



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Update to Historic Design Guidelines

City Council A Session
November 3, 2022



Update to Historic Design Guidelines

- Chapter 4, Guidelines for New Construction
- Applies to new construction on properties with a historic zoning overlay (districts and landmarks)
- New provisions triggered by projects with 2 or more units
- Companion to UDC Amendments



Background

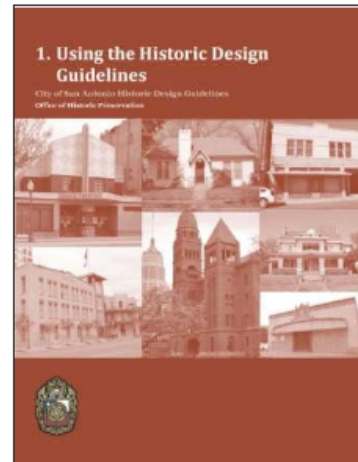
- Guidelines adopted in 2012
- Authorized as review criteria under UDC 35-608
- Largely consistent with Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation
- Provides customers and Commissioners with guidance for consistent outcomes



Guidelines vs. Standards

- Guidelines provide flexibility
- Projects are diverse and varied
- HDRC is a recommending body
- Final decisions are enforceable; can be appealed

DESIGN GUIDELINES



The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) is pleased to announce that the **City of San Antonio Historic Design Guidelines** were adopted by City Council on November 8, 2012. The OHP worked with a volunteer steering committee and consultants Clarion Associates and Hardy Heck Moore, Inc. to plan and execute the Historic Design Guidelines. The draft document was advertised and made available for public comment through two public meetings prior to creation of the final draft. We appreciate all of the community feedback on this initiative.

The Historic Design Guidelines provide historic district residents, property owners, professionals working with historic properties, and potential construction applicants a background history of the City's historic districts, an understanding of architectural design principles, and guidelines which promote predictability and ensure compatibility between new development and the existing historic environment. *Successful historic design guidelines help to reinforce and preserve the character of our historic districts!*

English

Español

The adopted Historic Design Guidelines are available to view and download at the links below. Hardcopies are also available at the following public libraries: Central Library, Landa Branch, San Pedro Branch, Mission Branch, Carver Branch, and the Bazan Branch.

- [Using the Historic Design Guidelines](#) ^(PDF)
- [Exterior Maintenance and Alterations](#) ^(PDF)
- [Additions](#) ^(PDF)
- [New Construction](#) ^(PDF)
- [Site Elements](#) ^(PDF)
- [Signage](#) ^(PDF)
- [A Guide to San Antonio's Historic Resources](#) ^(PDF)
- [Glossary](#) ^(PDF)

4. Guidelines for New Construction

City of San Antonio Historic Design Guidelines
Office of Historic Preservation



1. Building and Entrance Orientation

Why is this Important?

Historic buildings and their front entrances are typically oriented towards the street, creating a rhythm and cohesiveness along the street frontage that helps define the overall character of the public right-of-way and district. When new construction is not oriented properly, that rhythm and cohesiveness is lost.



As is typical in San Antonio's historic districts, the front façade and entrances to these homes are oriented towards the street and front setbacks are consistent.



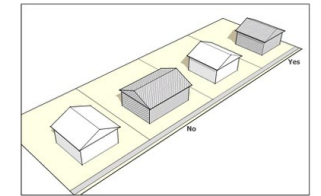
Guidelines

A. FAÇADE ORIENTATION

- Setbacks**—Align front facades of new buildings with front facades of adjacent buildings where a consistent setback has been established along the street frontage. Use the median setback of buildings along the street frontage where a variety of setbacks exist. Refer to UDC Article 3, Division 2. Base Zoning Districts for applicable setback requirements.
- Orientation**—Orient the front façade of new buildings to be consistent with the predominant orientation of historic buildings along the street frontage.

B. ENTRANCES

- Orientation**—Orient primary building entrances, porches, and landings to be consistent with those historically found along the street frontage. Typically, historic building entrances are oriented towards the primary street.



Orient new construction to be consistent with the predominate orientation of historic buildings along the street frontage.

4. Architectural Details

Why is this Important?

Attempting to create an exact replica of historic styles for new construction blurs the distinction between old and new buildings and makes the architectural evolution of the historic district more difficult to interpret. While new construction within historic districts should not attempt to mirror or replicate historic features, new structures should not be so dissimilar as to distract from or diminish the historic interpretation of the district.



New construction should incorporate forms and architectural details that complement nearby historic structures and the overall character of the historic district.

Guidelines

A. GENERAL

- Historic context**—Design new buildings to reflect their time while respecting the historic context. While new construction should not attempt to mirror or replicate historic features, new structures should not be so dissimilar as to distract from or diminish the historic interpretation of the district.
- Architectural details**—Incorporate architectural details that are in keeping with the predominant architectural style along the block face or within the district when one exists. Details should be simple in design and should complement, but not visually compete with, the character of the adjacent historic structures or other historic structures within the district. Architectural details that are more ornate or elaborate than those found within the district are inappropriate.
- Contemporary interpretations**—Consider integrating contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details for new construction. Use of contemporary window moldings and door surroundings, for example, can provide visual interest while helping to convey the fact that the structure is new. Modern materials should be implemented in a way that does not distract from the historic structure.



Issue

- The original Guidelines did not anticipate current development trends (more than 100 annually)
- The existing language does not adequately address multifamily or building height
- Inconsistent outcomes; confusion and delay in the process



Recommendation

- Recommended by HDRC and Zoning Commission
- Staff recommends approval



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