

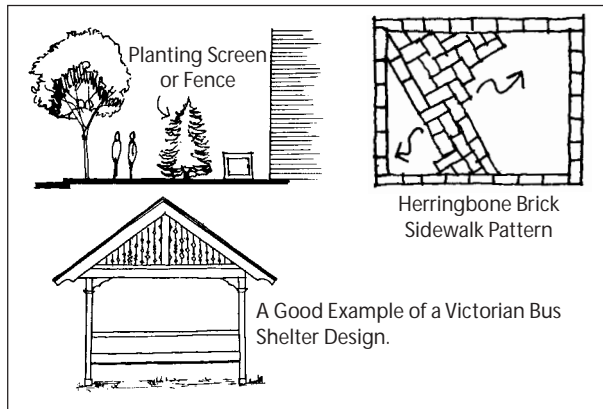
# Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations

A Practical Series for the Preservation and Maintenance of Rockville's Historic Resources

## 10: Utilities, Code Compliance, ADA

### Background

The necessity for conveniences, safety and building code compliance introduces a range of potentially obtrusive elements such as air conditioner units, wheelchair ramps and utility boxes to the historic districts. These often must be located near historic structures or public right-of-ways. Although these elements are necessary, the Historic District Commission reviews such applications for the least obtrusive installation.



### HDC Policy

Utilities, and code requirements that affect the exterior appearance of historic buildings and their environmental setting, should be placed carefully integrated into the historic setting. Installations at rear of properties is encouraged if suitable, and proper screening with plant material or compatible fencing is recommended.

- Handicapped ramps should be placed in such a way as to promote ease of access without damaging character-defining features of the site.
- Air conditioner units, heat pumps and utility boxes should be placed at the rear of properties and screened if visible from a public way.
- Utility boxes, transformers and equipment lockers are required to be placed underground or, if a variance is granted, screened from public view.

### HDC Policy *(continued)*

- Traffic signals and signs should be designed and placed with a minimal impact on the districts.
- New herringbone brick sidewalks and underground utility lines are encouraged within the historic districts.
- New street elements, e.g. benches, bus shelters, should be designed to complement but not imitate the historic period of the historic districts.

### Certificate of Approval

The Certificate of Approval application must include the following:

- Site plan and drawings illustrating design, location and method of installation, and materials.
- Description of grading or other land disturbance that might have an effect on archaeological resources.
- Photographs showing existing conditions and proposed location of installation.

### Tax Credit Information

Tax credits may apply. To maintain eligibility, please have before and after photographs of the work. Obtain HDC approval prior to undertaking the work if a COA is required, and make sure you follow all zoning requirements. Work done without a required HDC Certificate of Approval is not eligible for the tax credits. Forms are available on the City Web site or at the CPDS information desk.

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### Contact Us

For additional information and questions, please contact:

Historic District Commission  
Department of Community Planning and  
Development Services

Rockville City Hall  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-314-8230 voice  
240-314-8210 fax  
history@rockvillemd.gov

### Additional information

Adopted *Architectural Design Guidelines for the Exterior Rehabilitation of Buildings in Rockville's Historic Districts*, September 1977, Rockville Historic District Commission, pp. 3-18, 75-76.

Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation*, (1995), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of Interior, [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide).

NPS Preservation Briefs Series –  
#32 – Making Historic Properties Accessible

*Gaslighting in America Historic Preservation* by Denys Peter Myers, 248 pages, 120 illustrations, 1978. Available from the National Park Service.

For other information on the maintenance and rehabilitation of older homes, see [www.cr.nps.gov/architecture/htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/architecture/htm).

For suppliers and product information, see [www.oldhouseweb.net](http://www.oldhouseweb.net).

For general information about historic buildings, materials, and styles, see *A Field Guide to American Houses*, by Virginia and Lee McAlester, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.