

CHAPTER IX REHABILITATION

It is the intent of the Rehabilitation section of the *Design Review Guidelines* to ensure that any building projects, which create an exterior change or an addition to an existing building, are in keeping with the character of the building and with the surrounding area.

According to the Secretary's Standards (Chapter XII, Appendix 3), rehabilitation is the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural value. (A glossary of rehabilitation definitions is included in Chapter XII, Appendix 7). Rehabilitation includes maintenance, repair, alterations and additions. It is recommended that owners of historic and significant buildings maintain their properties according to these standards to protect the special qualities, which characterize that building and its site. If a building is listed on the State or National Registers, it is especially important for applicants to the Architectural Review Board to consult the *Secretary's Standards* prior to making any changes to the building. To be eligible for Federal Tax Incentives, a rehabilitation project must meet all ten of the Secretary's Standards.

MAINTENANCE

In order to protect the integrity of any building in the **Architectural Preservation Districts**, particularly buildings and neighborhoods listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, (Chapter XII, Appendix 1), and to prevent the loss of architectural elements due to the effects of weather and decay, an ongoing maintenance program is necessary. This phenomenon of demolition by benign neglect can be averted by regular maintenance; i.e. painting, cleaning of gutters, roofing, window glazing, caulking of joints, nest removal, repointing of brickwork, etc. Historic materials should be cleaned gently, without harsh chemicals or tools, and brickwork should never be sandblasted.

REPAIR

Any replacement of siding, roofing materials, windows, etc. which duplicates or matches existing materials and color schemes on the building does not need to be approved by the Architectural Review Board. However, the Architectural Review Board recommends, if feasible; that property owners repair historic architectural features rather than replace them when materials begin to deteriorate.

Conservation is preferable to reconstruction because it preserves evidence of past building practices and construction techniques in original materials. The use of synthetic siding on an older building is discouraged because of the structural damage it can cause when applied over problem areas and because of the obliteration of architectural details.

Correcting the cause of deterioration, rather than covering up the symptom with artificial siding will ultimately prolong the life of the building and maintain its integrity.

When replacement or reconstruction of important architectural features, such as porches, cornices, decorative window and door trim and molding, etc., is necessary on buildings in **Architectural Preservation Districts**, it is recommended that the replacement feature create an accurate duplication of the original feature as possible. If substantial renovations are proposed which would remove important elements from a building listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter XII, Appendix 1), then these elements need to be photographed and submitted to the Planning Department along with the application to the Architectural Review Board. The property owner has the option to allow the City access to the property to photograph the historic element which is proposed to be removed. It is recommended that the applicant check with the Planning Department for available information on the property to avoid duplication of reporting.

ALTERATIONS

Before considering a major alteration of a building listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter XII, Appendix 1), owners should explore the potential of the building for rehabilitation. Many older buildings are suitable for adaptive re-use projects. If the building is a certified historic building and the Secretary of Interior has approved the proposed rehabilitation project, a federal tax incentive program is available through the State government for commercial projects. The property owner should thoughtfully consider the return expected from the property and the ability of the building to provide this return in both its present state and in a rehabilitated state. In addition the property owner should consider the possibility that the building could be adapted for a low impact use, i.e. residential, office, day care, community center, bank, financial institution, museum and art galleries etc.

Rehabilitation of any building within **Architectural Preservation Districts** or the **Corridor Protection District** should not modify a building so that the result is a building decorated with architectural features of an era pre-dating the building or the style involved. In addition, property owners planning to restore a building back to its “original” appearance should consider the significance of subsequent modifications to the building and/or site and the role they play in defining the character of the property. The additions and alterations created by previous property owners often play a large role in defining the significance of the building and their removal may jeopardize the integrity of the building. (The house at 520 Jamestown Road is such an example where the unique character of the property is the result of a substantial Victorian era addition on the original early 19th-century house.) It is recognized, however; that there are situations where complete restoration of a structure or building is warranted or beneficial, i.e. the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Area.

Rehabilitations should be sensitive to the building's distinctive stylistic features. Unsympathetic cosmetic alterations, which would remove or adversely affect important stylistic details, are discouraged. Examples include:

1. The addition of monolithic picture windows on the street-side elevation which disrupts the stylistic relationship of window space to wall space on the façade.
2. The application of artificial siding so that architectural details are boxed over or removed and windows recede behind the siding.
3. The addition of, or replacement with, inappropriate stylized windows or doors; i.e. diamond-paned windows, projecting box window, "country" paneled and scrolled storm doors, etc..
4. Enclosure of front porches with under-or-over-scaled windows and siding.

Alterations should be compatible with the stylistic elements on the building, such as materials, proportions, window and door arrangements, decorative trim and cornice details, etc. It is recommended that elements that strongly contribute to the character of the building such as trim details and porches be retained. Modernizations that create extensive exterior changes to a building are more appropriate on the rear or secondary facades of the building. There may be occasions when it is not possible to restrict the renovations to the rear of the building and when it might be preferable to alter the primary elevation of the building.

In **Architectural Preservation Districts** before rehabilitation of any building listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter XII, Appendix 1) is undertaken which would substantially alter the features of the building or remove significant architectural elements, these elements need to be photographed and submitted to the Planning Department with the application to the Architectural Review Board. The property owner has the option to allow the City access to the property to photograph the historic element which is proposed to be removed or altered. It is recommended that the applicant check with the Planning Department for available information on the property to avoid duplication of reporting.

ADDITIONS

Additions to buildings in **Architectural Preservation Districts** should be sympathetic to the building. Contemporary designs for alterations and additions may be appropriate if they do not destroy the significant historical, architectural or cultural features of the original building and if the design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and neighborhood. If an addition is proposed on a primary façade of the building, the architectural features, materials and massing of the addition should respond to the elements existing on the building. It is not necessary for the design of the addition to duplicate the architectural elements on the original building in order to be compatible. There may be occasions when duplication is preferable to preserve the symmetry of the building. It may be appropriate for additions on rear or secondary facades to have more independent designs, but the additions should still respect the proportions of the existing building and the scale of the surrounding

neighborhood. Any additions or alterations should be designed so that if subsequent owners wish to remove them, it would be possible to do so without impairing the essential form and integrity of the building. Additions to buildings in the **Corridor Protection District** will be reviewed for appearance, good design principles, appropriateness to the site and the City, and compatibility with surrounding sites. Contemporary designs are encouraged if the design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and neighborhood.

ZONING WAIVERS

Due to peculiar conditions of design and construction in older neighborhoods in the **Architectural Preservation Districts**, some older buildings may not meet current zoning requirements. In order to maintain the special character of these neighborhoods, the Architectural Review Board may make recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals for exceptions to standard yard requirements, off-street parking requirements, and open space and landscape requirements for significant buildings, which do not meet current zoning requirements.