
Martinsville, Virginia



Church Street with Eastward View
Photograph courtesy of the Martinsville Bulletin

Historic District Guidelines

Introduction

Architectural Review Board

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) was established May 24, 2005, by the Martinsville City Council. The purpose of the ARB is to protect the integrity of the City's historic resources within its designated Historic Districts, both presented and so designated in the future (See Section XXI. HP-O, Historic Preservation Overlay District of the Zoning Ordinance). Preservation of these historic assets will aid in revitalization of neighborhoods within the City of Martinsville and contribute to the City's goal of fostering further economic development.

It is within the power of the ARB, in light of the aforementioned ordinances and objectives, to require property owners to file an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to any exterior work being conducted on properties within designated Historic Districts. All applications will be reviewed in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* located at www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm.

Work Requiring Review and Certificate of Appropriateness

- ✓ Any exterior alterations to buildings including outbuildings
- ✓ Construction of additions to existing buildings
- ✓ Construction of new buildings
- ✓ Demolition or relocation of any building or structure
- ✓ Change in exterior paint color
- ✓ Changes in landscape features including driveways, walkways, sidewalks, fences, and masonry walls
- ✓ Changes or additions of signage, exterior lighting, and street furniture

**See Design Guidelines for Historic Districts for detailed design requirements.

Work NOT Requiring Review or Certificate of Appropriateness

Exterior routine maintenance, repair, or replacement of damaged architectural features such as broken window panes does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Routine maintenance items are defined as the upkeep of architectural surfaces and elements by painting or staining, using the same color, and keeping trees and other plants and their root systems from damaging buildings or structures. Repair or replacement of damaged architectural elements is defined as restoring existing features in kind. In kind items are standards as stated in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. In kind changes does not include the following:

- Replacing damaged elements with substitute materials (i.e. vinyl for wood)
- Changes in size of door, window, or other restricted items specified in district guidelines

In kind substitutes that are not addressed in the *Standards for Rehabilitation* may be evaluated on an individual basis. Repair and replacement changes are subject to a review and the granting of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Owners of contributing and non-contributing structures in the Historic District are required to bring all changes before the ARB for review.

Application/Design Review Process

A Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained from the ARB prior to the issuance of building permits for construction, alteration, demolition, relocation, or restoration of a building or structure. This includes signage, changes in paint color, exterior lighting and landscape features as required in the City's Historic District Design Guidelines.

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness may be obtained from the Department of Community Development or found at www.martinsville-va.gov/businesses/community-development/architectural-review-board.

Complete applications can be submitted to the Department of Community Development or to Hannah Powell at hpowell@ci.martinsville.gov.us.

Applications must be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the next regularly scheduled ARB meeting. Incomplete applications will delay the design review process.

Required Application Materials

- ✓ Photographs of the building prior to any construction, including the building as a whole with its surroundings and details of areas to be altered or demolished
- ✓ Architectural plans to scale with elevation drawings
- ✓ List of materials and colors including manufacturer's specification sheets
- ✓ Detailed description of work to be undertaken

When reviewing applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the ARB will consider the overall design and character of the project, the harmony of the design in relationship to existing buildings in the Historic Districts, proportion and scale, mass, form, materials, as well as window and door configurations.

Public hearings are required to be held, allowing all parties in interest an opportunity to speak and be heard. Applicants must present proposed change(s) to or addition(s) of buildings to the Historic District. Adjoining property owners by notified by letter of the proposed changes and the scheduled public hearing. A public notice is also required to be published in a newspaper that has general circulation in the locality. Once the scheduled public hearing is complete, the ARB will render a decision on the appropriateness of the proposed alterations, additions, or new construction.

The ARB reserves the right to tour the site in question prior to its approval or denial of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Certificate of Appropriateness

If the project design is found to be appropriate to the Historic District in which it is located, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be awarded within thirty (30) days. The Certificate of Appropriateness is only for the approved design. If the design is altered after the certificate has been granted, the applicant must submit a new application to undergo the review process. Work on the project must be halted until the new design is approved and a new Certificate of Appropriateness is awarded.

Once a Certificate of Appropriateness is granted, a copy of the certificate will be attached to the application and both sets of plans that are date stamped. The application and supporting material will be transferred to the Zoning Administrator and Building Inspector. One set of the materials will remain on file and the other will be returned to the applicant.

Temporary Certificate of Appropriateness

The ARB may, at its discretion, issue a temporary Certificate of Appropriateness to an applicant who does not meet the necessary requirements of architectural compatibility, but only if the applicant meets all of the following requirements. Strict application of this section would produce undue hardship; The proposed work would not be of such a permanent nature as to preclude future activity which would meet compatibility compliance; No such temporary certificate shall be issued to allow the proposed work to exist for a period longer than five (5) years.

Martinsville Historic Districts

The City of Martinsville, Virginia currently contains three (3) Historic Districts as follows: 1) The Martinsville Historic District; 2) The East Church Street-Starling Avenue Historic District; and 3) The Fayette Street Historic District. Maps outlining Historic Districts in the City of Martinsville can be obtained in the Department of Community Development and also found online at www.martinsville-gov.va/businesses/community-development/architectural-review-board.

Martinsville Historic District

The Martinsville Historic District was designated with the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1998. This district initially contained one-hundred nineteen (119) contributing buildings along sections of Church Street and Main Street as well as streets joining these avenues through the City of Martinsville.

East Church Street – Starling Avenue Historic District

The East-Church Street - Starling Avenue Historic District was designated with the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 2006. This district encompasses portions of East Church Street, Brown Street, Cleveland Avenue, East Market Street, Scuffle Hill, Letcher Court, and Starling Avenue.

Fayette Street Historic District

The Fayette Street Historic District was designated with the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 2007. This district includes sixteen (16) blocks along Fayette Street from Market Street to Memorial Boulevard.

Design Guidelines for Historic Districts

Exterior Changes to Existing Buildings

Exterior changes to an existing building are defined as, but not limited to, replacement or alterations to siding or shingles, windows, doors, architectural trim work, porches, entryways, roofs, chimneys, storefronts, awnings, shutters, dormers, masonry (including re-pointing), and new paint color. Also covered under these guidelines are the additions of modern equipment, fire escapes and handicap access.

Access

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code in its current edition should be consulted to obtain guidance on current access guidelines. A copy can be obtained from the Inspections Department or from www.martinsville-va.gov/businesses/community-development/community-resilience/inspections-department.

Architectural Trim Work

In most cases architectural trim work defines the historic character and integrity of a building or structure. As such every effort should be taken to preserve these original features. If repairs to these elements are necessary it is appropriate to use materials consistent with the historic nature of the building and to replace only the damaged areas. Elements beyond repair should be replaced in kind and historically accurate in profile, scale, and material. Replacing these elements with synthetic composition materials may be appropriate to utilize in order to affect the integrity of the building and the Historic District as a whole.

Chimneys

Chimneys are an integral part of many historic buildings whether they serve fireplaces or furnaces and should be maintained and in good repair. Re-pointing should be done in a timely manner to preserve the integrity of the chimney. Mortar joints should be uniform and the same profile, color, and gap as original joints. Existing chimneys should not be replaced by those smaller in scale or height, but maintain the proportion and size of the original.

Doors

Doors, in the confines of the Design Guidelines, also includes its surround and other associated elements such as transoms, fan lights, side lights, pilasters, pediments, hoods, and architectural moldings.

Original or contributing later doors and their surrounds should be maintained to preserve their historic integrity. Door openings shall not be altered in width, scale, or configuration. Repair of the aforementioned elements should be done in kind and limited to only those sections needing repair. Replacement of these elements should also be in kind. Doors should have the same or similar design and appearance as the original. Aluminum, metal, and vinyl are not acceptable. Similarly, aluminum and vinyl screen doors are not historic to a majority of the buildings within the Historic Districts and as such will not be accepted in most instances. Wood screen doors have historic precedence and therefore are suitable for historic areas. Suitable synthetic composition materials will be considered.

Dormers

Dormers that are original to the building/structure should be retained as an integral part of the design and balance of the structure. Additional dormers added to a building should match existing dormers. New dormers constructed on a building that did not previously have this architectural element should be in proportion to the scale of the building and provide overall continuity in

design. While wood is the most appropriate material for these architectural elements, other materials will be reviewed on a case by case basis, such as Hardie board.

Fire Escapes

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code in its current edition should be consulted to obtain guidance on current fire escape guidelines. A copy can be obtained from the Inspections Department or from www.martinsville-va.gov/businesses/community-development/community-resilience/inspections-department.

Masonry

Masonry encompasses foundations as well as exterior walls. Foundations should be maintained so as to provide structural integrity to the structure. New construction should consider the height of the foundations of existing buildings and complement the surroundings in scale, height, material and proportion. Exposed concrete foundations are not historically applicable and must be covered in an appropriate material in the instance of new construction or repair.

Masonry exterior walls such as stone, brick and stucco should also be maintained to secure the structural integrity of the building. Painting masonry is not recommended (with the exception of stucco), but will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Mortar joints of stone and brick structures should retain original profile, width of joint, color and style.

Modern/Mechanical Equipment

Technological changes and updates in interior functions sometimes require modern equipment to be installed on or next to an existing building.

Mechanical equipment is defined as, but not limited to, air conditioners, heat

pumps, antennas, alarm systems, propane or oil tanks, dumpsters, solar panels, utility meters and satellite dishes.

Installation of this type of equipment and its related fastener and other parts should be placed to be as unobtrusive as possible. It is preferable that this equipment be installed in the rear of buildings or concealed by fencing or plant material so as to not interfere with the historic integrity of the district.

Equipment such as vents and air conditioners should be painted the same color as the surface or window trim, respectively. If roof installation of mechanical equipment is required then units should be placed out of the direct sight lines of the public, such as behind a chimney, parapet or on the rear slope. Additional utility lines should continue to be placed underground if economically feasible.

Seasonal air conditioners do not come under the purview of the ARB, but it is strongly recommended, for the overall appearance of the Historic District, that window units be placed on the side or rear of the building.

Outbuildings

Outbuildings that are contributing structures within a Historic District should have the same considerations as the buildings to which they belong. Modern outbuildings should be in keeping with the main building in style or complementary and similar materials used.

Painting

Paint colors not appropriate to the history of the building and its time period will be considered on an individual basis. Drastic color changes may be incompatible with the surrounding buildings and character of the Historic District. Paint colors, samples, and chips are to be submitted along with the application.

Painting of masonry surfaces is not recommended, but will be considered on an individual basis. Brick, stucco, stone, and mortar, by their nature, retain moisture. By painting the surface, moisture is trapped resulting in the deterioration of the masonry. Paint on masonry also leads to higher maintenance of the building due to upkeep of the painted surfaces. Owners should consider opaque stains on both masonry and wooden surfaces.

Porches/Balconies/Stairs/Entryways

Original or later contributing porches, balconies, stairs, entryways, particularly in public view are defining characteristics of historic buildings. Removal or alteration of these elements is not appropriate to the integrity of the building or the Historic District as a whole.

The exposed nature of these architectural elements requires they be painted regularly and sections repaired when necessary. If elements cannot be repaired and must be replaced they should be replaced in kind (same material, scale, type and profile) to maintain the integrity of the building. Substitute composite material other than in kind may be considered on a case by case basis.

Original entryways and stairs and those added later that contribute to the historic nature of the building should be retained and kept in good repair. Balance and scale of these architectural features is integral to the original design of the building. Expanding exterior door openings is not recommended because it will forever alter the building's historic integrity.

In the case of the addition of a new porch or balcony, the design should be compatible with the historic appearance of the building and those surrounding it. Research should be undertaken to determine the appropriate style, scale and material of this new feature. Detailed architectural drawings of the proposed addition will be required. Design assistance may be available to aid in compliance.

Roofs

Original roof slope and materials should be retained wherever possible. To avoid problems, roofs should be kept in good repair. Changes in roof material or color of asphalt shingles need to be approved by the ARB. Ornamental items that are placed on the roof should fit the era of the building and need to be approved by the ARB.

Shutters/Blinds

Shutters have been popular on buildings/structures constructed after the 1790s in most places and were typical during the late 1800s through the 1960s and are an integral part of the appearance of the structure. If appropriate to the building, shutters should remain. When replacement becomes necessary, the new shutters or blinds should reflect the appearance and materials of the original respective architectural period. Permanent removal or change in material of shutters requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Siding

Exterior siding is an important feature of buildings and provides authenticity to the appearance of Historic Districts. It is important, therefore, original materials be retained and kept in good repair, including painted surfaces. If repairs are necessary it is recommended that only those sections needing repair be addressed to maintain as much historic fabric as possible.

Replacement of wood siding should be in kind with the same appearance as the original. Other materials may be considered on a case by case basis. Vinyl or aluminum siding is not appropriate to the integrity of Historic Districts, may do irreparable damage to the structure and will not be approved. The removal of vinyl or aluminum siding and replacing it with wood or a suitable material appropriate to the time period is encouraged. Research should be conducted as to the type of siding originally on the building or structure or, if unknown, the types available when the building was constructed.

Storefronts and Awnings

Original storefronts within commercial districts should maintain their historic integrity, including windows, entryways, and exterior wall materials.

Architectural elements should not be covered, particularly with vinyl or aluminum siding or other materials. It is encouraged to remove such materials and restore the facades to their original appearance. Alterations may be considered on an individual basis.

In fill of new buildings or structures should maintain the placement and setbacks of surrounding structures. Typically, the front facades of commercial buildings in a downtown setting are adjacent to sidewalks. New in-fill construction should reflect this pattern of development and, if applicable, have parking in the rear of the building. This also creates a more pedestrian friendly environment and has historic precedent. Facades should be designed to complement the surrounding buildings in material, style, scale and window and door opening patterns.

Cloth or canvas awnings have historic precedence in downtown commercial districts. Awnings should not detract or hide defining architectural elements of buildings and should be attached in a manner as to not damage the historic fabric of the structure even when removed. Materials other than canvas will be considered on a case by case basis.

Windows

Windows are a very important architectural feature of buildings and structures and therefore, great care should be taken to maintain original windows and the pattern of openings along the façade. It is not recommended or appropriate to the historic integrity of the building or structure to alter these patterns by enclosing, removing, widening or otherwise compromising the appearance of the building. It is understood that windows may need to be replaced due to irreparable damage or energy efficiency. If windows need to be replaced, the

character of the building must be retained. Window mullions of new windows must reflect the arrangement of the original. If the type of window originally on the building/structure is not known then replacement of those windows should conform to the time period in which the building was constructed. True divided panes are encouraged; however, other alternatives may be considered on an individual basis.

Additions to Existing Buildings

Historically, buildings were expanded to suit the needs of its occupants. It is therefore recognized that additions to existing buildings become necessary even in modern times. Additions to buildings or structures within the Historic Districts should be designed to complement the existing residence or business and the streetscape. Additions should not destroy or obscure existing historical features and should retain the scale, style and materials of the main building.

New Construction

New construction should follow the same considerations as additions to existing buildings in the Historic District, including scale, materials, complimentary styles, setbacks and size. New construction in historic districts may not be more than fifty-five (55) feet in height in order to maintain the integrity and historic appearance of the district.

Driveways/Off-Street Parking/Walkways

Driveways in the early 20th century were traditionally concrete, brick or gravel. Asphalt driveways will be permitted so long as it doesn't interfere with the appearance of the building. The width of the driveway should not be more than thirteen (13) feet wide to maintain the scale and appearance of the structure to which it belongs. This applies to both residential homes and homes which have been rezoned for commercial use.

Off-street parking should be carefully designed in order not to compromise the historic integrity of the property. Ideally parking for residential properties should be on the side of the building or in the rear. Parking for commercial buildings should be in the rear in order to maintain the setbacks of the structures with Historic Districts.

Brick pavers, concrete or concrete aggregate are acceptable for walkways within both commercial and residential components of Historic Districts. Asphalt walkways are not appropriate for either application.

Fences/Walls

Fences constructed of wood, brick, iron work, and stone or stucco walls are appropriate for historic districts as long as they do not obstruct the view of the building. Chain link or plastic are discouraged. The ARB will consider all future fencing products as technology advances.

Lighting

Lighting should be tailored to reflect the desired ambiance of a historic district and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness if in public view.

Signs

Signs within designated Historic Districts should consider the present and future pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Signs should be designed in a manner that reflects the desired appearance of the districts and not detract from the historic integrity of the area. Historic signage should be retained and not covered by modern signage or introduced construction material.

Dimensions of signs should be in keeping with the scale of the buildings and not incompatible with the surrounding streetscapes. Wood, etched glass, brick and stone are appropriate materials for signs within designated historic areas. Plastic signs, plastic lettering, large vinyl lettering, or other signage that distracts from the historic nature of the district are not appropriate. Signage

requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the ARB. For further information please refer to Section VI. Sign Regulations, of the Martinsville Zoning Ordinance.

Billboards

Billboards are not permitted within the boundaries of the City's Historic Districts.

Relocation/Demolition

Relocation or demolition of historic structures and buildings within Historic Districts compromises the integrity, appearance, continuity, and unity of the district as a whole as well as the economic viability of the city. Additionally, vacant lots lead to disjointed streetscapes and a loss of community. It is preferable to create a plan for adaptive reuse of buildings within the Historic Districts rather than relocation or demolition.

Relocation or demolition are options of last resort and require a permit from the ARB. This process applies to structures within public view as well as contributing buildings not in view. Relocation will be considered only to prevent demolition. A demolition permit for structures and buildings within Historic Districts will only be approved if the structure does not contribute to the district as a whole. Demolition by neglect will not be tolerated. If the structure is deemed unsound by the City of Martinsville Building Official, an application for a permit to demolish the building may be granted.

If demolition or relocation is approved, the property owner will be required to provide written documentation of historic elements of the building, architectural elevations, plans, and photographs in compliance with the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) standards.

To guarantee vacant lots are utilized in a timely manner, the property owner must provide a time table and assurance in writing that the building on the lot

will be replaced for its future use. The new building will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Incentives/Grants

Property owners in Historic Districts may qualify for the following incentives or grant opportunities. Properties must meet individual requirements in order to qualify.

➤ **Federal Historic Tax Credits**

- Managed by the National Park Service
- Rehabilitation must meet certain requirements resulting in an income producing property
- Owner can claim 20% of qualified expenses on federal income taxes
- Owner can claim 25% of qualified expenses on state income taxes
- For more information, visit www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm

➤ **Virginia State Historic Tax Credits**

- Managed by the Department of Historic Resources
- Allows owners to receive state tax credit of 25% of eligible expenses
- Work must meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation
- Credits may be earned for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied and income producing properties
- For more information, visit www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax-credits

➤ **Enterprise Zone Real Property Investment Grant**

- Available to qualified zone investors
- Grant amounts up to 20% of the total amount of qualified investments
- For more information, visit www.martinsville-va.gov/businesses/incentives/entreprise-zone

➤ **Partial Exemption on Taxation of Substantially Rehabilitated Real Estate**

- City will refund the owner, real estate taxes paid for qualifying projects for new investment for substantial rehabilitation, renovation, or replacement
- Structure must be at least 15 years old and cannot exceed 110% of the original square footage
- Refunds calculated at 100% for the first year and 50% for years 2-5 over the increase in assessed value

➤ **Save America's Treasures**

- Public-private partnership between the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- For more information, visit www.nps.gov/articles/save-america-s-treasures.htm

Architectural Terms

Column - A freestanding hollow structural support of various styles typically found on porches.

Cornice - Molding underneath the roof line.

Dormer – Window which projects vertically from the roof.

Facade – The front elevation of a building or structure.

Gable Roof – A triangular shaped roof with equal roof slopes.

Hipped (Hip) Roof – A pyramidal shaped roof, typical of early 20th century buildings.

Historic Integrity – Maintaining the historic materials used in the original construction or subsequent historic additions of a building or structure.

Muntins – Divisions between panes of glass of a sash window.

Pediment – Triangular element above an entry.

Pilaster – An ornamental square attached column typically flanking an entrance.

Post – A freestanding solid structural support of various styles typically found on porches.

Re-pointing – The removal of damaged mortar and replacing it with new mortar

Sash – Movable section of a window

Shed Roof – A single direction slanted roof

Sidelights – Narrow vertical windows on either side of a door

Transom – Horizontal window panes typically above a door

Vernacular - Architecture that makes use of common regional forms and materials at a particular place and time; sometimes includes strong ethnic influences of an immigrant population; usually modest, unassuming, and unpretentious, and often a mixture of traditional and more modern styles or a hybrid of several styles. Houses are often owner-built by people familiar with local materials, regional climatic conditions, and local building customs and techniques, as described under folk architecture.

Resources

Local Resources:

- Martinsville Uptown Revitalization Association (MURA)
217 E. Church Street
P.O. Box 614
Martinsville, VA, 24114
(276) 632-5688

- Virginia Department of Historical Resources Regional Preservation Office
1030 Penmar Ave. S.E.
Roanoke, VA, 24013
(540) 857- 7585

State Resources:

- Virginia Department of Historical Resources
2801 Kensington Ave.
Richmond, VA, 23221
(804) 367-2323
www.dhr.virginia.gov

- APVA Preservation Virginia – Shenandoah Valley Office (Regional Office)
120 South Augusta Street
Staunton, VA, 24401-4222
(540) 886-6100

National Resources:

- National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C., 20036
(202) 588-6000
www.nationaltrust.org
- Southern Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington D.C., 20036
(202) 588- 6107
- National Park Service*
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC, 20036
(202) 343-9578

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation