GREENSBURG HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Design Guidelines

DOWNTOWN GREENSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT

Adopted: September 28, 2011
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INTRODUCTION

“Representing the heart of Greensburg is the Downtown Historic District. This area is made up of the commercial core of town, centered on the courthouse square. Dominating the center of the District is the Decatur County Courthouse. Originally constructed in 1854, this brick building has presented many faces over the years. It was clad for some time in limestone, but with the addition of a new annex in the 1990s, officials decided to revert the courthouse back to its original brick so the two buildings would look more similar. What hasn’t changed is the tree that grows out of the 110-foot-high tower.

Surrounding the square are commercial buildings that front on Main, Washington, Broadway, and Franklin streets. Along Main Street, on the south side of the square, is the longest stretch of intact historic buildings in the district”; with some of the buildings dating from 1866 through 1931 (excerpt from Decatur County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, May 1999, pages 48-49).

In accordance with its authority (Ordinance 2006-32), the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of the City of Greensburg, Indiana has adopted architectural guidelines to assist the property owner in formulating preservation plans. These advisory guidelines also serve to assist the Commission in determining the appropriateness of such plans. The HPC realizes that it must also consider economic hardship and other circumstances affecting proposed projects.

Ordinance 2006-32, approved by the Greensburg Common Council on February 5, 2007, created the HPC, authorized the Commission to adopt rules and regulations necessary to transact the business of the Commission and establish procedures for designating historic districts.

An historic district is “an area in Greensburg wherein there are located buildings, structures, and landmarks which have historic, cultural, educational and/or architectural
value, the preservation of which is deemed to be for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the inhabitants of Greensburg.” The Downtown Greensburg Historic District was approved by City Council on May 3, 2011, see Special Ordinance # 2011-3 for description and boundaries of the district.

For any property located within the boundaries of an historic district or for any landmark, the HPC must approve the following: “any excavation, construction or erection of any building, fence, wall, or other structure of any kind; or for any removal of any external architectural feature, or for any reconstruction, alteration, change to exterior color by painting or other means, or for any demolition of any structure.” The HPC’s approval is based upon the appropriateness of the proposed work, taking into consideration “the historic or architectural value and color of the exterior architectural features of other structures in the immediate neighborhood.”

The following guidelines are in addition to all prevailing laws and are in no way to be construed to diminish the force of existing building, safety, and zoning codes, etc. It is the property owner’s responsibility to contact all the appropriate State and City agencies and to comply with all existing laws and all State, City and local codes.

Where special techniques or materials are required, the HPC can assist in obtaining reference and source information.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Architectural Element** – A permanently affixed or integral part of the building structure which may be decorative and contributes to the composition of the façade. For example: Cornices, trim boards, brackets, lintels, dentils, columns, capitols, etc.

**Cornice** – A projecting horizontal feature that crowns an architectural facade or composition.

**Dentil** – A small block used in rows, resembling a row
of teeth.

**Façade** – The face or (principle) front of a building.

**Glazing** – Translucent glass material.

**Landmark** – A structure, public or private, of special historic and architectural significance.

**Lintel** – A horizontal architectural member spanning and usually carrying the load above an opening.

**Pilaster** – A flat column against the face of a wall.

**Setback** – Distance at which the building is placed from the street curb or property line.

**Sheathing** – Any durable material covering the original façade of the building.

**Sill** – A horizontal piece that forms one of the lowest members of a framework or supporting structure; for example: The horizontal member at the base of a window.

**Spandrel Glass** – Colored or reflective opaque glass material.

**Structure** – “work made up of interdependent and interrelated parts in a definite pattern of organization, generally, constructed by man.

**Vision Glass** – Translucent glass material

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**PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

1. **A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required.** A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued by the Commission before a permit is issued for, or work is begun on, any of the following:
   a. The demolition of any building or structure
   b. The moving of any building or structure
   c. A conspicuous change in the exterior appearance of any historic building or any part of such a building, including walls, fences, lighting fixtures, steps, paving, and signs by additions, reconstruction, alteration, or maintenance involving exterior color change.
d. Any new construction of a principal building or accessory building or structure subject to view from a public way.

2. **Application for Certificates of Appropriateness.** An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be made in the Building, Planning, and Zoning Office, 314 West Washington Street, Greensburg on forms provided by HPC. (Pending: HPC will create forms.) All application shall be subject to the rules and requirements established by the Commission. Rules may include, but are not limited to, filing deadlines and application requirements such as sketches, drawings, photographs, descriptions, or other information which the Commission requires to make a decision.

3. **Approval or denial of Certificates of Appropriateness.** The Commission may approve or deny Certificates of Appropriateness for any actions covered by this title. If an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is approved by the Commission, or is not acted on by the Commission within 30 days after it is filed, a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be issued. The Commission may grant an extension of the 30-day limit if the applicant agrees to it. The Commission must report its findings and the reasons for its decision in written form and supply the applicant with a copy of its report. A copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness must be submitted with the application for a building or demolition permit; no building or demolition permit shall be issued unless a copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness is provided by the applicant with the application. Any person aggrieved by the Commission’s decision may appeal to the City Council of Greensburg.

**GUIDELINES**

1. **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following guidelines are designed to help property owners formulate plans for the rehabilitation, preservation, and continued use of old buildings consistent with the intent of the HPC. The guidelines pertain to buildings of all occupancy and construction types,
sizes, and materials. They apply to permanent and temporary construction on the exterior of historic buildings as well as new attached or adjacent construction.

Generally, it is recommended that deteriorated material be repaired, or replaced with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. New material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial brick siding, artificial cast stone or brick veneer, is discouraged.

All buildings, structures, and sites should be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance are discouraged.

Previous changes to a building, structure, or site and its environment may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.

2. PAINTING

Paint colors must be submitted to HPC for approval. All exterior color changes must have Commission approval. Paint permits are issued upon receipt of paint samples. Most paint manufacturers have a line of "historic" colors which include a wide range of muted colors. Samples can be viewed at the manufacturers’ website.

Repainting should be done with colors appropriate to the period of the building and neighborhood. Incompatible color contrast should be avoided. Upon request the HPC office will assist in researching appropriate colors for the historic structure or district.

The removal of paint and finishes should be done carefully, using the least abrasive methods. Strong paint strippers, whether chemical or mechanical, should not be used to avoid changes to the surface.
Removing paint from architectural features that were never intended to be exposed is discouraged.

3. MASONRY AND MASONRY CLEANING

a. MASONRY SURFACE AND REPAINTING:

Original masonry should be retained wherever possible, without applying any surface treatment including paint. Re-pointing of mortar joints that do not need re-pointing is discouraged.

When re-pointing is necessary, old mortar should be duplicated in composition, color, texture, method of application and joint profile. Upon completion, the joint should not exceed the width of the original or existing joints.

Re-pointing with mortar of high Portland cement content should be avoided because it can create a bond that is often stronger than the building material. This can cause deterioration because the cement and brick expand and contract at different rates. The use of electric saws and hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick, and is strongly discouraged.

b. CLEANING:

The original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces, including early signage, should be retained wherever possible and appropriate. Masonry cleaning should be undertaken only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove graffiti and stains. Indiscriminate removal of paint from certain masonry surfaces may cause damage to the building and may change the character of the building. Brick and stone surfaces were painted or whitewashed in many cases for practical and aesthetic reasons.
When evaluated by HPC as necessary, the surface cleaning of structures should be done using the most appropriate methods. Cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials are discouraged.

c. **STUCCO**

Stucco should be repaired with a stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.

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**4. DISTINGUISHING ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES AND STYLES**

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment should be retained and treated with sensitivity. The removal or alteration of any historic material or architectural feature should be avoided when possible. Examples of distinctive materials include wood, iron, cast iron, terra cotta, tile and brick. Examples of significant architectural features include cornices, brackets, railings, porches, columns, shutters, window and door molding and details, exterior doors, marble steps, fencing and walls. Wherever possible, deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjecture, or the availability of inaccurate architectural
elements from other buildings or structures. The HPC office will assist in determining the original nature of architectural features.

5. FRAME BUILDINGS

Architectural features such as cornices, brackets, window and door molding and details, clapboard, weatherboard, shingles and other wooden siding are essential parts of the character and appearance of frame buildings, illustrating the continuity of growth and change. These significant architectural features should be retained and preserved whenever possible.

Where repair or replacement is necessary, the material should duplicate the size, shape and texture of the old as closely as possible.

Frame buildings should not be resurfaced with new material which either is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, vinyl or aluminum siding, Such material can also contribute to the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insect attack.

6. ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS WHICH ARE MOST COMMONLY REPAIRED OR REPLACED

a. WINDOWS AND DOORS

Existing window and door openings including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, frames, molding, shutters, doors, steps, and all hardware should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Introducing new window or door openings to into the principal elevations or altering window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes is discouraged. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.

If new sash and doors must be used they should duplicate the material, design and hardware of the older existing ones.
b. STORM WINDOWS:

Storm windows and doors may be installed if they are visually unobtrusive, do not damage existing frames, and can be removed in the future. Storm windows should match the trim color. Mill finished aluminum and vinyl frames can be painted. Stark white aluminum will be discouraged because the finish is an intense artificial color that does not become dull with age. For buildings with white trim, some manufacturers produce an off-white which is more acceptable.

c. EXTERIOR LIGHT FIXTURES AND BUSINESS ADDRESS NUMBERS

Exterior light fixtures and business address numbers should be an appropriate size and placed in an appropriate location. Avoid selecting oversized fixtures. Upon request HPC will assist in researching period fixtures and lettering.

Inappropriate new window or door features are discouraged. These include Plexiglas, aluminum storm and screen window that require the removal of original window and doors or the installation of plastic, canvas, or metal strip awnings that detract from the character and appearance of the building.

d. FABRIC AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Fabric awnings and canopies are natural or synthetic fabric material constructed over a framework for sun or moisture protection. Awnings and canopies are to be used only at window areas, except at the storefront level where extended use may be appropriate.

e. PORCHES AND STEPS:

Porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development should be retained. Porches or additions reflecting later architectural styles are often important to the building’s historical integrity and, wherever possible, should be retained.
The original material and architectural features of porches and steps, such as hand rails, balusters, columns, brackets, and roof decoration of wood, iron, cast iron, terra cotta, tile, and brick should be retained wherever possible. If these materials must be replaced, the new materials should match the old as closely as possible.

f. STAIRWAYS AND FIRE ESCAPES:

New stairways, elevations and fire escapes should be added in a manner which does not alter existing exits or other important architectural features and spaces. These additions must comply with all Greensburg Zoning Codes and Indiana Building codes. The City of Greensburg Area Plan Office (GAPC) will cooperate in the investigation of alternative life safety measures which preserve the character and architectural integrity of the building. In the case where special approval must be obtained from the GAPC Office, written confirmation must be presented to HPC.

g. ROOFS:

The original roof shape should be preserved.

The original roofing material should be retained, when appropriate. Deteriorated roof coverings should be replaced with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, texture.

All architectural features which give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, skylights, and weather vanes, should be preserved, or replaced, where necessary with new material which duplicates the old.

Adequate roof drainage should be provided to insure that the roofing materials are providing a weather-tight covering for the structure, and to assure that water does not splash against building or foundation walls, nor drain toward the building.
h. ARCHITECTURAL METALS:

Architectural metals such as cast iron, steel, pressed tin, aluminum and zinc should be cleaned when necessary with an appropriate method. Metals should be cleaned by methods that do not abrade the surface, and which don’t alter the color, texture and tone of the metal.

i. WALLS, FENCES AND RAILINGS:

Walls, fences, and railings are important elements of the design and character of a structure and district. HPC must approve changes to existing elements or designs for new ones. Removal or replacement by inappropriate design or material is discouraged.

![Image of a building with a sign]

j. COMMERCIAL SIGNS:

Signs on commercial buildings should respect the existing architectural features and be compatible in scale, color, material, and design with the building. Generally, neon and/or flashing signs are discouraged. Signs flush with the building’s facade are preferred.
Signs should be simple, utilizing only the name of the business, and should avoid logos. Signs must meet all city codes.

**Signs in Historic Districts**

As in the case of structural alteration, new construction, and demolition, all new signage or alterations to signage shall be required to receive a COA. The resulting high quality in both sign design and construction will strengthen the integrity of the historic district.

Generally, signs may be permitted by the HPC in those parts of historic districts which are classified as business or industrial in the zoning code, except for home occupation uses or certain special exceptions. To afford control, the HPC will review and approve all proposed signs and changes to signs as to their appropriateness within the historic district. Each sign application shall be reviewed as a unique case, subject to the following criteria which shall include but not be limited to the following:

a. **Allowable sign types**
   
i. **Flat signs.** These signs always exist parallel to the building façade. They shall not be painted directly on the building surface, but shall be painted on a separate background material and applied to the façade as a unit.

   ii. **Dimensional surface signs.** This sign type also exists parallel to the building façade. It may consist in part (or in whole) of three-dimensional letter forms applied directly to a separate flat background. The message may be in relief, or depressed by means of carving, etching, routing, positive or negative cutout, and the like.

   iii. **Awnings.** Awnings can act as an effective and decorative way to display a sign. Sign messages should be limited to the front drop flat of the awning, and might be achieved as sewn appliqué or inset, or by painting or silk-screening. Awning fabrics must be carefully chosen to coordinate well with the character of the building, and with adjoining buildings and
awnings. The bottom of any awning shall be at least seven feet above its sidewalk.

(Example of an appropriate “projecting” sign for Historic Downtowns.)

iv. Projecting signs. Projecting signs, except those on a corner, are those which exist 90 degrees to the building surface. In many instances, the signs’ shapes could be the most effective way to express a particular service or activity. For example, the familiar shoe shape to denote shoe repair. These signs need not be thought of as strictly flat, but could have dimension. A creative approach to the hanging hardware for such signs is also encouraged, but it must be designed for maximum strength. Signs must connect to sturdy wall bracket units with an adequate gauge of steel or iron strap or chain.

v. Banners. Banners may serve as “soft” versions of projecting signs (that is, bearing a message or symbol which relates directly to the business) or simply as decorative additions.

vi. Temporary signs. A temporary sign, valance, or display is defined as one being seasonal in nature or as one having a duration of not more than
eight weeks. A temporary sign, valance, or display will be evaluated relative to its size, material, its method of attachment, and its ease of maintenance and cleaning. These signs will be considered temporary and revocable and subject to review.

b. Location and size.

i. Flat or dimensional surface signs. Flat or dimensional surface signs shall not protrude from the primary building façade surface more than 12 inches.

(Examples of existing dimensional historic sign.)

ii. Perpendicular-to-building signs. Perpendicular-to-building signs shall not exceed nine square feet in area, nor shall they extend below a point eight...
feet from the sidewalk surface, nor out from the façade surface more than 54 inches.

iii. Materials. Materials such as wood, wrought iron, steel, metal, grill-work, and so forth, which were used in the nineteenth century, or replicas thereof, are encouraged. Materials such as extruded aluminum and plastics, while not prohibited, may not be appropriate. Simplicity and restraint in material selection, its method of application, or its construction, should be consistent with the other criteria.

iv. Method of attachment. The sign’s attachment should respect the architectural integrity of the structure and relate to or become an extension of the architecture. For example, a sign utilizing an archway should reflect the archway in its configuration.

c. Illumination

i. Signs may appear without illumination or may be illuminated. Lighting source, design, and placement must be as unobtrusive as possible, and the proposed method of lighting is also subject to review by HPC.

ii. Generally, signs which flash, blink, revolve, or are otherwise in motion, vary in intensity, or appear to be in motion, will not be permitted within the historic district. These illumination methods may be accepted by HPC, however, if they are deemed appropriate in a particular circumstance, for example, the traditional rotating barber pole.

d. In general

i. Signs in the historic districts which are located in areas classified in the business or industrial districts in the zoning code shall be of a simple
design and conform to regulations set forth herein, except that in no case will the following be allowed.

a. Roof-top signs;
b. Free-standing signs or pylons which intrude on public property;
c. Billboards;
d. Signs with an accumulated total of more than 100 square feet per establishment or more than 10% of the ground floor area of the wall surface.

7. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

The special problems inherent in the structural systems of historic buildings must be recognized especially where there are visible signs of cracking, deflection, or failure. Leaving known structural problems untreated will cause continuing deterioration and will shorten the life of the structure.

Weakened, damaged or inadequate structural members and systems should be stabilized, repaired or supplemented when possible. Historically important structural members affecting the exterior appearance should be replaced only when there are no feasible alternatives.

Existing foundations should not be disturbed with new excavations that undermine the structural stability of the building.

8. MECHANICAL SERVICES: HEATING AIR CONDITIONING, ELECTRICAL PLUMBING, TV ANTENNAE, SOLAR PANELS, AND SATELITTE DISHES

Mechanical services should be installed in and around spaces that will require the least possible alteration and damage to the exterior structural condition and physical appearance of the building.
Exterior electrical and telephone cables should be installed in places where they will be visually unobtrusive.

Television antennae, satellite dishes, and mechanical equipment such as air conditioners and solar panels should be placed in as inconspicuous a location as possible. The installation of such equipment should not affect the principal elevation.

9. NEW CONSTRUCTION

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties will not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic, architectural or cultural materials and the design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood and environment.

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were removed in the future, the essential form and character of the historic structure would be unimpaired.

New additions and adjacent reconstruction should be compatible in scale, building materials and texture. New additions should complement the style of the historic structure, but should also appear as products of their own age. Avoid imitating an earlier style of architecture in new additions that have a completely contemporary function. New additions should not imitate architectural styles which pre-date that of the historic structure.

10. BUILDING SITE AND ENVIRONMENT

Distinctive features such as the size, scale, mass, color and materials of buildings, including roofs, porches and stairways that give a neighborhood its distinguishing character should be retained.
Features such as parks, gardens, street lights, signs, benches, walkways, streets, alleys, plants, trees; fencing, and building set-backs which have traditionally linked buildings to their environment and which reflect the property's history and development, should be retained.

New plant materials, fencing, walkways, etc., may be used if they are compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material and color. Decisions for new site work should be based on actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, newspapers, or tax records. If changes are made they should be carefully evaluated in light of the past appearance of the site.

Introducing new construction into neighborhoods which is incompatible with the character of the district because of size, color, and materials will be discouraged.

Widening of existing streets, changing the paving materials, and introducing new streets and new parking lots should be done in a manner which is compatible with the character of the neighborhood and maintains the relationship of the buildings to the environment.

11. ARCHEOLOGICAL

Every reasonable effort should be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.

Known archeological resources should be left intact.

Disturbance of terrain around the structure should be minimized, thus reducing the possibility of destroying unknown archeological resources. Exceptions will of course be made where access for the handicapped is necessary, and a qualified archeologist has documented the site.
An archeological survey by a qualified archeologist of all terrain that must be disturbed during a rehabilitation program should be arranged, where possible.

The installation of underground utilities, pavements, and other modern features that disturb archeological resources should be avoided. Heavy machinery or equipment should not be introduced into areas where their presence may disturb archeological resources.
D. TAX INCENTIVES AND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE (LOANS AND GRANTS)

Loans, technical assistance and grants are available to assist with the rehabilitation of historic properties. For more information contact:

*Main Street Greensburg, PO Box 655, Greensburg, IN 47240, 812-593-4207
  www.mainstreetgreensburg.com, director@mainstreetgreensburg.com
*Indiana Landmarks, 340 W Washington, Indianapolis, IN 46202, 800-450-4534
  www.historiclandmarks.org
*Indiana Main Street, One North Capitol, #600, Indianapolis, IN 46204, 317-232-8910, www.in.gov/orca/mainstreet.htm
*Ball State Center for Preservation, 650 W Minnetrista Blvd, Munice, IN 47303 765-213-3540 X 228, www.bsu.edu/preservation/
*National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nationaltrust.org
*National Main Street Center, www.mainstreet.org
*National Parks Service, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps
CITY OF GREENSBURG HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
DOWNTOWN GREENSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT  

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA) APPLICATION  

If approved, a project must be initiated within one year from the date of the issuance of the COA. Please note that this is NOT a building permit. A separate building permit from the Greensburg Area Plan Commission may be required prior to commencement of work on the project.

Please print or type

PROJECT NAME:

PROJECT ADDRESS:

APPLICANT:

Name:
Address:
Phone: Fax:
Alternate Phone:
E-Mail Address:

OWNER (If different from applicant)

Name:
Address:
Phone: Fax:
Alternate Phone:
E-Mail Address:

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

314 W. Washington St.  
Greensburg, Indiana 47240
Existing Use of Property: Residential
-----
Commercial
-----
Manufacturing

Proposed Use of Property: Residential
-----
Commercial
-----
Manufacturing

PROPOSED WORK
Check all that apply:

- Exterior Alteration (installation/replacement of siding, change of façade, change of paint color, windows, roofing, fencing, lighting, construction of addition, walkways, etc.)
- Landscaping (installation of trees, street furniture, etc.)
- Signage (New or replacement)
- Demolition
- New Construction
- Relocation of structure
- Other

Description of proposed work (attach a separate sheet if necessary):
DEMOLITION

Provide justification for proposed demolition. Please attach a copy of the structural engineers report if demolition is due to structural integrity concerns. Please attach a copy of the economic report if demolition is due to economic issues. Attach a separate description sheet if necessary.
DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST TO SUPPORT APPLICATION*

Check all that apply:

- Photographs (required of all applications)
- Continuation sheets
- Site Plan/Survey
- Elevations
- Floor Plans
- Samples/Material Specifications
- Color Chips
- Other

*Note: All of these items may not be required for every type of request.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER(S)/APPLICANT(S)**

The undersigned owner(s) and/or applicant(s) certifies under penalty of perjury that all of the statements contained in this application, including any statement attached to this application, submitted herewith are true and correct.

Owner’s Signature

Owner’s Signature

Applicant’s Signature

Applicant’s Signature

**Only original signatures will be accepted as part of a completed application.