



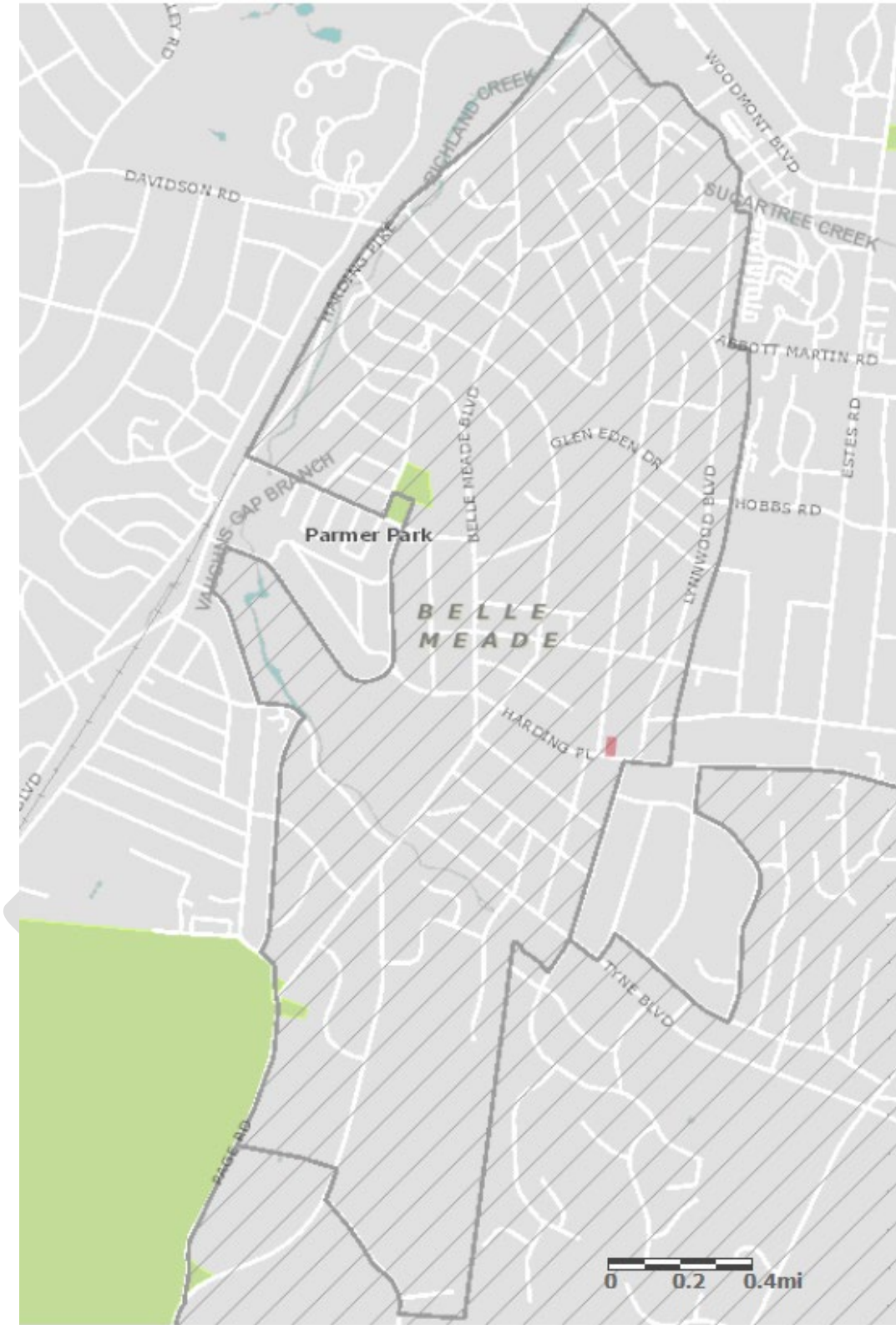
CITYWIDE CONSERVATION OVERLAY DESIGN GUIDELINES

**CITY OF BELLE MEADE, TENNESSEE
ADOPTED AUGUST 2022
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Map of the City of Belle Meade

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

Belle Meade's Conservation Overlay - Policy Statement

The purposes of the Conservation Overlay and Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) are to protect and benefit Belle Meade's residents, their quality of life, and the cultural heritage of the Belle Meade community by preserving, protecting, carrying forward, and improving its distinct visual and aesthetic architectural character and value, quality of excellence in design and materials, and craftsmanship of both historic and modern buildings, structures, streetscapes, neighborhoods, and areas within its cultural landscape that are of significant importance and beauty; to regulate exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used to insure compatibility; to create an aesthetic appearance which complements and is in harmony with Belle Meade's historic and/or architecturally worthy structures; to embrace both heritage properties and creativity of new modern properties; to stabilize and improve property values; and to maintain and foster Belle Meade's legacy of civic beauty and pride.

Belle Meade's Heritage - A Guiding Principles

Belle Meade is recognized as one of the most prestigious and significant residential communities in the United States. The city was created in the early 1900s from lands associated with the Belle Meade Plantation which was prominent in the 19th century as a nationwide leader in horse racing and breeding. As Nashville grew into a major city, much of the Belle Meade property was subdivided and platted into exclusive residential lots. Located approximately six miles southwest of downtown Nashville, the development of Belle Meade was aided by rising automobile ownership, its rural setting away from the noise and pollution of the city and the growing prosperity of Nashville's merchant and business class.

Between 1910 and 1930, over two hundred homes were built in the city. Most of these were designed by Nashville's most prominent architects in the Neo-classical, Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival and Tudor Revival styles. Construction in the city slowed during the 1930s and early 1940s due to the effects of the Great Depression and World War II. After 1945 many new homes were built as vacant lots were filled and the city expanded to the south. The popular Ranch style was widely built during the 1950s and 1960s along with more traditional Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival influenced houses.

Since the mid-20th century, Belle Meade has maintained much of its architectural legacy. While some historic homes have been replaced or enlarged, the city retains a strong sense of place. Concerns over the potential loss of this sense of place led the city to create a historic overlay ordinance and Historic Zoning Commission in 2019. The purpose of this ordinance is to preserve and protect the historical and/or architectural value of buildings, structures, or areas of significant importance; to regulate exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used within the historic districts to insure compatibility; to create an aesthetic appearance which complements the historic or other structures; to stabilize and improve property values; and to foster civic beauty. The protection and preservation of the city's heritage is now a guiding principle for residents and city leaders. The city's commitment to its heritage supports these objectives:

- Preserve the architectural and historical character of Belle Meade's significant historic properties.
- Encourage development that is compatible with the character of the city's historic resources.
- Conduct design review to assist property owners to be good stewards and utilize best practices for their properties.
- Expect that builders, developers and architects will respect the traditional architectural character of the City of Belle Meade and design new construction of the highest possible quality.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Property owners, real estate agents, developers, contractors, tenants, architects, and building designers should use these design guidelines when considering any project that will include demolition, additions or new construction within the City of Belle Meade. For any project that is subject to review by the HZC or staff, the applicant should refer to the design guidelines at the beginning of the planning process to avoid efforts that later may prove to be inappropriate and are ultimately rejected by the HZC.

The HZC will use these design guidelines in its review of proposed projects involving demolition, additions, and new construction. In each case, the combination of circumstances and variables will require the HZC to conduct its review and make its decision on the merits of the particular case. In making its determination of the appropriateness of a project, the HZC will determine whether:

- The proposed work complies with the criteria in the design guidelines;
- The integrity of the individual historic building or property is preserved; and
- New buildings or additions are designed to be compatible with surrounding historic properties.

Each design guideline element is described with a broad policy statement followed by justification of this policy based on design principles. The information in the background, policy statement, and specific itemized design guidelines all serve as the basis for HZC decisions.

TERMINOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION

Throughout the design guidelines a number of terms are frequently used to reflect the design principles that the HZC and staff will consider when making decisions. These terms and their interpretation are as follows:

Addition

The extension or increase in floor area or height of any structure.

Alteration

A change in building material, an addition and/or elimination of any architectural features.

Appropriate

Where a feature, action or design choice relates to demolition, new construction or an addition is stated to be “appropriate,” the project will be in compliance with the design guidelines. Sometimes a feature, “action” or design choice that is appropriate for one design or style is not appropriate for other designs and styles.

Certificate of Appropriateness

A Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) is a form issued to ensure that the work planned for new construction, additions, or demolition meets the criteria of the design guidelines. The CoA needs to be obtained in addition to the regular building permit.

Character

The term “character” means the attributes, qualities and features that make up and distinguish a particular place or development and give such a place a sense of definition, purpose, and uniqueness.

City

The land area within the boundaries of the City of Belle Meade jurisdiction.

Compatible and Compatibility

The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict. Compatible actions reinforce the established rhythm of a streetscape, maintaining typical placement of buildings on their lots, and common features among the buildings, such as similar roof forms, materials, window and door sizes and placement, porch size and location, and foundation heights.

Demolition

The complete removal of part or all of any structure.

Design Guidelines

Standards or criteria which the HZC and staff must consider determining the appropriateness of a proposal for work.

Inappropriate

In some cases, a stated feature, action, or design choice is stated to be “inappropriate.” In such cases, by choosing the design approach referred to as “inappropriate,” the project would not be in compliance with the design standards.

Non-residential Use

This term applies to any existing or proposed church and other place of worship, school, the Belle Meade Historic Site, the Belle Made Country Club, or multi-family housing.

Preservation

The term “preservation” means the adaptive use, conservation, protection, reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, or stabilization of sites, buildings, districts, or structures significant to the heritage of the City of Belle Meade.

Recommended

The term “recommended” means suggested, but not mandatory actions outlined in the design guidelines.

Rehabilitation

The term “rehabilitation” means the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions, while preserving those portions or features which convey its historic, cultural, or architectural values.

Repair

The reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing structure for the purpose of maintenance.

Residence

A building which is to be used as a single occupancy unit which also includes sanitary and cooking facilities for one or more persons, either permanently or temporarily.

Shall or Should

Where the terms “shall” or “should” are used, compliance is specifically required.

Significant

Those characteristics that are important to, or expressive of, the historical, architectural, or cultural quality and integrity of the resource and its setting, and includes, but is not limited to, building material, detail, height, mass, proportion, rhythm, scale, setback, setting, shape, street accessories, and workmanship.

Thin Veneer

Featuring a shallow depth from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch. Thin veneer differs from full veneer stone in its thickness, but is made from the exact same high-quality material. Natural thin stone veneer weighs under 15 pounds per square feet.

WHAT THE HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION REVIEWS

The City of Belle Meade Historic Zoning Commission has the authority to require design review and subsequent issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for any proposed demolition, new construction, or additions to existing properties that are designated in one of the two categories below. This review will be in accordance with the following categories:

Property of Significance

Properties of significance are those which are of particular architectural or historical significance to the early 20th century growth and development of the city. The HZC discourages the demolition of a property of significance. Additions to properties of significance may be allowed if the addition is of appropriate scale and placement on the property. Criteria for demolition and additions to significant properties are outlined in other sections of these design guidelines. A property of significance is defined as follows:

- Generally, these will be properties built prior to 1939;
- Possess integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, feeling, and association, as defined for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
- Embody such other qualities and characteristics as in the judgment of the HZC should be considered significant to the historical and architectural context of the City of Belle Meade;
- Are listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and/or determined to be a contributing property to an eligible historic district in the National Register of Historic Places; and/or
- Possesses one or more of the following criteria:
 - A broad cultural, political, economic, or social association with the historic development of the City of Belle Meade, the state, or the nation;
 - Identification with a historic person or with important events in the city, state, and/or national history;
 - Possesses distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type reflective of the dominant styles in the city and is inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
 - Possesses authenticity of its period of significance as evidenced by the survival of its characteristics, historic fabric, and architectural elements from that period;
 - Is a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect;
 - Possesses or may likely yield information important in prehistory or history; and/or
 - Possesses other qualities and characteristics that, in the judgment of the HZC should be considered for designation as a significant property.

Property Worthy of Conservation

Properties worthy of conservation are those which were built from the mid- to late-20th century and reinforce the historical and architectural character of the City of Belle Meade through their design, scale, and materials. The HZC will encourage the preservation of properties worthy of conservation. Properties worthy of conservation which are proposed for demolition or substantial additions will be reviewed by the HZC in order to identify alternatives which meet the property owner's requirements while preserving the integrity of the property. If no such alternatives are identified properties worthy of conservation may be demolished or receive additions in accordance with the design guidelines. Properties worthy of conservation are defined as follows:

- Generally, these will be properties built after 1939;
- Possess integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, feeling, and association from their original period of construction; and/or
- Are determined to be a contributing property to an eligible historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION REVIEW PROCESS

Property owners are encouraged to contact the Planning Director if they have any questions concerning the need for a Certificate of Appropriateness and the level of review required for their specific project. There are two primary approaches to work reviewed in the City of Belle Meade:

- **Historic Zoning Commission Review**
Projects with greater complexity and more permanent effect including extensive alterations, new construction, and requests for demolition are among the actions that require review by the HZC.
- **Staff Review**
Many actions involving properties can be reviewed directly by the Belle Meade Building and Zoning Staff. The requests can typically be reviewed in a brief period of time as long as such actions would not require review by the HZC and are consistent with the design guidelines.

Zoning Requirements

In addition to these design guidelines, property owners must follow the zoning requirements set forth in the Belle Meade Zoning Code, Title XIV, Chapter 2. The Zoning Code outlines the allowable floor area, setbacks, allowable height, and parking requirements for new construction and additions. When planning for new construction or additions within the city the Zoning Code must be consulted and followed.

Step One - Does Your Work Require a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA)?

These requirements apply to Properties of Significance and Properties Worthy of Conservation as described previously unless exempted below. Within the City of Belle Meade, a CoA is required for the following activities:

- Any new construction of a residence;
- Any exterior alteration to an existing residence;
- Partial or complete demolition to an existing residence that reduces the building footprint and/or gross floor area;
- Any addition to an existing residence;
- Any relocation/moving of an existing residence; and/or
- Any of the non-residential uses (as defined herein) which requires a building or demolition permit for the principal structure.

CoAs are not required for:

- Demolition of accessory structures and appurtenances;
- Demolition of any structure that has become a major life-safety hazard and is requested to be demolished for that reason;
- Construction of accessory structures and appurtenances; or
- Interior renovation or remodel that does not alter the exterior of the structure.

Step Two - Obtain and Complete a CoA Application

Property owners must first meet with the Belle Meade Planning Director and obtain a CoA application prior to the initiation of work outlined in Step One. The director will discuss the project, answer questions, and offer advice on how to meet the guidelines. The table below indicates if the CoA will be reviewed by the HZC or administrative by the planning director. Items that are administratively reviewed and meet the design guidelines, generally receive a permit within one week of receipt of a complete application

TYPE OF PROJECT	CoA Review and Approval
Any new construction of a residence	HZC
Any exterior alteration to an existing residence	Administrative
Partial or complete demolition to an existing residence that reduces the building footprint and/or gross floor area	HZC
Any addition to an existing residence	HZC
Any relocation/moving of an existing residence	HZC
Any of the non-residential uses (as defined herein) which requires a building or demolition permit for the principal structure	HZC

Upon application, the applicant must define the architectural style as found in A Field Guide to American Houses or Get Your House Right books.

Required documentation (in pdf format) to accompany the CoA application submittal:

- For new construction and additions:
 - Description of property condition and proposal;
 - Site plan showing building envelope, all existing and proposed structures and

- site features;
 - Building elevations for each side of the structure showing finished grade;
 - Floorplans for each proposed story/floor;
 - Inspirational photos based on defined architectural style;
 - Wall section with siding, roofing, doors, windows, and ornamentation;
 - Photos of existing property;
 - Photos of neighboring properties;
 - Presentation for HZC meeting; and
 - Materials sample exhibit/board in color.
- For demolition:
- Description of property condition and reason for demolition;
 - Historic background and archival research;
 - A plan for dismantling of historic materials for salvation. Such materials to be salvaged include historic timber framing, windows, doors, mantels, newel posts, balusters, moldings, flooring, hardware, metalwork, brackets, weatherboard, brick, stone, other masonry components, and any other interior or exterior decorative elements;
 - A report stating the condition of the building by a registered architect, licensed contractor, licensed building inspector, or licensed structural engineer.
 - Survey showing existing structures and site features;
 - Photos of existing property (inside and outside);
 - Photos of neighboring properties; and
 - Presentation for HZC meeting.

Step Three - Review and Approval by the Historic Zoning Commission

The HZC meets monthly to hear and approve CoA applications during a public meeting. The planning director will advise the HZC whether or not the proposed work meets the design guidelines. The HZC shall grant the CoA with or without conditions, postpone the approval for a resubmittal based on detailed guidance, or deny the application with reasons/findings stated. The HZC will make their decisions on CoA applications based on the criteria within these design guidelines.

Step Four - Obtain a Building Permit

Building permits are available at the Building and Zoning Office at City Hall. Building permits must be posted at the job site. A CoA is valid for two years from the date of issuance. If a building permit is not issued by the city during that period, a new CoA application must be submitted and approved.

Step Five - Begin Work and Enforcement

If your plans change while work/construction is in progress, contact the Planning Director BEFORE undertaking a change or deviation from the CoA. Work undertaken contrary to original approval of a CoA requires approval from the HZC or Planning Director. The Planning Director may approve a change to the original CoA approval if said change meets the following criteria:

- Building materials are upgraded but still in the assigned architectural style; and/or
- Alterations to building elements (windows, doors, etc.) that are in the assigned architectural style but were not specifically discussed during the HZC approval

process.

The HZC chair will be informed of all administrative approvals by the Planning Director. A record of the administrative approval will be included in the original HZC application file.

If a violation is discovered or reported, the following steps may be taken:

- The Building/Zoning Office may issue a Stop Work Order. At this point the property owner should obtain CoA approval of the work from the HZC. If the work does not meet the design guidelines, the HZC may require that the work be redone or modified.
- If the property owner does not respond to the Stop Work Order, the Building/Zoning Office may issue a citation for violating the ordinance. This will outline deadlines for responding. If the property owner still does not respond, the Building/Zoning Office may issue a citation to appear in city court.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The HZC follows the standards set forth in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These guidelines provide information on best practices for rehabilitation and new construction, a document created in 1978 and revised in 2017. Tennessee state law requires that any conservation overlay district comply with these 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. Avoid the removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property.
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 historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. 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.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and

preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials 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.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Criteria For Additions

Many of the City of Belle Meade's historic dwellings have been expanded with additions since their original construction. These additions vary in size but traditionally the additions have been added on rear elevations. In some cases, lateral additions have been constructed or porches enclosed for living space. Some early additions may now have significance in their own right and merit preservation. Additions to properties are permissible as long as they minimally affect historic materials, are secondary in size and scale to the footprint of the original building, and maintain the dominance of the original structure. The new addition should be compatible with the character of the original dwelling while blending with the overall design. An addition should be designed and constructed in a manner that would allow its potential removal in the future with minimal effect to the historic building.

The following are specific guidelines that will be considered by the HZC when reviewing a proposal for an addition:

- Additions should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing building and blend with those characteristics of the subject dwelling and adjacent buildings and streetscapes.
- Character-defining features of buildings should not be radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed by an addition. The existing historic building fabric should not be damaged by the installation of a new addition.
- The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front porch, stoop or entry is not appropriate. The creation of an addition through the enclosure of a side porch or attached garage may be appropriate.
- Contemporary designs for additions to existing properties are not discouraged when such additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material; and when such design is compatible, by not contrasting greatly, with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
- New dormers should be similar in design and scale to an existing dormer on the building. If there are no existing dormers, new dormers should be similar in design and scale to an original dormer on another historic building that is similar in style and massing. The number of dormers and their location and size should be appropriate to the style and design of the building.
- The roof form of the dormer should match the roof form of the building or be appropriate for the style. The roof pitch of the dormer should generally match the roof pitch of the building.
- The exterior material cladding of side dormers should match the primary or secondary material of the main building.

Criteria For New Construction

The City of Belle Meade contains a number of vacant lots that provide development opportunities for new construction. Construction of a new primary dwelling may also be necessary when a property is lost due to fire, flooding, or other disaster. In recent years there has also been increased development of existing properties resulting in the demolition of dwellings and their replacement with new construction. The general approach to new construction is for it to be compatible with adjacent dwellings and of the highest quality possible. New construction in Belle Meade should reflect traditional architectural styles such as the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, and Tudor Revival. However, early- to mid-20th century and contemporary designs are also appropriate if they are built with compatible massing, scale, proportions, and materials. Belle Meade is known for the high quality of its designs and craftsmanship and new dwellings and structures are required to maintain this standard.

The following are specific guidelines that will be considered by the HZC when reviewing a proposal for new construction:

- Most city dwellings have their primary façades facing the street. New construction should reflect the orientation found along the block in which it is sited;
- The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids (walls) to voids (door and window openings) shall reflect the proposed architectural style as well as be compatible with surrounding historic buildings. Window openings on the primary street-related or front façade should be representative of the window patterns of the proposed architectural style. Single-light sashes are appropriate for new construction. If using multi-light sashes, muntins should be fully simulated and bonded to the glass, and exhibit an interior bar, exterior bar, as well as a spacer between glass panes; and
- Building and site design shall respect the existing topography, the character-defining site features, including existing trees and vegetation, and shall minimize cut, fill, and the use of retaining walls.

Material Requirements for Additions and New Construction

In order to ensure the highest quality craftsmanship and construction the following guidelines shall be followed for the specific architectural elements:

- *Foundations:* Most existing foundations are of stone, brick or concrete and these foundation materials are preferred for new construction. Split faced concrete block is not an acceptable foundation material. Corner stones must have at least a 4" depth.
- *Siding:* No siding material shall be vinyl, aluminum, or wood refaced with vinyl or aluminum. No exterior materials shall be thin veneer brick, stone, cultured stone or synthetic stone, unless wrapping an interior flue chase that penetrates the roof. Materials such as Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EFIS) is not allowable for new construction. Materials such as wood, cementitious siding and solid brick or stone veneer are appropriate materials for new construction.
- *Front Doors:* No front door shall be of aluminum or vinyl.
- *Front Porch:* No front steps visible from the street shall be "Broom Finished" concrete.
- *Windows:* Wood construction is preferred for windows, especially those on the fronts of dwellings. Aluminum clad windows may be used as alternative to full wood windows. Windows shall not incorporate vinyl or aluminum frames. New

- construction shall not incorporate storm windows.
- *Deck Material:* No deck shall be constructed of vinyl clad materials.
 - *Window Shutters:* No shutters shall be plastic, vinyl or aluminum.
 - *Fascia (Gutter Board) Material:* No fascia board shall consist of wood refaced with vinyl or aluminum.
 - *Gutters:* No gutter shall have less than a six-inch (6") opening. Downspouts shall be a minimum of three by four inches (3"x4") in circumference.
 - *Chimneys:* Chimneys located on exterior walls constructed of materials other than masonry or modular masonry (Isokern "type") may not be constructed. When chimneys are above the roofline, the materials may have a nominal thickness between 2" – 4". Chimneys may not be faced with vinyl, aluminum, wood refaced with vinyl or aluminum, thin veneer brick, thin veneer stone, cultured stone, or synthetic stone.
 - *Paint:* All paints shall be of a better quality than contractor grade paint. All proposed colors with brand names (Benjamin Moore – True White) with examples must be indicated on the proposed plans.
 - *Roofing Materials:* Roof slope ratio shall the proposed architectural style. Roof forms of gable and hipped variations are most appropriate for Belle Meade. Common roofing materials in Belle Meade include asphalt shingle, metal, clay tile and slate. Roofing materials of faux clay tiles, faux slate, etc. are prohibited. Shingles should be of a dark color, predominantly dark gray or brown. Asphalt shingles must be a minimum weight of at least 300lb per square and/or use 3-tab shingles. Metal roofs should be of traditional colors not bright or glaring, and of traditional profile. All metal roofs shall be of a quality to include a sixty (60) year guarantee on finish and shall not use exposed screws.
 - *Mechanical/Plumbing Vent Stacks:* No vents shall be located on the portion of the structure's roof facing to the "front" as defined in the Zoning Code. All vents must be painted to match roof color.
 - *Garage Doors:* No garage doors shall be vinyl, fiberglass or aluminum. No steel garage doors shall be less than twenty-four (24) gauge thickness. Each garage bay shall have a separate door.

Criteria for Demolition

The loss of historic dwellings can occur through damage from fires or storms or by neglect and deterioration. Property owners may also want to demolish buildings that are no longer functional or in poor condition. However, demolition presents the greatest threat to the integrity of a significant historic resource.

The following are specific guidelines that will be considered by the HZC when reviewing a proposal for demolition:

- Public safety and welfare requires the removal of the building or structure; and
- The owner is encouraged to consider moving or relocating the building to another location within the City. An experienced, licensed, and qualified structural or architectural engineer and builder with experience in historic properties should evaluate the condition of the subject building and whether it might be able to withstand relocation as an alternative to demolition. This assessment should consider how much damage can be caused by removal and be compiled into a historic conditions report for the HZC evaluation.

APPENDIX A - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PRESERVATION BRIEFS

The National Park Service's **Preservation Tech Notes** provide practical information on traditional practices and innovative techniques for successfully maintaining and preserving cultural resources. The Tech notes are available at the National Park Service's page <https://www.nps.gov//tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes.htm>.

Preservation Briefs are made available by the National Park Service through this link (<http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>).

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