

Dayton Street Historic District Guidelines

City of Cincinnati
Office of Historic Conservation



PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Dayton Street Protection Area was originally established by City Council on June 16, 1965. It was created for a period of 50 years for the purpose of ensuring that new buildings and alterations are compatible and harmonious with historic buildings in the Protection Area, and to retain the pedestrian scale. The Protection Area was divided into Areas “A” and “B,” each with specific guidelines.

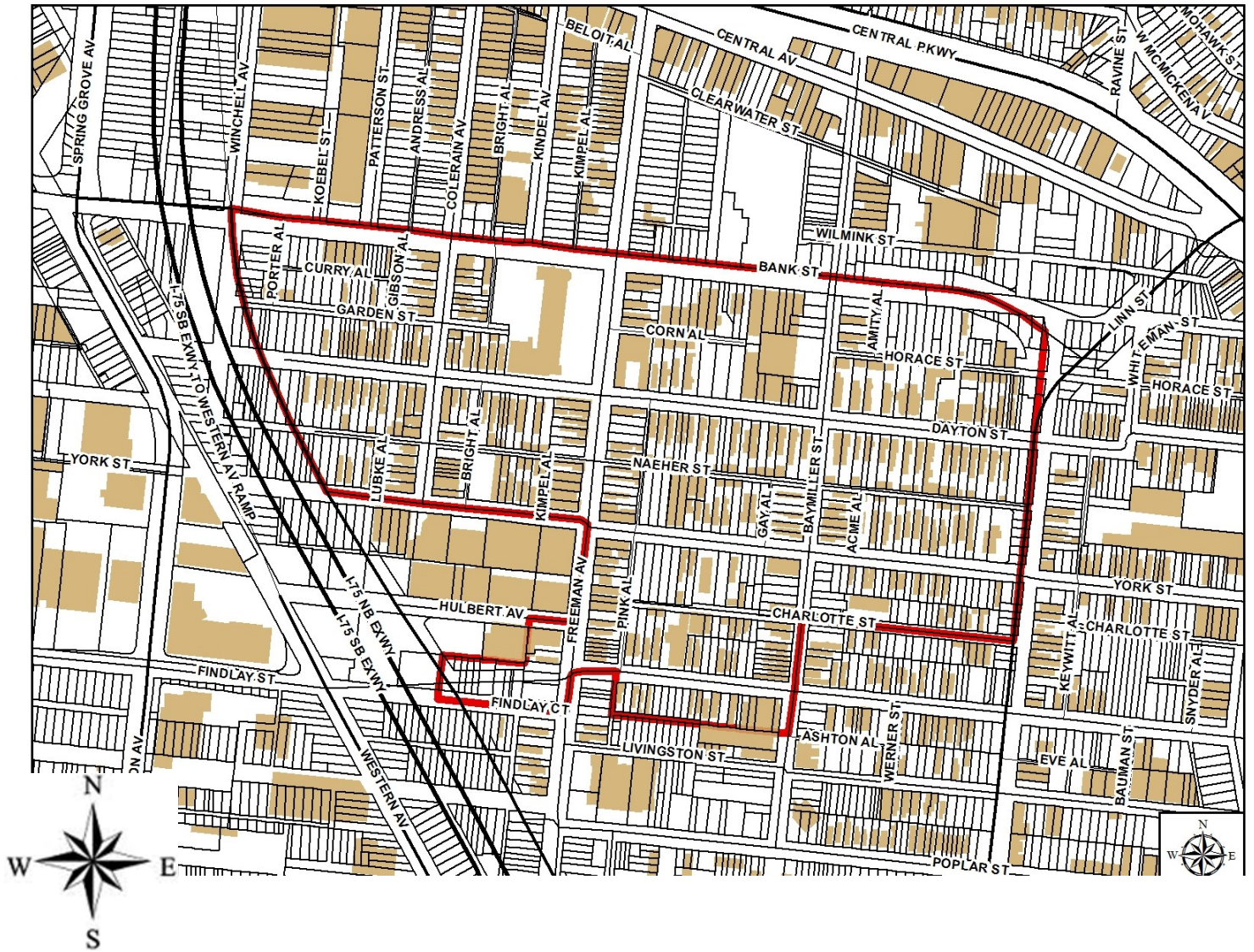
The Protection Area has evolved into a unified, diverse and vibrant historic segment of the West End and the new designation of the area as a “historic district” reflects this evolution. The area is no longer divided into sub-areas. The Dayton Street Historic District continues to evolve and these guidelines will ensure that future development, improvements and alterations are compatible with the historic character and integrity of the District.

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended to assist building owners, developers, and designers to plan, design and construct appropriate improvements in the district. The situation of each site and building within the District is different, as many of the standards are based on the degree to which a building is compatible with its surroundings as well as the District as a whole. Each site or building is considered on its own merit under the guidelines. After the owner submits a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application, the Historic Conservation staff may approve it if the proposed improvement substantially complies with the guidelines or if the works does not comply the application will be presented to the Historic Conservation Board.

DAYTON STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP

Dayton Street Local Historic District



GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION

These guidelines are intended to ensure that rehabilitation will maintain significant features of buildings. The guidelines are not hard-and-fast rules, but are used by the Historic Conservation Board as a guide to assess the compatibility and the appropriateness of proposed changes.

- Ordinary repair and maintenance that in no way changes the appearance of the building shall not be subject to review. Replacement is subject to review.
- Existing features in good condition shall be preserved and damaged features should be repaired wherever possible, ideally matching the original craftsmanship.
- Replace badly damaged or missing features sensitively to harmonize with the character of the original feature.
- New features and materials shall be compatible with the building in design, color, detailing, texture, size and shape. New products may be approved on a case by case basis.
- By their nature, adaptively reused buildings may require more flexible and creative design approaches.



REHABILITATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Materials: Missing or deteriorated materials shall be replaced with recycled or new materials that match the original as closely as possible with regard to the following: type, color, style, shape, and texture of material. The composition, type of joint, size of units, placement and detailing shall be appropriate for the building. Synthetic materials such as aluminum or vinyl siding, imitation brick or plastic are inappropriate.

Door and Window Openings: Among the most important features of any building are its openings – its windows and doors. The size and location of openings are an essential part of the overall design and an important element in the building's architecture. Do not alter or fill-in original openings. Roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of the building that cover door and window openings are not encouraged.

Door and Window Sash: Repair original doors and window sashes rather than replace whenever possible. If replacement is necessary, the new door or window sash should match the original in material, size and style as closely as possible. Synthetic replacement windows are discouraged. Consult with the Historic Conservation Office about acceptable replacement doors and windows.

Ornamentation: Significant architectural features such as window hoods, decorative piers, quoins, bay windows, door and window surrounds, porches, and other ornamental elements shall be preserved. These distinctive features help identify and distinguish the buildings in the District. Do not remove or replace ornamentation with substitutes that are of a different scale or design or an incompatible material. Make replacement ornamentation match the character of the existing feature closely as possible with respect to type, color, style, shape and texture of material.



REHABILITATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Roofs: Chimneys, dormers or towers and other architectural features that give the roofline of an existing building its identifying character shall be preserved. Most of the buildings in the District have flat or single-pitch roofs. The addition of vents, skylights, and roof top utilities shall be inconspicuously placed or screened where necessary. Retain and repair the original roof materials such as slate, which is common on churches, institutional buildings and buildings with mansard roofs, and standing seam metal roofs, which are common on smaller buildings with gable roofs. Do not use wood shakes and plastic roofing products, which are inappropriate materials in the District.



Painting: Repaint buildings that were historically painted. Many buildings built before 1890 in the District were originally painted. Paint is part of the aesthetic design of these buildings and should be maintained. Paint also protects porous nineteenth century masonry and masks alterations and inappropriate repairs. Masonry that has not been painted in the past should not be painted.

Wood Siding: Retain and repair original wood siding. When replacement is necessary, the new wood shall match the original in size, shape, profile and detail. Aluminum or vinyl siding is not encouraged.



REHABILITATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Shutters and Other Outside Attachments:

Original shutters shall be repaired and retained. Many buildings in the District have or had wood shutters. Reintroducing missing shutters must be based on physical evidence.

Exterior light fixtures should be appropriate to the style of the building. Colonial "coach" lights are not encouraged. High intensity discharge lighting is not encouraged for attachment to the façade. Exterior light fixtures should be mounted in a way that does not cast undue glare onto neighboring properties and does not damage masonry.

Awnings: Awnings should be installed so they do not cover or require the removal of any original architectural feature. Translucent internally illuminated awnings are not permitted.

Signs: Signs should be designed for clarity, legibility and compatibility with the building. Signs should be located above the entrance, above the storefront and should not negatively impact architectural features. Signs should capitalize on the special character of the building and reflect the nature of the business.

Wall and projecting signs should be located above the storefront or first story and below the second story sills. The size of wall signs shall be limited to one square foot per lineal foot of building frontage. Projecting signs should be no larger than 3 feet, 6 inches in width or height. Small projecting signs such as symbol signs are appropriate. Billboards and internally illuminated signs are not permitted.



REHABILITATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

Repointing Masonry: Repoint historic masonry with mortar that matches the existing in color, content and texture and with joints that match in type and thickness. The mortar joints in masonry construction deteriorate for a variety of reasons. Repointing these joints can significantly aid the rehabilitation of a structure. Generally, buildings built prior to 1900 used a lime-based mortar. A typical lime-based mortar has the following formula: 8 parts sand, 2 parts lime, and 1 part portland cement. This mortar is softer than the portland cement-based mortar of today. Hard modern mortar used on historic masonry causes bricks to crack or spall during the freeze-thaw cycle.

Water-Repellent Coatings: Do not use water-repellent coatings on historic masonry. Most historic structures have survived without the need of water-repellent coatings. Water-related damage on the interior of buildings is usually the result of a failing roof, deteriorated or faulty gutters and downspouts, deteriorated mortar, rising damp or condensation. Water-repellent coatings will not solve these problems and may make them worse.

Cleaning: Clean exterior surfaces with the gentlest method possible. For masonry structures, begin with scraping by hand or scrubbing with a bristle brush and mild detergent. Some types of chemical cleaners can be used, but test patches should be carried out in inconspicuous areas first. Do not sandblast or use other abrasive cleaning methods that destroy the surface of brick and stone and shorten the life of the building. Do not use wire brushes, because they can also damage masonry surfaces.

GUIDELINES FOR ADDITIONS

- Additions should follow the new construction guidelines. They should be compatible in character with the original building. They should be sympathetic but not imitative in design.
- Additions should be designed to relate architecturally to adjacent buildings in general and to the building they are a part of in particular.
- Additions should not overpower the original building.
- The appropriateness of design solutions will be based on balancing the program needs of the applicant with: (i) how well the proposed design relates to the original building and neighboring buildings; and (ii) how closely the proposal meets the intent of these general guidelines and the specific guidelines for new construction.

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

- New construction and infill construction should be well-designed but should not replicate the existing buildings. The exceptional quality of the existing buildings in the District provides an outstanding framework for new construction.
- The Historic Conservation Board's review of new construction will focus on the design compatibility with the surrounding contributing structures. The appropriateness of design solutions will be based on balancing the programmatic needs of the applicant with how well the design relates to the neighboring buildings and to the intent of these guidelines. New design proposals should pay particular attention to composition, materials, openings, rhythm, scale, proportion and height.
- The new construction guidelines for the District will be used to judge the compatibility of new work. The specific site and programmatic needs of each project should also be taken into consideration.

New construction should respond to the traditional composition found in historic properties: a base, middle, and top. Most buildings in the District are built of brick with the principal façade parallel to the street it faces. The most important features of buildings in the District are the arrangement of openings on the building and an overall vertical emphasis of the whole design. Each building has its own variations, but collectively they share many features.

Base: New buildings should have a well-defined base. Within the district most buildings have a base that is distinguishable from the rest of the building. This is accomplished through a change in materials, a change of scale, and/or a lintel or other type of horizontal banding. In larger buildings the original base may include more than the first floor. The front entrance should be elevated a top front stairs and a stoop.

Middle: Buildings in the district often incorporate architectural details such as changes in plane or changes in materials on the upper floors. Decorative, horizontal bands indicating the floor lines, sill heights, or lintel heights should not overpower the vertical emphasis of the design.



NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Top: New construction shall employ a strong element that terminates the uppermost part of the building. Distinctive elements in the District are elaborate projecting cornices, decorative parapets, or expressive use of materials.

Height: Building heights vary across the District. New building heights shall not create a “jagged” effect in the district but rather relate to the surrounding structures and their proportions. Corner buildings tend to be three stories or taller.

Accessory Structures: Carriage Houses, garages, etc should follow rehabilitation or new construction guidelines and should be detached from the main house.

Proportion: New construction should have a vertical emphasis, because in the District buildings are taller than they are wide, window openings are tall and narrow, and storefronts have slender columns, which emphasize verticality. Commercial and institutional buildings, which may have an overall horizontal emphasis, often incorporate vertical elements, such as pilasters or vertically oriented openings. Most buildings have 2 to 4 window bays.



NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Rhythm: New construction shall incorporate design features, such as window groupings, articulation of wall surfaces, and decorative elements such as columns or piers in an effort to maintain the rhythm that already exists in the district. New construction shall avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street by maintaining the rhythm of bays found in the district. Building facades typically display vertical subdivisions that establish a visual rhythm. In dense areas such as Dayton Street, there are no setbacks, creating a solid wall along the street. This wall is articulated by the individual buildings, which in turn are divided by window groupings, changes in wall planes and decorative elements such as pilasters, columns or piers.

Setback: The setback for new construction should be consistent with the buildings and nearby sites. Some buildings are set back from the street but retain an "edge" at the property line with a fence to provide public space and to add to their monumentality. In most cases new construction in the District should be built up near the property line parallel to the street, or both street property lines if on a corner site.



NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Window Openings:

Scale of doorways, windows and other openings in walls of buildings shall be compatible with contributing buildings in the district.

In residential buildings, window openings are typically found individually rather than in pairs or grouped. The openings are taller and wide (typically in a proportion of 2:1), window sashes are set back from the wall surface, and openings have some form of definition, such as lintels, sills or decorative surrounds. Window openings, which are typically aligned vertically, usually occupy between 20% and 50% of the principal facade.

In commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, windows are often grouped within a single opening. These building types may also use a combination of window sash, including double-hung, awning and hopper.

If muntins are used in new window sash, they shall provide true divided lights. Within the individual opening, window sashes are usually divided into two or more lights. In all cases the glass should be clear; dark tinted or reflective glass is not encouraged. Also, roll down shutters and metal bar systems installed on the exterior of commercial buildings that cover door and window openings are not encouraged.



NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Storefronts: Any new storefront in the District should be compatible and appropriate to the architectural style of the building. Features that are common in the District and could be incorporated into a storefront include: prominent entry stairs, covered entry with awning, windows on the entry floor that are taller than those on the upper floors, and lintel or horizontal element separating the entry floor from the rest of the building. Storefront glass must be broken up to reflect the scale and rhythm of the contributing buildings in the district.

Roofs: Roofs for new construction shall be similar to roofs of adjacent and nearby buildings of similar size and use. In the District, buildings of three or more stories generally have low-pitched shed roofs that are not visible above the principal facade. Smaller buildings in the district typically have simple gable roofs on which the gables are perpendicular to the principal facade. Institutional buildings in the District have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs and towers. Roofs in this district have little or no overhang. Rooftop decks or balconies shall not be visible from the street.

Materials: Materials used for exterior treatment of walls including exterior paint, shall be harmonious with the contributing buildings in the District. Clearly the dominant material in the District is brick, but other materials such as limestone, sandstone, cast-iron, slate, wood and are important as well. Materials such as stucco, synthetic stucco and plastic are not encouraged and shall not be considered as exposed finish materials for new construction in this district.



NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS



Signs: Sign should be designed for clarity, legibility and compatibility with the building. Signs should be located above the storefront and should not cover architectural features. Signs should capitalize on the special character of the building and reflect the nature of the business.

Wall and projecting signs shall be located above the storefront or first story and below the second story sills. Projecting signs for larger buildings will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The size of wall signs shall be limited to one square foot per lineal foot of building frontage. Projecting signs should be no larger than 3 feet, 6 inches in width or height. Small projecting signs such as symbol signs are appropriate. Billboards and internally illuminated signs are not permitted.

Equipment: Tanks, fans, chillers, satellite dishes and similar mechanical and electrical equipment located on roofs shall be situated in a manner so that they are not visible from the street. If the equipment cannot be located on the roof, it should be shielded from public view by decorative fences, plantings, or both. Where exterior vents are required and cannot be placed on the roof, they shall be placed as inconspicuously as possible so as not to interrupt the façade of the building.

Service Entrances: Garage doors, service docks or openings for motor vehicles in building walls shall be situated so that such doors, docks or openings are not visible the streets.

GUIDELINES FOR SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- Site improvements like parking lots, parking pads, paving, fences, decks and trees should be in character with the contributing buildings in the District and should respond to the colors, textures, materials and scale found in the area of the improvement.
- The design of any site improvement should be compatible with neighboring buildings in the district and not detract from the character of the District.



SITE IMPROVEMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Parking Lots: Cars in parking lots should be screened from public view. Appropriate screening includes low masonry walls in conjunction with planting areas and landscaping, low masonry walls with wrought iron fencing and planting areas with landscaping and wrought iron fencing. Chain link fence along sidewalks is inappropriate.

Parking lots with a capacity of 10 or more cars should contain trees within the lot as well as around the perimeter of the lot. Concrete curbs, not rolled asphalt bumpers, are appropriate edges for parking lots.

A lot used for surface parking of motor vehicles should be for the exclusive use of owners, occupants and customers of a building located within 300 feet of the lot, and shall be subject to a restrictive covenant to implement this provision.

Parking Pads: Parking pads (parking for one or two cars) are permitted at the rear of the property, with access at alleys or existing curb cuts whenever possible. Parking pads in areas other than the rear yard shall be judged on a case-by-case basis and judged by their impact on the property and on the district.

Decks: Wood decks should be stained or painted. Rooftop decks should not be highly visible from the street.

Paving for Sidewalks, Patios and Other Similar Areas: Materials used for paving should have the appearance of individual units to give the surface scale. Appropriate materials include brick, stone, scored concrete and unit pavers.



SITE IMPROVEMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Street Furniture and Amenities: Existing historic elements in the right-of-way such as steps, mounting blocks, fences, paving, natural stone curbs and splash blocks should be retained. Historic materials such as pavers, curbs or steps shall be returned to their same location, even if they are to be paved over, when they are removed to install or repair utilities such as water, sewer, electric, gas, cable, security or for any other purpose. Flower boxes, planters, urns and similar elements are encouraged but should be appropriate to the property where they are placed and with the district as a whole. The installation of these elements shall not cover or require the alteration of any architectural details.

Trees: Street trees and trees on private property are encouraged. Do not cut down mature, healthy trees.

Fences and Walls: Wrought-iron or cast-iron fences are encouraged along the sidewalks of vacant lots or where buildings are setback from the sidewalk. Fencing may be set between wrought iron and cast-iron posts, natural stone posts or pre-cast concrete posts. Fencing may also be set on a concrete curb or on top of a retaining wall. Landscaping in front of a fence is encouraged. Plain board fences (vertical boards nailed side-by-side on horizontal stringers) or wire fences are appropriate at the rear of the property or along the side of the property. Wood fences should be painted or stained but not left to weather naturally. Chain link, stockade, shadow board, basket weave, vinyl and lattice designs are not encouraged.

Retaining walls built along the front property line or along street frontage should be built of or faced with fieldstone or limestone. Retaining walls at other locations should be built of fieldstone, limestone, brick or specialized masonry block such as split-face concrete block. Concrete products including cinder block, stucco and unfinished concrete masonry units should not be used as the finish material for any retaining wall.



GUIDELINES FOR NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

- Some buildings in the District do not contribute to the historic character of the District. The Historic Conservation Board shall review the proposed alteration or demolition of these buildings based on the guidelines in this section. These guidelines encourage changes that do not add to the building's non contributing character.
- Buildings that do not contribute to the historic character of the District fall into two general categories:

Newer buildings: Most buildings that were built within the past seventy-five years do not fit the historic or architectural character of the district. Due to their more recent date of construction, these buildings did not contribute to the development of the District as an urban, nineteenth-century neighborhood. These newer buildings differ architecturally from the district's historic buildings, especially in scale, building materials, and detailing.

Significantly altered buildings: Some older buildings have lost their architectural integrity due to substantial, incompatible exterior alterations. The basic design, scale and rhythm of these buildings no longer relate to the historic buildings of the District.

- The rehabilitation of non-contributing buildings should comply with the guidelines for rehabilitation, as outlined in the "Rehabilitation" section of this document. These rehabilitation guidelines provide a framework for maintaining a building's basic architectural character; they do not suggest that a building be redesigned or altered to appear older than it is.
 - Alterations to a newer building should be compatible with the original architectural character of that structure or should help the building to relate better architecturally to the surrounding historic district. The rehabilitation of an older, altered structure should restore elements of the building's historic character, whenever possible, based on remaining physical evidence, historic documentation, or similar buildings nearby.
 - Alterations to non-contributing buildings should not create a false sense of history. In many cases it is preferable to rehabilitate and reuse a non-contributing building than to have a vacant parcel or parking lot.
- Additions to non-contributing buildings should comply with the guidelines outlined in the "Additions" section of this document. Additions should be designed to relate architecturally to adjacent buildings and to the building of which they are a part. Additions should not overpower the original building.
- Non-contributing buildings may be demolished if the demolition will not adversely affect the character of the District. The Historic Conservation Board's review of an application to demolish a non-contributing building will include an evaluation of plans for the redevelopment of the cleared site based on the "New Construction" and "Site Improvements" sections of this document. Generally it is not acceptable to demolish a building to build a parking lot. These demolition guidelines are supplemental to the demonstration required of an applicant in Cincinnati Municipal Code Chapter 1435. The following buildings are non contributing:

NON - CONTRIBUTING LIST

1. 1912 Baymiller Street
2. 826 Dayton Street
3. 901 Findlay Street
4. 930 Findlay Street
5. 1907 Freeman Avenue
6. 2008 Freeman Avenue
7. 816 York Street
8. 825 York Street
9. 923 York Street
10. 926 York Street
11. 1020 York Street

CONTACT US

If you have questions about these guidelines or require assistance in determining how they apply to your property or project, please contact the City of Cincinnati's Historic Conservation Office. Contact information for historic conservation staff is provided below.

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