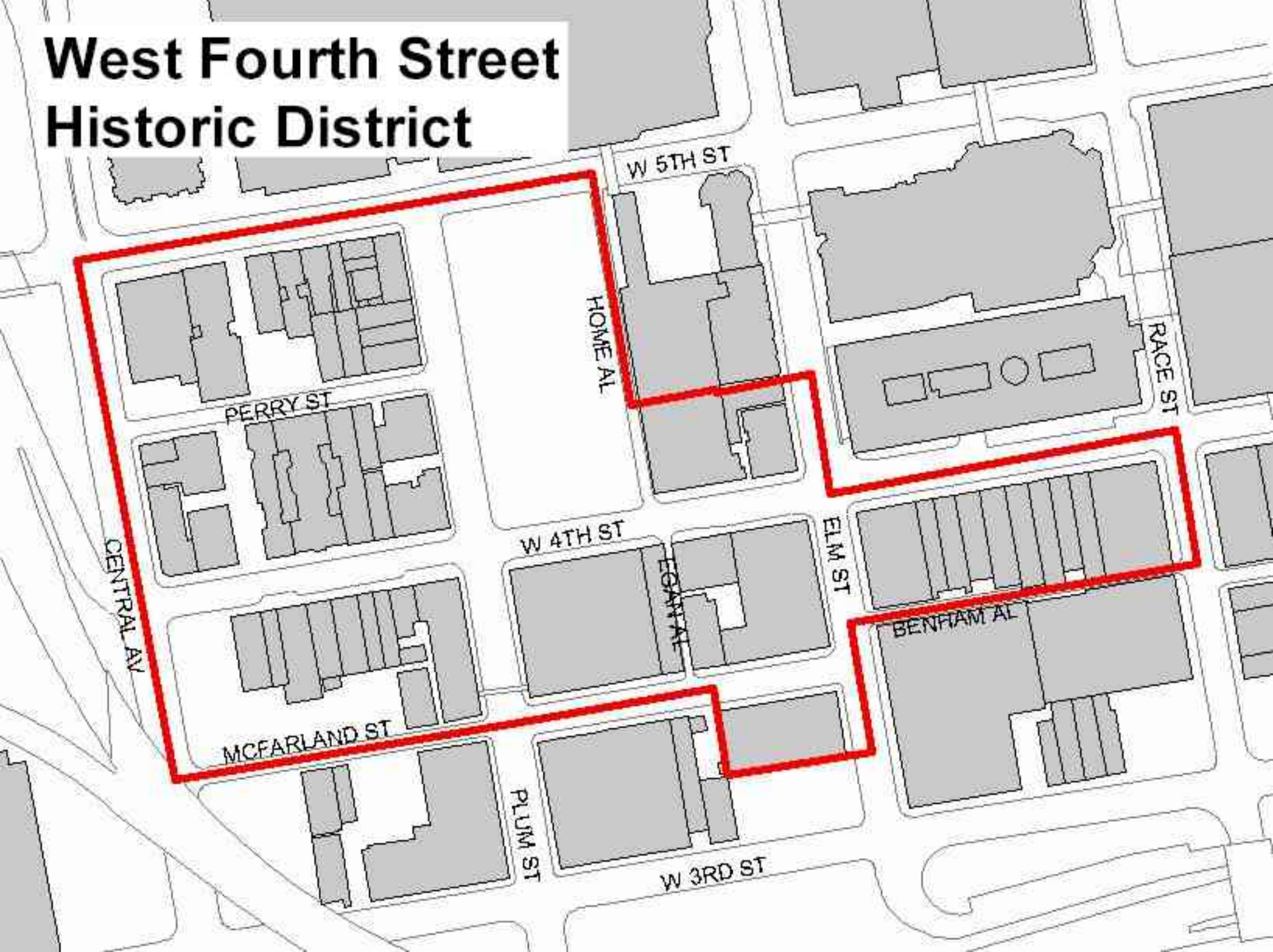


West Fourth Street Historic District



CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: WEST FOURTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Rehabilitation Guidelines

New Construction Guidelines

Demolition

REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

Intent:

These guidelines are intended to assure 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 assessing the compatibility and appropriateness of proposed changes.

Review shall be limited to exterior changes proposed for buildings. The focus of the review of alterations to buildings will be on the proposed improvement's impact on principal facades (those facing directly on streets). In general, secondary facades, such as rear walls, can be significantly altered if changes are compatible with the character of the building.

General:

Ordinary repair and maintenance which does not change the appearance of the building shall not be reviewed.

Existing features in good condition should be conserved, and damaged features should be repaired wherever possible.

Replace badly damaged or missing features sensitively to harmonize with the character of the original feature. Replication is appropriate, but it is not essential.

Completely new features and materials should be compatible with the building in design, color, detailing, texture, size and shape.

Specific:

1. Masonry:

Cleaning dirt and removing paint should be done by the gentlest means possible.

Sandblasting is *not* an acceptable means of cleaning masonry, and only under extremely rare circumstances is it appropriate for such materials as cast-iron.

Handscraping, chemical cleaning or low-pressure washing to remove loose and flaking paint is allowable.

Mortar repair should match the original mortar in consistency, color, composition, and type and width of joint.

19th-century buildings which were originally painted should be repainted. 20th-century hard-faced masonry buildings should not be painted unless they were originally painted.

Other materials should not be used to cover masonry which was visible in the original design.

2. Openings:

The size of original openings should not be altered. Window, doors and associated trim should be repaired rather than replaced; essential replacements should match the character of the original.

3. Cornices:

Cornices should be repaired and not removed. Replacement ornamentation (such as brackets) should match the character of the original.

4. Storefronts:

Existing original storefronts should not be removed or obscured. The design of new storefronts should be in character with the building.

Storefronts should not be set back in arcades, and ground-level transparency (glass storefronts) should be maintained.

5. Ornamentation:

Ornamentation should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible.

6. Additions:

Compatible additions are encouraged. They should appear contemporary, but should complement the design of the original building, and not overpower or detract from the original.

7. Appurtenances:

Signs should be located within the base of the building: at the top of the storefront, or immediately above the first floor openings, and should not cover up the special features of the building. Signs should not overwhelm, or clutter the storefront, nor should they be oversized for the building or the street.

When awnings are appropriate to the design of the building, they should be fabric.

Lighting of significant architectural features is encouraged. Fixtures should be inconspicuously placed.

NEW CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Intent:

These guidelines were developed to assure that new construction will enhance the present qualities of the District.

These guidelines are intended for use in assessing compatibility. They should not be considered as hand-and-fast rules. They should adapt to specific site considerations, to each owner's individual needs, and to the particular design features of nearby buildings. They will need to be applied in full light of the collective expertise and professional judgment of all the members of the Historic Conservation Board. It is not sufficient for the guidelines to be applied intuitively.

General:

- A. New construction should appear new. New construction should not create a false "historic" appearance.
- B. New buildings do not need to take a "back seat" to historic buildings. "Landmark" buildings are encouraged as long as they do not detract from the character of the district.

- C. If parking structures are built in the district, the parking should not be visible from Fourth Street, and vehicle access should be from streets other than Fourth wherever possible. The pedestrian character of the first floors of district buildings should be maintained.
- D. Open spaces along Fourth Street are not permitted unless physical enclosure is implied at the front property line by such means as walls, arches, gates, or fences.

Specific:

1. Building Form

The massing, height, and setback of existing buildings is an important contributor to the character of the District.

Buildings are parallel to the street, of varying heights, and are built to front property lines.

- A. The shape of new buildings within the District should be rectilinear and should be parallel or perpendicular to the street. Buildings should be built to the front property line.
- B. There are height variations within each block, but in general, taller buildings occur as one moves from west to east. Therefore, height limitations shall be considered on a block-by-block basis:

	<i>Minimum # Stories</i>	<i>Maximum # Stories</i>
Central to Plum	3	7
Plum to Elm	3	10
Elm to Race	5	12

No setbacks should occur on upper floors of front facades below the seventh floor.

Heights may exceed the maximum heights listed above if siting, upper-story setbacks, tower location and building configuration allow for compatibility with adjacent structures, maintenance of air and sunlight, and preservation of views.

2. The Major Parts of the Facade

Facades on new buildings should respond to the three basic subdivisions (top, middle, base) of the facades of existing buildings.

- A. There should be a significant architectural feature which visually caps the building.
- B. There should be a middle section which has a regular pattern of window openings
- C. There should be a base of at least one story which is distinct from the middle section.

3. Composition

All existing buildings are built of masonry and they consist of several colors. Existing buildings also have a pattern on their facades established by the composition of ornamentation or such elements as columns, piers and bays placed approximately 20 to 30 feet on center. These elements set up a rhythm on the street and create a sense of flow to the passers-by. New buildings should respond to this context.

- A. Primary building materials should be of masonry or like materials in at least two colors.
- B. New facades should be composed of elements that give a sense of rhythm to the building and to the street.
- C. No single new facade on Fourth Street should exceed 100 feet in length without a significant change in architectural rhythm.
- D. New buildings should incorporate design features to enliven the facade and provide small-scale visual interest.

4. Window Openings

The pattern and placement of window openings is an important part of the character of the District. The design and location of new windows should respond to this pattern.

- A. Windows shall be placed symmetrically on the facade.
- B. The proportion of glass to wall should be sympathetic to the existing proportions on the street. West of Plum Street, the amount of glass shall be between 20% and 70%. East of Plum, where existing buildings contain a higher amount of glass, the range shall be 50% to 75%.
- C. Glazing shall not form continuous horizontal bands.
- D. Mirrored glass is inappropriate.

5. Storefronts and Entrances

The design of storefronts and doorways is an important contributor to the character and image of the District. New storefronts should maintain the feeling of transparency found in existing storefronts. New building entrances should be distinctive, prominent, even monumental.

- A. New storefronts should have large expanses of clear or lightly-tinted glass.
- B. First floors should contain rhythm-giving vertical elements such as columns or piers, either subdividing or framing the storefront.
- C. New Fourth Street buildings should have a prominent doorway facing Fourth Street.

6. Appurtenances

Signs, awnings, lighting, canopies and other appurtenances add to the character of the streetscape and enhance the rhythm and pattern of the street. New appurtenances should blend with the existing character of the district, should be distinctive, but should not appear "historic."

- A. Billboards are not permitted and internally illuminated signs are not encouraged.
- B. Awnings, where appropriate to the design of the new building, should be fabric.
- C. Lighting of significant architectural features is encouraged.

7. Open Space Screening

Most district buildings are built to front property lines, forming a continuous blockface, and there has been little demolition. New buildings should be built to front property lines to maintain this sense of enclosure. Open spaces permitted along Fourth Street should continue this sense of enclosure through screening elements which meet the following criteria:

- A. Screening should be at least 25 feet high, and at least 75% open.
- B. Maximum height of the base of the screen should be three feet.
- C. Screen must be at the front property line.
- D. Screen design should respond to design features on adjacent structures.

8. Public Improvements

Sidewalk paving, lighting, street furniture, public signs, and landscaping all contribute to creating an image for the district. New public amenities for the District should be consistently applied and should be compatible with the streetscape scale and character.

- A. Paving: The District gains some of its character and scale through the variety of textures and colors in its buildings and the neutral color of the concrete sidewalks. This subtle interplay between the buildings and the sidewalks makes the neutral role of the sidewalks important. New paving in the sidewalks should be concrete with the "Special Edging Treatment" as described on page 39 of the *2000 Plan*, with the exception noted in item (D) below.

- B. Lighting: The District can maintain its unique qualities and tie in visually with the rest of the Central Business District with the use of "Malt Lighting Tripod Poles," described on page 38 of the *2000 Plan*.
- C. Street Furniture/Public Signs: Trash receptacles, benches and other street furniture should be compatible with the existing character of the district. Public signs should be mounted in the "Tripod" light poles, consistent with current Central Business District practice.
- D. Landscaping: Fourth Street has a heavily-used pedestrian streetscape with narrow sidewalks and minimal landscaping. Therefore, street trees should not be planted on Fourth. In other areas of the district (e.g., Fifth Street, Plum), trees are encouraged.

DEMOLITION

1. Demolition of existing buildings shall be permitted if one of the following conditions exist:
 - A. Demolition has been ordered by the Director of Buildings and Inspections for the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition which constitutes an emergency.
 - B. 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.
 - C. The demolition request is for an inappropriate addition, or an incompatible building, and the demolition of said structure will not adversely affect the streetscape as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.
 - D. The demolition request is for a non-significant portion of a building and the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the building which are significant as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.

2. Pre-Approved Demolition:

The following properties may be demolished without review by the Historic Conservation Board. The sites may be used for surface parking for a period not to exceed 36 months if that use is allowed by existing zoning.

1. 412 Central Avenue
2. 430 Central Avenue
3. 305 West Fifth Street
4. 325 West Fourth Street
5. 329–333 Perry Street
6. 415 Plum Street
7. 420 Plum Street
8. 426–430 Plum Street
9. 227–229 West Fifth Street