

Porches

Background: Porches are a common element of traditional Pottstown homes. They are semi-enclosed with a roof attached to the building and supported by columns, allowing people to sit outdoors protected from the elements.

Occasionally property owners will enclose a porch to provide more living space, but it is almost always at the cost of degrading the appearance of the building.

Deteriorating balustrades should be replaced with new wood to look as closely as the original as possible. Wrought iron railings and posts should never be used to replace original wooden balustrades and columns. Although they will hold up the porch roof, they clash with the style of the house. In addition, because the wrought iron is so lightweight in appearance, the porch roof looks like it is on the verge of collapse.



Porches like the ones above are integral parts of the building design. It would be difficult to enclose them without destroying the appearance of the building.



NO

This enclosed porch has destroyed the character of these buildings.



NO



YES

The rotted original columns of a porch are being replaced with new wood that matches the original.



NO

Wrought iron posts should never be used to replace the original wood columns. They take away from the original design, and make the porch roof appear to be floating in air.



YES

No attempt was made to match the original porch balustrade at left with the replacement railing at right. New balusters can be made at a planing mill, or if that proves too expensive, stock spindles and railings can be purchased that can provide a close version of the original.

NO

Walls

Background: With few exceptions, the best exterior building materials are the ones originally used on Pottstown's historic buildings. Pottstown buildings have lasted a century or more, often without much maintenance, because the original materials were of such high quality.

Brick walls should never be covered with vinyl, artificial stone, or any other kind of siding. Besides being far less attractive than the original brick, artificial siding can cause moisture problems which may soften the brick.

Although most historic buildings in Pottstown are made of brick, some are constructed with wood siding. Wood has more character and beauty than common replacement materials, such as aluminum or vinyl siding, and Pottstown encourages the replacement of old wood with new wood. If this is not economically feasible, artificial siding may be appropriate in some cases.



NO

Aluminum siding should never be placed over brick. It degrades the appearance of the building and can lead to moisture problems.



NO

The façade of this home was dramatically altered by covering the brick with aluminum siding, and installing a 1960s picture window and a pent roof. The historic appearance of the building is gone.



NO

This brick home was covered with stucco, obliterating the window trim in the process.



NO

Even the mansard roof is covered with aluminum siding, destroying the historic character of this building.



YES

The original wood siding has been replaced with new wood and painted.



YES

New affordable housing in Asheville, NC, uses a siding called HardiPlank which resembles wood and wears much better than vinyl or aluminum.

In-kind

Background: In-kind refers to replacing original materials with identical or very similar new materials, such as replacing a rotten board in a cornice with a new board, or replacing a damaged slate roof with new slate, or fabricating new wood ornamentation to replace damaged originals. Most in-kind repairs can be approved by the Code Officer without having to go to the Review Board.



BEFORE



AFTER



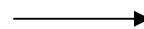
Rotten and split cedar shingles, left, were removed and replaced with identical new cedar shingles and painted. Rotten and broken wooden ornamentation around the dormer windows was removed and replaced with new wood fabricated to look like the original.



BEFORE



AFTER



A rotted out piece of trim over a doorway is replaced with a new piece of fabricated wood to match the original. A deteriorated block of wood to the right of the door is replaced with a new block carved to look like the original.

Miscellaneous features

Awnings



NO

Aluminum and plastic awnings are not compatible with historic buildings.



YES

Canvas awnings became popular in the late 19th century to protect against the hot sun in the summer. They are still attractive if well maintained.



NEW BRICK, OLD STYLE

New brick matching the original brick is used to rebuild a deteriorated chimney in the same ornamental style as the original chimney.

AIR CONDITIONERS

Air conditioners should never be installed in walls that face a public street or way.



NO



NO

Signs

Background: Signs are regulated by Pottstown’s Zoning Ordinance, Article 7. The photographs and charts in the Article show what kinds of signs are permitted, their size, and how they may be erected.

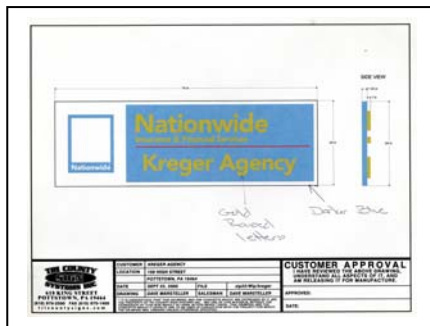
Within Pottstown’s historic districts, signs should be compatible with the scale, form, and architectural detailing of the building for which they are designed. Signs hanging from a wall with decorative brackets or signs mounted directly on a wall that are rectangular, square, or oval are appropriate to most historic buildings in Pottstown.

Free-standing signs are appropriate for buildings that are set back sufficiently from the sidewalk. A traditional sign type such as wood with either carved or raised lettering is encouraged. Signs should not cover any architectural detail. The most appropriate colors for signs were traditionally intense versions of building colors – high gloss bottle green, olive, golds, and burgundies. Signs of plastic and other artificial materials and internally lit signs are not recommended.

All applications for signs in Pottstown’s Historic Districts must contain the following information:

1. A current color photograph of the property.
2. An illustration of the building façade showing the proposed sign.
3. A scaled drawing showing the sign itself and including the size, materials, colors, lighting, lettering and method of attachment. Material samples may be required.
4. For ground signs, a site plan indicating the location of the sign.
5. The type of illumination.

Most professional sign makers will provide these items for you, and may even help you with your application.



Scale drawing of the sign

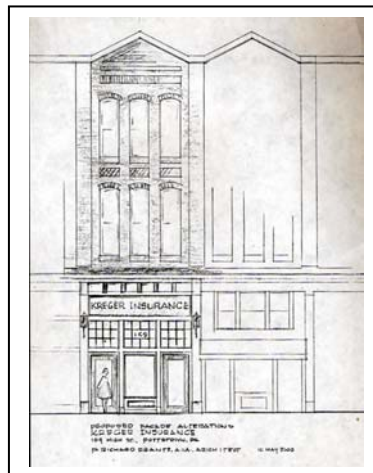
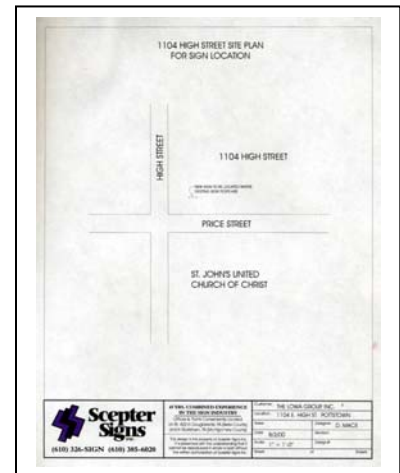


Illustration of building with sign location

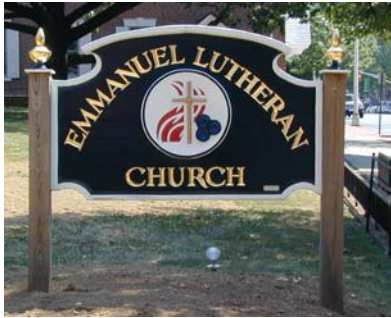


Site plan



Current photograph of the property

Signs



YES



YES



YES



YES



YES



YES



YES



NO



NO

Modest signs consisting of traditional materials or materials that appear to be traditional will add to the quality of Pottstown's historic districts. Contemporary signs typical of strip malls and shopping centers are not appropriate.



NO



NO

Storefronts:

Background: Storefronts are a prominent feature of Pottstown's downtown shopping district, which is a part of Pottstown's Historic Districts. Historic storefronts date from the late 1800s to the early 1920s. Pottstown has both wood and glass storefronts and metal and glass storefronts. In existing historic buildings, new storefront design should be based on the original storefront, based on surviving physical evidence and old photographs. Where no evidence exists, new storefronts should be compatible with the period of the building.



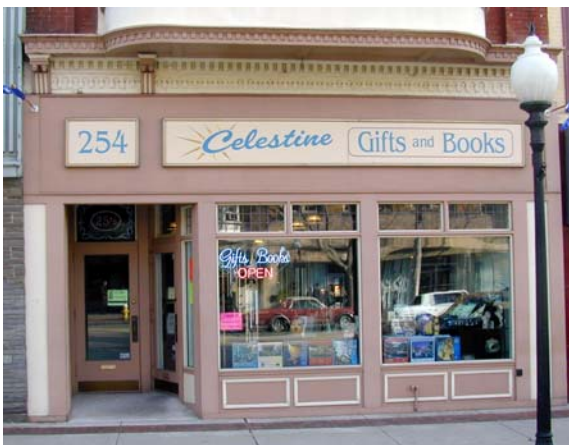
YES



YES



YES



YES



YES



NO



NO



NO

Additions:

Background: Because facades are so important to the appearance of a building, additions should be avoided at the front of a building. Whenever possible, additions should be constructed at the back of a building, or the least conspicuous side. The more visible the addition is from a public street, the more important compatibility becomes.



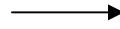
NO

This 1960s addition to two 19th century buildings has destroyed their appearance and marred the entire block.



YES

Placement of this single story addition to the rear of an existing building is functional without detracting from the historic building. The windows and brickwork are compatible with the rest of the building.



YES

This addition to a 1920s bank has the same stone façade and window proportions as the original building.



YES

These one-story additions have been tucked behind historic homes so they are not visible from the street.



YES

New Construction

New buildings should be compatible with existing historic buildings in the architectural style, form, scale, texture and pattern of materials, and proportion of walls to openings.



These new houses blend perfectly with 100-year old houses on the same block. Houses like these would fit seamlessly with existing buildings on High Street east of the Hill School.



These closely spaced homes in a recent development would look very appropriate in downtown Pottstown streets like Chestnut, Walnut and Beech.