



City of Eugene



Advisory Design Guidelines for Historic Residential Properties

*W. J. Skinner Proprietor of the
County of Lane, Oregon
the fact that...*

On the Cover...

*The E. W. Ryan Residence at 1224 West 5th Avenue, c. 1928 - a typical 1920s bungalow, with a front porch, foundation plantings, and an early set-back garage.
Lane County Historical Museum, #KE1531.*

Thank you to the Lane County Historical Museum for supplying most of the historic images that appear in these design guidelines.

The creation of these **Advisory Design Guidelines for Historic Residential Properties** has been a long term goal of Eugene's Historic Review Board. The board hopes these advisory guidelines can be used as an educational tool for owners of historic houses in Eugene.

Eugene's older neighborhoods, with their historic houses and tree-lined streets, are a critical part of our city's history and charm. Just as the Willamette River, Skinner and Spencer buttes, and the Cascade mountains define Eugene's natural surroundings, our historic neighborhoods trace Eugene's built history and help define the character of our city.

Nobody intentionally sets out to destroy the history of a city, but each time we remove or greatly alter an old place, the memory and understanding of who we are, and where we came from, is diminished. Historic preservation is not about slowing development, but about recognizing the value of what is already here. Many of our historic neighborhoods represent exactly the sort of development that cities across the nation are now trying to promote to combat sprawl. This "New Urbanism" takes as its model the pattern of development found in our historic neighborhoods. Promoting this compact, pedestrian friendly development is part of Eugene's growth management goals. Protecting this environment, and learning to manage its future seems to be common sense.

We hope that you will find these guidelines to be helpful as you embark upon rehabilitating your historic house or garden. The guidelines also contain a section on residential landscape history, while providing some insight on landscape interpretation by historic period. Of particular note is the section on infill development. Historic preservation does not discourage new construction, but aims to provide ideas on how to make new construction compatible in the historic neighborhoods.



Jim Torrey, Mayor
City of Eugene

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Recommendations found in this document should not replace professional advice that may be needed from engineers or architects. Many large projects, like additions or infill construction, are subject to specific building code requirements for fire and life safety. The Building Permit Services Department, Atrium Building, 99 West 10th Avenue, is available to answer specific questions related to building and land use requirements.

To learn more about the history of Eugene, and how residential development in the city relates to broader trends in commerce, industry, transportation, culture, and politics, see the [Eugene Area Historic Context Statement](#). You can borrow a copy at the Eugene Public Library, or purchase your own copy for \$10.00 from the City of Eugene Planning Division in the Atrium Building, 99 West 10th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401.

Acknowledgements

These design guidelines were written by the City of Eugene, Planning Division, with financial support from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The funding for this project will allow the guidelines to be made available to all of the Certified Local Governments (CLG) in Oregon. The Oregon SHPO will retain the master disc and distribute them to each CLG upon request. In this manner each jurisdiction can modify the guidelines to suit their own community's needs.

The development of the guidelines is the result of a recognition by the Eugene Historic Review Board that Eugene needed a document that could help homeowners and developers to better understand the unique character of the city's historic houses and neighborhoods, and incorporate that understanding into their designs for home alterations, additions, and new infill development.

The draft guidelines were reviewed during the summer of 1999 by the Eugene Historic Review Board and other interested citizens. They were revised based on this input to better address community needs and concerns. City of Eugene staff involved in the project include Scott Bogle and Kenneth Guzowski (writing and design) and Shawna Adams-Jacobs and Anne McCleave (editing). Charles Sauls provided technical assistance throughout the layout.

Eugene Historic Review Board

as of August 1999

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- Neighborhood leaders from the inner-city neighborhoods, and interested historic property owners throughout the City

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Why Preserve Old Buildings?	1
Preservation Tax Incentives	2
Treatment Strategies	4
The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation	5
Eugene Takes Shape	9
Getting to Know Eugene’s Architectural Styles	11
Rehabilitation and Alterations	19
Infill Construction	31
Historic Interiors	35
Historic Landscapes	37
Glossary & References	45
Glossary of Architectural Terms	45
Bibliographical References	50
Periodical References for Historic Rehabilitation	52

Why Preserve Old Buildings?

Eugene's older neighborhoods of modest bungalows, stately craftsman houses, and post-World War One revival style houses trace Eugene's history, and help define the character of the city and who we are in the Pacific Northwest.

Eugene has grown tremendously in the past fifty years, and will continue to grow as we enter the new millennium. Urban growth has often led to the loss of historic resources, but it doesn't have to. In developing our city's growth management goals, Eugene's citizens stressed that new growth has to be compatible with the character of historic neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units on historic houses, or new infill development on empty lots in historic neighborhoods, can be accommodated while maintaining the historic character of those places if they are well designed. Indeed, many architects and developers today are rediscovering the principles that characterize most of Eugene's historic neighborhoods: modest, well built houses on smaller lots, with street trees and convenient proximity to schools, parks, shopping, and public transportation. Protecting this sort of development where it already exists preserves history and sense of place, promotes a high quality of life, and also makes good economic sense.

These Design Guidelines were written to provide owners and residents of historic properties, as well as developers working with infill lots in historic neighborhoods, with design suggestions for protecting the historic character of their properties and surroundings. Exterior alterations can unintentionally alter or destroy a building's distinctive architectural features. Similarly, new construction in an old neighborhood that doesn't recognize the existing patterns of building, landscape, and streetscape gradually begins to erode the sense of place that is part of that neighborhood. This is not a matter of cheap versus expensive construction, but rather thoughtful design that recognizes context.

These Guidelines are intended to encourage residents of Eugene to appreciate local history and the historic character of our city. They are written to be general enough to apply to all historic houses in the city. They also address design for infill construction that is compatible with the character of surrounding historic neighborhoods. As the guidelines come to be used and accepted by citizens they can be applied to other new construction.

Eugene has a broad range of historic buildings, and an active historic preservation program. Over the past decade and a half, in cooperation with the University of Oregon and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, the City has conducted an ongoing survey of cultural resources within the city limits.

Introduction

This partnership has led to the completion of cultural resource inventories for the following neighborhoods, shown below and on the map at right:

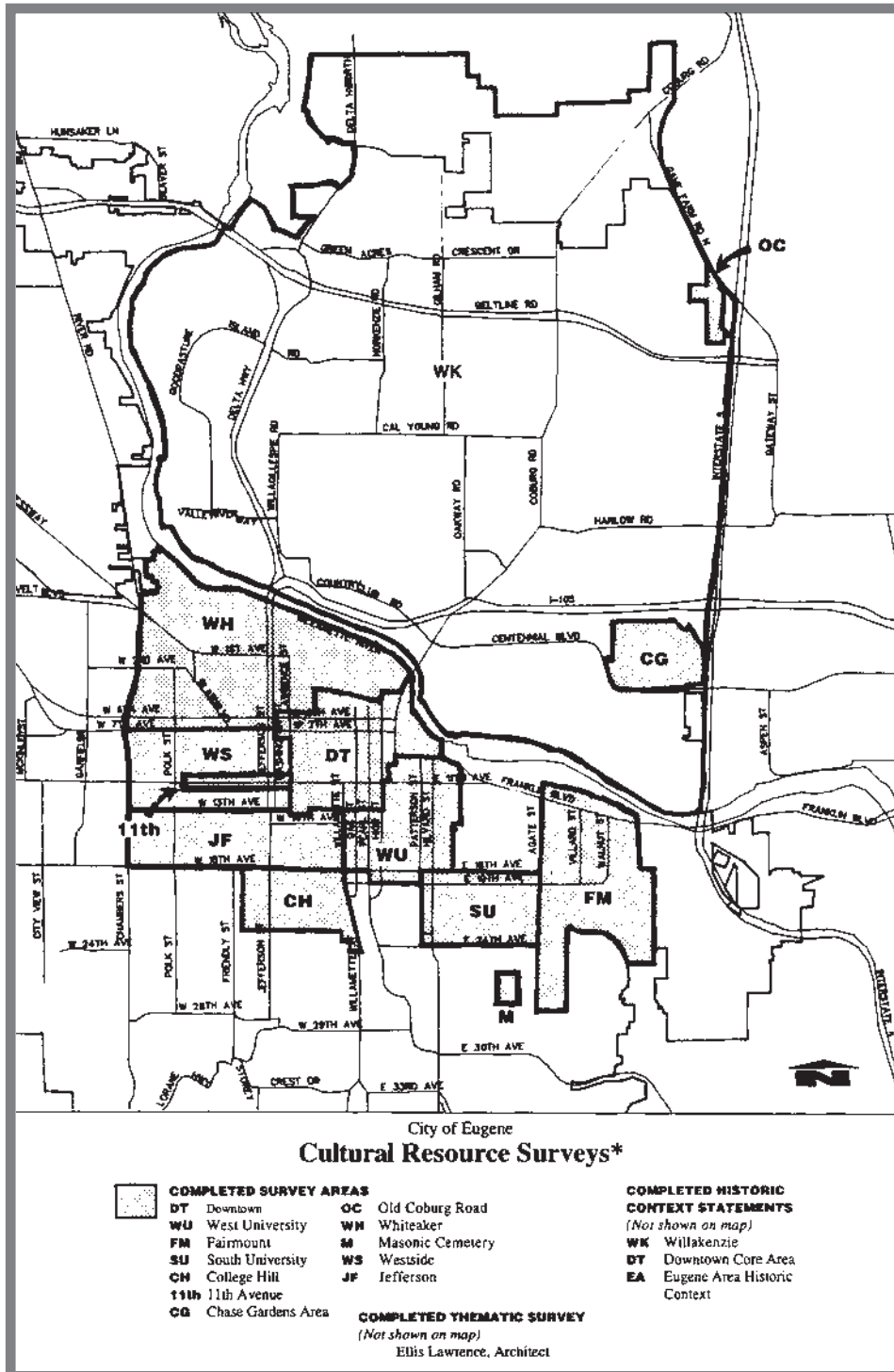
College Hill (1985-87)
Fairmount Neighborhood (1985-87)
South University Neighborhood (1985-87, 1999-2000)
West University Neighborhood (1986-87)
Eugene Downtown (1989-92)
Chase Gardens/Old Coburg Road (1991-92)
Whiteaker Neighborhood (1993-95)
Jefferson Neighborhood (1996-1997)
Westside Neighborhood (1997-98)

These surveys have inventoried over 4,000 properties, and resulted in protection of over three hundred historic resources, including two historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Eugene is experiencing a high interest in historic preservation and the protection of historic resources. This phenomenon relates to growing concern about livability and growth management in Eugene. The number of historic houses in Eugene is limited, making them highly desirable to own and rehabilitate.

Incentives for Historic Rehabilitation

Properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are often eligible for enrollment in the *Oregon Special Assessment Program*. This program is meant to serve as an incentive to rehabilitate historic properties by freezing the assessed value for property taxes at the current rate for fifteen years, allowing property owners to benefit from the tax savings by requiring reinvestment with careful maintenance and appropriate rehabilitation. The guidelines are intended to assist property owners already enrolled in the program, or those that are considering enrolling.

Income producing properties, including rental houses and bed & breakfasts, that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places may be eligible for the Federal Tax Credit for Rehabilitation of Income Producing Historic Property. This program encourages rehabilitations by offering owners a 20% tax credit with a 30 year depreciation schedule for the entire building cost (minus 50% of the tax credit). The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Salem can provide further information about these programs, and can be reached at 503-378-4168.



* Cultural resource surveys identify all buildings, landscape features, objects, and sites over 50 years of age and evaluate their historic significance. The surveys do not include archaeological resources

Treatment Strategies

These Design Guidelines are **advisory**, and are intended to be flexible and provide room for interpretation. As property owners come to understand the distinctive architectural and landscape features of their properties, they will be able to understand the best and most practical way to apply the guidelines.

The first step in this process is to analyze the unique characteristics of your historic property before making decisions about rehabilitation, alterations, or the design of new construction. Depending on the significance of the property, its condition, and how you intend to use it, one of three different treatment strategies will be most appropriate:

Rehabilitation - allows for alteration or addition to a historic property to accommodate continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historical, cultural, and architectural values. This method focuses on repair and replacement of deteriorated features, and ensures that any alterations or additions are compatible with the character of the property and its setting.

Preservation - focuses on sustaining the existing form, materials, and integrity of a historic property through ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features, rather than extensive replacement or new construction. New exterior additions are not consistent with this treatment approach. However, limited and sensitive upgrading of plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems, and other code-required work to make the property functional, is appropriate.

Restoration - involves accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time. This typically involves the removal of features from other periods in its history, and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. Here again limited and sensitive upgrading of utility systems and other code-required work is appropriate.

Typically **rehabilitation** is the most appropriate treatment strategy for a property that will continue to be used as a residence, and so rehabilitation is the treatment strategy that is the focus of this document.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties* were developed to serve as a national set of guidelines for rehabilitation work on any type of historic property. As legally defined, historic properties can include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Put more generally, a historic property could be a house, a garage, a train depot, a bridge, a war monument, or an agricultural landscape, like a filbert orchard. The *Secretary's Standards* are the benchmark to work toward when rehabilitating historic properties in Eugene. The Eugene Advisory Design Guidelines follow the recommendations set forth in the *Secretary's Standards*, but are written to be more specific and applicable to Eugene's historic resources. The ten standards are interpreted below:

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.***

This standard is most significant if you are converting a house to commercial or office use. When a house remains in residential use this is less of an issue, though modern residential needs are quite different from those of, say, the 1920s. Kitchens and bathrooms are commonly updated, and sometimes expanded, resulting in the removal of walls and door openings. The key point to remember is to avoid the loss of character defining features and significant historic spaces as you plan for future rehabilitation.

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.***

The first step in evaluating your historic property is identifying its distinctive materials, features, and spaces. Evaluate the condition of existing historic materials to decide whether materials will be repaired, maintained, or replaced. This will help you understand what is important to preserve as you prepare your plans for future repairs, maintenance, or alterations. Aim to preserve the functional and decorative features that define the character of the building, such as historic windows, doors, columns, balustrades, stairs, and porches. Also, consider the relationship of the house and outbuildings to paths, sidewalks, and significant historic landscaping.

- 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 elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.*

Another important element of understanding and protecting the historic character of your house is learning its date of construction, its architectural style, and the stylistic features that are characteristic of that style. Keep this information in mind when making decisions about replacing missing elements or adding to the house. If you own a Bungalow, Colonial Revival details like fanlights, pilasters, or pedimented doorways are not appropriate for your house. Similarly, avoid installing “gingerbread” or fancy cut out work to your porch or gable unless you have a Gothic Revival or Queen Anne style house. (See pages 11-18 for descriptions of historic styles)

- 4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

A house constructed in 1890 will almost certainly have been altered. Most common is the updating of kitchens and bathrooms, but many houses have had exterior alterations as well. A porch in Oregon could need major repairs, or even replacement, in twenty-five years if it has not been well maintained. Some such alterations may now be historically significant themselves. For example, if you have an 1890 Queen Anne house that was remodeled in 1918 to give it a “Craftsman” look, you may want to retain the historic alterations.

- 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

Every historic house contains materials and finishes that are unique to its style and period of construction. This might be the tongue and groove board floor of a Bungalow porch, or the octagonal window of a Minimal Traditional style house. Historic houses in Eugene are typically constructed of wood, so board siding and wood divided-light windows are examples of construction techniques and craftsmanship that should be preserved.

- 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Historic images of your house will help you identify if the house has been altered, and is missing a distinctive feature like a bay window or eave brackets. You may also be able to find clues on the building itself, such as paint shadows, nail holes, or patching in the siding, suggesting that a historic feature has been removed. The Lane County Historical Society and previous owners are good sources for historic photographs. When you replace missing or heavily deteriorated features use materials of the same size and shape as the originals.

- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.***

Never sand blast historic building materials to remove paint. This will result in pitting and texturing of the materials, particularly wood and brick. Sand blasting has been known to hasten deterioration of historic materials. Pressure washing with water at a low pressure can be an effective method to clean a historic house and prepare it for painting. Avoid pressure washing at a high pressure because it can damage historic materials, or force water into the interior cavities of a house, particularly around windows.

- 8. Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.***

Archeological resources include Native American artifacts, as well as artifacts from Euro-American settlement in Eugene that are more than seventy-five years old. You might find evidence of an outbuilding foundation, or a past burn barrel on your property. It is important to recognize and document, with photographs and drawings, such discoveries. While pieces of broken glass, metal, crockery, or old marbles are exciting to discover, these are generally not considered significant archeological resources.

- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.***

Additions to historic properties require special consideration for how the addition will complement the historic building, the site, and neighborhood in which it is constructed. The design can be contemporary, or

reference historic elements of the building. Contemporary style additions are sometimes used effectively with large commercial or institutional projects, but are used less often with residential projects. Residential additions should differentiate themselves from the historic building, while being compatible in terms of mass, materials, color, and relationship of solids to voids. Typically, a new addition should be placed on a rear or side elevation to limit the visual impact from the street. The size and scale of new additions should harmonize with the historic building.

- 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.***

An addition should be designed so that it will become a significant part of the building's history over time, which means using quality design and materials. A new addition respects the historic building to which it is attached, and does not obscure, damage, or destroy character defining details, like a bay window or brackets in the eaves. Keep in mind the idea that if the addition is removed in the future, it should be possible to rehabilitate the building to its original form.

Eugene Takes Shape: Residential Development 1846-1950

Eugene was established in 1846 on the Donation Land Claim of Eugene and Mary Skinner. Their pioneer cabin was located on what we today call Skinner Butte. The first town plat was east of the butte and south of the Willamette River. The river served as both an asset and an obstacle. It facilitated transportation of goods, and with the construction of the millrace in the 1850s, it provided power to run sawmills and other industrial operations around which the town grew. The obstacle of the river was lessened by the ferry service Skinner started near the present site of Ferry Street bridge.

The first plat for the town was laid out in 1851 in the area now bounded by Pearl Street on the west, Eighth Avenue on the south, and the Willamette River on the north. Four more plats were added to the burgeoning town by 1856. The large land claims of Skinner, Charnel Mulligan, Hilyard Shaw, and other early settlers were progressively divided into smaller farms, and in turn into individual home sites as the city matured. The availability of sawn lumber from Shaw's mill facilitated construction of wood-frame houses in the area immediately south of Skinner's Butte.

Between 1870 and 1880 the city's population grew from 861 to 1,111, spurred on by the establishment of the University of Oregon in 1876. By the 1870s, the city's growing grid of dirt streets was lined with plank sidewalks. Larger, quarter-block lots were subdivided for more houses, and residential development started to spread out from the downtown core along the expanding street grid. The simple wood-frame Classic Revival and Vernacular Gothic houses of the early settlement period gave way to more stylish Italianate residences in the 1880s, as the arrival of the railroad allowed building supplies, mail order architectural elements, and even entire houses to be shipped from the east.

Promotion of Eugene as an ideal place to live was in full swing by the 1890s. The city expanded tremendously in two growth spurts near the turn of the century. The first came in the mid-1890s, as the nation recovered from an economic depression in the early 1890s. The second came during 1909-1912 as the Willamette Valley boomed following the publicity of the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland in 1905. Fifty new additions and subdivisions were added during this period. College Hill Park and Fairmount were platted as fashionable residential areas during the 1890s. The growth of 1909-1912 saw large tracts of more modest bungalows filling in the Fairmount, West University, Whiteaker, Westside, and Jefferson neighborhoods.

Introduction

This growth in outlying neighborhoods was spurred by the development of the city's first trolley system, actually drawn by mules, which served the College Hill and downtown area beginning in 1891. The system converted to electric streetcars during 1907-10 and expanded to serve the "streetcar suburbs" developing in the Fairmont, Jefferson, Westside, and Whiteaker neighborhoods, as well as in Springfield. The system served the city until 1927, when the streetcars were replaced with buses and private automobiles, and the tracks were either removed or paved over. However, one can still see the trolley tracks in the pavement of some neighborhood streets.

The lull in building brought by the First World War was followed by another boom during the 1920s. The Fairmont, South University, and College Hill neighborhoods filled in, as did other outlying areas made accessible by the growth of automobile ownership. The Great Depression and World War II greatly slowed residential construction again during the 1930s and 1940s, though public works projects by the Civilian Conservation Corps gave the city the original Hendricks Park picnic shelter (destroyed in a storm and rebuilt in 1999), the Eugene Emeralds Stadium, and a system of stone walls at Skinner Butte.

Starting in the Great Depression and continuing through the war years, the Minimal Traditional and World War II Era Cottage styles were in great demand in Eugene. This house type remained popular as a "starter" home well into the 1950s, when a family could afford something larger in the developing suburban neighborhoods on the south and west sides of town. After World War II the one-level Suburban Ranch became the favored house choice for returning veterans. As development moved further away from the city center, the car became indispensable, and its importance was reflected in the attached one-car garage or carport that became standard following the war. A two bedroom version of the suburban ranch with a garage could be purchased for as little as \$10,000 under the G.I. Bill.

While many people may envision a settlement log cabin, a bungalow, or a Queen Anne style mansion when they think of historic houses, the passage of time constantly brings more recent buildings into the realm of historic significance. As an example, more than fifty years have now passed since the end of World War II in 1945, and many houses of the initial Post-War building boom are now eligible for listing on the National Register. These *Advisory Design Guidelines* are an invitation to you as a homeowner or resident of Eugene to learn how your house and the other buildings around you tie in with our city's past, and how you can take part in preserving Eugene's history for generations to come.