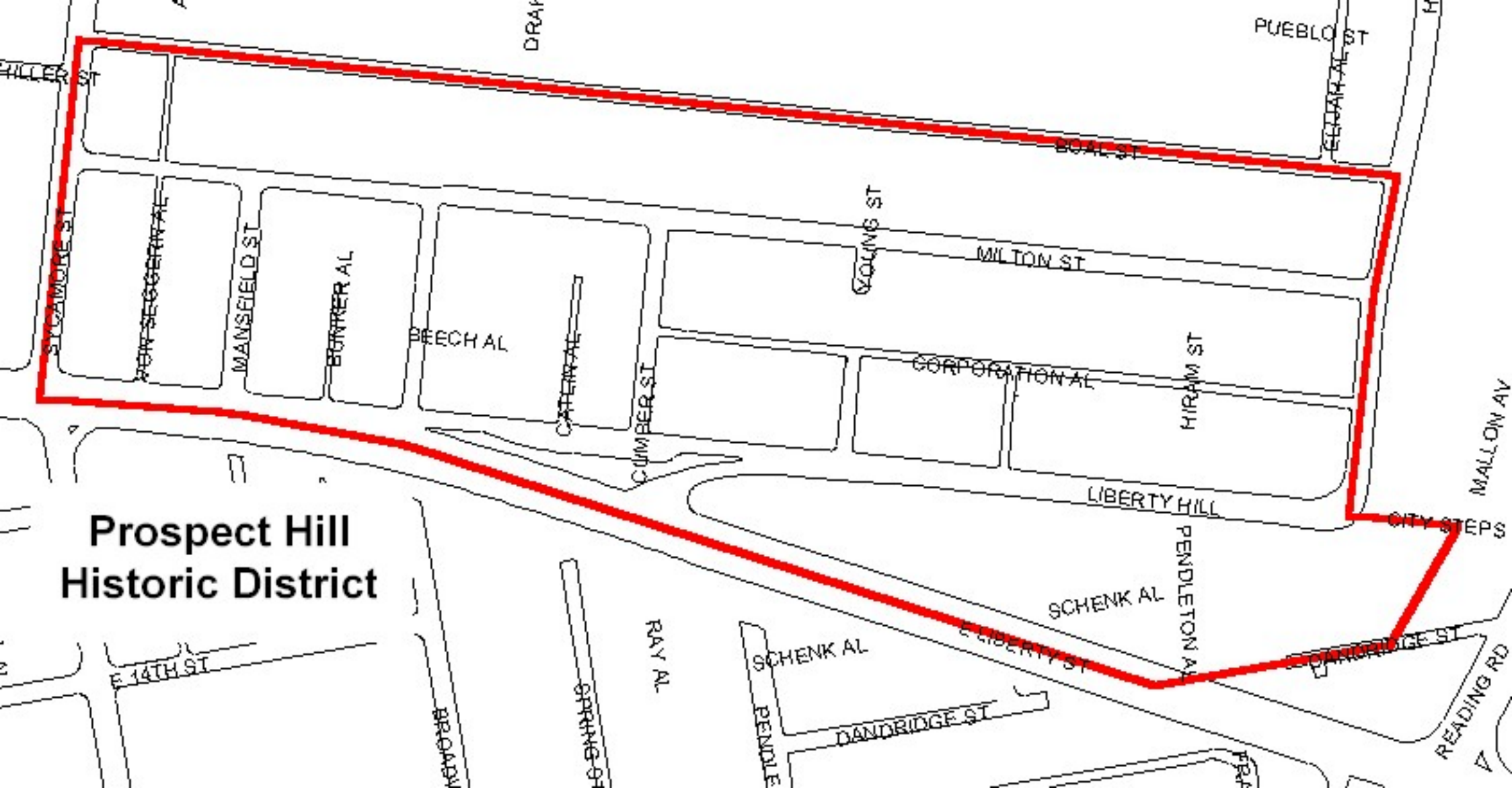




**Prospect Hill
Historic District**

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

The Conservation Guidelines outlined in this booklet are intended to assist property owners, architects, and contractors who are considering work in the Prospect Hill Historic District, including changes to existing buildings, demolition, or new construction. The guidelines are not a rigid set of rules, but serve as a guide in making improvements that are compatible with the district's character. They set broad parameters in which district changes should occur, while maintaining ample opportunity for design creativity and individual choice. The guidelines give the owners and the City's Historic Conservation Board (HCB) a way to determine whether the proposed work is appropriate to the long-term interests of the district.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the historic Conservation Office staff during the planning stages prior to formal application for a building permit. We are available in Suite 720, Centennial Plaza Two, 805 Central Avenue. Phone 352-4890.

The Prospect Hill historic district boundaries and guidelines were adopted by Cincinnati City Council on April 15, 1981, following public hearings before the HCB and the City Planning Commission.

STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

Applications for certificates of appropriateness shall be judged by their conformance to these guidelines. All alterations and environmental changes shall be designed and executed in a manner which is compatible with and sympathetic to the architecture within the Prospect Hill Historic District and shall respect the landscape characteristics of the site.

PROPERTY SUBJECT TO PROTECTION

All buildings, sites, and significant historic objects situated within the boundary of the Prospect Hill Historic District shall be subject to the reviewing authority of the HCB as specified in Administrative Code Section 741-13 and 741-15.

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed Prospect Hill Historic District incorporates a residential area located on the southernmost hillside slope on Mt. Auburn. The district includes approximately 225 buildings situated on long narrow lots. In conformance to the lot size and land contour, houses are tall and narrow with high basements or

an extra story on the downhill slope. Because of this siting, rooftops terminate at different levels creating a distinct visual pattern.

The majority of buildings are brick, and the predominant architectural style is the Italianate. Dating from the 1860-80 period, this style is characterized by bracketed cornices and round or segmental arched window details. Good examples of earlier Greek Revival style architecture constructed between 1835 and 1860 are also found, predominantly located on the lower streets which developed the earliest. This style utilizes classical details and geometric, symmetrical forms. Examples of the Queen Anne style, which displays a variety of contrasting materials and decorative surface treatments, and the French Second Empire style, which is characterized by a Mansard roof whose slope actually forms part of the front facade, may also be found scattered throughout the district. These styles date from the turn of the century.

Contributing to the distinct character of Prospect Hill are the street steps, which evolved in response to a hillside environment which did not lend itself to a linear grid plan. Where the terrain was too steep to build roads, stairways and "paper" streets developed. The streets that were built often cut sharply into the hillside, requiring retaining walls along lot fronts. Many of these retaining walls, which are primarily stone, support original iron fences and contribute to the character of the district. Open space between lots reflect the fact that the land was too irregular for construction purposes.

REVIEW CRITERIA

ALTERATION AND REHABILITATION

Materials – Original materials should be restored and reused whenever possible. Where necessary, missing or deteriorated material should be replaced with recycled or new materials which match the original as closely as possible with regard to:

type of material	texture
size of unit	style
color	type of joint
shape	placement
composition	detailing

Cleaning/Painting – Cleaning of existing materials should be done by the least damaging method possible. Sandblasting is not an acceptable method for cleaning. Painted brick buildings, when necessary, should be repainted rather than stripped or cleaned to reveal the natural brick color. The color of trim and decorative detailing on a building should contrast with the wall paint color; i.e., light colored buildings should have darker trim and dark colored buildings should have lighter trim. At no time should the detailing and the trim be painted the same color as the walls.

Windows/Doors - Openings – Original window and door openings should not be reduced or enlarged in size. Repaired or replacement windows should be double-hung and contain one-over-one, two-over-two, or six-over-six panes where appropriate. The elimination or permanent concealment of window and door openings on the primary or street facade should not be permitted, and elsewhere avoided. New window and door openings on the primary or street facade should not be permitted. Removable storm windows and doors should be utilized whenever possible. Aluminum storm windows and doors should be painted to match trim.

Appurtenances – All appurtenances, such as shutters, light fixtures, and signs, should be compatible with the building upon which they are to be installed. The installation of canvas canopies and awnings is permissible but should not obscure or require the removal of significant architectural features. Canopies and awnings made of plastic, wood or metal shall not be permitted.

Wall Resurfacing – Wood clapboard or shingle siding should be used as the repair or replacement material where appropriate, and their use is encouraged as a resurfacing material. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding for resurfacing should be avoided; however, in cases where they are used, the exposed width of such siding should not exceed four inches. Artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos, asphalt shingles and other similar resurfacing materials shall not be used. Architectural features such as cornices, brackets,

window sills and architraves, and doorway pediments shall not be removed or obscured when resurfacing materials is applied. Siding should be applied horizontally, and all wood siding should be painted.

Roofs – The existing roofline and the architectural features that give the roof its essential character such as dormer windows, cornice, brackets, chimneys and cresting should be preserved. The addition of inappropriate features such as vents, skylights, and rooftop utilities should be avoided, or inconspicuously placed and screened where necessary as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.

Utility/System Installation – The installation of utility and mechanical systems such as water or gas meters, central air conditioning cooling units, and elaborate electrical hookups should be inconspicuously placed, and screening should be provided; the installation of such systems should be avoided on the street facade. Wall or window air conditioning units on the street facade should not be permanently installed, but removable window units shall be permitted on a seasonal basis.

Decks – The addition of decks on the street facade shall not be permitted. Decks installed elsewhere shall not obscure or require the removal of significant architectural features. Balusters should be vertically placed not more than 6 inches apart. Solid plank railing shall not be permitted. Railing heights should not exceed 42 inches. Screened or glass-enclosed decks should be avoided.

Walls and Fences – Existing retaining walls and fences should be repaired and retained whenever possible. The installation of wood or chain link fences shall not be permitted on street frontage.

Site – The alteration or removal of existing walkways, steps, benches, and lighting which contribute to the character of the district should be avoided. All new site improvements should be compatible with the architectural character of the district. Tree removal should be avoided.

DEMOLITION

Demolition of existing buildings shall not be permitted unless one of the following conditions exist:

- Demolition has been ordered by the Director of Buildings & Inspections for reasons of public health and safety.
- The demolition request is for a garage, an inappropriate addition, or a building of a later period as defined and identified in these guidelines; *and* the demolition of said structure will not adversely affect the streetscape as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.
- The owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Historic Conservation Board that the structure cannot be reused nor can a reasonable economic return be gained from the use of all or part of the building proposed for demolition.

NEW CONSTRUCTION / ADDITIONS

Materials – The type of materials and their color, texture, scale, and detailing should be compatible with those of the District and/or the original building.

Scale – The scale of new work and its constituent parts should be compatible with the District and/or the original building and the scale of its parts.

Form – The shape, massing, and proportions of new work should be compatible with the District and/or the original building.

Detailing – The detailing, including but not limited to, the following features and their placement on additions and new construction:

walls	eaves	railings
roofs	cornices	belt courses
windows	chimneys	appurtenances
doors		

Height – The height of an addition should not exceed the height of the original building. The height of new buildings should be comparable to the height of existing adjacent buildings. The height of new buildings constructed in undeveloped areas should not detract from the character and appearance of the District.

Setback – The setback of new buildings should be comparable to the setbacks of existing adjacent buildings.

Historic Integrity – Compatibility of new work to original work is required, but imitation of old work in new construction should be avoided. New work should appear to be new work. Where new additions meet original work, the connection should be carefully designed so as not to detract from the original but to also reflect the fact that the connection is new. If original openings are filled in, the outline of the original opening should remain apparent by setting new in-fill material back from the surface and leaving original sills and lintels in place. Historic integrity is to be maintained by designing new buildings, structures, appurtenances, additions, connections and filled-in openings so that they do *not* appear to have been constructed when the affected historic structure was originally built.

BUILDINGS OF A LATER PERIOD

Buildings of a later period were generally constructed after most of the rest of the district was built and are of a different architectural character than the district due to their age and sometimes also due to the different character of their scale, material, and detailing. The following visually prominent "later period" buildings are subject to this review criteria:

1607 Mansfield Street
505 Liberty Hill Street
228 Liberty Street

Additions, alterations and rehabilitation to the above buildings shall either be compatible with the style and character each possesses, or shall cause the above building to become more compatible with the district.

EXCEPTIONS

The HCB may modify certain review criteria, as appropriate, in cases of economic hardship when there is no economically feasible and prudent alternative or environmental change which would conform to the guidelines. The applicant must demonstrate to the HCB that an economic hardship exists and that alternative changes which do meet the guidelines have been explored. In addition, when the applicant demonstrates that an alteration or environmental change which would conflict with the strict application of the guidelines would permit him to achieve substantial benefits without substantial harm to the historic district, the Board may approve it upon such conditions as it may determine.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (C.O.A.)

No person shall make any *alteration, demolition, or environmental change* to any historic structure or within an historic site or district without first obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness (C.O.A.).

- "Alteration" means any material change in the external architectural features.
- "Environmental change" means any material alteration, removal, construction or addition, if subject to public view, including new construction.

A C.O.A. is required before any work can begin for the following types of activities:

- All exterior building permits
- Painting
- Masonry cleaning
- Landscaping and site improvements
- Parking lots

- Public improvements
- Signs, lighting and other appurtenances
- Interior building permits if the work will cause an exterior change or if the interior of the building has been designated historic.

Ordinary maintenance or repair that does not entail an alteration or environmental change does not require a C.O.A.

Applications for C.O.A.s must be filled out by applicants and filed with the *Director of Buildings & Inspection*. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the staff of the *Historic Conservation Office at 805 Central Avenue, Suite 700* prior to filling out an application for a C.O.A. early in the planning process for design advice.

Some minor permits may be acted on by the Urban Conservator without a Hearing and without referral to the HCB. All other permits will appear before the full HCB. At least seven (7) days prior to HCB action on an application for a C.O.A., abutting property owners, the applicant, and community groups will be notified of the pending Hearing. If the Board approves an application, it will issue a C.O.A. which will then be referred to the Director of Buildings & Inspections. Only on the issuance of a C.O.A. may work begin.