OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

OTR



HISTORIC CONSERVATION GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION


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Do What You Wanna Do
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Brush Factory

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INTRODUCTION

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District is Cincinnati's historic heart, and a national treasure. Few neighborhoods in America inspire like Over-the-Rhine, with its expansive collection of Italianate churches, breweries, and tenements providing one of the best surviving examples in the country of a 19th century urban neighborhood. The historic district serves not only as the showpiece of Cincinnati's cultural heritage, but also as an economic engine and driver of the local economy. The famed travel historian Arthur Frommer said of the neighborhood, "When I look at [Over-the-Rhine], I see in my mind the possibility of a revived district that literally could rival similar prosperous and heavily visited areas." Indeed it is precisely the unique historic character of Over-the-Rhine and Pendleton that has fueled the renewal of the area and helped to facilitate a resurgence in the city as a whole.

As a national exemplar for what historic preservation can do, it is essential that the Over-the-Rhine Historic District continue to be preserved and protected so that its status as both a cultural and an economic asset for the city of Cincinnati is maintained. This includes protection not only from demolition of the historic structures that comprise the district, but also from insensitive new construction built on vacant sites in the neighborhood.

New construction has powerful impacts on the fabric and sense of place of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, and can either enhance the historic character of the district, or damage it in harmful and irreparable ways. Moreover, due to demolition that occurred in the 20th century, new construction will ultimately comprise a very significant portion of the historic district, and will thus play a substantial role in defining its sense of place.

These guidelines provide a regulatory framework for ensuring that new construction occurs in a manner that preserves and protects the Over-the-Rhine Historic District for current and future generations of Cincinnatians and visitors alike.

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District is Cincinnati's historic heart, and a national treasure.



1 Arthur Frommer, Visit to Cincinnati, 1993

HISTORY[2]

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District is significant in the continuing history of Cincinnati and the United States. In 1983 the district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in recognition of both its exceptional nineteenth-century architecture and its association with the successive waves of German immigration to America in the nineteenth century.

The historic district's collection of commercial, residential, religious and civic architecture is one of America's largest and most cohesive surviving examples of an urban, nineteenth century community. Similar neighborhoods in other cities have been decimated or lost entirely. The Over-the-Rhine Historic District, however, continues to display its original dense, urban development patterns and buildings of excellent architectural quality, imbuing the neighborhood with a "sense of time and place." Rows of three- to five-story brick buildings constructed along the sidewalk characterize the streetscape. Many buildings have storefronts on the first floor with residential space on the upper floors. The Italianate style is the predominant architectural style in the district. Other nineteenth-century styles, including Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Renaissance Revival, add to the flavor of the district.

The district also has many simply designed, working-class buildings that display modest elements of the high architectural styles.

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District encompasses a dense, urban area that displays a visual continuity conveying a sense of time and place. The physical relationship of adjacent buildings in a dense environment is accentuated by the uniform faced lines imposed on the streets. The buildings' consistent scale and height, similar materials, and architectural detailing blend to create distinctive streetscapes reflecting the historic development of the area.

In the nineteenth century Over-the-Rhine and Pendleton were home to businessmen of means and their families, shop owners, working-class families, and the poorest of immigrants. Like other urban centers of the period, this area was part of the 'walking city,' in which most people could easily walk from their homes to places of employment, entertainment, and worship. Building exteriors were designed to be experienced and appreciated by pedestrians along the sidewalks, and buildings were placed at the front of their lots for easy pedestrian access.



2 Excerpted from: Over-the-Rhine: A Description and History: Historic District Conservation Guidelines (Cincinnati, OH: Historic Conservation Office, Cincinnati City Planning Department) 1995.

Image: Provided by Cincinnati Museum Center History Library and Archives

PROCESS OF DEVELOPING NEW CONSTRUCTION

Prior to designing an infill building in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, developers contemplating a new construction project should undertake the following pre-design steps.



01 Understand the historic neighborhood

All successful new construction will emerge from an understanding and respect for the significance of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District as a historical place; it is therefore essential that this understanding be in place before any design efforts have begun. It is recommended that developers and their designers tour the district on foot, and study written materials on the history and significance of Over-the-Rhine.[3]

02 Understand the site and surrounding context

Each vacant site in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District is contextually related to both the previously existing (historic) structure on the site, and the historic buildings on the blocks surrounding the site. Successful new construction will relate to both of these facets of the context. Developers and their designers should review Sanborn Fire Insurance maps to gain an understanding of what previously existed on-site, including the height, material construction, setback, shape of the building, and potential archeological resources still on the site. Developers and their designers should also tour the area surrounding the site extensively, studying the surrounding historic buildings and their attributes, including height, massing, rhythm of openings, detailing and ornamentation, proportion, shape, composition, and roofscapes. This study should focus on broad patterns that bring cohesiveness to the fabric, rather than isolated anomalies on individual buildings. Developers should never limit their study to contiguous buildings, but should reference historic buildings along the block face and the opposing block face.

03 Thoroughly review these guidelines

Once a baseline understanding of the history of the district, the development site, and the surrounding context has been achieved, developers and designers should consult these guidelines to work toward a high-quality design compatible with the historic context of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.

04 Notify the Community

Early in the design process, developers and their designers should notify the appropriate community councils, the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, and other neighborhood groups of their intent to build. These community groups can provide knowledge, context, and insight to a developer/designer that will aid design of the project and assist in obtaining community support. This step also provides an opportunity to enhance the developer/designer's understanding of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District through the transfer of information from long-standing stakeholders in the neighborhood.

05 Compliance with Building Codes

Nothing in these guidelines shall prevent new construction from complying with all relevant building codes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. Building Code and ADA compliance should be a foundation of the design process.

3 See, for example, Robert Wimberg, Cincinnati: Over-the-Rhine (Cincinnati: Ohio Bookstore, 1988); Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Over-the-Rhine Tour Guide: Cincinnati's Historic German District, Over-the-Rhine, and Environs (Milford: Little Miami Publishing Company, 2010)

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is divided into 9 chapters outlining the major elements to be addressed in new construction.

The guidelines within each chapter are expressed using the modal verbs **"should"**, **"must"**, or **"may"**.

Guidelines containing **"must"** or **"must not"** are mandatory in all circumstances.

Guidelines containing **"may"** are optional.

While guidelines containing **"should"** are critical, the relevant authority may, at its discretion, grant relief from one or more "should" guidelines if at least two of the following standards are met:

a. The developer/designer presents at least three design concepts to the Urban Conservator for review at a pre-design conference, and the final project design has been reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Review Board.

b. The project is exceptional and enhances the Over-the-Rhine Historic District's unique standing as one of America's most cohesive surviving examples of an urban, 19th-century neighborhood.

c. The project otherwise demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence in design and to enhancing the visual continuity established by the district's historic buildings.



STANDARD SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following submittals are required on all new construction projects:

- Narrative statement of intent behind the design, including how it meets the guidelines and preserves and enhances the integrity of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.
- Map identifying the site in the context of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, including existing building footprints within a two block radius.
- A copy of 1930 Sanborn map depicting the subject site. Additional Sanborn maps from earlier are also accepted.
- 3D massing model of entire block on both sides of the street, including up to two blocks away in both directions where needed. The model must include roof profiles, turrets, steeples and other important roof features.
- Existing and proposed site plan, including north arrow, street names, building footprints, parcel lines, and setback dimensions from all property lines labeled. All properties contiguous to the subject building's side property lines must be included.
- Proposed front, side, and rear elevation drawings, including all buildings on contiguous properties, with labeled measurements for height, width, setback, and dimensions [using graphic scale].
- Photographic elevation of entire block face showing the streetscape with the existing undeveloped site, and the streetscape with the proposed building superimposed onto the block face. All buildings must be labeled with measurements for height, width, setback, and dimensions [using graphic scale]. For corner sites, photographic elevations must be provided for all block faces on which the proposed building has frontage.
- Photographic elevation of the entire block face on the opposite side of the street. For corner sites, photographic elevations must be provided for all block faces opposite the proposed building.
- Annotated elevation drawing for each guideline chapter depicting how the proposed building meets that specific guideline.
- Diagram or photographic elevation of the entire block face depicting the horizontal rhythm of the streetscape with the proposed building included. For corner sites, diagrams/photographic elevations must be provided for all block faces on which the proposed building has frontage.
- Diagram or photographic elevation of the entire block face depicting the compositional [base, middle, top] rhythm of the streetscape with the proposed building included. For corner sites, diagrams/photographic elevations must be provided for all blocks on which the proposed building has frontage.
- Diagram or photographic elevation of the entire block face depicting the vertical rhythm of the streetscape with the proposed building included. For corner sites, diagrams/photographic elevations must be provided for all blocks on which the proposed building has frontage.
- Wall section of the facade(s) cut through major openings from ground through roof.
- Siteline drawings or images showing that any rooftop decks and roof access enclosures are not visible from contiguous street(s).
- Siteline drawings or images showing that any mechanical systems, elevated solar panel arrays, and other non-deck rooftop appendages are not visible from contiguous streets at any point within 40 feet of the subject building.
- Material specifications and samples for all exterior materials, including, but not limited to, exterior cladding, mortar, detailing and ornamentation, fencing, windows, doors, and roofing.
- Proposed front, side, and rear axonometric and/or rendered perspective drawings.

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MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

New York, New York

01

MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Massing, Height and Scale are fundamental to the unique identity and character of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. The district was developed on long, narrow parcels of land, resulting in the construction of tall, long, narrow buildings designed to maximize density. Thus, the quintessential building is significantly taller and longer than it is wide, with either a rectangular or "L" shape volume. The massing and height of each building varies from its neighbors, but within a limited range, resulting in the particular scale that defines each block. While some blocks feature buildings that range from 2-4 stories in height, others have a 3-5 story range. Most buildings in the district are relatively narrow, 25-50 feet in width.

24-30 E. 15th Street typifies the massing, height, and scale of buildings found in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.



1430-1438 Race Street typifies the massing, height, and scale of buildings found in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.



MASSING, HEIGHT & SCALE

GUIDELINE INTENTION

New buildings in Over-the-Rhine are to reflect the historic massing and height within the district and should support the continuity of scale established by the historic fabric. Major deviations from the established massing, height, and scale can irrevocably detract from the character of the neighborhood.

01 **Building width should be within 10% of the average width of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face.*** †

02 **Building height should be within 10% of the average height of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face.***

03 **Building height must not exceed the tallest non-institutional contributing building on the block face, or be less than the shortest non-institutional contributing building on the block face.**

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, then the average must be calculated using non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face plus an additional block face in both directions.

† Projects developed on a single historic lot where the width of the lot is less than the minimum width allowed by this guideline are exempt from this guideline. Where this guideline conflicts with Chapter 02: Setback, Chapter 02: Setback shall take precedence.

04 **Buildings should be rectilinear in form.**

05 **Building height should be greater than width, and building depth should be greater than width.**

06 **In addition to the foregoing guidelines, development on two or more contiguous historic lots, or on one or more consolidated lots with total width of 40 feet or more, must meet all of the following requirements:**

a. Use multiple detached volumes to break the building into separate structures.

b. Meet at least two of the following standards:

   i. The developer/designer presents at least three design concepts to the Urban Conservator for review at a pre-design conference, and the final project design has been reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Review Board.

   ii. The project is exceptional and enhances the Over-the-Rhine Historic District's unique standing as one of America's most cohesive surviving examples of an urban, nineteenth century neighborhood.

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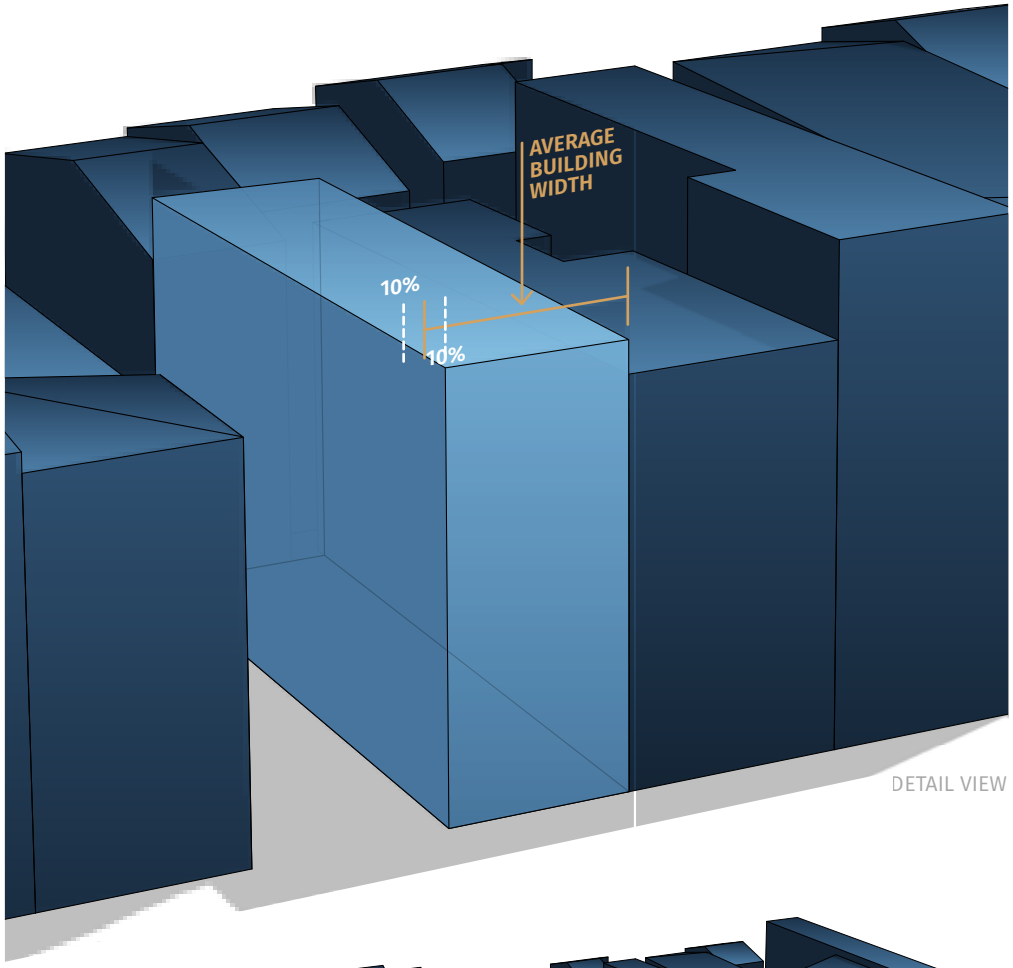
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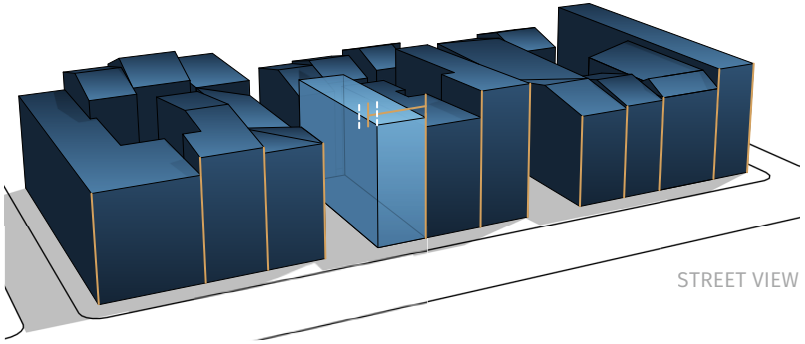
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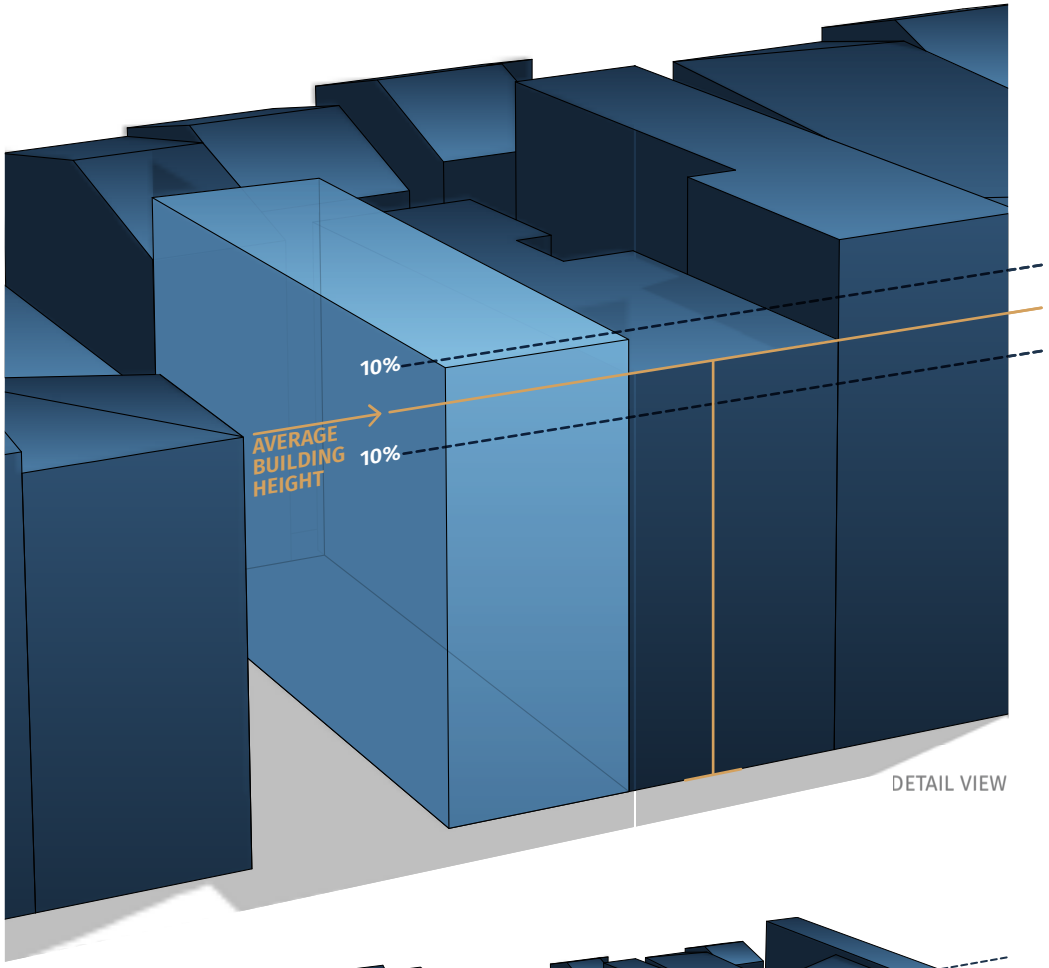
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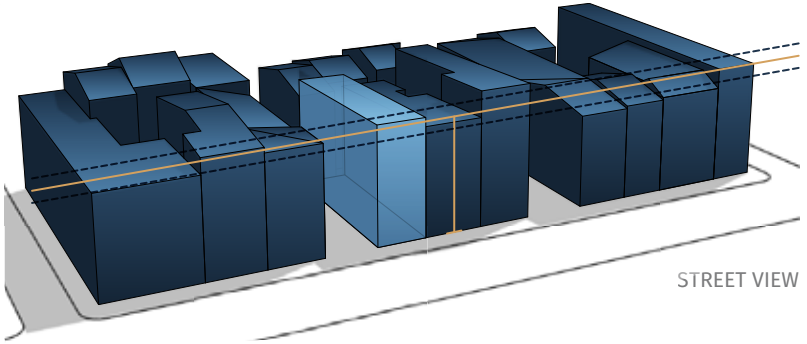
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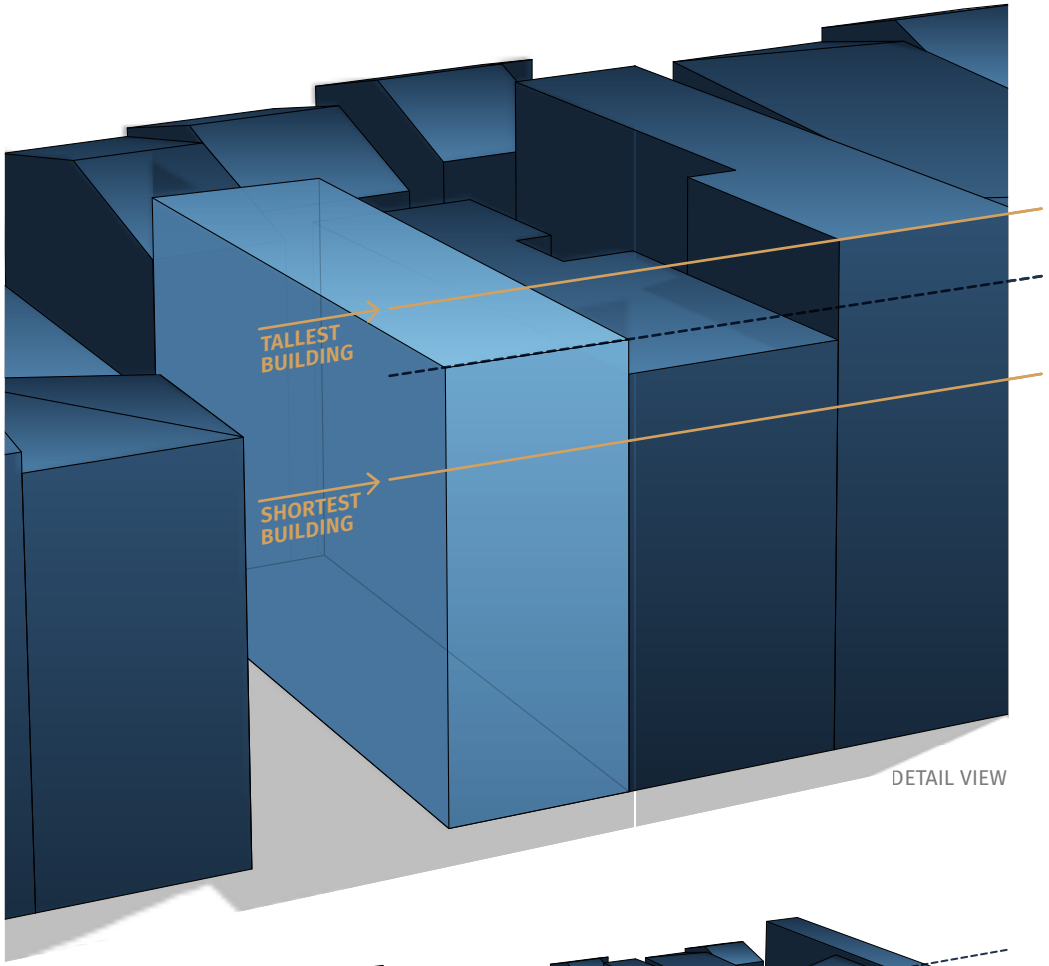
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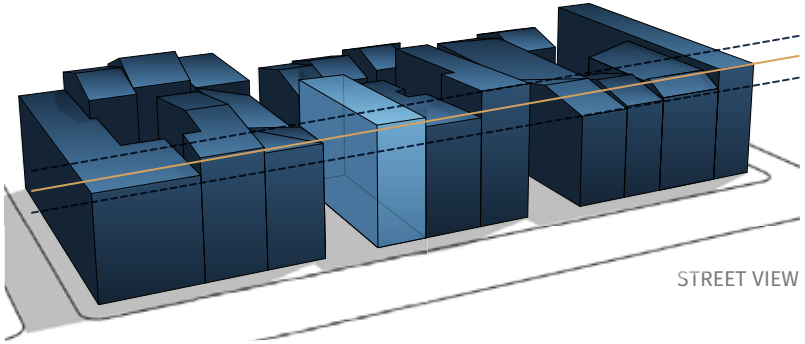
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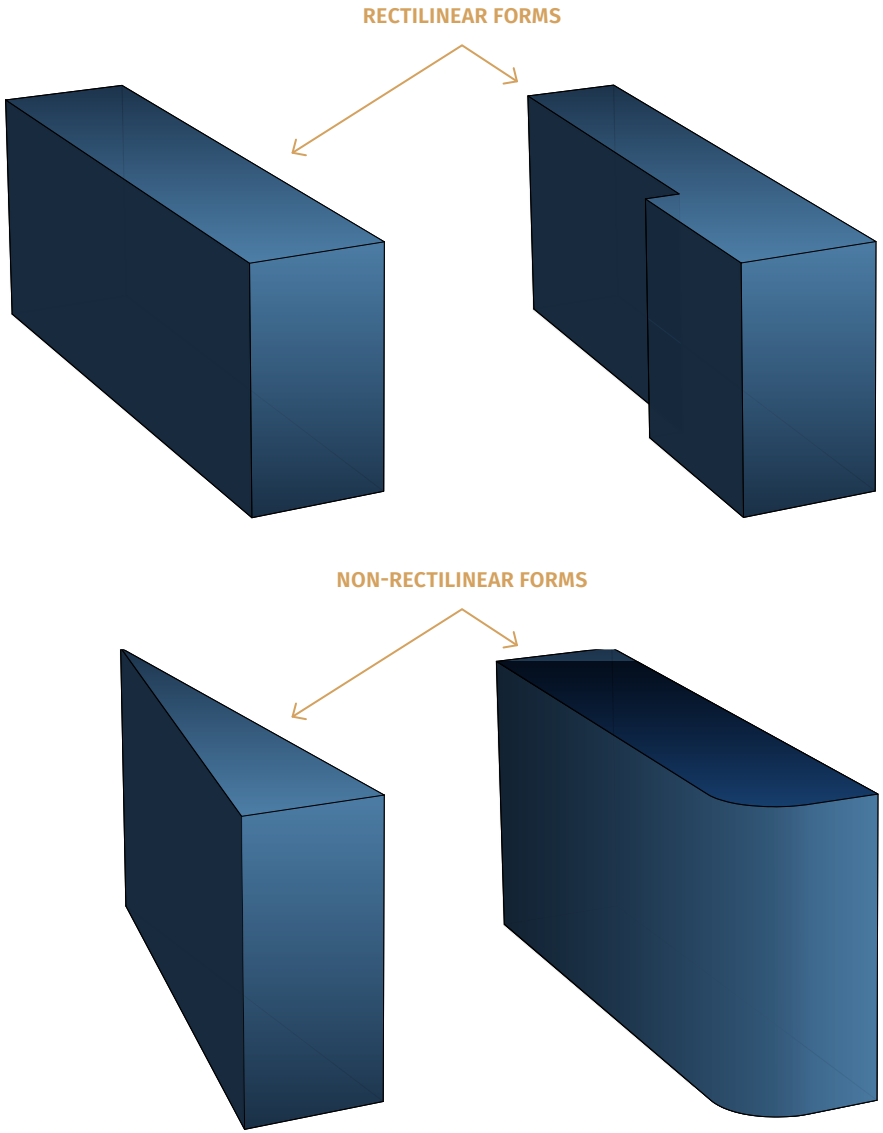
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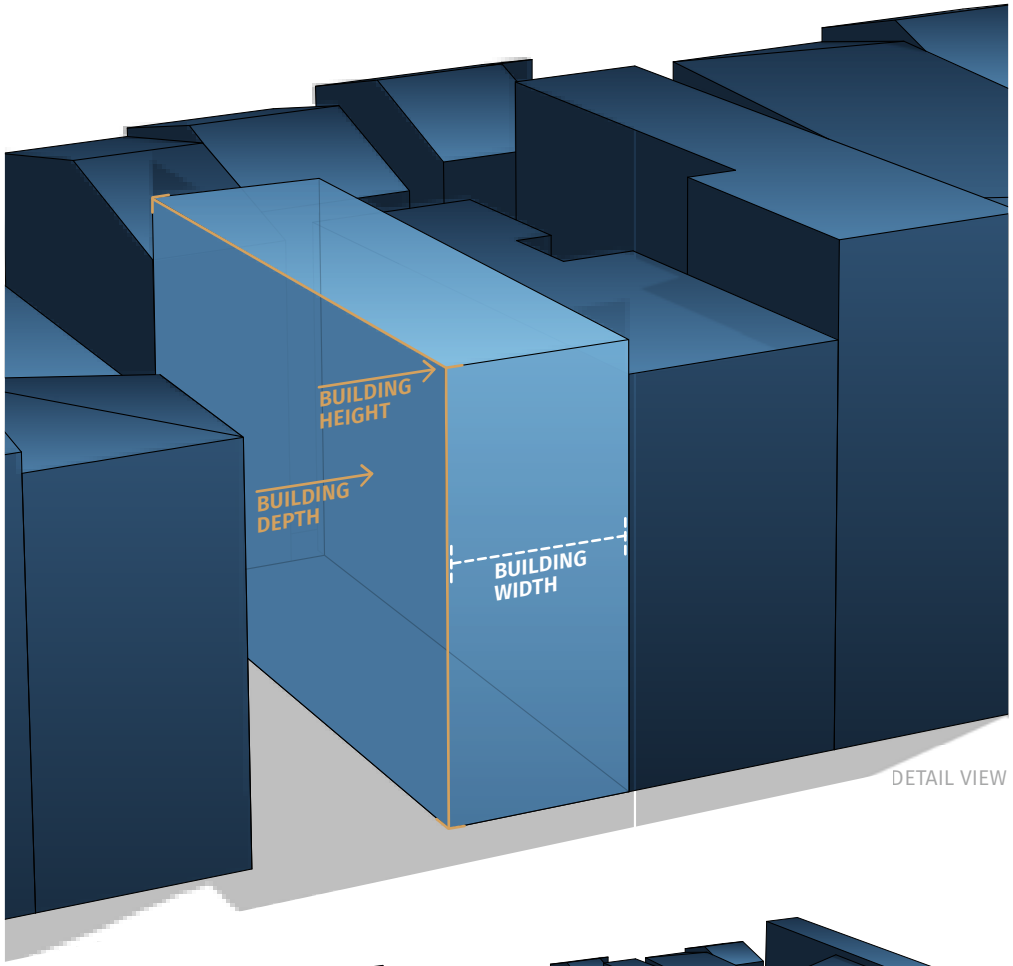
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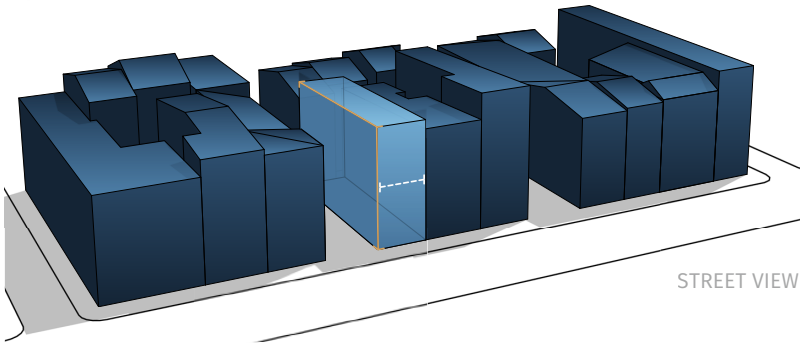
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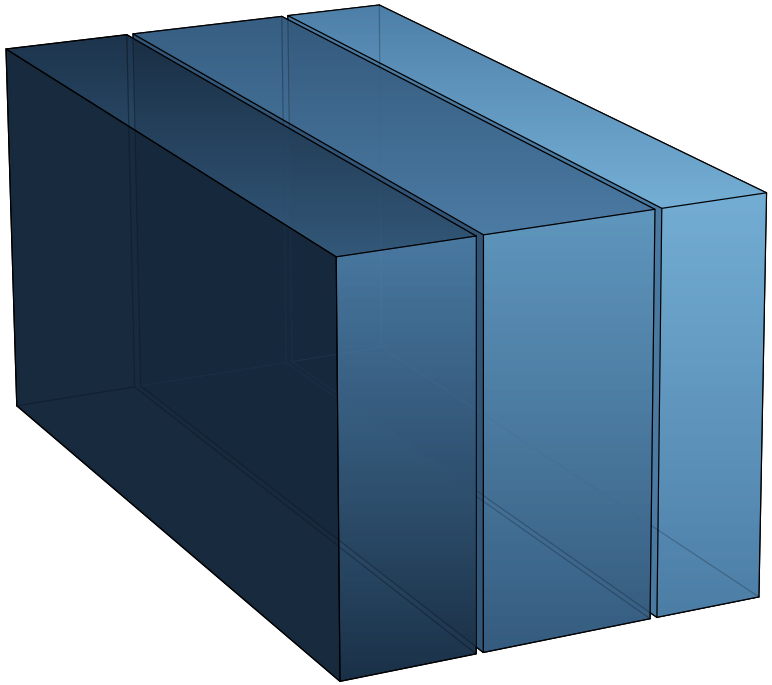
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SETBACK



SETBACK

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District was developed as a dense walking neighborhood with the vast majority of buildings built directly up to the sidewalk. This mostly zero setback environment presents a rich pedestrian experience full of vitality, visual interest, and public access to commercial property. A majority of buildings are also built up to the side property lines, though some buildings have small side setbacks. In rare cases, small, detached residential buildings are set back from the street using a low, visually-permeable, decorative, iron fence to mark the edge. Some larger institutional buildings such as schools, churches, and public buildings are set back from the street to provide public space, adding to their civic monumentality.

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District is dominated by zero setback streetscapes, as seen here in the 1400 block of Vine.



Some side streets and portions of blocks have groups of buildings with small front and/or side setbacks, as seen here at 211-217 Orchard Street.



SETBACK

GUIDELINE INTENTION

New buildings are to respect the established setback pattern on the street. A zero lot line setback at the front and on the sides should be the first response to a new construction project unless a majority of other contributing buildings along the block face have setbacks.

01 **Buildings must be built with zero setback from the front property line, except as defined in 02.**

02 **Buildings may have a front setback if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The building is a residential building.

b. A majority of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face* have a front setback of at least two feet.

c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a setback of at least two feet.

d. The setback is within 15% of the average setback of those contributing buildings defined in 02b.

03 **Buildings must be built with zero setback from both side property lines for at least the first 20 feet of the building, except as defined in 05.**

04 **Buildings should have a side setback on one side if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The building is a residential building.

b. A majority of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face* have a side setback on at least one side.

c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a side setback on at least one side.

d. The setback is within 15% of the average side setback of those contributing buildings defined in 04b.

05 **Buildings should have a side setback on both sides if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The building is a residential building.

b. A majority of non-institutional contributing buildings within the same block face* have a side setback on both sides.

c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a side setback on both sides.

d. The setbacks are within 15% of the average side setback of those contributing buildings defined in 05b.

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, then the quantity of buildings used to calculate a majority must include non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, plus an additional block face in both directions.

01 **Buildings must be built with zero setback from the front property line, except as defined in 02.**

02 **Buildings may have a front setback if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The building is a residential building.

b. A majority of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face* have a front setback of at least two feet.

c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a setback of at least two feet.

d. The setback is within 15% of the average setback of those contributing buildings defined in 02b.

03 **Buildings must be built with zero setback from both side property lines for at least the first 20 feet of the building, except as defined in 05.**

04 **Buildings should have a side setback on one side if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The building is a residential building.

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c. The previously existing historic building on the site had a side setback on at least one side.

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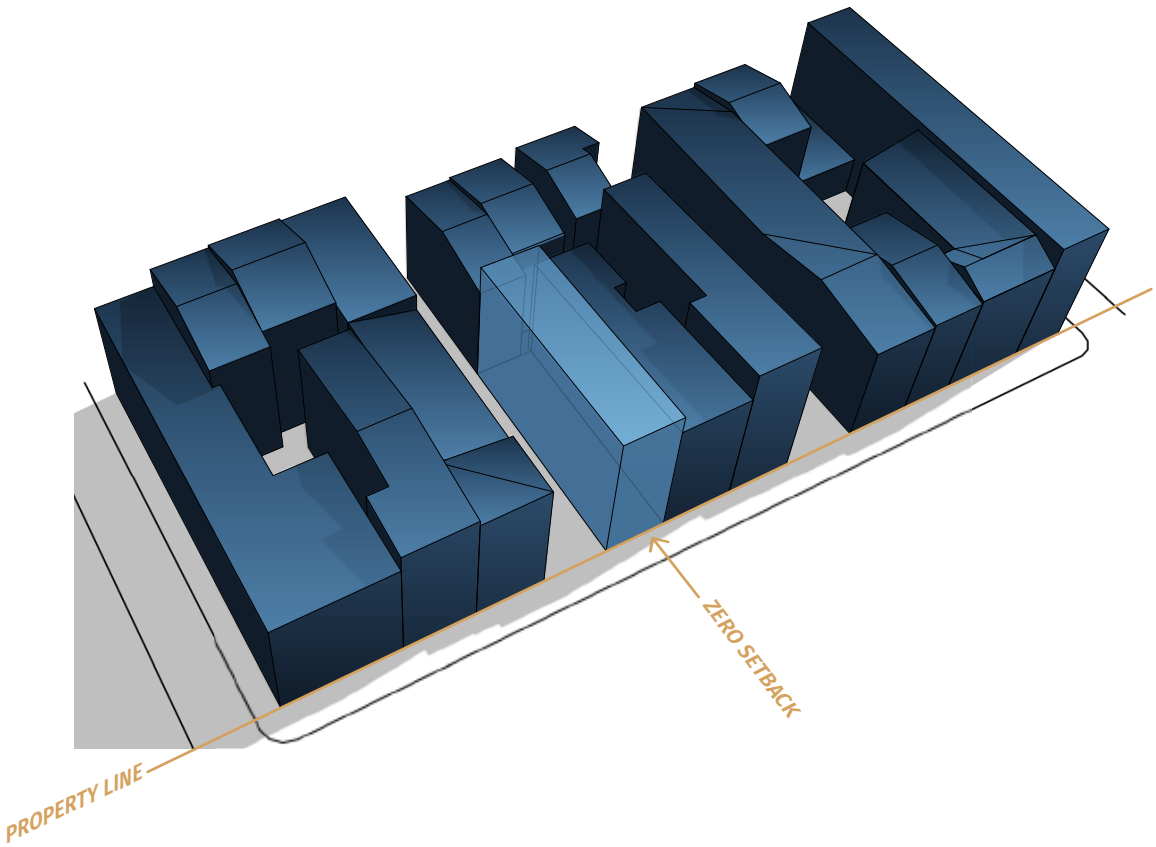
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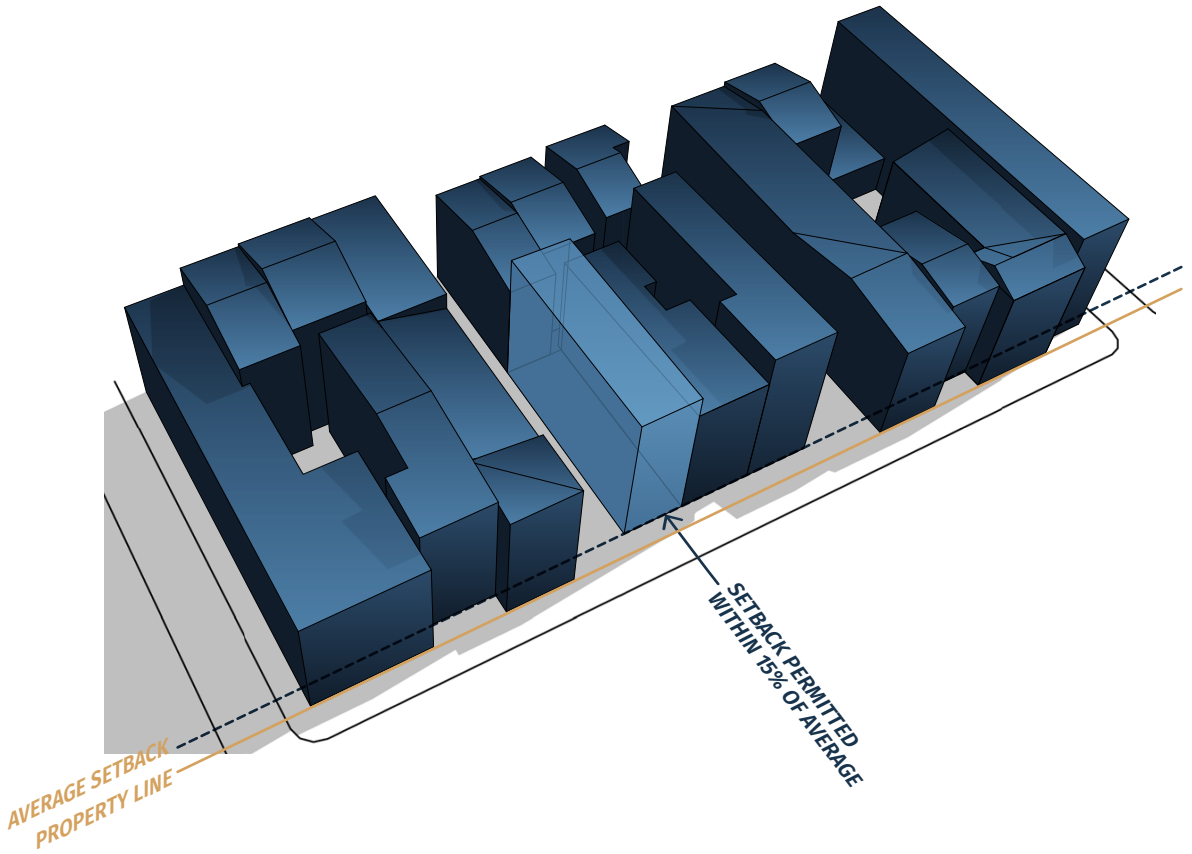
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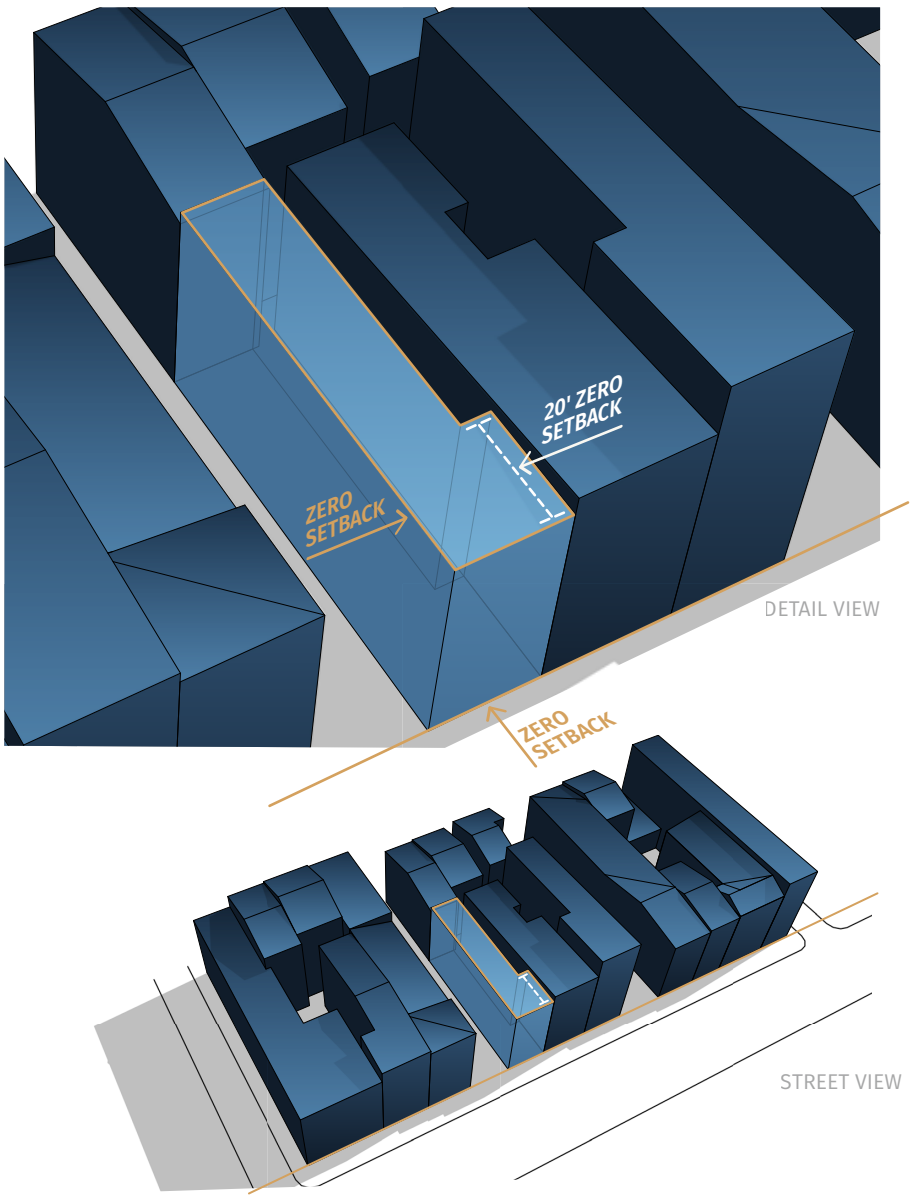
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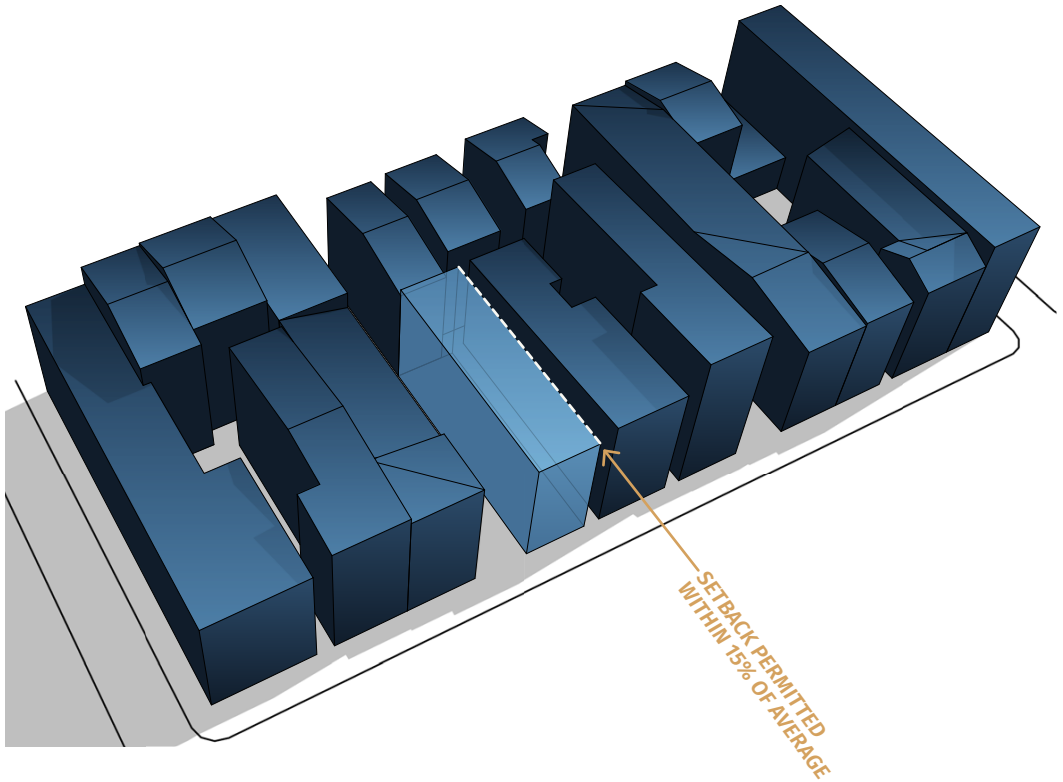
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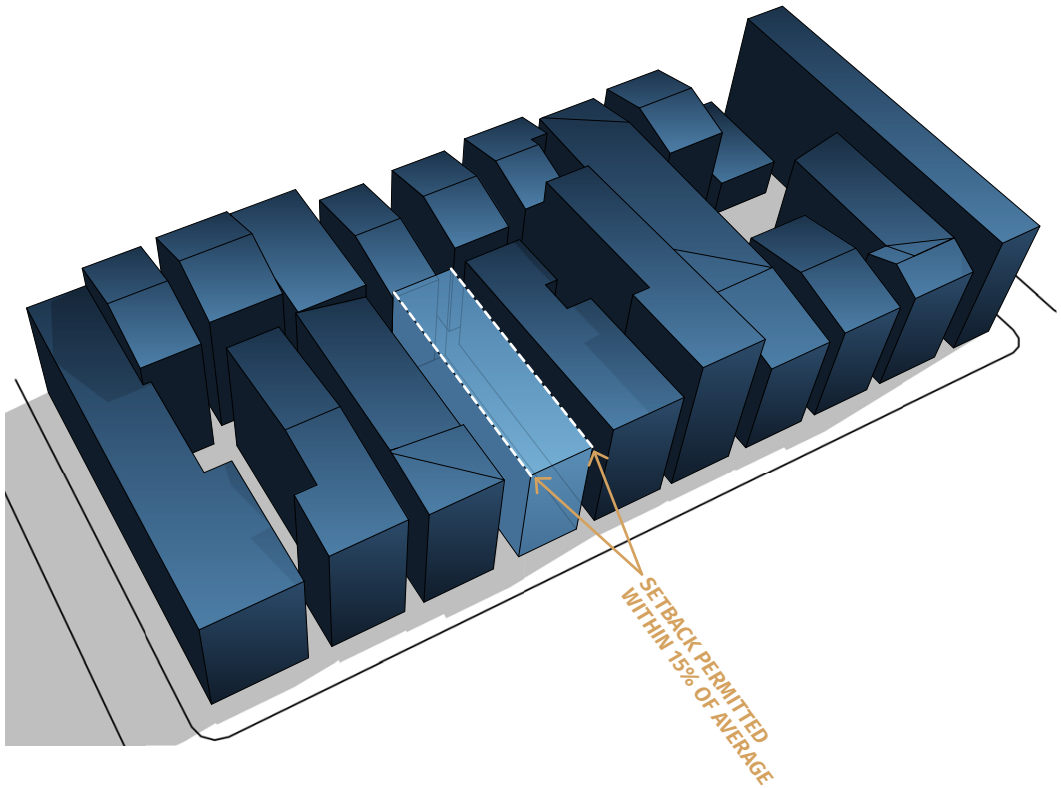
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C. TOP

B. MIDDLE

A. BASE

COMPOSITION

New York, New York

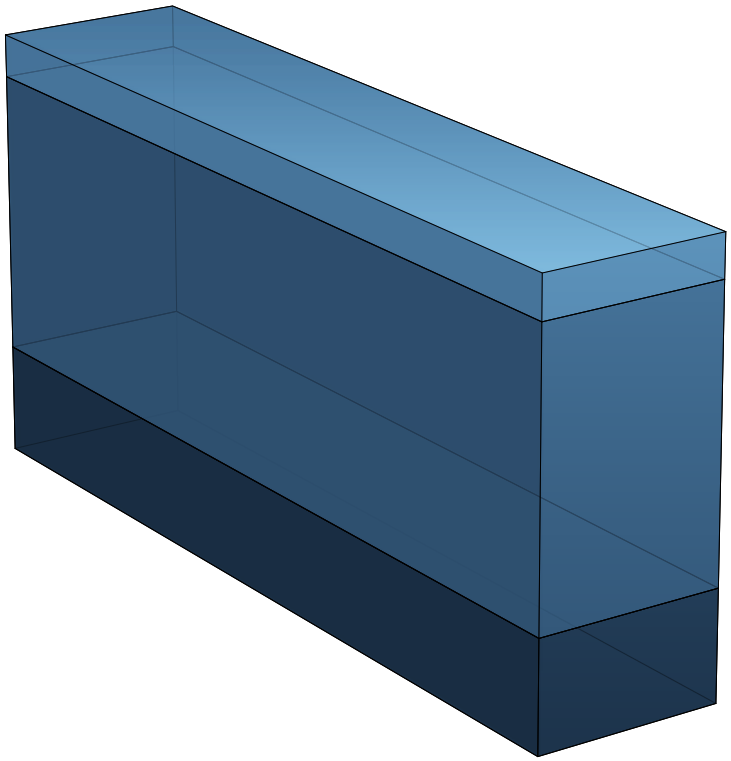
03

COMPOSITION

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Typical buildings in the district have a three-part organization consisting of a base, middle, and top. Each of these elements plays a specific role in the composition of the building.

While there is a distinct difference in the bases of commercial and residential buildings, the middle and top components of Over-the-Rhine Historic District buildings are similar across different uses.





1119 and 1121 Walnut Street demonstrate composition in residential and mixed-use buildings.

COMPOSITION: BASE

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Commercial Storefronts

First-floor storefronts are common and are a significant architectural feature in the district's mixed-use buildings. Storefronts take on a dual role. First, as the place where merchants display their wares, they allow customers to "window shop", thus providing intimate contact with the pedestrian. Second, by forming the architectural base of the mixed-use building, they also give scale, rhythm, and texture to the street.

Storefronts are prevalent on commercial arterials, but are also found interspersed on predominantly residential streets -- particularly on corner buildings. Corner storefronts typically wrap the facade to face both streets.

During the latter decades of the 19th-century, most storefronts were built of brick columns faced with sandstone or cast iron pilasters. Architecturally, styles include Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne. Detailing ranges from very simple stone piers and lintels to very elaborate cast iron columns assembled in a variety of patterns. The exact size, scale and level of detail vary greatly from building to building, but most storefronts share a common design framework.

Residential Bases

Residential bases often consist of a stone foundation, typically rising nine to 24 inches above grade and capped by a projecting sandstone or limestone water table. Some bases contain windows that provide ventilation and light to the building's basement. Residential bases may also be characterized by the presence of stoops leading to an elevated entry. These stoops vary in height, but are generally consistent in form and height with other stoops within the same block face.



1708 Elm Street exhibits the characteristics of residential bases.



119 E 12th Street exhibits the characteristics of commercial storefronts.

COMPOSITION: BASE

COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

GUIDELINE INTENTION

New storefronts should evoke the scale and proportions of historic storefronts in the district, and should provide visual interest, transparency, and a consistent street wall.

01

Commercial/mixed-use buildings must have a storefront, as follows:

a. Storefronts should feature the basic components of a storefront system, including a bulkhead, transom windows, display windows, columns, pilasters, storefront cornice/lintel, and entry door.

b. Storefront height should be within 10% of the average height of contributing storefronts located within with same block face.*

c. Storefront window sills should be between 18 inches to 3 feet above grade.

d. Storefront windows should be recessed from the structural storefront elements.

e. Door and window glazing should comprise at least 60% of the total storefront system. Transparency of greater than 60% is encouraged, but complete storefront transparency is not appropriate.

f. Door and window glazing should not be covered by systems that obscure the view of the glazing from the public realm.

02

Storefronts should be taller than individual upper floors.

03

Commercial/mixed-use buildings may have garage doors/garage door openings. These may be placed on a street-facing wall if all of the following conditions exist:

a. There is no feasible or practical alley access, as determined by the Department of Transportation and Engineering, that would permit the placement of garage doors or garage door openings on an alley rather than a street-facing wall.

b. The garage doors/garage door openings give the appearance of a storefront and incorporate the major features of a storefront as outlined in Chapter 03A-01.

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) contributing storefronts located within the same block face, then the average must be calculated using contributing storefronts within the same block face plus an additional block face in both directions.

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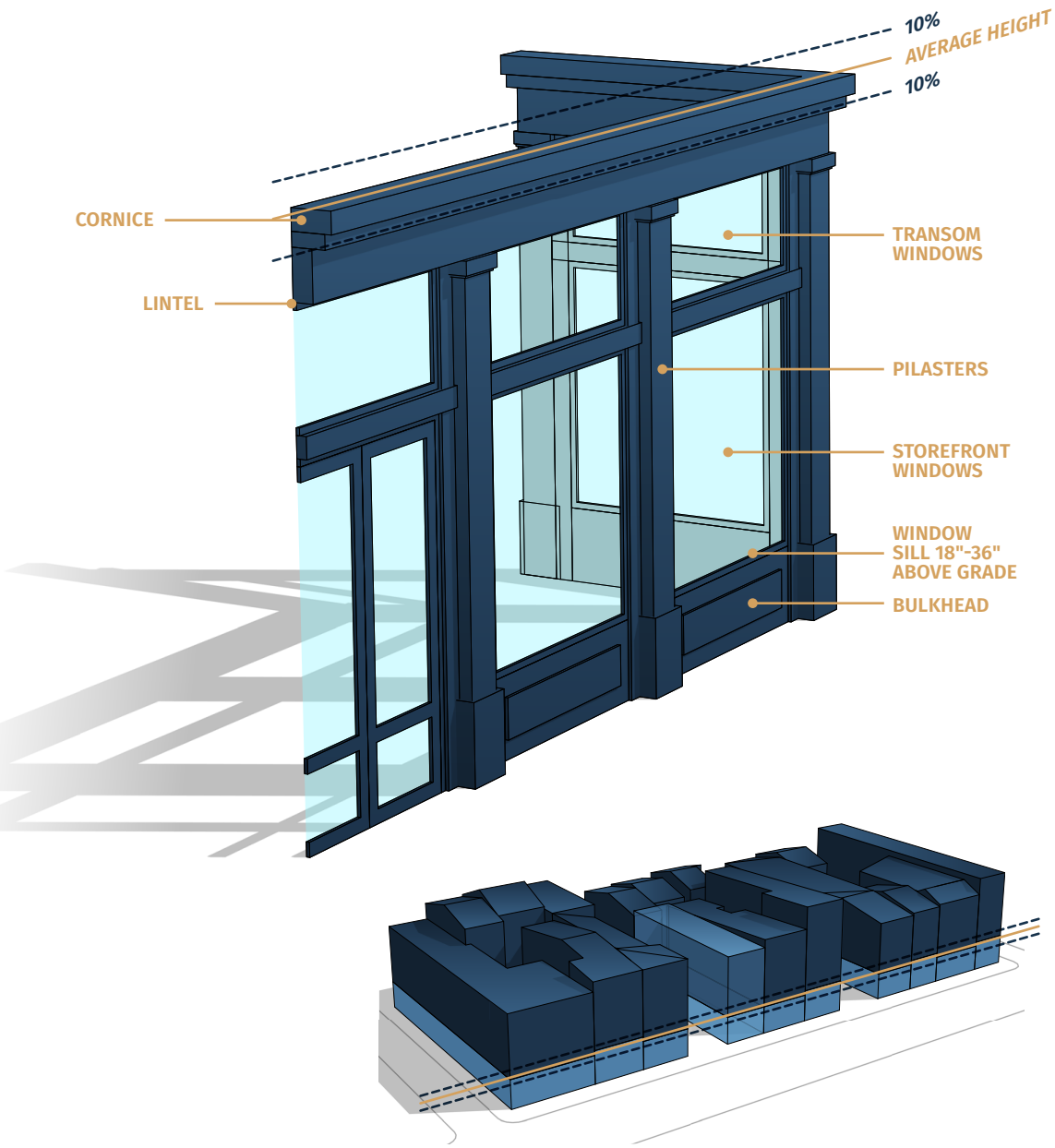
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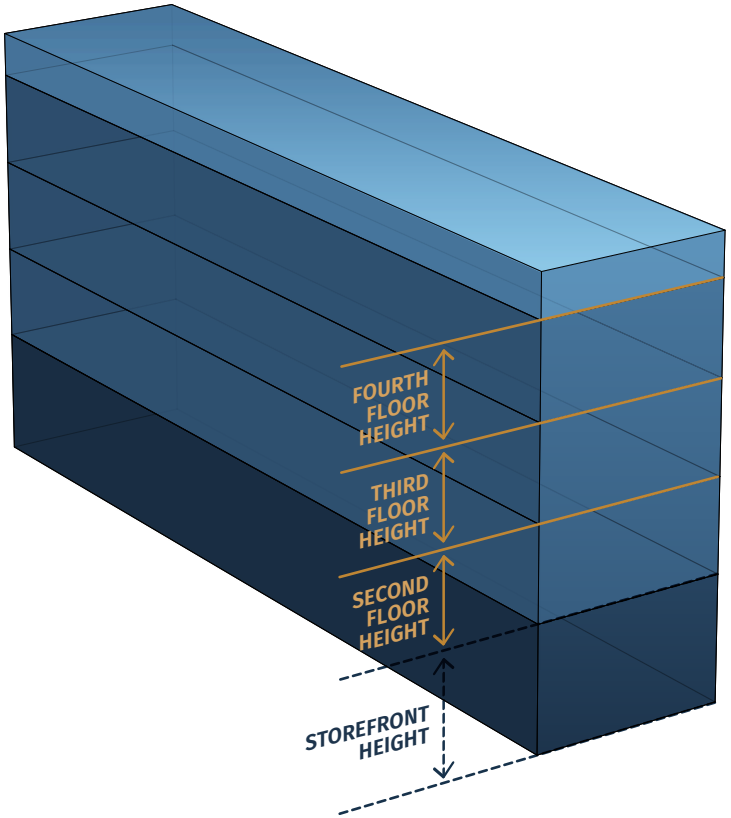
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02 Storefronts should be taller than individual upper floors.



COMPOSITION: BASE

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

GUIDELINE INTENTION

Residential bases are to be well defined and distinguishable from the middle component of a building.

01 **Buildings should have a base component represented by a change in material and/or design that marks the transition from base component to middle component.**

02 **Base component height should be within 15% of the average height of base components on contributing residential buildings located within the same block face.**

03 **Buildings may have garage doors/garage door openings if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. The garage door or opening is not located on a street-facing wall.

b. The opening is limited to a single car opening.

COMPOSITION: MIDDLE

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The middle component of buildings in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District is the area between the top of the base component, and the bottom of the cornice. The middle component contains window openings, sills, lintels, and other detailing and articulation that contributes greatly to both the vertical emphasis and rhythm of the design.

In mixed-use buildings, the middle component is typically distinguished from the storefront below through a strong horizontal element, such as a stone or cast iron lintel or cornice corresponding to a division in the use of the building. In residential and other commercial buildings, the horizontal element dividing middle from base is the top of the stone foundation or water table that terminates below the building entry. In both building types, the middle component is distinguished from the more decorative top component through the application of a strong horizontal element.



1222 and 1224 Republic Street exhibit the characteristics of composition: middle in residential buildings.



118-128 W. Elder Street exhibit the characteristics of composition: middle in mixed-use buildings.



1212 Jackson Street exhibits the characteristics of composition: middle in industrial buildings.

COMPOSITION: MIDDLE

GUIDELINE INTENTION

The design of the middle component should provide a consistent architectural vocabulary along the streetscape.

01 **Buildings should have a change in material and/or design that marks the transition from base component to middle component, and from middle component to top.**

COMPOSITION: TOP

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Strong terminating elements at the tops of buildings are primary defining features of the district. Projecting cornices supported by decorative brackets and bold, decorative frieze panels are the quintessential tops found in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Historically, cornices projected over buildings to minimize rainfall on facades. Decorative cornices in the district often exhibit their own micro-composition of base, middle, top, while remaining consistent with an overarching theme throughout the district.

Some buildings feature less elaborate building tops – such as bracket-less box gutters and corbelled parapet walls – that nevertheless serve as strong terminating elements to the building. On other buildings the entire uppermost story serves as a top, realized by a mansard roof or a lower secondary cornice.



116 W. Elder Street exhibits the characteristics of composition: top.



213 and 219 Odeon Street exhibit the characteristics of composition: top.



8 Green Street exhibits the characteristics of early 20th-century composition: top.



1408 Elm Street exhibits the characteristics of composition: top.

COMPOSITION: TOP

GUIDELINE INTENTION

New buildings are to provide a crowning visual termination to the composition.

01 **Buildings should employ a strong top component that terminates the building, without mimicking the district's historic cornices.**

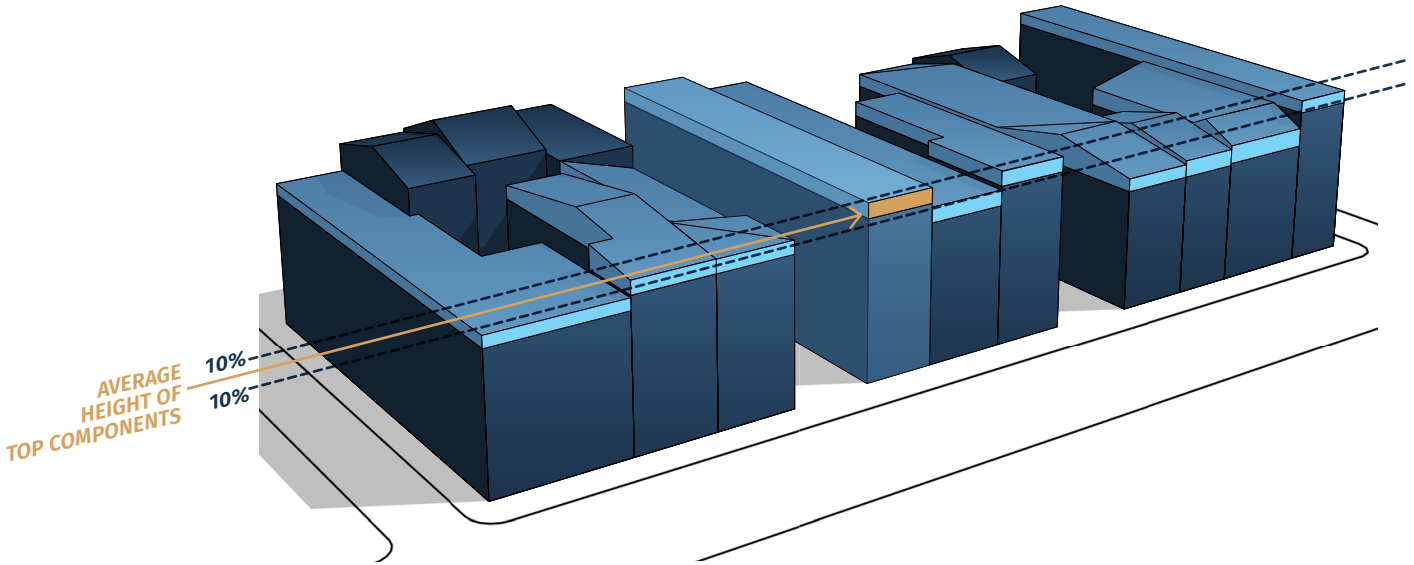
02 **Top components should have a height that is within 10% of the average height of historic top components on non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face.***

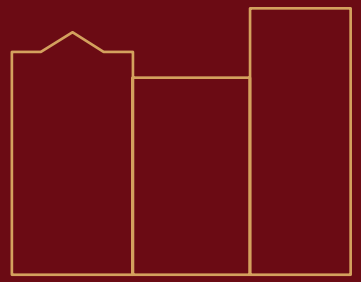
03 **The projection (overhang) of top components beyond the plane of the facade must not exceed 90% of the furthest projection among top components on contributing buildings within the same block face.**

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, then the average must be calculated using non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face plus an additional block face in both directions.

02 Top components should have a height that is within 10% of the average height of historic top components on contributing buildings located within the same block face.





RHYTHM



04

RHYTHM

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The “rhythm” formed by the repetition of buildings is one of the core elements that knits the fabric of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District together into a cohesive district. Most buildings are tall and narrow – typically 20-50 feet in width and three to four stories in height – and exhibit a variation in height from one building to the next. Most buildings also feature regularly spaced, horizontally and vertically aligned, symmetrically placed window openings that display a remarkable consistency from one building to the next. Finally, buildings tend to have articulated wall surfaces (e.g., sills, lintels, and bracketed cornices), resulting in the consistent projection of elements from the plane of the primary façades of buildings along the streetscape. This repetition of tall, narrow buildings of varying height, consistent fenestration geometries, and articulated wall surfaces results in a particular pattern, or “rhythm”, that gives the district's streets harmony and coherence.

1405-1417 Main Street exemplifies the Over-the-Rhine Historic District's distinctive rhythm.



529-541 E. 13th Street exemplifies the Over-the-Rhine Historic District's distinctive rhythm.



RHYTHM

GUIDELINE INTENTION

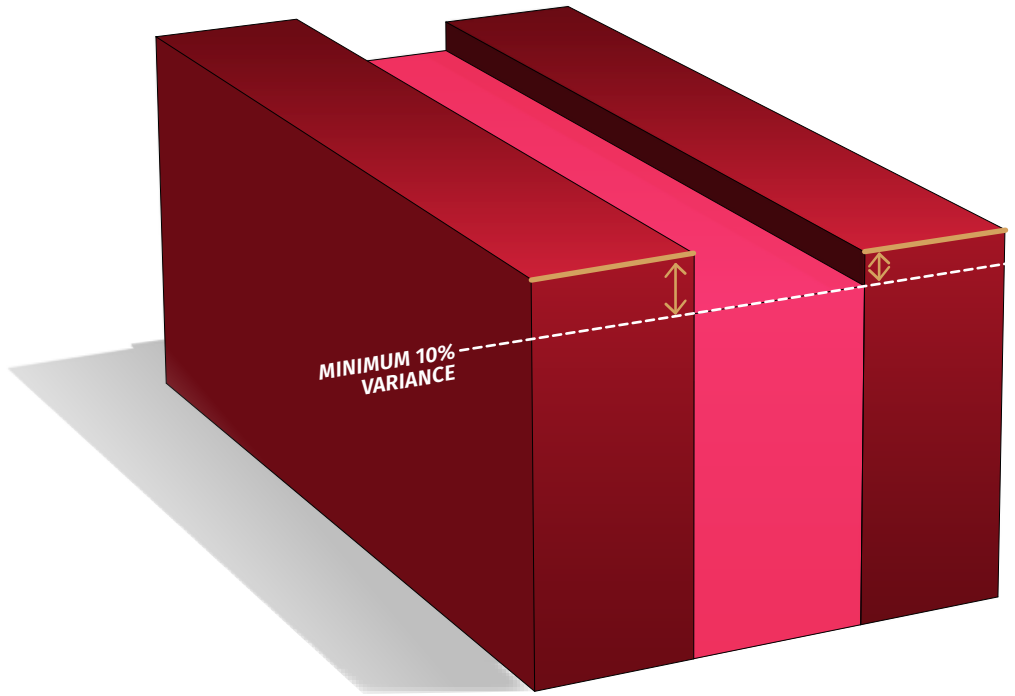
New buildings should reflect the visual continuity established by the repetition of similarly designed and scaled contributing buildings along the streetscape.

01 **Building height should vary by a minimum of 10% from the height of any neighboring buildings.**

02 **Window openings should respond and relate to the rhythm of openings found on non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face.**

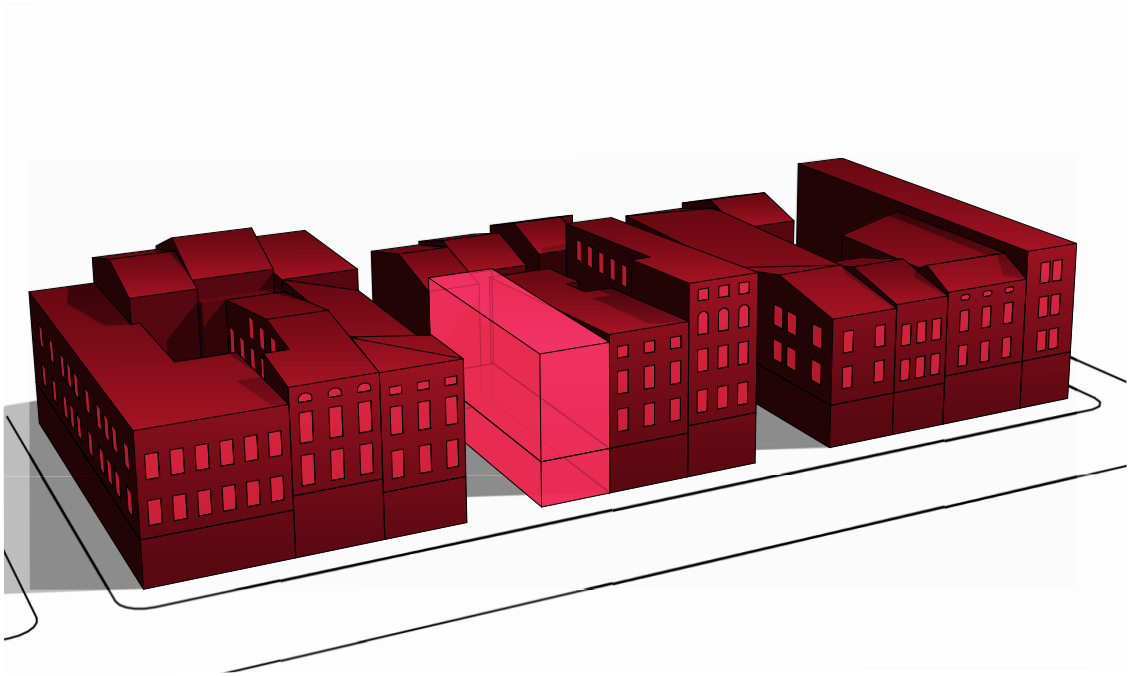
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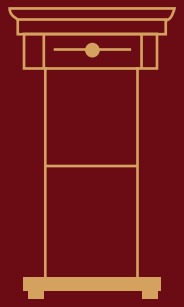
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OPENINGS



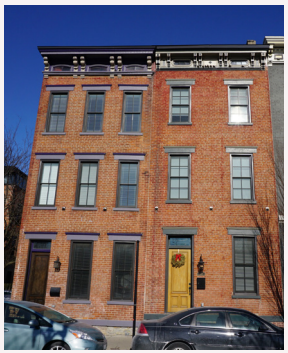
OPENINGS

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Openings are fundamental to the distinctive rhythm that defines the district. Openings are found both on principle façades as well as the rear and side walls of buildings where those walls are not immediately abutted by another building or located on a property line. Most buildings feature regularly spaced, vertically oriented individual window openings formed into horizontally and vertically aligned, symmetrical rows and columns. Windows are typically recessed into the opening, creating a strong shadow detail.[8] Windows are typically double hung and often have decorative stone sills and lintels.

Buildings with commercial uses on the upper floors and many built after the turn of the century often feature more variation in window openings, including groupings of openings that create more of a horizontal orientation.

While oriel windows are not defining features of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, they are present at a number of locations in both residential and mixed-use buildings. Oriels are designed to provide functional benefits to interior space, and are also architectural expressions that add distinction and three-dimensionality to the district's typically planar masonry facades.



118 and 120 W. 14th Street exhibit the characteristics of window and door openings



1126 Walnut exhibits the characteristics of grouped window openings.



1428 Race exhibits the characteristics of oriel windows.

Doors follow the patterns and characteristics of windows, accentuating the verticality and symmetry of the district. Entries have different sizes, locations, and styles depending on the use and period of the building. Entrances to residential buildings usually feature a single wooden door, set off to one side of the primary façade and recessed into the brick. In mixed-use buildings, especially along commercial arterials such as Elm, Race, Vine, Walnut, Main, and Sycamore Streets, residential entrances are placed either in one of the outermost bays of the primary façade, or are located on a side exterior wall of the building, accessible through a tall narrow breezeway with a gate or door at the front of the building.

OPENINGS*

GUIDELINE INTENTION

The openings of new buildings are to establish a relationship with the size, placement, and configuration of openings found on contributing buildings of similar use within the same block face.

01 **Window openings should be taller than they are wide in a proportion that reflects proportions generally found on non-institutional contributing buildings of similar use within the same block face.†**

02 **Window openings should occupy a total of between 30% and 60% the middle portion of facades and street-facing walls.**

03 **Windows:**

a. Should be recessed from the plane of the wall

b. Must not have internal grids

04 **Buildings may have oriel windows if all of the following conditions exist:**

a. There is at least one contributing building with an oriel window located within either the subject block face or the opposing block face.

b. Not greater than 15% of total buildings (contributing and non-contributing) located within the combined block face and opposing block face have oriel windows.

Note

* Storefront openings must follow the requirements set forth in Chapter 03: Composition: Base.

† If there are no non-institutional contributing buildings of similar use located within the same block face, then reference should be made to non-institutional contributing buildings of similar use located within the next block face in either direction.

05 **Window openings should be arranged into columns, as follows:**

a. The number of columns of openings should reflect the number of columns found on contributing buildings of similar width.

b. Columns should be evenly spaced.

c. Window openings should be vertically aligned with other openings within the same column.

d. Columns should be symmetrical.

06 **Window openings should be arranged into rows, as follows:**

a. Rows should be present for each story. Attic stories are exempt.

b. Rows should be evenly spaced.

c. Window openings should be horizontally aligned with other openings within the same row.

d. The upper most row of openings in the middle component, including lintel, should terminate at least 15 inches below the beginning of the top component.

07 **Street-facing walls must have a door opening providing access to the sidewalk.**

08 **The size and proportions of door openings should reflect the size and proportions generally found on non-institutional contributing buildings of similar use within the same block face†. Door openings must not be sunken below grade. Door openings may be elevated but must not be more than 25% higher than the height of the base component.**

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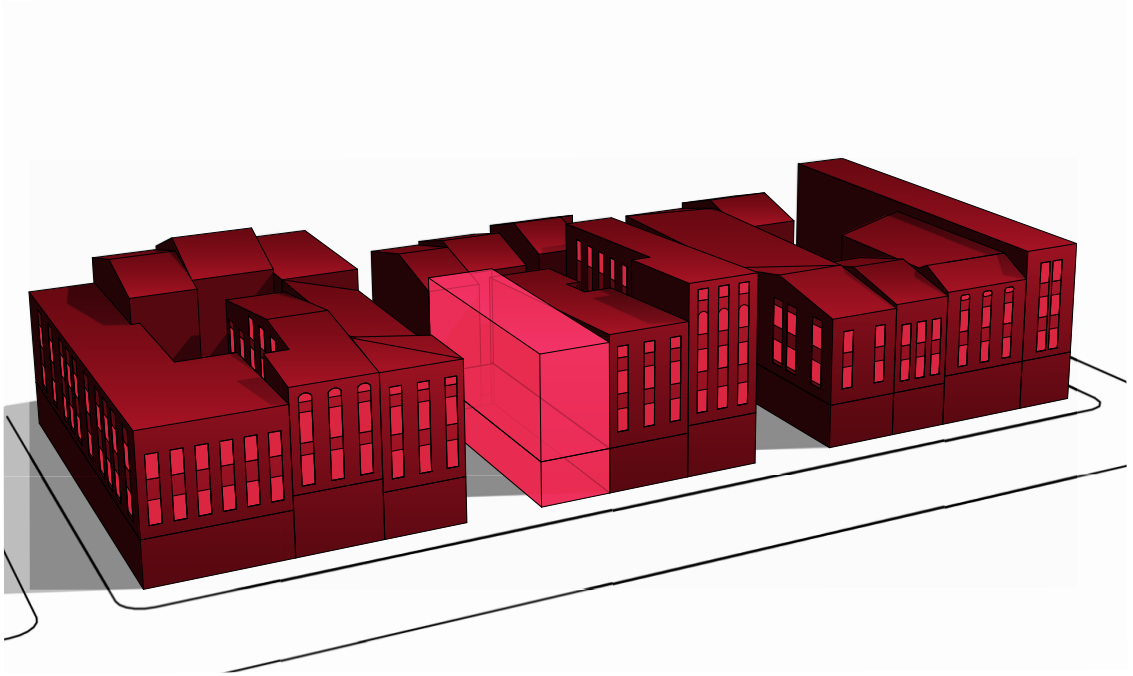
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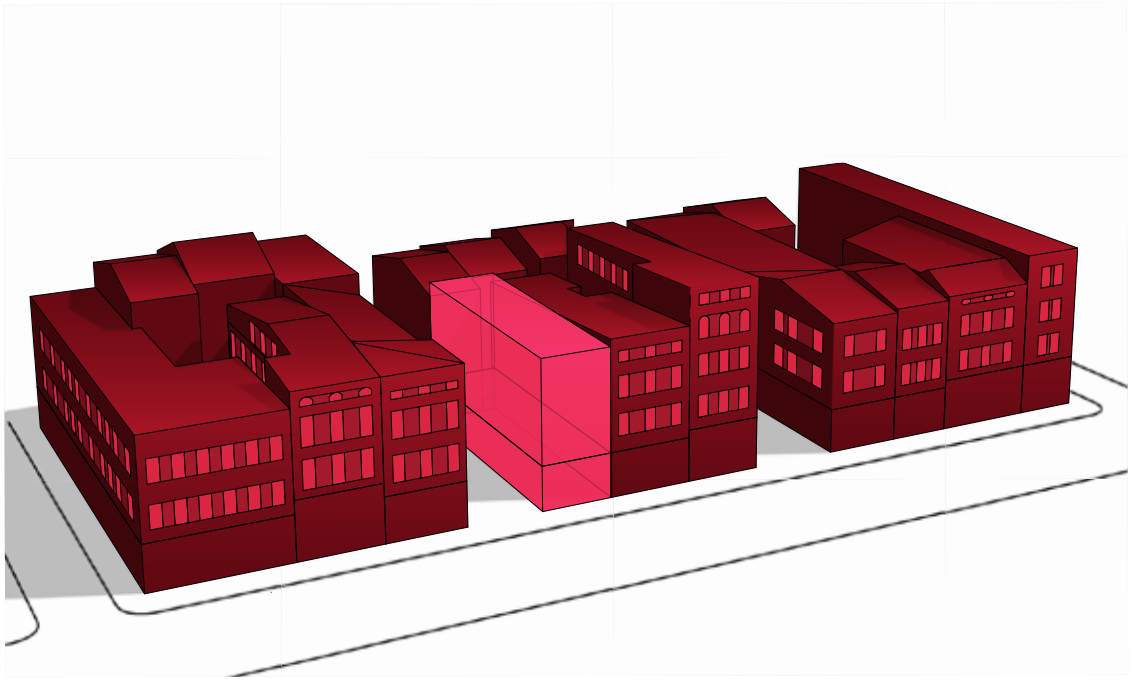
06 Window openings should be arranged into rows, as follows:

a. Rows should be present for each story. Attic stories are exempt.

b. Rows should be evenly spaced.

c. Window openings should be horizontally aligned with other openings within the same row.

d. The upper most row of openings in the middle component, including lintel, should terminate at least 15 inches below the beginning of the top component.





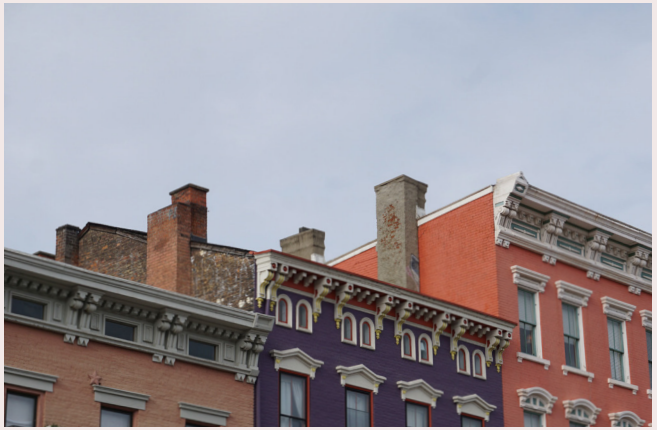
ROOF



ROOF

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Roofs help define not only the pedestrian experience of the district from street level, but also the unique aerial views of the neighborhood from hillsides and rooftops. The roofs that are featured most commonly in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District are side-gabled roofs and low-pitched shed roofs. Mansard roofs and sawtooth roofs at the rear portion are seen sporadically throughout the district. Institutional buildings in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District have a variety of roof shapes, including dormers, multiple gables, hip roofs, and towers.



1425 and 1427 Main Street typify roof forms commonly found in Over-the-Rhine.

ROOF

GUIDELINE INTENTION

Roof profiles are to reflect the roof profiles of contributing buildings of similar size and use within the district. The impacts of rooftop appendages on street-level, aerial and elevated panoramic views of the district are to be minimized.

01 **Roofs should be built using a roof profile found on at least one non-institutional contributing building within the same block face.* The following profiles are appropriate:**

a. Side-Gabled Roof

b. Side-Gabled Sawtooth Roof

c. Descending Low-Pitched Shed Roof

d. Ascending Low-Pitched Shed Roof

02 **Roof pitch must be consistent with the pitch of corresponding roof profiles found on contributing buildings within the same block face.**

03 **Rooftop decks and roof access enclosures must not be visible from contiguous streets and must not be highly visible from the public realm. Penthouses are not permitted.**

04 **Mechanical systems, elevated solar panel arrays, and other non-deck rooftop appendages must not be visible from contiguous streets at any point within 40 feet of the building. Efforts should be made to minimize visibility of such appendages from the public realm entirely.**

Note

* If there are no non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, then reference should be made to non-institutional contributing buildings located within the next block face in either direction.

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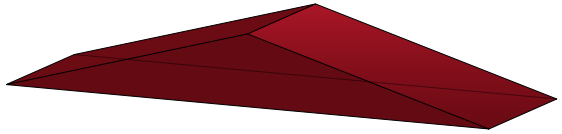
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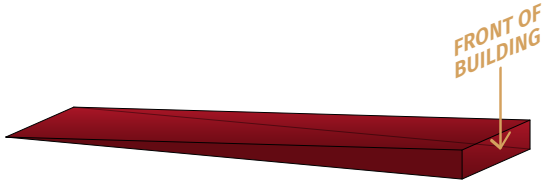
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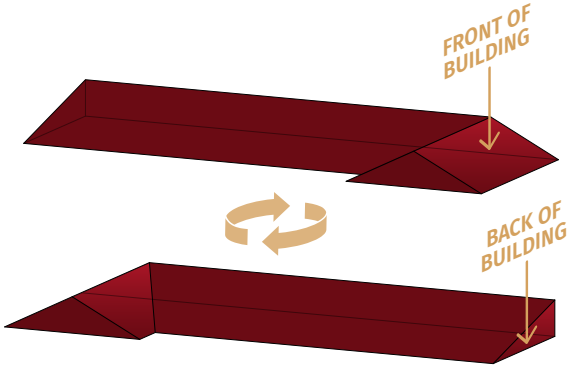
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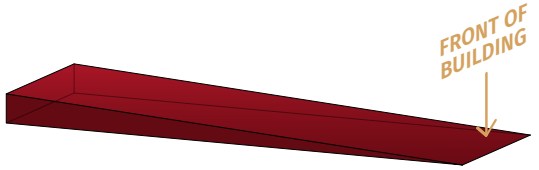
SIDE-GABLED ROOF



DESCENDING LOW-PITCHED SHED ROOF



SIDE-GABLED SAWTOOTH ROOF



ASCENDING LOW-PITCHED SHED ROOF

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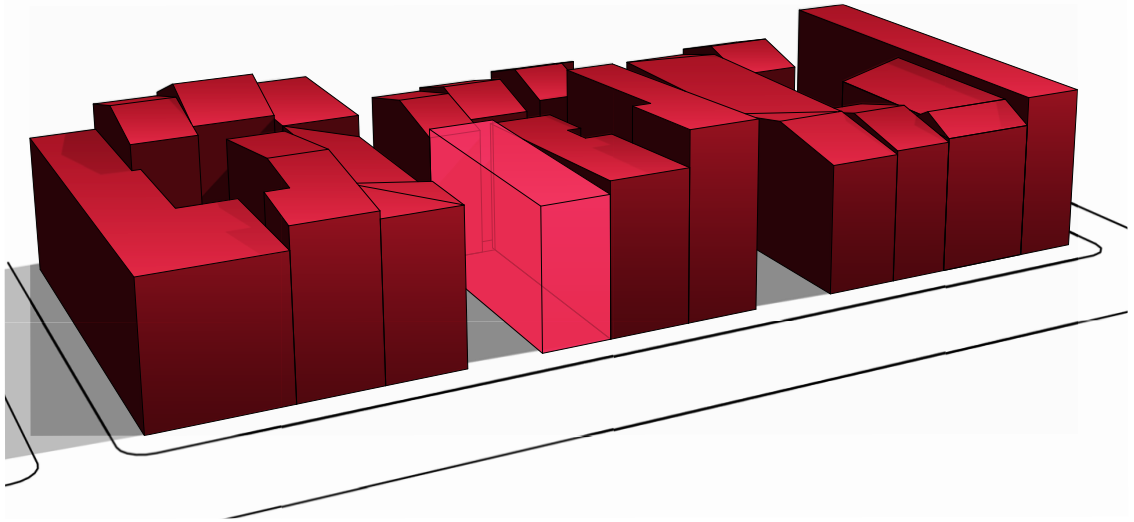
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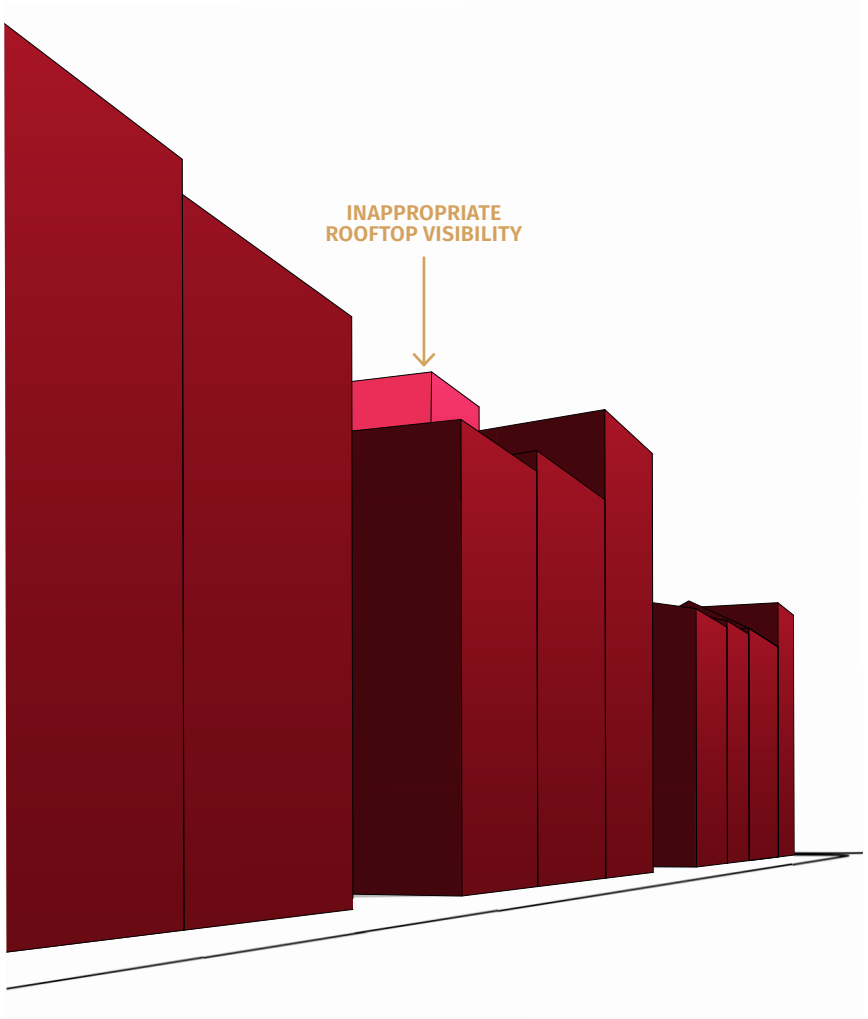
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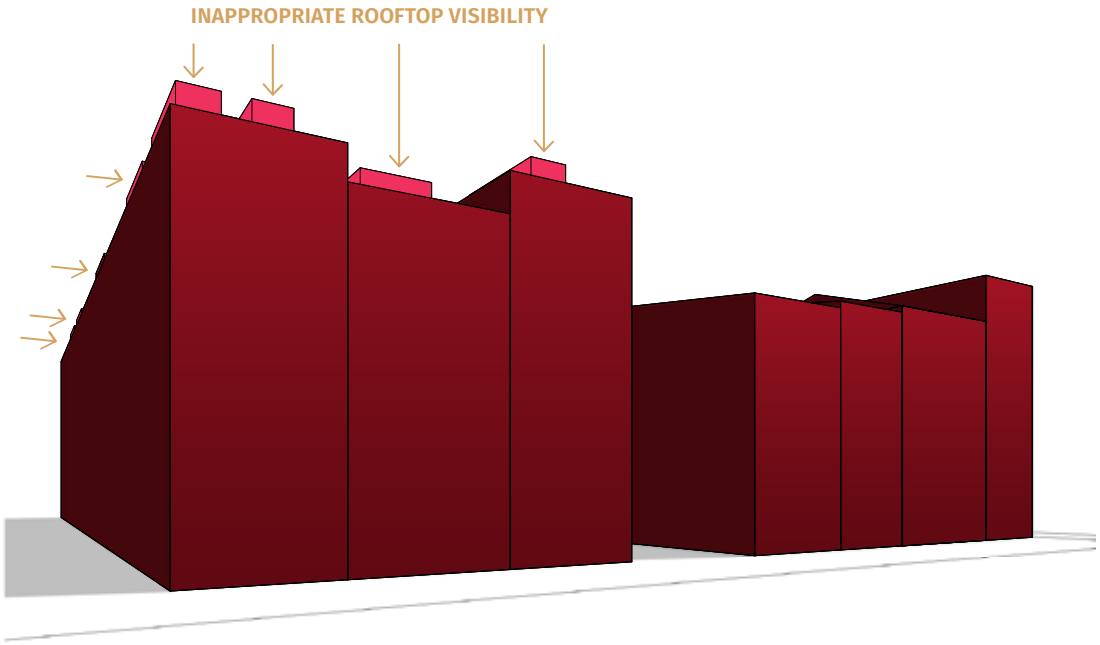
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MATERIALS



New York, New York

07

MATERIALS

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Materials form an essential part of the identity of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, and brick is the character-defining material of the district. The neighborhood evolved from primarily wood frame construction with wood clapboard siding in the earlier part of the 19th-century, to primarily brick masonry buildings in the mid-to-late 19th-century as the district entered what is considered to be its period of significance. Thus, the vast majority of Over-the-Rhine buildings are made of brick. Other materials characteristic of the district include limestone and sandstone (sills, lintels, and the occasional façade), wood (doors, windows, box gutters, cornices, and siding on early buildings), metal (lintels, sills, cornices, and roofs), cast iron (storefronts), and wrought iron (fire escapes, fencing).



Buildings in the district are primarily constructed of handmade, orange-red clay bricks stacked using the common bond pattern, as seen here at 1219 Sycamore Street.



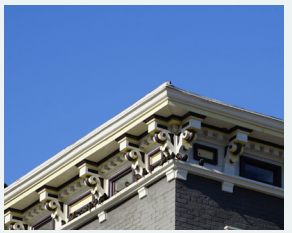
Decorative metal header at 1418 Elm.



Decorative stone lintel at 1431 Elm.



Decorative cast iron storefront at 116 East 14th Street.



Decorative metal brackets and wood trim form the cornice at 116 West 14th Street.

MATERIALS

GUIDELINE INTENTION

Materials used on new construction are to rise to the standards of quality, authenticity, and durability set by materials found on contributing buildings in the district.

01 **Buildings should use materials found on contributing buildings or materials that honor the best qualities of historic materials.**

02 **Materials proposed for new construction should meet the quality standards found on contributing buildings in the district. Materials will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

1. Life span/durability.
2. Authenticity (authenticity is inversely proportional to the degree of engineering/processing of the material).
3. Visual continuity with contributing buildings within the block face.
4. Color, texture, design/pattern, glare/reflectivity, dimensions.

03 **Brick used as exterior cladding should meet the following requirements:**

a. King and Queen sized brick are not appropriate and should not be used.

b. Brick should have either historic (2-1/2" x 8-1/4") or modular (2-1/4" x 7-5/8") dimensions.

c. At least one full wythe of 4" (depth) brick should be used.

d. Faux-historic brick (i.e., brick that attempts to match the color and texture of historic brick) is not appropriate and should not be used. Rather, brick should seek to root itself in its current place and time.

04 **Primary cladding material(s) should be applied uniformly on all exterior walls of the building. Buildings must not use stucco, synthetic stucco, vinyl, or plastic as cladding materials.**

05 **Lintels and sills should be made of limestone or sandstone, cast stone with a limestone veneer applied, or an appropriate alternate material.**

06 **Window components should be made of wood, aluminum clad wood, metal, or an appropriate alternate material.**

07 **Storefront systems should meet the following requirements:**

a. Columns, pilasters, and framing should be made of cast iron, steel, limestone, sandstone, or cast stone with a limestone veneer applied. Brick is permitted where examples exist on contributing storefronts within the same block face.

b. Window framing and muntins should be made of wood, steel, or dark colored aluminum.

08 **Residential bases should be made of stone or an appropriate alternate material.**

09 **Doors should be made of wood or a stain grade material.**

MISCELLANEOUS



London, England

08

MISCELLANEOUS

HISTORIC CONTEXT

A number of important features of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District fall within the Miscellaneous category, including porches, fencing, balconies, and stoops.

Porches

Side porches (veranda) are occasionally found on buildings in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Typically they are built into the "L" of the building, filling the void created by the building's keyback. Front porches are not found in the district.

Fencing

Front fencing is sometimes used to mark the front property line on buildings in the district that have a setback. Fencing was most frequently made of wrought iron formed into narrow vertical elements supported by vertical posts.

Balconies

True balconies are rare in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Fire escapes are prevalent and often double as balconies.

Stoops

Stoops are common in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District on buildings with elevated entries. Stoops serve as a form of street furniture and foster increased pedestrian interaction in the public realm.

MISCELLANEOUS

PORCHES

01 Buildings must not have front porches.

02 Buildings may have side porches if they are placed in the void created by a keyback.

03 Side porches should be built in a rectangular geometry.

MISCELLANEOUS

FRONT FENCING

01 **Buildings with a front setback of at least two feet may have front fencing if a majority of non-institutional contributing buildings with setbacks of at least two feet located within the same block face have front fencing.***

02 **Front fencing should be set at, and occupy the full width of, the front property line.**

03 **Front fencing should be made of black colored or coated wrought iron, cast-iron, or steel.**

04 **Front fencing should reflect the design, spacing, opacity, and height of historic front fencing found on contributing buildings within the district.**

Note

* If there are fewer than three (3) non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face, then the quantity of buildings used to calculate a majority must include non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face plus an additional block face in both directions.

MISCELLANEOUS

REAR FENCING

01 Buildings may have rear fencing placed at the rear property line.

02 Rear fencing should be made of wrought iron, cast-iron, steel, natural wood, or an appropriate alternate material.

03 Rear fencing should not exceed six feet in height.

STOOPS

01 Buildings may have one or more stoops if stoops are present on the block-facing facade of at least 30% of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face.

02 Stoop height should be within 25% of base component height. Stoop width and depth should be within 10% of the average width and depth of stoops on block-facing facades of non-institutional contributing buildings located within the same block face. Use of stoop railings should be minimized.

BALCONIES

01 Buildings may have protruding balconies if they are placed at the rear of the building, or on the side of the building in the void created by a keyback.

02 Buildings may have recessed balconies if they are placed at the rear of the building or on the side of the building.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

01 Building sites should be evaluated for their potential for archaeological resources. If, after a survey of Sanborn Maps and consultation with staff, or if during construction archaeological resources are discovered, existing archaeological survey protocols must be followed.

APPENDIX



09

GLOSSARY

Articulative Recess A slight change in plane in part of an exterior wall, usually decorative.

Attic A room or space directly under the roof of a building.

Base Component The bottommost portion of a building, commonly represented in commercial buildings by a storefront, and in residential buildings by a foundation capped by a water table.

Block A unit of urban development representing the smallest area that is enclosed on all sides by streets.

Block Face A portion of a block consisting of a row of properties whose building facades are all oriented toward the same street.

Cladding The outermost material layer covering the exterior of a building.

Composition The arrangement of a building into base, middle, and top components.

Contiguous Sharing an edge or boundary; touching.

Cornice A molded, decorative, projecting horizontal member that crowns the top of a building.

CORNICE COMPONENTS

- **Box Gutter** A rectangular rain gutter built into the slope of a roof, above the cornice.
- **Bracket** An angled structural and/or decorative element that actually or visually supports the box gutter/cornice soffit.
- **Corbel** A type of bracket built into a wall and projecting outward to support the box gutter/cornice soffit.
- **Dentil** One of a series of small, decorative rectangular blocks placed at regular intervals under the soffit of a cornice.
- **Frieze** A decorative horizontal band typically containing rectangular trimmed panels and through-the-cornice windows.
- **Through-the-Cornice Windows** Attic windows built into the cornice.

Contiguous Street A street that is contiguous to a parcel containing the subject building.

Contributing Building A historic building that is designated by the City of Cincinnati as contributing to the historic significance of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.

Elevated Solar Panel Array An array of solar panels attached to a roof in which the panels are angled toward the sun, and do not lay flat against the roof surface.

Facade Any face of a building given special architectural treatment.

Front Property Line A property line that is contiguous to a street.

Front Setback A space or gap between the front property line and any portion of the facade or other street-facing wall, excluding articulative recesses.

Grade Ground level, as measured by the average of the slope between two points.

Height The vertical distance between the grade of the facade and the highest point on the facade, including architectural features.

Historic Being from the period of significance (1840-1941) of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District, with special emphasis on the period 1840-1900.

Institutional Building A contributing building constructed for use as a school, theater, music hall, market house, bath house, or place of worship.

Keyback A setback on a side exterior wall beginning at a point at least 20 feet removed from the primary facade, typically extending back to the rear property line, and resulting in an enclosed breezeway, alleyway, or outdoor space.

Lintel A horizontal member, typically structural, that spans the top of a window or door opening.

Massing The general shape and size of a building.

Materials The substances that are used to form the visible exterior of a building.

Mechanical Equipment Any device or apparatus used relating to heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing, fire suppression, transportation, or any other building system.

Middle Component The area of a building located between the base component and the top component, typically constituting the largest bulk of the building and containing the majority of its design elements.

Neighboring Building A building that is next to the subject building and located on a parcel that is contiguous to one of the subject building's side property lines.

Oriel Window A bay window projecting from an upper story (or stories) on a building facade.

Over-the-Rhine Historic District A geographic area covering parts of Over-the-Rhine, Pendleton, and Mount Auburn that is protected by the City of Cincinnati based on its cultural and architectural significance as a representation of the period in Cincinnati's urban development from 1840-1941, and particularly that period prior to 1900.

GLOSSARY

Parcel A tract or plot of land.

Penthouse An enclosed or partially enclosed structure on or above the roof of a building which is designed or used for human occupancy.

Property Line The boundary line between two pieces of property.

Public Realm Any portion of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District that is accessible to the public, including streets, alleys, rights of way, public parks, and publicly accessible buildings.

Residential Building A building that is entirely residential in use and does not have a storefront.

Rhythm A regularly recurring sequence or pattern within and among buildings.

Roof The structure forming the upper covering of a building.

Roof Access Enclosure A small structure on or above the roof of a building whose exclusive purpose is to provide access to a rooftop deck.

Roof Deck A flat surface on or above the roof of a building that provides space for recreation, typically surrounded by railings.

Roof Pitch A numerical measure of the steepness, or slope, of a roof.

Rooftop Appendage Any structure, surface, fixture, equipment, furniture, or other item that is attached to the roof.

Scale The size of a building judged in relation to other buildings.

Side Property Line Generally, a property line that runs perpendicular to the front and rear property lines.

Side Setback A space or gap between the side property line and any portion of the side exterior wall(s), excluding articulative recesses.

Sill A horizontal member that spans the bottom of a window opening.

Storefront The ground floor facade of a retail store, restaurant, bar, or personal services establishment.

STOREFRONT COMPONENTS

Bulkhead/Knee Wall The portion of a storefront that serves as a platform for the display windows.

Column A vertical structural member designed to support compressive loads in a storefront system.

Display Windows Large windows in a storefront used to attract attention to a business and its merchandise or services.

Pilaster A projecting, non-load bearing vertical member having the appearance of a column, with a capital and a base, but being purely ornamental in function.

Storefront Cornice/Lintel A horizontal member that terminates the uppermost portion of the storefront, separating it from the upper floors above.

Transom Windows Windows located above the main display windows and separated by a transom.

Story/Floor A level in a building.

Street A public thoroughfare, including sidewalks, typically fronted by buildings on one or both sides.

Street-Facing Wall An exterior building wall that faces a contiguous street.

Subject Building A building being considered for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Top Component The uppermost terminating element of a building, often represented by a change in both plane and material.

Transom A horizontal crosspiece separating the top of a window or door from a smaller window above.

Use The type of human activity for which a building is purposed.

Water-Table A horizontal projecting string course, molding, or ledge placed at the top of the foundation so as to divert rainwater from a building.

Width The horizontal distance between the sides of the facade.

Window Opening An opening in the wall of a building for admission of light and air.

Wythe A single thickness of brick in masonry construction.

Definitions taken from the following resources:

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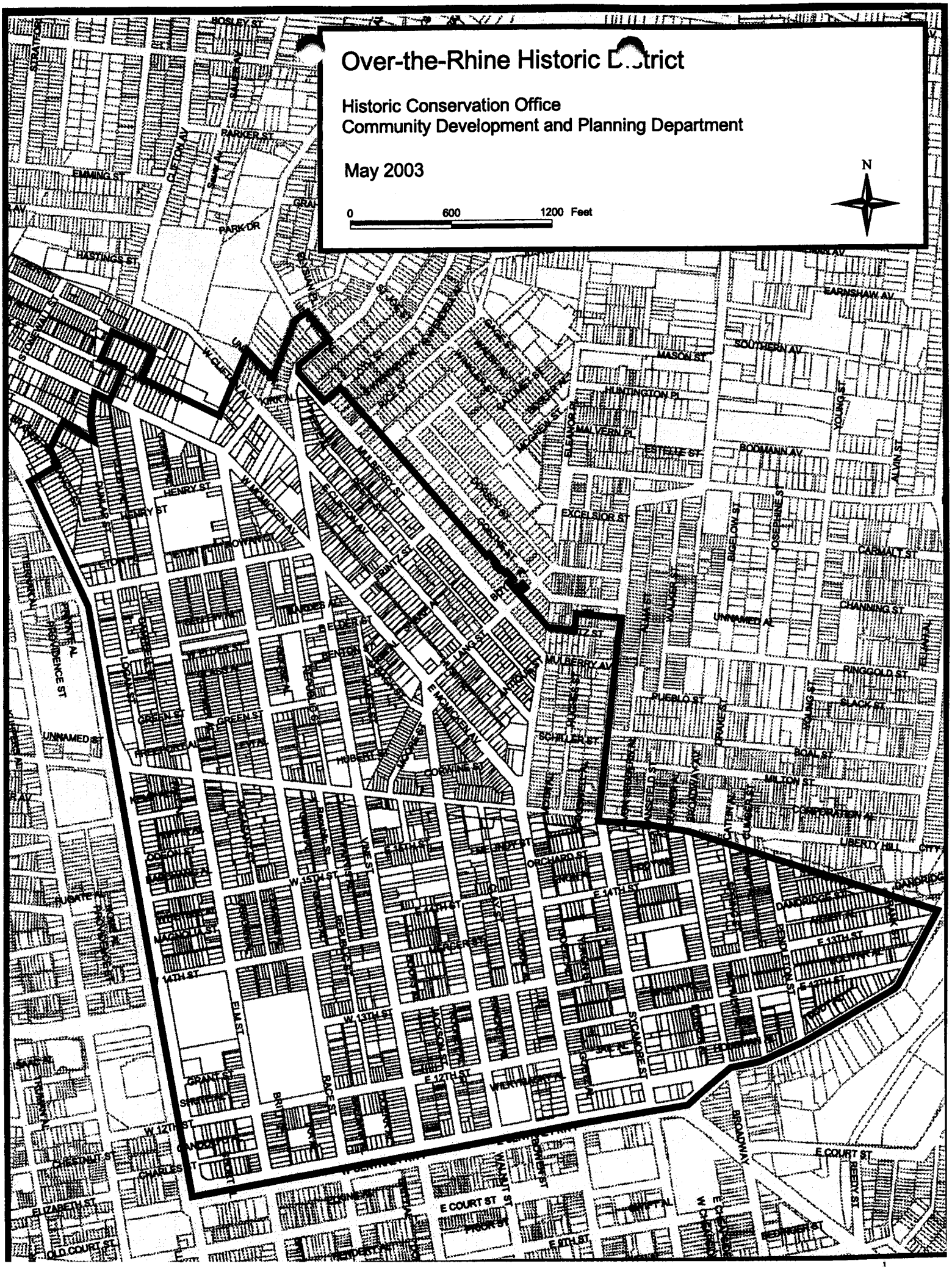
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Over-the-Rhine Historic District
Historic Conservation Office
Community Development and Planning Department
May 2003
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