

## **5.0 Guidelines for the Historic Planning Area and the National Register/Local Historic District**

### **5.1. Architectural Rehabilitation Guidelines**

The Historic Planning Area has a total of approximately twenty-one historic buildings; these buildings are listed in [Section 2.0 Existing Architectural Resources](#). These properties retain a high degree of architectural integrity.

If Spotsylvania Courthouse is to retain its historic character, it must, first and foremost, work to preserve and maintain these properties. As this area develops, these properties will be increasingly outnumbered but with protection and planning they can serve as prominent reminders of the past and models for the future.

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" provide the framework for these design guidelines and their basic principles are continually reinforced in the details of these guidelines. The "Standards for Rehabilitation" is considered the basis of sound preservation practices. They allow buildings to be changed to meet contemporary needs while ensuring that those features that make buildings historically and architecturally distinctive are preserved. They have meaningful application to virtually every type of project involving historic resources. These standards are as follows:

#### ***U.S. Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation"***

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 4. Most properties change over time: those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary physical, or pictorial evidence.*
- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

8. *Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

### **5.1.1 Institutional/Community Rehabilitation Guidelines**

Many of the guidelines presented in [5.1.2 Residential/Commercial Rehabilitation Guidelines](#) may also be applied to institutional buildings. Institutional buildings are generally visually prominent structures that provide a unique community identity. In Spotsylvania Courthouse, these buildings include governmental buildings such as the county courthouse and the old jail, and community buildings such as the historic churches.

All of the institutional/community properties located in the Historic Planning Area retain for the most part, their historic building materials and have undergone few alterations.

#### **5.1.1.1 Distinctive Features**

Guideline - Retain distinctive features that characterize historic institutional buildings and make them visually prominent landmark buildings. Deteriorated features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When replacement is required, new features shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence. (See also guidelines in [Section 5.1.2.](#))

*The columned porticoes of the [Spotsylvania Courthouse](#) and [Spotswood Inn](#) are important stylistic details that set these buildings apart from other buildings in the district.*

*The original gable-end detailing of the [Berea Christian Church](#) has been replaced with synthetic shingling that now shows signs of rust/water stains detracting from the building's historic character.*

*The original brick exterior of the [Berea Christian Church](#) is an important architectural feature and should not be painted.*

#### **5.1.1.2 Alterations and Additions**

Alterations and additions to institutional buildings are often made to provide more space and accommodate new needs.

Guideline - Alterations and the placement of additions on institutional buildings shall be accomplished without compromising the historic character of these structures. Additions shall not be placed on the front facade and shall have minimal visual impact from the public rights-of-way. Alteration of the front facade is strongly discouraged. (See also [Section 5.3 Criteria for New Construction/Subdivisions.](#))

*The [Courthouse addition](#) successfully incorporates design features of the original courthouse (such as the columned porch and yellow brick) and is set back behind mature trees. The trees and setback together allow the courthouse itself to have the dominant visual impact.*

*Even though the nonhistoric annex of the [Zion United Methodist Church](#) is not physically attached to the church, this guideline can be applied to it. Unlike the Courthouse addition, the church annex is not appropriately set back from the public right-of-way and, in effect, competes with the historic church building and detracts from its appearance.*

### **5.1.1.3 Adaptive Use**

Historic institutional buildings may accommodate new uses successfully in order to remain an active part of a community. Many institutional buildings have large spaces that can be easily adapted for a number of compatible uses.

Guideline - Proposed new uses for historic institutional buildings should be compatible with the historic property so that minimal changes are necessary. Institutional buildings adapted for new uses shall retain the distinctive features and historic character of their original appearance and use.

Recommendation - Interior space changes should have minimal impact on original materials and floor plan. When at all possible, these changes should be “temporary” in nature allowing for future complete restoration of the interior space. If original details and materials are removed, they should be retained and stored for possible future replacement.

### **5.1.1.4 Health and Safety Code Compliance**

Historic institutional buildings may require modifications to comply with current health, safety, and access requirements. Acceptable solutions can be found that will be compatible with historic buildings while successfully accommodating these requirements.

Guideline - Compliance with health and safety codes and handicap access requirements shall be carried out with a minimum of impact to the historic character and materials of institutional buildings. Examples of acceptable solutions include the placement and design of ramps to be as unobtrusive as possible and the placement of fire escapes to the rear or on view-obstructed sides of a building.

For more discussion of the appropriate placement and design of handicap access see [Section 5.2.4 Barrier Free Access](#).

*The [Courthouse fire escape](#) has been appropriately placed on the rear facade of the building. Its placement could be improved by swinging it to the left rather than its current orientation to the right, thus minimizing its visual impact on the rear facade.*

## **5.1.2 Residential/Commercial Rehabilitation Guidelines**

There are twelve historic residential properties in the Historic Planning Area. For the most part, these properties retain considerable architectural integrity, the primary issue being the application of synthetic exterior materials such as asbestos shingles (likely done before 1960) and vinyl and aluminum siding.

### **5.1.2.1 Exterior Materials**

One of the most serious impacts to the Historic Planning Area has been the application of synthetic materials to the exteriors of historic buildings. Historically, asbestos shingles were used. In the past thirty years metal sidings and vinyl siding have been the materials of choice. It cannot be emphasized enough that this practice seriously diminishes, and in many cases destroys, the historic architectural integrity of a building, and, as explained in the following guidelines, can actually destroy underlying materials.

Guideline - Retain original wood siding and repair rather than replace damaged material whenever possible. When replacement is necessary, replace only deteriorated materials and match the original material in size, shape, texture, and material. Paint removal and repainting shall be done using appropriate techniques that do not damage the historic material.

Guideline - The application of artificial or non-historic exterior siding materials such as brick veneers; asphalt shingle siding; and cementitious, aluminum, or vinyl siding is strongly discouraged. These materials are not successful in mimicking details of original wood siding (the most common material over which they are applied); subsequently, their use greatly compromises the historic integrity of buildings. Application often results in the loss or distortion of architectural details, and improper installation can result in damage of historic materials.

*This [house](#) at the edge of the Historic Planning Area is a good example of how vinyl siding encapsulates a building and destroys the inherent craftsmanship that greatly contributes to the historic character of a building*

*The west wing of [Dabney Farm](#) has been covered in vinyl siding potentially doing irreversible damage to underlying materials.*

*The [vinyl siding](#) on this house has been applied in such a way so as not to obscure detailing around windows and doors. Despite these efforts, the “plastic” appearance of the material does not successfully mimic the original wood siding*

Guideline - Retain original masonry without the application of any surface treatment, including paint. Avoid chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials. Masonry cleaning shall be done using the gentlest means possible. Repointing of mortar joints shall only be undertaken when necessary, and appropriate techniques, tools, and materials shall be used to avoid damage to the historic masonry and to match the existing visual character.

Guideline - Architectural details shall be maintained and treated with sensitivity. The removal of such details or application of details inappropriate to the period or style of a house is strongly discouraged. Repair rather than replace damaged elements whenever possible. Historic details that have been lost or are beyond repair may be replaced with new materials, provided that historical evidence and that can substantiate their earlier presence the new materials match the original in composition, design, color, and texture.

Guideline - Stucco facing requires periodic maintenance and shall be repaired with a stucco mixture that comes very close to duplicating the original material in both appearance and texture.

*Many of the [community/institutional buildings](#) in Spotsylvania Courthouse have brick exteriors. It is important to adhere to this guideline to preserve the architectural integrity and longevity of the buildings*

### 5.1.2.2 Architectural Details

Architectural details, such as brackets, cornerboards, moldings, cornice details, decorative window and door trims, and shingles are essential to the historic character of buildings and districts.

Guideline - Architectural details shall be maintained and treated with sensitivity. The removal of such details or application of details inappropriate to the period or style of a house is strongly discouraged. Repair rather than replace damaged elements whenever possible. Historic details that have been lost or are beyond repair may be replaced with new materials, provided that their earlier presence can be substantiated by historical evidence and that the new materials match the original in composition, design, color, and texture.

*This delicate [cornice board](#) detail on the Pendleton House (HA-12) is typical of the Queen Anne style.*

*The [Ionic Column](#) on this porch is an important stylistic detail that should be maintained*

### 5.1.2.3 Entrances and Porches

Entrances and porches are quite often the focus of historic residential buildings, particularly when they occur on primary elevations. Together with their functional and decorative features, they can be extremely important in defining the overall historic character of a building.

Guideline - Retain original porches and steps. Repair of porches shall not result in the removal of original materials (such as balusters, columns, hand-rails, brackets, and roof detailing) unless seriously deteriorated. If replacement materials must be introduced, the new shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated, if possible, by documentary and physical evidence.

*The front (top) and side (bottom) porches of 8954 Courthouse Road ([HA-8](#)) are important features of the house and should not be infilled or altered*

Guideline - The enclosure of front and side porches visible from a right-of-way is strongly discouraged.

*The front and rear porches on the house at [Dixie](#) (located in the Transitional Planning Area TA-10) have been infilled with a non-transparent material and incompatible two-over-two horizontal windows have been used. These alterations have destroyed the historic integrity of the house. In fact, the front facade no longer presents itself as the main facade leaving the house with no clear orientation*

Guideline - Retain original doors unless deteriorated beyond repair. Screen and storm doors shall not detract from the character of the house and shall be designed to be compatible with original doors. In the case of a replacement for a deteriorated door, the new door shall be similar to the original in design and materials. Original door openings shall not be infilled on facades visible from the public right-of-way.

### 5.1.2.4 Windows

Windows are very important in creating rhythm on a house and also play a role in the directional emphasis and scale of buildings. Highly decorative windows with distinctive shapes or glazing patterns are always character defining features of buildings and contribute to the district's overall appearance.

Guideline - Existing windows, including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, frames, molding, shutters, and all hardware shall be retained and repaired through routine maintenance whenever possible. When deteriorated elements must be replaced, new materials shall be compatible with original materials in terms of material, design, and hardware. If it is necessary to replace an entire window, the replacement shall be sized to the original opening and shall duplicate all proportions and configurations of the original window.

*The two-over-two historic light pattern of this window on the [Spotswood Inn](#) is an important detail different light patterns are often associated with different styles and therefore it is important to retain the original windows*

*This extremely distinctive window on the [Berea Christian Church](#) is covered with metal security wire which is somewhat distracting If absolutely essential to use such materials. application should be done in such a way as to not harm any historic materials.*

Guideline - The addition of storm windows shall be accomplished without seriously compromising original window appearance. Storm windows shall not damage original window frames and shall be removable at a later date.

*The [aluminum storm window](#) detracts from the historic character of the original window*

### **5.1.2.5 Roofs, Chimneys, and Dormers**

Original roof form - with its shape; features such as dormers, cresting, and chimneys: slope: material and color; and patterning - is an essential and character-defining feature of a building. Massing elements such as projecting bays, porches, and dormers display secondary roofs that may connect with and impact the overall impression of the roof form. Roof pitch, orientation, and shape also contribute to patterns within a district. In addition, sound roofs are essential to a building's preservation.

Guideline - Retain the original roof form. No addition to a house shall greatly alter the original form of a roof or render that form unrecognizable. Original or historic roof dormers shall also be retained. Skylights shall be installed to be as unobtrusive as possible. If additional upper-story space is required, consider using dormers placed out of view of the public right-of-way to create this space.

Standing seam metal roofing is the most common material used on historic residential resources in the Historic Planning Area.

Guideline - Historic metal roofs should be maintained and, if necessary, replaced in kind or with an alternative material that duplicates the appearance of the original.

*The [roof form](#) and material (standing seam metal) are distinctive features of the Christ Episcopal Church Education Building*

Guidelines - Original chimneys are often character defining features of historic houses and shall be properly maintained; they shall not be covered with stucco or any other material, unless historically covered. A prominent chimney that is no longer in use still functions as an important element in the overall composition of a house and shall not be covered, removed, or replaced.

*This [chimney](#) (top) has distinctive brick corbelling and is a contributing historic feature of this house. This nonhistoric concrete block chimney (bottom) detracts from the appearance and architectural integrity of the house.*

### **5.1.2.6 Gutters**

Adequate roof drainage is necessary to **(1)** insure that roofing materials provide a weather-tight covering, and **(2)** prevent water from splashing against walls and foundations or draining toward buildings.

Guideline - Gutters and downspouts shall be maintained in their original appearance and location. It is particularly important that downspouts be situated along the edges and corners of buildings and along porch supports to limit visual disruption.

### **5.1.2.7 Foundations**

Foundations primarily play a functional role by providing support for the structure above. Often times they are subtle elements that blend with the rest of the building. They can, however, contribute to the stylistic expression of a building.

Guideline - Work involving foundations shall, to the extent possible, preserve original appearances and materials. Original foundation materials shall not be covered with stucco or other materials. The infill of pier foundations shall be done in a way that maintains the appearance of foundation piers. A simple temporary material, such as wood lattice, is most appropriate. A less desirable solution is the use of a solid material. In both cases, the infill material shall be recessed behind the original piers and should allow for significant ventilation underneath the structure. (See guidelines under [Section 5.1.2.1 Exterior Materials](#)).

*The foundation at 8953 Courthouse Road ([HA-9](#)) shows signs of settling, not uncommon in older buildings it remains unpainted as is the recommended treatment.*

### **5.1.2.8 Mechanical Services**

Guideline - The placement of air conditioners and similar mechanical services shall be accomplished without detracting from the historical integrity of a building. The principal elevation of a building shall not be disrupted by the addition of mechanical services.

*This [air conditioning unit](#) is one of four located on the southeast facade of the Spotswood Inn It is one of the many distractions (signs, traffic signals, utility poles and wires) detracting from this building's presentation*

### **5.1.2.9 Accessory Buildings**

Guideline - Garages, garage apartments and other accessory buildings that are original to their main houses shall be preserved as significant site elements. Rehabilitation treatments shall follow the design guidelines provided in this section. For construction of new accessory buildings see [Section 5.3 Criteria for New Construction/Subdivisions](#).

### **5.1.2.10 Maintenance/Demolition by Neglect**

Demolition by neglect is a situation in which a building is left to deteriorate due to lack of maintenance and security.

Guideline - Avoid demolition by neglect with regular maintenance and repair, even of buildings currently unoccupied. Minimize the occurrence of this condition through the education of property owners concerning proper methods of upkeep and preservation.

9128 Courthouse Road - These historic garages and sheds have been significantly altered and no longer contribute to the property's historic character

The Zion United Methodist Church (HA- 14) (bottom) and the house at 9126 Courthouse Road (HA-17) (top) show signs of needing some general maintenance The Church is in the process of being rehabilitated

#### **5.1.2.11 Exterior Colors**

The Historic Preservation Commission will not review exterior colors.

Recommendation - Appropriate paint colors are usually related to the style and type of the property in question. Anyone considering painting a home is encouraged to determine the range of paint colors and techniques applicable to the particular architectural period of their property so that a proper choice might be made. The placement of different colors on a house (i.e., the primary color as well as trim colors) is also of critical importance. A source that provides historic illustrations, color palettes, and placement information is A Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings, 1820-1920 by Roger Moss.

#### **5.1.2.12 Interiors**

The Historic Preservation Commission will not consider proposed changes to interiors unless those changes would have an effect on exterior architectural features. Although not required, it would be wise for property owners to make every effort to preserve the historic characters of their building interiors, as they are valuable assets of the property. Following are some helpful recommendations for property owners to follow.

Recommendation - When planning rehabilitation, preserve as much of the significant historic floor plan as possible. If changes are needed, attempt to make changes in such a way that they are reversible and do not damage or result in the loss of historic materials.

Recommendation - Care should be taken to preserve character-defining interior features such as wood floors, molding, picture rails, fireplaces, plaster, and other details that distinguish historic buildings from new construction.

Recommendation - Although not the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission, it should be noted that the visible interior features of heating, lighting, air conditioning and plumbing systems may contribute to the overall character of a building. Retaining these elements, when possible, should be considered. This will likely require upgrading and augmenting the system components themselves.

#### **A COMMENT ON COLOR**

Many of the historic residential buildings in the Historic Planning Area are late-nineteenth/turn-of-the-century Queen Anne or Gothic Revival houses. These houses fall into a time period when house designers and paint companies were continuing a movement, begun by Andrew Jackson Downing in the 1640s, toward the use of richer colors. Jackson, author of The Architecture of Country Houses, is quoted as saying, "There is one colour frequently employed by house painters, which we feel bound to protest against most heartily, as entirely unsuitable and in bad taste. This is white, which is so universally applied to our wooden houses of every size and description The glaring nature of this colour, when seen in contrast with the soft green foliage, renders it extremely unpleasant to an eye attuned to harmony of coloring, and nothing but its very great prevalence in the United States could render even men of some taste so heedless of its bad

effect..” This quote is included here not to insult anyone but rather to illustrate the vehemence with which some did (and still might!) view this issue

Downing’s views on the subject effectively changed Americans thinking for the remainder of the century. According to Roger Moss, author of *A Century of Color*, there were four major color phases in the nineteenth century late Federal through Neoclassical (c 1820-1840), Gothic and Italianate Revival. or early Victorian (c 1840-1870), late Victorian (c 1870-1890); and Colonial Revival (1890-1920). “These four periods have fairly definable color palettes ranging from a dominant white with green shutters, through the pale earth tones, to the dark, rich—if somewhat muddy’—colors that most people associate with late Victorian buildings, to a gradual return to white and light pastels.”

There are many possible approaches to consider when determining the color scheme to use on a house. Various combinations of colors and placement of colors are advocated for different reasons but certainly late-nineteenth Victorian and Gothic Revival houses were intended to be multicolored. One good general guideline to follow is that the simpler the house the fewer the colors. Besides that, one must do his/her homework to determine appropriate color schemes and, first and foremost, enjoy the colorful possibilities!

### [Potential Color Scheme for the C. 1880-1895 Pendleton House](#)

## **5.2 Landscape Architectural Guidelines**

### **5.2.1 Tree Conservation**

The Historic Planning Area of Spotsylvania Courthouse is characterized by remnants of a mature hardwood forest contained within its public open spaces and privately owned, institutional and residential lots. The management of this vegetative resource within the district will assist in the perpetuation of this significant historic and character-defining feature. A plan should be implemented to promote the conservation of the mature hardwood forest. Management of the district’s tree resources can be accomplished through a variety of techniques-voluntary as well as mandatory.

A tree ordinance is one of the most effective mandatory techniques. Tree replacement and protection of existing trees are fostered through the requirements contained within such an ordinance. Depending on the application of the ordinance, minor as well as major activities can be monitored for impacts to an urban forest.

Voluntary actions might include a survey and analysis of existing trees. Survey and analysis activities should include an assessment of the existing resource through a tree inventory and recommendations for rejuvenating the existing urban forest. Pruning of dead wood is suggested to stimulate growth of mature trees. Pruning specifications and guidelines (typically available through county extension offices) should be followed. Trees in deteriorated conditions or of an advanced age should be removed and replaced.

An **underplanting program** should be initiated in anticipation of future replacement. In an underplanting effort, young trees of identical or compatible varieties to existing trees are planted adjacent to aged vegetation for the purpose of eventual replacement. In most cases, replanting schemes should follow the diversity of tree types contained within tree groupings. Replacement trees should be of adequate size to make a visual impact in the district. For that reason, seedlings are not recommended. Underplanting should be carried out by both the public and private sectors.

Guidelines - Existing ordinances that provide for the protection and replacement of the district's tree resources should be applied to development activities within Spotsylvania Courthouse. Additional requirements should be considered to further protect the mature forest, possibly in the form of a new tree ordinance. Such ordinances are designed to protect and perpetuate the wooded character of mature landscapes. Most ordinances typically control large scale development actions, while individual actions occur unchecked. In Spotsylvania Courthouse, it may be desirable to monitor individual actions related to tree preservation and replacement, since incremental actions over time lead to major changes in the character of a community.

Guidelines- the mature hardwood forest within the Spotsylvania Courthouse [Historic District](#) should be perpetuated through a district-wide replanting program. Replacement trees should be of identical or similar varieties to the original trees. A diversity of tree types is recommended to perpetuate the existing character of most tree groupings. Replacement trees of adequate size (2.0" caliper minimum) are recommended. Trees should be replaced when mature trees are lost to age or damage or are removed for safety reasons.

## 5.2.2 Pedestrian Improvements

Spotsylvania Courthouse lacks a comprehensive pedestrian network. The current system is fragmented with portions contained within the existing government complex and in the vicinity of the middle school. The pedestrian walks at the government complex are constructed of brick in a herringbone pattern. The walkways in the vicinity of the middle school are constructed of concrete. The prescriptive easement limits the availability of public open space for pedestrian improvements.

Guideline - A comprehensive network of pedestrian paths should be constructed at Spotsylvania Courthouse to provide multi-modal opportunities for community residents and visitors. The pedestrian system within the Historic Planning Area should be oriented to walking, while paths within the Village Planning Area and, particularly, the Transitional Planning Area should allow for biking.

All walks should be four feet minimum in width and wider where space will allow.

Brick is the recommended paving material, especially at the government complex as a complement to the existing walkways. Concrete, which is less expensive, is an alternate material for paving. Concrete walks can be highlighted with brick trim and limited areas of brick paving as a method of relating to the existing brick paths.

The prescriptive easement situation requires creative solutions in the addition of new sidewalks. New walks should be constructed adjacent to roadways and within the interior of properties, as appropriate for circulation. Public property provides opportunities for locating new pedestrian pathways, many times in under-utilized areas. On private parcels adjacent to roadways, sidewalks can be constructed through an easement from the property owner.

(See [Illustration C. Pedestrian System. Public Property](#); [Illustration D. Pedestrian System: Public Property](#); and [Illustration E. Pedestrian System: Private System](#) for implementation alternatives.)

*Illustration C* provides an example of the addition of a walkway though the utilization of land previously contained within the parking lot adjacent to the County Administration Building. The backing space within the parking lot is excessive (10' depth) and is lessened to five feet with the remaining five feet being used for a future sidewalk.

Other pedestrian amenities have also been suggested in the sketch, such as pedestrian scale lighting and tree plantings.

A crosswalk, also paved in brick, is recommended to extend across the street connecting the administration complex with the courthouse. The change in material for the crosswalk will help to slow traffic entering the crossroads intersection.

### 5.2.3 Landscape Improvements

New development or the redevelopment of property in the future should include a strong landscape element in each project's design. Landscape enhancements can be used for a variety of purposes - to [buffer](#) objectionable views, highlight a primary entrance, accentuate one of the community's major boulevards, or simply complement a new structure or a cluster of buildings.

Guideline - Future projects in the community should strive to incorporate landscape enhancements as an important part of the development program. The design of the landscape should relate to the desired character of the project and complement the historic character of the Spotsylvania Courthouse crossroads area.

Informal design is best suited for rural areas or large acreage tracts in the community, while formal design is more appropriate in urbanized zones.

*View through the red cedar allee at historic farmstead [\(TA-12\)](#) illustrates this traditional landscape form. Rows of red cedar trees are a common element in both natural and manmade environments in Spotsylvania. In natural settings red cedar appears as "hedgerows", a separation for agricultural fields. In numerous historic landscape settings the red cedar was used to highlight an entrance. Red cedars would be a good substitution for the nonhistoric Bradford Pears found at several subdivision entrances today.*

Informal design is best suited for rural areas or large acreage tracts in the community, while formal design is more appropriate in urbanized zones.

Native plant materials are strongly encouraged in all types of landscape improvement projects for the following reasons: **(1)** reflection of regional identity; **(2)** tolerance of climate; **(3)** seasonal interest, particularly wildflowers and native grasses; **(4)** wildlife enhancement; **(5)** lower maintenance, once established; and **(6)** increased biodiversity.

Exotic plants can also be utilized, particularly in urban areas and in historic settings, using plant materials appropriate to the historic period. There is a danger in using exotic plants, particularly in environments where uncontrolled growth is possible. Some exotic species, if not managed, have the potential to overtake an area and to threaten the biodiversity of a region.

Native plants are defined as plants naturally occurring before the time of European settlement in Virginia. Native plants are adapted to the naturally occurring soil and climate of a region. They can be used in both informal and formal groupings. Informal groupings are best achieved by emulating native plant communities. Forest, wildflower meadows, and wetlands can serve as models for informal design. Native plants offer a sustainable approach to landscape enhancements since they do not require excessive watering and generally do not need fertilizer or pruning.

Formal landscape design traditions can also utilize native plants. In this situation, native plants are organized in formal design arrangements, such as a monoculture planting (large masses of a single plant) or through the planting of trees in grid patterns, such as rows of trees lining a street.

The area adjacent to roadways, particularly roads not under the “prescriptive easement,” and public properties offer opportunities for community landscape enhancements. Tree plantings along public roadways will need to follow established guidelines by the United States Federal Highway Administration and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VA, DOT).

(See [Illustration F](#) *Tree Planting Opportunities within Virginia Department of Transportation Roadway Design Safety Standards.*)

The proposed bypass is one of several opportunities the community will have to enhance a new feature in the built environment with an appropriate landscape setting. The location of the bypass in a former agricultural landscape and adjacent to the military park dictates an informal design of native plants. The use of native plants will also lessen future maintenance requirements. The concept suggests a wooded edge of native trees and shrubs, placed a minimum of six feet behind the curb. The wooded edge could be interrupted to allow vistas to particularly pleasing views. The median space provides the opportunity for the planting of informal “islands” of trees and shrubs. By grouping plant materials, maintenance is minimized. Groups rather than single trees lessen the difficulty of mowing the surrounding grass.

(See [Illustration G](#). *Landscape Concept for Proposed Bypass.*)

#### **5.2.4 Barrier Free Access**

Guideline - Barrier free access - in accordance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act - should be provided within the site as well as from the site into adjacent buildings. This access should be provided in a manner that does not physically harm the character of the historic landscape or [historic structure](#).

*Example of barrier free access to the historic [Spotsylvania Courthouse](#) which facilitates access without negatively impacting the historic structure*

#### **5.2.5 Parking**

Guideline - Parking should be addressed in a manner that does not distract from the overall character of the district. Parking to serve private institutional/residential lots should be accommodated on-site, when at all possible, using the pathway of original drives and parking. Rear yard spaces should be considered for expansion of parking areas.

Front yard parking shall not be allowed unless it is a public safety issue. When front yard parking is necessary, it should be added in a manner that does not destroy the symmetry of the roadway. Curb cuts should not be added or expanded to protect the utility of the district’s streets.

Recommendation - In surfacing new parking areas, the use of impervious paving materials is discouraged. The intent is to limit the amount of run-off within the district’s watershed. Consideration should be given to the use of porous materials that allow water penetration and preserve the open character of the landscape.

*Rear view of [Episcopal Church](#) illustrating available space for rear parking the congregation of the church already utilizes this space for parking on Sunday*

Caution should be used in considering porous asphalt paving. This material has been determined to create soil compaction. The paving material may deteriorate due to oil and gas leaks. Other porous materials that have been shown to be effective are open paver blocks, sometimes referred to as “grasscrete” or “grass blocks”.

There are also a variety of soil compaction systems now available that offer additional porous surfaces. These systems are designed to accommodate vehicles within open lawn surfaces. Other options include granular materials and result in a graveled surface effect.

View from the rear yard of [Episcopal Church](#) to Government Center illustrates the large area available for future parking at the rear of buildings

### 5.2.6 Signage

Guideline - Signage on commercial historic buildings should be subordinate to the architecture of the building and sized for legibility at a reasonable distance, particularly by pedestrians on sidewalks and motorists driving past the courthouse crossroads. Signage should be set flush on the building face. Appropriate locations for signage within a traditional storefront include the lintel space which separates the storefront from the upper floor and the space above the transom in the storefront. Other potential locations include windows or awnings. Signs for nationally franchised concerns can be designed to complement the scale and character of the district with recognizable logos still readable. Public signage within public right-of-ways in the district should be designed to be compatible with the character of the district. Signs projecting from a building at a 90-degree angle and mounted with brackets are allowed.

[Appendix B](#) provides information on how to calculate the appropriate size for signage based on design speed and roadway type (two lanes versus one lane). This appendix also provides general guidelines for lettering size and the desired area assigned to the graphic/lettering and the background within a sign.

### 5.2.7 Walls and Fences

Historic enclosures typically consisted of wood or metal fences, stone walls or vegetative hedges.

Guideline - Existing historic enclosures should be preserved and protected. Repairs to existing walls and fences should follow preservation standards, Vegetative hedges can be maintained through the replacement of dead materials with identical plantings. New walls and fences should complement the structures they enclose through compatible design and should be similar in height and detail to historic fence types.

Historic photographs are excellent to consult in determining an appropriate design.

### 5.2.8 Site Design for New Commercial Developments

The following *Illustrations H* and *H-A* show an approach to developing a vacant parcel within the Historic Planning Area contained within the future location of the 208 Bypass and Brock Road. [Illustration H](#) provides an example of small-scale commercial developments with one large retail space. [Illustration H-A](#) is offered as an alternate development with all small-scale enterprises.

Guideline - New Commercial Development within the Historic Planning Area should strive to include the following elements:

- ◆ **Multiple Buildings** - Buildings should be organized into several clusters rather than in single linear strip forms. This approach will result in buildings that respond to the scale and character of the historic area

- ◆ **Decentralized Parking** - Parking should be organized into several small lots to serve the adjacent buildings, rather than in large single lots. Smaller lots are appropriate to the scale and character of the historic area
- ◆ **Parking in Rear and at Side of Buildings** -Traditionally parking has been located in highly visible areas, typically adjacent to the roadway. Parking in the historic area is most appropriate at the side and/or rear of buildings. Parking at these locations can adequately serve the adjacent businesses while preserving the lot frontage for more visually compatible uses such as landscaping and pedestrian zones.
- ◆ **Creation of Public Pedestrian Zone** - To assist in the development of a pedestrian network throughout the Historic Planning Area, a public pedestrian space should be provided along the road as part of any commercial development. This zone should include a pathway of six feet to eight feet in width and associated landscape plantings and pedestrian amenities, such as benches, trash receptacles, and pedestrian scale lighting. Larger developments that include several parcels should also include an internal pedestrian circulation system connecting parking lots and businesses.
- ◆ **Limited Access** - Commercial developments should strive to limit conflicts with traffic on the adjacent roadways. Curb cuts should be kept to a minimum. Shared access roads are encouraged. On-site circulation systems for larger developments with each business connected to the internal network rather than the public roadway is also encouraged.
- ◆ **Separation of Service and Customer/Client Access** - Commercial developments should strive to separate service access from customer and client entrances. Provisions will need to be made for truck deliveries, possibly after normal business hours.
- ◆ **Landscape Enhancements/Buffers along Roadways** - Commercial developments should include landscape enhancements and buffers or appropriate tree plantings along adjacent roadways. Conservation of historic and natural sites as part of a development plan is encouraged, such as the utilization of a wooded area as an open space within the project. Provisions will also have to be made to address storm water retention. Such areas have the potential to be designed as wetland features within a site.

### **5.3 Criteria for New Construction**

#### **5.3.1 Analysis of Existing New Construction**

*Issue Summary - One of the most prominent characteristics of the Historic Planning Area, which is even true of the smaller designated [Historic District](#), is variety. The goal of design review should not be to create sameness but rather to encourage use of creative designs to achieve compatible new construction.*

Because Spotsylvania Courthouse grew out of a crossroads community, different building types - in terms of use - are located relatively close together. While there is a subtle pattern with the majority of residential properties being located on the edges of the district and the commercial and government buildings located at the center the “closeness” of the area does not provide enough separation for one to really feel that he or she is in a “neighborhood” or “downtown.”

Therefore, it is perhaps even more important that new buildings not only be compatible in terms of the various design elements identified in *Section 5.3.2: General Guidelines for New Construction* but also that they project an identity as either a residence, community or institutional building, commercial building, or church. The existing historic buildings in the Historic Planning Area should be referenced as models for new construction.

### 5.3.1.1 Characteristic Design Tendencies

Each of the four building types (residential, institutional/community, commercial, and religious) in the Historic Planning Area have some unique features that can be referenced for identity. There are, however, four overriding design tendencies - in terms of scale, directional emphasis, degree of stylistic detailing, and materials-that are common to all and should be adhered to regardless of use. (These terms are explained in more detail in [Section 5.3.2.](#))

*The large scale of the nonhistoric Spotsylvania County [Administration](#) building overwhelms the district and surrounding buildings*

- ◆ Scale tends to be small to moderate scale, with the exception of the Spotsylvania High School
- ◆ *Directional Emphasis* tends to be neutral to vertical; some modestly horizontal; directional emphasis influenced primarily by roof type and pitch and building proportion (ratio of height to width)

*This [building](#) on Courthouse Road has a strong horizontal directional emphasis (created by the low-pitched roof and low wall height) which is out of character with existing historic buildings.*

- ◆ Degree of Stylistic Detailing overall tendency is toward modest design expression; adherence to this precedent is less critical than to the other design tendencies

*This new [commercial building](#) displays a level of stylistic detailing that is somewhat out of character for the Historic Planning Area A variety of styles are represented in the area but the tendency is toward overall modest design expression. The scale of the building is also somewhat large for the area but this is offset by the orientation of the building (smaller side facing the right-of-way) and the dormers on the “front” facade which effectively break up its presentation*

- ◆ Materials variety of materials historically present; need to evaluate compatibility of proposed new construction, case-by-case; perhaps most important in achieving compatibility is the restriction of synthetic materials in new construction, especially siding

*The [NAPA building](#) in the foreground is extremely incompatible with surrounding historic development. The building is extreme horizontal emphasis and the sharply contrasting, mixed brick exterior are particularly distracting*

### 5.3.1.2 Illustrative Examples

This section uses existing nonhistoric buildings and complexes in the Historic Planning Area to illustrate both compatible and incompatible new construction. Discussion of these examples emphasizes the design tendencies presented in the previous section. Examples are divided into three categories: community/institutional, multi-family residential and commercial.

Community/Institutional

Development of the Spotsylvania Courthouse complex (on Courthouse Road and [American Legion Drive](#)) has been, for the most part, compatible with the historic courthouse building. The use of materials is consistent and the mix of building sizes, orientations and styles is pleasing without being distracting. The exception is the [Volunteer Fire Department building](#) which departs entirely from the established architectural theme and thus stands out as incompatible.

### *Multi-Family Residential*

This nonhistoric [multi-family residential building](#) does a good job of using a moderately- to steeply pitched gable roof, giving it a slightly vertical emphasis. It does appear to be somewhat out of scale, however, due to the relatively plain and flat front facade and the uninterrupted plane of the roof. Although historic residential resources in the district are typically wood exterior, the larger scale of this building (more in line with community/institutional buildings) makes the use of brick appropriate.

This [multi-family residential complex](#) is based on a townhouse model and is appropriate for the neotraditional model. Some suggestions for making the complex more compatible with existing development are: **(1)** use non-synthetic exterior materials. **(2)** alternate red brick with weatherboard exterior (not vinyl) rather than with wood shingles, which seem out-of-character for the district. **(3)** lay out the complex in a less linear fashion, **(4)** increase the pitch of the roof to achieve a more neutral or vertical directional emphasis. and **(5)** include chimneys to help break up the roof surfaces.

### *Commercial*

The [nonhistoric commercial building](#) in the foreground is compatible with historic development in the sense that it has a brick exterior, is of an appropriate scale, and is modestly stylistic. The strong horizontal emphasis created by its low-pitched roof, however, detracts from its ability to fit in. Landscaping in the front of the site could modify this effect.

The [small strip mall](#) in the background is incompatible in every way - with the Christ Episcopal Church Education Building shown in the foreground as well as other historic development in the area. Besides the obvious incompatibility of scale, directional emphasis, materials, and stylistic expression, the setback and expanse of paved parking in the front of the building is particularly obtrusive (See Section 5.2.7 for a discussion of appropriate site design for new commercial development).

The [nonhistoric library](#) to the right (east) of Chewning Groceries is fairly compatible with the historic commercial building. In particular, its wall materials and the use of industrial/commercial type windows helps it to fit in. Its close proximity to Chewning's - and the identical setback - help maintain the feel of historic commercial development. The somewhat low pitch of the roof is the building's only drawback.

The new [Crestar Bank](#) building is compatible with the area's historic development in terms of scale, directional emphasis, stylistic detailing, and materials.

*Judicial Center* The nonhistoric [Judicial Center](#) could be used as a model for new commercial complexes. Its siting, landscaping, and pedestrian system could all be incorporated into a commercial complex. The complexes use of materials and scale, its directional emphasis and stylistic expression are all very appropriate for the district.

### **5.3.1.3 Infill Opportunities**

One of the goals of the *Courthouse Area Plan* is to encourage denser development in the Historic Planning Area. Increased development - in accordance with the guidelines provided in Section 5.0 - should help identify this area as the "town center" as well as help alleviate some of the development pressure in outlying areas where a more rural character is desired.

These [photos](#) of areas throughout the district illustrate the many opportunities, in terms of vacant real estate, for infill development in the Historic Planning Area

The [parking area](#) in front of the County Administration building could accommodate additional, smaller-scale county buildings. The addition of such would also help offset the impact of the existing building scale on the district

### **5.3.2 General Guidelines for New Construction in the Historic Planning Area**

A new building is compatible with its historic setting when it borrows certain design characteristics and materials from adjacent buildings and integrates (not copies) these into a modern expression. Before undertaking new development, be it a new building, changes, or additions to nonhistoric buildings, take time to evaluate what makes the property and the neighborhood distinctive. Evaluate what type of impact the new development will have on the property and neighborhood. Decide how the development can best be designed to complement the property and area without simply designing a new “old” building.

The underlying guideline for new construction and additions is to consider one’s neighbors and nearby structures and reinforce the existing historic character through sensitive, compatible design.

Note that many of these guidelines refer to new development or new construction but are equally applicable to additions to existing buildings.

#### **5.3.2.1 Defining the Area of Influence**

The area of influence may be the back of a historic property, a streetscape, or several blocks. To define the area of influence of a new development or addition, ask questions such as:

- ◆ *How large of an area will the new development impact?*
- ◆ *Is it to be an addition to the rear of a building that will not even be visible to the public? Or is it a new building that will impact the whole streetscape?*
- ◆ *Will the new building be in the middle of a block with only one facade visible to the public or will it be on a corner lot, and therefore will have two facades clearly visible?*

Evaluate also if the project will generate the need for additional parking or impact traffic in the area.

*Area of influence:*

*Each site within a [Historic District](#) will have its own unique area of influence. [Shown here](#) are two different examples with suggested minimum areas that might be considered. Neighboring buildings should be examined to determine the consistent patterns of design concepts and architectural elements that are present.*

Guideline - Define the area of influence. In considering the appropriateness of a design for a new building in a [Historic District](#), it is important to determine the area of influence of the site of that new development. This area should be that which would be visually influenced by the building, i.e. the area in which visual relationships will occur between historic and new construction. A consistent streetscape will result when new buildings are designed in consideration with what already exists.

#### **5.3.2.2 Recognizing the Prevailing Character of Existing Development**

Every building, whether historical or modern, is a product of design, and the design of buildings is accomplished through the utilization of several basic concepts:

- ◆ Building Orientation and Setback
- ◆ Directional Emphasis
- ◆ Shape
- ◆ Massing
- ◆ Proportions
- ◆ Rhythm
- ◆ Scale/Height
- ◆ Materials/Architectural Elements

These concepts form the basis for visual relationships among buildings, which in turn influence the ways in which the public perceives buildings. When a new structure is built among historic buildings, the level of success with which it relates to existing buildings — and whether it contributes to or detracts from the area — will be determined by the ways in which its design recognizes the prevailing design expression in the area of influence.

Guideline - When looking at a series of historic buildings in the area of influence, patterns of similarities may emerge that help define the predominant physical and developmental characteristics of the area. These patterns must be identified and respected in the design of additions and new construction.

This section identifies and defines the principal design concepts listed above and offers guidelines for using these concepts in evaluating the appropriateness of a proposed new building or addition. Illustrations are intended only to point out the types of relationships between historic and new buildings that are important and are not meant to serve as examples of real-life design solutions.

### *Building Orientation and Setback*

Building orientation refers to the directional placement of the building on the site, while setback refers to how far back the building is from the street and side lot lines. Typically, historic areas have strong predominant orientations and setbacks.

Guideline - The [orientation](#) of a new building and its site placement should appear to be consistent with dominant patterns within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.

### *Directional Emphasis*

Most [buildings](#) are either vertical or horizontal in their directional emphasis, which is determined by the size and placement of elements and openings on the building's front facade as well as by the building's overall shape. Surface materials and architectural detailing may also influence directional emphasis.

Guideline - A new building's directional emphasis should be consistent with dominant patterns of directional emphasis within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.

### *Shape*

A building's surfaces and edges define its overall [shape](#). This overall shape, in concert with the shapes of individual elements (such as roof pitch, porch form, and window and door openings), is

important in establishing rhythms in a streetscape. Shape can also be an important element of style.

### *Massing*

[Massing](#) has to do with the way a building's volumetric components (i.e., main body, roof, bays, overhangs, and porches) are arranged and with the relationship between solid wall surfaces and openings.

### *Proportion*

[Proportion](#) is the relationship of one dimension to another, for example, the relationship of the height to the width of a building, or the height and width of windows and doors. Individual elements of a building should be proportional to each other and the building.

### *Rhythm*

[Rhythm](#) is the recurring patterns of lines, shapes, forms, or colors (materials) on a building or along a streetscape. For example, the rhythm of openings on a house refers to the number and placement of windows and doors on a facade. Rhythm also occurs on the larger scale of streetscapes as created by development patterns (orientation and setback) and details of individual buildings (directional emphasis, scale, height, massing, etc.).

### *Scale/Height*

[Scale](#) refers to the apparent relationship between two entities, such as the relationship of a building's height to human height, the relationship between different buildings' heights and sizes, or the relationship between the size of an addition and the building to which it is attached. In this instance the two most important issues are (1) the relationship of new construction too historic and (2) the relationship of additions to the historic building to which they are being added.

Guideline - New construction in historic areas should be consistent with dominant patterns of scale within the area of influence, if such patterns are present. Additions to historic buildings should not appear to overwhelm the existing building.

Guideline - A proposed new building should appear to conform to the floor-to-floor heights of existing structures if there is a dominant pattern within the established area of influence. Dominant patterns of cornice lines, string courses, and water tables can be referenced to help create a consistent appearance.

### *Individual Architectural Elements*

Predominant architectural and site elements in the area of influence should be taken into account. New construction and additions need no attempt to create a "new historical work" but rather acknowledge predominant patterns in a contemporary manner. Following is a list of different types of elements that should be assessed before proceeding with new construction.

- ◆ Roofs - A variety of roof shapes, pitches, and types is often found within a historic area. Roof details such as chimney design, gable ornamentation, ridge decoration, and roofing materials may also be a predominant characteristic.

- ◆ Walls - The surfaces of the walls may be relatively smooth and uninterrupted, or they may be broken by projecting windows, porches, and other architectural elements.
- ◆ Windows and Entrances - There may be patterns of window and entrance placement, size, or ornamentation that are a strong visual component of the area. Shutters and window trim affect this patterning.
- ◆ Details - Facia, soffit, eave, and cornice trim; porch columns and supports; and other decorative details can provide a pattern and scale to historic buildings and areas.
- ◆ Materials - Buildings may incorporate a variety of materials such as wood, masonry, stucco, stone, and others. These materials may have different textures and shapes, such as coarsely surfaced brick versus smooth stucco exterior facing. The use and presentation of materials contribute to the overall character of an area.
- ◆ Landscaping Elements - Specific types of vegetation such as oak trees, shrubs, or expanses of grassy lawn may predominate in an area. Elements such as walks and drives may also contribute to visual continuity along the street.

Guideline - New construction and additions should be compatible and not conflict with the predominant site and architectural element -and their design relationships — of existing properties in the area of influence.

### **5.3.2.3 Additions**

Property owners considering making an addition to a historic building should ask themselves three questions

1. *Does the proposed addition preserve significant historic materials and features?*
2. *Does the proposed addition preserve the historic character?*
3. *Does the proposed addition protect the historical significance by making a visual distinction between old and new?*

Guideline - Additions to historic buildings shall not be placed on the main historic facade(s) of the building. Locate the proposed addition away from the principal public view, possibly to the rear of the building. Respect the proportions of the building to which it is being added, so the addition does not dominate its historic environment. Do not obscure character-defining features of the historic building with the addition.

Guideline - Set an additional story well back from the roof edge to ensure that the historic building's proportions and profile are not radically changed.

Historic photographs can sometimes give clues to where previous additions were constructed on the building and thus provide guidance for the location of new additions.

Guideline - Additions shall respect the character and integrity of original buildings and incorporate design motifs that relate it to the historic building. No matter what its design, it should be of quality workmanship and materials. The addition should be designed so that at a later date it could be removed without compromising the historic character of the building.

Guideline - While the addition should be compatible, it is acceptable and appropriate for the addition to be clearly discernible as an addition rather than appearing to be an original part of the

building. Consider providing some differentiation in material, color, and/or detailing and setting additions back from the historic building's wall plane.