

# STILLWATER DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

Stillwater, Minnesota

*Incorporating design guidelines for the Stillwater Commercial Historic District, the Downtown Design Review District, the Neighborhood Conservation District, and historic residential properties in adopted areas*



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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

CLG	Certified Local Government
CDD	Community Development Department
DDRD	Downtown Design Review District (Overlay)
HPC	Heritage Preservation Commission
NCD	Neighborhood Conservation District (Overlay)
NPS	National Park Service
MNHS	Minnesota Historical Society
MnSHPO	Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
SCHD	Stillwater Commercial Historic District
SCLD	Stillwater Cultural Landscape District
SOI	Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation
WCHS	Washington County Historical Society

Unless noted, photographs by Landscape Research





## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stillwater’s unique landscape setting and historic buildings have long been prized by residents and admired by visitors. The new content and consolidated format of the *Design Guidelines Manual* supports the continued conservation and revitalization of these resources. It includes guidelines previously developed for the Stillwater Commercial Historic District (SCHD), the Downtown Design Review District (DDRD), and the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) (**Figure 1**). Design guidelines and related zoning and heritage preservation ordinances were reviewed and updated during 2020-2021, including the [previously unadopted] draft Historic Residential Guidelines.

The *Manual* provides a convenient resource for property owners, City staff, and the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) when planning and reviewing projects requiring a Design Permit. It is also a source of information about the city’s history, architectural styles, and general historic property information.

### MANY SUCCESS STORIES

The effort to revitalize Stillwater’s former commercial and industrial buildings for new uses was evident by the early 1970s. This interest mirrored a nationally growing awareness of the cultural and economic benefits of historic preservation to local communities. Stillwater was long a destination for Saint Croix River tourists arriving by boat, train, and streetcar, and the Lowell Inn (1927) was among popular stops for the automobile age. In the 1970s, public tours of the city’s landmarks, including high-styled Victorian mansions, were offered. The Brick Alley (1904) at 432 S. Main Street, formerly a gas plant and Northern States Power Co. (NSP) electric substation, was among the first of many downtown buildings to be adaptively reused for shops, offices, dining, and lodging.

*Above: looking over the Downtown Design Review District from N. 3rd Street, with the Stillwater Lift Bridge (1931) and the St. Croix Crossing Bridge (2017) in the background.*



*At left, the NSP Substation (ca. 1904) in ca. 1920; at right, the Brick Alley, 432 S. Main Street, in 2019. (WCHS/Runk)*

Residential properties also show decades of owner investment and local support for historic preservation. Stillwater’s diverse collection of historic houses spans more than one hundred years and include examples of small vernacular cottages as well as elaborate Queen Anne style mansions. Many building owners have been successful in maintaining historic exterior features, and have made additions that conserve the building’s historic character.

Ten neighborhood context studies completed by the HPC provide background information about the Neighborhood Conservation District (**Figure 6**). To date, seven Stillwater houses have been recognized by listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

## THE HPC AND STILLWATER PRESERVATION AWARDS

In 1973, the Stillwater City Council approved the creation of the HPC, reflecting increased community interest in preserving and revitalizing the city’s historic and cultural resources. In 1988, the National Park Service designated Stillwater as a Certified Local Government (CLG), which provided access to historic preservation guidance and grants. In 1992, the Commission began to provide design review for properties located within the boundaries of the Stillwater Commercial Historic District.

In May of each year during National Preservation Month, the HPC recognizes individuals and organizations whose actions have furthered local historic preservation efforts. Exterior restoration, adaptive reuse and new construction projects are a chief focus of the program.



*The top photo shows the east side of S. Main Street, looking south, in 1974. Below, façade rehabilitation, including brick conservation and removal of large signs and metal cladding, has transformed the appearance of this block. MNHS*



*New residential construction at 207 E. Pine Street (2017).*



Recent recognized projects include the JX Event Venue in the former Connolly Shoe Company (1905) at 123 N. 2nd Street and the Lora Hotel development in the former Joseph Wolf Brewery (1886) at 403 S. Main Street. New residential construction includes 209 E. Pine Street (2017). New commercial construction includes the two-story building housing the LOLO restaurant at 233 S. Main Street (2014), and the Hotel Crosby (2018) at 232 N. Main Street.



*Lora Hotel, in former Joseph Wolf Brewery, 402 S. Main Street, 2021*



*435 Broadway (1865). In 2018 the porch of this Italianate style house on South Hill was restored and exterior painting—shown below while still underway—was completed. Recipient of Stillwater Preservation Award. CDD*



*Detail at right of storefront and façade improvements at 214 S. Main Street (1884), in 2021.*



*Oscar Comfort House, 102 W. School Street (1872)*



*New building (2014) housing Lolo Restaurant, 233 S. Main Street.*



*The new Hotel Crosby (2018, center) at 232 N. Main Street is flanked by historic commercial and industrial buildings.*



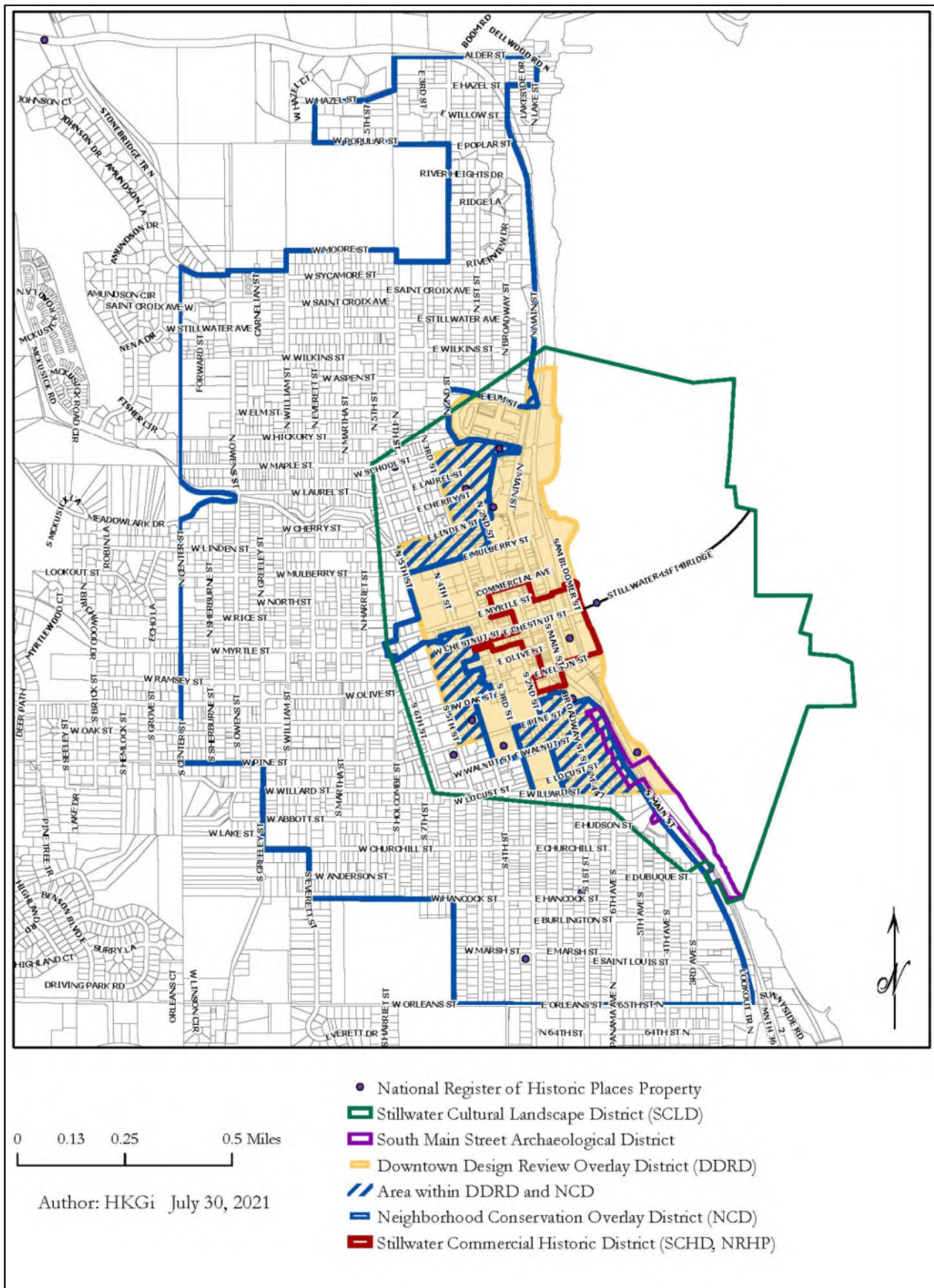


Figure 1. Stillwater Commercial Historic District, Neighborhood Conservation District, and Downtown Design Review District. The Stillwater Cultural Landscape District and South Main Street Archaeological District are also shown.





## 2. STILLWATER'S HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Lumber prospectors founded Stillwater on land long inhabited by Native Americans. Treaties signed in 1837 ceded millions of acres of Native land across Minnesota and Wisconsin. Investors from New England soon prospected sawmill sites along the Saint Croix River, including John McKusick. McKusick (1815-1900), a native of Stillwater, Maine, was among the founders of the Stillwater Lumber Company in 1844. Other companies built about one dozen additional mills during the next decade.

Stillwater was the site of the 1848 Territorial Convention that initiated Minnesota's path to statehood, the same year that McKusick platted a forty-six block townsite. Stillwater was selected as the seat of Washington County in 1849, and as the Territorial Prison site in 1851. Three years later, Stillwater organized a city government and elected John McKusick as mayor. When the second Washington County Courthouse (NRHP), was placed atop Zion Hill in 1869, it announced the city's continuing significance as an important axis of the "Saint Croix Triangle" lumber economy.

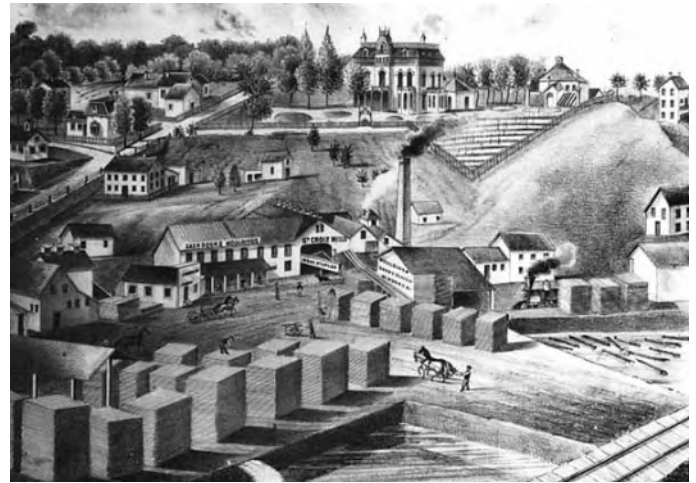
This triangle was bounded by the Saint Croix and Mississippi Rivers and extended as far north as Mille Lacs Lake



*Washington County Courthouse (1869), in ca. 1900. MNHS*

*Top: Bird's eye view of the city of Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota, 1870). Library of Congress*

As shown on the 1870 Bird's eye view, Stillwater's original townsite plat of rectilinear streets and blocks laid out residential and commercial building lots roughly parallel to the Saint Croix River. Later additions to this central downtown area were laid out according to standard north/south survey lines, resulting in a shift of the grid of city blocks. Stillwater's numerous ravines and steep hillsides created breaks in the grid, providing small triangles of green spaces, and river views. A system of historic limestone retaining walls and public stairs remain distinctive features of Stillwater streetscapes. Some prominent blufftop lots became the site of civic structures such as the Washington County Courthouse (1869) and the Stillwater Public Library (1903), as well as churches and residences.



*The Illustrated Historical Atlas of Minnesota shows the riverfront area below present-day Pioneer Park in 1874. Andreas*

## 2.1 THE LUMBER DECADES

Despite its picturesque location on Lake Saint Croix—a setting highly praised by some steamboat visitors seeking bluff and river scenery—early investors focused on Stillwater's full industrial potential. For more than sixty years, Stillwater would prove an ideal setting for sawing and shipping the white pine harvested in Minnesota and Wisconsin forests. In addition to mill, factory, and steamboat sites, the riverfront offered a platform for rail construction connected to a national network. Sheltering bluffs offered some degree of separation from the smoke and noise of industry, but much of the activity was visible across a wide viewshed of city neighborhoods.



*S. Main Street south of Myrtle, looking south at stairs, ca. 1885. MNHS*

The city's leading position in the Saint Croix lumber industry soared with the creation of the Saint Croix Boom Corporation. Isaac Staples and other investors incorporated this company in 1856 to collect, measure, and raft logs downriver, creating a distribution point for the entire Saint Croix. Located about two miles north of Stillwater, rafts containing millions of board feet of lumber were directed to the city's mills and were also bound for Winona, St. Louis, and other mill sites.



*Vernacular and Greek Revival style dwellings on Slab Alley, S. Main Street in 1932 (razed). MNHS*



Inexpensive frame buildings made up much of the early commercial district during Stillwater's earliest building boom, in 1855-57, when the population reached about 2,500.<sup>1</sup> Simple houses of wood frame construction, some reflecting the Greek Revival style, but mostly of vernacular design, were most common. Most of the first structures included small, one-and-one-half-story houses with gabled, wood-shingled roofs. In plan, most early houses were simple rectangles, but soon porches and other additions were made to increase living space, forming the familiar L-shaped plan.

By the end of the Civil War in 1865 the owners of the six sawmills then in operation began to build integrated business networks that included real estate, flour milling, transportation, banking and insurance, and manufacturing. Lumbering financed new enterprises, and new masonry buildings reflected increased investment. Many early sawmill firms would remain in business until 1914 and the end of the lumber era.

In 1867, area business leaders organized the Stillwater & St. Paul Railroad. This line and the two that followed immediately brought economic and population growth and secured the city's position as a lumber center. In 1871, the Stillwater, White Bear and St. Paul Railroad connected Stillwater with Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth. In 1872, the St. Paul, Stillwater, and Taylor's Falls Railroad reached the city.

By 1878 the Stillwater & St. Paul became part of the Northern Pacific transcontinental system. Rails and spurs were laid across the riverfront to sawmills and factories and connected to depots that supplied freight and passenger service connected to river steamers. In 1876 a pontoon-supported, wood drawbridge spanned the river to Houlton, Wisconsin. This structure was rebuilt in 1911 and occupied the site of the present Stillwater Lift Bridge (1931; NRHP).



*Panoramic View of the City of Stillwater, Minnesota, (1879), Albert Ruger, lithographer; reproduction from Empson Archives/WCHS.*



*Looking northeast from the Courthouse in 1880. WCHS*



*Lumbermen's Exchange, 101 S. Water Street (1890). MNHS*

<sup>1</sup>Edward D. Neill, *History of Washington County and the St. Croix Valley* (Minneapolis: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 547.

There were eleven sawmills located on the Stillwater levee by the turn of the century. Sawn lumber had been rafted downriver to other markets for processing, but rail connections allowed local manufacturers to produce lumber, lath, shingles, doors, sashes and furniture. The peak year for lumber traffic on the Saint Croix River was 1890, when one-half-billion board feet passed through the Saint Croix Boom. The boom closed in 1914, marking the end of Stillwater's lumber era.

Grain dealers constructed mills and warehouses along rail spurs lining the levee, and boat builders, icehouses, and foundries of various types also located here. Foundry products were needed for mill and railroad development, and there was demand for many types of agricultural implements. In 1882, Seymour, Sabin & Co., a manufacturer of furniture and wood products, launched the Northwestern Manufacturing and Car Company, which had several successor firms including Northwest Thresher. The building was razed in 1946.

## 2.2 TOWNSITE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Stillwater's late 19th-century prosperity mirrored that of many other Minnesota manufacturing cities. The townsite platted by John McKusick in 1848 was a standard grid plan, but many of the lots surveyed across the city's hills and ravines provided picturesque building sites. Simple, gable-roofed vernacular dwellings built for laborers, shopkeepers, and artisans filled many of the lots.

North and South Hill continued as the focus of much early development. Another building boom followed after the Civil War, when the population reached 4,000.<sup>2</sup> Some builders of Greek Revival, Second Empire, and Italianate style houses selected prominent sites on North and South Hills that offered with panoramic views of the river as well as its numerous new industries. Isaac Staples' Second Empire Style residence (ca. 1873), atop North Hill, featured an eye-catching mansard roof clad in polychrome slate tiles.



*Northwest Thresher in 1918. MNHS*



*A simple vernacular house at 408 W. Maple Street (ca. 1875). WCHS*



*The Italianate Style: 214 N. Elm Street (1877). WCHS*

<sup>2</sup> Neill, 547.



A growing economy and the local wealth of local wood and stone products also underwrote large Queen Anne style houses constructed by the city's mill and factory owners. Many of these houses feature complex rooflines and elaborate porches and millwork trim.

Stillwater's tradespeople, mechanics, and workers in mills, railroad, and other industries included settlers from New England and other states and as well as natives of England and Ireland. Germans Scandinavians, Italians and other European immigrants were well represented, including Jewish families from Eastern Europe. African-American and Native American families were also members of the early community.

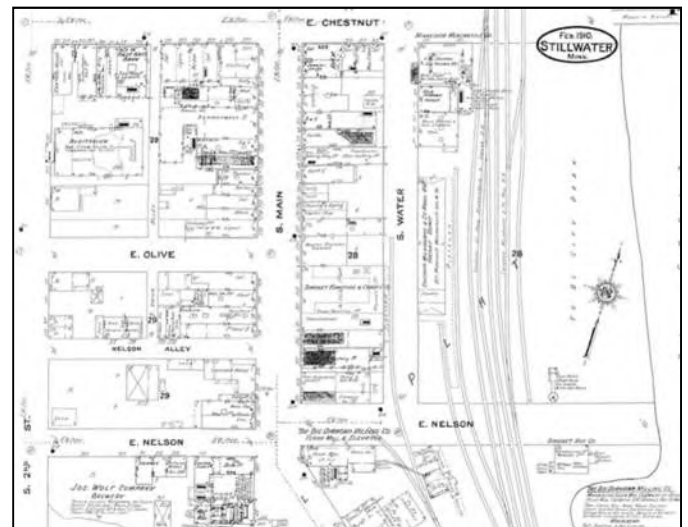
By the late 1880s, a new crop of commercial-district business blocks and other buildings reflected the city's economic success. The Union Depot (1888, razed), an exceptional example of the Shingle Style, presided over its riverfront location near the bridge. The Lumber Exchange Building (Lumbermen's Exchange, 1890) was the first modern business block in the city, and featured heating, plumbing, and electrical service, as well as an elevator. The size, cost, and craftsmanship of these and other buildings reflected a high level of investment for a city of 11,268 residents in 1890.

The 1914 closing of the Saint Croix Boom Company was a critical event in the city's economic history. Many riverfront mill and factory buildings were put to other uses, but the new businesses were often short-lived. Investment in diversified industry, such as agricultural implement manufacture, allowed the city to retain its workforce and position as a small trade center. The city's population stood at 12,318 in 1900, but declined to 10,198 in 1910, 7,735 in 1920 and 7,013 in 1940.

The Northwest Thresher, Twin City Forge and Foundry, Foote-Schultze, Smithson Paper Box, Stillwater Market Creamery, Minnesota Mercantile, Connolly Shoe and Stillwater Garment companies were among the city's important early 20th-century employers on or near the riverfront. The Minnesota State Prison, located as the Minnesota Territorial Prison on N. Main Street in Battle Hollow since 1853, closed in 1914. During the next decades the riverfront area was slowly transformed by removal of industrial buildings, railroad tracks, and bathhouses.



*The Queen Anne Style: L. E. Toronius House, 812 Harriet Street (1901). WCHS /Runk*



*The Stillwater riverfront in 1910. Sanborn Map Co./ MNHS*



*Connolly Shoe Co., (1905), 123 N. Main St., in ca. 1920. MNHS*

## 2.3 STILLWATER AND THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

The nationally popular City Beautiful Movement, which emphasized urban planning built on a foundation of improved streets and neighborhood parks, was underway just as many people in Stillwater were beginning to understand the potential need for new uses for the riverfront. Evidence of the city's progressive planning included streetcar service inaugurated in 1889, opening of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway (which by 1900 offered half-hour service to St. Paul), and completion of the Carnegie-funded Stillwater Public Library in 1903.

Although the riverfront would continue to be dominated by industrial land use for several more decades, the initial construction of Lowell Park (1911) represented the first step in reworking the city's gateway, creating a public use along the former levee, and accommodating new automobile traffic.

William A. Finklenburg of Winona designed the first phase of Lowell Park, which extended two blocks south of Chestnut Street and featured a river wall with a lawn, plantings, and concrete benches. A north extension was completed in 1917 with plans by Minneapolis landscape architects Morell & Nichols. A riverfront pavilion was completed in 1923. The firm also prepared the *Plan of Stillwater* (1918). It was a blueprint for the modern city, proposing new ideas for parks, boulevards, housing, and riverfront land use. It called for a system of scenic drives linking views of the river valley, and the reclamation of ravines for park purposes.

In 1917, the East Side Lumber Company, located on the Wisconsin side of the river, donated their property to the City of Stillwater for park use. In 1931 American Legion Post 48 constructed Legion Beach. The site was later named Kolliner Park. It has been closed since 1979.



*Stillwater Public Library (1903). MNHS*



*Lowell Park and the levee in 1922. MNHS*

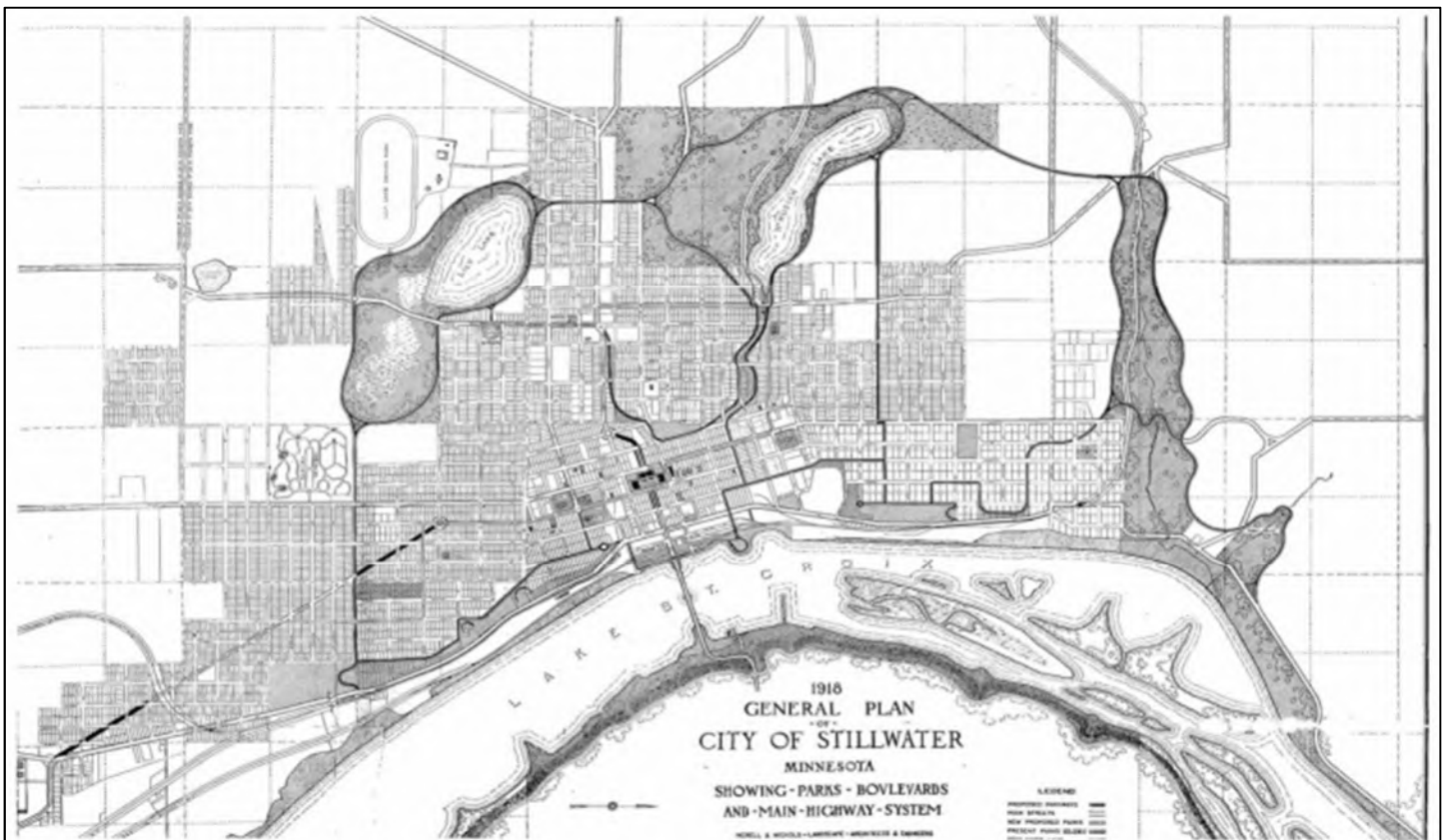


*Legion Beach in ca. 1931. MNHS/Runk*





*Lowell Park sunken gardens in 1934. MNHS*



*General Plan of City of Stillwater, Minnesota, Showing Parks, Boulevard, and Main Highway System. Morell and Nichols, Landscape Architects and Planners, 1918.*

## 2.4 EARLY PLANNING FOR TOURISM AND RECREATION

When the new Stillwater Lift Bridge opened in 1931, the two-lane, 1,050-foot structure was the centerpiece of a redesigned riverfront. This was also a period when city leaders planned to build future tourism and recreation markets. The Lowell Inn (1927), built on the site of the popular Sawyer House hotel, was an early symbol of the city's potential as an automobile traveler's destination.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, Works Progress Administration (WPA) and other public funds assisted with some area improvements geared at tourism, including the placement of commemorative markers at Battle Hollow and near the Tamarack House, the site of the first county courthouse. Design and construction of the Lake Saint Croix Overlook (NRHP), south of Stillwater, and the Saint Croix Boom Site (NHL), north of the city, was completed by the Minnesota Department of Highways and utilized federal relief funds.

Increasingly, visitors saw less and less of the city's industrial past, although railyards still defined much of the riverfront. Notably, in 1918, lumberman Isaac Staples' North Hill residence, built in ca. 1873 and overlooking his Saint Croix Lumber Mill, was razed. During the 1930s, Pioneer Park was built on the site and offered a dramatic view of the Stillwater Lift Bridge and broad river and valley vistas.

Builders constructed new houses at the city's edges and also as infill in older neighborhoods, a reflection of the rebounding economy after World War II. One-story Ranch houses with attached garages as well as Period Revival style houses were especially popular.



*Looking south at the Lift Bridge from Pioneer Park in ca. 1935. MNHS*



*Lowell Inn (1927). MNHS*



*Stillwater Lift Bridge (1931). MNHS*





*The Hersey & Staples Block in 1914; the Union Depot is at rear (both razed). MNHS*



*Building restoration underway at 308 S. Main Street, ca. 1985. CDD*

A number of late-19th-century landmarks were lost in the 1960s, beginning with the new one-story Hooley's Supermarket (razed) that replaced the Shingle style Union Depot (1888). In 1968 the Cosmopolitan State Bank built a new one-story bank to replace the Hersey & Staples Block (1871). The community's interest in Stillwater's history and architectural resources remained strong through the 1970s, however, and was highlighted by the Stillwater City Council's approval of the creation of the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Stillwater's population reached 19,241 in 2019. Today, the city retains much of its historic commercial core. Many historic buildings have been repurposed for new commercial and residential uses, and there are excellent examples of compatible new construction. The historic houses set across the landscape of bluffs and ravines that frame the downtown and its riverfront continue to represent the city's late 19th- and early 20th-century development.

Following the 2017 completion of the Saint Croix Crossing Bridge to the south, the closure of the historic Stillwater Lift Bridge (NRHP) to vehicular traffic and opening of a pedestrian and bicycle loop trail offers new recreational potential for the community and visitors.



*Stillwater Lift Bridge and Lowell Park, 2021.*



### 3. STILLWATER’S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, BUILDING TYPES, AND LANDSCAPES

Most of Stillwater’s historic commercial and industrial buildings are concentrated in the Stillwater Commercial Historic District (SCHD) that occupies approximately eleven blocks at the core of Stillwater’s downtown riverfront area (**Figure 2**). The district includes an important concentration of historic business blocks and storefronts along Main and Chestnut Streets. The riverfront edge at the east is framed by the levee and Lowell Park. The Stillwater Lift Bridge, also listed in the NRHP, is just outside the district at the foot of Chestnut Street.

*Above: 233 S. Main Street (ca. 1900)*

The adjacent Downtown Design Review District (DDRD) includes more than thirty additional blocks with approximately 300 commercial, residential, industrial and institutional buildings. Institutional buildings include the historic Washington County Courthouse (1870, NRHP), the Classical Revival style Stillwater Public Library (1903), the Federal Building/Old Post Office (1905), and four late 19th-century churches. Recent construction within the district includes apartment and condominium blocks as well as new public plaza design on Chestnut Street at the foot of the Stillwater Lift Bridge.

The irregular boundary of the DDRD extends from the river at the east to 5th Street N. and S. at the west, and from Elm Street at the north to Willard St. E. at the south (**Figure 2**).



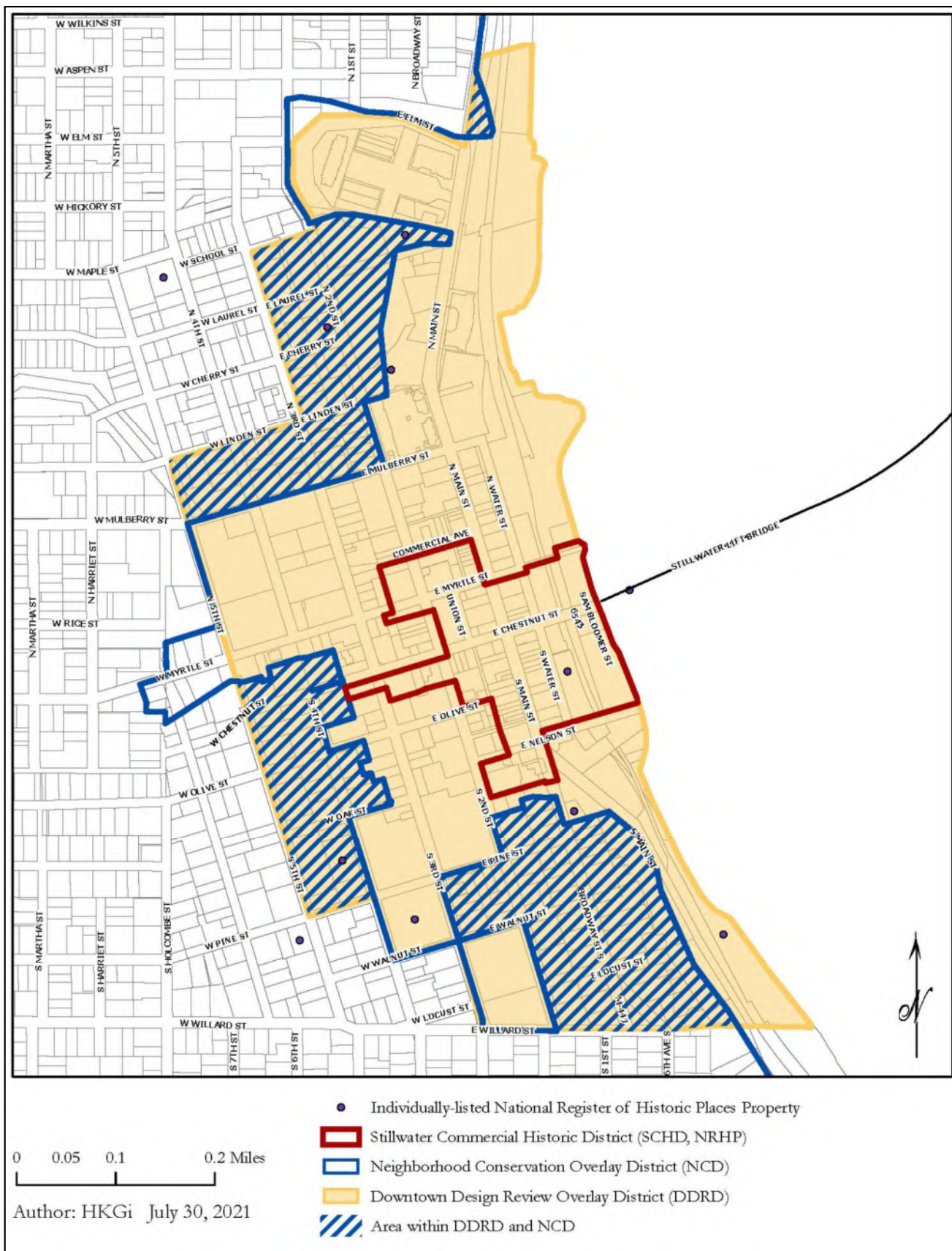
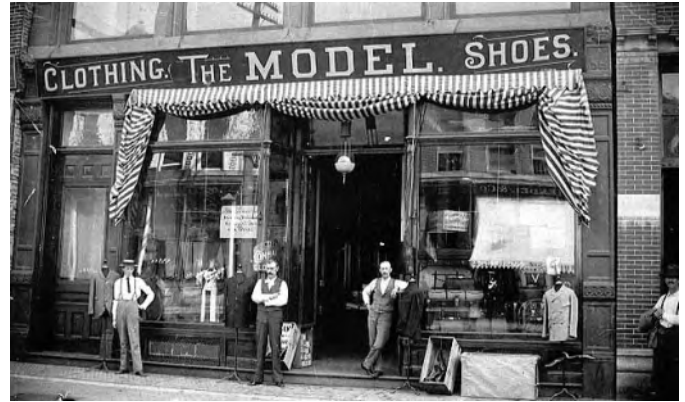


Figure 2. Stillwater Downtown Design Review Overlay District, including Stillwater Commercial Historic District

### 3.1 DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The Downtown Design Review District's (DDRD) masonry commercial buildings primarily span the period from the 1860s to the 1940s. Ranging from one to three stories, they rest on stone or concrete foundations. Rooflines, parapets, window treatments and storefronts represent several varieties of Italianate, Queen Anne, and Commercial styles. Art Deco and Modern remodels of storefronts are also evident. Some early business names and building dates are inset in metal or stone plaques at the parapet at the roofline. Behind the parapet the roof is usually flat and clad in asphalt.

Some of the earliest buildings in the DDRD are built of locally quarried limestone and date from the 1860s and 1870s. A few examples have been reclad in brick or stucco. Most commercial buildings are of red or locally-burned yellow brick, and are trimmed in stone, brownstone, or concrete. Some are painted and a few contain old painted advertising signs and graphics. The party and rear walls of commercial buildings are typically of common red or yellow brick, or stone rubble. Many upper-story windows are framed by ornate brick or stone hoods. Storefront display windows flank recessed entries that are framed by wood or cast iron columns.



*The Model Store, ca. 1884. MNHS.*



*This Italianate style business block at 220-224 E. Chestnut Street dates from before 1884 and features a lancet-arched central entry, deep overhanging eaves, and stone hood molds above the slender double-hung windows. The storefronts have central entries flanked by large display windows.*



*Looking north on S. Main Street, 1928. The First National Bank (1888) is at right. WCHS*



Many historic commercial buildings are organized as a two- or three-story, one or two-part block. Two-part buildings typically have separation of the lower-level commercial space, with offices, meeting rooms, and apartments above. One-part buildings typically were devoted entirely to commercial spaces. Arcaded blocks are notable for their arched openings, sometimes supported by prefabricated cast iron columns.

Stillwater's traditional storefronts typically have a central opening with single or double-leaf doors. The entry is framed by piers and large windows intended for display of goods as well as a source of interior light. Previous alterations to historic buildings have included modernization of storefronts and entries. Replacement materials include brick infill, vertical wood siding, and new metal display windows and doors.

Generally, window openings and masonry hood molds or lintels at the upper stories are intact, although there are a few examples of historic window sash. Restoration efforts that began in the 1970s have uncovered historic storefronts and facades. In addition to such efforts, maintenance, new signage, and new construction for commercial, residential and mixed uses constitutes much of the ongoing work in the historic district and surrounding DDRD.

Beginning in the 1920s, the owners of traditional commercial building storefronts often updated them with Art Deco-influenced or Art Moderne treatments. Some features, including structural glass and porcelain enamel panels, polished stone cladding, and hexagonal windows announced the newest design trends. The upper stories were usually left untouched. Although restoration of the storefront to reflect its historic appearance is usually appropriate, certain surviving features of some of these "half-modern" buildings may have gained significance over time.



*308 S. Main Street: an arcaded façade with cast-iron columns.*



*The restored limestone exterior is a distinctive feature of this 1869 commercial block at 132 S. Main Street.*



*Stillwater Recreation, S. Main Street, in 1937. WCHS/Runk*

Within the DDRD, part of Stillwater's past railroad and industrial history is represented by the gable-roofed Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot and Freight House (1883, NRHP) and the Saint Croix Lumber Mills/Stillwater Manufacturing Building (1850-1900, NRHP). Many former factory and warehouse buildings have flat roofs, sometimes with glazed clerestories, and large windows with flat brick lintels and sills.

The Commander Elevator (1898) is a flour-milling landmark clad in corrugated metal. Some early-20th century garages and other commercial and industrial buildings are built of rusticated concrete block.

### 3.2 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS

Some small commercial areas in the neighborhoods outside the DDRD, such as those at and around 4th and Churchill Streets, have a variety of one- and two-story wood and masonry structures. Some retain a fair to good level of historic integrity and the Commercial Design Guidelines for the DDRD may be appropriate in the general review of Design Permit applications.



*Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot and Freight House (1883, NRHP). Multi-paned, segmental-arched windows and a deep limestone foundation are notable features.*



*The Commander Elevator (1898) near S. Main and Nelson Streets is a prominent structure that anchors the edge of the Stillwater Commercial Historic District.*



*Kearney Store, E. 4th and Churchill Streets, ca. 1925. MNHS*



### 3.3 HISTORIC COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES



*The Majestic Theatre, 229 S. Main Street. The Commercial style façade has an arched parapet. The view at left, ca. 1910, shows crushed cans piled in the brick-paved street.*

#### 1860-1880 Italianate Style



*118 N. Main Street (ca. 1872).*

#### 1885-1900 Queen Anne Style



*330 N. Main Street (ca. 1885).*

#### 1890-1940 Commercial Style (including former industrial buildings)



*Lumbermen's Exchange, 101 S. Water Street (1890).*



*Kolliner-St. Croix Garment Co., 270 N. Main Street, in 2021.*



*270 N. Main in 1925.*

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### 3.4 HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

#### 1845-1880 Greek Revival Style



*Brunswick House, 114 E. Chestnut Street (1848).*

Stillwater's earliest development coincided with the popularity of the Greek Revival style in mid-19th century America. As shown in carpenter's plan books and adaptable to many types of buildings, including dwellings, stores, and churches, the style referenced the low-pitched roof and classical decoration of Greek temples. Stillwater's examples, clad in clapboards or masonry, typically featured a low-pitched gable roof with prominent returns at the eaves, flat trim, and entries framed with sidelights.



*Brunswick House in ca. 1930. MNHS/Runk*

#### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Primary low-pitched gable roof with returns at the eaves
- Narrow clapboard or brick exterior
- Prominent corner pilasters and columns
- Evenly-spaced, double-hung windows with two-over-two or six-over-six lights
- Secondary (flat) roofs over porches; portico at entry
- Sidelit entry and glazed transom
- Simple, flat trim at corners and frieze board beneath eaves

Historic color schemes were often white, light gray, and yellow, with white or dark green trim.



## 1845-1900 Early Vernacular Houses



717 W. Churchill Street (1863).



N. 2nd Street, looking north, in ca. 1873. MNHS

Many of the first structures built in Stillwater were simple vernacular workers' houses, designed and built by local carpenters. These houses were often small, one- and one-half stories, with gabled, wood-shingled roofs. Porches and wings added to the original square or rectangular plan produced the familiar L-plan. Depending on the date of construction, the exterior might have some Greek Revival, Italianate or Queen Anne style stock millwork trim. Most of these houses are of wood frame construction with clapboard siding.

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Front gable or side gable
- Square, rectangular or L-shaped plans
- Minimal ornamentation, with decoration of standard millwork (turned or stamped)
- Rear additions of varying heights
- Two-over-two, double-hung wood sash; early examples had more lights
- Central chimney may pierce roof ridge

Many carpenters and builders were part of the early community. Historian Norene Roberts noted in a study of North Hill that the practice of building pattern book houses was likely a strong one in Stillwater where so many businesses produced lumber and finished millwork.<sup>3</sup>



805, 807 S. 3rd Street, ca. 1885.

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<sup>3</sup> Norene Roberts, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Stillwater Commercial Historic District," 1992. On file, Stillwater Community Development Department.

## 1845-1880 Gothic Revival Style



*James and Rose Spencer House, 205 E.. Walnut Street (ca. 1870).*

The Gothic Revival style was championed by admirers of European medieval architecture and picturesque ruins. Among the style's promoters in the United States were architects Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) and Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), and horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52). Downing's popular books illustrated many variations the Gothic Revival style, set in a rustic landscape. Books such as the *Architecture of Country Houses* (1842) promoted the small Gothic Revival style house as an ideal design for rural settings, with its complex and irregular shapes and forms fitting well into the natural landscape.



*Andrew Jackson Downing, "An Ornamental Farmhouse," Cottage Residences (1842).*

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Steeply pitched roof
- Pointed arches as decorative element and as window shape
- Front facing gables with decorative trim (vergeboards or bargeboards)
- Two-over-two wood sash
- Porches with turned posts or columns
- Gables often topped with finials or cross-bracing
- Decorative crowns (gable or drip mold) over windows and doors
- Carpenter Gothic buildings have distinctive board and batten vertical siding

Historic color schemes were often based on natural hues imitating stone, stucco, and brick.



*Whiteside House, 223 Pine Street (1880).*



## 1850-1885 Italianate Style



*John G. and Johanna Nelson House, 604 N. 4th Street (1874). The curved porch dates from ca. 1905. Suki Thomsen photo*

The Italianate style was popular in the United States from the 1840s through the early 1880s, during a period when Stillwater's population reached 9,055. Inspired by picturesque stone farmhouses of the Italian countryside, the Italianate style was accessible to American builders through many editions of popular plan books. Horticulturist Alexander Jackson Downing and architect Calvert Vaux championed the "Italian Villa" as well as Gothic Revival dwellings in their popular books. The style was very adaptable to institutional and commercial buildings as well as dwellings. Stillwater's residential examples are typically clapboard-clad with a hipped roof and wide, bracketed eaves.

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Square or asymmetrical plan, sometimes with projecting bays
- Low-pitched hip or gable roof with wide, overhanging eaves; sometimes with a tower or cupola
- Narrow clapboard or brick exterior
- Symmetrical arrangement of the windows and entry
- Long narrow windows, sometimes with elaborate arched hoods and two-over-two wood sash
- Deep cornices at the roofline, with ornate wood brackets
- Porches with slender columns resting on low pedestals and brackets
- Belvederes or towers

Historic color schemes were often based on natural hues that imitated stone, stucco, and brick.



*The Italianate style William and Helen McCluer House, near S. 3rd and Mulberry Streets, ca. 1870. Razed 1961. WCHS*

## 1885-1902 Queen Anne Style



*Albert and Helen Lammers House, 1306 3rd Street S., (1893, NRHP). Suki Thomsen photo*

The builders of Stillwater's 1880s and 1890s houses often chose the Queen Anne style for new construction and remodeling projects. The roots of this eclectic style reach to the medieval-inspired manor houses designed by British architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). The Queen Anne was popular with American architects as well as builders who were inspired by plan books. A richness of wall surfaces, achieved through layering of shingles, siding and decorative trim, and an elaborate porch with turned posts and railings are typical features. Decorated porches and shingled gable ends were applied to small, simple houses as well as elaborate mansions.

The popularity of the Queen Anne style accompanied the rise of the local lumber economy. Stillwater's population reached its peak of 12, 818 in 1900, and during the previous two decades there was increased mass production of doors, windows, and decorative details, and modern advances in plumbing, central heating and electrical and telephone service.

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation; later examples with rusticated concrete block
- Complex plan, sometimes with offset bays at the corners
- Steeply-pitched roof, sometimes with several slopes or dormers and conical towers
- Decorated chimneys
- Asymmetrical facade, with windows of varying shapes and sizes
- Richly textured wall surfaces, with shingles, clapboards, and carved and incised panels
- Windows surrounded with deep moldings and a variety of sash arrangements, including two-over-two
- Porches heavily decorated with sawn and turned ornament, or "gingerbread"
- Front porches may be full, partial or wrap-around

Historic color schemes were often polychrome compositions of deep, sometimes vibrant colors.



*Gordon and Ida Welshons House, 117 Burlington Street (1887).*



## 1845-1875 Second Empire Style



*Ivory E. McKusick House, 504 N. Second Street (1866).*

There are a few examples of the Second Empire style in Stillwater. Especially popular in the 1860s and 1870s, the double-sloped mansard roof is a key feature of the style, sometimes featuring heavily decorated dormers.

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Mansard roof with bracketed eaves
- Patterned shingle or slate roof (typically replaced with asphalt shingles)
- Iron roof cresting
- Projecting bays
- Decorative window surrounds and dormers
- One-story porch with slender chamfered columns and balustraded railings
- Central or corner tower
- Decorative corner quoins

## 1870-1890 Eastlake and Stick Style



*John and Nanni Caesa House, 801 Pine Street W. (1886). Suki Thomsen photo*

The Eastlake and Stick Style is characterized by ornamental features that create complex patterns in high-style houses, while more vernacular dwellings applied a limited number of these elements.

### *Characteristics:*

- Limestone foundation
- Steeply pitched roofs, with a main gable on the façade, often with exposed cross-gables
- Wall surfaces that feature patterns of horizontal, vertical and diagonal boards reminiscent of Medieval half-timbering.
- Structural elements that emphasize vertical effects
- Prominent front porch with lathe-turned columns and balusters
- Vertically-oriented window openings; main windows often have stained glass in upper sash.

## 1895-1940 20th-Century Period Revivals



*S. Blair McBeath House, 203 Willard Street E. (1921).*



*James and Susan Bronson House, 1309 S. 3rd Street (1905). Louis Lockwood, architect. Suki Thomson photo.*

The Classical and Colonial Revival styles represented a return to regularity and order following the heavily-decorated Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, which featured impressive but less ornamental buildings than those of the previous decade, and an interest in the nation's past, influenced its popularity. The two-story, hip- or gable-roofed variety was especially popular with builders in turn-of-the-century Stillwater.

### *Colonial and Classical Revival style features:*

- Limestone foundation; later examples with rusticated concrete block
- Square or rectangular plan
- Clapboard or brick exterior
- Gable, hip, or gambrel roof, often with dormers
- Symmetrically organized façade
- Rectangular windows, often with one-over-one or two-over-two sash
- Three-part (Palladian) window, usually in a dormer or gable above the entry
- Porch with single or paired classical columns

Historic color schemes were often white, cream, yellow or gray.

American architects and builders continued to draw from traditional styles after the turn of the century. In this period, Stillwater's population declined and building was not as robust as in previous decades, but examples of Period Revival styles include the Tudor Revival and Mission Revival. The Tudor Revival façade usually included brick and stucco cladding with applied half-timbering and stone trim, and an oversized chimney mass. Roofs are steeply pitched, and dormers and overhangs are common. Brick or stucco-clad cottage variants featuring round-arched windows and entries were especially popular in the 1920s.



*818 Olive Street (1925).*



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## 1910-1940 Bungalow and Craftsman



*517 N. 3rd Street (ca. 1914).*

Early 20th-century bungalows and the larger Craftsman style house were popularized by California architects Charles S. and Henry M. Greene, who widely published their work in magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal*, and in Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*. Plan books including that of the Sears, Roebuck and Company also offered complete interior designs, including built-in china cabinets and leaded glass windows. Bungalow and Arts and Crafts designs sometimes show the influence of popular Period Revival styles, as evident in classical porch columns and millwork trim.

### *Characteristics:*

- Rusticated concrete block foundation
- Square or rectangular plan.
- Low-pitched gable or hip roof with wide, overhanging eaves
- Exterior of clapboard, shingles, stucco, fieldstone, or brick
- Wide eaves with exposed rafter ends
- Knee brackets
- Rectangular windows with one-over-one sash and simple, flat moldings.
- Porches with short, sometimes splayed columns on stone or wood bases.

Historic color schemes were often earth-toned.



*Decorated bargeboards, knee brackets, and paneling decorate the eaves and upper story of this Craftsman style house.*

## 1946-1975 Pre- and Postwar Housing



*The Ranch house: 619 N. 4th Street (1950).*

With its one-story, open-plan interior, the economical Ranch style appealed to post-World War II builders. Some construction of Ranch houses as infill on vacant lots in older neighborhoods and in new subdivisions at the city's edges was supported by financing from the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill. Varieties of the ranch included features such as "raised ranch" or split-foyer and bi-level plans, and historical motifs such as half-timbering were sometimes applied to the exterior.

Other housing design in this period followed evolving Modern principles, with a horizontal emphasis, flat or shed roofs, little or no ornamentation, and large, undivided windows.

### *Characteristics*

- Concrete block foundation
- One-story, rectangular plan
- Flat or slightly pitched gable or hip roof
- Prominent picture window
- Wide lap or stucco siding
- Simple flat moldings and trim
- Decorative iron or wood porch supports
- Few or no historically-based trim details
- Metal or wood window frames
- Use of flagstone for decorative purposes, such as planter boxes
- Prominent attached garage



*Colonial Revival style: 606 N. 3rd Street (1941).*

Period Revival styles remained popular before and after World War II, and the Colonial Revival was among variations built on remaining lots in Stillwater's older neighborhoods.

The automobile garage became a standard feature of new house construction after about 1914. Early garages were compact, usually sheltering one vehicle, and often reflected the architectural design of the house. Attached garages were a standard feature of the post-war house.



### 3.5 STILLWATER'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The city's unique setting was the focus of a study of the Stillwater Cultural Landscape District (1999). The district recognizes the significance of the unique river shoreline, hills, and ravines that surround the SCHD and the DDRD (**Figure 1**). Determined eligible for the NRHP, the Cultural Landscape District is comprised of large and small-scale features. Although not directly part of local design permit process review, it is important to consider the impact of new construction on the city's viewsheds and other features.

Viewsheds up, down, and across the Saint Croix River are an important component of the setting. In addition to buildings and structures, smaller-scale built features include the stone retaining walls and concrete steps that weave across the city's oldest neighborhoods surrounding downtown Stillwater. Early surveyors laid out the generally grid-plan streets over hills and bluffs with little recognition of the steep topography. The highest bluffs were graded, and steep ravines were filled.

Many streets have been re-graded during sewer and sidewalk construction projects to improve drainage and safety, but the general historic pattern of the street grid and sidewalks and building setbacks remains intact. Many locally quarried, buff and gray limestone retaining walls along steep streets and ravine include the massive buttresses placed along the bluff below Pioneer Park and behind the State Prison as well as low walls that edge residential lots.

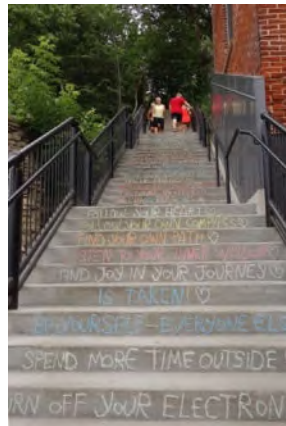
A network of informal paths circulated around some of the city's ravines and other topographical features. The first systems of wood steps were later improved with stone and concrete. Among prominent sets of stairs are those that connect S. Main Street with S. Broadway, featuring 157 steps, and those connecting S. 3rd and 4th Streets at Chestnut Street.



*North and South Hills, 2021.*



*S. 5th Street, 2018.*



*N. Main Street stairs, 2018.*



*Chestnut Street stairs, 2021.*



#### 4. DESIGN PERMIT

Decades of planning for Stillwater’s cultural and historic resources has resulted in the listing of three districts (one designated and two eligible) and numerous individual properties in the National Register of Historic Places as well as one locally designated district. As identified in the Stillwater 2040 Comprehensive Plan and as regulated in the Stillwater City Code, the local historic designation of the Stillwater Commercial Historic District (SCHD) and adoption of the surrounding Downtown Design Review Overlay District (DDRDO) recognizes the significance of historic resources for current planning and future development.

The SCHD is entirely encompassed within the DDRDO and the requirements of the DDRDO apply to both districts. Exterior alterations and additions to properties within these two districts require a Design Permit, as does new infill construction, demolition, and building moving within district boundaries.

The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCO), which partially overlaps the Downtown Design Review District, is recognized for its concentration of late 19th- and early 20th-century houses.

*The creation of Stillwater’s Overlay Districts recognizes the significance of historic resources to the city’s history and continued development...*

*Stillwater 2040 Plan*

A Design Permit is required for new infill construction and additions to existing properties, partial building demolition, and moving.

The Downtown Design Review and Neighborhood Conservation Districts are designated as **Overlay Districts** in order to establish specific design regulations for these two areas. The overlay district regulations are in addition to the requirements of the underlying or base zoning district. An overlay district typically provides requirements (or incentives) intended to preserve the historic character of an area. An overlay district allows for increased flexibility in setting zoning regulations since their standards can be more closely tailored to an area that shares certain characteristics.

*Above: John Karst Block, 122 S. Main Street (1891)*



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## 4.1 HERITAGE PRESERVATION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

As detailed by the Stillwater City Code, the Design Permit process is based on heritage preservation standards and guidelines. The Stillwater Commercial Historic District is the city's only locally designated historic district. Design guidelines developed for the SCHD have also been adopted for use in the Downtown Design Review District.

**Standards** are mandatory courses of action or rules that give formal policies support and direction. In most cases, they have been incorporated into the Stillwater City Code. **Guidelines** are recommendations to users when specific standards do not apply. They are designed to streamline design review according to best practices. Guidelines may be applied with some flexibility.

Design guidelines and standards for the Downtown Design Review District (including the Stillwater Commercial Historic District), and the Residential Design Guidelines are based on best practices for historic properties established by the Secretary of the Interior (SOI) *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The standards were developed by the National Park Service (NPS) to assess the treatment of properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as those in NRHP-listed historic districts, when federal funds are involved. These guidelines are also the basis for review of activities such as tax-certified historic rehabilitation. A companion document, *Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* provides more detailed information. (See also <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>)

Design guidelines for the Neighborhood Conservation District, which address new infill construction, additions, and demolition, also correspond to the *Standards and Guidelines*, where appropriate.

## 4.2 SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The *Standards* outline four key approaches to historic properties:

**Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

**Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing changing uses while retaining the property's character.

**Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

**Reconstruction** recreates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

**Remodeling** involves making over the property's historic design to include removal of original features and forms.

The *Standards* provide a foundation for Stillwater's local guidelines and standards:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

7. 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 other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
9. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
10. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
11. 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.

### 4.3 DESIGN PERMIT GOVERNANCE

The Stillwater Comprehensive 2040 Plan outlines the city’s planning framework for conservation of Stillwater’s significant historic and cultural resources. Depending on property location and significance, these projects include exterior rehabilitation of historic properties as well as additions and new construction and other actions not covered by design standards in the Stillwater City Code. The Stillwater HPC and Community Development Department (CDD) staff administer the Design Permit review process and assist applicants with applying appropriate Design Guidelines and Standards.

The Stillwater HPC is charged with conducting Demolition and Design Permitting. The Design Permit process provides for the review and approval of development design and alterations and improvements throughout various neighborhoods and districts. As shown in **Figure 3**, the Design Permit Governance chart outlines the relationship of the Design Permit to other planning functions and responsibilities.

The Stillwater City Code includes the following ordinances that reference Design Guidelines and Standards:

- Sec. 22-7                      Heritage Preservation Commission
- Sec. 31-215                  Building Demolition Permit
- Sec. 31-209                  Design Permit
- Sec. 31-404                  Downtown Design Review District
- Sec. 31-405                  Neighborhood Conservation District



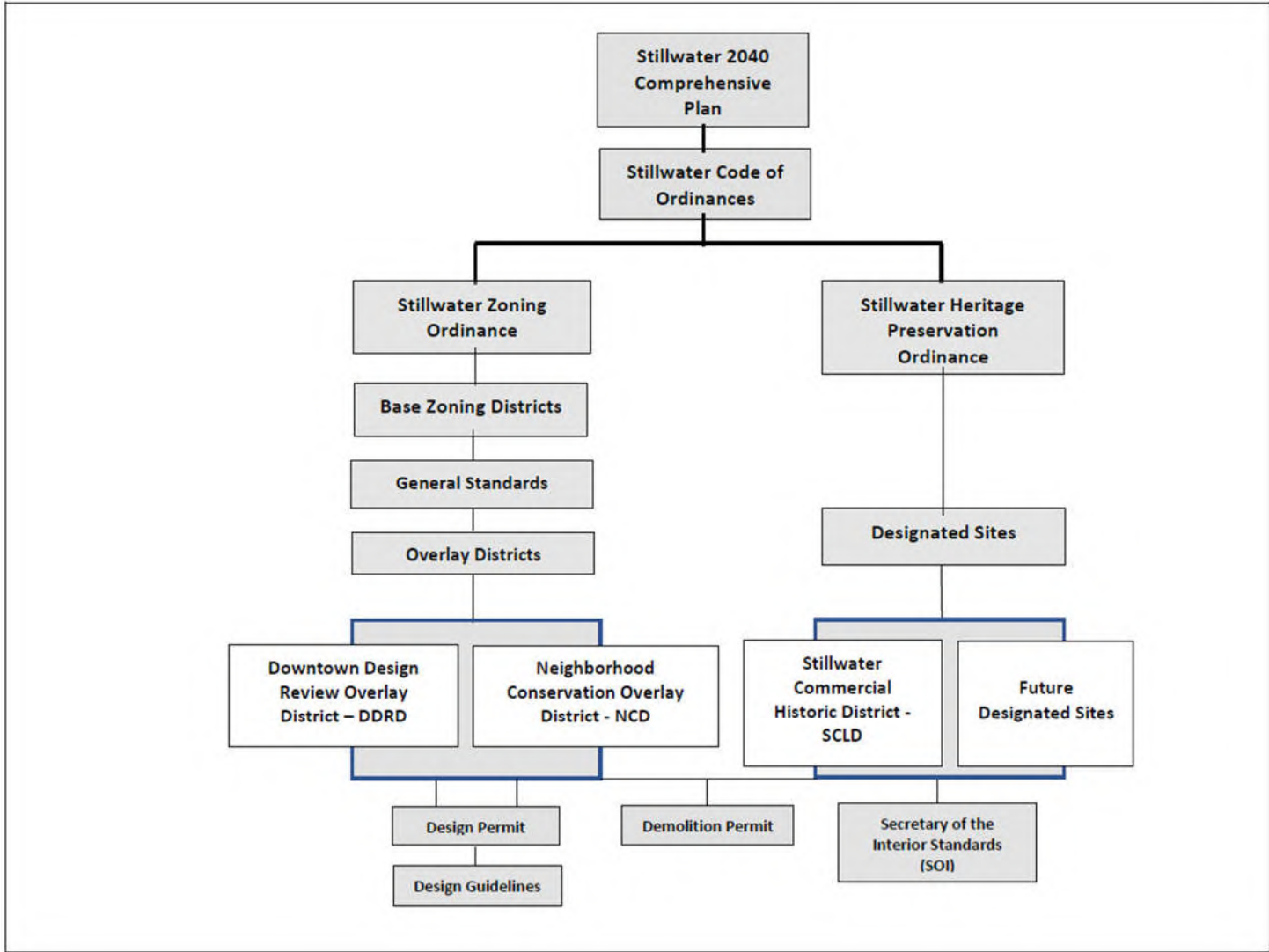


Figure 3. Design Permit Governance

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## 4.4 DESIGN PERMIT PROCESS

The Design Permit process is intended to help applicants utilize the design guidelines to plan a successful building alteration or construction proposal and, if necessary, to improve the quality of the proposed design. For new construction and demolition, the process also provides a Public Hearing where the concerns of neighbors and those affected by the proposed project can be heard.

Section 31-209 of the Stillwater City Code states:

*The purpose of the design permit process is to ensure that building and site development is designed to complement the character and integrity of Stillwater's traditional neighborhoods and commercial districts, including adjacent buildings, the streetscape, and the natural environment.*

As defined by the Stillwater City Code, Design Permits are required for:

- Exterior alterations, additions and new construction within the Downtown Design Review District (including the Stillwater Commercial Historic District)
- Depending on building type, the Residential Design Guidelines or Downtown Design Review District Guidelines will apply
- Exterior alterations and new construction for individual, locally designated properties outside the Downtown Design Review District (including the Stillwater Commercial Historic District)
- Infill new construction and additions to existing buildings in the Stillwater Neighborhood Conservation District
- Signs, Awnings, Lighting (see the Stillwater City Code)
- Moving

Individual overlay districts specify additional projects for which Design Permits are required. See the Stillwater City Code for additional information.

Additionally, a Building Demolition Permit is required for:

- Demolition, or partial demolition, of any property listed on the NRHP, heritage preservation sites, or pre-1946 buildings or structures of potential historic significance (see Stillwater City Code).

Depending on property location, Stillwater CDD staff and the seven-member HPC use the Downtown Design Review District or Neighborhood Conservation District Design Review Guidelines to review design permit applications for alterations and new construction. The Residential Design Review Guidelines apply to residential properties located within the Downtown Design Review District and those that are individually designated.

The HPC will approve, approve with conditions, or deny most applications. However, for some requests—such as demolition denial—they make recommendation to the City Council. Permit applications for projects subject to Standards within the Downtown Design Review Overlay District or the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District, as listed in the Stillwater City Code, or within certain budget limits may receive staff administrative review and not require full design review.

All development in the Downtown Design Review and Neighborhood Conservation Districts is subject to City zoning regulations. See the Stillwater City Code for additional information.



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#### 4.5 DESIGN PERMIT APPLICATION STEPS

**Project Consideration:** Early in the consideration of a potential project, City staff will determine if a Design Permit or Building Demolition Permit will be required.

**Pre-application Conference:** It is strongly recommended the applicant make an appointment with Community Development Department (CDD) staff prior to developing a design and submitting an application. The intent of this meeting is to discuss applicable Stillwater City Code regulations, items that may be of concern, application submittal requirements, etc. For the meeting to be most effective, the future applicant should be prepared to discuss the proposed project and any potential alterations.

**Filing the Application:** A complete application, required attachments, and applicable fee(s) will be accepted by the CDD according to the established Development Review Schedule. Incomplete applications will not be accepted or may be returned to the applicant. Once the application has been determined to be complete, staff will place the item on the applicable Commission and Council agendas. Notice of any scheduled public hearings, if required, will be sent to all property owners within 350' of the subject property. Legal notice will be published in the *Stillwater Gazette* at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled public hearing(s).

**Staff Review:** CDD staff will review and evaluate the project conformance to the Stillwater City Code, the Comprehensive Plan, relevant area plans, including adopted design guidelines and standards, and all lawful regulations.

Staff will develop a report which, in most cases, will include a recommendation for approval or denial. Recommendations for approval may be accompanied by staff recommended conditions of approval. Staff will distribute this report to the applicant in advance of the scheduled meeting(s) and hearing(s).

#### 4.6 HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Heritage Preservation Commission and City Council members will receive the staff report in advance of the scheduled meeting(s) and public hearing(s), prior to an informal meeting held in the Council Chambers of City Hall. At meeting(s), staff will explain the nature of the request. The applicant, who is requested to be at these meeting(s), will be given the opportunity to make a presentation at the meeting.

Once all testimony has been made, the respective appointed or elected members will discuss the request. After all discussion, the body will make findings to determine approval or denial of the application. They may, at their discretion, continue the hearing to a later meeting date. This happens when insufficient information has been submitted or additional information is needed to make a decision.

#### 4.7 APPEALS PERIOD

There is a ten-day period in which the applicant, or any other individual aggrieved by the decision, may submit a request for reconsideration of the application. If the appeal is to a decision of a Commission, the City Council will hear the appeal in a scheduled public hearing. The City Council has the authority to make the final decision; their decision can be appealed through the court system.

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## 4.8 BUILDING PERMITS

If a building permit is required, the submittal of the building permit to the Building Department may occur any time after the meeting date, however, issuance will not occur until after the appeal period is over. Any permit submitted prior to the meeting date will not be reviewed. All work must be in accordance with the HPC/CC approvals and follow all conditions of approval.

## 4.9 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### Additional Information Packets

The City of Stillwater provides information packets pertaining to Design and Demolition Permitting. Packets contain additional information application processing, as well as application-specific checklists. Please contact the City of Stillwater Community Development Department (CDD) to obtain a copy.

Contacting CDD staff at 651-430-8820 prior to submittal is encouraged. Materials can be submitted to the City of Stillwater via mail, drop-off or emailed to: [PlanningDept@ci.stillwater.mn.us](mailto:PlanningDept@ci.stillwater.mn.us).





## 5. STILLWATER DESIGN GUIDELINES

# DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT (DDRD) DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 5.1 STILLWATER COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (SCHD)

The Stillwater Commercial Historic District, at the heart of the Downtown Design Review District, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1992.<sup>4</sup>

The NRHP is a listing of properties identified as having cultural significance at a national, state or local level and that have met criteria for listing as defined by the Secretary of the Interior. The NRHP listing requires review of projects that receive federal funds to consider the impact on historic and prehistoric resources. Federal tax credits are available for certified rehabilitation of qualifying properties within the district. Rehabilitation work must meet the Secretary of the Interior *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*. (SOI).

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<sup>4</sup> Norene Roberts, "Stillwater Commercial Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination," 1992. On file, CDD.

The Stillwater Commercial Historic District is also a locally designated historic district. As shown in **Figure 4**, the historic district encompasses the area that parallels the river along Water and S. and N. Main streets, and the cross-streets of Mulberry, Commercial, Myrtle, Chestnut, Olive, and Nelson. The local district includes 56 contributing buildings, two contributing sites, three contributing structures, and one contributing object. According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination (1992), the eleven-block district is significant in the areas of architecture and commerce. **Contributing** properties in the historic district, which retain a good level of exterior historic integrity, include primarily brick commercial buildings, one to three stories in height, which represent a variety of architectural styles from 1860 to 1940. The oldest remaining downtown core along North and South Main Street includes buildings dating from between 1864 and 1875; some feature stone exterior walls with brick-faced façades. In addition to historic one-, two- and three-story commercial buildings of various types, there are also examples of 1860s and 1870s Greek Revival and Italianate style dwellings at and just outside the edges of the district, and buildings related to historic lumber, rail, manufacturing and institutional uses are also well represented.

### 5.1.1 Review of Contributing and Non-contributing Properties in the Stillwater Commercial Historic District

The HPC uses the guidelines to review all Design Permit applications for new infill construction, additions, and exterior alterations to **contributing** properties within the Stillwater Commercial Historic District and in the surrounding portion of the Downtown Design Review District. The Secretary of the Interior *Standards for Rehabilitation* may also be consulted (see **Chapter 4, Section 4.2**). If determined to be maintenance-related and within certain budget limits, some projects may receive administrative review and approval from City staff. A **non-contributing** property (classified as such because of loss of exterior historic integrity or properties built within the past 50 years) also requires a Design Permit and is reviewed with the Guidelines to the extent applicable. In some cases, SOI standards may be applied if it appears the work could have a negative impact on adjacent properties in the Stillwater Commercial Historic District.



*At left, the Brunswick House (1848) at 114 E. Chestnut Street, and the commercial development just outside the SCHD boundary.*



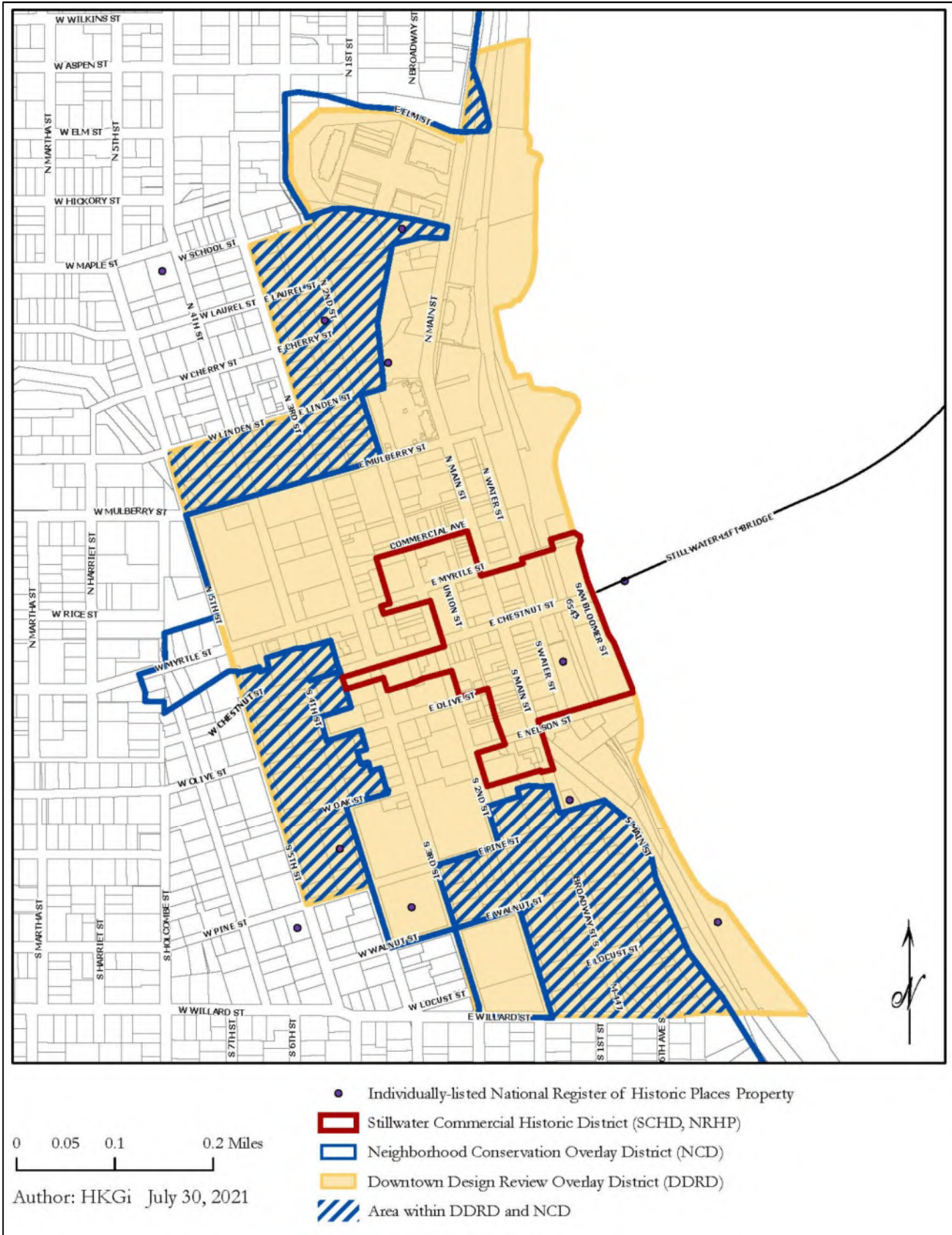


Figure 4. Stillwater Downtown Design Review Overlay District, including Stillwater Commercial Historic District. The Downtown Design Review District includes commercial, former industrial, residential and institutional buildings, as well as historic parks, public stairs, stone retaining walls, and other distinctive viewshed and landscape features.

## 5.2 DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW OVERLAY DISTRICT (DDRD OVERLAY DISTRICT)

Section 31-404 of the Stillwater City Code notes:

*The downtown design review overlay district is established to conserve and enhance downtown Stillwater's appearance, preserve its historical and architectural assets, protect and encourage areas of existing or potential scenic value, and assist property owners. It promotes working together effectively when new construction, renovation, and restoration are proposed. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that building alterations emphasize the design and materials of the original building and remove inconsistent materials and features, that new construction maintains the scale and character of existing buildings and that downtown pedestrian quality is maintained and enhanced.*

The Downtown Design Review District (DDRD Overlay District) includes the Stillwater Commercial Historic District shown on **Figure 1** and **Figure 4**. These districts contain most of the city's late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial buildings. The surrounding DDRD with a total of approximately 300 commercial, residential, institutional, and industrial properties, includes new construction since ca. 1975, most notably residential and office buildings. Overlapping portions of the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCD) include many 19th- and early 20th-century residential properties. Pioneer Park is among historically significant public open spaces in the DDRD, in addition to Lowell Park. Commercial properties in the DDRD outside the Stillwater Commercial Historic District span the period ca. 1885-1970 as well as more recent construction.



*One of the oldest commercial buildings in the SCHD: 132 S. Main Street (1869), in 2021.*

The HPC uses the Design Guidelines to review all Design Permit applications for new construction, exterior alterations and additions. Features of the following are regulated by Standards in the Stillwater City Code:

- Building height, volume and setback
- Signs and Awnings
- Lighting
- Parking
- Streetscape Design

If determined to be primarily maintenance-related and within certain budget limits, some projects may receive administrative review and approval from City staff.

All building alterations and development in the DDRD are subject to City zoning regulations. Base zoning districts underlying the DDRD overlay district primarily include Central Business District (CBD), Two Family Residential (RB), and Public Administration (PA).

Individually designated NRHP properties within the DDRD, outside of the Stillwater Commercial Historic District, have not been individually designated as local landmarks. NRHP properties include the Washington County Courthouse, Ivory McKusick House, Mortimer Webster House, Roscoe Hersey House, Austin Jenks House, and Staples Mill (see **Figure 4**).

### 5.2.1 Historic Residential Properties in the DDRD

The Downtown Design Review District Guidelines or Historic Residential Design Guidelines may also apply to residential buildings, including some properties currently in commercial use that were historically used as dwellings. The Design Review Permit Process includes review of proposed alterations to exterior features such as porches, windows, siding, and decorative trim and additions.

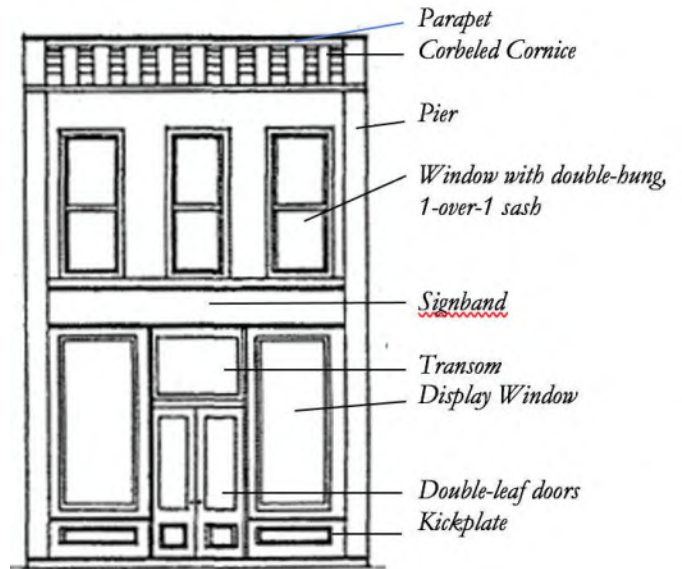


### 5.3 NON-RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS

The Downtown Design Review District surrounding Stillwater’s Main Street and the downtown riverfront represents more than 150 years of the city’s development. The restored masonry storefronts and industrial building facades are evidence of property owners’ interest in historic preservation since the early 1970s. Ranging in height from one to three stories, excellent examples of Italianate, Queen Anne, and Commercial styles are executed in red and yellow brick and limestone. Each historic commercial building is unique, with a great variety of storefronts, window treatments and rooflines located on each block. Roofline parapets are executed in wood, metal or brick, and masonry plaques bear the names of early businesses. Storefronts are often flanked by cast iron or wood columns and upper-story windows are framed by brick corbelling and ornate stone and brick hoods.

In the past, some historic storefronts and facades were remodeled, resulting in removal of decorative trim and window and storefront alterations. In recent years, however, many building owners have completely restored historic storefronts and facades. Photographs and archival research have aided these efforts. Historic photographs, available at the Minnesota Historical Society, the Washington County Historical Society, the John Runk photo collection at the Stillwater Public Library, Washington County Historical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society, show Stillwater’s streetscape changes over time. Exterior maintenance and rehabilitation, new infill construction and upgraded signs and lighting are ongoing in the district today.

As detailed in **Chapter 3**, many of Stillwater’s commercial and industrial buildings retain special style or character associated with a period (or periods) of construction. Typically there is a two-part horizontal division with glazed (or once-glazed) storefronts at the first story. The storefronts—the façades of individual shops—usually support a band of uniformly sized windows surmounted by a decorative cornice.



*Parts of a Building: Historic Commercial*

Design Guidelines also apply to features of former factory and other industrial buildings within the Downtown Design Review District. A prominent stone or concrete foundation, flat roof, simple cornice treatment, and symmetrically arranged windows with one-over-one sash are typical characteristics of some.



*Smithson Box Factory, 323 S. Main Street (1910), in 1936. Runk/MNHS*

### 5.3.1 General Guidelines

- a. Conserve and enhance the historic appearance of Stillwater's commercial and industrial buildings. Windows, entries, and decorative historic features such as columns, brackets, cornices, and parapets should be retained in repair or renovation projects.
- b. Historic storefronts should be repaired or restored rather than replaced, when possible.
- c. Conserve historic wood, stone, brick, tile, terra cotta, metal and glass, and other surfaces.
- d. Missing or severely deteriorated features should be replaced with new materials that reflect the size, style, and detail of the original. Appropriate substitute materials are acceptable.
- e. Retain and conserve alterations and additions that have developed significance over the course of the building's history.
- f. Restoration or rehabilitation projects should not borrow designs, materials, or colors from periods inappropriate to the historic design.
- g. Where possible, determine the historic appearance the property of through photographic and archival research and building inspection, and use the information in planning improvements. Alterations that have not have historical significance may be removed.



*Lumbermen's Exchange, 101 S. Water Street (1890). MNHS*



*Majestic Theatre, 229 S. Main Street (1910).*



*Mosier Bros Block (1888) and the adjoining Jarchow and York Block (1890) at Chestnut and S. Main Streets, shown in 1915. MNHS*



### 5.3.2 Masonry

*Deteriorated brick, stone, mortar, and other materials should be replaced with material used in original construction or with materials that resemble the appearance of the original as closely as possible. The advice of a skilled mason should be sought for repair projects.*

#### *Cleaning and Waterproofing*

- a. Masonry cleaning should be conducted only to halt deterioration and by means such as low-pressure water, soft brushes, and/or appropriate chemical treatment. Sandblasting should not be used under any circumstances. Waterproof and water repellent coatings should not be used unless there is evidence of past water penetration.

#### *Repointing*

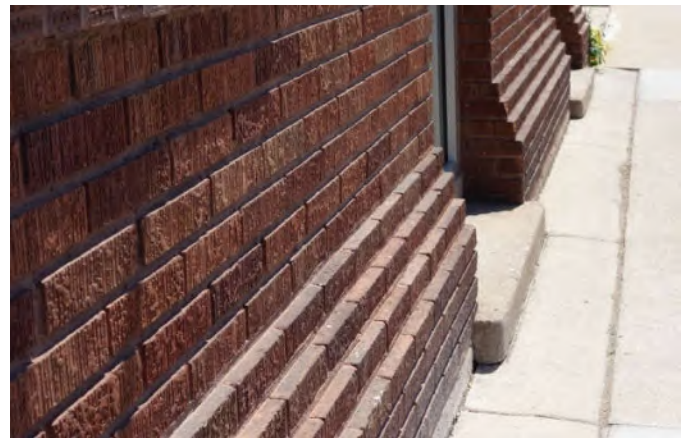
- b. Original mortar joint size and profile should be retained and/or reduplicated in repointing. Mortar mixtures should duplicate the original in lime, sand, and cement proportion and should duplicate the original mortar in color and texture.
- c. Mortar joints should be carefully washed after setup to retain the neatness of the joint lines and keep extraneous mortar off of masonry surfaces.

#### *Painting and Paint Removal*

- d. The historic color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained and unpainted stone and brick surfaces should not be painted. The removal of paint from painted masonry surfaces should only be attempted if unpainted surfaces are historically appropriate and if removal can be accomplished without damage to the masonry.
- e. Historic painted signs and features such as masonry anchors should be conserved.

#### *Resurfacing*

- f. Historic masonry surfaces should not be covered with other materials, including stucco, brick or stone veneer, or vinyl or aluminum products.



*Above: locally quarried limestone and many types of brick, including locally burned yellow brick, are among Stillwater's distinctive early building materials.*

### 5.3.3 Roofs, Cornices, and Parapets

*The historic roofline including the coping, cornice, parapet, and other elements are character-defining features and should be appropriately maintained.*

- a. Whether constructed of wood, brick, pressed sheet metal, limestone or other stone, or terra cotta, no part of the historic cornice or parapet should be covered or removed.
- b. Historic masonry copings at the parapet should be maintained. Where coping is missing on common (party) walls, metal coping with an appropriate painted finish is acceptable. It should not extend on the exterior building wall farther than the approximate width of a single brick or masonry unit.
- c. Rooftop equipment, including air conditioning units that project above the roofline, should be set back from the parapet and primary building elevation. Equipment should be concealed with appropriate materials and wherever possible should not be visible from the street level. (See also **Chapter 5, Section 5.5.2, Rooftop Equipment, Utility Areas and Mechanical Equipment.**)



*Excelsior Block (1882) at 118-126 N. Main Street features a corbeled brick cornice and stone date and name plaques.*

### 5.3.4 Removal of Non-historic Features

- a. Manufactured siding, signs, canopies, filler panels of wood or shingles, stucco, concrete or glass block, and fiberglass are among non-historic materials or treatments that may be appropriate for removal during building rehabilitation.

### 5.3.5 Replacement of Missing Features

- a. Missing materials and features, as shown in historic photographs or other evidence, may be replicated and replaced as appropriate. Replacement materials or features should replicate the size, scale, design, material, and texture of the original and be based on historical documentation.
- b. Avoid adding features that cannot be substantiated by historical evidence.



*Rooftop equipment should be set back as far as possible.*



### 5.3.6 Windows

*Windows and window trim give character and expression to the building exterior. Their size and spacing are important elements of the historic facade.*

#### *Maintain and Conserve*

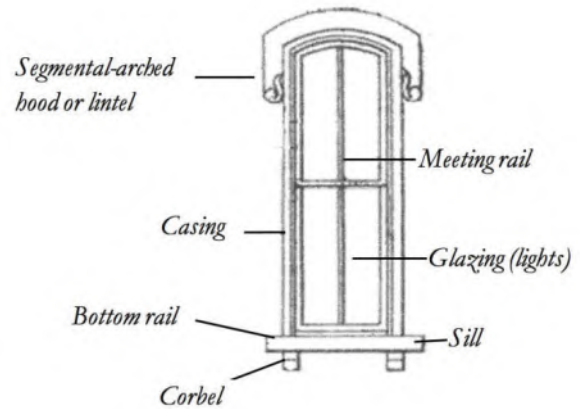
- a. Wherever feasible, historic windows and sash should be repaired rather than replaced, especially on principal elevations.
- b. Existing window openings should be retained. Window openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit new sash. Window openings should not be filled in with wood, brick, or any other material.

#### *New Windows: Size and Shape*

- c. New window openings should not be introduced into principal elevations.
- d. Where appropriate, in limited instances such as on secondary facades, new windows should be compatible with existing historic windows and trim.

#### *New Sash*

- e. Historic wood and metal sash should be repaired and conserved wherever possible.
- f. Replacement sash, if installed, should duplicate the existing or other appropriate historic models. Whenever possible, choose new units of wood, rather than metal. If metal is selected, it should have a baked enamel or other appropriate factory finish.
- g. The size and number of lights (panes of glass) in each sash should not be altered. New sash, if installed, should replicate the existing or other appropriate historic models.
- h. Crank-out or fixed single-pane units should be not be used to replace double-hung sash.



*Parts of an Italianate style window shown with 2-over-2, double-hung sash.*



*222 – 224 E. Chestnut Street, ca. 1882. Molded stone lintels and stone sills frame slender windows with double-hung sash.*

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### *Window Trim*

- i. Retain all decorative trim around the windows, including lintels, pediments, and hoods.
- j. If window replacement is necessary, the original trim profile should be replicated.

### *Storm Windows*

- k. Repair and retain historic wood storms wherever possible.
- l. Consider adding appropriately designed storm windows to protect historic sash.
- m. If replacement windows are needed, they should not have vertical or horizontal divisions that conflict with the divisions of the historic sash and should be flush with existing trim. If combination metal storms must be installed, they should have a baked enamel factory finish.

### *Shutters and Blinds*

- n. Shutters and blinds should not be installed on buildings not originally designed for them.
- o. Where appropriate, shutters should appear to be operable and should be mounted to the window casing. Shutters should be constructed of wood.

### *Security*

- p. Historic trim or other architectural features should not be removed for the installation of security bars or grills on principal elevations.



*214 – 218 N. Main (ca. 1884)*



*109 Myrtle Street (ca. 1880).*



### 5.3.7 Entries and Storefronts

*Prominent first-floor display windows and distinctive entries facing the street are typical of Stillwater's historic commercial buildings, whether free-standing or part of a large, multi-unit property.*

- a. All historic entry and storefront components should be retained, including recessed features, display windows and hoods, cast iron or other columns, sidelights, fanlights, and tilework or paving,
- b. Entry openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit a new door. New entry openings should not be introduced into principal elevations.
- c. Historic doors (and hardware) should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement of original or historic doors is necessary, the replacement should be compatible with the material, design, and hardware of similar historic models.
- d. If there are no historic models available for replacement or replication, the new door should be of simple design with a single-light design. Wood-framed, painted wood doors and wood framing are preferred. Avoid solid or residential-type doors. Avoid solid or residential-type doors.
- e. Avoid clear-finish aluminum doors and doorframes, aluminum windows (and their accessories).
- f. Historic garage openings, where present, and service doors should be conserved. If removal is necessary, materials used to fill the opening should be compatible with the material, design, and hardware of the surrounding facade.



*Restored storefront, ca. 1884, at 216 S. Main Street.*



*Restored storefront at 208 S. Main Street. The building dates from ca. 1904.*



*Restored storefront at 330 S. Main Street; building dates from ca. 1885.*

### 5.3.8 New Systems in Existing Buildings

- a. Historic materials should not be damaged or obscured to accommodate new heating, ventilating, and other mechanical systems.
- b. Mechanical and electrical equipment should not be placed on primary, character-defining facades.
- c. Rooftop equipment, including air conditioning units that project above the roofline, should be set back from the primary building elevation and screened with appropriate materials. (See also **Chapter 5, Section 5.5.2, Rooftop Equipment, Utility Areas and Mechanical Equipment.**)

### 5.3.9 Firestairs

- a. The detailing of firestairs should be compatible with the period and style of the building.
- b. As permitted by the Stillwater City Code, stairs should be located as inconspicuously as possible.



*Electrical equipment should be placed on non-primary facades wherever possible.*



## 5.4 NON-RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS

*Compatible additions provide for current and future needs and the continued use of existing historic buildings. Additions must be carefully designed to relate to protect the historic and architectural character of the building and streetscape.*

*The historic district conveys a sense of time and place associated Stillwater's history but is also dynamic, with alterations and additions to existing structures and new construction occurring over time. Well-executed design and construction details should assist in understanding the evolution of the building.*

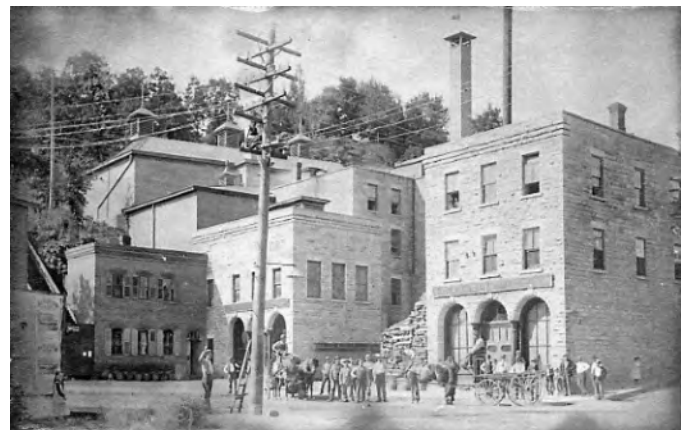
Refer to applicable Design Standards for height, volume, setback, parking, signs, and other requirements (see Stillwater City Code).

### 5.4.1 General Guidelines

- a. New additions should conform to the size, scale, massing, height, materials, and facade proportions of the historic building and surrounding buildings and pedestrian spaces. (Refer to the Stillwater City Code, as some provisions of the base zoning district may not be allowed by the overlay district.)
- b. New additions should be designed to result in no or minimal loss of historic fabric. Character-defining features of the original historic building should not be destroyed, damaged, or obscured.
- c. A new addition should be compatible with the design of the historic building, but also be identifiable as a product of its own time.



*At the Lora Hotel at 403 S. Main Street, the façade of the two-story red brick building (which dates from the 1980s) was restored and features new display windows. A new penthouse above has simple exterior cladding and window openings.*



*Joseph Wolf Brewery in ca 1890.*

## 5.4.2 Building Guidelines

### *Materials and Details*

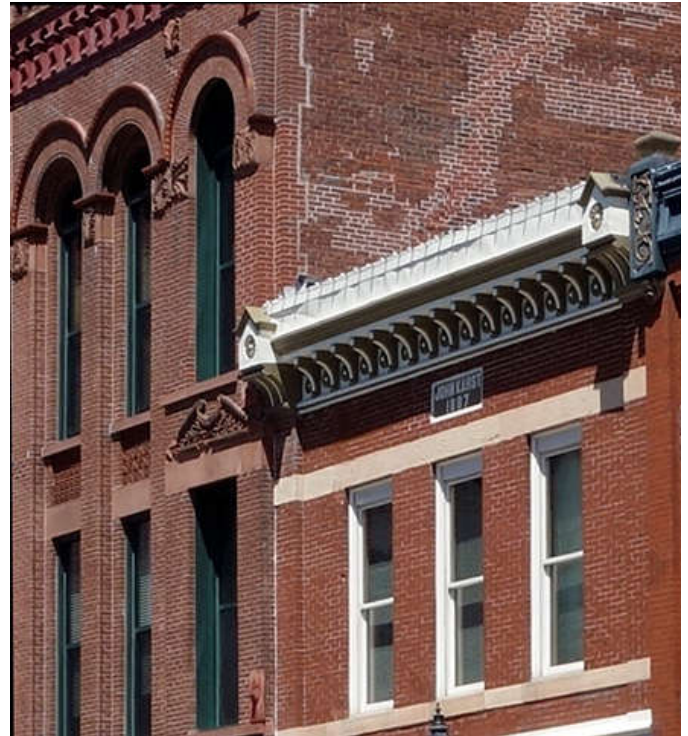
- d. Materials and details used in new additions should be compatible with those of the primary historic building.

### *Roofs*

- e. The skyline or roof profile should relate to the predominant roof shapes of the historic building. Roofing materials should be appropriate to the design of the building and the visibility of the roof.
- f. Roof hardware including skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane and should be buffered from view wherever possible.

### *Windows and Entries*

- g. The proportion, size, rhythm, and detailing of windows and entries should be visually compatible with that of the existing historic building. The rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure should also be visually compatible.



*Stillwater's Main Street historic rooflines and upper-story windows exhibit a variety of styles and materials.*

## 5.4.3 Site Guidelines

- h. Additions should be located on the most inconspicuous elevation of the historic building, preferably at the rear.
- i. New additions should be compatible with the setback of the existing historic building and the adjacent streetscape.
- j. Additions should not destroy character-defining site features, including topography, mature vegetation, and significant views and vistas.



*This N. Main Street block shows the integration of old and new buildings with varying setbacks.*



## 5.5 NON-RESIDENTIAL: NEW CONSTRUCTION

*Guidelines for new construction projects in the DDRD are intended to encourage a high standard of new design while conserving the scale and character of Stillwater's historic buildings and streetscapes. Pedestrian-oriented design that maintains and improves the scale, walkability and general accessibility of downtown streets and spaces is especially important.*

See applicable Design Standards for height, volume, and setback, parking requirements, and other requirements (see Stillwater City Code).

Depending on location, a Design Permit application for new residential construction in the DDRD could potentially refer to three sets of guidelines: those for NCD, DDRD, and historic residential properties. CDD staff will determine which guidelines are applicable.

New infill construction within primarily residential blocks of the DDRD should follow the Neighborhood Conservation Guidelines and may also refer to the New Construction section of the Historic Residential Design Guidelines. See also the Stillwater City Code for applicable Standards.

### 5.5.1 General Guidelines

- a. New construction design proposals within the Downtown Design Review District should relate to the massing, scale, size, height, and materials of existing historic buildings and the pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- b. As appropriate, larger building masses should be subdivided into smaller units related in size to traditional buildings within the historic downtown. The pattern of features such as window and entry openings also establishes building scale.



*The Hotel Crosby, 232 N. Main Street (2018).*



*A sense of human scale is established at street level by building height and width, and by window and entry openings across the façade.*

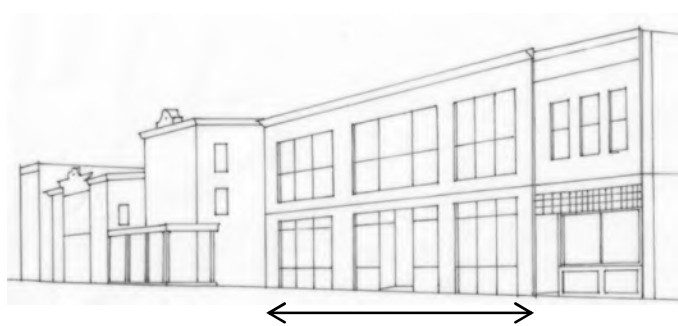
- c. Design proposals should demonstrate compatibility with adjacent cornice lines, floor-to-floor heights where strongly expressed, sign bands, and any other elements that unify the street elevation.
- d. New construction should reflect the placement and orientation of adjacent historic buildings. In most cases, new buildings should be built to the lot line (see Stillwater City Code)
- e. Where appropriate in the commercial streetscape, the primary façade should maintain the traditional division of an articulated storefront or entry-level story, an upper facade with regularly-spaced windows, and a well-demarcated roofline.
- f. Exterior materials should complement the type, color, and texture of materials historically used in the district. Acceptable exterior materials include stone, brick, rusticated concrete block, and decorative terra cotta and stucco.
- g. As noted in the Standards, a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the street level Main Street facade shall be transparent and thirty percent (30%) on side streets or rear facades (see Stillwater City Code).

*Landscape Design*

Refer to the Stillwater City Code.

*Parking*

Refer to the Stillwater City Code.



*New construction, whether infill or freestanding structures, should reflect the scale and character of the existing streetscape, including the pattern of rooflines, windows and entries.*

## 5.5.2 Building Guidelines

*Height*

- a. The height of new buildings should conform to the height of buildings on the surrounding block street face(s). See the Stillwater City Code for specific freestanding and infill building requirements). Step-downs in building height, wall-plane offsets, and other variations in building massing should be used to provide a visual transition when the height of new construction exceeds that of adjacent historic buildings by more than one-half story.

*Roofs*

- b. Roofs should be flat or slightly sloped with appropriately detailed parapets and/or cornices. Roof components should be scaled to relate in size and proportion to adjacent buildings.
- c. Roof materials should be similar in terms of form, color, and texture to traditionally used in the district.

*Windows, Entries, and Storefronts*

- d. Windows, entries, and storefronts should be compatible with surrounding historic buildings in alignment, type and proportion. Features such as divided lights, transoms, signbands, and bulkheads are typical of many historic storefronts and should be included in new design where appropriate.



*Stillwater's commercial core is comprised of one- and two-story buildings, many with prominent parapets above flat or slightly sloping roofs.*



- e. Recessed entries are appropriate for new construction in the DDRD.
- f. Window sash or frames should be wood, vinyl-clad, or appropriately colored metal.
- g. Wood-framed, painted wood doors and wood framing systems are preferable to aluminum systems.

*Exterior Color*

- h. Building color should be compatible with historic materials, building type and style, and the surrounding area context.
- i. The masonry exterior of new infill buildings should not be painted (see Stillwater City Code).

*Rooftop Equipment, Utility Areas and Mechanical Equipment*

- j. Wherever possible, rooftop mechanical equipment, including air conditioning units that project above the roofline, should be set back from building elevations. Equipment should be screened from street-level views with appropriate materials.
- k. Exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers and air conditioning units should be screened from views from nearby streets and adjacent structures in a manner that is compatible with the building and site design.
- l. Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment adjacent to pedestrian alleys and service entrances.



*114 S. Main (ca. 1885, 1928). New designs should refer to the traditional organization of the entry and storefront.*



## 5.6 SIGNS, AWNINGS, AND LIGHTING

*Signs, awnings, and lighting in the DDRD are subject to City sign regulations within the Stillwater City Code. The following guidelines provide additional direction for signs, awnings, and lighting to ensure appropriate preservation and enhancement of the historic character of the DDRD.*

### 5.6.1 Signs

#### *Existing Historic Signs*

- a. The maintenance and restoration of any existing historic sign is encouraged in lieu of replacement.

#### *Architectural Signs*

- b. Preserve existing architectural signs.
- c. Promote the use of original building names in new signage.
- d. New buildings are encouraged to incorporate an architectural sign.

#### *Graphic Design Signs*

- e. Where existing historic painted wall signs can still be found, leave them exposed or restore them to their original colors.
- f. Graphic design signs should have a historic theme.
- g. Graphic design signs should not advertise a new business or company.



*Signage on E. Chestnut Street, looking west, in ca. 1930. MNHS/Runk.*

#### *Window Signs*

These design guidelines are only applicable to window signs that cover more than one-third of the total area of the window in which the sign is displayed. Window signs that cover one-third or less of the window area do not require a sign permit.

- h. Leave the window display space clear. Insert signs at the base and/or head of the window.
- i. The size of sign lettering and images should generally be small since it should be oriented to visibility by pedestrians.
- j. Lettering formed with neon may be used on the inside of the window provided the size, light intensity, color and style are consistent with the theme of the building.
- k. Display street numbers on or directly above the door.
- l. Display business hours directly on the inside of the door or in an adjacent window.

#### *Multi-tenant Signs*

- m. View the building as a whole and plan a unified sign design strategy to take advantage of all possible sign locations.
- n. The use of a common directory is encouraged.

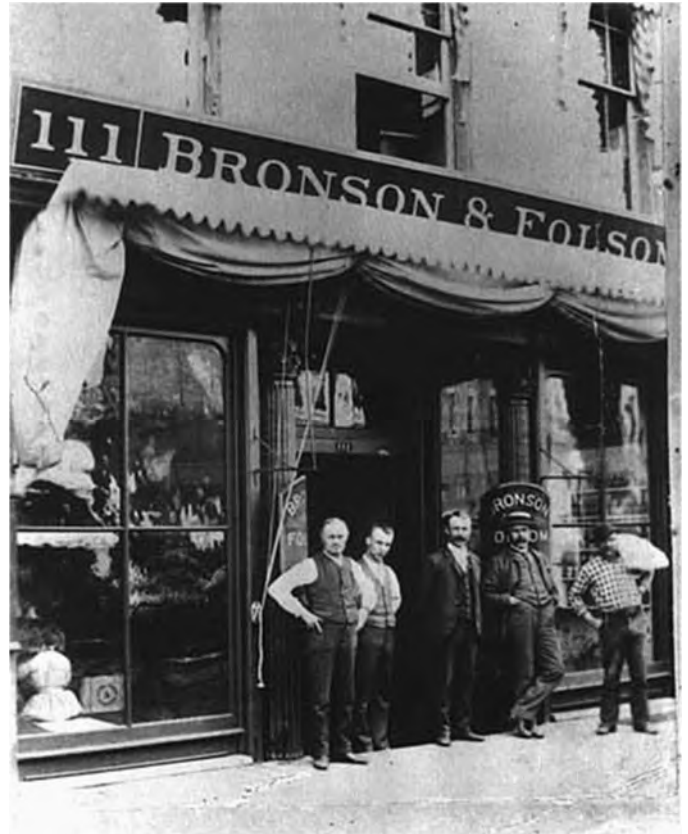
#### *Installation of Signs on Historic Buildings*

- o. The impact of the installation of any sign on a historic building should be minimized and must allow the building façade to return to its original condition upon sign removal.
- p. Reuse of existing mounting brackets, studs or holes is encouraged.



## 5.6.2 Awnings

- a. Retractable shed awnings are encouraged; fixed awnings should mimic the profile of operable units (one to one pitch).
- b. The width of awnings should fit the geometry of the building façade. They should not extend across multiple storefronts of different buildings, but should reflect the window or door openings.
- c. Canvas, canvas blend, and acrylics that resemble canvas are appropriate materials for awnings and canopies; vinyl, metal, glass and shiny materials are generally not appropriate.
- d. Awnings with stripes or other patterns may be appropriate if there is not signage on the awning and the pattern is complementary with surrounding awnings on the same block face.
- e. Awnings should be mounted on the frame of a window or door opening rather than the wall surrounding the opening.
- f. Awnings should not obscure transom windows. Awnings should be mounted below the transom windows on the horizontal window frame feature that separates the display window from the transom window.



*Awnings and signband at Bronson & Folsom Grocery Store, S. Main Street, in ca. 1900, MNHS.*



*Awnings at the Lumbermen's Exchange, 101 S. Water Street (1890).*

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### 5.6.3 Lighting

Lighting is also subject to the regulations and standards of Stillwater City Code.

#### *General Summary of Lighting Standards*

- a. Historic lighting should be repaired and retained wherever possible.
- b. Lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other features rather than attract attention to itself.
- c. Lighting should have an even, indirect, and preferably warm level of illumination.
- d. New light fixtures should be of simple contemporary design.
- e. No part of the historic facade should be irreversibly damaged or altered in the installation of lighting. Wherever possible, electrical conduit and other hardware should be concealed and not installed across the building façade.





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# NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT (NCD) DESIGN GUIDELINES

## 5.7 NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT

Stillwater's Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCD) was established in 2013 to preserve the unique character of Stillwater's historic residential neighborhoods. The City of Stillwater encourages the conservation of historic houses by providing guidance on the design of new infill development and additions resulting from a partial demolition. Unnecessary demolition of structures that contribute to the district's historic character is discouraged (**Figure 5**).

Such conservation Districts have been successfully adopted in many cities and assist in preserving historic and architectural character and contribute to neighborhood participation and investment.

Section 31-405 of the Stillwater City Code notes:

*The neighborhood conservation overlay district is established to protect and preserve the unique character of Stillwater's residential neighborhoods by regulating new infill development and partial demolition within the district. Its purpose is to conserve traditional neighborhood character, guide future infill and partial demolition development within the district, and discourage unnecessary demolition of structures that contribute to the district's historic character. It also preserves neighborhood pride, property values, a diverse and affordable range of homes, and the general economic vitality of the neighborhood.*

The NCD is comprised of some of Stillwater's earliest neighborhoods, including North Hill and South Hill. These and seven other neighborhoods developed from the late 19th- through the mid- 20th century. They were the subject of inventories and studies conducted by the HPC between 1995 and 2005 (**Figure 5**).

Houses within the NCD especially reflect the decades of economic and population growth related to the lumber industry and manufacturing. The housing stock includes simple vernacular houses located on small lots as well as large, late 19th- and early-20th century houses that occupy large parcels. Many blocks within the NCD offer views of the Saint Croix River. Many houses have open porches, mature landscapes, and streets that follow the topographical contour of the hillsides and ravines.

During the first decades of Stillwater's settlement, most commercial, industrial and residential construction took place along or near the riverfront. House builders soon chose lots leading up the steep streets and along the ravines of Stillwater's topographical bowl, and erected large, stylish houses as well as a great range of houses intended for people in many occupations. Stillwater is associated with its impressive "lumber baron mansions," but the diverse collection of smaller Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne style houses as well as many vernacular examples deserve equal attention when evaluating the impact of nearby new infill construction or additions. **Chapter 3** reviews the range of architectural styles typical of Stillwater's neighborhoods.

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### 5.7.1 NCD Design Review

The HPC reviews Design Permit applications in the NCD prior to issuance of a building permit for new construction, including additions to existing buildings that have required a Demolition Permit. (See **Chapter 4** for information about the Design Permit process.) Guidelines for new construction projects in the NCD are intended to conserve the character of the buildings and emphasize setback, height, size and scale, massing, and the overall relationship to the streetscape and neighborhood. Historic features such as windows, porches and trim are a general part of the discussion, but the guidelines do not include review for alterations to these building components. The NCD guideline authors noted, “Many of the design guidelines are based on the simple goal of helping a new infill project be a good neighbor to adjacent existing houses and neighborhood.”

Exterior alterations to properties located in most of the NCD do not require a Design Permit. However, exterior alterations to properties located in the portion of the NCD that overlaps the Downtown Design Review District do require a Design Permit (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). Depending on building type, Downtown Design Review District or Historic Residential Guidelines apply to those properties. Proposed alterations to features such as porches, windows, siding, and decorative trim are reviewed through the Design Permit process. (See **Figure 3**).

The following NCD guidelines are organized in four sections: Neighborhood and Streets, Building and Site, Architectural Details, and Good Neighbor Considerations.

The area included in the NCD reflects the growth of the city between 1843 and 1914, with a number of houses constructed after that period. **Chapter 2** of the *Manual* provides an overview of Stillwater’s development and historic building and landscape resources. **Chapter 3** provides information about building types and style features and is useful in project planning.



*The Classical Revival style porch of the Huntton House, 522 S. 6th Street, in 1925. MNHS/Runk.*





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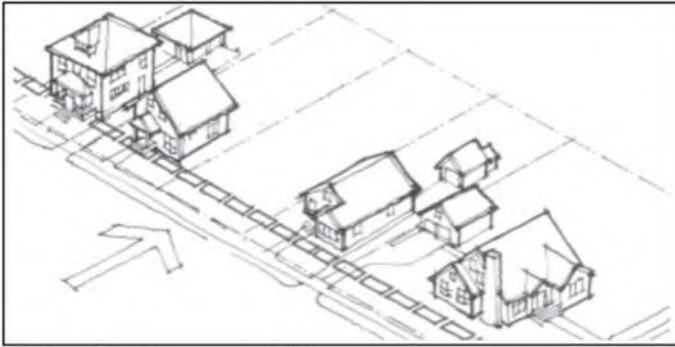
## 5.8 NEIGHBORHOODS AND STREETS

### 5.8.1 Massing and scale of a new building should be compatible with neighboring structures.

The massing and scale of new buildings should follow the predominant pattern of the neighborhood. Special consideration should be given to adjacent structures, especially if they are consistent with the overall pattern of the neighborhood.

A well-designed building and site exhibits a proportional relationship to adjoining properties and maintains the rhythm and scale of the streetscape by using compatible massing, proportions and details.

Although base zoning districts often allow greater mass and scale, the scale and volume of the new building should respect its context and that of adjacent buildings and not stand out due to inappropriate size.



*Infill designs should address the size, height, and scale of buildings on neighboring lots and the overall streetscape.*

### 5.8.2 Respect the existing rhythm of the streetscape.

New infill construction should attempt to maintain the existing overall pattern and rhythm of the streetscape.

Uniform narrow lots naturally set up a strong rhythm on the street front, and design features of new construction should relate to that rhythm.

Building massing, scale and orientation, roof forms, porches, building setbacks, garage and driveway locations, and landscaping should be carefully considered because they all contribute to the new structure's compatibility with the existing pattern and rhythm of the streetscape.

### 5.8.3 Follow alignment and setbacks predominant on the street and adjacent properties.

One important component of street rhythm is the building-front alignment and setback from the street and boulevard.

The building-front alignment and setback should be carefully planned to ensure integration with the surrounding streetscape.

Varying lot sizes, corner lots, and other considerations should be examined on a case-by-case basis to determine where, and to what degree, variations from setbacks are appropriate. In most cases, relating to the predominant alignment is appropriate, even if some existing structures may deviate from it.



*New construction should relate to the overall massing, rhythm, setback, and sideyard spacing of the block.*



*Appropriate infill: Roof forms, height, and detail are compatible.*



*Inappropriate infill: Roof forms are not compatible; large unbroken roof slope out of scale with neighboring buildings.*

#### **5.8.4 Design new roofs to be compatible with forms of existing roofs in the neighborhood.**

The perception of scale, massing and the rhythm of a building is greatly affected by its roof form and height.

Although a variety of roof forms may be evident along several blocks, the new building's roof should appear compatible in scale, pitch, orientation and complexity to those surrounding it.

Oversized roof forms should be avoided.

If the infill building is larger than those nearby, massing should be adjusted to allow the larger roof forms to be more articulated and broken down into smaller, well-scaled components.

#### **5.8.5 Building height should be considered in choosing roof forms, architectural style, and relating to the neighborhood context.**

Building height alone is not adequate in considering the relationship of adjacent structures. Two buildings of the same height can be perceived quite differently in terms of scale and compatibility, depending on the overall massing of the building, its articulation and its roof forms.

Depending on site and surrounding neighborhood context, certain architectural styles are more appropriate than others. Consider the pitch, slope and orientation of primary gables, and the use of hip roofs, in adjusting the apparent building volume, mass, and height, to be appropriate to surrounding building style and context. Consider introducing projecting elements, roof forms, shed roofs, dormers and gables, as appropriate.

### **5.9 BUILDING AND SITE**

In Stillwater neighborhoods, many parcels have sloped or irregular topography, and existing mature trees. Building and site design should respond to and be influenced by natural features, adapting the building to the land rather than the land to the building.

#### **5.9.1 Building and site design should respond to natural features.**

Locate building forms on the site to work with existing significant trees, slopes, and other natural features.

Choose locations for walks, driveways and garages that will minimize site disruption and erosion or damage to nearby or adjacent root systems.





*Appropriate: Adjust the building design to respect existing vegetation and slope.*

### 5.9.2 Respect the site's natural grades in new building design: minimize cut, fill and retaining walls.

When possible, locate structures to follow the natural contours of the property. Organize the building's massing for orientation with existing grades rather than creating an artificially flat building pad with abrupt retaining walls.

See city slope conservation regulations in the Stillwater City Code for restrictions on slopes greater than 24%.

### 5.9.3 When retaining walls are necessary, minimize their impact.

Design of retaining walls should minimize grade change by creating gradual steps or tiers.

Select the form and material of new walls to be compatible with existing walls in the neighborhood, especially where visually prominent (such as along the boulevard and street frontage).

Use landscaping to soften and minimize visual impact.

### 5.9.4 Preserve significant trees.

Building design and siting should consider existing trees on site and those immediately adjacent.

Site carefully around the tree canopy and root zone, and avoid excessive removal of topsoil from building site.

Choose permeable materials for paths and driveways in sensitive areas of the root zone.

### 5.9.5 Locate the garage and driveway to respect existing street and neighborhood patterns.

Garage design should be properly scaled and sited relative to the primary structure.

Because of the impact garage location has on streetscape and building massing, refer to existing neighborhood garage/building/site relationships in new infill site and building design.



*Appropriate: Recessed garage is minimized, emphasizing house façade and street frontage.*

### 5.9.6 Minimize garage impact on new structure massing and street front.

Design the garage to set back and defer to the main building massing. Consider tandem garages, or side-loaded or backyard garages where site permits.

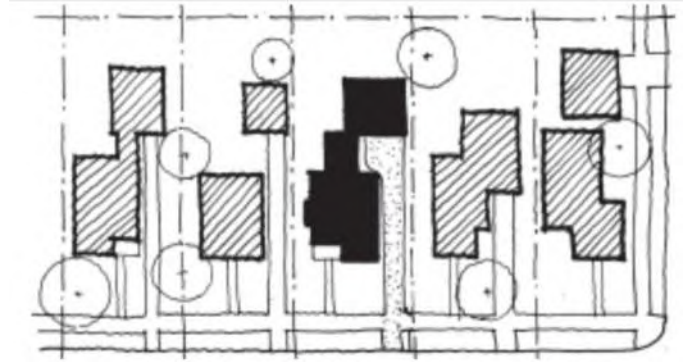
Avoid oversized garages that dominate the site and street frontage on narrower lots.

Use dormers, windows and other design elements to help break up blank garage roof forms or walls. Single garage doors are preferred over double garage doors.

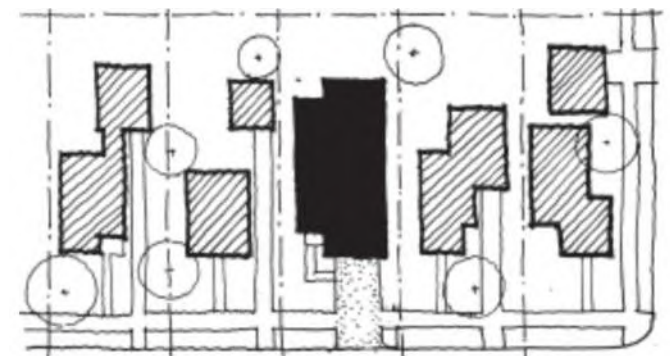
Minimize the total area devoted to driveway paving.



*Inappropriate: Garage-dominated “snout” house.*



*Appropriate: Building footprint maintains scale and pattern of surrounding block and streetscape.*



*Inappropriate: Oversized footprint of building ignores scale and pattern of neighborhood and neighbors’ open spaces.*

**5.9.7 The size and mass of the structure should be compatible with the size of the property.**

Consider the open space around a structure, and how it relates to the pattern of the neighborhood.

**5.9.8 Consider front porch elements in the design of infill structures.**

New infill structures should reflect the pattern of the neighborhood and adjacent structures with respect to porch elements and design.



*Many porch types, including full-length and wraparound, are found on District houses. Porches provide a transition from the public street to the private space of the building.*

**5.9.9 Accessory buildings should be compatible with the main building.**

Accessory buildings (including garages) should strongly relate to the main building design, including roof pitch, windows, trim details and materials. This relationship increases in importance with the visibility of the accessory building from the street.



*Accessory buildings should reflect the scale and overall design of the main building.*



**5.9.10 Design and detail new construction as four-sided architecture, where the building’s style, design and detail is consistent on all sides, not just the front façade.**

New design should exhibit character that is consistent with the existing four-sided design in the neighborhood. Roof forms, location and style of window openings, siding materials and texture, trim and detailing all play a role in creating consistent, complete design.



*The top example shows window and trim details that are consistent on all sides, but the example below lacks such architectural features.*

**5.10 ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS**



*In addition to designing for compatible massing, setback, and height, the appropriate use of materials, architectural details, color and lighting can also help the new structure fit into the neighborhood. The example at right has poorly chosen window, entry and roof details for its setting next to a traditional house.*

**5.10.1 The building façade should be compatible in scale and character to the houses of the surrounding streetscape.**

Window and door placement, proportions, and size can affect a building’s compatibility with adjacent structures. If the houses on the street tend to have a consistent vertical or horizontal emphasis in their facade elements, this should be incorporated in the new design.

**5.10.2 Building elements should be proportional to the scale and style of the building, and its context.**

Building facades should provide visual interest and a sense of human scale.

Door and window proportions should relate to the style of the building, and façade design and detail should be consistent in all elevations of the structure. Tall narrow window openings are appropriate with some traditional styles of architecture, while larger openings may fit more contemporary styles.

Avoid large area of blank walls, disproportionate gables sizes or shapes, minimal detailing. Features such as bay windows, bump-outs, dormers, and masonry chimneys can help add detail and enliven facades.



### 5.10.3 Use architectural details to create visual interest.

Use architectural features such as columns, brackets, rails, window, door and corner trim, water table and horizontal banding, and frieze and fascia boards to be generally compatible with adjacent structures.

### 5.10.4 In new building design, consider appropriate materials, textures and colors, and their relationship to other buildings of the neighborhood.

Building materials should relate to prevailing materials of the streetscape to unify old and new structures of the neighborhood. Traditional materials may include wood, stucco, stone, brick, and shingle siding. The use of natural materials—wood, stone, brick, stucco—rather than simulated, is preferred.

If fiber-cement products are used, they should be of the same depth, character and detail as surrounding buildings.

Color, although a matter of personal choice, should complement the structure and streetscape. For traditional styles, consider historic color palettes, often of three or more colors.



*In considering materials, study the details and textures typical of surrounding houses.*

### 5.10.5 Use masonry and stone authentically.

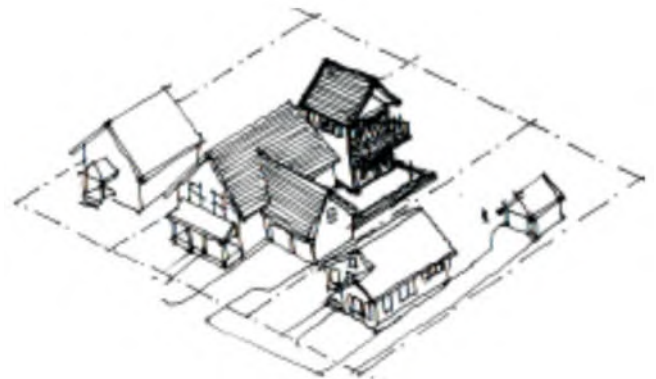
Masonry and stone materials, especially thin veneer types, should be used carefully, and in an authentic way. Their primary use as a foundation element relates well to the traditional use of local limestone and brick in historic Stillwater structures.

When masonry and stone are used as cladding for wall elements, care should be taken to define building mass elements with it, typically terminating it at inside corners.

## 5.11 GOOD NEIGHBOR CONSIDERATIONS

Many of the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Guidelines are based on the goal of helping a new infill project be a “good neighbor” to the adjacent existing houses and neighborhood. In addition to visual design compatibility, other considerations should be addressed, including maintaining privacy, access to views, light and air, and drainage issues.

### 5.11.1 Locate taller portions of buildings so as to minimize obstruction of sunlight to adjacent yards and rooms.



*Inappropriate infill: Tall building mass may obstruct sunlight to adjacent lots.*

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5.11.2 Consider views from neighboring properties when placing and sizing new building elements.

5.11.3 Windows, balconies and decks should be located to respect the private spaces of neighboring properties.

5.11.4 Consider using landscape elements and fences to buffer views and maintain privacy between properties.

5.11.5 Minimize the impact of exterior lighting on adjacent properties.

5.11.6 Use recessed downlight fixtures or shields. Avoid floodlights and non-shielded point source lights. Use motion sensors and timers to control fixtures.

5.11.7 Design grading and impervious surface drainage to minimize water run-off impact on neighboring properties.

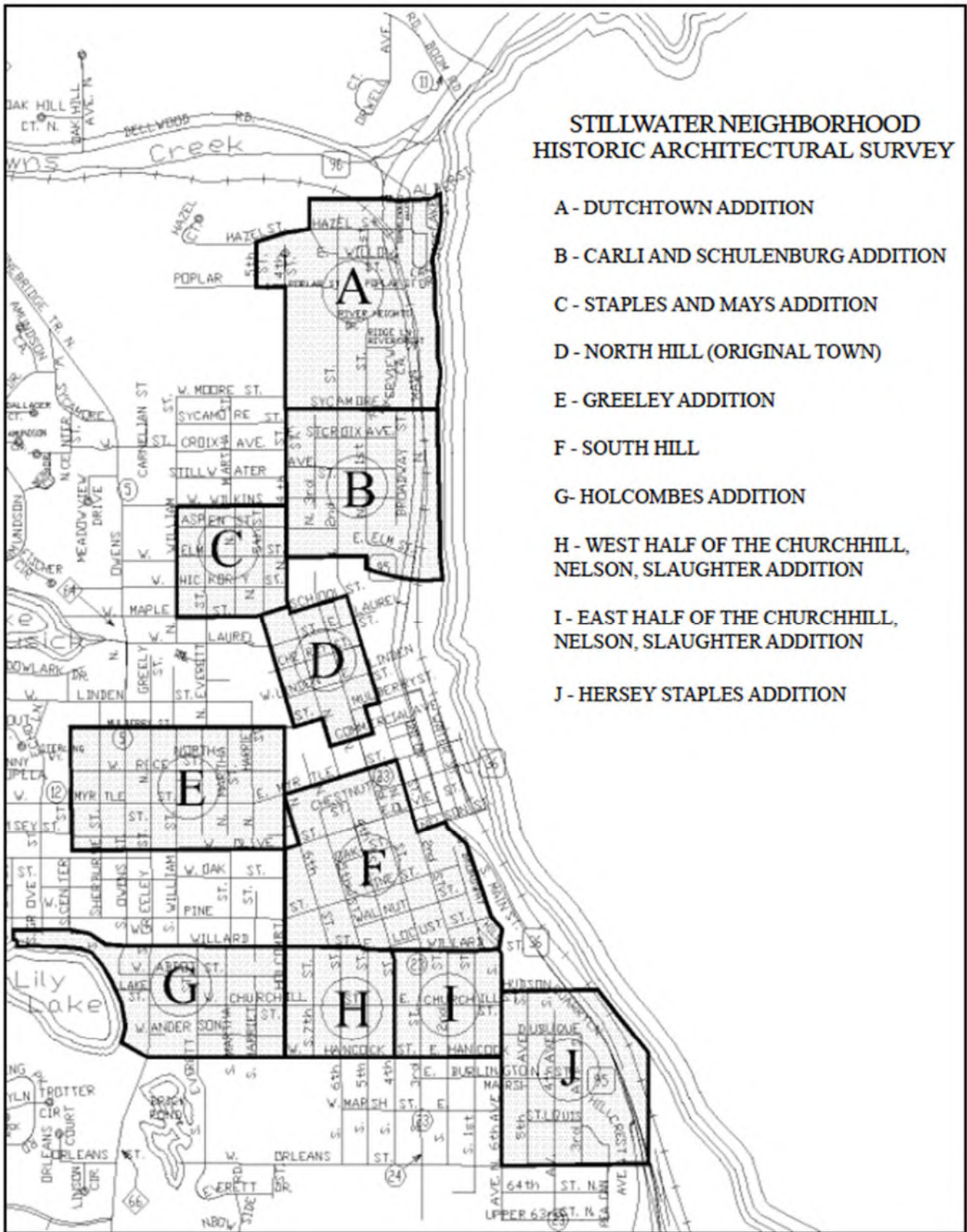


Figure 6. Stillwater Neighborhood Architectural Survey Areas

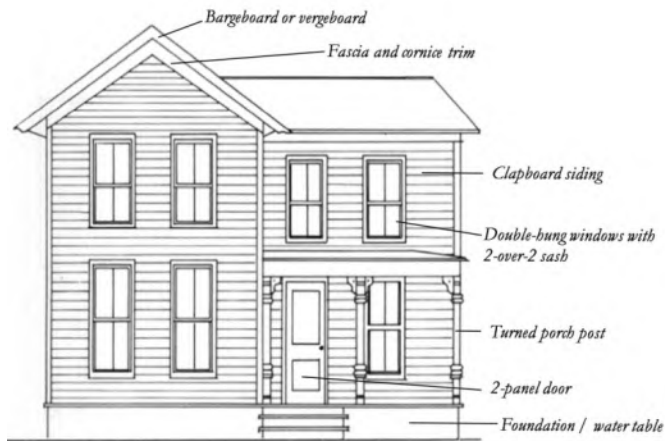


# HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

## 5.12 RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS

The Stillwater Historic Residential Design Guidelines are based on the Secretary of Interior's *Standards* and reflect local building types, styles and materials.

The guidelines provide a basis for making informed and consistent decisions about the rehabilitation and treatment of historic resources within the design permit process. They also provide information to property owners, builders, and designers when making improvements that affect historic resources. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of Stillwater's development and historic building and landscape resources, and **Chapter 3** provides information about building types and style features useful in project planning.



*Parts of a Building: Italianate and Vernacular styles*

### 5.12.1 General Guidelines

- Changes and additions should be compatible with the historic design of the building.
- Retain all historic materials and features where possible. New materials and features should replicate the old in size, shape, and texture.
- Retain wood clapboard siding and shingles wherever possible.
- Vinyl and metal siding is not recommended for installation on historic resources.
- Details such as cornerboards should be conserved or replicated.
- Retain original masonry and mortar where possible, repointing joints where missing or deteriorated. Mortar should match the original in composition, color, and texture, and joints should be of the same size and profile as the original. Masonry should be cleaned with the gentlest method possible; historic brick should never be sandblasted.



*Photographs, maps, and other building records at the Washington County Historical Society, Stillwater Public Library, and Minnesota Historical Society document past changes to Stillwater's historic houses. The Hospes House at 4th and Mulberry Streets is shown in 1921. MNHS/Runk*

### 5.12.2 Entries

The entry—including the door, the door surround, and sometimes sidelights and a transom—is usually the focal point of the facade. The size of the entry is directly related to the mass and scale of the building. As with windows, any alteration to size, shape, or trim details can have a detrimental effect on exterior appearance. As a character-defining feature, whenever possible, historic doors should be repaired rather than replaced, especially on principal elevations.

#### *Maintain and Conserve*

- a. Wherever feasible, the features of historic entries should be repaired rather than replaced, especially on principal elevations.

#### *Size and Shape*

- b. Historic entry openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit a new door. New entry openings should not be introduced into principal elevations, and new openings and doors should be compatible with existing historic units.

#### *Trim*

- c. Original or historic features of the entry, including hoods, columns, sidelights, fanlights, and transoms and hardware should be retained.
- d. New material used to repair or replace deteriorated trim or other features should match the original as closely as possible.



*Captain Austin Jenks House, 504 S. 5th Street (1871, NRHP).*

*Doors and Entry Trim*

- e. Wherever possible, historic paneled doors (and hardware) should be repaired and weather-stripped rather than replaced.
- f. If replacement of original or historic doors is necessary the replacement should be compatible with the material, design, and hardware of the older door.
- g. Steel-covered, hollow-core doors should not be installed unless they are compatible with the appearance of the house. Historic trim should not be removed for the installation of steel doors.

*Sliding Glass or French Doors*

- h. New sliding glass or French-style doors should be confined to the rear of the building where they are not visible from the public way.

*Storm and Screen Doors; Security Doors*

- i. Storm doors should be compatible with the inner door in shape and style. Historic trim at the entry should not be removed for the installation of grill-style security doors.



*222 Willard Street (1873).*



*Gordon and Ida Welshons House, 117 Burlington Street (1887).*



### 5.12.3 Windows

Like doors, windows and window trim give character and expression to the building exterior. Their size and spacing are important elements of the historic facade.

#### *Maintain and Conserve*

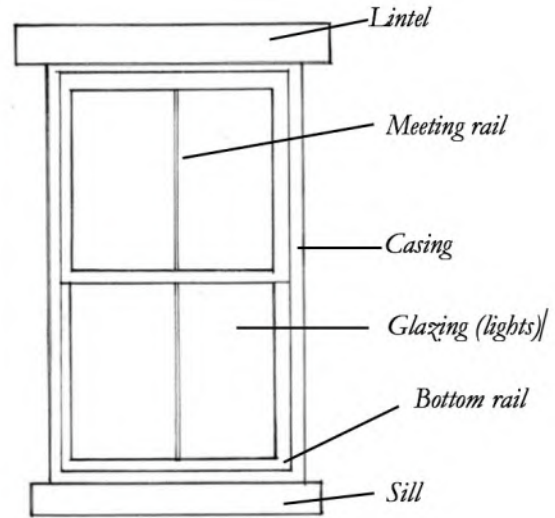
- a. Wherever feasible, historic windows and sash should be repaired rather than replaced, especially on principal elevations.
- b. Existing window openings should be retained. Window openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit new sash. Window openings should not be filled in with wood, brick, or any other material.

#### *New Windows: Size and Shape*

- c. New window openings should not be introduced into principal elevations. Where appropriate, new windows should be compatible with existing historic units.

#### *New Sash*

- d. Historic wood and metal sash should be repaired and conserved wherever possible.
- e. Replacement sash, if installed, should duplicate the existing or other appropriate historic models. Whenever possible, choose new units of wood, rather than metal. If metal is selected, it should have a baked enamel or other appropriate factory finish.
- f. Crank-out or fixed single-pane units should not replace double-hung sash.
- g. The size and number of lights (panes of glass) in each sash should not be altered. New sash, if installed, should duplicate the existing or other appropriate historic models.



*Parts of a Greek Revival style window shown with 2-over-2, double-hung sash*



*Window Trim*

- h. Retain all decorative trim around the windows, including lintels, pediments, and hoods. If replacement is necessary the original trim profile should be replicated.

*Storm Windows*

- i. Repair historic wood storms wherever possible.
- j. Consider adding appropriately designed storm windows to protect historic sash.
- k. Storm windows should not have vertical or horizontal divisions that conflict with the divisions of the historic sash and should be flush with existing trim. If combination metal storms must be installed, they should have a baked enamel factory finish.

*Shutters and Blinds*

- l. Shutters and blinds should not be installed on buildings not originally designed for them.
- m. Where appropriate, shutters should appear to be operable and should be mounted to the window casing. Shutters should be constructed of wood.

*Security*

- n. Historic trim or other architectural features should not be removed for the installation of security bars or grills.



*1112 N. 4th Street (ca. 1895)*



*122 Linden Street (1872)*

## 5.12.4 Wood Siding and Shingles

Stillwater's historic residential building stock is primarily of wood frame construction, and most buildings were originally clad in wood siding (clapboards). A few houses are clad in wood shingles, but in most cases shingles were used decoratively in gable ends and to trim projecting bays and other features. Underneath layers of old asphalt, aluminum or vinyl siding, historic siding and other details sometimes remain intact. Often, this historic wood siding can be successfully restored by cleaning, replacing broken or deteriorated pieces, scraping and priming as necessary, and painting.

### *Repair*

- a. Wood siding should be maintained with paint or stain. Deteriorated wood siding should be replaced with new wood siding resembling the original in width, thickness and profile, and texture.
- b. New siding should be installed with the weather (exposed surface) identical to the original. Siding should be installed horizontally except in those instances where vertical or diagonal siding was used on the original exterior.
- c. Appropriate corner boards, frieze boards, drip caps, and other features should be included with new siding.

### *Vinyl and Aluminum Siding; other Manufactured Products*

- d. Buildings originally clad in wood siding should not be resurfaced with brick, stucco, artificial stone or brick veneer, or vinyl or aluminum siding. If the historic siding is unsalvageable, replacement with a fiber-cement product may be acceptable.

### *Shingles*

- e. Buildings originally clad in horizontal wood siding should not be resurfaced with shingles of wood or other material.
- f. Wood shingles used for cladding material or decoration, such as in the gable ends, should be retained in repair or resurfacing. Deteriorated wood siding should be replaced with new wood siding replicating the original in width, thickness and profile, and texture.



402 N. 4th Street (ca. 1857).



1306 S. 4th Street (1893).

### *Decorative Siding Treatment*

- g. Decorative siding treatments, such as paneled herringbone patterns or shingles applied to gable ends, should be retained in repair or resurfacing.

### *Painting*

- h. Exterior wood surfaces should be maintained with appropriate paint. Shingles, brick, and stone should not be painted. In most cases, unpainted historic stucco should not be painted. Exterior paint colors should be appropriate to the building's age, style and condition.



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### 5.12.5 Masonry

Brick, stone, stucco, concrete, and mortar are porous materials susceptible to water damage from rain, condensation, or rising damp. It is important to have good drainage around the foundation, a sound roof, and working gutters.

#### *Repair*

- a. Deteriorated brick, stone, stucco, mortar, and other materials should be replaced with material used in historic construction or with materials that resemble the appearance of the original as closely as possible. The advice of a skilled mason should be sought for major repair projects.

#### *Cleaning and Waterproofing*

- b. Masonry cleaning should be conducted only to halt deterioration and by means such as low pressure water, soft brushes, and/or appropriate chemical treatment. Sandblasting should not be used under any circumstances.
- c. Waterproof and water repellent coatings should not be used unless there is evidence of past water penetration.

#### *Repointing*

- d. Original mortar joint size and profile should be retained and/or reduplicated in repointing. Mortar mixtures should duplicate the original in lime, sand, and cement proportion and should duplicate the original mortar in color and texture.

#### *Stucco Resurfacing*

- e. Repairs to stucco surfaces should duplicate the original in color and texture, if evidence exists. Smooth or heavy dashed surfaces should be avoided unless they were used on the original surface.



*Whiteside House, 223 Pine Street (1880).*

#### *Painting*

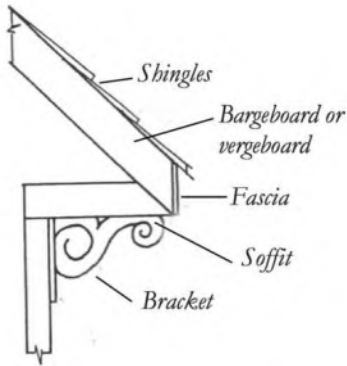
- f. The original color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained and unpainted stone and brick surfaces should not be painted.
- g. The removal of paint from painted masonry surfaces should only be attempted if unpainted surfaces are historically appropriate and if removal can be accomplished without damage to the masonry.

#### *Resurfacing*

- h. Historic masonry surfaces should not be covered with other materials, including stucco, brick or stone veneer, or vinyl or aluminum products.

### 5.12.6 Roofs, Dormers, and Chimneys

Good preservation begins with a sound roof that protects the building from the weather and prevents water from seeping into walls. Each style of architecture has distinctive roof forms, whether gable, hip, gambrel, mansard, or shed. In Stillwater the gable is most common, but there are many variations.



*Details at the roofline*

#### *Roofing Materials*

- a. Original roofing materials that contribute to the character of the building or district, such as tile and slate, should be maintained and retained unless badly deteriorated. If partial re-roofing in tile, slate or asphalt is necessary, replacement roofing should match the old in composition, size, shape and texture.
- b. New roofing material should be appropriate to the character of the building in composition, size, shape and texture. Rolled roofing may be used only on flat or slightly sloped roofs that are not visible from the public way.

#### *Decorative Features*

- c. Historic cornices and cresting, finials and other decorative detail at the roofline should be repaired and retained wherever possible.



*The shape, texture, and color of the roof are key design features of the historic building. New dormers and other additions to the roof must be carefully designed. In Stillwater, wood shingles were used to roof the earliest houses, and asphalt shingles became standard in the early 20th-century. Gordon and Ida Welshons House, 117 Burlington Street (1887).*



*Captain Austin Jenks House, 504 S. 5th Street (1871, NRHP).*

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### *Alterations to Roof Shape*

- d. The original roof type, slope and overhangs should be preserved. The roof shape at the front should not be altered except to restore it to the original documented appearance or to add architecturally compatible dormers.

### *Dormers*

- e. The shape of existing dormers should not be altered unless compatible with the original design. Alterations to the roof shape at the sides or rear should be compatible with the architectural character of the building.

### *Skylights*

- f. Skylights should not be installed on the front roof plane. They should be flat and close to the roof plane as possible. “Bubble” type skylights should not be installed.

### *Rebuilding Chimneys*

- g. If rebuilding is necessary, original brick details such as decorative panels and corbels should be replicated. In the absence of evidence of the original appearance, repair or rebuilding should be compatible with the building type or style.

### *Chimneys and Stovepipes*

- h. New chimneys and stovepipes should not be installed on the front roof plane.



*Dormers provide additional light, air and headroom to attic spaces. Dormers project through a sloping roof, and usually repeat the same roof form as the main roof.*



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### 5.12.7 Decorative Trim

Decorative trim includes finials, brackets, cornices, dentils, capitals, paneling, balustrades, railings and moldings. Trim may be of wood, concrete, stone, or metal. Save any trim that must be removed and use it as guide in duplication. Where trim details cannot be matched exactly, they can be approximated in size and bulk.

#### *Maintain and Conserve*

- a. Exterior architectural features including finials, cornices, brackets, columns, balustrades and railings, and window and door moldings should be retained.

#### *Documentation*

- b. Original trim details and other architectural features should be photographed or otherwise recorded before they are removed for repair or replacement. Deteriorated trim, if removed, should be saved for use in making duplicates.

#### *Repair and Replacement*

- c. New material used to repair or replace deteriorated trim or other features should match the original as closely as possible. Deteriorated trim that is unsalvageable should be replaced with trim identical or similar to the original design. Simplified trim should approximate the old in design and placement.

#### *New Trim*

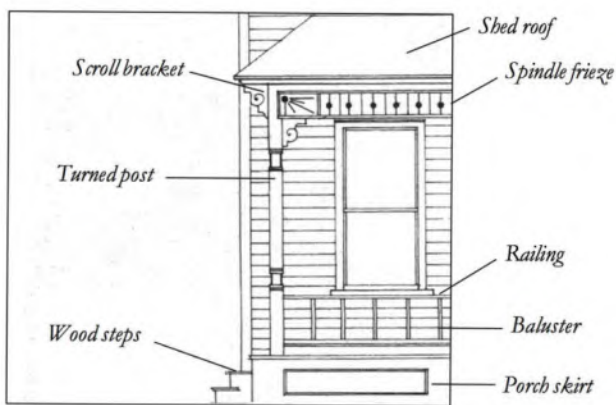
- d. Details should not be added in an effort to make the building look older. However, in the case of some “pattern book” houses, the addition of certain trim details such as those typical at the gable and porch may be permitted if supported by historic photos or pattern book sources.



*The details of this baluster and rosette-trimmed, chamfered porch post should be kept intact, if possible. Wood trim can be treated with preservatives and paint. Any trim that must be removed should be saved as used as a pattern for replacement.*

### 5.12.8 Porches, Steps, and Decks

Porches are an exterior living space that mark the transition between the private house and public street. Some only cover the entry, while others wrap around the building. Porches and steps are exposed to the weather and receive hard use. Some buildings have had a succession of replacements that reflect different styles of architecture. In reconstructing a missing porch, it is important to select posts and railings of appropriate scale and detail. Avoid using undersized ready-made trim.



*The entry porch at 1206 S. 3rd Street features a spindle frieze.*

#### *Maintain and Conserve*

- a. Porches, steps, and handrails that are appropriate to the building and its architectural development should be conserved and retained.

#### *Repair and Replacement*

- b. Historic porches, steps, or handrails that require complete rebuilding or partial replacement should be reconstructed using historical research to determine an appropriate design. Reconstructions should be compatible with the period and style of the building in material, design, and detail. Concrete should not be used to replace wood porch floors or steps.

#### *Railings*

- c. The original spacing, section, and profile of railings and balusters should be maintained in replacement or repair. Unless historical evidence indicates, reconstruction should include a bottom rail and balusters should not be nailed directly to the step or deck. Metal railings should not be used to replace wood railings.

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*Posts and Columns*

- d. If replacement is necessary, porch posts and columns should be replaced with units that replicate the original materials, size, and scale. Elaborate details such as carving, turning, gouging, or stamping may be simplified if necessary. Wood posts should not be replaced with metal posts or supports.

*Decks*

- e. Decks should be constructed only at the rear of the building or where most inconspicuous from the public street. Railings, steps, and other deck details should be compatible with the architectural character of the building.

*Porch Enclosure*

- f. Historically unenclosed front porches should not be enclosed.



### **5.12.9 Fire Stairs**

- a. The detailing of fire stairs should be simple and compatible with the period and style of the building. In consultation with the building official, fire stairs should be located as inconspicuously as possible.



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## 5.13 RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS

Additions are part of the past lives of many historic houses, and often account for the variety of styles layered on a single building. Compatible additions provide for current and future needs and the continued use of existing historic buildings. Additions must be carefully designed to relate to the principal building as well as adjacent buildings. In most cases, additions should appear contemporary, but compatible in character with the original, and sympathetic but not imitative in design. All applicable zoning regulations should be consulted in planning new construction.

(See also applicable NCD Guidelines.)

### 5.13.1 General Guidelines

- a. New additions should be designed to create minimal loss of historic fabric.
- b. Character-defining features of the original historic building should not be destroyed, damaged, or obscured.
- c. New additions should conform to the size, scale, massing, height, materials, and facade proportions of the historic building and surrounding structures. (Refer to the Stillwater City Code, as some provisions of the base zoning district may not be allowed by the overlay district.)
- d. The historic building should remain intact as an historic building. The design of the new building should be highly compatible with the original but also be identifiable as a product of its own time.



*110 E. Cherry Street, in 2021.*

### 5.13.2 Siting

- a. Additions should be located on an inconspicuous elevation, usually at the rear.
- b. New additions should be compatible with the setback of the existing historic building and the adjacent streetscape.
- c. Additions should not destroy the character of the site, including topography, mature vegetation, and significant views and vistas.

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### 5.13.3 Materials and Details

- a. Materials and details should be compatible with the original building and the surrounding area; wood and masonry are preferable to other manufactured materials.
- b. Additions should incorporate architectural details such as windows, ornamentation, porches, and cornices that are compatible with the historic building's architectural style. In some cases, contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details may be appropriate.
- c. Details should be simple in design and complement the character of the original structure. Contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details may be appropriate for some additions.



### 5.13.4 Building Elements

#### *Roofs*

- a. The skyline or roof profile should relate to the predominant roof shapes of the historic building. Roofing materials used on additions should be appropriate to the design of the building and the visibility of the roof.
- b. Roof hardware such as skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

#### *Windows and Entries*

- c. The proportion, size, rhythm, and detailing of windows and entries should be visually compatible with that of the existing historic building, and the rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure should also be visually compatible.

#### *Porches*

Porches are a standard feature of Stillwater's historic houses and streetscapes.

- d. The front entry of any new addition should be articulated with a design element such as a porch, portico, or landing. This element should be appropriately detailed and compatible with the size and scale of the building.

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## 5.14 RESIDENTIAL: NEW CONSTRUCTION

New buildings should fit the historic areas they occupy. A successful new design will reflect an understanding of the character of the surrounding streetscape. In most cases, new designs should not duplicate or replicate the exact historic forms and features of surrounding buildings, but rather relate to them. As with additions to historic buildings, there is no single recipe that will produce compatible new construction in historic districts or areas. Careful consideration of the surrounding area and a good planning, design, and design review effort is necessary for success.

New construction includes additions to historic buildings, new structures along primary streets, and secondary structures such as garages, sheds, outbuildings, or workshops.

(See also applicable NCD and DDRD Guidelines.)

### 5.14.1 General Character

- a. Design new construction to reinforce the historic architectural and visual character of the site, streetscape, or district. However, in most cases, new buildings should be discernible from the old.

### 5.14.2 Siting and Setback

- a. Design new construction to be compatible with the setback, orientation, and spacing of older buildings along the street.
- b. Design new construction to conserve site features such as topography, trees, and significant vistas and views. (Refer to the Stillwater City Code.)



*Imhoff House, 514 St. Croix Trail (2018). Located in the Neighborhood Conservation District, this new building received a 2016 Stillwater Preservation Award. (Troy Theis, Minneapolis Star Tribune)*



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### 5.14.3 Building Elements

#### *Massing, Height, and Scale*

- a. Design new construction to conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions, spacing and scale of buildings within view of the site, and also comply with existing zoning regulations. The gross volume of any new structure should be visually compatible with the buildings and elements within the surrounding area.

#### *Materials and Details*

- b. Select materials and details that are compatible with those on adjacent historic buildings. Wood and masonry are preferable to vinyl, metal, or hardboard siding. Imitative materials such as artificial stone or brick veneer should not be used.
- c. New siding should be of appropriate texture and width and should be detailed with cornerboards and eave and window trim, where appropriate.

#### *Roofs*

- d. In new construction, the roof profile should relate to the predominant roof shapes of the surrounding area.
- e. Roofing materials used on new buildings should be appropriate to the design of the building and the visibility of the roof. Roof hardware such as skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

#### *Windows and Entries*

- f. The rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure should be visually compatible with surrounding structures.
- g. Select new windows and doors for new buildings that are compatible with those in the surrounding historic area. Vertically-oriented, double-hung sash are a predominant window type in Stillwater. Proportion, size, rhythm, and detailing of windows and entries should be compatible with that of existing nearby buildings.



#### *Porches and Decks*

- h. The front entry of new construction in residential areas should be articulated with a design element such as a porch, portico, or landing which provides a transitional zone between the semi-public and public exterior zones and the private interior zone. This feature should be appropriately detailed and compatible with the size and scale of the building.
- i. Modern decks are generally not compatible with historic homes. Instead, consider the addition of a compatible porch that is integrated into the overall design of the building.

#### *Parking*

- j. Locate parking areas at the side or rear of the new buildings.
- k. Parking areas should be screened with landscaping, low walls, or appropriately detailed fences.
- l. Large paved areas should be divided with landscaping at the interior of the site. (Refer to the Stillwater City Code).

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## 5.15 GARAGES AND ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

There are many historic sheds, carriage barns and early automobile garages remaining in Stillwater. Some were designed to match the architectural style of the house, while others are simple vernacular buildings. Nearly all were sited in the rear yard and reached by an alley or narrow driveway from the street.

- a. Retain and preserve garages and other accessory structures that contribute to the historic character of the site and surrounding area.
- b. Locate new garages in locations compatible with the main structure of the site and existing traditional garages in the surrounding area. New garages should not be attached to the front of the historic house.
- c. Select prefabricated accessory buildings with appearance, material and scale compatible to the main structure of the site and surrounding area.
- d. Replace deteriorated garages with new building designs of compatible form, scale, size, and materials (see applicable New Construction Guidelines).



*614 N. 4th Street.*

## 5.16 LANDSCAPE AND STREETSCAPE

The historic layout of streets and sidewalks and the division of blocks and lots, sometimes adapted to the landscape of ravines and hills, is an important feature of Stillwater's historic neighborhoods. The maintenance and repair of streets, sidewalks, planting strips, retaining walls, and fencing requires public engineering standards that are sensitive to the scale and appearance of historic areas.

### 5.16.1 General Guidelines

- a. The maintenance and design of existing or new streets in or adjacent to historic districts should respect the original plan of interconnected streets, sidewalks, and alleys.
- b. Streets should not be widened to accommodate through traffic and alleys should not be vacated. Cul-de-sac and dead-end streets should not be created in existing grid-plan areas.
- c. Preserve the mature neighborhood tree canopy wherever possible, and replant with regularly-spaced trees where necessary. Planting strips and sidewalks should be preserved and maintained at maximum width.
- d. Surface parking lots should be screened with landscaping, low masonry walls, or iron or steel fencing of appropriate design. (Refer to the Stillwater City Code.)

### 5.16.2 Fences and Walls

Fences usually mark the transition from the public street to the private yard. Late 19th-century fences in Stillwater included wood dowels or flat sawn pickets supported by boxed posts as well as elaborate wrought iron or simple arched wire.

Stillwater's hills provided a challenge for the builders of stone and brick retaining walls. These historic walls contribute to the city's historic landscape and should be conserved.



*Traditional wood fences in Stillwater's historic neighborhoods include dowel and picket varieties.*

#### *Repair and Conservation: Metal and Wood*

- a. Existing historic fences of metal or wood should be repaired and conserved wherever possible. Repairs should be compatible with the original materials and design of the fence.

#### *New Fences*

- b. New fences should be compatible with the architectural character, materials, and scale of the principal building and surrounding streetscape.
- c. Fences enclosing the front yard should be semi-transparent. Appropriate materials include wrought iron and painted wood pickets. In general, complete enclosure by opaque fences is not appropriate.
- d. Iron or steel fencing should have appropriately scaled and detailed masonry or steel piers.



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### *Chain Link Fences*

- e. Chain link fences should not be used to enclose front yards or the front half of side yards. Fences that allow some visual penetration of front yard space are preferable to complete enclosure. Chain link fences should not be used to enclose front yards or the front half of side yards.

### *Repair and Conservation of Retaining Walls*

- f. Existing historic walls (and stairs, where applicable) of fieldstone, limestone, brick, or stucco should be repaired and conserved. Repairs should be compatible with the adjoining masonry. (See Masonry Guidelines.)

### *New Retaining Walls*

- g. New walls should be compatible with the architectural character and scale of the principal building and surrounding streetscape. Masonry retaining walls should be finished with caps and other appropriate details.
- h. Limestone, brick, and natural-color split-face (rock-face) concrete block are appropriate materials for the construction of new retaining walls visible from the public right-of-way. Block with a round, striated, or polygonal profile is not appropriate.
- i. Landscape timber is not appropriate for new retaining walls visible from the public right-of-way.



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- 02: *Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*
- 03: *Roofing for Historic Buildings 06: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings*
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- 09: *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*
- 10: *Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*
- 11: *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*
- 14: *New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns*
- 15: *Preservation of Historic Concrete*
- 16: *The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors*
- 17: *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*
- 25: *The Preservation of Historic Signs*
- 27: *The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron*
- 31: *Mothballing Historic Buildings*
- 32: *Making Historic Properties Accessible*
- 33: *The Preservation and Repair of Stained and Leaded Glass*
- 35: *Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation*
- 38: *Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry*
- 39: *Holding the Line: Controlling Moisture in Historic Buildings*

## 6.4 ADDITIONAL PRESERVATION BRIEFS, INTERIOR TOPICS:

- 13: *Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings*
- 18: *Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings: Identifying Character-Defining Elements*
- 21: *Repairing Historic Flat Plaster: Walls and Ceilings*



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23: *Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster*

24: *Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches*

28: *Painting Historic Interiors*

34: *Historic Interiors: Preserving Historic Composition Ornament*

40: *Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors*

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## 6.6 ORGANIZATIONS

Washington County Historical Society, 602 Main Street N., Stillwater, MN 55082. (651) 439-5956. Website: <http://www.wchsmn.org>

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, 51 Sherburne Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155. Website: <https://mn.gov/admin/shpo/>

Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Boulevard West Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906. Website: [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)

National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. Website: [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org)