

Site Features & Plantings

The mature landscapes found in Chapel Hill's historic districts are not static but evolving and their preservation cannot be accomplished in the same way that buildings are preserved. Nonetheless, significant natural site features and plantings—including mature trees, gardens, foundation plantings, hedges, grassy lawns, and street tree canopies—are an essential part of the district setting. Further, manmade features—including terraces, trellises, and gazebos—illustrate the evolving use of yards and gardens over time. Fences, walls, and walkways, arguably the most significant built resources, are discussed in later sections. Collectively, the natural and built features serve as a cohesive backdrop against which to view the architecture of the districts.

Mature trees and the canopy they provide contribute significantly to the character of the historic districts with many streets lined with majestic oak trees that date to the early 1900s. Beyond the aesthetic, shade trees are important elements of a sustainable landscape, reducing energy costs by providing shade in the summer to reduce the cost of cooling and solar heat gain, especially on south-facing walls. For these reasons, trees and plantings can and should be maintained through routine fertilizing, pruning, and treatment for diseases. Replacing diseased or damaged trees and plantings with healthy new specimens that will have a similar height and size canopy as they mature also maintains the character of the districts.

The districts are also characterized by grassy lawns, hedges, shrubs, and plantings along walkways and foundations. Because plants are constantly growing and evolving, the current landscape is the result of many years of cultivation and care. Thus, the continued maintenance of plantings, as well as the retention of the sense of openness or enclosure that they provide, is essential to maintaining the historic character of the district. Like shade trees, plantings are inherently sustainable, providing permeable surface area to absorb rainwater and limit run-off; purifying the air; and providing habitat for a variety of insects, birds, and small wildlife.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

Landscapes are constantly evolving as trees and plants grow, die, and new ones are planted. Further, gardens and yard designs are easily changed, often without significant change to the overall character of the site or district. Consequently, the guidelines address only significant landscape features and do not apply to minor or seasonal plantings including low plants and flower beds. However, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for the removal of "rare and specimen trees" (as defined in the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO)), the removal of mature trees larger than 10" in diameter, and for any proposed site work related to new construction or paving. Property owners should contact the HDC staff to determine whether a COA is required for proposed site changes or improvements.

When planning site changes or improvements, it is important to consider the overall district setting and specific site characteristics. New plantings and site features should be selected and located in an effort to maintain or enhance the existing sense of enclosed or open space within the property and district. Additionally, plant materials that are not in keeping with the traditional character of the district or North Carolina's native climate should be avoided. A list of suggested plantings is provided in the Appendix. The Town's Urban Forester can provide technical advice to property owners as well.

Routine maintenance of mature trees, including trimming, pruning, and the removal of kudzu, wisteria, and English ivy from tree trunks and limbs is necessary to extend their life cycle. Further, large trees and other important site features should be protected from damage during

Commented [HW1]: AS: make sure pruning is done in an appropriate manner - it can cause harm if not done properly

Commented [HW2]: AS: We might want to explain what these both mean, and why both are stated, even though they sound opposite.

Commented [HW3]: Staff: Committee discussion required for 10" tree diameter proposal.

Commented [HW4]: Staff: What about site work that can impact a significant tree on a neighboring property? Should this be noted here or is this covered in other Town development regulations?

construction or site work. Related soil compaction or loss of root area as a result of construction activities can also endanger mature trees and plantings. Maintenance of built features should follow the guidance for the specific material of which it is constructed. Ensuring that water does not collect on built surfaces and that wood surfaces maintain protective coatings is essential to their longevity. The routine maintenance and repair of fences, walls, and walkways is covered in subsequent sections.

While modern, sustainable site features like rain barrels, cisterns, and, in some cases, vegetable gardens were not historically part of the nineteenth and twentieth century landscape, if carefully sited, these features can be easily integrated into the historic landscape. Mechanical equipment, transformers, satellite dishes, dumpsters, and other smaller contemporary site features can usually be located in rear or side yards and screened from view by plantings or fencing. However, the introduction of large manmade contemporary site features, such as playground equipment or swimming pools, should only be considered if the site feature can be accommodated in a unobtrusive location that successfully screens its visibility from the street, minimizing its impact on the historic district.

Guidelines: Site Features & Plantings

1. Retain and preserve site features and plantings that are important in defining the overall historic character of sites and streetscapes within the historic district. These include, but are not limited to mature trees, lawns and ground cover, foundation plantings, hedges, terraces, trellises, and gazebos.
2. Retain and preserve historic relationship between district buildings, structures, or streetscapes and their site features and plantings, including site topography, retaining walls, hedges, foundation plantings, driveways, and walkways. It is not appropriate to significantly alter the topography of the district by excavating, grading, or filling.
3. Protect and maintain constructed and natural site features and plantings through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods. Ensure that constructed surfaces are properly drained and that painted surfaces maintain an intact paint film. Prune or trim trees in a way that encourages the preservation of the district tree canopy. It is not appropriate to drastically change the shape of a tree by “topping” it.
4. Protect and maintain mature trees and the district tree canopy. It is not appropriate to remove a healthy, mature tree. However, trees less than 10” in diameter may be removed with Administrative approval. When tree removal is needed (due to disease, structural impact on a historic structure, or other reason), a Certified Arborist must be consulted and the written recommendation must be provided with the COA. The HDC may require the planting of new trees to replace any mature trees that are removed.
5. Repair deteriorated or damaged constructed historic site features, such as terraces, gazebos, trellises, fences, and walls through appropriate methods outlined in the guidelines for Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Fences & Walls.
6. Replace deteriorated or missing constructed site features with new features match the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Or install new features that are compatible with the overall historic character of the site, building, or district.
7. Replaced damaged or diseased trees and plantings, including mature trees, hedges, and foundation plantings, that are important to the historic character of the site or district with new plantings that are the same or similar in species. Replace damaged or diseased trees with species of a similar mature height and canopy. Preserve and propagate plant species that are indigenous to North Carolina (see the list of suggested plantings in the appendix).
8. Maintain and protect site features, trees, and plantings from damage during or as a consequence of site work or new construction.
9. Introduce compatible, new site features, trees, or plantings with care so that the overall historic character of the site and district is not diminished or compromised. Utilize traditional materials in the construction of benches, terraces, gazebos, trellises, fences, and walls. Repeat dominant landscape designs found in the district when installing new plantings. Locate new site features—including building additions and new construction—in areas that do not obscure historic buildings or their architectural features or require the removal of healthy, mature trees.
10. Introduce sustainable site features—including solar collectors, rain barrels, and raised

Commented [HW5]: Maybe we just take this line out and leave it at “protect and maintain mature trees.” We’ll still need to flush out when trees can come down so that the HDC doesn’t decide that arbitrarily or hang their hat on protecting the tree canopy in every situation.

Commented [HW6]: Staff: Committee discussion needed to ensure development isn’t denied saving a single tree.

planting beds—in locations that do not diminish or compromise the overall character of the site and district.

11. Introduce contemporary site features—including satellite dishes, playground equipment, mechanical equipment, transformers, “hot boxes,” and swimming pools—in locations that do not diminish or compromise the overall character of the site and district.

Public Rights-of-way

The buildings and landscapes that make up Chapel Hill's historic districts are viewed against the backdrop of the public rights-of-way. While generally considered to be secondary to the buildings, the network of streets, alleys, lanes, sidewalks, and planting strips that links stylistically disparate properties within the districts and that accommodates cars as well as pedestrians contributes in significant ways to the historic character of Chapel Hill's historic districts. Elements of the public right-of-way, or streetscape, include the street patterns themselves, low fieldstone walls, street tree canopies, gravel sidewalks, rolling topography, and occasional brick gutters. The streetscape also includes necessary lighting, signage, and utilities. However, if left unmonitored, the ongoing proliferation of signs, utility lines and poles, transformers, and other contemporary elements to the streetscape can diminish its distinctive historic character.

Within the districts, streetscape characteristics vary. The core of the Franklin-Rosemary and Cameron-McCauley districts follow a gridded street plan with regular sidewalks and the consistent use of fieldstone walls. The commercial section of Franklin Street in particular is far more rectilinear and formalized than the softer-edged, heavily landscaped residential streets a few blocks away. Development north of North Street in the Franklin-Rosemary district and throughout the Gimghoul district is arranged on curvilinear streets that follow the topography of the land and have fewer sidewalks. However, all district streetscapes share a pedestrian-oriented character and scale.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

Maintaining the functionality of the public rights-of-way while preserving its historic character requires careful attention to retaining historic materials, such as brick gutters and fieldstone walls, as repairs or improvements are made. The fine-grained gravel used to surface most sidewalks is a distinctive material in the Chapel Hill districts and it is important to retain it. However, in some heavily traveled areas, the gravel sidewalks may prove too irregular or too narrow a passage for pedestrian safety and accessibility or the rapid erosion of sloping sites may make their maintenance too difficult. In these locations, alternative compatible surface materials, such as red brick pavers, may be necessary. However, in situations where a new sidewalk surface material is introduced, it is important to avoid a patchwork effect from alternating surface materials along a particular street or block.

Maintaining and replenishing the tree canopy that contributes to the historic character of many district streetscapes is critical to their preservation. This effort requires monitoring existing trees for damage or disease, pruning them appropriately, protecting them from nearby construction work, and developing a long term plan for their replacement when needed.

The Town of Chapel Hill and the North Carolina Department of Transportation are responsible for maintaining streets, curbs, gutters, and public sidewalks in the districts. While pedestrian and vehicular traffic necessitate the regular repaving of public streets, care should be taken to maintain street widths and to minimize the impact of heavy machinery and vibrations on mature trees and historic buildings and site features.

The pedestrian experience can be enriched by selectively placing lighting, street trees, public art, and street furniture between the curb and building frontage, especially in the commercial corridor. However, as new street furniture, signs, and lights are added or replaced within the public rights-of-way, their selection and siting should be carefully reviewed for compatibility in terms of

design, location, materials, color, and scale.

While streetlights, street signs, and power poles have always been a part of the streetscape, the amount of equipment, signage, cables, and utilities located within the public rights-of-way can diminish the historic character of the districts if not carefully monitored. Coordinating the work of various services and utilities, locating utilities and equipment in locations that preserve landscape features and historic building fabric, and screening dumpsters and transformers can help to minimize the visual clutter they bring to the streetscape. Further, underground services should be considered when possible.

Guidelines: Public Rights-of-way

1. Retain and preserve the topography, materials, features, patterns, and dimensions of the streets, alleys, sidewalks, planting strips, and street trees that are important in defining the overall historic character of the districts.
2. Protect and maintain the details, features, and material surfaces of the historic streetscape—including, but not limited to, red brick and gravel walkways, stone walls, and brick gutters—through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods.
3. Repair or replace deteriorated or damaged historic features taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature. Replacement features should match the original (or adjacent historic features) in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern.
4. Protect and maintain street trees by trimming and pruning them in a manner that preserves the existing tree canopy. It is not appropriate to drastically change the shape of a tree by “topping” it. Replace diseased or damaged street trees with new trees of the same or similar species.
5. Maintain existing planting strips between the sidewalk and curb. **It is not appropriate to pave over existing planting strips.**
6. Introduce new plantings in the public rights-of-way that are compatible with the historic character of the district with regard to species, density, and mature height. Select native species when possible. (A list of appropriate plantings is included in the Appendix.)
7. **Limit signage in the public rights-of-way primarily to signs necessary for traffic and pedestrian safety. Locate signage so it does not obscure historic building or landscape features or compromise the overall historic character of the streetscape.**
8. Introduce new street lighting, as needed, that is compatible in scale, materials, and design with the pedestrian scale and character of the historic district.
9. Locate necessary **street furniture**, trash receptacles, mailboxes, newspaper racks, and similar elements in locations that do not compromise the historic character of the streetscape. Select benches and other street furniture that are compatible with the historic district in design, scale, and materials.
10. Minimize the introduction of additional transformers, utility poles, wires, and cables in the public rights-of-way. Seek less intrusive locations for such elements to reduce their impact on the mature tree canopy and the historic streetscape. Consider painting equipment and exposed utilities to compliment mounting surfaces or screening them with vegetation to reduce their visibility. Consider the introduction of underground utility lines where feasible.
11. It is not appropriate to introduce paving materials, lighting fixtures, or other streetscape elements that predate the historic district in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.

Commented [HW7]: Staff: Is it OK (or encouraged) to do the opposite: to remove existing paving to replace with a planting strip?

Staff: Is it fair to say that it would also be inappropriate to over landscape the planting strip? I don't think I've seen it much here, but we wouldn't want there to be a planter bed full of shrubs or flowers in the planter strip either if the street is predominantly grassy planter strips.

Commented [HW8]: Staff: Do we want to specify in residential neighborhoods? In commercial areas, there are projecting and shingle signs that extend above the sidewalk into the right-of-way.

Commented [HW9]: Is it necessary to address public art? Is there another body that reviews public art? This guideline would only regulate location and scale, not content. Other guidelines in the document would apply to the impact of art on historic buildings (i.e. painting unpainted masonry or concealing historic features of buildings)

Commented [HW10R9]: Staff: I think there is a separate body for public art. We might want to provide some recommendations on the location, but not get too deep into it. I think most would realize that it's a contemporary, and possibly even temporary, improvement.

Walls & Fences

Low fieldstone walls are one of the most distinctive landscape features in Chapel Hill's historic districts, especially in the Franklin-Rosemary historic district. The walls, which are either dry stacked or set in mortar, border many front yards and edge the streetscape, delineating property lines and demarcating boundaries between private lots and the public right-of-way. Where the topography shifts, stone retaining walls accommodate the shift in height between the lawn and the sidewalk. Wooden or cast iron picket fences and pierced brick walls are less common, but are also found within the districts. The low height of stone walls and picket fences within the districts give definition to property lines without screening views of the front yards. Consequently, a visually open feel is characteristic of the district streetscapes.

Higher walls and fences are used for more significant grade changes, especially in the north portions of the Franklin-Rosemary and Gimghoul historic districts and the west end of the Cameron-McCauley historic district. In some cases, taller wood fences screen mechanical equipment and provide privacy for rear yards.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

It is important to retain the low stone walls and fences that are so characteristic of the districts. Maintenance and repair of existing masonry walls and metal or wood fences should follow the guidelines for the specific material. In addition, appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for walls and fences include the following steps:

- Inspect wood, metal, and masonry surfaces and features regularly for signs of water infiltration or damage from moisture, structural failure or fatigue, or settlement.
- Ensure adequate drainage to prevent water from collecting on horizontal surfaces or along foundations.
- Retain space between wood or metal fences and the ground to limit exposure to ground moisture.
- Maintain a sound layer of paint or other protective coating on wood and metal surfaces and features.
- Repoint deteriorated mortar joints to prevent water infiltration.

When considering new fences or walls, traditional materials such as fieldstone and red brick are appropriate for walls, while wood and cast iron are appropriate for fences within the districts. A careful look at the surrounding properties will help determine what material, height, and type of wall or fence will best maintain the streetscape character. Screening of mechanical equipment or parking areas in rear yards or can often be accomplished by a low wall or picket fence complemented by shrubs and other plantings. Picket fences are an option in front or rear yards where access must be controlled but where high, solid fencing would interrupt the visual continuity of the streetscape. Tall, solid privacy fences or walls are inconsistent with the informal, visually open setting of the districts and are not appropriate choices for front and side yards visible from the right-of-way. However, tall fences and/or light-gauge wire fencing may be appropriated in rear yards where privacy or animal control is desired. Temporary, light-gauge fencing to keep plants and gardens free from animals is acceptable in front and side yards, though should be limited to small garden areas. Contemporary modular concrete products and vinyl or metal chain link fencing are not characteristic of the districts and should not be introduced where they are visible from the street.

Guidelines: Walls & Fences

1. Retain and preserve the materials and decorative and functional features of walls and fences that are important in defining the overall historic character of sites within the historic districts. These include, but are not limited to the overall form, materials, patterns, dimensions, configurations, and details.
2. Protect and maintain the features, materials, surfaces and details of historic walls and fences through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods. Ensure that walls are properly drained to divert rainwater from flat surfaces and foundations. Ensure that wood surfaces are properly sealed and/or have sound paint films. Refer to the guidelines for Masonry, Wood, and Architectural Metals.
3. Repair deteriorated or damaged historic walls and fences through recognized preservation methods of patching, splicing, consolidating, and reinforcing. When possible, salvage original materials from a less prominent location to patch more prominent parts of the wall or fence.
4. Replace in kind any part of a historic walls and fences that is too deteriorated to repair, taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature. Replacement features should match the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern.
5. If a historic wall or fence is completely missing, or if deterioration necessitates its replacement, replace it to match the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color, based upon physical and documentary evidence. Otherwise, replace it with a new feature that is compatible in material, design, scale, and detail with the building, site, and district.
6. Site new walls and fences in configurations and locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district and consistent with the location and height of other walls and fences in the district. New front- and side-yard walls and fences should not exceed the average height of the walls and fences of surrounding properties.
7. Construct new walls in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, height, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district. Walls should be constructed of red brick or fieldstone. Walls constructed of bare concrete block or with thin stone veneers applied to concrete or other structural block are not appropriate.
8. Construct new fences in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, height, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district. Fences should be constructed of wood or metal and should relate to the original materials used on similar fences of the period. Wood fences should be constructed with structural members facing inward to the property and must be painted or stained to compliment the historic character of the building, site, and district. Chain link, vinyl, or split rail fences are not appropriate. Light-gauge wire fencing may be constructed as necessary to keep animals out of gardens and rear yards.
9. Introduce contemporary utilitarian walls and fences in rear and side yards only where they do not compromise the historic character of the building, site, or district. Wood privacy fences should be relegated to rear yards, beginning beyond the rear wall of the primary structure on the property, and should be screened with landscaping materials as much as possible. Sites with significant variations in topography should consider segmented walls and fences that step up and

Commented [HW11]: Staff: What if you're the first person in your vicinity to put up a fence? Will the HDC say no to the fence because there are not existing fences and walls on adjacent properties?

Heather: Does the LUMO regulate fence height? If so, or if we just call out appropriate fence heights, this whole sentence could be deleted.

Staff: LUMO doesn't differentiate between front and rear yards.

Commented [HW12]: I think we need to define front, side, and rear yards. Some communities consider the front yard anything in front of the front corner of the house, the rear yard back from the rear corner, and the side yard between the front and rear corners. It gets tricky when you consider rear additions and whether the rear yard starts beyond them or beyond the original house. There's also one municipality (can't remember which offhand, but I can find it) that uses front, side-front, side-rear, and rear to further break it down. Either way, we should define them and include a diagram.

Staff: What if it was the midpoint of the side elevation of the house? Maybe we somehow stress that they are more appropriate in backyards, but this gives people a bit more flexibility.

down to follow the topography. It is not appropriate to introduce contemporary vinyl or metal chain link fences.

Commented [HW13]: Should vinyl be allowed?

Commented [HW14]: NM: If vinyl (I don't think metal chain link should be allowed) fencing is used, screen the fencing with appropriate plant material.

Walkways, Driveways & Off-street Parking

Variations in the size, location, and materials of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking in the districts is the result of more than two hundred years of development. It also illustrates changing modes of transportation and changes in building usage over time. Nineteenth-century Chapel Hillians relied on foot traffic, bicycles, or in some cases, horses. The twentieth-century shift to automobile transportation resulted in significant changes to the landscape of Chapel Hill's historic districts. Public streets were widened and paved, sidewalks on major streets were paved to allow for ADA access, and commercial and institutional buildings required larger parking lots. While foot and bicycle traffic remained a common form of transportation within and between the districts throughout the late twentieth century, changes continued to be made to the landscape to accommodate the ever-growing number of parked cars, especially as residential buildings were enlarged and converted to multi-family or fraternity/sorority housing.

Despite these changes, several dominant styles and materials have emerged for walkways and driveways, contributing to a cohesive historic character within Chapel Hill's historic districts. Narrow walkways of flagstone, gravel, red brick or concrete typically lead the pedestrian from the sidewalk or driveway to the front of the house. While many walkways extend in a straight part from the public sidewalk to the front door, others conform to the irregularities of the terrain with their edges softened by landscaping. In the commercial areas, wide, crisply-edged concrete walkways define the pedestrian path.

Driveways are typically single-lane leading from the street to a rear or side yard parking area or garage. In the Gimghoul Historic District, Evergreen Road provides access to the rear of properties, negating the need for driveways from the street. Driveway materials include gravel, concrete runners, asphalt, or red brick pavers. On some larger sites, circular drives curve through the front yard, while in other locations with narrower lots shared driveways are utilized. Reflecting an earlier era when automobiles were less dominant, most residential drives and garages were designed to accommodate only one or two vehicles.

Paved parking areas became increasingly common as churches expanded in size and residential properties were converted for use by multiple unrelated tenants, especially in the Franklin-Rosemary and Cameron-McCauley historic districts. Parking is generally located to the side or rear of buildings, constructed of concrete, asphalt, or gravel, and in some cases is screened with vegetation.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

Changes in land use and lifestyle have resulted in an increase of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic in Chapel Hill's historic districts throughout the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. Balancing the need for increased parking with a desire for sustainability, while trying to minimize the impact of changes to the historic districts can be especially challenging. For residential properties in the historic districts, it is important to retain the informal, harmonious character of existing walkways and driveways. If their surfaces deteriorate, replacement in kind or with compatible materials will maintain the visual continuity they provide. If steep slopes present an ongoing maintenance problem for gravel driveways, red brick pavers or asphalt are more compatible replacement choices than concrete. The introduction of new walkways and driveways should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with the siting, spacing, configuration, width, and paving materials of other properties within the district.

Increasing the amount of off-street parking for residential properties in the districts is a challenge.

Commented [HW15]: AS: What about concrete pavers?

Widening or expanding driveways and parking areas that are visible from the right-of-way is generally not appropriate. However, if the building lot is large enough, it may be possible to add off-street parking in the rear or side yard, provided that it can be visually screened from adjacent properties and the street. Regardless of the location, new parking areas should not significantly alter the site's proportion of landscaped area to constructed/paved area.

For institutional or commercial parking lots within the historic districts, it is important to minimize their visual and environmental impact by screening the lots from view and subdividing large paved areas with landscaped medians or islands that incorporate existing trees or allow for new plantings.

Guidelines: Walkways, Driveways & Off-street Parking

1. Retain and preserve the features, materials, patterns, dimensions, details, and configurations of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas that are important in defining the overall historic character of sites within the historic districts.
2. Protect and maintain the details, features, materials, and surfaces of character defining walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods. Ensure that surfaces are properly sloped to divert rainwater along appropriate channels.
3. Repair deteriorated or damaged historic walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through recognized preservation methods. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated portions of a feature, matching the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern.
4. If a historic walkway, driveway, or off-street parking area is completely missing, or if deterioration necessitates its replacement, replace it to match the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern, based upon physical and documentary evidence. Otherwise, replace it with a new feature that is compatible in material, design, scale, and detail with the overall historic character of the site and district.
5. Design new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking to conform with the spacing, width, configuration, and materials of character-defining walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas in the district.
6. Site new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas in locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district—typically to the side and rear of existing buildings—and locate them so the topography of the site and mature trees and other significant site features are not altered, damaged, or lost.
7. In residential areas, it is not appropriate to locate off-street parking areas in front yards. Whenever possible, driveways should lead to parking areas to the side or rear of the primary building on the site.
8. In commercial and institutional areas, parking should be located at the side or rear of the property whenever possible.
9. It is not appropriate to locate driveways or parking areas in locations where the paving will abut the principal building. A planting strip of 6"-12" should be retained between historic structures and any new paving in order to minimize damage to the foundation.
10. It is not appropriate to locate new off-street parking on a site where the paved area will substantially alter the proportion of the site that is paved versus landscaped.
11. Construct new walkways in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district. These include red brick, flagstone, concrete, and Chapel Hill gravel. It is not appropriate to use asphalt for sidewalks within the historic districts.

Commented [HW16]: AS: Is this large enough? Where does this size suggestion come from?

Commented [HW17]: Most guidelines just say that paving should not abut the foundation. The 6-12" came from the Charlotte guidelines. I assume the more space the better, but I don't have another source that gives guidance on how much space is needed/appropriate.

Commented [HW18]: I didn't call out specific brick patterns/colors, but we can get more specific if you think it's necessary.

Commented [HW19R18]: AS: It might be good here, and elsewhere, to specify red brick, as the color does matter in this instance, as it is historically the most appropriate in Chapel Hill. Also, differentiate between true brick pavers and concrete/composite pavers that have a different profile.

Staff: Committee discussion needed.

12. Construct new driveways and off-street parking areas in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district. [These include red brick, concrete, asphalt, and Chapel Hill gravel.] Consider permeable materials—including brick—or install paving strips, or concrete runners, to minimize the impervious surface area and thus, reduce runoff from the site. It is not appropriate to use asphalt for curb cuts or aprons within the historic districts.

13. Utilize perimeter plantings, trees, shrubbery, hedges, and other landscape features—including stone walls—to screen new driveways and off-street parking areas visually from the street, to buffer adjacent residential properties from their visual impact, and to reduce the solar heat gain of the paved surfaces. Further reduce the visual impact of large parking areas by subdividing them with interior planting medians.

Commented [HW20]: Staff: Is the use of colored concrete to be allowed? It can sometimes be misused- Or is it preferred to use colored pavers instead?

Commented [HW21]: Do you want all of these available for paving materials? Do you have a preference for concrete vs. asphalt paving?

Commented [HW22]: AS: I think all of these are fine. I do think we need to address whether composite/concrete pavers are appropriate and in what use – I think we have said okay as driveways in Gimghoul, but frown on them almost everywhere else. Also maybe say no to pattern (pressed) concrete.

Historic Garages & Accessory Structures

Outbuildings and accessory buildings have always been a part of Chapel Hill's historic districts, their size, materials, and function illustrating the long development history of the districts. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a wide variety of outbuildings were extant in the district including privies, barns, carriage houses, kitchens, and sheds. However, few, if any, of these buildings remain. The majority of extant outbuildings in the districts date to the twentieth century and include garages, cottages, studies, storage sheds, carports, and other accessory structures.

Typically, garages are one or two bays wide, located behind the principal structure, and oriented with the doors facing the street. Generally, small cottages and storage buildings are located in rear yards well behind the main house. The materials and details of garages, cottages, and storage buildings often match those of the primary building. Houses constructed in the late twentieth century, especially those located in the north part of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, are more likely to have been constructed as attached garages, carports, or storage structures.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

Like all buildings, the preservation of early garages and accessory structures is dependent on routine maintenance and timely repair of building elements and materials as described in the relevant design guidelines. Guidelines on the rehabilitation of specific materials as well as guidelines for Foundations; Roofs; Exterior Walls, Trim, and Ornamentation; Windows and Shutters; and Exterior Doors should be followed when making changes to existing garages and accessory structures. Additionally, appropriate routine maintenance and repair methods for garages and accessory structures include the following steps:

- Inspect wood, metal, and masonry surfaces regularly for signs of deterioration due to moisture damage, settlement or structural damage, insect or fungal infestation, corrosion, or paint failure.
- Ensure that gutters and downspouts are free from debris and that water does not collect along the foundation or on flat, horizontal surfaces and decorative elements.
- Retain protective paint or stain coatings that prevent deterioration and repaint surfaces as needed to maintain a sound, protective paint film
- Use the gentlest effective method to clean surfaces.

While many historic garages and accessory structures mimic the architectural detailing of the primary resource, it is often in a pared-down fashion. In rare instances, historic barns and sheds remain; more utilitarian in form and detail than garages, they may not necessarily mimic the style and materials of the house. Thus, the addition of architectural elements not original to the historic building, including decorative doors and windows, porches, and trimwork, is not appropriate as it misrepresents the history and architectural significance of the building. Likewise, it is not appropriate to install overtly modern elements to visible elevations of historic garages and accessory structures including standard two-car overhead garage doors, skylights, solar panels, and modern doors and windows.

The design of new garages and accessory structures is addressed in the New Construction portion of the document.

Guidelines: Historic Garages & Accessory Structures

Note: These guidelines apply only to historic garages and accessory structures. Guidelines related to the construction of new garages and accessory structures are located on page --.

1. Retain and preserve the materials and decorative and functional features of garages and accessory structures that are important in defining the overall historic character of sites within the historic districts. These include, but are not limited to the overall form, materials, windows, doors, details, and finishes.
2. Protect and maintain the details, features, materials, and surfaces of historic garages and accessory structures through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods. Ensure that drainage features are functioning properly to divert rainwater from buildings walls and foundations and that wood surfaces have sound paint films.
3. Repaint garages and accessory structures following the guidelines for Paint on page--.
4. Repair deteriorated or damaged historic garages and accessory structures through recognized preservation methods of patching, splicing, consolidating, and reinforcing. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated features and surfaces of garages and accessory structures.
5. Replace in kind any part of a historic garage or accessory structure that is too deteriorated to repair, taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature. Replacement features should match the original in material, design, dimension, detail, texture, and finish. It is not appropriate to remove rather than repair or replace decorative features on a character-defining elevation of a garage or accessory structure. Consider a compatible substitute material only if replacement in kind is not technically feasible.
6. If deterioration necessitates the replacement of an entire garage or accessory structure, follow the guidelines for Demolition of Existing Buildings on page-- and the guidelines for New Construction of Garages and Accessory Structures on page--.
7. It is not appropriate to remove or conceal materials or details of historic garages or accessory structure—including wood siding, eaves, windows, and original doors. It is not appropriate to install vinyl or fiberglass overhead doors on historic garages.
8. It is not appropriate to introduce features or details to a garage or accessory structure in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.

Commented [HW23]: We need to clearly define a historic garage.

Exterior Lighting

Exterior lighting is essential for human safety and can be effectively used to highlight and reinforce a building's architectural character or landscape. Traditionally, exterior lighting of the residential sections of Chapel Hill's historic districts was minimal and generally limited to front porch lighting in the form of a single ceiling or wall fixture or to site lighting in the form a single post light at the end of the front walkway. Exterior lighting increased in the twentieth century with low-level lighting along paths and walkways and utilitarian lighting on accessory buildings becoming common.

Exterior lighting in the commercial and institutional areas within the districts was also minimal by today's standards. Commercial lighting was typically limited to a single light illuminating a building sign or a ceiling light within a recessed entrance. Institutional lighting most often includes lights at each entrance to a building, a light illuminating signage on the building or site, and, in some cases, decorative lighting at the exterior walls or within the landscape.

In addition to individual site lighting, the historic districts are lit by streetlights within the public right-of-way.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

The need for increased site and street lighting in the twentieth century reflected contemporary concerns with security and safety throughout the historic districts, a concern that continues in the twenty first century. However, it is important to meet these demands in ways that do not compromise the historic character or the pedestrian scale of the site or district. Lighting fixtures are visible in the district by day and selective lighting can enhance the architecture of a building and the character of the district by night. However, the installation of new fixtures should always be carefully considered to compliment the architecture of the building and should be carefully measured against the increased light pollution and energy expended.

When possible, maintain original lighting fixtures (after ensuring that the wiring is safe and meets modern building codes). When replacing or installing new fixtures, consider the design, materials, size, height, scale, and color of proposed exterior lighting fixtures. The design of fixtures should be in keeping with the character of the house and site. Period lighting fixtures may be appropriate if they are consistent with the character of the house. However, while reproduction period lighting is available online and in stores, it is generally preferable to install simple, inconspicuous fixtures—like simple globe fixtures—instead of highly stylized fixtures that may create a false sense of history.

The brightness, direction, and color of the proposed light source should also be reviewed. Early gas and electric lights were significantly less bright than what we are accustomed to today. Careful placement of fixtures and the installation of low-wattage bulbs can help reduce both light pollution and energy consumption. Low-level lighting in key locations and the use of directional fixtures and downlights can minimize excessive, indiscriminate nighttime light. The impact of undesired exterior lighting can also be minimized by the use of timers and motion sensors that control light sources and reduce energy consumption. As a general rule, rather than illuminating an entire area, select fixtures that direct light towards the walkway, path, or steps. Limit the repeated use of footlights along a path to prevent a distracting runway effect. If low-mounted footlights are not appropriate, consider modest height post-mounted fixtures that are compatible with the human scale of the historic districts.

Guidelines: Exterior Lighting

1. Retain and preserve exterior lighting fixtures that are important in defining the overall historic character of buildings or sites within the historic districts.
2. Protect and maintain the details, features, materials, and finishes of historic exterior lighting fixtures through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods.
3. Repair deteriorated or damaged exterior lighting fixtures through recognized preservation methods for masonry, wood, and architectural metals. It is not appropriate to replace original light fixtures instead of repairing them.
4. If a historic exterior lighting fixture is missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace the fixture with one that matches the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, and texture. Or, replace it with a new fixture that is compatible in design, scale, material, and finish with the overall historic character of the building, site and district.
5. Introduce new exterior lighting fixtures with care so that the overall historic character of the building, site, and district is not compromised or diminished. Select and site new lighting fixtures so their location, orientation, height, brightness, scale, and design are compatible with the historic district and its human scale. Fixtures should emit a white or warm spectrum light; fluorescent, neon, or colored lighting is not appropriate in the historic districts.
6. Introduce low-level lighting in residential areas as needed to ensure safety and security. Minimize their impact on the overall historic character of the site by selecting discreet fixtures—such as footlights, recessed lights, directional lights, and lights on pedestrian-scaled posts—and installing them in unobtrusive locations.
7. Control the direction and range of new lighting so it does not invade adjacent properties. Locate low-level or directional site lighting and motion detectors with care to ensure that light does not invade adjacent properties. It is not appropriate to introduce indiscriminant lighting, including bright security lights, or to over-illuminate the facades or front yards of houses in the historic districts. It is not appropriate to install outdoor string lighting that is lit indiscriminately and/or continuously.
8. It is not appropriate to introduce period lighting fixtures from an era that predates the district building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance. It is not appropriate to introduce period lighting fixtures that are stylistically incompatible with the style of the building.

Commented [HW24]: AS: What is permanent vs. temporary? Maybe we need to define that somehow, for this, for garden features, art, Christmas/holiday decorations, little free libraries, etc. And recommendations vs. something that requires a COA. I love a string or two of Japanese lantern or twinkle lights over a patio or on a porch.

Commented [HW25]: This was a concern raised at the public meeting (or in an email from the public) regarding string lighting used by sororities/fraternities that was left on all night, every night, all year round.

Signage

Signage plays an important way-finding and educational role in Chapel Hill's historic districts. Signs are functional—used to direct, identify, educate, and promote—but are also decorative elements that contribute to the unique character and visual qualities of the historic districts. Appropriately located and detailed signage can enhance the streetscape, the district, and the pedestrian experience. Conversely, inappropriately placed signs obscure historic features, create visual clutter, and disrupt the harmony of the streetscape.

Within the commercial area of the Franklin/Rosemary Historic District a variety of signs can be found. Some are incorporated into the building facades while signboards have been attached to others. Signage has also been applied to many awnings and display windows. Signage in the commercial areas is essential as it identifies businesses and the goods and services they offer. However, signage should be graphically simple and designed to complement the architecture, color, and textures of the building.

Throughout the residential areas of Chapel Hill's historic districts, institutional signs, traffic signs, and historic plaques are found. Institutional signs are generally hanging signs on freestanding posts or larger pedestal signs located low to the ground and softened with landscaping. Fraternity and sorority houses are typically identified by large Greek letters applied to the façade of the building and many individual homes have small wood or brass plaques that name and date the houses. Transportation authorities have jurisdiction over the placement and quantity of traffic signs. However, when possible, public signs should be consolidated on uniform poles to reduce visual clutter.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

For commercial properties, the traditional location above the storefront transom or mid-cornice remains an ideal location for wooden signboards that are sized to fit the storefront area. Awnings and display windows continue to provide opportunities for signage to be applied as well. Throughout the historic districts, plastic signs and signs that are internally illuminated are not appropriate and are incompatible with the historic character of the districts.

In the residential areas of the historic districts, simple signs that do not detract from the overall historic character can be used to discreetly provide identification or necessary information. Consider the compatibility of proposed new signs in terms of size, overall design, legibility of typeface, and color. The location and supports for proposed signage should also be carefully considered. Generally small, freestanding wooden or metal signs mounted on low supports or a landscaped base can be added to residential properties without detracting from the site or building. If signage must be added directly to a building, it is important to find ways to install the sign without concealing or damaging significant architectural features or details. An unobtrusive, inexpensive and easily reversible way to introduce signage on historic buildings is to apply clear adhesive films with opaque lettering onto window or door glazing in appropriate locations. Small identification plaques or wooden signs can sometimes be mounted near a building entrance without compromising the building as well. Within the historic districts, traditional sign materials such as painted wood, metal, and stone are all appropriate.

Guidelines: Signage

Note: In addition to a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission, property owners must also apply for a Sign Permit from the Town of Chapel Hill. Signage must comply with sign regulations outlined in the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO).

1. Retain and preserve historic signs that are important in defining the overall historic character of buildings or sites within the historic districts.
2. Protect and maintain the details, features, materials and finishes of historic signs through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods. Ensure that drainage features are functioning properly to divert rainwater from horizontal surfaces and that wood and ferrous metal surfaces have sound paint films.
3. Repair deteriorated or damaged historic signs and surfaces through recognized preservation methods for the specific feature or material. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated portions of sign features or materials.
4. If a historic sign is missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace the sign with one that matches the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, and texture. Or, replace it with a new sign that is compatible in design, scale, material, and finish with the overall historic character of the building, site and district.
5. Introduce new signage with care so that the overall historic character of the building, site, and district is not compromised or diminished. Select and site new signs so their location, orientation, height, scale, design, and finish are compatible with the historic district and its human scale.
6. In the **commercial areas of the districts:**
 - a. Locate wall signs on lintels or within the sign panel on the façade. It is not appropriate to cover a large portion of the façade or any significant architectural features.
 - b. When multiple businesses are operating within a single building façade, provide unifying elements for multiple signs, including coordinating the height, border, font, and material treatments.
 - c. Introduce signage or graphics on awnings or windows that are in scale with the feature.
7. In the **residential areas of the districts:**
 - a. Install freestanding signs on low posts or bases that are compatible with the pedestrian scale of the historic districts and in locations that do not obscure architectural features or significant landscape elements.
 - b. Mount small identification signs and plaques on building facades in locations that do not damage or conceal significant architectural features or details.
8. Construct new signage out of traditional sign materials, such as wood, stone, or metal. It is not appropriate to introduce new signage in contemporary materials, such as plastic.
9. If necessary, light signs in a manner compatible with the historic character and pedestrian scale of the district (see Guidelines for Exterior Lighting). It is not appropriate to install internally illuminated signs or to install signs that **flash, blink, or have illuminated revolving content.**
10. Install new signs with care to prevent damage to historic building fabric. Sign loads should be

Commented [HW26]: AS: Any need to discuss painted wall signs? I don't think there are any in the district; would we allow someone to create one? Or a mural on the side of a commercial building in the district?

Staff: Committee discussion needed. Need to make sure it's consistent with the sign ordinance.

Guidelines regulating painting of masonry would also apply.

Commented [HW27]: Do we need to address signage on houses converted to sorority/fraternity use?

Commented [HW28R27]: AS: We could have a separate note for "institutional" uses, but I do think the items listed here cover them adequately.

Staff: Agree.

Commented [HW29]: AS: What about lit signs in windows? I don't know how the LUMO covers these. They are temporary/removable, but they are very visible.

properly calculated and distributed. Install signs to brick facades with fasteners installed through mortar joints to prevent damage to brick and ensure their removal without damage to brick.

Archaeology

While the majority of the guidelines in this document are focused on the above-ground buildings and landscape features, Chapel Hill's historic districts also contain an unknown quantities of below-ground archaeological resources. Archaeological resources—including both the site and associated artifacts—provide physical evidence of past human activity. Traditionally, archaeology includes both prehistoric and historic time periods, though extant resources in Chapel Hill likely date from the late-seventeenth to the early-twentieth century development of the town. Resources may include stones from earlier building foundations, old cisterns and wells, garden pathways, and buried rubbish piles. Such artifacts can provide information about the location, configuration, and materials of previous site structures, fences, walls, walkways, and gardens. They can also offer insight into the lifestyles and activities of previous occupants.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

While typically concealed beneath the ground, resources may be revealed, often inadvertently, during site work. For this reason, upon discovery, efforts must be made to protect valuable resources in their natural, undisturbed setting whenever possible.

The best way to preserve archaeological resources is to leave them undisturbed. Consequently, it is important to keep site grading, excavating, and changes related to new construction to a minimum within the historic districts. When such activities are planned, it is important to avoid areas with known archaeological resources and to proceed with caution in areas where archaeological resources are probable. During the planning stages of large construction projects, a professional archaeologist should review the project to determine if it is likely to destroy important archaeological resources. The Office of State Archaeology in the North Carolina Division of Archives and History can provide this assistance to property owners.

Occasionally, property owners within the historic districts may uncover archaeological features while making modest site changes, such as adding a walkway, planting a tree, or burying a drain line. Photographing the feature before continuing the work is one way to record such information for future reference.

Guidelines: Archaeology

1. Retain and preserve known archaeological resources that are important to the site or historic district by maintaining them in place.
2. Protect and maintain known archaeological resources from damage during or as a consequence of site work or construction. It is not appropriate to utilize heavy machinery and equipment in areas known to contain important archaeological resources.
3. Minimize disturbances to terrain, changes in topography, and site grading to reduce the possibility of damaging or destroying important archaeological resources.
4. If archaeological evidence is discovered during site work in a historic district, contact the Chapel Hill HDC and the Office of State Archaeology.
5. Work with the Office of State Archaeology and professional archaeologists following current professional practices to plan and conduct investigations of important archaeological resources and to document archaeological resources exposed during site work that cannot be preserved in place.