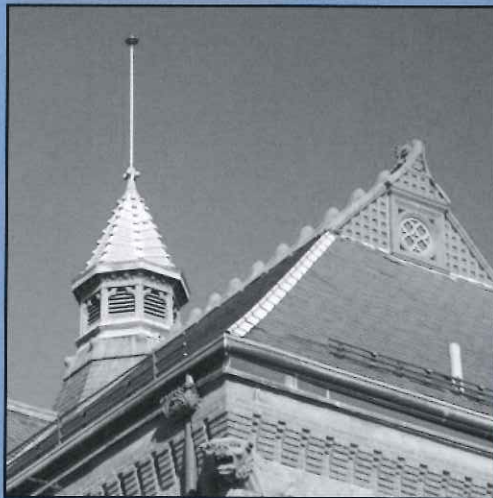
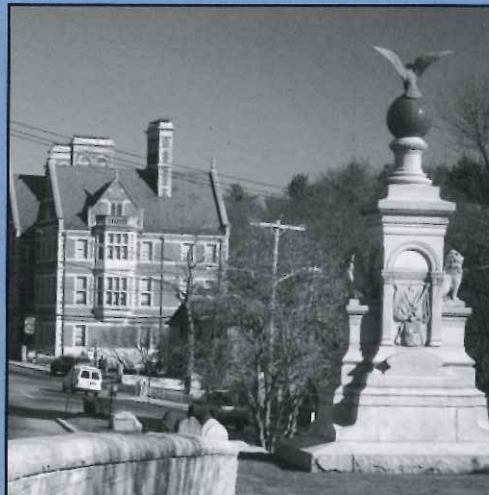


Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District



DESIGN GUIDELINES HANDBOOK

Methuen Historic District Commission

Methuen, Massachusetts

City of Methuen

The Searles Building
41 Pleasant Street
Methuen, MA 01844
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Acknowledgements and Equal Opportunity Statement

The activity that is the subject of this Historic District Design Guidelines Handbook has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior or the Massachusetts Historical Commission, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District

DESIGN GUIDELINES HANDBOOK

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SECTION 1

Introduction

An historic district is a vital part of modern life. More than a catalogue of historic styles and details, a district is an ensemble of structures with diverse and dynamic relationships that create a sense of place and tradition over time. And just as an historic district reflects the technology, tastes, and economics of its time, changes within a district need to reflect their own time, but in a way that complements what is special about the district.

The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District was established by the City of Methuen in 1991 to preserve the distinctive architecture and rich character of the downtown. The Historic District is administered by the Methuen Historic District Commission, an oversight board appointed by the Mayor. This Commission has seven members, who are selected to represent the fields of architecture, real estate, law, and history, as well as residents of or property owners in the District. The Commission is empowered to review and approve all alterations—changes, additions, demolition, and new construction—of all exterior architectural features that are visible from any public way or place.

This handbook is about the character of the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District. It analyzes the major physical, spatial, and architectural elements of the District, as well as their interrelationships. It also makes recommendations for how to enhance the District's character through good design and planning. In these ways, the handbook will help the community better understand the extraordinary value of the Historic District, and provide direction for property owners when making architectural decisions. This handbook is also intended to provide the Historic District Commission with an objective basis for evaluating

proposed changes and for creating consistency and predictability in the review process.

Design review is an attempt to balance aesthetic, social, and functional requirements in the context of physical structure. Adding modern elements to an historic district requires great sensitivity—not imitation!—if the additions are to enhance the district. Good *new* design has been one of the important themes of the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District throughout its nearly two centuries of evolution, and should be sustained into the future.

With an understanding of the individual components and the architectural themes of the District, we can better appreciate how its great diversity operates within a sense of overall order. And we can better appreciate how changes that by themselves seem small have a cumulative effect. The guidelines that form the second part of this handbook are intended not to be strict, quantitative rules for individual building components. Instead, they should serve as a flexible framework for change. Use them to explore creative interpretations of the traditional patterns of the Historic District.



Historic bird's eye view of Methuen.



(above) View of the Page Building and Masonic Lodge.

(below) Pleasant Street streetscape.

(right) 8 Ditson Place and Central School.



The Historic District in Context

What's Special About This District?

Topography, history, and architecture combine to produce several extraordinary features in the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District. For example, while the Historic District presently constitutes the center of Methuen, this was not always so. First settled in the mid-17th century, Methuen was incorporated as a town in 1725 from the western part of Haverhill. Unlike most New England towns of the period, early settlement in Methuen was dispersed. There was no focal village center, although Daddy Frye's Hill (to the east of the Historic District) contained the town's first meeting-house (1727), cemetery (1728), and schoolhouse (1735).

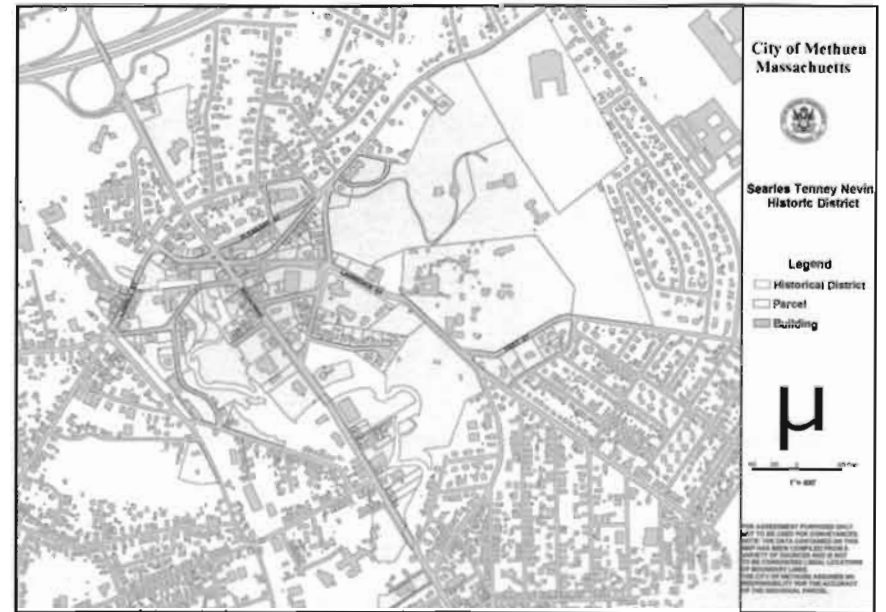
Methuen's landscape was largely agricultural until the early 19th century, when a cluster of houses and mills appeared near the Spicket River Falls to take advantage of this important power source. Historic maps from the 19th through 20th centuries show the early cluster of buildings expanding outward from the Falls, and dense linear development eventually filling in along Broadway.

Construction of the Essex Turnpike (the present Broadway) in 1806 and the Manchester & Lawrence Railroad in 1848-49 facilitated travel and the transportation of goods for the growing industrial economy. In recognition of this change in focus, the First Church Congregational moved from Daddy Frye's Hill to Pleasant Street in 1832, the Lawrence Street burying ground was laid out in 1828-31, and the Town Hall (Methuen's first) was built on Broadway

in 1853. The rapid industrial and economic growth that followed was concentrated on hat, boot and shoe, and textile manufacturing, and lasted into the early 20th century.

The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District is a truly diverse town center today, with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses; a variety of building types, styles, forms, and materials; and a river running through it.

The second outstanding feature of the District is its hilly terrain, which creates the dramatic Spicket River Falls and requires numerous retaining walls and terracing. The steep grade change from north to south also affords myriad views across the District; most buildings in the District are visible from multiple sides and from both near and far. The skyline therefore plays an especially prominent role in the area, as evidenced in the many towers present on churches, the Central School, Memorial Music Hall, Masonic Lodge, fire station, and the Methuen Company Mills.



(above) Current map of the historic district.

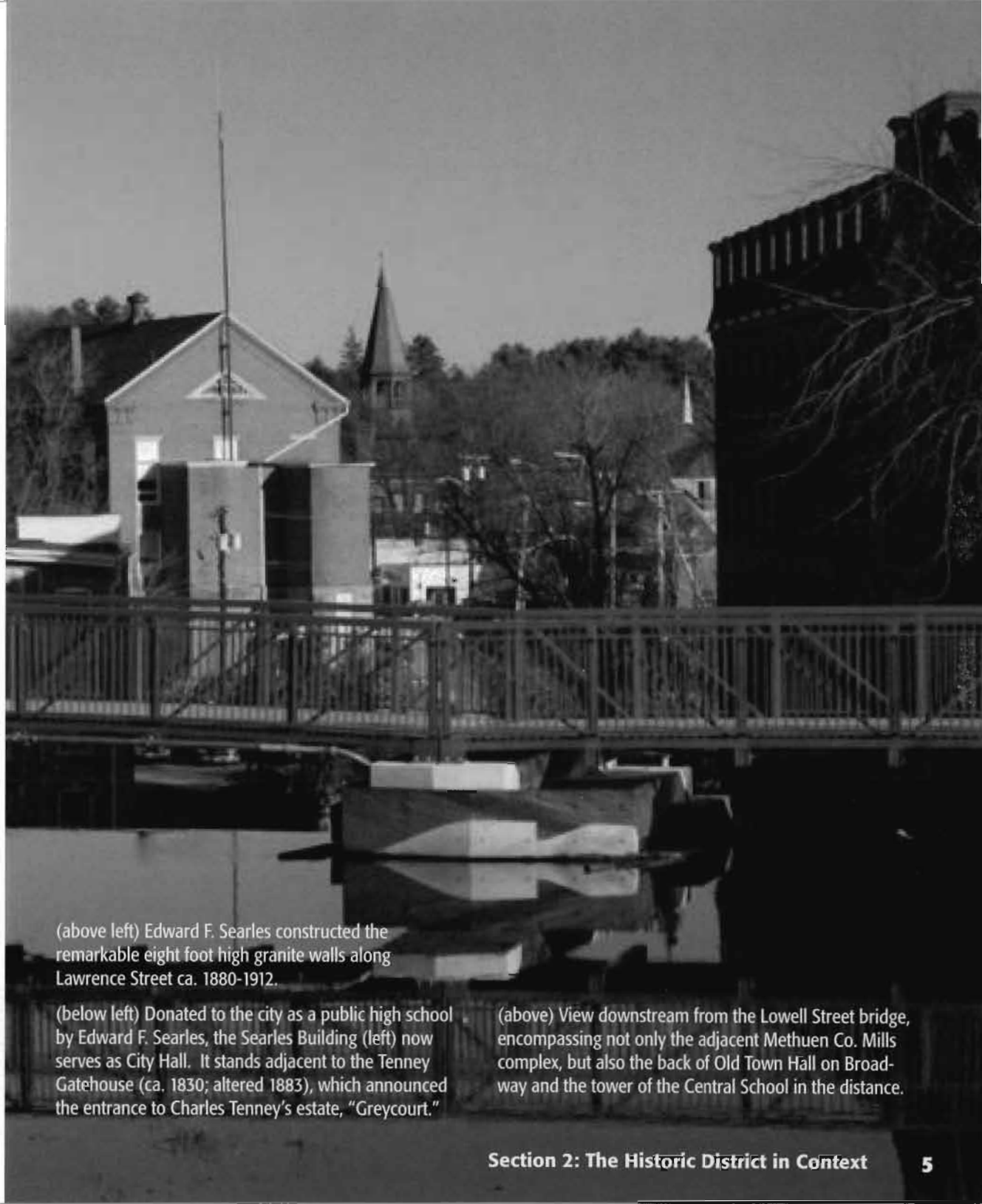
(below) Downtown Methuen as it appeared in the early 20th century (1906 Richard's Atlas).

A third exceptional quality of the Historic District—unlike almost any other small (or large) industrial town of the period—is the influence of the eponymous David Nevins, Charles Tenney, and Edward F. Searles. Their industrial fortunes (locally made, except for Searles) and civic consciousness provided an outsized architectural legacy for Methuen. The library, music hall, Broadway bridge, present city hall building, Masonic Lodge, Civil War monument, and monumental granite walls along Lawrence Street are a few of their many and varied contributions to the streetscapes of the Historic District.



(above left) Edward F. Searles constructed the remarkable eight foot high granite walls along Lawrence Street ca. 1880-1912.

(below left) Donated to the city as a public high school by Edward F. Searles, the Searles Building (left) now serves as City Hall. It stands adjacent to the Tenney Gatehouse (ca. 1830; altered 1883), which announced the entrance to Charles Tenney's estate, "Greycourt."



(above) View downstream from the Lowell Street bridge, encompassing not only the adjacent Methuen Co. Mills complex, but also the back of Old Town Hall on Broadway and the tower of the Central School in the distance.

Architectural Character of the District

Building Types

Many historic districts encompass only a small number of building types and uses—such as industrial, commercial, or residential buildings—or concentrated village centers. The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District, however, is an unusually large, spread-out, and diverse district. It encompasses both small-scale and large-scale examples of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and other property types, in many different forms. The collection provides an impressive picture of Methuen's growth over time.



Residential

Residential buildings form a major part of the District. Along Broadway, this building type is still common, but most have been converted to commercial use. Most residential buildings in the District are wood frame construction, 1½ to 2½ stories high, with gable roofs. Greek Revival and Victorian styles predominate. Single family houses are most popular, but examples of duplex mill housing survive on Lowell Street.



These mid to late 19th century houses on Charles Street are typical and well-preserved examples of residential buildings in the Historic District.

Commercial

Commercial buildings in the District range from small to large, vernacular to high style, wood-frame to masonry construction. As is common with this building type, they have seen the most alteration, indicative of the pace of changing economic trends and occupants. Unlike many city centers of comparable size, Methuen does not have continuous commercial blocks lining its sidewalks. Stand-alone structures such as the Odd Fellows Building (1899; 5 Hampshire St.), Page Building (1879; 271 Broadway), 1859 House (1859; 12 Hampshire St.), and Methuen Co. Store (ca. 1860; 42 Hampshire St.) are the norm, and are concentrated at Gaunt Square and Hampshire Street.

Gaunt Square as seen from the east, with the Masonic Lodge and Odd Fellows Building framing a glimpse of Hampshire Street.

Institutional

The Historic District contains many fine institutional buildings, both public and private; many were funded by Nevins, Tenney, and Searles. Most are brick or stone construction, architect-designed, large in scale, and imposingly set on prominent parcels of land. Built in a range of styles, they include the Old Town Hall (1853), Central Fire Station (1899), three churches, two school houses, a library, Memorial Music Hall, and the Nevins Home for the Aged.



First Congregational Church (1855; 30 Pleasant St.). This excellent Gothic Revival design is distinguished inside by work of the eminent late-19th century artists John LaFarge and Augustus St. Gaudens.



Central School (1904/24; 10 Ditson Pl.) was given to the City by Edward F. Searles and designed by architect Henry Vaughan, who was responsible for many other civic buildings in the downtown as well.

Industrial

The center of the Historic District is anchored by a diverse collection of industrial buildings, ranging in age from the early 19th through early 20th centuries. Most conspicuous among these are the brick buildings of the highly significant Methuen Company Mills complex (1826–1882; 45–55 Osgood St.) and the Selden Worsted Mills (1919; 225 Broadway). Other notable examples include the wood-frame Tenney Shoe Factory (1868; 2 Charles St.), the small-scale brick Corliss Building (1886; 270 Lawrence St.), and the brick train station (1907) with adjacent wood-frame warehouse (mid- to late 19th century) on Union Street.



Built with funds provided by Edward F. Searles, the Railroad Depot on Union Street (1907) has an iconic form and modest architectural detailing.



Built in 1826, this Methuen Company Mills building (45 Osgood St.) has a distinctive monitor roof, and is one of the best examples of its type in the state.

Other Resources – Cemeteries, landscapes, bridges, walls, and monuments

In most towns, these miscellaneous resources are minor in character and impact. They have a major presence in the Searles Nevins Tenney Historic District, however, because of their numbers, design quality, and visibility. Bridges, for example, range from vernacular, fieldstone arch structures to the very formal Searles Bridge on Broadway. Stone walls provide striking street edges throughout the District. Two cemeteries and the prominent Civil War Memorial set in a small park at Pleasant and Charles streets round out this collection.



This simple bridge at Osgood Street (ca. 1830) is an unusual example of Methuen's early industrial period.



Stone retaining walls and four medieval-style towers at the crossing of Broadway and the Spicket River were built in 1912 by Edward F. Searles, accentuating his Memorial Music Hall next door.



Dating from the early 19th century, the Lawrence Street Cemetery was later re-cast by Searles with a gatehouse and formal tombs inside, and granite walls lining the adjacent roadway.

Architectural Styles

The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District contains examples of nearly every architectural style popular from the early 19th through early 20th centuries, and a range of scales, forms, materials, and design quality within those styles, as well. The following guide provides an introduction to the most common styles found here. Any given style has shared themes and many variations in plan, form, materials, and ornament.

THE EARLY REPUBLIC

In the first decades after American independence, architectural styles retained their classical sources, although they were increasingly based on more scholarly archaeological work. Traditional forms and elements began to change in subtle ways, however, including detailing, proportion, orientation of interior space, and methods of building construction. At the same time, Massachusetts' agricultural base was beginning to shift to more urban patterns and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution.

Federal (1780–1830)

The Federal style in America is an extension and refinement of the preceding Georgian period. Simple rectangular shapes of 1½ to 2½ stories with gable roofs were still common. Cubical shapes with a hip roof, third floor for added height, and chimneys on the outside walls are more distinctly Federal, however. Facades are characterized by symmetry, center entrances, and double-hung windows with multi-paned sash (six and nine small panes per sash are typical). Proportions and ornament became lighter and more delicate; trim is often concentrated at the door

enframement and in simple, built-up moldings around the windows and at the eaves.

Most houses of this period in the District were constructed of wood; the Tenney Gatehouse (ca. 1830, significantly remodeled 1883; 37 Pleasant St.) is an unusual example in stone. The Methuen Co. Mill at 45 Osgood Street (1826) illustrates an industrial application of the style, with brick construction and a roof monitor to provide valuable interior illumination.



The George Waldo House at 233 Lawrence Street (1825) is a high-style example of the Federal period, with a hip roof and monitor, elaborate cornice trim and balustrades, and a lavish entrance composition.



The Carleton/Johnson House at 8 Ditson Place (1811; originally located on Broadway), is a relatively simple example of the Federal style. Its square shape, low hip roof, and slender end chimneys are characteristic of the period.

Greek Revival (1830–1860)

Beginning in the early 19th century, industrialization required new factories and commercial building forms, as well as housing for the growing urban population. In response, the new Greek Revival style, often called the first truly American architectural style, offered a re-oriented building, usually with the short gable end facing the street. The typical floor plan changed from a center entrance and stair hall to a side hall plan with the doorway offset on the façade. Trim became flatter and more robust.

Turning the gable end of the building to the street recalls the ancient Greek temple antecedents, and is reinforced by wide corner boards or pilasters and wide frieze boards, which were sometimes extended around the gable end to form a triangular pediment. One-story entrance porches are common, and occasionally extend across the entire façade with classical columns. Window sash became larger and are often elongated on the lower floor; glass panes became larger and fewer, with 6 or 2 panes per sash common. Good examples of clapboard-clad, Greek Revival style houses are found throughout the District, while the Methuen Co. Mills built several brick industrial buildings in the period on Osgood and Union streets.



VICTORIAN ERA

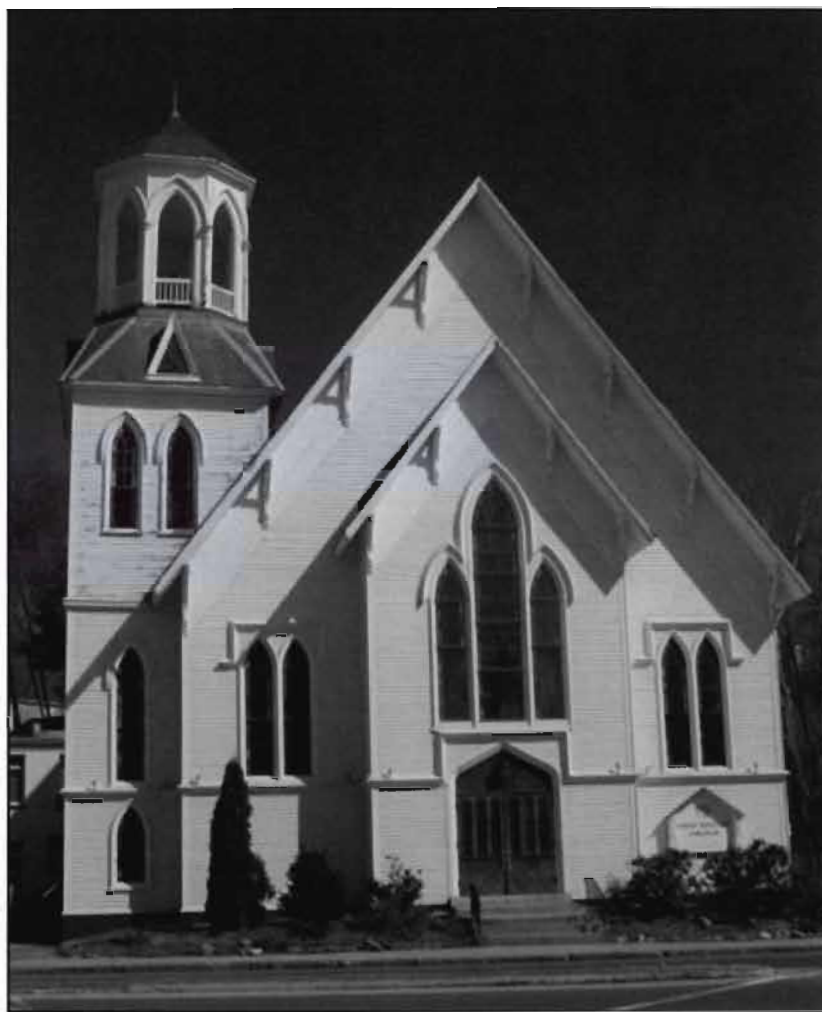
The industrial and economic growth and diversity of the second half of the 19th century is reflected in the architecture of the period—a flowering of buildings in many new styles. Victorian architecture is broadly characterized by asymmetry, contrasts in mass and color, elaborate decorative detail, and often fanciful forms such as towers and turrets.



(above and left)
The brick Methuen Company Storehouse (1854; 62 Osgood St.) is a very well-detailed example of the Greek Revival style, with a pedimented façade supported by broad pilasters, which march around the side walls as well.



The Gutterson/Peirce House (ca. 1845; 13 Pleasant St.) is a substantial Greek Revival house, with an L-shaped plan, fully pedimented gable end, and boldly articulated trim. The wrap-around porch might be original, but with Victorian updates.



Gothic Revival (1840–1880)

The Gothic Revival style was the first 19th century style to depart from the standard classical architectural designs. Characteristic features include steeply pitched roofs and pointed windows, boldly carved cap moldings over the tops of windows and doors, delicate jig-sawn scrollwork at roof eaves and porches, and board-and-batten siding. No residential buildings in this style are found in the Historic District today, but it is popular on church buildings in the District, including the stone structure for the First Church Congregational and the wood-frame First Baptist Church.

The First Baptist Church (1869; 24 Park St.) displays the sharp roof angles, pointed arch windows, textured siding, and heavy moldings typical of the Gothic Revival style.

Italianate and Second Empire (1860–1880)

Italianate is the most prevalent of the eclectic, romantic revival styles in Massachusetts, loosely based on medieval and Renaissance villas of northern Italy. Buildings are more often L-shaped, with gable-ends facing the street, lower-pitched roofs, and deep overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets. Side hall plans with offset doorways continue to predominate; entrances are often marked with decorative door hoods or porches with square posts. Round-headed or arched windows were popular, and window sash most commonly featured two large side-by-side panes of glass. Bracketed window hoods and bay windows are also distinctive Italianate features.



The mansard roof on the Page Building (1879; 271 Broadway) caps a stately Second Empire style building with a wrap-around porch; tall, decoratively-trimmed windows; and a large central monitor.

The contemporaneous but less prevalent Second Empire style is boxy in shape and more formal and symmetrical than the Italianate. In its more vernacular versions, as found in the Historic District, it is chiefly identified by the application of a mansard roof on a building that is otherwise Italianate in design.



Typical of the Italianate style, the Elbridge Clark House (ca. 1875; 10 Park St.) displays an L-shape structure with its gable end facing the street, bracketed eaves and door hood, and a round-arched window in the gable.

Queen Anne (1880–1915) and Stick Style (1860–1880)

Queen Anne, the most decorative Victorian style, is characterized by variety, complexity, and asymmetry in plan, form, fenestration, materials, and color. An accumulation of building volumes; multiple steeply-pitched roofs; a variety of window sizes, shapes, and glazing; and highly decorative finishes prevail in buildings in this style. Decorative porches are common, and exterior wall surfaces are frequently clad in more than one building material, called out in multiple paint colors. Carved wood ornament is abundant.

The Stick Style was related in concept but much less common in application. Similar in its free-spirited porches and creative use of exterior materials, the Stick Style is more rectilinear and geometric in massing and ornament than Queen Anne. Hallmarks of the style include flat trim boards applied in horizontal, vertical, and diagonal panels, and projecting rafter ends and decorative trusses in the gable ends. Many older buildings in the Historic District were updated with Queen Anne and Stick Style elements such as towers, bay windows, and porches.



The front entrance and gable ends of the Federal-period Benjamin Osgood House (ca. 1819/1881; 248 Broadway) were updated with lively Stick Style details.



The Peirce House (1889; 15 Pleasant St.) is a fine example of the Queen Anne style, exuberantly detailed with bands of contrasting wall materials, a wrap-around porch, and a Palladian window in the gable end.



At the Tenney Gatehouse (37 Pleasant St.), a simple five bay, center entrance, Federal-period house was transformed by Queen Anne style window sash, porches, decorative siding and tower.

LATE 19TH /EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

As the local economy consolidated and prospered in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a variety of new architectural styles arose, many based on earlier movements. Some of these, like Romanesque, Jacobethan, and Craftsman, were based on pre-classical precedents. Others, like the Colonial Revival style, represent a more luxurious version of early American design.

Romanesque (1850–1900)

Several versions of the Romanesque style were employed in the second half of the 19th century, all making reference to an ancient style of Mediterranean architecture. This style is characterized by clean massing of volumes, smooth wall surfaces, round arches, and simple yet bold articulation of forms. The Old Town Hall (1853; 290 Broadway) is a good early example (with many Colonial Revival alterations), while the Central Fire Station (1899; 24 Lowell St.) displays a very late and more classicized version of the style.



Detailing of the Library's arcade contrasts highly sculptural limestone and terra cotta ornament with the smooth, rich red brick of the wall surfaces.

The Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) is an excellent local example of the Richardsonian variant of the Romanesque style. It is distinguished by large, simple building forms, a ground floor arcade, massive roof, and terra cotta ornament.



Renaissance Revival (1840–1920)

The Renaissance Revival is a more formal, neo-classical style inspired by the public buildings of the Italian Renaissance. The style is characterized by cube-like building shapes in smooth stone or brick, with flat or low-pitched roofs, arched windows, horizontal stone banding between floors, quoins, pediments over doorways or center bays, and elaborate stone trim. It was commonly used on commercial and institutional buildings and grand estates.



The Odd Fellows Building (1899; 5 Hampshire St.) combined institutional and commercial uses, and was the first and only multi-story masonry block in downtown Methuen.

Created for Edward F. Searles, the Memorial Music Hall (1899–1909; 192 Broadway) features an eclectic blend of Renaissance Revival and Jacobethan elements in a soaring volume.



Colonial Revival

A resurgence of interest in colonial American culture followed the national Centennial Exposition in 1876, especially in New England, where many 18th century houses survived for study (and salvaging of materials). The Colonial Revival style returned to symmetry, order, and classical details, although usually on a grander scale than the original 18th century buildings. Boxy shapes, hip roofs, elaborate entrances, and porches are prevalent. Windows typically feature multi-paned, double-hung sash (6 over 6, 8 over 8, and 12 over 12 small panes). Ornament flourished, often with freer applications than the original prototype. Wood was the most common building material, but St. Monica's Rectory (1822; 231 Broadway) is a good example of brick construction.



(above right) Originally constructed as a hotel, the Masonic Lodge building (1851/1906; 275 Broadway) was significantly remodeled by Edward F. Searles. The Colonial influence is evident in its blocky form, hip roof, small-paned windows, and classical ornament.

(below right) The Dr. Richard Lawlor House (1909; 251 Broadway) exemplifies the residential use of the Colonial Revival style in its hip roof, traditional 5-bay façade, and full-length porch. It was built at a time when suburban houses still predominated on Broadway.



Jacobethan/Tudor Revival (1890–1940)

This picturesque revival style is loosely based on English medieval precedents. It is characterized by asymmetry in massing and facades, combinations of building materials, steeply-pitched gables, complex rooflines (usually featuring prominent chimneys), and a variety of windows, often with leaded glass and casement sash. A great many of the civic buildings constructed in the Historic District by Nevins and Searles make use of the inventive and ornamental possibilities of brick, stone, wood, and glass in the Jacobethan style.



The Red Tavern (1900; 5 Pleasant St.) was designed as a guest house for Edward F. Searles, but was soon converted to an inn. Its multiple gables, irregular massing, and half-timbering are characteristic of wood buildings in the Jacobethan style.



The Nevins Home for the Aged (1906; 100 Broadway) is a zig-zagging brick assembly of tall gabled structures ornamented with a wealth of bay windows, entry porches, towers, crenellation, finials, balustrades, and limestone trim.

Craftsman and Bungalow Styles (1900–1930)

These 20th century styles were also inspired by medieval architecture, but their domestic qualities made them chiefly applied to residential buildings. These styles were further influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, which favored the hearty virtues of the pre-industrial past in simple, earthy forms, materials, and colors. Restrained, classically-inspired detail was also often employed. Craftsman style houses are typically 2½ stories high and cubical in form, with a hip roof. Bungalows are usually 1½ stories high, with more asymmetrical massing and swooping gable roofs. Wood shingle siding, rustic fieldstone and brick, and groupings of small-paned, double-hung windows are prevalent.



The bungalow-style Rolf C. Norris House (1924; 9 Pleasant St.) is characterized by multiple gable roofs with deep overhanging eaves, stucco siding, an arched doorway, and irregular clinker brick.



(above top and bottom) The Lewis E. Barnes House (1906; 259 Broadway) is a fine example of the Craftsman style, featuring a high hip roof with deep overhanging eaves, stucco siding, and classical details.

The Application & Review Process

When a property owner wishes to alter the exterior features of his or her property in any way, or to place a permanent or temporary sign on the property, an application must be submitted to the Historic District Commission. Forms are available from the Department of Community and Economic Development at City Hall (the Searles Building), 41 Pleasant Street, Suite 217; tel. 978-983-8560, or www.ci.methuen.ma.us/HistoricDistrict/Assets/Application.

Applications should be submitted with as much information as possible to avoid delays in the review process.

An informal meeting with Commission staff to discuss the proposed project before submitting an application is strongly encouraged.

No work may be done without one of the following certificates:

A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued for approved applications for the following activities:

- New construction, alteration, or demolition of an exterior building feature, building, or structure that is visible from a public street, way, park, or waterway within the District or partially within the District. Changes in exterior colors are also subject to review.
- Permanent and temporary signs on or about any building or building site within the District.

A Certificate of Non-Applicability is issued for the following activities:

- Proposed construction or alteration of exterior architectural features not visible from a public way.
- Ordinary maintenance and repair of any exterior architectural features if such repair and maintenance does not involve a fundamental change in design or materials.
- Terraces, walks, sidewalks, and other similar structures at grade level. Driveways and parking lots, however, are subject to review and approval by the District Commission.
- Storm doors and windows, screen doors and windows, and air conditioners.
- Any work ordered by the Building Inspector or similar agent for the purpose of public safety.
- A reconstruction that is substantially similar in exterior design to a building, structure or exterior architectural feature that is damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, if the reconstruction is begun within one year and carried forward with due diligence.
- Traffic control devices necessary for public safety, including, but not limited to, traffic signs and lights, guardrails and pedestrian crosswalks.



19th century view of the Spicket River Falls.

A Certificate of Hardship may be issued under the following circumstances:

- In rare circumstances, the District Commission may determine that failure to approve an application would place a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, on the applicant, and that approval would not cause a significant detriment to the character of the District.
- The District Commission fails to make a determination within 60 days after the filing of an application for any certificate.

Review Criteria

In reviewing certificate applications, the District Commission considers the following:

- The relative significance of the property, individually and in relation to the District as a whole.
- The general compatibility of the design with its setting, and the degree to which it complies with the District Commission's Design Guidelines.
- The overall impact of the proposal on the historical, architectural, and cultural qualities of the District.

(right) Methuen Company Mills foundation detail.



Design Fundamentals

The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District contains a great variety of building styles and types. Yet it also displays a strong 19th and early 20th character that is produced by regularly spaced buildings with cohesive street edges and a distinctive range of building proportions, massing, and materials. This section of the handbook describes some fundamental approaches to building improvements that are based on the architectural traditions of the District.



This entrance to the recent Methuen Cooperative Bank building (1964; 243 Broadway) reinforces important historic design patterns in the District with its attention to detail and its relationship to the street.

Design Review Principles

Accepted preservation policy is to minimize the impact of a project on historic fabric as much as possible—preferring to maintain rather than repair, and to repair rather than replace. The federal Department of the Interior has published a useful and widely recognized framework for the preservation and improvement of historically and architecturally significant properties. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures* (available at the website for the National Park Service: <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/secstan1.htm>) describe four basic approaches:

- **Preservation** Emphasizing conservation of historic fabric through maintenance and simple repairs.
- **Rehabilitation** Allowing compatible new uses through repair, alterations, and additions that preserve significant historic and architectural character.
- **Restoration** Bringing a property back to a particular period of time by removing later features and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period.
- **Reconstruction** Rebuilding an entire structure or vanished historic portions of a structure, based on careful physical and documentary evidence.

The Secretary's *Standards* are often used as a philosophical underpinning for design review decisions. They do not, however, provide specific rules for a project. For more direction, a property owner should begin with the General Guidelines outlined below and then consider the Specific Guidelines for individual architectural elements that follow.

General Guidelines

Consider the following as basic rules of thumb to start the planning and design process.

- When planning a project, always take into account its effect on the streetscape as a whole, and the many possible views of the building.
- Traditional materials—primarily wood, stone, brick, and stucco—are usually most appropriate for historic buildings. The choice and use of materials are critical to defining various historic architectural styles. They give a distinct texture to the building that can be damaged by insensitive modern replacements.
- Retain and repair historic elements as much as feasible, from siding to window sash to decorative detailing. These elements—and the play of light and shadow that they create—are key to architectural style and to the rich visual texture that makes historic districts compelling.
- Alterations should not obscure, damage, or remove historic elements, to the extent possible. Architectural elements that can not be repaired should be replaced with new elements that match the original in design, color, texture, and material.
- New elements should be appropriate to the historic period(s) of the building, and not borrow from unrelated historic styles.

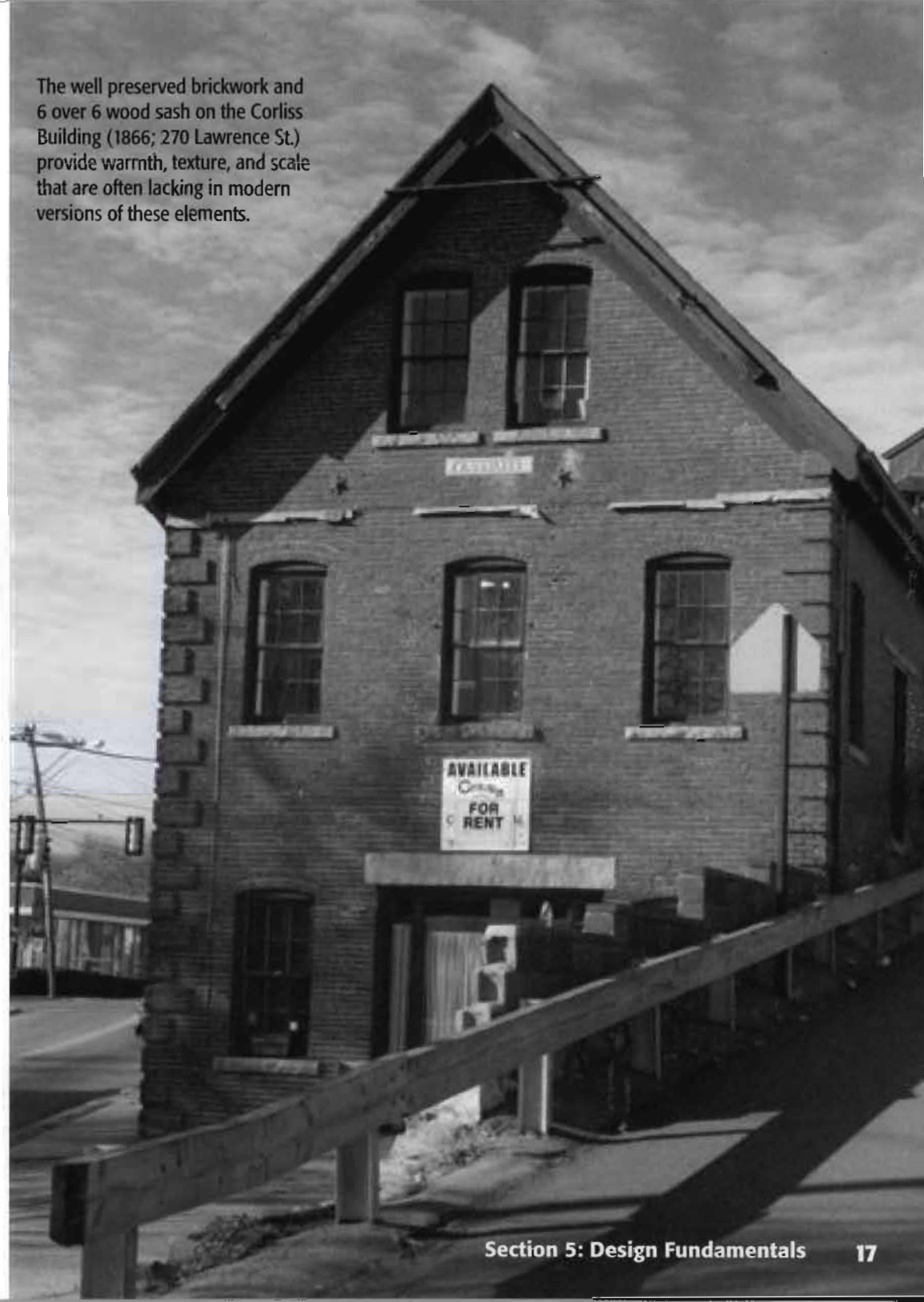
- Missing architectural features should be replaced based on documentation of the previous appearance of the building or, if this is not available, on period-appropriate designs.
- Inappropriate materials and design features from previous alterations should be removed. Historic materials and design elements may be revealed beneath, and should be reused if possible or serve as a basis for reconstruction. If no physical evidence remains, a new design that is more sympathetic to the original character of the building should be used, based on photographs or other documentation of the building or on similar buildings of the period.

(below left) The Tenney Gatehouse (ca. 1830/1883; 37 Pleasant St.) represents a major late 19th century remodeling of an early 19th century house, using compatible materials and proportions.

(below right) Historic door hoods, such as this beautifully carved example on the Baptist Church Parsonage, (1877; 32 Park St.) are vulnerable to removal but are essential to the character of Victorian buildings.



The well preserved brickwork and 6 over 6 wood sash on the Corliss Building (1866; 270 Lawrence St.) provide warmth, texture, and scale that are often lacking in modern versions of these elements.



Design Relationships

In an historic district, design patterns—themes and variations on the ways buildings are arranged—play an overarching role that transcends the individual parts. Buildings are not just handsome, solitary objects; they interact with each other, with users, and with passersby. The relationships between elements, and not just the elements themselves, are essential to understanding the District, and to keeping it fresh and alive.

In a cohesive streetscape, the major elements—height, setback, massing, and roofline—tend to be similar, while the smaller parts—such as architectural ornament—show more variety. The overall sense of continuity and cohesion still allows for individual design flexibility.

Some of the many elements that are woven into rich and complex architectural themes in the Searles Tenney Nevins District are described below.

Site

Site is the relationship between a building and landscape elements of a property. It includes lot size; the orientation of a building to the street; a building's setback from the street or sidewalk; the location of entrances, driveways, and walkways; and the layering of elements such as porches, hedges, and fences between a building façade and the public way.



The George Waldo House (1825; 233 Lawrence St.) is enhanced by a layering of site elements—street trees, sidewalk, stone wall, an elaborate front porch, and projecting entrance bay—that creates a rich interface between the building and its environment.

Setting

Setting includes the physical and visual relationships between a building and surrounding development, including building type and use (residential, commercial, industrial), appearance (style, materials, design), and age. Setting also includes geographic qualities such as lot sizes; urban, suburban, or rural location; type of adjacent roadways; and topography. Visual prominence of the property is another factor.



The fronts of the commercial buildings on Hampshire Street are dramatically different from their back view on Osgood Street. The steep grade change and the adjacent mill buildings down below give a whole new perspective.



At the intersection of Pleasant and Charles streets, the commanding Civil War Memorial is set off by a small grassy park and granite block walls. The Searles Building forms a complementary architectural backdrop.

Changes in elevation and an irregular web of streets at the intersection of Osgood, Lawrence, and Charles streets are integrated by terracing of the land, granite retaining walls, and well-designed buildings that take advantage of highly visible building sites.

Building Form and Massing

Form and massing refer to the basic shape(s) of a structure, its overall size, and the arrangement of its parts. Every architectural style has a signature geometry—from the simple boxy forms of early 19th century and Colonial Revival houses and many industrial and commercial buildings, to combinations of multiple building shapes that are characteristic of Victorian and Jacobethan styles. The massing of a building in relation to its neighbors is important to forming a harmonious and interesting streetscape, affecting rhythm, continuity of street edges, and the shape of the skyline.



This utilitarian late 19th century warehouse on Union Street is as simple as possible—one highly efficient rectangular shape and no ornament to spare.



The highly articulated volume of the Searles Building (1904; 41 Pleasant St.) consists of three gabled, connected wings elaborated with a variety of wall and roof projections and lavish trimwork.

Scale

Scale refers to the relationship between the size of a building and something else—its surroundings, its individual architectural components, or human beings. Scale is important for establishing a unified architectural context; the right scale keeps disproportionate buildings from overwhelming their neighbors and passersby.

The perception of scale can be influenced by breaking up the massing of a large building (forming the building of multiple smaller volumes, instead of one large mass), setting back the upper stories of a building that is significantly taller than its neighbors, or breaking down large facades into smaller (more human-sized) components. Individual architectural elements (such as a sign or new picture/storefront windows) can be out of scale—too large or too small—for a particular building, and thus appear discordant.



The contrast between the ample, four-story mass of the Odd Fellows Building and its small one-story neighbor on Hampshire Street is incongruous.

Rhythm

Rhythm is created by recurrent patterns such as the spacing between buildings and the distance between building facades and the street (site setbacks). It is also manifested in the repetition of building forms, patterns of fenestration (window and door openings), and architectural details along a streetscape. On an individual building, the placement of windows often follows an ordered pattern, although that is not true for certain picturesque architectural styles that delight in asymmetry. Entrances, porches, and bay windows in particular will enliven flat facades and provide a human-scaled rhythm along the street.



Lining Gleason Street is a row of houses built at roughly the same time (ca. 1884–1906), with similar setbacks and spacing. A consistent, 2½ story building form with similar proportions, arrangement of entrances and bay windows, and gable roofs marches down the street.

Proportion

Proportion is the ratio between height and width; it can be applied to the shape of spaces between buildings, the shape of a building facade, and the dimensions of a building's components (such as windows). From ancient Greece through the Renaissance and the early 20th century, extensive studies have been made to determine the ideal proportions. The “golden section”—a ratio of approximately 5 to 8—is one well-known standard for visual harmony. Historic buildings are typically more vertical in orientation than modern (post-World War II) structures.



Central Fire Station (1899; 24 Lowell St.) balances its general horizontal orientation with a vertical tower of approximately equal dimension.



This window at the Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) demonstrates the typical vertical proportions of windows and other architectural elements in historic buildings.

Relationship of Materials and Textures

The handling of materials and textures is distinctive in most architectural styles and periods of construction, representing aesthetic taste and the available technology of the day. The inherent properties of historic materials such as stone, brick, wood, stucco, and glass affect their detailing (the way they are joined together), color, and texture, and provide a richness and dimension that are often missing from modern materials.

A combination of materials and textures is characteristic of historic buildings. Layers of details such as corner boards, gable returns, brackets, decorative shingles, window sash and trim add texture, light, and shadow, and individualize the buildings.



The beautifully composed porch of the George Waldo House (1825; 233 Lawrence Street) features fluted Ionic columns, modillion brackets at molded cornices, and a roof balustrade.



This detail of the Masonic Lodge (1851/1906; 275 Broadway) exemplifies the combination of materials, textures, and ornament found throughout this richly articulated building.

Street Edges

Cohesive street edges provide a physically attractive and psychologically comfortable sense of enclosure along a street. Architectural continuity in the Historic District is established most notably by buildings of similar height (2½ stories is typical), orientation (facades parallel to the street), and setback (structures typically stand close to the street or sidewalk edge). The spacing between buildings in the District is relatively close, and streetscape features such as fences and walls, landscaping, street lights, and curb and sidewalk materials tend to reinforce the continuity of the street edge.

New construction should reinforce and continue the street walls and emphasize pedestrian-oriented design, an important part of the historic character of the District.



Houses of various styles along Park Street form a continuous and inviting street edge through regular setbacks and spacing, and through the connecting sidewalk, hedges, and street trees.



A 19th century photograph shows lines of buildings framing both sides of Broadway. This pattern creates a cohesive and active street edge, which tends to encourage pedestrian activity.

Views and the Importance of Roof Edges

The hilly terrain of the District allows multiple views of a property, including not only the usual close-up views, but also medium and long range views across the District. Many buildings that are geographically distant from each other on the ground can be viewed together on the skyline—a perspective that should be carefully considered during design.

Roof edges are particularly important—the top of the Searles Building, for example, can be seen from many unexpected places in the District, and the towers found on numerous buildings in the District take on particular significance



The curve of Hampshire Street provides a fishbowl view of many small-scale commercial buildings along its south side, which are anchored by the contrasting mass of the Odd Fellows Building across the street.



The Red Tavern (1900; 5 Pleasant St.) is distinguished by its multiple intersecting and overlapping gables, punctuated by decorative chimneys. The building is easily visible from all four sides.



The Methuen Co. Mills complex on Osgood Street (1826–1882) has a remarkably elaborate roof edge, with decorative cornices, mansard roofs, dormers, towers, and smokestacks.

Specific Guidelines

Recommendations for the treatment of individual architectural elements and special design conditions are detailed below. These are often flexible, with a range of alternatives possible.

Accessibility

Federal and state laws require accessibility to public buildings for persons with disabilities. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board supply both overall goals and specific building requirements for handicapped access. This can be particularly tricky to achieve in an existing building.

Fortunately, historically significant buildings and districts are given some leeway in meeting the accessibility requirements: alternative methods of access may be allowed if the standard requirements would require alterations that threaten or destroy the historic character of a building. Nonetheless, an attempt must be made to provide equal access for all, and many creative and elegant solutions are possible to minimize visual impact on the building. For example, where space is available, manipulating the ground plane to slope gently up to an entrance will minimize intrusive ramps and railings.



Universal access to the Central School (1904/24; 10 Ditson Pl.) is neatly provided at one of its major entrances. A brick wall conceals the upper ramp, repeating the materials and planar forms of the building and minimizing the more cluttered effect of lengthy railings.

Additions

Many historic buildings have been expanded over time to accommodate additional occupants or uses, or to update the style of the original structure. In order to respect the architectural significance of buildings in the Historic District, new additions should be designed to complement the existing structure and to avoid obscuring, damaging, destroying, or overwhelming the character-defining features of the historic property.

Additions should typically be subordinate to the existing building in size and scale. The composition of the addition (placement on the site, size, scale, materials, distribution of windows and doors, degree of ornamentation) should harmonize with existing patterns on the building and on the streetscape.

The scale and proportions of an addition should ordinarily be similar to the original building, while smaller-scale elements (such as trim detailing and ornament) may be handled differently.



(above) A large addition on the Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) is sited at the back of the property and uses the scale, shapes, window patterns, and ornament of the original building in a contemporary way.

(below) A lively Queen Anne tower and porch were added to a simple Greek Revival-style house (ca. 1840; 266 Broadway). Although dramatic in visual impact, the proportions, materials, and detailing of the additions complement the original design.

Code Requirements

Mandated code requirements include seismic protection, lead paint and asbestos abatement, and energy efficiency. Careful planning is needed to minimize alterations to the historic appearance of a building. Existing historic features that may be impacted by code requirements should be carefully identified and evaluated before retrofitting work is undertaken. Alterations should be as inconspicuous as possible.

Constructed before heating, air conditioning, and insulation were so readily available and effective, many historic buildings were designed with inherent energy-conserving features such as cupolas, shutters, transoms, porches, and plantings that are still functional today. These low-technology elements should be kept in service wherever possible, to minimize alterations to historic fabric and to take advantage of existing sustainable design.



Destruction by fire of the main house at the Tenney estate (Greycourt, 1890; 37 Pleasant St.) meant the loss of not only an individually significant building, but also an integral part of the estate complex and a prominent element in Methuen's skyline.

Demolition and Removal

The loss of buildings in an historic district often results in jarring visual gaps, and incremental losses of historic properties have a cumulative damaging effect on the overall character of the District. The proposed demolition of the Nevins Home for the Aged on Broadway was the original impetus for creation of the Searles Tenney Nevin Historic District, but other losses have scarred the District since then.

Demolition of an historic structure in the District is neither recommended nor typically approved, unless required for public safety. When a new building or structure will replace an existing building or structure, the post-demolition condition and appearance of the property shall be reviewed by the Historic District Commission in conjunction with a request for demolition.

Dormers, Cupolas, and Skylights

Dormers, cupolas, and skylights have a dramatic effect on the roofline of a building, and help define this important edge. Existing elements of this type should be retained where feasible. New dormers should be small in scale, not extend to the outside building walls, be placed on secondary facades where possible, and correspond to the form and style of other architectural features on the building. New, low-profile skylights should be placed on secondary facades (not facing the street), and use a finish color that blends with the roof material.



The dormers and slate roof of the Tenney Shoe Factory (1868; 2 Charles St.) are among the few original design features remaining on this historic building. Their decorative detailing highlights this very visible property.



A delicately detailed cupola and terra cotta cresting on the Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) crown the voluminous building below.

Entrances and Porches

Entrances are typically focal points for building facades, and historic features such as porches, steps, railings, and door hoods should always be retained. Wood is the historic and preferred repair/replacement material for entryway elements such as porch floors and posts, railings, brackets, and other ornamental trim. Steps should be repaired or replaced in-kind, matching historic configurations and materials.

New openings in existing walls should be avoided, along with modifying the size and design of original door openings to accommodate stock replacements. Transoms, sidelights, and the arrangement of doors (single- or double-leaf) should be retained.

Historic porches should remain open where possible, or be enclosed with sensitivity to historic proportions, materials, and elements. New porches should be consistent with the historic style of the building.



The George Waldo House (1825; 233 Lawrence St.) has one of the most elaborate entrances in the Historic District, layering a porch with Ionic columns, bracketed cornice, and carved balustrade onto a three-story projecting bay surmounted by a bracketed pediment.



(left) Tucked into a corner of an elaborate commercial building, this entrance to the Masonic Lodge (1851/1901; 275 Broadway) features a porch with sturdy Doric columns supporting a carved entablature and balustrade.

(right) This otherwise plain Victorian duplex (ca. 1870s; 10-12 Lowell St.) is embellished with a decoratively bracketed hood that spans the paired doorways.



(left) Memorial Music Hall (1899-1909; 192 Broadway) is entered through a high-style classical doorway above a formal stone stairway.

(right) The beautifully carved railing at a back stairway of the Red Tavern (1900; 5 Pleasant St.) brings the building solidly to the ground, and dramatically manipulates light and shadow.

Intrusions

Occasionally, prior to establishment of the Historic District, new buildings were constructed that are incompatible with the overall character of the District and do not contribute to its significance. These intrusions may be exceptional because of their inappropriate scale, orientation to the street, materials, or style. Improvements that will make these structures more harmonious with the historic character of the District are encouraged.



These two mid-20th century commercial buildings (272 and 276 Broadway) break the cohesive patterns of the Historic District in their low height and utilitarian designs. The building on the right is also set at an angle to the sidewalk, rather than parallel to it, further disrupting the street edge.



The box-like commercial building at 193 Broadway (late 20th century) relies on oversize graphics for visual distinction. Its massing, façade composition, materials, and adjacent parking lot detract from the rhythm and historic articulation of the streetscape.

Lighting and Streetscape Furnishings

Lighting, benches, trash cans, and other elements on the street edge provide a fine level of detail that can enhance or diminish the character of the District. Their rhythm, size, scale, materials, and style must be carefully considered in relation to the building and to the streetscape.

Original and early light fixtures are unique architectural features and should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Historically-accurate fixtures that match the period of the building are recommended; simple and unobtrusive modern styles are also appropriate. Black or dark green are usually the most appropriate finish colors. The style and location of light fixtures and other streetscape elements should be organized and coordinated to minimize clutter and to respect building entrances and other important design features of the street edge.

The quality, intensity, and distribution of illumination provided by new light fixtures are significant to the night-time appearance of a property or streetscape. Focused down-lighting of buildings and structures is preferred; spillover of light beyond the property line should be avoided. The lamp (light bulb) should be fully shielded inside the fixture to prevent glare and overspill. A low-output fixture with a light quality equivalent to warm incandescent is recommended.

Illumination of signage in the Historic District is regulated by *The Methuen Sign Guide*, which should be consulted for specific requirements.



(left) The scale and style of this period light fixture complement the large forms and high-style design of the Searles Building and its granite retaining walls.

(right) This new light pole at the Methuen Co. Mills complex on Osgood Street is clearly modern in style, but its simple forms and minimalist detailing provide an attractive contrast to the historic buildings.

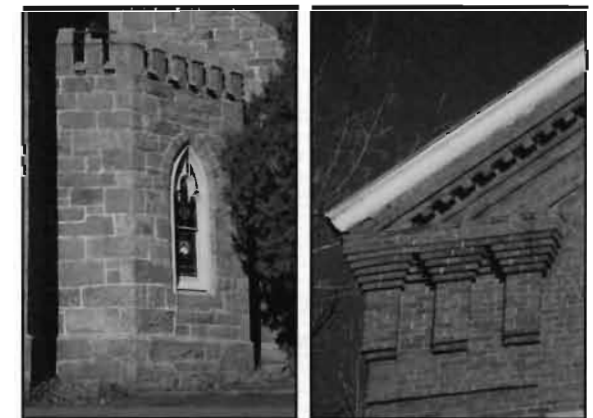


New seating, bollards, light poles, trash cans, and bicycle racks at the rear entrance to the Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) are constructed of natural wood and black metal.

Masonry

Masonry—in the form of brick, stone, and stucco—is one of the most prevalent building materials in the Historic District, and is characteristic of industrial and institutional buildings here. While these materials are ordinarily very durable, good maintenance procedures are required, and occasionally replacement or patching of materials is needed.

The joints in masonry construction comprise a surprisingly large part of the total surface area of a wall, and therefore make a significant contribution to the appearance of a masonry surface. When repointing brick and stone walls, extreme care must be taken when cutting out old mortar to avoid damaging adjacent masonry units.



(left) The fine stonework at the First Church Congregational (1855; 30 Pleasant St.) includes roughly-coursed granite ashlar (squared blocks), voisoirs (wedge-shaped stones over the arched windows), and crenellation at the roof edge.

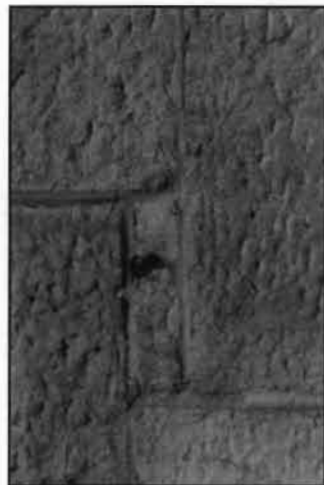
(right) The Old Town Hall (1853; 290 Broadway) has a beautifully detailed cornice with brick corbelling (a series of projecting brick courses) built up at both the horizontal and raking eaves. This ornamentation uses light and shadow to create a bold textural contrast to the planar surfaces below.

Match the existing joint width and the existing profile of the joint (e.g., convex, concave, sloped). Do not smear mortar on the surface of adjacent brick or stone. New mortar must match adjacent historic mortar in composition, color, and texture, to avoid a patchwork look on historic facades. Physical damage can also result from an improper mortar recipe. Until the late 19th century, most mortars were lime-based and relatively soft; stronger modern mortars contain cement and can pull old bricks apart. (See the National Park Service's "Preservation Brief #2, Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings.")

Original materials should be preserved wherever possible. Paint, sealants, or other coatings should not be applied to masonry surfaces, as they can affect the ability of the material to breathe and thus may trap moisture inside the walls. Sandblasting and other abrasive cleaning techniques should be avoided altogether, to prevent changing the historic texture of exterior walls and to preserve the hard, water-proof, exterior surface of brick. Existing stucco should be repaired or patched with a mixture that matches the original in color and texture; modern, resin-based stuccos should be avoided.



Selective repointing with a brighter color mortar makes the repair work highly conspicuous. Such a patch not only detracts from the quality of the original brickwork, but also can spoil the overall design effect. (Memorial Music Hall, 192 Broadway)



At the base of the Old Town Hall (1853; 290 Broadway), the granite foundation exhibits an almost modern, abstract composition of masonry sizes and textures, framed by crisp, historic mortar joints.

Modern Equipment

Modern utility, HVAC, and communications equipment located on the outside of a building—including air conditioners, heating units, antennas, satellite dishes, propane tanks, and utility meters—should be as small and inconspicuous as possible. These accoutrements should be located on the back (preferred) or side walls or roofs, as far as possible from the principal façade(s). Equipment should be painted or otherwise finished (or concealed) to blend with adjacent surfaces. Equipment on the ground should be screened with fencing or plantings.



Mechanical equipment added to the rooftop of the old St. Monica Rectory (1922; 231 Broadway) is concealed with a railing that blends with the Colonial Revival style of the building, greatly minimizing its visibility.

New Construction

Like additions to existing buildings, the construction of new free-standing buildings can radically alter the historic appearance of a structure or streetscape. The rhythm and form of the existing streetscape should be enhanced by repetition of critical elements such as front and side setbacks; orientation of the building to the street; the pattern of building entrances; and the typical height, massing, and materials of surrounding buildings. The roof edge should be carefully designed as a positive contribution to the skyline.

Reinforcing a strong street edge with a palpable sense of enclosure is vitally important in the Historic District. On Broadway, for example, where there are many gaps in the historic streetscape, new construction should reflect the prevailing 2½ story building height, shallow to moderate setback from the street, and active pedestrian edge that characterize the historic patterns of the street.



The recent Methuen Cooperative Bank (1964; 243 Broadway) exemplifies a clearly modern but traditionally-styled new building. In the location of its front entrances near the street and in its massing, height, and materials, the design of this building is consistent with others in the District. The building reinforces the historic street edge and encourages pedestrian activity.

Outbuildings

Historic outbuildings such as sheds, barns, carriage houses, and early garages are not common in the District, and should be retained wherever possible. Their presence illuminates details of life in the past that are often overlooked. Any new outbuilding should be appropriately sized, scaled, and located to complement the primary building on the site, and to minimize its impacts on landscape features of the property and on nearby lots.



The very well-preserved carriage house at the Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) is appropriately set at the back of the property and recalls earlier methods of transportation.



This utilitarian barn is attached to the back of the Federal-period Carleton/Johnson House (1811; 8 Ditson Pl.).

Parking Lots and Driveways

Most of the Historic District was built before the advent of automobiles, with pedestrians, horse-drawn vehicles, and streetcar traffic in mind. The introduction of parking lots and driveways to accommodate cars therefore can seriously impact the character of an historic property and the quality of historic streetscapes. While the car is usually given predominance today, parking areas and driveways in the Historic District should be as small as possible in size, and located to the rear (preferable) or side of a property. The view of cars should not dominate the view of historic buildings on the site, or detract from the sense of building enclosure on the streetscape.

Landscaping should be used to minimize views of vehicles, and if necessary to maintain a continuous edge along the sidewalk where parking areas are near the street. The amount of pavement should always be minimized.

Hard-packed gravel was popular for driveway (and street) surfaces before the 20th century, and should be considered for use on new or replacement driveways. Asphalt with stone dust or gravel rolled into the surface is an acceptable alternative. Brick or granite pavers are encouraged for walkways as well as driveways, while concrete or asphalt paving units that simulate brick or stone are usually not appropriate. Granite curbing is historically appropriate at street edges.



This well-designed parking lot adjacent to the George Waldo House (1825; 233 Lawrence St.) features stone walls, historically appropriate lighting, and a landscaped island that give appropriate scale, texture, and detail to what is usually an intrusive element in the historic landscape.

At this strip shopping plaza on Broadway, a large parking lot is set right at the street edge, with no effective mitigation for the obtrusive expanse of pavement.



Paint Colors and Painting

Each architectural style has distinctive patterns of paint color that were related to technology, availability, and fashion of the period. Historic buildings therefore tend to look their best when painted in colors appropriate to their period of construction. Most historic paint schemes feature different colors for the body (main sheathing material), trim (all other woodwork), and the window sash and doors.

The Historic District Commission does not specify paint colors, but it does review and approve color selections. Subdued colors that are historically accurate for the style of the building are recommended. Color schemes based on historic documentation (such as physical examination of successive paint layers on a building's surfaces) are highly encouraged. Brick and stone on historic buildings should never be painted or coated with a sealant.

Many paint companies offer lines of historic colors with a variety of choices available for particular periods of construction. Two excellent sources of information on understanding and choosing appropriate exterior paint colors are referenced in the Appendix to this guidebook.

Paint removal must be carefully done to avoid damaging the wood underneath, and also to avoid environmental hazards from dust and lead paint. Good quality preparation is essential to achieving a long paint life.

Roofs

The roof edge is often an underappreciated aspect of historic buildings and a neglected component of new buildings. Roofs and cornices help create a rich silhouette against the sky, however, and form a transition between solidly enclosed space and open air. Of course, the roof also has an essential functional role to play in keeping the building weather-tight.

Elements such as gabled roofs, eaves, projecting cornice lines, step backs in building height, towers, dormers, and chimneys provide human scale and interest at the tops of buildings in the Historic District. These topographical variegations should be retained, and the scale of new elements at the roof edge should match historic elements.

The historic roof shape, slope, color, and materials are integral to the character of a building. The texture and color of historic roof materials should be preserved or replaced in kind where possible. Existing slate and terra cotta tiles should be retained, repaired, or replaced in kind, preserving color, dimensions, and decorative patterns. Repair is often more cost-effective than replacement in the long term.

Chimneys form a vertical counterpoint to horizontal roof and building forms; they should not be shortened, changed in configuration, or removed. Decorative clay chimney pots and iron cresting at ridge lines should be retained.



Nevins Memorial Library (1883; 305 Broadway) has a richly elaborated roofline, with a corbelled brick cornice, copper gutters and flashing, decorative chimneys, slate roof tiles, terra cotta cresting at the top ridge, and a copper-clad cupola.



Visible from many parts of the Historic District, the lively roofline of the Searles Building (1904; 41 Pleasant St.) features projecting parapets on the gable ends, gabled dormers, finials, roof balustrades, and striking chimneys, using the same play of shapes, textures, and colors that characterizes the walls below.

Shutters and Awnings

Window shutters were not common until the mid-19th century. If shutters are appropriate to the building, they should be retained and repaired. If replacement is necessary, shutters should be made of wood and should match the originals in proportions and style; new shutters installed where none presently exist should be consistent with the period of the building. Vinyl or metal shutters are typically not approved for historic structures.

Shutters should appear to be functional—that is, they should be the same shape, height, and combined width as the window sash. They should be attached to the casing of the window, not nailed to the building wall; the slats should point up when the shutters are open. Existing shutter hardware (such as S-shaped hooks to hold the shutters open) should be preserved, even if the original shutters are missing.

Awnings may be allowed if appropriate to the style of a building. Canvas is the preferred material, although alternative materials may be used if available in compatible textures and colors. The color and overall design must be compatible with the period and style of a building.



Historic wood shutters on the Elbridge Clark House (ca. 1875; 10 Park St.) provide an important visual accent to the window on the exterior, and allow for control of ventilation and light on the interior.

Siding and Trim

Wood is the most common siding material on residential buildings in the Historic District, and was used on a number of commercial buildings and even a few industrial structures as well. Historic clapboard or shingle siding should be retained whenever possible; deteriorated material should be repaired or replaced in-kind, matching the dimensions, texture, patterns, and detailing of the original. Preserve areas of decorative shingling or panels. Under no circumstances should historic trim and other decorative features—including sill boards, corner boards, pilasters, eave returns, cornices, brackets, and window and door trim—be removed.

Adding new siding over existing often results in the removal of historic trim and an inappropriate receding of the windows into the wall plane. In both cases, the façade design is severely compromised.

Synthetic siding materials—particularly vinyl and aluminum—are not appropriate in the Historic District, and are normally not approved. Installing such materials over wood siding can cause the historic material to decay, and can cause damage to or loss of historic detail.

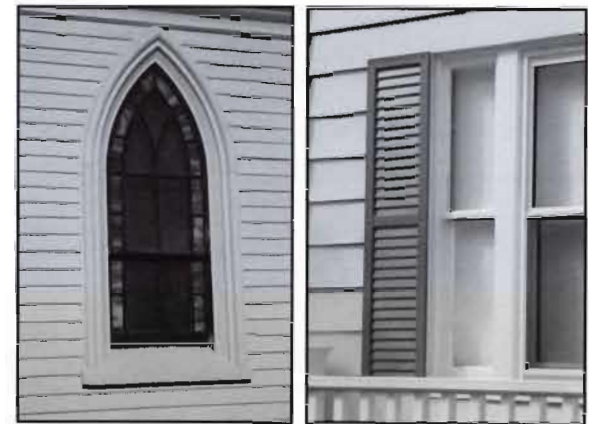
Cement fiber-board siding may be acceptable as replacements for clapboard if their dimensions and texture match historic material. Plastic trim boards may be acceptable in limited situations, such as where wood trim boards are in contact with the ground.

The removal of non-historic siding materials such as asbestos shingles and aluminum and vinyl siding is encouraged.



(left) Handsome wood trim articulates the corners and eaves of the Greek Revival style, Henry Preston House (ca. 1840; 17 Park St.).

(right) The bay window at the Elbridge Clark House (ca. 1875; 10 Park Street) is characteristically Italianate in its bracketed eaves, carved wood trim, louvered shutters, and angled shape.



(left) A series of bold round moldings frames this pointed-arch window at the First Baptist Church (1869; 24 Park St.).

(right) New siding over old has caused the original window to recede into the wall rather than make a positive design statement. The historic window trim and sash have been removed, further diminishing the character of this building (Beverly, Mass.).



(left) An unusual array of carvings on the entrance vestibule accents the otherwise plain and traditional façade of the Federal style Carleton/Johnson House (1811; 8 Ditson Pl.).

(right) The Greek Revival house at 23 East Street (ca. 1850) displays a typical period doorway, with full height sidelights, a rectangular transom, and flat pilasters carrying a simple entablature with molded cornice.



This detail of the Baptist Church Parsonage (1877; 32 Park St.) shows a handsome and well-preserved combination of clapboards, corner boards, entablature, and bracketed eaves in a typical Italianate design.

Signs

Signs can complement an historic building and streetscape, or they may detract from historic character and produce visual clutter. The scale, size, shape, color, and materials of building signs are important elements of their design, and should harmonize with their historic setting. Wood is usually the most appropriate material, although some wood-like materials may be permitted; raised or carved letters are recommended. The number and placement of signs should be carefully coordinated with the building and with existing signs in the vicinity. Architectural features should not be obscured by signs; neither should signs compete with the building for attention.

Detailed guidelines for sign design and installation are described in *The Methuen Sign Guide*, which is available from the Historic District Commission.



(left) The design and materials of the new, free-standing sign for the Nevins Memorial Library (305 Broadway) harmonize with the setting and design of the historic building.

(right) The sign on the new CVS store on Broadway is appropriately located in the traditional sign band location and constructed of wood, with carved letters, subdued colors, and simple down-lighting.



This well-proportioned, modern sign at 46 Hampshire Street (Methuen Company Store; ca. 1860) is simple and attractive, with classical lettering and a decorative metal support. It is appropriately mounted over the storefront windows.

Storefronts

Methuen's commercial architecture is unusual, without the continuous blocks of low, linear masonry buildings that characterize similarly-sized communities of the same period. At one time, numerous 2½ story, wood-frame commercial buildings lined Broadway, but these have largely disappeared. Many of the residential buildings surviving along Broadway have been adapted for commercial use without significant alterations to their facades.

Hampshire Street contains a cluster of commercial buildings still in commercial use, and varied in age, style, design, and architectural integrity. Many of these structures have been drastically altered. The Odd Fellows Building is the District's sole example of a traditional brick commercial building with storefronts on the ground level and offices above.

Where commercial buildings have been greatly altered, inappropriate siding materials and other detracting elements (such as plate glass windows) should be removed. Surviving historic storefront elements should be preserved

and enhanced. Renovations using historic patterns of materials and design are encouraged, based either on physical evidence or documentation of the historic design, or on period designs for similar buildings.

New work should be compatible with the proportions, scale, form, and directional orientation (vertical or horizontal) of adjacent historic buildings and the established streetscape. Consistent building height and setbacks are particularly critical to maintaining a cohesive commercial district. The rhythm of entrances and display windows along a street create an active pedestrian edge that helps attract customers.

Traditional canvas awnings are recommended for storefronts, with flat, sloped tops and free-hanging skirts. Awnings should not be uplit from below. Signage should complement the building design in size and form, and should be judiciously applied to avoid obscuring the building and its detailing.



The recessed entrance to 20-24 Hampshire Street (1915) retains its original three-part configuration, wood doors, and transom openings. Any future renovations to the flanking storefronts or upper floor should capitalize on these distinctive features.



One of the best preserved facades on Hampshire Street, this small storefront at 4-6 Hampshire Street retains historic materials and the traditional composition of a recessed center entrance with flanking display windows.



This recent but historically appropriate storefront in Salem, Mass. features wood base panels, large storefront windows, recessed entrances, and a sign band with a bracketed cornice.



These historic images of Methuen in the 19th and early 20th century illustrate typical storefront designs that provide human scale and texture, encourage pedestrian activity, and are still appropriate today.

Walls and Fences

Stone walls—lining the big estates and forming retaining walls throughout the hilly terrain—are an extraordinary asset of this Historic District; they are complemented by a distinctive array of iron fences that define boundaries but allow views through. These historically and architecturally significant walls and fences should be maintained and preserved wherever possible.

New walls and fences should ordinarily not obscure views of buildings from a public way. New designs should be compatible in scale, material, proportion, and style with both the existing building and the streetscape. Traditional materials such as wood, cast or wrought iron, and granite are recommended; vinyl fences are not appropriate.

Fences along the front property line should not exceed 42 inches in height. Where privacy or a sense of enclosure at the sidewalk is needed, landscaping such as evergreen hedges should also be considered.



(left) Largely hidden from public view, this dry-laid retaining wall between Hampshire and Osgood streets displays beautiful stonework in an informal variety of patterns.

(right) The very formal granite walls around the Searles estate feature variegated bands of masonry and a crenellated top that produce an interesting texture and a rhythmic play of light and shadow.



The ornate scrollwork on the fence to the Tenney estate (Greycourt; 1890; 37 Pleasant St.) is a delicate contrast to the flanking granite block walls.



(left) The decorative metal railing that surmounts this stone wall on Osgood Street provides a light, screen-like touch at the top edge.

(right) The granite retaining wall at the Page Building (271 Broadway) is topped by a plain iron picket fence, which transforms into elaborate corner posts.

Windows and Doors

Windows are one of the single most important elements on a building's façade, and one of the most threatened. The distribution of windows and doors across a façade is a key defining architectural feature, and provides a rhythm to the building and to the streetscape. Keep original openings on principal facades (visible from public ways) and avoid adding new openings or blocking in existing openings.

Wood window sash is virtually universal on historic buildings in the District. These existing windows should be repaired whenever possible, and not replaced.

Repairing existing wood windows can be as cost effective in the long run as replacement windows (which typically have much shorter life spans), and specialists in this field can be found nearby. Wood repairs, weather stripping, new glazing (the putty between the glass panes and the wood muntins and sash), and good quality storm windows are very effective in improving weathertightness and energy efficiency, while also retaining the historic materials and design of an existing building. (For more information, see the National Park Service's "Preservation Brief #9, The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows.")

If a window is beyond repair, replacements must be based on physical, photographic, or documentary evidence. The replacement must match the material and design of the existing window— including the trim (molding and sill), casing, window type, sash dimensions and proportions, and the number and configuration of panes of glass. Retention of the existing frame and sill, and replacement only of the window sash, is strongly preferred.

Single-paned, historically accurate, true divided light windows are most appropriate on historic buildings. Simulated divided lights and snap-in muntins may be approved in some instances.

Maintenance or in-kind replacement of wood windows is strongly encouraged, although aluminum-clad wood sash may be permitted. Vinyl windows are not appropriate in the District. They depart from critical historic materials, and require blocking down of the original opening to accommodate stock sash elements. Unlike wood sash, which can be modified in the field to fit minor variations in window openings, vinyl sash require adjustable panning and blocking to take up the slack. The result is a more cluttered window with less glass area than historic sash.

Metal storm windows should have a finish color that is appropriate to an historic building—either painting an existing galvanized metal storm sash the same color as the primary sash, or, for new storm sash, requesting a factory-applied black finish for most 19th century architectural styles, and off-white for Colonial Revival style buildings.

New window openings should be in proportion to the existing building and compatible with its style and materials. Large areas of glass disrupt the traditional proportions of wall to window area, and are usually not appropriate on historic buildings.

The multiple pieces of wood required for door construction allowed for considerable variation between different architectural styles. Original or early doors should be preserved and retained wherever possible; replacements should match the existing design and materials. Storm doors should obscure as little as possible of the primary door.

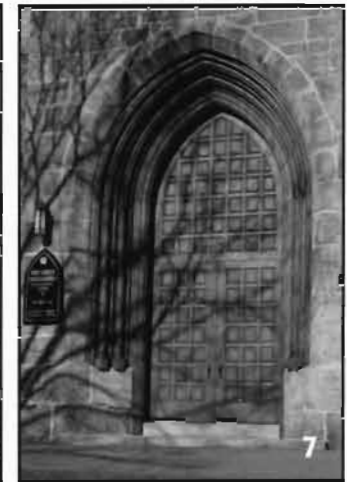


1. The rehabilitation of the Selden Worsted Mills Building (1919; 225 Broadway) involved the reproduction of multi-paned wood window sash that bring warmth, depth, and scale to the façade.

2. The historic 6 over 6 double-hung sash, wood frame and molding, and stone sill on the Corliss Building (1886; 270 Lawrence St.)—unobscured by storm sash—make a strong visual statement that is appreciable at eye level from the adjacent sidewalk.

3. This pair of 12 over 1 window sash at the Tenney Gatehouse (ca. 1830/1883; 37 Pleasant St.) is characteristic of the Queen Anne period in which the building was remodeled.

4. The modern Methuen Cooperative Bank (1964; 243 Broadway) is carefully detailed right down to the multi-paned wood window sash, molded wood cornice, and prominent sill, creating a sense of scale and texture that are necessary on new construction in an historic district.



5. The eight-panel wood door on St. Monica's Rectory (1922; 231 Broadway) is an integral part of an elaborate composition featuring leaded-glass sidelights and transom, and a columned porch.

6. At the basement of the Page Building (1879; 271 Broadway), the texture of a simple wood door with early or original hardware contrasts with the granite block foundation. The deep recess from the face of the stone provides strong shadow lines that are characteristic of historic buildings.

7. The main entrance to the First Church Congregational (1855; 30 Pleasant St.) is consistent with the high-style Gothic design of the building, featuring an intricately paneled wood door recessed inside a striking series of wood moldings.

Appendices

Glossary

Balustrade A railing system with upper and lower horizontal rails and short vertical elements (balusters).

Band course A projecting, horizontal element separating parts of a wall surface, especially in masonry construction.

Bay A regularly repeated unit of space on the facade of a building, often formed or suggested by dimensions of the structural framework.

Brick corbel A series of masonry courses, each stepping progressively outward from the face of a building to create a decorative element.

Casing The flat wood trim on the surface of the wall surrounding a window or door, often with bands of molding around the perimeter.

Corner board A flat trim board applied to an exterior corner of a wood-frame building.

Cornice Molded projections extending across the top of a wall, or forming the top element of a door or window frame.

Cresting An ornamental element at the top of a parapet or along a roof ridge, usually made of metal or occasionally of terra cotta.

Dormer A small structure that projects from a sloping roof, with a window in the vertical face

Eave The projection of a roof beyond the wall below; most often used to refer to the edge or underside of a roof.

End gable form A gable-roofed building with its primary façade on a short end wall usually facing the street (the roof ridge is perpendicular to the street).

Entablature A series of horizontal elements at the top of a wall; in classical architecture consisting of an architrave, frieze, and cornice.

Façade Any of the exterior faces of a building; often refers to the architectural front, which is distinguished from other walls by its degree of elaboration or the location of the principal entrance.

Fascia A flat horizontal band on a wall surface; often a plain element with simple molding at the top edge of a wall.

Fanlight A semicircular window over a door

Frieze board A flat horizontal band at the top of a wall, below the cornice.

Gable end A short end wall of a gable-roofed building, perpendicular to the ridge beam, which has a triangular shape at the top portion. An end gable structure is set with this wall facing the street; a side gable structure is set with this wall set perpendicular to the street.

Gable return The bottom corner of a raking cornice molding that turns inward towards the center of the wall in a horizontal direction.

Half-timbering A medieval building construction technique in which an exposed timber frame is infilled with plaster or brick, so that the timbers form a geometric pattern on the exterior.

Hip roof A roof that slopes inward from all four exterior walls, forming a pyramid.

Hood A projecting element that covers a wall opening such as a window or door; often supported by brackets at each end.

Joint The space between masonry units in a wall, usually filled with mortar to attach the units.

Light An individual pane of glass in a window or door.

Lintel A horizontal structural element in a wall that spans a window or door opening; in a masonry building, often distinguished by a contrasting material.

Mansard A roof with two slopes on each side, the lower slope typically being almost vertical.

Monitor A raised section at the top of a roof, usually with glazing in its vertical sides to allow illumination of the center of a building.

Muntin A secondary framing member that holds individual panes of glass within a window or glazed door.

Palladian window A three-part window unit with a wider center window usually having an arched top, flanked by a narrower rectangular window on each side.

Parapet The part of a vertical wall that extends above the adjacent roof.

Pediment The triangular gable end of a building, framed by a horizontal cornice and the raking (diagonal) cornices of the roof eaves, or a similar form used above a door or window.

Pilaster A vertical projection on a wall, usually rectangular in cross-section and often with a capital and base, that appears to be supporting building elements.

Pitch The slope of a building element in relation to the horizontal, especially in a roof.

Pointing The material with which joints in a masonry wall are filled. Also the process of placing mortar in a masonry joint as the units are laid up; repointing refers to removing an outer portion of deteriorated mortar and re-filling the joint with new mortar.

Rake board, raking cornice, raking course, raking molding A diagonal trim element following the slope of a gable or roof, where it meets an exterior wall.

Sash The perimeter frame of a window, including the horizontal rails and vertical stiles, that holds the glass panes; it may be movable or fixed.

Set back On a parcel of land, the distance between the street and the front of a building, or between a building and the side or back property lines. On a building, recessing elements (such as upper stories) back from the main wall plane.

Side gable form A gable-roofed building with its short end walls perpendicular to the street (the roof ridge is parallel to the street) and its primary façade on a long wall.

Sidelight A narrow rectangular window to the side of a door or wider window.

Soffit The exposed undersurface of an overhead element, such as an arch or roof eave.

Transom A window above a doorway, separated by a horizontal crossbar, or a secondary window similarly set above a larger window.

True divided-light sash A window with individual panes of glass separated by muntins.

“There’s a Difference”: Historic Districts and Historical Organizations in Methuen

Local historic districts are established by municipal ordinance pursuant to Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Historic District Commission is a local regulatory agency that administers design review and approval of most construction projects that require a building permit, and some that do not (e.g., exterior colors). The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District is Methuen’s only locally-designated historic district.



Masonic Lodge, 275 Broadway.

A National Register District is a federal designation under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides limited protection for a property if federal or state licenses, permits, or funding are involved. Methuen has three districts and 40 individual properties listed on the National Register (NR). The Searles Tenney Nevins District is not listed on the National Register as such. It does, however, contain some properties in two of the NR-listed districts (Pleasant-High Streets and Spicket Falls), and many properties that are individually listed within a National Register Multiple Resource Area.

The Methuen Historical Commission, established by the City under state enabling legislation (Chapter 40, Section 8d) in 1973, is a broad-based organization whose goals are to preserve, protect, and develop the historic and archaeological assets of the entire community. It has no regulatory powers, but rather works to educate the community and make recommendations to city government and the Massachusetts Historical Commission on issues affecting historic properties throughout the city. The Methuen Historical Commission also maintains a research collection of photographs, documents, and artifacts related to local history.

Founded in 1980, the Methuen Historical Society is a private organization founded, as it says, “for the purpose of preserving open space, historic sites and landmarks in the Town, and promoting public awareness of community’s rich heritage.” Complementing the public Historical Commission, the Society maintains the Tenney Gatehouse, hosts an exhibit there on local history, and holds many special events that benefit preservation efforts throughout the city.

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Warehouse, Union Street.