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TAMPA HEIGHTS DESIGN GUIDELINES

**A Guide to Rehabilitation and New Construction
in the Tampa Heights Historic District**

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A Guide to Rehabilitation and New Construction
in the Tampa Heights Historic District

Tampa Architectural Review Commission
City of Tampa
Florida

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Edited by
The City of Tampa Historic Preservation Commission

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History and Architectural Styles of Tampa Heights

History:

Tampa Heights is one of Tampa's oldest residential neighborhoods, with houses dating from the late 1800s to the mid-1940s. The houses in the historic district reflect architectural styles favored by Americans for nearly six decades. Housing types range from simple wood frame structures to styled masonry buildings. The area is marked by a variety of other structures as well, such as apartment buildings, churches, and commercial buildings. Originally established as a neighborhood for Tampa's wealthier citizens, the area eventually attracted persons of all economic backgrounds. The district is associated with the pioneer settlement of the Tampa Bay region and its economic development. Tampa Heights was designated a local historic district by the Tampa City Council on September 7, 2000.

Architectural Character:

The Tampa Heights Historic District is comprised of mainly single family dwellings, but the district also features several churches, a school, a fire station, and a handful of commercial buildings. There are approximately 300 structures (62 percent) that contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood, while approximately 184 (38 percent) are considered noncontributing. The historic buildings date from circa 1890 to 1945 and represent a wide variety of architectural styles. Most of the houses in the district are bungalows or wood frame vernacular residences erected between circa 1910 and 1925; however, the district also features examples of such formal styles as Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, and Mediterranean Revival.

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines for historic districts do a number of important things. They are foremost a communication tool between the Architectural Review Commission (A.R.C.) and the public, describing the context of the neighborhood in terms of its history and its architectural styles, while providing a framework or philosophy for design review. Further, they describe in some detail the building elements that are important to each architectural style in the district and suggest a variety of solutions for rehabilitation and new construction that might best preserve the neighborhood's character. Finally, the guidelines are the general guide that will be used by the A.R.C. when reviewing construction activities in the Tampa Heights Historic District.

Guidelines are *not* a means to dictate specific solutions that must always prevail, nor are they rules or regulations. Instead, they provide consistent guidance to A.R.C. members and the public alike.

Since 1931 when the City of Charleston established the first historic district ordinance, historic preservation has been evolving. In the past two decades important policies, laws and standards at national, state and local levels have been developed and preservation has matured.

One important benchmark was the drafting of **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation** in 1979. This document, refined and revised in recent years, provides the basis for many design guidelines including that of Tampa Heights. The basic philosophy of **The Standards** is best indicated in the definition of rehabilitation as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values." It implies a gentle, thoughtful process which respects the original character of each contributing structure, while allowing for orderly change. **The Standards** are included in the next section for reference.

Using the Design Guidelines

Developed in coordination with the Tampa Historic Preservation Ordinance, the guidelines apply to residential as well as commercial structures located in the historic district. For proposed construction or demolition activities as outlined in the Quick Reference Chart, a property owner must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the A.R.C. prior to the initiation of any construction activity or the issuance of a building permit. Some types of work, as indicated in that chart, may be approved by the staff of the A.R.C. It is recommended that people planning to do rehabilitation, new construction or an addition contact the staff early in the planning process. For new construction it is required by the ordinance that the applicant contact the A.R.C. for preliminary review of the proposed project prior to beginning construction documents.

Please contact the staff of the Architectural Review Commission at the offices of the City of Tampa, Planning & Development Department, Architectural Review & Historic Preservation Division regarding the Tampa Heights Historic District, the ordinance or the guidelines. The staff can be reached at Development Services Center located at 1400 N. Boulevard, or by telephone at (813) 274-3100.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Historic properties that are considered significant through associated historic, architectural and cultural values often require rehabilitation to serve viable functions. Recognition of the importance of preservation of significant properties and of the economic benefits of recycling buildings prompted the need for standards and guidelines. The document that sets forth the prevailing philosophy for work on contributing structures is **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings** (1983). Conformance with these standards in the treatment of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places is required for certain types of funding and is endorsed by preservation agencies and professionals.

The Standards encourage selection of a function for a historic property appropriate to its physical characteristics and context, which allows preservation of distinctive features and examples of craftsmanship. According to **The Standards**, deteriorated elements should be repaired and preserved rather than replaced. If replacement is unavoidable, historic elements should be matched in quality and visual character. Alterations and additions may be of compatible contemporary design and should be carried out in such a manner that any future decision to remove them would not impair the integrity of the property. Cleaning procedures that are potentially harsh or damaging must be avoided.

Rehabilitation, by definition, assumes that some alterations must take place to make a building efficient and to comply with code requirements for life safety, conservation of energy and accessibility. Because of the many styles of buildings within the Tampa Heights Historic District, the particular elements that define the character of each property must be identified so that the work necessary for current use can be integrated with historic preservation goals. Because guidelines cannot address conditions peculiar to a single building, property owners are encouraged to utilize professional preservation expertise including assistance from the staff of the Architectural Review Commission during the initial planning process and for advice throughout the project.

The Tampa Historic Preservation Ordinance, as part of its Review Criteria for its Architectural Review Commission, has provided for design guidelines for use within the Tampa Heights Historic District. These design guidelines were developed out of the information found in **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings** and out of the specific needs of the Tampa Heights Historic District. The A.R.C. will use the design guidelines as a basis for review of all applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.

The most frequent use of **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation** has been to determine if a rehabilitation project qualified as a "Certified Rehabilitation" pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and previous legislation. These standards may be used again in

subsequent legislation. This type of evaluation is required for benefits under Federal Tax Incentive programs.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the design guidelines are different. Granting of a Certificate of Appropriateness does not imply that a project has met the criteria to be considered a "Certified Rehabilitation." For a project to be considered under the Federal Tax Incentive program the project must be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer of the State of Florida and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards may be used as a guide by the Architectural Review Commission when reviewing all Certificates of Appropriateness. **The Standards**, which are reinforced by the more detailed guidelines, are as follows:

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.
9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.
10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.