



*springfield*  
charrette



## *Charrette...*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Parisian architectural studios at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, students were instructed to toss their assignments in a cart—a charrette—when the cart was pushed between their drafting tables. The assignments were to be turned in whether complete or incomplete.

This idea has taken root in American design circles and is used to describe a visioning process that is conducted for a short time period in a particular location.

All energy is devoted to solving a community problem and the resulting products are presented as concepts to provide guidance for decision-makers and other professionals.

The charrettes that the BHT design office conducts in Better Hometowns are four-day design brainstorming sessions, whereby we meet and interact with the community and provide a visitor's and professional's outlook towards the design of your town.

We have conducted design charrettes in Blackshear, Dawson, Plains, Metter, Hawkinsville, Flowery Branch, Suwanee, Springfield, Darien and Oglethorpe.

Springfield. . . Slower pace. . .

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... different... unique experience.





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# *Springfield*

has the chance to get it right. Now is the time to avoid the sprawling anonymity of nearby highway architecture and reclaim your very special downtown and corridors leading into town. A place is remembered because it is beautiful and appealing; impressions made on visitors are like business cards for a community. Springfield needs some new calling cards and revived image. This report, and the design charrette that produced it, is the beginning of making restitution to the historic image and future vision of Springfield.

A place is remembered because...

Use this report as a set of marching orders for town improvement. Make the changes that are recommended in the text and the physical improvements suggested in the illustrations and Springfield will look better, more alive, less anonymous and more successful.

The town form, the community spirit and the proximity to burgeoning growth make this report timely. Your historic development patterns have set the pace for future development. Your town should grow in the 21st century as it would have grown in the early 20th century. A style and appearance has been established...it must now be reinforced. The lesson is not difficult: follow your existing town plan and historic building placement.

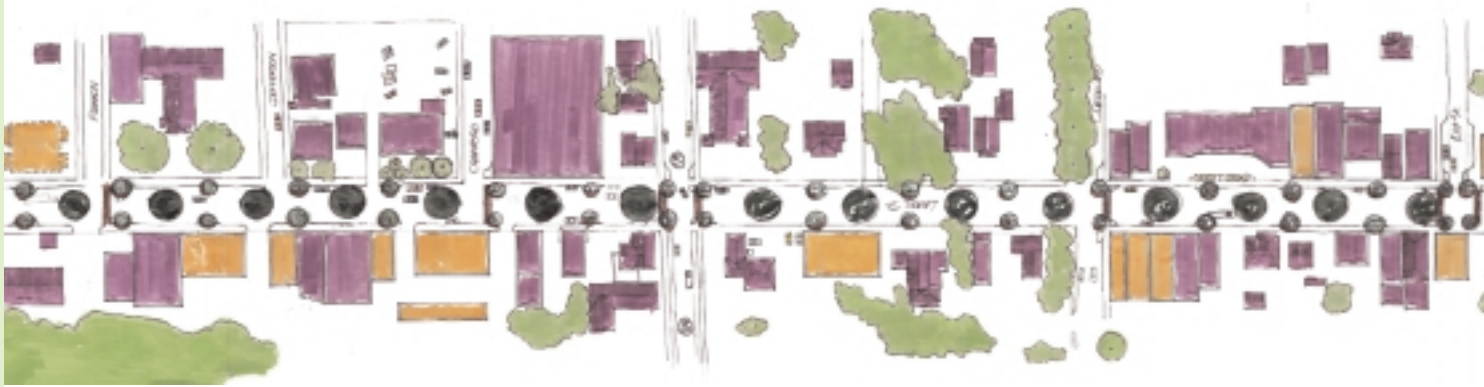
The enthusiasm that has blossomed as a result of the Better Hometown Program should be coalesced and placed toward town "re-stitching"...a literal reweaving of town fabric and community context.

Growth coming from Savannah has already made its sprawling character visible in Springfield. This should not intrude into the rural landscape that makes Effingham County a Georgia jewel. It is not the issue of keeping development out; it is keeping the development appearance LOCAL. There is a standard that must be established for the Guyton-Springfield Heritage Area.

This is exactly how the area should be viewed: as a heritage area. A "National Heritage Area" is a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. Continued use of the National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance.



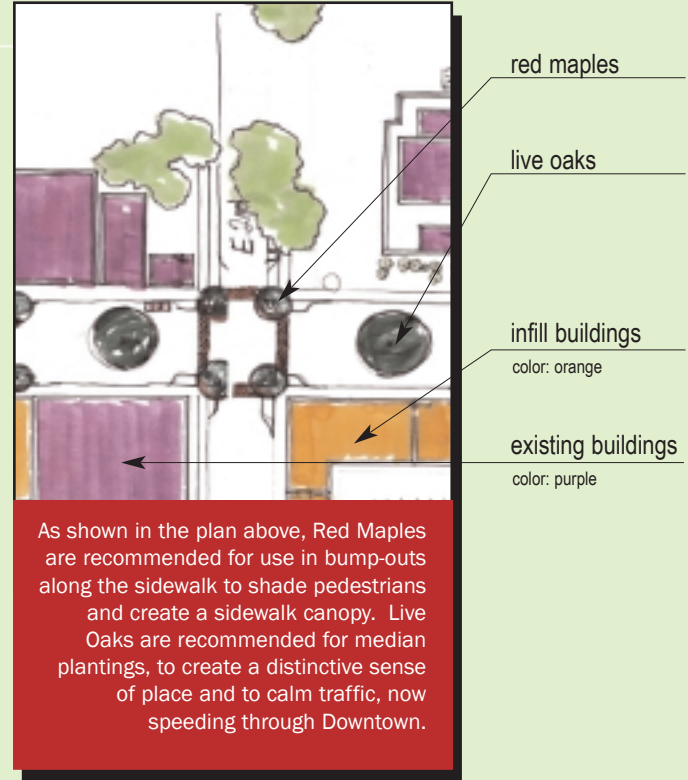
...it is beautiful and appealing.



## Streetscape

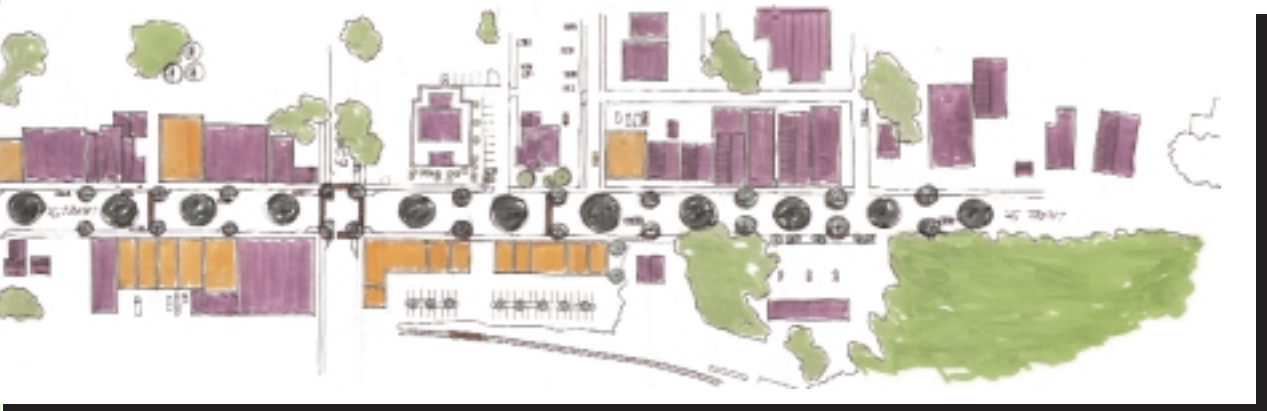
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A consistent streetscape plan will help to hold the long stretch of Downtown Springfield together. Much of the historic fabric has been eroded: most noticeable is the fact that many historic buildings have been torn down and have left gaps in the streetscape. The intimate space that we associate with most Downtowns has been lost. In connection with new zoning regulations, tree plantings, safe sidewalks and crosswalks will help make Downtown pedestrian-friendly. The row of large live oaks on Cleveland Street provides a glimpse into the past and a model for future plantings. The rhythm of the trees and the canopy of their leaves provide beauty and much-needed shade for Downtown Springfield. By using this lovely street as precedent, a tree canopy should be established along Laurel Street.



As shown in the plan above, Red Maples are recommended for use in bump-outs along the sidewalk to shade pedestrians and create a sidewalk canopy. Live Oaks are recommended for median plantings, to create a distinctive sense of place and to calm traffic, now speeding through Downtown.

Cleveland St. . . . get a glimpse into the



From the Georgia Model Urban Forest book by the Georgia Forestry Commission, “Trees provide many economic, ecological, and social benefits. Trees provide shading and cooling, increase property values, prevent water runoff and soil erosion, improve water quality, reduce energy use, clean the air, and enhance wildlife habitats, to name just a few.” Whereas existing development models put trees as a low priority, a successful and attractive community will put trees on an equal footing with other infrastructure such as roads and sewer lines. Springfield has to look no further than Savannah to realize the importance of the area’s Live Oak heritage.

past and a model for future plantings.



## *Facade Improvements*

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### DESIGN CHARACTER:

Respect the original design character of the building.

Analyze the building to determine which elements are essential to its character.

Don't try to make it appear older (or younger) in style than it really is. The genuine heritage of Springfield should be expressed.

"Williamsburging" is a trend that has hit Springfield heavily. Many new buildings are not designed to fit into this town.

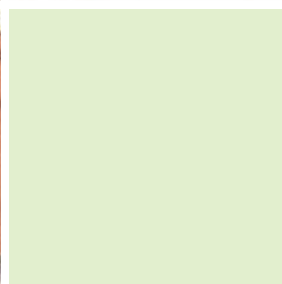
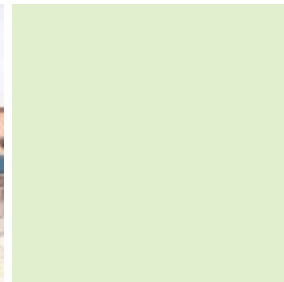
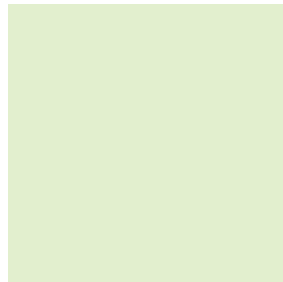
The Colonial-look that is preferred by banks, insurance offices and lawyers IS NOT compatible with the character of a small Georgia railroad town.

Preservation of character-defining elements of existing buildings is a top priority and alterations and repairs should accurately represent the historic qualities of the buildings.

Original documentation therefore should be used for restoration work whenever possible. Where original documentation is not available, interpretations of similar elements that occurred in the area may be considered.

The genuine heritage of





# 9. facade

Springfield should be expressed. . .





## Zoning:

- Expand downtown (mixed use) district to include all areas currently zoned for commercial development.
- Eliminate (or drastically reduce) all off street parking requirements.
- Increase landscaping (particularly tree planting) requirements for all new development.
- Change ordinance from PUD-on-request (i.e., as a developer requested rezoning) to allow the city government to establish PUD districts on the land use map. Then designate virtually all significant (1 acre or more) undeveloped tracts as PUD.

## *Zoning and Subdivision Regulations:*

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The Charrette Team reviewed existing zoning and subdivision regulations and made the following brief recommendations for future changes. These changes would result in a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented city and begin to knit the current fragmented development pattern back together.

The staff at the Department of Community Affairs is available to work with local officials to implement these changes.

- Use site plan review for PUDs as an opportunity to impose our recommended design standards and traditional neighborhood development patterns on new developments.

## Subdivision Regulations:

- Make sure the city has an up-to-date official map (called for in the subdivision regulations) showing where new streets should be built. New streets should be indicated to continue the traditional (grid) road patterns of the city, and to ensure connectivity.
- Require new subdivision to meet our recommended design standards.
- Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) patterns as follows:
  - Reduce the street width requirement.
  - Require sidewalks.
  - Reduce lot size requirements.
  - Reduce setbacks and (in particular) sideyard widths
  - Require all residences to have covered front porches
  - Require midblock alleys with access to driveways and garages from the rear of each lot (i.e. off the alleyway).
  - Require small commercial centers within one-half mile (walking distance) of each platted residential lot.



**One of Springfield's greatest challenges is the large sea of asphalt across the street from city hall.**

## *Parking Lots*

Plan parking lots to be sub-divided into small components so that the visual impact of large paved areas is reduced.

Provide planting buffers at the edges of parking lots.

Also include islands of planting in the interior of lots. Locate parking to the side or rear of buildings when possible.



*Example of well-screened parking lot*

pedestrian-oriented city.



## *Open Space Recommendations*

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Consider using water and power easements, city-owned property and undevelopable neighborhood lots as "pocket parks" or community gardens.

These can be low fairly low maintenance areas that provide greenspace and community gathering spaces within neighborhoods.

low maintenance areas that provide

## Future greenspace

A list of appropriate native plants  
for Springfield follows:

### trees

*Acer rubrum*, *Betula nigra*, *Carpinus caroliniana*,  
*Cornus florida*, *Juniperus virginiana*,  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*,  
*Magnolia virginiana*, *Pinus taeda*, *Pinus*  
*palustris*, *Platanus occidentalis*, *Quercus*  
*falcata*, *Quercus virginiana*, *Salix nigra*,  
*Sassafras albidum*.

### shrubs and vines

*Illex glabra*, *Myrica cerifera*, *Rhapidophyllum*  
*hystrix*, *Vaccinium arboreum*, *Bignonia*  
*capreolata*, *Gelsemium sempervirens*, *Lonicera*  
*sempervirens*.

### ferns and herbaceous plants

*Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris ludoviciana*,  
*Onoclea sensibilis*, *Osmunda cinnamomea*,  
*Osmunda regalis*, *Elephantopus carolinianus*,  
*Mitchella repens*, *Saururus cernuus*,  
*Piptochaetium avenaceum*, *Solidago spp.*



community gathering spaces.

## *Park Recommendations*

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*Public space is an essential element in creating a sense of community. Fountains, shade trees, walking paths, garden plantings - all invite citizens to relax, unwind, and enjoy the sense of belonging.*

*Playground equipment and park benches, sandboxes and permanent checkerboards, all offer a variety of activities for a multitude of ages. In this open, common space, neighbors become friends, and a town becomes a community.*

Springfield. . . enjoy the. . .

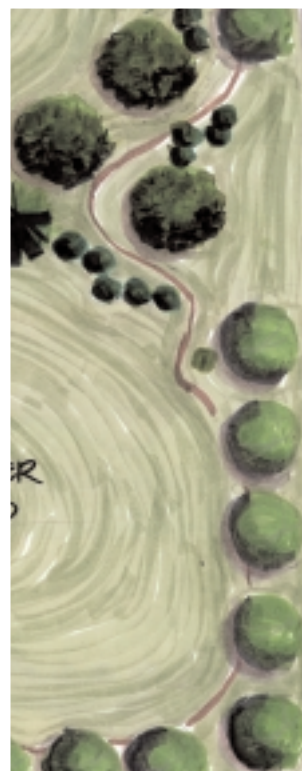
## Existing Space

The existing park downtown is centrally located, close to downtown businesses, the courthouse, churches, and residences, but is vastly underused. Currently, the park is rather unappealingly—circled with chain link fence—discouraging, rather than encouraging, its use. Further, the park is divided by an unused road.



**The charrette team has studied the park extensively and has specific recommendations to create an open, inviting space for the citizens of Springfield.**

1. Remove all fencing from park to create an open, accessible space.
2. Remove the asphalt road dividing the spaces currently used as a ball field and playground.
3. Provide ample shaded areas by planting large growing, indigenous trees (we suggest Live Oak - while we may not see the immediate benefits, future generations will thank you for your foresight).
4. Provide benches and group seating areas.
5. Create a shaded walkway extending from the park to the cemetery.
6. Rather than prohibiting pets, require pets on leashes.
7. Rescind the rule that children under twelve must be supervised by a parent. The park is within walking distance of many homes and provides an excellent area for play. While we are certainly not recommending toddlers playing unsupervised, school-age children (and their parents) should benefit from public space.
8. Discourage vehicle parking except at the north end near existing services and businesses.

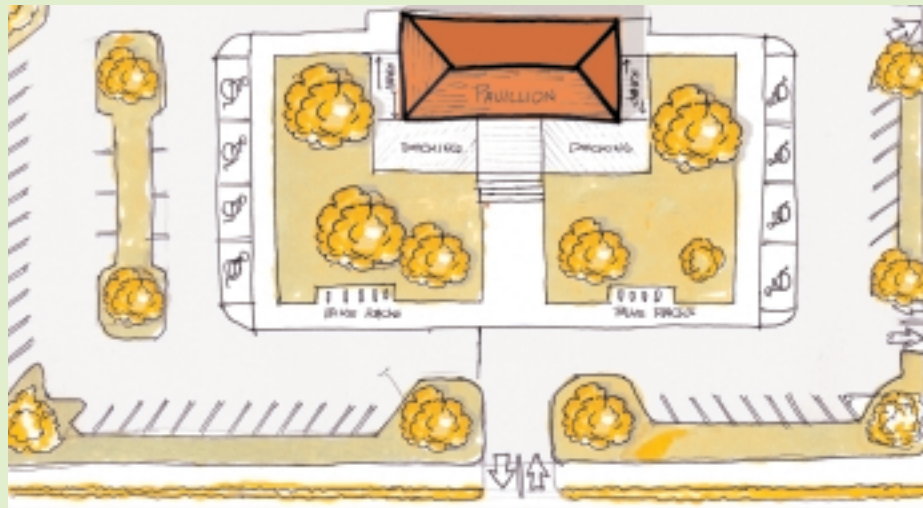


. . . sense of belonging.

*Site of the former Central of Georgia railroad depot, the now-empty lot wallows in the center of town, providing no shade, visual appeal or sense of place to the historic downtown.*

## *Bike Trailhead Infill Recommendations*

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preserving visual appeal and sense



A full historic recreation of the depot will prove costly and perhaps unnecessary. We suggest a pavilion structure, based on railroad depot design with sufficient landscaping around the perimeter. This structure can serve as a community meeting place: space for a local farmers' market, weekend festivals and celebrations. Additionally, the structure could serve as the trailhead for a walking and biking path through the historic downtown district out to Ebenezer Creek.



*ebenezer creek*

of place to the historic downtown.



*9 things that should never happen again*

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**Recent development patterns have changed the character of downtown Springfield from its original appearance. These patterns should not be allowed to continue.**

Maintain zero lot line/no set-back



## Things that should **NEVER** happen again in Springfield

1. Front yard setbacks along Laurel Street; property has traditionally had a "zero lot line"- no set-back - in the commercial area. This precedent must be maintained to unify the commercial area.
2. The construction of Butler-type Buildings along primary streets.
3. The removal of mature plant materials and the spraying of herbicides along highways.
4. Creating buildings with pitched roofs along Laurel Street. The predominant commercial building form is flat roof 1- 1<sup>1/2</sup> stories, this is the precedent that should be adhered to.
6. Paving large surfaces without breaking up the area with plantings and other permeable surfaces.
7. Widening roadways without justification.
8. Creating tall, blinking, internally illuminated, garish highway signage along Laurel Street.
9. Demolition of buildings over fifty years old.



in the commercial area.



## *Guidelines for Change*

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### **What are design guidelines?**

Design guidelines help to maintain the historic character of towns.

The Historic Preservation Commission uses design guidelines to review requests for changes to historic structures and to all structures within historic districts.

**Guidelines for Rehabilitating Existing Buildings**

**page 21**

**Guidelines for New Construction**

**page 22**

**Guidelines for Site Design**

**page 24**

**Special Guidelines for Commercial Buildings**

**page 26**

**Guidelines for Additions to Existing Structures**

**page 27**

Making Design Changes in

## 1. ESTABLISH A GENERAL APPROACH:

The primary objectives of a rehabilitation plan should be: The preservation of all important or "character-defining" architectural materials and features of the building. AND provision for a safe and efficient contemporary use.

## 2. DETERMINE THE CONTENTS OF A REHABILITATION PLAN:

A plan should contain strategies for these five types of work:

- A. Protection and maintenance of historic features that survive in generally good condition,
- B. Repair of historic materials and features that are deteriorated,
- C. Replacement in-kind of historic materials and features with new materials where deterioration is so extensive that repair is not possible,
- D. Alterations to the exterior of the historic building, and,
- E. Additions of new rooms or spaces to the exterior of the historic buildings.

## 3. GENERAL PRESERVATION POLICY

Preservation of character-defining elements of existing buildings is a top priority and alterations and repairs should accurately represent the historic qualities of the buildings. Original documentation therefore should be used for restoration work whenever possible. Where original documentation is not available, interpretations of similar elements that occurred in the area may be considered.

## 4. DESIGN CHARACTER:

- A. Respect the original design character of the building.
- B. Analyze the building to determine which elements are essential to its character.
- C. Don't try to make it appear older (or younger) in style than it really is. The

genuine heritage of Springfield should be expressed.

D. "Williamsburging" is a trend that has hit Springfield heavily. Many new buildings are not designed to fit into this town. The Colonial-look that is preferred by banks, insurance offices and lawyers IS NOT compatible with the character of a small Georgia railroad town.

## 5. CHANGE IN USE

- A. New uses that require the least change to existing structures are encouraged.
- B. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.

## 6. REPAIRING ORIGINAL FEATURES

- A. Avoid removing or altering any historic material or significant architectural features.
- B. Original materials and details that contribute to the historic significance of the structure are qualities that should be preserved whenever feasible.
- C. Rehabilitation work should not destroy the distinguishing character of the property or its environment. Examples of historically significant architectural features are porches, siding, window trim and chimneys. Other significant elements may be the overall building form, its roof shape or material finish.
- D. Protect and maintain existing significant stylistic elements.
- E. Protection includes the maintenance of historic material through treatments such as rust removal, caulking, and re-painting.
- F. Use approved procedures for cleaning, refinishing, and repairing historic materials.
- G. Minimize alteration of historic elements. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than

replaced, wherever possible. Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate, or otherwise upgrade the existing material, using recognized preservation methods, whenever possible.

The replacement of missing portions of an element may be included in repair activities.

Match the original material when feasible. A substitute material is acceptable if the form and design of the substitute conveys the visual appearance of the original.

## 7. REPLACING ORIGINAL FEATURES

Replacement of missing architectural elements should be based on accurate duplications of original features. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match that being replaced in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. The design should be substantiated by physical and/or pictorial evidence. Use materials similar to those employed historically where feasible. If alternate materials must be used, they should match the original in appearance as closely as is possible.

Where reconstruction of an element is impossible because of a lack of historical evidence, then a new design that relates to the building in general size, scale and material may be considered. Use design elements that reflect the building's style.

## 8. EXISTING ALTERATIONS

More recent alterations that are not historically significant may be removed.

## 9. SERVICE AREAS AND EQUIPMENT

Screen service equipment and trash containers from public view. The visual impact of mechanical and electrical equipment should be minimized.



## *Guidelines for New Construction*

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**Without making the recommended zoning changes, any new building going into downtown will be a continuation of non-pedestrian friendly design that does not speak of Springfield's history.**

### **1. BUILDING ORIENTATION**

Align the façade of the new building with the established set-backs of buildings in the area.

### **2. BUILDING FORM AND SCALE**

- A. New buildings should appear similar in mass and scale with historic structures in the area.
- B. Where new building facades will be wider than those found traditionally, subdivide the surface into portions similar in scale to historic facades by varying set-backs, roof forms, and materials.
- C. Use building forms that match those used historically.
- D. Use roof forms that match those used historically.

### **3. MATERIALS**

- A. Use building materials that are similar to those employed historically for all major surfaces.
- B. Materials for roofs should be similar in appearance to those used historically.
- C. Use finishes similar to others in the area.

### **4. ENTRANCES**

- A. Orient the main entrances buildings in a manner similar to established patterns in the area.
- B. If porches are typical of the district, use similar elements to define entrances to new buildings

### **5. WINDOWS**

Use of window sizes and proportions similar to historic designs is encouraged.

A place is remembered because



— created under new zoning guidelines  
see page 12 for zoning regulations



— allowed by current zoning standards

it is beautiful and appealing.



## *Guidelines for Site Design*

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### **1. SET-BACKS**

Maintain the pattern and alignment of buildings established by the traditional set-backs from the street.

### **2. ENTRANCE ORIENTATION**

Maintain the traditional location of building entrances.

### **3. PLANT BEDS AND PLANTINGS**

Locate plantings in traditional areas of the site. Along fences, walks, foundations, and at porch edges are good locations.

### **4. FENCES**

- A. Maintain traditional fence lines where they existed.
- B. Preserve historic fences in their original location.

### **5. PARKING LOTS**

- A. Plan parking lots to be sub-divided into small components so that the visual impact of large paved areas is reduced.
- B. Provide planting buffers at the edges of parking lots.
- C. Also include islands of planting in the interior of lots. Locate parking to the side or rear of buildings.

Springfield. . . better, more alive, . . .





## 6. SIGNS

Signs should be subordinate to the architecture and overall character throughout the district. These guidelines also apply:

- H. No moveable or portable signs are allowed in any location in the district.
- I. Position flush-mounted signs so they will fit within architectural features.
- J. Locate flush signs so they do not extend beyond the outer edges of the building front.
- K. Avoid obscuring ornament and detail.
- L. Locate projecting signs along the first floor level of the façade. Positions near the building entrance are encouraged.

M. Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs.

1. Align several smaller signs, or group them onto a single panel.
2. Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs, to visually tie them together.

G. Locate pole-mounted signs in landscaped areas.

H. Sign materials should be compatible with the building materials.

I. Avoid using interior-lit plastic signage. Use individual letters or hand-painted wooden or metal signboards.



less anonymous and more successful.



*Special  
Guidelines for  
Commercial  
Buildings*

**1. DISPLAY WINDOWS**

- A. Maintain the large display windows that are characteristic of commercial buildings. The traditional "storefront" image should be preserved at the street level.
- B. When replacing glass or restoring windows maintain the original size and shape of the storefront opening.

**2. SECOND STORY WINDOWS**

Preserve the original size and shape of upper story windows.

**3. BUILDING ENTRANCES**

Maintain original recessed entries where they exist.

**4. ROOFS**

- A. Preserve original roof forms where they contribute to the historic character of the building.
- B. Maintain or replace in-kind original roof materials where they are visible to the street.

## *Additions to Existing Structures*



### **1. RELATIONSHIP TO MAIN BUILDING**

Additions to existing buildings relate to the size, scale, color, material, and character of the main building and its environment. Additions include porches and bay windows, as well as entire wings or rooms.

### **2. ORIGINAL DESIGN CHARACTER**

- A. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to buildings should not obscure or confuse the essential form and character of the original building.
- B. Avoid new additions or alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the design character of the historic period of the district.
- C. Alterations that seek to imply an earlier period than that of the building are inappropriate. Alterations that seek to imply an inaccurate variation on the historic style are also inappropriate.

### **3. LOCATION**

- A. When locating additions to historic buildings, maintain the pattern created by the repetition of building fronts in the area. Locate additions back from the building front so they will not alter the historic rhythm of building fronts.
- B. Locate additions so they will not obscure or damage significant ornament or detail.
- C. Place additions to the side or rear.
- D. Avoid impacts to special moldings, decorative windows or dormers.

### **4. MATERIALS**

Use materials that are similar to the original building.

. . .different. . .unique experience.

Report produced by:



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**The University of Georgia**

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School of Environmental Design  
Public Service and Outreach

for Springfield, Georgia

