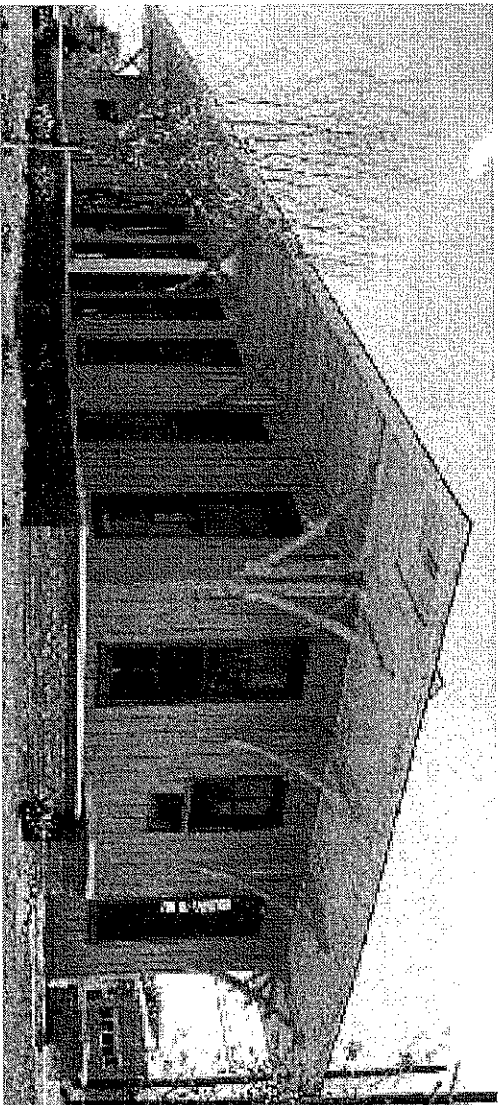


Old Decatur Historic District

Design Guidelines

October 2006




City of Decatur
Historic Preservation Commission

Acknowledgements

The Decatur Historic Preservation Commission would like to recognize the work of the Preservation Planning class of the Georgia State University's Heritage Preservation Program, city staff, and residents of the proposed Old Decatur Historic District in creating these design guidelines. The commission hopes that these recommendations will preserve the unique architectural and historic character of Old Decatur.

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Introduction

As one of the oldest neighborhoods within the city Decatur, Georgia, the district from here on referred to as "Old Decatur" represents many cross-sections of the city's evolution. As far back as 1982, when Decatur issued its "Development Plan, Proposal, and Policies for the Decatur Town Center", citizens were enthusiastic about the potential growth of downtown, but concerned about the future of the city center's one surviving residential neighborhood. The plan notes, "The citizens were sensitive to the one remaining residential area (North Candler and Sycamore Streets) in the downtown and sought its conservation. They looked for opportunities and guidelines for new residential development within the ring road, particularly in the area of Sycamore Street east of the Avondale MARTA Station."¹

In the 20+ years since the city's development plan, Old Decatur has continued to exist without design guidelines, maintaining its eclectic character with a minimum of unsympathetic structures. However, in recent years incompatible residential construction, coupled with increasing commercial pressure on the edges of the district, has prompted concerned residents to nominate Old Decatur as the city's fourth local historic district.

The Historic Preservation Commission and residents of Old Decatur in partnership with the Graduate students of Georgia State University's Heritage Preservation program developed these design guidelines to assist the city of Decatur in the continued preservation of the Old Decatur Historic District. The following proposed design guidelines will serve as a uniform set of criteria to evaluate any proposed changes within the Old Decatur district. Ultimately, these guidelines serve to protect the visual qualities of the district's historic and cultural resources.

The guidelines are available to aid neighborhood property owners who may be considering alterations, additions or new construction projects within the district. Additionally, they should be used by the Decatur Historic Preservation Commission in evaluating proposed alterations, additions, or demolitions to historic properties and new construction within the Old Decatur district. These guidelines will also assist property owners in understanding the unique historic character of the buildings and environment of the Old Decatur district. The guidelines should act as a guide to owners who are faced with decisions about repair, maintenance, rehabilitation and new construction.

The following design guidelines should not be viewed as rigid restrictions created to halt all change or to return the district to a prior historical period or style. Instead these guidelines should serve as standards that can guide neighborhood residents in sound design, repair, rehabilitation and preservation practices to reinforce and enhance the existing historic character of the Old Decatur Historic District.

¹ Decatur Square Development Team, Development Plan, Proposal, and Policies for the Decatur Town Center, May 1982, 12.

A few structures from this early era in the neighborhood's history still stand. The house at 218 Barry Street dates to 1855, and is considered "one of the oldest structures in DeKalb County."² Known as the "Stewart-Roland House", this structure was owned from 1855-1893 by county ordinary and state legislator Mr. John B. Stewart. According to research done in preparation for the nomination as a local historic district, the house was apparently moved 100 yards south on Barry Street in the late 19th century to its current location. The nomination quotes Sanders Roland recalling "a huge crew of workmen descended on our house. They loosened it from its foundation and brought in several big, long logs for rollers. With a strong mule pulling, several men guiding, and several others moving the rollers, they rolled the house down the way and put it on a new foundation on the lower lot."³

The town's first train depot was probably destroyed by General William Tecumseh Sherman's march through Georgia during the Civil War. A second depot was erected during reconstruction and a third erected in 1891. There is evidence that this second depot, which still stands along the tracks and East Howard Avenue today, was designed by the nationally celebrated architect Edmund G. Lind. Lind's work spans from the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Maryland to prominent Atlanta structures such as the Gwinnett County Courthouse and the homes of many of the city's prominent elite. Within Decatur itself, he designed the first Decatur Presbyterian Church (demolished in the 1950s) a school for Henry Hillyer (demolished), and the "cottage" residence of Colonel Milton A. Candler. The latter house stood at 142 North Candler where townhomes now reside within the district.⁴

With the installation of a new train depot in 1891 and Decatur's post-war economic recovery, commercial development began to spring up along East Howard Avenue with complements of residential construction along Barry Street, North Candler Street and Hillyer Place. Many of Old Decatur's existing residential historic structures were erected during this period of growth, as Decatur took on the status as a commuter suburb to Atlanta. Residents that could afford the fare could take the railroad to and from work in Atlanta.

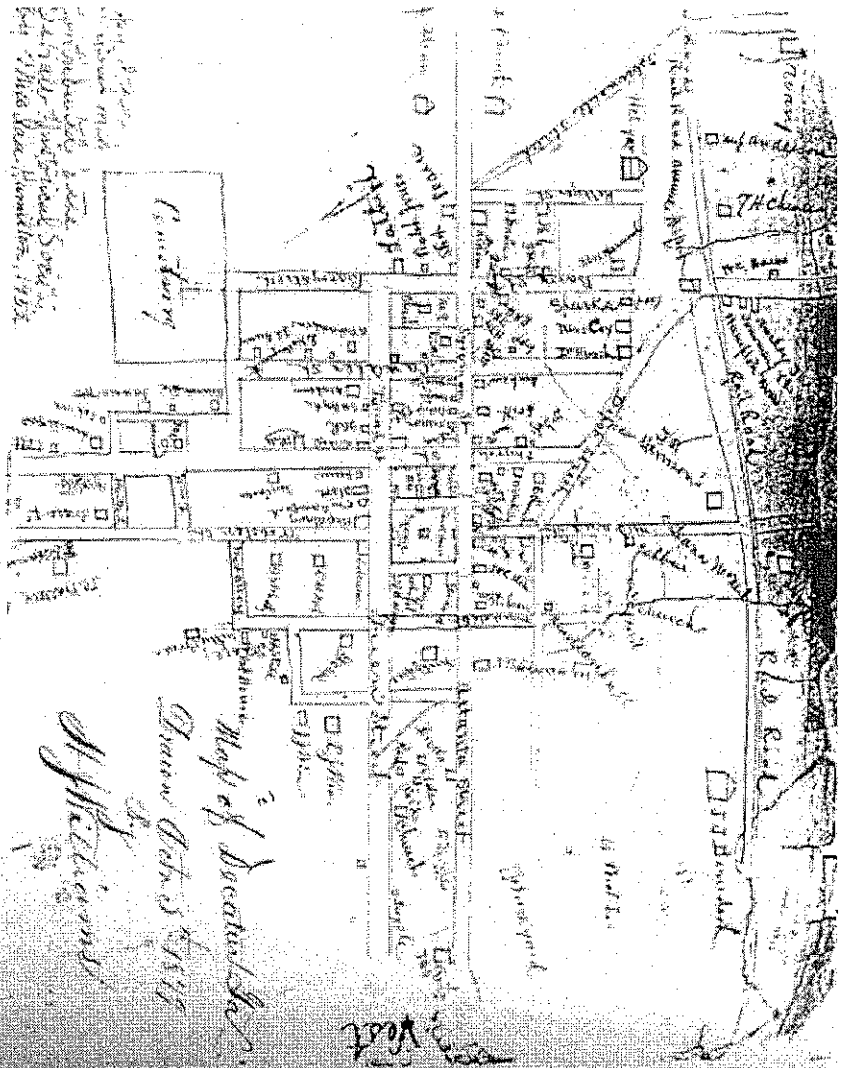
The namesake of Hillyer Place, originally called "Line Street" because it acted as the town line from 1823 to 1871, was Judge George Hillyer. As a veteran of both Fredericksburg and Gettysburg and a trustee of the University of Georgia, this well-known Atlanta judge had the honor of admitting future President Woodrow Wilson to the Georgia Bar. His home once stood at the corner of Hillyer Place and East Howard Avenue.

Over the course of the 20th century, Old Decatur remained remarkably stable for an area so close to a city center. From examination of plat maps and a 1911 Sanborn map, few property lines have been redrawn and a comparably small number of structures have been torn down. However, the history of the district goes beyond just the neighborhood's structures. Some current residents can trace their family ancestry back nearly 100 years within the neighborhood. As noted in the neighborhood's nomination form, many structures have been passed down through the generations and remain in the same family. The form mentions 220 North Candler Street, which is still owned by the Candler family. This house was located on Sycamore Street before both the Recreation Center and the Murphy Scott Cooper House that preceded it. The small home was moved to its current location on North Candler Street and stands out due to its large setback and orientation. Additionally, the two-story home at 214 Barry Street has been in the Enloe family since 1912 and 136 Barry Street has been in the Garrison family since 1915.

2. Karwoski, Mary. Old Decatur Historic District Nomination Form.
3. *Ibid*.
4. Mosier, Philip. "Decatur's Train Depot was Built by a Nationally Prominent Architect". Decatur Community Review, January 1996.

Old Decatur Historic Overview

"Old Decatur" developed along the stagecoach route between Atlanta and Augusta, now Sycamore Street, during the first half of the 19th century. The area, which lies along Sycamore Street, Hillyer Place, Sycamore Place, Barry Street, Pate Street, and North Candler Street, boasts an eclectic mix of historic structures that echo the neighborhood's long history. As the oldest residential neighborhood in the city, Old Decatur's past and present infrastructure are intricately tied to the history of the entire city. As the second oldest municipality within the metropolitan Atlanta region, Decatur was incorporated as a town on December 10, 1823, before even neighboring Atlanta, which was not founded as "Marthasville" until 1843. In fact, Marthasville's namesake, Martha Compton, once lived on Line Street (now Hillyer Place) within the district. James Diamond, a surveyor, platted Decatur on an orthogonal grid (two sets of lines perpendicular to each other). This is a traditional town pattern frequently found in the South.



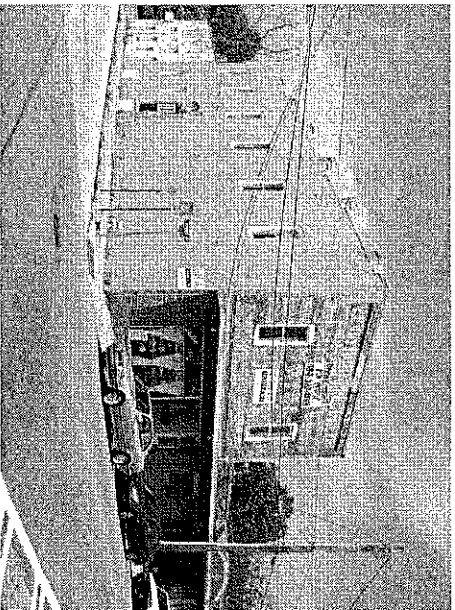
Drawn Map of Decatur - 1877

Originally a Native American trade route, the Sycamore Street stagecoach line passed along the northern border of the district. At the present site of the Sycamore Square Townhomes stood the "Midway" or "Halfway" Inn, which serviced travelers halfway on their journey from Chattanooga, Tennessee to Augusta, Georgia. With the introduction of the railroad through Decatur in 1833, a depot was built along the track at East Howard Avenue, moving the city's main transportation line from Old Decatur's northern border to the south. With the coming of the railroad, all older, slower modes of transportation were eventually abandoned and Sycamore Street lost most of its importance, though remained the city's main local east/west thoroughfare.

The residential areas of Sycamore, Hillier, Barry, and North Candler have remained residential, primarily single family homes with the exception of the Spanish Colonial Revival apartment building at 221 North Candler Street, erected in the mid- 1930s. Many homes on Sycamore were converted to multi-unit rentals in the 1950s and 1960s, but have since reverted back to single family dwellings. A small African-American community resided on Pate and on Barry north of Sycamore through the 1930s and 1940s as noted in the City Directories of the period.

Reflecting the stability of the neighborhood, the small commercial strip located along East Howard Avenue between North Candler Street and Hillier Place has contained some of Decatur's oldest businesses, such as the Decatur Veterinarian Hospital (308 East Howard Avenue) which dates to at least 1934 and the Dixie Marble and Granite Company which was in business at 318 East Howard from 1930 through the early 1950's. Of particular interest, is the former Palace Hotel (302 East Howard Avenue), built sometime between 1890 and 1911. By 1930, Lewis Seed Store occupied the building and remained there until the early 1960s when it became a print shop, a craft store, a doll hospital (1984) and a beauty parlor.

Site of Old Palace Hotel and Lewis Seed Store



The community landmark buildings of Old Decatur are an important part of the neighborhood's architectural, cultural, and historic character. They are freestanding and distinct from other structures in the neighborhood by their large scale and setback and were developed between 1891-1958. They tend to be more stylistic than the commercial buildings and were designed by architects. They are all located on or tie into Sycamore Street.

Though many homes in the district have long local lineage, the district has seen intrusions that jeopardize its character over the second half of the 20th century. During the 1970s, Sycamore Street homes, from the Square to Sant's Crossing, were threatened and disrupted by the construction of the MARTA underground rail line. The neighborhood rallied through a grassroots organization called "Save Old Sycamore" and was able to prevent a total loss of the neighborhood. Additionally, the completion of Commerce Drive from East Ponce De Leon Avenue to East Howard Avenue altered the character of the neighborhood with the construction of a four-lane road through its eastern border. Though these intrusions show that Old Decatur has not survived totally unscathed by unsympathetic development, the neighborhood today remains remarkably intact, full of colorful examples of both residential, commercial, and institutional architecture that span from the city's founding to the present.

Old Decatur – Residential Guidelines

The proposed Old Decatur Historic District is the city's oldest surviving residential neighborhood and with the exception of a few changes still maintains much of its historic character. Old Decatur's long and unique history is reflected in its residential character through the variety of styles and types of dwellings found throughout the district. Each individual street has its own distinct styles and types. Queen Anne houses can be found adjacent to Colonial Revival homes on Sycamore while Craftsmen bungalows are across the street from Folk Victorian Gabled Ells on Barry Street. Every street within the district reveals a wealth of information about the working class and affluent residents of one of the oldest residential areas in Decatur, both past and present. Despite the variety of types and styles, the neighborhood maintains a sense of cohesiveness through the presence of tree-lined sidewalks and similar massing, scale, and setback on each street.

The north-south running streets (Barry, North Candler, and Hillier Place) contain cottage house types and bungalows from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The historic homes located on these streets range in style from Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, Craftsman, to Colonial Revival with house types including gabled ells, Queen Anne cottages, New South Cottages, and bungalows. These types and styles are often found intermixed along the street. As one travels down the streets, front yards create a sense of visual continuity due to their similar depth and spacing. Setbacks range between approximately 15 and 30 feet. Adding to the visual continuity, the one-story houses are similar in mass and scale.

The 1943 Spanish Colonial Revival historic apartment building located on North Candler is a novel addition to the street. The building's style of brick parapets and Spanish tile roof add to the neighborhood's diverse character. While the apartment building's style of architecture and scale may be thought of as out of place in the district, it contributes through a similar setback as the street's single-family dwellings. Additionally, the apartments are distanced from the single-family homes by a side garden so not to overshadow their presence in the neighborhood. The apartment building continues the pedestrian-friendly nature of the neighborhood with its sidewalks and landscaping similar to single-family dwellings.

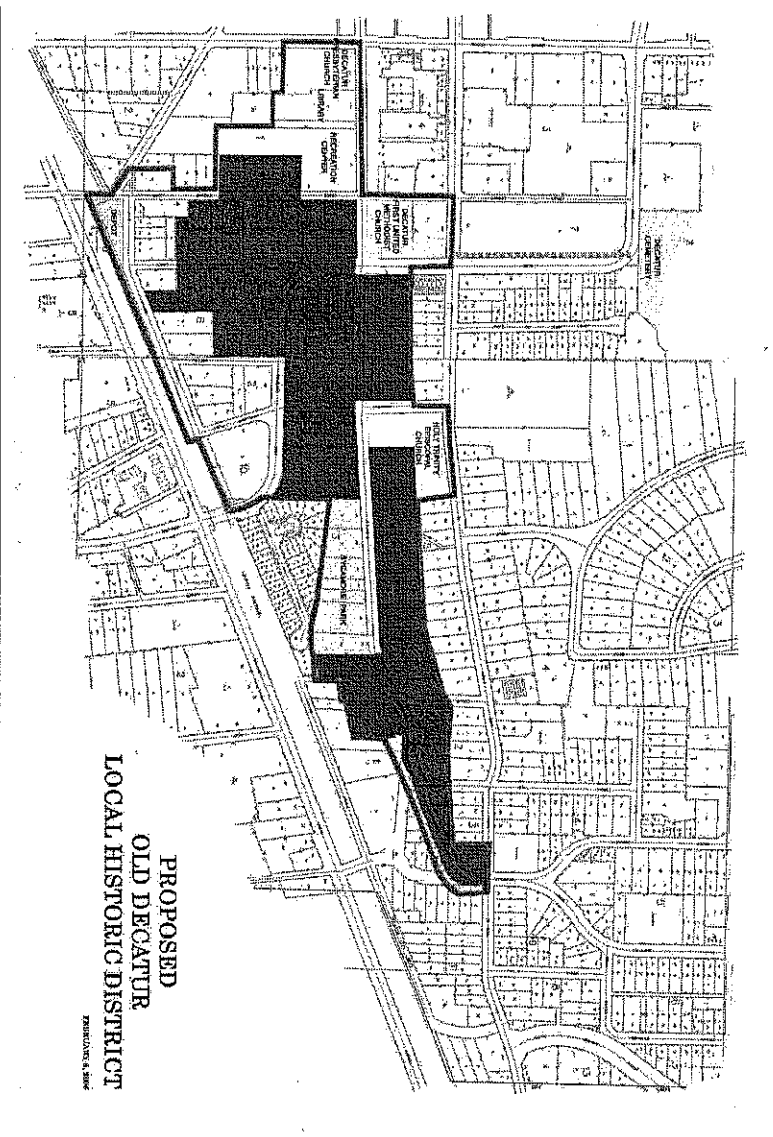
The homes along Sycamore Street are larger, mostly two-story structures dating from the early 20th century. These homes range in styles from Queen Anne, Craftsmen, Colonial Revival, and Italianate with house types including Queen Anne House, Georgian House, American Four Square and Bungalow. Like the north-south streets of the neighborhood, the styles and types are intermixed along Sycamore. Due to the larger scale and massing of homes on Sycamore, the setbacks are much larger than those on the north-south streets, ranging between approximately 30 and 50 feet. Like the north-south streets, the similar depth of front yards creates a sense of visual cohesion. Historic residences on both the north-south streets and Sycamore Street have common characteristics that add to the residential character of the district including building materials, entranceways, and porches. Building materials on historic homes include wood, brick, and stone, while foundation materials are comprised of brick and stone. Most residential entranceways are oriented to the street, which adds to the pedestrian-friendly quality of the district. The entranceways are similarly spaced along each street contributing to the sense of visual continuity. These entranceways are defined on almost all historic homes by porches, porticos, and stoops. These features add a one-story element to the fronts of buildings.

Landscape features such as driveways, sidewalks, and fences are present throughout the proposed district. The majority of the homes have driveways on the side of homes leading to a rear parking area. Driveway materials used in the neighborhood are poured concrete, gravel, and dirt. Fences, while not consistent in the neighborhood, do exist on a couple properties. Fence materials consist of wood and metal. Fences in the front yards of properties make sure not to obstruct the view of the house and yard from the street. Sidewalks lined with mature trees located on both sides of all district streets combined with rear parking areas and unobtrusive fences help maintain the pedestrian-friendly nature of Old Decatur.

The townhouse developments on Commerce Drive, Sycamore Place, and Hillier Place are not contributing to the historic and visual character of the district. They do increase the variety of housing types within the district and serve as a transitional buffer between residential and institutional uses.

Old Decatur's variety of historic architectural styles and types of residences blend together to create an eclectic character that is both visually interesting and inviting. The presence of the landscape features in combination with the consistent setbacks and massing of homes throughout the district creates a neighborhood that calls for long walks down its streets. Old Decatur's many unique residential characteristics mingle together leading to a community feel with an eclectic character.

Residential Areas of Old Decatur

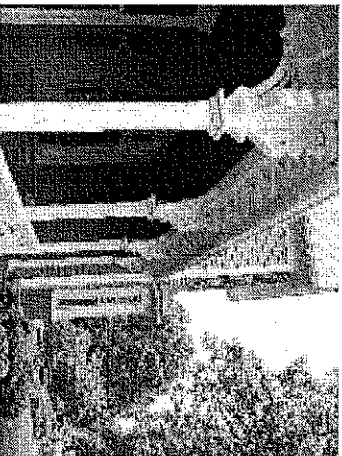


Residential Preservation and Rehabilitation

Exterior materials and features are important components that help to define the architectural style and period of a house and enhance the historic character of the neighborhood. For this reason, there are a few basic, but essential preservation principles that should be kept in mind when conducting any repair or rehabilitation project involving historic building materials of residential properties in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.

Recommendations

- When cleaning or repairing historic exterior materials, it is important to always use the gentlest methods and means possible.
- Preserve, maintain and repair rather than replace historic building materials. Architectural features and details of a historic building should not be removed or altered.
- If replacement of historic materials is necessary, they should be replaced with like materials and design or with visually similar materials.
- Missing contributing features should be reconstructed based on physical, pictorial or historical evidence.
- New ornamentation, details and other materials not compatible with the period and style of historic buildings in the Old Decatur neighborhood are not appropriate.
- Historic materials and features should not be covered with vinyl, aluminum, stucco or other synthetic materials.



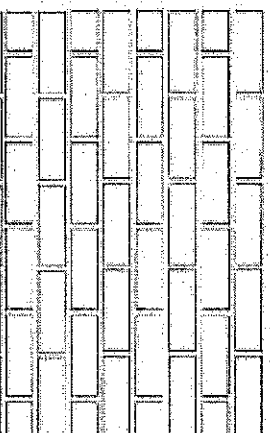
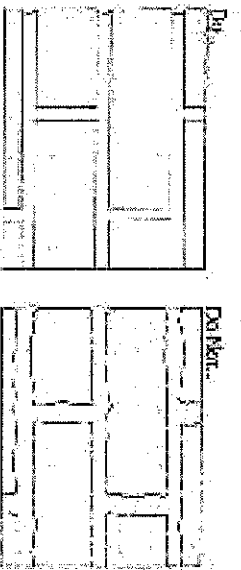
Masonry Material

There are a number of brick veneer buildings in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District and brick and stone foundations, porch piers and chimneys are common on almost all of the historic houses in the neighborhood. These masonry features should be retained and preserved. If repair or replacement of historic masonry is necessary, the color, shape, size and visual appearance of the material should match the original as closely as possible.

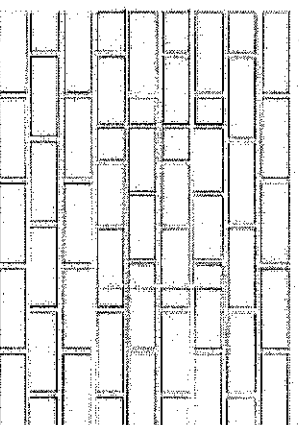
Recommendations

- Maintain all masonry veneer, piers, chimneys and architectural features. Repair damaged masonry to match existing historic materials in shape, size and color.
- Repointing of mortar should match the historic mortar in width, depth, color, composition and texture. The use of Portland cement without lime or other hard mortars without lime for repointing of older masonry is damaging to the historic material and not appropriate.
- Do not paint or waterproof unpainted brick.
- Do not apply stucco, cement or other synthetic material over existing masonry.
- Do not use artificial materials imitating stone or brick.
- Never clean brick or stone using sandblasting.

On any repointing project, care should be taken to match the original mortar widths and color



Appropriate patch of brick masonry material



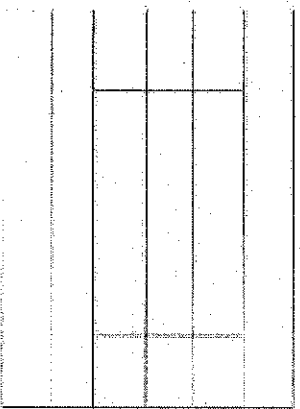
Inappropriate patch of brick wall

Wood Material

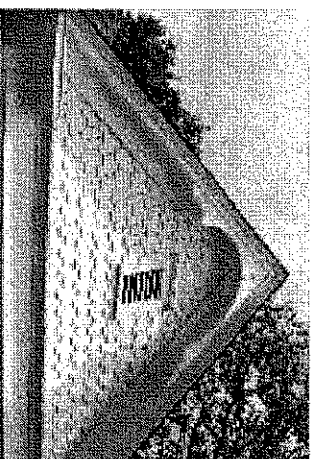
Clapboard wood siding is the most common exterior surface material found on houses in Old Decatur and therefore, a primary element contributing to the visual character of the neighborhood. Wood shingles are also used, primarily as decorative features in the gable wall-surface patterns of the many Queen Anne, Folk Victorian and Craftsman Style houses located throughout the neighborhood.

Recommendations

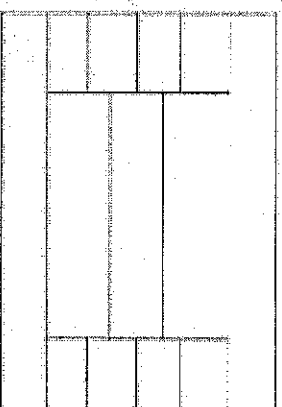
- Historic wood siding and shingles should be maintained.
- If necessary, repair or replace damaged siding with material that matches the reveal or lap, width, thickness, profile, texture, placement and design of the historic material.
- Introduction of new wood features incompatible in size, scale, material is not recommended.
- Historically painted surfaces should not be stripped to bare wood or have clear finishes or stains applied to them.
- The removal of synthetic siding such as aluminum, asbestos and vinyl and restoration of historic wood siding is highly encouraged, but not required.



Appropriate patching technique for wood siding



Decorative shingle wall-surface pattern at 204 North Candler Street



Inappropriate repair – size and placement of patch does not match the existing siding material

Porches and Decks

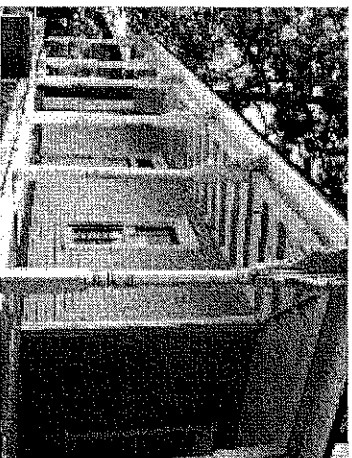
Porches are important architectural design elements and are often the focal point on historic homes in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District. In addition to providing visual interest to a house, they also influence its perceived scale, protect entrances and provide shade and shelter. Many of the porches on houses located along the Sycamore Street corridor and on some of the Craftsman style bungalows dispersed throughout the neighborhood are full width and extend across the entire front of the building. Other examples of wraparound, side and rear service porch types can be found on many of the historic houses fronting Barry, Church and North Candler Streets.

Recommendations

- Front and side facade porches should be maintained in the historic configuration and with their historic material and detailing.
- Where necessary, replace missing posts, railings and other decorative features in kind.
- If the historic porch is missing, a new porch should be accurately reconstructed based on photographic or physical evidence.
- Avoid using materials not typical to the neighborhood. Porch columns of aluminum or wrought iron are not appropriate for front porches.
- Decks should be located to the rear of the house and not visible from the public right of way.

Porch Enclosure

- Do not enclose an historic front porch with opaque materials.
- Screen material may be acceptable as long as it maintains transparency. Framing of the screening material should be set behind the porch columns and balustrades.
- Rear decks and porches may be enclosed with screening material when not readily visible from the street.



130 Hillier Place



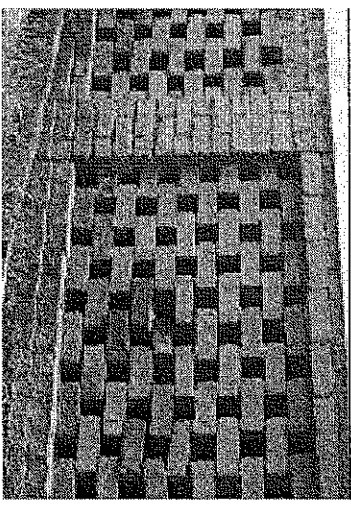
Decorative porch elements at 428
Sycamore Street

Foundations

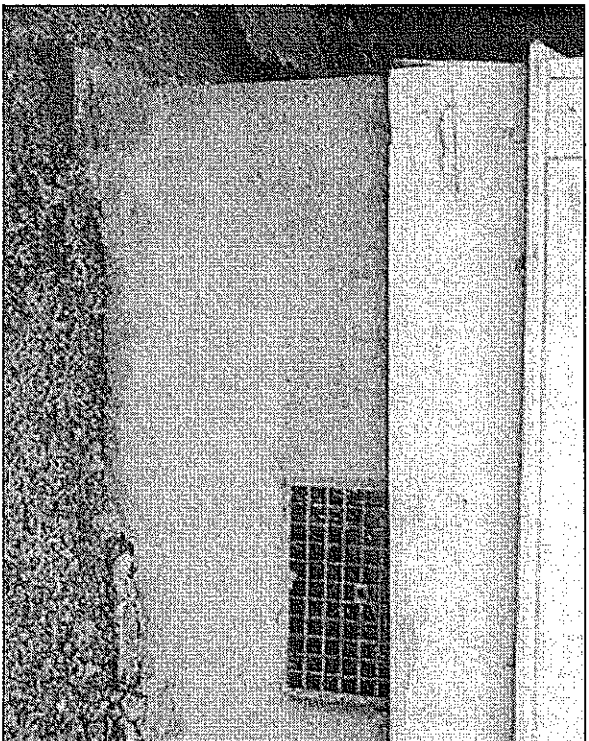
Most Old Decatur houses along Barry Street, North Candler Street and Hillyer Place have foundations of continuous brick or brick piers with brick infill, stone or concrete. A few of the houses along Sycamore Street have granite foundations. Repointing and repair of residential foundations should follow the masonry guidelines.

Recommendations

- Foundations between existing piers should be filled in as traditional for the type and style of the house. Infill with concrete block and stucco may be considered.
- The infill should be recessed behind the existing piers and should allow for significant ventilation under the structure.
- Foundations of brick may be painted if the brick and/or mortar is mismatched or inappropriately repaired.



Pierced brick infill at 133 Hillyer Place



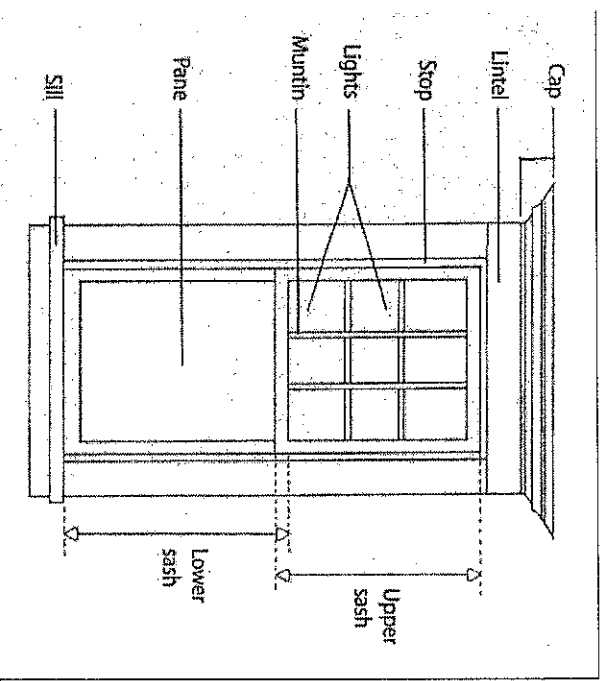
Do not cover brick foundation masonry with concrete or stucco

Windows

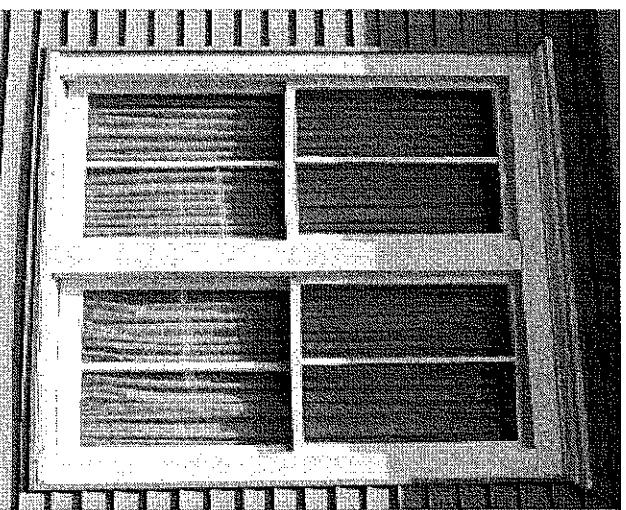
Traditional window styles and their architectural configuration on historic houses greatly contribute to the building's appearance. Many windows in Old Decatur are double or single-hung sash, casement and fixed single pane. 2/1, 4/4 and 6/6 are three of the most common light configurations.

Recommendations

- Windows should be preserved in their historic location, size and design and with their historic materials, number of lights and panes and shutters.
- Damaged windows should be repaired rather than replaced.
- Avoid using shutters of vinyl construction in the Old Decatur Historic District.
- If necessary, replacement windows should keep with the architectural style and period of the house.
- Oddly shaped windows, such as fanlights, octagons, circles, and diamonds are not compatible to the residential architectural styles found in Old Decatur and should not be used.
- Only simulated (double-sided) or true divided lights are required in the district.
No snap-in muntins are permitted.



4/4 window configuration at 210 North Candler

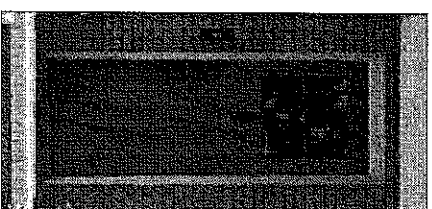
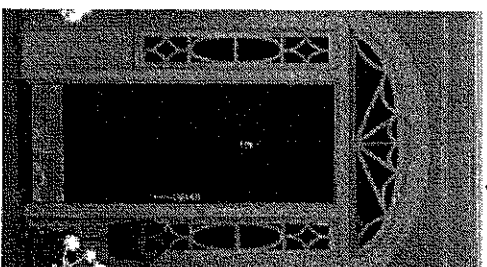


DOORS

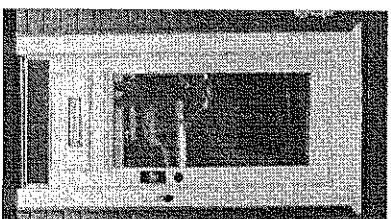
There is a wide variety of historic door types and designs found in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District. In general, the predominant doors and entranceways of most houses are defined by the structure's architectural style.

Recommendations

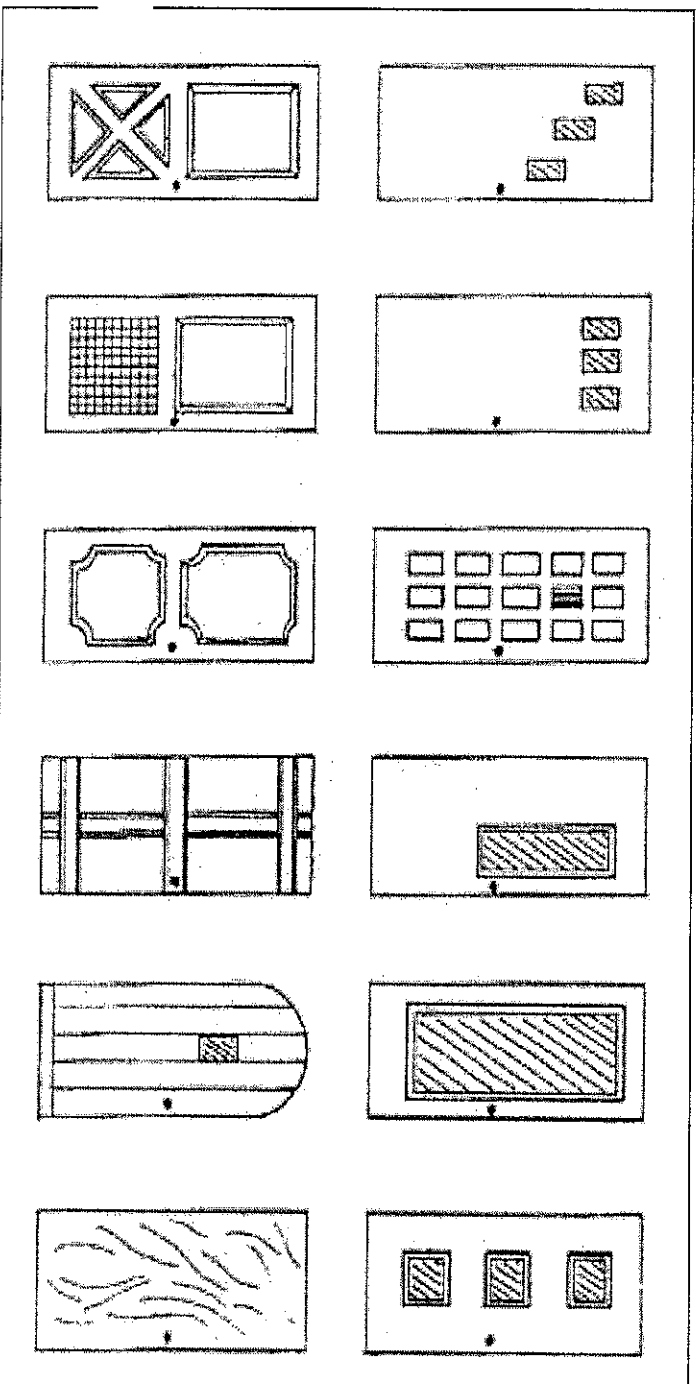
- Historic front and side entry doors and/or their surrounds, sidelights, transoms and hardware should be retained and not be altered.
- If a deteriorated door must be replaced, the new door and surround should be similar to the original in design and materials.
- New doorways should not be added to the front or side facades.
- Screen doors and storm doors should be compatible with existing historic doors in shape, size, material, and appearance.



Appropriate door styles for Old Decatur



Inappropriate door styles for Old Decatur

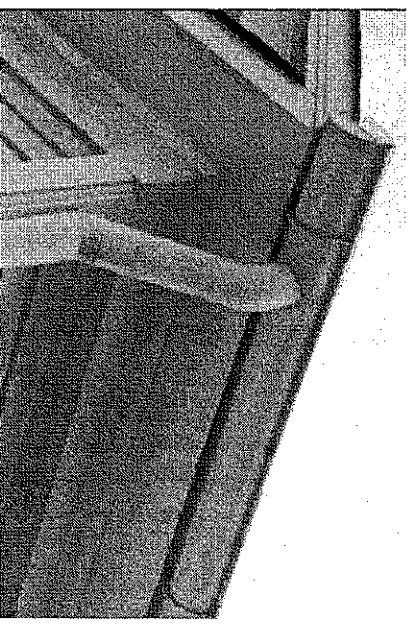


Roofs

Hipped, gabled and pyramidal are just a few of the many different roof types found on the residential buildings in Old Decatur. Preservation and maintenance of these various roof types of the Queen Anne, Craftsman and Folk Victorian style houses are important and contribute to the unique historic character of the proposed Old Decatur district.

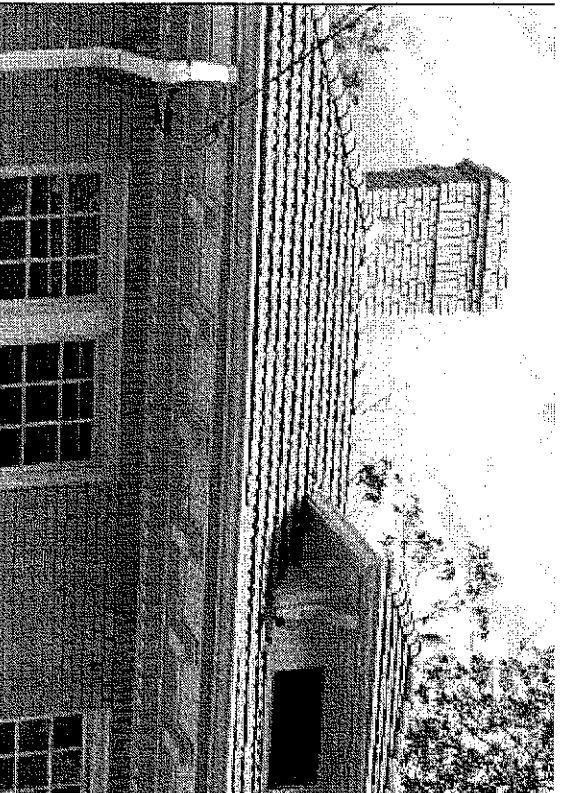
Recommendations

- Historic roofs should be preserved in size, shape and pitch with historic features (such as brackets, cresting, and chimneys) and roof material.
- Unique historic roof materials such as tile, metal slates should be repaired and preserved. If repair is not practical, replacement in kind or with asphalt shingles may be acceptable.
- Dormer additions, if necessary, should be located where they are not visible from the public right of way. Dormers on the front façade will be considered, but are not encouraged.
- The addition of decks, balconies, skylights and solar collectors that are visible from the public right of way are not recommended.
- Historic gutters and downspouts should be maintained or replaced with visually similar materials appropriate to the style and period of the house.



Appropriate gutter and downspout system at 231 Hillier Place

Tiled, hipped roof at 718 Sycamore Street

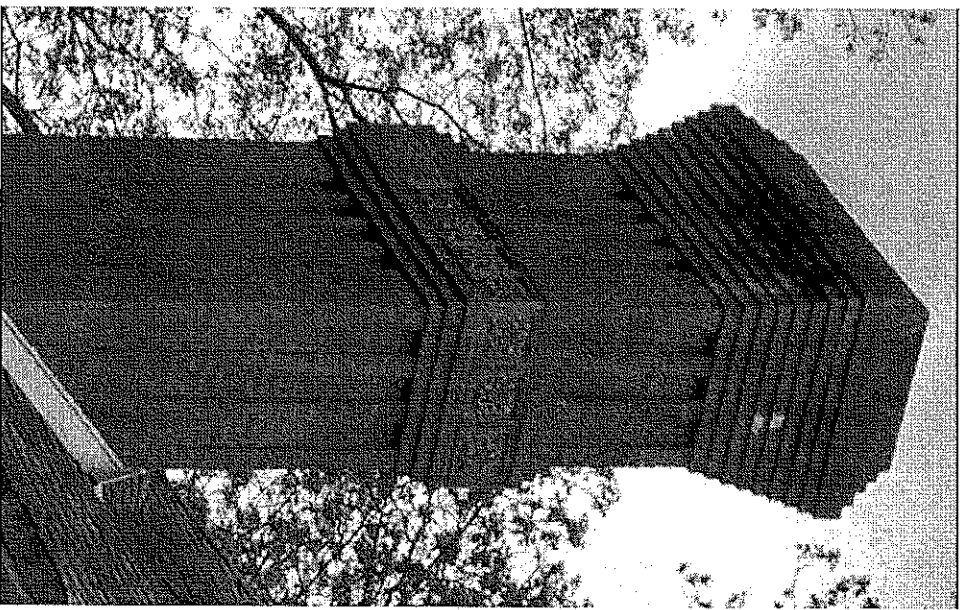


Chimneys

Many of the chimneys on historic homes in the Old Decatur neighborhood feature decorative brickwork and designs that greatly contribute to the building's character. For many of the late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles, the location of the chimney is an important contributing element and should not be altered or removed.

Recommendations

- Chimneys should be maintained and preserved in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the Masonry Material section.
- If a chimney must be rebuilt due to instability or deterioration, the proportion, type, design and material should match in historic design, location and material composition.
- The application of stucco veneer or other siding material over existing historic chimney masonry materials is not appropriate.



Brick corbeling and detail work on chimney at 428 Sycamore Street

Residential Additions and New Construction

New residential construction within Old Decatur should reference historic styles and types, yet still be a product of the time when the new structure was built. New construction should also match existing buildings in scale and mass in order not to overwhelm smaller historic structures.

Design goals:

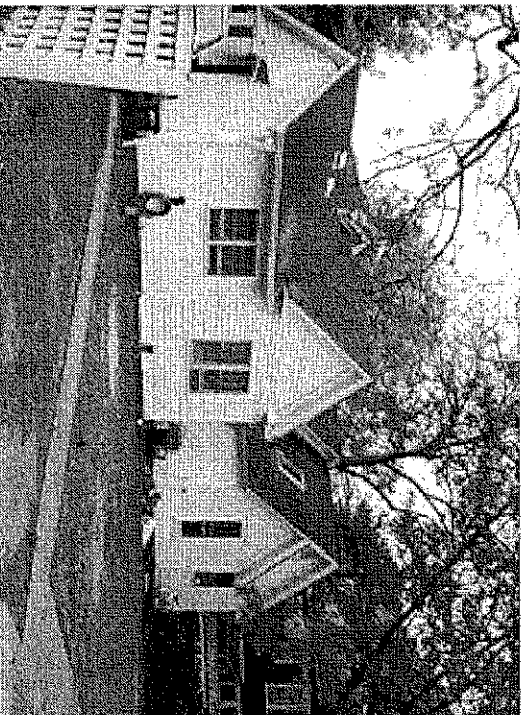
- Compliment historic structures by matching scale, proportion, and form.
- Keep historic features of the block face consistent.
- Match height, orientation, proportion, and setback of historic houses on block face.
- Use traditional building materials such as brick and wood siding.

Additions to Residential Buildings

Additions to residential buildings may be necessary to expand a historic home with a small floor plan. Many buildings within Old Decatur have expanded their buildings. As a rule, additions should be placed to the rear of the property and should complement the existing structure.

Recommendations:

- New additions should be placed away from the front facade of the building.
- New additions should be compatible with the design and scale of the historic building and should also use similar materials.
- New additions should have a design that differentiates it from the historic building in order to avoid the creation of a false sense of history.
- New additions should be created so that a minimal amount of historic material will be damaged, destroyed, or obscured.
- Historic materials removed during the construction process should be re-used to the extent possible.
- Historic additions and/or alterations should be preserved if they have gained significance in their own right.
- Rooftop additions are discouraged.



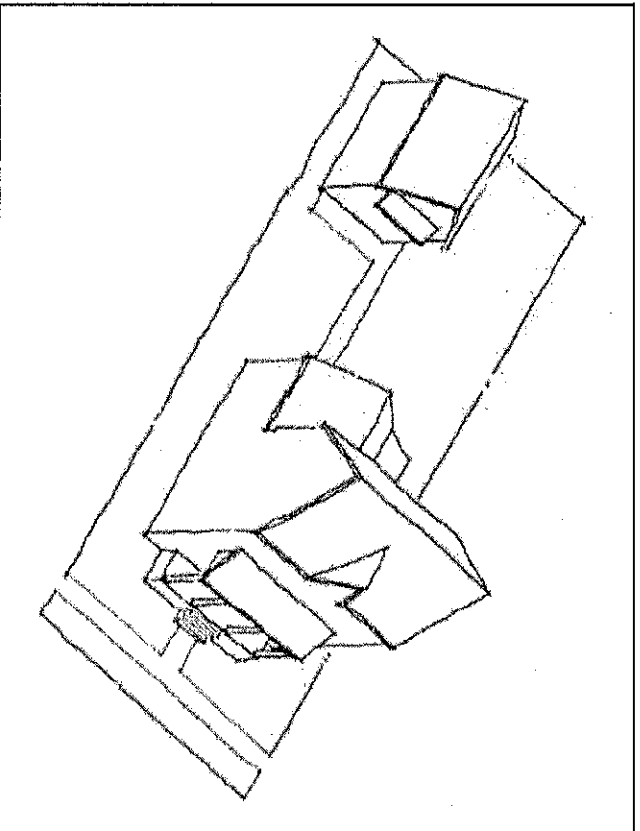
An appropriate addition at 203 North Candler Street.
The addition is on the rear facade of the property
and away from the street

Outbuildings

Many outbuildings located within Old Decatur are detached garages or carports located behind the main house. Outbuildings may be utilized for storage or workspace. If outbuildings are visible from the right of way, they should be compatible with the home in scale and design. Most outbuildings within the proposed district are made of wood construction with wood or vinyl siding.

Recommendations

- Garages, sheds, or other outbuildings that are original to the property, or have gained historic significance in their own right should be preserved.
- Rehabilitation of outbuildings should follow the residential design guidelines outlined previously in this section.
- The location of a new outbuilding should be placed towards the rear of the property and should be compatible in scale (the outbuilding should not be larger than the home) and design with the historic building.



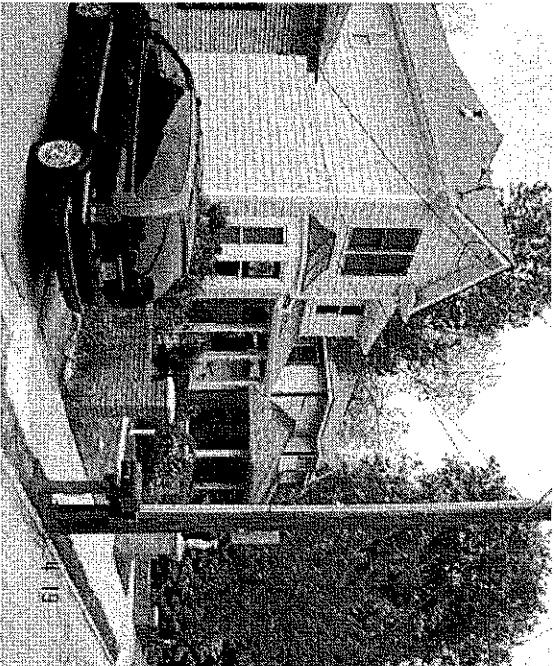
Locate all new outbuildings to the rear of the property

Building Mass, Scale, and Proportion

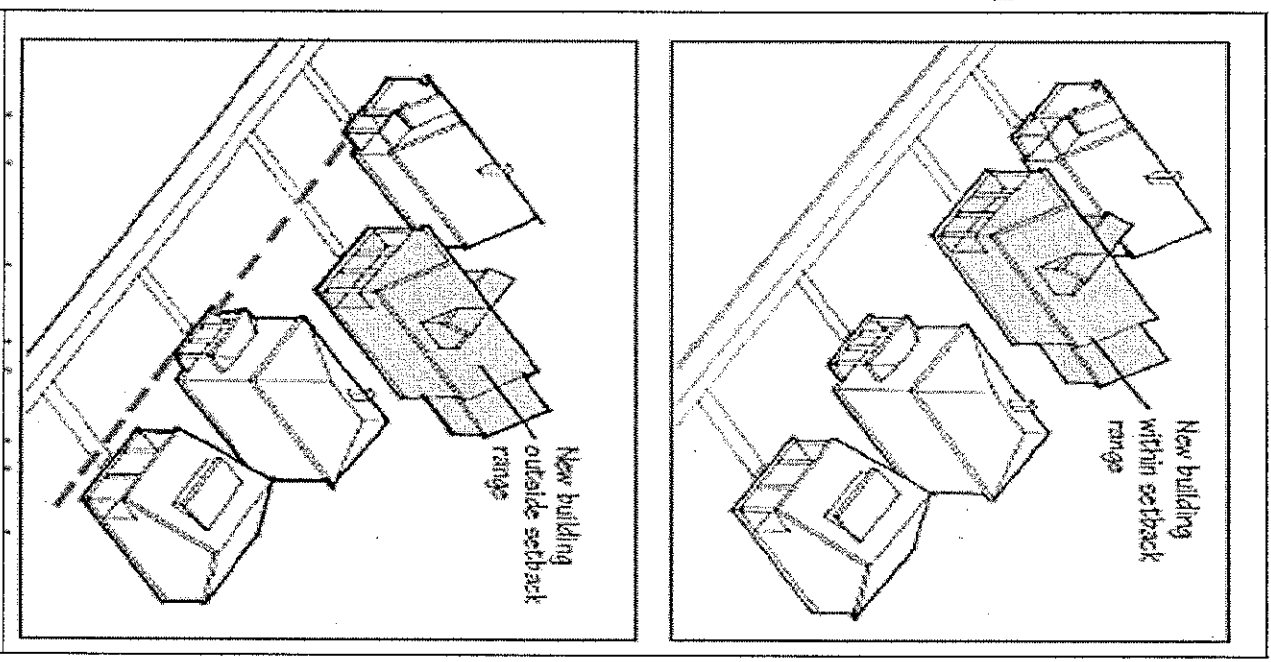
It is important that new construction maintain continuity within the Old Decatur district by respecting the size of historic buildings around it. New houses should be constructed in a manner that respects the smaller sized houses on streets like Barry Street and North Candler. New construction on Sycamore Street should match the size of existing houses as well.

Recommendations

- New buildings should match the proportion, scale, massing, setback, height and street orientation of existing buildings in their area. New buildings should continue to add to the pedestrian-friendly environment of manystreets within the district.
- The scale of a building should relate to and respect its lot size and placement.



The mass and scale of the new construction at 122 Barry Street matches the other buildings within its area of influence.

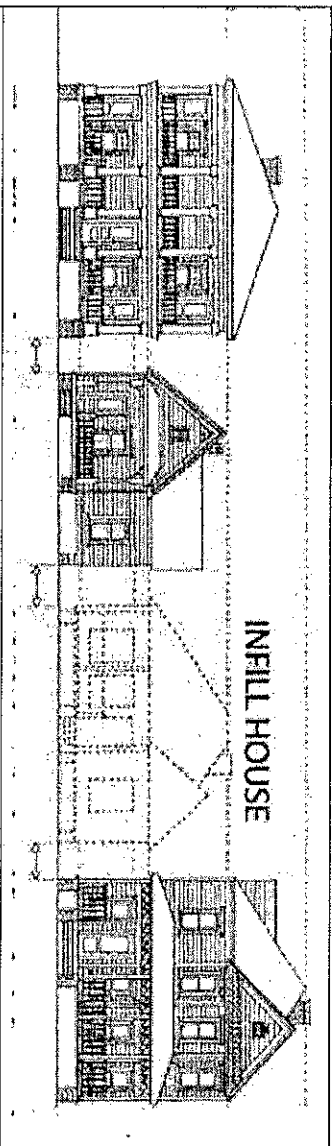


Foundation/Floor to Ceiling Heights

The flow and rhythm of historic houses within Old Decatur should be preserved, and new construction should be compatible with the height of existing buildings. An example of this would be the Sycamore Street corridor, where most houses are two stories in height; therefore, it would be inappropriate to build a small, one-story house on this street.

Recommendations

- Foundation height for new construction should be compatible with adjacent structures.
- New construction in residential areas must have foundation heights of at least 1 foot above grade on the primary facade.
- Slab on grade house construction is inappropriate for the Old Decatur neighborhood and is discouraged.
- Brick construction must have the foundation level delineated through some type of belt course.
- New construction should be compatible with adjacent structures in floor to ceiling heights.



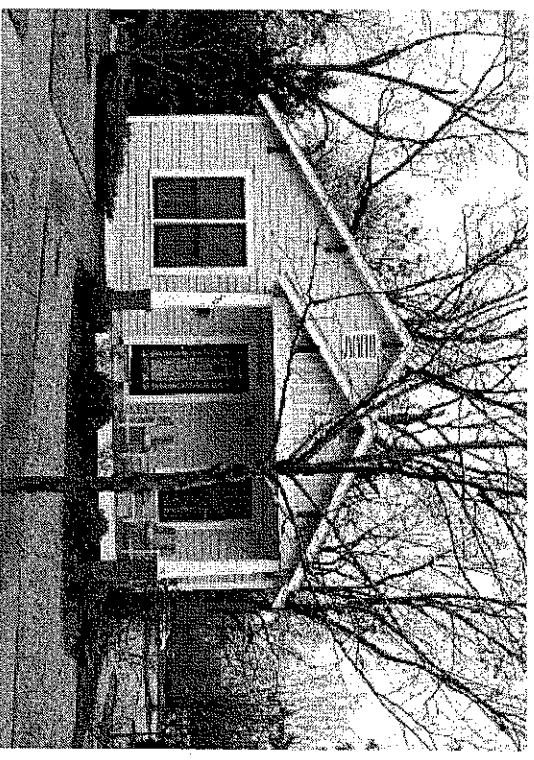
The foundation, window and door heights of the infill house are compatible with other houses along the residential block face

Building Types and Styles

Old Decatur has an eclectic mix of house types and styles. Many house styles are Craftsman or Queen Anne, and predominant types include Bungalow and Queen Anne Cottage. New construction should reference the architectural types and styles historically found within the district.

Recommendations

- New buildings should follow historic architectural styles and details; however, they also should be a product of their time and distinguishable as contemporary construction.
- The form of a new building should be similar to those traditionally found in the Old Decatur Historic District.
- One simple form should be the dominant element in a building design.
- Building forms that step down in scale to the rear of the lot are encouraged.
- Traditional roof forms should be utilized. Simple gabled and hipped roofs are appropriate; exotic roof forms that detract from the visual continuity from the street are not appropriate.
- The number and size of dormers should be limited on a roof in order for the primary roof to remain prominent.



These two examples of new residential construction adhere to the style and scale of the Old Decatur Historic District

Building Materials

Building materials most commonly found within Old Decatur include brick and clapboard (wood) siding. It is important for new construction to include historic building materials that complement the historic character of the district. New materials such as metal or vinyl siding will detract from the integrity of the district.

Recommendations

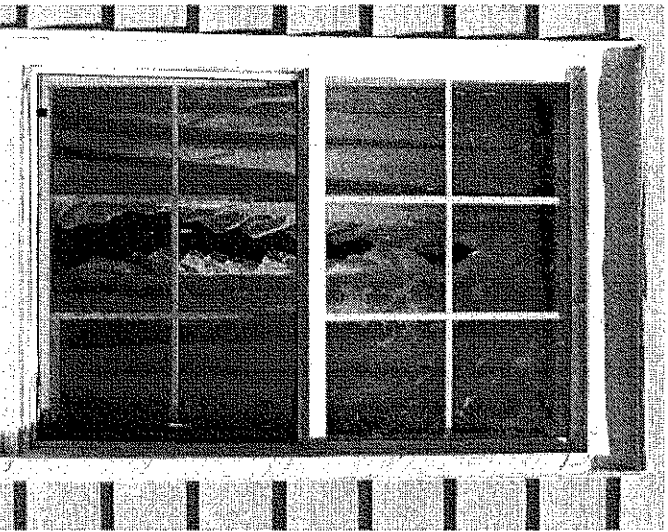
- The use of materials that are similar to those traditionally used on historic houses in the Old Decatur neighborhood is encouraged for all new construction. Traditional materials include clapboard wood siding, wood shingles, brick and cut stone and granite.
- New buildings may utilize contemporary materials, such as smooth faced cementitious siding, as long as they are visually compatible with surrounding historic buildings within the district. Vinyl and aluminum siding are discouraged.
- Metal siding, mirrored windows, polished metals, stacked stone and river rock are inappropriate materials for the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.
- The size, shape and texture of masonry should appear similar to that used on historic houses along the block face.

Fenestration

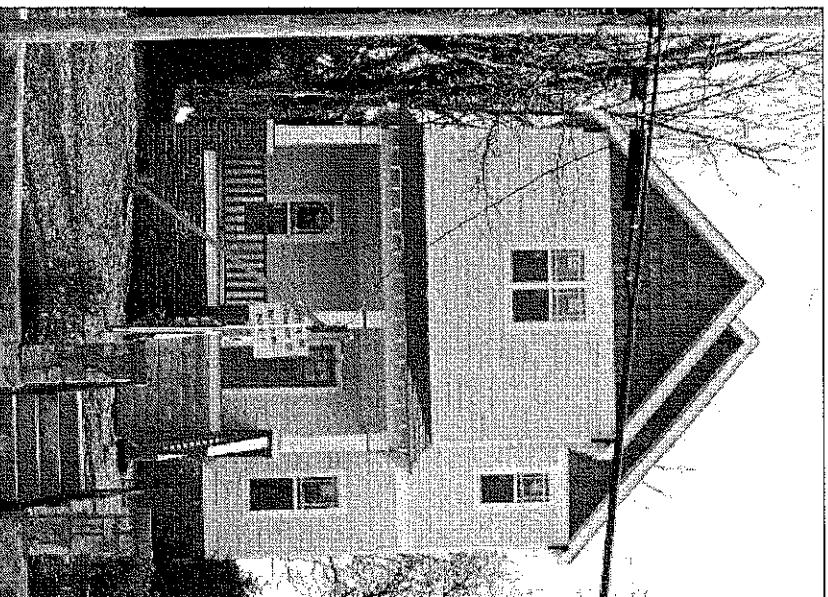
The historic patterns of solids to voids should be replicated in new construction in order to keep the historic integrity of the block face intact. Inappropriate window sizes and types detract from the architectural consistency of the block face. Most windows within the district are double hung sash windows, and the majority of homes within the district have one front door.

Recommendations

- Window size and arrangement should match existing historic houses within the district.
- The solids (walls) to voids (windows and doors) ratio should be similar to historic configurations.
- New residential construction should have single pane, double-hung or casement windows with true divided or simulated lights. Windows with snap-in grid systems are not appropriate in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.



Snap-in grid system vinyl windows are inappropriate for new residential construction



The fenestration pattern on this new construction would be inappropriate for the Old Decatur neighborhood

Demolition and Relocation of Historic Structures

The demolition of historic houses within Old Decatur is discouraged because historic houses that are unique to the district can never be recreated with the same integrity.

Recommendations

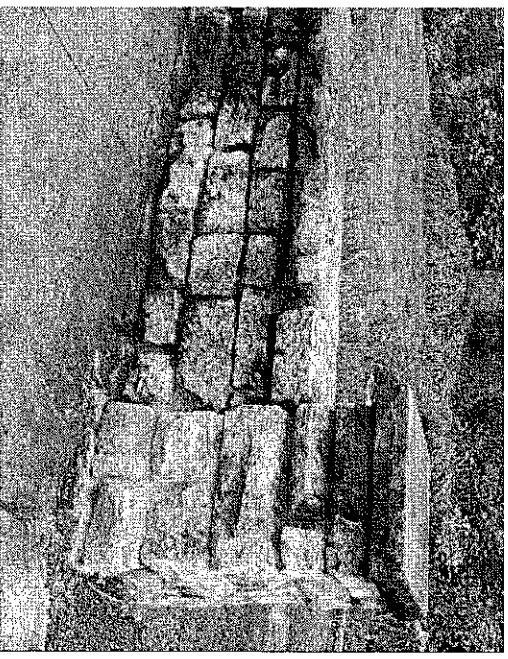
- Historic buildings should not be demolished.
- A building or structure should not be relocated out of the proposed historic district if the building retains its architectural and historic integrity.
- Historic buildings should not be relocated from one location to another within the district unless the building would otherwise be demolished and relocation could save the structure.
- If a building is relocated from one location to another within the district, the site and setting of the relocated building should be similar to the historic site and setting of the building.
- The relocation of historic buildings into the historic district may be appropriate and will be subjected to the same guidelines as new construction.

Retaining Walls

In areas where the street grade is considerably lower than the grade of house lots retaining walls provide decorative transitions from the public expanse of the sidewalk to the more private zones of the front yard and porch. Approximately sixteen percent of the properties within the Old Decatur neighborhood have some form of retaining wall. These walls are composed of brick, rough granite stone, and concrete slab. Historic retaining walls contribute directly to the character of the block face and the Old Decatur district.

Recommendations

- Preserve historic retaining walls. If historic retaining walls need repair, they should be replaced with like materials.
- If deterioration occurs, replace only the portions that are deteriorating with like materials.
- The use of paint or stucco to cover a wall surface is not appropriate.
- Reduce pressure on retaining walls by improving drainage behind them. Drains in the wall should allow moisture to pass freely.
- The construction of new retaining walls should incorporate historic materials. Brick and rough granite stone are the most prevalently used in the proposed district and are considered appropriate for new construction.



Granite retaining wall at 428 Sycamore Street

Fences

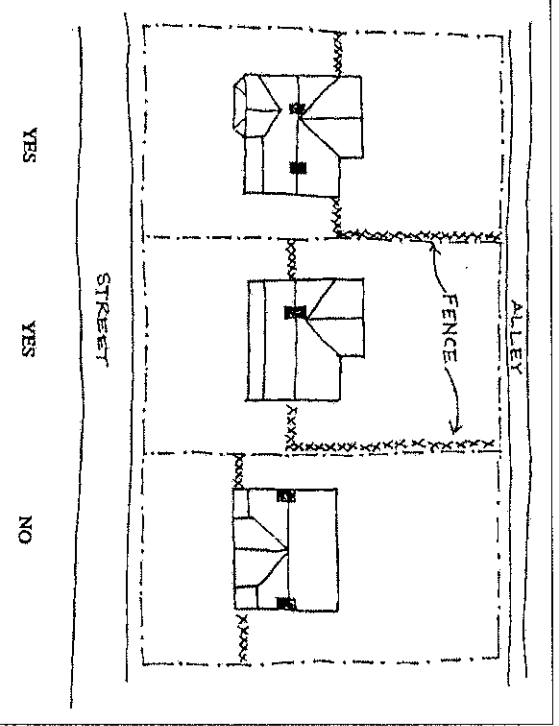
Fences can define house lots, create private space, add to security, and play a decorative role on a property. Currently, fences are not a prevalent site feature in the front yards of properties contributing to the historic character of Old Decatur. In the past, fences were used on smaller lots, like those on Barry Street, but were not found on the larger lots on Sycamore Street that developed after 1920. Historic fencing, when used in front of contributing properties, consists of white wood pickets. These fences need to be maintained using existing materials, while new fencing should be erected in the backyards of houses and should not impact front facades and sight lines.

Recommendations

- If present, historic fences should be preserved with historic materials.
- Surfaces should remain painted to protect against the elements.
- If deterioration occurs, replace only the portions that are deteriorating with like materials.
- Fencing may be used to define a rear yard. New fencing should be constructed behind the front building line and should not stand flush with the front facade.

• Fences should be constructed of historically appropriate materials. Synthetic materials are not recommended.

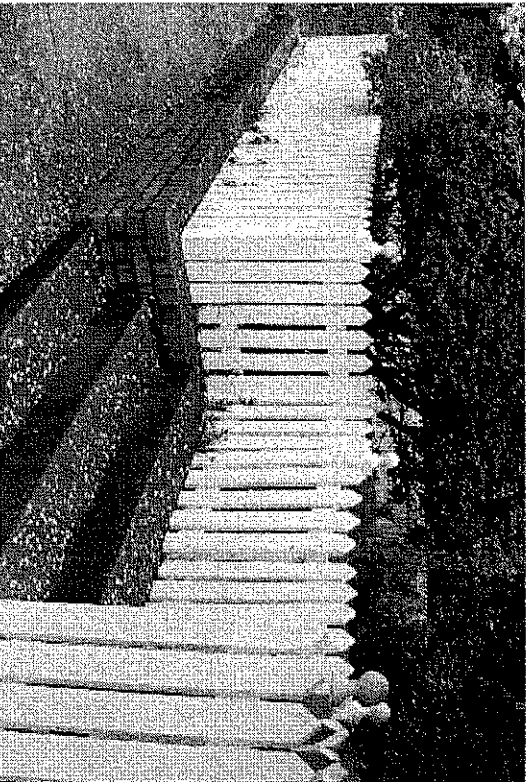
• Rear fencing should not exceed 6 feet in height.



YES

YES

NO



Picket fence at 125
North Candler Street

Trees and Lawns

The historic pattern of vegetation in yards should be maintained along streets. Front yards should complement one another, creating continuity between yards. The maintenance of the mature tree stock of the neighborhood is one of the most important means of preserving the historic landscape.

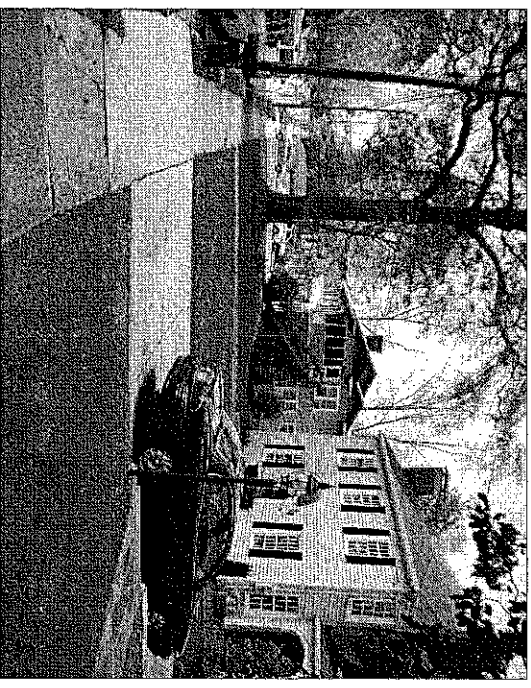
Recommendations

Trees

- Mature trees measuring 12 inches in diameter or greater should not be removed unless they are diseased or hazardous.
- If a tree is removed, the stump shall be ground flush to grade.

Lawns

- Grass lawns in the front yards are of importance, especially down the Sycamore Street corridor.
- The use of hard surface paving for patios and terraces in a front yard is not appropriate and out of character with the historic landscape.



Open front yards along Sycamore Street



Magnolia Tree at the Decatur
Public Library

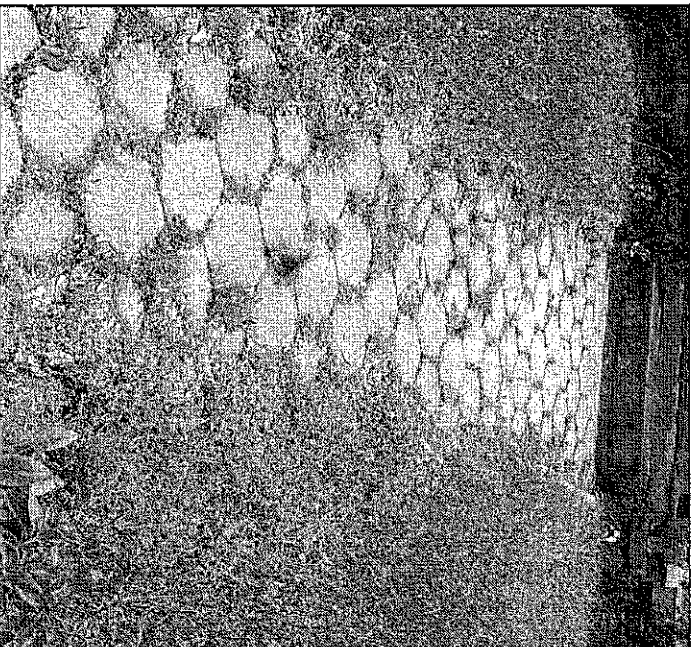
Walkways

Walkways have historically been ornamented entrance ways leading visitors from the public spaces of the streets edge to the private space of the front porch or doorway. Walkways within the proposed Old Decatur Historic District feature a greater variety of building materials. The most frequently used materials are concrete hex-pavers, brick, and concrete slab. The general pattern of orientation for walkways is perpendicular to the street, running from the sidewalk to the front door. Sycamore Street features more walkways parallel to the street leading from the front door to the driveway. Historic materials and orientation should be maintained if walkways are to be constructed or repaired.

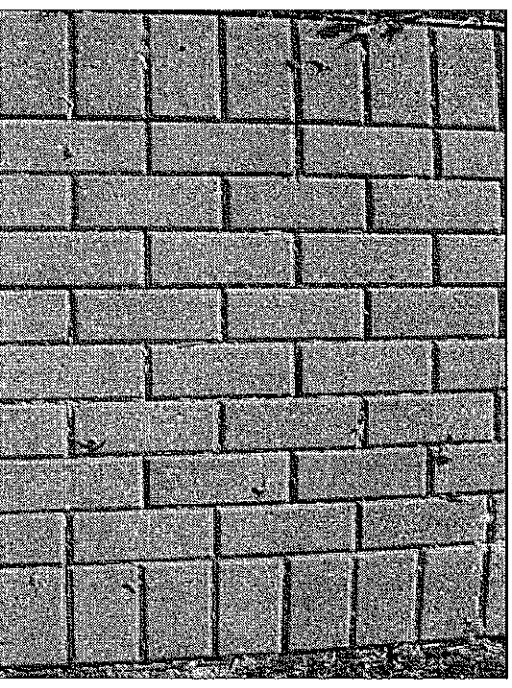
Recommendations

- Walkways should be maintained in their historic scale and with historic materials.
- If deterioration occurs, replace only the portions that are deteriorating with like materials.
- Brick, concrete hex-paver, or concrete slab are recommended materials when constructing a new walkway.
- The orientation of the walkway should be consistent with the houses on its block face.

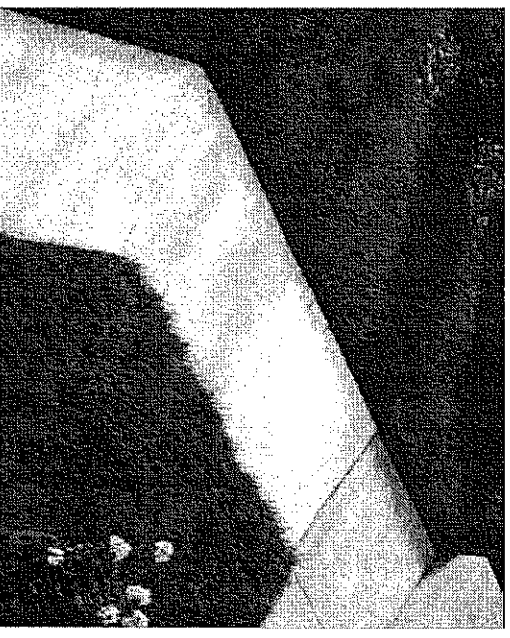
Hex-paver



Brick



Concrete



Residential Parking

Cars were not a factor in the founding of Old Decatur. However, over time they have become an integral part of the urban landscape. Inappropriate placement and design of parking could have a negative impact on the historic character of the neighborhood. To promote the established pedestrian-nature of Old Decatur, the visual impact of automobile parking should be minimized. This is accomplished by maintaining the historic pattern parking placement in the rear of house lots in detached structures. Driveways should be maintained in the pattern of orientation and size established by the contributing structures within the area of influence. Most driveways are typically composed of concrete slab and are situated to one side of the house. These driveways lead straight to rear parking areas.

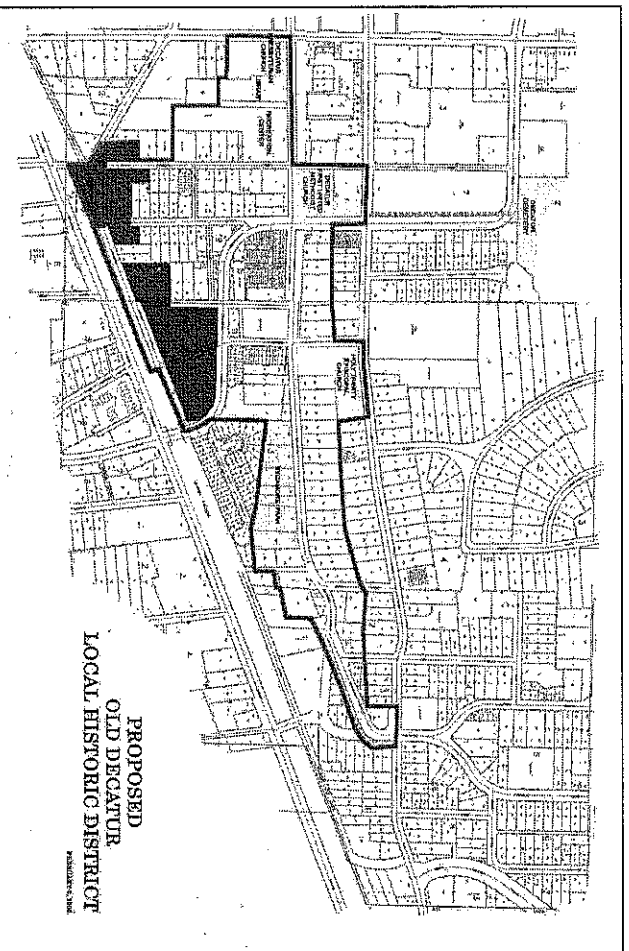
Recommendations

- Parking areas and structures are to be located to the rear or side of buildings. Incorporation of a garage or carport into the front facade of a house is inappropriate.
- Garages, parking pads, and carports should be situated to the rear of the house.
- Historic driveway alignment, at one side of the house, should be maintained.
- The driveway should lead straight from the street to the parking area. The construction of circular driveways and parking pads in the front yard is inappropriate.

Commercial Preservation and Rehabilitation Commercial Character of Old Decatur

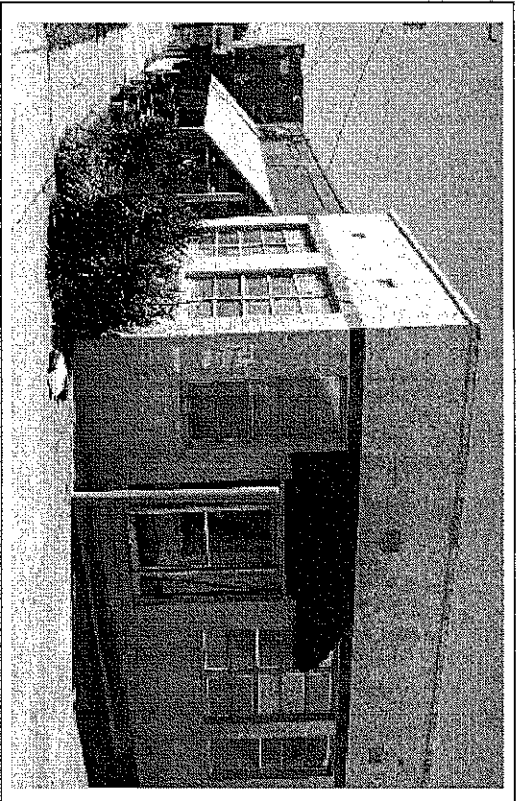
Old Decatur is a unique neighborhood within the city, as it includes both businesses and restaurants within its district. The presence of these businesses creates a sense of community through their use by local residents who can walk to commercial resources. Like the residential character of Old Decatur, the commercial character is created through an eclectic mix of commercial styles and periods. The commercial buildings are integral to the overall character of the district.

The Old Decatur Historic District developed mostly in response to the presence of the railroad which still runs along East Howard Avenue. From the 1890's to present day this area has contained many buildings devoted to light industrial uses. The depot building on East Howard, built in 1891, was constructed with Stick Style elements. A few of the remaining buildings on East Howard reflect late 19th and early 20th century commercial styles associated with a railroad development. An example of one of these buildings is 302 E Howard Avenue, which originally served as a hotel for rail travelers. Many of the commercial buildings along East Howard are aligned immediately at the sidewalk edge giving the area a pedestrian-friendly quality. In most cases similar entry ways are evenly spaced along the block. These entrances are also typically recessed from the sidewalk edge further contributing to the sense of visual continuity.

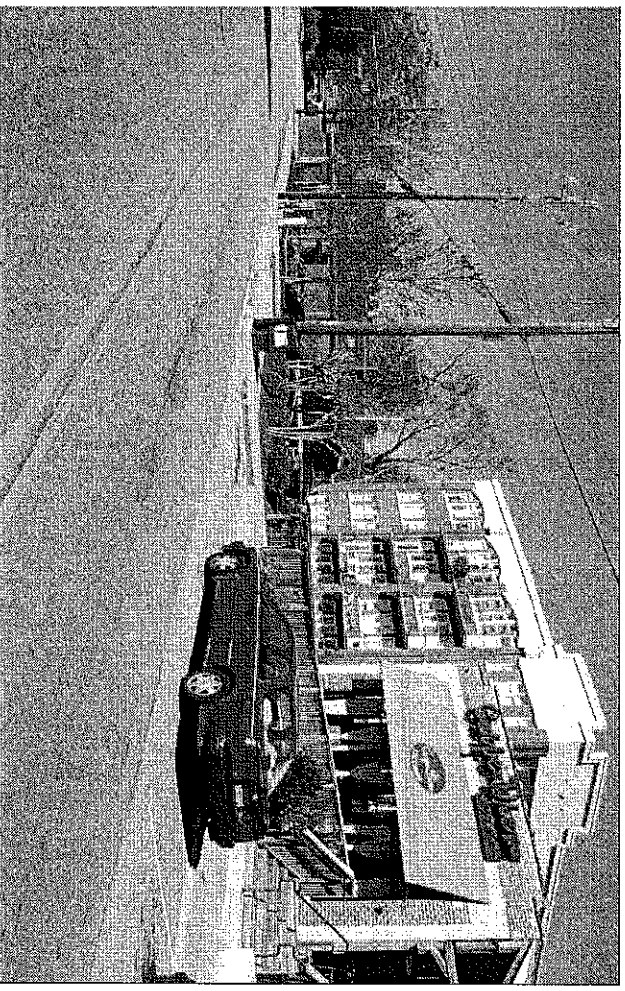


Moving east along East Howard, the styles of commercial buildings begin to change to mid-20th century styles (i.e. International). These later period commercial buildings have larger setbacks from the street of approximately 10 feet. An example of one of these later commercial buildings is Spencer's Tire Company at 402 E Howard Avenue. Commercial buildings occur throughout the district in less linear patterns than on East Howard. A notable commercial building within the neighborhood is 333 Commerce Drive, a modern style gas station from 1965 that has been converted into a restaurant.

Building materials used in the historic commercial buildings include brick, wood, stucco and concrete block. Many windows on commercial buildings are fixed, single-pane windows in keeping with the commercial styles of the buildings. Parking is located on the street or on the side of most commercial buildings. In some cases, parking is found directly in front of the building.



316 East Howard Avenue



The Ice House Lofts, looking north along
Sycamore Place

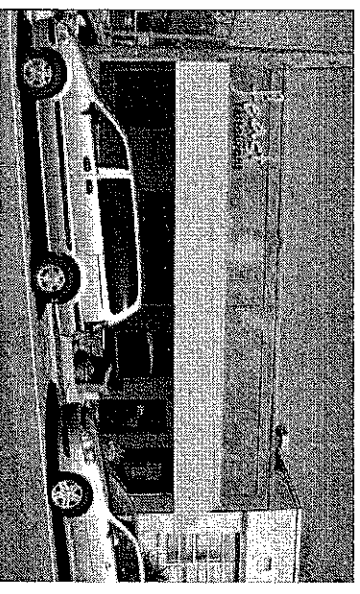
Commercial Architectural Types and Styles

The presence of commercial building types in the proposed Old Decatur district adds to the small community character of the neighborhood. The commercial buildings have provided valuable resources and services to Decatur residents since the early 20th century.

Single Retail Building Type

The single retail type is a single unit that was built to stand alone or in a series of units. This type of commercial building was built in all size towns from the 1880s to the 1950s.

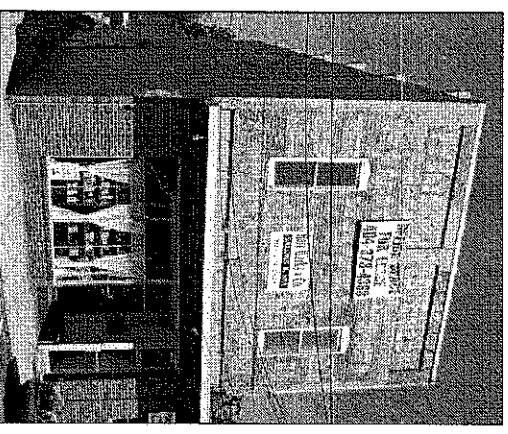
These units usually had a sloping or flat roof and three-bay facades, often large display windows and central door. Single unit retail types could be used for a variety of commercial purposes.



Retail and Office Building Type

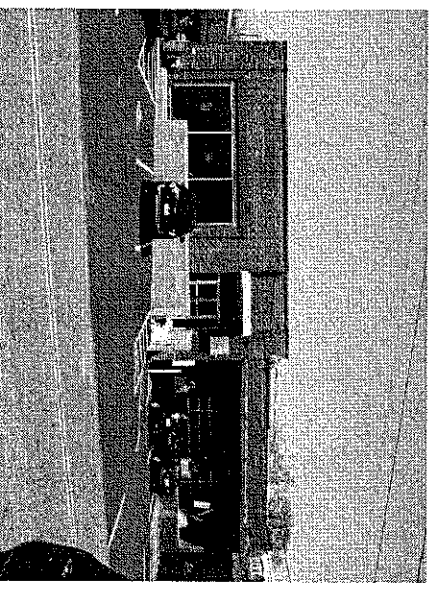
The combination retail and office type was built in the 1880s through the 1930s. This commercial type was built as a single unit or in a series of units. This type was typically 2-4 stories high with a flat or sloped roof.

Like the single unit the lower level facade often had three-bays. The lower level of these units often functioned as retail space while the upper floors served as rental office spaces. In Old Decatur the only existing retail and office space unit, 302 E Howard Avenue, once served as a hotel on the second floor and today as retail on the lower and office on the upper.



Post-modern Building Type

The building type was used after World War II and was inspired by the Bauhaus movement in Germany. It emphasized clean lines, simple block forms, and mixing materials like brick for exterior cladding and aluminum windows. In the Old Decatur district, these buildings were typically used for light industrial businesses, like car repair shops and cabinetmakers.



Commercial Preservation and Rehabilitation

The preservation of the contributing, historic commercial structures is critical to the integrity of the district. The commercial buildings in combination with the residential dwellings provide a complete picture of Old Decatur. Exterior materials and features are important components that help to define the architectural style and period of a commercial building and enhance the historic character of the neighborhood. For this reason, there are a few basic but essential preservation principles that should be kept in mind when conducting any repair or rehabilitation project involving historic building materials of commercial properties in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.

Recommendations

- When cleaning or repairing historic exterior materials, it is important to always use the gentlest methods and means possible.
- Preserve, maintain, and repair rather than replace historic building materials. Architectural features and details of a historic building should not be removed or altered.
- If replacement of historic materials is necessary, they should be replaced with like materials and design or with visually similar materials.
- Synthetic materials such as vinyl, aluminum and imitation brick are not appropriate as replacement materials for commercial buildings in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.
- Do not cover or obscure historic facade materials. If historic materials are presently covered, consider exposing them.

Masonry Material

Brick and mortar veneer is the most common exterior material found on commercial buildings within the proposed Old Decatur Historic District. While masonry is among the most durable of historic building materials, it is also susceptible to damage by improper maintenance or repair techniques. Harsh or abrasive cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, are also detrimental and should never be used on historic buildings.

Recommendations

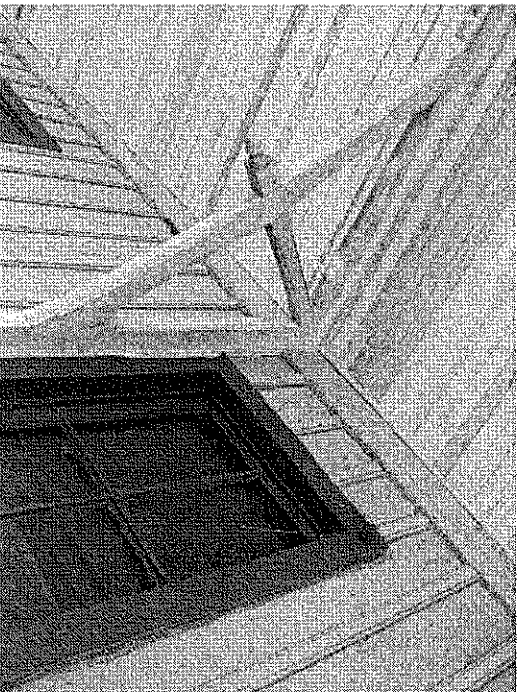
- Masonry construction that defines the overall historic character of the building should be preserved in its original condition.
- Applying stucco, cement or other synthetic material over existing masonry is not allowed. Repairs should be done carefully to match the original brickwork and mortar.
- The use of hard, contemporary mortars such as Portland cement without lime for repointing and mortar repair is damaging to older masonry material. Try to determine the original mortar chemical composition or use an appropriate historic compound. (Refer to masonry appendix)
- Never sandblast exterior masonry surfaces. Washing brick with a low-pressure water application is the best-recommended cleaning method.
- Painting or waterproofing unpainted brick is not recommended.

Wood Material

Although the majority of commercial buildings within the proposed Old Decatur Historic District have brick masonry exterior surfaces, there are a number of older, late 19th and early 20th century wood frame structures in the neighborhood that have been adapted for business-related use. The functional and decorative wood features of these buildings are important in defining their historic character and should be retained, protected and repaired in all rehabilitation projects.

Recommendations

- Wood siding original to the building should be repaired rather than replaced. Replacement should be done only if siding is deteriorated beyond repair and it should match the historic material.
- Introduction of new wood features incompatible in size, scale, material and color is not recommended.
- Historically painted surfaces should not be stripped to bare wood or have clear finishes or stains applied to them.
- The application of substitute materials such as vinyl or aluminum over historic wood siding is inappropriate and their use is prohibited in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.
- The removal of synthetic siding such as aluminum, asbestos and vinyl and restoration of historic wood siding is highly encouraged, but not required.



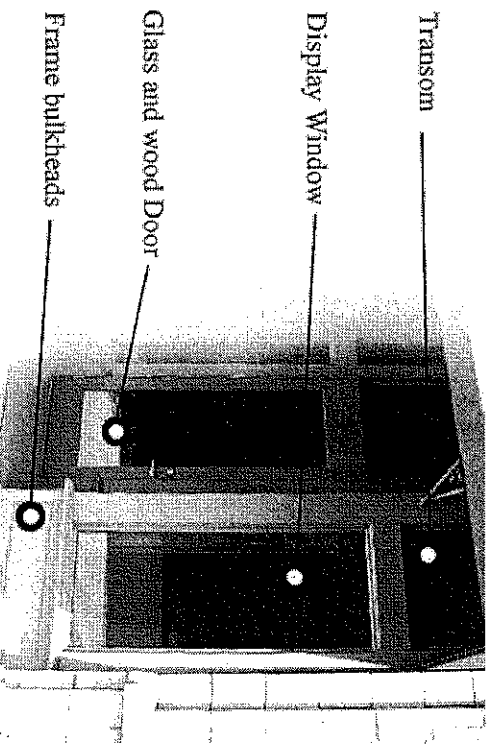
**Decatur Train Depot wood
ornament and siding**

Storefront Entrances and Doors

There are currently few, un-altered traditional storefront designs in the Old Decatur commercial area. Many of the existing, early 20th century buildings with pedestrian focused storefronts are found at the western end of East Howard Avenue across from the train depot. Elements of a historic retail storefront generally included large display windows with sidelights or transoms, solid bulkheads and recessed or flush doorways. Most commercial structures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had either single or double wooden doors with large lights as a means of utilizing natural lighting. By the mid-20th century, commercial buildings generally used plate glass doors with mill finish aluminum framing that were more in keeping with minimal modern design.

Recommendations

- Non-historic storefronts of inappropriate design should be replaced with a traditional configuration.
- Entrances should not be relocated or filled in. The addition of windows and/or doors on the front facade of a building is also inappropriate and is strongly discouraged.
- Transoms should be preserved and remain visible. Air conditioners and signs located in this space are inappropriate.
- Replacement doors should be appropriate to the architectural style and age of the building. Do not use solid doors or residential doors with decorative designs on a commercial storefront.
- Retain historic entrances on the rear and side facades of a building.

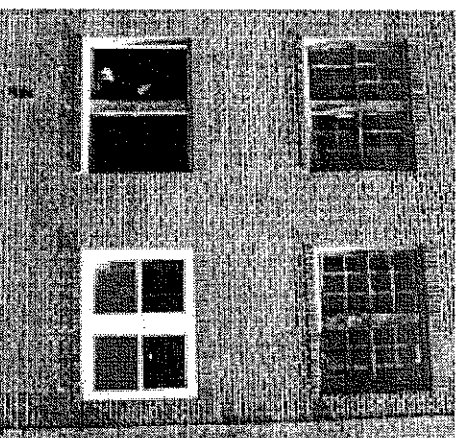


Windows (other than storefront windows)

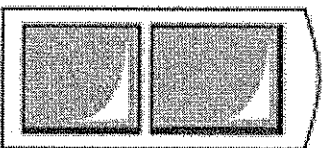
In addition to their functional purpose, a historic building's windows also play an important role in defining a structure's decorative character and style. Windows on historic buildings in Old Decatur should be repaired and maintained rather than replaced.

Recommendations

- Historic windows should be maintained, preserved, and repaired rather than replaced.
- If replacement windows are needed, they should match the existing style. Only windows with true divided lights or simulated divided lights are to be used (no snap-in mutins).
- Windows should not be filled-in, reduced or tinted.
- Decorative windows and fanlights are inappropriate for buildings within the proposed Old Decatur Historic District.
- Decorative shutters should not be added to buildings.
- Storm windows and security windows should not obscure historic windows.



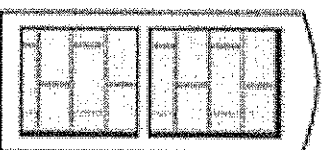
Inappropriate window replacement



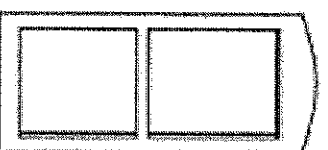
A



B



C



Do not replace historic windows with (A) - tinted glass, (B) - reduce the size of the window or (C) - fill the window in

Roofs

Roof design and form are important functional and architectural features on historic commercial buildings in Old Decatur and should be preserved. Proper maintenance and repair of the roof is essential to a building's long-term structural integrity.

Recommendations

- Maintain a building's existing roof form. Certain forms such as gabled and hipped roofs are not appropriate for most commercial structures in Old Decatur.
- During roof repair and replacement, new materials should match existing materials in scale and texture.
- Chimneys on commercial structures should be maintained and preserved.
- Where applicable, historic gutters and downspouts should be retained. Replacement gutters and downspouts should be similar to the original in material and appearance and should not obstruct window or door openings or architectural details.

Awnings

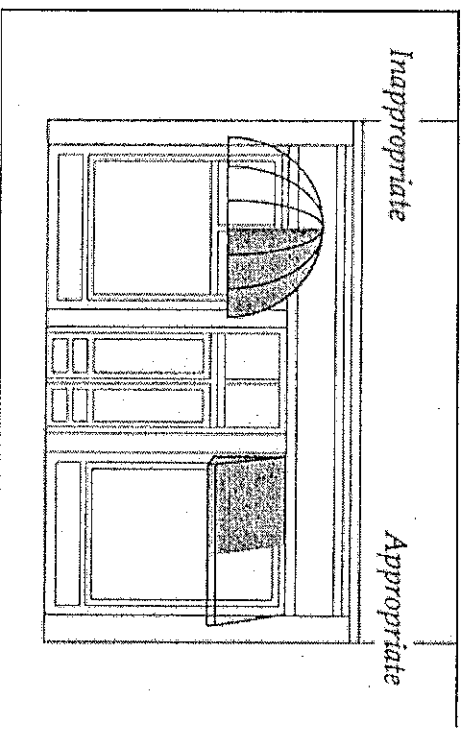
Awnings were a common feature found on commercial and residential architecture during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Awnings provide a simple and inexpensive means of protection from the elements and are effective devices for focusing attention on a building's storefront. They also can serve an aesthetically pleasing function by adding color and variety to the streetscape.

Recommendations

- The application of the awning should not damage the existing historic material of the building.
- Both retractable and fixed type awnings are appropriate with canvas, vinyl coated or acrylic fabric material.
- Flat canopies should only be used on existing mid-20th century modern architecture along East Howard Avenue.
- The awnings should be individually located within the storefront's major bays or openings. A continuous awning across two buildings is considered inappropriate.
- Awnings should match the shape of the openings-shed awning for rectangular opening, arched awning for arched opening.
- Do not use bubble, concave, convex or internally lit awnings.
- Awnings should have an 8 foot height clearance from the sidewalk and cover no more than a third of the opening's height.



Appropriate shed awning at
314 East Howard Avenue



Signs

Signs on the exterior of a commercial building are a vital component of a business's promotion. It is important that signs be both informative to passersby as well as complementary to the business within. All commercial signs in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District must conform to the regulations outlined in the City of Decatur Sign Ordinance (See Appendix F).

Recommendations

- Historic painted signs should be preserved and maintained.
- New signs should be placed in traditional sign locations on commercial buildings. Hanging signs, painted window signs and wall signs above display windows and awnings signs are appropriate areas.
- Freestanding signs less than 8 feet in height and constructed of wood are appropriate for residential structures that have been converted to commercial use.
- Sign installation should not destroy or alter historic materials and ornamentation.
- New signs should be of compatible building design and materials.
- Flashing, blinking, rotating and internally lit signs are inappropriate for the proposed Old Decatur Historic District and are not allowed.

Mechanical Systems and Appurtenant Features

Modern mechanical systems for heating and air conditioning can easily detract from the historic character of the commercial area when conspicuously placed. The visual impact of mechanical systems and service areas should be minimized.

Recommendations

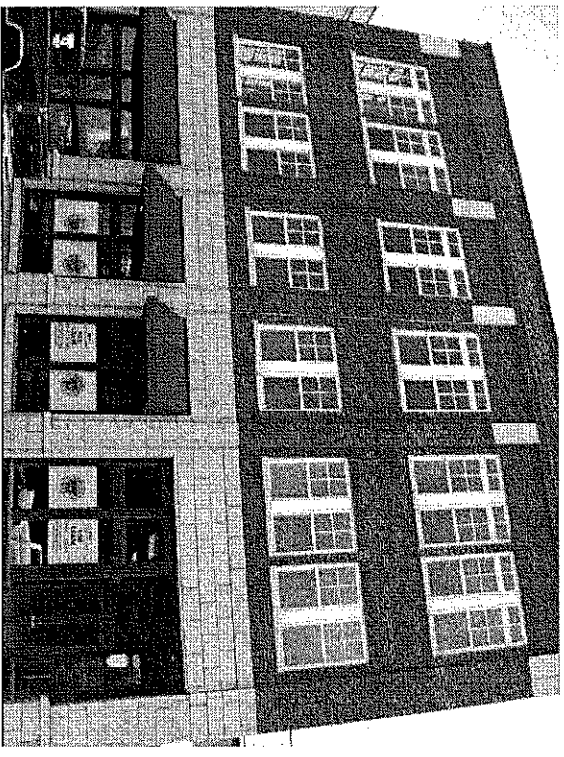
- Satellite dishes and other rooftop mechanical systems should not be visible from the immediate public view.
- Utility meters should be located inconspicuously.
- The front facade of a building should not be disrupted by the addition of mechanical systems such as air conditioner units.
- Air conditioner units should be placed on the roof or rear or side facades of a building in such a way as to avoid damage to historic material.
- When placed at ground level, the system should be landscaped or fenced in such a way as to shield it from being visible from the public right-of-way.
- It is recommended that dumpsters should be enclosed, screened from view, landscaped, and not located in the front yard setback.

Commercial Additions and New Construction

There are a number of areas within the proposed Old Decatur Historic District that present opportunities for new construction and development. These guidelines should be used as a reference tool for promoting appropriate commercial design in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood. The eclectic nature of the commercial district provides an opportunity to explore a variety of building materials and contemporary design.

Design Goals:

- Minimize the negative impact of new development on the historic residential neighborhood of Old Decatur.
- Preserve and rehabilitate existing historic and pedestrian scale buildings in the neighborhood commercial district.
- Create new commercial development and building forms that are compatible with the scale and character of existing historic structures and the adjacent neighborhood.
- Promote a mix of retail, service, office, dining and residential uses that serve and enhance the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Reference and reinforce the historic architectural character of Old Decatur's late 19th and early 20th century railroad past in all new building design.
- Provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment through the use of sidewalk furnishings and street trees.
- Improve pedestrian access within the commercial areas and to and from the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Allow for adequate parking facilities for the neighborhood commercial area.
- Maintain a small scale, low rise transitional zone between historic residential structures and any future infill development. Infill within transitional zones should imitate the size and mass of historic commercial structures in each block face.

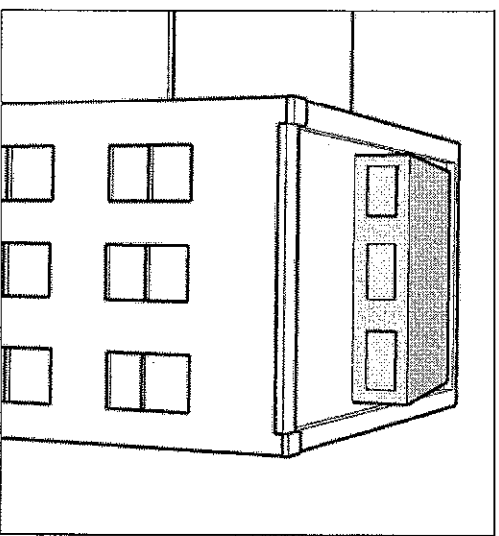


Additions to Commercial Buildings

An addition may sometimes be needed to extend the viability of an historic commercial building and allow for its continued use. In such cases, the new attached addition should be constructed in a manner that minimizes damage to significant materials and features and preserves the historic character of the existing structure. The design of the addition should be compatible with the materials and features of the historic building but should be differentiated as a newer structure.

Recommendations

- New additions should be placed at the rear of the existing historic building.
- Rear additions should be compatible in form, size, scale and proportion to the original building.
- New additions should not change the orientation of the existing building.
- Roof additions must be set back from the front facade and not visible from the immediate public right of way.
- Building materials used on additions should be compatible with existing historic materials in the district.



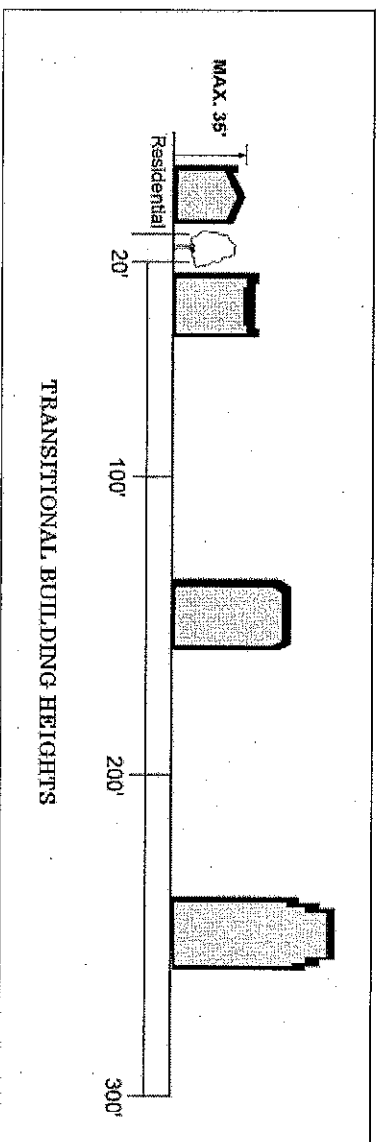
Roof additions should be set back from the front and not visible from the street

Building Mass, Scale, Proportion, and Siting

New multi-use commercial construction should reference the early 20th century building forms found in the Old Decatur neighborhood. Older commercial structures used architectural form and elements to promote a feeling of stability and permanence and reflected the utilitarian nature of their use. The solid, block-like quality was emphasized using a flat roof, a parapet, or both. In addition, the width and height of infill development next to buildings contributing to the area of influence should also be consistent with the adjacent historic designs.

Recommendations

- Buildings will relate proportionally to the street widths that they front.
- New construction may incorporate projecting and recessing wall planes and angled corners.
- New construction should have similar width, scale, and proportions as adjacent historic buildings.
- Stepped parapets with low or flat roofs are the appropriate roof form.
- Building heights for new construction should not overwhelm existing single-family buildings or the single and double story historic commercial structures. The highest building in the district is the Ice House Lofts on Sycamore Place and new construction should transition to the lower heights of adjacent single-family and small scale commercial structures.
- Setbacks should be measured from the property line.
- Transitional landscaped buffers should be used to mitigate the impact of new construction between commercial and residential properties.

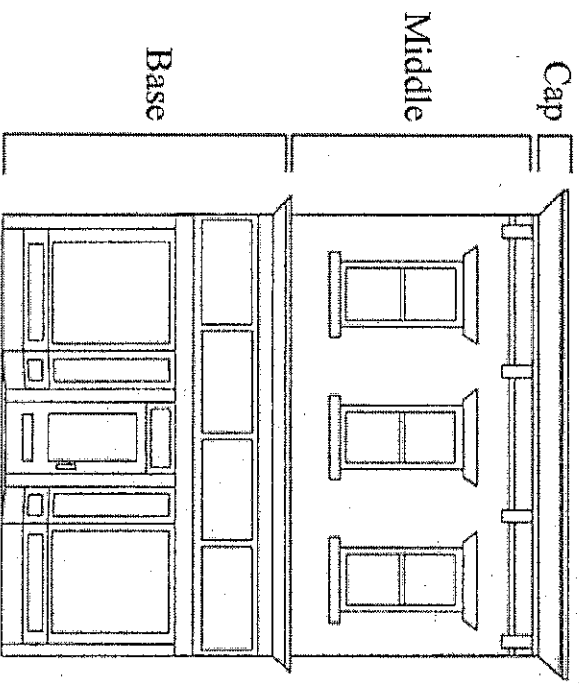


Building Facades

Commercial facades from the late 19th and early 20th centuries generally employed architectural detailing such as belt courses, cornice lines and caps. The delineation between floors (also known as base, middle and cap composition) helped to define the different uses of the building, generally with prominent storefronts and display windows for street level retail and upper stories for office or residential use. This method of facade design reflects the character of some of the existing historic commercial buildings in the proposed Old Decatur Historic District and is encouraged for all new development.

Recommendations

- Primary building facades must face the major street. Corner buildings will have entrances on each side.
- Storefronts must relate to the pedestrian scale.
- Width and height of multiple storefronts must be consistent on a single facade so as to create a rhythmic pattern.
- Established proportion, distribution and ratio of solid-to-void (wall-to-opening) patterns on historic buildings in the district should be followed.
- Fenestration must cover a minimum of 75% of the frontage length on the 1st floor and be raised to a minimum of 3 feet above the sidewalk with a maximum height of 10 feet above the sidewalk, unless the first floor is residential.
- Upper facade windows should be placed symmetrically and relate to those on the lower facade.



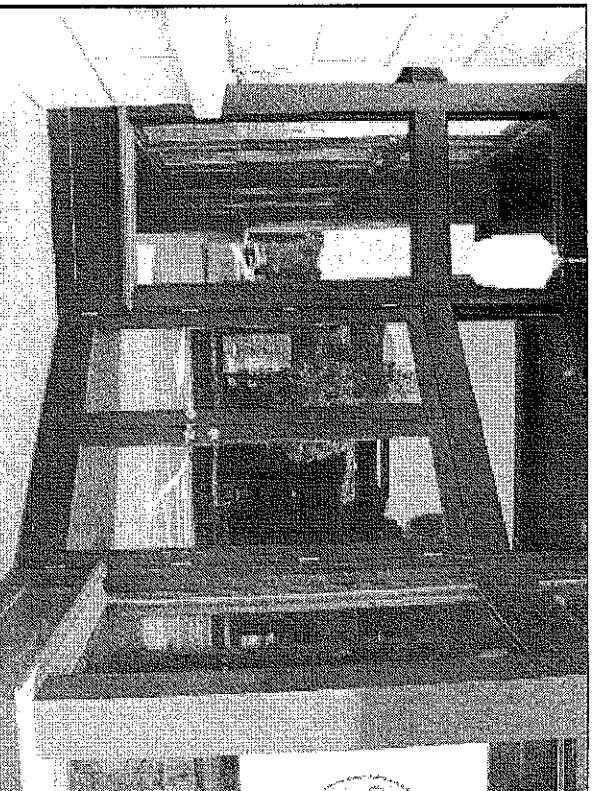
Basic architectural features of historic commercial facades

Building Materials

Facade materials on all new construction or additions to historic buildings should be in keeping with those used on existing early 20th century commercial buildings near the Decatur train depot.

Recommendations

- Building materials should be consistent with historic materials in the district. Recommended facade materials on all new construction include brick, metal, glass, or cut stone. Stacked stone and river rock are not allowed.
- Contemporary materials will be approved on a case by case basis.
- Upper facade windows should have true or simulated divided lights (no snap-ins).
- Glass must be clear to allow for views of store interiors. Noticeably tinted glass is inappropriate.
- Doors may be recessed or flush with the facade.
- Doors at the storefront may be single or double and should be of wood or anodized metal with clear glass lights.



Appropriate window, glass and door materials for new commercial construction

Parking

The accommodation of adequate parking facilities should be an important consideration for all new and existing businesses located in and around the commercial corridor of the proposed Old Decatur Historic District. In addition to lot capacity requirements, an emphasis on organization, management and design of parking areas is also important as a method of providing a safe and convenient pedestrian environment. It is critical that parking is designed in a way that does not visually intrude into the neighborhood.

Recommendations

- Historic buildings contributing to the area of influence should not be demolished to create parking.
- On-street parking should be maximized wherever possible. Establishment of a maximum off-street parking allowance should be considered.
- Parking lots will be located to the rear or side of buildings.
- Shared parking and consolidated driveways and curb cuts are strongly encouraged as a method of preserving continuity of street edges. Connect public sidewalks to surface parking areas.

- Create a continuous landscape buffer area between parking areas and the street, excluding driveways.

Parking decks

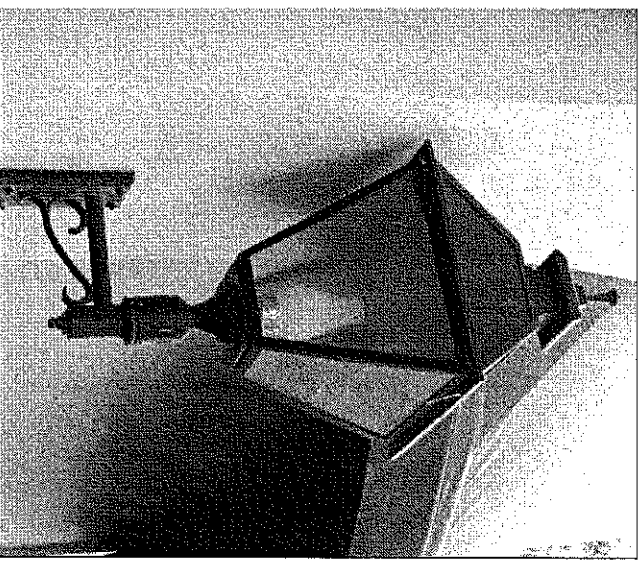
- Above ground parking structures will provide continuous, street-fronting ground level commercial or office and have the appearance of a horizontal storied building consistent with other facades of multi-use buildings in the Old Decatur neighborhood.
- Any parking deck should conceal automobiles from visibility.
- Any parking deck should mitigate the impact of lighting on adjacent properties.

Storefront Lighting

Storefront lighting should fulfill a number of functional purposes such as accentuating commercial signs and goods, providing a welcoming environment for customers and enhancing existing sidewalk lighting of the streetscape.

Recommendations

- Lighting attached to a commercial building should be aimed down, illuminating the immediate sign and front facade area.
- Lighting should not overwhelm adjacent storefront areas or shine into upper floor windows.
- If necessary, lighting may be appropriate for free standing signs if placed conspicuously behind landscaping or in the ground below the sign.
- Use white or soft white natural lighting only. Colored lighting is not allowed.
- Only use simple, contemporary fixtures for commercial lighting. Lamp styles of historical periods not compatible with the Old Decatur neighborhood are not allowed.



Lamp designs that are not in keeping with the time period of Old Decatur, like this colonial coach lantern, should not be used



Appropriate commercial lighting

Community Landmark Buildings

The community landmark buildings of Old Decatur are an important part of the neighborhood's architectural, cultural and historic character. Community landmark buildings, like commercial buildings, exist throughout the district in a variety of styles. The landmark buildings' presence in the district contributes to the sense of community that exists in the neighborhood, by giving residents important public resources within walking distance.

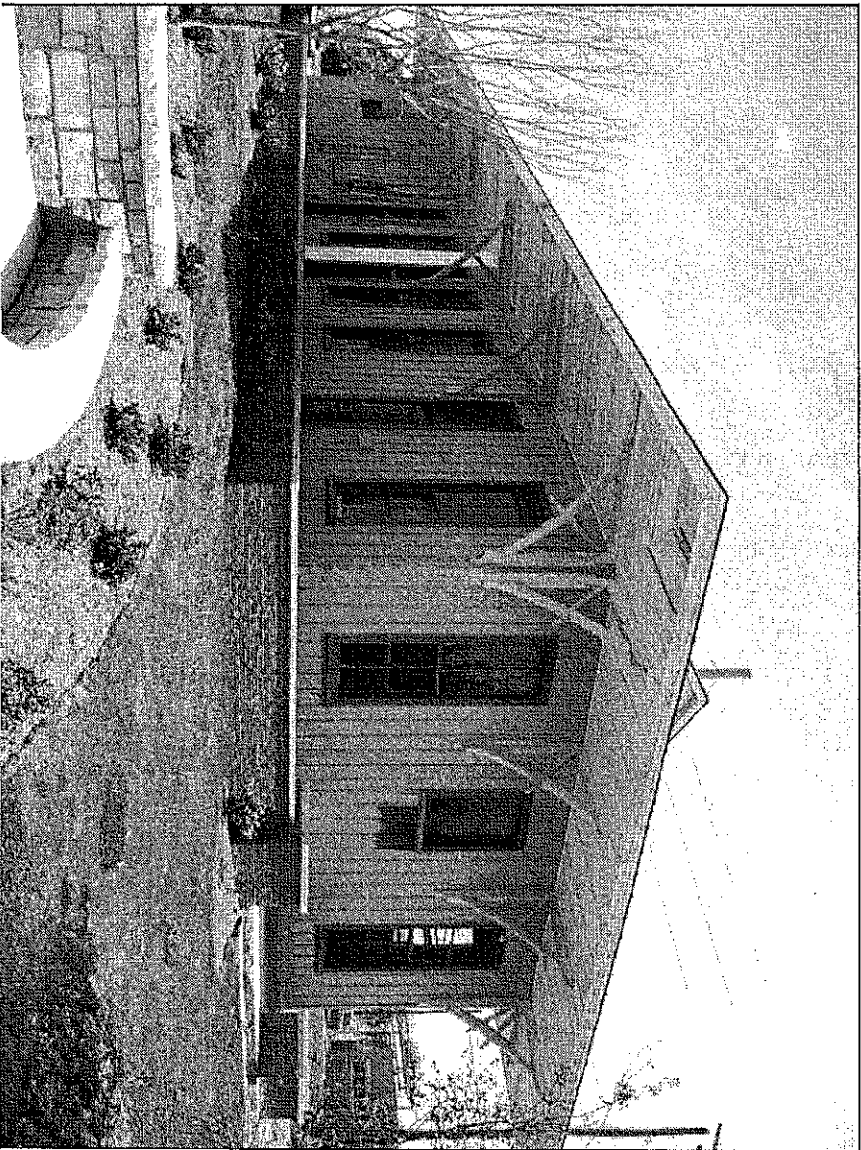
Community landmarks also tend to be more stylistic than commercial buildings and are often designed by an architect. Most are freestanding and distinct from other structures in the neighborhood by their large scale and setback. Similar to residential properties in the proposed district, landscape features including sidewalks and fences are common elements of commercial and institutional buildings. Fences are often made of wood or metal and do not block the view of the building from the street. While setbacks are much larger in the institutional and later commercial buildings (approximately 40 to 70 feet), sidewalks and the presence of street trees help the district maintain pedestrian-friendly environment.

Design Goals

- Prevent demolition of historic landmarks and encourage adaptive reuse.
- Repair and replace historic materials in-kind on contributing structures.
- Encourage additions and new construction that are compatible with contributing structures.

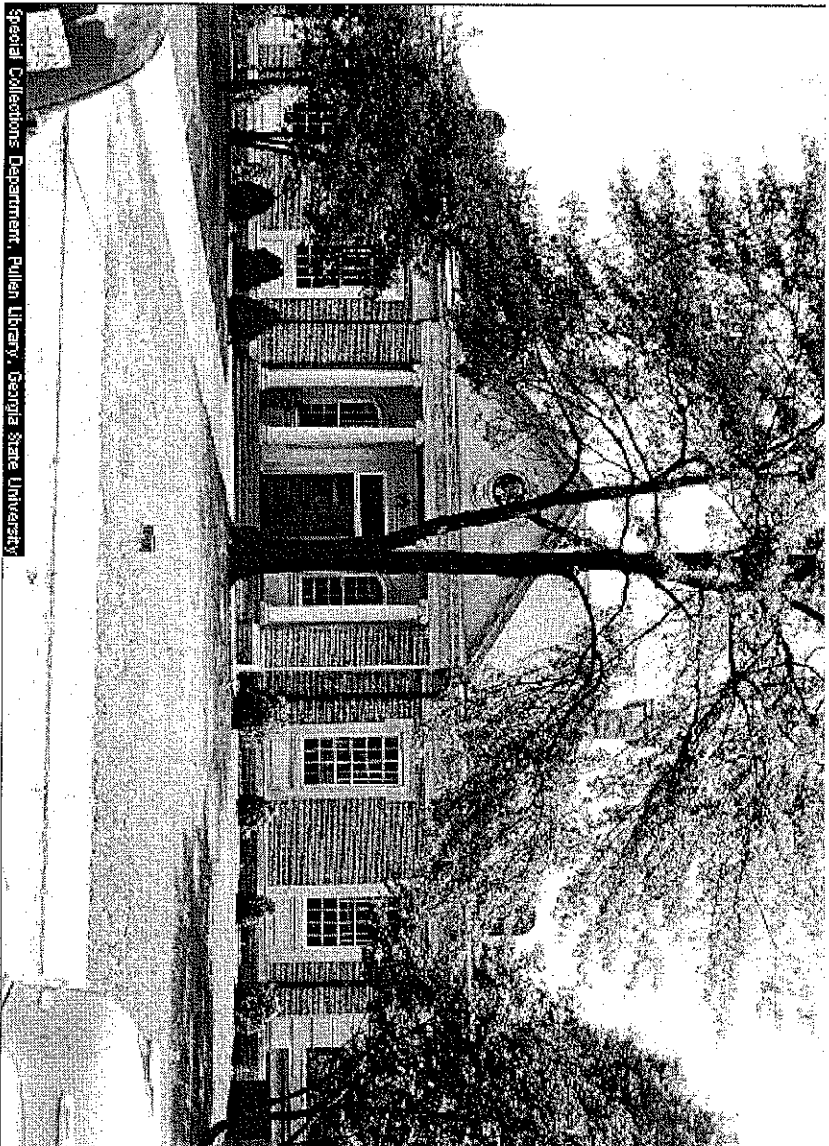
Decatur Train Depot

The Decatur Train Depot, built in 1891, was constructed as a long and narrow building and has a common depot form. The north and south facades historically paralleled the train tracks and the wide, over-hanging eaves provided shelter for waiting passengers. The depot has elements of the Stick Style which was generally popular between 1860 and 1890, but rare in the South. Distinguishing features of this style are decorative trusses, overhanging eaves, often with exposed rafters, and diagonal or curving porch support braces. Other features include board-and-batten or shingle wall cladding as well as horizontal and vertical bands over the exterior wall, which represent the structure's framing.



Decatur Public Library

The Decatur Public Library was built in the Neoclassical Revival Style, which was popular throughout Georgia between 1890 and 1930, but can often be found throughout the mid-twentieth century. This style is distinguished by a symmetrical facade with a central entrance way surrounded with pilasters and columns. Decorative details often include fanlights, sidelights, and transoms. A classical cornice is usually present with dentils or modillions. The roof line is usually low-pitched and hipped.

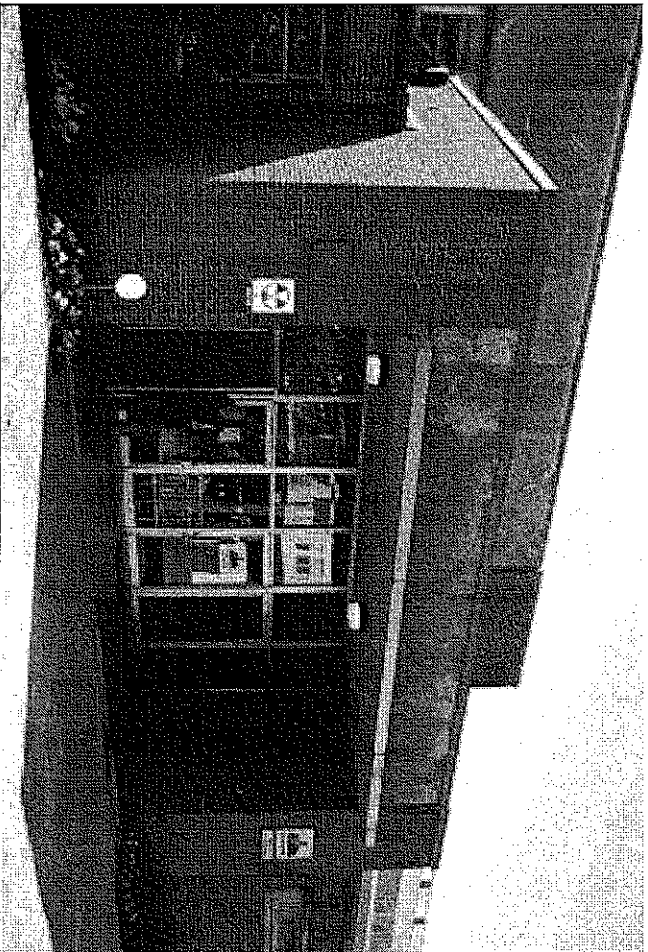


Special Collections Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Decatur Public Library on Sycamore Street,
circa 1940s (photo courtesy of GSU Pullen Library)

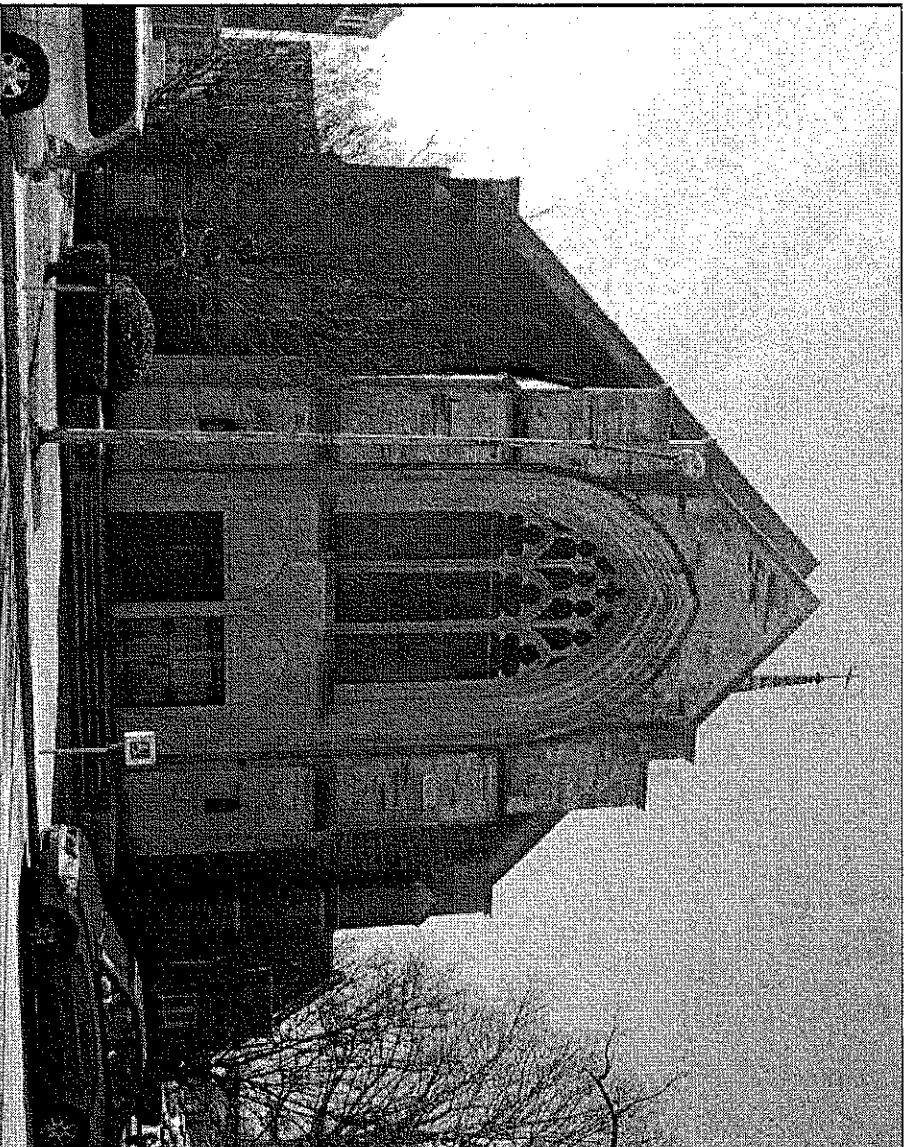
Decatur Recreation Center

Built in 1958, the Decatur Recreation Center is an example of the International Style. Originally developed in Europe during the 1920s, the International Style was rare for residential architecture, but was the most common design used for institutional and commercial buildings in the United States during the period following World War II, generally between 1950 and 1970. The style is characterized by modern construction materials such as concrete, glass, and steel. Design elements common to the International style were flat roofs, minimal decoration, exposed structure, and glass "curtain walls" or corner windows.



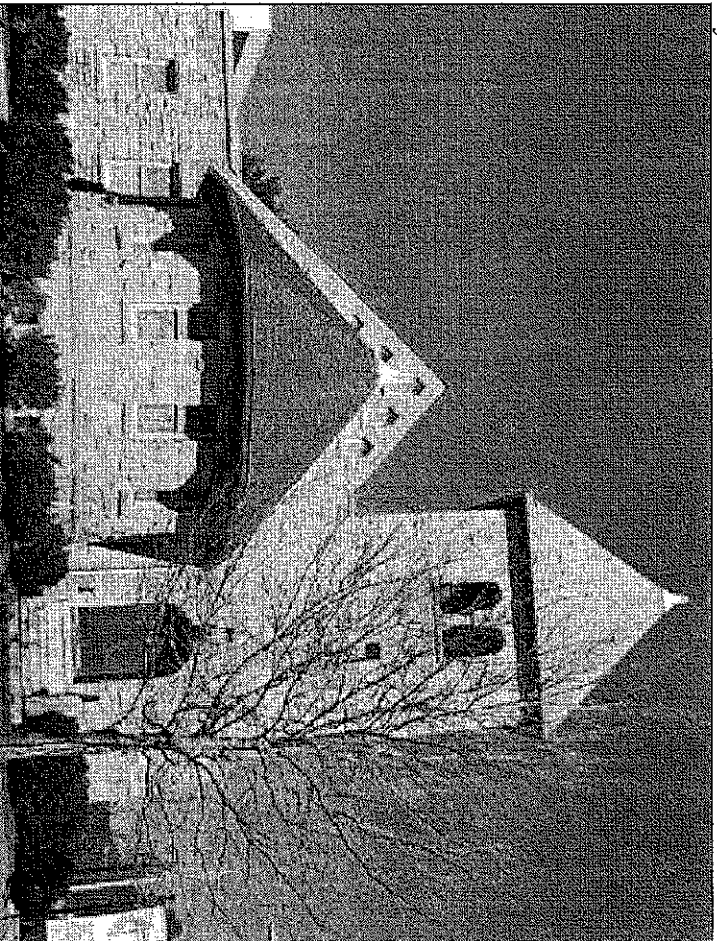
Decatur Presbyterian Church

The Decatur Presbyterian Church, built in 1951, is a front gable church type. This type is characterized by a large front gable and basic rectangular plan with one or two front doors and three to five windows in the sides. Rooftop steeples or belfries are common additions to this church type. The church's style is Gothic Revival. Although this style was somewhat common in residences between 1840 and 1880 it prevailed as a common style for church buildings for a much longer period. This style is distinguished by steeply pitched roof, triangular or pointed arch windows, entrances, and porch supports. In church buildings, Gothic Revival often includes a steeply pitched spire and polychromatic masonry work.



Decatur United Methodist Church

Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church, South (now Decatur First United Methodist Church) was organized between 1823-1826. Its first building was erected in 1826. In 1897, a new granite church, the third structure, was built beside the old wooden sanctuary. The “rock chapel,” as it is commonly referred to, is a corner tower type church with a basic rectangular plan and large front gable like that of the front gable church type. The distinctive feature of this type is the projecting corner entrance tower with usually a pyramidal shaped roof. The church's style is Richardsonian Romanesque, a common building style between 1880 and 1900 and created by architect H.H. Richardson. This style is distinguished by round-topped arches above windows, porch supports, and entrance ways, as well as rough-faced masonry walls. Structures often have towers and an asymmetrical facade.



Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

The Holy Trinity Episcopal Church connects East Ponce de Leon and Sycamore Street. The church has three distinct buildings on its property. The original chapel has elements of an English Venacular Revival style incorporating a gable roof, flying buttresses, and a dark brick cladding. A building survey from 1989 indicates the date of construction for the chapel as circa 1935. An addition was added in the late 1970's and a new classroom building was constructed in 2003. Due to its age, the newer construction is not considered contributing to the district.

