

Guidelines for Design Review Considerations

St. Johnsbury is unique in that many of its intact nineteenth century buildings are by the same local architect, Lambert Packard. There are excellent commercial, residential and institutional examples of many architectural styles, and it is this rich Victorian legacy that gives St. Johnsbury its special character. Our purpose is to provide guidelines and alternatives for quality replacement of or restoration of architecturally or historically significant buildings. As thoughtful improvements are carried out, a beneficial contribution is made to the individual property and to the total community as well, by preserving for the future the best of the past.

The following guidelines have been developed to aid those contemplating new or replacement buildings or restoration or renovation of existing buildings in St. Johnsbury. Each situation will have its own unique challenges/opportunities. It is the intent of these guidelines only to try to point the way to design solutions.

Guidelines for New or Replacement Construction:

Residential AND Commercial Areas

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 2. It is of prime importance to analyze the elements that provide visual continuity on a street or block in order that an overall unity be maintained or enhanced.
 3. New construction should be the product of its own time and not be a copy of an older architectural style with associated details no longer practical.
 4. The massing of a new building must maintain the existing wall line or setback line of a street façade.
 5. Areas in front of the buildings should be considered an important part of the project. Pedestrian amenity in the form of paving, planting, benches, etc. is desirable not only for its pleasant effect on individual buildings, but also for its effect on the quality of the town as a whole.
4. The use of retractable awnings is to be encouraged as part of a storefront. Awnings add color and movement to the street, and provide pedestrian protection from the weather, as well as provide sun control for displayed merchandise.
 5. Signs on a new building should relate in size and character to others on the block.

Residential Areas

1. In buildings of close proximity, entire blocks are considered to be one neighborhood. Therefore, consideration of the following is important:
 - materials,
 - colors,
 - scale
 - rhythm of neighboring façade elements, and
 - common details.
2. Maintaining the streetscape through parking, landscaping and screening is important.
3. Preservation of historic style or intended use.

Commercial Areas

1. In buildings of close proximity, entire blocks are considered to be one façade. Therefore, one must recognize:
 - materials
 - scale
 - rhythm of neighboring façade elements, and
 - common details.
2. Maintain the cornice line and the sign entablature line of existing buildings in a block.
3. The area of a commercial building below the sign entablature line, referred to as the storefront zone, may depart in design from the building above, as long as

Guidelines for Restoration and Renovation:

In consideration of a building restoration effort, the following general statements should be kept in mind:

1. Buildings must function to meet today's needs just as they met certain needs in the time they were built. The changes required to meet new demands should be a compromise between the existing integrity of the structure and the new functions. Good preservation seeks both of these goals.
2. Every attempt should be made to preserve as much of a building's original design, architectural details, and building materials as is possible. Such materials are often irreplaceable; they offer an integrity and genuineness, which cannot be duplicated or copied.
3. When it is necessary to introduce modern elements or components to an original building exterior, every effort must be made to maintain the integrity of the building's overall architectural character.

If there is any doubt to accurately maintain or restore a building, it is strongly urged that the owner seek professional advice. Too often buildings have been rehabilitated without regard for their real historic or architectural assets.