

Proposed Isle of Hope Bluff Historic District Design Guidelines and Criteria (June 8, 2022)

I. Background, Intent, Limitation, Applicability, and Waiver or Modification

A. Background: The Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance (the “Ordinance”) contains general development standards to protect and enhance historic properties and districts in the county. Each historic property and district in the county also must have its own Design Guidelines and Criteria (“Design Guidelines”) that supplement the Ordinance and reflect the individual character of the historic property or district.

B. Intent: These Design Guidelines of the Isle of Hope Historic District (the “District”) are intended to reflect and protect the historic and aesthetic characteristics of the District; protect against loss of federal and local historic district status; protect property values and Viewsheds in the District; and together with the Ordinance, establish a uniform procedure for property owners in the District to consult when planning new construction and/or additions, demolition, or relocation of Resources (as defined herein).

C. Limitation: These Design Guidelines do not:

1. Apply to any property on Isle of Hope outside the District;
2. Require any changes to the current condition of any property;
3. Restrict owners’ use of their property;
4. Regulate the interior of any property; or
5. Regulate the paint color of any property.

D. Applicability: These Design Guidelines apply to the following circumstances affecting property in the District:

1. Demolition or relocation of any Contributing Resource;
2. Demolition or relocation of any Non-Contributing Resource visible from a public right-of-way;
3. New construction of Resources visible from a public right-of-way, including additions to existing Resources;
4. Material Changes to the exterior of Resources visible from a public right-of-way; and
5. Material Changes to signs and fences visible from a public right-of-way and to pavements more than 4 feet wide visible from a public right-of-way.

The circumstances listed above require a Certificate of Appropriateness approved and issued by the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission (the “Commission”), except as permitted under Section 3-505(3), Staff Review, in the Ordinance. The criteria for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be as described in the Ordinance, as supplemented herein.

E. Waiver; Modification. The Commission, at its sole discretion, may waive or modify strict compliance and interpretation of the Ordinance and/or these Design Guidelines, if it finds that a proposed change: (i) is not detrimental to any Contributing Resource, (ii) is visually compatible with the Historic Character of the District, and (iii) complies with all other guidelines, standards, and/or requirements of applicable ordinances and codes.

II. Definitions

A. Building: A construction created principally to shelter any form of human activity (for example, a house, garage, shed, or barn).

B. Certificate of Appropriateness: A document evidencing approval by the Commission of an application to make a Material Change to a Resource.

C. Contributing: That which adds to the historic, architectural, or archaeological value of the District and is within the Period of Significance.

D. Demolition by Neglect: Deterioration of exterior features of any Resource leading to any of the following defects:

1. Structural decay of vertical and horizontal supports that causes leaning, sagging, splitting, listing, or buckling.
2. Ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, and foundations, including broken windows and doors.

E. Historic Character: The historic features, finishes, materials, construction techniques, examples of craftsmanship, architectural details, forms, and placement of a Contributing Resource, whether original to the Contributing Resource or alterations that have acquired historic significance.

F. **Material Change:** A change that will affect the exterior architectural features of any Resource in the District. Such changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. A reconstruction or alteration of the size, shape, or facade of a Resource, including repositioning any architectural features, details, or elements;
2. Demolition or relocation of a Resource;
3. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction of a Resource;
4. Erection, alteration, restoration, or removal of a Building, including foundations, exterior walls, windows, doors or other entrances, railings, porches, fences, steps, or appurtenant features, exterior architectural details such as roofs, and chimneys, and excepting paint alterations; and
5. Erection or alteration of any sign that is visible from the public right-of-way except when replacing an existing sign with a new sign the same size or smaller than the original sign.

G. **Non-Contributing Resource:** A Resource that does not add to the historic, architectural, or archaeological value of the District and is not within the Period of Significance.

H. **Object:** A construction that is not a Building or Structure and is primarily artistic in nature or relatively small in scale, and associated with a specific setting appropriate to its historic use, role or character (for example, a fountain, milepost, or memorial).

I. **Period of Significance:** The time period from approximately 1820 to 1930 when the District was associated with important events, activities, or persons, and attained the characteristics that qualified it to be designated the Isle of Hope Historic District.

J. **Resource:** Any Building, Structure, or Object within the District.

K. **Site:** The area of ground on which a Building, Structure, or Object is constructed or placed.

L. **Structure:** As distinguished from Buildings, a construction made for purposes other than human shelter (for example, a dock, bridge, or silo).

M. **Viewshed:** The line of sight to and from a Resource from the public right-of-way.

III. Alterations and Additions to Contributing Resources

A. **Intent:** The intent of these Design Guidelines is to ensure that the Historic Character of Contributing Resources is preserved to the maximum extent possible, that alterations and additions to Contributing Resources are appropriate, and that the historic integrity of Contributing Resources is protected while allowing new or expanded uses. All Contributing Resources shall be identified on the “Isle of Hope Historic District Map.”

B. **Location:** The primary Contributing Building shall retain the most prominent location on the Site, and alterations, new construction and/or additions shall be subordinate to the primary Contributing Building.

C. **Driveways and Parking Areas:** To convey a sense of place, a primary Contributing Building should be prominent in relation to the accommodation of vehicles, and the primary Contributing Building and its driveway and parking area should be situated in a manner consistent with the District’s historic development patterns.

D. **Additions to Contributing Resources:** Additions to Contributing Resources shall comply with the following requirements and the Design Guidelines for new construction in Section VI herein:

1. Additions shall be subordinate to the Contributing Resource and not obscure or destroy any of its Historic Character.
2. Additions shall not be on the primary or front facade of a primary Contributing Resource.

E. **Preservation:** The following Design Guidelines shall be applied to assess the appropriateness of an alteration to a Contributing Resource:

1. The Historic Character of a Contributing Resource shall be retained and preserved. The removal of any aspect of the Historic Character of a Contributing Resource shall be avoided.
2. The Contributing Resource shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other Buildings or other time periods, shall not be undertaken.
3. Most Contributing Resources change over time. Those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
4. Historic features, materials, and architectural details that have deteriorated shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement, the

replacement shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.

5. Material Changes shall not destroy the Historic Character. The new work shall be compatible with the mass, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the Contributing Resource and its environment.
6. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the Contributing Resource and its environment would not be impaired.

IV. Relocation of Contributing Resources

A. Intent: Relocating Contributing Resources is detrimental to the historic fabric of the District because the location, context, and setting of a Contributing Resource is significant. Moving a Contributing Resource may destroy the relationship between the Contributing Resource and its surroundings, associations with historic events and persons, potential archaeological Contributing Resources, and historic features such as landscaping, foundations, and chimneys. Relocating also may create a false sense of historic development. However, there are exceptional circumstances which may require relocation.

B. Relocation Guidelines:

1. Contributing Resources within the Bluff Historic District shall not be moved out of the Isle of Hope National Register District. If approval to move is obtained, the new location shall be in as close proximity as possible to the original location and shall approximate the Historic Character and development of the original Site.
2. The Contributing Resource shall be in sufficient condition to move without causing significant damage to the Contributing Resource.

C. Documentation: When a Contributing Resource is proposed for relocation, the Commission shall determine that the standards in the Ordinance have been met and the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness includes the following additional documentation:

1. Detailed explanation of the reason for the relocation and why it cannot be avoided, such as the relocation is required to alleviate an immediate threat to public health or public safety as confirmed by the County Manager, or the relocation is required to avoid demolition
2. Detailed site plan of the proposed Site.
3. Detailed description of how the proposed Site is compatible with the Historic Character of the Contributing Resource.
4. A report from a structural engineer, licensed in the State of Georgia, with demonstrated experience in renovation, restoration or rehabilitation, as to the structural soundness of the Contributing Resource and its capacity for relocation. All dangerous, hazardous, or unsafe conditions shall be identified.
5. Information documenting the construction date, history, and development of the Contributing Resource.

D. Conditions: In granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for relocation, the Commission may impose, in addition to those conditions listed herein, reasonable conditions, such as documentation and salvaging requirements, that will mitigate the negative effects of the relocation.

V. Demolition of Contributing Resources

A. Intent: Demolishing Contributing Resources permanently destroys the historic fabric of the District and is detrimental to the public interest. Demolition should be undertaken only when it is the only viable option.

B. Documentation: When a Contributing Resource is proposed for demolition, the Commission shall determine that the standards in the Ordinance have met and the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness includes the following additional documentation:

1. A report from a structural engineer, licensed in the State of Georgia, with demonstrated experience in renovation, restoration or rehabilitation, as to the structural soundness of the

Contributing Resource and its adaptability for continued use, renovation, restoration or rehabilitation. All dangerous, hazardous, or unsafe conditions shall be identified.

2. Evidence that the owner(s) has given a notice of intent to demolish, in whole or in part, by registered mail, to all property owners on the street.
3. A copy of an order for demolition, in whole or in part, signed by the Director of the Chatham County Department of Building Safety and Regulatory Services, due to an immediate dangerous, hazardous or unsafe condition.
4. Evidence that the order for demolition, in whole or in part, has been reviewed and signed by the Chatham County Manager.

C. **Conditions:** In granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, the Commission may impose, in addition to those conditions listed herein, reasonable conditions, such as documentation, that will mitigate the negative effects of the demolition.

VI. Alterations to Non-Contributing Resources and New Construction

A. **Intent:** The intent of these Design Guidelines is to ensure appropriate and compatible alterations to Non-Contributing Resources and new construction within the District.

B. **Guidelines:** The following Design Guidelines shall be applied to assess the appropriateness of all alterations to Non-Contributing Resources and all new construction within the District:

1. **Viewshed:** Buildings and Structures shall not negatively impact the Viewshed.
2. **Location:**
 - (a) The primary Building shall have the most prominent location on the Site.
 - (b) Accessory Buildings and Structures (other than a dock or boat house) shall be situated to the side or rear of the primary Building.
 - (c) Rhythm of primary Buildings on street: The open spaces between a primary Building and its adjacent primary Buildings on a street shall be visually comparable to open spaces between other primary Buildings on the street.
 - (d) Setbacks:
 - i. The front yard setback shall be the average of the setbacks for the primary Contributing Buildings within the block.
 - ii. A minimum rear yard setback of 30 feet shall be maintained. Where applicable, the rear 15 feet of such area shall be used for meeting the off-street parking requirements.
 - iii. A minimum side yard setback of 15 feet shall be maintained for the primary Building and residential accessory Buildings. A minimum side yard setback of 20 feet shall be maintained for nonresidential Buildings and Structures.
3. **Height and Mass:**
 - (a) General: The height and mass of any accessory Building or Structure shall not exceed the height and mass of the primary Building.
 - (b) Height: The maximum height of all Buildings and Structures located between Bluff Drive in the District and the Skidaway River shall be 15 feet above grade or 15 feet above the 100-year flood plain, whichever is higher. For all other sites within the District, the maximum height of a primary Building shall be within ten percent of the average height of all primary Contributing Buildings within the block. If there are no primary Contributing Buildings within the block, the maximum height shall be within ten percent of the average height of all primary Buildings within the block.
 - (c) Mass: The mass of a primary Building shall be comparable to the mass of all primary Contributing Buildings within the block. If there are no primary Contributing Buildings within the block, the mass shall be comparable to the mass of all primary Buildings within the block.
 - (d) Lot Coverage: The maximum aggregate Buildings coverage shall not exceed 40 percent of the lot area.
4. **Foundation:**
 - (a) Intent: Foundations that match the traditional pattern of construction in height and materials complement the craftsmanship of existing construction. The visual impression of separate piers is important to the look of traditional construction in the District.

- (b) Materials: Foundations shall be constructed of brick, stone, tabby, or traditional (hard coat) stucco over concrete block piers.
 - (c) Configuration:
 - i. Foundations shall have a finished floor height at least 30 inches above grade.
 - ii. The space between piers may be filled with wood lattice, brick, or traditional (hard coat) stucco over concrete block, but it must be recessed at least three inches behind the front edge of the pier so that the piers are clearly visible and differentiated.
 - iii. Foundations shall be recessed beneath a Building or a Structure and not project forward of the exterior walls.
5. *Exterior Walls:*
- (a) Intent: Exterior walls of Buildings and Structures should reflect and complement the traditional materials and construction techniques of the District's architecture.
 - (b) Materials: Exterior walls shall be constructed of brick, wood, traditional (hard coat) stucco, or smooth fiber-cement siding in a wood-lap or board and batten style.
 - (c) Configuration:
 - i. Blank wall areas shall not exceed 15 feet in vertical direction and 30 feet in the horizontal direction visible from a public right-of-way.
 - ii. If different exterior construction materials are used, the material that is visible from a public right-of-way must wrap around the corner of the Building or Structure and not stop on the primary or front facade.
6. *Windows:*
- (a) Intent: The placement of windows should provide a sense of rhythm and continuity in architecture.
 - (b) Materials:
 - i. Window casings and sashes shall be made of wood or clad wood material.
 - ii. Window glass other than stained glass shall be transparent with no dark tints or reflective effects.
 - (c) Configuration:
 - i. The arrangement of windows shall be similar to historic arrangement patterns in the District.
 - ii. Windows shall be taller than they are wide, except for accent windows.
 - iii. Windows shall be double-hung, triple-hung, or casement.
 - iv. Framing members shall be covered with appropriate trim. Trim shall feature a header, surrounds, and a pronounced sill where appropriate.
 - v. Between-the-glass muntins shall not be permitted.
 - vi. Bottom window sashes shall be inset not less than three inches from the facade.
 - (d) Exterior Shutters:
 - i. Shutters shall be constructed from a durable wood species or a smooth fiber-cement wood.
 - ii. Shutters shall be sized to fit the window and able to be closed over the window.
7. *Doors and Entrances:*
- (a) Intent: The placement of doors and entrances should provide a sense of rhythm and continuity in architecture.
 - (b) Materials: Doors and transoms shall be glass, wood, clad wood or steel (without wood grain simulation).
 - (c) Configuration: The front door shall face the primary street on which the primary Building is located (normally the street from which it takes its address).
8. *Porches, Decks, and Balconies:*
- (a) Intent: Porches, decks, and balconies enhance the sense of rhythm in architecture, provide visual interest, and promote the sense of community.
 - (b) Materials for Porches and Decks:
 - i. Piers and base walls shall be the same material as the foundation wall facing the street.

- ii. Flooring, stair treads, and risers shall be constructed of brick, a durable wood species, a smooth fiber-cement wood, concrete, tabby or stone.
- (c) Configuration:
 - i. Porches, Front Entrance. A primary Building shall have a first-floor front porch with a minimum depth of six feet over a minimum of 50 percent of the width of its front.
 - (A) Porch columns shall have a cap and base molding.
 - (B) Porches shall have a railing system with balusters placed between the upper and lower rails.
 - ii. Porches, Secondary Entrances. All entrances other than entrances on the front of primary Buildings shall have a porch that may be covered or uncovered, and may be enclosed with wire mesh screening, glass, wood lattice, or shutters.
 - iii. Decks. Any uncovered deck shall be at the rear of the primary Building, except as a part of a dock or boat house.
 - iv. Balconies. Residential balconies shall not extend more than three feet in depth from the face of a primary Building and shall be supported by brackets or other types of architectural support.
- 9. *Roofs*:
 - (a) Intent: Roof forms should be designed to provide visual interest in a manner that is consistent with Contributing Buildings within the block.
 - (b) Materials: Roofs shall be constructed of standing seam metal, V-crimp, slate or equivalent synthetic material, or architectural asphalt or similar shingles.
 - (c) Configuration:
 - i. The roof shape shall match the predominant roof shape of Contributing Buildings within the block. If there are no Contributing Buildings within the block, or if there is no predominant roof shape, the roof shape shall be compatible with Buildings within the block.
 - ii. Gable and hip roofs shall be symmetrically pitched between 4:12 and 8:12.
 - iii. Shed roofs and porch roofs, subordinate and attached to the primary Building, shall be pitched between 2:12 and 6:12.
 - iv. Skylights and roof vents shall be permitted only on the roof plane opposite the public right-of-way facade, or when screened from public view.
 - v. Eaves shall extend no fewer than 12 inches beyond the supporting walls.
 - vi. Dormers are permitted.
 - vii. Applied mansard roofs are not permitted.
- 10. *Docks and Dock Structures*: In addition to the requirements of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other regulatory bodies, docks and dock Structures should be consistent with the height and mass, and reflect and complement traditional materials and construction techniques, of docks in the District.
- 11. *Mechanical Equipment and Refuse Containers*: These items shall not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- 12. *Lighting*:
 - (a) On Buildings and Structures: Materials, design, and placement of light fixtures shall be compatible with the Historic Character of the District.
 - (b) On dock Structures and their walkways: Materials, design, and placement of light fixtures shall be compatible with the Historic Character of the District and shall not negatively impact neighbors.
- 13. *Grandfathered Features*: All features within the District that do not comply with these Design Guidelines shall be deemed to be nonconforming or "grandfathered." When considering a Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration to the exterior of an existing structure, a grandfathered feature shall be permitted to remain, expand, and/or be replicated on the same structure.

VII. Site

A. Parking and Pavements:

1. *Intent*: Parking areas should be located to the side and rear of Buildings so that streets are not obstructed and active pedestrian streets are protected.
 2. *Materials*: Use of pervious paving shall be encouraged.
 3. *Configuration*:
 - (a) Paved areas shall be kept to a minimum with the primary Building having the most prominent position.
 - (b) Breaking up large paved areas into smaller, landscaped islands of paving is encouraged. Landscaped islands shall be required when the footprint of the paving exceeds 1,500 square feet. When required, the landscaped area shall be at least five percent of the total paved area.
 - (c) Where a parking lot or storage lot extends over 30 feet in length along any public right-of-way, a 36-inch-high wall or fence shall be placed parallel to the public right-of-way in order to screen the lot.
 - (d) Paved driveways for residential properties shall not be wider than 12 feet.
 4. *Limitation*: Paved walkways less than 4 feet in width are exempt from review.
- B. Fencing and Walls:
1. *Intent*: Fences and walls can help define outdoor spaces, separate private and public areas, and add architectural interest.
 2. *Materials*:
 - (a) Walls and fences shall be constructed of wood, smooth fiber-cement wood, iron, or brick.
 - (b) Chain-link fences are discouraged and may be installed only along the rear lot line and along the side lot lines backward of the primary Building's rear facade.
 3. *Configuration*:
 - (a) A fence or wall along the streetproperty line or any side lot line forward of the primary Building's rear façade shall be 4 feet or less.
 - (b) A fence or wall along the rear lot lineand along the side lot lines backward of the primary Building's rear façade shall be 8 feet or less.
- C. Pools: Pools shall be located to the side or rear of the primary Building and shall be screened from view from the public right-of-way.

VIII. **Protective Maintenance of Resources**

- A. Intent: Lack of maintenance that leads to Demolition by Neglect detracts from the aesthetic appearance of the District, creates hazardous conditions, and lessens property values.
- B. Maintenance Required: All Resources shall be preserved against decay and deterioration. Exterior walls, roofs, foundations, doors, and windows shall be maintained or secured in a weather-tight condition to prevent structural decay.
- C. Certificate of Appropriateness: A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required if the ordinary maintenance or repair work of any exterior feature to correct deterioration, decay, or damage does not involve a Material Change in design, material, or exterior appearance.
- D. Securing Vacant Property: All windows and doors, except the front door through which access to the interior of the Building or Structure is made, shall be secured, at a minimum, in accordance with the standards and/or requirements of applicable ordinances and codes. Additionally, the following measures shall be undertaken:
 1. A deadbolt lock or other locking device shall be installed on the front exterior door above the existing lockset.
 2. All exterior sheathing shall be painted with at least one coat of primer on all exterior surfaces.
 3. Leaking roofs shall be repaired so that water cannot enter the Building or Structure.
 4. Exterior walls shall be sheathed such that weather cannot penetrate the Building or Structure.

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