



PART TWO

**GENERAL
DESIGN GUIDELINES &
PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES**

Part Two of this manual provides (1) basic preservation principles and design concepts and (2) specific guidelines for architectural rehabilitation, new construction and additions, natural landscapes, cultural landscapes, archaeological resources, and nonhistoric properties. These are comprehensive guidelines, applicable to all properties within the district, including those located in the five character areas discussed in Part Three.

Adhering to the information contained in Part Two will assure the preservation and protection of the historic character of the Druid Hills Local Historic District in accordance with the goals established in *Section 1.3*.

5.0 PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES & APPROACHES FOR ARCHITECTURAL REHABILITATION PROJECTS

Presented in this section are some of the most widely accepted and essential principles of historic preservation. A review of this material will provide the prospective Certificate of Appropriateness applicant with a better understanding of the concerns of the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission and why it is important to use a carefully thought-out approach when working with historic resources.

Before any preservation project is begun, a number of fundamental decisions need to be made. What will the property be used for? Will the property be restored to its original condition or rehabilitated for contemporary use? How can the significant architectural and historical features of the building be preserved? What steps need to be taken?

Design Review Objective - When making a material change to a structure that is in view from a public right-of-way, a higher standard is required to ensure that design changes are compatible with the architectural style of the structure and retain character-defining features. When a proposed material change to a structure is not in view from the public-right-way, the Preservation Commission may review the project with a less strict standard so as to allow the owner more flexibility. Such changes, however, shall not have a substantial adverse effect on the overall architectural character of the structure.

5.1 USE OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

From a preservation perspective, the most desirable use for a historic property is its original use. Keeping a historic home as a residence or a storefront as retail space usually requires the least physical changes to a property. Due to changes in economic conditions, zoning, and other realities of modern life, however, it sometimes becomes necessary to alter a historic building. For example, a residential building may be converted to office space or a family may need to add to the functional living space of their home. Following is information that will assist property owners in making the right decisions when planning changes to their historic properties.

5.2 PRESERVATION METHODS

Preservation is defined as the taking of steps to retain a building, district, object or site as it exists *at the present time*. This often includes an initial stabilization effort necessary to prevent further deterioration as well as more general maintenance work. But “preservation” has become the term most often used when referring to a wide range of conservation practices. Following is a list and definition of the four principle preservation methods. The condition of the property, degree of authenticity desired, and the amount of funding available usually dictate the method used to preserve a historic property. Although “rehabilitation” and “restoration” might sound alike, the end result is quite different.

STABILIZATION entails making a building weather resistant and structurally safe, enabling it to be rehabilitated or restored in the future.

Stabilization techniques include covering the roof and windows so that rainwater cannot penetrate, removing overgrown vegetation and dead or dying trees that threaten the structure, exterminating, carrying out basic structural repairs, securing the property from vandalism, and other steps to prevent additional deterioration of the property. This approach is usually taken on a building not currently in use to “mothball” it until a suitable use is found.

REHABILITATION involves undertaking repairs, alterations, and changes to make a building suitable for contemporary use, while retaining its significant architectural and historical features.

Rehabilitation often includes undertaking structural repairs, updating the mechanical systems (heating and air conditioning, electrical system, and plumbing), putting on additions for bathrooms, repairing damaged materials such as woodwork and roofing, painting, and addressing contemporary needs such as fire safety and handicap access.

Rehabilitation sometimes necessitates the adaptive use of a building from residential to office or commercial use. This may result in physical changes, such as additions for offices, parking lots, and signage.

If a rehabilitation is sensitive, those changes are made in a way that does not detract from the historic character and architectural significance of the building and its setting.

RESTORATION includes returning a building to its appearance during a specific time in its history by removing later additions and changes, replacing original elements that have been removed, carefully repairing parts of the building damaged by time, and replanting vegetation.

Restoration is a more accurate and costly means of preserving a building. It entails detailed research into the history, development, and physical form of the property; skilled craftsmanship; and attention to detail.

Druid Hills' numerous architect-designed buildings are appropriate candidates for restoration.

RECONSTRUCTION entails reproducing, by new construction, the exact form and detail of a vanished building, or part of a building, as it appeared at a specific time in its history.

5.3 UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S "STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION"

The U.S. Secretary's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects were initially developed for use by the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating the appropriateness of work proposed for properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Revised in 1990, the "Standards for Rehabilitation" are considered the basis of sound preservation practices. They allow buildings to be changed to meet contemporary needs while ensuring that those features that make buildings historically and architecturally distinctive are preserved. They have meaningful application to virtually every type of project involving historic resources.

The "Standards for Rehabilitation" provide the framework for these design guidelines and will be used by the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission in reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. These standards are listed as follows:

- 1 A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- 2 The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

- 3 Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

- 4 Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

- 5 Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

- 6 Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

- 7 Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

- 8 Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

- 9 New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

- 10 New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

5.4 EIGHT STEPS OF A PRESERVATION PROJECT

Following is an outline of an accepted approach to **planning** (Steps 1-3) and **implementing** (Steps 4-8) preservation projects. It is highly recommended that property owners review these points carefully and consider their importance. The planning phase must be completed prior to the submission of a Certificate of Appropriateness application. These steps are explained in recommended order.

STEP 1 — INSPECT THE PROPERTY AND MAKE A WISH LIST

It is essential that a thorough inspection of the structure or site be made, which will allow for an understanding of specific problems that may exist as well as special conditions and features that need to be considered. This inspection should also take into account the character of the surrounding area (area of influence—see *Section 7.1*), with special attention given to how the property in question relates to nearby buildings and sites. Develop a wish list of what needs to be done and what improvements and/or changes are desirable but not necessary to the physical soundness of a property.

It is very important that existing conditions be documented, through photographs, before any work is undertaken. This is especially true when tax credits are being sought. These photographs can be taken at any time during the planning process.

THE PROPERTY OWNER MAY WISH TO CONSULT WITH THE DEKALB COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION TO OBTAIN PRELIMINARY COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BEFORE DEVELOPING CONCEPT PLANS.

STEP 2 — DEFINE THE PROJECT AND DEVELOP A PRELIMINARY CONCEPT

At this stage the property owner must determine the type (stabilization, rehabilitation, renovation, or reconstruction) and extent of the project to be undertaken. Cost will likely be an issue and therefore it is advisable to consult with an architect, landscape architect, interior designer, or preservation planner. These professionals can assist the owner in defining the basic components of the project.

STEP 3 — REFINE PRELIMINARY CONCEPT AND DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN

This is the final step of the planning process—the end result of which is what might be called a Master Plan. The Master Plan should outline the principal goals of the project and the efforts needed to complete Steps 4 through 8.

SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.

STEP 4 — STABILIZE THE BUILDING

Before any new design work is undertaken, the property must be in a stable condition with all deterioration halted. An example would be the repair of a leaking roof so that further moisture will not enter the structure after new work has been completed.

STEP 5 — CARRY OUT STRUCTURAL REPAIRS

Once deterioration has been halted, any structural damage that exists must be corrected. Depending upon the location of the damage, work on the project may be continued prior to correcting the damage. It is advisable, however, to address all structural damage in a timely manner. If the approved project involves an addition to the building, it should be made only after all structural repair work has been completed.

STEP 6 — CARRY OUT INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS

Repairs and improvements to mechanical systems (i.e., cooling and heating systems, electrical systems and plumbing) are essential to achieving the highest degree of comfort and economy in any building. It is therefore important to attend to this type of work fairly early in the overall project rather than delaying or even neglecting to complete it. Infrastructure improvements can be costly, which is yet another reason for planning this work early in the project.

STEP 7 — CARRY OUT ENERGY CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENTS

Most steps to improve energy efficiency are generally quite straightforward and sometimes surprisingly inexpensive. This type of work can therefore usually be put off until more complicated and expensive tasks have been completed. Of course, if the project involves an addition, this work should be done during framing.

STEP 8 — CARRY OUT COSMETIC WORK

Finishing work, such as exterior painting, minor siding repairs and porch reconstruction, should be the next stage of a preservation or rehabilitation project. This is the work that will generally create the greatest visual impact, and it is

essential that all preliminary work (stabilization, structural repairs, infrastructure improvements) be completed beforehand so that nothing will have to be done twice.

STEP 9 — LANDSCAPING

If the project involves an addition, landscaping for the addition will likely be the last phase of work. It is helpful, however, to prepare a landscape plan early in the project so as to allow for planting at the earliest appropriate season. See *Section 9.7* for steps to follow in projects involving the redesign of residential landscapes.