

DRAFT

DOBBS FERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES



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PART 1 Introduction

Dobbs Ferry's Development and Architecture

The land now called Dobbs Ferry was home to the Lenape Indians before Europeans explored the Hudson Valley. The Village figured in the American Revolution most notably as the launching point for the 1781 march to victory at Yorktown, Virginia. A few treasured structures survive from the 18th century. Most buildings we now see around us date from the 1800s on. They survive as evidence of community patterns of settlement and an evolution of architectural styles. They show influences of high and modest American traditions and ways of building imported from Europe—especially Italy, from which many residents came in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Architects who have designed notable buildings in the village include Alexander Jackson Davis, at St. Christopher's campus, Bertram Goodhue on Main Street, Frank Lloyd Wright disciple David Henken on Beechdale, Albert Buchman of Masters' Estherwood Mansion and Julius Munckowitz, architect of the South Presbyterian Church.

Settlement organized itself in response to our challenging topography interlaced with streams headed to the Hudson. The river landings, the Albany Post Road, the Old Croton Aqueduct (1842) and soon after, the railroad (1849), shaped land use. The automobile allowed development to disperse. Late 19th and 20th century suburban developments fanned out from the village center to populate estate properties. They climbed our hills, and offered new "settlers" a variety of styles, compatible in scale but stylistically diverse. Many enjoyed fine river views.

The density and patchwork of the village is determined by the underlying Dobbs Ferry Zoning Code. This guide, and the Design Requirements it contains, present a range of preservation principles to help residents identify the character of their buildings and plan restoration, remodeling and additions in ways faithful to the original design. Our village cannot claim to be an unspoiled historic artifact, perfectly frozen in time. Its



The character of downtown took shape early in the 20th century, complete with telegraph poles and wires. The expanses of brick paving look wider with only a few narrow carriages parked curbside.

strength is the evidence it shows of change: in ways people supported themselves, in the building traditions they brought to the valley, in institutions drawn to the verdant landscape, and in commercial ventures adapting to changing populations. The guide encourages new construction conforming to the zoning-permitted volumes and setbacks and suggests ways builders can best achieve harmony (but not mimicry) with neighboring historic buildings. The aggregate of small preservation moves can be neighborhood-transforming.

Dobbs Ferry's building stock does not perfectly fit into categories, but general types can be identified:

- Commercial retail buildings
- Light industrial buildings
- Religious and institutional buildings
- 19th-early 20th century houses and outbuildings surviving from an agricultural past
- Residential settlements for local merchants and workers
- Housing for a growing commuter bedroom community

How a Historic District Works

At its best, a historic district inspires shared community efforts to improve properties and quality of life. The compact implied by the district provides property value stability, reducing risk of negative change. Historic districts have a long track record in New York State and across the country, providing stability to property values, enhancing community character, and revitalizing downtowns.

Buildings within a historic district fall into two categories: contributing and non-contributing. A contributing building must be over 50 years old, and may exemplify a significant architectural style, may have been designed by a known architect, may have housed notable people, activities or events, or may simply be part of a collection of structures useful to the evolution of a community, such as workers' housing or vintage suburban subdivision. Non-contributing buildings are of more recent construction. Like all construction projects in the Village, they are subject to review by the Architectural and Historic Review Board, but the particulars of vintage styles described in this guide do not apply.

The National Register of Historic Places

Dobbs Ferry's local legislation provides a process for designating local landmarks and districts. This local legislation provides greatest control over proposed changes, protecting structures designated as historic from demolition or anachronistic changes. Listing on the National Register carries no such protections unless the proposed action is funded in part with federal money. A review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would have to be undertaken for approval of the action, as it also would if a local application required a review under the State Environmental Quality Review act (SEQR). Listing on the National Register has some practical benefits. For example, commercial and mixed use buildings in a National Register downtown can benefit from 20% tax credits on substantial rehabilitations. Tax credit legislation is tracked by the Preservation League of New York; see **Historic Preservation Resources** for contact information.



South Presbyterian Church, which dates from 1868, is one of a handful of sites in Dobbs Ferry that have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Guiding Principles

A tool used to guide work on historic buildings throughout the country is the federal **Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings**. These guidelines were formulated by the National Park Service, together with the **Standards for Rehabilitation**, to guide work on public historic sites, but they also are useful to owners and professionals working on private historic properties. These guidelines are at the core of standards adopted at federal and state levels and in local municipalities. They are the underlying philosophy of the **Dobbs Ferry Historic District Guidelines**.

The federal guidelines provide a model approach using increasingly intense levels of intervention, as required, to achieve rehabilitation goals. First, learn what you have; what are the qualities that define your historic structure? Carefully maintain it. Repair elements in need of fixing. And finally, as a last resort, replace elements that cannot be repaired. Paraphrasing the National Park Service directives:

Identify, Retain, and Preserve

This capsule phrase describes the initial process of determining the qualities, features, or components of a site or structure that are most important to defining its character. Once that identification has been made, it is then possible to look at how to retain and preserve those existing character-defining elements.

Protect and Maintain

Protection involves the least degree of intervention and is often a preventive measure. Maintenance can include rust removal, caulking, re-application of protective coatings, painting, cleaning of roof and gutter systems, and installation of protection in the form of lightning, security, flood and fire protection systems. These types of procedures should be included in a regular maintenance plan. The Village Code requirements for property maintenance (Chapters 204 & 247) are of special importance in historic districts to maintain their character.

Repair

When additional work is required, repair is recommended. Repair work should begin with the least amount of intervention possible, such as piecing in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing or upgrading accordingly. Repairs can also include in-kind

replacement or substitution of materials used for extensively deteriorated elements.

Replace

Replacement should only be undertaken when an entire system or feature has failed. The replacement should use the same or comparable materials and match the existing in shape, dimensions, and finishes. Exterior features that could be repaired or preserved with reasonable effort and cost should not be replaced.

The first intervention identified by the federal guidelines above includes identifying character-defining features of the structure. **Part 2: Historic Styles in Dobbs Ferry** in this Design Guide has narrowed down the building styles to those most prevalent in the Village and identifies the primary features of each style.

Similarly, **Part 3: Guidelines for Modification, Renovation, Repair and Expansion of Buildings** takes inspiration from the federal guidelines: retaining and preserving or repairing existing historic components is favored over work that includes replacing existing historic components.

See nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com and nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/guidelines/index.htm



Many projects on historic buildings include a range of actions from maintenance through replacement.

Preservation and Sustainability

The preservation and repair of existing buildings is a highly sustainable activity and an important tool to reduce climate change. This guide presents the rationale and methodologies for capitalizing on an existing building while upgrading its energy efficiency.

Keeping buildings in use means keeping the largest objects in our environment out of the landfill. Demolition followed by new construction, no matter how “green” the new building, adds right away via emissions from materials used to the greenhouse gases overheating our planet. Locally, demolition and construction debris are major components of the waste stream. The preservation mantra of “retain, repair, restore” complements the sustainability trio of “reduce, reuse, recycle”.

Many of the older buildings in Dobbs Ferry were built before the era of cheap energy and have (or had) green features such as porches or large overhangs shading the interior, shade trees, operable windows and shutters, and passive attic ventilators. Preserving or restoring these features is equally or more sustainable than adding solar collectors or geothermal systems, which require large amounts of energy for their manufacture and installation. Bending the curve on climate change to avoid worst case scenarios requires us to understand the carbon emissions of alternatives at every turn in our lives, and especially in relation to buildings, which account for close to 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions.



Dense-pack cellulose, here being pumped in from the exterior, is a relatively low cost recycled product suitable for retrofit of old and historic buildings. It has a lower climate change impact than foam insulations.

The most cost-effective green strategies such as insulation and air sealing do not dictate architectural style or prevent new buildings from fitting their context. Some knowledge is required to properly apply these techniques to existing buildings of any era.

One purpose of this design document is to help chart a sustainable future for Dobbs Ferry. You will find recommendations for sustainable approaches imbedded in the guidelines for the rehabilitation of old and historic structures and landscapes in the Village. Before undertaking improvements on your building, it is smart to commission an Energy Audit so you understand what energy conserving measures you can include in the work you are contemplating. Benefits to the planet and to your pocket-book can be substantial. Information is available from your utility supplier and state agencies such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (see appendices for contact).



Plugging air leaks in existing buildings is key to reducing energy costs and minimizing CO2 emissions. Tools like blower doors (above) and thermal scans (below) measure air leakage and target repair efforts.



The orange and yellow stripes in the scan show indoor heated air being lost to the outdoors at typical locations where caulk and insulation should be installed.

PART 2

Historic Styles in Dobbs Ferry



Introduction to Styles

Dobbs Ferry has numerous architectural treasures. Especially important to its distinctive character is the collection of 19th and early 20th century buildings that cluster along the Old Croton Aqueduct. These structures come in a variety of styles and shapes, from historic churches to vernacular, utilitarian carriage houses and barns. The modulated scale, the detailing, and the history of the village still visible in this collection are more important than the virtuoso stylistic “performance” of a single structure. Other collections of historic structures occur on side streets off Broadway, including houses on lower Clinton Avenue, those in the Belden Avenue Historic District, and a cluster on lower Chestnut Street and Ogden Park that includes 75 Main Street and Our Lady of Pompeii Church.

An understanding of styles is important, but not all buildings fit into a single slot. Designers and builders of many of the older structures referred to pattern books that illustrated styles, such as those by Andrew Jackson Downing or Calvert Vaux, who both worked in the Hudson Valley. Designers also occasionally mingled styles, with an eclectic result. In Dobbs Ferry, for example, one can find Folk Victorians with both Gothic Revival and Classical Revival touches. While strong patterns guided architectural styling in the 19th and early 20th century, creative architects in the 20 and 21st centuries invented new forms—deliberately trying to break the mold. Dobbs Ferry has several of these one-of-a-kind houses which could at some point be designated as landmarks or contributing structures in a district.

As buildings, particularly residences, age over time, adjustments are often made to update the exterior appearance and enlarge or alter them for functional purposes. Those alterations can also leave a record of changes in taste, and of varying levels of design and construction skill.

In spite of occasional stylistic blurring or mingling, it is important to look carefully at each building and try to determine its primary underlying design impulse. See if old pictures are available; look for comparable buildings. Restorations, repairs and changes to historic properties are more likely to be successful if the designer has first considered a building’s design origins, from overall proportions and materials to minute details.

First, and above all, study your building and what it “wants” to be.

Residential Styles

Most historic residential buildings in Dobbs Ferry are wood-framed and display stylistic forms and details reflecting their eras of construction. Houses are typically two or three stories tall and have primarily rectangular massing supporting a gabled or hipped roof. There is a considerable number of late 19th and early 20th century houses that ramble asymmetrically with dormers and wings. Each building is further distinguished by patterns and details that were prevalent in the following variety of styles popular in the late 19th, early 20th and mid 20th centuries.

Early Colonial (1790-1850)



The handsome stone version above has a 3 bay upper level over 5 below where windows may have been added in a later renovation.

Dobbs Ferry has a few examples of early colonial houses that were adaptations of simple English dwellings. They are small, wood framed, with simple plans, 3 or 5 bays, with side gables connected by a ridge, small horizontal sash at an attic level. Small dependencies have been added to side or rear to accommodate changing uses.



This three bay example with center chimney has faced Broadway (the "Highland Turnpike" in 1859) for over 150 years.



An earlier incarnation of 66 Cedar Street had 5 bays, two chimneys and an ornate later shallow porch.

Gothic Revival (1840-1880)



Hallmarks of this style include rectangular massing, steeply-pitched gabled roofs and cross gables, decorative vergeboards with finials at the gables, single-texture wall surfaces that run the entire height of the wall, and, sometimes, entry or full-width porches often with flattened Gothic arches. Windows are typically double-hung sash in a variety of patterns, with upper sash that may have Gothic arches and hoods, and may be grouped.



This example combines pointed arches on doors and windows with flat arches. Steep gables are enhanced by deeply sculpted trim.



Tracery plays with light and shade and emphasizes the gables in this "Carpenter Gothic" cottage. Flat topped upper windows are a variant.

Italianate (1840-1885)



A mansard roof adds a Second Empire touch to an asymmetrical composition with both flat and round arches.

The massing for this style is typically square or rectangular, topped by a low-pitched hip or front-gable roof with moderate to deep overhanging eaves supported by fairly decorative brackets. A tower form is common and characteristic. Windows and doors are tall and narrow, and often have elaborate crowns and surrounds. Windows are typically 1/1 or 2/2 double-hung, have arched or flattened arch upper sashes, and may be grouped in pairs or triples. Bays, large porches, cupolas and quoins are also common details.



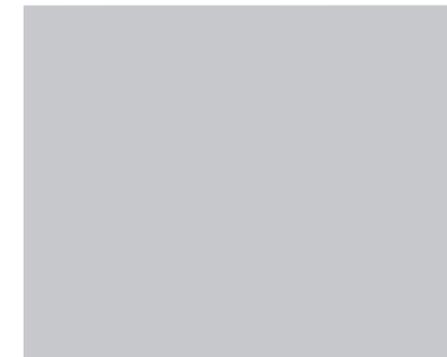
An arch-windowed belvedere provides a tower form at a corner of an upper flat roof. Heavy bracketed roof overhangs and elaborate window shrouds add decorative flourishes. A wrap-around porch shades southern and western exposures. Small circular windows punctuate the gables.

Hybrid (1870-present)



Mediterranean tile, a crenellated Tudor chimney and Deco detailing create a unique sympatico blend.

The Victorian era saw a free mixing of stylistic features in individual buildings, and that tradition in American design has continued to the present day, alongside the revival of more pure earlier styles which were often based on European and English traditions. Hybrid buildings may combine details from different styles and apply them to a plan from another tradition. Whether intentional or the record of changing taste, the results can be delightful category-defying compositions.



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Overhangs with Craftsman and Prairie Style horizontal emphasis combine here with a traditional Colonial Revival approach.

Second Empire (1855-1885)



The distinguishing feature of a Second-Empire building is the dual-pitched hip or Mansard roof, often with dormers. The steeper-sloped hip roof commonly has straight, flared, or concave shapes. Below the roofline these buildings are similar to the Italianate style with decorative brackets in the eave (often paired) and molded cornices that decorate the upper and eave edges of the steeper sloped hip roof.



A true Mansard has a significant angle from vertical, 18 degrees minimum. Dobbs Ferry wood frame buildings, in all styles, have often been stuccoed by more recent owners.



Dormers punctuate rather than dominate the roof in the typical 3 part composition: roof (cornice) 2nd floor and elaborated ground floor with bay extensions.

Folk Victorian (1870-1910)



Residences of this style are composed of simple rectangular or square masses often with front or side gable roofs, a symmetrical face, prominent front porch, brackets under the eaves, and simplified Gothic Revival, Italianate, or Queen Anne details at the cornice and porch.



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A simple 3-bay side gable with a decorative Victorian porch.

Queen Anne (1880-1910)



This ornate style is predominant in Dobbs Ferry for larger residences and includes steeply pitched roofs that are often shaped irregularly, with the main façade having a front-facing gable. The massing of the house is often complex with bays, turrets, and asymmetrical porches wrapping around two or more sides. Decorative details include shingles of various shapes, gable ornament, pent roofs which enclose the main gable, and panels, brackets and other trim. Windows and doors tend to have simple surrounds and the windows are usually 1/1 double hung sash, sometimes with the upper sash having a large, clear center pane surrounded by colored, smaller panes.



The Queen Anne taste for varied texture and ornament is visible here in siding, windows and rake moldings

Shingle (1880-1915)



Wood-shingled walls and roofs originally gave a seamless sculptural quality to examples of this style. Shingles wrap around corners and climb into dormers and around porches. Roofs are often steep and volumes asymmetrical. Divided light windows provide additional texture, either in the top sash only or both top and bottom. (Diamond railing is not original or consistent with the style.)



Shingles wrap a rounded corner on the right, tying together the asymmetrical massing of this wonderful example.



A historic photo shows that this Belden property was originally a pure example of the style in a compact form.

Colonial Revival (1880-1955)



The main form of this style is rectangular massing with side gable, hipped, or gambrel roof. A prominent front door with a decorative crown supported by pilasters and possibly sidelites or a transom stands out from a symmetrical street façade. Alternatively some residences have a small or full-width porch supported by classical columns. Quoins, a dentilated cornice and shutters are also common features. Windows are typically double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing and often appear in pairs, while a Palladian or semi-circular window may accent a gable end. Symmetry is common but not required.



Classical pediments and pilasters on dormers and Tuscan porch columns below are applied to a simple side-gabled house.



The columned porch and shutters are Colonial Revival elements on this shingled hip-roofed four-square house.

Tudor Revival (1890-1940)



Hallmarks of this style include steeply-pitched gable roofs with at least one front-facing gable which dominates the street facade, massive chimneys, and decorative half-timbering (particularly in the gable). Windows are usually casements with multiple lites or double-hung sash, have simple or no surrounds and are commonly grouped. The entry on the street façade may be a small porch or front door with a Tudor or round arch. Plan types vary. Both houses and commercial buildings in Dobbs Ferry display this style.



Celebrated architect Bertram Goodhue used Tudor to renovate the "Village Hall" for library use in the 1920s.



The projected upper gable, diamond pane casement windows and decorative half-timbering evoke English precedents for Tudor revival.

Prairie Style / Wrightian (1910-present)



Dobbs Ferry has a number of examples of mid-20th century houses influenced by the Prairie Style, and in particular by Frank Lloyd Wright. David Henken studied with Wright at Taliesin in Arizona and did several houses in Dobbs Ferry as well as helping found Usonia in Mt. Pleasant. The classic elements of the style can be seen on other buildings around the village: strong horizontal lines, integration with the landscape, wide overhangs, large glass areas connecting indoor spaces to landscape, and low slung, and angled roofs and plan shapes.



Low sloped roofs with deep overhangs are anchored by chimney masses. Wood horizontal board exteriors, here with smooth white panel inserts, emphasize the horizontal and tie the building to the ground.



These twin housing units, with hipped roofs, brick exteriors and strong horizontal overhanging eaves, show a Prairie style influence.

Mediterranean (1935-1990)



The house above and its two neighbors are early poured concrete structures in the Mediterranean style, with highly visible hipped tile roofs and stucco exteriors.

Stucco exteriors, tile roofs and half-round arched windows are key elements of Mediterranean, a popular style in Dobbs Ferry. Roofs can be hipped or gabled and small dormers occasionally punctuate the roofline. Plans are highly variable since this style is more about the scenic qualities of the exterior than the basic architecture.



Arched windows and doorways, sometimes trimmed with tile, are punched into the stucco exteriors of Mediterranean houses. Ornamental iron railings and wood or metal casement windows with divided lights are common features.



Windows and arched doorways are shaded by broad bracketed tile roof overhangs and a deep porch with Tuscan columns, creating a Mediterranean ensemble.

Ranch Style (1940-present)



The Ranch Style came east from California carrying with it a vision of a different way of living, more informal, with more open interiors, “picture” windows, minimal decorative embellishments, low sloped roofs and sometimes multiple levels, as in “split-level” versions. Many Dobbs Ferry examples date to the post World War II era housing boom, when the style proved to be popular and economical to build. Now more than 50 years old, these buildings and neighborhoods can qualify for designation as an important part of our architectural heritage.



The Victorian bay shape gets stretched into a picture window, and split levels allow a garage and daylight lower level in an efficient floor plan.



In this version a mid-level entry affords access to living spaces above and a variety of habitable spaces below.

Mid-Century Modern (1940-present)



European architects immigrating to the US brought with them the International Style, a stripped down modernism that took hold in architectural schools and the corporate design world in the mid-twentieth century. This style is characterized by flat roofs, large glass areas, a low horizontal emphasis and rectangular geometries. One can see this influence in several places around the village, including a few single family houses. They record another aspect of the wide variety of tastes and preferences that shaped the village.



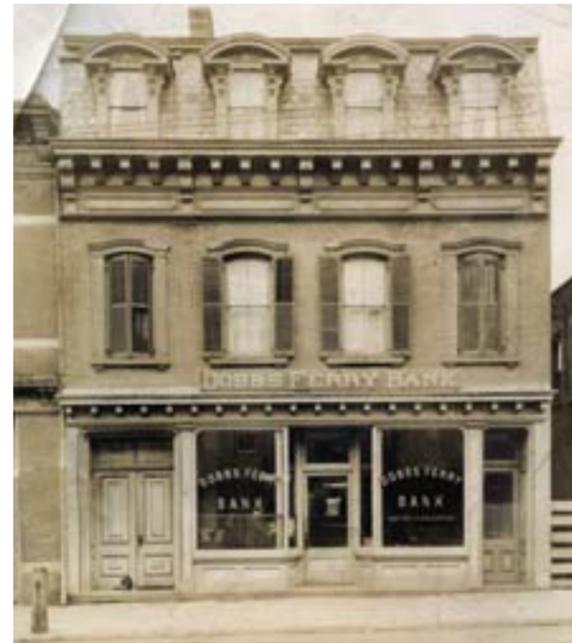
Structure is often expressed and appears slender and skeletal, with aggregated glass areas in a “pavilion” form floating on piers above the ground.



High-key color accentuates the horizontal lines. The low-slung single story minimizes visual impact and maximizes the connection of interior spaces to the outdoors.

Commercial and Institutional Styles

The commercial buildings along Main and Cedar Streets are typically mixed-use, two or three stories in height, and follow the traditional three-part storefront façade pattern: a projecting cornice above the residential stories delineates the upper extent of the building with first floor storefronts distinguished from the residential stories by a horizontal cornice or sign band.



Old photographs can provide a way to judge the success (or failure) of changes made to the building. This comparison can inform new proposals for changes to the same or a similar building. In the case of this Second Empire commercial building the changes include: the loss of dormer surrounds; the loss of the upper bracketed cornice; the loss of the arched windows, window surrounds and shutters; the coating of the brick with stucco; the loss of the lower cornice and classic large-windowed storefront. The result is organized but visually a major step backwards for the streetscape. This example is dramatic but instructive for proposals made today. Incremental changes may not seem crucial by themselves but can set a negative trend that can be seen across downtown Dobbs Ferry. Where original features still exist or are hidden by later coverings, an effort should be made to restore and uncover them and to make any new elements as sympathetic to the surviving features as possible. The goal is not to stop change but to manage it to benefit the surrounding context.

Stylistically, these buildings are most commonly Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, or Colonial Revival. Details such as roof type, cornices, brackets, windows and door hoods and surrounds, porch massing, and column types are akin to those found in the residential building styles. On Cedar Street there are several examples still extant of

Caption to come Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, nonummy et in aliquam mauris praesent et, molestie semper eros. Pharetra lorem id dolor, dui est et

a common early to mid-20th century downtown development pattern where older houses were later fronted by “new” storefronts right on the street as commercial uses grew. The new storefronts were often only one story, leaving the house visible in the background as evidence of the development history.

Many downtown buildings have had their original style marred or covered by new siding or other cladding, stucco, boxy additions or dormers. In some cases the historic elements are preserved and could be uncovered and restored. Those original elements are visually and aesthetically consistent with the overall shape, scale and form of the basic building and are the result of the original evolution of a successful commercial style. In almost every instance it is safe to say restoration would improve the appearance; that assumption and recommendation is built into these Design Requirements.



Tudor Revival style appears on a number of buildings downtown, including a cluster in the first block of Main Street below Cedar. Like residential examples, it is characterized by half-timbering with stucco infill.



Downtown retail shops form a new street wall in front of older houses set back on the property: a classic American downtown sequence. (Robison house c. 1927)

PART 3 Guidelines for Modification, Renovation, Repair and Expansion of Buildings

The following pages identify major exterior building components for structures in Dobbs Ferry. Each section includes a narrative highlighting some of the more common conditions and materials in Village buildings, as well as typical modifications, repair, or maintenance procedures that owners or designers may be contemplating. Each section also includes items or conditions that are “Recommended” and “Not Permitted,” as well as additional photographs and drawings that illustrate these concepts. All photographs, aside from some generic details, were taken within Dobbs Ferry to provide residents with examples from the neighborhood as a point of reference.

If the proposed work is more extensive than a modification, renovation, repair, or expansion, **Part 4: Additions and New Construction** in this Design Guide provides similar types of information.

Additionally, building owners and designers are encouraged to review **Part 5: The Project Approval Process** to understand procedural requirements for construction projects in the Village.

Readers who have further questions about terminology and materials may also want to reference the various sources available in **Part 6: Best Practices and Resources**. Many of these items are available online, as well as through the Westchester Library System.

Roofing

A wide variety of roof forms is visible in Dobbs Ferry’s historic buildings. Gable roofs predominate, but a range of shapes is displayed, including flat or low slope roofs on row houses, mansard roofs, pyramidal hipped roofs, Victorians with complex cross gables, and commercial buildings with flat roofs and decorative parapets. Roof shape, pitch and texture play a major part in defining the mass and style of a building. Chimneys, dormers, gutters and downspouts are roof elements integral to the character of the building. Additional paraphernalia on a roof detracts from that building’s character. In hilly Dobbs Ferry, roofscapes are highly visible from both private and public vantage points .

Many old and historic buildings have lost their original roofing materials and today have contemporary asphalt roofs. Some wood shingle, slate and metal roofs can still be found, although in diminishing numbers, throughout the village. Some owners have preserved original roofing or replaced it with historically appropriate materials.



Roofscapes in a hilly village are highly visible and can contribute positively not only to the building itself but also the experience of the larger landscape.



The changes to this Italianate building at 14 Cedar Street that occurred sometime between the firehouse and The Parlor tenancies, record another trail of changes: The stucco covering of the ornamental shingling on the upper floor (a Dobbs Ferry theme), the loss of the cornice and arched windows, and the ornamented first floor surround. The introduction of a large storefront opening is natural and consistent with the development of a retail street. It is part of keeping an existing building viable as uses change. The other changes may have been made with the hope of reducing maintenance or saving money. Review under these Design Requirements should enhance viability by promoting good design decisions.

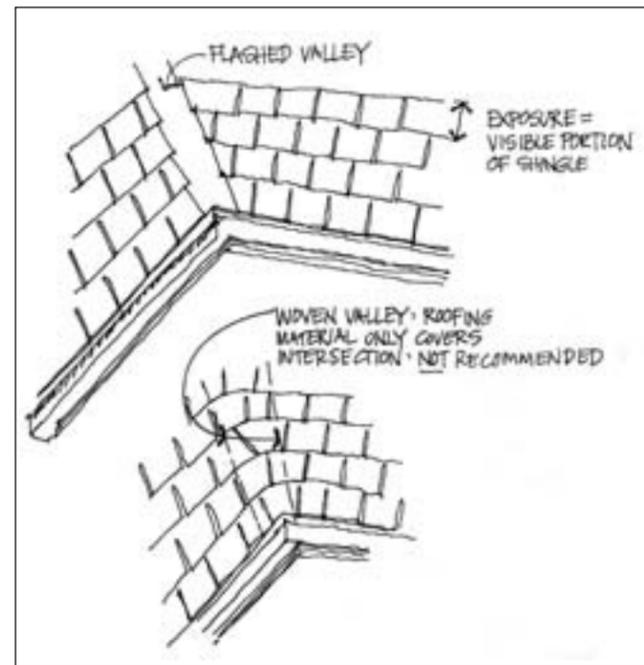
Re-roofing materials are the most common change made to historic roofs. Consider alternatives carefully when planning to re-roof. Besides the strong visual appeal and look of authenticity of historically appropriate materials, when maintained, these traditional roof materials and construction methods can last up to 100 years—much longer than the standard 15 to 25 year lifespan of contemporary asphalt roofing, which clog landfills when removed.

When necessary, re-roofing, like re-siding, presents an opportunity to improve energy performance as well as appearance. It may be possible, for example, to add a thin layer of insulation over the roof sheathing without noticeably affecting appearance. That insulation will help reduce heating and cooling bills, and prolong the life of the roofing materials by reducing stress from temperature swings.

The material and construction method used for flashing will often determine the lifetime of a roof system, especially a historic one. Tile or slate roofing, for example, might well outlast galvanized flashing, so longer lived materials like copper or stainless steel would be better choices for durability. Care in the selection and the craft of flashing is fundamental to all roofing projects, whether or not located in a historic district. Flashing and gutter materials should be the same to avoid possible corrosion from mixing metals.



Luckily, many important buildings retain original materials that lend enormous character and texture to the streetscape. When maintained, natural materials like the slate shown here last a century or more.



Flashed valleys are preferred over woven valleys because of the greater protection and durability they provide in areas where water is concentrated, as well as their traditional appearance.



Traditional roof furring or equivalent spacer systems provide ventilation for the shingles above. Ventilation under cladding to promote drying enhances the longevity of insulated walls and roofs, which used to be dried by waste heat through uninsulated walls.

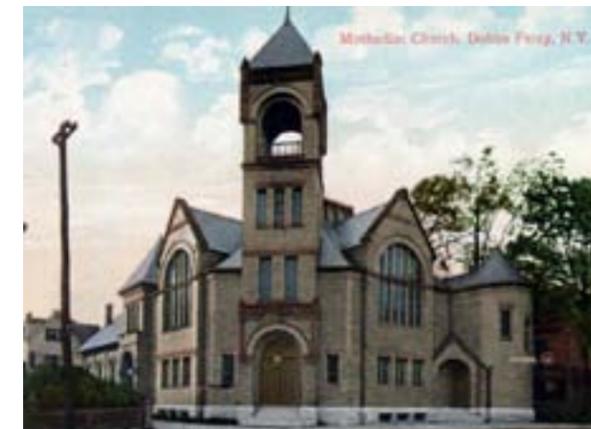
Roofing

Recommended

- Use materials originally on the building or alternates with similar texture, scale, reflectance, color and thickness.
- Preserve the original roof form including shape, pitch, line, overhang and integral features.
- Select a roofing material by placing a minimum 3 square foot sample on the roof in daylight.
- Get quality flashing craftsmanship. It is the key to a good roofing job.
- Re-roof over existing roofs only once with asphalt or composite roofing, to a maximum of two layers.

Not Permitted

- Choosing a roof material from a sample board indoors.
- Woven valleys (overlapped shingles).
- Using imitation materials with grain, color, thickness or sheen different from the original.



Slate is a durable, natural material that will last a century or more, making it often a more economical and environmentally friendly choice over the long term.



Clay tile is extremely durable and appropriate for styles in addition to Mediterranean.

ROOFTOP SOLAR



Thin-film solar collectors laminated onto a metal roof (left) are much better suited than high profile arrays facing the street in a historic district.



Building integrated solar like roofing tiles (left) and shingles (right) do double duty as roofing and power producer, as well as providing better looking installations.

Energy efficiency improvements, if not already undertaken, should be implemented prior to installing a photovoltaic (PV) system. Energy conservation measures are the most cost-effective way to reduce carbon footprint, save energy and realize utility bill savings. The return on an investment in PV is enhanced when the energy performance of the building hosting the system is upgraded.

Left: solar installations shading parking provide the double benefits of comfort and energy saving.

Exterior Materials and Trim

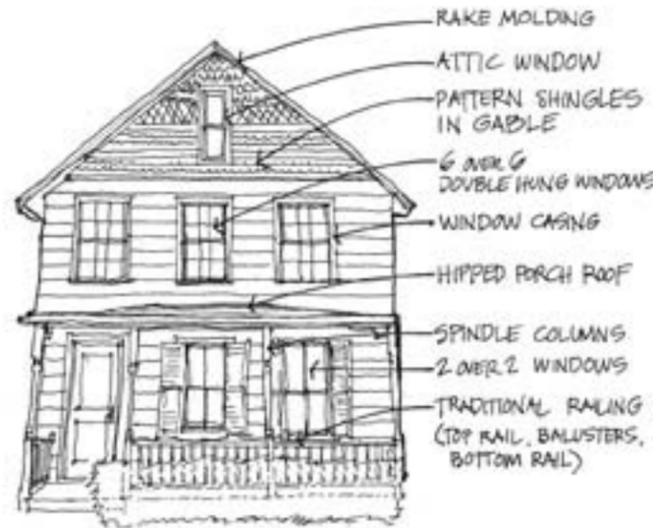
Consideration of texture, pattern, scale, and detail of original exterior wall and trim material is appropriate when repairing or replacing damaged or deteriorated exterior walls and trim. In most cases, selective replacement is all that is necessary. Owners are encouraged to match the historic characteristics of the original material such as the distinct bonding pattern of a brick wall, the texture and depth of wood siding, and the three-dimensional quality of wood moldings.

Layering over existing siding and trim can trap moisture and promote deterioration in hidden layers or create a chimney effect in the event of a fire. If siding is truly at the end of its useful life and must be removed, an opportunity is presented to improve the building's protection from drafts and water entry. To avoid trapping moisture the protective material chosen must be compatible with the proposed siding system and the nature of the exterior wall. Many materials now available have the desirable trait of rejecting liquid water but allowing water vapor to pass through, permitting materials to dry out quickly and reduce the risks of rot and mold.

The design of building exteriors and color schemes evolved together. If you would like to know the original colorway of your exterior, a conservator can often look at sample chips and provide contemporary paint colors that match the original; or you can carefully sand down a



Brackets provide a graceful transition at eaves and overhangs. Wood details are traditional; plastics and composites can lead to problems due to their greater expansion and contraction properties.



Classic exterior elements of the common Folk Victorian style.



Small details subliminally register with viewers to build an impression of the "face", the identity of the building. In this way they have an importance beyond their size or prominence.



Exterior details work together to reinforce the basic volumes and create the style of the building. In general, decoration, as in brackets, window hood and moldings shown here, is applied to horizontal elements at a scale appropriate to each.

selected sample to expose earlier layers. Assume that paint layers placed before 1973 contain lead. Any work that involves those layers must follow the Environmental Protection Agency's rules. Select a contractor who is certified to deal with lead paint. See Resources for EPA information.

Exterior Materials and Trim

Required

- Match the structure's original materials in all dimensions (thickness, exposure and profile) and texture.
- Retain and preserve walls that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a historic building, including their functional and decorative features and details.
- Maintain and repair the material surfaces and details of exterior walls using maintenance and methods appropriate to the specific material.

Recommended

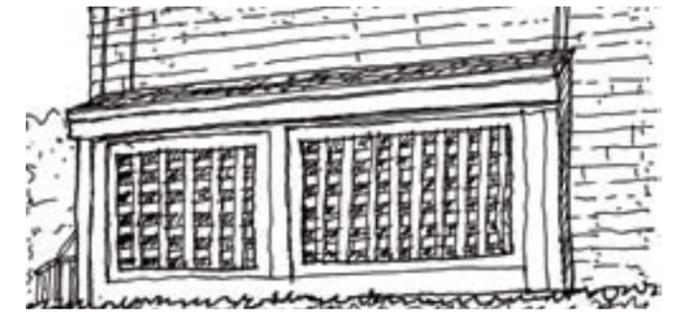
- When repainting, consider investigating your building's original color scheme or consulting historic color references (See Resources).
- Carefully clean, scrape and prepare surfaces for new paints and stains to prolong their life.
- Use the lowest settings when pressure washing. Begin with plain water before resorting to harsh chemicals.

Not Permitted

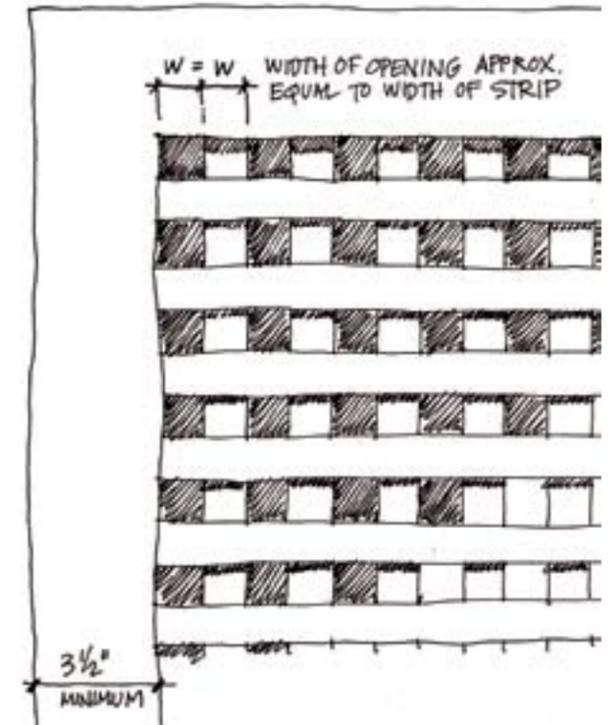
- Sandblasting or stripping with harsh chemicals.
- Covering original corner boards, brackets, cornices, and other trim with incompatible contemporary materials such as aluminum or vinyl.



A necessary and highly visible balcony support becomes a visual asset through good exterior detailing.



Screening for utilities or storage



Lattice was traditionally horizontal not diagonal—though exceptions can appear in documentation. Lattice should always be in framed sections, with solid and openings from 1:1 as shown to a maximum of 1 solid to 1.5 open.

Fish-scale shingles playfully emphasize a gable and contrast with clapboards below that surround a handsome window pattern.



Exterior Materials and Trim: Stucco & Stones

In the 1990s the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society published a pamphlet “Stucco & Stones: the Look of Italy in Dobbs Ferry”. It celebrated the visible influence in the “vernacular” character especially of lower Main and Palisade streets, where new residents covered existing wood-clad buildings with stucco. The treatment of the materials and the topography combine to create the feeling of an Italian hill town. For this reason stucco and masonry have a special place in the village architectural vocabulary. Proposed changes must be addressed in context. Is the building part of an assemblage that honors this heritage? If so, stucco and stone should be preserved. Would the removal of stucco or the introduction of another material damage contributing buildings or features in the district? If so, those changes are not permitted. If stucco was never used on the building, it should not now be applied.

Many of downtown’s stucco buildings are wood frame buildings. Since wood expands and contracts at different rates from stucco, it is vulnerable to moisture that can enter through cracks or pores in the stucco. Stucco in general, but especially on wood buildings, should therefore be carefully and expertly installed and maintained.

Stucco is an exterior plaster that can consist of a variety of materials and be applied in a variety of ways. Before making repairs one must determine what kind of stucco is present and over what substrate. A Department of Interior brief may provide guidance: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/22-stucco.htm>.

Acrylic stucco is a newer formulation supplied by some major companies. It is permitted on new construction or additions but texture, sheen, color and other visual characteristics must match its context.



Integral color in stucco mixes makes patching more seamless when required.



Dobbs Ferry is imprinted by the handiwork of master masons like Dominick Altieri who built the palazzo, left, in 1923.



Main Street looking south from Elm, 1909 (left) and 2019 (right): Wood shingles gave way to stucco, showing the influence of Italian settlers who came primarily from Avellino hill towns.

Porches, Porticos and Front Entrances

Porches, porticos and front entrances are prominent elements of a building façade and play a major role in defining a building’s character. The particulars of these entrance features are indicators of the era and style of the building. As significant characteristics of the “face” of a building, porches and porch details should be preserved and retained through ongoing maintenance and prompt repair. Character defining elements include overall size and proportion, columns, brackets, railings, balustrades, balusters, steps and lattice.

Historically, porches were outdoor living spaces where residents could gather, observe and greet passersby. Porches and porticos shelter people from the weather as they arrive and leave the building. By catching breezes and shading windows in summer, porches can increase comfort and reduce cooling bills. Porch floors were usually finished with tongue and groove, painted pine boards oriented perpendicular to the building and sloping from the building face to the porch exterior. They were often built on piers, with latticework between the piers to improve the appearance and deter animals from entering and nesting under the porch. Uninterrupted foundation plantings



Like many porches, these graceful outdoor living spaces that also shaded interiors from western sun, eventually gave way to enclosures at all 3 levels.



Well-detailed porches lend a generous, expansion feel to the building and connect it to the surrounding landscape.



Porches on historic buildings are often the occasion for decorative fancifulness showing off a carpenter’s skill set or a millwork supplier’s inventory.



Porches can have a range of enclosure from fully open to partly enclosed through the use of lattice, railings, screens and plants.

were not common before the 20th century. Sparsely spaced shrubbery kept lattice visible and allowed air circulation. These features present special challenges to those planning to renovate. Ideally, porches should remain as open rooms and not be enclosed.

In the years following original construction, many residents have enclosed porches—some adding screens against insects, some creating sun rooms with an array of either seasonal or permanent windows. Some have fully enclosed their porches with solid materials and few windows. New work on enclosed porches not original to the building should attempt to restore the articulation and transparency of the previous porch by spacing, recessing and enlarging openings.

Porches, Porticos and Front Entrances

Required

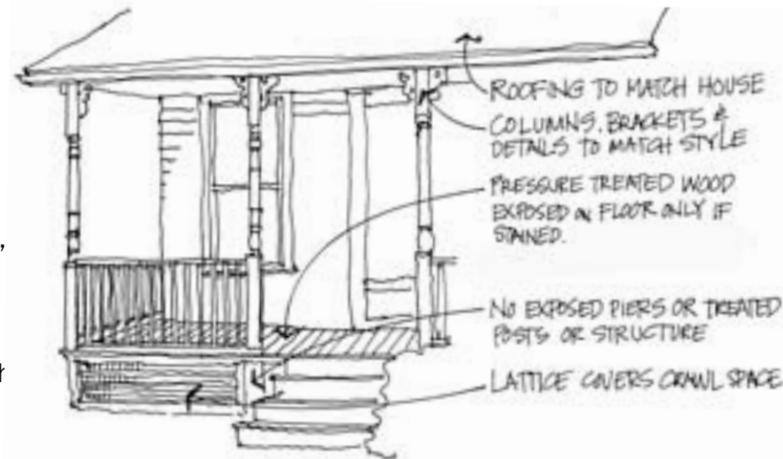
- Retain and preserve surviving columns, railing and balusters.
- Provide in-kind decorative element replacements where needed.
- Paint the wooden elements of the porch.
- Maintain a gentle outward pitch on flooring of open porch.

Not Permitted

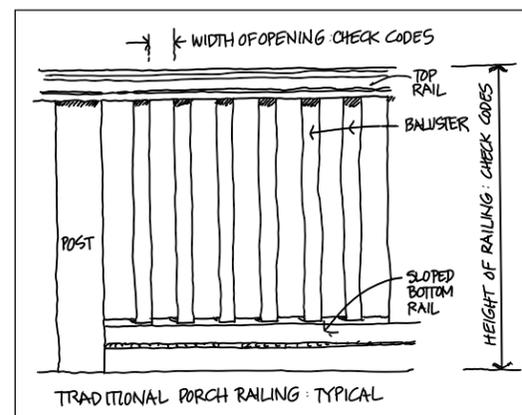
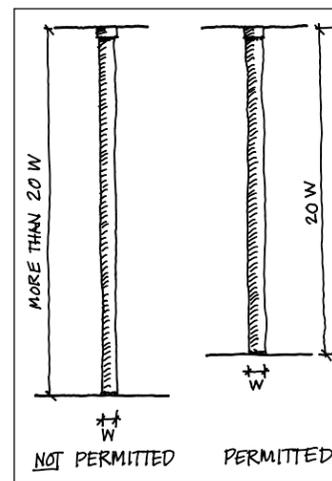
- Replacing railings with a different pattern.
- Adding porch ornamentation for which you have no documentation or evidence.
- Enclosing a porch at the front of the building without compelling reasons, artful design and high energy performance.
- Adding columns or brackets where none historically existed.
- Replacing wood steps, flooring, and framing with concrete or tile.
- Replacing old tongue and groove flooring with decking.



If a porch is enclosed, transparency must be maximized, and structural bays and other salient details like brackets and beams should continue to be visible. In locations where a district characteristic is open porches, they may not be enclosed.



Columns and railings must follow well-established guidelines for their proportions that have evolved through structural and visual testing over centuries.



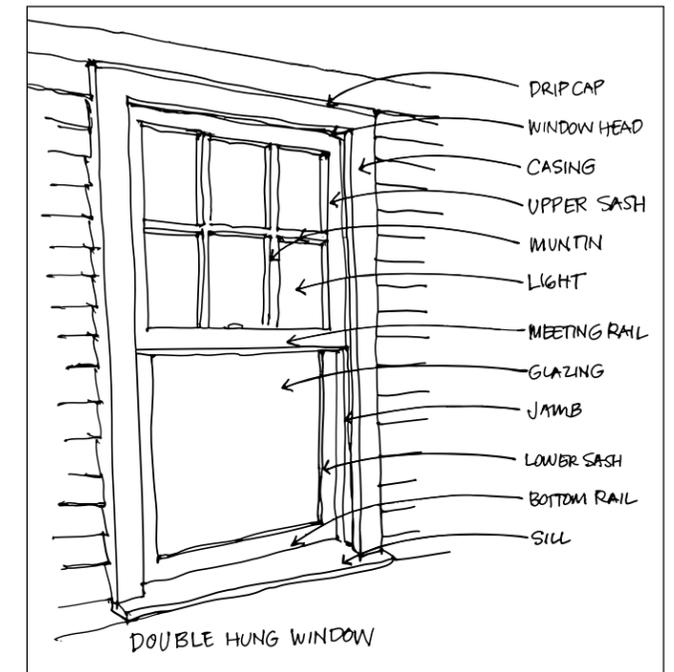
Windows

Windows add depth and variety to historic building facades and can be critical in determining a building's character. In Dobbs Ferry's historic neighborhoods there are many window styles: double hung; casement; tilting; awning and fixed. The wood double-hung window is most common in residential buildings, and can be found in houses of a variety of architectural types.

Windows provided daylight and ventilation before electric lighting and air conditioning systems and their placement and orientation tell you how your building breathed. Know your building's period of construction and style before planning changes to your windows. This will help you choose appropriate measures and materials.

Many vintage buildings in Dobbs Ferry have undergone "modernization" which has diminished their historic character. Common among these changes are doors with 1950s styling, replacement windows that eliminate or obscure the original window trim, substitution of ornamental metal work for wood railing and banisters. To recover elements that were lost due to modernization, look for neighboring similar buildings that have retained original features and consult references.

If your property has original wood windows, consider retaining and repairing them. The cost of re-



Window shape and detail are key to the style of this building, in spite of close to submersion in later layers of stucco.



At right, pairs of arched windows, upper and lower brackets and gable brackets create a stunning roofscape.

Right: the width of muntin dividers is unmistakably original. The quality they lend would be lost in a replacement window.



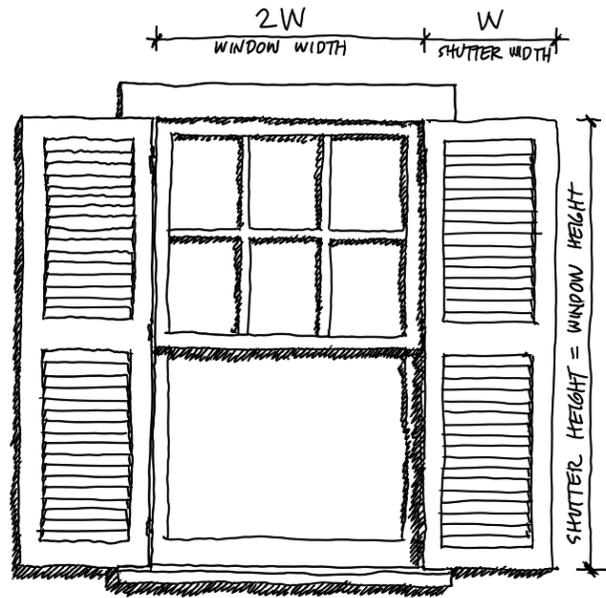
pair may be as great as replacement, but it is usually less. Repair is less disruptive to the existing building's fabric. Replacement also normally requires compromises in appearance. Common conditions such as flaking paint, broken glass, failing putty or jammed hardware are easily repaired and do not require replacement. Matching key features, such as muntin width and profiles, rail and stile proportions, and glazing patterns is important to preserving the character of your building. New windows in contemporary materials and proportions can change a façade's depth and profile and compromise the character of the building.

Historic windows can achieve a high level of energy efficiency if care is taken. Make sure the interior and exterior trim is tight and well caulked around the window unit. Re-putty around glass panes, install weather stripping around the sash, install pulley seals, and repair or rehabilitate sash locks so meeting rails align and can be pulled together tightly to eliminate drafts. Add interior or exterior storm windows for additional winter protection. By rehabilitating historic windows, you are preserving historic character and conserving energy that would otherwise be spent in the demolition and disposal of old windows and the manufacture of new ones.

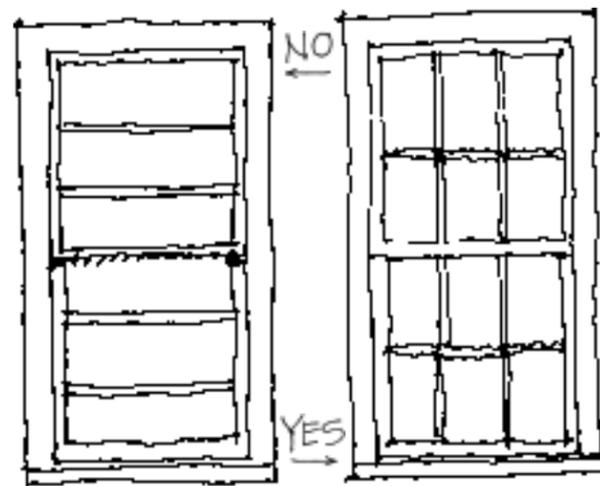
Windows

Required

- Match original materials, dimensions, glazing and trim when existing windows are beyond repair and you are replacing units.
- Install storm windows or screens that do not obscure the original windows; for double-hung windows, for example, align the horizontal bar or rail with the original meeting window rail; install wood or aluminum storm and screen windows in colors that match the original window sash or paint them accordingly.



Shutters must be proportioned and positioned properly, as above, to match the window; and ideally the shutters should operate.



For new or replacement windows, choose traditional glazing division patterns that are consistent with the building's original windows and architecture.



The arch-top effect was often achieved with less effort within a square upper sash behind curved trim, as in this case. The brick window hood above both helps shed water and enhance the appearance.

- When installing new or replacement windows, install true or simulated divided-light muntins rather than snap-in or flat muntin grids.

Recommended

- Retain historic materials and repair existing windows.
- Implement a regular maintenance plan.
- Plan size and location of new openings to match the original window vocabulary and patterns already evident in the building.
- Where shutters are known to have existed, consider installing shutters.
- Match shutter style (for example louvered or recessed paneled) to original.
- High quality exterior metal clad wood windows will be permitted when colors match original windows closely.

Not Permitted

- Replacing historic materials with contemporary products such as PVC, fiberglass, vinyl or metal.
- Enlarging or shrinking window openings on public sides of buildings.
- Changing opening shapes or glazing pattern.
- Concealing original windows.
- Changing window type (e.g. double hung to casement.)



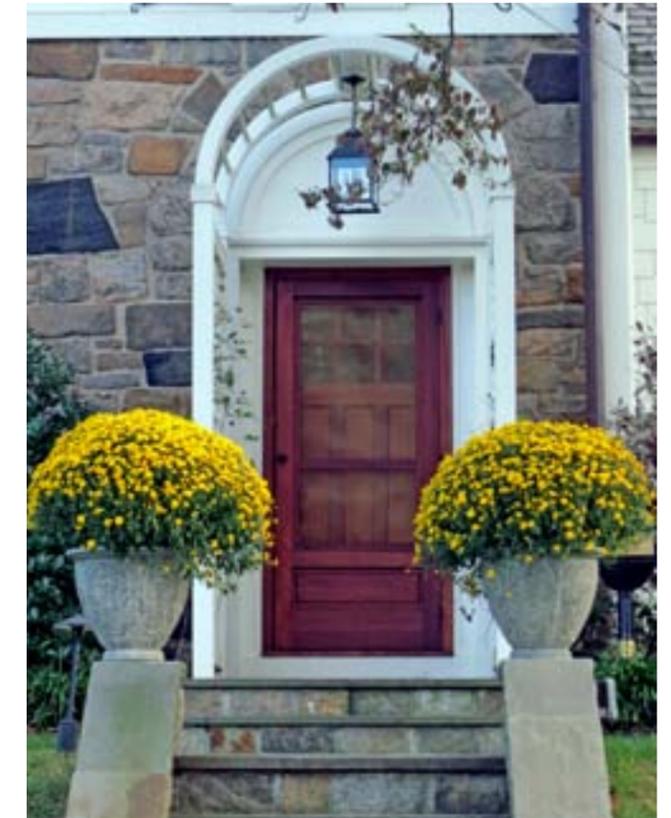
Even after larger glass sizes were possible, smaller lites were often maintained, sometimes only in the upper sash, for the sake of exterior appearance. Thin storm windows are permitted but should be painted in a color to match the window sash color.

Doors

Doors throughout Dobbs Ferry vary in size, shape, ornamentation and color. Wood paneled doors are prevalent, and levels of ornamentation and glazing vary according to architectural style.

Doors are among the most prominent and heavily used building elements, subject to intense wear and tear. A cyclical maintenance routine should include regular inspection, careful repair, and painting. Avoid replacing an original door unless the door has deteriorated beyond repair. Use the original material if available. Contemporary materials such as vinyl and aluminum are inappropriate.

When repairing or if replacement is required, match key features, such as glazing, rail and stile proportions, and panel sizes, as closely as possible in order to retain the character and architectural integrity. Decorative trim, entablatures, sidelights and tran-



A successful entry like this consists of many elements: quality masonry, decoration, an arbor, an appropriate light fixture, and a screen/storm door that allows visibility of a good-looking front door.

soms dating from the original installation are as significant as the door. These key features should not be altered; retain original door opening sizes.

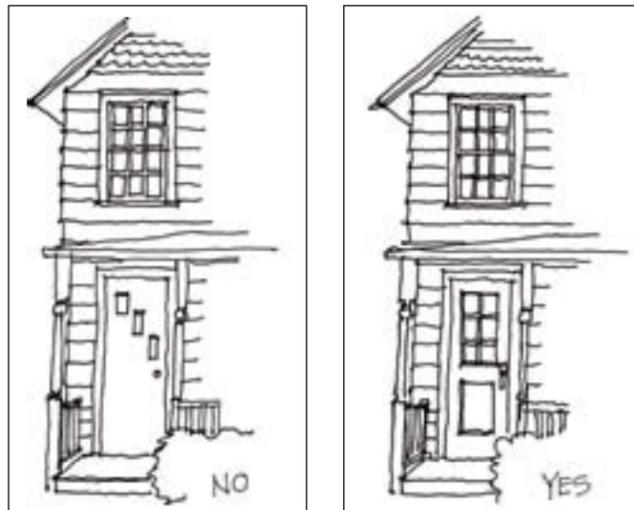
Whether you are adding storm/screen doors, or replacing worn out units, you will find that the new installation, properly weatherstripped, can increase energy efficiency in your building. Storm/screen doors should be constructed of wood and should be as transparent as possible, providing maximum visibility of the historic door. Avoid installing any storm/screen with inappropriate ornamentation or of an incompatible material.



Sidelights, transom, a sconce, and rich detailing enhance this doorway.



The repeated arches make a strong statement at the entrance that strengthens the character of this house.



Above, Doors should be sympathetic to windows and other distinctive details on the building. Above left: a door that belongs to another house style and era. Right: a door that matches the house.



Left, the shape and hardware used here are consistent with the building's Tudor Revival style.



Prominent garage doors can detract considerably or, as above, be better integrated into a building's design through the choice of material, pattern, color and surrounding architectural treatments like trellises and vines shown here.

Doors

Required

- Match the original door type and overall configuration of glass, panels and detail.
- Retain door surrounds, trim and details, such as decorative entablatures, moldings, pilasters, sidelights, and transoms.

Recommended

- Use appropriate repair techniques to maintain, protect and repair historic features, materials and details.
- Install a wood storm or screen door to increase energy efficiency and select a model with a large glazed and screened opening that provides maximum visibility of the historic door.
- Use colors for the screen door that are compatible with the door and trim paint schemes.
- Install weatherstripping and caulking to decrease energy loss.
- Regularly paint or varnish exterior doors.
- Retain original hardware, recondition if needed

Not Permitted

- Altering door opening size, dimensions and proportions.
- Removing or concealing original door molding.
- Replacing historic wood door with contemporary materials such as vinyl or aluminum.
- Constructing a new opening in front façade.



A wide variety of hardware, including refurbished original hardware or high quality reproductions are available online.

Commercial and Institutional Buildings

Dobbs Ferry's downtown has a significant number of 19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings intermixed with historic civic buildings as well as more recent structures that are non-contributing buildings in the Historic District. There are still residentially scaled buildings on Main Street that provide a visible historic record and lend a welcome diversity to the Main Street assemblage. Many of the buildings' facades have survived intact and continue to reflect popular architectural styles of their original construction period. Masonry façades frame recessed entryways and showcase large plate glass display windows.



The bracketed upper cornice, applied letters on the sign cornice, sconces and traditional lower roll-out awnings framing large glass areas comprise a successful street frontage.



Caption to come Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, nonummy aliquam et in mauris praesent et, molestie semper eros.

The traditional commercial building has 3 major components: an upper element consisting of a top cornice over a street façade punctuated by windows, a second element including an intermediate cornice and sign-board, which separates the top from the third element, the base consisting of a more open storefront band at street level.

Increasing appreciation of historic downtowns and commercial districts is based on their architectural character and the economic dynamism they provide. Most commercial district success stories have had historic preservation as a major component. Thoughtful changes and careful rehabilitations can increase business for owners, increase property values, and attract visitors. Architectural harmony in a district has a cumulative appeal lost if commercial structures use showy style deviations to compete for attention.



The classic American downtown building arrangement includes an upper cornice, windows for the “apartments over the store” a sign cornice and more horizontal detailing over a glassy, ground level retail frontage with a recessed entry.

Storefronts / Windows and Doors

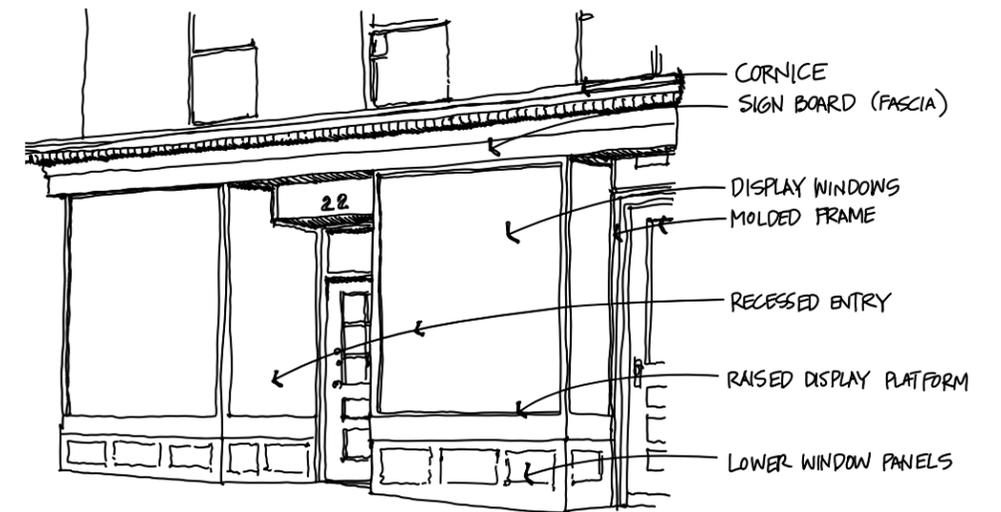
Storefronts are the welcoming face of commercial districts and a key element in building facades. Attractive storefronts encourage pedestrians or passersby in vehicles to slow down, linger and shop.

Storefronts are frequently altered by changes in use and to express contemporary tastes, and in the process buildings risk an erosion of their historic character. Maintaining, preserving, and restoring historic storefronts is especially important to downtown character. Well preserved buildings provide enduring “packages” for the changing contents of a retail zone. Alterations that replace or



Caption to come Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, nonummy aliquam et in mauris praesent et, molestie semper eros.

conceal original details (wood, brick, glass, etc) detract from a building’s inherent character, as do replacement materials such as shingles not original to the building, vinyl, fiberglass, or aluminum. Alterations that change the size of the storefront opening or display window area also diminish its historic character.



Storefronts must retain the 3 basic elements: base, display area, and sign cornice, and be compatible with the building.

Storefronts / Windows and Doors

Required

- Take cues for new work from the surrounding context and reinforce its character.
- Retain and preserve storefronts and elements sympathetic to surrounding commercial buildings and districts including overall materials, dimensions, colors, signage types, and special features including display windows, transoms, mid-cornices and lighting.
- Develop an understanding of the building’s style prior to making changes and identify the type of storefront that would be characteristic of that style’s design; if conjecture or adaptation to current retail needs is necessary, err on the side of simplicity rather than ornateness.
- Maintain and rehabilitate the features, materials surfaces, and details using repair methods appropriate to the storefront material.
- Retain original inset entries.

Recommended

- Remove soffits or dropped ceilings that conceal original elements.
- Use storefront display and contents to provide interest to passersby .
- Light storefront interiors to provide interest and security at street level in the evening.

Not Permitted

- Closing off portions of an older open storefront.
- Letting signage accumulate into distracting clutter.
- Installing features whose size, color, operating mode, or shape are significantly at variance from the pattern of surrounding buildings and businesses.



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Caption to come Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, nonummy aliquam et in mauris praesent et, molestie semper eros.

Roofs, Cornices and Parapets

The top portion of traditional three part commercial buildings provides a shaped boundary against the sky that concludes the structure. It provides continuity as well as welcome variations on a theme from one building to another along the street. Maintaining the shape and detail, though often challenging and neglected, is therefore critical to the individual building and the collection.

Required

- Regularly inspect, retain and repair existing cornice and parapet details.

Recommended

- Look at adjoining or similar buildings for patterns to replicate for missing elements.
- Fiberglass or other durable substitute materials are acceptable for upper elements that are hard to access.

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Not Permitted

- Enclosing original architectural details, such as cornices and corbels, under siding.
- Using replacement materials that have an appearance, texture, glossiness or shape unavailable when the building was originally constructed.
- Installing unsympathetic features lacking historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.
- Enclosing original details including cornices.



Fences, Walls and Paving in the Downtown

Dobbs Ferry's commercial Main and Cedar Streets include retail, mixed use and residential buildings. Business district character is strongly influenced by its immediately adjoining larger residential context, so an approach to paving, walls and fences can echo the residential recommendations shown elsewhere, with the modification that access ways will be more heavily traveled and should be sized appropriately and surfaced for customers with limited mobility. Where private houses have been adapted for commercial uses, paths need to be paved with appropriate materials for heavy public use and well-lit for safety while maintaining a character in keeping with the vintage of the principal structure. As in residential areas, walls, fences and hedges should not obscure the principal structures. Dobbs Ferry's Downtown District Design Guidelines, embedded in the Zoning Code, address Buildings, Public Improvements, Streets and Circulation, Pedestrian Circulation, Open Space and Landscaping, and Parking. The Guidelines suggest interventions

to improve the safety, comfort and grace of downtown. See www.ecode360.com/10566362 Supplementing Village efforts to improve the streetscape, individual business owners can maintain tree pits and container plantings.



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Signs and Awnings

Signage must follow the Village of Dobbs Ferry's sign ordinance, which can be found in the Zoning Code, at 300-50 via the Village's website at www.ecode360.com/10566362

Historically during the 19th and early 20th century, signs were a key feature of storefronts and continue today to shape the character of a business district. Within the Historic District, signage and awnings should be compatible in design with the historic character of the storefront and should be installed in a manner that does not diminish or damage important architectural features. Size, materials, graphics and legibility of the typeface, color, and method of attachment must be considered when designing new signage or awnings for the historic commercial area.

Signage is often multiplied by merchants' perceptions that more signs and bigger signs will improve their business. In fact legibility is often improved by sign controls that reduce the visual clutter in the vicinity of the store. Limiting letter size and the number of signs permitted per establishment can further these goals.

Recommended

- Install signs and awnings in scale with the building as well as the storefront.
- Make signs and awnings compatible with the graphics, colors and style of the building and its neighbors.
- Locate signs on the traditional sign cornice over the first story on older commercial buildings.
- Standoff lettering is effective and reinforces the architecture.
- Storefront signage styles can provide a contemporary feeling while reinforcing traditional architecture.
- Handmade signs are effective if strategically located and uncluttered.
- Respect neighboring signs and buildings with placement and size.
- Pick up on existing horizontals and reinforce architectural features with sign placement.
- Use stencil cut letters rather than solid letters on a backlit field.
- Use energy efficient light sources on timers for illuminated signage.
- Where possible, install retractable awnings.

Not Permitted

- Signs or awnings that cover or obscure significant architectural features or visibility through the windows.
- Multiple signage forms on the same property or business.
- Signs or awnings that include an overwhelming amount of lettering.
- Permanent quarter-round waterfall awnings.



Signs that are inventive and eye-catching do not have to be large to be effective.



Discrete statements in high quality materials set a tone for the business.



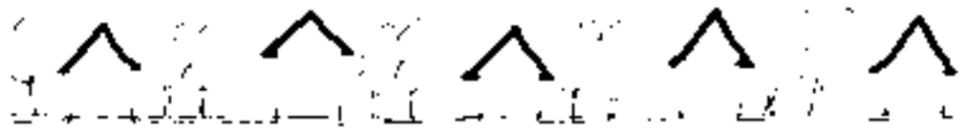
The use of daylight and indirect lighting rather than internal lighting can be good-looking and sustainable.

Additions and New Construction in a Historic District

Additions and new construction can quickly change neighborhood character. Guidelines can reinforce those aspects of character that the community considers most positive, such as residential scale, street side articulation, appropriate building placement on the property, ratio of built to unbuilt area on the site and architectural style. The guidelines should communicate shared goals that challenge rather than limit the creativity of designers and builders.

All building projects are renovations of a landscape, a neighborhood or a building. The guidance at each scale comes from the best aspects of the style of the building, the feeling of the adjoining buildings, the nature of the landscape, and the overall character of the larger neighborhood.

Scale and placement are the most important characteristics to control for new buildings; stylistic details are secondary. Quiet “background” additions or new buildings are a safer general approach than aggressive structures that call attention to themselves or upstage historic landmarks, but fresh, creative architectural approaches should not be discouraged if they represent a level of effort and excellence that meets the Historic District standard. The best buildings that have survived from previous eras do not have to be surrounded by half-hearted facsimiles of themselves; they may benefit more from the best efforts of our own era. An acute observer of an addition to an intact historic building should be able to distinguish the new work from the original. The addition can use materials and proportions of the original, or it can be a distinct, contemporary design. In either case, the addition should not overpower the original and should sit well in its larger context.



New construction should respect the rhythm and scale of the neighborhood context.

Guidelines for Additions to Contributing Structures

Required

- Site additions so they are less prominent than the existing building, which in general means located to the side or rear.
- Size additions so they are subordinate in scale to the existing building and its neighbors.
- Study approaches that create connectors to independent volumes rather than additions that “fatten up” and distort the original volume.
- Offset rather than align additions with the planes of the existing building.
- Meld small changes into the existing architectural composition.
- Adopt a clear design approach to the relationship between existing and new construction. In general detailing similar to but discernibly different from existing historic



Successful additions to old and historic buildings avoid bloating the original scale and often employ a “hyphen” connecting to a compatibly scaled and detailed volume, as in the example above.

patterns is recommended. Use a connector or “hyphen” between the original structure and an addition in a different style or form and distinguish clearly between them.

- Harmonize materials on new additions with existing.
- Undertake new additions and adjacent or related new construction so that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the existing property and its environment will be intact.
- Protect significant existing landscape features during construction.



Recommended: Dormers and additions should use shapes that adopt forms from the existing building and are sized to preserve its overall balance.

Not Permitted

- Obscuring or removing the best or character-defining elements of the existing structure.
- Aligning the plane of new work with existing and thereby erasing the outline or shape of the original building.
- Juxtaposing natural materials with imitation materials.
- Overwhelming the original or neighboring buildings with the size or shape of the addition.



Not permitted: Dormers that introduce new forms to the building or occupy more than 40% of the area of the roof in which they are inserted.

New Construction of and Modifications to Non-Contributing Structures in the District

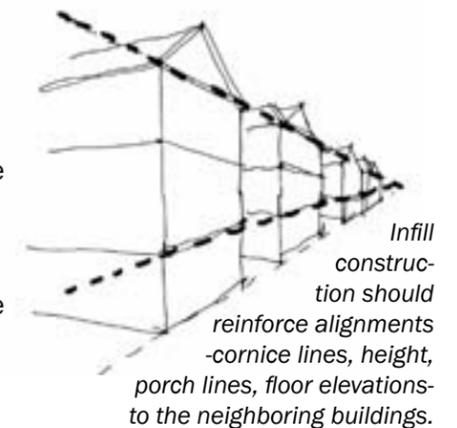
New buildings and additions to non-contributing structures are not required to meet the standards applicable to contributing structures in the District. New construction and additions are subject to review, however, with the goal of minimizing any potential disruption to the character of the District. Simple background buildings and additions that are scaled to their neighbor and context should be welcomed. Exaggerated or false historical insertions or overlays should be discouraged.

Required

- Adapt to the scale of nearby contributing buildings, follow the massing guidelines for additions to contributing structures.

Recommended

- Keep designs simple as a background to contributing buildings.
- Site accessory structures behind the primary one. Site new buildings and their landscape elements so they follow the neighborhood patterns of lot placement with similar setbacks.
- Use materials compatible with the context.
- Respect the façade designs and rhythms of nearby structures.
- Protect significant existing landscape features during construction.



Infill construction should reinforce alignments -cornice lines, height, porch lines, floor elevations- to the neighboring buildings.

Not Permitted

- Creating artificial mounds or land forms under or around new structures; ground floor level should relate to the existing grade in a manner similar to neighboring buildings.
- Mirroring or closely copying an adjacent existing building.
- Overwhelming the neighboring buildings with out of scale construction.

PART 5 Landscape Best Practices

Settlers cleared the wooded hills above the Hudson River for farming when the village was young. As more residents turned to employment along the river, commerce, education and the professions, private properties started to demonstrate “a public taste in Rural Embellishment” as reported by A.J. Downing, a prominent influencer of popular taste in 1849. He and other authors of the influential pattern books that guided architectural style assumed the associated landscape to be integral to the design. New homeowners were urged to abandon farm-related conventions and avoid front yard fencing so views of their properties could be shared with passersby. No longer needing cleared land in full sun for farming, owners planted flowering ornamentals and stately shade trees—a tradition followed today.

In the Hudson Valley, buildings climbed with the topography, giving residents unusual elevation differences, and in many cases, tiers of houses on the hills gave people in an entire neighborhood glimpses of the river. Today Dobbs Ferry’s View Preservation regulations seek to protect and enhance the natural and man-made features that contribute significantly to the Village’s scenic quality and character. See Code 300-46 “Natural & Scenic Resource Protection” and “Viewing Platforms” in Appendix E in the Zoning Code. Rather than being planned, much settlement in Dobbs Ferry just happened—responding to slopes, views, and old travel ways. Landscape gardening in this heterogeneous, and multi-aged architectural community has a lot of freedom.

Downtown, residents exploited gaps between buildings, and the interruptions in building density offered “breathing” ports—a relaxation in the urban fabric—and niches for the handiwork of ingenious gardeners. The Old Croton Aqueduct, passing through the older settled part of the village, offers a stream of light, greenery and oxygen to the community.

Landscape changes, additions and improvements may require Village approval if they involve landscape structures such as retaining walls, fences, additional coverage as defined under the Zoning Code or are part of an application seeking site approval before the Planning Board. The Planning Board or Architectural and Historic Review Board (AHRB) may consider type, size and appearance of paving or architectural or vegetative screening. These Design Requirements offer advice and resources for owners, designers and builders as they consider landscape elements in relation to their location and architectural context.



Buildings cluster in the village.



Secret gardens off Main Street



A stream of open space

Dobbs Ferry’s historic neighborhoods contain great variety, with clusters of styles interspersed with occasional new structures and one-of-a-kind examples. While years of renovations and face-lifts have altered them, downtown commercial properties have more consistency in design, with important vernacular outbuildings and individual landmarks like historic churches interspersed among them. The primary recommendation is to design landscapes—paving, fences, plantings—in harmony with the “family” character and public experience of the neighborhood.

This section of the Design Requirements primarily addresses the “presentation” portions of Dobbs Ferry properties—the landscape visible to the public from the street or public way. Landscape improvements should be based on general historic precedent and compatibility with the principal structure and immediate community. If owners uncover historic pictures of their properties or detailed home improvement diaries of original owners, these are the ideal basis for new work.

The Old Croton Aqueduct is a pedestrian public way with 10 foot no-build zones on either side. It is used by many for exercise. For recreational strollers, it offers ever changing panoramas of Village settlement, private landscapes and the Hudson River. Owners abutting the Aqueduct must balance their wishes for privacy and the need to screen unsightly yard elements from public view with a need not to completely obstruct views for Aqueduct users. A continuous obstruction along the trail reduces the perception of safety for walkers.

Recommended

- Plan the landscape along the Aqueduct so screening, if desired, allows view windows through to yards and to the river. Select fencing with gaps between boards; arrange shrubs and trees around openings.



From Aqueduct trail: view of historic house.

Paving

When possible, choose paving that is permeable, and if not, is pitched to a carefully planned drain, gutter, swale, or rain garden. For properties dating up to the early 20th century, dirt, gravel, asphalt, brick or stone pavers were likely to be used on drives. Concrete was a choice in the 20th century, sometimes found in parallel ribbons to a garage. In the mid 20th century, concrete with exposed aggregate was a popular feature. Since concrete has a disproportionate carbon footprint, today owners should choose locally sourced stone, gravel or asphalt, optionally with a gravel topping (tar and chip). Lawn grown within a stabilizing matrix is an excellent way to manage occasional parking or a drive where infrequent vehicle access is needed.

Terraces and patios were likely to have been surfaced in stone, brick, quarry tile or occasionally terra cotta tile. Cement without additional surfacing is found in 20th century yards; exposed aggregate concrete sometimes paved the



Left, square flagstones on soil with a fine dirt/mulch surround. Below, flagstones and dry-laid bricks.



outdoor spaces of prairie style, ranch style or mid-century modern houses. Concrete pavers that are poor simulations of natural or historic materials should be avoided.

Paths were commonly made of flag-stones—random irregular or rectangular—brick, both dry-laid on a gravel or dirt substrate, or mortared onto a concrete base or ever popular gravel. In the 20th century irregular and sometimes multicolored slate laid on concrete became popular.

Since Dobbs Ferry’s historic districts vary in character and period of fashion, owners should study historic pictures of their houses or neighborhoods to dig beyond the generalities described above.



Terrace surface: stones shaped to minimize joint size.



For a 20th century house, gravel with square stepping stones. Raised stone allows water to cross the path and drain to the right.

Walls and Fences

Follow Dobbs Ferry’s Zoning Code regulations on fences and barriers between properties. Investigate Dobbs Ferry height allowances for deer fencing and recommendations on deer management generally from sources listed in Resources. For stylistic guidance, study vintage images of your house or similar for clues on walls and fences. As mentioned above, the tastemakers in the 19th and early 20th century sought to keep views of front yards open. Later, some styles popular in the 20th century derived from English/European traditions (e.g. Tudor Revival) may have featured masonry walls enclosing outdoor living areas. Still later, modern house forms sometimes used high barriers to provide privacy for glass-walled interiors.



High stone wall encloses the forecourt of a Normandy Tudor house.

Walls

Retaining walls hold back hillsides throughout Dobbs Ferry. In some cases, the structure of the wall (and ascending steps) is integral to the architecture of the property. Often, wall materials are compatible with house materials; sometimes, it appears that a masonry style has been adopted by a neighborhood—that one mason worked his way down the block. Landscape masonry in Dobbs Ferry benefits from the traditions of Italian masons settling here between 1890 and 1920.



Age-old retaining wall and steps. Random weep holes deal with underground water pressure.

Recommended

- Where there is regional or Dobbs Ferry precedent for upstanding brick or masonry walls, or where a retaining wall is required, select style, stone, or brick, mortar and coursing from the period in which the house was built.

Not Permitted

- Walls that visually isolate a property and interrupt the continuity of a neighborhood. Exceptions may be made where landscape walls are extensions of the house and integral to its style.
- Stone or brick piers of a style borrowed from more prosperous properties.
- Solid or perforated concrete block walls.
- Railroad tie walls.
- Simulated stone walls.

Fences

Recommended

- Use historic images of the property or documentation of fencing dating from the time of original construction.
- Low see-through fences with narrow slats or spindles—wood or metal—are preferable to fences which hide the yard behind.
- Use materials commonly found in the historic period, in traditional sizes and spacing. Contemporary synthetic wood products, improved formulations for preservatives, paints, stains, hardware, etc. may be permitted if indistinguishable from historic materials.
- Maintain a consistent fence style in the public view.
- Non-historic, inconspicuous and functional landscape fencing is an option. While it may be stylistically contemporary, scale, form and materials should not compete with or detract from neighboring, more historically faithful features; the intent is to maintain the character of the neighborhood.
- Avoid fencing altogether and consider low plantings if you wish to define the property frontage and reinforce the continuity of the street.
- If a gate marks the entrance to the property, it should swing in – not out to the street.



In construction: Rustic wall shaped around existing boulder.



Dressed stone retaining wall; mortared joints.



A simple iron fence allows views of the yard.

Fences

Not Permitted

For landscape visible from the street – usually front and the visible parts of side yards – avoid:

- Chain link fencing.
- Imitation wood fencing made of plastic that reflects head- light glare.
- Fencing higher than 3 feet tall along the frontage.



Above right, low see-through fence allows views of era-appropriate plantings along the porch front.

Right, see-through fence in weathered wood is a low-key foreground for the house

Outbuildings and Things in the Yard

As this guide is concerned primarily with the “presentation” part of a property—the area visible from the street or public ways—adding features to these visible parts of the yard must be done carefully. Architectural insertions must adhere to the setbacks of the zone.

Recommended

- Sheds, where permitted, should complement the architecture of the principal dwelling. They should not fake antiquity, but details, proportions and colors should be compatible with the historic qualities of the principal dwelling.

Not Permitted

- Insertion of the following in the presentation area is discouraged unless evergreen vegetative screening or carefully detailed lattice fencing can minimize visibility from the public view: contemporary garbage enclosure or shed, play equipment, wading pool, propane tank, generator, barbecue structure, boat, compost pile or container, and other like paraphernalia.



Air circulates through lattice enclosure hiding meter and air conditioning. Lattice is painted to blend with house palette.



Outbuildings at the Mead House, home of thhe Dobbs Ferry Historical Society.

Outdoor Lighting

Dobbs Ferry’s exterior lighting code advises “Provide an environmentally sensitive nighttime environment that includes the ability to view the stars against a dark sky”. This dark sky emphasis results in lower lighting levels, with less floodlighting and light spill. Night vision improves if glare is minimized. Selections for outdoor lighting should be made to assure safe way-finding and clear building/address identification.

Light fixture styles evolved as architecture changed. Exterior light fixtures now associated with early forms of American architecture were later inventions, satisfying a need for permanent illumination with replicas of lanterns that would have been carried around, not attached to buildings or hanging on posts. That mock-authentic form, now electrified, endures as a convention for vintage houses.

In the 20th century, exterior lighting echoed some of the earlier lantern conventions, employed some “Old English” forms, and started to experiment with new, stream-lined fixtures. Low height path lighting became popular—either in-ground fixtures or, more commonly, knee height lights on stems. Many of these were low voltage, allowing homeowners to do some installations themselves. It became fashionable to up-light trees, a practice that runs counter to today’s best practices for maintaining a dark sky environment.

Recommended

- If you have images of the property dating from the time of original construction or from the era of electrification, use these images to guide lamp selection. Lacking specific images of original lighting at a property, use reproduction exterior fixtures known to have been associated with the style of house. If appropriate historic fixtures cannot be identified, use contemporary fixtures with shielded light sources.
- Select fixtures and placement to minimize glare. If necessary for way-finding and safety, augment light thrown by the reproduction exterior fixture(s) with contemporary shielded low level path lights. Spotlights to illuminate utilitarian areas at the side or back of the property such as a garden shed/ garbage enclosure, should be minimized and well-shielded to eliminate glare.

Not Permitted

- Spotlights spilling onto the public way or shining into neighbors’ properties.
- Theatrical lighting aimed at the façade of the house or at trees and landscaping.
- Elaborate historic fixtures without precedent in association with the principal structure or with Dobbs Ferry traditions.



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FIND DARK SKY FRIENDLY LIGHTING

The International Dark Sky Association offers recommendations for light levels and fixture types. darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-industry/fsa/fsa-products

Planning Your Landscape

As with architectural recommendations, the first rule for planning a landscape is to read it carefully. Look at slope, extent of shade, drainage, and opportunities for views (and be mindful of neighbors' views). Study the architectural style of your building and consider how faithfully you wish to plan a garden in keeping with that style.

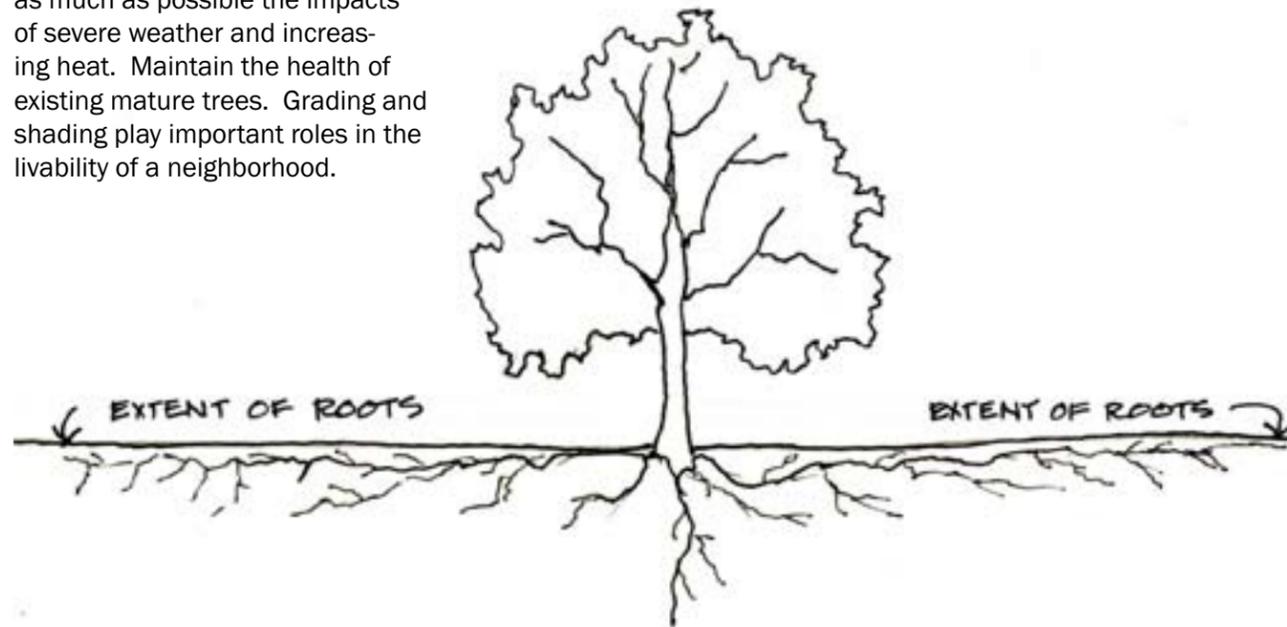
The advantages of historic districts increase when the affinities among a family of historic buildings are visible. Landscape can weave a neighborhood together. Recommendations on particular landscape elements include options so each property can display its own character while signaling that it belongs to the community.

Dobbs Ferry is a Silver Certified Climate Smart Village. Landscape choices should be made with an awareness of climate change, selecting approaches to reduce carbon emissions and manage as much as possible the impacts of severe weather and increasing heat. Maintain the health of existing mature trees. Grading and shading play important roles in the livability of a neighborhood.



The tree canopy is the first air conditioning.

Life-sustaining roots reach well beyond the drop zone. Protect roots during landscape changes.



Water management has evolved so present codes require capture of rainwater on individual properties. One above-ground water management device is the rain garden—a water collection area with wet loving plants growing in a deep drainage medium. A lure to bees and butterflies it brings a country garden ethos to a suburban property.



This "dry" stream bed collects and directs water.

The rain garden (left) collects water from two thirds of the house nearby.

Plantings

With energy and water conservation in mind, select vegetation that, after an establishment period, will require little supplemental watering. On steep slopes, use plants to slow water runoff. Site trees to shade outdoor living areas and, to reduce air conditioning, plant trees to shade the house, especially its western exposure. Maintaining a lawn is water and energy intensive, so consider planting lawn only where it is really needed—in areas flat enough to be useful for games, play or sitting. These ecology-smart measures can be accomplished using a palette of plants from the eras represented in our historic districts.

Recommended

- See Landscape Resources, Guides to the Past for information on historic gardening and lists of period-appropriate plants.
- Study historic images of Dobbs Ferry and northeast/Hudson Valley garden patterns available at local historical societies and the photographic archives at the Library of Congress.
- Plant species with moderate to low water needs and reputed deer unpopularity, preferably native plants.
- If considering period-appropriate non-natives, select plants that are not on an invasive plant list. See Landscape Resources.
- Consider the transitions with neighbors' gardens so that while each property may be distinct and personal, visual continuity is preserved.



- For pre-20th Century houses, avoid foundation plantings, a row of shrubs all of the same species at the base of the building. This planting convention evolved in the 20th century to hide foundations considered unsightly.

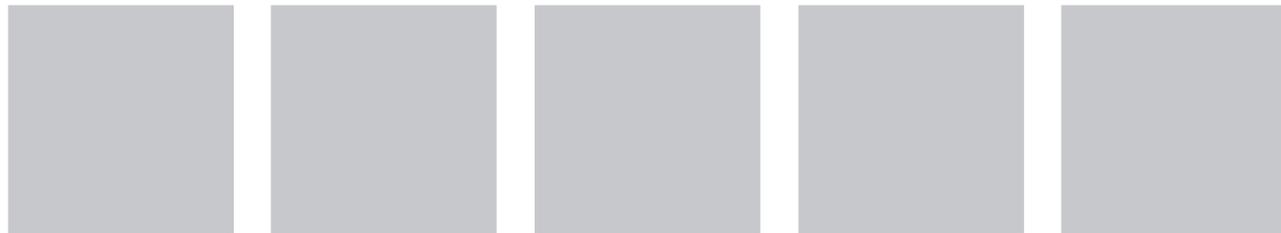
PART 6 The Project Approval Process

Work in historic districts or on individual landmarks has the same municipal permitting requirements as those elsewhere in the Village, with an overlay at the Architectural and Historic Review Board (AHRB) requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness that determines compatibility with district character. All projects must comply with the New York State Building Code. Most projects in the Village will require a building permit issued by the Dobbs Ferry Building Department before construction begins. Please consult the Dobbs Ferry Building Department web site for the most up-to-date list of projects that require a permit: www.dobbsferry.com/building-department. The list, “work requiring a building permit” is a useful guide and summary of required approvals for most projects in the Village. Throughout the Village any work that requires a building permit and alters the exterior of a building also requires the approval of the AHRB. The AHRB is charged with protecting the historic character and encouraging the harmonious development of the Village. In addition to AHRB approval, the construction, reconstruction or alteration of any building or structure that modifies or expands an existing building’s footprint or volume beyond a modest minimum area will require Site Plan approval from the Dobbs Ferry Planning Board. In the event that a proposal does not meet the requirements of the Dobbs Ferry Zoning Code, a variance from the Dobbs Ferry Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will be required.

The way in which a historic district differs from the rest of the Village is that characteristics described in the original district designation as well as these Design Requirements will guide the AHRB when it determines whether a proposed change will maintain the historic character of the building, structure and/or property that is the subject of an application for a building permit. The AHRB review is not a punitive process but the framework for a discussion about how best to meet the project goals within the historic context. The district designation and guidelines provide guardrails and assistance for this discussion.

Demolition

Demolition in a historic district is subject to strict review under section 300-19-D of the Zoning Code, where the roles of the Building Inspector, AHRB, Board of Trustees and the applicant are described in detail. Demolition in a district, especially of contributing features, is discouraged as contrary to the principles of “retain, repair, restore” that guide change in a district. Demolition is an environmentally damaging activity that is responsible for a significant percentage of waste materials headed to our landfills and is also contrary to the environmental mantra of “reduce, reuse, recycle”.



The information presented in this document and online by the Dobbs Ferry Building Department is to be used only as a summary guide and may not cover specific requirements for a specific project. Like any project in the Village, it is recommended that you consult with a licensed architect, engineer, and/or the Dobbs Ferry Building Department prior to moving forward. Finally, please visit www.dobbsferry.com/building-department for detailed information on the land use processes and approvals in the Village.

PART 7 Resources

