

Downtown Oakboro, NC Historic District Design Guidelines



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1.0 Introduction

Maintaining a rural, small-town character is one of the primary goals of the recent comprehensive planning effort in the Town of Oakboro. With the tremendous growth pressures now facing Stanly County and the surrounding area, this objective of preserving Oakboro's quaint atmosphere will be no small task. The



completion of the I-485 loop and upgrades to 49 and 601 greatly improves access from the expanding Charlotte metropolitan area, and makes it even more imperative that Oakboro preserve its quality of life.

One way to ensure that Oakboro retains its small-town character is by protecting the historic fabric of the downtown. Without the protection that a local preservation program can provide, the character and vitality of downtown Oakboro could be vulnerable. Realizing the importance of historic preservation to overall economic development, the Town of Oakboro commissioned a project to establish a preservation program. The process included adopting an ordinance, appointing a historic preservation commission, developing design guidelines, and establishing a local historic district for downtown Oakboro. This document presents the historic district design guidelines, which will guide the preservation and future development of downtown Oakboro.

1.1 Purpose of Design Guidelines

These design guidelines are intended to be a manual of best practices for property owners and business owners to use whenever considering exterior changes, additions, or new construction within Oakboro's historic downtown. They present the preferred methods of making appropriate changes to historic buildings, while also prescribing new development that preserves the integrity of the district itself. They are based on the ten principles of preservation as outlined by the US Secretary of Interior in its Standards for Rehabilitation.

The guidelines are also a tool for Oakboro's Historic Preservation Commission to use whenever evaluating the appropriateness of exterior changes to existing buildings and new construction proposed within the district. Ultimately, these guidelines and their application will help the Town of Oakboro preserve its unique downtown for generations to come.

What it means to be in a Local Historic District

Designating a local historic district shows that the community has determined the area as an important part of the heritage of the community and reflects a strong desire of the Town of Oakboro and its residents to protect the area from inappropriate changes. Historic designation is an important planning tool for the town and provides a way to improve the quality of life and a means to protect the area from unmanaged change.

The local historic district is an overlay zoning designation detailed in Oakboro’s zoning ordinance. Owners of properties included in a locally zoned historic district must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness before undertaking any exterior change to the property. This would include, for example, general improvements such as re-roofing, as well as additions to existing buildings or new construction. A local district does not, however, require an owner to seek approval for any interior improvements. Even if a property is not a historic building (such as a modern structure or vacant lot) it must still undergo the Certificate of Appropriateness process in order to ensure that any changes or improvements do not negatively impact the character of the historic district.

It should also be noted that these guidelines and the approval process contained within apply only when a property owner is seeking to make an exterior change, new construction, or demolition within the historic district. No property owner is required to make any improvements to his or her property by virtue of being in a local historic district.



1.2 Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

All guidelines presented in this document are based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The National Park Service created these ten basic principles in 1976 to guide property owners in preserving the historic integrity of a building. The Standards recognize the need for adapting historic structures to modern times and therefore allow for changes and new construction that are compatible with the building and/or the historic district. The guidelines are generic enough that they apply to all architectural styles, age of building, and building types. Detailed guidelines are included in this document.

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 historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the 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, 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 means possible.
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.

1.3 Historic Preservation Commission

The Town of Oakboro appointed a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to facilitate historic preservation practices in downtown and throughout the community. The HPC's primary responsibility is to review projects and issue Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior changes and new construction to properties in



the historic district. It also has the ability to review and make recommendations to Town Board for any additional local historic districts and local historic landmarks. In doing so, the HPC keeps an inventory of the historic properties and districts within the community.

The HPC also serves as an educational resource for local property owners and concerned citizens to use when undergoing preservation projects. These design guidelines and the architectural inventories are readily available as information for all citizens.

The Historic Preservation Commission is a quasi-judicial board that makes decisions as to the appropriateness of changes in the historic district based on these design guidelines. The guidelines are founded in sound principles of preservation and outline detailed strategies for individual preservation activities. While flexible in their application, these guidelines shape the decisions of the HPC. The Commission is bound by the provisions in this document and cannot make decisions that are arbitrary or based on individual preferences or that of the Commission as a whole. As such, the HPC must apply these guidelines consistently and cannot approve or deny a project in contradiction to any of the design guidelines.

The Oakboro Historic Preservation Commission is made up of 5 members and 2 advisors appointed by Town Board. Regular HPC meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall in downtown Oakboro.

Certificate of Appropriateness

A certificate of appropriateness (COA) must be obtained prior to commencing any exterior work to a property within the local historic district. The COA certifies that the proposed project is in keeping with the historic fabric and architecture of the district, as well as the design guidelines and historic preservation ordinance. Once a COA has been secured, work can begin on the proposed project.

Projects are classified as either major or minor works. Major works are those projects which include a more significant change to the property including, new construction, demolition, new additions, or significant alteration to the property. These types of projects must be reviewed by the HPC at its regular meeting. Minor works projects, on the other hand, require only administrative review from Town Staff and include those projects that do not significantly alter the appearance or character of the property. These projects generally include the repair and replacement of architectural features, accessory structures, signage, and fencing or other minor site changes. These projects can be reviewed by staff immediately upon receiving an application for a COA at the Town Hall. They do not require meeting with the full HPC. General maintenance and repair needs no review under these design guidelines.

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness are processed through Town Hall. Town Staff will assess an applicant's proposed project and then advise the applicant how to proceed. The staff person will provide assistance with the historic district's design guidelines and specify which guidelines apply to the proposed project. Applications should include any relevant supplemental materials.

If the COA request includes a major work project, it must proceed to the HPC for review. When the proposed project is presented to the HPC by the applicant, comments from the public will also be heard prior to any decision being made. Following the HPC rendering a decision, the applicant will receive written correspondence including minutes from the meeting and an explanation for the commission's decision.

Any decision of the HPC can be appealed to the Zoning Board. They must be made within 30 days of the HPC's decision. Appeals to the Zoning Board's decisions will be made to the Superior Court of Stanly County.

2.0 Historic Development of the District

2.1 Map



Figure 1: Oakboro Downtown Local Historic District.

The Oakboro Historic District boundary includes over 50 properties encompassing the historic downtown core generally from the railroad to the South, Fifth Street to the North, Haywood Street to the East, and College Street to the West. It includes industrial, commercial, religious, and residential that developed in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The map above and its corresponding identification numbers refer to the architectural survey completed as a companion to this document. Each identified building and site is inventoried in the survey, along with photographs, architectural descriptions, and historic information.

2.2 General History

The following historic description is an excerpt from the *History of Oakboro*, as written in the *Welcome to Oakboro, North Carolina* magazine.

Beginnings

Oakboro traces its beginnings to the coming of the railroad in 1913. Before that time, C. C. Furr's store and Ellis Thomas' blacksmith shop were the only evidence of what would soon be a thriving downtown. The first passenger train came through town in late 1913 and stopped at the new Furr City depot.

In 1915, the name was changed to Oakboro and the town was incorporated. A map of the early town shows a 320-acre tract one mile wide with Main Street running through the center. Furr and other large landowners divided their property into smaller parcels and new homes and businesses began to prosper.

Center of Trade

Oakboro was the center of surrounding rural life, being located at the juncture of five roads. In fact, the community was called "Five Roads" for a time prior to the advance of the railroad. Travelers from other communities as well as local farmers regularly used these country lanes to bring cotton, lumber, produce, and other goods to sell or trade for necessities. With the coming of the railroad, these goods could be moved faster by freight train, and, at one time, Oakboro was known as moving the most freight between Charlotte and Raleigh.

The small town remained relatively unchanged in size for a number of years. More municipal services were added, schools were consolidated, and roads were improved. Business and industry flourished in the early years. Several cotton gins operated in Oakboro and soon textile mills were added to the landscape. Oakboro Cotton Mill was built in 1923 and brought needed jobs into the area. This mill remained active for nearly 50 years before being sold to Tuscarora Yarns. Today, Tuscarora is the only textile company left and is the town's largest employer with approximately 200 workers. Most of the local workforce travel to Albemarle, Concord, Charlotte, and elsewhere for their livelihood.

Growth and Expansion

From its beginnings in 1913, Oakboro town limits remained constant for more than sixty years until annexation began in 1978. From 1960 to 1990, the population remained at approximately 600 and only 64 acres had been added. By 1997, the population had reached an estimated 1,026 and the town was 683 acres. As the Charlotte growth effect became evident, subdivisions have been annexed around the perimeter of the town.

The main highway leading into Stanly County from the Charlotte area passes a mere four miles north of Oakboro. The highway is being widened to four lanes and an outer loop around Charlotte had been completed. This improved transportation corridor plus the availability of water and sewer will no doubt bring more people who need housing and other services.

Downtown Revitalization

Downtown Oakboro has been revitalized by the renovation and restoration of buildings erected in the 1920's and 30's. Lining Main Street, you will find the Oakboro Regional Museum of History, old-timey hardware store, florist, antique, and gift shops, popsicle factory, hobby, trophy, and consignment shops along with a T-shirt embroidery shop, a mini-park, fresh air market, Town Hall, service stations and excellent restaurants. A main attraction is the Oakboro Music Hall where bluegrass concerts are held featuring nationally known recording artists. (Excerpts from the History of Oakboro)

Commercial Architecture

The commercial buildings of downtown Oakboro are primarily one and two story brick structures built during the 1920s through the 1940s, with some being constructed during the early to mid-teens. The oldest of downtown Oakboro's commercial building stock is located in blocks one through four as indicated on the district map. These buildings have simple detailing such as the one story, blond brick 124 North Main Street (#34) with its herringbone corbelled cornice and brick stringcourse over its storefront. The Oakboro Regional Museum of History at 231 North Main Street has a very simple, open glass storefront with recessed central entry under an upper façade with a simple, recessed sign panel and no other detailing. Many of the historic commercial buildings have typical storefront features including recessed central entry flanked by large display windows on brick or wooden bulkheads with transoms above. 213 North Main Street (#21) formerly housing the Fountain Grill has the most elaborate storefront façade with its glass block transom, paneled wood bulkhead above, and side walk-up door for upper floor access.

A unique commercial archetype in downtown Oakboro is seen in the four service garage structures built in the 1930s and 40s. The most significant of these is 404 North Main Street (#52), a mission style service station with a stucco façade, terracotta tiled hip roof, and mission style piers separating each bay. Nearby is a service station building (#54), a one-story blond brick building with stepped parapet upper façade over three garage bays.

Industrial Architecture

Oakboro was once the center of trade for a larger rural region and lies along a freight corridor between Raleigh and Charlotte. As such, there exist several buildings remnant of the warehousing and agricultural history of Oakboro's early days. The most prominent of these include the grain warehouses (#8) along the railroad tracks at their intersection with South Main. The structures were likely built in the 30s or 40s and lie within the right-of-way of the railroad. A number of railroad related warehouses exist along Second Street including the Oakboro Insulation building at 123 West Second (#1). This red, one-story frame warehouse building with a shed roof loading dock around the front and east façades is reminiscent of the cotton and grain trade of days past. It has a simple, corrugated metal front gable roof much like the structure at 117 West Second (#2). This frame warehouse structure has an east side loading dock area off a rear addition and is still used as a seed warehouse.

Religious Architecture

The Town of Oakboro has a number of religious institutions in its downtown area, but only two exist in the proposed historic district, Oakboro Methodist Church (#50) at 405 North Main and First Baptist Church (#48) at 322 North Main Street. Originally the Big Lick Methodist Episcopal Church, Oakboro Methodist Church began in 1921 at its current location on Main Street. The current church was completed in 1949 as an unadorned brick church structure with pedimented

portico on two-story round columns. A central double door entry below arched stain glass windows is under the portico and there are four tall arched windows down either side façade. An open, wooden octagonal steeple with slate roof adorns the top of the church.

Across the street lies the First Baptist Church constructed in 1950. The cruciform brick church has a gable end front portico on round columns projecting from the church nave. The ornate central double door wooden entry has a transom and broken pediment above the door. There are five arch windows down either side façade with stone sill, caps, and keystones. On top of the church lies a hexagonal wooden steeple on square wooden and brick base. An arch window lies on either side of the wooden base. A more contemporary church fellowship hall built in 2001 (#49) lies behind the main sanctuary on North Haywood Street.

Civic Architecture

There are only a couple of civic buildings in downtown Oakboro. Town Hall, at 109 North Main Street (#7) is in a two story commercial building that has had significant changes including an enclosed storefront. The other public building in downtown is the Oakboro Rural Fire Department at 320 North College Street (#39). The two-story brick firehouse was built in 1960 and has eight garage bays facing College Street. The second story is of frame construction with a pitched gabled roof.

Residential Architecture

The downtown local historic district represents primarily the historic commercial core of Oakboro encompassing approximately nine blocks total following Main Street north of the railroad. Filling out these blocks within the district are three residential structures. 123 East Second Street (#30) was built in 1944 and is a simple front gable frame worker home with front gable porch extending offset from the main façade. A one-story brick ranch constructed in 1954 exists at 122 East Second and has a cross-gable roof and small side entry porch. Finally, at 416 North Main (#53), a small one-story brick ranch built in 1920 has a steeply pitched side gable roof and small gabled stoop entry offset and projecting from the front façade.

The period of significance for the Downtown Oakboro Historic District begins in 1913 with the coming of the railroad and continues through the 1920s when the majority of downtown's commercial buildings were constructed. Like many small communities, Oakboro's downtown grew outward from the town's lifeline of the railroad resulting in a mixture of uses that define small town life – grain silos & warehouses, commercial storefronts, cornerstone church congregations, and residential living. The majority of these buildings and uses still survive in Oakboro today and comprise the historic district of the commercial core. As access to the greater Charlotte region improves, the preservation of this architecture and small town life is more important than ever.

3.0 Changes to Existing Buildings

The design guidelines that follow in the next four chapters present the best practices to use when undergoing changes to historic buildings, making site improvements to a property, developing a new building in downtown, or undergoing demolition. As mentioned previously, these guidelines, and particularly those that for changes to historic buildings, are based on the principles set forth in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

For each section, brief guidelines are presented by particular categories. At the beginning of each guideline section, a series of *Preservation Briefs* document titles are listed. *Preservation Briefs* are publications prepared by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service as part of its Technical Preservation Services pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act. These informative briefs detail preservation practices for very specific situations or treatments. They are listed here as additional tools for the Historic Preservation Commission, property owners, and the general public to use when undergoing preservation projects. All *Preservation Briefs* and other Technical Preservation Services materials can be found online at http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standards_guidelines.htm

3.1 Architectural Materials (Masonry, Wood, Metals)



Like most historic downtowns, the commercial buildings in downtown Oakboro are predominantly made of masonry materials. Most buildings are constructed with brick and mortar, while there is some limited use of stone and concrete detailing throughout downtown. Oakboro grew with the railroad, and most of the remaining industrial and railroad related historic structures are frame structures with metal cladding. Oakboro's current historic district is predominantly commercial, but there are a number of brick and wood frame residential structures that surround the perimeter of portions of the district.

Materials are by far the most character-defining feature of our historic buildings. They contribute to the building's architectural style & design, and give the building its historic integrity. Unlike many historic downtowns, Oakboro has been fortunate to have seen its building retain that historic integrity, rather than having their walls and architectural features covered in vinyl siding and other synthetic coverings. While Oakboro has seen a few cases of these treatments, the vast majority of buildings are still defined by their original historic material. These materials should be retained and preserved however possible.

Preservation Briefs:

- 1 - Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings
- 2 - Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings
- 6 - Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings
- 8 - Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings
- 10 - Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
- 16 - The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors
- 38 - Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

Guidelines:

1. Identify, retain and preserve original building materials such as wood, masonry, and architectural metals that are important in defining the overall character of the historic building.
2. Historic building materials should be protected and maintained in order to prevent deterioration.
3. Deteriorated building materials should be repaired, rather than replaced, whenever possible using recognized preservation methods. Repair by patching, splicing, consolidating, or reinforcing.
4. When replacement of a deteriorated material is necessary, replace in-kind with materials that match the original in design, size, shape, texture, color, and profile.
5. When historical features are missing, use historical, pictorial, and physical documentation to create an accurate restoration or create a new design that is compatible with the size, material, and color of the historic building. Synthetic materials are prohibited on historic structures for the wholesale covering of a structure.
6. Aluminum, vinyl siding, and other synthetic materials shall not be used to cover original materials such as wood siding and masonry.
7. Use appropriate techniques when cleaning a structure:
 - Do not use abrasive methods such as sandblasting and high-pressure washing to clean historic buildings as they will permanently damage the structure.
 - Use caution when utilizing chemical cleaners. Test the cleaning method on a small area first to determine if the method will cause additional damage to the historic material.
 - Refer to the National Park Service's Preservation Brief Documentation on cleaning historic structures, or consult a contractor experienced in cleaning historic structures.
8. Do not paint previously unpainted masonry surfaces.
9. When there is evidence of deterioration, repoint mortar joints in an appropriate manner to preserve masonry surfaces.

- Remove deteriorated mortar with hand tools rather than electric tools.
- Match the original texture, color, width, and profile of the historic mortar joints
- Repointing with mortar that is stronger than the original, such as Portland cement, can cause brick to crack, break or spall. In repointing mortar joints, mortar of appropriate PSI should be used.

10. Proper preparation should be done prior to painting wood surfaces including:

- Remove damaged paint down to the next sound paint layer using gentle techniques such as hand scraping and sanding.
- Clean the surface thoroughly with soap and water to remove all dirt and grime.
- Prime any bare wood surfaces prior to painting.
- Apply a protective paint coating using high quality paint.

11. Inspect metal features for peeling paint, corrosion, and rust on a regular basis.

12. Protect walls and historic building materials from moisture and water deterioration by providing proper drainage, guttering, downspouts, sealing of building materials, etc.

3.2 Windows and Doors



Window and door openings, while fully functional in use, define the scale and often the overall design character of a building. Their size, placement, number, and location, are all key design elements of a façade. For example, turn of the century commercial storefronts like those found in Oakboro generally had central recessed doorways flanked by large, plate glass display windows. Similarly, Craftsman style residential homes would typically have double hung window configurations of 4/1, 6/1 or other variation. Different architectural styles then would generally have distinct door and window design characteristics.

Because windows and doors are such important character-defining elements, their preservation is critical to the overall preservation of the historic structure. This would include the size, shape, location, material, profile, and general design of the historic window.

Preservation Briefs:

9 - The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows

13 - The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows

33 - The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass

Guidelines:

1. Whenever possible, retain and preserve architectural detailing of historic windows and doors, including frames, trim, sashes, muntins, glass, sills, moldings, lintels, shutters, and hardware, etc.
2. Similarly, the size, number and arrangement of windows and doors should be preserved and maintained.
3. Repair, rather than replace, deteriorated window and door elements whenever possible. When repair is necessary, splice or patch only the deteriorated section to match the original.
4. If replacement of a window or door unit is necessary, the new unit should be replaced to match the original in size, scale, material, detail, pane and/or panel configurations. New or replacement windows should be designed to fit within the original window openings.

5. Enclosing an original window or door opening or adding a new window or door opening to a character-defining façade will alter the historic character of the building and is not recommended. If permitted, new openings should be proportionally the same as existing openings and should have matching sash, glass, sills, frames, casings, and muntin patterns.
6. Wooden shutters are permitted on those buildings that would have had shutters historically. Installation of any shutters or storm windows should be done in a manner that does not obscure or damage important architectural window and door details. Shutter dimensions should reflect the proportions of the window unit. New shutters should be made of wood and should have the appearance of being functional.
7. Storm doors are permitted providing they match the original frame proportions and sash design. Storm doors shall be full view glass doors and not be installed in a manner that would obscure or damage the existing window and frame.
8. Substitute window materials such as vinyl or aluminum may be considered only if it matches the original in its dimension, profile and finish.
9. Reflective, mirrored, frosted, plexi-glass and tinted glass windows are inappropriate window materials and shall not be used on historic buildings.
10. Maintain caulking and weather-stripping to prevent air and water infiltration and keep a sound paint film on all windows and doors to promote energy conservation.
11. Retain and preserve energy efficient features such as transom windows, awnings, shutters, skylights, and porches.

3.3 Roofs



Roof forms in Oakboro's historic district follow three general designs. The majority of the commercial structures have flat, sloping roofs set behind parapet walls that often step down from the front elevation. The historic industrial warehouse structures have front-gable roofs typically clad in metal. The few residential structures in the district have gable and cross-gable roofs covered in architectural shingles.

Overall, these roof forms are simple yet distinct, and should be preserved and maintained. Their maintenance is particularly important as roofs function to protect the buildings from the elements. It is critical that they be kept in proper shape so that the historic structures do not suffer any structural damage.

Preservation Briefs:

4 - Roofing for Historic Buildings

19 - The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs

29 - The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs

30 - The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs

Guidelines:

1. The original roof form of an historic structure should be retained and preserved whenever possible including its shape, pitch and overhang. Historic commercial buildings typically have flat, or sloping roofs, while residential have gable or hipped roofs.
2. Original architectural elements of roofs should be retained and preserved. These can include parapets and cornices on downtown buildings, as well as dormers, chimneys, boxing, soffits, eaves and brackets on residential buildings.
3. Historic roofing material is character defining and should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Use replacement materials only when original materials are not feasible.
4. If replacement materials are used, they should convey a similar texture, composition, profile, pattern, size and color. Composition shingles can be considered as an appropriate material.
5. Roofs should be properly maintained in order to prevent deterioration of the roof and structure of the historic building:
 - Gutters and downspouts should be regularly inspected and cleaned.
 - Ensure the roof is weather tight by repairing leaks and deteriorated metal flashing.
 - Inspect roofs for damage. The roof should be repaired upon first sign of a leak to prevent water infiltration in the building's structure.
 - The shallow flat roofs of commercial buildings are difficult to see. They should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are properly draining and remain weather tight.
 - Roofs should be ventilated to prevent moisture retention as well as insect infestation.
6. Roof additions such as vents, skylights, and antennae should be applied only to non character-defining areas or on rear portions of the building where they will not be visible from the street.
7. Changing the historic character of the building by adding roof elements that are not historically accurate such as dormer windows, vents, or skylights is prohibited.
8. Painting roofing materials that historically were not painted is prohibited.
9. The installation of new gutters and downspouts is appropriate and should be done in a manner that does not damage any architectural features.

3.4 Storefronts



Downtown Oakboro has retained some excellent examples of turn of the century historic commercial buildings. It has also seen the preservation of a few key downtown buildings back to their historic configurations, including fully renovated storefronts. In Oakboro's case, with its small downtown and relatively simple architecture, it is the historic commercial storefront that defines the entire district.

The storefronts, like the ones shown above, typically have a central recessed entryway, flanked by large windows for the display of commercial goods. Often, the display windows and doors will have transom windows above. Transoms were either left uncovered to allow light to come into the building, or were covered by a canvas awning. Immediately above the storefront was typically a small sign panel, a row of upper story windows, or both.

Preservation Briefs:

11 - Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts

Guidelines:

1. Retain and preserve original commercial storefronts and details that contribute to the historic character of the building including display windows, recessed entryways, doors, kickplate, upper-façade, transoms, corner posts, columns, and other decorative features.
2. Do not cover upper façade or façade detailing with non-historic materials such as aluminum siding. Similarly, do not enclose or cover up upper façade windows.
3. If replacement of a deteriorated storefront or storefront feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
4. When replacing a storefront that is deteriorated beyond repair, use historical evidence to recreate the original storefront or design and construct a new storefront that is compatible with the size, scale, color, and material of the historic building.
5. Changing a storefront so that it appears as an office or other use is not recommended. If a new storefront design is used, it should be compatible to the character and design of the historic structure.

3.5 Architectural Details



Architectural detailing on Oakboro's historic buildings is relatively simple. Most detailing occurs with changes in materials within the façade element, or simple brick detailing. Oakboro's downtown commercial structures do not have elaborate cornices, but instead have simple upper façade detailing including brick corbelling, piers, and coping. More elaborate detailing can be seen in Oakboro's downtown churches with their steeples, columns, woodwork, and stained glass.

Preservation Briefs:

17 - Architectural Character - Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character

Guidelines:

1. Preserve and protect character-defining architectural features whenever possible.
2. Original historic architectural components and details shall be maintained in good repair whenever possible.
3. If replacement of an architectural element is necessary, the new components or details shall match the historic elements as closely as possible in style, proportion, and material.
4. Historic architectural components shall not be replaced with materials, such as plywood, vinyl, and aluminum that would not have been used in the original construction. New features should not be added unless there is physical or other evidence that they historically existed.
5. Architectural elements that are inappropriate to the architectural style of the historic structure should not be installed.
6. Architectural details shall not be covered or obscured by artificial siding or cladding.

3.6 Additions and Outbuildings

Buildings change over time. Historic structures often were added onto, and in many cases, these additions have taken on historic significance of their own. Most buildings in Oakboro's historic district still exist in their original configuration, with few changes or additions. Still, future growth and additions may be necessary, both to commercial and residential structures, and it is important that these new additions not detract from the historic character of the primary structure.

Guidelines:

- 1.** Additions should be designed and located in a manner that is consistent with the historic district. Additions or changes to the primary façade are discouraged.
- 2.** Additions should be of a scale consistent with surrounding structures. Doors and windows on the addition should be similar in size and placement to the openings of adjacent historic buildings and exterior materials should be compatible with the surface materials of adjacent historic buildings.
- 3.** Additions shall not be visually obtrusive and shall have a minimum impact to the primary façade of the historical building.
- 4.** Additions shall be secondary to the original structure in scale, design, and placement.
- 5.** Additions should be constructed in a manner that avoids extensive removal or loss of historic materials, and does not damage or destroy character-defining elements.
- 6.** When possible, locate new outbuildings in rear yards.
- 7.** New outbuildings should be proportionally the same in size and height to the primary structure as is seen in the relationship between other primary and secondary structures in the district.
- 8.** Prefabricated wooden accessory structures that are not architecturally similar to the primary structure are allowed only if screened from view from any existing right-of-way. Prefabricated metal storage buildings are not acceptable.

3.7 Accessibility and Mechanical



Modern mechanical, access, and safety systems often are in conflict with historic preservation practices. Energy conservation, heating and ventilation, handicapped access, and fire safety are all critically important to any building. These treatments on historic structures should attempt to minimize any negative impact to the historic character of the building, to the degree possible.

Preservation Briefs:

3 - Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings

24 - Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches

32 - Making Historic Properties Accessible

Guidelines:

1. Preserve character defining spaces, features and finishes as much as possible when complying with health, safety and accessibility codes. When possible, locate these improvements on rear elevations not visible from the public right-of-way.
2. Screen mechanical systems on historic commercial structures from view on rear elevations or behind parapet walls.
3. When installing window air-conditioning units, television antennas, or satellite dishes, place them on the rear elevations not easily seen from a public right-of-way.
4. Health and safety features that are visible from the public right-of-way shall be constructed so that the scale, materials, and details are compatible with the historic structure.
5. Fire escapes and access ramps shall be constructed in such a way that they can be removed with minimum damage to the historic structure. If feasible, new doors for fire escapes should be located in existing openings.

4.0 Site Requirements

Downtowns are defined by urban design as much as they are their historic architecture. Unlike their suburban counterparts, downtowns are pedestrian friendly with wide sidewalks, buildings built to the front property line, and parking off-site or behind the buildings. The buildings address the pedestrian rather than the vehicle, and all of the elements of the environment contribute to the pedestrian nature of the downtown including parking, sidewalks, lighting, tree cover and landscaping, signage, and other hardscape.

It is critically important that the historic development pattern of downtown Oakboro be preserved, and that any new development follows historic urban design patterns.

4.1 Lighting

Generally speaking, lighting in the historic district should be understated and be appropriate to the pedestrian and historic character of the district.

Guidelines:

1. Original lighting fixtures should be maintained and preserved.
2. The design of lighting fixtures and poles shall be compatible in size, scale, material and brightness with the structure, landscape, and downtown, or neighborhood setting.
3. Use soft, minimal lighting sources to accent a buildings architectural details and entrances, rather than illuminating the entire building
4. Low height, low brightness landscape lights are allowed as long as they don't detract from the structure or historic landscape.
5. Use downlights and focused light sources in parking lots that do not spill over into adjacent properties.

4.2 Parking & Sidewalks

Downtown's architecture and historic development pattern is of a pedestrian scale, and care should be taken to ensure that parking, circulation, sidewalks, and new paving patterns respect the pedestrian character of downtown. Pedestrian and vehicular areas should be clearly defined, and the overall visual impacts of parking to the urban design of downtown should be minimized. Architecture and pedestrian character should define downtown Oakboro.

Guidelines:

1. On-site parking within commercial areas shall be to the side or rear of the structure. Front yards should be used for building area or public space rather than parking.
2. New parking lots in downtown should have a clearly defined edge between the pedestrian sidewalk and parking area, using planting strips, landscaping, fencing, low walls, etc.

3. Locate surface parking lots on the interior of a commercial block rather than corners, whenever possible.
4. Gravel, crushed stone, or other loose material, including unpaved lots, is prohibited in commercial areas.
5. Walkways in commercial areas shall be utilized to connect parking and commercial uses. Pedestrian walkways in parking areas or crosswalks at street intersections should be clearly differentiated either in material or striping.
6. Whenever possible, parking in residential areas should be to the rear or side of the structure. Front yards should not be used for parking.

4.3 Signs and Awnings



It is not the intent of these design guidelines to regulate signs or their content for Oakboro's downtown businesses. Oakboro's zoning ordinance regulates size, placement, number, types, as well as permitting of signs for new and existing businesses. Still, signs themselves can give character to a building and a historic district, and these guidelines present the best treatments for signage and awnings in a historic downtown.

Signs and awnings are first and foremost functional in their use, but provide interest and color to the built environment. They also provide activity and scale to the pedestrian environment within downtown. Therefore, signage is an important design consideration in a historic downtown, and should be designed in context with the building and district.

Preservation Briefs:

25 - The Preservation of Historic Signs

44 - The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings: Repair, Replacement and New Design

Guidelines:

1. Size, scale, location, style and material of signage shall be compatible with the architecture of the historic buildings.
2. Signs attached to a historic structure shall be mounted so that no significant architectural feature is concealed or damaged.

3. Wall signs on commercial buildings shall be flush-mounted in appropriate locations in the wall space above the storefront. The sign should fit within existing architectural features, usually with the sign panel above the storefront.
4. Projecting signs scaled for the pedestrian are encouraged in the downtown. The signs should be placed over the building entrance, or just to its side.
5. Window signs are appropriate provided they meet the requirements of the Town of Oakboro's sign ordinance.
6. Painted wood and metal are preferred materials for signage in downtown, while high quality synthetic materials may also be accepted.
7. Neon, internally illuminated, and portable signs are prohibited in downtown. Understated lighting should be used when directed at a sign from an external source.
8. Freestanding signs are recommended for residential structures that serve a commercial function.
9. Awnings shall be placed only on structures for which they are historically accurate or which there exists physical evidence of a previous treatment.
10. Canvas awnings can be installed over windows and doors if they are historically appropriate. Awnings shall be placed appropriately to fit in the openings above display windows and doors and be installed in a manner that does not conceal or damage any historic materials.
11. Backlit or continuous awnings are prohibited on commercial buildings. Metal awnings are allowed only on buildings which would have historically had flat, metal awnings.
12. Residentially used awnings should be made of canvas, vinyl-coated canvas, or acrylic. Metal awnings shall be placed only on post-World War II homes.
13. Awnings are appropriate on upper floor windows if there is evidence that awnings originally existed at these locations.

4.4 Fences and Walls

Guidelines:

1. Retain and preserve historic fences and walls whenever possible including gates, hardware, details, etc.
2. Deteriorated fences and walls should be repaired rather than replaced. New fences and walls should be of a design that is appropriate to the architectural style of the historic structure.

3. Wooden privacy fences in side and rear yards shall not extend past the rear elevation of the structure. Solid privacy fences should not be used in front yards.
4. Whenever possible, fences should be used to screen service areas, garbage receptacles, and parking areas in the commercial areas.
5. Vinyl fences, chain link fences, non-historic welded wire and concrete block walls are not permitted in the district in areas that can be seen from public rights-of-way.

5.0 New Construction



Oakboro exists in a dynamic and growing market that has seen a significant amount of new development in recent years. The downtown itself has seen several signature new buildings with new institutional and office uses, as well as the most recent Railroad Museum. New construction in a historic downtown has a significant potential to impact the character of the district, both positively and negatively. Downtown Oakboro should continue to grow, and it is critically important that its new development be in keeping with the existing urban fabric of the historic district. New construction should not mimic historic buildings, but its scale; orientation, massing, setbacks, height, materials, and roof forms should be considered when being proposed in the historic district.

Most buildings in downtown Oakboro are one or two stories and are oriented towards the street. They are designed to accommodate the pedestrian, with parking located either on-street, or to the rear of the building. Oakboro, like most historic downtowns, has buildings built to its front property lines, creating a solid building wall along the sidewalk. Most buildings in downtown Oakboro are made of masonry with simple architectural detailing.

5.1 Massing, Scale, and Orientation

Guidelines:

1. New building façades should be designed to be compatible with adjacent buildings. A new building should be compatible with the established rhythm of buildings in the district.
2. Main entrances should be clearly evident and should be oriented toward the sidewalk and street.
3. Maintain the historic alignment of buildings. Commercial buildings should be built to the front property line to create a continuous building line or street elevation.

4. The space between buildings should reflect the existing pattern of property development within the district. Historically, buildings within the interior of a block were built to the side property line, usually sharing a wall with its neighbor.
5. New construction projects should follow the site features and district setting guidelines presented earlier in this document.

5.2 Setback, Height, and Width

Guidelines:

1. Downtown Oakboro commercial structures were historically one and two stories. New commercial uses should be of similar scale.
2. Building setbacks should follow established setbacks on the street and must comply with zoning requirements. The setback of new construction should be consistent with how the district historically developed.
3. A new building's overall proportion (height to width ratio) should be consistent with existing historic structures.
4. Use landscaping treatments such as low shrubs or fencing to help define a continuous street edge when a building is setback from the street.
5. In certain instances, buildings at the corners can be set back further, but should provide pedestrian amenities and landscaping within the front yard.
6. Where buildings are set back from the front property line, the parking should be to the side and rear only.

5.3 Architectural Detail & Materials

Guidelines:

1. The design of a new building should not attempt to create a false historic appearance, but rather complement buildings in the existing district. New construction should have its own character and style.
2. New construction should include storefront elements proportional to that of existing historic structures.
3. Architectural details such as cornices, trim, windows and doors should reflect the scale of buildings in the existing historic district. The orientation and pattern of windows, doors, and architectural details can help reduce the impact to new construction.

4. The materials used for walls, windows, roofs, and other architectural details should be respected and compatible with existing structures in the district. Exterior surfaces should be finished in a similarly compatible manner to surrounding historic buildings.
5. Modern materials are appropriate on a new building; however, masonry should be the predominant material on the façade.
6. When modern materials are used, they should be similar in their physical appearance and texture with traditional materials.
7. Aluminum and vinyl siding are prohibited on new construction.

6.0 Demolition

Oakboro has a small downtown with limited historic resources, and demolition of historic structures cannot be reversed. Demolition is strongly discouraged and alternatives to demolition are always preferred.

The Historic Preservation Commission cannot deny a COA request for a demolition, but it can issue a temporary delay of demolition while preservation alternatives are being explored. The COA, then, would be approved but with an effective date of up to 365 days from the date of approval.

During the delay, the Commission should actively explore options for preservation. If the Commission determines that the building in question has no historic significance or value, the COA can be approved without delay.

6.1 Demolition

Guidelines:

1. Prior to undertaking demolition work, the property owner shall determine the historic significance of the structure and its relationship to the district.
2. If it is determined that the structure is historically significant, demolition shall be delayed for an appropriate time in order for town staff to work with the property owner to seek viable alternatives to demolition. Alternatives to demolition include:
 - If a building is in disrepair, working with the property owner to develop a rehabilitation plan and identify funding assistance such as rehabilitation tax credits that would allow the building to be rehabilitated.
 - If a building does not fit the owner's required needs, determining if the structure could be adaptively reused.
 - Working with the property owner to locate a buyer who will use the property without demolishing the structure.
 - As a last resort, finding a suitable location within the district for the building to be moved and working with the property owner to develop a relocation plan.

3. If all alternatives for preservation have been exhausted, town staff shall work with the owner to make a permanent record of the historic resource including photography, an architectural description of the building, as well as any other historic documentation that is available.
4. When a demolition is proposed, the applicant must submit a landscaping plan illustrating proposed landscaping and other site development to be completed within six (6) months after demolition.

During the delay, the Commission should actively explore options for preservation. If the Commission determines that the building in question has no historic significance or value, the COA can be approved without delay.

7.0 Routine Maintenance, Major and Minor Works

The table below outlines those projects which fall into the categories of routine maintenance, minor works, and major works. A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is not required for Routine Maintenance however; a COA would be required for all other projects.

7.1 Routine Maintenance, Major and Minor Works

Routine Maintenance projects include repairing or replacing where there is no change in the design, materials, or general appearance of the structure. There is not a need for a COA for these projects, however if there is a question as to whether a project falls under Routine Maintenance and is not included below, Town of Oakboro staff can assist in that determination.

Minor works projects require approval by the Town of Oakboro staff as designated by the Historic Preservation Commission. If these projects meet the design guidelines, town staff can approve the application. Staff, however, cannot deny a COA request. If the staff person concludes that either the project does not fall under the minor works provisions, or that it is in conflict with the design guidelines, the application is forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission for its review.

Major works projects require design review by the Historic Preservation Commission. In general, major works projects involve a change in the appearance of a structure, and are more substantial in nature than routine maintenance or minor works projects. These projects would be reviewed by the HPC during its regular meeting.

Major Works	Minor Works	Routine Maintenance
New construction or additions to primary building	Installation of signage meeting zoning ordinance & guidelines	Painting of previously painted buildings
Exterior alterations to principal elevation of buildings	Installation, alteration, or removal of awnings, canopies or shutters	Landscaping and planting
Demolition of any structure	Repair or replacement of	Repair or replacement of

	windows, doors, and siding with no change	architectural details with no change
Relocation of any structure	Alteration, addition of architectural details	Repair or replacement of existing awnings, canopies or shutters
Installation of new windows and doors	Replacement of synthetic siding	Repair or replacement of existing driveways, walks & paved areas with no change
Construction of new accessory structures	Construction of appropriate fences, walls or hedges	Repair or replacement of existing fences or walls with no change
Construction, addition or removal of porches or steps	Addition or repair of existing accessory structures	Repair or replacement of existing gutters or downspouts
Changes to historic roof forms & features	Construction or alterations of new driveways and walkways	Repairs, including repointing, to existing masonry
New or expanded parking areas	Removal of existing accessory buildings that are not historically significant	Repair or replacement of exterior lighting fixtures with no change
Substantial changes to previously approved COA	Repair of existing masonry	Repair or replacement of existing signs with no change
	Replacement of existing roofs	Window air conditioners at rear elevations
	Repair or replacement of existing porches	Repair of existing roof coverings with no change
	Installation or removal of HVAC or mech. Equipment	Installation of building, house numbers and mailboxes
	Construction, alteration, addition or removal of decks and patios	Repair/replacement of other features and accessory site features not specifically listed
	Installation of satellite dishes & TV Antennas	
	Repair of existing stairs and steps	
	Installation of storm windows and doors	
	Installation and alteration of exterior lighting features	
	Alteration, construction or removal of temporary features necessary to ease difficulties associated with a medical condition	
	Renewal of expired COA	
	Addition, alteration or removal of other appurtenant features and accessory site features not specifically listed	

NOTES: