WiFi hotspots, and covered bicycle racks. For the North Side and South Side historic districts, a bicycle network identified with signage, marked with sharrow or bicycle lanes, and additional bike racks placed at key points of interest would greatly enhance cyclists' amenities throughout Oil City.



Oil City's Bike Route Sign



Oil City's Bike Repair Station



Downtown Oil City's Bike Racks



SUSTAINABILITY

- Multiple types of transportation, especially non-polluting and less polluting forms, increases a street's and community's sustainability by connecting people to goods and destinations while reducing pollution and environmental impact of transportation.

- Oil City supports less polluting forms of transportation by having an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station on Sycamore Street.

PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

SECTION 9 CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Pedestrian amenities are features that enhance the comfort and ease of people walking. Pedestrian amenities include safe sidewalks, crosswalks, outdoor seating, trash receptacles, shade, and moments of shelter. Other features that enhance pedestrian pleasure are window displays, visual points of interest, dynamic building frontage, and places to gather outdoors.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Oil City's downtown has great pedestrian amenities. The district has fixed outdoor seating, planting areas, well-maintained sidewalks, a central park, a large bus shelter, trash receptacles, murals, adequate crosswalks, and welcome signage.

Downtown's pedestrian experience would be strengthened with a few additional enhancements. Replace existing ornamental street trees that are thin and small with medium shade trees that canopy the street. Refer to the "Street Trees" section of this Design Guide for more details. Other suggested improvements are repairing or replacing deteriorating trash receptacles, and adding pet stations and recycling bins. Create more spaces for visitors to enjoy and linger downtown by providing covered areas, moveable seating, and more opportunities for businesses to use outdoor areas, such as sidewalks for seating, gathering, and sales. Downtown has exceptional murals. Facilitate a more experiential downtown by locating additional spots to add public art, and wayfinding and interpretive signage. Art and signage intrigue and inform visitors and residents about the community and culture of Oil City.

Urban planner Kevin Lynch described the five elements that create a successful city: path, node, landmark, edge, and district. Oil City's Downtown Commercial Historic District and Southside

downtown would benefit from stronger defined edges. Edges are defined as linear elements that form boundaries between areas or linear breaks in continuity. Edges can be real or perceived, and examples are buildings, cliffs, shorelines, or groves of trees. In Oil City, the parking lots and buildings setback far from the street have diminished the sense of district, especially in the northeast, northwest, and southern sections. Finding ways to better define the district edges and establish a sense of enclosure will improve the ambience and character of downtown. Review the "Recreational Features" section of this Design Guide for more specific recommendations for downtown parks.

Many residents in the North Side Historic District utilize the gridded, walkable streets, seen by the pedestrian activity throughout the neighborhood. Some streets have large trees that create a canopy over the street, improving pedestrian comfort. Build upon these existing amenities by repairing or installing sidewalks in many locations, making note to improve curb and sidewalk heights for pedestrian safety and accessibility. Plant large shade trees along streets that have gaps in the canopy or no street trees. Consider adding trash and recycling receptacles, pet stations, public art, and benches at key points throughout the neighborhood.

The South Side Historic District has great tree canopy coverage on most of the residential streets, a large welcome sign, and an interactive area to play music with public art. The South Side would benefit from the addition of shade street trees in the commercial area. Since some of the sidewalks in the commercial area are narrow, shade trees could be planted in bump-outs or sidewalk widths could be widened to allow room for tree pits. Screening between sidewalks and parking

PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

SECTION 9 CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

lots would improve the aesthetics of the area, enhance pedestrian comfort, and provide shade on more pavement. Other pedestrian amenities needed in the commercial area are outdoor gathering areas, trash receptacles, benches, and safety improvements at key intersections, such as crossing signage, crosswalks, distinction between pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and traffic calming measures.

The main challenge in the residential area is the sidewalks. In certain areas, sidewalks are non-existent or in need of repair. New sidewalks should accommodate the existing street trees and, where gaps in the tree canopy exist, provide street tree pits. At street corners, sidewalk repairs should also include accessible curb ramps. In a few locations, sidewalks are substantially higher than the street. If possible, lower the sidewalk heights to six to eight inches above the street.

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES



Dining Table



Mural



Bench and Bus Shelter



Public Trash Can

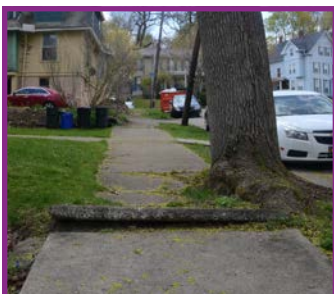


Pedestrian Signals



Accessible Crosswalk with Landscaping

PLACES FOR IMPROVEMENT



Tripping Hazards



Sidewalk Discontinuity



Expand Pedestrian Amenities in Other Commercial Areas

STREET TREES

SECTION 9 CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Research continues to accumulate on the benefits of trees and green space in cities. For historic districts, some benefits include an enhanced district ambiance, a sense of enclosure, a more comfortable environment for pedestrians to stroll or mingle, and increased property value of homes and businesses. For the environment, street trees lower the temperature caused by heat island effect from the high concentration of impervious surfaces, absorb pollution, extend the lifetime of pavement, improve drainage, and reduce stormwater runoff.

Oil City's Zoning Ordinance specifies large tree spacing at 50 feet, medium tree spacing at 40 feet, and small tree spacing at 30 feet.

- Large trees such as an American Sycamore, a Pin Oak, or a Tulip Tree, require large amounts of space and resources. Plant these trees in areas that can accommodate the space and resources requirements like yards, parks, or woodlands.
- Medium Trees such as a Red Maple, a Thornless Honeylocust, or a Hornbeam are more suited for streetscape applications because they tolerate urban conditions and provide canopy coverage. Generally, the size of a tree pit needs to be a minimum of three feet by ten feet.
- Small Trees such as a Dogwood, an Eastern Redbud, or a Crabapple are also used in streetscapes as landscape accents or in areas with limited space due to underground constraints or overhead power lines.

Be mindful of entrances and architectural features. Do not block entryways or handicap accessible routes. Plant a variety of tree species throughout the area to create a more biologically diverse ecosystem that is more resistant to disease, fungus,

and insects. More resistance helps prevent the spread of disease and minimize annual tree loss. Be cognizant of elements overhead, like awnings and power lines.

In downtown Oil City, where possible, replace existing ornamental street trees that are thin and small with medium shade trees that canopy the street. Shade trees increase pedestrian comfort by creating an aesthetically pleasing walking district; providing protection from precipitation, sun, and heat; lowering automobile traffic speeds; and hiding undesirable views. Plant additional trees to screen parking lots, walls, and dumpster areas that are not aesthetically pleasing, or use screening to define edges of public space.

Some streets in the North Side Historic District have large trees that canopy over the street, which improves pedestrian comfort. Plant large shade trees on streets that have gaps in the canopy to strengthen the tree canopy and neighborhood continuity.

The South Side Historic District has great tree canopy coverage on most of the residential streets. However, the South Side would benefit from adding shade street trees in the commercial area. Since some of the sidewalks in the commercial area are narrow, shade trees could be planted in bump-outs or sidewalk widths could be widened to allow room for tree pits. Screening between sidewalks and parking lots would improve the aesthetics of the area, enhance pedestrian comfort, and canopy more pavement.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about selecting and planting a tree, visit the [Arbor Day Foundation's The Right Tree in the Right Place](#) website.

STREET TREES

SECTION 9 CONNECTING FEATURES STREETS AND SIDEWALKS



Small Tree Accenting Downtown Oil City's Street



An Opportunity for Shade Trees in the Tree Canopy Gap



South Side Historic District's Street with Shade Tree Canopy

RECREATIONAL FEATURES



Justus Park's Main Vehicular Entrance on Western Edge of the Veterans' Memorial Bridge



View Out to the Primary Pedestrian Entrance to Justus Park and Connection to Downtown Oil City



Parking Lot on the Western Side of Justus Park and the Underpass of Veterans' Memorial Bridge



Tree Canopy Covered Trail along the Allegheny River



Justus Park's Existing Restrooms and Trailhead Information



The Bandstand in the Eastern Part of Justus Park

CITY PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

JUSTUS PARK

Located in downtown Oil City, Justus Park is a moderately sized city park along the Allegheny River and the confluence of Oil Creek. The park sits lower than downtown's commercial area and beside the Oil City Veterans Memorial Bridge. These conditions obscure the view of the park from downtown. From the Veteran's Bridge, both east and west sides of the bridge have pedestrian paths leading down to the park and the west side of the bridge has a vehicular entrance. Once below, a parking lot for more than 50 cars resides underneath the bridge and along its western side. On the eastern side of the bridge, the park features a stage, benches, views and access to the Allegheny River, a trail, interpretive signs, a pavilion, restrooms, a trailhead, trash receptacles, shade trees, public art, and a playground.

The park has a variety of features and programming for a moderately sized city park. The main challenge for the park is the lack of visual and physical connection between downtown and the park. Suggestions include:

- Relocating the Elm Street and Seneca Street entrance to Sycamore Street by making Sycamore Street a two-way street. This entrance would be for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. The existing entrance would become vegetation with a large welcome sign.
- Consider extending the existing pedestrian path on the east side of Veterans Bridge to the crosswalks at the Elm and Seneca intersection. By making the entrances and connection points more clear, the park will have more presence downtown and safer connection points.

- Create a buffer between Veterans Bridge and Justus Park by placing evergreen trees along the pedestrian path nearest to the bridge. A buffer would separate traffic noise on the bridge from the passive recreational area below.
- More signage could be placed on Veterans Bridge to welcome the community to Justus Park and lighting could be added under the bridge to improve safety and visitor comfort.
- Justus Park is a trailhead for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail with restrooms and information. Trailhead amenities could be enhanced by adding a water bottle refill station, a bike repair station, and a kiosk with information about Oil City and its downtown businesses. Make trails more obvious with better surfacing and landscaping at the starting points of the trail.
- Justus Park's location along the river would make it an ideal place to provide riverfront recreational access. Emphasize connections to the river and consider providing water connection between the Oil City Marina and Justus Park.

CITY PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES



Wayfinding Signage at First Street, Westward Traffic Lane



Main Entrance into the Marina



Landmark Signage in the Marina and Main Access Road from First Street



Informational Signage in the Marina



The Marina's Boat Launch



The Marina's Water Recreation on the Allegheny River

CITY PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

OIL CITY MARINA

The Oil City Marina is another city park located within the historic districts. The narrow park lies along the southern edge of the Allegheny River. The marina is concealed by the residential neighborhood situated between the park and the main arterial road, First Street. On First Street, a small sign indicates the bike trail at the marina, but no other signage identifies the park's location. To access the park, vehicles cross train tracks and enter into a large parking lot. Pedestrians and cyclists also access the park via this vehicular road and use the parking lot and travel lanes to circulate within the park. The park has new interpretive, welcome, and wayfinding signage. The Marina also features restrooms and a well-utilized boat launch.

The Oil City Waterways Plan identifies a variety of improvements that will help connect South Side Historic District to the Marina and enhance the recreation within the park and on the Allegheny River. The Waterways Plan specifies adding trails at the end of Abbott Street and Hickory Street, which would connect South Side residents to the marina. The Waterways Plan also mentions wayfinding signage, which has since been added to the marina. Additional wayfinding signage at First Street in both directions would enhance the marina's visibility and assist with navigating into the marina. Trails and walking paths exist within the marina, however, clearly designating their locations and route at points where non-motorized and motorized traffic cross will improve safety and circulation. Create a specific launch point for kayaks and canoes to connect the Oil City Marina to Justus Park, making a "waterway trail" in Oil City. Construct a fishing pier to provide fishing opportunities and water access for individuals with disabilities. Enhance overall

landscaping at the marina by planting shade trees, tree islands in the parking areas, and native plants and shrubs throughout. Lastly, improve drainage and stormwater collection by utilizing solutions, such as bioretention gardens, found in the "Best Stormwater Management Practices" section of this Design Guide.

CITY PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES



Town Square Looking Southeast



Park Benches



Street Bump-Outs to Calm Traffic at Town Square's Edges



Town Square Looking Northeast



Town Square Looking Northwest



Town Square has Mostly Open Space with Sapling Shade Trees

CITY PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

TOWN SQUARE

Town Square is a relatively new park that occupies a block in the center of downtown and is bordered by Seneca, Elm, Center, and Sycamore streets. This flat, small city park has a central location in downtown and is visible and accessible via crosswalks from all sides. Sidewalks surround the perimeter and diagonal paths intersect in the middle of the square. The park has no formal program and is adorned with benches, shrubs, small trees, and trash receptacles. The open, flat space makes it ideal for hosting various city events, like festivals, parades, and outdoor markets.

The major improvements to focus on for Town Square are the surroundings, not the square itself. The minimal features and open space make the space more flexible for events and should remain. Since the block was originally a series of buildings, the surrounding context does not interact with the square as an important open space. To address this issue, whenever possible create primary entrances that face the park, specifically buildings on Sycamore and Elm streets, and modify the streetscape bordering the square.

Streetscape improvements would make the park blend with the context better and calm traffic. On Center Street, modify the travel lanes from two lanes in each direction to a single lane in each direction. Convert one travel lane to a lane of parallel parking, which will calm traffic and create a safety barrier between the street and the sidewalk. For the other lane, enhance the width of the northern sidewalk and add landscaping on both sides of the street. Widening the northern sidewalk will create more opportunities for outdoor dining, seating, and sidewalk sales, which will allow people to spend more time outside

and create a livelier downtown and Town Square. Adding more landscaping on both sides of Center Street will blend the park into the city, calm traffic, and beautify the area. Transform the existing landscape bump-outs to urban bioretention gardens and add additional bioretention gardens wherever possible. Lastly, for Center Street, place sharrow markers on the lanes to establish a bike route between Town Square and King Memorial Park, a small park located at the corner of Main Street and Center Street.

The other major streetscape improvements should be on Sycamore Street. Sycamore currently has two travel lanes and one parallel parking lane. Convert one travel lane into a parking lane nearest to the square. This new parking lane could also be used during festivals and markets as stations for food trucks. On the opposite side of the street, widen the sidewalk adjacent to the buildings to create more outdoor opportunities for pedestrians and enhance landscaping to blend the park into the city.

For all streets, add or modify street tree pits and plant shade trees instead of ornamental trees to calm traffic, improve pedestrian comfort, reduce summer temperatures, and beautify the area. Established park trees should remain.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

POLISH HERITAGE MEMORIAL PARK IN THE NORTH SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Polish Heritage Memorial Park occupies a small plot at the northern edge of the North Side's Polish Hill neighborhood overlooking the Oil Creek valley. The park has multiple memorials of famous and local Polish leaders and information about Oil City's Polish community. The memorials are nestled in a grassy lawn with central flagpoles and sidewalks adjacent to the street. The park location is in a quiet area without much traffic, perfect for reading and reflecting.

Polish Heritage Memorial Park functions well as a memorial park and contemplation area. Preserve the park's main intention, but embrace improvements that enhance and broaden the functionality. Add benches or seating for reflection, pedestrian paths, and a small pavilion for shelter in case of rain. To broaden the park's usage, introduce an outlook that overlooks the valley and consider adding picnic tables.



Polish Heritage Memorial Park Signage



Northeast View of the Valley and Hills



Sidewalk Access and View to the Southwest

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

HARRIOTT AVENUE PLAYGROUND

Harriott Avenue Playground, a neighborhood park located in the North Side Historic District, recently received a renovation to the playground equipment and landscaping. The community can access the park via the crosswalks at each corner and the sidewalks surrounding the edges of the park. Vehicles can park in on-street parking lanes or the parking lot across Mylan Street. The park's variety of playground equipment makes the park ideal for all age groups. In addition to multiple playground areas, the park has shade trees, art sculptures, swings, a pavilion, and benches.

Although the park recently received a renovation, a few additional changes would further improve the park, namely the landscaping. The vitality of the current park trees needs to be assessed. Prune and maintain trees as necessary, or if the existing trees require removal, replace them with shade trees. Plant evergreen screening along the rear (north side) of the park to separate park activity from the residential housing. At the front entrance of the park, place native plants and boulders around the existing sculptures for less maintenance. Include park signage to identify the park's name to community members and visitors. Maintain playground equipment fall zones for children's safety. Lastly, include more trash receptacles and place benches throughout the park for parents to rest and supervise children.



Harriott Avenue Playground Main Entrance and Sculptures



Harriott Avenue Playground's Playground Equipment and Fencing



Harriott Avenue Playground's Sidewalk Access

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

SECTION 10 RECREATIONAL FEATURES

INNIS STREET PLAYGROUND

Innis Street Playground, located in the South Side Historic District, is another neighborhood playground. Visitors enter the park from the sidewalks surrounding it or park in the on-street parking spots. The park has benches, shade trees, a playground, and a basketball court.

Innis Street Playground has great amenities for the neighborhood; however, a few updates would amplify the park space. First, create accessible pathways throughout the park and improve existing sidewalks bordering the park. Address the landscaping by providing separation between the street and the park with fencing or landscaping, and assess the condition of the existing trees and prune or remove them whenever necessary. Plant new shade trees to replace removed trees and plant additional shade trees away from power lines. Add trash receptacles throughout the park. Lastly, utilize best stormwater management strategies to address water runoff within the park.



Sidewalk Access to Innis Street Playground and On-Street Parking



Innis Street Playground Basketball Court and Playground Equipment



Main Staircase Entrance with Shade Trees

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

One of the benefits of a property being located in a historic district is that property owners may be eligible to receive federal and/or state tax incentives. The federal and/or state historic tax credits are available to qualifying rehabilitation work if the rehabilitated property is located in a designated historic district and is a contributing property. For federal tax credits, the property must be income-producing or a business, must receive substantial rehabilitation, and the rehabilitation work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings".

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties is a technical preservation service provided by the National Park Service, which administers the National Register of Historic Places. These Standards describe general guidelines for maintenance, replacement, and repair of historic materials, and are an important reference when preserving or rehabilitating a historic property. The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" are not mandatory for general projects; however, adherence is required when receiving historic tax incentives.

This Oil City Design Guide applies and expands guidance from The Secretary of the Interior's Standards in a regional approach to Oil City's historic properties, landscapes, and context. The purpose of the Design Guide is to maintain and enhance Oil City's authentic architectural and natural characteristics by being an informational resource to the community. The recommendations in this Design Guide are not mandatory and do not

propose any laws or regulations. The use of the Design Guide will be strictly voluntary.

The recommendations in the Design Guide are pragmatic approaches to preserving the integrity of Oil City's historic districts. Some of the materials and techniques specified in the Design Guide are practical, long-lasting solutions to maintenance and renovations. The recommendations do not necessarily conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Following the specific recommendations in this Design Guide may not be eligible for historic tax credits.

FINDING A PROFESSIONAL

If interested in learning more or applying for historic tax credit, consult with a preservation specialist with historic tax credit experience to review whether a property and rehabilitation work qualify for state or federal historic tax credits.

There are many times in historic work where a knowledgeable consultant is important or even necessary.

- **Contractors** Painters, masons, carpenters, roofers, door and window specialists, and general contractors are often the most valuable consultants and partners in historic work.
- **Historic Societies** such as The Oil City Heritage Society can suggest consultants, and sometimes provide consulting services themselves.
- **Designers, Architects and Engineers** will have different strengths and services, and the right professional can sort out the most complicated historical problems. Local chapters of the American Institute of Architects are in Northwestern Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh and Cleveland can recommend architects.

RESOURCES

SECTION II ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For any consultant, the first step is to establish their knowledge and experience. Reviewing past work, asking them what their specialty and experience is, and checking references are first steps. The best way to judge a potential candidate is their past work.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

The Oil City Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program grants 50/50 matching funds to eligible commercial buildings located within the Main Street District for façade improvements. The maximum amount of matching funds is \$5,000 per project. Applicants must be the property or business owner; must prove that all city, county, and school taxes are current; and must confirm that the building has no major code violations or structural issues. For more information, contact the Oil City Main Street Program at 814-677-3152.

Units of local government (Oil City and Venango County) are eligible to apply for two categories of Keystone Historic Preservation Grants from the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office.

[Preservation Project Grants](#)

[Preservation Construction Grants](#)

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Before starting maintenance or renovation projects in an Oil City historic district, property owners must review Oil City's Zoning Ordinance and Municipal Code. For more information regarding state tax incentives, contact Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. More rehabilitation information is detailed in the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation", which can be found online on the National Park Service website.

[Venango County Historical Society](#)

[Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry, and Tourism](#)

[This Old House](#)

[Traditional Building Magazine](#)

[Old House Journal Magazine](#)

[Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission](#)

[Sanborn Maps](#)

[Heritage Society of Oil City](#)

[Oil Region Library Association](#)

[Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#)

[Park Service Technical Preservation Briefs](#)

[Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits:](#)

[Pennsylvania State Rehabilitation Tax Credits](#)

[National Park Service Illustrated Guidelines for Sustainability](#)

GLOSSARY

SECTION II ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE the characterization of a building design that correlates with a time period, culture, and architectural features

APPROPRIATE an element that is suitable for historic buildings

BALUSTER the series of vertical supports that holds a handrail of a railing system, such as stair railing or porch railing, and rests on stairs, deck, porch, or floor

BIORETENTION GARDENS (RAIN GARDEN) a shallow designed planting areas that retains stormwater and allows water to gradually dissipate into groundwater

BOTTOM RAIL the flat horizontal strip at the bottom of a door or window

BRACKET an angled structural or decorative element that carries weight or braces another object. Commonly located under a roof eave

BRICKMOULD the trim piece between the brick and the frame of a window or door

BUILDING PROFILE the shape of a building's footprint on the ground

BULKHEAD panel or trim wall located below the storefront window

CLADDING the material that covers or overlays on a structure or material.

COLUMN a structural post that bears weight and can be square or circular

CONTEXTUAL an element that responds to its surrounding environment (commonly buildings)

CORBELED BRICK projected incrementally from a masonry wall or column creating a stepped

appearance

CORNICE the angled decorative molding located at the top of a parapet and/or above a storefront

CROWN a decorative trim located at the top of a window or element, commonly found on Italianate architecture

CYCLIST AMENITIES useful features for bicyclists (e.g. bicycle racks, water stations)

DENTILS square decorated projections located in the cornice

DISPLAY WINDOW windows for a storefront and located on the ground floor, historically transparent and large

DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS slide up and down to open

ELEVATION an orthogonal drawing of a building's façade

FAÇADE a building's vertical exterior walls

FENESTRATION the arrangement of openings (windows and doors) on a building

FINISHES the final coating or material on the surface of a building or element

FRAME the element surrounding the door or window

HINGE STILE the flat vertical strip of the door where hinges are fixed

HISTORIC elements and buildings that are at least 50 years old and have meaning to the community's past

HISTORIC PRESERVATION protecting sites, structures, buildings, and districts the embody

GLOSSARY

SECTION II ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

history of a place, people, or culture

INAPPROPRIATE an element that is not suitable for historic buildings

INFILL CONSTRUCTION new construction built on vacant land in an existing district

IN-KIND change with the same or very similar

JAMB the two vertical pieces of the door frame. The door hangs from one piece and other piece secures the latch

LIGHT TRESPASSING over lighting or ill-directing illumination so that light shines pass a site's boundaries or where it is not wanted

LINTEL a horizontal structural piece spanning over a window or door. Commonly stone, wood, or steel

LOCK STILE the flat horizontal strip at the middle of a door where the lock and handle are located

LOW SLOPE ROOF a roof with a shallow slope that appears almost flat

LOWER SASH the bottom half of a double-hung window

MASSING a building's form and shape

MEETING RAIL the horizontal piece of the upper and lower sash on a double-hung window that touch, commonly in the center of the window

MUNTIN a strip of wood or metal dividing panes of glass on a window or door

OPEN SPACE OR PUBLIC SPACE green or civic space that is intended to be used by the public

OVERLIGHTING illuminating a place too brightly

PANEL the recessed decorative piece that can be found on a door or wall

PARAPET the low wall that extends above the roof

PARGE cover masonry wall with a lime-mortar mixture

PARTY WALL a shared wall between two properties, found on rowhouses or traditional commercial buildings

PEDESTRIAN AMENITY useful features for people walking (e.g. benches, trash receptacles)

PERMEABLE PAVEMENT a surface that allows water to penetrate it and flow through

PIANO WINDOW a short and wide rectangular shaped window place high on the wall that is most often fixed. Commonly, piano windows were lead glass or stained glass

PILASTER a decorative column projecting from a wall

PRESERVATION see "Historic Preservation"

PROPERTY LINE the legal boundary of a parcel

PROPORTIONS relationship between height and width of an object (e.g. window or door)

PUBLIC REALM the public spaces of a community (e.g. streets, parks, plazas, public land)

RECONSTRUCTION remove damaged or inappropriate element and reinstate architectural character by replicating original historic element

REDESIGN designing an element in a different way

REFINISH OR REFACE apply a new coating of surface finish (e.g. stain, paint, or glaze)

REHABILITATION reimagining the function, use, or design of an element for a new purpose

GLOSSARY

SECTION II ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

REMOVE eliminate the element

RENOVATION making an element look new again or updated

REPLACE change the element for a similar element of new or restored construction

REPOINT remove mortar between brick joints to a depth of one-inch and replace with an appropriate type of mortar

RESTORE OR REPAIR fix damaged or deteriorating portions of the element

RETAIN AND PRESERVE maintain the element and its characteristics

SANDWICH BOARD SIGN an A-frame shaped sign placed on a sidewalk for temporary promotional purposes

SCALE the physical relationship between two objects size

SETBACK the distance between a building or structure and the property line

SHARROW LANE a marked lane on a street that is designated for automobiles and bicycles

SIDELIGHT a narrow window along one or both the sides of a door or window

SIGNBOARD a flat area above a storefront where signage was traditionally located

SILL the slightly angled piece on the bottom of an opening where a window rests, angle sheds water

SITE PLACEMENT the location of a building on a given site

SPINDLE the series of vertical supports that holds

a handrail in a railing system and rest on a bottom rail

STONE MARQUE a stone plaque at the top of the building that commonly indicates the building's date and/or name

STOREFRONT DOOR public door that leads to a ground floor commercial space. Typically the primary entrance and more transparent than other doors

STREETSCAPE natural and built elements of a street

THRESHOLD the piece at the bottom of the doorway that people pass over when entering or exiting

TOP RAIL the flat horizontal strip at the top of a door

TRANSOM WINDOW a window located above a door or another window

TRANSOM STOREFRONT WINDOW windows located above the storefront window

TRIM decorative edging that borders an object or building, commonly wood

UPPER FLOOR DOOR leads to staircase or lobby for the upper floors, typically less transparent or a solid door to indicate privacy

UPPER SASH the top half of a double-hung window

WYTHE a vertical section of a masonry wall that is one unit thick