

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

by The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS)

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a common terminology and visual reference for all those involved in working with historic properties within Cleveland Park and to ensure greater consistency in approach by everyone involved in planning and reviewing changes to properties. In Cleveland Park, the great variety of architectural styles and landscape and streetscape features that form our historic neighborhood can make it challenging to understand how changes to one historic property will affect the integrity of that property and the historic district as a whole. The guidelines aim to provide property owners with guidance on how to think about potential changes to their historic properties and what to expect when their proposed changes are reviewed.

These Guidelines pertain to the portion of the Cleveland Park Historic District that lies between Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues and consists primarily of single-family houses, with some smaller apartment buildings and institutional campuses, though the preservation principles articulated also apply to the commercial corridors that bound the historic district.

Chapter I of this document provides a brief introduction to the Cleveland Park Historic District and its historic preservation review procedures.

Chapter II sets out preservation principles that inform the Guidelines and how these should be applied in the Cleveland Park context.

Chapter III, the Guidelines proper, is organized alphabetically by topic. Readers seeking guidance on a particular architectural feature or type of project can go directly to the relevant section, but we encourage everyone to read the discussion of preservation principles in Chapter II.

We welcome comments and questions on these Guidelines. Email staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org.

CHAPTER I. THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT AND THE REVIEW PROCESS

THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

An early “streetcar suburb” of Washington, Cleveland Park has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites since 1987. The Cleveland Park Historic District features a picturesque street plan, the work of the landscape architectural firm of Fredrick Law Olmsted, and an impressive array of architecture, which offers a visual textbook of the changing taste in domestic architectural styles since the late 19th century. Cleveland Park retains estates that preceded the area’s suburban growth and survive as integral components of the neighborhood. The quantity and quality of Cleveland Park's open spaces and greenery, the park-like setting of the residential structures, and the ruggedness of the ravines branching out of Rock Creek Park contribute to the neighborhood's distinctive character.

Read more about the historic district and see a detailed map of its boundaries and buildings at <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district/>.

Historic preservation requires maintaining properties and places in active use and accommodating improvements to sustain their viability while conserving their character and preserving them for the benefit of future generations. Changes in properties in historic districts have a visual impact on the character of adjacent structures and streetscapes.

These guidelines do not add any new restrictions or rules. Rather, they identify preservation priorities for Cleveland Park and approaches to making changes consistent with those priorities. They supplement but do not replace DC’s historic preservation regulations and the citywide guidelines published by the DC Historic Preservation Office on specific topics, such as doors and windows, roofs, etc. They are informed by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which guide preservation practice in the U.S., and the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Cleveland Park Historic District, which articulates the features for which Cleveland Park is recognized as historic.

These Cleveland Park guidelines are intended to be the primary statement of the standards that will be applied by the Cleveland Park Historical Society’s Architectural Review Committee.

Further reading:

Download the National Register nomination form for Cleveland Park at <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district/>.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties can be consulted at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>.

The District of Columbia’s historic preservation regulations are at DC Code Title 6, Chapter 11, which can be consulted at <https://planning.dc.gov/node/920562>. Guidelines published by the Historic Preservation Office are available at <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1183905>.

PLANNING A PROJECT IN THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Any project within the historic district that requires a permit must first be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), a division of the District of Columbia's Office of Planning.

DC's historic preservation review process is intended to give guidance and technical assistance to property owners early in their renovation or construction planning. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, HPO staff will advise the property owner of the necessary review process: whether the work can be approved administratively, or if a preservation specialist needs to conduct a full review and submit the project for approval by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB).

Work *not* subject to historic preservation review includes interior alterations and non-structural interior demolition, ordinary maintenance, paint colors, gutters and downspouts, window attachments, window repair, landscaping (excluding paving), movable site features, light fixtures, and any work not requiring a building permit.

A property owner's first step for any project should be to contact the HPO staff to informally discuss the project and to obtain advice on the type of information required for the review.

The preservation review process encourages public participation and comment on projects that may affect historic property or the surrounding neighborhood. For projects needing full review by HPRB, HPO provides public notice of filed applications to immediate neighbors of the project site, to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), and to community organizations such as the Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS). By law, HPRB gives "great weight" to the position of the ANC, and "carefully considers" the views of community organizations such as CPHS.

CPHS seeks to promote preservation of the historic, cultural, and architectural heritage of Cleveland Park. An essential objective is to protect historic properties in the community from demolition or from alteration that might damage their integrity. We also seek to promote high-quality new construction that is compatible with this objective.

THE ROLE OF CPHS'S ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)

Each of the District of Columbia's historic districts has different mechanisms for providing neighborhood input to the city on preservation cases. In Cleveland Park, neighborhood input is provided through the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and CPHS's Architectural Review Committee (ARC).

The ARC is composed of volunteer residents of Cleveland Park who have an interest or professional expertise in architecture, historic preservation, and related fields. The ARC reviews conceptual plans for projects in the historic district that are subject to review by the HPRB. It issues advisory opinions

on the projects it reviews, and HPO staff and HPRB and take these opinions into account when making final decisions.

(For a detailed guide to the review process, visit

[https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/preservation-design-review/.](https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/preservation-design-review/))

CHAPTER II. PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES AND THE CLEVELAND PARK CONTEXT

GENERAL PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

The Historic Preservation Office, Historic Preservation Review Board, and the ARC follow the principles outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Understanding these principles, which underlie modern preservation practice, will help property owners understand the rationale for recommendations they receive during the review process.

The most important of these are:

The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided. (The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, no. 2)

Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved. (The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, no. 5)

Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken. (The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, no. 3)

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. (The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, no. 9)

Read the full Standards and publications offering guidance on how to apply them at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>. An updated (2017) and richly-illustrated guide to applying the Standards, featuring several pictures from Cleveland Park, can be downloaded at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>.

PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES IN THE CLEVELAND PARK CONTEXT

How do these standards apply to your historic property in the context of the Cleveland Park Historic District? These principles do *not* mean that no changes are allowed, but they *do* indicate that certain types of proposals will be subject to the greatest scrutiny. These include:

- Changes to the front or public side(s) of a property
- Significant expansions to the size of an existing building, including large additions or changes to the roof line for the addition of upper floors
- Demolishing any existing structure for any reason

When the ARC, HPO, and HPRB review proposed alterations and additions to properties in the Cleveland Park Historic District, they consider the significance of the property in question, its character-defining features, and how it contributes to the historic district as a whole. Homeowners and architects can think through the same issues when planning their approach. Questions to think through include:

What are the character-defining features of your building?

Cleveland Park's historic significance stems from the diversity of its buildings, which represent architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and include examples of the work of architects of national or local importance. The period styles and the work of individual architects represented in Cleveland Park each have character-defining features, as does the historic district as a whole.

Illustrations: A variety of distinctive types of Cleveland Park houses

When you begin to plan your project, consider:

- the age of the building's original construction
- the style of the building
- the degree to which it does or does not retain its original architectural features
- the extent to which it represents the work of architects and builders working during the period
- the contribution of the building and any surrounding landscape to the appearance and feel of the street

How does your property fit in its immediate context and in the development of your part of the neighborhood?

Cleveland Park visually reflects its history of growth from a large tract of land supporting country and summer houses to a streetcar suburb. These phases produced different house styles and landscape features, but the historic district has maintained a park-like setting. The historic context is important in

determining the preservation approach to a particular property. The property owner should study the building's visual relationship with its neighboring buildings to determine the rhythms established by the assemblage of buildings and their common features (e.g. roof lines, porches, exterior details, distance from the street, landscape patterns). Consider multiple vantage points, including street and alley views.

Illustrations: houses in context; street rhythms; alley/rear views

Is your building a contributing resource in the historic district?

National Register Historic Districts have defined "periods of significance." Cleveland Park's period of significance is 1880 to 1941. Buildings that date from this period are "contributing resources" in the historic district and are fully subject to the guidelines presented here. Individually landmarked properties constructed outside the designated period, such as Rosedale and the I.M. Pei-designed Slayton House, are treated as contributing resources, with special attention to the features for which they were landmarked. For both categories, any proposed alterations must give priority to preserving their original features.

Buildings in Cleveland Park that were built after 1941 and are not individually landmarked are considered "non-contributing resources." They are still subject to the historic district's approval process for all construction and renovation within the neighborhood and are reviewed for their effect on the surrounding historic context.

You can check the date of your property using HPO's HistoryQuest DC interactive map, <https://planning.dc.gov/page/historyquest-dc>, or contact CPHS and we will be happy to check the date for you.

How will new construction fit into the historic setting while still reflecting the time in which it is built?

The ARC encourages designs for new construction that are contemporary but compatible with the house's historic setting. New construction is permitted in order to accommodate change and reflect the evolution of tastes in residential architecture, but must preserve the character of the historic district as a whole. New building should not try to copy traditional older architectural styles but may connect to them through design relationships and appreciation for the context.

Quality of Design and Materials

The structures of Cleveland Park, from the oldest to some of the most recent, have demonstrated attention to detail, craftsmanship, exuberance, and architectural excellence. Whether the product of an architect, designer, builder, or resourceful craftsman, these buildings contribute more to the neighborhood over the years than perfunctory functional construction. That pursuit of high quality will be expected in any new proposal. Material selection and detailing are also important, but not as an

invitation to display exotic or expensive materials. Humble materials may address the concerns evidenced in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The Park-Like Quality of Cleveland Park

One of Cleveland Park's most significant qualities is that it retains a park-like quality throughout. Several important elements contribute to this:

A number of historic estates and institutions abut or lie within the Cleveland Park Historic District. These include:

- **Rosedale:** This estate lies between Newark and Ordway and 34th Place and 36th Street. It is the remaining portion of the 18th-century estate that underlies all of what is now Cleveland Park.
- **Tregaron and Twin Oaks:** These two large estates along the southern edge of the Cleveland Park Historic District represent survivals of the type of large private estate of the 19th century that preceded the suburban development of the neighborhood.
- **Washington Cathedral Close:** The Cathedral, its schools and surrounding grounds border the Cleveland Park Historic District on its southern edge.
- **Schools and Playgrounds:** Macomb Playground, John Eaton Elementary, National Child Research Center, and Washington International School, and portions of National Cathedral School within the historic district; Hearst School and Playground and Sidwell Friends School on its northern border.
- **Federal Park Land:** Melvin C. Hazen Park lies near the northern edge of the Cleveland Park Historic District. Klinge Valley is the westward extension of a tributary feeding into Rock Creek to the east of Cleveland Park, and forms part of the southern border of the Cleveland Park Historic District. The eastern edge of the historic district behind Connecticut Avenue abuts Rock Creek Park.

Illustration: The open, 18th-century landscape of Rosedale sits at the center of Cleveland Park like a village green.

Along the streets of Cleveland Park, open front yards unimpeded by tall fences make for a communal, park-like feel. Most houses in the neighborhood contribute to a sense of scale through the use of first-story horizontal massing and the frequent use of front porches. A consistent horizontal emphasis created by first-story porches and eaves contributes to a stepped visual experience of houses. Diversity in design at the street level contributes to a sense of discovery for the walker exploring the neighborhood.

Illustration: Porches along Macomb Street unify eclectic houses and form a welcoming interface between public and private space.

Illustration: Some of the earliest houses from Cleveland Park's development as a streetcar suburb are placed in the steep and curving contours of Newark Street above Connecticut Avenue. Lushly-planted terraced front yards unimpeded by fences and a gradual ascent to large, welcoming porches create a human-scale experience for the pedestrian.

Illustration: A newer house on a steep lot on Ordway Street uses terracing and plantings to help avoid the appearance of looming over the street.

Cleveland Park's topography, which includes steep ravines, has sculpted the area and is integral to its historic and future evolution. Stepped retaining walls and terraced front yards began as logical solutions to the challenges of varying topography on lots, and remain a special design characteristic. Visually open rear yards, in some cases with pronounced topographical changes, emphasize the shared nature of natural spaces behind houses. Notable "valleys" include those between Newark and Macomb Streets and between Porter and Ordway Streets.

Illustration: Houses on Macomb Street that back onto Tregaron use terracing sensitively to maintain an open, naturalistic feel to the shared backyard landscape. They avoid decks that would loom over the ravine and tall fences that would obscure the shared views. Note that rear additions are in various styles, but all defer to their houses' main volumes and avoid towering over the ravine.

Together, these characteristics define the historic district and reinforce its park-like nature. As such, they must be taken into account when considering additions, renovations, landscape changes, or new construction.

CHAPTER III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

There are few absolute rules for projects in the historic district. Most proposed changes are considered in a larger context, such as the significance of a particular building to the district and the way the building fits into the pattern of its street. In a historic district as architecturally eclectic as Cleveland Park, one must consider the historic period, style, character, and materials of each individual buildings as well as its setting and relationship to its neighbors. Preservation does not aim to make all buildings look alike.

The one absolute rule is that a contributing property within a historic district must not be demolished. There are no structural issues that can't be resolved.

The Historic Preservation Office of the DC Office of Planning publishes guidelines for the treatment of specific features, such as roofs, doors, windows, and porches. See the full list of HPO guidelines at <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1183905>. The following Cleveland Park-specific guidelines supplement the general HPO guidelines. We do not reproduce all the relevant material here, but refer to design

elements specifically related to Cleveland Park and provide an overview of key issues encountered in reviewing proposals for historic properties in Cleveland Park.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

See Outbuildings.

ADDITIONS

The relevant standard applied in all cases is that “New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.”

The challenge when designing an addition is to maintain the original structure’s character. Therefore, additions are typically planned for the rear of a property to minimize the effect on public elevation and the original building’s character-defining features. The visibility of the addition from the street or neighboring buildings will be an important factor in determining design compatibility.

Where lot configuration dictates that adding onto the side of a house is the best or only solution, particular care should be taken to ensure that the new structure is compatible with the original design.

An addition should be subordinate to the existing structure, and should not compete in size, scale, or design with the historic building. One that overpowers the historic form and/or changes the scale will inevitably alter the character of the original. Massing can be reduced by setbacks, changes of material, or reduction in size.

Additions should be designed so they can be differentiated from the original structure. In other words, one must be able to easily distinguish new construction from original. It should in principle be possible to remove the new construction at a later date without harming the original building. The use of a “hyphen” connector, which provides a physical link while visually separating the old from the new, is a common approach. An addition that wraps around the rear and side elevation would most likely eliminate too much of the original features and form. It may be tempting to exactly replicate the historic form, material, features, and detailing in a new addition, but if the new work seeks to replicate the old in appearance, one may no longer be able to distinguish the “real” from the new. While it is impossible to draft a prescription for successful additions, it would be advisable to consider materials that harmonize with the originals that keep the size rhythm and alignment of windows and door openings, as well as other distinctive features of the building’s style.

Illustrations: Additions subordinate in scale and massing, with and without hyphens, in various styles.

CURB CUTS (See also Parking)

The addition of curb cuts and associated paving for vehicles and reduction in green space has a negative effect on the neighborhood, and is unlikely to receive support. The argument that the creation of a driveway eliminates the need for on-street parking is countered by the loss of parking on the street for residents and visitors and the interruption of sidewalks, tree boxes, and other character-defining features of Cleveland Park's streetscapes.

Where original curb cuts are too narrow for modern vehicles, requests for widening by the smallest necessary amount may be considered. In this instance it is important to conserve the original material and carefully reconstruct any retaining walls adjacent to driveways.

DECKS (See also Porches)

Decks are a contemporary feature typically not compatible with Cleveland Park's historic architecture. However there are examples in the neighborhood where a successful solution has been found to the transition from the house to a rear yard where there is a substantial change in grade. Where a deck is proposed, a more finished, porch-like detailing is generally preferred in lieu of exposed, unfinished framing.

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS

It is often necessary to modify a historic building to improve accessibility for persons with limited mobility. This work must be carefully undertaken so it does not result in the loss of character-defining features. The goal is to provide access with the lowest level of impact on the historic character of the building. Please see HPO's guidelines on Accommodating Persons with Disabilities at <https://planning.dc.gov/node/594372> and consult with HPO staff about options.

DOORS

See Openings: Windows, Doors, Entrances

DRIVEWAYS

See Curb Cuts, Landscape.

FENCES AND FENCE WALLS

The Olmsted design for Cleveland Park promoted curvilinear street layouts fitting the natural contours of the land and extended to the notion of buildings situated in a park-like setting surrounded by green space. It is essential to the character of the historic district to have a view from the public right of way of front-yard green space and the neighborhood's historic architecture.

Illustration: 2900 block of Newark, south side—open front yards, distinctive houses set on steep, curving street.

It may occasionally be desirable to enclose front yards for the safety of pets or small children. Both objectives—safety and the open, park-like setting—can be satisfied with the use of appropriate materials and design. As required by zoning regulations, front fences must be under 42” in height; rear fences are limited to a maximum of seven feet, depending on adjacent context and visibility from public ways or if a fence affects the landscape of one of the ravines. It is most desirable for both front fences, and rear fences abutting green spaces and ravines, to be visually permeable, so all residents can have visual access to the green space. Corner lots are treated as if they contained two front yards. In some parts of the historic district, the streetscape is characterized by low, visually-permeable front-yard fences in a variety of historic styles.

Illustration: In some parts of the neighborhood, there is a tradition of low, visually open front fences at the sidewalk. These fences on Quebec Street provide both unity and variety to the block’s front yards and allow children a safe place to play, without impeding views of the houses’ varied architecture.

Where the property has a retaining wall near the sidewalk, avoid putting fences directly on top of the wall, as this tends to create a tall barrier at the sidewalk and is inhospitable to pedestrians. Front yard fences can be set a few feet back from the wall to preserve an open feeling at the sidewalk.

Illustrations: These low side-yard fences on 35th Street are set back from the sidewalk, helping to maintain an open feeling for pedestrians. With their placement at the top of a modest berm, they provide substantial privacy for the yards without obscuring the views of the houses.

LANDSCAPE: SITE WORK, WALLS, DRIVEWAYS, WALKS, VEGETATION

When landscaping is proposed in the front or would be highly visible to the public, site work such as steps, walks, retaining walls, and driveways are should reinforce the park-like, communal setting.

The use of humble materials, such as cast concrete, may be preferred for drives and walks. Property owners should not assume that fancier materials make a landscape element “more historic.” Examine the prevailing historic materials in your part of the neighborhood.

In keeping with DC-wide efforts to control storm runoff and mitigate resulting pollution, it is recommended that paving materials be permeable. Much of Cleveland Park was built before (and without) good storm water catchment.

The Olmsted firm’s influence on the shaping of Cleveland Park resulted in a design approach that favored the preservation of existing contours in the topography of the neighborhood. Therefore, retaining walls should work with existing grades where possible and should not exceed a height of three feet except where it can be shown that an original wall was taller. Tall walls in conjunction with significant infill are discouraged. Substantial changes in grade should be managed with stepped wall

systems if necessary. This is important for back yards that back onto ravines, as well as for retaining walls that front the sidewalk.

Illustration: Rear yards of houses on Macomb that back onto Tregaron

Driveways have been discussed in the context of curb cuts. Widening an existing curb cut is allowed only for reasons of safety. The creation of new curb cuts is not desirable.

Walks and Steps: New walks and steps should have minimal impact on the context in which they are proposed. Material selection and design details should be consistent with the surroundings. See further under MATERIALS, below.

Changes in plantings and other vegetation are generally not subject to review, with the exception that the preservation of old trees and important examples of landscape design is a priority. Work that requires the removal of trees or that endangers their root systems is discouraged. Proposals that insert large tree groupings requiring substantial site work for support will also be carefully reviewed.

MATERIALS

Evaluation of materials is important for work on any property. Choice of materials is also important when restoring original features to buildings that have been inappropriately altered in the recent past. For buildings that retain their original material, preservation and maintenance are of the highest priority. Original materials are important in defining the historic character of a building. These may include masonry, stucco, or wood exterior wall finishes, roofing materials, siding, brackets, railings, cornices, window sashes and glass, window architraves, door pediments, steps, and columns.

When prototypes are available, replacement in kind of extensively deteriorated or missing parts of wood features is recommended. Likewise, it is recommended to recreate missing or damaged parts of masonry features.

Materials used for additions will also face close scrutiny, as will site work and materials used for hardscape design. Technological developments have produced more sustainable replacement materials that require less maintenance but are indistinguishable from the original materials; these may be considered reasonable modifications to historic buildings. For example, lightweight, paintable, concrete-based clapboard siding may be considered a reasonable substitute for wood siding. Roofing materials are constantly undergoing development and acceptable substitute materials may be available. Fencing material of wood or iron is recommended, acrylic material is not. Consult the Historic Preservation Office about what substitute materials they may approve for your property.

Appropriate maintenance and repair of original materials is the ideal, and should take priority over replacement materials. Failing to stabilize deteriorated or damaged wood and masonry and thus allowing further damage to occur to contributing structures will never justify removal or demolition.

NEGLECT AND BUILDING CONDITION

Buildings whose condition has deteriorated over time, or which have suffered damage from an act of nature, are natural candidates for restoration and/or improvement. However, it must be stressed that a poor existing condition is not in itself an argument to permit changes that are inconsistent with the principles of preservation. To permit otherwise is to provide an incentive for willful neglect.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

There are relatively few opportunities for new construction within the Cleveland Park Historic District. There may be a buildable lot or a non-contributing building (i.e. one erected after 1941) that may be a candidate for demolition and reconstruction. However, any changes within the district must still follow the full approval process. All existing buildings, including non-contributing buildings, have an impact on the character of the neighboring buildings and streetscape and must be evaluated in that light.

New construction must meet existing zoning considerations (usage, size, setbacks, etc.) and the more stringent requirements for construction within a historic district. Any project that requires exceptions to zoning regulations is unlikely to meet the requirements for appropriate new construction within the historic district.

The design of new construction within a historic district is always a difficult issue to prescribe. We acknowledge that Cleveland Park's historic significance lies in the variety of housing styles that reflect evolving tastes in residential architecture. New construction need not mimic historic styles; contemporary and revival styles are both possible solutions.

Whatever style is chosen, new construction should relate visually to its neighbors so as not to detract from the overall effect of the immediate area. There are many successful examples of architecture that has comfortably made the connection between modern design and the domestic architecture styles of 1880-1941.

Illustration: Examples of successful new construction t.b.d.

It is strongly advised that those interested in new construction first conduct a careful study of existing contributing buildings' style, size, setback, and other defining characteristics, and take into account the constraints of lot size and existing vegetation. Green spaces are as important to the district as the built environment, and respect for topography, vistas, and the preservation of mature trees is of great importance for the district as a whole.

OPENINGS: WINDOWS, DOORS, ENTRANCES

The windows and other openings on historic buildings are important features of architectural character. In properties that are significant because of their historic or architectural value, especially where the proposed changes are to the front elevations or other very visible areas, high priority is given to retaining existing openings. Original materials should be repaired and retained wherever possible or, if necessary, replaced in kind.

Window details, such as exterior casings, sills, mullions, glass types, hardware, and materials, are specific to their time. Windows in additions should harmonize with existing windows, with particular attention paid to mullion patterns and mullion thickness, pane thickness and array, arrangement of multiple windows or doors, shutter design, proportion, and orientation.

Energy conservation concerns should be addressed from the interior when possible. Substantial energy savings can be realized by properly restoring and weatherstripping historic windows. Internal or external storm windows can cut down on drafts and do not require any historic review.

When designing windows and doors in a new addition, the question arises whether these elements should match or be distinctly different from the openings in the original structure. There is no single answer, except to determine what choice best supports the larger preservation issues as reflected in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which stipulate that new construction be distinct but in harmony with the original. The rhythm of openings, proportions, trim details, and the percentage of opening to wall should all be considered within the context of the Standards and the particular property.

For detailed information, see HPO's guidelines on [window repair and replacement](#) and [door repair and replacement](#).

OUTBUILDINGS: DETACHED CARRIAGE HOUSES, GARAGES, SHEDS, POOL HOUSES

An outbuilding that was erected during the period of significance is also significant and enjoys the same protection from neglect and demolition as other contributing structures within the district. These structures are often distinctive and of historic significance even if small in scale, and they demonstrate notable craftsmanship and attention to detail.

Illustration: House at Wisconsin Avenue and Norton Place and its early garage both preserve their historic green tiled roofs.

New construction or substantial alteration of outbuildings, as provided by zoning regulations, is governed by the same rules of proportion and appropriateness as apply to main residence construction. This includes Accessory Dwelling Units. Evaluation of the conversion of garages to other uses will consider the age and significance of the existing garage; the visibility from the public right of way; and the pattern of outbuildings of adjacent properties on the block.

PAINTING

There is no review of paint colors in Washington’s historic districts. Cleveland Park has many colorful houses whose exuberance matches that of the neighborhood’s architecture. Painting is not subject to review unless your property is an *individual landmark* with masonry that has never before been painted.

Illustration: Purple house on Highland Place

Although it is not subject to review, we strongly discourage property owners from painting previously-unpainted brick. The historic masonry material, including its textures, patterns, and mortar, is an important character-defining feature of historic buildings. Painting over brick can lead to the deterioration of the brick and set up a never-ending cycle of maintenance hassles.

Illustration: Brick house with stone details on Porter: The pattern formed by the original unpainted brick and the stone quoins and door surround defines the character of this house on Porter Street. The distinctive historic pattern and textures would be lost if the masonry were painted over.

Illustration: Tudor Revival house on Rowland Place: The texture of variegated brick and a slate roof characterize this Tudor Revival house on Rowland Place.

PARKING (see also Curb Cuts)

The placement of automobiles between the public street and the front of a house erodes the concept of a park-like setting. When off-street parking is absolutely necessary, it is preferable to locate it at the side or (preferably) the rear of the property.

PORCHES and PORTICOS

“Few architectural features evoke more romantic notions or do more to define a building’s historic character than the American porch” (See [Preservation Brief #45: Preserving Historic Wood Porches](#).) The Cleveland Park Historic District is distinguished by the wealth and variety of porches in various styles and from many periods. Front porches are one of the district’s defining characteristics.

Porches, open to the landscape and with a roof, offer a friendly and welcoming interface between public and private life. They are a character-defining feature of many of the 19th– and early-20th-century styles found in Cleveland Park, notably Queen Anne, Shingle-style, and Victorian houses, Sherman Cottages, bungalows, most of the neighborhood’s Foursquares, and Wardman-style semidetached houses. Porches sharing the same setback, scale, and openness help define the rhythm of a streetscape and unify the neighborhood’s varied architecture.

Construction in the later years of the period of significance include terraced houses with uncovered porches that serve as a transition from the street to the house and telegraph openness and connection to the community.

[Illustrations: Porches at 36th and Macomb and along Newark; rhythm of porches along lower Macomb; an example of the uncovered porches mentioned above. (Corner of Porter and 30th? Is this a common enough feature to be worth mentioning and illustrating?)]

Porches on front elevations and visible side elevations should not be altered and every effort should be made to maintain them.

Prior to the designation of the historic district, some residents enclosed their original porches to gain interior space. Many of these enclosed porches retain their original character and still “read” as porches because the structural support columns were not obscured by paneled infill. They retain the massing hierarchy that reinforces the friendly communal feel to the neighborhood. Conversely, enclosures that obscure the original “bones” of the porch often make for a clumsy, incompatible feel. Ideally, these changes would be removed in the process of later renovations, and the original design restored, using any original documentation or referring to similar existing designs. Where this is not practical, or where the changes made in the past now have acquired their own significance, any proposed alterations have to be considered on their own merit.

Adding a porch to a house that does not already have one constitutes a major alteration to the façade and owners should not assume that this will be allowed. Evaluation of such proposals will take into account the relative significance of the existing building, and whether front porches were an original feature of the design. While many of Cleveland Park’s historic architectural styles feature porches, many do not. These include Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, and Georgian Revival houses, and most houses of the 1930s. Many of these have distinctive porticos or other architectural ornaments highlighting the main entrance, which are themselves an important character-defining feature for these buildings. It may be possible to expand a portico somewhat to provide more shelter over an entrance, but care should be taken not to obscure the historic front door detailing and to preserve the original proportions of the portico in relation to other elements of the façade.

Illustration: Colonial Revival house on 36th between Lowell and Woodley. The combination of portico, columns, fan light, and side lights on this Colonial Revival house on 36th Street are as characteristic of its style as porches are of some of Cleveland Park’s other historic styles. The beautifully-preserved unpainted brick, masonry detailing, original door, and painted wooden elements together are a classic expression of this historic house type.

Illustrations: Sears house and its neighbor in the 3500 block of Porter. The inset, shallow arched portico defining the entryway of this porchless house on Porter Street (above) is one of the features that makes it identifiable as a particular model of Sears kit house. One would not want to obscure this distinctive detail by adding a porch that was never there. Meanwhile, its next door neighbor (below) has the deep porch characteristic of its variety of Foursquare.

Auxiliary porches at the side or rear of a house, including sleeping porches, may be screened in or enclosed provided that the resulting design retains the appearance of and reference to the original purpose, which was to provide an open airy connection between the outside and the interior of the house.

The DC Historic Preservation Office publishes a pamphlet that deals with issues of porches in historic buildings in greater detail. See: [Porches and Steps on Historic Buildings](#).

ROOF SHAPES AND DORMERS

The Cleveland Park Historic District houses a vast variety of roof shapes and sizes. Roof shapes include gable, shed, gambrel, hipped, mansard, flat, and more, and are a crucial design features of the many historical styles in the neighborhood. Before proposing any change to your roof, it is essential to understand the style of the building and the role of the roof shape in defining that style.

Illustration: 3145 Newark, with shingled roof immitating thatch. Distinctive roof profiles are character-defining for many houses in Cleveland Park.

Illustrations: Sherman Cottages. Roof profiles are an important part of the style of the “Sherman Cottages” built by the Cleveland Park Company.

Additional illustrations: an example of a shallow hipped roof in tile; a bungalow; Wardman-style rowhouses with tiled roofs and consistent front retaining walls and stoops.

Any change to the roof as seen from the front elevation on a contributing building will receive close scrutiny. The same degree of attention will be paid to dormers. If the building is highly significant, the request for a change visible from the front may be denied. If the building is less significant, or if it can be determined that a request for a change in the pitch of the roof or the addition of dormers would be consistent with the original design, the request will be considered. There is more leeway in the review of requests for changes in the roof lines in the rear of a building, but this remains dependent upon the building’s architectural significance and the effect of the proposed change on the building’s style.

Raising (also known as lifting) a roof or ridge line is rarely, if ever, appropriate alteration in the historic district.

Roofs on additions: Careful attention should be given to the way the roof on a proposed addition joins to and relates visually to the roof on the main mass of the historic building. Size matters. Roof shapes cannot be separated from the buildings they protect and as such the appropriateness of any particular roof form is directly related to its overall size. A large addition may have a roof type that simply does not attach well to an existing structure. In a smaller addition, the very same roof type at a smaller scale might be the perfect design element.

[Illustrations: We need great examples of successful rooflines on additions.]

Roofs on new construction: For new construction, the roof shape, size, and slope should be considered in the context of immediate surrounding buildings and landscapes. While there is no “wrong” or “right” roof types, steeper roofs, with a pitch of three in twelve or greater, are more characteristic of most areas in the historic district. A proposal for a three-story new construction

building will fit better with the typical massing of nearby historic buildings if its roof is pitched rather than flat. This helps visually reduce the height and mass of the building.

Illustrations: 3036 and 3038 Macomb, the new houses by the Tregaron gate, use steeply-sloped roofs in historic forms to moderate the bulk of larger new houses. 3500 Ordway is a tall house on an elevated site with three full stories, but it uses a steep roof slope with a dormer facing the street to avoid the appearance of a massive rectangular block.

SKYLIGHTS

The insertion of skylights into the visible roofs of contributing buildings is discouraged. When considered for non-contributing buildings and/or for sides and rear roof elevations, skylights should be coherent with the overall existing and proposed ensemble. Glass skylights are preferable to plastic “bubble” skylights. Consideration should be given to using “curbs” around skylights to disguise them from street level.

SOLAR PANELS and SUSTAINABILITY

Historic preservation is by definition a good practice in sustainability. Property owners who wish to increase the energy efficiency of their buildings should exhaust all means from the interior of the building by improving insulation and restoring and weatherstripping historic doors and windows. Principles of preservation take precedence over alternative energy measures.

If solar panels are desired they should be located on roofs that cannot be seen from the street, such as flat roofs or rear sloping roofs. If used, solar panels should be as low-profile as possible so as not to alter the roof profile visually and should blend with the roof color. Solar panels will not be approved for portions of sloped roofs that can be seen from the street.

For more on sustainability and historic preservation, see the DC Historic Preservation Office’s draft Sustainability Guide for Existing and Historic Properties (<https://planning.dc.gov/node/1314201>). It contains a wealth of useful information for owners of older and historic properties.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

With its great variety of periods, styles, and topography, Cleveland Park has many historic properties that present unique design challenges. These include buildings that have undergone previous changes and those situated on odd-shaped lots or lots with extreme topography. Alterations to these properties will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Property owners should be prepared to be flexible in preserving their property’s character and its contribution to the character of the district as a whole.

STYLE

The evolution of the character of the Cleveland Park District shows the results of a philosophy of embracing innovation and exuberance in architecture. As such there is no preference either for or against any particular style of architecture. However, the character of the neighborhood is rooted predominantly in the styles and values of the period of significance, 1880-1941. Any proposed addition or new construction, regardless of proposed style, must respond directly to its generally more traditional neighbors.

The most unusual modern architecture in the neighborhood, while some of it is significant in its own right, should not be taken as license to create new construction that has no relationship to the scale, massing, and materials of neighboring buildings from the period of significance. When considering stylistic approaches, owners and architects should consider the range of styles present in their part of the historic district and the scale, settings, and rhythms that unify those diverse styles in context.

WINDOWS

See Openings: Windows, Doors, Entrances