

OVER THE RHINE ★ HISTORIC DISTRICT



18



40



HISTORIC CONSERVATION
GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION



#THISISOTR

INTRODUCTION

Over-the-Rhine is Cincinnati's historic heart, and a national treasure. Few neighborhoods in America inspire like Over-the-Rhine, with its expansive collection of Italianate churches, breweries, and tenements providing a cohesive experience of a 19th century urban neighborhood. The district serves not only as the showpiece of Cincinnati's cultural heritage, but as an economic engine and driver of the local economy. The famed travel historian Arthur Frommer said of the neighborhood, "When I look at [Over-the-Rhine], I see in my mind the possibility of a revived district that literally could rival similar prosperous and heavily visited areas". Indeed it is precisely the unique historic character of Over-the-Rhine that has fueled the renewal of the neighborhood and helped to facilitate a resurgence in the city as a whole.

It is essential that the Over-the-Rhine Historic District be preserved and protected so that its status as both a cultural and an economic asset for the city of Cincinnati is maintained. This includes protection not only from demolition of the historic structures that comprise the district, but also from insensitive new construction built on vacant sites in the neighborhood. New construction has

powerful impacts on the fabric and sense of place of Over-the-Rhine, and can either enhance the historic character of the district, or damage it in harmful and irreparable ways. Due to demolition that occurred in the 20th century, new construction will ultimately comprise a significant portion of the Over-the-Rhine district, and will thus play a significant role in defining the district.

These guidelines provide a regulatory framework for ensuring that new construction occurs in a manner that preserves and protects Over-the-Rhine for current and future generations of Cincinnatians.

*Over the Rhine
is Cincinnati's
historic heart,
and a national
treasure.*



HISTORY²

Over-the-Rhine is significant in the continuing history of Cincinnati and the United States. In 1983 the district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in recognition of both its exceptional nineteenth-century architecture and its association with the successive waves of German immigration to America in the nineteenth century.

Over-the-Rhine's collection of commercial, residential, religious and civic architecture is one of America's largest and most cohesive surviving examples of an urban, nineteenth century community. Similar neighborhoods in other cities have been decimated or lost entirely. Over-the-Rhine, however, continues to display its original dense, urban development patterns and buildings of excellent architectural quality, imbuing the neighborhood with a "sense of time and place." Rows of three- to five-story brick buildings constructed along the sidewalk characterize the streetscape. Many buildings have storefronts on the first floor with residential space on the upper floors. The Italianate style is the predominant architectural style in the district. Other nineteenth-century styles, including Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Renaissance Revival, add to the flavor of the district.

Over-the-Rhine also has many simply designed, working-class buildings that display modest elements of the high architectural styles.

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District encompasses a dense, urban area that displays a visual continuity conveying a sense of time and place. The physical relationship of adjacent buildings in a dense environment is accentuated by the uniform faced lines imposed on the streets. The buildings' consistent scale and height, similar materials, and architectural detailing blend to create distinctive streetscapes reflecting the historic development of Over-the-Rhine.

In the nineteenth century Over-the-Rhine was home to businessmen of means and their families, shop owners, working-class families, and the poorest of immigrants. Like other urban centers of the period, Over-the-Rhine was part of the 'walking city,' in which most people could easily walk from their homes to places of employment, entertainment, and worship. Building exteriors were designed to be experienced and appreciated by pedestrians along the sidewalks, and buildings were placed at the front of their lots for easy pedestrian access.



PROCESS OF DEVELOPING NEW CONSTRUCTION

Prior to designing an infill building in Over-the-Rhine, developers contemplating a new construction project should undertake the following pre-design steps.



01

Understand the historic neighborhood

All successful new construction will emerge from an understanding and respect for the significance of Over-the-Rhine as an historical place; it is therefore essential that this understanding be in place before any design efforts have begun. It is recommended that developers and their designers tour the Historic District on foot, and study written materials on the history and significance of Over-the-Rhine.³

02

Understand the site and surrounding context

Each vacant site in Over-the-Rhine is contextually related to both the previously existing (historic) structure on the site, and the historic buildings on the blocks surrounding the site. Successful new construction will relate to both of these facets of the context. Developers and their designers should review Sanborn Fire Insurance maps to gain an understanding of what previously existed onsite, including the height, material construction, setback, and shape of the building. Developers and their designers should also tour the area surrounding the site extensively, studying the surrounding historic buildings and their attributes, including height, massing, rhythm of openings, detailing and ornamentation, proportion, shape, composition, and roofscapes. This study should focus on broad patterns that bring cohesiveness to the fabric, rather than isolated anomalies on individual buildings. Developers should never limit their study to adjacent buildings, but should include historic buildings and streetscapes on both sides of the street that are within the same block.

03

Notify the Community

Developers and their designers should notify the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, Over-the-Rhine Foundation and other neighborhood groups of their intent to build, before design has begun. These community groups can provide knowledge, context, and insight to a developer/designer that will aid design of the project, assist in obtaining community support. This step also provides an opportunity to enhance the developer/designer's understanding of Over-the-Rhine through the transfer of information from long-standing stakeholders in the neighborhood.

04

Thoroughly review these guidelines

Once a baseline understanding of the history of Over-the-Rhine, the development site, and the surrounding context has been achieved, developers and designers should consult these guidelines to work toward a high-quality design compatible with the historic context of Over-the-Rhine.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

These guidelines are divided into 9 chapters outlining the major elements that must be addressed in new construction.

Each chapter allows for exceptions, which permit project developers and designers to deviate from the prescribed chapter guidelines in the event a more innovative design approach is desired. Contemporary design and innovation are allowed and encouraged, but require a higher degree of scrutiny and documentation. The chapter exceptions ensure that alternative design approaches are accommodated and that they are executed to a standard worthy of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.

Developers and designers who are more interested in getting a project completed as quickly and simply as possible, and who are less interested in the aesthetic or architectural qualities of the development, would follow the chapter guidelines without exception. The chapters are designed to ensure that new buildings blend into the historic environs seamlessly, respectfully incorporating the most representative characteristics of the surrounding fabric while creating little to no contrast. Alternatively, developers and designers who are interested in making an architectural statement or developing a more contemporary building in Over-the-Rhine may favor the utilization of certain exceptions.

Standard Submission Requirements

- Narrative statement of intent behind the design and how it preserves and enhances the integrity of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District
- Map identifying the site in the context of Over-the-Rhine
- Existing and proposed site plan including, north arrow, street names, building footprints, parcel lines, and setback dimensions from all property lines labeled. All immediately adjacent properties must be included in the site plan.
- Proposed front, side, and rear elevation drawings, including both drawings that show the site on its own, and drawings that include massing elevations of the entire block. Drawings must include measurements for height, width, and setback [using graphic scale].
- Diagram of each guideline section calling out each guideline component
- Wall Section cut through major openings from ground through roof.
- Labeled photographs of at least one block in both directions, placing the site in the context of the wider fabric. (if a corner site, then photographs must show both streets)
- Labeled photographs of at least one block in both directions on the opposite side of the street. (if a corner site, then photographs must show both opposing streets)
- Material specifications and samples for all exterior materials including, but not limited to, exterior cladding, mortar, detailing and ornamentation, fencing, and roofing.



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MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

London, England

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MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

INTENTION

Massing, Height and Scale are fundamental to the unique identity and character of Over-the-Rhine. The District was developed on long, narrow parcels of land, resulting in the construction of tall, long, narrow buildings designed to maximize density. Thus, the quintessential Over-the-Rhine building is significantly taller and longer than it is wide, with either a rectangular or “L” shape volume. The massing and height of each building varies from its neighbors, but within a limited range, resulting in the particular scale that defines each block. While some blocks feature buildings that range from 2-4 stories in height, others have a 3-5 story range.

24-30 E. 15th Street is made up of tall and narrow buildings of similar height.



The similar massing of 1430-1438 Race Street give the street a distinct scale.



GLOSSARY

Massing

the general shape and size of a building

Height

the measurement from lowest to highest point on a building

Scale

the size of a building in relation to other buildings

MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

GUIDELINE

In order to be deemed compliant with these Guidelines, buildings must incorporate the following characteristics for massing, height, and scale:

01

Building width must be within 10% of the average width of non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block.¹

02

Building height must be within 10% of the average height of non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block.¹

03

Buildings must have either a rectangular or an “L”-shaped volume

04

Building height and depth must both be greater than building width

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.



SETBACK

London, England

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SETBACK

INTENTION

Over-the-Rhine was developed as a dense walking neighborhood with the vast majority of buildings built directly up to the sidewalk. This mostly zero setback environment presents a rich pedestrian experience providing vitality, visual interest, and accessible commercial activity from the public realm. A majority of buildings are also built up to the side property lines, though some buildings have small side setbacks. In rare cases, small, detached residential buildings are set back from the street wall using a low, visually-permeable, decorative, iron fence to mark the edge. Some larger institutional buildings such as schools, churches and public buildings are setback from the street to provide public space, adding to their civic monumentality.

OTR is dominated by zero setback streetscapes, as seen here on the 1400 block of Vine.



Some side streets or portions of blocks have groups of buildings with small front and/or side setbacks as seen here from 211-217 Orchard Street.



GLOSSARY

Setback

the distance which a building is recessed from the property line

SETBACK

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for setback:

01

Buildings must be built with zero setback from the front property line, except as defined in 2.

02

A building may have a front setback if all of the following conditions exist:

- a. The building is a residential or civic building.
- b. Greater than 60% (>60%) of non-institutional contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block* have a front setback of at least two feet
- c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a setback of at least two feet

03

Any front setback must:

- a. Be within 10% of the average setback of those contributing buildings defined in 2b.
- b. Maintain an edge at the front property line using a fence. Refer to Fencing [hyperlinked].

04

Buildings must be built with zero setback from both side interior property lines, except as defined in 5.

05

Buildings must have a side interior setback on one side if all of the following conditions exist:

- a. Greater than sixty percent (>60%) of non-institutional contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block* have a side setback on at least one side.
- b. The previously existing historic building on the site had a side setback on at least one side.

06

Buildings must have a side interior setback on both sides if all of the following conditions exist:

- a. Greater than sixty percent (>60%) of contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block* have a side setback on both sides.
- b. The previously existing historic building on the site had a side setback on both sides

07

Any side setback(s) required under 5.5 – 5.6 must:

- a. Be within 10% of the average side setback of those contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block* that have a side setback.

08

Buildings may have a keyback beginning a minimum of 15 feet from the front of the building**Note**

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.

London, England

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C. TOP

B. MIDDLE

A. BASE

COMPOSITION



COMPOSITION

INTENTION

Typical buildings in the district have a three-part organization made up of a base, middle, and top. Each of these elements plays a specific role in the composition of the building. The base, in the pedestrian realm, provides visual interest, openings, transparency, and a consistent street wall. The middle provides window openings to upper stories, repetition, and rhythm. The top provides both ornamental interest and a crowning visual termination capping the building. Architectural treatment of building bases in Over-the-Rhine differs significantly between commercial and residential ground floor uses, while middle and top elements remain largely consistent.



1119 and 1121 Walnut Street demonstrate the composition components for both residential and mixed-use buildings

GLOSSARY

Composition

The discrete components that comprise a building



COMPOSITION BASE

London, England

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03A

COMPOSITION BASE

INTENTION

03A(ii) Commercial store fronts and bases:

First-floor storefronts are common and are a significant architectural feature in the district's mixed-use buildings. Storefronts take on a dual role: as the place where merchants display their wares, allowing customers to “window shop”, they provide intimate contact with the pedestrian. By forming the architectural base of the mixed-use building, they also give scale, rhythm and texture to the street. For corner conditions, commercial storefronts typically wrap the facade to face both streets.

During the later decades of the nineteenth century, most storefronts were built of sandstone or cast iron. Architecturally, styles include Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne. Detailing ranges from very simple stone piers and lintels to very elaborate cast iron columns assembled in a variety of patterns. The exact size, scale and level of detail vary greatly from building to building. However, most of these storefronts share a six-part design framework, as illustrated in figure x.x.



1708 Elm Street exhibits the characteristics of residential base



119 E 12th Street exhibits the characteristics of commercial storefronts and base

03A(i) Residential Bases

Residential bases often consist of a stone foundation, typically rising 9 -24 inches above grade capped by a projecting sandstone or limestone water table. Some bases contain windows that provide ventilation and light to the building's basement. Residential bases may also be characterized by the presence of stoops leading to an elevated entry. These stoops vary in height, but are generally consistent in form and height with other stoops within the same block.

COMPOSITION BASE

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for building base:

COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

01

Must have a storefront that exhibits the six - part storefront composition illustrated in figure x.x, as follows:

Bulkhead

- a. Must have a height that is within 10% of the average height of bulkheads on contributing residential and other commercial buildings within the same block.*
- b. Must be built in line with the plane of the primary facade.
- c. Must extend the full width of the display windows.

Tansom Windows

1. Must be located above the display windows
2. Must be separated from the display windows by a horizontal member or transom bar.
3. Must be rectangular in shape
4. Must run the width of the storefront between the outer pilasters
5. Must be within 10% of the average height of other transom windows on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.*
6. Window glazing must be clear, non-reflective, and without tint.

Display Windows

1. Must have a sill separating the window glazing from the bulkhead
 - a. The sill must protrude 2"-4" from the plane of the primary facade
2. Window glazing must be parallel to the plane of the primary facade
3. Window glazing must either be built up to the plane of the primary facade, or recessed from the primary facade.
 - a. If glazing is recessed from the primary facade, the recession must be within 10% of the average recession of display window glazing on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.¹
 - i. The calculation of average display window glazing recession shall exclude that portion of any storefront that may have an angled window glazing recession due to a recessed entry door.
4. Window glazing must be clear, non-reflective, and without tint.
5. Muntins are not required but when used must be either true divided light or simulated divided lights. Number and pattern should reflect historic context.
6. Window glazing must not be covered by bars, panels, or any system that obscures or blocks the view of the window glazing from the public realm.

COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE BUILDINGS (CONT.)

01

Columns/Pilasters

1. Storefronts must incorporate Framing Columns at each end of the facade. These columns:
 - a. Must be rectangular in shape
 - b. Must be equal in size
 - c. Must be within 10% of the average width of other pilasters on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.
2. Inner Columns may be added to divide expanses of display window larger than 5 feet, or to frame entry doors to upper stories of the building. Such columns:
 - a. Must be either rectangular or cylindrical in shape
 - b. Must be within 10% of the average width/diameter of other columns on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.¹
3. Pilasters may face columns under the following conditions:
 - a. If pilasters are used, they must be employed on all columns in a storefront system
 - b. Have a base, shaft, and capital composition that reflect historic context. Pilasters must not protrude beyond 4" from the plane of the primary facade.

Storefront Cornice/Sign Band

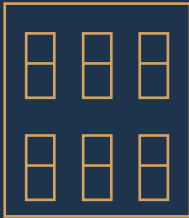
- 1.. Storefronts must have a Storefront Cornice/Sign Band located above the transom windows. This element:
 - a. Must be within 10% of the average height of other sign bands on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.¹
 - b. Must be rectangular in shape
 - c. May have a projecting horizontal element. If such an element is included, it:
 - i. Must terminate the top of the sign band
 - ii. Must run the full length of the sign band.
 - iii. Must not protrude beyond 8" from the plane of the primary facade.

Entry Doors

1. Must be within 10% of the average height and the average width of other entry openings on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.¹
2. Must be between 34" and 38" in width and 82" and 112" in height
3. May be set flush with the façade with the frame set back slightly, or doors may be located within a recessed vestibule.
4. Corner storefront entrances may be cut in at 45 degrees and framed by columns set between 4 and 6 feet from the corner with a cylindrical column at the corner to hold the edge. The door should be located within the recessed vestibule.
5. May include transoms and/or sidelights that follow the historic context.
6. Should patterns and scale of original wood doors found in the district.
7. No more than one storefront entry shall exist for each 20 feet of storefront width.

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.



COMPOSITION MIDDLE

City, Country/State

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03B

COMPOSITION MIDDLE

INTENTION

The middle composition of historic buildings in Over-the-Rhine is the area between the top of the base composition, and the bottom of the cornice. The middle composition contains window openings, sills, lintels, and other detailing and articulation that contributes greatly to both the vertical emphasis and rhythm of the design.

In mixed-use buildings, the middle composition is typically distinguished from the storefront below with a strong horizontal element, such as a stone or cast iron lintel or cornice corresponding to a division in the use of the building. In residential and other commercial buildings, the horizontal element dividing middle from base is the top of the stone foundation or water table that terminates below the building entry. In both building types, the middle composition is distinguished from the more decorative top or attic level through the application of a strong horizontal element.



1222 and 1224 Republic Street exhibit the characteristics for residential middle



118-128 W Elder Street exhibit the characteristics for mixed-use middle



1212 Jackson exhibits the characteristics for industrial middle

GLOSSARY

Residential Middle

the area on a residential building between the water table and the building top

Commercial Middle

the area on a commercial/mixed use building between the storefront sign band/cornice and the building top

COMPOSITION MIDDLE

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for building middle:

RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

01

Must have a middle that is visually distinguishable from the rest of the building. This middle section:

- Must have a height that is within 10% of the average height of middle compositions on contributing residential and other commercial buildings within the same block.¹
- Must be built parallel to the plane of the property line on all sides
- Must follow the specifications for Openings set forth in Chapter 6 (hyperlinked)

COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

01

Must have a middle that is visually distinguishable from the rest of the building. This middle section:

- Must have a height that is within 10% of the average height of building bases on contributing residential and other commercial buildings within the same block.¹
- Must be built parallel to the plane of the property line on all sides
- Must follow the specifications for Window Openings set forth in the Openings section (hyperlinked)

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.

COMPOSITION MIDDLE

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for building middle:

COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

01

Must have a middle that is visually distinguishable from the rest of the building. This middle section:

- a. Must have a height that is within 10% of the average height of middle compositions on contributing residential and other commercial buildings within the same block.*
- b. Must be built parallel to the plane of the property line on all sides
- c. Must follow the specifications for Openings set forth in Chapter 06 (hyperlinked)

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings with the relevant setback must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in either direction.



COMPOSITION TOP

COMPOSITION TOP

INTENTION

Strong terminating elements at the tops of buildings are primary defining features of the district. Projecting cornices supported by decorative brackets and bold, decorative frieze panels are the quintessential tops found in Over-the-Rhine. Historically, cornices projected over buildings to minimize rainfall on facades. Decorative cornices in the district often exhibit their own micro-composition of base, middle, top, while remaining consistent with an overarching theme throughout the district.

Some buildings feature less elaborate building tops – such as bracket-less box gutters, and decorative horizontal corbelled parapet walls – that nevertheless serve as strong terminating elements to the building. On other buildings the entire uppermost story serves as a top, realized by a mansard roof or a lower secondary cornice.



116 W Elder Street exhibits the characteristics of top



213 and 219 Odean exhibits the characteristics of top



8 Green exhibits the characteristics of early 20th century top



1408 Elm exhibits the characteristics of top

GLOSSARY

Top

the terminating element of a facade as it transitions from the middle composition to the roof, often marked by a change in both plane and material

COMPOSITION TOP

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for top:

01

Cornices must either replicate the form and design of historic cornices found in the district, or be a contemporary interpretation that follows the size, scale and rhythm found in the brackets, fascia, attic windows and other features of the district's historic cornices and rooflines. New construction buildings:

1. Must have a distinct top
2. The height of the top must be proportioned relative to the height of the primary façade, representing 5-12% of the total height of the primary facade for a cornice condition.**
3. The projection of the top beyond the plane must be proportioned relative to the height of the primary facade, representing a projection distance from the primary plane that is 2-5% of the total height of the primary facade.**
4. Brackets [not to be confused with dentils (hyperlinked to definition)] are not required but when used the dimensions, number, and placement should reflect historic context:
 - a. Brackets must be placed on both edges of the primary facade. Outer brackets can either be placed individually, doubled, or enlarged [typically between 1.5x and 2x larger than a single bracket].
 - b. There are three typical patterns for inner bracket placement in the district:
 - i. Evenly spaced single or double brackets along the entire facade
 - ii. Single or double brackets evenly spaced above the

brick void between every window

- iii. Single or double brackets with single bracket bookending edges of each window, typically aligned with edges of the window lintel.
- c. Must be at least 6" wide. Brackets are typically between 6" and 10" wide with the most common width being 8".
- d. Bracket height, width and projection must be based on overall top height and projection and should reflect historic context and building type.
- e. Bracket shape must reflect historic bracket shaping. Perfectly rectangular shaping is inappropriate.

02

If a traditional cornice design is chosen, it is important that the proportions, scale, and rhythm found in the components of the cornice including: box gutter, brackets, frieze, through-the-cornice windows and other features [hyperlinked to each definition], including trim work, are executed appropriately. See the glossary [hyperlink all] for full definitions. These components should relate in dimensions and scale of similarly scaled contributing residential and other commercial buildings within the same block.¹

Note

² The appropriate percentage will be based on the scale of the building. A smaller percentage for smaller buildings and a larger percentage for larger buildings.



VERTICAL EMPHASIS



VERTICAL EMPHASIS

INTENTION

The quintessential Over-the-Rhine building is tall and narrow with a distinctive vertical orientation, a consequence of the District's historical development on narrow lots. This vertical emphasis is expressed not only in the overall height-to-width ratio of buildings, but also through individual elements such as window openings, which were designed to be tall and narrow as a practical measure to bring in maximum light and airflow at a time before modern lighting and climate control existed. Other ways in which vertical emphasis is expressed include columns, chimneys, fencing, and detailing and ornamentation on the facade.

1301-1313 Main Street demonstrate the vertical emphasis of the base and middle sections of mixed-use buildings



1119 and 1121 Walnut Street demonstrate the composition components for both residential and mixed-use buildings



GLOSSARY

Vertical Emphasis

the vertical orientation of elements in architecture

VERTICAL EMPHASIS

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for vertical emphasis:

01

The height of the building must be greater than the width.

02

Window openings must be taller than they are wide in a ratio of between 1.75:1 and 2.36:1. The exact ratio should respond to the dimensions of the exterior walls.

03

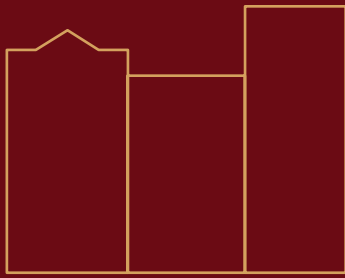
Window openings must be stacked vertically in symmetrical columns as set forth in Chapter 06 [\[hyperlinked\]](#)

04

Vertical Emphasis must be enhanced or supersede any articulation [e.g. horizontal banding]

05

The proportions in the composition [base, middle, top] and the components of each must emphasize and enhance the overall verticality of the building



RHYTHM

City, Country/State

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RHYTHM

INTENTION

The “rhythm” formed by the repetition of buildings is one of the core elements that knits the fabric of Over-the-Rhine together into a cohesive district. Most buildings are tall and narrow – typically 20-50 feet in width and three to four stories in height – and exhibit a variation in height from one building to the next. Most buildings also feature regularly spaced, horizontally and vertically aligned, symmetrically placed window openings that display a remarkable consistency from one building to the next. Finally, buildings tend to have articulated wall surfaces (e.g. sills and lintels), resulting in the consistent projection of elements from the plane of the primary façades of buildings along the streetscape. This repetition of tall, narrow buildings of varying height, consistent fenestration geometries, and articulated wall surfaces results in a particular pattern, or “rhythm”, that gives Over-the-Rhine streets harmony and coherence.

5.1
1405-1417 Main Street



5.2
and 529-541 East 13th
Street are examples
of Over-the-Rhine's
distinctive rhythms



GLOSSARY

Rhythm

the organized movement of repetitive forms, elements, and space in architecture

RHYTHM

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for rhythm:

01

Building height must vary by a minimum of 5% from the height of any adjacent non-institutional contributing buildings

02

The proportions in the composition [base, middle, top] and components of each should relate to the proportions in the composition of non-institutional contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block.²

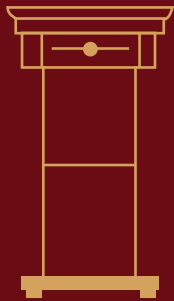
03

Window openings and articulation of wall surfaces (i.e. sills) must meet the criteria for windows set forth in [Openings](#) [hyperlinked]

- a. Rows of window openings must relate to the rhythm [horizontal alignment pattern] of non-institutional contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block.²

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.



OPENINGS

City, Country/State

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OPENINGS

INTENTION

Window openings are fundamental to the distinctive rhythm that defines the district. Window openings are found both on principle façades as well as the rear and side walls of buildings where those walls are not immediately abutted by another building. Most buildings feature regularly spaced, vertically oriented (in a proportion of 1.75:1 to 2.36:1) individual window openings formed into horizontally and vertically aligned, symmetrical rows and columns. Buildings with commercial uses on the upper floors and many built after the turn of the century often feature more variation in window openings, including groupings of openings that create more of a horizontal orientation. Window openings typically occupy 30%-50% of the total surface area on a given wall.

Windows are typically recessed into the opening, creating a strong shadow detail.⁸ Windows are typically double hung and often have decorative stone sills and lintels.

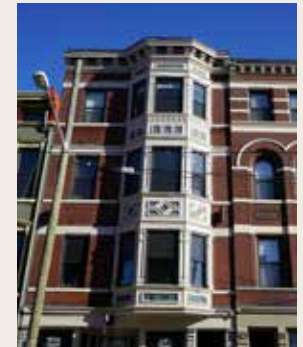
While oriel windows are not defining features of Over-the-Rhine, they are present at a number of locations in both residential and mixed-use buildings. Oriels are



118 and 120 W 14th Street exhibit the characteristics for windows



1126 Walnut exhibits the characteristics of grouped openings



1428 Race exhibits the characteristics of oriel windows

designed to provide functional benefits to interior space, and are also architectural expressions that add distinction and three-dimensionality to Over-the-Rhine's typically planar masonry facades.

Doors follow the patterns and characteristics of windows accentuating the verticality and symmetry of the district.

OPENINGS

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for window openings:

01

Exterior walls must have one row of window openings for each story. Attic stories are not required to have window openings.

02

Must occupy a total of between 30% and 50% the middle portion of the building

03

Rows of window openings:

- a. Must have evenly spaced openings
- b. Must have horizontal alignment among openings within the same row
- c. Must relate to the rhythm [horizontal alignment pattern] of non-institutional contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block.*
- d. The upper most row of windows, including lintel, must be at least 15 inches below the lowest component of the top element.

04

Columns of window openings:

- a. The number of columns of openings typically corresponds to the width of the subject building:

Building Width	# of opening columns	Linear ft between window columns*
40-50	6	6.67' – 8.3'
35	5	7'
25-30	4	6.25', 7.5'
20	3	6.67'
18	2 – 3	6', 9'
16-17	2	8' – 8.5'

- b. Must have evenly spaced openings
- c. Must have vertical alignment among openings within the same column
- d. Must be symmetrical

05

Window openings

- a. Must be taller than they are wide in a proportion of between 1.95:1 and 2.37:1. Windows are most always 38" wide and between 74" and 90" tall. Common lengths are: 74", 83", 90", 98".
- b. Must have a lintel:
 - i. Typically are 8" in height. Ornate headers typically range between 12" and 18" inches in height and project several inches beyond the plane
 - ii. Typically extend beyond the width of the window opening by 8" on either side or total length of 52" for lintels of 8" in height. For ornate headers, typically between 5" and 8" on either side.
 - iii. Typically extend beyond the width of the window opening by 8" on either side or total length of 52" for lintels of 8" in height. For ornate headers, typically between 5" and 8" on either side.
- iv. Must have a sill:
 1. Typically are 4" or 5" in height.
 2. Typically extend beyond the width of the window opening by 2" or 7" on either side or total length of 42" or 52"
 3. Must project between 1½" and 3" outward from the plane of the exterior wall

06

Window groupings and oriel windows:

- a. Window groupings and oriel windows are uncommon features in the district. Therefore, their use in new construction must strike a balance with existing historic buildings. The use of these special window features will be considered on a case by case basis.
- b. Window groupings may be considered if no more than 15% of contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block have grouped windows, in which case the building may have window grouping that reflects the window grouping of the contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block. If the application of window groupings is deemed appropriate they must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Must have horizontal alignment among openings within the same row
 - ii. Must have vertical alignment among openings within the same column
 - iii. Must be symmetrical
 - iv. Must have a sill:
- c. Oriel Windows may be considered if no more than 15% of contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block have oriels, in which case the building may have oriel that reflects the oriel windows of the contributing buildings on the same side of the street within the same block. If the application of oriels is deemed appropriate they must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Must be perceived as a well-defined separate element within the façade.
 - ii. Must not comprise more than two-thirds of the plane of the façade.
 - iii. Must have vertical emphasis
 - iv. Must be constructed of material different from the façade, typically wood or wood clad in metal.
 - v. Must have a tripartite division of bottom, middle, and top.
 - vi. The Oriel projects forward from the flat plane of the façade sufficiently to allow framed glazing to occur on all sides of the projection.
 - vii. Framed glazing must occur on all planes of the oriel projection.

07

Windows

- a. Must be double-hung
- b. Must be recessed from the plane of the primary facade
- c. Must be clear, non-reflective, and without tint
- d. Muntins are not required but when used must be either true divided light or simulated divided lights. Number and pattern should reflect historic context.

Note

Storefront windows must follow the requirements set forth in (Commercial: Base, [hyperlinked](#))

OPENINGS

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for door openings:

01

Must have door opening on primary facade

02

Must be aligned with the furthest right or furthest left opening column. If there are two residential entrances [e.g. primary facade and breezeway entrance], the primary facade entrance must be aligned with the second to last right or left opening and the breezeway entrance aligned with the furthest right or left opening column. The two openings must be adjacent to each other.

03

Must have top horizontally aligned with openings within the same row.

04

Must be within 10% of the average height and the average width of other entry openings on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.*

05

Must be between 34" and 38" in width and 82" and 112" in height

06

May be set flush with the façade with the frame set back slightly, or doors may be located within a recessed vestibule.

07

May include transoms that follow the historic context.

08

Should patterns and scale of original wood doors found in the district.

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block, then the quantity of buildings must include non-institutional contributing buildings located on the same side of the street within the same block plus an additional block in both directions.

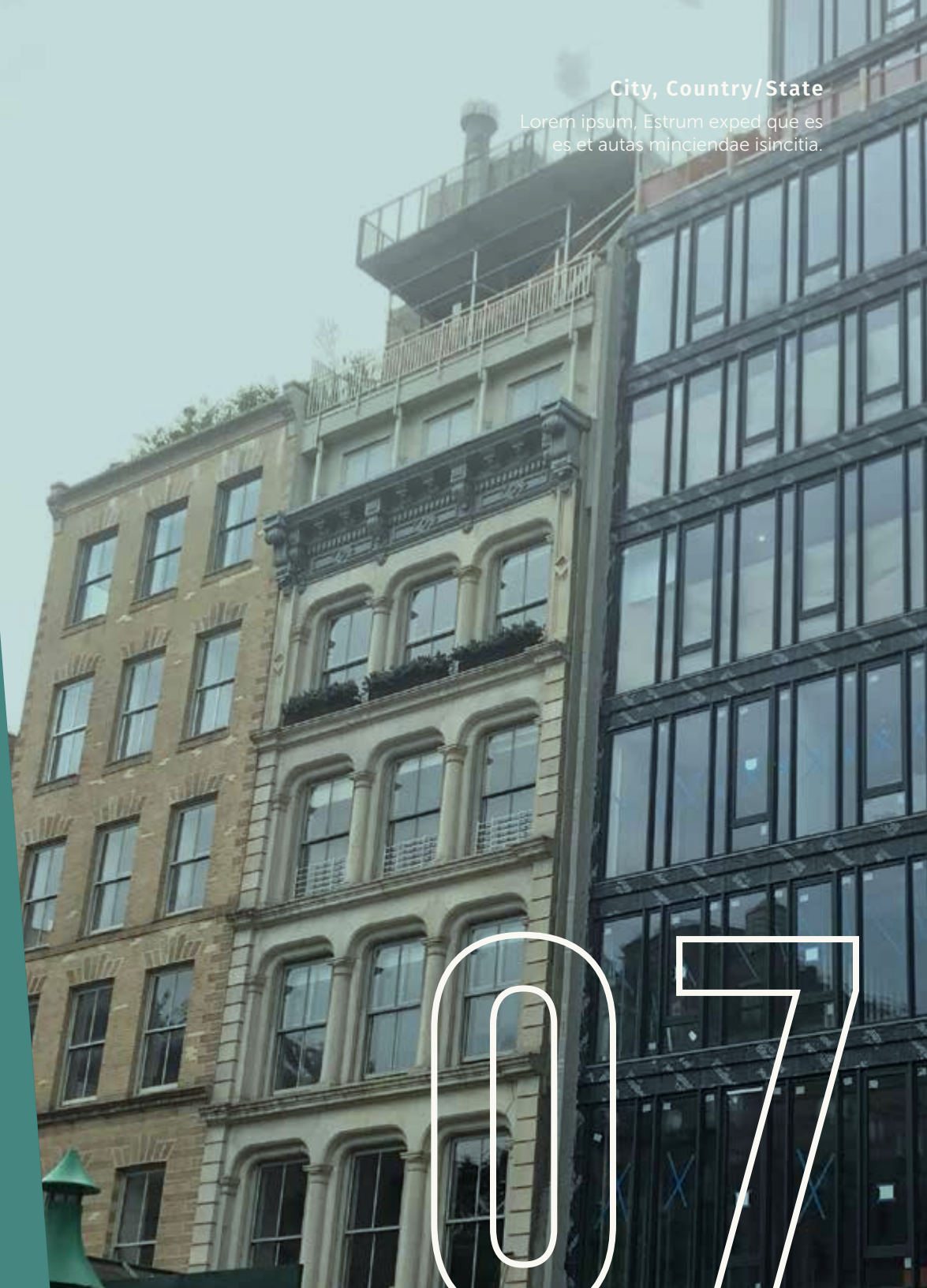
Storefront doors must follow the requirements set forth in (Commercial: Base, [hyperlinked](#))



ROOF

City, Country/State

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ROOF

INTENTION

Roofs help define not only the pedestrian experience of the district from street level, but also the unique aerial views of the neighborhood from hillsides and rooftops. The roofs that feature most commonly in the Over-the-Rhine historic district are side-gable roofs and low-pitched shed roofs. Mansard roofs and sawtooth roofs at the rear portion are seen sporadically throughout the district. Institutional buildings in Over-the-Rhine have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs and towers.



1425 and 1427 demonstrate the common roof types of the district

GLOSSARY

Roof

the structure forming the upper covering of a building

ROOF

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for roofs:

01

Must be built with either a side-gabled roof or a low-pitched shed roof. Side-gabled roofs must have a pitch between 12:2 and 12:6. Low-pitched shed roofs must have a pitch of between 12:1 and 12:2.

02

Rooftop decks and outdoor rooftop environments must not be visible from, and must be entirely hidden from view of the public realm

03

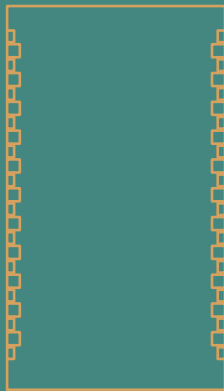
Standing seam metal is encouraged but not required as a roofing material.

04

Mechanical systems, clean energy installations (e.g. solar panels), and other non-deck and non-outdoor rooftop environment rooftop appendages must not be visible from a street-level vantage point from within 40 feet in any direction from the primary street-facing facades. Efforts should be made to minimize visibility of such appendages from the public realm entirely.

05

Efforts should be made to minimize the impact of rooftop appendages on aerial and elevated panoramic views of Over-the-Rhine.



MATERIALS

City, Country/State

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es et autas minciendae isincitia.



MATERIALS

GUIDELINE

Materials form an essential part of the identity of Over-the-Rhine, and brick is the character defining material of the District. The neighborhood evolved from primarily wood frame construction with wood clapboard siding in the earlier part of the 19th century, to primarily brick masonry buildings as the century wore on and Over-the-Rhine entered its period of significance. Thus, the vast majority of Over-the-Rhine buildings are made of brick. Other materials characteristic of the district include limestone and sandstone (sills, lintels, and the occasional façade), wood (doors, windows, box gutters, cornices, and siding on early buildings), metal (lintels, sills, cornices, and roofs), cast iron (storefronts), and wrought iron (fire escapes, fencing).

Today, the quality and price of craftsmanship, construction methods, building envelope technology, and raw materials have all changed considerably since the period of significance of the Over-the-Rhine historic district. While 'old-world' construction techniques and high levels of customized ornamentation are



OTR buildings are primarily constructed of hand-made orange-red clay bricks stacked using the common bond seen here on 1219 Sycamore Street. There may be slight variation in texture and color from brick to brick.



Decorative metal header on 1418 Elm



Decorative stone lintel on 1431 Elm



Decorative metal header on 1418 Elm



The cornice line of 116 W 14th Street is made up of decorative metal brackets and wood trim work

not considered the current standard for new construction, the historic materials of Over-the-Rhine remain viable and appropriate as the material palette for new construction in the district.

GLOSSARY

Materials

The substances that comprise the exterior of a building

MATERIALS

GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for materials:

01

Exteriors must be brick on all sides; consisting of at least one full wythe of 4" brick. This brick must:

- Match historic dimensions of 2-1/2" x 8-1/4", or be modular sized brick of 2-1/4" x 7-5/8"
- Be visually homogeneous within individual bricks, displaying a consistency in color, texture, and finish. Factory applied variations and patterns (e.g. speckling) are to be avoided.
- Be visually homogeneous with other brick on the building. Variations in color, texture, patterning, and finish among brick are not permitted.
- Be arranged in common or running bond
- Have well-defined corners and edges, and must not be rounded.
- May be painted, but must still follow all of the requirements for brick in this section.

02

Vertical and horizontal mortar joints in the brick must:

- Have a width of 3/8"-1/2"
- Have mortar be flush with the brick or recessed 1-3mm from brick; mortar shall not overlap onto the brick.
- Be colored to approximate the color of original mortar joints on historic buildings in the district. (Cases where masonry has been repointed with new mortar on historic buildings should not be used as examples for color matching purposes)
- Weep holes, steel angles, and any other evidence of non-traditional masonry construction techniques must not be visible from the public realm.

03

Lintels and sills must be made of limestone or sandstone, or cast stone with a limestone veneer applied.

04

Window components must be made of wood or aluminum clad wood.

05

Box gutters and cornice soffits must be made of natural wood.

06

Cornice brackets and/or dentils must be made of wood, metal, or fiberglass

07

Storefront systems must meet the following requirements:

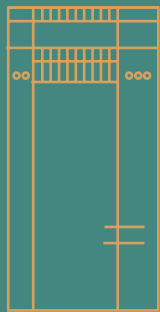
- a. Columns and Pilasters must be made of cast iron, steel, limestone, sandstone, or cast stone with a limestone veneer applied. Brick is permitted where examples exist on contributing mixed-use buildings within the same block.
- b. Bulkheads must be made of natural wood or steel
- c. Window framing and muntins must be made of wood or steel, or dark colored aluminum

08

Residential bases must be made of stone or precast concrete.

09

All window glass must be clear, non-reflective, and without tint excluding the minimum tint applied for energy rated window glazing



MISCELLANEOUS

City, Country/State

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MISCELLANEOUS

INTENTION

A number of important features of the Over-the-Rhine historic district fall within the Miscellaneous category, including ornamentation, doors, porches, fencing, and signage.

Side Porches (Veranda)

Side porches are frequently found on historic Over-the-Rhine buildings. Typically they were built into the “L” of the building, filling the void between the neighboring property line and the exterior side wall of the building. Often the side porch would reclaim the space left by the narrowing of the building as it moved away from the street.

Front Fencing

Front fencing is used to mark the front property line for buildings that have a setback in Over-the-Rhine. Fencing was most frequently made of wrought iron formed into narrow vertical elements supported by vertical posts.

Exterior Entries

Exterior entries mark the division between public and private realm in Over-the-Rhine. Entries have different sizes, locations, and styles depending on the use and period of the building. Entrances to residential buildings usually feature a single

wooden door, set off to one side of the principal façade and recessed into the brick. In mixed-use buildings, especially along commercial arterials such as Elm, Race, Vine, Walnut, Main, and Sycamore Streets, residential entrances are placed either in one of the outermost bays of the principal façade, or are located on a side exterior wall of the building, accessible through a tall narrow breezeway with a gate or door at the front of the building. Storefront entries can be centered, off-centered, or recessed at the corner of the storefront.

Ornamentation

Ornament is ubiquitous in Over-the-Rhine. The ornate expressions and flourishes found on cornices, fences, cast iron storefronts, and building facades give Over-the-Rhine much of its characteristic charm. Types of ornamentation include stone and plaster sculpture, decorative bracket moldings, string coursing, brick corbeling, decorative iron work, stone lintel and sill inscriptions, and crown moldings.

Balconies

True balconies are rare in Over-the-Rhine. Fire escapes are prevalent and often double as balconies.

Rooftop decks

Rooftop decks are not a feature of the district.

MISCELLANEOUS

PORCHES GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for porches:

01

Front porches are not permitted.

02

A single side porch is permitted if the previously existing building on the site included a side porch, and if the new building is built in an “L” shape such that the porch can be placed in the void created by the space.

03

Side porches must be built into the “L” void of the building where the building narrows as it moves away from the street. They must not extend beyond the plane of the rear exterior wall of the building.

04

Side porches must be built of natural wood with wooden panels filling the space between the floor and railing.

05

Side porches must be built in a rectangular geometry

MISCELLANEOUS

FRONT FENCING GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for fencing:

01

Buildings with a front setback must have front fencing.

02

Fencing must be set at the front property line (abutting the sidewalk) and occupy the full width of the front property line.

03

Side porches must be built into the “L” void of the building where the building narrows as it moves away from the street. They must not extend beyond the plane of the rear exterior wall of the building.

04

Fencing must be made of wrought iron, cast-iron, or steel.

05

Fencing must have a design that consists of a series of narrow vertical elements set between vertical posts, and intersected by perpendicular horizontal elements.

06

Fencing must have no more than three horizontal elements

07

Vertical elements must be cylindrical and have a diameter of no greater than 1.5 centimeters.

08

Vertical elements must be regularly spaced at intervals that are within 10% of the average interval of vertical elements found on historic front fencing on the same side of the street within the same block. If no historic front fencing exists on the same side of the street within the same block, then vertical elements must be spaced at intervals that are within 10% of the interval of vertical elements from at least one example of historic front fencing found elsewhere in the district.

09

Vertical elements must extend beyond the uppermost horizontal element by an amount that is within 10% of the average extension of vertical elements beyond the uppermost horizontal element of historic front fencing on the same side of the street within the same block. If no historic front fencing exists on the same side of the street within the same block, then vertical elements of fencing must extend beyond the uppermost horizontal element by an amount that is within 10% of the extension of vertical elements beyond the uppermost horizontal element from least one example of historic front fencing found elsewhere in the district.

10

Fencing must have a height (measured from grade to the top of the vertical elements) that is within 10% of the average height of historic front fencing on the same side of the street within the same block. If no historic fencing exists on the same side of the street within the same block, then fencing must have a height that is within 10% of the height of at least one example of historic front fencing found elsewhere in the district.

11

Fencing must be painted black

12

Fencing must be visually permeable

MISCELLANEOUS

REAR FENCING GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for fencing:

01

Rear fencing is permitted.

02

Fencing must be made of wrought iron, cast-iron, steel, or natural wood.

03

Fencing must be no more than 6 feet in height.

04

Fencing made of wrought iron, cast-iron, or steel must follow the requirements for front fencing

05

Plane board fences may be either horizontally or vertically arranged.

06

Fencing must not have lattice, shadow board, or basket weave design

07

Vertical elements must be cylindrical and have a diameter of no greater than 1.5 centimeters.

08

Vertical elements must be regularly spaced at intervals that are within 10% of the average interval of vertical elements found on historic front fencing on the same side of the street within the same block. If no historic front fencing exists on the same side of the street within the same block, then vertical elements must be spaced at intervals that are within 10% of the interval of vertical elements from at least one example of historic front fencing found elsewhere in the district.

MISCELLANEOUS

ORNAMENTATION

Buildings must meet the following criteria for ornamentation:

01

Ornamentation should be simple and restrained so as to allow the ornamentation on historic buildings to take precedence.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS GUIDELINE

Buildings must meet the following criteria for exterior entries:

01

Exterior entries must be located at the front of the building or through a breezeway on the side.

02

Exterior doors must be made of natural solid core wood.

03

Exterior doors must have at least two but not more than six panels.

COMMERCIAL & MIXED USE BUILDINGS GUIDELINE

01

Storefront entries can be centered or off-centered.

02

Residential entries must either be located in one of the outermost bays of the principal façade, or on a side exterior wall of the building, accessible through a breezeway or alley.

BALCONIES GUIDELINE

Balconies are exceptions to these guidelines.

ROOFTOP DECKS

Buildings must meet the following criteria for fencing:

01

No part of a roof deck including railings, access structures or any element of the deck can be visible from a street-level vantage point from within 40 feet in any direction from the primary street-facing facade.

Over-the-Rhine Historic District

The geographic area of Over-the-Rhine that is protected by the City of Cincinnati based on its cultural and architectural significance as a representation of a 19th century urban neighborhood.

Contributing Building

A building constructed between 1800 and 1940 that is designated by the City of Cincinnati as contributing to the sense of place that characterizes the Over-the-Rhine Historic District

Residential Building

A building that is entirely residential in use and does not have a storefront

Single-Family Residential Building

A residential building that contains only one housing unit

Multi-Family Residential Building

A building constructed between 1800 and 1940 that is designated by the City of Cincinnati as contributing to the sense of place that characterizes the Over-the-Rhine Historic District

Mixed-Use Building

A building constructed between 1800 and 1940 that is designated by the City of Cincinnati as contributing to the sense of place that characterizes the Over-the-Rhine Historic District

Other Commercial Building

Other Commercial Building – A building that contains commercial uses or a combination of commercial and residential uses but does not have a storefront.

Institutional Building

A contributing building originally constructed for use as a school, theater, market house, or place of worship.

Public Realm

That portion of the District that is accessible or was historically accessible to the public, including all streets, alleys, parks, and other public or once-public areas and rights of way and publicly accessible buildings

Story

A finished level of a building 12-14 feet in height (ground level commercial) or 10-12 feet in height (all other levels), and excluding rooftop appendages

Adjacent

Contributing building – a building.....contribute to the historic or architectural character of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District's period of significance

Rooftop Appendage

Any structure, element, fixture, equipment, furniture, or other item that is attached to the roof.

Block Context

the defining character [of a block] constituted by the forms and functions of existing contributing historic buildings. May pertain to either side of the block individually or both sides of the block as a whole.

Attic

a top story that has lower floor-ceiling-heights than other stories and/or angled ceilings due to the roof pitch.

Oriel Window

a form of bay window projects from the main wall of a building but does not reach to the ground.

Massing

the general shape and size of a building

Height

the measurement from lowest to highest point on a building

Scale

the size of a building in relation to other buildings

Composition

the discrete components that comprise a building

Residential Middle

the area on a residential building between the water table and the building top

Commercial Middle

the area on a commercial/mixed use building between the storefront sign band/cornice and the building logo

Top

the terminating element of a facade as it transitions from the middle composition to the roof, often marked by a change in both plane and material

Vertical Emphasis

the vertical orientation of elements in architecture

Rhythm

the organized movement of repetitive forms, elements, and space in architecture

Roof

the structure forming the upper covering of a building

Materials

The substances that comprise the exterior of a building

STOREFRONT COMPONENTS

Bulkhead/Knee Wall

The bulkhead is the rectangular area of the storefront between the ground and the display windows, varying in height from 18 to 36 inches.

Display windows

Display windows are always present in historic storefronts and are framed by Pilasters/Columns

Transom

Rectangular transom windows are located above the display windows and entrances, and are between 12 and 36 inches in height.

Storefront Cornice/Sign Band

The storefront cornice and sign band together make up the horizontal solid band directly above storefront transoms. This area serves as a bearing member as well as visual separation between the building's base and middle. Sign bands may incorporate appropriately scaled storefront signage.

Columns

Columns are vertical load bearing elements that support a storefront system. Framing Columns are those structural members found at both edges of a storefront. Many storefronts also feature Inner Columns between the Framing Columns that provide additional structural support and/or division between display windows. Framing Columns are typically 10-13 inches in width, while Inner Columns are typically 4-10 inches in width.

Pilasters

Pilasters are non-load-bearing architectural features placed over top of columns to provide ornamentation,

articulation, and planar differentiation from the wall surface.

Water table

A horizontal projecting ledge that diverts rainwater from a building's foundation. Typically made of sandstone or limestone and divides the middle and base portions of the building.

CORNICE COMPONENTS

Box gutter

a rectangular rain gutter that projects beyond the plane of the facade.

Bracket (corbel)

a structural and decorative element that actually or visually supports the box gutter.

Dentil

a small block, secondary to brackets, used as a repeating ornament between or rather than brackets.

Frieze

a horizontal panel that covers the brick facade. Typically contains rectangular trimmed panels and through-the-cornice windows

Through-the-cornice windows

attic windows. Typically rectangular, sometimes circular.



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