Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing

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Community residents and representatives of the following organizations participated in the development of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing: the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, the City of Atlanta Department of Planning, Development, and Neighborhood Conservation, the Community Partners Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, the Historic District Development Corporation, the National Park Service, the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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Martin Luther King, Jr., National Register Historic District

[Map showing the boundaries of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Register Historic District Amendment in Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. The map highlights the existing and proposed amended district boundaries.]
The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District in Atlanta are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the area is also designated as a local historic district by the City of Atlanta. It is a historically significant African-American neighborhood located immediately to the east of downtown Atlanta, and adjacent to the historic Auburn Avenue business district.

The district contains a variety of housing types ranging from modest shotgun houses and small Victorian cottages to more substantial foursquare and Queen Anne style houses. The neighborhood is also the location of the Martin Luther King, Jr., birth home, a National Historic Site operated by the National Park Service.

In 1980, the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) was established. HDDC is committed to preserving the historic character of the neighborhood while providing affordable housing for its residents. Its mission includes "restoring the viable, economically diverse and interdependent community that previously existed." HDDC has already undertaken the rehabilitation of several historic residential properties within the district, as well as the construction of affordable housing for its residents. It works closely with the City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

While general guidance for preserving the historic character of the residential neighborhood is provided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the Atlanta Urban Design Commission has also developed the Martin Luther King, Jr., Landmark District Residential Design Guidelines. The local guidelines provide more specific guidance to property owners proposing exterior changes to their properties that must be reviewed by the commission as a result of the neighborhood's local historic district status. Beyond the guidance offered in these guidelines, property owners seeking state or federal tax credits for rehabilitation work in the historic district should contact the Georgia Historic Preservation Division when planning rehabilitation work.

This document, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing, was developed in response to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Policy Statement: "Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation," adopted June 26, 1995. The policy statement was developed to provide a framework for both Section 106 consultation (triggered by participation in federally funded programs) and local historic preservation planning in communities where economic or design constraints could impact the development of affordable housing. The Advisory Council's policy statement stresses flexibility, encourages community involvement, and emphasizes the treatment of exteriors.

These local design guidelines for affordable housing supplement the district's residential design guidelines by expanding on the flexibility called for by the Advisory Council's policy statement. They are a specific interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as they relate to affordable housing in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District.
The U. S. Department of the Interior developed ten national standards which address the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The standards describe appropriate preservation treatments in a ranked order: retain, repair, replace. The standards emphasize the value of ongoing maintenance and protection of historic properties to minimize the need for more substantial repairs. In turn, the standards value repair over replacement of historic features.

1. A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships 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 elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a 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, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

8. Archaeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. 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, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the 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.
The purpose of these design guidelines is to encourage the preservation of historic houses by describing rehabilitation approaches that are economical yet do not sacrifice the overall historic character of the historic district or the individual buildings that comprise that district. The guidelines emphasize the preservation of those significant architectural features which the local residents, the Historic District Development Corporation, the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division have identified as being important to the historic character of the neighborhood.

These guidelines will be used by both the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, in reviewing proposed rehabilitation plans, and by the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, in reviewing federally funded projects in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District. Also, they may be useful as a voluntary guide for private property owners—providing them with an overall planning strategy for selecting the most appropriate options for repair and replacement decisions in planning a rehabilitation project.

The guidelines are based on the principle that architectural features which are visible from the street should be given a high preservation priority since they contribute the most to the passerby's appreciation of the historic district. Those features that are not as prominent or visible in the streetscape are less significant to the district character. Consequently, less priority is given to their preservation, allowing for more flexibility in terms of rehabilitation treatments.

While consistent in principle with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in advocating the preservation of historic features and materials, the guidelines emphasize flexibility in changes that will not have a strong visual impact on the historic district in order to take into account possible rehabilitation cost differences. It should be pointed out, however, that retaining and repairing various building materials and features is often the least costly option regardless of how significant the feature. On the other hand, if a distinctive feature is severely deteriorated, repair can also be the most expensive rehabilitation choice.

The guidelines are not a master checklist of all the steps involved in any rehabilitation process. Instead, they focus on the rehabilitation changes that clearly have a visual consequence. For these changes, the guidelines offer a framework for making decisions rather than a list of specific replacement options that are acceptable for all houses. Recognizing that the existing condition of each house varies in terms of how extensive its rehabilitation needs are and recognizing that the significant architectural features of each house vary as well, the guidelines propose a planning approach for tailoring the rehabilitation plan to the specific conditions and significant features of each house.
These guidelines present a four step planning approach to making decisions regarding the sensitive rehabilitation of a historic house with economic considerations factored into those decisions. As every rehabilitation project presents a different combination of historic features and existing conditions, this planning approach will result in a tailored set of selected options for each. But, the goal remains the same: the appropriate, affordable rehabilitation of a historic house. The four steps in achieving this goal are:

**Step #1:** Identify the most significant historic features of the house—prioritize these features in terms of their visibility from the street, giving preference to key exterior features over interior features, and to the principal first-floor interior spaces over less important interior spaces.

Using this approach, it would be more important to retain and repair historic front porch features than features of a screened rear entrance. Also, it would be more important to save decorative woodwork in the front entry hall than in an upstairs bedroom.

**Step #2:** Review the ranked options for each part of the rehabilitation:
- Retain and repair historic materials or features.
- Replace to match the original materials or features in design, color, texture, and materials.

**OR:**
- Replace the original with a compatible substitute material or feature that matches it in as many characteristics as possible.

These rehabilitation options are elaborated on in more detail on the next page.

**Step #3:** Estimate the quantity or extent of all work items and the related costs.

If only one window needs to be replaced, that presents a different situation than if all the windows are missing. It is important to get as specific as possible with this step and to obtain accurate cost information. Often, an economy of costs for rehabilitation work can be gained if similar work is required for multiple houses and a contractor can be scheduled for work on several neighborhood properties at the same time.

**Step #4:** Make the best overall decisions for the entire project—after considering all the options and costs—with the emphasis placed on keeping the most visible and significant historic features but with flexibility provided for less visible and less significant features.

This important final planning step merges the two key concerns: what is best for the building and what is economically feasible. It is important to consider the cumulative effect of the various rehabilitation choices and to ensure that, overall, they do not substantially compromise the historic character of the individual house or the neighborhood. Also, weighing all options in developing a comprehensive plan gives the property owner an opportunity to determine how to maximize the visibility of the investment made.
The consideration of options, or alternatives, for each part of the rehabilitation is central to the four step planning process outlined on the previous page. In the sections that follow, these design guidelines provide a series of ranked options to consider when repair or replacement is necessary for specific elements as part of an overall rehabilitation. For each historic house, the most appropriate options will vary depending on various factors:

- which elements are most significant to the historic character of the house and neighborhood,
- what condition those significant elements are in, and
- what the costs for the various rehabilitation options would be.

The options are ranked, like the Secretary’s Standards, to favor keeping important historic features rather than replacing them. Option #1 (retain and repair) is the most desirable from a preservation standpoint. It is the least intrusive rehabilitation choice and often—depending on existing conditions—the least expensive rehabilitation option.

Sometimes, Option #1 may involve the removal of previous, unsympathetic alterations in order to retain and repair the historic feature or materials, such as the removal of a deteriorated substitute cladding that is covering original wood clapboards.

Other times neglect may have led to such serious deterioration of a feature that the first option—repair of important historic features—is not really an option. This situation would trigger consideration of Option #2—replace to match the deteriorated or missing historic feature or material. In many instances, matching a distinctive feature may require custom work or the skills of an experienced contractor or craftsman. In other situations, Option #2 may be a straightforward, economical choice.

If the replacement costs for Option #2 prove too high to implement, then Option #3—replacement with a compatible substitute material or feature—would be considered. When considering possible alternatives under the third option, it is always important to thoughtfully compare the characteristics of a substitute material to the original material and to assess the impact the substitution will have on the overall project. The selective application of Option #3 in a rehabilita-
tion can keep the costs down without compromising the building’s historic integrity. However, if Option #3 is automatically applied in all cases, the sum of the compromises will likely sacrifice that integrity. Decisions on which option is most appropriate should recognize the flexibility the guidelines provide as they emphasize the importance of the street facade of each building and are less concerned with changes to the rear of the buildings. Likewise, they are more concerned with highly visible exterior changes than with less visible interior changes.

In the end, the compromises made due to cost must not result in a house that loses so much of its historic character that it is no longer an asset to the historic district. The overall rehabilitation must meet the intent of preserving a historic resource and, at a minimum, the work done on any individual structure must never adversely affect the historic character of the district.
The historic character of the residential portion of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District is defined by the neighborhood setting as well as the architecture. This setting includes the combined visual effect of the topography, streets, sidewalks, front yards, and landscaping, in addition to the siting, setback, spacing, and orientation of the houses along the neighborhood streets. Street trees, retaining walls, front walks, fences, and hedges also contribute to the district character. To preserve the overall district character, visual changes to the streetscapes and to the street front facades of the historic houses must be thoughtfully considered and carefully planned.

Given the public nature and prominence of front yards, it is important when planning changes to retain the original arrangement of front walkways and steps, that typically lead directly up to the front porch. It is also important to locate new meters, power lines, pipes, transformers, mechanical equipment, and communication equipment in inconspicuous locations so that the street facade of the house is not compromised. Even more major changes such as the addition of storage buildings or decks can usually be accommodated in rear yard locations without compromising the historic character of the front yard or the building's street facade.

Traditionally, front yards in the district were bordered by masonry retaining walls, hedges, or—less frequently—open, picket fences. Utilitarian fences in rear yards were constructed of vertical wood slats or woven wire attached to posts. Today, safety or privacy concerns may lead to the addition of utilitarian fencing in rear yards, but it is not appropriate to add such fencing—especially vinyl or chain link fencing—in front yards.

Hedges, well-defined front yards, and the consistent setback of houses all contribute to the character of the district streetscapes.

Some front yards in the historic district are defined by wooden picket or decorative cast-iron fences, like this one.

On some streets, stone, brick, or concrete block retaining walls accommodate the changing topography in the neighborhood.
In the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District the architecture includes a variety of period styles and a range of building scale reflecting both the age of the neighborhood and the economic diversity of its early residents.

The modest shotgun house, a simple vernacular house form, is found throughout the historic district—as is the less typical double shotgun. Small Victorian cottages contrast in scale with larger Queen Anne style and two-story foursquare houses in the neighborhood. A few later bungalows are found as well.

The various elements of the building exteriors—prominent front porches, clapboard walls, repetitive roof forms, double-hung windows, brick foundations, and stylistic trimwork—contribute to the rich district streetscape. Consequently, the preservation of highly visible, significant exterior building materials, features, and details should be given a high priority during the rehabilitation process.

This section of the guidelines provides rehabilitation options for specific exterior elements. Particular attention should be given to the options for windows, exterior walls, and porches as they are often especially vulnerable to replacement.

Although the guidelines address individual exterior elements, it is always important to relate the options for specific exterior elements back to the overall rehabilitation plan and to the visual impact the combination of selected options will have on the historic character of both the building and the streetscape.
Simple brick piers create an elevated foundation for most homes in the MLK, Jr. Historic District.

Brick or stone steps, leading up to front porches, and brick chimneys projecting above the rooflines, are typical neighborhood features as well.

Option #1. Retain and repair significant historic masonry foundations, chimneys, and exterior steps.

Generally, the repair of historic masonry involves repointing deteriorated mortar joints to prevent related moisture damage. When completed, the new mortar joints should match the original joints in appearance. Applying a waterproof coating or parging (coating deteriorated masonry with concrete) are both poor substitutes for traditional repointing and should be avoided because they mask the original masonry.

From an ongoing maintenance perspective, it is best not to paint unpainted masonry. If it has been painted previously, repainting when necessary in colors compatible with the original masonry color is recommended.

Option #2. If parts or all of a significant historic masonry feature are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, color, texture, and material.

The continued popularity and availability of brick makes replacement of damaged brickwork in kind a fairly straightforward task. A skilled mason can successfully match masonry bonding patterns, mortar joint details, and even distinctive corbeling or pierced work. If replacing a foundation, it is important to retain its configuration including projecting piers.

When rebuilding prominent chimneys or highly visible foundation piers, it is always best to use a brick or stone that approximates the original material—even if it is applied as a veneer. While economics may lead to the simplification of a chimney cap or front step detail, it is important to maintain the overall size and scale of the original masonry feature.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing masonry feature with a new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

Option #1: This prominent center chimney with its distinctive shape and details was retained during rehabilitation.

Option #2: The original brick front steps were repaired and the brick walkway was replaced to match during this rehabilitation.

Option #3: Plywood infill panels painted in a dark color recessed between new brick piers repeat the original porch pier configuration.
Throughout the district, the most prominent feature of many historic houses is the front porch. Ornate or simple, these porches contribute in important ways to the character of the streetscape.

Option #1. Retain and repair significant historic porches and entrances—including their materials, features, and details.

Wooden front porches and exposed entrances are particularly vulnerable to the elements. Consequently, they require relatively high maintenance to prevent their deterioration. Routine maintenance includes ensuring proper drainage of all horizontal surfaces, the caulking of all exposed joinery, and a sound paint film to avoid damage from water, wind, and sun.

Option #2. If parts or all of a significant historic porch or entrance are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

Many traditional porch materials are still readily available, including tongue-and-groove flooring and beaded board ceiling materials. Porch elements—such as columns, railings, and brackets—can often be duplicated by combining or slightly modifying stock millwork. It is important not to strip porches of their decorative details. If they are not readily available, it is possible to reproduce even ornate porch elements and details through custom millwork.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing porch or entrance feature with a new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

Simpler but compatible replacements can be substituted for porch features or details that are missing or deteriorated. If using stock millwork replacements, it is especially critical to retain the overall proportion and scale of porch elements, including the traditionally low railing height. Similarly, a beaded board ceiling can be approximated in grooved plywood and original flooring in new decking. For a missing front porch, a compatible new design may be the most appropriate rehabilitation solution.
Option #1. Retain and repair significant historic exterior walls—including their materials, features, and details.

This option may also include the removal of later substitute claddings (asphalt shingles, brick-patterned rolled siding, vinyl and aluminum siding) to reveal the original wood clapboards. Although original exterior trimwork is sometimes removed or damaged during the application of substitute siding, the clapboards themselves often survive intact.

Wood surfaces can last indefinitely if they are protected by a sound paint film and kept free of excessive moisture. If a house has been neglected for a number of years, selective replacement of deteriorated siding and extensive preparation may be necessary prior to repainting. To ensure that the new paint bonds to the surface, any loose or peeling paint layers must be removed down to the first sound paint layer.

Option #2. If parts or all of significant historic exterior walls are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

Wood siding in a range of widths and finishes is still available today making selective or total replacement of wood clapboards in kind a viable alternative.

Before installing replacement siding, any sources of previous moisture damage should be mitigated and any sub-surface materials repaired to prevent further deterioration of wood elements.
Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible:

- cover the deteriorated wall material with a new material that matches as many of its characteristics as possible, OR
- remove the deteriorated or missing wall material and replace it with a new material that matches as many of its characteristics as possible, OR
- if the original wall material has been covered with a substitute cladding that is intact, consider retaining the substitute cladding and repairing it as necessary.

It is always preferable from a preservation standpoint to retain original architectural fabric. For this reason, if leaving the original siding exposed is not considered feasible, then covering the original siding with a new substitute siding would be preferable to removing the original siding and replacing it with a substitute siding. Covering existing siding allows for the reversal of the option in the future, the later cladding could be removed and the original siding exposed again.

Even if original siding is covered or replaced, it is important not to remove, damage, or conceal exterior trimwork or wooden shingles in the process. The proper installation of substitute siding should maintain the original relationship of siding to trimwork. Other considerations in selecting a substitute material include approximating the exposed width of siding, edge detail, texture, and finish of the original siding.

Option #3: New vinyl siding covers earlier claddings on this house; but the wood cornerboards and shingles in the gable were retained.

Option #3: Hardiplank, a fiber-reinforced cement siding, approximates the dimensions of wood clapboards on this house in the district.

Option #3: An intact cladding of asbestos board, which conceals the original wood siding, was retained during rehabilitation.
Both decorative and functional, exterior architectural ornament accommodates and often embellishes the building exterior. Examples of architectural ornament found in the historic district include bargeboards, cornerboards, door and window surrounds, brackets, cornices, fretwork and pilasters.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair significant historic exterior architectural ornament—including its materials, features, and details.

Most architectural ornament in the neighborhood is constructed of wood and can be preserved by ensuring proper drainage of water, sealing exposed joints, and maintaining a sound paint film. Because architectural ornament contributes so much to the architectural character and detail of the exterior of a historic building, it is not appropriate to simply remove decorative trimwork rather than repair or replace it.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of significant historic exterior architectural ornament are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, color, texture, and material.

Replacing architectural ornament may require custom millwork if the detail or feature cannot be duplicated in contemporary stock millwork. Sometimes, stock trims can be combined or slightly modified to duplicate the original ornament without the cost of having it custom milled.

When exact duplication of an architectural ornament is not feasible, it is always preferable to approximate the original feature rather than eliminate it. The substitution of a simplified feature that matches the overall size and scale of the ornament (but may lack some of the detail of the original) would provide a compatible replacement. Stock millwork—perhaps slightly modified—can often match most characteristics of original ornament.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing features with a new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

Option #1: The decorative applied swag designs on this cornice board were retained during rehabilitation.

Option #2: The distinctive scrollwork panel on the upper facade was custom reproduced during rehabilitation.

Option #3: This simple replacement column capital was constructed from stock millwork to approximate the original capital.
Solid wood front doors in a variety of styles and panel configurations are found throughout the residential district. Glass, occasionally stained or cut, is frequently incorporated into the upper half of the door.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair significant historic exterior doors.

Historic wood doors can be preserved and upgraded by adding weather-stripping, caulking exposed joinery, and maintaining a sound paint film. Given the sturdy quality and stylistic details of many original front doors, replacement of a deteriorated panel is well worth the effort. A badly damaged area around a lock in an otherwise sound door can be carefully cut out and new wood pieced in to match the original in appearance.

The security provided by a historic door can be enhanced through the addition of a dead-bolt lock and exterior lighting. Both traditional screen doors and contemporary storm doors, compatible in style and color with the original door, are also appropriate additions.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of significant historic exterior doors are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

If a distinctive front door is not readily available in the same design or dimension as the original, it can be custom milled. Sometimes, a stock door can be slightly altered to closely match the original door in size and appearance.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing exterior door with a new door that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

A variety of stock wood doors in various panel and glazing configurations are available today, making selection of a compatible new door quite feasible. Occasionally, a salvaged door can be found that is compatible in size and architectural style. It is important to find a replacement door that closely approximates the overall dimensions of the original to avoid replacing or altering the jamb and surrounds as well.
Option #1. Retain and repair significant historic windows.

The useful life and energy-efficiency of historic windows can be substantially increased through routine maintenance and prompt repair such as reglazing sashes, recaulking wood joints, and applying a sound paint film. Typical repairs to double-hung windows include adjusting sashes that stick and replacing broken sash cords and glass panes.

The addition of weatherstripping and/or storm windows can further enhance energy efficiency. To minimize their visual impact, select narrow profile storm windows that are sized to fix the opening and finished in a compatible color. For double-hung windows, the storm units should also be operable and their dividers should align with the meeting rails of the existing sash. Interior storm windows (units which are tension mounted within the interior casing) are another energy efficiency alternative. It is important to ensure any storm unit is properly vented to prevent condensation on the window sash.

Option #2. If parts or all of significant historic windows are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

It is always desirable to retain as much of the window unit as possible and replace only what is necessary. For example, if the window frame and surround can be retained and only the sash replaced, that is preferable to replacing the entire unit. For most historic windows, following this option will require having the replacement feature custom built.

The quantity of windows requiring replacement may influence the decision to have a custom sash, or sashes, made. For example, if all but two original windows on a house...
can be economically repaired, then replacing only the two windows with custom sash to match may be the best option.

It is especially important to consider the custom replacement of distinctive windows on the front facade—given their prominence and visibility. Likewise, more flexibility can be given in selecting replacement windows for side or rear elevation locations.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing window with a new window that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

Since a wide variety of stock windows are available today, it is often possible to find a replacement wood window that closely approximates the original in overall size and general configuration. When feasible, it is best to replace only the sash while retaining the frame and surround.

Because maintaining the shape and size of the window opening is so important, a replacement window should not vary more than an inch in height or width from the original. It is always desirable to closely match the general configuration and sash pattern of the original windows. If compromises are necessary, it is preferable to make them in terms of sashes with a simpler pane subdivision or less detailing rather than a change in material, size or general configuration.
Both simple gable and hip roofs are quite typical of the historic houses in the district. More complex roof forms combining or repeating these shapes are found as well. Dormers, chimneys, projecting brackets, dentil moldings and decorative soffits are all elements that contribute to the architectural character of these roofs.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair significant historic roofs and roof elements—including their materials, features, and details.

The overall form of the roof, whether simple or complex in shape, and any distinctive features or details—such as dormers, chimneys, exposed brackets, and stylized fascia boards—are primarily what define the historic character of roofs in the district. Typically, roofs in the district are covered in asphalt or composition shingles which are not historic and they should be replaced when deteriorated with compatible, contemporary shingles. Maintaining roof flashing and keeping gutters and downspouts clean are also essential in protecting a house from water damage.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of significant historic roofs and roof elements are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

While deteriorated chimneys require the attention of a skilled mason to repair or rebuild, the skills of a good carpenter are needed for the careful repair or replacement of distinctive wood trimwork that details dormers, gables, soffits, and cornices. As is the case with other trimwork, stock millwork can often be used, sometimes with slight modification, to duplicate these items.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing features with a new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

If replacement in kind is not feasible, it is preferable to replace a distinctive roof feature with a compatible substitute, that is similar in its overall dimensions and configuration, than to eliminate it altogether. Many times, stock millwork and trim can approximate the proportion and appearance of elements such as fascia boards, soffits, brackets, and gable vents or windows. Simpler versions of such features are always preferable alternatives to eliminating or concealing them.
Building Interior

Whether grand or modest in scale, the interiors of historic houses in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Landmark District, reflect their historic character through the proportions of the interior spaces, stylized trimwork, and interior finishes. Gracious parlors, formal front halls, plaster walls and ceilings, hardwood floors, elaborate moldings, decorative mantels, and tile-faced fireplaces distinguish many of these historic interiors.

While interior changes are obviously less visible than exterior changes and consequently have less of an impact on the overall character of the historic district, it is still important to carefully plan the interior rehabilitation to preserve these features when possible.

This section of the guidelines addresses the treatment of interior spaces and elements in historic houses within the district. It provides property owners and housing providers with recommended approaches to the preservation and maintenance of significant interior spaces and features of historic properties. The interior guidelines present an approach to rehabilitation that will result in the maximum retention of historic fabric and preservation of the unique architectural character of the historic property. These guidelines will be used in the Section 106 process for review of district properties under federally funded programs. Adherence to them may also avoid jeopardizing the owner's ability to apply for federal or state Historic Tax Credits. However, specific requirements for tax credits eligibility should be discussed with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

In these guidelines, except for properties individually listed or eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, review of interior spaces will be limited to spaces on the principal living floors; such as entrances halls, living and dining rooms, and stair halls. Sleeping rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and floors other than the main floor will be excluded. The review of proposed changes to the interiors of houses within the district is intended to ensure that the integrity and special features of the more significant interior spaces are maintained whenever feasible.

The interiors are not seen as museum-like and it is expected that the interiors will also express the lifestyles, values, and tastes of the current residents. When floor plan changes are necessary, it is preferable to add to the historic building in a sensitive manner rather than to remove historic material. In this approach, alterations are reversible and emphasis is placed upon minimizing the loss of historic material. These design guidelines also provide for more flexibility in considering changes to less architecturally significant secondary spaces—such as bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms.

The total rehabilitation of a historic house includes many other upgrades that can have visual consequences. With careful planning, the impact of the installation of new building systems (plumbing lines, electrical service, and mechanical systems), the installation of energy conservation measures, and changes to accommodate the disabled can be minimized so that character-defining interior spaces and features are not unnecessarily compromised.

While the guidelines address elements of the building interior separately, it is important to relate the selected options back to the total interior and exterior rehabilitation and the overall impact on any significant interior spaces.
Option #1. Retain significant interior spaces and spatial configurations in historic buildings.

Retaining the original floor plan and configuration of significant interior spaces intact, when feasible, is recommended. The spatial character of prominent spaces is created by the shape of the room as well as the height of the ceiling and the locations of doors and windows. Often, necessary or desired changes in the uses of interior spaces can be accommodated without compromising the spatial character of the public spaces on the principal living floors: such as the entrance hall, living and dining rooms, and stair hall.

Option #2. If a significant interior space has been altered, reconfigure it to match the original space in design, dimension, and shape.

Sometimes the sensitive rehabilitation of a historic house may include the reversal of earlier unsympathetic alterations that compromised its original character. For example, if the front hall ceiling had been substantially lowered or if the front parlor had been divided into two rooms, the reversal of those changes might be part of the proposed rehabilitation. In other cases, doorways that have been covered over might be reopened.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not functionally or economically feasible, reconfigure the space to match as many of its original characteristics as possible.

If changes to the interior layout or configuration of interior spaces are necessary for functional reasons, it is best to accommodate those changes in less significant, more utilitarian spaces when possible. If changes to primary spaces are necessary, it is preferable to add to those spaces in a sensitive manner as opposed to removing historic material. Such changes to the interior layout are reversible and would minimize the loss of historic materials and features.
Many houses within the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District still retain their original hardwood floors.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair historic floors in significant spaces.

The repair of hardwood floors typically includes refinishing the surface and may include selective replacement of deteriorated sections. Usually the original hardwood floors do not have a subfloor so it is important to verify that they are structurally sound and not to sand them excessively during rehabilitation. Often, wood floors have been concealed by linoleum, vinyl flooring, or carpeting over the years and the removal of these later coverings may also be part of the proposed rehabilitation. Sometimes matching flooring from secondary spaces, closets, or attic areas in the house can be used to patch deteriorated sections in more prominent locations.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of historic floors in significant spaces are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

The availability of tongue and groove wood flooring in a variety of species and widths makes selective or full replacement of deteriorated wood floors in kind a viable option.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing historic flooring with new flooring that matches as many of its characteristics as possible OR cover the historic flooring with a compatible new material.

One reverses solution to replacing sound but damaged wood floors in prominent rooms is to install carpeting over the wood floor, so the option to repair and refinish the floor later remains feasible. For utilitarian spaces, like kitchens and baths, vinyl flooring provides a practical rehabilitation alternative.
The interior walls of most historic houses in the historic district are finished in plaster. Although plaster is by far the most typical interior wall material, walls or wainscots finished in beaded board or wood paneling are found as well.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair significant historic interior walls—including their materials, configuration, and details.

If interior plaster walls are generally intact, then retaining the plaster finish and patching any small deteriorated areas is the best solution from an economic as well as a preservation solution. A skilled plasterer can remove areas of cracked and damaged plaster and replace them with new plaster to match the original.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of significant historic interior walls are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in configuration, design, texture, and material.

If plaster walls are severely deteriorated, the removal of all plaster—down to the wood lath it was applied to—may be necessary. While not as common as in earlier times, plasterers can still be found. When replastering walls, it is important to maintain the original relationship of the plaster wall plane to surrounding trim.

Beaded board and other wood paneling are still readily available today, so replacement in kind of these materials is possible as well.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace or cover the deteriorated or missing wall features with a new material that matches as many of its characteristics as possible; OR, if the wall is already covered with an intact substitute material, consider retaining the substitute material.

Gypsum board is a compatible substitute for plaster walls; however, it is not as thick as a three coat plaster finish so the depth of the new wall must be adjusted to match the original relationship of the wall plane to the surrounding trimwork. This can be accomodated by installing the gypsum board over the wood lath or using a thicker gypsum board.
Door and window surrounds, chair rails, baseboards, picture moldings, and other interior trimwork add ornament and stylistic detail to the historic houses in the district.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair historic trimwork—including its materials, features, and details—in significant interior spaces.

The stylistic embellishments of historic wood trimwork are often more distinctive and ornate than most contemporary trim so its retention and repair is desirable.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of historic trimwork in significant interior spaces are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

Replacement for historic trimwork may be custom milled. It is also sometimes possible to duplicate it by combining stock moldings, or salvage it from a less significant location in the house.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing trimwork with new trim that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

When replacing historic trimwork, it is especially important to match the overall dimensions and scale of the trim. For example, a flat window surround which is the same width as the original molded window surround is preferable to a stock surround that reduces the scale of the original trim.

**Option #1:** These original baseboards and window surrounds were retained, repaired, and repainted during rehabilitation.

**Option #2:** Here, a new section of wood baseboard (on left) that matches the original is pieced in to replace a deteriorated section.

**Option #3:** Here, new stock wood baseboards and door surrounds that approximate the appearance of the originals are installed.
Within the district, high ceilings in main first floor spaces contribute to the gracious character of the historic houses. Typically the ceilings were originally finished in smooth plaster, but some were faced in beaded board or wood paneling.

**Option #1.** Retain and repair historic ceilings—including their materials, features, and details—in significant interior spaces.

If an original ceiling has been covered by incompatible substitute materials, like acoustical tiles, or the ceiling height in a significant interior space has been substantially lowered, the removal of these unsympathetic alterations may be a part of the rehabilitation plan.

If the original ceiling is basically intact, repair or selective replacement in kind of any damaged sections is both recommended and cost effective.

**Option #2.** If parts or all of historic ceilings in significant interior spaces are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in height, design, texture, and material.

Whether the original ceiling is plaster or beaded board, either finish can be replaced in kind. When replacing an entire ceiling, it is important to approximate the height of the original ceiling. While the installation of new mechanical ductwork may be accommodated by dropped ceiling planes, it is important to carefully choose the least intrusive locations for such compromises.

**Option #3.** If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the ceiling feature with a compatible new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible; OR cover the original ceiling with a compatible substitute material.

Gypsum board is often installed as a compatible replacement for plaster ceilings or to cover deteriorated beaded board ceilings. When installing a new ceiling, it is important to closely approximate the original ceiling height in any significant interior spaces. For smooth plaster ceilings in significant spaces, the application of sprayed-on textured finishes is not recommended because it noticeably alters the texture and appearance.
Solid wood paneled doors with decorative surrounds that frame their openings contribute to the historic character of homes within the district. Pairs of pocket doors were used to open up the primary spaces in some of the larger scale homes.

Option #1. Retain and repair historic doors in significant interior spaces.

Retaining intact interior doors and their surrounds makes sense from an economic and preservation viewpoint. Minor repairs and repainting are often necessary.

Option #2. If parts or all of historic doors in significant interior spaces are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, dimension, and material.

A matching replacement door for a prominent location can be custom milled or might be relocated from a less significant space in the house.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the door with a new door that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

A variety of stock interior wood doors are available today in a range of panel configurations, providing property owners with a wide selection of compatible replacement doors. It is especially important to find a replacement door that is compatible in overall dimension to avoid altering the opening and surround as well. Flush, hollow core doors with no panel divisions are not appropriate replacements for paneled doors in principal, front rooms as they are not compatible with the historic character of houses in the district.
Option #1. Retain and repair historic features in significant interior spaces.

The front parlors in many of the houses in the historic district still retain their original fireplace and mantel. The original staircases with intact balustrades and newel posts can still be found in some two-story homes. Such distinctive interior features add charm and character to historic houses and should be retained whenever feasible.

Option #2. If parts or all of historic features in significant interior spaces are missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original in design, texture, and material.

The replacement of various interior features in kind may require having millwork custom made or locating matching ceramic tiles. Other times, the items may be salvaged from less significant spaces in the same house.

Option #3. If Option #2 is not technically or economically feasible, replace the deteriorated or missing feature with a new feature that matches as many of its characteristics as possible.

For fireplaces where the mantel and surround are missing, it may not be feasible to reconstruct them; but where decorative iron surrounds or tile work remain in main rooms, constructing a simple mantel consisting of a wood shelf with simple wood triangular supports is a compatible treatment.

It is generally preferable to replace a missing feature with a simpler, compatible new feature than to eliminate it altogether.
New construction—including additions, infill buildings, and accessory structures—is a healthy component of the continuing development of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District. Compatible infill can fill the gaps in the streetscape left by houses that were lost to demolition.

It is important to ensure that new construction is designed to complement and enhance the historic character of the district. It should reinforce the residential appearance and scale of the neighborhood. At the same time, new construction should not imitate that historic character so directly that it creates confusion as to what is historic and what is new. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Landmark District Residential Design Guidelines provide specific information and recommendations for the design of additions, infill, and accessory structures. Those guidelines address criteria such as building form and roof shape; rhythm of solids to voids; property divisions; massing; proportion; directional expression; materials, texture, and color; scale; architectural ornament; and site issues and elements. Particular attention must be paid to the design and detailing of the front porches of new houses, given the visual prominence of porches in the neighborhood.

Compared to rehabilitation projects, new construction opportunities provide for even greater flexibility both in the utilization of new building technology and in the selection of compatible, contemporary materials and finishes. While new construction in the historic district provides opportunities for the incorporation of updated features and conveniences, it must also accommodate new code requirements such as handicapped-accessible entrance ramps as inobtrusively as possible.
Lead-based paint was commonly used in most buildings constructed prior to 1950. Consequently, it is present in many of the historic homes of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District. Although the use of lead-based paint was prohibited in the 1970s, its presence is an ongoing concern in most older houses.

Lead is a toxic substance that poisons people. It attacks both the organs and the systems of the human body. The most crucial populations to protect from lead poisoning are children under six and pregnant women because it is particularly damaging to the early development of the brain and nervous system.

Typically, lead dust is the source of lead poisoning. The dust is either inhaled or ingested—making breathing air filled with lead paint particles or chewing on a surface coated with lead paint critical health concerns. While the presence of lead-based paint is not itself a health hazard, it can become one if it discharges lead particles into surface dust or adjacent soil. Surfaces, coated with lead-based paint, that children can access and chew or mouth also are considered hazardous.

There are three ways surfaces coated with lead-based paint can become a problem: impact, friction, or deterioration may release lead particles into the environment. Impact includes the normal bumping or striking of baseboards, doors, or trimwork that routinely occurs through use of a space. Friction occurs when window sash or doors are operated and the painted surfaces rub against each other, generating lead dust. Deterioration results in flaking and disintegration of the painted surface. As the paint flakes off, lead particles are emitted into the air or nearby soil.

The process of rehabilitating a building disturbs interior and exterior painted surfaces and, consequently, can create a lead dust problem. It is important that contractors and property owners are aware of the potential health hazards such work presents. Property owners should inform contractors of the possible presence of lead paint and the contractors should follow all applicable regulations for safe work and clean up procedures. Additionally, homeowners with young children should take particular care during any rehabilitation work not to expose them to an unhealthy environment.

The mitigation of lead paint hazards usually involves one of two basic approaches. Either the lead-based paint source is totally eliminated or it is controlled to provide a lead-safe building and site. Eliminating the source may be accomplished by stripping the paint, enclosing the surface, or encapsulating the surface with a new coating. Procedures for creating lead-safe environments include controlling all dust through special cleaning and maintenance techniques, specially treating friction or impact surfaces, and monitoring all painted surfaces for signs of deterioration.

Although additional safety precautions and procedures are necessary, historic properties can be made lead-safe without removing significant trimwork, decorative features, and finishes that contribute to their historic character.
# Appendix: Resources

## Local Resources

For information on the application of these guidelines, contact:

**Atlanta Urban Design Commission**  
55 Trinity Avenue, S. W.  
Suite 3400  
Atlanta, Ga. 30335-0331  
Phone: 404/330-6200  
Fax: 404/658-7491

For information on affordable housing in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District, contact:

**Historic District Development Corp.**  
107 Howell Street, N. E.  
Atlanta, Ga. 30312  
Phone: 404/215-9095  
Fax: 404/523-4747

## State Resources

For information on state and federal preservation tax credits, contact:

**Georgia Historic Preservation Division**  
Department of Natural Resources  
500 The Healey Building  
57 Forsyth Street, N. W.  
Atlanta, Ga. 30303  
Phone: 404/651-6452  
Fax: 404/657-1040

## National Resources

For information on the Community Partners Program, contact:

**Community Partners**  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202/588-6000  
Fax: 202/588-6038
Accessory Structure—A smaller, more simply designed structure or building used for a variety of purposes; it is detached from, and customarily incidental and subordinate to, the principal building.

Addition—Wings, rooms or other exterior attachments made to the existing principal or accessory structure.

Architectural Style—The arrangement and pattern of decoration or ornamentation on the structure; the design of the overall form of a dwelling such as the proportion, scale, massing, symmetry or asymmetry, relationship of solids to voids, height, depth and width.

Architectural Ornament—As used in this publication, details added to a building or its elements for the purpose of embellishment or decoration.

Architrave—The lowest part of an entablature; the molded frame surrounding a door or windows.

Awning—A sheltering screen, often of fabric or a hinged support, over a porch, window, door, walkway, etc.

Balustrade—A series of balusters joined by a handrail used to enclose porches, balconies, staircases, etc.

Bargeboard—Boards which are sometimes decorated, placed against the incline of the gable to hide the ends of horizontal roof timbers.

Bay Window—A window(s) in a wall which projects away from another wall at an angle.

Beaded Board—A tongue and groove wood member with a decorative bead incised at each edge, used as a facing for ceilings or interior walls.

Bracket—A supporting or decorative member for a projecting floor, roof, window, or porch.

Brick—A masonry unit, commonly about 2" x 4" x 8", of a kiln-fired clay mixture.

Brick bond—The pattern in which bricks are laid.

Capital—The head or crowning feature of a column.

Caulking—A resilient mastic compound, often having a silicone, bituminous, or rubber base; used to seal cracks, fill joints, prevent leakage, and/or provide waterproofing.

Chimney—A flue usually made of brick or stone, for conducting smoke and gases from above a fire to the outside air.

Chimney Cap—A protective covering to a chimney flue.

Clapboard (Weatherboard)—A wooden board used for siding that is thin on one edge and thicker on the other to facilitate horizontal overlapping to aid in weatherproofing.

Column—A vertical support pillar.

Concrete—Cement mixed with course and fine aggregate, sand and water in specific proportions.

Corbeling—A projection from a masonry wall or chimney, sometimes to support a load and sometimes for decorative effect.

Cornice—In classical architecture, the top, projecting section of an entablature; also, any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a building, wall, arch, etc.

Cut Glass Pattern—Clear glass placed in decorative compositions with the use of lead cameas, metal frames, and stiffeners.
**Dentil Molding**—A series of block-like projections forming a molding often found under a cornice at the roof line.

**Dormer**—A vertically set window which protrudes through a sloped roof. Sometimes a wooden ventilation vent replaces the window.

**Double Hung Window**—A window having two balanced sashes, one sliding over the other vertically.

**Downspout**—A rain leader or vertical pipe which carries water from the gutter away from the building walls or surfaces.

**Dropped Ceiling**—A new ceiling often installed below the original in an older house to accommodate equipment such as ductwork, wiring, etc., needed for modern conveniences such as central heating and air conditioning.

**Eave**—The underpart of a sloping roof overhanging a wall.

**Fascia**—a plain horizontal band, usually in an architrave, which may consist of several fascia sometimes separated by narrow bands of molding.

**Frame**—A wood or metal enclosing, supporting case into which a window or door fits.

**Fretwork**—A geometric ornament of horizontal and vertical straight lines repeated to form a band.

**Gable**—The triangular upper portion of a wall at the end of a pitched roof.

**Glazing**—Referring to the use of glass, for example in windows or doors.

**Gutter**—A channel for water at a roof edge or at ground level.

**Gypsum Board**—A contemporary wallboard material used primarily to face interior walls, partitions, and ceilings.

**Hipped Roof**—A roof form with four sloping sides, instead of vertical ends, as well as a ridgeline.

**Infill Building**—Principal structures constructed on vacant lots within a defined context.

**In Kind Replacement**—To replace with the same design, material, texture, and detail as the original.

**Interior Door**—A door on the inside of a room or building.

**Jamb**—The vertical frame against which the sash or the door abuts.

**Lath**—A thin narrow strip of wood; used in building to serve as a base for plaster walls and ceilings.

**Lattice**—Diagonal or crossed interlacing strips of wood or metal used as an open, ornamental screening.

**Lintel**—A horizontal structural member over a door or window opening.

**Molding**—A decorative band having a constant profile or having a pattern in low relief, generally used in cornices or as trim around openings.

**Mortar**—A mixture of sand, water, lime, and cement used to bind together the units of masonry.

**Mullion**—An upright division member between windows or doors of a closely-placed series.

**Muntin**—A bar or member supporting and separating panes of glass in a sash or door.

**New Construction**—New principal or accessory structures built on a property.

**Newel Post**—A vertical member or post, usually at the start of a stair or at any place a stair changes direction. Usually large and ornate, it is the principal support for the handrail.
Panes (Lights)—A pane of glass; openings between the muntins of a window.

Pier—An upright structure of masonry that serves as a principal support, such as a porch or foundation pier, whether isolated or part of a wall.

Pierced Masonry Work—Describes a masonry wall with a pattern of small, clear openings incorporated into the face of the wall.

Pilaster—A shallow pier or rectangular column projecting only slightly from a wall; in classical architecture, conforming with one of the orders.

Post—A vertical wood or metal support.

Principal Structure—The main building on a property such as a house.

Repaint—A preservation technique which involves removing existing deteriorated mortar to a specified depth and applying a compatible new mortar in the space.

Retaining Wall—A wall built to support or retain a bank of earth or water.

Sash—The framework in which panes of glass are set in a window or door.

Screen Door—The frame of a door with an insert of wire mesh or hardware cloth to provide additional ventilation and a barrier to insects.

Scrollwork—Open cut designs made with a jigsaw.

Shingle Siding—Wedge shaped pieces of wood used in overlapping courses on the exterior wall surface.

Siding—Exterior wall covering of horizontal boards or shingles nailed to a wooden frame.

Sill—The lower horizontal part of a frame for a window or the horizontal closure at the bottom of a door frame.

Soffit—The exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building, such as an arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel, or vault.

Spindles—Decorative trim work, often part of an open cornice, configured of a row of vertical spindles.

Stained Glass—Colored glass used in decorative or pictorial compositions with the use of lead camees, metal frames and stiffeners.

Storm Door—An additional outside door in the door frame, for better insulation against the weather.

Storm Window—An additional outside window in the window frame, for better insulation against weather.

Stucco—A plaster applied to the exterior of masonry walls.

Surround—Decorative or functional framing around a window or door opening.

Swag—A decorative ornament usually in relief in the form of a simulated net-held mass of fruit and flowers sagging between two supports or cloth draped over two supports, a festoon or garland.

Transom—A fixed, hinged or pivoted, glazed or solid opening over a door or window whose function is to supply additional light or ventilation.

Turned Work—Woodwork cut on a lathe.

Vernacular—In architecture as in language, the non-academic local expression of a particular region or area.

Wainscot—A decorative or protective facing applied to the lower portion of an interior wall, such as wood paneling.

Weatherstripping—Thin strips of metal, felt, or other material used to cover the joint between a door or window sash and the jamb, casing, or sill, to keep out wind or rain.