

## GUIDELINES FOR LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

These Guidelines were developed in collaboration between the Gloucester City Urban Enterprise Zone (GCUEZ) and the Gloucester City Historic Preservation Commission (GCHPC) in order to enhance the visual aesthetics in the Gloucester City commercial and historic districts.

### Program Overviews:

The GCHPC reviews Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications for proposed exterior alterations to properties within the historic districts visible from a public way. The applicant is responsible for complying with the provisions of the Zoning and Building Codes at the time of application. The applicant must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) as well as all necessary permits prior to proceeding with any work. For more information, or to obtain permit applications, please call the Administrative Zoning Officer at (856) 456-7689.

The GCUEZ program promotes economic growth by helping neighborhood businesses succeed through offering incentives which encourage growth while stimulating the local economy. One of these such programs is the GCUEZ signage and matching façade grant program where UEZ businesses only can receive up to \$10,000 in matching facade grants as well as \$1,000 in signage grants to enhance their business storefronts. For more information, contact the UEZ Coordinator at (856) 456-6075 or via email at [uez@cityofgloucester.org](mailto:uez@cityofgloucester.org).

### Using the *Guidelines*:

Please review this information during the early stages of planning your project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project quickly through the approval process, saving applicants both time and money.

Additional *Guidelines* addressing other historic building topics and application forms are available at the Municipal Building and on the City's web site at [www.cityofgloucester.org](http://www.cityofgloucester.org).

### PURPOSE

These *Guidelines* were prepared to assist property owners with information when considering the alterations to their historic landscapes. It is not intended that these *Guidelines* should replace consultation with qualified landscape architects, landscapers, the GCUEZ, the GCHPC, and/or the applicable ordinances.



*Gloucester City has a rich variety of landscape elements.*

### GLoucester's LANDSCAPE

The architectural fabric of Gloucester City ranges from row houses or twins along the sidewalk with little to no front yards, to free-standing buildings surrounded by landscaping. For each property, the relationships of landscape elements can be viewed in terms of the front, side and back yards around primary structures, as well as the locations of secondary structures within the landscape setting. Aspects of the landscape surrounding individual or groups of historic structures represent important associations of traditional organization and visual and physical relationships.

#### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Keeping views of historic buildings open to street
- Front yard development with traditional, simple arrangements, similar to neighboring properties

#### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ discourage:*

- Modern amenities in front and side yards in view from public roadways
- Dense foliage, fences or other screening blocking views to historic structures from the public way



*Plantings at the base of a display window can add visual interest and attract potential customers.*

## CITY LANDSCAPE

The landscape of neighboring properties along a streetscape is seen as a composition. Owners should be aware of the landscape treatment of their immediate neighbors, the grouping of properties on their block and street, and the overall cluster of houses in the area.

Individual properties should be considered in terms of the front, side and rear yards; how the landscape functions for everyday use; and how it affects the overall character of the property and streetscape. The preferred features of the City lots on a street often include:

- Front yards that can include the street edge, street sidewalk, and entry walk, lawn, garden, one or more trees and possibly on-street parking
- Side yards that are often a narrow space that may include a driveway, lawn, plantings and storm water drainage systems
- Rear yards that are often more screened from the street frontage and may have space for a secondary structure such as a garage, shed, deck or arbor; a path to access a secondary door, a lawn or garden area; and shrubs or trees

The arrangement of the landscape elements of the yards is important both to the maintenance of the historic structures and to their character. Although the unique landscape of Gloucester with houses built along the sidewalk does not always allow the preferred arrangement to be implemented, property owners are encouraged to minimize the impact of modern amenities on the character of the overall historic landscape of the City.

*The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Locating and screening modern amenities, such as a paved terrace, garage, swimming pool or large wood deck to minimize visibility from the public roadway
- Developing a front yard landscape that is historically appropriate for the property

## LANDSCAPE FEATURES & ELEMENTS

The spaces defined by the primary residence and any secondary structures establish the landscape setting that can contribute to the overall historic character of the City of Gloucester. The landscape elements and features may include:

- Plantings of trees, shrubs, gardens and placement in relation to structures
- Driveways and parking arrangements
- Pedestrian walkways and paving materials
- Fences
- Building numbers and mailboxes
- Lighting
- Positive drainage away from structures



*The landscape of Gloucester City includes street trees, trees, shrubs, lawns and planting beds on individual properties, and a rich variety of iron fences. The City has also begun replacing sidewalks with brick surrounded by concrete.*

## PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS

Traditional paving materials for pedestrian walkways in the City of Gloucester include stone, brick and gravel. Today, walks made of flagstone, compacted gravel, and brick laid in basket weave or running bond patterns are visible in the City. The City has also begun the process of replacing many of the sidewalks in the City to include a brick paving system surrounded by concrete. If considering replacement or installation of a walkway, it is recommended that a complementary material be considered.

*The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Using stone, brick, or other permeable type of unit paving material of historic appearance
- Regular maintenance and upkeep of pavement



*Iron fencing is prevalent in Gloucester City, particularly along Monmouth Street.*

## FENCES

Traditional materials for fences in the City of Gloucester are generally cast or wrought iron and occasionally wood. Traditional fencing types not only marked the boundaries of a specific space, but also allowed visual access to and from the historic structures located on a property from the roadway.

Cast or wrought iron fencing is most often located along the sidewalk boundary in the City of Gloucester. Iron fences enclose a space in a more transparent and decorative manner than wood and are typically most appropriate for Victorian homes.

Wood fences are most often located to enclose a side and rear yards. Historically, typical wood fences included picket and post and rail fencing. More recently, a larger variety of fence styles have become available including stockade fences and solid board fencing.



*Wood fences, such as this gothic picket example, are less common along the street frontage in Gloucester City than iron fences.*

Although a new fence may be erected using traditional fencing materials, the overall appearance of the enclosure may not be appropriate. Solid and visually dense fences create privacy, but also block visual access to historic structures from the street, and are not in keeping with the historic character of the City and its landscape. The delineation of space with traditional, open fencing can create a sense of separation and a degree of privacy without blocking views to the historic architecture.

Modern fencing options such as vinyl or other reflective materials tend to detract from the historic character of the landscape. In addition, no chain link fences can be erected in Gloucester City. Using historically common fencing materials in an appropriate manner promotes the overall character of a property and the area and is encouraged.

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Use of traditional materials for fences, walls, gates and other boundary markers in an appropriate manner
- Maintaining building views open to the surrounding roadways
- Installing fence posts towards the interior of a property
- Regular maintenance and upkeep to fences

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ discourage:*

- Blocking views to historic buildings and settings with dense fencing materials or plantings
- Using non-traditional fencing materials such as vinyl
- Chain link fences



*While it is constructed of a traditional material, this solid board fencing inappropriately blocks views of the historic building from the street.*



*This style and color of this light complements the characteristics of the building and adjacent iron fencing. The light standard also supports the signage for the offices within.*

## LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting is an amenity of modern life. For a historic house, outdoor lighting should highlight the architecture and be of a style appropriate for the historic building. A wide range of wall-mounted or free-standing, replica historic lighting is available to complement a variety of historic properties and their lighting needs.

Residential lighting should be installed to illuminate pathways and access routes, limiting the spillage onto adjacent properties and the public way. Generally lighting on one property should not extend onto the neighboring lots or into the night sky. To minimize light spillage, many lights are available that cast light downward where it is needed to illuminate walking surfaces. In addition, existing lights can often be fitted with hoods or shields to direct light downwards.

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Unobtrusive lighting of historic properties that limits light spillage onto neighboring properties and into the night sky
- Traditional lighting fixtures that complement the architectural style

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ discourage:*

- Obtrusive lighting of historic properties that illuminates neighboring properties
- Modern lighting fixtures on historic buildings

## POSITIVE DRAINAGE AWAY FROM STRUCTURES

Positive drainage away from historic buildings is crucial to prolonging the life of its materials and structure. Over time ground levels often rise around historic structures bringing soil closer to building materials and creating drainage patterns that actually direct water towards buildings. Keeping moisture away from the foundation and materials of a building can reduce basement wall moisture and moisture-related deterioration of building sills and cladding.

Grading around historic buildings should be a minimum of six inches below wood elements to reduce the likelihood of moisture-related deterioration. After proper soil level is established adjacent to the building, soil or paving should be sloped away from the building with the lowest elevations where the water will drain away at a minimum of three feet away from the building's foundation. Please refer to *Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance* for additional information regarding perimeter drainage.

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ encourage:*

- Maintaining positive drainage away from structures
- Adjusting grading to position low points at least three feet away from building foundations
- Adjusting grading around historic structures to place soil six inches below wood sills and siding
- Installing splash blocks or extending downspouts and rainwater conductors away from building foundation

### *The GCHPC and GCUEZ discourage:*

- Storm and surface water draining toward buildings
- Groundwater ponding adjacent to foundation
- Soil less than six inches below wood building members



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