Design Reference for Virginia-Highland

Note: These guidelines were created when Virginia-Highland was considering Historic Designation. Virginia-Highland is not a Historic District, but these design principles may be helpful.
Acknowledgements

This document was made possible through the leadership of Richard Laub, Director of the Heritage Preservation Program at Georgia State University, and Mary Ann Eaddy, faculty member in Georgia State University’s Heritage Preservation Program. Graduate students researched the Virginia-Highland area, and using the draft regulations, compiled the following document through their Preservation Planning course. The class would like to thank the Virginia-Highland Civic Association - Neighborhood Preservation Committee for providing support and vital information for this project.

Prepared By:
Chris Baccus
Kim Burton
Susan Conger
Elisa Graf
Paul Graham
Debye Harvey
Courtney Lankford
Laura Lembas
Maysly Naolu
Addie Watts
David Westbrook
Caitlin Zygmont

Note: These guidelines were created when Virginia-Highland was considering Historic Designation. Virginia-Highland is not a Historic District, but these design principles may be helpful.
Neighborhood Character

Residents recognize the Virginia-Highland Historic District as a distinctive and special place, a place in which they take pride and wish to preserve. This neighborhood most nearly resembles a small town, with its Main Street along Highland Avenue and its central business district at the intersection of Virginia and Highland Avenues, surrounded by residential developments in which there are dwellings of various ages and densities ranging from single-family houses to apartments. Parks, schools, churches, and recreational facilities are located in the neighborhood. The area is bound on the south and east by major thoroughfares: Ponce de Leon Avenue and Briarcliff Road. On the southwestern edge, a railroad right-of-way is lined with flat-roofed, single-story industrial and commercial buildings formerly associated with the railroad and now put to other uses. There is a modern shopping center immediately to the west of this former industrial area. Virginia-Highland is a diverse community with a long history of development reflected in the physical characteristics of its built environment.

The Virginia-Highland Historic District is the result of several major campaigns of development and many minor ones undertaken for over one hundred years. In addition, the district was the site of mid-20th century urban renewal and clearance for construction of the proposed Interstate 485, which was never built. Because of this, Virginia-Highland is visually diverse. Streets are rectilinear (laid out in a regular grid) in some areas of development and curvilinear (curving streets that take advantage of natural contours of the land) in others. There is one large park, Orme Park, and several smaller ones. Most commercial development occurs around the perimeter of the district on the south and west, but there is also a major commercial node in the center of the district at the intersection of Virginia and North Highland Avenues and two smaller ones on Highland. Some streets have sidewalks on both sides; some only on one. Street widths and sidewalk materials are not consistent throughout the district, adding to the eclectic character of the neighborhood. House sizes, styles, and setbacks vary from development to development, although they are generally consistent within developments, and the ages of the residences within the proposed local historic district span more than one hundred years.
Why Preserve?

presence of small neighborhood parks, and the mature landscape identify Virginia-Highland as an established urban neighborhood. Protection of these features facilitates the enjoyment of the area for residents and visitors alike.
History of Virginia-Highland

The Virginia-Highland neighborhood is an accumulation of a number of different subdivisions that were built three miles outside the heart of the city of Atlanta from 1889 to 1955. The land was used for agricultural and recreational purposes until the late 19th century. The first documented white settlement of the Virginia-Highland area was by Revolutionary War veteran, William Zachry, who was granted the land encompassing most of the present-day historic district soon after the War of 1812 by the United States government for his “patriotic service.” The land was part of the neutral territory designated by feuding Cherokee and Creek Indians. In 1821, the Creek Nation relinquished land that included the area of Virginia-Highland to the United States government. Zachry farmed his property until 1822 when he sold it to Richard Copeland Todd from South Carolina. Todd built a farm house on what is currently 816 Greenwood Avenue. The house burned in 1910, but an apartment building can be found in the same location today. The advent of the trolley car to Atlanta in 1871 changed the neighborhood as more and more city workers were drawn to it as an opportune place to live due to its proximity to downtown Atlanta and the expansion of the line into the suburb in 1889. Virginia-Highland has remained intact and still has the appeal that drew residents to it from its beginnings.

The area developed as many typical American suburbs did during the early 20th century. It was originally a white, middle-class residential neighborhood with initial growth beginning in 1889 when the Fulton County Street Railroad Company’s Nine-Mile Circle trolley line cut through the area. The street car started
downtown and traveled along Highland Avenue (now North Highland Avenue), Virginia Avenue, North Boulevard (now Monroe Drive), and back to Highland Avenue before returning to the city. Before the area was developed, Atlanta residents would take the trolley to the “country,” as it was called, to enjoy the cool breezes and relaxing atmosphere. The oldest structures in Virginia-Highland can be found along the trolley line. The impact of this line on the area is evident in the community’s street pattern. The area employs a grid system of streets because real estate values at the time were determined by proximity to the streetcar line. A grid pattern achieved the shortest distances to the line from individual properties. The effects of the trolley on the neighborhood are also felt in the curving intersections of Virginia Avenue and Boulevard (now Monroe Drive) and of Virginia and Highland Avenues. Space was needed to accommodate the trolleys wide turning radii when maneuvering around corners. Later subdivisions in Virginia-Highland incorporated curvilinear streets and a semi-rural feel as a direct result of an increase in automobile usage and ownership.

The majority of development in the neighborhood occurred between 1905 and 1936. Various real estate companies purchased the land and subdivided the lots over a 23-year period. Prominent cotton merchant, Green B. Adair, subdivided his property southwest of the intersection of Highland and Virginia Avenues in 1904. Adair set up his own residence on a large lot on Rupley Drive. Most of the houses in this area are Craftsman-style bungalows and American Foursquares. New subdivisions, created along Virginia and Highland Avenues between 1909 and 1913, contained mainly Craftsman-style bungalows and garden-style apartments. The North Boulevard Park Corporation purchased 64 acres of undeveloped land in 1914 to be platted and developed. This subdivision, North Boulevard Park, was located in the northwest corner of the district and utilized curvilinear streets. Houses in this neighborhood are usually Craftsman-style bungalows, American Foursquares, English Vernacular Revival-style cottages, and side-gabled cottages. The construction of these houses, however, was delayed until after the Park Drive
History of Virginia-Highland

Bridge was built. World War I hindered development as well and is the reason these residences date to the 1920s instead of the 1910s.

The northern and eastern parts of the historic district were platted a few years later. Typical of middle-class housing of the 1920s and 1930s in the United States at this time, this subdivision is comprised of mostly English Vernacular Revival and Colonial Revival homes. It was during this time that smaller subdivisions were created that included Virginia Hills and Virginia Highlands (which is not to be confused with the district as a whole). Orme Park is the largest of these neighborhoods that was created in the 1920s. It is located in the northeast portion of the district. Houses in this subdivision are large Craftsman-style bungalows and English Vernacular cottages. The area also employs curvilinear roadways and includes a park, named Orme Park like the subdivision itself, with a small stream running through it. This park, however, was not named Orme until a developer with The North Boulevard Park Corporation, A.J. Orme, gave the area to the neighborhood for public use. The park was originally an extension of the North Boulevard Park subdivision. The southern portion of the district encompasses mostly multi-family houses which include garden-style apartments and duplexes.

Throughout the 1960s, the area of Virginia-Highland fell into an era of decline. This was not uncommon in other intown neighborhoods in Atlanta and other large American cities during this time. More and more middle-class families were moving to the suburbs, resulting in decreasing property values and neglect in Virginia-Highland. Many single-family homes were converted into multi-family residences. In the 1970s, families began to slowly move back into the neighborhood and began renovating existing structures. The neighborhood began
to experience growth again with property values and home ownership increasing steadily. In 1975, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) was founded with the mission of defeating the proposed Interstate 485 that was intended to run in a north/south direction through many existing neighborhoods in the city like Virginia-Highland. The highway was aimed to ease traffic flow in and around downtown Atlanta. A massive interchange was planned in Virginia-Highland at Virginia Avenue that would have encouraged strip development and ruined the community feel of the area.

Naturally, commercial corridors built up around the district as it grew over the years. Business establishments, situated at the intersection of Virginia Avenue and North Highland Avenue, were present as early as 1908 with the bulk of development occurring in 1925. This is the main business node in Virginia-Highland, but other commercial areas can be found along other parts of North Highland Avenue including the area near Atkins Park. Historic structures in these areas are mostly brick, one and two-story, attached buildings. Much like today, historic businesses addressed the needs of residents. There were restaurants, stores, and gas stations to name a few. Due to the walkability of Virginia-Highland, these areas will continue to develop and adapt to the needs of the people that live in the community and to visitors alike. Most of these properties, however, are not included in the proposed local historic district.

The Virginia-Highland district is a prime example of typical subdivision development of the early 20th century. The houses found in the area are characteristic of middle-class residences of this era. Today, the area is densely populated due in part to easy access to downtown Atlanta but also, more importantly, because of the community feel and history of the neighborhood and the efforts of property owners who are personally invested in Virginia-Highland.

*This information was gathered using information found in the National Register of Historic Places nomination form, and in Linda Merrill’s “History of Virginia-Highland.”*
Residents recognize the Virginia-Highland Historic District as a distinctive and special place, a place in which they take pride and wish to preserve. This neighborhood most nearly resembles a small town, with its Main Street along Highland Avenue and its central business district at the intersection of Virginia and Highland Avenues, surrounded by residential developments in which there are dwellings of various ages and densities ranging from single-family houses to apartments. Parks, schools, churches, and recreational facilities are located in the neighborhood. The area is bound on the south and east by major thoroughfares: Ponce de Leon Avenue and Briarcliff Road. On the southwestern edge, a railroad right-of-way is lined with flat-roofed, single-story industrial and commercial buildings formerly associated with the railroad and now put to other uses. There is a modern shopping center immediately to the west of this former industrial area. Virginia-Highland is a diverse community with a long history of development reflected in the physical characteristics of its built environment.

The Virginia-Highland Historic District is the result of several major campaigns of development and many minor ones undertaken for over one hundred years. In addition, the district was the site of mid-20th century urban renewal and clearance for construction of the proposed Interstate 485, which was never built. Because of this, Virginia-Highland is visually diverse. Streets are rectilinear (laid out in a regular grid) in some areas of development and curvilinear (curving streets that take advantage of natural contours of the land) in others. There is one large park, Orme Park, and several smaller ones. Most commercial development occurs around the perimeter of the district on the south and west, but there is also a major commercial node in the center of the district at the intersection of Virginia and North Highland Avenues and two smaller ones on Highland. Some streets have sidewalks on both sides; some only on one. Street widths and sidewalk materials are not consistent throughout the district, adding to the eclectic character of the neighborhood. House sizes, styles, and setbacks vary from development to development, although they are generally consistent within developments, and the ages of the residences within the proposed local historic district span more than one hundred years.
Neighborhood Character

The characteristics that most areas of the Virginia-Highland District share in common are the rolling topography, two-lane streets, and mature overstory trees. However, the most pervasive characteristic of this neighborhood is that it is a place of human scale and arrangement. Buildings are not generally more than three stories tall. They face the streets, which are narrow enough to cross easily but wide enough to allow on-street parking. Most houses include front porches with sidewalks and landscaping from the front of the house to the street, and garages are generally located behind the house. Studies indicate that people find this arrangement inviting because it creates the impression of accessibility to the residences. Shade trees line the thoroughfares, which, in most cases, occur in regular rhythms of blocks and intersections, enhancing navigation within the community. These features give the proposed Virginia-Highland Historic District its small-town ambiance and invite visitors and residents alike to stay.
Categories of Residential Buildings

Based on density of use, the proposed Virginia-Highland Historic District contains three categories of housing. These are: 1) single-family dwellings, 2) multi-family dwellings, which include duplexes, triplexes, and quadra-plexes, and 3) multi-unit buildings, which include apartment houses and condominiums. The majority of residences in Virginia-Highland are single-family residences.

Residences tend to be clustered according to density of use within the district. Buildings for up to four families are more often mingled with single-family residences than are apartment houses and condominiums, but some mixing of this kind does occur. In addition, some lots where the primary building is a single-family residence also have a second residential unit in an accessory building, usually a garage. Only those buildings containing between one and four families are regulated by these Design Guidelines.
A variety of architectural styles and types exist in historic neighborhoods found throughout the state of Georgia. Virginia-Highland is no different, as this neighborhood is comprised of numerous examples of different historic styles and types of housing.

Architectural Styles
Architectural styles relate to the external ornamentation or decoration of a house. Through exterior means such as proportion, scale, massing, and symmetry or asymmetry, one can classify a house as one of the twenty-three major styles of historic houses located in Georgia. Architectural styles present in Virginia-Highland include Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Dutch Colonial Revival, English Vernacular Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Neoclassical Revival.

Architectural Types
Architectural types categorize buildings based on their overall form. Types are defined using a simple classification system based on the outline of the main house as well as the general layout of the interior rooms. An easy way to think about this method is plan + height = type. The house types American Foursquare, American Small House, Bungalow, English Cottage, Georgian Cottage, and Georgian House are evident throughout Virginia-Highland.

A description of these styles and types can be found on the following pages.
The Colonial Revival style is an interpretation of American colonial architecture. In the early 20th century, the Colonial Revival style was often an idealization of this historic style. With the onset of the Great Depression and later World War II the style became much more simplified. This simplified Colonial Revival can be found in Virginia-Highland.

In Georgia, the Colonial Revival style was very popular beginning in the 1890s and continues to be popular today, with many examples found within Virginia-Highland.

**Characteristics:**

- Symmetrical front façade, balanced windows, and centered door

- Accentuated front door usually includes a decorative pediment supported by pilasters or a gable supported by columns to form a porch (A)

- Overhead fanlight and/or sidelights usually emphasize the front door

- Side gable roof

- Windows with double-hung sashes; usually have multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes

- Height of building varies between one and three stories

- Windows frequently in adjacent pairs

- Decorative cornices

- Siding materials often wood clapboard or brick
The Craftsman style is one of the most predominant in Virginia-Highland. Excellent representative examples are found throughout the various historic subdivisions. American in origin, the style was also influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement. It was one of the most popular 20th century style interpretations in Georgia as well as the rest of the country, with a majority of residences built between the 1910s and 1930s. Defining characteristics include an emphasis on materials and craftsmanship. While typically associated with the bungalow house type, the Craftsman style was popular as ornamentation for many different houses.

**Characteristics:**

- Roof is low-pitched, gabled, or occasionally hipped
- Wide, unenclosed eaves; exposed rafters
- Decorative brackets or knee braces under gables (A)
- Windows have multi-paned sash over a large one-pane sash (B)
- Full-or partial-width porch; short square columns set on heavy masonry piers extending to the ground; porte-cochere (C)
- Door framed by sidelights
- Woodwork, masonry and stone reflecting skill and craftsmanship
Architectural Styles:
Dutch Colonial Revival (1920 - 1939)

The late 19th century and early 20th century is punctuated by many colonial revival styles of architecture and the Dutch Colonial is one these styles. This revival style was particularly popular in the American suburbs and neighborhoods like Virginia-Highland and was a popular style in the neighborhood in the 1920's and 30's.

The Dutch Colonial revival reflects that of the early Dutch colonists but does not necessarily replicate the earlier style. The most identifiable feature of the Dutch Colonial style is the gambrel roof. Unlike the original style, however most Dutch Colonial revival houses in Virginia-Highland are two stories rather than one.

Characteristics:

- Steeply pitched gambrel roof; typically side gabled but occasionally are found with a front facing gable often with a cross gambrel roof line (A)

- Roof eaves are sometimes flared

- Dormers are common as a continuous shed roof dormer with multiple windows or as single dormers with one window (B)

- There may be a small entry porch on the first floor
The English Vernacular Revival house style borrows from the architecture of the English countryside. Houses with this style were common in Georgia during the early 20th century. Examples are found throughout Virginia-Highland, most commonly on two-story houses and English Cottage type houses.

**Characteristics:**

- Steeply pitched gabled roof with dominant front gable (A)
- Decorative half-timbering in gables (C)
- Variety of materials used including brick, stone, and stucco
- Asymmetrical façade
- Prominent chimneys
- Doorways emphasized (often with rounded arch) (B)
Architectural Styles: Mediterranean Revival (1920 - 1939)

Mediterranean Revival style houses were popular in Georgia during the 1920s and 1930s. This house style encompasses the design of Mission style (A), Italian country (B), and Spanish vernacular houses. Mediterranean style houses are not a prevalent house style in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood.

**Characteristics:**

- Roofs feature clay tile roofing material (C)
- Usually asymmetrical and ornate
- Primary exterior materials are smooth stucco or yellow colored brick (D)
- Recessed and arcaded open porches are common
- Italian style houses feature overhanging eaves (E)
Beginning in 1893 with buildings designed for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, reaction against the eclectic mix of materials and forms found in Victorian architectural styles revived interest in early Classical and Greek Revival architecture. The Neoclassical Revival style was found in Georgia from around 1895 to 1940. Some examples of Neoclassical Revival style residences in Virginia-Highland are found on North Highland Avenue, St. Charles Avenue, and Brookwood Drive.

**Characteristics:**

- Rectangular, two-story building with hipped roof and few side extensions
- Classical columns with elaborate capitals support the front porch roof (A)
- Porches have balustrades between the columns
- Porch deck extends the length of the front façade
- Symmetrical in arrangement of doors and windows, with central entry door; may be asymmetrical with the door to one side
- Elaborate doors with fanlights, sidelights, and door lights, or a combination of these
- Paired or triplet windows; second story may have single windows
- Often has fanlights over windows, and may have Palladian-style window groupings on the second story
While the early 20th century American Foursquare house type was not as prevalent in Georgia as in the rest of the country, Virginia-Highland has several good examples. It was popular between 1915 and 1930. This two-story house consists of a cubic mass capped by a pyramidal roof with four principal rooms on each floor. The entry and stair hall were typically located in one of the front two rooms. The American Foursquare offered an economical housing option—providing maximum interior space for the cost.

**Characteristics:**
- Two-story cubic massing
- Simple square or rectangular floor plan
- Four rooms on each floor
- Usually pyramidal roof
- Conspicuous off-center entrance
The bungalow was popular in Georgia between 1900 and 1930 in rural and urban areas. Throughout the United States, the bungalow gained popularity during this time due to the increasing need for small single and two family homes within easy reach of the city as the use of the automobile increased.

A bungalow type home is characterized by being long and low, with an irregular floor plan. Porches are common, as are low-pitched roofs with wide overhangs. Bungalows are a predominant architectural type within Virginia-Highland.

**Characteristics:**
- Little embellishment in architectural details
- One or one-and-a-half story
- Broad street-facing gables
- Low-pitched bracketed roof
- Wide overhangs
- Front or side-gable roof
- Large porch with square columns and masonry piers
Characteristics:

- Asymmetrical front façade
- Cross-gabled massing
- Relatively steeply pitched gabled roofs
- Front-gable projects slightly
- Front chimney
- Entry near the center of the façade
- Compact square or rectangular block plan

The English Cottage house type was popular in Georgia in the 1930s and 1940s among middle-class citizens. Typically found on the edges of towns and in suburbs of larger cities, such as Atlanta’s Virginia-Highland neighborhood, these houses display cross-gabled massing and a front chimney. This massing is tightly held in a compact square or rectangular block. The front gable projects slightly or not at all. The entry of the home is near the center of the façade and is often marked with a secondary gable-front or a recessed opening, oftentimes with a recessed porch located on one of the front corners of the house. The interior rooms of the house cluster around a small entrance foyer, some of which contain a stairway leading to an upper half-story.
Based on 18th century English Georgian architecture, Georgian cottages are one of the most popular and enduring house types in Georgia. Built as late as the 20th century, a majority were constructed between the mid to late 1800s and located in the piedmont area of the state. Also found in Virginia-Highland, the exterior view of a Georgian cottage consists of a symmetrical square or nearly square shape with a hipped or sometimes gabled roof. Chimneys are typically located in the interior of the house, but are also present in the exterior walls. The interior plan consists of two rooms flanking a central hallway.

**Characteristics:**
- Square shape
- Hipped or gabled roof
- Interior or end chimneys
- One or one-and-a half story
### Architectural Styles:

**Georgian House (1900 - 1930)**

**Characteristics:**

- Square shape
- Hipped or gabled roof
- Interior or end chimneys
- Centered front entrance
- Two stories high, two rooms deep

The Georgian house type has all the characteristics of the Georgian cottage, except it has two stories. Popular in the 19th and 20th centuries, most of this building type found in Virginia-Highland was constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. Although only a few examples of Georgian house types exist in Virginia-Highland, they play an important role in the architectural history of the area as they demonstrate a grouping of wealth in the settlement of the neighborhood.
Rehabilitation and Maintenance

The rehabilitation and maintenance of materials and features are essential to keeping any house or structure in good working order and are especially important for historic houses whose features and materials are more susceptible to damage. When considering maintenance or rehabilitation work on a building, it is important to look at the structure as guide. Where possible it is recommended that elements should be repaired unless they are so damaged that replacement is necessary. If that is the case, they should be repaired using similar materials to the historic material. For a complete list of National Park Service Preservation Briefs, refer to Appendix F.
Similar to façades, foundations in Virginia-Highland are constructed with a variety of materials. The most common foundations in the neighborhood are continuous and constructed of brick, granite, or concrete masonry units.

**Recommended:**

- Damaged foundations should be repaired to prevent further damage to the structure.
- Foundation materials should be replaced in kind.
- If there is loose or missing mortar, it should be re-pointed. When repairing mortar, it is important to take into consideration the existing color, composition, texture, and profile of the existing mortar joint. For detailed information on how to repair mortar please refer to the National Park Service Preservation Brief 2 in Appendix F.

**Not Recommended:**

- Air vents built into foundations should not be sealed. They should be kept open to prevent the build up of moisture and rot within the foundation envelope.
- Continuous foundations should not be altered in such a way that they are no longer continuous.
- Portland cement should not be substituted for lime based mortar.
Because of the wide variety of house types and styles found in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, a variety of materials are used on the exteriors of structures. The most common façade material in Virginia-Highland is brick. However, many structures are also clad in wood siding, granite, asbestos shingles, stucco, and concrete masonry units. For detailed information on the care, repair, and replacement of historic materials please see the National Park Service Preservation Briefs 2, 6, 15, 16 and 22 in Appendix F.

**Recommended:**

- Materials that are damaged should be repaired to prevent further damage to the structure.
- Materials should be replaced “in kind,” which means that, when possible, materials should be replaced with the same material or one that has a similar visual quality as the historic material.
Materials

For more information see Appendix A VII.B.19a-e

Not Recommended:

- Materials should not be replaced with materials that compromise the historic characteristics of the structure.

- Lime-based mortar should not be replaced with Portland cement. Portland cement is harder than lime-based mortar and does not “breathe” as well, which can cause damage to surrounding bricks.

- Corrugated metal, aluminum siding, and vinyl siding are not permitted as replacement siding materials on historic structures.

Historic brick structure

Materials should not be replaced with materials that compromise the historic character of the structure.

Historic structure covered with siding (Not Recommended)
There are a variety of door configurations in Virginia-Highland that are important components in defining the architectural character of its buildings. The types of historic doors include wood panel types or a combination of panels with glazing (glass). Such combinations of paneling and glazing patterns include rectangular, circular, and square panes within the upper half of the door. An additional type can have glazing separated by muntins resembling the window style of the structure. There are also types of decorative glass found in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood which include etched, stained, and beveled styles. In some cases, the tops of the doors are arched to accommodate the entranceway style of a particular front entrance. Storm or screen doors are generally single or two-paneled and are separated by a horizontal rail in the same proportion as the main door.

Proper maintenance and repair of doors is needed to retain their overall architectural character. Peeling, fading, or cracking of finishes or sealant can be easily repaired. The proper care of the door materials and entranceways can be more cost effective in preserving the character of the structure than purchasing a new door.
Recommended:

- The retention and preservation of historic doors, framework, and moldings is important in maintaining the architectural character of the structure. If replacement of glazing or other components is needed, in-kind or compatible materials should be used.

- Retain the proportions, character, and shape of the historic door and hardware if replacement is necessary. Replacement doors should be of the same material as the historic door or a compatible material if the historic material is unavailable.

- For more information on appropriate methods to maintain historic doors, refer to National Park Service Preservation Bulletins 10 and 33 in Appendix F.

- Appropriate storm and screen doors should be proportional to the historic door and be of a complementary design to the main door.

- If needed, added security reinforcement such as bars or heavy grilles should be built inside the structure to preserve the overall visual architectural integrity of the exterior of the building.
Not Recommended:

- It is not recommended to replace doors with non-historic material such as vinyl or metal alloys.

- If new door openings are added to the structure, they should not be placed on the front façade. They should be placed in the back or side of the building with such design and placement as to not disrupt or compromise the architectural character of the structure’s front façade.
The Windows are important features that help define the architectural character of the buildings in Virginia-Highland. The window types found in the neighborhood vary depending on placement or location on the building. The majority, located on the front façades of buildings, are wooden, double-hung windows with divided muntins principally on the upper sash, in patterns including 3/1, 4/4, 6/1, 6/6. Most of the window casings are a horizontal rectangular design, but arched tops are present in the design of some buildings. Other predominant types include fixed windows with muntin or mullion dividers in decorative patterns and designs.

**Recommended:**

- Maintenance, repair, and upkeep of window components are important factors in maintaining their architectural character. Any deterioration such as peeling or cracked paint should be rehabilitated to avert the need to replace the windows. For more information on appropriate maintenance methods for historic windows, refer to National Park Service Preservation Bulletins 9, 10 and 13 in Appendix F.

- Retention and preservation of the historic window panes, muntins, sills, molding, frame, and shutters are important. If replacement glazing is needed, in-kind or compatible materials should be used.

- If total replacement is needed, the new window should be of the historic or a compatible material and retain the design features of the historic window. Regardless of being fixed or operable, double-hung, muntins must physically divide the panes (called “true divided lights”) or be attached to the exterior of the panes.

- Repaired or replacement windows should retain the original dimensions and distinctive features of the historic design.

- It is recommended that screen and storm window additions be secured to the exterior of the frame rather than replacing the historic windows.

- If on the exterior, storm widows or screens should have a narrow profile and be coated with paint or an enamel cover that matches the window frame and molding.

- In the case of double-hung windows, it is recommended that triple track storm windows be installed with the meeting rails aligning with the historic window meeting rails. Such a modification will preserve the historic character of the window facing while increasing energy efficiency.
Examples of historic windows found in Virginia-Highland:
Recommended: Appropriate shutters are hinged and fitted to window

Not Recommended: Non-functional shutters are inappropriate

Not Recommended:

- While not recommended, if window air-conditioning units are to be added, they should be located on the side or rear of the building (see Appurtenances on page 53).
When performing maintenance on roofing material, avoid techniques that could damage the material. If a portion of it must be replaced, replace in kind so that the repaired area matches the existing material. For example, slate should be replaced with slate, clay tiles with clay tiles, and so forth, and should match the existing pattern. Avoid removing features such as decorative elements or functional elements such as chimneys, vents, or gutters.

**Recommended:**

- All roof maintenance should be sensitive to the existing historic material. Historic elements of other roof features (chimneys, vents) should be maintained and not replaced with a different material.

- Replacement of roof features should be made with the same or similar material. Parts of the roof structure that are visible from the public must match the historic pattern and texture in order to maintain the historic character.

- When repairing a chimney, the new brick pattern and brick type should match the historic pattern and brick type. When repairing stucco, new stucco should match the texture of the existing stucco.

**Not Recommended:**

- Cleaning techniques that could damage the roof elements should be avoided. When cleaning roofs, use techniques and chemicals that will not damage the appearance or function of the roof elements.
Porches serve various functions that include identifying and defining an entry to a house, providing weather protection for inhabitants and visitors, and giving neighbors a convenient place to meet and visit, thus helping to foster a sense of community. The principle porch style in Virginia-Highland is characterized by a covered deck located in front of the main entrance. Openness is achieved through the use of columns and balustrades, and steps lead to the porch deck. It is important to rehabilitate and maintain porches because they are a character-defining feature for various existing architectural styles and types in the area such as Craftsman, Neo-classical Revival, and Bungalow.
Recommended:

- The condition of the porch should be determined before making any rehabilitation or maintenance efforts. Unless the condition is so poor or the damage so severe that it calls for removal or replacement of the porch, the best action is to reinforce, repair, or replace in kind. This helps preserve the porch’s historic materials and character.

- When repairing or replacing porch elements, materials compatible with the historic materials in design, texture, and size should be used.

- During maintenance, every attempt should be made to preserve a porch’s historic materials. For example, use chemical cleaners only as a last resort and as gently as possible.

- If enclosing an existing porch is desired, the porch may be enclosed with glass or wire screen. Enclosing materials should be installed to the inside of the porch supports to maintain the historic appearance of the façade. The porch supports should remain visible on the exterior of the building.

Not Recommended:

- Important elements that define a porch historically or architecturally should not be removed or obscured. For example, openness is an important porch element that should not be destroyed by enclosing the porch with solid walls. Masonry, glass block, or wood stud walls should not be used to enclose a porch.

- Materials that are not historically or architecturally compatible with the house style or type should not be used in the repair or maintenance of a porch. For example, metal railings should not replace wooden ones.

- A false sense of history should not be created by using elements or ornaments that are uncharacteristic to the style of the building. For example, the gable of a Craftsman-style porch should not be ornamented with a Colonial-style broken pediment.

- Sand-blasting should not be used when cleaning a porch. This extreme method damages historic materials including brick and wood.
Historic Porch Column Repair or Replacement

Recommended:
- Damaged column should be repaired or replaced in kind.

Not Recommended:
- Rehabilitation or replacement should not deviate from the style of the historic element.
Existing accessories and outbuildings in Virginia-Highland include detached garages, garden sheds, and gazebos. It is important to rehabilitate and maintain these structures because they are located on the same lot as the main house. Like the house, these structures contribute to the overall character and history of the neighborhood and should be preserved.

**Recommended:**

- The condition of an accessory or outbuilding should be determined before making any rehabilitation or maintenance efforts. Unless the condition is so poor, or the damage so severe that it calls for removal or replacement of the structure, the best action is to reinforce, repair, or replace in kind. This helps preserve the structure’s historic materials and character.

- Efforts should be made to determine elements that contribute to the overall historic character of the accessory or outbuilding. Repair or replace those elements using materials compatible with the historic materials in design, texture, and size.

- During the maintenance of an accessory or outbuilding, every attempt should be made to preserve its historic materials. For example, protect wood features by checking for causes of wood deterioration, including faulty flashing, cracks and holes, or foliage growing too close to the structure.

- To preserve historic materials, accessories and outbuildings should be cleaned as gently as possible. Use chemical cleaners only as a last resort.
Not Recommended:

- Important elements that define an accessory or outbuilding historically or architecturally should not be removed. For example, if a detached garage has damaged double doors that open manually, the doors should not be replaced with one that is single, overhead, and automatic.

- Materials that are not historically or architecturally compatible with an accessory or outbuilding should not be used in its repair or maintenance. For example, brick should not replace wood.

- A false sense of history should not be created by using elements or ornaments that are uncharacteristic to the style of an accessory or outbuilding. For example, decorative bargeboard should not be added to the eaves of a Craftsman-style outbuilding.

- When cleaning an accessory or outbuilding, sand-blasting should not be used. This extreme method damages historic materials, including brick and wood. (See visual #2).
The Appurtenances are equipment that are, or can be, attached to the main structure on a property. Common examples of appurtenances are air conditioners, satellite or digital antennas, and outdoor emergency generators. Obscuring the addition of such equipment on the exterior of the structure can preserve the historic architecture of a building while still adding modern amenities to it.

Appurtenances should be placed on the side or rear of the structure.
**Recommended**

- Exterior equipment such as central air conditioning units and generators shall be located to the side or rear of the building in an obscured or non-visible manner from the public right-of-way.

- If placement of the equipment is in a line of sight of the public right-of-way, it should be concealed by either compatible fencing or landscaping which surrounds the unit to obscure the view.

- Satellite dishes or outdoor digital or analog antennas should be attached to the rear roof or ground areas of the building. If a satellite dish must be placed in the front or side of the building to obtain proper reception, it should be screened by a fence, retaining wall, or plant material.

**Not Recommended**

- It is not recommended to place appurtenances at the front of a building or structure without visually obscuring the equipment from the public right-of-way.
When designing additions to a historic building, it is important to use that building as a guide to create a design that is contemporary but compatible with the existing historic characteristics, materials, and features. New additions should not mimic historic designs but should use them for inspiration.

To comply with the Compatibility Rule, elements of a building related to its envelope should be compared to the block face. Elements related to a building’s envelope include height, setback, massing, and roof pitch. Questions related to style should be answered using the entire neighborhood of Virginia-Highland as a guide.

For inquiries related to the construction of additions on accessory structures and outbuildings, refer to the corresponding section located in section VII. For example, questions relating to appropriate materials for additions on accessory structures and outbuildings should refer to the materials portion under section VII.
Setback and Lot Location

For more information see Appendix A VII.7.B.3-10

The amount of open space around houses is a key aspect of the character of the neighborhood. Setback and lot location are regulated in order to preserve the rhythm of historic placement patterns in the district. The setback and location of an addition should reflect the predominant patterns on the block.

**Recommended**

- Locate additions to the rear of the structure.
- Additions should be compatible with the prevailing setbacks and lot locations of contributing structures.
- Locate additions to the rear of the structure.

**Not Recommended**

- Do not locate additions on the front or on the side of a structure where it can be seen from the public right-of-way.
- Front additions that encroach on the existing setback are not allowed.
The shape and proportion of major sections of a house define its mass. Scale is the relationship of the size of one object to another. The similar size and shape of houses along each street is a defining characteristic of the district, and massing and scale are regulated in order to help maintain a regular rhythm. To meet that goal, additions should be compatible with the scale and mass of the existing house and other contributing houses on the block face. The combined elements of height appearance, building height, floor area ratio, and lot coverage define the limits of massing and scale for additions.

**Recommended:**

- Any addition should respect the building mass of the primary structure.
- Additions shall not appear to add a full story to the structure. This applies to additions to contributing structures requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Including the addition, building height should be no taller than the tallest and no shorter than the shortest contributing houses on the block face. An addition shall not exceed 35 feet from the average grade of the block face, except where the existing structure already exceeds 35 feet. In that case, the addition shall not exceed the preexisting roof height.

**Not Recommended:**

- Additions to non-contributing structures shall not exceed the height and width of the tallest and widest contributing structures on the block face.

**Floor area** ratio is used as a flexible method for controlling the size of buildings. It is defined as the total floor area of a house divided by the total area of the lot. The total floor area of a structure, including additions, shall not exceed 50% of the total lot area.

**Lot coverage** is the percentage of all structures and accessories on the lot that create an impervious surface. The total area of the lot occupied by the structure shall not exceed zoning limits. Almost all houses in the district are zoned R-3 on which lot coverage cannot exceed 40%. (Atlanta Code of Ordinances, Chapter 5, Section 16-05.008)
Massing and Scale
For more information see Appendix A VII.B.3-10 and VII.C.1

Historic structure, side elevation

**Recommended**

Appropriate additions respect the massing and scale of the structure.

**Not Recommended**

Additions that appear to add an additional to the height of the structure and exceed the dimensions of contributing structures on the block are inappropriate.
Besides cladding an addition in a different material, another easy way to discern if a portion of the house or structure is an addition is by the foundation. If the foundation on the addition is slightly different than that of the historic house, it will help the addition blend into the existing structure while at the same time allowing it to be differentiated from the historic house or structure.

**Recommended:**

- Foundations for new additions should be the same material as the primary façade of the historic structure if it is brick, stucco, or stone.

- If the primary façade of a structure is not brick, stucco, or stone, the foundation of the new addition should be constructed of brick, stucco, stone, or a historically appropriate material.

- To help differentiate between historic and contemporary foundations, the new foundation should be offset from the historic foundations or constructed in a different pattern than the masonry of the historic foundation.

**Not Recommended:**

- New foundations should not duplicate existing historic foundations.

The foundation of the addition is offset from the historic foundation.
Recommended:

The foundation on this addition does not duplicate the existing historic foundation and is constructed of historically appropriate material.

Not Recommended:

The siding on this addition inappropriately extends to ground level.
The choice of materials for additions to a structure should be influenced by the type of materials on the historic structure itself and also those of the historic structures on the block face. By using the historic building and those around it as a guide, the new addition will be contemporary but compatible with the existing historic fabric of the block face. One of the easiest ways to make sure an addition appears contemporary is to clad it in a different material than the rest of the structure.

**Recommended:**

- Materials for new additions should differentiate but be compatible with the materials on the structure, reflect the materials on the block face, and be consistent with the architectural style of the structure.

- For additions, recommended materials include horizontal lapped wood siding, cementitious lap siding, cementitious panels with seams concealed, brick, brick veneer, wood shingles, stone, external insulating finishing system (“EFIS”), and true stucco.

**Not Recommended:**

- Corrugated metal, aluminum siding, and vinyl siding should not be used for additions.
Regardless of the house style or type found in Virginia-Highland, doors are an important architectural feature. Therefore, the placement of doors on additions should be consistent with the architectural character of the existing historic structure and its main door.

**Recommended:**

- Doors for added or attached structures should be similar in design to the historic front door if placed on the front façade or street side to help maintain the historic character of the structure as a whole. Additional doors should also be similar in size to that of the historic, main door.

- If it is glazed, the additional door(s) should maintain the fenestration pattern of the historic, main door.

- If the door is visible from the public right-of-way, any storm or screen door should be complementary to the door design to facilitate the continuation of the historic architectural character of the structure.

**Not Recommended:**

- Doors on additions should not be of vinyl or metal alloys.

---

**Appropriate style and scale**  
**Inappropriate modern style**  
**Inappropriate modern style and scale**
Windows and fenestration patterns are important architectural characteristics of a structure or house. Windows on additions should use the existing structure as a guide to help determine an appropriate fenestration pattern as well as an appropriate size, shape, orientation, and proportion for individual window openings.

**Recommended:**

- Windows in additions should be compatible with the historic design and materials of the historic windows on the façades visible area from the public right-of-way. The Compatibility Rule should be used to help determine appropriate design and materials.

- The Compatibility Rule should be used to determine appropriate depths and widths of window casing.

- If the windows are non-operable, the muntins must be on the exterior of the glaze.

- Exterior screens and storm windows should have a narrow profile and have painted or enamel trim the same color as the window.

- Any shutters attached to the window frames should be functional and should completely cover the window panes when closed.

**Not Recommended:**

- Widows on additions should not be constructed to appear to be historic.

- Muntins of non-operable windows may not be on the interior side of the window.
Windows

For more information see Appendix A VII.B.17a-c and VII.B.21

**Recommended**

The window on this addition is differentiated from the historic windows while using compatible style and scale.

Appropriate shutters are hinged and fitted to the window.

**Not Recommended**

The window on this addition is of modern style and out of scale with the historic windows.

Non-functional shutters are inappropriate.
Roofs play an important role in defining the architectural significance of a structure. The pitch, material, and type (hipped, gabled, gambrel) are associated with particular architectural styles and should be retained. Roof elements also create consistency in scale and design along street faces. Any roof addition should respect established historic features found in the context of surrounding structures. However, in spite of the Compatibility Rule, a single-story house may be modified into a one-and-a-half story house for additional living space. In such instances, the pitch of the new roof can be increased by an increment of 2 inch over a 12 inch run over that of the existing roof pitch. Also, when consistent with the architectural type of the house, the direction of the main ridgeline can be changed from parallel to perpendicular to the block face – or vice versa - whenever necessary. However, this should only be done after very careful consideration of alternative solutions.

**Not Recommended:**

- Roof additions such as new dormers or other features cannot exceed the highest section of the existing roof.

- In all cases, except adding a half-story to a single-story structure, new roof construction cannot exceed the pitch of the existing roof and its features (dormers, gables).

- New roof construction cannot eliminate historic features such as vents, chimneys, or dormers.

- New materials that are not visually similar to historic roof materials should be avoided.
Recommended:

- New dormers should reflect the historic character of the building and be of the same scale, materials, and pitch as surrounding structures. In order to ensure appropriate style and placement, historic photographs of architecturally similar structures should be consulted in formulating the design of the project.

- All existing historic features, such as decorative trim, gutters, and downspouts, should be retained and be made integral to additions when appropriate. Existing dormers should not be boarded up or altered in a way that diminishes their character and function.

- Installation of new features such as solar panels, sky lights, and other exterior accessories should be located on the rear of the structure. Additional decorative details should be avoided.

- Roof elements such as chimneys and vents should not be removed or drastically altered. These components are important historic features.

- When adding a half-story on a single-story house, the pitch of the new roof cannot exceed the original pitch by more than a factor of two. For example, if the existing pitch is 7/12 (rise over run), the maximum increase in pitch for the new roof cannot exceed 9/12. Once the roof pitch has been increased, it may not be increased again. For additional information, see section VII.B.20B.b.i. of the regulations.

Roof additions may be constructed by increasing the roof pitch by a maximum factor of 2/12.
Porches are character-defining features for various architectural styles and types in Virginia-Highland including Craftsman, Mediterranean Revival, and Bungalow. Sometimes, damage to a character defining porch is severe enough to require its removal and replacement. Additionally, if a porch is normally a character defining feature of a particular architectural style or type, and archeological evidence or research using documents such as Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicates that the porch once existed, a homeowner can choose to add a porch.

**Recommended:**

- A porch addition should follow the Compatibility Rule. Elements included in the rule are height, setbacks, massing, scale, lot coverage, and roof pitch. The general character of the entire Virginia-Highland neighborhood should also be considered.

- An added porch should be compatible in style with the house. For example, a Neo-classical Revival porch should be added to a house of the same style.

- If adding a porch, efforts should be made to distinguish between the new addition and the historic house.

- Ideally, the materials used for the porch addition should be the same as those of the house, but, if the materials are different, they should still be visually and physically compatible in proportion, texture, and installation technique.

- Only stone, brick, or poured concrete should be used for front porch stairs.
Not Recommended:

- Though the appearance, style, or detailing of an added porch should be compatible with those of the house, they should not be exact duplicates. Exact duplication gives a false sense of the historic development of the property.

- Materials used for porch step additions should not be anything other than stone, brick, or poured concrete. Front porch steps should not have open risers and ends.

- A porch unconnected to a main entrance should not be added.
Modern lifestyles often call for new spaces to entertain or enjoy the back garden or yard. However, as decks are not historical components of houses within the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, sensitive placement at the rear of the residential structure, and no wider than the house, will reduce the impact on the historic character of the neighborhood.

**Recommended**

- Decks should be placed at the rear of the residential structure
- The length of the deck should be narrower than the width of the house

**Not Recommended**

- Decks should not be placed at the side of the residential structure
- The length of the deck should be no wider than the width of the house
In order to help maintain the rhythm and character of Virginia-Highland, new principle structures should be contemporary but compatible with the existing historic structures on the block face where the new structure is to be built. New buildings should not duplicate existing buildings but refer to them for design inspiration.

To comply with the Compatibility Rule, only structures that are deemed contributing to the historic character of Virginia-Highland should be used for comparisons for determining the appearance of new construction. Questions referring to the envelope of a building should be compared to the block face. Elements related to a building’s envelope include height, setback, massing, and roof pitch. Questions related to choosing an appropriate style for the new construction should use the entire neighborhood of Virginia-Highland as a guide.
The amount of open space around houses is a key aspect of the character of the neighborhood. Front, side, and rear yard setbacks and lot location are regulated in order to preserve the rhythm of historic placement patterns in the district. The setbacks and location of a structure should reflect the predominant patterns on the block.

**Recommended:**

- Side setback should be compatible with those of contributing structures if the general pattern of side setbacks on the block face is less than current zoning limits.

- Primary structures should be placed similarly on the lot and oriented to the same street as other contributing structures on the block face.

---

**Not Recommended:**

- Front setback should not be less than the minimum setback or greater than the maximum setback of contributing structures on the block face.
Not Recommended:

This house is placed too shallow in the lot.

The orientation of this house is not compatible with the block face.

This house is placed too deep in the lot.
The shape and proportion of major sections of a house define its mass. Scale is the relationship of the size of one object to another. The similar size and shape of houses along each street is a defining characteristic of the district, and massing and scale are regulated in order to help maintain a regular rhythm. To meet that goal, new principle structures should be compatible with the scale and mass of contributing houses on the block face. The combined calculations of building height, floor area ratio, and lot coverage define the limits of massing and scale for new construction.

**Recommended:**

- Building mass should respect the prevailing size and proportion of contributing houses on the block face. For example, a new house with vertical massing should not be placed among existing houses with horizontal massing.
Massing and Scale

For more information see Appendix A VII.7.B.3-10

Not Recommended:

- Building height should be no taller than the tallest and no shorter than the shortest contributing houses on the block face. In no case shall the building height exceed 35 feet from the average grade of the block face, even if existing contributing structures are taller than 35 feet.

This house does not respect the massing and scale of contributing structures.

Floor area ratio is used as a flexible method for controlling the size of buildings. It is defined as the total floor area of a house divided by the total area of the lot. The total floor area of a structure shall not exceed 50% of the total lot area.

Lot coverage is the percentage of all structures and accessories on the lot that create an impervious surface. The total area of the lot occupied by the structure shall not exceed zoning limits. Almost all houses in the district are zoned R-3 on which lot coverage cannot exceed 40%.
Appropriate foundation materials are essential for a new structure to appear contemporary but compatible in any neighborhood. In Virginia-Highland, the most common foundation materials for historic structures are brick and granite. These historic structures should be used for inspiration when designing the foundation for a new house or structure.

**Recommended:**

- Foundations for new construction should be of the same material as the primary façade of the new structure when the primary façade is brick, stucco, or stone.

- If the primary façade of the new structure is not brick, stucco, or stone, the foundation of the new structure should be constructed of brick, stucco, stone, or a historically appropriate material.

**Recommended**

![Recommended](image1)

New foundations should be constructed of historically appropriate materials such as stone and brick.

**Not Recommended**

![Not Recommended](image2)

Installing siding to ground level is not appropriate.

**Not Recommended:**

- Foundations should not be constructed out of historically inappropriate materials. stone, or a historically appropriate material.
Materials

For more information see Appendix A VII.B.19a-e

By choosing appropriate materials for new construction, a structure can easily appear contemporary but compatible in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood. Additionally, by using the Compatibility Rule and choosing materials based on contributing structures on the block face, new structures will continue to uphold the historic character of Virginia-Highland.

**Recommended:**

- Materials for new construction should be consistent with materials and visual character of contributing structures of a similar architectural style on the block face.

- For new construction, recommended materials include horizontal lapped wood siding, cementitious lap siding, cementitious panels with seams concealed, brick, brick veneer, wood shingles, stone, external insulating finishing system ("EFIS"), and true stucco.

---

This contemporary house on Lanier Avenue incorporates materials that are consistent with those used in other houses along the street.

---

**Not Recommended:**

- Corrugated metal, aluminum siding, and vinyl siding should not be used for new construction.
Doors for new construction should reflect the architectural character of those in the historic neighborhood to be compatible with the surrounding aesthetic. Doors should be compatible with, but not identical to, the architectural design and placement of the existing historic contributing structures in the surrounding block face.

**Recommended**

- Door proportion, fenestration, and ornamentation should be similar in design in order to be visually compatible with the contributing structures on the block face.

- It is recommended that the material used for doors in new construction be compatible with the contributing structures in the surrounding historic neighborhood.

- Door entries from the front of the structure should be parallel to the street face. If the surrounding historic structures have front entries that are perpendicular to the street, a compatible design can be used.

**Not Recommended**

- It is not recommended to have doors for new constructed made of vinyl or metal.

- It is not recommended to have security bars on the outside of the doors; they should be installed on the inside, out of public view.
Windows of new construction should reflect the architectural character of those in the historic neighborhood to be compatible with the surrounding aesthetic. To help maintain the historic character of Virginia-Highland, the Compatibility Rule should be used to determine an appropriate fenestration pattern as well as an appropriate size, shape, orientation, and proportion for individual window openings on new structures.

**Recommended:**

- Window patterns should be compatible with the architectural design that is being used to reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. This includes proper scale and proportions.

- The fenestration pattern should use visibly compatible materials and have a similar, but not identical, design as the surrounding historic structures.

- Shutters accompanying new construction windows are recommended to be functional, and to completely cover the area of the window opening.

**Not Recommended:**

- The fenestration pattern on a new structure should not be identical to any existing structures on the block face.
Roofs on new construction should be compatible with structures on the block face by being similar in scale, architectural quality, pitch, and design. New construction should also reflect, but not be identical to, historic roof types. New design should be inspired by existing architectural features and endeavor to use materials common to the block face. Spacing 1.1, set text box 1/8” from green line and heading

Roof systems should reflect the pitch, massing, and complexity of contributing structures.

- New roof construction should use historic material common to that found on surrounding contributing structures.
- Roof systems on new construction should satisfy the Compatibility Rule. Efforts should be made to reflect the pitch and massing dimensions on historic structures.
Many house styles and types in Virginia-Highland, such as Craftsman, Mediterranean Revival, and Bungalow, are built with porches. Porches on new primary structures should be constructed to be compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood.

**Recommended:**

- A newly-constructed porch should follow the Compatibility Rule. Elements included in the rule are height, setbacks, massing, scale, lot coverage, and roof pitch. The general character of the entire Virginia-Highland neighborhood should also be considered.

- A new porch should be compatible in style with the house. For example, a Neo-classical Revival porch should be built for a house of the same style.

- To distinguish it from the existing or historic porches in the neighborhood, a new porch should be constructed using modern materials and techniques. A new porch should not be made to look historic.

**Not Recommended:**

- The appearance, style, or detailing of a new porch should not duplicate exactly those of existing or added porches.

- Materials used for new porch steps should not be anything other than stone, brick, or poured concrete. Front porch steps should not have open risers and ends.

- All porches must be connected to an entrance to the building.
While decks are not a historical component of houses within the district, outdoor living space is a key feature of modern lifestyles. Sensitive placement of decks at the rear of the new residential structure will reduce the impact on the historic character of the neighborhood.

**Recommended**

- Decks should be placed at the rear of the residential structure
- The length of the deck should be narrower than width of the house

**Not Recommended**

- Decks should not be placed at the side of the residential structure
- The length of the deck should be no wider than width of house
Since accessory structures and outbuildings are located on the same lot as the house, they also contribute to the character of the entire neighborhood. It is important to consider this when constructing accessories and outbuildings.

Outbuildings should be compatible with the materials, design, and architectural style of the main structure. This gazebo is not compatible with the historic structure.

**Recommended:**

- A new accessory structure or outbuilding should be built according to the Compatibility Rule. Elements included in the rule are height, setbacks, massing, scale, lot coverage, lot location, and roof pitch. The general character of the entire Virginia-Highland neighborhood should also be considered.

- A new garage should be compatible both in materials and design with the architectural style of the house.

- The roof pitch of a new detached garage should match the roof pitch of the main house.

- A new detached garage must be built at the rear of the lot, but it is acceptable for it to be visible from the public-right-of-way if this placement complies with the Compatibility Rule.
Accessory Structures and Outbuildings

For more information see Appendix A VII.B.11-12 and VII.B.22.g

Attached garages should not face the same street that the main house faces. Rear-facing garages or detached rear garages are recommended.

Not Recommended:

• The footprint of a new accessory structure or outbuilding should not be more than 25 percent of the size of the house. The roof pitch should not be less than 5/12.

• The appearance, style, or detailing of a new accessory structure or outbuilding should not exactly duplicate those of other accessory structures and outbuildings in the neighborhood because this will create a false sense of history.

• An attached garage should not face the same street that the main house faces.
Appurtenances are equipment that are, or can be, attached to the main structure or house on a property. Common examples of appurtenances are air conditioners, satellite or digital antennas, and outdoor emergency generators. Newly-constructed structures in the historic neighborhood of Virginia-Highland should place appurtenances in the rear the building, out of view from the public right-of-way.

Appurtenances should be placed on the side or rear of the structure.
Appurtenances

For more information see Appendix A VII.B.18

**Recommended**

- Exterior equipment such as central air conditioning units, generators, satellite dishes, and antennas shall be located to the side or rear of the building, obscured from the public right-of-way.

- If placement of the equipment in a line of sight of the public right-of-way is unavoidable, it should be hidden by either compatible fencing or landscaping which surrounds the unit to obscure the view.

- Satellite dishes or outdoor digital or analog antennas should be attached to the rear roof or ground areas of the building. If a satellite dish must be placed in the front or side of the building to obtain proper reception, it should be screened by a fence, retaining wall, or plant material.

**Not Recommended**

- It is not recommended to place appurtenances in the front of a building or structure without visually obscuring it from the public right-of-way.
Scale, form, and massing are as essential as house types and styles are in defining the neighborhood of Virginia-Highland. Landscapes are also a fundamental characteristic. Elements of the Virginia-Highland landscape include unpaved planting strips, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, fences, and retaining walls. By using historically appropriate materials, residents can maintain existing landscapes and create new landscapes that will add to the aesthetic character of the neighborhood.
By choosing appropriate materials for new construction, a structure can easily appear contemporary but compatible in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood. Additionally, by using the Compatibility Rule and choosing materials based on contributing structures on the block face, new structures will continue to uphold the historic character of Virginia-Highland.

**Not Recommended:**

- Planting strips should not be altered in such a way that they become an impervious surface. For example, planting strips should not be paved.

**Recommended:**

- Unpaved planting strips located adjacent and parallel to the street on properties of existing historic structures should be maintained.

- When building a new structure in the neighborhood of Virginia-Highland, unpaved planting strips should be located adjacent and parallel to the street.
Recommended:

- Sidewalks located parallel to the street and between the front yard and the planting strip shall be maintained.

- Sidewalks should be repaired rather than replaced. If sidewalks must be replaced, they should be replaced in kind.

- New sidewalks should be constructed with the paving material that predominates on the block face.

- If there is no predominant paving material on the block face, the sidewalk should be constructed in the manner which is most historically appropriate for the block face. Options for these sidewalks include hexagonal pavers, brick, concrete inlaid with hexagonal imprint, or stone aggregated concrete.

![Concrete Design](image1)
![Hexagonal Pavers](image2)
![Concrete](image3)

- For new construction, if there is no sidewalk present on the block face but one is required by a provision of the City Ordinance, the sidewalk shall comply with that ordinance.

- New sidewalks should be the same width as adjoining properties unless a larger width is required by law.

Not Recommended:

- Asphalt is not an appropriate paving material for sidewalks.
Recommended:

- Existing walkways from the front sidewalk parallel to the street to the front door of the principal structure should be maintained and repaired when necessary. If these walkways must be replaced, they should be replaced in kind.

- A new walkway from the front door of the principal structure to the front sidewalk parallel to the street may be added when:
  
a. The action of a Certificate of Appropriateness results in a permanent change to the size, shape, or grade of the front yard, or  
b. a new structure is being built, or  
c. it is appropriate for the architectural style of the existing structure, and  
d. it is architecturally possible.

Typical Walkway Materials:

- Brick
- Concrete Design
- Hexagonal Pavers
- Concrete
Not Recommended:

- Existing walkways located from the front door of the principal structure to the sidewalk that runs parallel to the street should not be removed.

- Asphalt is not an appropriate paving material for walkways.
Recommended:

- Existing driveways should be maintained and repaired.
- Driveways maybe shared (example below).

Not Recommended:

- Not including the flares, driveways should not be more than 10 feet wide.
- Loose stone, asphalt, and gravel are not appropriate paving materials for driveways.
**Recommended:**

- Historic fences should be maintained and repaired. If repair is not possible, the materials of the fence should be replaced in kind.

- New fences located in the front yard or half-depth front yard may be up to 4 feet in height.

- When building a fence in a side or rear yard, it may up to 6 feet tall.

- The Compatibility Rule should be used to determine an appropriate style and material for any fence constructed in a front, side, or half-depth front yard.

- Appropriate fencing materials in Virginia-Highland include brick, stone, wrought iron, decorative pre-finished aluminum, vinyl picket, and wood picket.

**Not Recommended:**

- Chain link fence is not an appropriate material for any fence located in the front yard or any yards adjacent to public streets.

- Fences constructed on top of retaining walls may not exceed 7 feet in height. This is the total amount of the combined heights of the retaining wall and the fence. For example, a fence on top of a 4 feet high retaining wall can only be 3 feet tall.
Retaining Walls

For more information see Appendix A VII B.16

Recommended:

• Historic retaining walls should be maintained and repaired when necessary. For information on repairing historic masonry see the National Park Service Preservation Bulletins 2 and 22, Appendix F.

• If historic retaining walls cannot be repaired, they should be replaced in kind.

• The Compatibility Rule shall be applied to retaining walls located in the front yard and yards adjacent to a public street where the wall can be seen from the street.

• Retaining walls may be constructed up to 4 feet high, and fences may be located on top of retaining walls as long as the combined height of the retaining wall and the fence does not exceed 7 feet.

• Appropriate materials for new retaining walls include stone, simulated stone, brick, and authentic stucco.

Not Recommended:

• Except for retaining walls, no solid walls may be constructed in the front yard or half-depth front yard.

• Railroad lumber, wood, concrete masonry units, or simulated materials other than stone are inappropriate for retaining walls.
Similar to landscapes, streetscapes play an important role in defining the visual characteristics of Virginia-Highland. They are the first impression a neighborhood can have on visitors and potential new residents. Parking locations, as well as alleyways are key components of Virginia-Highland streetscapes.

**Recommended:**

- Alleys should remain open for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- Alleys may be used for parking.

**Not Recommended:**

- Alleys should not be blocked.
- Parking on walkways located between the façade of the principal structure and the street is not permitted
- Parking between any public street and the principal structure is not permitted unless the view of the principal structure is not blocked and it is the only parking option for that particular structure.