

section
one

Introduction to Design Guidelines and Design Review

This manual provides **Design Guidelines** for rehabilitation and new construction projects within the Milledgeville Local Historic District. It also provides a step-by-step outline of Milledgeville's **Design Review** process.

These Design Guidelines have been written primarily for use by the Milledgeville Historic Preservation Commission in evaluating proposed material changes in appearance to historic properties in the locally designated Milledgeville Historic District. (See *Historic District Map* at the end of Section Two.) The guidelines are also intended for use by property owners in making decisions about proposed rehabilitation and new construction projects that are sensitive to the historic character of the local district. The guidelines should be viewed as guiding principles that, when followed, will result in sound historic preservation practices and help maintain the unique "sense of place" enjoyed by residents of Milledgeville.

Design Guidelines Sections

This Design Guidelines manual is divided into the following sections:

- 1. Introduction to Design Guidelines and Design Review** provides information on design guidelines as well as Milledgeville’s design review process and local historic preservation ordinance.
- 2. Historical Sketch of Milledgeville** provides a brief summary of the history of the historic community of Milledgeville.
- 3. Historic Resources of Milledgeville’s Local Historic District** provides information on the architectural resources within the local historic district.
- 4. Historic Preservation Principles and Approaches** provides guidance on basic preservation standards, methods, and principles.
- 5. Commercial and Institutional Design Guidelines** provides specific guidelines for commercial and institutional rehabilitation projects.
- 6. Residential Design Guidelines** provides specific guidelines for residential rehabilitation projects.
- 7. Landscape Design Guidelines** provides guidelines aimed at preserving and enhancing the district’s historic landscape resources.
- 8. Cemetery Design Guidelines** provides guidance in preserving and restoring the Memory Hills Cemetery.
- 9. Demolition and Undue Hardship Guidelines** provides specific guidelines for granting demolition and determining when Undue Hardship applies to an application.

The **Appendices** contain (1) the Milledgeville Historic Preservation Ordinance; (2) the Milledgeville Historic District Ordinance; (3) the Rules of Procedure for the Milledgeville Historic Preservation Commission; (4) an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness; (5) Downtown Storefront & Business Design Standards; (6) Evaluation Guidelines for Review of Applications for Use of Synthetic Vinyl/Aluminum Siding on Existing Structures in the Historic District; (7) Enforcement and Penalty Schedule: City Marshal/Code Enforcement; (8) Sources for Maintenance and Resource Rehabilitation; and (9) Glossary of Terms.

Dos & Don'ts of Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines are used to evaluate the appropriateness of material changes in appearance to properties within the locally designated historic district. The ultimate goal of Design Guidelines is to protect the physical and visual qualities of the historic properties within the district as well as the overall historic character of the district, both of which reflect the history and heritage of a community.

Design Guidelines are only concerned with changes to the **exterior** appearance of historic properties and do not affect the interior appearance or the use of a property. In some cases, design guidelines are also used to evaluate proposed changes to the historic landscape and streetscape character. When a property owner proposes changes that would alter the exterior appearance of his/her property, the owner is required to file an **Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness** to obtain permission to make those changes. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews these proposed changes but does not comment on the proposed use of the property. Use of a property is regulated through the zoning ordinance and building and development codes.

Design Guidelines Do:

- ✓ protect the historic character and integrity of the district
- ✓ provide guidance to design professionals and property owners undertaking construction in the district
- ✓ identify important review concerns and recommend appropriate design approaches
- ✓ provide an objective basis for review, assuring consistency and fairness
- ✓ increase public awareness of the district and its significant characteristics

Design Guidelines Do Not:

- ✗ limit growth or development within the district
- ✗ apply to routine maintenance or to work which does not visibly affect the district, such as interiors
- ✗ dictate stylistic design approaches which are based on individual preference
- ✗ restrict creative design solutions

Milledgeville's Historic Preservation Ordinance

Milledgeville's **Historic Preservation Ordinance** was adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen on August 28, 1984. The purpose of the ordinance is stated as follows:

In support and furtherance of its findings and determination that the historical, cultural and aesthetic heritage of The City of Milledgeville is among its most valued and important assets and that the preservation of this heritage is essential to the promotion of the health, prosperity and general welfare of the people;

In order to stimulate revitalization and preservation of the business districts and historic neighborhoods, to protect and enhance local historical and aesthetic attractions, to tourists and thereby promote and stimulate business;

In order to enhance the opportunities for federal or state tax benefits under relevant provisions of federal or state law; and

In order to enhance the opportunities for federal tax relief of property owners under relevant provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 allowing tax investment credits for rehabilitation of certified historic structures;

The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Milledgeville hereby declare it to be the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to establish a uniform procedure for use in providing for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, and works of art having a special historical, cultural or aesthetic interest or value, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance established the following:

Milledgeville Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission consists of nine (9) members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Aldermen. The members serve three (3)-year terms. The Commission holds regularly scheduled monthly meetings open to the public. The Commission is charged with:

Reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness;

Preparing and maintaining an inventory of historic properties within the city;

Recommending to the City Council specific districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects to be designated as historic properties or local historic districts;

Conducting educational programs on historic properties and on general historic preservation activities;

AND, seeking out local, state, federal or private funds for historic preservation.

Local Designation of Historic Districts and Properties

Historic districts and individual historic properties may be locally designated by the Mayor and Aldermen upon recommendation by the Historic Preservation Commission.

A local **historic district** is a geographically definable area within the City of Milledgeville which contains structures, sites, works of art, or a combination thereof, which (a) have special character or special historic/aesthetic value or interest; (b) represent one or more periods, styles or types of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of the City of Milledgeville; and (c) cause such area, by reason of such factors, to constitute a visibly perceptible section of the City of Milledgeville.

A **landmark** is a structure, site, or work of art, including the adjacent area necessary for proper appreciation or use thereof, deemed worthy of preservation by reason of value to the City of Milledgeville, the State of Georgia, or local region, for one of the following reasons: (a) it is an outstanding example of a structure representative of its era; (b) it is one of the few remaining examples of a past architectural style; (c) it is a place or structure associated with an event or persons of historic or cultural significance to the City of Milledgeville, State of Georgia, or the region.

Individual properties within a locally designated historic district shall be classified as **Historic** (contributes to the district) **Non-Historic** or **Intrusions**. A Historic property is more than fifty years old. The property may be of limited individual significance but nevertheless functions as an important component of the district. A Non-Historic property is less than fifty years old, yet possesses architectural character. Intrusions are structures less than fifty years old which do not contribute to the historic character of the district.

Certificates of Appropriateness

After the designation by ordinance of a historic landmark or district, no material change in the appearance of such historic landmark, or of any structure, site, or work of art within such historic district, shall be made or be permitted to be made by the owner or occupant thereof, unless or until the application for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** has been submitted to and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. A **material change in appearance** is defined as "a change that will affect either the exterior architectural or environmental features of a historic property or any structure, site, or work of art within a historic district." A Certificate is also required for demolition or relocation of a property. A building permit shall not be issued without a Certificate of Appropriateness. A Certificate shall become void unless construction is commenced within six (6) months of date of issuance. Certificates shall be issued for a period of eighteen (18) months and are renewable.

Appeals Procedure

The ordinance provides an appeals procedure for persons adversely affected by a determination made by the Commission relative to the issuance or denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

A copy of the complete Historic Preservation Ordinance is included in Appendix A.

Design Review Process

Design Review is the process by which the Historic Preservation Commission reviews proposed material changes in appearance for properties within the locally designated district and issues or denies Certificates of Appropriateness. An approved Certificate of Appropriateness allows the proposed changes to take place. **An application for a building permit triggers the design review process, however, changes which do not require a building permit may also need to come before the Historic Preservation Commission for design review.**

Any **Property Owner** or **Occupant** wishing to make a **material change in appearance** to any building, structure, or site within the locally designated historic district must submit an application to the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Demolition, relocation, and new construction also require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

For a summary of the design review process, see the **Flowchart** on page 1-12.

Property Owner's Application Process

Step 1: Determine Whether a Certificate of Appropriateness is Needed

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required when a property owner desires to make a material change in appearance to the exterior of a building, structure, site or work of art in the locally designated historic district. A Certificate of Appropriateness is also required before a building permit can be issued for any material change in appearance to a designated historic property. A **material change in appearance** may be:

1. A reconstruction or alteration of the size, shape, or facade of a historic property, including relocation of any doors or windows or removal or alteration of any architectural features, details, or elements;
2. Demolition or relocation of a historic structure;
3. Commencement of excavation for construction purposes;
4. A change in the location of advertising visible from the public right-of-way; or
5. The erection, alteration, restoration, or removal of any building or other structure

within a history property or district, including walls, fences, steps, and pavements, or other appurtenant features.

Ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural or environmental feature in or on a historic property to correct deterioration, decay, or to sustain the existing form, and that does not involve a material change in design, material or outer appearance, does **not** require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Step 2: Submit an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness

An **Application** for a Certificate of Appropriateness may be obtained from the City of Milledgeville's Main Street Office. The application should be completed and returned to the Planning and Zoning Department. Planning and Zoning will forward the application on to the Historic Preservation Commission for review. Applications are due back to the Planning and Zoning Department by the 15th of the month **previous to** the monthly meeting at which the application will be reviewed.

All applications are to be accompanied by:

- Drawings, photographs, plans and documentation required by the Commission.
- Demolition or relocation projects must be accompanied by post-demolition or relocation plans for the site.

A copy of the Application is included in Appendix A.

Step 3: Historic Preservation Commission Reviews the Application

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting held on the second Thursday of each month at 3:30 pm in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The date, time and location of the meeting will be published in the local newspaper and will be posted at City Hall. Written notice of the meeting will be mailed by the Commission to all owners and occupants of the subject property.

Applicants and affected property owners, or their representatives, will be given an opportunity to speak at the meeting at which their application is presented. Applicants may request special consideration based on undue economic hardship.

In reviewing applications, the Commission is guided by the following standards:

1. U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
2. Milledgeville Design Guidelines

Step 4:
Application Approved – Certificate of Appropriateness Issued

The Historic Preservation Commission will approve, approve with conditions, or deny an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness within forty-five (45) days after the application has been filed. Failure of the Commission to act within this time period will constitute approval.

If the application is **approved**, the Commission will transmit a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant. A copy of the Certificate will be forwarded to the City Building Official's office which is responsible for enforcement.

If an application is **denied**, the Commission will notify the applicant in writing of its decision and state the reasons for the denial.

The applicant may make **modifications** to the proposed project plans and may re-submit the application at any time after doing so.

Persons adversely affected by a determination made by the Commission relative to either the approval or denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness may appeal such determination of the Mayor and Aldermen. These persons must appeal the determination within fifteen (15) days after the issuance of the determination. The Mayor and Aldermen may approve, modify, or reject the determination made by the Commission if they find the Commission abused its discretion in reaching its decision. Appeals from decisions of the Mayor and Aldermen may be taken to the Superior Court of Baldwin County.

Historic Preservation Commission's Review Process

Checklist of Design Review Questions for the Commission

Before the design review meeting:

Before the design review meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission should make sure that the proper procedures for submission of an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness have been followed and that all information needed for efficient review of the Application has been obtained. The following questions should be asked:

- Does the proposed project require review? Or does it fall under ordinary maintenance or repair?
- Are non-design issues, such as zoning or land use, part of the proposed project?
- Have notices been sent and applications properly advertised?
- Are Certificate of Appropriateness applications and accompanying documentation (photos, floor plans, drawings) complete?
- Have the designated Commission members or staff person visited all the properties under review?
- Is all paperwork in order?

At the design review meeting:

Following a consistent process and clearly recording the results of that process are critical to the success of the Historic Preservation Commission. As the Commission goes through design review on an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, there are basic questions that should be asked in determining whether to **approve**, **approve with conditions**, or **deny** an application. Following is the process for reviewing applications:

STEP 1 – Evaluate the property and establish its **level of significance**. Is the property historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant? Possible classifications from most to least significant might be:

- historic landmark, architectural, and/or cultural property
- historic significant, architectural, and/or cultural property
- historic property
- nonhistoric property
- nonhistoric vacant lot
- nonhistoric intrusive property

(If the property is a **historic (contributing) property**, go to *Section Three: Historic Resources of Milledgeville's Local Historic District* to assist in evaluating the property's architectural integrity and significance. Consider age; historic, architectural, and cultural significance; and historic and architectural integrity.)

STEP 2 – Evaluate the character and integrity of the ***area of influence*** of the proposed project. Is this surrounding area historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant? Possible classifications might be:

- largely intact historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant area
- partially intact historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant area
- very altered historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant area
- mixed historic/nonhistoric area
- nonhistoric area

The level of significance of the property and the area of influence should guide the degree of scrutiny used to evaluate a project.

STEP 3 – Define the ***project type*** (rehabilitation, addition, new construction, etc.) and evaluate the proposed project using the following questions as a guide. Use the appropriate guidelines to help in evaluating the project.

1. Would the proposed project physically impact a historic property? If so, would the impact be negative?
2. Would the proposed project visually impact a historic property? If so, would the impact be negative?
3. Would the proposed project physically impact a historic landscape or streetscape feature? If so, would the impact be negative?
4. Would the proposed project have a negative impact on the overall historic, architectural, and/or cultural character of the district?

STEP 4 – Answer the question, “Does this project set a precedent for others?”

STEP 5 – In a final and broad view, answer the question, “How will the proposed project meet the goals of the district?” The result of design review should ultimately contribute to the overall betterment of the community.

Design Review Process Flowchart

