Metro Historic Zoning Commission

Metro Historic Zoning Handbook

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METROPOLITAN HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County

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ABOUT THE MHZC

The MHC/MHZC has called many historic buildings home including the Silver Dollar Saloon at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Broadway and Cummins Station. We are presently located at Sunnyside, the historic building in the center of Sevier Park in the 12South neighborhood.

In 1974, Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County adopted an ordinance creating historic zoning and authorizing the creation of the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC). The five-member commission, selected by mayoral appointment and council confirmation, was authorized to review all permit applications for alterations, new construction, relocation, and demolition within areas designated as historic zoning districts, to determine the appropriateness of the proposed work and preserve the area's buildings and character.

In 1977, the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) was established, followed by the designation of the first *historic zoning* district, Edgefield, in 1978. The ordinance was amended in 1983 to bring it into compliance with revised state-enabling law; and again in January 1985, to establish a second, less-restrictive type of historic zoning called *neighborhood conservation zoning*. With the creation of this additional type of historic zoning, what had previously been called historic zoning became known as "historic preservation zoning".

The MHZC is a nine-member commission that oversees exterior work in historic zoning districts. The panel is made up of a representative from the MHC, the Planning Commission, four overlay district representatives, a registered architect, and two representatives from districts in the downtown code area. They are appointed by the mayor, confirmed by Metro Council, and serve five-year staggered terms without compensation.

The MHZC is staffed by an executive director, a zoning administrator, and other professionals with training and experience in preservation, architecture, building sciences, and architectural history, under the employment of the MHC. They administer the day-to-day activities of historic zoning by meeting with and advising property owners on the appropriateness of proposed work; giving technical advice on rehabilitation matters; keeping records; monitoring work in progress; preparing public information newsletters, reports, and slide programs; guiding neighborhoods through the overlay designation process; and helping neighborhoods develop design guidelines. The staff compiles technical information on the best practices, methods, and materials utilized by preservation professionals across the country, to share with property owners and contractors.

The MHZC is a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), The Tennessee Historical Commission. The CLG Program is a federal program established through the 1980 and 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act, and has become a cost-effective local, state, and federal partnership. Local communities must meet certain criteria and be certified for this program in order to benefit from the federal assistance and resources.

The office is a member of, and frequently partners with Historic Nashville, Inc, the Tennessee Preservation Trust, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

HISTORIC ZONING

*Listing in the **National Register of Historic Places** is a different designation from Historic Zoning, in that it is honorary and does not change property rights. A property can be listed in the Register and have a Historic Overlay.*

WHAT IS HISTORIC ZONING?

Historic zoning is a tool to protect the architectural character of Nashville's historic neighborhoods by managing growth and change. A zoning overlay is in addition to the base or land-use zoning of an area. Neighborhoods in more than two thousand towns in the United States use historic overlays as a tool to protect their unique architectural character.

There are quantifiable reasons for historic zoning: neighborhoods have greater control over development; stabilizes property values; decreases the risk of investing in one's house; promotes heritage tourism; protects viable urban housing stock; preserves natural resources by conserving building materials. There are less quantifiable, but equally important, reasons for historic zoning: it protects our past for future generations, it nurtures a sense of community, and it provides a sense of place.

Most property owners desire a historic zoning overlay because it maintains property value and protects investment.

What is the process for obtaining historic zoning?

The process of acquiring historic zoning is initiated by neighborhood residents. After extensive public input, final approval of the designation is given by Metropolitan Council with the adoption of an ordinance and design guidelines.

What types of historic zoning are available?

There are three types of historic overlays which differ based on the level of protection and review.

Historic Landmark Overlay: A landmark overlay is an individual property or "campus" of special significance and is the most restrictive of the historic zoning overlays. Many landmark properties are owned by Metro or the State.

Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay: A historic preservation zoning overlay

HISTORIC ZONING

provides for a great deal of protection for a neighborhood by regulating the majority of exterior alterations.

Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay: A neighborhood conservation zoning overlay is the least restrictive type and only guides change for new construction, additions, demolitions or moving of structures.

How does Historic Zoning Work?

If your property has an historic overlay (landmark, historic or neighborhood conservation), you will need to obtain a Preservation Permit before making certain types of exterior changes. Which alterations require a permit depend on the type of overlay. The preservation permit must be issued before a building permit will be issued. Design guidelines for each overlay are used to make decisions. The guidelines are based on national standards and customized for each district.

WHAT IS NOT REVIEWED

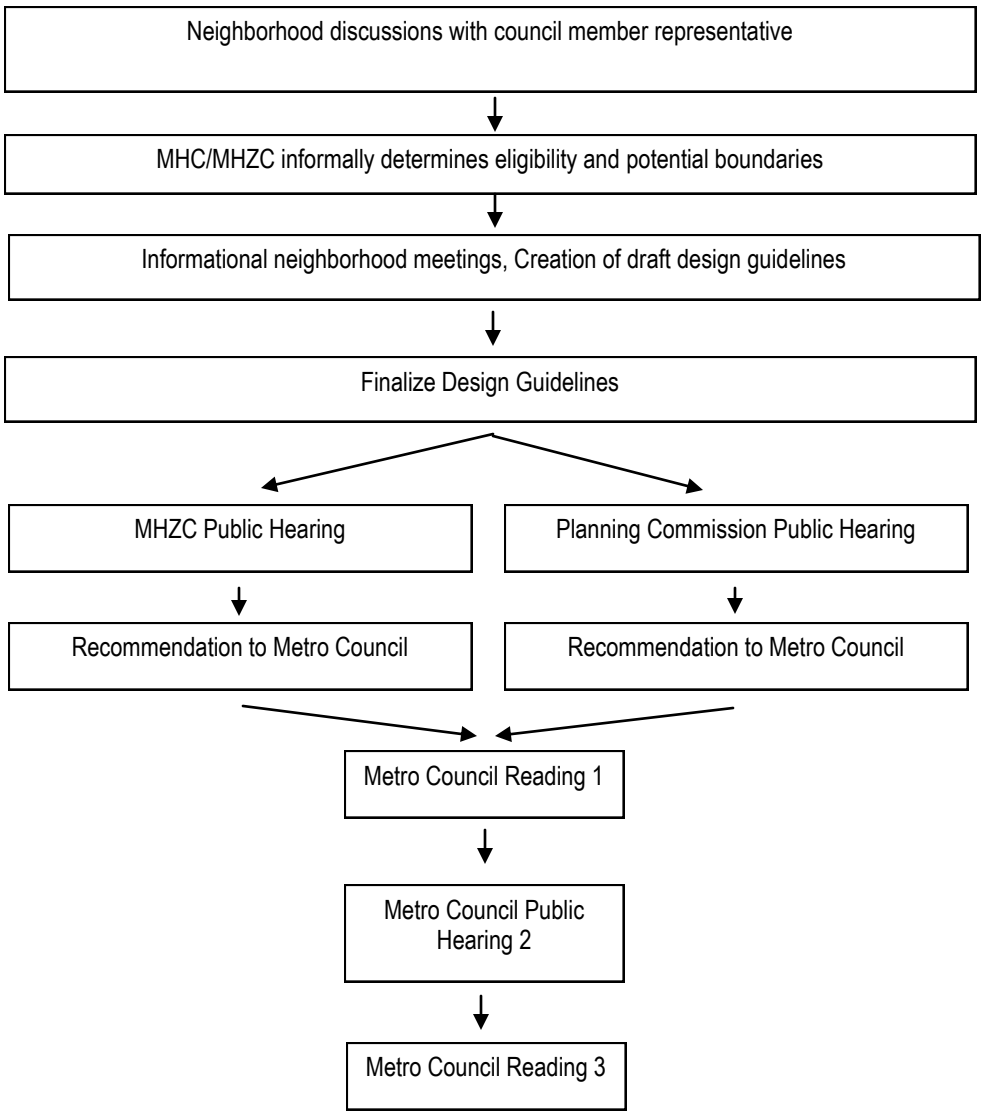
- Work that is not visible from the public right-of-way (not including alleys). To avoid a possible violation, the project should be evaluated by staff for assurance that a Preservation Permit is not necessary.
- Temporary structures that are erected for a period of 90 days or less and do not have permanent foundations.
- Portable buildings that are no larger than 10' x 10', do not have permanent foundations, designed and used primarily for the storage of household goods, personal items and other materials, used on a limited basis and are not hooked up to utilities.
- Temporary banners/signage
- Temporary construction

PRESERVATION PERMITS REQUIRED

Type of Work	Landmark	Historic	Conservation
New construction of primary building	●	●	●
New construction of accessory building (garage, shed, carport, etc.)	●	●	●
Additions – increased footprint, height or building envelope of an existing structure (Examples: rear and side additions, dormers, skylights, chimneys, porches)	●	●	●
Demolition (in whole or part)	●	●	●
Relocation	●	●	●
Setback reductions*	●	●	●
Construction of appurtenances (with the exception of portable storage buildings less than 100 square feet.) (Examples: fences, walls, retaining walls, paving, streetlights, curb cuts, sidewalks, driveways, gravel, fountains, and other accessory or adjunct permanent built features related to a building or streetscape)	●	●	
Signage	●	●	
Repairs and Alterations to existing structures (Examples: reroofing, repairing/replacing siding, repointing mortar joints, repair/replace windows, replacing or adding exterior lighting, repair or replace exterior doors, painting masonry)	●	●	

*The MHZC has the ability to reduce the setbacks required by base zoning where appropriate for the district.

DESIGNATION PROCESS



DESIGNATION PROCESS

An interested person or group, usually a neighborhood organization, investigates the need for historic zoning by discussing the possibility with MHZC staff and their councilmember. In conjunction with Staff, proposed boundaries are explored based on the historical and architectural merit of the area and on owner support; draft design guidelines are developed based on the Secretary of Interior Standards. The MHZC staff meets with the group and area property owners to explain historic zoning and answer questions.

*All buildings and structures within an overlay are considered '**contributing**', meaning they contribute to the historic character of the district or '**non-contributing**,' which means that they do not contribute because of age, condition and/or alterations.*

Alterations to a contributing building should be appropriate for the building as well as the district. Alterations to a non-contributing building need only be appropriate for the district.

The first official step in obtaining designation is for the councilmember to file a zone change application with the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). The application should include a map with the specific boundaries of the proposal and identification of the type of overlay requested: Historic Preservation, Neighborhood Conservation or Landmark. A letter from the neighborhood organization stating that the organization agrees with the proposal and a petition, signed by property owners within the area, should be submitted with the application or as soon as possible.

Next, the MHZC and Planning Commission each review the proposal at public hearings to assure it meets the standards of the ordinance and the community plan. Each sends its recommendations to the Metropolitan Council.

Finally, an ordinance designating the district is introduced in the Metropolitan Council. The ordinance must pass three readings and must be heard on public hearing after the first reading.

A part of the process will be to conduct an Architectural Resource Survey to assist with the creation of design guidelines and the review of Preservation Permits, if the overlay is adopted.

PERMIT PROCESS

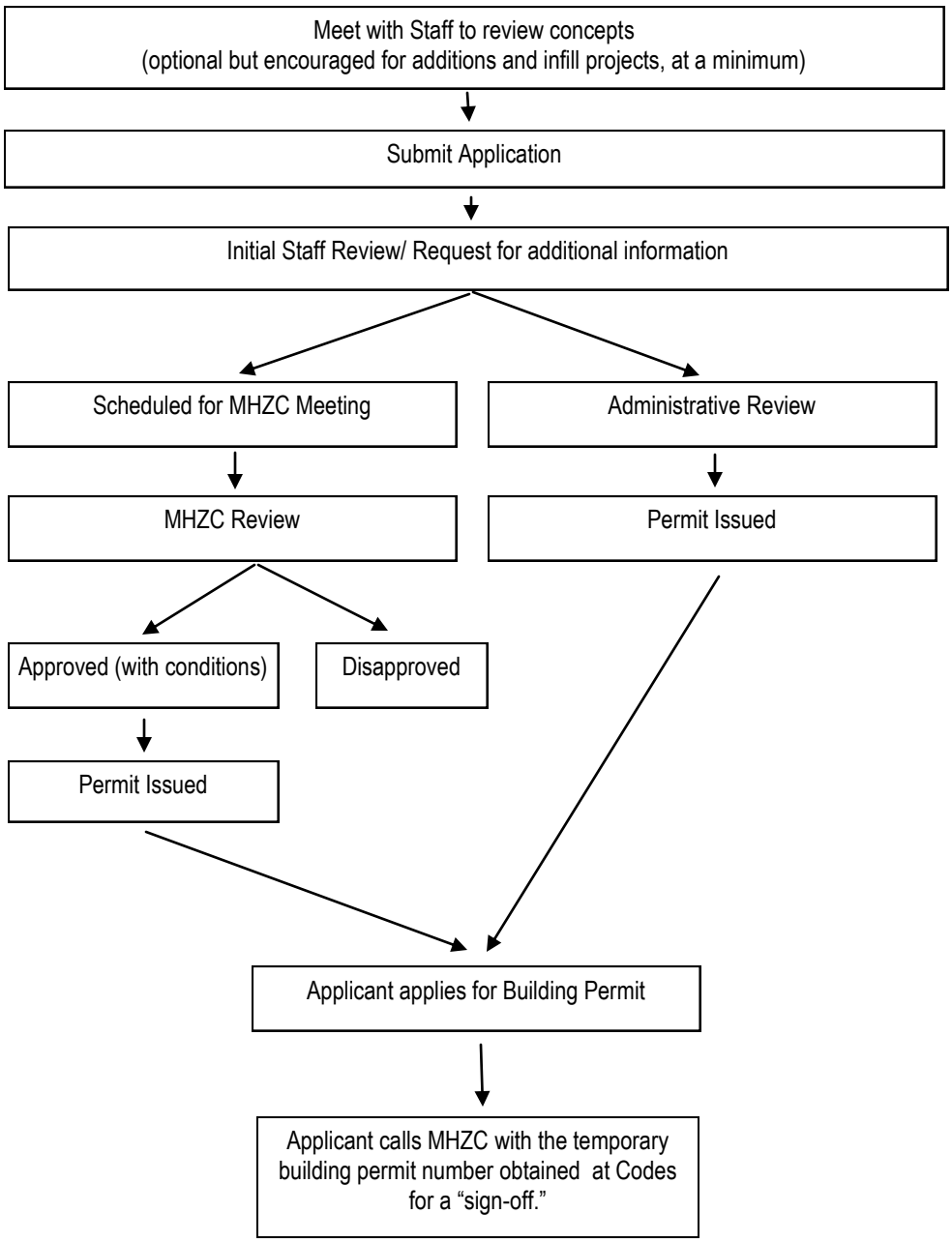
DATES TO REMEMBER

16 days prior to meeting date- Deadline for applications

Second Wednesday- Deadline for applicant to notify neighbors about any setback determinations

Third Wednesday MHZC meeting

Dates may change to avoid holidays.



PERMIT PROCESS

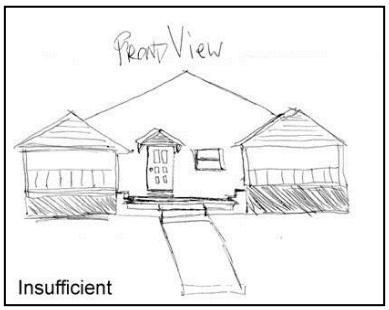
WHAT?

You will need a Preservation Permit if you plan to:

BUILD a new structure,
ADD to an existing building
DEMOLISH a structure in whole or in part
RELOCATE a structure,
EXTERIOR REPAIR OR ALTERATION (historic preservation and historic landmark overlays only)

HOW MUCH?

There is no fee for a preservation permit but there may be for the building or demolition permit. The fee is based upon the type and value of the work done, and will be charged to you by the Codes Department when you apply for your building permit.



Drawings do not have to be done on a computer; however, they must be to scale (1/8" = 1', 1/4" = 1', etc.). The example above is insufficient because it does not show details and is not drawn to scale. The drawing below, is sufficient in terms of scale but should also have major measurement and materials listed on the drawing.

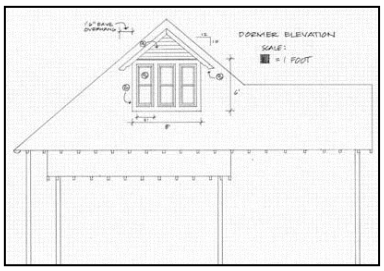
WHEN?

If your project is scheduled for an MHZC meeting, it meets the third Wednesday of each month. The deadline for submitting applications is listed on our website. Projects that may be administratively reviewed are often permitted within a day or two of receiving a complete application. Meeting dates and deadlines may change to avoid holidays. For information about the meeting dates, location and parking, visit www.nashville.gov/Historical-Commission/About/Historic-Zoning-Commission/Meeting-Information.aspx.

HOW?

1. MEET/CONTACT US

Contact the MHZC at 862-7970 or histlap1@nashville.gov to confirm that the MHZC needs to review your project; and if so, to make an appointment to meet with the staff.



We are pleased to meet with you at any point during your planning process; however, we encourage you to meet with us early. Even if you just have an idea sketched on a scrap piece of paper we can give you guidance on how to meet

PERMIT PROCESS

the design guidelines and assure that your project is approved.

2. SUBMIT APPLICATION

   Applications can be found on our website at www.nashville.gov/Historical-Commission/Services/Preservation-Permits.aspx. This form must be accompanied by complete site plans, elevation drawings, specifications and any other appropriate supporting information. (Please see second page of application for complete list.) You can drop-off complete applications at our office or email to histlap1@nashville.gov

3. MHZC MEETING/ PERMITS

   Once a complete application is received, it will be placed on the agenda for the next MHZC meeting, which is generally scheduled the third Wednesday of each month. (Meetings may be rescheduled if the date conflicts with a holiday.)

   Some projects can be reviewed administratively, which usually means you can expect your permit to be issued within a day or two of submitting a complete application. Otherwise, your permit will be issued within 2 days after the MHZC meeting, unless the decision is a disapproval or requires additional information be submitted.

4. SUBMIT CODES APPLICATION

   Most projects also require a Building Permit from the Department of Codes before you can begin work: www.nashville.gov/Codes-Administration.aspx. (You may also choose to begin this process before you receive a preservation permit .) The Preservation Permit should be provided to the Building Department for completion of the Building Permit process. Projects on Metro owned or leased property must also go through an ADA review. For more information please visit www.nashville.gov/General-Services/ADA-Compliance.aspx. Permit fees (amount charged depends on the type and value of the work done) will be charged to you when applying for a building permit. For permits to remain valid, work must begin within six months of the date of issue.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Setbacks: If your project requires a change to the setbacks required by base zoning, it is your responsibility to notify all adjacent property owners by snail mail at least 7 days prior to the public hearing. This means notifying all properties on each side of the subject property, behind it and across the street. The notification must be mailed and include a site plan. If notice is not completed, it will mean that your project review will be delayed until the following hearing. To assure that there is no delay and that you have a record of sending the notices, we recommend sending them certified mail, placing a copy of the notice in the door of the neighboring properties, and posting a yard sign.

Metro Mapping and the Property Assessor's websites are two resources that may be used to find the mailing address of adjoining property owners: http://www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department/Mapping-and-GIS/Interactive-Maps.aspx or http://www.padctn.org/real-property-search/. On both websites your initial search can be the property address for which the request is being made. The search will provide a map where you can click on each adjoining property and find the property owner and associated mailing address.

For a sample letter and additional information, please contact us at histlap1@nashville.gov or 615-862-7970. Not sure if this applies to your project? We can help, just ask.

SPECIAL PURPOSE (SP) REZONING PROCESS

Generally, the Planning Commission (PC) reviews use, infrastructure and density, while the Historic Zoning Commissioner (MHZC) reviews massings, bulk standards and details such as materials and elevations for an SP rezoning; therefore, the process of rezoning requires concurrent reviews by both the Planning PC and the MHZC. The general steps are:

1. Preliminary meeting with Planning and MHZC staff. This can be scheduled through the PC or MHZC departments.(optional)
2. Pre-app meeting with multiple metro departments. This should be scheduled through the PC department.
3. File SP rezoning with MPC for review. Plans will be distributed to MHZC for consideration by MHZC prior to Planning Commission consideration.

PERMIT PROCESS

4. SP preliminary approval by MHZC.
5. SP approval by the MPC.
6. SP approval from Council.
7. Final approval of details and materials by MHZC.
8. Final site plan approval by PC staff, or Commission if case is not eligible for administrative approval.
9. Submit plat at Planning Commission for approval, if necessary.
10. File building permit applications at Codes for distribution to reviewing agencies.

NOTE: Subject work done without a preservation permit is in violation of the Historic Zoning Regulations established under Chapter 17.36.110, Historic overlay districts established, of the Code of Laws of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Like the Building Code, these Design Guidelines are a legal document. Appeals to decisions of the Historic Zoning Commission staff can be made to the Commission; appeals to decisions of the Commission can be taken to a court of competent jurisdiction as provided for by law.

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

AVAILABLE APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

The MHZC staff often meets with property owners at our office or on-site to discuss an application or just to provide advice. We have a library of materials available to the public on historic architecture and restoration technology, and files on preservation products and services, which are also available to the public. Please call for more information.

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE?

What you need to include depends on your project, but a good rule of thumb is to consider what the Commission will need to fully understand your project. Here are the minimum requirements. All drawings must be no larger than 11 x 17 and MUST be to scale.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

- Site plan showing the entire lot with property lines and with all setbacks clearly noted. It should show all associated site improvements, e.g. sidewalks, lighting, pavement, etc. For infill projects, the footprints of the abutting properties should be shown in relation to the proposed building and elevation contour lines. *Basic site plans may be obtained at www.nashville.gov/mpc/property/index.asp. More accurate maps may be obtained at Community Plans/Planning Commission.*
- Elevation drawings of each façade with major dimensions (including roof pitch) and materials specified. For additions, existing and proposed areas should be clearly delineated. For infill projects, the building height and porch floor heights of the abutting properties should be shown in relation to the proposed building.
- Current photographs of building or site. (Digital preferred) Photos should show the building overall as well as detail views of where the work is proposed.
- Floor plans
- Roof plan may be necessary for complex additions or new construction.
- Demolition plans are required for projects that require partial demolition.
- If you know your materials and details, such as windows and doors, these should be noted on the plans. It is OK if you don't know these details when you begin; however, these materials will need to be

Drawing Types

Elevation: *A drawing showing the vertical elements of a building. When referencing the sides of the building itself, not the drawing, we use the term "façade."*

Floor Plan: *A simple line drawing showing rooms from a "top down" perspective. At a minimum, a floor plan will show the location of walls, doors and windows.*

Site Plan/ Plot Plan: *A site plan, sometimes referred to as a plot plan, is "top down" oriented, accurate drawing or map of your property that shows its size and configuration and the size and precise location of most man-made features on the property such as buildings, parking areas and driveways.*

Perspective: *A graphic representation of a building or part of a building shown as it would appear three-dimensionally.*

Rendering: *A perspective or elevation with artistic delineation of materials, shades, and shadows.*

Schematics: *A presentation of the element-by-element relationship of all parts of a system.*

APPLICATION GUIDANCE, continued

submitted eventually.

- Design and materials of windows, doors, trim and features
- Drawings, samples, product literature and manufacturer's illustrations may be required.

REHABILITATION (Historic Preservation & Landmarks Overlays)

- Plans or drawings illustrating the proposed work
- Photographs (detail and overall) of the relevant facades
- Specifications, manufacturer's literature and samples may be required
- Design and materials of windows, doors, trim and features

DEMOLITION

- Written description of the structure's condition and reason for demolition.
- Photographs of structure's current condition showing all elevations, interior, accessory buildings and site features.
- Describe the proposed reuse of the site, including plans of any proposed new structure.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (When demolition does not meet the standards of the ordinance.) The Economic Hardship process is to determine the economic hardship of the property, not the property owner.

- Estimated cost of demolition
- Report from a licensed engineer
- Estimated market value of current condition and after alterations to meet basic code requirements
- Estimate from an architect, developer, real estate consultant, appraiser or other real estate professional experienced in rehab on the economic feasibility of rehab or reuse of the structure
- Amount paid for the property, date of purchase, who it was purchased from, including a description of the relationship, if any, and terms of financing between seller and buyer
- For income producing properties: Annual gross income for the previous two years, itemized operating and maintenance expenses for the previous two years, and depreciation deduction and annual cash flow before and after debt service
- Any additional information requested

MEETING GUIDANCE

Did you know that you can sign up to receive an email notification when our agendas are posted? Sign up here:

www.nashville.gov/global/agenda_subscription/index.aspx

FEES

There is no fee for a Preservation Permit.

WHO?

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. You are welcome to speak to any case. If you are not the application, you will have 2 minutes, so you may want to prepare your comments in advance. Groups may elect to have one speaker represent them.

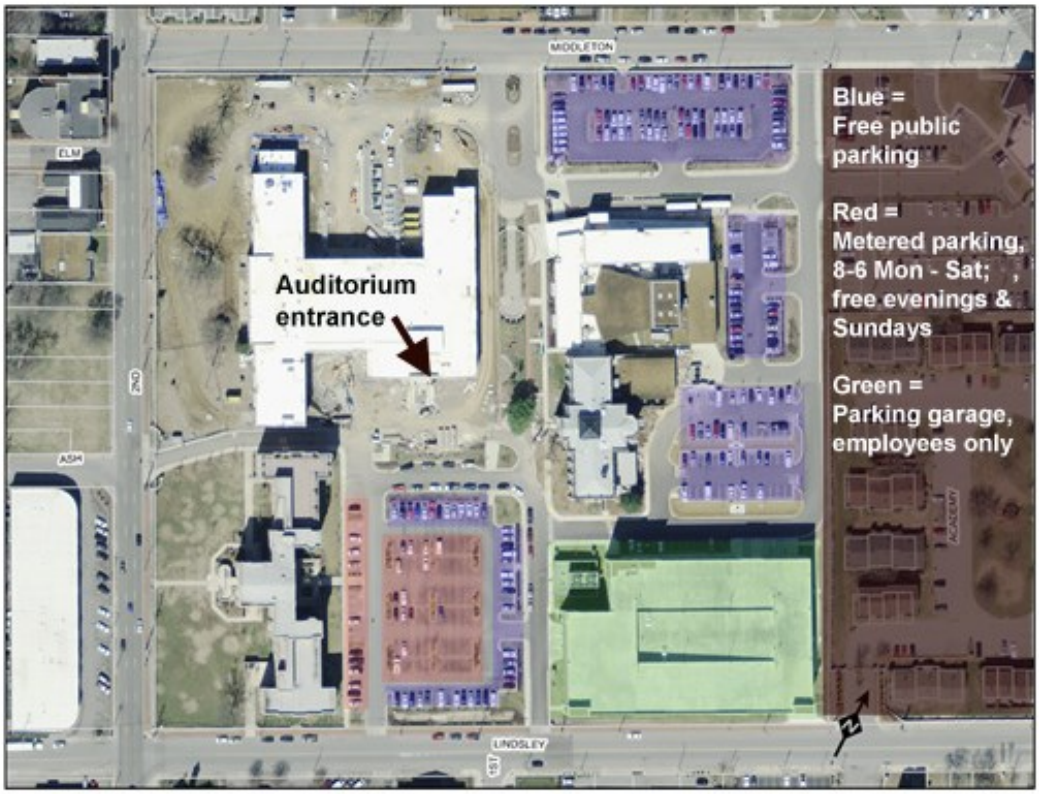
WHAT?

Meetings are televised and can be seen on www.nashville.gov/metro3 and archived on www.YouTube.com. Viewing a past meeting is a great way to get to know how the meetings proceed. If that is not an option; the format for each case is as follows:

CONSENT AGENDA: Items that fully meet the design guidelines but do not meet the criteria established by the Commission for administrative review may be placed on the Consent Agenda. Infill items are not placed on the Consent Agenda. Consent Agenda items will be voted on all at once without discussion. Anyone may request an item be removed from the consent agenda for at any time. Items removed will be presented and discussed at the beginning of "New Business" on the same day.

1. Staff will make a presentation about each project to be considered, providing an analysis of how it does or does not meet the design guidelines, and a recommendation for approval or disapproval.
2. Applicant will have up to 10 minutes to present and answer questions asked by the Commission. Two of the 10 minutes may be reserved for rebuttal of public comment, if desired.
3. Members of the public will have 2 minutes each to comment on the application. Anyone representing an organization or group, such as a neighborhood organization will have 5 minutes to comment. Please state your name and address for the record before making your comments. Direct all comments to the microphone so that they are a part of the public record. Comments may also be sent to the office in advance via email, fax, or postal service. See agenda for contact information.
4. Applicant has the option of responding to public comments after all have been made.
5. The MHZC chair will close the "public hearing" after all comments have been made. At this time there is no further opportunity for comments from the public or applicants unless the Commission invites them back to the floor.

MEETING GUIDANCE



Meetings are usually held the third Wednesday of each month but may need to be rescheduled to avoid holidays. View the **Metro Calendar** at www.nashville.gov/calen/

6. The Commission will make a decision to approve, disapprove, or approve with conditions. The applicant may also request that a decision be deferred.

WHERE

The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission meets in the Sonny West Conference Center at the Howard Office Building, 700 Second Avenue South, at 2 pm the third Wednesday of the month.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE?

If you ARE the applicant::

- Staff recommendations are available online prior to the meeting. Review the recommendation of your project and contact the staff project lead with any questions you have.
- Make notes and organize them so you are able to cover all aspects of the project that are important to you during the presentation.

MEETING GUIDANCE

- The Commission will not accept new information at the public hearing so be sure to submit everything you want them to see by the application deadline.
- You may bring additional materials that help to explain your project, such as photographs that were not available at the application deadline or a model. Due to Metro IT regulations we are not allowed to use non-metro discs or flash drives in the computer. If you are bringing printed information, please bring 11 copies.
- Organize your notes wells so that you are sure to cover all important aspects of your project during the presentation.
- Keep in mind that staff will present an overview of the project prior to your presentation. You do not need to repeat what has already been said.

If you are NOT the applicant:

- Staff recommendations are available online prior to the meeting.
- If you would like to speak about a project, please have all your comments organized so you are able to share all your considerations within the two minute time limit. Comments may also be sent to the office in advance via email, fax, or postal service. See agenda for contact information.
- If multiple people wish to speak on the same topic, consider selecting one spokesperson to speak for all of you or divide the points you want to make between multiple speakers so there is no repetition of information.

WHAT IF I DO NOT LIKE THE DECISION?

If your project was denied, you may submit a new application for a new project. Staff can assist you with advice on how to alter the application so that it meets the design guidelines.

You may also appeal. Appeals to decisions of the MHZC can be taken to a court of competent jurisdiction as provided for by law. Because the MHZC does not have a lawyer on staff, we cannot help with the details or provide legal advice. We recommend hiring an attorney if this is an option you are considering.

The Commission will not rehear the same case after a decision has been made unless the applicant has new information that was unavailable at the time of the public hearing. Check with Staff on the process.

MEETING GUIDANCE

AFTER THE DECISION

After the MHZC meeting, Staff will provide you with a Preservation Permit or a Notice of Disapproval. The Preservation Permit should be used to obtain a Building Permit for most projects. The typical Preservation Permit will require inspections throughout the building process and additional information on details that were not known at the time of approval. An applicant should stay in contact with the MHZC office throughout the construction process to assure compliance and avoid delays.

Decisions made by the MHZC remain valid for 3 months. For a Preservation Permit to remain valid, work must begin within 6 months of issuance and be completed within two years of issuance.

PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

In addition to the ordinance (17.36.110) that allows for Historic Preservation, Neighborhood Conservation and Landmark Zoning Overlays, there are additional Metro Ordinances that address preservation and are administered by the MHZC.

DEMOLITION

BL2005-864 The MHZC reviews all demolition requests for buildings constructed prior to 1865.

BL2006-936 The MHZC has the authority to place a 90 day delay on requests to demolish historic buildings listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, for the purpose of attempting to mitigate planned demolition with documentation, salvage, dismantling of historic structure for educational purposes, relocation or other appropriate measures.

BED & BREAKFAST HOMESTAY

BL2005-701 A property owner may use a building as a bed and breakfast without obtaining a "Special Exception" if the property is historic.

DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

BL2011-900 Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADU) are allowed in certain zones within some historic zoning overlays and allow a property owner to have a small rental unit or "mother-in-law apartment" above a garage or as a free-standing building. See design guidelines for permitting and design requirements.

RIGHT UPON ENTRY OF LAND

The Commission, its members, and employees, in the performance of its work, may enter upon any land within its jurisdiction and make examinations and surveys and place or remove public notices as required. There shall be no right of entry into any building without the consent of the owner.

PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Certified Local Government: A Certified Local Government (CLG) is a city or county that has been "certified" by the State Historic Preservation Office as eligible to apply for federal grants for historic preservation.

Compatible: Designed to be in harmony with elements such as surrounding architecture and landscape in terms of masing, design, scale and siting.

Contributory Status: All buildings and structures within an overlay are considered '**contributing'**, meaning they contribute to the historic character of the district; or '**non-contributing**,' which means that they do not contribute because of age, condition and/or alterations.

Design Guidelines: Written tenets, based on the Secretary of Interior Standards, according to which the MHZC interprets the standards of the zoning overlay for alterations, new construction, demolition, and moves. Design Guidelines include specific instructions for how to meet the standards of the ordinance, guide the applicant's planning, and guide the MHZC's decisions.

Elevation: A drawing showing the vertical elements of a building. When referencing the sides of the building itself, not the drawing, we use the term "façade."

Floor Plan: A simple line drawing showing rooms from a "top down" perspective. At a minimum, a floor plan will show the location of walls, doors and windows.

Historic Context: Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history, architecture and development that create a setting for a particular place and help to give a place meaning.

Perspective: A graphic representation of a building or part of a building shown as it would appear three-dimensionally.

Rendering: A perspective or elevation with artistic delineation of materials, shades, and shadows.

PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

Schematics: A presentation of the element-by-element relationship of all parts of a system.

Site Plan/ Plot Plan: A site plan, sometimes referred to as a plot plan, is a "top down" oriented, accurate drawing or map of your property that shows its size and configuration and the size and precise location of most man-made features on the property such as buildings, parking areas and driveways.

Sustainable: A pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the resource so that these needs can be met, not only in the present, but also future generations. Historic Preservation is environmentally, socially, economically and culturally sustainable. It is environmentally sustainable because reuse of a building is the ultimate in recycling. It is socially sustainable because our historic districts disproportionally meet the housing needs of those of modest means. It is economically sustainable because it increases property values, creates more jobs than new construction, increases heritage tourism, and keeps money local. Preservation is culturally sustainable because it preserves the "stage on which to learn and explore our culture."

TOP 10 CONSTRUCTION OBSTACLES TO AVOID

The rise in grade on this lot was not considered, resulting in a foundation significantly higher in the front than what the MHZ approved. Contractors had to stop work in order to devise a solution.

Since 1996 the MHZC has issued more than three thousand permits. Over the years, we have seen the same construction problems occur repeatedly, problems that could have easily been avoided and saved money and heartache. It is not uncommon for a project to change during construction, and notifying our office of any changes as they arise ensures that we can work together on a solution before any problems become more costly to resolve.

Here are the top ten things to avoid:

1. Reviewing Permit. The most common mistake made is not reading a permit once it is issued or not passing it along to the contractor. This mistake has led to easily avoidable mishaps that can end up being quite costly; such as installing embossed siding, using brick-mold on windows in walls with lap-siding, leaving out the required 4"-6" mullion between double or triple windows, installing vinyl windows and installing HVAC and mechanicals in the wrong location.

Fiber cement siding is an appropriate cladding for new construction but not when it has a faux (embossed) wood grain, as seen above. Below is an example of a smooth fiber cement siding that looks more like historic wood siding.

2. Requesting Sign-offs and Reviews. Each project has a series of sign-offs and reviews that must be requested by the applicant once the permit has been issued. Projects that involve new construction require a "sign-off" when the foundation has been staked, when the foundation has been laid and when framing has been completed. It is rare that an applicant has made every decision on a project at the time of approval, so there is also often there is also the need to have staff review and approve details such as trim, windows and doors, and cladding and roofing materials. Remember: the review process isn't over, once you have a permit in hand.

3. Grade. Often new homes or accessory buildings are planned as if the building is on flat ground, but due to Middle Tennessee's rolling terrain, many lots have a change in grade. Disregarding how the grade affects the design assures that construction cannot begin or continue as permitted. It is always easier to consider the grade at the beginning of a project rather than later.

4. **Consistency.** Planning a new building can be a large undertaking with lots of small changes before plans are submitted to us. As a result, views of drawings may

TOP 10 CONSTRUCTION OBSTACLES TO AVOID

be inconsistent with each other. When this happens, construction might take place in a manner that doesn't meet the design guidelines requiring costly reconstruction.

5. Accuracy. When projects are planned around existing conditions, such as an addition to an existing house, it is extremely important that the existing conditions be measured and drawn accurately. If not, it is probable that the project cannot be completed as planned. It is far less expensive to spent money on the front end than to redesign the project during construction.

6. Planning. Sometimes interior plans are not fully considered in terms of placement of windows, door, bays and fireplaces. This usually prompts multiple calls to our office to change the size or placement of these elements.

7. Scale. The MHZC requires that all submitted drawings be to-scale and that major measurements be calledout. Sometimes the scale is lost when reducing plans to the required 11 x 17 size. Be mindful of the scale when you are submitting your drawings. Make sure it is accurate and noted on each page.

8. Railings. Porch railings are often overlooked in planning and are sometimes required by building codes.

9. Porch Posts. Sometimes the thickness of a post veneer is not taken into consideration, resulting in a post that hangs out over the edge of the porch floor.

10. Flooring system. Occasionally the thickness of the flooring system is ignored, resulting in a need to increase the overall height of a building during construction. This problem often occurs when using stock plans or working from a pattern book of historic buildings. Be sure to make allowances on the outside to accommodate what is happening on the inside.

Remember that when the Commission approves a project, they are approving the drawings you submitted to them, not just the *concept*. Avoid delays and additional expense by planning well and keeping us informed of changes.

The foundation plans showed a porch depth of 4', the elevations showed a porch depth of 6' and the floor plans showed a depth of 8'. This homeowner now as a portion of their porch too narrow to be useful.

The depth of the stone veneer was not considered, leaving a porch pedestal hanging over the edge of the porch floor.

TOP 10 REASONS TO SAVE HISTORIC WINDOWS

Regardless of the manufacturer's "lifetime warranties" 30 percent of the windows being replaced each year are less than 10 years old.

1. **More heat is typically lost through your roof and un-insulated walls than through your windows.** Adding just 3 and 1/2 inches of insulation in your attic can save more energy than replacing your windows.
2. **Replacement windows are called "replacement" for a reason. Manufacturers often offer lifetime warrantees for their windows**. What they don't make clear is that 30% of the time, a replacement window will be replaced within 10 years. That doesn't say much when historic windows that have been properly maintained, have lasted between 100 and 200 years.
3. **Replacement windows that contain vinyl or PVC are toxic to produce and create toxic by-products**. Installing these in your house is not a "green" approach.
4. **If your wood window are 60 years or older, chances are the wood they are made of is old growth—dense and durable wood that is now scarce**. Even high-quality new wood windows, except for mahogany, won't last as long as historic wood windows.
5. Studies have demonstrated that **a historic wood window, properly maintained, weather-stripped and with a storm window, can be just as energy efficient as a new window.**
6. According to studies, **it can take 240 years to recoup enough money in energy savings to pay back the cost of installing replacement windows**.
7. **Each year, Americans demolish 200,000 buildings. That is 124 million tons of debris, or enough waste to construct a wall 30 feet tall and 30 feet thick around the entire US coastline.** Every window that goes into the dump is adding to this problem.
8. With a little practice **it can be easy—and inexpensive—to repair and maintain your wood windows with basic tools and readily available materials.**
9. Not a DIY-er? There are people near you who can do it for you. **Hiring a skilled tradesperson to repair your windows fuels the local economy and provides jobs.**
10. **Historic wood windows are an important part of what gives your older building character.**

From the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Historic Wood Windows" tip sheet.

TEN WAYS TO "GREEN" YOUR HOME

1. **Keep original windows intact.** Studies show that old windows can perform as well as vinyl replacements. Weather strip them so that they seal tightly, caulk the exterior trim and repair cracked glazing or putty around glass panels. You will reduce landfill waste and the demand for vinyl, a non biodegradable material that gives off toxic byproducts when it is made.
2. **Use light paint colors** for your home's exterior. Light colors reflect heat better than darker ones.
3. **Insulate attic, basement and crawl space**. About 20 percent of energy costs come from heat loss in those areas.
4. **Reuse old materials** such as brick, glass, stone and slate when making home improvements. For example, if you're rebuilding a staircase, use wood from a shed that couldn't be saved.
5. **Install fireplace draft stoppers, attic door covers and dryer vent seals** that open only when your dryer is in use. An open damper in a fireplace can increase energy costs by 30 percent and attic doors and dryer vents are notorious energy sieves.
6. **Plant trees**. Evergreen trees on the north and west sides of your house can block winter winds, and leafy trees on the south and west provide shade from the summer sun. Using old photos of your house, try to match the historic landscape.
7. **Have an energy audit done**. Audits can help pinpoint problem areas and measure energy savings after you improve your home's efficiency.
8. In the summer, **open the windows and use fans and evaporative coolers**, which consume less energy than air conditioning. Many old houses were designed with good cross ventilation; take advantage of your home's layout.
9. **Keep doors airtight** by weather stripping, caulking and painting them regularly.
10. **Restore porches and awnings**. Porches, awnings and shutters were intended for shade and insulation. To save energy, draw shades on winter nights and summer days.

Obtain an energy audit through ***NEW: Nashville Energy Works****.*

NEW is a partnership between the Mayor's Office, TVA, and NES to provide incentives to Nashville residents who make energy-saving improvements to their homes.

www.nashvilleenergyworks.org

HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY GARAGE DESIGN

Excerpts from a two part series title "The Great American Garage" by J. Randall Cotton, published The Old House Journal, *September 1986 with information specific to Nashville.*

This three-bay garage was part of a esidence known as "Bonnie Brae," that once rested on twenty-two acres along the hillside of the present-day southwestern corner of Woodlawn Drive and I-440. The Villager Condominiums stand there now. Image from the Metro Archives.

According to every district's design guidelines, new garages should be compatible with the primary structures they serve and with the historic context. Certainly modern day garages can't be the same as historic garages because vehicles are so different from what they used to be and most households typically have at least two cars where in the early 20th century they only had one. Nevertheless, an understanding of historic garages can help guide the design of a new garage.
From the start, America has had a love affair with the automobile, and no single invention
has changed the way we live and how our environment looks more than the "horseless
carriage." The widespread acceptance of the automobile presented a host of problems, however, including the need for better roads, service and fuel stations and, not least, a place to store the contraption. The private garage is in many ways a result of a gradual evolution from the horse barn or another outbuilding.

A published photo from the Nashville Times *(1940) about the Seventh Avenue Garage. Cited in the 1941 City Directory as "South Finest One Stop Service Garage, 600 car capacity, gas, oil, tires and tubes, brake work our specialy, park inside, 15 cents to 25 cents all day, 145-149 7th Avenue North."* Image from the Metro Archives.

Even today we find many 19th-century carriage houses which were converted to garages many years ago. Although adapting carriage houses to auto storage remained popular in non-urban areas, it was a different story in the city. Contrary to popular belief, earlier city dwellers did not all own horses, but rather relied on public-transportation or walking to get around. Because of the crowded city environment, along with the smell and filth associated with horses, urbanites who did own a horse usually put it up at a livery stable. Hence there was initially a lack of existing space that could be converted to store the new-fangled automobile.

The first solution for urban auto storage was publicly and privately owned large-scale
garages, a natural outgrowth of the livery stable. For $15 to $20 a month, an owner could store his auto along with up to 100 others in a large, heated space where maintenance and cleaning services were provided. But by 1910, automobile ownership was so widespread that a new building type had to be invented.

As with all new building types (such as the skyscraper or railroad depot), there was a

period of experimentation with the garage. How exactly should it look? How should it function? What are the best materials and construction method to use? People disagreed. Some thought "a garage is strictly for business. The utilitarian side must dominate." Others decried what they saw as hideous little sheds "of a mechanical nature" which are "apt to be ugly" and called instead for "decorative utility." Those who took the latter view suggested garages follow the architecture of the house much as Victorian carriage houses had. Either direction is appropriate for new construction.

This historic one-bay garage in Richland-West End is 200 square feet, 12 feet tall and has exposed rafter tails and lapsiding.

One of the first solutions was the so-called "portable" garage, available as early as 1908. These were really small, partially prefabricated structures consisting of wood or metal panels. They were manufactured by such companies as Hodgson Portable Homes, were available for $140, and could be put up in one or two days. They were relatively inexpensive, but they were flimsy and so a less than ideal solution: still, they remained popular throughout the first part of this century.

More substantial prefabricated garages were also introduced. Most of the companies that
produced "ready-built" homes also carried prefab garages. Sears, Roebuck was among the most successful in this endeavor and sold mail-order garage "kits" during the teens, 20s, and 30s.

Most historic garages, like these in Maxwell Heights and Belmont-Hillsboro were utilitiarian in design.

Like pattern book houses, pattern-book garages also proved popular. For example, the Home Builders Catalog Company of Chicago illustrated dozens of garages in their catalogs: complete blueprints could be purchased for $5. The Southern Cypress Manufacturers' Association offered a "pergola-garage" working drawing which, of course, espoused decay-resistant cypress as the best garage-building material. The true impact of pattern books is hard to estimate, but chances are that if you own a 19l0-1930s garage, it owes its design to a published plan that the contractor followed.

Suburban garages were usually functional in appearance. The basic plan was rectangular (approximately 12 by 18 feet), large enough to accommodate one auto and not much else. Multi-car garages were built simply by repeating this basic plan, with two or more bays

HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY GARAGE DESIGN

When this brick house was first constructed in Elizabethon, TN, it had a one-bay garage. Image from TSLA.

side by side. The major distinguishing feature of these plain structures was their roof. While gabled roofs were the most common, flat, shed, gambrel, and hipped were popular, too.

Because of the fear of auto-related fires, garage-builders paid great deal of attention to "fireproof" construction. Vitrified brick, cast concrete, and hollow tile were considered safe. When a frame garage was built, or an old carriage house converted, the framework was often covered with plaster, tin, or better yet, glazed tile (to retard fire). Frame garages had clapboard siding, of course, but stucco surfaces were also used, particularly with a coarse aggregate (sometimes called "pebble-dash"). Roofing materials were any of the standard fare including slate, metal, terra-cotta tiles, or shingles of asphalt, wood, or asbestos. Floors were sometimes simply gravel or cinder, but most consisted of poured concrete. Often the floor slanted down slightly toward the front, so that if all else failed, a little push could serve to start the car.

From the beginning garages had windows to provide ventilation as well as light. These were mostly stock sash units similar to those used in houses. One window along each side was the usual arrangement, and garage doors almost invariably had several glazed panels. Not surprisingly, the first garage doors were identical to barn doors. Big double-leaf doors which swung out on heavy strap hinges were the most common. These had the disadvantage, though, of being both heavy and temporarily disabled by uncleared snow. Barn-like sliding doors were better, but not all garages were wide enough to allow the doors to be pushed to the sides on tracks.

A published photo from the Nashville Times *(1940) about the Seventh Avenue Garage. Cited in the 1941 City Directory as "South Finest One Stop Service Garage, 600 car capacity, gas, oil, tires and tubes, brake work our specialy, park inside, 15 cents to 25 cents all day, 145-149 7th Avenue North."* Image from the Metro Archives.

Soon many new door types were developed just for garages. New sliding doors, divided into vertical sections, could slide around the inside of the garage. Bifold (or "accordion") doors were also popular, often used in combination with swinging doors. The sectionalized roll-up door, the most popular today, appeared soon after the turn of the century

despite an
early claim that "such doors as those that roll up after the fashion of the old-time roll-top desk have proved effective, but are not in widespread use, and probably never will be." So much for predictions. Roll-up and swing-up garage doors were spring loaded for easy operation and early ads often showed a small boy lifting them. A smaller "wicket door" was sometimes incorporated into the main door so that one could enter the garage without opening the entire door. Some garages provided doors at each end so that the car could enter one way and exit the other.

The western portion of Belmont-Hillsoboro developed later than the main portions of the district. Here driveways leading back to a small garage are found but are rare in the majority of the district..

By the 1920s, automobiles were commonplace. In the cities, alleys originally intended as
secondary roads for horse-drawn service vehicles and garbage removal were now lined with
small garages. These were usually set on the rear corner of the narrow lots. Sometimes a
wide multi-bay alleyway garage served several owners. In the post-Victorian suburbs –whose development the automobile greatly encouraged -- individual freestanding garages with driveways to the street were the norm. Most of Nashville's historic overlays were initially developed in the Victorian era with every lot having access to an alley; therefore, new curbcuts for driveways generally does not meet the design guidelines.
While fancy garages had been built all along -- for the wealthy -- it was not until the 1920s and 30s that every automobile owner could choose from a variety of garage styles which matched his house. These decades can be considered the heyday of the freestanding American garage.
Garages became directly connected to houses when the initial fear of the incendiary nature of early autos was overcome but were still designed to appear as a stand-alone structure connected by a breezeway.
As the automobile insinuated itself ever more strongly into our lives, it was inevitable that the car would come home to "live" with us, as it were. For example, basement-level garages were built under the main living quarters -- this kind of garage was made accessible
by a down-sloping driveway. In Nashville the basement level garage is most common in buildings constructed after the 1940s but are often too small too still be used to house an automobile. In all the early-20th-century examples, the visual

Homes from the 1940s and 1950s that were constructed on a sloped lot sometimes took advantage of the change in grade to add a rear basement-level garage, like these on Cedar Avenue in the Belmont-Hillsboro district.

HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY GARAGE DESIGN

This contemporary garage in the Richland-West End neighborhood is a two-bay garage with lapsiding, 600 square feet and is 21' tall.

This two-bay garage in Hillsboro-West End has room for storage above.

These two-bay garages in Edgefield have space for storage and studios above. They are approximately 26' tall with footrpints in the 600 square foot range.

impact of the garage was minimized. It was not until the birth of the split-level ranch after World War II that the broad, blank-faced garage door was openly and unabashedly displayed. It was no longer déclassé to have the car live with us.

Massing & Materials

The majority of historic garages are already gone from Nashville but those that remain are typically utilitarian in design rather than matching the house, probably because the utilitarian approach was less expensive to accomplish. For the most part, they are one-story, with small footprints of between 200 square feet and 500 square feet. The majority of ridgelines are 10' to 12' from grade with the tallest historic outbuilding remaining being approximately 24' tall from grade. In all cases, the massing of historic garages were subordinate to the primary building. Wood lap siding and board-and-batten are the most typical wall cladding; however brick, stucco, wood shingles and concrete are also found.

Roof Forms and Details

From gable to mansard all the popular roof shapes used for houses were used for garages. The more utilitarian garages had gable, hip, shed, or flat roofs. Fancier garages copied

the roof form and pitch of the house. Garage roofs were historically covered with standing-seam metal, clay tiles, or shingles made of asphalt, slate, wood, cement, or tin. The most commonly used modern material is asphalt shingles.

Eave details are very important. In the first 20 years of this century, utilitarian garages generally had open eaves with exposed rafter tails. Garages with more style had eaves and cornices finished in a manner similar to the architecture of the house. For example, a Colonial Revival garage might have a molded box cornice, while one in the Prairie style would have a wide overhang with a finished soffit. Late Victorian carriage-houses turned- garages often had bracketed eaves or bargeboards. Other roof details to consider are dormers, cupolas, vents, cresting, and copings (for parapet-wall roofs).

Design Details

Besides roof and cornice details, period garages picked up other ornamentation from the main house. For example, Tudor Revival garages had false half-timbering in the gable over the door. Colonial Revival garages often had a semi-circular, round, or oval window in the gable, along with a boxed cornice and corner boards. Vines grew on wall trellises or pergola-like canopies extending from the eaves of Craftsman-inspired garages.

This historic one-bay garage in Richland-West End is 200 square feet, 12 feet tall and has exposed rafter tails and lapsiding.

Windows & Doors
A word on windows before we describe old fashioned garage doors: Use them. Windows
provide light and ventilation and an easy way to dress up the garage in period style; however, they are not necessary to meet the design guidelines since garages are typically minimally visible from the street.

The most important element in garage design is the door. The door expresses the function of the structure, and it defines age and style. Typically they were no more than one-bay wide. On multi-car garages, identical doors were placed side by side. To meet the design guidelines, vehicular entrances that face the street must have separate doors for each bay rather than one large door for a two-bay garage but this is not necessary for alley facing garages. How the door opens is not a concern in meeting the design guidelines and should be based on the owner's preference.

Early garage doors were made of wood although metal doors are appropriate for new construction. They usually had glass panels along the top with recessed and flat panels below, particularly after the 1920s. Earlier designs were more decorative. Raised panels befitted Colonial Revival garages and long, narrow panels looked at home on Craftsman and English types. Many garage doors had cross-braced ("barn door") panels.

Most historic garages, like these one in Maxwell Heights and Belmont-Hillsboro were utilitiarian in design.

Tongue-and-groove wainscot (also called matchboards or porch-ceiling lumber) was
popular for door panels, too. Matchboards were usually applied vertically. Cross-braces over the matchboard gives the barn-door appearance that was so popular on early garages. A modern garage door can be improved by adding moldings to the panels. On a later door that has no glazing, you can replace a row of panels with

HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY GARAGE DESIGN

window glass.

For more specific information please visit your neighborhood's design guidelines on the website at: http://www.nashville.gov/Historical-Commission/Services/Preservation-Permits/Districts-and-Design-Guidelines.aspx

A published photo from the Nashville Times *(1940) about the Seventh Avenue Garage. Cited in the 1941 City Directory as "South Finest One Stop Service Garage, 600 car capacity, gas, oil, tires and tubes, brake work our specialy, park inside, 15 cents to 25 cents all day, 145-149 7th Avenue North."* Image from the Metro Archives.

This historic one-bay garage in Richland-West End is 200 square feet, 12 feet tall and has exposed rafter tails and lapsiding.

Most historic garages, like these one in Maxwell Heights and Belmont-Hillsboro were utilitiarian in design.

TOP TEN INFILL CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Avoid "Mr. Potato Head Design."** Sometimes designers will simply pick design features seen throughout our stylistically eclectic neighborhoods. The result can be mishmash of elements from different time periods and different architectural styles. Designers are encouraged to present forms that replicate those found in the district but with a fresh look in terms of style. Abstract interpretations of the historic design features often fit the bill. Complete historic replicas compromise the architectural quality and authenticity of a district. Being able to appropriately abstract an element takes an understanding of its parts and function as well as what it simply looks like.
2. **When designing a porch, consider all aspects:** foundation, depth, railings, columns, steps, and roof. Historically, porch foundations have been solid or piers. Railings should only be added if needed for safety. A usable porch depth is between 6' and 8'. Don't forget scale. For instance, a 4 x 4 square post can look too spindly on most homes, and historic homes often had thick porch racks.
3. **If using multiple cladding materials, keep in mind that historically, materials changed horizontally and at floor lines.** There should always be a change in materials at the foundation line of residential buildings. Consider a skirt board between floors help to break-up large facades with little articulation.
4. **Choose appropriate windows.** Historically, windows with divisions were small panes of glass with wood mullions between; however these are typically cost-prohibitive. To achieve the same look, use simulated divided lights with spacer bars or save money and leave off dividers all together. Flat snap-on muntins or between-the-glass muntins are not appropriate. Faux shutters are inappropriate too; however, shutters that actually close and are the same size as the window can be an approvable design feature.
5. **Carefully consider new materials.** Contemporary materials are appropriate for new construction if they look and act like historic materials. For instance, smooth cement fiber siding is appropriate since, once painted, it looks like historic wood siding and because it can be sanded, painted and repaired, similar to wood siding.
6. **Material colors are important.** The Commission does not review paint color but does review color of materials such as roofing, brick and stone. New brick and stone should have a color similar to the brick and stone found in the district. Roofing colors should be natural hues such as black, gray, dark green

TOP TEN INFILL CONSIDERATIONS, continued

and brown.

7. **Window heights are important for appropriate scale.** The windows of an upper floor should never be taller than the windows of the ground floor since, historically, ground floor ceiling heights were taller than upper stories.
8. **Make sure eave overhang is appropriate.** Most of our historic buildings have overhanging eaves of at least one foot. Tight to no-overhangs may be appropriate in areas where the historic buildings were constructed after World War II.
9. **Don't forget the trim**. Trim is an important feature of historic buildings. Window trim on a lapsided building should be thicker than the siding but should not be a brick mold. Lapsided buildings typically had corner trim as well.
10. **The roof pitch and form should be similar to what is seen in the district.** Roof "intrusions" such as dormers, skylights and solar panels are appropriate for new construction and historic buildings, when placed in appropriate locations.

METRO HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION

Sunnyside in Sevier Park
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WE ARE ON THE WEB AT WWW.NASHVILLE.. GOV/MHC

The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission reviews applications to create new historic overlay districts and reviews and approves preservation permits in historic and conservation districts for new construction, alterations, additions, repair and demolition. For design guidelines, permit applications, and meeting information, visit us at www.nashville.gov/mhc.

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