

1

***St. Charles Commons
Neighborhood***



The Commons Neighborhood

OFFICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Design Guidelines
for the
Saint Charles Commons Neighborhood**

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Saint Charles, Missouri**

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Mission Statement	1
Neighborhood Map	2
Neighborhood History	3
Glossary	4
Chapter 2: Architectural Styles Existing in Our Neighborhood	5
Chapter 3: Changes to Existing Structures	8
Primary Historic Building Materials	8
Foundations, Piers, and Steps	11
Porches and Rear Decks	12
Roofs and Roof Accessories	14
Dormers	14
Chimneys	15
Gutters and Downspouts	15
Windows, Shutters, and Awnings	17
Doors and Doorways	19
Architectural Details	20
Accessory Buildings	21
Site Design and Landscaping	22
Chapter 4: Additions	24
Chapter 5: New Construction	25
Site Design Standards	25
Building Scale Standards	25
Building Form Standards	26
Building Details	26
Chapter 6: Demolitions	28
Chapter 7: Did You Know?	30
Chapter 8: The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	31

Introduction

Mission Statement

The St. Charles Commons Neighborhood Association was incorporated in 1988 as a not-for-profit organization to work for the betterment of the area. The purpose was to become an educational group that would inform and inspire residents to appreciate the quality of life that we have. We also wanted to work with the city and each other to improve our quality of life and preserve our historical and architectural environment for future generations

The Commons neighborhood is bounded on the east by N Fifth Street, on the north by Randolph Street, on the west by Kingshighway, and on the south by Clark Street (see following neighborhood map.)

St. Charles Commons Neighborhood Map

Neighborhood History

Prior to 1830, the neighborhood was part of the Common Fields of the Village of St Charles, enveloped in forest land and used by the villagers for hunting game, timber, and grazing animals. The land was surveyed in 1830 by Nathan Boone (son of Daniel Boone) at the request of St. Charles officials. By 1835 the sections of the land were being purchased by speculators who subdivided it into smaller lots. These small lots were quickly bought by the influx of European immigrants. Parts of the Commons are indicated on the 1869 illustrated map of St. Charles as having dwellings built on the lots.

In 1870-71 following a general plan by James B Eads, an engineer, H. Shaler Smith of Baltimore constructed a \$2 million railroad suspension bridge over the Missouri River into St. Charles. With its three 300 foot center spans 53 feet above the water, this 2,200 foot marvel was considered an advanced example of bridge construction. Unfortunately, its career was marred by tragedy. Eighteen workmen were killed in a construction accident, and spans collapsed twice, in 1879 and 1881, killing six more workers. With the advent of the railroad, the American Car and Foundry Company of St. Louis began operations in St. Charles, three short blocks east of the Commons Neighborhood at Second and Clark. The quickly became the largest employer in St. Charles and many residents of our neighborhood served this company through the years in the manufacture of railroad cars and during the second World War, tanks!

During the early 1870's many more brick homes were built creating the vernacular

(common type) for St. Charles. Along with these came many frame Victorian Folk Houses. By the 1890's, more elaborate but still subtle variations of Queen Anne, Italianate, Classic Revival, and Eclectic Combinations filled in some remaining properties. The early 1900's brought simpler versions of styles such as Prairie, and Four-Square. The 1920's filled in a few Craftsman Bungalows and a few brick Tudors of the 1930's filled in most of the rest. By 1940, the cycle of design returned to the vernacular side-gabled, one-story interpreted in wood.

The history of our neighborhood is a microcosm of the history of blue collar America. Retired successful immigrant farmers and early self-employed workers neighbored with laborers with the neighborhood American Car and Foundry. This forming of a neighborhood was further escalated by workers for a local shoe factory, and in the 1940's, an influx of personnel for nearby war industry jobs, the bosses, supervisors, and laborers living and working together in communal harmony.

Glossary

Accessory building. A freestanding, separate building devoted exclusively to a use which is incidental or customary to the principal use, and is on the same lot as the principal use

Alteration. Any act or process that changes one or more of the exterior architectural features of a structure, including, but not limited to, the erection, construction, reconstruction, or removal of any structure

Baluster. A short, upright column or urn-shaped support of a railing.

Certificate of Appropriateness. A certificate issued by Saint Charles' Historic Landmarks Preservation and Architectural Review Board indicating its approval of plans for alteration, construction, removal, or demolition of a landmark or of a structure within a historic district.

City codes. The Code of Ordinances of the City of St. Charles, Missouri

Construction. The act of adding to an existing structure or the erection of a new principal or accessory structure on a lot or property.

Demolition Any act or process which destroys, in part or the majority of, a landmark or a structure within a historic district.

Dormer. A window set upright in a sloping roof. This term is also used to refer to the roofed projection in which this window is set.

Model example A permanent visual representation used to illustrate how a proposed exterior alteration would look. This term includes one-dimensional representations such as sketches or photographs, and three-dimensional representations such as material or paint samples and scaled models

Normal maintenance To upkeep property in an existing state and preserve from decline or physical decay. Normal maintenance includes repair and partial replacement of materials (less than half), but does not include major replacement of materials

Removal of building. Any relocation of a structure on its site or to another site.

Repair. Any change that is not construction, removal, or alteration.

Chapter 2: Architectural Styles Existing in Our Neighborhood

The Commons has 262 properties, the majority being single-family residences. The following classification of architectural styles reflects the diversity of architecture within our neighborhood. It also indicates how our neighborhood has continued to evolve is not frozen in any particular time period. The vast majority of buildings, though, reflect the primary period of construction in the Commons Neighborhood (roughly 1850-1920)

One of the unique architectural styles is described under German Folk Houses. During the mid-19th century, both Americans and Germans were building simple vernacular houses in a Germanic variation of the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Almost all of the earliest surviving German Folk Houses are brick, one and one-half stories high, and side-gabled. Later examples (circa 1890's) have more steeply pitched roofs, and often employ spindle work or "colonial" porches, later double houses tend to pair doors in the center bays. Early examples of this type were probably built for single-family use, while later houses appear to be for two families. Thus, a house will often have front doors, side by side.

Romantic Period (nationally popular 1820-1880) The Romantic movement was one which affected not only architecture, but also literature and art

Greek Revival (nationally popular 1825-1860) Greek Revival style buildings are almost always more than one story in height with a low pitched roof. Most have porches supported by prominent Greek or Roman style columns. The cornice line of both main and porch roofs are emphasized by a wide band of trim. The front door is most often surrounded by a narrow line of side and transom lights

Italianate (nationally popular 1840-1885) This style had its origin in the rural architecture or northern Italy. It came to Britain in the 1830's and from there spread to the United States, enjoying immense popularity in the decade before the Civil War. Italianate style buildings are almost always two or three story and are most commonly simply square in shape. Low pitched roofs, commonly hipped, predominate. Widely overhanging eaves with decorative brackets underneath are the most dominant visual feature. Italianate buildings commonly have cupolas or towers and tall, narrow windows with inverted U-shaped window crowns

Gothic Revival (nationally popular 1840-1880) Changing tastes in styles--fueled in part by the novels of Sir Walter Scott--led to a rejection of the formality of classical architecture. Gothic Revival grew out of a sense of superiority of the Christian medieval past. Gothic Revival style buildings have steeply pitched, side gabled roofs, very often with very steeply pitched cross gables. Gables typically have decorated vergeboards (decorative trim running along the underside of roof gables). Windows commonly extend into the gables and have a pointed arch shape, but rectangular windows with heavy drip molds above are also common.

Victorian Period (nationally popular 1860-1900)

German Folk Houses (locally popular 1850-1900) German emigrants to Saint Charles brought knowledge of long-span roof framing techniques. This is reflected in Single German folk houses of Saint Charles which were one room wide and two rooms deep with side gables. These houses were usually either one or one and a half story with small dormers providing light to attic space. Pure examples of German folk houses have no front porch although many had porches later added. Although these German folk houses had an extremely basic floor plan, these buildings were sturdy, constructed of brick with limestone foundations. Double German folk houses were composed of two single houses built side by side. Decorative brickwork was very common, often with Classical-style cornices. Heavy, rectangular limestone lintels were often placed above windows and doors. Small dormers were common. These houses often were placed in the extreme forward, right corner of the lot to allow for an L-shaped yard to be used for a garden. German Folk House architecture was later blended with French Canadian style architecture already present in Saint Charles. The resulting architecture is apparently unique to this area.

Second Empire (nationally popular 1855-1885) The Second Empire style of architecture was borrowed from France. It was considered very modern in its day, having been popularized in that country during the reign of Napoleon III (1852-1870), France's Second Empire. The most prominent feature of Second Empire buildings are mansard roofs with dormer windows on steep lower slopes. The boxy roofline had a practical application in that it allowed full upper story use of an attic. Like Italianate buildings, those in the Second Empire style commonly have wide eaves with decorative brackets underneath.

Queen Anne (nationally popular 1880-1910) This was an English style of architecture which was popularized in America through the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Irregular shaped residential buildings with steeply pitched roofs. This style commonly had full front porches, towers, turrets, projecting pavilions, bay windows, and verandas. In order to avoid having a smooth-walled look, Queen Anne style buildings had highly decorative detailing such as patterned shingles used to clad exterior walls, brackets and spindlework on porches, and patterned masonry. Huge, medieval-type chimneys were common. A small percentage has half-timbering under the gable eaves.

Folk Victorian (nationally popular 1870-1910) The spread of this type of house was made possible by the railroads. Many times, trimwork was milled elsewhere but made available locally by rail. Folk Victorian houses were simply shaped buildings (most common either rectangular or square) but with Victorian detailing such as spindlework and brackets on front porches and brackets under eaves.

Eclectic Period (nationally popular 1880-1955)

Colonial Revival (nationally popular 1880-1955) Colonial Revival buildings look very similar to Georgian and Federal style buildings which were popular 1700-1820 and normally differed in only a few minor details. Colonial Revival style buildings were very symmetrical, the front door being accentuated by a small porch with simplified Greek or Roman influenced details. Front doors are also surrounded by a line of narrow side and transom lights. Windows are rectangular with double-hung sash and multi-paned glass.

Prairie (nationally popular 1900-1920) Prairie style buildings were typically two stories with low-pitched hipped roofs and wide, overhanging eaves. Porches were often square with massive, square masonry porch supports. Eaves, cornices, and facade detailing emphasized horizontal lines. Row of windows, sometimes wrapping around corners and with geometric patterns of small-paned windows, are common. Angular geometric patterns were common decorative detailing. Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the best known architects to have designed in this style.

Craftsman (nationally popular 1905-1930) Many Craftsman style homes are called Bungalows. The most distinguishing characteristic of Craftsman buildings is low-pitched gables roofs with roof rafters exposed underneath. Front gabled roofs commonly had false decorative beams or braces under gables. Front porch column bases were often square and massive, extending all the way to the ground.

Chapter 3: Changes to Existing Structures

It is every property owner's desire that their property will increase in value. With ownership and neighbors comes the responsibility to preserve or improve the main building and its subordinate structures. The method used to do this can either increase or decrease the property's value. The following architectural guidelines have been written in order to preserve our architectural heritage as well as promote harmony and understanding.

These architectural design guidelines are not retroactive. Existing, nonconforming structures are "grandfathered". These guidelines apply only when a property owner chooses to make certain exterior changes to their building.

Each section states specifically when architectural review is required by the Historic Landmarks Preservation and Architectural Review Board. Those items listed which do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmarks Board are recommended but not required. The following architectural design guidelines apply to both residential and commercial properties.

Primary Historic Building Materials

Primary building materials refers to the materials on the exterior walls of the building. There are approximately 101 full brick and 115 frame homes in the Commons Neighborhood. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any addition or replacement of siding. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.1 Painted or newly stripped brick may be repainted.**
 - a. Unpainted brick may also be painted when it is soft brick, needs a protective coating, and was painted historically.
 - b. Sturdy brick should not be painted simply for decorative purposes. Unpainted brick should remain unpainted.
- 3.2 City codes require that mortar joints in bad condition be tuck pointed.**
- 3.3 Siding which covers the original primary building material may be removed as long as doing so would not harm the building.**
 - a. For instance, asbestos, asphalt, aluminum, and vinyl siding could be removed to expose brick or wood lap siding underneath.
- 3.4 Asbestos and asphalt siding may be covered with vinyl or aluminum siding, or wood clapboard consistent with time period.**

- 3.5 City codes require wood siding to be maintained and in good repair**
- 3.6 Vinyl, masonite, or metal lap siding may be used under the following circumstances:**
- a. In order to emulate the look of older lap siding, vinyl or metal siding on pre-1950 buildings should not be wider than four inches;
 - b. Siding must not be used to simply cover up architectural features;
 - c. Siding must not contribute to moisture buildup and structural deterioration, and
 - d. A model example must be provided.
- 3.7 Stucco may be removed if doing so would be consistent with its original architectural style, and if removal would not harm the building.**
- 3.8 Use of stucco should be consistent with the architectural style of the building.**
- a. In the Commons Neighborhood, stucco is only appropriate for Italianate or Spanish Revival architectural styles.
 - b. City codes require stucco to be maintained and in good repair
- 3.9 Unpainted, sturdy brick should not be painted simply for decorative purposes. Painting brick to avoid tuck pointing is not permitted**
- 3.10 Covering brick with lap siding to avoid brick maintenance is not permitted**
- 3.11 Installing vertical board siding, plywood, roll roofing, and tar paper to permanently cover exterior walls is not permitted.**
- a. An exception to this is use of board-and-batten or board-on-board siding for accessory buildings.
- 3.12 Sandblasting or other abrasive blasting to clean brick or stone is very destructive.**
- a. Abrasive stripping of old brick very often removes its outer protective layer. Doing so allows brick to absorb water and erode away, thus often leading to incredible damage

Foundations, Piers, and Steps

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before replacement of any pier, foundation, wall, or step. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged

- 3.13 Repair or replacement of foundations shall be made using material that will replicate the original.**
- 3.14 Replacement foundations may be poured concrete, stone, or brick**
 - a. Exposed foundations with flat, textureless surfaces (such as poured concrete) must be covered with an appropriate finish such as stone or brick.
- 3.15 According to City codes, foundations shall be kept in good repair**
- 3.16 Unpainted masonry (such as stone foundations and concrete steps) should not be painted.**
 - a. Once masonry is painted, however, it's acceptable to repaint it. Foundations should not be painted in place of tuck pointing.
- 3.17 If porch supports are brick or stone, then some attempt should be made to retain them**
 - a. Changes will be considered with a scale drawing/model example
- 3.18 According to city codes, steps shall be kept in good repair**
 - a. When replacement is required, it should be done with materials consistent with the time period.
 - b. A scale drawing/model example will be considered.

Porches and Rear Decks

The Commons strongly encourages property owners to preserve original porches, or in the case of nonoriginal porches, to restore them to the original architectural style of the building. Old photographs are very helpful in determining how the original porch looked. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for construction which changes the appearance of the porch or any of its architectural details. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.19 Front porches which are open shall not be enclosed, in whole or in part, with windows, screens, or opaque materials (siding, plywood, etc.).**
 - a. This does not include appropriate use of lattice or other proper screening to enclose open area below porches.
- 3.20 City codes require porches to be kept in good repair**
- 3.21 Wooden porches and details shall have a finish, paint, varnish, etc**
- 3.22 When feasible, original woodwork should be retained and repaired**
 - a. Otherwise, modern replications or salvage materials consistent with the original architectural style may be used
 - b. A scale drawing/model example is required for new or replacement porches
- 3.23 Porch flooring is encouraged to replicate the original and be consistent with the time period**
- 3.24 Wood steps should be made from 5/4" thick lumber or 2" x 10"/2" x 12"**
 - a. All wood steps must have risers. City codes require wood steps to be kept in good repair and painted.
- 3.25 When feasible, original porch architectural details (handrails, lattice, brackets, rails, posts, etc.) shall be retained and repaired.**
 - a. Otherwise, salvage materials or modern replications consistent with the original architectural style may be used.
 - b. A scale drawing/model example is necessary for replication.
- 3.26 Roofs over a rear deck should be clad with shingles.**
 - a. Scale drawing/model example necessary.
- 3.27 According to City codes, existing decks must be maintained in good repair.**
- 3.28 Astroturf, carpeting, or synthetic materials for porch floor covering is not acceptable**
- 3.29 Lightweight lattice is not an acceptable replacement for porch balusters**
- 3.30 Wrought iron or imitation wrought iron is not to be used for porch railing on pre-1950 houses, unless it can be shown to have been original.**

- 3.31 Plywood may not be used for exterior finish on decks
- 3.32 Deck materials should not be used on front porches.

Roofs and Roof Accessories

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any change in roof line, mansard, or parapet. Scale drawing and/or model example is required. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.33 **Preferably, roof cladding should be made of materials original to the building**
- a Shingles may be asphalt, wood, slate, synthetic slate composition (slate reproduction), fiberglass, or standing seam metal.
 - b Clay tile roofs are appropriate for Spanish Revival as well as some Prairie and Bungalow architectural style buildings.
 - c Roll roofing is permitted only on flat or nearly flat roofs (2:12 pitch or less).
 - d Exposed felt/tar paper is not acceptable.
- 3.34 **You are encouraged to use original materials for mansard roof cladding.**
- a Whenever possible, patterns of colored slate on mansard roofs--such as diamonds--should be retained, restored, or replicated in a manner consistent with the time period.
 - b Mansard roofs may not be clad with materials other than shingles.
 - c Vinyl or other siding, for example, is not appropriate cladding for mansard roofs.

3.35 Parapets shall not be altered without a scale drawing/model example

3.36 Coping shall be glazed coping tile or correct metal coping, or other appropriate finished material

3.37 Parapets should be constructed of original materials

a Exposed cinder blocks are not acceptable

3.38 Bubble skylights are not acceptable if visible from the street.

Dormers

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for any change in size or style of dormer, as well as the removal or addition of a dormer. A scale drawing and/or model example are required.

3.39 New dormers may be added if the dimension and proportions are consistent with the time period.

a. A scale drawing and/or model example are required.

3.40 Enlarged dormers shall face the rear of the property

a. Required scale drawing/model example.

3.41 When feasible, original ornamentation and woodwork should be retained and repaired, including pediment, molding, and verge boards

a Otherwise, modern replications or salvage materials consistent with the original architectural style may be used.

b. A scale drawing/model example is required

3.42 Materials acceptable for walls and window surrounds of dormers: wood shingles; brick or brick facade; horizontal siding of wood, vinyl, or aluminum.

a Roll roofing or exposed tar paper are examples of unacceptable materials

3.43 Dormers may not exceed the height of the peak of the roof

3.44 The shape of dormer windows should be appropriate for the original architectural style of the building.

a For instance, round, octagon, and diamond shapes are most likely inappropriate if visible from the street.

Chimneys

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for any removal of a chimney or structural change.

3.45 City codes require that chimneys be maintained and in good repair.

- 3.46 Chimneys not in use may be capped but in no case be altered in dimension, including height**
- 3.47 Reconstructed chimneys should duplicate the original.**
- 3.48 Standing metal pipe chimneys may be acceptable.**
- a. Large metal flues or chimneys are more appropriate if not visible from the street.
 - b. A scale drawing/model example is required.
- 3.49 Exposed cinder block or tile chimneys are not acceptable**

Gutters and Downspouts

Gutters and downspouts are needed to quickly move rainwater away from buildings. This is extremely important for preventing damage. Water infiltration around the foundation can lead to water in basements, deteriorated mortar, weakened foundation, and rotted wood.

- 3.50 City codes require existing gutters and downspouts to be maintained and in good repair.**
- a. Under most circumstances, the City also requires gutters to be installed on all new buildings
- 3.51 Accessory buildings should also have gutters.**

Windows, Shutters, and Window Awnings

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for a new window opening, or changes to an existing window or window opening which would make it appear different than what was there previously. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.52 Window sills and sashes can be replaced with vinyl, wood, finished aluminum, that duplicates the original window in size and style.**
- a. Unpainted or raw aluminum windows is not acceptable.
- 3.53 Window openings should be of the size and proportions appropriate for the architectural style of that building.**
- b. A scale drawing/model example is required
- 3.54 City codes require windows to be maintained and kept in good repair.**
- 3.55 Framing of all windows must be retained and maintained.**
- 3.56 Bay or bow windows may be added at the side or rear of the house with appropriate scale drawing/model example.**

- 3.57 Instead of bricking or siding over unwanted windows, consider covering them on the inside with drywall and on the outside by closed shutters or louvers**
- a The window opening and frame should remain intact, including subsill and lintel.
 - b Other elimination of windows require a scale drawing
- 3.58 City codes require that window wells must be kept in good repair.**
- 3.59 Size of windows should not be changed when they are part of the architectural style.**
- 3.60 When feasible, original shutters shall be retained and repaired.**
- a Otherwise, modern replications or salvage materials consistent with the original architectural style may be used
 - b A scale drawing/model example is needed for replications.
- 3.61 Shutters must be appropriate size for windows.**
- a Shutters do not have to be closable, but they should at least fit the window if they could be closed
- 3.62 Awnings are acceptable, provided**
- a Pre-1950 buildings should use canvas awnings.
 - b Canvas awnings are most appropriate for post-1950 buildings, but metal awnings may be acceptable for structures built 1950-1965
 - c Fiberglass awnings are not appropriate.
- 3.63 City codes require that all awnings be maintained and in good repair.**

Doors and Doorways

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before making any changes to doors, transoms, or doorway openings. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.64 Door openings must not be altered if it will change the style and character of the building.**
- 3.65 Abandoned doors (these are doors no longer in use) may be considered if the door, door opening, and frame are left intact, including subsill, lintel and transom, and are covered with drywall on the inside**
- a Shutters shall be used if the original door has glass panels
 - b A scale drawing/model example required.
- 3.66 Transoms and door side lights are an important architectural detail and should not be bricked up or covered over**
- a An exception to this is when abandoned doors/transoms are covered appropriately as provided above
- 3.67 New wood doors or finished metal doors which are similar in style to the original door or are consistent with the time period may be used with a model example**
- 3.68 If a building has more than one front door, doors must match**
- 3.69 Doors should be appropriate for the original architectural style of the building**
- 3.70 Doors shall have a finish, varnish, paint, etc.**
- 3.71 City codes require storm and screen doors to be well- maintained.**
- a. They should also have a finish, paint, varnish, etc.
- 3.72 Doors designed for interior use are not acceptable for use on the exterior.**
- 3.73 Security doors and bars may be acceptable with scale drawing/model example.**

Architectural Details

Architectural details are critical in establishing the visual character of a historic district. They not only add visual interest but can showcase fine craftsmanship and design. Architectural details also help define the particular architectural style of each building. Property owners are urged to repair architectural details when feasible instead of replacing them. It is better to replace only those portions of architectural details beyond repair than to completely replace new. Even when replaced by an exact replica of the original, the historical integrity of the building is diminished. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before removing, replacing or adding shutters, awnings, security doors, etc. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.74 When feasible, original ornamentation (iron stars, gingerbread, brackets, etc.) should be retained and repaired.**
- a Otherwise, salvage materials or modern replications consistent with the original architectural style may be used.
- 3.75 Solar collectors and satellite dishes should not be visible from the street.**

Accessory Buildings

An accessory building is a secondary structure separate from the main building on the lot. Examples include detached garages, gazebos, tool or storage sheds, smoke houses, brick kitchens, out houses, stables, chicken coops, etc. Accessory buildings are an important part of the character of an historic district. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any enlargement, replacement, removal, or demolition of any accessory building, regardless of size. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.76 Every effort should be taken to preserve and maintain accessory buildings which have historical or architectural significance.**

- 3.77 Storage buildings shall have the appearance of stability and should be in a design that related to the main dwelling or time period of the main dwelling.**

- 3.78 Garages shall not exceed the height of the existing structures. A scale drawing/model example is required**

- 3.79 All existing accessory buildings must be kept in good repair, including exterior walls, doors, windows, roofs, and painted**

Site Design and Landscaping

Fences properly designed can enhance a property's visual impact. When adding a fence, consider what type of fence will best complement your property. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required before building a new fence, or replacing one with another of a different style. A Certificate of Appropriateness is also required before replacing or building a retaining wall. Normal maintenance does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and is encouraged.

- 3.80 Front yard fences should be consistent with the time period.** Wood picket, vertical board ("privacy"), wrought or cast iron, masonry, and hedge or shrub fences are most appropriate for the neighborhood. Chain link and wire fencing are inappropriate for front yard fencing.
- 3.81 Heavy-duty lattice may be used for fencing and screening.** Thin, light-weight lattice for either fences or screening is not appropriate.
- 3.82 Contact the Department of City Development for City codes concerning fence height restrictions.**
- 3.83 City codes require fences to be well maintained and kept in good repair.** All fences which are designed to be painted, stained, or treated must be maintained in that condition and kept in good repair.
- 3.84 Newly-installed mechanical equipment (air conditioners, heat pumps, etc.) should be screened from view from the street by vegetation, lattice, pickets, etc.**
- 3.85 Retaining walls more than two feet tall should be of masonry construction.**
- a. Poured concrete retaining walls are encouraged to use raked joints to imitate masonry blocks.
 - b. Retaining walls two feet tall or less may be constructed of masonry or treated landscape timbers.
 - c. Cinder block and automobile tires are examples of inappropriate materials for the exterior finish of retaining walls, regardless of height.
- 3.86 City codes require retaining walls to be maintained and in good repair.**
- 3.87 Reconstructed steps should either replicate the original or reproduce ones which would have been found traditionally.**
- a. Other reconstruction may be considered with a scale drawing/model example.
 - b. City code requires steps within retaining walls to be maintained and in good repair.

3.88 Mature trees make our neighborhood an attractive place to live.

- a. Shade provided by larger trees can also lower electric bills in summer. It's no wonder that properties with mature trees often have higher values than those which do not!
- b. Owners are encouraged to maintain and nurture all trees that are not detrimental to life, limb, or property
- c. When a tree is removed the property owner is encouraged to plant a replacement.

3.89 City codes require lawns, gardens, patios, shrubs, bushes, hedges, etc. to be well maintained

Chapter 4: Additions

All new additions require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

- 4.1 Additions are most appropriate if constructed to the rear or side of an existing building.**
 - a. Additions to the front of the building are not normally appropriate, especially if they alter the facade
- 4.2 Additions to existing structures that will alter the facade of the building are prohibited.**
- 4.3 Additions should not be taller or wider than the building to which it is added.**
- 4.4 Whenever possible, garage doors should face the alley and are most likely inappropriate when facing the street**
- 4.5 Gutters are required for all new roofs, even additions and accessory buildings**

Chapter 5: New Construction

The Saint Charles Commons is a living neighborhood which has continued to change since its beginning. These design guidelines are not intended to freeze the neighborhood in time, but they are intended to insure that new construction will reinforce the basic visual characteristics of the district. Newly constructed buildings need not replicate or exactly imitate old buildings. This could create a false sense of history.

Having said this, even though new buildings may have certain details which subtly distinguish them as new, they must exhibit similar scale, form, and setbacks of traditional buildings on the block and in the neighborhood. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for all newly constructed buildings.

Site Design Standards

- 5.1 **Orient the front of a primary structure toward the street**

- 5.2 **New buildings should be set back from the street about the average distance of building setbacks on the block**
 - a. Typically, buildings in the Commons Neighborhood had shallow setbacks from the street right-of-way and small front yards. Traditionally, front porches were often within "conversation distance" of public sidewalks
 - b. Before having plans drawn up for a new building, contact the Department of City Development for the zoning setback requirements for your particular lot.

Building Scale Standards

- 5.3 New buildings should be constructed to reinforce a sense of human scale, similar in scale to that established in the block**
- a. The front of a building should include a one-story element, such as a porch.
- 5.4 Build to heights similar to those found historically in the district.**
- 5.5 New buildings should be constructed of similar width to that of nearby historic buildings**
- a. If a new building is to be much wider than those seen historically, it should be divided into modules which are of similar width to nearby buildings in the district.
- 5.6 Wall-to-window ratio should be similar to that found in historic structures in the district.**
- a. Large surfaces of glass are inappropriate in residential areas
- b. Large glass areas should be divided into smaller windows.
- 5.7 City zoning codes limit the square footage of new accessory buildings to no more than one half the ground floor area of the main building on the lot.**
- a. Other size and location requirements for accessory buildings can be obtained by contacting the Department of City Development, City of Saint Charles

Building Form Standards

- 5.8 Use building forms traditionally found on the block.**
- a. Simple rectangular shapes are most common. Complex or irregular building shapes are usually appropriate for only late Victorian buildings which had more elaborate massing
- 5.9 Use roof forms similar to those traditionally found on the block**
- a. Gable and hip roofs are most appropriate for primary buildings
- b. Roof pitches should be 6:12 or greater
- c. Shed roofs may be appropriate for some additions and accessory buildings but not main buildings
- 5.10 New buildings should have proportions of facade height to width similar to traditional buildings in the block.**

Building Details

- 5.11 Use of traditional materials--such as red brick, wood, and limestone--is strongly encouraged for primary building materials**
- a. New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing
 - b. New materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture, and finish to those used historically.
 - c. Cinder block, particle board, and roll roofing are not permitted for exterior finish of new buildings
- 5.12 Doors, windows, and porches should be of sizes and proportions as traditionally found on the block and in the area.**
- a. Windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.
- 5.13 The City requires gutters to be installed on nearly all new buildings**
- a. These guidelines require them on accessory buildings as well.
- 5.14 Grading and cut and filling shall be compatible with surrounding properties**
- 5.15 Where possible, new garage doors should face the alley or side yard instead of the front or street**
- 5.16 Where lots adjoin an alleyway, new driveways should not connect to the front street**

Chapter 6: Demolition

Many homes in the St. Charles Commons are considered historically significant to the character and the integrity of the Commons. All structures are considered irreplaceable assets and as such demolition is limited. Each property within the Commons boundaries contribute to the atmosphere and the character of the district as a whole no matter what the age. Any demolition of a whole house or the removal of an addition or removal of an outbuilding is required to have a Certificate of Appropriateness. If the structure is to be replaced, application for demolition will not be considered unless a scale drawing/model example of the replacement structure is provided.

In accordance with City codes, the following criteria shall be used in determining whether or not a structure has historical or architectural significance:

1. The structure's character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or country;
2. The structure's location as a site of a significant local, county, state, or national event,
3. The structure's identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or country;
4. The structure's embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous material;
5. The structure's identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state, or country;
6. The structure's embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship which renders it architecturally significant;
7. The structure's embodiment of design elements that make it structurally or architecturally innovative;
8. The structure's unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or the fact that it has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history; and/or
9. The structure's character as particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, farmhouses, schools, churches, public buildings, institutional offices, gas stations, or other commercial structures, with a high level of integrity or architectural significance.

Chapter 7: Did You Know?

These architectural guidelines have been written as an adjunct to regulations and ordinances already in existence in order to more clearly define the history and architecture of the Saint Charles Commons Neighborhood.

The owner of any building or structure in the Commons Neighborhood must keep the structure properly maintained and repaired. The City of Saint Charles requires property owners to prevent deterioration of their property, and when necessary, repair or replacement of deteriorated elements. For the sake of the health, safety, and welfare of its inhabitants, as well as property values and aesthetics, property owners should be vigorous in preventing:

The deterioration of exterior walls or other vertical supports,

The deterioration of roofs or other horizontal members,

The deterioration of external chimneys;

The deterioration or crumbling of exterior plasters or mortar;

The ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, and foundations, including broken windows or doors or gutters,

The peeling of paint, rotting holes and other forms of decay,

The deterioration of fences, gates, sidewalks, steps, signs, accessory structures, and landscaping,

The deterioration of any structure so as to create or permit the creation of any hazardous or unsafe condition;

The deterioration of any architectural feature which belongs to the style of the building such as porches, porch rails, brackets, cornices, or other detailing; and

Broken and uneven sidewalks. Sidewalks belong to the City, but it is the property owner's responsibility to keep them in good repair and weed-free.

Chapter 8: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards For Rehabilitation

The U S Department of the Interior is responsible for establishing historic preservation standards for Federal historic properties. This department has also established historical guidelines for proper restoration of historic properties held privately, as well as by state and local governments. The Department of the Interior also maintains the National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation include the following principles (For a full copy of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, please contact the Department of City Development, City of Saint Charles)

Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use the property for its originally intended purpose.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, site or its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible

All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance

shall be discouraged.

Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures

The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken

Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment

When possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired