City of Houston, Texas

Starkweather Historic District

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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1 INTRODUCTION

All historic districts change over time. In some cases, those changes preserve the qualities that make the district desirable, such as mature trees, front porches that foster connections between residents, and a variety of architecturally compatible, well-maintained buildings.

However, not all changes have a positive effect on the neighborhood. Some changes — particularly those that remove buildings, or remove or cover the pieces of a building that give it character — can damage the fabric of the district. Actively managing all exterior changes, therefore, serves the best interests of the neighborhood as a whole.

The City of Houston's Planning and Development Department is responsible for managing changes to properties within Houston's historic districts. A general Historic Preservation Ordinance, or local law, establishes the City's ability to designate and manage historic landmarks and districts.

Once an historic district is officially designated by the City, all property owners within that district are required to obtain approval before making exterior changes that are visible from the public right-of-way. The Planning and Development Department can help property owners with this process. The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) reviews and decides whether or not to approve proposed projects.

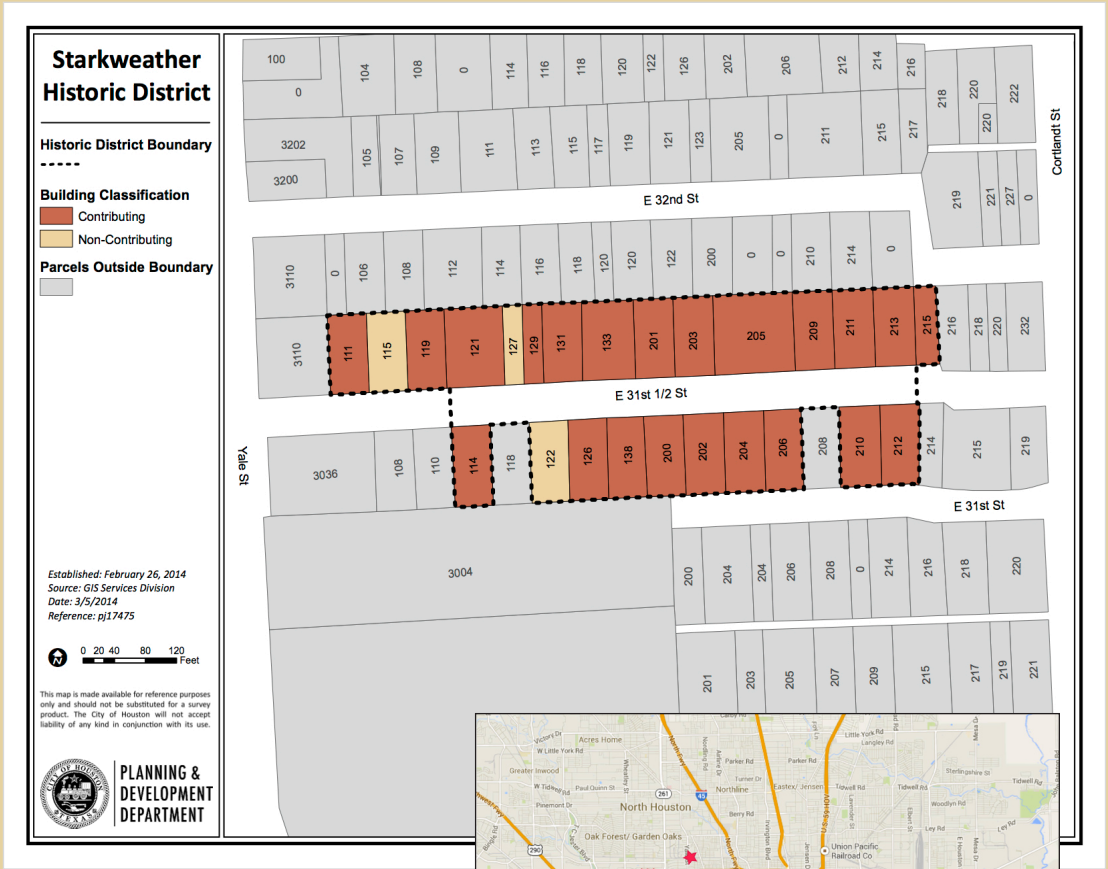
In order to help property owners and their design professionals plan successful projects that are likely to be approved, the City Planning and Development Department has created these Design Guidelines.

The Guidelines reflect existing criteria for review that are established by City Ordinance. It also reflects nationally accepted best practices in historic preservation, which have been tailored to the specific resources found in the Germantown Historic District.

Property owners should be aware that some lots or blocks in historic districts are subject to additional deed restrictions, or minimum lot size and minimum building line requirements. Property owners should review real property records for possible deed restrictions. Copies of deed restrictions may be obtained from the Harris County Clerk.

This document is organized into four chapters.

1. *Introduction* — about the Starkweather Historic District's history and architecture
2. *Guidelines* — how to make appropriate repairs and changes to properties in the district, including additions, new construction, and demolishing or relocating a building or structure
3. *Good Practices* — compatible design elements for the Starkweather neighborhood
4. *Resources* — glossary of terms, inventory of properties in the district, and additional sources of information


Starkweather Historic District
Historic District Boundary
Building Classification
Contributing
Non-Contributing
Parcels Outside Boundary
Established: February 26, 2014
Source: GIS Services Division
Date: 3/5/2014
Reference: pj17475
0 20 40 80 120 Feet
This map is made available for reference purposes only and should not be substituted for a survey product. The City of Houston will not accept liability of any kind in conjunction with its use.
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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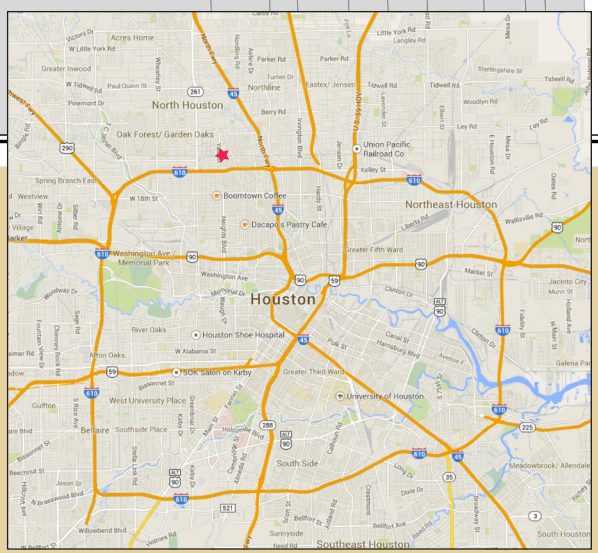
E 31st 1/2 St
E 31st St
Yale St
Cortlandt St


North Houston
Northeast Houston
Houston
Southeast Houston
Boomtown Coffee
Dacapo's Pastry Cafe
Houston Shoe Hospital
University of Houston
Union Pacific Railroad Co
Washington Ave / Memorial Park
Greater Fifth Ward
Greater Third Ward
South Side
West University Place
Bellaire
Southside Place
Afton Oaks
River Oaks
Oak Forest/ Garden Oaks
Northline
Acres Home
Greater Inwood
Spring Branch East
Meadowbrook/ Allendale
South Houston

History

The Starkweather Historic District is completely contained on both sides of East 31½ Street, which was laid out by the Phelps Real Estate Company in 1925. This street is short -- only two blocks long, between Yale Street and Cortlandt Street -- and was originally paved with oyster shells dredged from Galveston Bay. It was known as "Short Shell."

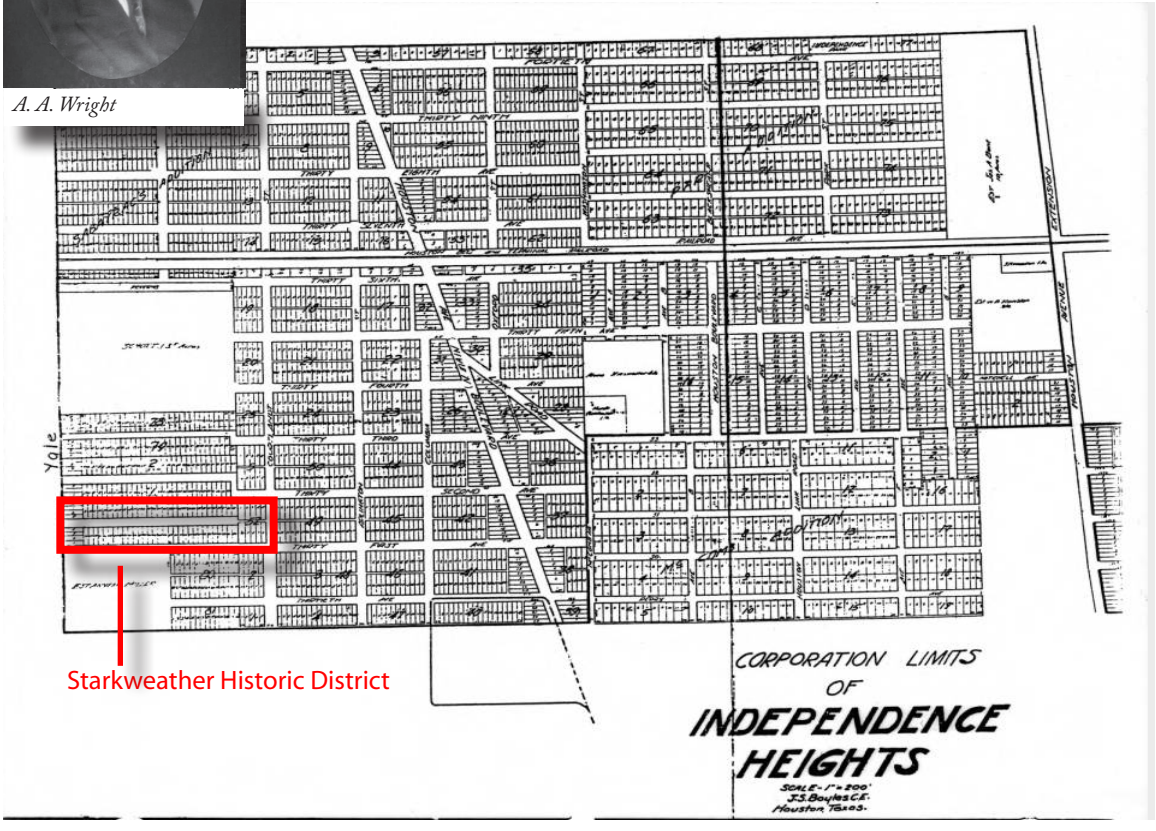
A. A. Wright

The Starkweather Historic District is located within Independence Heights, a subdivision established by A. A. Wright and his wife, who moved to Houston from Ohio in 1905.

Wright created two land companies: the Wright Land Company offered land and low interest loans to African Americans, while the Wright Loan and Security Company marketed to white people.

The Wright Land Company's first subdivsiion was Independence Heights, on the north side of Houston at the end of the Studewood streetcar line.

It was bounded by 30th Street to the south, 40th street to the north, Yale Street to the west, and McComb Road and Airline Road to the east. The Starkweather Historic District is located in the southwest corner of Independence Heights (see below).



Independence Heights was a middle class African American community. Residents were well educated and had good jobs. Many of the houses in the community were built by tradesmen who lived in the neighborhood.

Independence Heights was incorporated in 1915. It was the first incorporated city in Texas with all black city officials, including mayor George O. Burgess (an attorney) and commissioners S. C. Lamothe and Arthur MacCullough. Residents established a city hall, a school, churches, and businesses. The community voted to become part of Houston in 1929, hoping to gain access to street paving and other city services.

Like other historic neighborhoods in Houston, Independence Heights experienced a decline, beginning in the 1970s, but has also experienced the beginning of a revitalization.

The Starkweather Historic District is named for F. W. Starkweather, who originally subdivided the neighborhood in 1911. The Starkweather Plat encompassed five acres and was divided into 70 lots on either side of Starkweather Avenue (now 31½ Street). Lots 1–8 faced Yale Street, with 1–4 on the south side of Starkweather Avenue and 5–8 on the north side. The remaining lots were laid out facing Starkweather Avenue, with Lots 9–39 on the north side and Lots 40–70 on the south side.

Edgar S. Phelps and his son, Edgar H. Phelps, purchased the entire undeveloped plat in October 1925. Ed S. Phelps was an attorney, investor, and lender who moved to Houston from La Grange around 1900. His son, Edgar H., was also an attorney, having studied law at Rice Institute. The father and son sold lots in the neighborhood between the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Between 1925–1929, most of the lots in the eastern half of the neighborhood had been sold, generally in two-lot parcels.

View of East 31 ½ Street, looking east toward Courtlandt Street.

In 1936, the Carter Lumber Yard purchased the entire remaining south side lots (1–3 and 57–70).

Sales of properties in the neighborhood halted during the Great Depression, as the Phelps family encountered financial difficulties. The remainder of the neighborhood developed after World War II; Edgar S. Phelps' wife Olive sold the remaining lots (9–10 and 15–24, on the western side of the neighborhood) after the deaths of her husband and son. Edgar S. died in 1945 at the age of 74; he was preceded in death by Edgar H., who died in 1942 at the age of 35. Olive Phelps passed away in 1951.

The Starkweather Historic District contains 25 properties, including 22 buildings that are contibuting to the historical significance of the district, one non-contributing buildng, and two vacant lots.

"Short Shell" today is home to many families who have lived in the neighborhood for decades.

Notable former residents include Oliphant Hubbard, the second mayor of Independence Heights, moved into the Starkweather neighborhood at 206 East 31½ Street in 1930. A graduate of Prairie View College (now Prairie View A&M University), Hubbard and his wife Ella were both teachers and served as prinicipal of the Independence Heights School.

Architectural Styles in the District

The Starkweather Historic District is made up entirely of one-story wood-frame homes on pier-and-beam foundations. The different styles of houses reflect the development of the neighborhood developed in two distinct phases: bungalows with Craftsman details, built between 1925–1936, and Minimal Traditional homes constructed after World War II.

Houses in the district are clad predominantly with wood or synthetic siding, and porches are generally constructed with wooden and/or brick supports.

Most homes in the district have experienced alterations over time, but they retain many character-defining features. These elements include wide eaves with exposed rafter tails, prominent gable vents, and in some cases, roofs with clipped gables.

The most prominent characteristic of these homes is the front porch. Porches may project from the front of the house or be inset. They are generally either full-width or half-width, although a few homes have small or no coverings over the front entry.

Lots in the neighborhood are relatively long and narrow, so that adjacent houses are sited close together. Setbacks from the street are relatively small, resulting in modest front yards which combine with comfortably sized front porches to create a sense of neighborliness along the street.

Craftsman

One-story Craftsman bungalows were very popular in Houston during the first quarter of the 20th century. Many of the houses built in the eastern half of the Starkweather Historic District were built during the late 1920s and early 1930s. They feature Craftsman details, including prominent front porches, low-pitched roofs, wide bracketed eaves, and groups (or "ribbons") of windows. The profile of the roof at the front of the house sets these variations apart from one another.

The neighborhood contains several variations on the Craftsman style.

A house with a **single front gable roof** often has a wide porch that spans the entire front elevation.

A **double front gable roof** creates a smaller (but still prominent) porch.

Similarly, a house with a **hipped roof** may include a smaller front gable over the porch.

Several houses with **cross-gabled** roofs have front porches; some do not.

Single front gable

Double front gable

Cross-gabled roof with clipped gables

Hipped roof with front gable

Minimal Traditional

The homes constructed in the western (100 block) side of the neighborhood were built during the 1940s and 1950s and reflect the popularity of small, modest houses during that period. The design of these homes was literally *minimal* – with very little exterior decoration – and *traditional* in terms of the shape of the house – with a gabled or hipped roof.

Many of these houses have a front gabled roof or hipped roof with an inset porch. They are usually oriented with a front gable facing the street. They have shallow eaves, without exposed rafter tails.

The newest house in the district, at 115 East 31½ Street (below), was built in this style to be compatible with the rest of the neighborhood.

Minimal Traditional house

L-plan house

A compatibly styled house (115 East 31½ Street) built in 1996

Small house with awning over front stoop

2 GUIDELINES

Using the Design Guidelines

These Design Guidelines were developed to help property owners and their design professionals (architects, builders, etc.) plan projects that can be approved by the City of Houston Planning Department staff and/or the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC).

Planning staff and members of the HAHC are responsible for administering the City's Historic Preservation Code, Chapter 33, Article VII. In doing so, they rely on several sources of information.

- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* provides general guidance and best practices developed, over the past 50 years, throughout the United States. This document is used by federal and state government agencies, as well as local historic preservation commissions. Developed and updated by the National Park Service, the *Secretary's Standards* includes four types of projects: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. The most common approach is Rehabilitation, defined as "the process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, changes, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." The *Secretary's Standards* are available online at **http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm**.
- City Planning staff and HAHC members apply those standards and practices within the framework of the City's own guiding criteria, which are established by ordinance.
- These Guidelines are tailored specifically for the Starkweather Historic District. They are designed to be used in conjunction with the *Secretary's Standards* and the City's established criteria for historic preservation.

Complete information about the City of Houston's design review process is available online at www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist_pres.html.

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- ALTERATIONS page 17
- NEW CONSTRUCTION page 30
- RELOCATION page 31
- DEMOLITION page 32

Finding Information in the Design Guidelines

This chapter is organized into five sections: Streetscapes, Alterations, New Construction, Relocation, and Demolition. Each section is organized using a common format, as shown below.

Section Title

Each section begins with a brief explanation of the topic and a general description of desired outcomes.

Guideline

Within each section, individual Guidelines provide direction for specific project components:

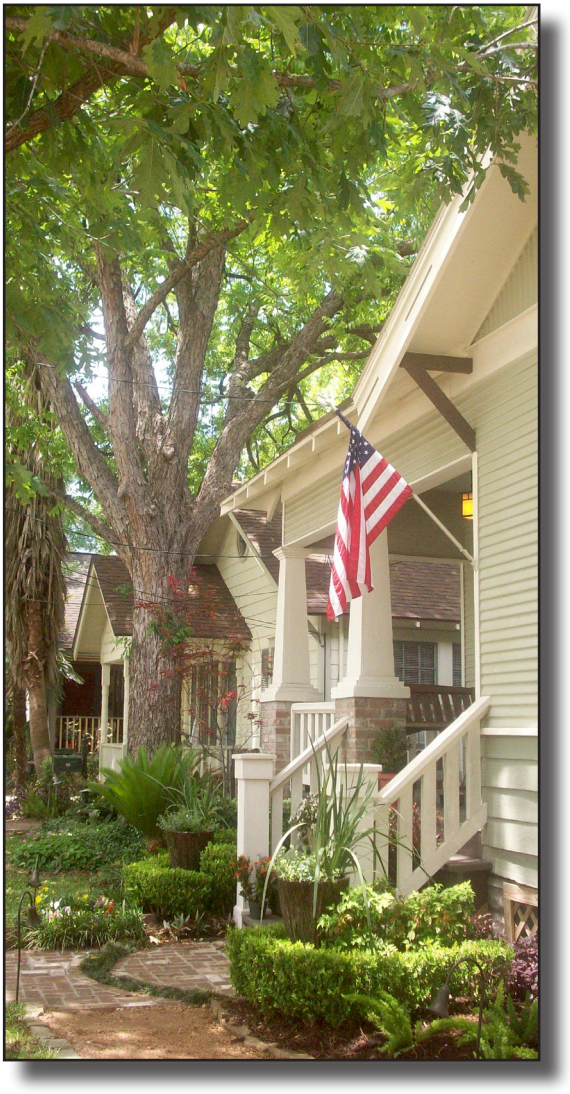
- Historic elements as they exist in the district
- Compatible Changes
- Incompatible Changes

In general, Incompatible Changes are not permitted and are unlikely to be approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.

Images help clarify each Guideline by illustrating compatible and incompatible changes. They are marked for easy reference.

☑ Compatible Changes

☒ Incompatible Changes



Streetscapes

The collection of buildings along a block face create a *streetscape*. The size and shape of those buildings, along with their distance from the street and orientation, together affect the overall look and feel of the neighborhood.

For example, consider a block full of tall townhouses with front-loading garages and little or no lawn and landscaping between the buildings and the street. Contrast that with a neighborhood like the Starkweather Historic District, where one-story houses are all set back from the street far enough to create a sizeable front yard, with room for plenty of flowers and shrubs, but close enough to the street so that neighbors sitting on porches can converse with passersby. The way that buildings relate to the street and each other affects the way that people relate to them, as well.

To maintain a consistent, compatible streetscape, buildings must be appropriately sized and sited on their lots. In order to determine what is appropriate for the Starkweather Historic District, the City has evaluated all historic properties in the district to determine a range of building sizes, massing, heights, orientation, and setback from the street.

Streetscape in Starkweather Historic District

Streetscape in neighborhood of high density townhouses

IN THIS SECTION:

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- MASSING, page 13
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Size

The Starkweather Historic District contains only one-story houses. These homes average 24 feet (two rooms) wide. Many of them contain two bedrooms and one bathroom and are 1,000 square feet or less in size. Three-bedroom homes in the neighborhood generally are around 1,200 square feet.

Lots in the district measure 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep (a total size of 2,500 square feet). Most properties in this neighborhood span two lots, although one-lot, three-lot, and one four-lot properties also are found in the district.

Houses typically cover between ½ and ¾ of the length of the lot. Few homes appear to have been expanded with rear additions.

Compatible Changes

These houses average 15 feet tall at the peak of the roof. Rear additions shall be no taller than the original one-story house.

Infill construction must be similar in size to Contributing homes in the neighborhood.

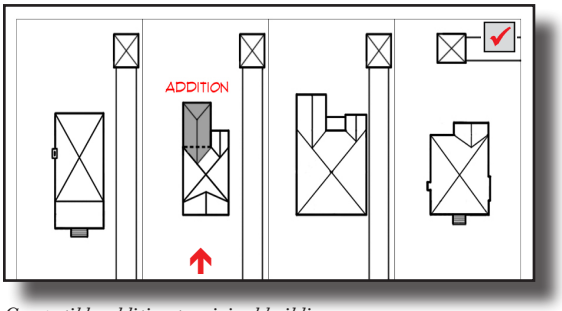
Incompatible Changes

New construction that is taller or wider than Contributing homes in the neighborhood is not allowed. (See **Height** on page 14.)

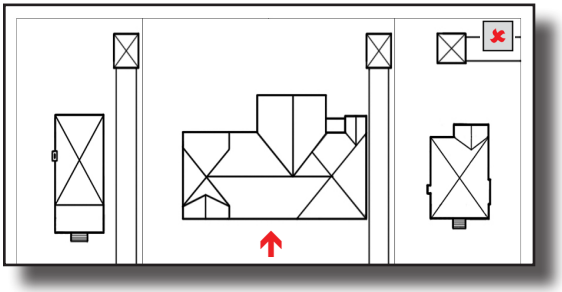
Additions to the front of the house are not allowed.

Additions to the side of the house may not be taller than the original house and should be located toward the rear of the house.

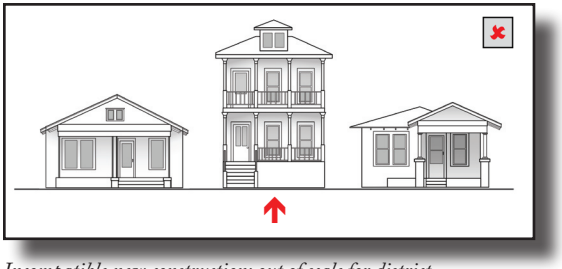
Additions in any location may not visually dominate the original house.



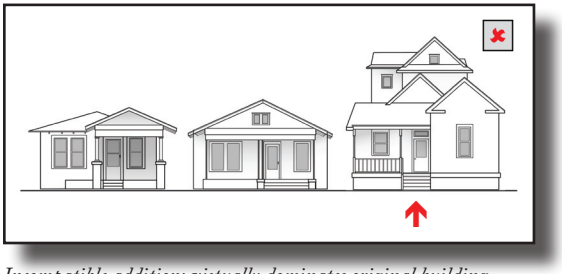
Compatible addition to original building



Incompatible new construction; out of scale for district



Incompatible new construction; out of scale for district



Incompatible addition; vistually dominates original building

Massing

Massing, or architectural form, is the overall shape and volume of a building. The proportion of *solid* surfaces (walls, roof) to *voids* (windows, doors, porches) also affects the perception of form and volume.

Most of the houses in Starkweather Historic District are relatively small, with simple rectangular shapes. Subordinate building elements are mostly rectangular. These generally project from the main house in the form of front porches.

Any prior additions appear to simply extend the house to the rear under the same roofline and, therefore, are visually subordinate to the traditional forms of the original houses.

Compatible Changes

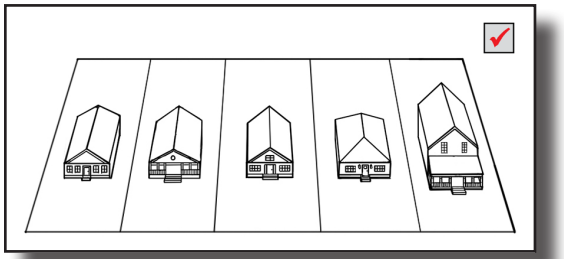
Maintain traditional building forms.

Maintain traditional proportions of solid walls to voids (windows, doors, porches).

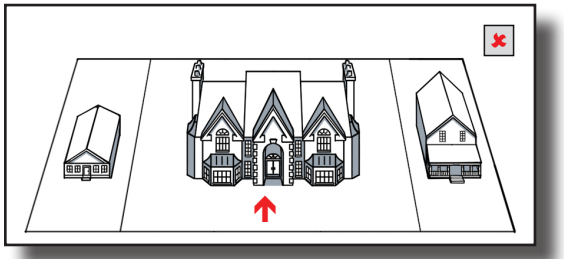
Incompatible Changes

Complex building forms or roof forms, such as those typically found on 21st century houses, are not allowed.

Houses with disproportionate solid-to-void proportions (bottom right) are not allowed.



Compatible massing is generally small and rectangular



Incompatible complex, non-linear massing

Appropriate solid–void proportion

Too few windows; too many windows

Height

The height of additions and new construction should be compatible with the height of historic buildings. Important height measurements to be considered include:

- **Eave height:** measured at the bottom edge of the eave, front corner of the main roof.
- **Porch eave height:** measured at the bottom edge of the eave, front corner of the porch roof.
- **Peak height:** measured at the highest point of the roof.
- **Foundation height:** measured from the surface of the ground to the bottom of the sill plate on which the building is constructed.
- **Roof pitch:** the slope of a roof surface expressed in inches of vertical rise per 12 inches of horizontal distance. Since the height of the roof is a function of pitch and width, even a shallow-pitched roof can be relatively tall if the building is very wide.

The City's historic preservation ordinance regulates eave height for new construction. Foundation height, roof pitch, and building width combine to determine the eave height. If all of these measurements are at the top end of the typical range, the eave height is likely to be higher than allowed.

Typical building dimensions in the Starkweatehr Historic District are shown below.

Measurement	Range (feet)
Main roof eave height (one story)	8–11
Porch roof eave height	8–11
Roof peak height (one story)	12–18
Foundation height	0.5–2.25
Roof pitch	5/12 or 6/12
Width of front elevation	18–32

Compatible Changes

Maintain building eave, porch eave, and peak heights within the typical range for the neighborhood.

The roof pitch of an addition should match the roof pitch of the existing building.

Incompatible Changes

Building eave, porch eave, and peak heights may not be less than or greater than the range for Contributing houses in the district.

Orientation

All houses in the Starkweather Historic District face the street.

Front doors generally face the street, although houses with inset porches may have side-facing doors that open onto the porch.

Compatible Changes

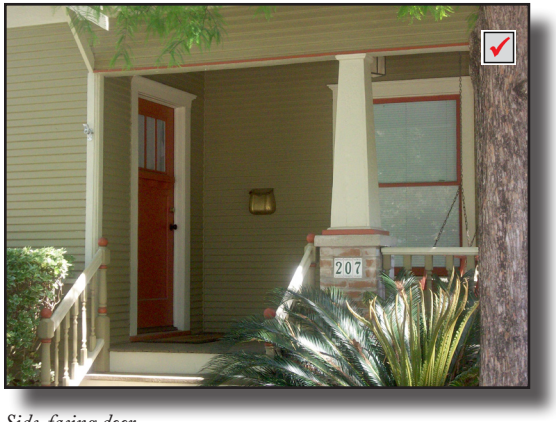
Maintain front-facing primary facades and primary entry doors.

Maintain primary entry doors that were originally side-facing and opened to the porch.

Incompatible Changes

New construction with a primary facade or primary entry that faces a side property line is not allowed.

Front-facing door



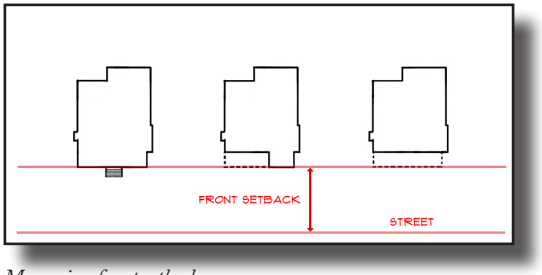
Side-facing door

Setback

Front setback is measured from the front property line to the closest point carrying a structural load, such as the foundation of the house or the base of a column that supports a porch roof.

The amount of setback at the front of the house determines the size of the front yard and affects how the building relates to the street.

If deed restrictions or minimum building line requirements apply, the most restrictive standard shall be used.



Measuring front setback

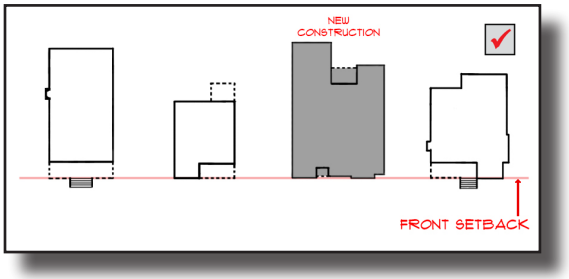
Compatible Changes

Where all of the houses on a blockface have approximately the same front setback, make new construction consistent with that.

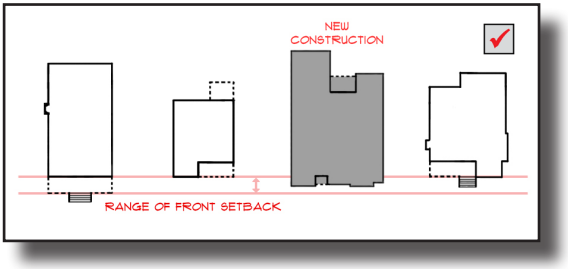
Where front setbacks vary across a block face, place new construction within the existing range.

Incompatible Changes

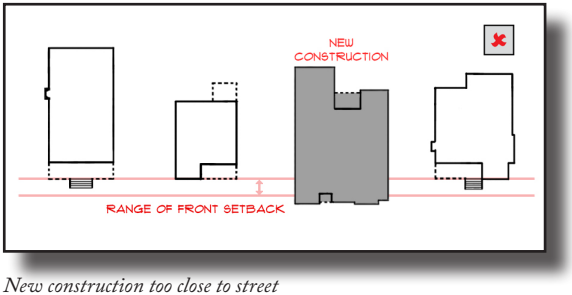
Front setbacks that are inconsistent with existing setbacks along the containing block face are not allowed.



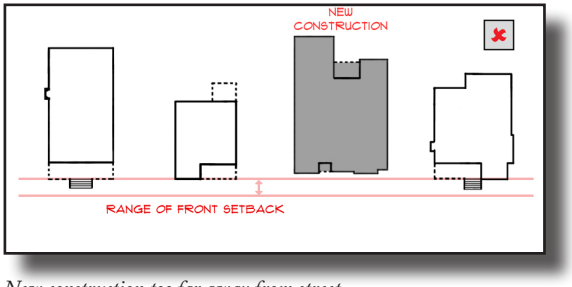
New construction matches existing consistent front setback



New construction within existing range of front setback distances



New construction too close to street



New construction too far away from street

Alterations

Most changes to the exterior of buildings or structures in the Starkweather Historic District, other than ordinary maintenance and repair, require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Some COA applications can be approved by the Planning staff; others must be reviewed by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission. For more information about the level of review required for your project, visit www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/HistoricPreservationManual.

In general, historic building materials should be maintained and repaired, rather than replaced. When replacement is necessary, use the same or visually compatible materials to preserve the historic character of the building.

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Porches

Many houses in the Starkweather Historic District have a prominent front porch (or *garret,* as they are known in the neighborhood). Some original porch materials have been replaced or removed, particularly wooden railings and posts.

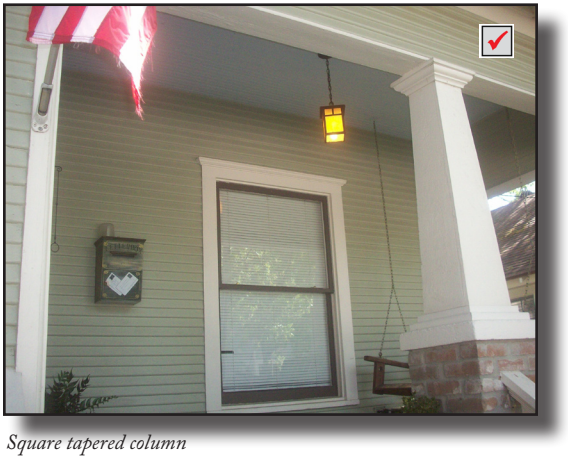
Columns and posts should be appropriately sized for the porch roof they are supporting and for the base on which they rest. Many houses in the district have brick porch columns of various heights. These likely were topped originally with thick, square tapered columns as are typical on Craftsman-style houses. (See photos, right.)

Slender posts, with large roofs and massive bases, are visually out of balance. Columns, posts, and railings should be appropriate for the style of house.

Most porch decks in the district have been replaced with concrete at some point in the past. Wooden porch decks are extant at the following addresses: 206, 210, and 213 31½ Street.

Most porches have two or three concrete steps leading up to the porch deck.

A porch with original Craftsman features



Square tapered column

Brick porch column/base

Compatible Changes

Maintain historic porch elements. Keep wooden members painted and repair damage as needed, to avoid replacement. Maintain wooden porch decks.

Maintain historic brick columns and bases in their natural, unpainted condition. Repoint brick masonry as needed.

Property owners who wish to restore their porches, particularly by adding new posts, columns, and/or railings, should consult historic photographs of the property and City Planning staff for guidance.

Porches, continued

Compatible Changes, continued

New construction should include a prominent front porch. The porch deck may be made of concrete, wood, or an appropriate engineered wood product or wood substitute. Porch columns/bases may be constructed using brick, but not concrete blocks, stone, or products that give the appearance of stone. Porch columns may be entirely made of brick or may include brick column bases topped with square tapered wood columns.

Railings should be made of wood and in a design that is appropriate for the style of house.

Incompatible Changes

Replacing porch elements of one architectural style with elements from another architectural style is not allowed.

Replacing porch elements with mismatched modern parts is not allowed.

Replacing wooden porch decks with concrete is not allowed.

Replacing wood and brick porch elements with ornamental metal porch columns and railings is not allowed.

Painting brick porch elements on existing or new houses is not allowed.

Enclosing porches to create additional rooms, with either framed or screened walls, is not allowed.

Incompatible ornamental metal replacement posts on a Craftsman house; these would be compatible with a Minimal Traditional house

Incompatible screened-in porch

Exterior Wall Cladding

All buildings in the Starkweather Historic District are or were clad with siding. Materials include wood, aluminum, vinyl, and asbestos. The front of the church has been faced with brick veneer, and the house at 205 31½ Street has been covered with stucco.

When repairing or replacing wood siding, the size and profile (shape of the cut end) should be matched. Using the same species of wood is not required.

Wood siding should be regularly maintained and painted to prevent deterioration.

If vinyl or aluminum siding is damaged and must be removed, and wood siding is present underneath, the wood siding should be restored, rather than re-covered.

If synthetic siding was the original material, it may be replaced with cementitious siding (such as HardiePlank®).

Compatible Changes

Maintain and repair historic wood siding. Replace with in-kind materials.

Cover any additions or new construction with siding.

Incompatible Changes

Replacing or covering wood siding with vinyl, aluminum, or cementitious siding (such as HardiePlank®) is not allowed.

Exterior walls may not be covered with brick or stucco. Brick may only be used for porch columns.

Wood siding

Brick masonry

Siding applied in an incompatible herringbone pattern

Doors

Historic doors were constructed of wood. In this neighborhood, houses have single front doors. These are almost always paneled and may have additional decorative trim. They are often inset with one or more panes of glass.

Sidelights are not typical for the type of houses that were built during this period.

Screen doors are present on many front entry doors.

Compatible Changes

Maintain historic wood doors and screen doors.

When replacing a damaged front door, choose one that matches the original in size, material, composition, and design. The new door should fit within the original opening.

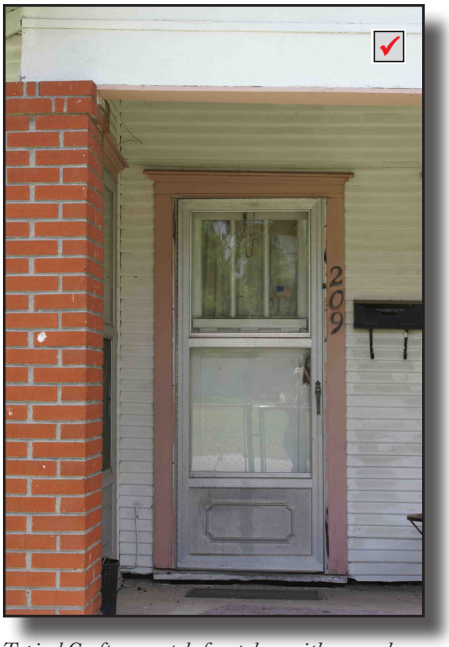
When replacing a front door that is not original, consider moving an original door from another side of the house, or choose a new door that complements the relatively simple style of the house.

When adding or replacing a screen door, choose one with a frame that allows most of the entry door to be seen.

Incompatible Changes

Full-glass doors, those with stained/leaded glass, and front entry doors with a modern design are not allowed.

Screen doors with intricate gingerbread trim are not allowed.



Typical Craftsman-style front door with screen door

Incompatible replacement front door

Windows

Windows are visually important, character-defining features of historic homes. In the Starkweather Historic District, most windows are double-hung, with upper and lower sashes that may be divided into smaller panes, or *lites*.

Storm windows and solar screens, with wood or aluminum frames, are prevalent in the district.

Small, single-pane windows are often located in gables in order to provide light into attic spaces.

Historically, exterior shutters were operable and used to provide privacy and to protect windows during storms. Today, shutters are simply attached to exterior walls as decoration, as seen on a few houses in the Starkweather Historic District.

One-over-one original window with exterior storm windows

Six-over-six window (not original) with interior muntins

Compatible Changes

Maintain and repair, rather than replace, historic wood windows, exterior storm windows, and screens. Solar screens are allowed.

Maintain wood trim around windows.

Replacement window glass should be clear and non-reflective. Low-E glass or film is permitted and encouraged, but must be correctly applied.

If historic windows are damaged beyond repair, replacements (regardless of material used) must maintain the appearance of the original windows.

One-over-one windows are appropriate for homes in this neighborhood.

Windows, continued

Incompatible Changes

When replacing windows that are damaged beyond repair, replacement windows that change the size or shape of the original opening are not allowed.

Replacement windows that have a different appearance than the original windows (for example, replacing one-over-one windows with six-over-six windows) are not allowed.

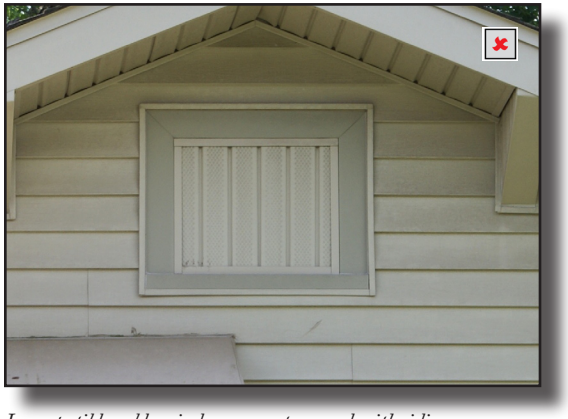
If replacement windows are approved, interior muntins (decorative grilles placed between single interior and exterior panes of glass, intended to give the appearance of multiple individual panes) are not allowed.

Where gable windows are present, covering the window, replacing the glass with another material (such as wood), or changing the size, shape, or design of the window is not allowed. Stained glass is not appropriate for gable windows in the Starkweather Historic District.

Decorative shutters should not be added to houses that have not had shutters in the past.

Original windows in gables

Original window in gable



Incompatible gable window or vent covered with siding

Roofs

Historic roofs are typically gabled, hipped, or pyramidal. Some hipped or pyramidal roofs have a front gable. Both hipped and gabled roofs are found in the Starkweather Historic District.

Roofs in the district are covered with composition shingles.

Eaves may be open, with exposed rafter tails, or boxed with soffits. The average eave width in the district is approximately 15".

Houses in this neighborhood were built without gutters and downspouts.

Gable vents or windows are typical in front-gable houses and provided ventilation and/or light into the attic.

Typical hipped roof with front dormer

Typical gabled roof

Incompatiblely scaled metal roof

Compatible Changes

Maintain the size, shape, and pitch of the historic roof.

When replacing a roof, use similar materials. Windstorm-certified shingles are permitted.

Gutters and downspouts may be added. Rain barrels may be added as long as they are located at the rear half of the house.

Place solar panels on a rear slope of the roof.

Incompatible Changes

Standing seam metal roofs and clay tile roofs are not allowed.

Skylights are not allowed on front-facing roof slopes.

Foundations

Foundations in the Starkweather Historic District are generally pier and beam or post and beam. Piers may be constructed of brick, stone, or concrete.

The space beneath the house is called a *crawl space*. Some houses use skirting or screening to limit access to the crawl space. Screening or skirting is not required.

Lattice panels can provide appropriate screening.

Because screening or skirting comes in contact with the ground, maintenance is essential. Screening or skirting may need to be repaired or replaced at regular intervals.

Compatible Changes

Lattice panels, if used, may be framed or unframed. They may be made of wood or vinyl. The color of the lattice (and frame, if present) should not draw attention away from the rest of the house.

Framed lattice panels ideally should be fit into the spaces between the bottom sill, the piers, and the ground.

Lattice panels (framed or unframed) that are placed against a wall, rather than set into the space between piers, should be sized so that they do not cover part of the siding.

Incompatible Changes

Faux stone or brick panels are not allowed.

Plywood or other solid materials are not allowed.

Concrete masonry units (CMU, or concrete blocks) placed as infill are not allowed.

Lattice panel, framed between piers

Incompatible lattice panel placement overlappling siding

Incompatible faux stone foundation skirting

Awnings and Canopies

Some houses in the Starkweather Historic District have awnings or canopies over windows. Awnings and canopies are used to provide shade from the sun and can lower energy bills.

Fabric, wood, or metal awnings over windows are appropriate for the Starkweather Historic District.

A wooden, shingled pediment or pent roof over a front door, stoop, or steps may or may not be appropriate for a particular house, depending on the designs of both the house and the proposed cover. Consult with Planning staff.

Pent roof over front door

Compatible Changes

If an awning or canopy is necessary, choose a style that has a minimal visual impact on the front of the house and does not detract from or conflict with other architectural features.

Awnings should be installed in such a way that minimizes damage to exterior walls and siding.

Maintain awnings and canopies and paint regularly to prevent rust and deterioration.

Metal awning over window

Incompatible Changes

Awnings should not cover more than 50% of the height of a window.

Awnings should not be used in locations other than over windows.

Fabric awning over window (compatible) and porch (incompatible)

Chimneys

Houses in the Starkweather Historic District do not have chimneys.

Houses built during the 1920s–1950s often were constructed with fireplaces and chimneys. These were located on exterior walls or interior walls.

Fireplaces and chimneys may be included in new construction or additions.

Compatible Changes

New chimneys should be of a shape and size similar to those found on one-story houses of the same period and architectural style.

New chimneys may be located on an interior or exterior wall.

New chimneys should be clad with brick.

Chimney located on an exterior wall

Incompatible Changes

Adding a chimney to an existing house, as opposed to a new addition or new construction, is not allowed.

Covering brick chimneys with stucco or stone is not allowed.

Plain metal chimney pipes are not allowed.

Chimneys clad with wood, stucco, or synthetic siding are not allowed.

Chimney located on an interior wall

Accessibility Concerns

Ramps may be necessary for people in wheelchairs or with mobility issues. Ramps may be placed to access the front entry or a secondary door from the sidewalk, street, or driveway.

Compatible Changes

Ramps should be at least 36" wide and include railings on either side to ensure that no one falls off the ramp.

To enable a person in a wheelchair room to turn around, landings at the top or bottom of a ramp, or where a ramp changes direction, should measure 5' x 5'.

Ramps should be built with a solid, stable, non-slip surface.

Doors should have a 32" opening to accommodate a wheelchair. Traditional door hinges may be replaced with off-set hinges to increase the size of the door opening.

Thresholds should be no more than ½" high. Beveled edges can be added to thresholds higher than ½" to permit easier travel over them.

Levered door handles are easier to grip than door knobs.

Incompatible Changes

Doorways on the front elevation of the house should not be widened.

Wooden ramp to front deck

Concrete ramp to front porch, with handrails

Garages and Accessory Structures

In the Starkweather Historic District, garages (where present) are located in the rear half of lots, accessed via driveways next to the house.

Detached garages are typical for homes of this age.

Sheds and other accessory structures are usually located along rear and/or side property lines, in order to maximize available back yard space.

Compatible Changes

When possible, preserve and repair historic garages and accessory structures.

New garages, carports, and accessory structures may be attached or detached, as long as they are located at the rear half of the lot and appear to be detached.

If possible, a carport should not be visible from the public right-of-way.

Garages should be constructed in a style and with materials that complement the house.

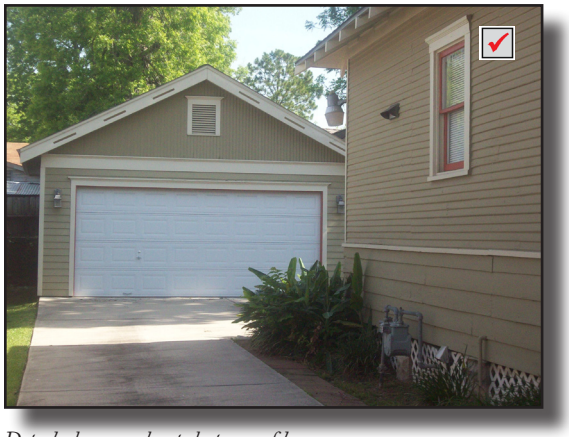
Second-story additions for garage apartments may be constructed but should maintain the features and footprint of the existing garage.

Incompatible Changes

Garages and carports may not be located in the front half of the property.

Garages that are attached to the side of the house or appear to be attached are not allowed.

Garages that are significantly different from the house in style and construction are not allowed.



Detached garage, located at rear of house

Attached garage, attached to side of house in front half of property

New Construction

The Starkweather Historic District contained two vacant lots in 2014, when it was designated. Infill construction on vacant lots is encouraged.

Compatible Changes

New construction should be appropriately sized to be compatible with the existing neighborhood, in terms of height and width (see pages 12–14).

New construction may incorporate architectural features that have been described as Compatible with the historic district in these Guidelines. New construction does not need to look "historic."

Traditional materials and features incorporated into new construction should be appropriately scaled for the size of the house.

New construction should not be so different from the other buildings in the district that it detracts from them or visually competes with them. Compatibility is more important than differentiation.

New construction may be made distinct from historic buildings through the use of different materials and construction methods.

Incompatible Changes

New construction that is incompatible with the neighborhood is not allowed.

New construction that is over- or under-scaled in comparison to typical width and/or height of Contributing houses in the district is not allowed.

Design elements with proportions that are not typical of Contributing houses are not allowed.

Compatible new house built in 1996

Incompatible infill (size, style) between historic houses

Relocation

Together, all of the properties in an historic district establish the character of the neighborhood. The removal of a Contributing house or building is particularly damaging to the neighborhood overall.

Relocation of historic buildings from other, similar areas of the City onto vacant lots in the Starkweather Historic District is an acceptable strategy for infill.

Buildings being relocated into the district should be appropriately sized to be compatible with the existing neighborhood.

Infill construction on vacant lots is encouraged.

Photo courtesy of Cherry House Moving

Compatible Changes

Relocated buildings being moved into this historic district should be similar in scale, style, and materials with Contributing buildings in the district. The same criteria used to evaluate new construction will be applied to these buildings.

It is good practice to indicate the previous location of a relocated building by installing a small sign or placard that indicates the previous address, date of construction, and date of relocation, as well as any historic name by which the building is known. Photographic documentation of the building before the move, as well as the move itself, is encouraged.

Incompatible Changes

Relocating houses out of the Starkweather Historic District to other locations is not allowed except as provided in the ordinance.

Demolition

Demolition should be a measure of last resort. An historic district is created in order to protect an area that has historic and architectural significance. Designating an historic district in the City of Houston requires the support of 67% of property owners.

All of the properties in an historic district, together, establish the character of the neighborhood. The removal of a Contributing house or building is particularly damaging to the neighborhood overall.

Demolition should be avoided. It is permitted in an historic district only when the applicant can establish either unreasonable economic hardship or an unusual and compelling circumstance. Substantial documentation and evidence is required to establish either claim.

Demolition of secondary, non-designated structures does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, historic garages that are visible from the public right-of-way should be maintained and preserved when possible.

Compatible Changes

If demolition is permitted, make arrangements to salvage usable architectural materials, elements, and fixtures for future use.

Incompatible Changes

Demolition without an approved Certificate of Appropriateness is not allowed.

3 GOOD PRACTICES

Other Design Elements

In addition to the architectural features described in Chapter 2, other design elements contribute to a neighborhood's overall visual appeal. These include fences and walls, walkways, driveways and parking areas, exterior lighting, building systems equipment, and paint colors.

Changes to these design elements do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The Good Practices contained in this chapter are intended to provide useful information while planning projects that include these design elements.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

- FENCES page 34
- SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS page 35
- DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING AREAS page 36
- EXTERIOR LIGHTING page 37
- SATELLITE DISHES; BUILDING SYSTEMS EQUIPMENT page 38
- PAINTING AND EXTERIOR COLORS page 39

Fences and Walls

Fences and walls should not create a visual barrier between an historic house and the street.

Fences found in the district include chain link and powder-coated cast metal finished in a dark color.

Privacy fences enclosing back yards are not found in this neighborhood, although chain link fences surround some back yards.

Good Practices

Install metal fences consistent with those present in the neighborhood. Wood-and-wire mesh fencing also may be used.

Avoid using brick columns in place of fence posts.

Avoid solid privacy fences that block the view of the front of the house from the street.

Compatible metal fence

Compatible wood and wire mesh fence

Wood fence obscuring entire front of house — not recommended

Sidewalks and Walkways

The Starkweather Historic District currently has no sidewalks along 31½ Street. Paths or walkways connect front entrances to driveways and the road. These walkways are generally made of poured concrete.

Good Practices

Maintain historic walkways.

When constructing new sidewalks or walkways, follow City Code requirements; obtain building permits.

Poured concrete, masonry pavers, or flagstone may be used to create walkways.

Avoid creating loose gravel or dirt paths.

Avoid asphalt paving.

Poured concrete sidewalk

Walkway constructed of brick pavers

Driveways and Parking Areas

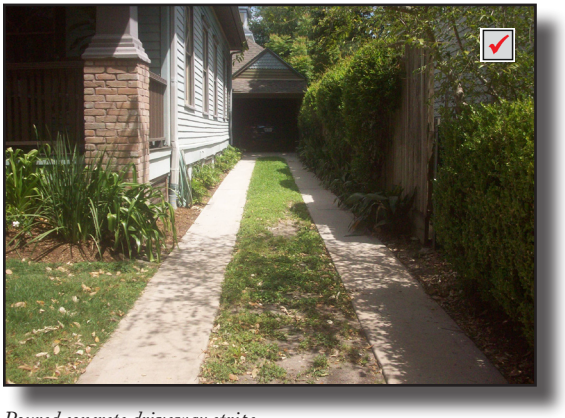
Driveways in the Starkweather Historic District, where present, are usually located next to the house. Parking areas other than the driveway are located behind the house.

Driveways and parking areas are generally paved with poured concrete.

In some cases, driveways are paved in two concrete strips to create wheel tracks, with grass growing between the paving.

Some properties have unpaved driveways and/or parking areas.

Poured concrete driveway



Poured concrete driveway strips

Good Practices

Maintain paved and unpaved driveways beside the house.

Maintain paved and unpaved parking areas behind the house.

Unpaved driveways or parking areas may be paved with poured concrete.

Concrete driveway strips are encouraged as a way to minimize impervious cover.

Avoid creating parking pads in front of the house.

Avoid asphalt driveways and parking areas.

Exterior Lighting

Lights are generally located above and/or next to entry doors. These should be appropriately sized and compatible with the overall style of the house.

Additional security lights are often located on garages, accessory buildings, and rear entrances. Lights should be appropriately sized for their purpose.

Lights in all locations may be motion-activated.

Appropriately sized light fixture near front entry

Good Practices

Where possible, maintain historic light fixtures.

New or replacement wall sconces may be mounted on either or both sides of the front door.

Flush-mounted or pendant-style lights may be installed over porches or stoops.

Utility lights may be installed over or next to rear entry doors or garage doors, or on accessory buildings, but should not be visible from the right-of-way.

Avoid industrial or commercial light fixtures of a size, design, or strength that is inconsistent with residential use.

Avoid bare light bulbs, which can be easily broken.

Utility light placed on front of house — not recommended

Satellite Dishes

To maintain a home's historic appearance, satellite dishes should be installed toward the rear of the house. Ideally, they will not be visible from the street; however, this is not always possible.

Good Practices

Install satellite dishes on a slope of the roof that faces a side or rear property line, rather than the street.

If possible, install the dish so that is not visible from the street.

Building Systems Equipment

Air conditioning units, rain barrels, water heaters, and similar equipment may be installed outside the house in Houston. If so, they should be placed toward the rear of the house or in a location where they will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

Fences, hedges, and other landscaping features may be used to screen these items from view.

Painting and Exterior Colors

When choosing a paint color for the exterior of the historic home, a traditional color palette is appropriate. Look for colors that are harmonious with the rest of the neighborhood.

Many of the homes in the Starkweather neighborhood are white or a muted color. White trim is a good choice for houses with non-white siding. Brighter or darker colors are best utilized for trim or accents, rather than for the main body of the house.

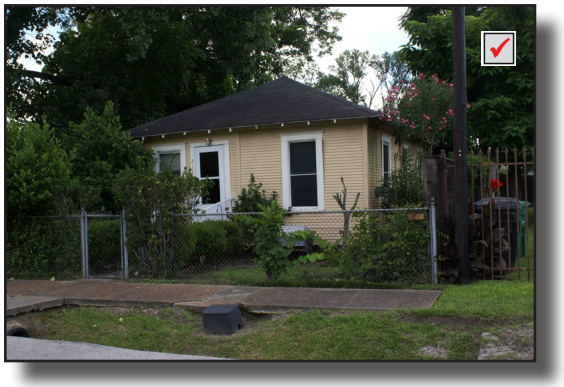
Be aware that paints or sealers advertised as water-repellent or waterproof can damage historic houses by trapping moisture inside the walls. These products should not be applied to historic building materials.

Good Practices

Maintain painted surfaces; scrape or sand loose paint before recoating.

Test for lead paint before scraping or sanding.

When repainting, choose a paint color that is harmonious with the rest of the neighborhood.



Muted paint colors are harmonious with rest of neighborhood

A bright paint scheme is not recommended

4 RESOURCES

For More Information

A wide variety of resources are available to assist property owners and design professionals as they plan building projects in historic districts.

City of Houston

Complete information about the City of Houston's Design Review process is available online at **www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist_pres.html.**

Texas Historical Commission

Texas-specific information about the National Register of Historic Places and state preservation programs is available at **www.thc.state.tx.us**.

National Park Service

Publications from the National Park Service provide technical information about the repair and maintenance of historic building mateirals and systems. Hard copies are available to order; electronic versions can be accessed online at **www.nps.gov/tps/index.htm**.

NPS also publishes *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, summarized in this section and available online at **www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm.**

IN THIS CHAPTER:

- GLOSSARY page 42
- DISTRICT INVENTORY page 49

Glossary

Awning	An overhang or covering placed on the exterior of a building, often above the upper edge of an opening or window, that often functions to provide shade, filter light, or provide shelter from weather.
Baluster	A vertical shaft or post, the form of which may be square, lathe-turned, or molded; often used to support the handrail of a porch or staircase. Also known as a *spindle*.
Beam	A horizontal structural element that tranfers the load of a building or structure to a foundation or to posts/piers set into the ground.
Bracket	A building element (often a piece of wood or stone) used to support or strengthen an overhanging element, such as the eave of a roof; also, a decorative element that appears to be, but does not function as, a structurally supporting member.
Capital	The uppermost component of a column or pilaster, sometimes based on ancient Greek or Roman examples; design may be intricate or plain.
Casing	The decorative molding around an opening such as a window or door.
Chimney	A vertical structure used to draw air into a combustion chamber such as a fireplace, stove, or furnace and then ventilate the resulting smoke and gases to the outside atmosphere; made up of a shaft (single flue) or a stack (multiple flues).
Cladding	The lightweight material used to cover the exterior surface of a load-bearing structure for aesthetic reasons or as a shield from the weather.
Clapboard	A narrow, horizontally laid board with one edge thinner than the other, attached to an exterior surface so that the wide edge of each board overlaps the thin edge of the board just below it. Traditionally made of wood, clapboard siding more recently has begun to be created using vinyl, aluminum, and cementitious fiber-board.

Glossary, continued

Column	A building element made up of a load-bearing base which supports a vertical shaft, topped with a capital. Columns are generally cylindrical or rectangular; they may be fluted, tapered, or otherwise shaped in a decorative manner. Bases and capitals are usually wider than the shaft in order to effectively distribute load. A column may be freestanding, but it is more often used to structurally support a horizontal beam.
Cornice	The molded projection placed at the edge of the top of wall, entablature, or roof, thereby finishing or crowning the structure.
Cross gable	A roof shape that features two sets of gables, one set facing the front and back of the house and the other facing the sides, which cross to form a right angle.
Dormer	A building element that projects from a sloping roof surface, often inset with a window or vent to provide light and ventilation to a room or attic space.
Double-hung sash window	A window having two panels (*sashes*), each of which is framed to hold one or more panes of glass, and both of which can be moved up and down.
Eave	The overhanging lower edge of a roof.
Elevation	One vertical side of a building or structure.
Exterior feature	An architectural element located on the outside of a building and, for the purposes of this document, visible from the public right-of-way.
Fascia	A band of molding that runs horizontally along the uppermost edge of a wall, just below the eave.
Foundation	The ground beneath a building; or, the base supporting structure beneath a building or structure, which transfers loads to the ground.
Fretwork	A decorative design cut out of a solid piece of material or carved in low relief on a solid background; may be a geometric, grid, lattice, or intertwined pattern.

Glossary, continued

Gable-on-hip	A roof structure in which a steeply sloped gable roof rests upon and extends from the top central surface of a hipped roof.
Gable	The generally triangular portion of a wall between the two sloped edges of a roof.
Glazing	A transparent pane, made of glass or plastic, which is set into a window sash or a door; often set into a groove within the frame and secured with triangular glazing points, putty, or a molding.
Handrail	A rail attached firmly to a surface or supporting structure, designed to be grasped for added stability.
Header	A brick laid within a wall so that the short end is exposed and the wide side is parallel to the ground.
Hip-on-gable	A roof structure in which the peak of a gable roof, instead of rising to a point, is clipped short and appears to turn downward. Also known as a *clipped gable* or *jerkinhead*.
Hipped roof	A roof structure in which all sides slope down from a central peak or ridge and the sides also meet at ridges.
Jamb	A vertical piece or surface that forms the side of an opening, such as a window, door, or vault.
Joist	A structural member laid horizontally in a series from wall to wall or beam to beam, to supports the weight of a floor, ceiling, or roof. Joists may be made of wood, metal, or concrete.
Latticework	A decorative panel made of thin strips of material in a criss-crossed pattern.
Lite (or light)	A piece or section of glass, set within a frame in a window or door. A single window unit may have multiple lites, which may be individual panes of glass or a single piece of glass visually divided by false muntins.
Lintel	A horizontal beam that carries the load above an opening, such as a window or door.

Glossary, continued

Louvers	Horizontal slats or fins, sometimes movable, which are set into an opening at a slant to admit light and air but keep out rain.
Molding	A decorative strip of material placed atop a surface for ornamental or finishing purposes.
Mullion	A vertical bar of metal, wood, or stone that separates adjacent window units in a row of windows.
Muntin	A thin vertical strip of wood or metal used to separate and hold in place the panes of glass within a window sash.
Ornament	A building element that is decorative rather than structural; may be used to conceal structural elements, indicate the function of a part of the building, or express a particular style or type of design.
Panel	A flat or raised surface, usually set into a frame.
Pent roof	A roof structure composed of a single slope.
Pier	A post constructed of masonry units. See *post*.
Pier-and-beam	See *post-and-beam*.
Pilaster	A shallow, often rectangular decorative element applied to the vertical surface of a wall, in order to create the look of a column without providing structural support.
Plate glass	A flat sheet of glass, such as may be inserted into a window or door.
Porch	A raised, usually unenclosed platform attached to one or more sides of a building and used primarily as a sitting area, outdoor living space, or covered access to a doorway.
Porte-cochère	A covered structure attached to a building, through which a vehicle can pass, which allows passengers to exit vehicles and enter the building under cover and out of the weather.

Glossary, continued

Post	A vertical structural element that supports a horizontal structural element (*beam*) laid across its upper ends.
Post-and-beam	A simple type of construction system, composed of vertical structural members that support a horizontal structural member.
Pyramidal roof	A type of hipped roof with a square base and four sides that meet at a central peak.
Quoins	Masonry or stone blocks at the corner of a wall; may be structural or simply decorative; often laid so that they appear to wrap around the corner with alternating short and long sides.
Rafter	A structural member that rests on the top of a wall or other supporting surface and rises at a slope to the ridge or peak of the roof; a series of rafters supports the roof deck and eaves.
Rafter tail	The exposed end of a rafter, which may extend to or beyond the edge of the roof eave.
Ridge board	The horizontal beam at the central apex of a roof, to which the upper end of the rafters are attached.
Shingle	A standardized, wedge-shaped piece of wood or asbestos/cement material used in overlapping courses to provide a weatherproof covering on a roof or wall structure; may be cut into shapes (e.g., square, fish-scale, octagon, staggered, diamond, cove) to form patterns.
Sill	The horizontal structural member at the base of a wall or a window or door opening, to which vertical members (such as studs or posts) are attached.
Slab	A flat concrete plate, often reinforced with steel rebar, that forms the floor of a building.
Soffit	The underside of a construction element, such as a roof eave.

Glossary, continued

Step	Part of a stairway, consisting of a tread (the horizontal piece upon which one steps) and a riser (the vertical piece between steps).
Stoop	A small staircase leading to the entrance of a building.
Stucco	A decorative exterior wall coating usually made of lime, Portland cement, sand, water, and other materials that add strength and flexibility; frequently applied over a metal or plastic mesh that helps the stucco bond to the wall material.
Transom	The horizontal crossbar over a door or window (also known as a *lintel)*; also, a window above a door or other window, which rests upon and may be hinged to the transom.
Trim	Material used to decorate or frame a building façade or an opening, such as a door or window.
Truss	A structural system made of straight wooden or metal members arranged into triangular units; typically used in bridge building or to support a roof, because a truss can carry heavier loads and span greater distances than a simple beam.
Veneer	A thin slice of wood or a relatively thin single width of brick, stone, or masonry, used to cover a surface.
Veranda	A porch that lines the exterior of a building on one or more sides, often partially enclosed by a railing and a series of columns or posts.
Verge board	An ornamental board attached to the projecting edge of a gable roof; also known as a *barge board*.
Weep hole	An opening built into an exterior masonry wall, which allows water to pass from inside a wall system to the outside.

Starkweather Historic District Inventory

(As of designation date — February 2014)

Building Status Legend

C = Contributing Structure

NC = Noncontributing structure

V = Vacant

PROPERTY ADDRESS	SUBDIVISION	LOTS	CIRCA YEAR BUILT	BLDG STATUS	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE
111 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	9, 10	1946–1947	C	Church
114 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	63, 64	1952	C	Traditional
115 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	11, 12	1996	NC	Traditional, new
119 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	13, 14	1953	C	Traditional
121 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	15, 16, 17	1949-1951	C	Traditional, apartments
122 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	59, 60	n/a	V	Vacant
126 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	57, 58	1958	C	Traditional
127 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	18	n/a	V	Vacant
129 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	19	1945	C	Traditional
131 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	20, 21	1952	C	Traditional, L-shape
133 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	22, 23, 24	1955	C	Traditional
138 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	55, 56	1929	C	Craftsman
200 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	53, 54	1928	C	Craftsman
201 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	25, 26	1928	C	Craftsman
202 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	51, 52	1927	C	Craftsman
203 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	27, 28	1928	C	Craftsman
204 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	49, 50	1927	C	Craftsman
205 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	29, 30, 31, 32	1927	C	Craftsman
206 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	47, 48	1929	C	Craftsman
209 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	33, 34	1928	C	Craftsman
210 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	43, 44	1927	C	Craftsman
211 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	35, 36	1928	C	Craftsman
212 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	41, 42	1928	C	Hipped roof cottage
213 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	37, 38	1927	C	Craftsman
215 31 ½ ST	STARKWEATHER	39	1928	C	Craftsman

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