

W COURT ST

# Ninth Street Historic District

RICHMOND ST

PENDERY AL

BRITT AL

ELM ST

PLUM ST

WATTS AL

W 9TH ST

IRA AL

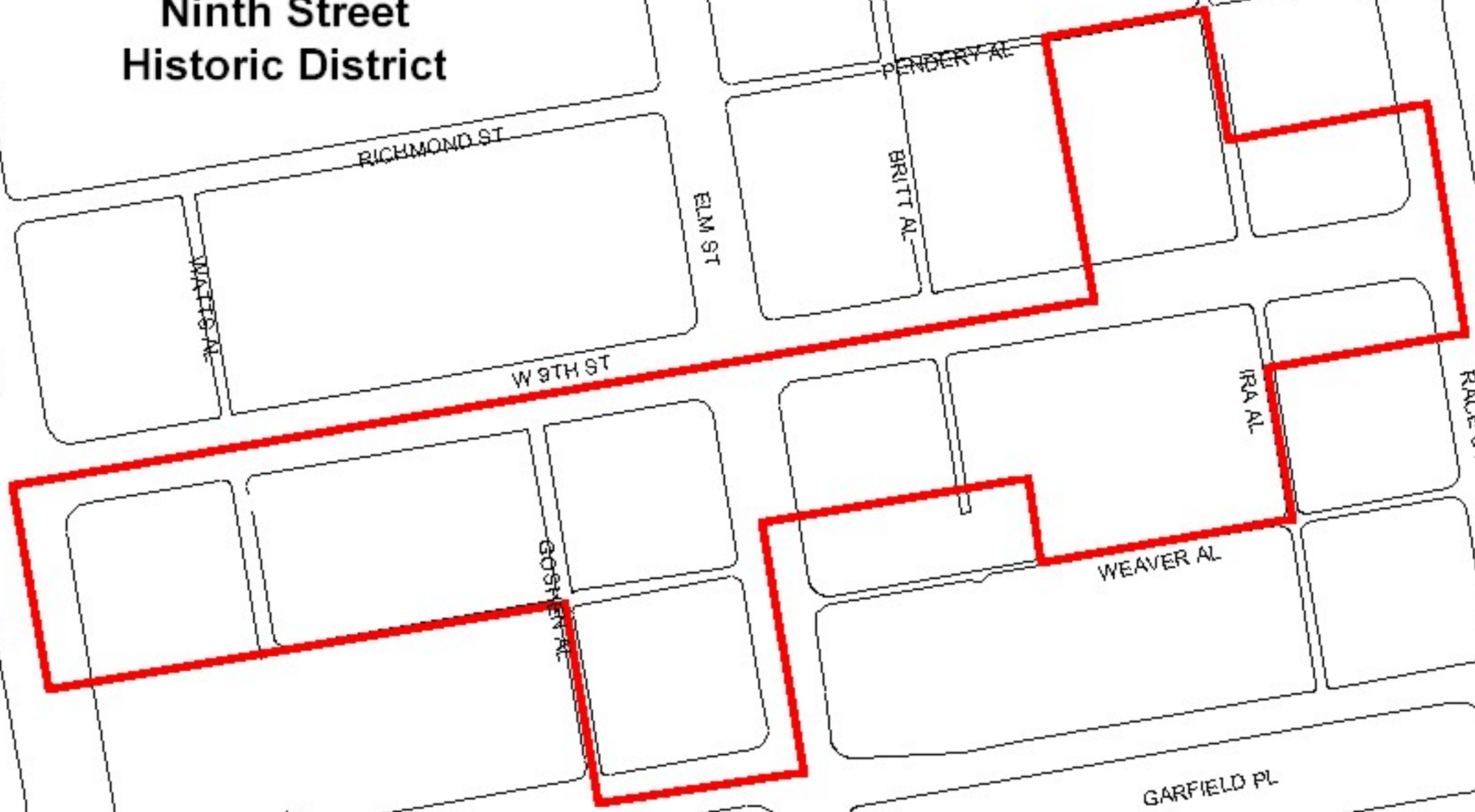
RACE ST

GOSHEN AL

WEAVER AL

W 8TH ST

GARFIELD PL



# CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: NINTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

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## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Ninth Street Historic District is the last sizeable collection of 19th century residential buildings remaining in the central business district. The district's thirty buildings date from the 1840s through the turn of the century and, as a whole, the district has remained remarkably unchanged for the last 80 years. Emerging stylistic trends, changes in construction techniques, and patterns of development can all be traced in the two blocks which comprise the district.

The district, located in the northwest corner of the central business district, extends two blocks along Ninth Street from Race to Plum, and includes some properties fronting on Elm and Plum cross streets. The two-block local district is part of a larger district listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

From its earliest years, this portion of Ninth Street has been primarily residential. Although mixed-use structures appeared in the last decades of the 19th century, they incorporated apartments above storefronts. The residential character was reinforced at two intersections in the district by the construction of three large apartment buildings: the Saxony in 1881, the Brittany in 1885, and the Norfolk (now the Waldo) in 1891.

Stylistically, the district includes examples of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, French Second Empire and Colonial Revival architecture. Among these buildings are included representative works by architects Samuel Hannaford and by the partnership of William Walter and James Keys Wilson. The development/architecture team of Thomas Emery's Sons Real Estate and Joseph Steinkamp—a major force in Cincinnati development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries -- is also represented in the district.

For all their stylistic differences, the buildings share similar setbacks, materials and use. When viewed collectively, the massing, texture and variety of architectural elements in the district give it a distinct small-scale, urban residential character. The district is a near-perfect residential slice of the 19th century "walking city."

## ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The south side of Ninth Street from Race to Plum has remained remarkably unchanged for the last 80 years. It has retained its small scale, 19th century predominantly residential character since its early development in the 1840s. One third of the 30 buildings in the district were built before the Civil War. Major architectural styles represented on the street coincide with the popularity of that style during the periods of construction of district buildings. These styles include Greek Revival (1840-1860), Italianate (1860-1890). French second empire (1860-1890), Queen Anne (1880-1900), and Colonial Revival (1890-

1910). The district also contains a number of buildings from one period which were "updated" in a later period.

Most district buildings are three-story structures with three notable exceptions, all at corners; the Brittany (6 floors), the Saxony (5), and the Waldo (8). Brick is the predominant building material with trim of tin, stone, or wood. Prominent cornices, vertical window openings, and the appearance of flat roofs are all common district traits. Also characteristic of the district are these other features: stone stoops; stone, wood, or cast-iron storefronts; and deeply recessed entrances. Several buildings have large bay windows and several buildings are setback from the sidewalk.

The district has a cohesive quality due to its consistent scale, residential character, the age of its buildings, the common construction materials, the similarity of architectural treatment, and the lack of front yard setback for all but five of the 30 buildings. Within this consistent architectural setting is a lively streetscape created by variations in window treatment, ornamentation, and use of materials.

## **INTRODUCTION TO GUIDELINES**

Conservation Guidelines are used by owners, architects, contractors and the City's Historic Conservation Board when owners in the Ninth Street historic district decide to make changes to the outsides of their buildings.

They are not rigid sets of rules, but serve as a guide on making improvements which are compatible with the district's character. The guidelines set broad parameters within which district changes should occur, while maintaining ample opportunity for design creativity and individual choices and tastes. They give the Historic Conservation Board a way to determine whether proposed work is appropriate.

If an improvement is proposed within the Historic District, a Certificate of Appropriateness (C.O.A.) must first be obtained from the Historic Conservation Board. This is in addition to a building permit, though there is no additional fee. The following kinds of work do not require a C.O.A.:

- Interior work such as plumbing, wiring, plastering.
- Ordinary repair and maintenance which does not result in an exterior change.

The following points are of extreme importance:

- The guidelines do not require that an owner make improvements.
- The guidelines do not force an owner to "take the property back to the way it was."
- The HCB may modify certain guidelines, as appropriate, in cases of economic hardship. The Board must approve the proposal, even if it doesn't meet the guidelines, when the owner demonstrates
  - a. that there is no "economically feasible and prudent alternative" which would conform to the guidelines, and
  - b. that strict application of the guidelines would deny the owner a reasonable rate of return on the property, and would amount to a "taking of the property without just compensation."
- The guidelines, and the legislation which set up the Board, are geared toward negotiating solutions which will give the owner substantial benefit without causing substantial harm to the district. The Board may grant approval, set conditions, or waive certain guidelines as "trade-offs" to aid negotiations.
- Any applicant who disagrees with a Board decision may appeal the decision to City Council. In the 5 years that the Board has reviewed proposals in historic districts all over the city, not one applicant has appealed. This indicates overwhelming success of the negotiation process.

## **REHABILITATION AND ALTERATION**

### **General Guidelines**

1. Avoid removing or altering historic material or distinctive architectural features: if it's original and in good shape, try to keep it.

2. Repair rather than replace wherever possible. If replacing, replicate the original based on existing materials. Do not invent something new that "might have been."
3. When extensive replacement of missing or severely deteriorated materials is necessary and replication to exactly match the original is not feasible, the new work should match the general character of the original in terms of scale, texture, design and composition.
4. Don't try to make the building look older than it really is. Rehabilitation work should fit the character of the original building. If your building has been substantially altered, nearby buildings of similar age and style 'may indicate what its original character was.
5. Your building may contain clues to guide you during rehabilitation. Original detailing may be covered up with other, later materials, or there may be physical evidence of what original work was like and where it was located.
6. A later addition to an old building or a non-original facade or storefront may have gained significance on its own. It may be significant as a good example of its style, or as evidence of changing needs and tastes. Don't assume it's historically worthless just because it's not part of the original building. Several Greek Revival buildings in the district, for example, were later "modernized" by adding Italianate elements.
7. Surface cleaning should be done by the gentlest means possible. Never sandblast or use other abrasive methods. Cleaning or paint removal may not be necessary at all.
8. If no evidence of original materials or detailing exists, alterations should be simply detailed and contemporary in design, yet fit the character of the building.

### **Specific Guidelines**

#### **1. MATERIALS: MATCH THE ORIGINAL AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE**

Most buildings in the district are made of brick, often with tin or stone details. Missing or deteriorated materials should be replaced with recycled or new materials which match the original as closely as possible with regard to the following: type, color, style, shape, and texture of material, composition, type of joint, size of unit, placement and detailing.

#### **2. DOORS AND WINDOWS: KEEP THE "EYES" OF THE BUILDING OPEN**

Possibly the most important feature of any building are its openings—its doors and windows. Original openings should not be altered. Original doors and window sash should be repaired rather than replaced, when possible. When replacement is necessary, the new door or window should match the original as closely as possible.

The doors and doorways on Ninth Street are generally rectangular, though some have arched openings. Most doorways are recessed and many have rectangular glass transoms above. Many original doors remain, with recessed wood panels surrounded by several layers of applied molding. Most doors also have large glass panels. The most common window is double-hung (it has an upper and lower section of the same size, both of which can be raised and lowered). Early buildings in the district had window sash that contained six panes of glass on the top and six on the bottom (called 6 over 6). Later buildings had 2 over 2, and even later had 1 over 1.

#### **3. ROOF: MAINTAIN THE ROOFLINE**

In general, rooflines in the district are low-pitched gables or are flat. The existing roofline and architectural features which give the building its character, such as dormers, cornices, brackets, and chimneys, should be preserved. The addition of features such as vents, skylights and rooftop utilities, should be avoided or they should be inconspicuously placed and screened where necessary.

#### **4. ORNAMENTATION: RETAIN DISTINCTIVE DETAILING**

Significant architectural features such as window and door hoods, tin cornices and brackets, decorative piers, bay windows, door surrounds, and other ornamental elements should be preserved. The addition of inappropriate and out-of-character features should be avoided.

5. CLEANING: NEVER SANDBLAST

The cleaning of existing material should be done by the gentlest method possible. For masonry structures, begin with scraping by hand or scrubbing with a bristle brush and mild detergent. Chemical cleaning is effective, but must be followed immediately with a neutralizing acid wash. In any case, sandblasting is not an acceptable method of cleaning. Sandblasting destroys the surface of the brick and stone and lessens the life of the building. Wire brushes can also damage the masonry surface and their use is also not acceptable.

6. REPOINTING MASONRY: USE THE PROPER MORTAR AND JOINT

The mortar joints (spaces between the bricks) found in masonry construction deteriorate for a variety of reasons. Repointing these joints can significantly aid the rehabilitation of a structure. Generally, buildings built prior to 1900 used a lime based mortar. This mortar is much softer than the portland cement based mortar of today. If a hard, modern mortar is used, the softer bricks may crack or break during the freeze/thaw cycle. When repointing an existing wall, try to match the color and consistency of the sand as closely as possible, and match the type and thickness of joint.

7. WATER REPELLENT COATINGS: AVOID IF POSSIBLE

Most historic structures have survived without the need for water repellent coatings. Water-related damage on the interior of buildings is usually a result of deteriorated or faulty gutters and downspouts, deteriorated mortar, rising damp or condensation. Water repellent coatings will not solve these problems, and may even accelerate them. Waterproof and water repellent coatings should never be used unless there is actual water penetration through the masonry, then only the affected area should be treated and only after it has thoroughly dried out. In many cases, the brick buildings in the district were originally painted, providing an effective protective skin.

8. PAINT: PART OF THE DESIGN SCHEME

The earliest brick buildings in the district (generally built prior to 1875) were faced with a relatively soft brick requiring paint for protection. Paint color was also part of the overall design scheme. While the HCB does not review paint colors, some general guidelines apply. Paint colors selected should be compatible with the district and appropriate for the style of the particular building. The color selected to paint the body of the building should contrast with the structure’s decorative elements so that these architectural features stand out (Historic color charts are available at the City’s Historic Conservation Office).

Later brick buildings, and buildings clad in stone, should not be painted (with the exception of such elements as window trim, cornices, and bay windows). These buildings are constructed of a harder face brick which does not require the protection of paint. The aesthetic character of the unpainted brick is also important to the building’s design intent. Buildings in the Queen Anne style, for example, often are constructed with varied textures, patterns, and colors of brick work. The following properties are the only district buildings which, for authenticity, should not be painted:

|              |              |              |          |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 133 W. 9th   | 221 W. Ninth | 105 W. Ninth | 810 Plum |
| 135 W. 9th   | 211 W. Ninth | 108 W. Ninth | 807 Elm  |
| 124 W. 9th   | 123 W. Ninth | 118 W. Ninth | 801 Elm  |
| 229 W. 9th   | 225 W. Ninth | 213 W. Ninth | 815 Elm  |
| 215 W. Ninth |              |              |          |

9. FRONT STEPS: A SIGNIFICANT FEATURE

Half the district buildings have stoops and some have iron fences set on low stone walls or between stone posts. These enhance the street’s residential character and every effort should be made to retain or restore them. If stoops must be replaced, try to match the new stone to the original.

## 10. SITE IMPROVEMENTS: TREES, SCREENING ENCOURAGED

All new site improvements should be compatible with the architectural character of the district. Street trees are encouraged; placement in the ground is preferable to placement in planters. Parking lots should contain landscaping and should be screened from public view with landscaping, a low wall, or fencing.

## 11. STOREFRONTS: MAXIMIZE TRANSPARENCY

Almost half the buildings in the Ninth Street district contain storefronts at the first level. While above the first floor these buildings are the same as their residential neighbors, the storefronts are completely different in character from the upper floors. Basic storefront elements should be retained and repaired. Storefront piers and columns are generally cast-iron, but some are stone or wood. These piers and columns, and the lintels or cornices which separate storefronts, from upper floors should not be covered or removed. Windows should not be filled in. Sill height should be maintained. Original transoms, window configuration, doors and ornamentation should be retained, repaired, or replicated. Where no original materials or detailing remains, new work should be compatible with the original character of the building.

## 12. SIGNS: CLEAN, SIMPLE, COMPATIBLE, BUT INDIVIDUALIZED

Signs should be compatible with the district and in character with the building they are on. The removal of inappropriate and extraneous signs is encouraged. New or altered signs should meet the following guidelines:

- a. Signs should be constructed of materials (such as wood, fabric or metal) which complement the natural materials of the buildings. Plastic-faced signs are inappropriate, as are internally-illuminated signs.
- b. The design of signs should capitalize on the special character of the area and reflect the nature of the business they are identifying.
- c. Large signs should be kept flat against buildings, should not detract from the architecture of the building, and should not cover architectural detail.
- d. Generally, signs should be located on storefront lintels or at the height of the lintel.
- e. Small projecting signs may be used for identification. These may take the form of projecting symbol signs.
- f. Signs should be adequately spaced from other signs for good visibility and should be approximately the same size and shape, and should be placed at the same general location and height as other appropriate signs for similar types of businesses.
- g. Obsolete signs and unused sign supports should be removed. New rooftop signs which extend above the roof line of a building or above the window sill line of the 2nd floor of buildings should not be permitted.

## 13. AWNINGS, OTHER FIXTURES: THEY SHOULD FIT THE BUILDING

New exterior light fixtures should be of a simple contemporary design and not "colonial." The installation of fabric awnings and canopies is permissible but should not obscure, or require the removal of significant architectural features. Awnings and canopies made of plastic, wood, or metal should not be permitted. The installation of utility and mechanical systems, such as water or gas meters, central air conditioning cooling units, and elaborate electrical hookups should be inconspicuously placed and screening should be provided; the installation of such systems should be avoided on the street facade. Permanent installation of wall or window air conditioning units on the street facade is strongly discouraged. If possible, even removable window units should be kept on the side of the building rather than the front.

## ADDITIONS

- A. Appropriate additions are encouraged as a means of providing for current and future needs and continued use of existing district buildings.

- B. The design of additions should respond specifically to architecture of the original building. The design should also respond, in a more general way, to adjacent buildings.
- C. If the original building is architecturally significant, the addition should take a respectful "back seat" to it, and not overpower the original. An addition may be taller than the original building if site considerations and careful design still allow the old building to remain dominant.
- D. In general, additions should follow new construction guidelines. They should appear contemporary but compatible in character with the original, and sympathetic but not imitative in design.
- E. The appropriateness of design solutions will be based on a comparison of the program needs of the applicant with 1) how well the proposed design relates to the original building and neighboring buildings and 2) how closely the proposal meets the intent of the "Addition" guidelines and the guidelines for new construction.

## **NEW CONSTRUCTION**

The district contains few new building sites. If new construction is contemplated, the applicant should pay particular attention to the following design elements, Composition, Openings, Rhythm, and Height. New construction should not try to imitate the old, but should be compatible with the district with respect to the following:

### **A. COMPOSITION**

- 1. Roofs should appear flat.
- 2. There should be a "crowning" element (like a cornice) which defines the top of a building.
- 3. If adjacent buildings have horizontal banding, a new building should respond through changes in color, texture, plane, or materials.
- 4. Materials in new construction should be responsive to the general design character of materials found in the district.

### **B. OPENINGS**

- 1. Window openings should be vertically proportioned.
- 2. Windows should generally be placed symmetrically on the facade.
- 3. Windows should occupy no less than 20% of the front facade (exclusive of 1st floors and cornices) and no more than 50%.
- 4. New storefronts should be taller than any individual upper floor and be similar to original storefronts in amount of glazing.

### **C. RHYTHM**

- 1. Walls should be broken up into bays by grouping windows, varying planes, or using vertical elements like piers. New construction should avoid creating long, unrelieved expanses of wall along the street.
- 2. New construction should be vertical in emphasis.
- 3. Buildings should be built to front property lines or be set back no more than ten feet.

### **D. HEIGHT**

The intent of the Height Guidelines is to provide a general framework within which new buildings can be built without damaging the scale of the district. Where project review by the HCO determines that a significantly taller building is appropriate (based on site, design and Economic Development considerations), the HCB may allow a taller building with design modifications to lessen its impact on the street. Modifications may include setting a tower back from a base which is at the height of abutting buildings or stepping down a tall building toward the street.

- 1. New construction should be in scale with neighboring buildings. Generally, new buildings should not exceed the height of the tallest abutting building by more than two stories.

2. The tallest district buildings are located at corners. This pattern should be respected in new construction. The height map reflects this historic pattern. New buildings should not exceed the heights indicated on the height map.

## **DEMOLITION**

Demolition regulations for designated property in Cincinnati are contained in the city's Historic Conservation Legislation. Generally, demolition of existing buildings is permitted if one of the following conditions exist:

- a. Demolition has been ordered by the Director of Buildings & Inspections for the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition which constitutes an emergency.
- b. The owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Historic Conservation Board that the structure cannot be reused nor can a reasonable economic return be gained from the use of all or part of the building proposed for demolition.
- c. The demolition request is for an inappropriate addition or for a non-significant portion of a building and the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the building which are significant as determined by the HCB.

## **ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

### **GREEK REVIVAL (1840-1860)**

- Squat in proportion
- No ornamentation Small Scale 6/6 Windows (originally)
- Plain lintels over rectangular openings
- Simple Cornice Usually low pitched gable roof
- Dentils at the cornice
- Painted brick or unpainted stone facades

### **TRANSITIONAL (1860-1875)**

Early Buildings exhibiting architectural elements of both Greek Revival and Italianate styles

- Overall vertical proportion
- Temple-like entry
- Simple Cornice
- Decorative Window Hoods
- Brackets supporting cornice
- Windows were probably 2/2 originally
- Rectangular openings
- Painted brick facades

### **ITALIANATE (1860-1890)**

- Vertical proportions
- Projecting cornice supported by brackets
- Windows with square or arched openings
- Elaborate molding above and around openings
- Usually 2/2 Windows
- Raised first floor
- Painted brick or unpainted stone facades
- Flat or shed roof

### **FRENCH SECOND EMPIRE (1865-1890)**

- Similar characteristics to Italianate with the following additions:
- Slate mansard roof, usually with dormers
- More elaborate detailing around openings
- Horizontal Bands
- Often Metal Cresting on the roof
- More elaborate brackets



**QUEEN ANNE (1880-1900)**

- Variety of Materials (unpainted)
- Highly textured surface
- Variety of Window shapes
- Grouped Windows
- Bay Windows
- Wall Dormers
- Roof Dormers
- Tall, fanciful chimneys
- Banding
- Changes in Wall Plane

**ECLECTIC (1880-1915)**

Elements or features from other architectural styles brought together in unusual and often unique combinations. This style is used to describe architectural designs which don't fit a particular stylistic category.

**RENAISSANCE REVIVAL (1885-1910)**

- Symmetrical design
- Large Windows (often arched)
- Prominent Projecting Cornice
- Elaborate Brackets
- Quoins are common (at corners)
- Stone is the preferred material
- Variety of Surface texture
- Horizontal Banding
- Recessed Entrance
- Elaborate Window Hoods, 1/1 Windows

**COLONIAL REVIVAL (1895-1915)**

- Bay Windows
- Projecting Cornice
- Large Dentils
- End Brackets at the cornice (often)
- Unpainted brick, thin mortar joints
- 1/1 Windows
- Large Windows sometimes grouped
- Garland and swag motifs
- Pressed metal decoration
- Fanlights and columns at entry
- Quoins (sometimes)