

**Washington, Connecticut**  
**Historic District Commission**  
**Design Guidelines**

Revised Edition 2020

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Dedication	3
Letter from the Washington Historic District Commission	4
General Remarks	5
Definitions	7
Rationale	11
Architectural Guidelines	14
Subdivision, Site Planning & Lot Layout Guidelines	17
New Accessory Structures & Landscaping	20
Secretary of the Interior's Standards	22

**Dedication**

**To**

**George A. Krinsky**

The Washington Historic District Commission dedicates this revised edition of the Washington Historic District Design Guidelines in loving memory of George A. Krinsky. George served as Secretary to the HDC and was instrumental in the revision and the organizational order of these guidelines until his death in January 2017. His years of experience as a journalist were invaluable as the Commission searched for the precise wording and meaning necessary to help historic district property owners to preserve and to protect the legacy of Washington's Historic Districts. We are profoundly grateful for all his contributions to the Commission's work.

## **Letter from Washington's Historic District Commission**

The document you are about to read is the fifth revision of design guidelines for Washington's three Historic Districts, dating back 40 years, as of this writing.

Our town became involved in historic preservation in 1976 because of a growing movement in Connecticut, fostered by new statute enabling legislation, to save an architectural, cultural and environmental legacy.

The result of the ongoing effort to preserve the "look" of our historic districts can be clearly seen today. Washington has largely avoided the suburbanization and commercialization trends one sees elsewhere in the state. Residents frequently tell us that they were attracted to the community because of its rural charm and respect for its heritage. Preserving our history has become a core value of the community.

The design guidelines governing the town's Historic Districts have been revised over the years. Our task now and for the future is to try to reach a balance between respect for Washington's history and architectural integrity and an accommodation with innovations in construction technology.

The Washington Historic District Commission welcomes and encourages property owners to arrange a preliminary discussion with the Commission at one of its regular meetings. Many issues can be discussed which can ultimately save time and lessen anxiety for the property owner regarding the scope of the proposed work.

The Commission acknowledges with appreciation the stewardship of the town's Historic Properties by private owners and institutions. We ask property owners in the Town of Washington's Historic Districts, whether they be current and/or future residents, to continue to collaborate with the Washington Historic District Commission to ensure that the town that attracted them in the first place is conscientiously preserved now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Hollinger, Chair, Jane Boyer, Vice Chair, Susan Averill, Secretary, Sally Woodrooffe, Phyllis Mills and alternates, Louise Van Tartwijk, William Fairbairn and Dimitri Rimsky

05/01/2017

## GENERAL REMARKS

Washington appointed its first Historic District Commission in 1976 under state enabling legislation (CGS Section 7-147).

Each of the three Historic Districts in Washington has been specially designated as such because it contains a collection of buildings and structures strong in historic feeling and association. Each of the districts is unique and evokes a strong sense of connection with the local past. None, however, is a pristine historic area. These places are the products of different times and tastes over nearly three centuries.

It is the Washington Historic District Commission's ("HDC") charge to ensure the preservation of those aspects and features of the Historic Districts that contribute to their particular historic identity, character and feeling, by reviewing and evaluating applications for new structures, exterior alterations, demolition or new construction.

It is the HDC's responsibility to receive and review applications for external changes to structures within view of a public way, hold a public hearing to allow questions and comments from Commissioners, neighbors, residents and the property owners themselves (or their representatives) and to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changes. Details of this process can be found on the HDC's web page on the town's web site.

In terms of the community as a whole, historic districts currently make up only about seven (7) percent of Washington's total land area, but their character and history are considered vital to the very **essence** of the town.

The purpose of these guidelines is to make as clear as possible the principles and regulations governing Washington's Historic Districts to allow property owners to tailor their own design desires within the historic character of their particular district. In this way, applicants can be prepared for what the HDC will be looking for when reviewing applications for changes and will help to expedite the application and review process to ensure a consistency of evaluation between applications.

The criterion for "appropriateness" will depend less on style *per se* than how a new structure or alterations relates to the existing structures and spaces around it, and to the character of the district as a whole. For a new structure or change to an existing structure to be compatible, its design must respect the existing character-defining features or relationships of that district.

Commented [g1]: TH prefers "congruity"

All applicants should seek approval of any town commission that may apply to the applicant's project. If there are questions, the applicant should speak with the Land Use Commissioner. Projects in an historic district which will be visible from a public way first require approval from the Washington Historic District Commission before approaching other commissions or boards.

All applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Abutters:** All owners of property adjacent to that of the applicant, including property directly across any public or private street. If the applicant owns a corner property, the abutters shall also include owners of the property diagonally across any public or private street.

**Alteration:** Change, modification, rebuild, removal, demolition, dismantling, restoring, razing, moving, or reconstructing.

**Appropriate:** Not incongruous with those aspects of the building, its neighborhood, the streetscape, and the historic district that the Commission determines to be historically or architecturally significant.

**Building:** Any combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals, or property. See also Structure.

**Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)** This is the authorization required before alterations may be made to any part of buildings or structures that are historic or that lie in an historic district and visible from a public street.

**Change:** See Alteration

**Change of COA:** Any modification of an approved COA, which, if carried out, would result in a different form or appearance from the originally approved alteration. Such changes would include, but not be limited to, the use of different materials from those specified in the approved COA, and changes in style, dimensions, materials, and/or location of character-defining features.

**Character:** All the visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building.

**Character-defining Features:** Visual aspects and features that comprise the appearance of a historic building, such as the overall shape, proportions, nature and texture of materials including historic coatings or finishes, decorative and utilitarian details, as well as various aspects of the setting and site.

**Commission:** The Washington Historic District Commission

**Demolition** "Demolition" means the wrecking, razing, rending, moving or removing of any structure.

**Demolition by Neglect:** The irreparable condition of a structure caused by its gradual deterioration over the passage of time, due to deferred maintenance or purposeful neglect.

**Design Criteria:** Criteria relating to a particular district, which describe or define the history, period or style of the architectural features necessary to preserve the distinctive character of the buildings and places of that district.

**District:** One of the municipal historic districts designated as such by the Town's historic district ordinance and regulated by the Commission.

**Elevations:** See Exterior Building Elevation.

**Emergency:** An event which causes sudden damage to one or more buildings or structures within a historic district, and is declared emergent by the Building Official or Fire Marshal, or which results in a condition that renders the building(s) or structure(s) unsafe or dangerous, or involves the safety of the building's inhabitants or risk of damage to the architectural elements.

**Emergency Repair:** Temporary work necessary to insure safety and/or prevent the destruction or dilapidation of buildings and or structures that are immediately threatened or have been damaged by fire, flood, earthquake or other unforeseen circumstances. Typical emergency repairs: covering windows/doors/holes in the roof with plywood, putting tarpaulins over breaks in a structure, putting up temporary supports; removing, marking and storing dangling or loose elements.

**Erect:** Construct, build, install, or enlarge a building or structure.

**Exterior Architectural Features:** Such portion of a building or structure as is open to view from a public street, way or place. If such portion is obscured in whole or part by foliage, it is considered open to view (visible). Landscaping and foliage are considered transparent by this Commission.

**Exterior Building Elevation:** Scale drawing of an outside wall of a building, including labeled and dimensioned features such as windows, doors, height and shape of the roof, and siding materials. Small elements should also be shown – such as meters, utility boxes, vents, light fixtures and the like, if these elements are part of the proposed alteration.

**Incongruous Alteration:** A change that diminishes or adversely alters the historic character of a building, structure, place, or streetscape in a historic district.

**Landscape & Landscaping:** The Commission does have authority to review structural elements of the landscaping including fences, walls, arbors, and any feature

permanently affixed to the land. Lawns, trees, plant materials, and subsurface drainage are not usually subject to review.

Where however a structural modification **is necessary** for the use of a historic structure the Commission shall have the discretion on how to adequately buffer that structure to foster maintaining the overall historical features of the property in question. To foster that end, the Commission may, in its discretion, require evergreen plantings, a fence, or both.

Any Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) issued under the Commission's discretion above shall set forth the language contained in the Agreement to maintain the approved landscaping signed by the applicant and the COA shall be recorded in the Land Records of the Town of Washington.

**Lighting Fixture:** Any lighting device located exterior to a structure or intended to illuminate areas exterior to a structure, whether permanently or temporarily installed. Such devices include, but are not limited to, search lights, spotlights, flood lights, sign and architectural lighting, and lighting for parks, parking lots, driveways, walkways, permanent holiday lighting, and athletic and recreational facilities.

**Major Work:** Work deemed by the Commission to have significant impact on the character-defining and architectural features of a building or structure. See Demolition, New Construction, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Restoration

**Minor Work:** Work that has no significant effect on the character-defining and architectural features of a historical building or structure as determined by the Commission.

**Modifications:** See Change or Alteration.

**Municipality:** Town of Washington, Connecticut.

**New Construction:** A completely new structure, building or addition built on an existing site in an Historic District. The definition also includes a change in roofline or an expansion of the building footprint.

**Ordinary Maintenance:** Work done to keep any architectural feature intact or in its present state in such a way that the work does not change its appearance, design, or material. This definition of ordinary maintenance applies, whenever appropriate, to a building's site features as well as to the building and associated structures.

**Ordinary Repair:** Work done on or replacement of any architectural feature that is broken, damaged or not in good working order in such a way as the work does not

change the appearance or design or the replacement is of the same size, design, texture and materials.

**Place:** Unifying, identifiable setting for the buildings and structures in an area, district, or neighborhood. The elements of place include the relationship of buildings to one another, setbacks, fence or wall patterns, views, configuration of driveways and walkways, together with the prevalent exterior architectural features of the buildings. The sum of these elements defines the distinctive character of each neighborhood or district, as set forth in the Rationale.

**Preservation:** Work that strives to retain all historic materials through conservation, maintenance, and repair.

**Public Way:** Any road, street, avenue, alley, driveway, parkway, sidewalk, trail or place over which the public at large has a right to pass.

**Reconstruction:** Re-creation of a non-surviving building, structure, or object in all new materials.

**Rehabilitation:** Work that emphasizes the retention and repair of historic features, but may involve a different, adaptive use (e.g. barn to a house). More latitude is provided for change than in restoration or reconstruction.

**Restoration:** Work that retains and preserves materials from the property's architectural history.

**Sign:** Any device however made, displayed, painted, supported, or attached, intended for the purpose of advertisement, attraction of attention, identification, publicity or notice.

**Site:** The property surrounding an historic building and contained within an individual lot.

**Site Features:** Walkways, driveways, parking areas, lighting fixtures, fences, sculptures, signs, walls, and other structures.

**Site Plan:** A plan of the applicant's lot drawn to scale that shows the location of all buildings and structures, proposed and existing, with their setbacks from the property lines and their distance from one other.

**Solar Panels:** The installation of solar panels is subject to the review of the Washington Historic Commission and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The WHDC may not deny an application for solar panels unless it determines that the system will substantially impair the historic character and appearance of the structure.

**Streetscape:** The aspect and built environment surrounding a public thoroughfare. This encompasses the particular localized relationship and interaction between structures, as well as the effect of the built environment and the spacing and placement of buildings on the greater landscape.

**Structure:** Any combination of materials, other than a building, that is affixed to the land and shall include, but not be limited to, signs, fences, and walls.

**Style:** In architecture, style is characterized by the features that make a building or other structure notable or historically identifiable. A style may include such elements as form, method of construction, building materials, and regional character.

**Zoning:** The Town of Washington has a zoning code which is applied through the Zoning Commission. Property owners are responsible for adhering to these regulations and pursuing the necessary permits for work on a property.

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## **WASHINGTON'S THREE HISTORIC DISTRICTS: HERITAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE TODAY**

### **RATIONALE**

The visual character of each district is a result of the evolution of building styles, functions, and materials rather than the particular role it played in the community. The character of each district is partly derived from traditional settlement patterns (pre-1939) and 20<sup>th</sup> century municipal land use regulations (zoning since 1939) which gives each district its identity. This identity underlies and informs each district's visual qualities. This is the reason for maintaining visual integrity, and why the HDC's certifications are not simply a matter of personal taste. The Design Guidelines for the historic districts are designed to complement local zoning and do not reflect any authority over use of a property.

#### The Green: A Cohesive Townscape

The Green was the original, mid-18th century center of Washington, or Judea Parish. A meeting house stood here, within an open space for public gathering or animal grazing. This roughly square plot of land, now the open space of the Green, became surrounded by houses, shops, and stores. As industrial and commercial activity developed more intensively in the river

valleys of New Preston and the "Hollow", later called the "Depot," during the mid-19th century, the Green became the mainly institutional and residential area that it remains today.

The Green's hilltop location gives this district a dramatic setting, and sets it off from the rest of town. The roughly square plan of the Green, centered on the large Congregational Meeting House, defines this tightly settled townscape of simple, handsome houses of similar scale, shape and character, aligned and all facing the church. This visually commanding structure stands central and at the same time isolated by the space around it. All the surrounding structures are focused on this building, and mirror its strong architectural patterns. Likewise, there is a clear difference in scale between the residential and institutional structures in the immediate vicinity of the Green. The largely Colonial Revival aspect of the district's late 19th and early 20th century buildings which are off the Green, as in the Gunn Library and the Washington Club Hall, and the campus of The Gunnery School, reinforces this distinction and provides for visual order throughout the district. These clearly defined formal relationships and architectural patterns are character-defining aspects that give the center of the Green district a powerful historical and visual coherence.

A third character-defining quality of the immediate vicinity of the Green is the existing balance of structures and spaces. The most critical aspect of this relationship is the way many of the buildings here inhabit their sites: for the most part the older structures are fairly discrete blocks in form, occupying their original foundation "footprint." They do not, generally, have substantial ell and other secondary forms which spill out onto the land or massively occupy publicly visible parts of the site.

### Calhoun-Ives Street: An Historic Landscape

This district of rolling, south-facing hills is a rural area of 19th century farmsteads regularly interspersed with open lands and woods. The natural lay of the largely open land, the shifting near and distant views unspoiled fields and wooded hillsides, and the way the roads and structures inhabit it make this an extraordinary place. The route taken by the narrow Calhoun Street, which climbs, drops, and curves with the natural contours of the

land, allows the traveler to experience a dynamic, but gradual unfolding of this lyrical landscape and its buildings.

In contrast to the architecturally dense and structured character of the Green, here the landscape is the primary element in the district's identity. The houses and barns are crucial to our understanding of how this place was inhabited, and in their understated vernacular architecture contribute critically to the definition of its character. From a physical standpoint, however, these buildings are secondary elements in the district's identity, subordinate to the landscape.

Since this is a district designated for its history as an agricultural landscape, it is appropriate to maintain these relationships between the built, natural, and cultivated environments.

#### Sunny Ridge: An Early Crossroads

This district is the triangular junction of three early routes through the east side of Washington. Being a crossroads located along one of the early New Haven to Albany routes, two of its five contributing homesteads (out of seven total) were inns during the late-18th and 19th centuries. Two others are early 19th century farmsteads with associated fields. Much of the interior of the triangle is and has been in open farmland visible from the roads. Like Calhoun Street and Ives Roads, Sunny Ridge Road is one of the few narrow, winding country lanes left in Washington, and is remarkable because of its historic scale and character. As an historic agricultural landscape, the compatibility of the siting and scale of any proposed subdivisions and new construction here will be a major consideration in determining their appropriateness. Of course, the shape, massing, patterns and materials of new construction will also be important in this rural district of simple vernacular building clusters. As in Calhoun Ives, since this is a district designated for its history as an agricultural landscape it is appropriate to maintain this balance of the built, and natural and cultivated areas.

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## I. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

### *General Remarks:*

#### **Preservation:**

In the majority of its deliberations HDC focuses on encouraging preservation and the continued use of historic structures. Many of the guidelines listed are meant to assist property owners in making decisions about how to preserve their historic building with regard to windows, trim and decorative detail, roofs, enclosures, doors and shutters. The HDC encourages property owners to consult these guidelines and use them in their consultations with their contractors and architects.

**Reproduction and Present-Day Design:** Each of the historic districts is a record of several periods of architecture, including, potentially, present and future periods. Each contributing structure is significant both in its own right and as a contributor to that historical record. Introducing reproductions or moving historic buildings from elsewhere into the districts could distort and even falsify that record. Therefore, reproductions, including "authentic" and historical "stock" designs, will generally be discouraged. By the same token, the HDC recognizes the need to work with applicants who prefer historical Connecticut styles and their desire to fit into a district's historic setting. These aims can only be achieved by creating a design which is not an imitation, reflects the present-day origins of the design, is traditional in character, and is compatible with respect to the existing architectural scale, massing, siting, and features of the district. The HDC also recognizes the need to work with applicants who wish to use present-day designs. The challenge here is to find a design of quality which is distinctly present-day, but which honors the basic character of the district's structures with respect to scale, massing, and siting.

### *Recommendations:*

- a. **Overall Character:** Consider the impact your proposed new construction will have on the character of the district, even if the scale, shape, and materials are compatible. Design that harmonizes with its surroundings, rather than competing with them, will be viewed more favorably by the HDC.
- b. **Scale:** Maintain the existing scale and size relative to existing houses in the district. A structure that appears to dominate its site will not be

considered appropriate. Likewise, an addition which competes in scale and size with the existing structure being added to may not be considered appropriate.

- c. Shape: Massing: Note that there is usually a predictable hierarchy of forms in the overall composition of the existing houses, consisting of primary and secondary blocks. In this, the primary blocks of the existing houses tend to be rectangular, two rooms deep with 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 stories, and gable-roofed. The secondary blocks, such as wings, ells and additions, tend to be proportionally smaller elements in the whole design, have gable or shed roofs, and project at right angles from the main block. Try to maintain these kinds of relationships in new construction. With larger buildings on open land, try to mass forms so they gradually lead the eye back down to the ground.
- d. Patterns: Fenestration (windows): Note relationships of solids to voids (proportions of wall to openings such as doors, windows, inset porches etc.) in the district's existing houses and outbuildings. These tend to be fairly consistent. Try to maintain a similar relationship in new construction, which is appropriate to the building type, noting that utilitarian structures have different solid/void ratios than do residential structures. Windows in District houses are typically double-hung, integral wood muntin (mullion) type with true divided lights. Avoid using large single pane windows on visible elevations. Any other type of window will be reviewed by the HDC on a case-by-case basis. When choosing and installing storm windows or screens, attempts should be made not to cover details, damage the frame or visually impair the appearance.
- e. Trim and decorative detail: Trim and detail should be in traditional proportion and scale to the new building. Avoid using trim and architectural detail which makes false or empty historical or functional references, such as shutters which would not fit properly over the windows when closed, widows-walks, barn-related features on residential structures, etc. This guideline includes, but is not limited to, soffits, fascia, and window and door openings.

- f. Doors: The HDC recommends raised panel doors for primary entrances. Batten doors or doors with panels below and true divided lights above are acceptable for secondary entrances. French doors with true divided lights will be reviewed by the HDC on a case by case basis. Storms and/or screen doors, when installed should ideally be constructed of wood. When choosing and installing a storm door or screen door, attempts should be made not to cover details, damage the frame or visually impair the appearance.
- g. Exterior window shutters: In Washington's 19th century buildings which post-date 1840, hung, functioning, wooden shutters are usually appropriate, however, the HDC recognizes the costs of maintaining them and therefore will not discourage the removal of deteriorating shutters from such structures, except where the WHDC determines that the shutters contribute significantly to the design of the building. The use of such shutters on pre-1840 buildings is entirely at the discretion of the owner. Exterior shutters were not generally used until the 1840s; however, they may have been added then or sometime later, and therefore may be considered appropriate. The HDC reviews any application in which different materials are proposed to replace the material in existing shutters. In the case of new shutters, they should be of a size which would fit properly over the windows if closed, and they should be hung, rather than screwed, into the wall of the building. They should be mounted on the front of the window casing, not on the side.
- h. Roofs:  
The gable roof is recommended for construction since it is the most common kind of roof in the districts. The pitch of the gable on an addition should match the existing pitch while the roof pitch for new structures should replicate those historic examples within that particular historic district. A flat roof is highly discouraged and would be reviewed by the HDC.

Shingles are the primary roofing material in the districts. Although wood shingles are preferable, asphalt shingles are acceptable. However, if asphalt is proposed to replace wood shingles, the HDC requires an application for a COA. Metal roofing also subject to HDC review.

- i. Materials: Note existing uses of mainly 5" wood shingle or 4" smooth wood clapboard siding on residential structures, and vertical wood siding on barn and outbuildings are appropriate. Efforts should be made to use materials appropriate to their building types.
- j. Property Enclosures: Old stone walls and picket fences contribute to the historic character of the historic districts. New stone walls should be built in a traditional New England manner with dry-laid fieldstone. Walls need to be of Connecticut stones indigenous to our area and appropriate in size and shape for old Litchfield County walls. Picket fences should be made of wood and replicate the period fencing found in a historic district. Split rail or planked fences are also acceptable but should not be used on the front of a property. No fences should restrict existing views or open spaces. Stockade and tall privacy fences are unacceptable. The specific character of any new fence will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## II. SUBDIVISION, SITE PLANNING AND LOT LAYOUT DESIGN

### A. CALHOUN-IVES AND SUNNY RIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

General Remarks: Because of their access to views, their generally good drainage characteristics, and their marketability as attractive residential building sites, the fields of the Calhoun Ives and Sunny Ridge Districts are particularly vulnerable to development. As a recurring, extensive feature with high visibility throughout these two districts, with an historic functional relationship to the districts' structures, the fields are the historic context of and the "connective tissue" between the often widely-spaced farmsteads. Most importantly, their significance in establishing the districts as historic agricultural landscapes requires that every effort must be made to plan the siting of any new construction in this district with as much sensitivity to preserving open space as possible.

Note: The HC can only review the appearance of a property and has no authority over the general location, setback, size, use, or density of development. These are the concern of the town's zoning ordinances and the Zoning and Planning Commissions, property owners will need to contact them for specifics.

*Recommendations:*

- a. **Building Sites**: Be aware of the prominence of your building site, and consider how the new construction will affect the view of existing open land from the public way(s). Every effort should be made to avoid locating new construction in the middle of fields or on hills and ridgetops, or where it would be silhouetted against sky.
- b. **Lot Layouts**: In designing subdivisions and locating boundaries in open areas, layout lots and designate building envelopes so new construction can be located more inconspicuously with regard to open land. For example, confine a useable building site on an open lot to an edge such as a wooded area or a road. Designating building "envelopes" is encouraged to confine new construction to one portion of a lot, leaving as much as possible of the remaining land open and uninterrupted by development. Preserving undeveloped stretches of contiguous backlands is a way of maintaining the integrity and continuity of the historic agricultural landscape.
- c. **Natural site features**: Preserve existing natural and/or historic landscape features, such as stone walls, cellar holes, root cellars, old trees, and ledge outcrops.
- d. **Clearing**: Buyers of lots in wooded areas in the district should be prepared to leave as much woods as possible to help maintain the existing clear contrast between woods and open space. Manicured forest cleared of underbrush tends to look suburban and is not appropriate to the Calhoun Ives and Sunny Ridge rural agricultural landscapes.
- e. **Landscaping**: Consider using and maintaining large areas of land in ways that are consistent with the district's rural and agricultural context. For example, avoid extensively recontouring existing land. Try to maintain existing woods and fields rather than converting them to lawn with formal landscaping or park-like landscapes.

**Commented [g2]:** Washington has no regulation banning construction on ridgetops - MA

**B. THE GREEN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

*Recommendations:*

- a. Building Sites: Consider the existing relationship of the neighborhood's structures to the space around them, and the relative density of the surrounding settlement.
- b. Lot Layouts: Lay out new building lots and designate envelopes so that new construction can be located more inconspicuously with regard to existing settlement.
- c. Natural Site Features: Preserve existing natural and/or historic landscape features, such as stone walls, old trees, and ledge outcrops.
- d. Clearing: Non-manicured wooded areas between existing lots and as buffers between houses and the road are a feature of the southern section, and should be preserved. Some grounds are maintained as private parkland, and in places this is appropriate, but in general the clearing of brush and trees would disrupt the feeling of privacy and informality peculiar to this part of the district.
- e. Landscaping: Avoid extensively re-contouring land and installing formal landscaping in front yards.

**C. ALL DISTRICTS**

*Roads and Driveways*: Because of the open, rural character of the land in Calhoun Ives and Sunny Ridge, the presence of merely a few paved subdivision roads and driveways on these areas would have a suburbanizing effect on the districts. Existing driveways in the Green District are also narrow, and in scale with the generally narrow aspect of the roads in the district. Therefore, every effort should be made to route roads and driveways as inconspicuously as possible. Designate shared driveways wherever possible to reduce the incidence of side-by-side driveways.

*Outbuildings*: Outbuildings found in the historic districts, notably Calhoun/Ives and Sunny Ridge and to a degree the Green, include garages, toolsheds, cottages, barns, carriage houses, and barns. Some of

these are historically important. For example, a number of barns reflect the history of Washington as a farming community. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair these historic buildings in keeping with the design guidelines. Consider rehabilitation or adaptive re-use options before demolition of a deteriorating historic outbuilding.

*Recommendations:*

- a. Route contours: As with new building construction, route new roads and driveways in the woods or close to existing edges (woods, existing tree lines, stone walls). In general, try to route new roads or driveways to follow the natural contours of the land, unless this would disrupt the landscape more than an alternative route. Avoid extensive cutting, filling and re-grading of contours. Property owners should contact zoning and inland/wetlands commissions for permission to disrupt existing land contours.
- b. Surface material: Except for the Green District, avoid paving driveways. Use gravel or loose stone of an inconspicuous color; these materials are more compatible with the district's rural character. If driveways must be paved, avoid paved curbing.
- c. Width: Keep driveways as narrow as possible (12 feet width or less is recommended).
- d. Driveway markers: Avoid landscaping and landscape structures which draw attention to roads and driveways, including lines of shrubbery, formal gateways, lamp posts, relocated boulders, etc.

## **NEW ACCESSORY STRUCTURES AND LANDSCAPING**

- a. New fences, walls, and gates: Old stone walls and picket fences contribute to the historic character of the historic districts. New stone walls should be built in a traditional New England manner with dry-laid fieldstone. Picket fences should be made of wood and replicate the period fencing found in a historic district. Split rail or planked fences are

also acceptable but should not be used on the front of a property except unpainted split-rail fencing is generally recommended in the Calhoun-ives and Sunny Ridge Districts. No fences should restrict existing views or open spaces. Stockade type fences, tall privacy fences, metal fences, chain link fences or plastic fencing are not appropriate. The specific character of any new fence will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Whatever their design, new fencing and gates should be in scale and character with existing surrounding structures and other such structures in the district, and in scale with their function. In general, walls and fences should not be used for the purpose of completely obscuring a view within an historic district. Property owners should consult town zoning regulations regarding the appropriate dimension and construction of fences, especially stone walls.

**b. New construction:** Such as garages, toolsheds, guest houses, pool houses, gazebos should be compatible with the main building in material, scale, design, and location. If possible try to locate new structures to the rear of the property and/or screened from public sight. In the case of attached garages, they should be designed to suggest a traditional barn or shed. Garage doors should be installed on the side or at the back of the garage whenever possible, out of public view.

**c. New recreational structures:** Try to site structures such as but not limited to swimming pools, tennis courts, platform tennis courts and gazebos as inconspicuously as possible.

**d. New landscape and miscellaneous structures:** Avoid adding new structures that have no contemporary relevance, such as but not limited to, mounting blocks, hitching posts, carriage and gate houses, etc.

**e. Final Reminder:** All applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis with respect to these Design Guidelines.

The Commission also recommends property owners consult the following website, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with guidelines for:

Preserving  
Rehabilitation  
Restoring

Reconstructing historic buildings.  
[www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-preservation.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-preservation.htm)

The standards for Preservation and Rehabilitation are included in these Design Guidelines but the website provides many specifics regarding preservation.

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## **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S 10 STANDARDS FOR PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION**

The Secretary of the Interior's 10 Standards for preservation and rehabilitation set forth the principles and purposes of historic preservation, and provide a good introduction to the more specific guidelines which follow them. Below are the Standards for Preservation and Rehabilitation.

### **PRESERVATION STANDARDS**

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alternation of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed

to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visibly compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques of examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or repair of limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disrupted, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

**Preservation as a Treatment:**

When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive

alterations, Preservation may be considered as a treatment.

## REHABILITATION STANDARDS

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible and materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic

materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest methods.

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

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

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

END