

**Bell Buckle**  
**Historic Commission**  
**Design Standards**  
**Bell Buckle, Tennessee**  
**2019**



Thomason and Associates, Preservation Planners, Nashville, Tennessee



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## CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE & INTENT

The purpose of the Bell Buckle Design Guidelines is to provide direction for the preservation, conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historically and architecturally significant buildings in the Downtown C-1 Historic District of the Town of Bell Buckle. Design guidelines assist property owners in maintaining and enhancing the appearance of their properties, keep up property values, and improve the livability of historic areas. Design guidelines help property owners understand the value and methods of preserving and maintaining the essential character of their property and methods for preservation and appropriate maintenance.

The Bell Buckle Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and the district includes all of the commercial buildings facing Railroad Square. Listing in the National Register is an honorary designation and does not require design review or impose any requirements on property owners. Since 1976, the Town of Bell Buckle and its citizens have recognized that the historic buildings are assets to the community and have made historic preservation a basic approach to economic development and tourism.

In order to provide an oversight role to protect and preserve the community's historic and architectural resources, the Town government established the Bell Buckle Historic Commission (Commission) in 2009. The Town's emphasis on historic preservation is based on the premise that the historic district businesses and neighborhoods should remain vital and vibrant places in which to live, work, and socialize. The role of the Commission is to consider the potential impact of changes on the character of the commercial district as a whole, while respecting the rights of individual property owners. The Commission is responsible for ensuring that changes within the Town's historic district reflect the intent of the Design Guidelines.

These Guidelines have been crafted to maintain the historic integrity of the original architecture of the buildings in the historic district. The Guidelines outline standard and best practices involved in adapting historic buildings to modern needs. The Guidelines allow for change when it is carried out in a sensitive manner that maintains the special character of the historic district while meeting the practical needs of the residents and property owners. The Commission works to ensure that the rights of property owners are recognized and respected, and full use of private property is guaranteed within the bounds of these Guidelines.



*The railroad is significant to the founding of Bell Buckle, and remains a key theme of town identity.*



The Guidelines assist the Commission, staff, and property owners in making appropriate determinations regarding maintaining and preserving historically historic properties within the designated historic district. The Guidelines provide commonly accepted principles and methods for the maintenance and preservation of exterior materials, features, and site elements such as landscaping, streetscape elements, streets, and other outside features.

The Guidelines generally focus on the exterior of historic buildings, which includes wall treatments and finishes, windows, doors, storefronts, and other improvements or modifications to the original building exterior. The Guidelines address nominal repairs and limited improvements to historic buildings and structures. However, it is highly recommended that property owners seek the expertise of a qualified architect when making major renovations and construction decisions. This assistance is especially necessary in the rehabilitation of an income-producing property for which the building owner is applying for federal tax incentives.

The Bell Buckle Design Guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, (Appendix B). These are standards used in grant and tax certification projects by the National Park Service (NPS). These standards provide a basis for respectful rehabilitation and guidelines for new construction.

The Commission is a five (5) member citizen's board appointed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to administer the Guidelines. The Commission reports to the Town Planning Commission on anything related to design, construction or other issues affecting the Downtown C-1 Historic District.

Following the adoption of the Guidelines, it is the intent of the Commission to establish a formal review process including the development of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Whenever a property owner in the Downtown C-1 Historic District seeks to undertake an exterior change or new construction project, they will first need to have their plans reviewed by the Commission to see if their plans meet the Guidelines. A formal application will need to be completed which is called a COA. The review process to be established by the Commission will include rules and procedures, regular meeting times and by-laws for the effective oversight of the historic district.



*A bell and buckle insignia is incorporated into Bell Buckle's downtown site features.*



*Bell Buckle's authentic historic character has attracted creative businesses and individuals, including Tennessee's Poet Laureate Margaret Britton Vaughn.*

## What Design Guidelines Do and Do Not Do

Guidelines are statements of design basics to help property owners determine whether the specifications of a project will conform with, and do not detract from, the existing character of the historic district.

### These Guidelines are intended to:

- Provide guidance to property owners undertaking changes or planning additions to their building or lot.
- Assist the Commission by providing minimum standards to determine the appropriateness of a project.
- Result in more appropriate changes that reinforce the distinctive character of the district.
- Help identify and resolve specific design concerns frequently raised in the district.
- Assist the local architects, contractors, suppliers, building inspectors, and public works officials in understanding the nature of historic areas and how to reinforce their special character.
- Improve the design quality of future developments and growth within the district.
- Protect current property values and public investment in the district by discouraging poorly designed and inappropriate projects.
- Increase the overall public awareness of the unique character of the district.



*The storefront awnings of Bell Buckle's commercial buildings forms a continuous canopy for pedestrians.*



*The Moon Pie and RC Cola Festival is a major annual event for Bell Buckle, featuring music, cloggers, games, a parade, and cutting of the world's largest Moon Pie.*

### These Guidelines are not intended to:

- Require involuntary rehabilitation or restoration of existing buildings or structures in the district.
- Regulate the amount or location of growth and development within the district.
- Regulate changes to the interior of any building within the district.
- Absolutely insure the highest quality design in every instance. To assist property owners, guidelines are intended to be flexible and allow a certain level of decision making by the property owner, making them easier to administer and more widely accepted by the public.



## **The Benefits of Historic Preservation to Bell Buckle**

### *Historic Preservation Promotes Quality of Life*

Historic buildings provide a community with a unique character that distinguish it from others. Many buildings may not be significant on their own, but as a group they create a cohesive expression of architectural significance. Historic districts serve its residents and visitors who come to enjoy the distinct character found there. Bell Buckle's downtown area contains a significant collection of commercial buildings which date to the 1890s.

### *Historic Buildings Often Last Longer than New Ones*

There is no greener investment than preserving historic buildings. Buildings constructed before the 1960s are more structurally sound and can last much longer than more recent construction. Bell Buckle's downtown buildings are well over 100 years old and will last another 100 years if properly maintained.

### *Historic Preservation Creates Jobs*

Bell Buckle's emphasis on preserving its downtown has resulted in many new jobs associated with its shops, restaurants and music venues.

### *Historic Preservation Increases Property Values*

Dozens of studies have shown that property values stabilize or increase in historic districts. Properties within National Register and local overlay historic districts usually have higher property values than adjoining areas without such designations, even if the architecture is similar.

### *Historic Preservation Attracts Visitors to Cities*

Heritage tourism is a rapidly growing business and is hugely beneficial to local communities. As visitors come to historic sites and districts, they boost the economy by spending time and money in local businesses. Over 25% of the Town's revenues come from the tourism.



*Bell Buckle has hosted the annual Webb School Arts and*



## Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation in Bell Buckle

The Bell Buckle Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Listing in the National Register qualifies income-producing properties in the district for a federal rehabilitation tax credit. This credit equals 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures, and applies to rental housing, retail, offices, and other commercial uses. To take advantage of this tax credit, property owners must follow the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and the *Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*. These provide direction to property owners, developers, and reviewing agencies, and is the basis of the Bell Buckle design guidelines.

The 20% tax credit is applied to what an owner spends rehabilitating the building, not including acquisition costs or costs of site work or new construction.

### To qualify for the 20% Credit:

1. The building must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or listed as contributing within the National Register Historic District. The majority of the buildings in the Downtown C-1 Historic District are contributing buildings and would qualify
2. The rehabilitation project must meet the "substantial rehabilitation test," which means you must spend the adjusted basis of the building or \$5000, whichever is greater. The adjusted basis is determined by the acquisition costs of the property plus capital improvements minus depreciation.
3. After rehabilitation, the structure must be income producing for five years (commercial, rental, B&B). The property owner must also retain ownership for five years or there is a recapture of a percentage of the tax credit.

In the residential area of the historic district, the tax credit could be used to rehabilitate properties for income-producing purposes such as rental property or a bed and breakfast. Owners would be able to take the tax credit over a five year period. Once the tax credit has been taken the owner can then continue to rent the property or convert it into owner-occupied use.



Signs on the exterior wall of 2 Railroad Square depict the products celebrated annually at Bell Buckle's RC Cola and Moon Pie Festival.



## CHAPTER 2 - A BRIEF HISTORY OF BELL BUCKLE

Located in northeastern Bedford County, present-day Bell Buckle was originally settled during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Local lore explains the name Bell Buckle originated from symbols carved into a tree as a waymarker, but their meaning was unclear. Bedford County was founded in 1807, and Bell Buckle was incorporated almost 50 years later in 1856 after the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad was constructed through the county in 1852.

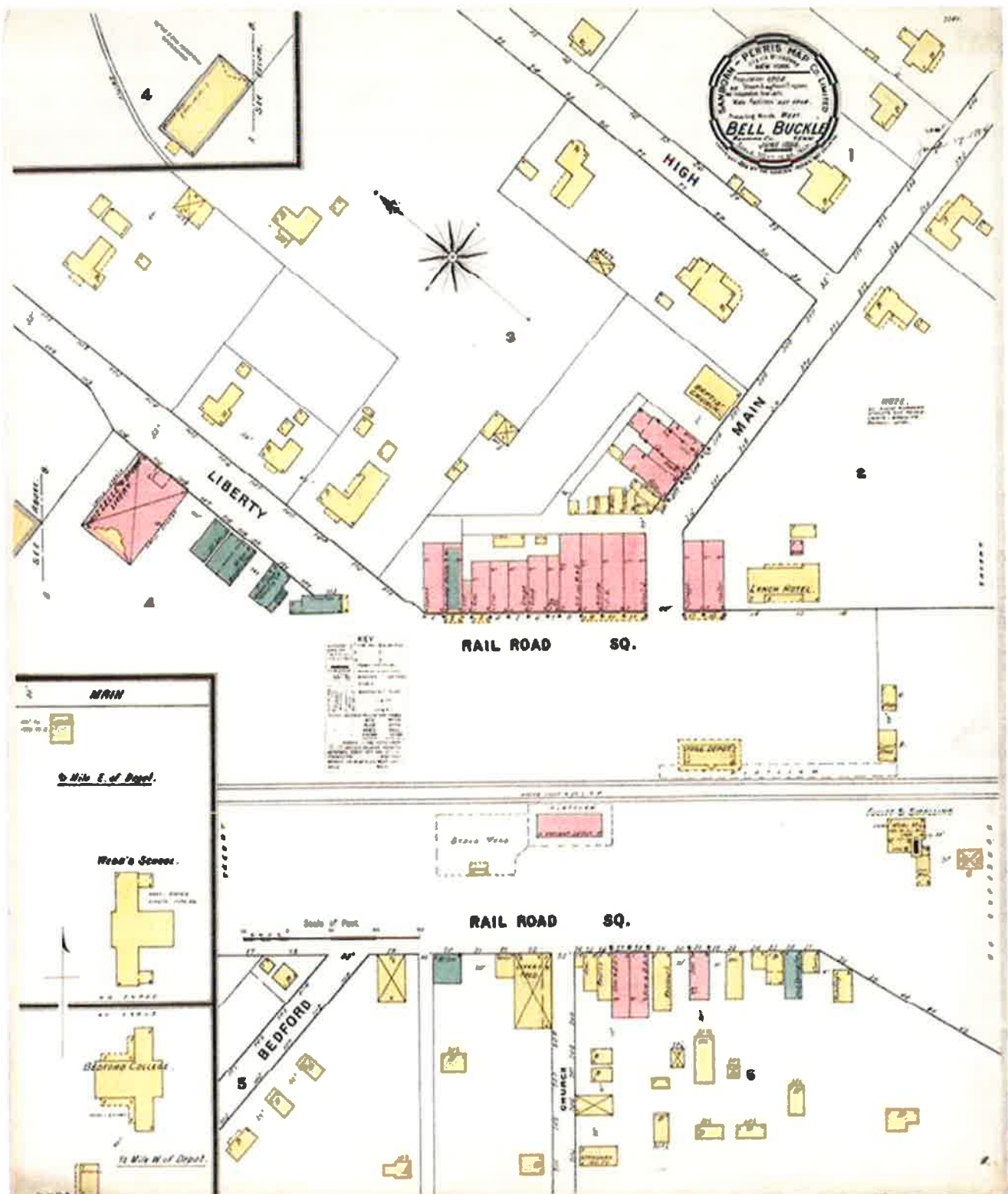
A.D. Fugitt was the first area merchant in the rail town, and he donated land for a depot in 1853. Other merchants of the period included Clark & Miller, W. B. Norville, R. D. Rankin, W. R. Pearson and R. D. Blair. The town's business enterprises grew in the 1860s to include the stores of Lamb & Weirback, W. C. Cooper, Norville & Beachboard, R. D. Blair & Son, Thomas & Claxton, while R. D. Wallace ran a flouring-mill.

Bell Buckle's location along the railroad made it a strategic point during the Civil War. Following the Battle of Stone's River in Murfreesboro in January of 1863, the Confederate Army under General Braxton Bragg withdrew to a defensive line in Bedford and Coffee County. Confederate troops camped along the railroad near Bell Buckle and Wartrace. On June 24, 1863, the Union Army under the command of General William Rosecrans moved south from Murfreesboro. Rosecrans divided his army, sending them along different routes through the various gaps in the hills of the Highland Rim north of Bell Buckle. Rosecrans moved Brigadier General Richard Johnson's division through Liberty Gap towards Bell Buckle. After a brief engagement at Liberty Gap, the Confederate forces retreated south through Bell Buckle and on to Tullahoma. Rosecrans' Tullahoma Campaign resulted in Bragg's retreat from Tennessee into Georgia. Bell Buckle was then occupied by Union forces until the end of the war.

After the war, Bell Buckle slowly recovered, adding more businesses during the 1870s. Merchants in that decade included McFarrin Bros., Jamison & Miller, Haggard Bros., W. L. Garner, and B. E. Thomas, who also ran the post office. Bell Buckle was the site of a major stockyard along the rail line between Nashville and Chattanooga by 1870. In 1880, Bell Buckle had 298 residents but local lore holds that 1,000 people might be counted in the town during the bustling stockyard days. Other commercial enterprise in the town included a grain warehouse, two banks, a carriage shop, corn mill, and several general stores. The two-story Lynch Hotel opened in the 1870s and was an important railroad hotel in the town. In 1882, several new turnpikes were developed from outlying areas into the town. The Bell Buckle & Flatwood Pike was built a distance of five miles to the west; Bell Buckle & Beech Grove Pike, six miles to the northeast, and Bell Buckle & Liberty Gap Pike, five miles to the north. In 1885, a stock company established a large creamery at Bell Buckle with \$5,000 capital. Several local dairy herds supplied milk to the creamery, which was outfitted with the latest machinery. The facility had a capacity of 6,000 pounds of milk per day.

William R. "Sawney" Webb relocated his preparatory school to Bell Buckle from Culleoka in 1886. A veteran of the Confederate army, Webb established the school in 1870. A.D. Fugitt donated six acres of land for the school campus to the east of the railroad. With his brother John, Sawney built a frame school house for \$2,200. The Webb brothers spent \$8,000 for books to fill a library they built for \$400. Other original buildings of the campus included the Senior Room, the Junior Room, and a small chapel.

The arrival of Webb School had a major influence on Bell Buckle. The population increased to 715 residents by 1890, and numerous new Victorian-style dwellings were built a short distance from the railroad and commercial district. The Webb School had no dormitories, relying instead on boardinghouses within the community. Sawney Webb demanded excellence from his students and his newly adopted town, sometimes butting heads with locals over matters of morality, religion, and politics. Still, the town and school enjoyed a



The fire of 1890 destroyed much of the commercial district of Bell Buckle on the east side of the railroad. Property owners soon rebuilt and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1894 shows a solid line of brick buildings on Railroad Square (Map courtesy Sanborn Fire Insurance Company).

cordial relationship. John Webb was named president of the Bell Buckle Bank, and his Dante Club encouraged enjoyment of literature among local residents. Webb students helped fight the 1890 fire that claimed the majority of the commercial buildings on the east side of Railroad Square. The business owners soon rebuilt, and by the early 1890s many new, one-story, brick commercial buildings were constructed. The 1894 Sanborn Insurance Map of Bell Buckle shows a solid row of brick buildings facing Railroad Square.

During the early 20th century Bell Buckle's population gradually declined as few new industries or manufacturers moved to the community. By 1930, the population had declined to 378 residents. The Depression of the 1930s contributed to the loss of businesses and jobs, and Bell Buckle slipped into a quiet period as passenger rail service was discontinued. The Town's population declined further to 318 in 1960. In the mid-20th century, the Webb School increased in prominence and built new buildings on its campus. During this time, the preserved buildings of Bell Buckle attracted new residents who opened shops along Railroad Square. With its listing in the National Register in 1976, Bell Buckle promoted its historic district for tourism and the Town as a scenic, quiet community with the amenity of the Webb School. The Webb School Arts and Crafts Festival was begun in 1977. The event draws artists working in a variety of media from across the country. In 1994, the Bell Buckle Chamber of Commerce initiated the RC Cola Moon Pie Festival to celebrate these Southern treats in its small town setting. Today, Bell Buckle has grown to over 500 residents and is known as one of the most historic small towns in Tennessee. Thousands of visitors now come annually to Bell Buckle to appreciate its historic character and visit its many businesses.

## CHAPTER 3 - THE DOWNTOWN C-1 HISTORIC DISTRICT - GENERAL APPROACH

The primary approach of the Guidelines is to emphasize preservation instead of removal/replacement and the use of sustainable practices and materials where possible. These principles are demonstrated in the use of words such as *repair*, *retain*, *maintain* and *replace in kind*. In conducting their review, the Commission will use the following approach:

- Proposed projects should emphasize retaining, maintaining, preserving and repairing original or historic features.
- If such features and elements cannot be retained, maintained, preserved and repaired, then replacement in-kind is recommended. Replacement in-kind means that the new feature and element match the existing original, or historic in material, size, detail, profile, finish and texture as closely as possible. Architectural details and materials can be documented through drawings, photographs, or physical evidence. Such documentation will aid in defining appropriate rehabilitation activities.
- If material replacement in kind is not feasible or practical, the Commission may consider the use of appropriate substitute materials that are sustainable.
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings is reviewed to determine the impact, compatibility and appropriateness of proposed work to the existing structures, site, streetscape and district.
- Rehabilitation should be compatible with the historic building or structure for which it is proposed. Compatible rehabilitation efforts are those that protect and retain significant architectural and features and elements of individual buildings and the district.



*Town Hall of Bell Buckle offices are housed in a historic commercial building on Railroad Square.*

Throughout the Guidelines a number of terms are frequently used to reflect the design principles that the Commission will consider when making decisions:

**Appropriate:** Rehabilitation and new construction actions especially suitable or compatible with the design guideline standards.

**Compatible/Compatibility:** The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict.

**Character:** Attributes, qualities and features that make up and distinguish a particular place or development and give such a place a sense of definition, purpose and uniqueness.

**Contributing Structures:** Resources that by age, materials, style, and features help convey the historic feeling and associations of the district.

**In-Kind:** Use of the same or similar materials to the original or existing materials.

**Non-Contributing Structures:** Resources that do not convey the historic feeling and associations of the district due to age, style, or alterations.

**Preservation:** The adaptive use, conservation, protection, reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation or stabilization of sites, buildings, districts, or structures significant to the heritage of Bell Buckle.

**Recommended:** Suggested, but not mandatory actions outlined in the design standards.

**Rehabilitation:** The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations and additions, while preserving those portions or features which convey its historic, cultural or architectural values.

**Significant (Characteristics of Historical or Architectural Resources):** Those characteristics that are important to, or expressive of, the historical, architectural or cultural quality and integrity of the resource and its setting, and includes, but is not limited to, building material, detail, height, mass, proportion, rhythm, scale, setback, setting, shape, street accessories and workmanship.



*The Lynch Hotel dates to the 1870s and is a rare example of a 19th century railroad hotel.*



*Bell Buckle is known for its antique and specialty shops.*

## The Commercial Historic District's Architectural Character

Bell Buckle's downtown reflects its prosperity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Basic to stylistic influences is a commercial building's form, which can be One-Part or Two-Part Commercial Block designs. Richard Longstreth's publication, The Buildings of Main Street, outlines these commercial building types based on their two separate components, storefronts and upper facades. Nationwide, One-Part and Two-Part commercial blocks typify commercial architecture of this period especially in small and mid-size communities, like Bell Buckle. Commercial buildings have detailing such as cast iron columns and pilasters, sheet metal cornices, and brick corbelling.

Storefront design consists largely of glass display windows, for pedestrians outside to view the displayed merchandise. Originally, these display windows had wood frames, which disrupted the flow of visibility to some degree. However, mid-nineteenth century technological advances such as cast iron columns and pilasters allowed for an even greater area devoted to transparency; this type of load-bearing framework decreased the amount of structural material previously required to support the weight of upper facades.

In addition to display windows, storefronts of nineteenth century commercial architecture typically included transoms and recessed entrances, allowing for additional display area and illumination of the interior. Entrances typically had single or double wooden doors with large glass panes, as well.

Above storefronts of Two-Part commercial block buildings, upper facades had rows of windows, allowing natural light into the upper floor or floors. Exterior masonry walls often included decorative brickwork known as corbelling, with a pattern of bricks set at angles to provide small areas of additional texture and embellishment. Such architectural detailing was located along the cornice at the roofline and perhaps in upper pilasters. Cornices might instead be adorned with wood or sheet metal.



*Streetscape of commercial core buildings in Bell Buckle along the east side of Railroad Square (above) and Webb Highway (below).*



The use of cast iron for storefronts continued into the early twentieth century. After 1910, most storefronts used steel lintels to support the upper facade masonry, and a variety of materials were used in storefront construction. Storefronts continued to emphasize transparency with large glass display windows, along with an increasing diversity of materials such as brick piers, marble, glazed tile, and brick bulkheads, and metals such as copper.

In Bell Buckle, as across the nation, a change in aesthetic preferences occurred after 1900 as Americans embraced their colonial roots. This trend away from elaborate Victorian architecture was evident in commercial buildings, which became more simplified in their detailing. They emphasized form-to-function over ornamentation. Cast iron pilasters and sheet metal at cornices fell out of favor. Instead different brick surface textures and colors provided decoration to upper facades.

Building forms after 1900 remained the same, as One- or Two-Part commercial blocks; however, ornamentation became less elaborate. Buildings displayed elements of a form commonly referred to as Brick Front or Tapestry Brick; they have rectangular windows on the upper floor and more simplified upper facade decoration such as corbelled brick cornices and recessed rectangular panels.

The original storefronts that have been retained in downtown commercial buildings in Bell Buckle should be preserved. Also, it is recommended that storefronts altered since 1970 be returned back to their original appearance. Where upper facade windows have been enclosed with brick or wood panels, cornices have been removed, and details have been concealed beneath added metal panels, are opportunities for restoration. Rehabilitation through the repair or replacement of upper facade elements helps to maintain and enhance a building's character



*Bell Buckle is unusual in having so many original storefronts preserved and maintained on its commercial buildings (4 Railroad Square).*

## Commercial Building Types

### One-Part Commercial Block

Almost all of the commercial buildings in Bell Buckle are examples of the “One-Part” commercial block building type. One-part commercial block buildings have a single story with a storefront composed of display windows on bulkheads, an entrance, and a small upper façade below the roofline. There may be transoms across the façade above the display windows, or just above the entrance. The upper façade does not have windows, but may have decorative features including rectangular insets, brick corbelling, pressed metal panels or cornice features. The upper façade is also one of several locations traditionally used for a business sign.



*An example of a one-part commercial block is the building at 4 Railroad Square.*

### Two-Part Commercial Block

Another kind of form is known as a “Two-Part” commercial block, with two or more stories. This form of building has two primary sections – a storefront at ground level and an upper façade of one or more stories. The upper floors typically have windows, as their interiors were often used for living or office space. The cornice at the roofline of the building may have decorative detailing such as brick corbelling or terra cotta panels. Some times, the builder included a date stone with the owner or business name of the original occupant.



*Two-part commercial blocks are at least two-stories in height. This one of only a few two-story historic commercial buildings remaining in Bell Buckle. It was built as a livery stable in 1899.*

## CHAPTER 4 - COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 4.1 Storefronts

#### Introduction

The storefront is the first-floor commercial area of the historic commercial façade. The storefront is the single most identifying characteristic of the historic commercial façades within Bell Buckle's Downtown C-1 Historic District. Almost all of the buildings along the east side of Railroad Square were built between 1890 and 1895 resulting in a highly consistent storefront pattern. These storefronts were designed with large display windows, transoms, awnings, single and double doors, and recessed entryways.

Large plate glass windows at the street level of the facades were the foremost features of traditional storefronts of the this period. As a rail town, Bell Buckle enjoyed a direct link to the larger markets of Nashville and Chattanooga, where the latest styles and inventions in clothing, housewares, and agricultural equipment were first distributed. Local business owners showcased new merchandise for easy view from the sidewalk. Display windows rest on lower panels called bulkheads which may be of wood, brick, tile, or other materials.

Doors and entrances are also important as visual components of commercial buildings. Single-light glass and wood doors were a common entrance design for commercial buildings from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries. Double doors were also common. Transoms above doors allowed for ventilation and could also vary from single-light designs to multi-light panes, performing both functional and decorative duties. Because entrances are key focal points of commercial buildings, major alterations or replacements with inappropriate doors can have a detrimental affect on the historic character of a building. Preserve original doors unless they are deteriorated beyond repair. Replace missing or severely deteriorated doors with historically appropriate doors.



*The commercial building at 24 Railroad Square has an original storefront with double doors flanked by display windows resting on bulkheads.*



*This original storefront at 3 Webb Road East retains its original frame bulkheads, display windows and recessed entrance.*



*An example of an original storefront is the building at 5 Webb Road East which has its original display windows on frame bulkheads, transoms, and double door entrance.*



*Most storefronts in the historic district retain their original frame bulkheads such as at 3 Webb Road East.*



*The storefront on the building at 2 Railroad Square has a bulkhead of poured concrete added ca. 1920.*

## Design Guidelines

1. Historic storefronts and their component elements, such as display windows, bulkheads, transoms, doors, cornices, pillars, and pilasters, should be retained and maintained.
2. Historic storefronts and their component elements should remain visible. Do not cover historic materials or elements.
3. Deteriorated or damaged storefronts or elements should be repaired so that the storefront retains its historic appearance.
4. Missing storefronts or elements should be replaced so that they replicate the historic storefront, other historic examples, or compatible modern examples.
5. It is appropriate to remove added materials and later renovations to reveal original storefront openings obscured by the changes.
6. Do not replace or cover wooden storefront and entrance elements with modern substitute materials such as aluminum or vinyl.
7. If desired, introduce fabric or metal awnings that are compatible with the storefront in scale, form, and color. It is not appropriate to install awnings that damage or compromise the storefront's character-defining features.
8. Repaint storefront features in colors that are appropriate to the building and the district.
9. If replacement of deteriorated historic bulkheads and display windows is necessary, replace in-kind, matching the original feature in design, dimension, detail, texture, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if it is not technically feasible to use the original material.
10. Repaint frame or previously painted brick bulkheads in colors that are appropriate to the building and the district.



*Original display window and transom at 15 Webb Road East.*

11. Display windows should be of clear glass or only with a slight dark tint. If privacy is desired use blinds or drapes on the inside of the window.
12. Retain and preserve openings and details of doors, such as trim, glass, lintels, transoms, thresholds, and hardware.
13. If replacement of a door element is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, scale, proportion, pane or panel division, material, and detail.
14. It is not appropriate to replace doors with stock items that do not fill the original openings or duplicate the unit in size, material, and design.
15. Repair original doors and frames by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing deteriorated sections.
16. It is not appropriate to introduce sidelights or transoms at entrances where there is no evidence these features existed previously.
17. It is not appropriate to fill in existing door openings or to cover them with plywood.
18. It is not appropriate to introduce new doors if they would diminish the original design of the building or damage historic materials and features. Keep new doors compatible with existing units in proportion, shape, positioning, location, size, and details.



*Display windows were designed with large sheets of plate glass to allow the viewing of merchandise in the windows. The storefront at 3 Webb Road East illustrates the typical designs used by Bell Buckle merchants. .*





*Preserve and maintain original recessed storefronts such as the design at 15 Webb Road East (right) and 22 Railroad Square (left).*



*Historic doors on locations other than storefronts should also be preserved and maintained as at 107 Main Street (left). The addition of screen doors in traditional designs is also appropriate as at 16 Railroad Square (right).*



*Preserve and maintain original transoms such as this border glass transom on the storefront at 6 Railroad Square.*



*This arched two-light transom should be kept open and not covered or concealed (12 Railroad Square).*

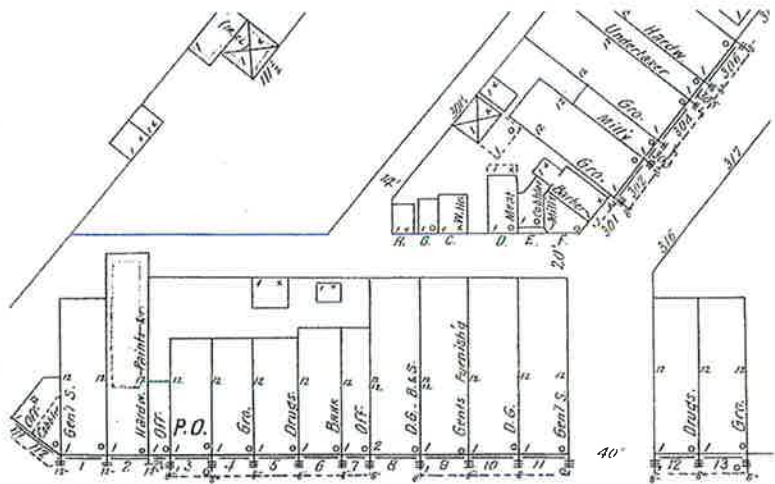
## 4.2 Awnings

### Introduction

Frame and metal awnings have been traditionally used in Bell Buckle since the 1890s. Awnings helped to shade and cool pre-air-conditioned commercial buildings and protect pedestrians from the elements. Awnings also offered the business owner additional facade visibility with color and signage. While most original awnings in the downtown area have been replaced, the buildings continue to maintain much of the original placement, design and appropriate materials consistent with historic awnings. Sloped or shed roof metal awnings on frame or metal support posts are the traditional awning type and are appropriate for most historic commercial buildings.

### Design Guidelines

1. Repair rather than replace any historic awning hardware.
2. Existing historic awnings should be retained and maintained on historic building facades whenever possible.
3. The location and design of an awning should be based on physical and/or documentary evidence whenever available such as old photographs. Consider installing awnings that match the documented originals.
4. Install a new awning where no awning previously existed only if it is compatible with the building, streetscape, and adjoining storefronts and awnings.
5. The shape of the awning should complement the façade design. The traditional triangular shed-frame shape with a free-hanging valance is appropriate for most storefronts within the historic district. Straight-sloped awnings should be used on rectangular storefronts.
6. Boxed or curved fabric awnings are a more current design treatment. Arched or curved fabric awnings are appropriate for arched door openings or entry ways and over individual second-story windows.



*The 1899 Sanborn Insurance map shows that most buildings had fixed awnings as illustrated by the dashed lines.*



*Row of metal and frame awnings on Railroad Square.*

7. Shingled awnings, awnings that simulate mansard roofs, umbrellas, or domes are not permitted designs.
8. The bottom of the awning valance should be at least seven (7) feet above the sidewalk.
9. Open ended awnings or “shed awnings,” are preferred to allow less obstructed views of storefronts.
10. Awning slope or angles should be between a 20 and 60 degrees and complement the exterior architectural features of the storefront. Awning slopes should be consistent with or complement existing awnings on adjacent storefront buildings.
11. New awning hardware shall be installed so that it does not damage historic materials. Clamps and fasteners on masonry buildings should penetrate mortar joints rather than masonry surfaces.
12. Awning placement on wider buildings should be broken into segments that reflect the composition of the building’s façade and maintain pedestrian scale.
13. Awning placement should not cover side piers if present on either side of the storefront.
14. Awning colors should be compatible, enhance, and complement the building architecture and overall building color scheme and other awnings in the streetscape.
15. Posts supporting awnings are of both frame and metal. While both materials are appropriate, a consistent design theme is recommended to be considered in the future. Brick or concrete piers to support awnings are not traditional materials and should be avoided.



*Awnings of wood with crimped or corrugated metal roofs are most common on Bell Buckle’s commercial buildings.*



*This crimped metal roof at 15 Webb Road East is typical of awnings in the downtown area.*



*Adding ceiling fans beneath the awnings is appropriate.*



*The support posts for the metal and frame awnings vary widely in materials and design. A consistent material and design approach should be considered.*

## 4.3 Lighting

### Introduction

Light fixtures are details that contribute to a building's unique historic character by helping to portray a sense of time and place. If any historic light fixtures remain, preserve and maintain them. New fixtures should be in keeping with traditional designs such as gooseneck or ceiling-mounted.

### Design Guidelines

1. Historic light fixtures and neon signs should be retained and maintained.
2. Deteriorated or damaged historic light fixtures should be repaired using methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance.
3. Owners are encouraged to replace missing or severely damaged historic light fixtures with replacements that replicate the originals or other historic examples in appearance and materials.
4. If modern light fixtures are desired as replacements or where light fixtures previously did not exist, they should be unobtrusive, conceal the light source, and direct light toward the building.
5. Light fixtures should not damage or obscure architectural features or other building elements.



*This traditional gooseneck light fixture provides illumination for the sign and storefront (107 Main Street).*



*This simple modern light fixture is an appropriate design at 3 Webb Road East.*

## 4.4 Upper Facades

### Introduction

Bell Buckle's commercial buildings are generally composed of the storefront and the upper façade. Most of the historic downtown buildings are One-Part commercial block type buildings, meaning they have only one full story. Above the storefronts, these buildings have upper façades of varying height and decorative detail, including brick corbelling, pilasters, sheet metal panels or cornices, or wall signs.

### Design Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve features of the upper façade of a commercial building that contribute to the overall design of a building including cornices, windows, and details.
2. If a detail or element of a contributing feature is deteriorated beyond repair, replace only the deteriorated portion in-kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original detail or element in design, dimension, color, and material. Consider compatible alternative materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
3. If replacement of an entire contributing feature is necessary, replace it in-kind, matching the original feature in design, dimension, detail, texture, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
4. If a contributing feature is missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation. If accurate documentation is not available, then utilize a new design compatible with the building in scale, size, material, and color.
5. The removal of non-historic additions to upper facades such as post-1970 metal fronts, stucco, or other materials which conceal the original façade is encouraged.
6. Materials which conceal the original upper façade or details should not be added.



*The upper façade of the commercial building at 12 Railroad Square has distinctive terra cotta tiles and brick corbelling emphasized by pilasters.*



*Pressed sheet metal adds a textured effect to some upper facades as at 5 Webb Road East.*

## 4.5 Masonry

### Introduction:

Masonry is used on cornices, pediments, lintels, sills, and decorative features as well as for wall surfaces. Color, texture, mortar joints, and patterns of the masonry define the overall character of a building. The primary construction material in the downtown historic district is brick. Masonry materials also include stone, terra-cotta, concrete, and stucco. The texture, scale, color, bonding pattern, joints, and detail of the masonry surfaces contribute to the overall character of the historic building. Masonry features such as chimneys, arches, quoins, lintels, sills, cornices, and pediments further define a building's historic character.

It is important to make sure that the repointing of masonry is with a mortar mix similar to the original. Historic mortar is a mix of sand and lime while Portland cement did not become widely used until the early 20th century. If a mortar is too hard it will not allow the brick to expand and contract properly leading to cracking and spalling.

### Design Guidelines

1. Original brick, stone, terra cotta, cast concrete and other masonry original to a building should be preserved and maintained.
2. Repair damaged masonry by patching, piecing in, or consolidating instead of removing an entire feature.
3. Repair cracks; not only may they be an indication of structural settling or deterioration, they may also allow moisture penetration.
4. Repoint masonry joints if the mortar is cracked, crumbling, or missing, or if damp walls or damaged plaster indicate moisture penetration. Carefully remove deteriorated mortar using hand tools. Add new mortar that duplicates the original in strength, color, texture, and composition. Match the original mortar joints in width and profile.
5. If a masonry detail is deteriorated beyond repair, replace only the deteriorated portion



*Brick and terra cotta masonry are decorative accents at 12 Railroad Square.*



*The 1899 livery stable at 107 Main Street has an added stucco surface which is now a historic feature of the building.*

in-kind rather than the entire surface or feature. Use compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.

6. If replacement of a large masonry surface or entire feature is necessary, replace it in-kind, matching the original in design, detail, dimension, color, pattern, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not feasible.
7. Repair leaking roofs, gutters, and downspouts to prevent water damage to masonry. Also, secure loose flashing.
8. Clean masonry only as a response to deterioration or heavy surface staining.
9. Test any cleaning technique, including chemical solutions, on an inconspicuous sample area to evaluate its effects. Do not clean masonry with destructive methods, including sandblasting, high-pressure waterblasting, and power washing.
10. Repaint previously painted masonry surfaces in colors appropriate to the historic material, building, and district. It is not appropriate to paint unpainted masonry surfaces that were not painted historically, except to salvage and seal damaged masonry surfaces.



*Maintain and preserve original brick walls and surfaces. Do not paint previously unpainted brick unless the brick is mismatched or deteriorated (8 Railroad Square).*



*Masonry details such as corbelled brickwork can be found on many of Bell Buckle's commercial buildings (16 Railroad Square).*

## 4.6 Windows

### Introduction

Windows are one of the most visual aspects of a historic building and may include sills, lintels, decorative caps, and shutters. The shape, positioning, location, pattern, and size of windows can contribute significantly to a building's historic character and also help identify the building's period of construction. Windows are a significant part of the original fabric of historic structures. They provide important architectural qualities that define and characterize an architectural style and time period, as well as the scale of a building and/or historic district.

The reasons for preserving original windows include:

- The loss of windows alters the defining qualities of the historic fabric, structure and/or historic district. Repairing historic wood windows and adding storm windows makes them as efficient as new windows and more than offsets the cost of new window installation. Several comprehensive window studies have found that a wood window with weatherstripping and an added storm window is as energy efficient as most new thermo-pane windows.
- The old-growth lumber used in historic window frames can last if well maintained, unlike new-growth wood, vinyl, or aluminum.
- Any energy savings from replacing wood windows with aluminum or vinyl seldom justifies the costs of installation. For most buildings, it would take decades to recover the initial cost of installation, and with a life expectancy of 10 to 15 years or less, installing new vinyl or aluminum windows does not make good economic sense.

### Design Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve original windows.
2. Retain and preserve openings and details of windows, such as trim, sash, glass, lintels, sills, shutters, and hardware.



*An original one-over-one wood-sash window at 3 Webb Road East.*

3. Patch, paint, putty, and weather strip historic windows as needed in order to restore them to their original conditions.
4. Replace historic windows only if they are damaged beyond the reasonable possibility of repair. If replacement of historic windows is required, use replacements that closely match the historic windows in size, type, and material.
5. It is not appropriate to replace windows with stock items that do not fill the original openings or duplicate the unit in size, material, and design.
6. It is not appropriate to introduce window shutters where no evidence of earlier shutters exists.
7. Do not cover or conceal an original transom.
8. If a new window is required to meet building and safety codes, it should not be intrusive to damage historic façade materials or features.
9. Re-use serviceable window hardware and locks.
10. Use storm windows that are full-view or with internal elements that match those of the windows.
11. Windows may be used for painted signs.



*The historic Lynch Hotel at 101 Hinkle Hill Street displays its original two-over-two wood sash window. It also has an appropriate storm window for energy conservation.*



*Mid-20th century metal windows should also be preserved and maintained (1 Webb Road East).*

## 4.7 Wood and Wood Elements

### Introduction

The commercial buildings of Bell Buckle feature a great deal of wood features, a common trait of Victorian-period design. Wood elements found on historic building facades include window sashes, doors, bulkheads below display windows, and cornices. These functional and decorative wood features help convey the historic character of a building and district.

### Design Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve wood features that contribute to the overall historic character of a building and a site, including such functional and decorative elements as cornices, brackets, pilasters, and architectural trim.
2. Repair historic wood features by patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing.
3. If a wood feature or detail is deteriorated beyond repair, replace only the deteriorated portion in-kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original detail or element in design, dimension, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
4. If a wood feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original feature or a new design compatible in scale, size, material, texture, and color with the historic building and district.
5. Keep wood surfaces and features painted in colors that are appropriate to the historic structure and district.
6. Do not attempt to clean wood features and surfaces with destructive methods such as sand-blasting, power washing, and using propane or butane torches. Clean using methods such as low-pressure washing with detergents and chemical strippers.
7. It is not appropriate to replace or cover wooden trim, or window sashes with contemporary substitute materials such as aluminum, masonite, or vinyl.



*This original wood pilaster at 8 Railroad Square is a decorative element as well as providing structural support.*

## 4.8 Paint

### Introduction

The application of paint and paint colors is not reviewed by the Commission. Generally, the painted surfaces in Bell Buckle's downtown structures tend to be window trim, ornamentation, or any other architectural feature that provides a visual accent to the façade. While this painting often serves a protective role to the underlying material, it also provides an opportunity to reinforce a historic building's architectural style and accentuate its significant features through appropriate paint selection.

Painting of previously unpainted masonry surfaces is discouraged unless the brick is mismatched or extensively patched with various mortar joints and widths. The repainting of previously painted masonry and stucco using compatible paint coatings after proper cleaning and preparation is recommended.

### Recommendations

1. Maintain the painted finish of building and landscape elements that were historically painted.
2. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, do not paint historically unpainted masonry or other surfaces.
3. Use oil paint on surfaces that have been painted with oil paint in the past; this is generally the case for historic buildings in the district.
4. Avoid latex paint because it will likely not adhere well and because it shrinks more than oil paint when drying and can pull off underlying old paint. If latex is used, first completely prime the surface with an oil-based primer.
5. Before painting, remove dirt with household detergent and water to allow new paint to adhere.



*Paint colors can be used to enhance storefront features such as the varying colors on the doors, bulkheads and display windows at 16 Railroad Square.*



*Bell Buckle business owners embrace the town's heritage as a "Victorian" village with a wide variety of color schemes on their storefronts.*

## 4.9 Rear Elevations

### Introduction

The buildings along Railroad Square have their rear elevations facing an alley while those along Webb Road East have vacant lots at the rear. These elevations are generally not visible by everyday shoppers and tourists. However, these elevations are readily visible by those attending festivals or parking behind them. Most rear elevations do not have public access into the buildings but property owners are encouraged to make them more attractive through paint, awnings and other improvements. The rear elevations also offer opportunities for ADA access if needed.

### Design Guidelines

1. Maintain and preserve historic doors at rear entrances.
2. If new doors are required, use single-light glass-and-wood or other historically appropriate doors.
3. Maintain a simple appearance for rear entrances. Signs and awnings are appropriate for the identification of businesses.
4. Screen HVAC units and service equipment through landscaping or wood and/or brick enclosures, or place units and equipment on roofs out of view from the street.
5. Consider making rear entrances ADA compliant if necessary for building access.



*Bell Buckle business owners are encouraged to improve the appearance of rear elevations through consistent paint colors, awnings and screening of HVAC units.*

## 4.10 Streetscapes and Site Features

### Introduction

The historic character of downtown Bell Buckle is defined not only by the historic buildings and their sites, but also by the network of streets, sidewalks, landscape beds, parking, and alleys that support those buildings and sites. Streetscape elements, including utility lines and poles, street furniture, and traffic signs are components of the overall appearance of the district. Consequently, maintaining the distinctive visual character of the district requires attention to its streets, alleys, sidewalks, and their features.

### Design Guidelines

1. Bell Buckle should continue to be enhanced through streetscape elements such as benches and planters.
2. Outdoor furniture provided by the city should be uniform in appearance, of historically appropriate materials, such as wrought iron, and placed so as not to impede pedestrian flow.
3. Benches, tables and chairs placed in front of individual storefronts should also allow for unimpeded foot traffic.
4. Street lighting should be pedestrian-scaled, and blend with the overall appearance of the historic district. Fixtures should be simple and unobtrusive. Their design should not convey a false sense of time or period historically.
5. The Town of Bell Buckle, Duck River Utility, other utility companies, and private contractors should seek approval by the Commission before undertaking work that would alter the appearance of the public right-of-way.



*Street furniture in downtown Bell Buckle has a simple and unifying design that compliments the historic character of the district.*



*Garbage receptacles incorporate the bell and buckle logo and old horseshoes, in recognition of the town's heritage.*



*The Town government and property owners have financed streetscape improvements such as benches and planter boxes. Future streetscape elements should be consistent in their design and reinforce downtown's historic character.*



*Many business owners incorporate benches and seats into their storefront design which enhances the informal character of the historic district.*

## 4.11 Parking

### Introduction

Parking lots are integral features of commercial areas to facilitate safe and easy access to local businesses. Parking lots should be properly marked with painted lines delineating parking spaces, turning lanes, wheelchair accommodation, and emergency/fire lanes. Ideally, parking areas should be screened with landscaping and located to the rear of new or existing buildings.

The existing parking areas in front of the businesses on Railroad Square should continue to be delineated and defined by striping. The large parking area in front of the post office should be defined from the highway, striped and access should be clearly delineated.

### Design Guidelines

1. Parking and pedestrian areas should be clearly differentiated. Parking lots should be delineated through striping.
2. The screening of parking lots with landscaping or fencing is highly encouraged.
3. In planning and constructing new parking areas, historic streetscape elements and buildings should be protected.
4. ADA compliant parking spaces should be a priority in any new parking plans for the downtown area.



*The existing parking area adjacent to Highway 269 is recommended for improvement with landscaping, striping, ADA compliance, and specific directions for entering and exiting the lot.*



## 4.12 Utilities and Energy Conservation

### Introduction

Buildings in downtown Bell Buckle typically have mechanical units and utilities sited on the rear, or alley elevation. When introducing new mechanical and electrical equipment and lines, care must be taken that historic features of the building or landscaping are not damaged or obscured. All such equipment should be located in the least visible location and appropriately screened. Large antennas, satellite dishes, and communication equipment are intrusive, but may be installed in inconspicuous areas on the building or lot and screened from view. Rooftop installation behind a parapet wall is encouraged.

### Design Guidelines

1. Garbage containers should be located behind buildings.
2. Ground-mounted mechanical systems should be located behind or on top of buildings. If on top of buildings, they should be set back or behind a parapet, not visible from the street.
3. Meters, conduits, and other equipment should be located on rear elevations.
4. Installation of new mechanical equipment such as solar collectors, satellite dishes, antennas, etc. should cause no or minimal alteration if any to the building's exterior, historic building fabric, and site features. Screen units whenever possible and so that the screening does not obstruct access and parking behind buildings or in the alley.
5. Where possible, place utility lines underground to reduce the intrusion of additional overhead lines and poles. When trenching, take care to avoid archaeological resources and the roots of trees.
6. Where possible, locate portable window air-conditioning units on rear facades or inconspicuous side facades. Do not add or replace new window units at front and side elevations.



*Install window air conditioning units on rear elevations out of public view (15 Webb Road East).*



*Another option for placement of HVAC units is ground level with screening on the rear elevation of the building (6 Webb Road East).*

## 4.13 Safety and Accessibility

### Introduction

Access to public and commercial buildings requires compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Both the building code and ADA provide some flexibility in compliance when dealing with historic buildings. While some of the buildings currently meet ADA compliance, others do not due to historic steps to access the entrance. In those cases the use of temporary ramps may be appropriate alternatives. For buildings which have high volumes of pedestrian traffic consider adding an ADA compliant entrance on the rear, or alley elevation.

For ADA compliance temporary and reversible changes are preferred over permanent and irreversible ones. ADA-compliant crosswalks and sidewalks should be installed and maintained in Bell Buckle in the future.

### Design Guidelines

1. In considering changes to meet accessibility and life-safety codes in historic buildings, review options with respect to the building's historic character-defining facades, features, and finishes.
2. Business owners should have movable and temporary ramps available to provide access as needed.
3. Introduce new or additional means of access that are reversible and that do not compromise the original design of the historic storefront and entrance. Consider installation of an ADA compliant entrance on the rear elevation.
4. Locate exterior fire stairs, ADA ramps, or elevator additions on rear elevations. Design such elements to be compatible in character, materials, scale, proportion, and finish with the historic building.



*ADA-compliant crosswalks and curbing should be incorporated into the streets and sidewalks in Bell Buckle.*



*Example of a permanent ADA compliant ramp at the rear of this historic building.*

## 4.14 Public Art and Murals

### Introduction

In recent years the appearance of downtown Bell Buckle has been enhanced through the addition of public art and decorative murals. Public art is appropriate for the historic district as long as the art does not impede pedestrians or cause safety concerns. Murals are also appropriate if they are not painted over “ghost” signs or other historic features.

### Design Guidelines

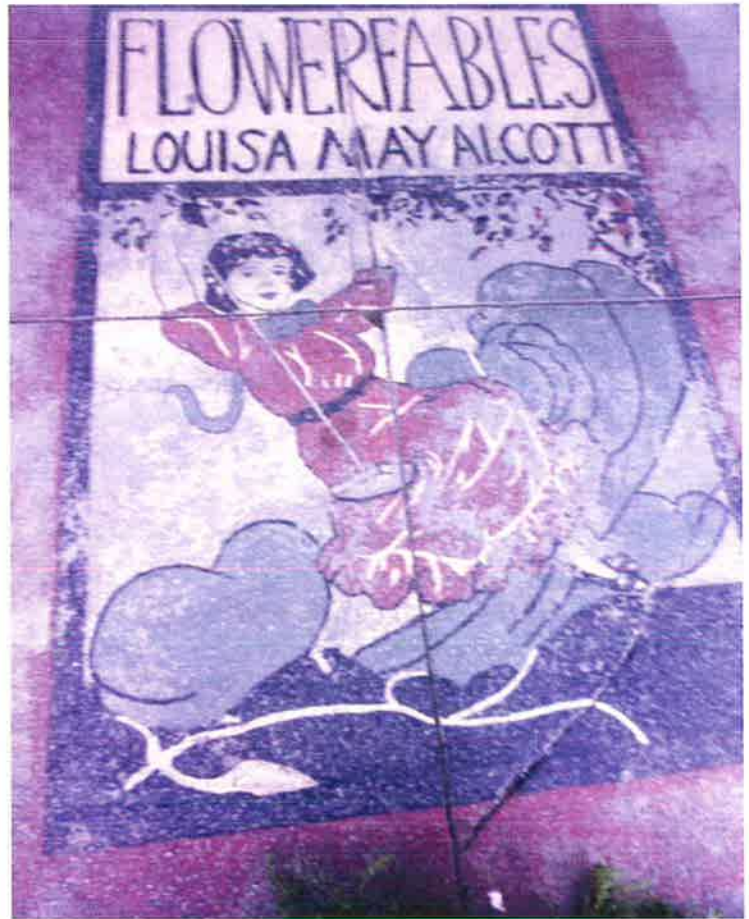
1. Public art may be added along sidewalks and in landscaped spaces as long as the art does not impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic, does not create a safety hazard and does not overly impede or obscure view of the historic buildings behind it.
2. Murals must follow the Town’s sign ordinance murals section,.
3. New mural signs shall not interrupt, detract, or overwhelm the historic architectural features of a building.
4. Mural signs shall be located only on planar or flat surfaces of buildings and shall not overlap architectural features such as cornices, columns, trim, windows, doors, vents, control joints in plaster, etc.
5. Mural signs shall reinforce the size, shape and proportions of building features such as column bays, window proportions and placement, planar wall proportions, etc.
6. Mural signs shall be laid out or composed within the building’s architectural framework to reinforce a sense of balance of the overall mural/architectural composition.
7. Mural signs shall not be located on the primary street façade of buildings.
8. For buildings located on corners, murals shall not be located on the primary street façade but may be located on the secondary street façade provided the murals conform with the other requirements of these guidelines.



*The mural on the exterior wall of this town public building depicts Bell Buckle’s story in railroad transportation, agriculture, and commerce.*



9. Mural signs shall be located, designed, and proportioned to reinforce the building façade proportions.
10. Applicants shall demonstrate that preparation, priming and finish painting materials shall not damage the surface of the building and that the finished application shall not lead to the surface deteriorating in an accelerated fashion over time.
11. New mural signs shall not be painted over “Historic” murals or “ghost signs.”
12. New murals shall have simple, rectangular fields, which contain all lettering, trademarks, and imagery. Borders or implied borders are suggested to reinforce the containment of images within the mural and minimize the impact on the architectural character of the building.



*Murals on sidewalks are also an acceptable treatment such as this design on Railroad Square.*



*“Ghost signs” on commercial buildings may be restored on side elevations such as the building at the corner of Railroad Square and Webb Road.*

## 4.15 Signs

### Introduction

Commercial buildings traditionally had a variety of sign designs and placement and there should be flexibility for their use for Bell Buckle businesses. Signs are important elements in the historic and commercial character of the historic district and historic signage should be retained and maintained.

The purpose and intent of the sign guidelines is to ensure consistency in style, scale, visibility, readability, and clarity as well as location and quantity of signs for non-residential properties. In general, most signs require a permit with the Town of Bell Buckle prior to construction, illumination, or alteration.

Traditional sign types and locations on buildings are generally appropriate, including awning, projecting (blade), window, and wall signs, among others. Because of the presence of the shed roof awnings on many buildings, hanging signs are also common. Any existing historic signs should be preserved—even signs that do not pertain to the current business, as they provide historic context and enhance the historic quality of the building and district.

### Design Guidelines

1. All signs must be in conformance with the Town's sign ordinance.
2. Historic signs including neon signs should be preserved, maintained, and repaired.
3. New signs should be of traditional materials such as wood, glass, copper or bronze letters. Sandblasted wood signs are appropriate. Plastic, substrate or unfinished wood signs are not recommended.
3. Signs should be sized in proportion to the building. Avoid oversized signs.
4. Buildings should have no more than three signs, not counting signs painted on windows.
5. Signs that resemble logos or symbols for businesses are encouraged.



*This hanging sign at 3 Webb Road East incorporates a logo design with a strong association to the business name and uses a tasteful*



*Projecting or "blade" signs are traditionally made of wood with metal hardware (2 Webb Road East).*

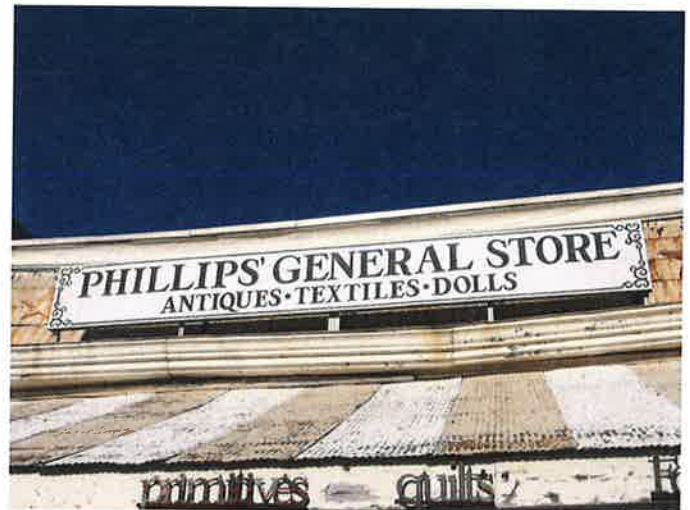
6. Signs should have no more than two or three colors; colors should be coordinated with overall building colors.
7. Serif, Sans Serif or Script lettering are traditional styles for signs. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height or cover more than 60% of the total sign area.
8. Signs should be installed in such a way that no damage occurs to historic materials. Mounting brackets and hardware for signs should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
9. Lighting for signs should be concealed; spot- or up-lighting is appropriate for signs. Internally lit signs are not appropriate.
10. Traditional sign locations include storefront beltcourses, upper façade walls (not to exceed 20% of the overall wall surface), hanging or mounted inside windows, or projecting from the face of the building. Moveable sandwich boards or “menu easels” are also allowable downtown and provide additional signage for businesses.
11. Downtown’s metal canopies provide additional locations for signs suspended from the canopy ceiling and are appropriate.



*Business owners are encouraged to use signs with logos or symbols to establish a business brand, such as this example at 6 Railroad Square.*



*Moveable sandwich board signs are appropriate on sidewalks outside Bell Buckle businesses.*



*Examples of appropriate sign locations, materials and lettering in the downtown historic district.*

## CHAPTER 5 - NEW CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

### 5.1 New Primary Buildings

#### Introduction

The Downtown C-1 Historic District is composed of continuous rows of commercial buildings on Railroad Square and Webb Road. Within these rows of buildings there are no vacant lots. However, there are several vacant lots in the 100 block of Main Street as well as potential buildable lots on Hinkle Hill Road south of the historic Lynch Hotel property. These parcels offer potential infill sites for new commercial construction. The guidelines also apply to buildings which replace those lost by fire or another disaster.



*The 100 block of Main Street contains several buildable lots.*

The development of these sites is appropriate if the design of the new building is compatible with the surrounding buildings and the overall character of the historic district. When designing new buildings, compatibility with existing setbacks, the spacing of buildings, and the orientation of buildings should be considered. Compatibility of proposed landscaping, lighting, paving, signage, and accessory buildings is also important.

Guidelines for new construction ensure that the district's architectural character is respected. The height, the proportion, the roof shape, the materials, the texture, the scale, the details, and the color of the proposed building must be compatible with existing historic buildings in the district; however, compatible contemporary designs rather than historic replications are also appropriate.



*Hinkle Hill Road also has several underutilized or vacant lots.*

#### Design Guidelines

##### *Height*

1. Construct new buildings so their height is compatible with that of historic buildings. Ensure new construction is compatible in height with the block and general surroundings on which it is sited.

## ***Mass and Scale***

1. Construct new buildings to be compatible with historic buildings in terms of scale and proportion. Replicating the existing pattern established along the block will provide visual continuity and uniform scale.
2. Construct new buildings so they are not dramatically larger than historic buildings, as to not overwhelm the streetscape. While new buildings may be larger than historic ones, ensure they do not compromise the visual continuity of the street.

## ***Width***

1. Construct new buildings to appear similar in width to surrounding historic buildings. If new construction is filling a large footprint that is wider than traditional buildings along the block, divide the new construction into visually separate sections that give the appearance of traditional building widths. This can be accomplished with vertical divisions within the building design.

## ***Solid to Void Ratio***

1. Ensure that window size and proportion of openings are consistent with adjacent historic buildings. Design new contemporary buildings to have similar amounts of wall space and openings for windows and doors as neighboring historic buildings. Create patterns in rhythm, size, and spacing of window and door openings similar to surrounding historic buildings.

## ***Building Form***

1. Construct new contemporary buildings of forms that are similar to those of existing historic buildings along the blocks on which they are sited. Typically, Bell Buckle's commercial buildings have been constructed in simple rectangular forms of varying heights.
2. Ensure the roof form of new commercial buildings match those of adjacent historic buildings. Flat or sloping roofs are most common for commercial buildings in Bell Buckle.



*One-story buildings are appropriate for downtown Bell Buckle. The examples shown above and below are of appropriate materials, have traditional storefronts and are enhanced with awnings and cornice lines.*



3. Maintain the traditional separation between storefronts and upper facades. Typically, ground floor storefronts are visually separated from upper floors through design patterns and window placement. Replicate this separation in new construction, and maintain the alignment with adjacent buildings.

### ***Rhythm and Spacing***

1. Ensure proportions of window and door openings are similar to those of surrounding historic buildings. Similarity in rhythm and spacing of window and door openings strongly contributes to the visual appearance and character of a district. This includes the pattern of display windows along storefronts as well as upper level windows. It is important that new contemporary construction maintain a pattern that is compatible with that already established in the district.

### ***Materials***

1. Use traditional building materials that are compatible with adjacent buildings. Common building materials such as wood, brick, and metal help to provide a sense of visual continuity and flow to the street. Alternative materials or combinations of materials for contemporary buildings will be considered on a case by case basis.
2. New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing. Alternative materials for contemporary buildings may be approved if they appear similar in scale, proportion, texture and finish to materials used historically. Also, alternative materials must have a proven durability in Bell Buckle's warm and humid climate. Different materials may be appropriate for commercial areas with historic architecture from the recent past.



*These examples are in historic districts and are more contemporary in design. The example below does not have a traditional storefront but would be appropriate for a free standing building on the edge of downtown.*



## Architectural Character

1. Building components of new construction that are similar in size and shape to those found historically along the street are preferred. Components such as windows, doors, bulkheads, and display windows of newly constructed commercial buildings that are comparable in size and shape to those of historic buildings in the area help to maintain visual continuity in the district.
2. The scale of decorative elements similar to that of surrounding historic examples is preferred. These include ornamental elements such as cornices, or other decorative elements.
3. Construct new buildings to appear contemporary but compatible in design to historic buildings. It is important to be able to distinguish new buildings from historic ones. Do not seek to replicate historic styles in new construction design, nor contrast dramatically with the existing historic architectural context. New buildings need to be visually compatible with neighboring historic buildings, yet be representative of their own time. Contemporary interpretations of traditional details are encouraged.



*Two-story buildings would also be appropriate on the town's buildable lots. The example above is of brick construction and has appropriate storefront and window designs. A more contemporary but compatible design is below and it uses corner detailing of modern materials to distinguish it as new construction.*



## 5.2 Additions to Commercial Buildings

### Introduction

The buildings along Railroad Square and Webb Road have limited potential for additions due to the presence of the rear alley and lot lines. Any additions would be by definition small in scale and design. It is important to differentiate the addition from the original building so that the original form is not lost. Additions should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without significant damage to the historic building or loss of historic materials. Also, as with any new construction project, the addition's impact on the site in terms of loss of important landscape features must be considered.

The compatibility of proposed additions with historic buildings will be reviewed in terms of the mass, the scale, the materials, the color, the roof form, and the proportion and the spacing of windows and doors. Additions that echo the style of the original structure and additions that introduce compatible contemporary design are both acceptable.

Rooftop additions are also appropriate if they are set back from the roof of the historic building and are not readily visible from the street.



*This small addition at the rear of 4 Railroad Square is appropriate for its simple design and materials.*

### Design Guidelines

1. The construction of an addition should not cause damage to or removal of historic walls, roofs, and features from historic buildings. Use existing openings to connect the addition to the existing building.
2. From the primary street, an addition should have little or no visibility.
3. Additions should be compatible with the original building in scale, proportion, rhythm, and materials.
4. The design of an addition should be distinguishable from the historic building; it should be smaller and simpler in design.
5. Additions should be contemporary in design, but compatible with adjacent buildings.

## 5.2 Rear Decks

### Introduction

Wood decks are sometimes added at the rear or roof of historic commercial buildings. Decks are appropriate when they are of a compatible design and hidden from street view.

### Design Guidelines

1. Locate decks at the rear of the building or where not readily visible from the street. Decks that are visible from the street should be screened with landscaping or lattice panels.
2. Decks should be of wood construction and of dimensions that do not overwhelm the rear elevation or significantly detract from the architecture of the building.
3. Avoid installing decks that require the removal of historic materials or otherwise damage or obscure architectural features. Design and install decks so that they may be removed in the future without damage to the historic structure.



*Rear decks should be simple in design and the screening of the deck or its foundation is encouraged (10 Webb Road East).*



*Roof decks should also be sited at rear elevations and screened from public view as in this example.*

## 6.0 Demolition

### Introduction

The demolition of any building in Bell Buckle's Downtown C-1 Historic District should not be allowed in most circumstances. When reviewing requests for demolition, the Commission will consider the proposed demolition's effect on adjacent historic properties and the overall character of the district. The Commission will also consider: the building's contribution to the historic character of the district, whether the property could be adapted to meet the owner's needs; whether the property could be sold to someone whose needs it would meet; whether the building could be relocated; and what use is being proposed for the site that will compensate for the loss of the structure. The property owner must submit a proposed site plan at the same time demolition is requested.

### Design Guidelines

6.1 Demolition of a building that contributes to the historic or architectural significance of the historic district should not occur, unless:

- public safety and welfare requires the removal of the building or structure;
- the building has lost its architectural and historical value;
- the building does not contribute to the historical or architectural character of the historic district, its removal will improve the appearance of the district, and will not adversely impact the integrity of the historic streetscape and the historic district.

6.2 Property owners are encouraged to work with the Commission and other interested parties to salvage usable architectural features and materials.



*Demolition should always be the last option considered for historic buildings.*

# APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A - SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

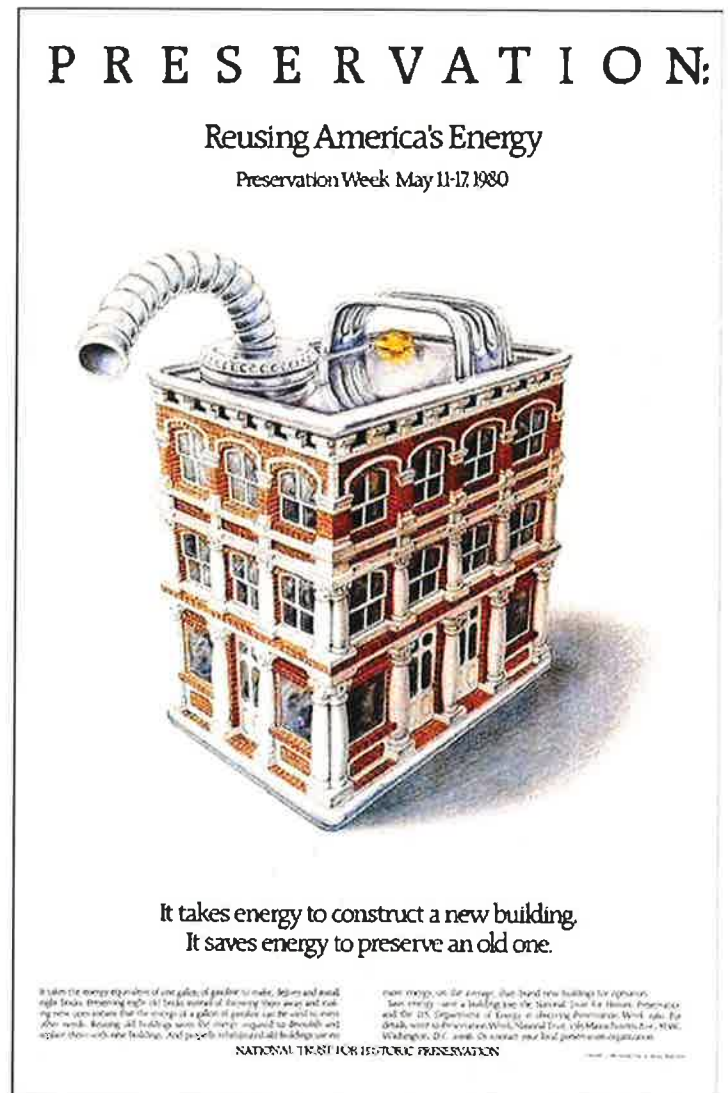
## APPENDIX B - HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

### Introduction

One of the design guideline's main objectives is to preserve Bell Buckle's unique heritage, and also encourage the adaptive reuse of its core commercial buildings. By encouraging the maintenance and re-use of existing buildings, preservation represents the broad philosophy of recycling. Therefore, historic preservation is inherently "green." In past decades, the traditional focus of preservation focus was on the aesthetic and cultural significance of historic buildings. Recently, as communities consider how to grow responsibly, preservation has become a tool for promoting values of energy-efficiency and sustainability.

### Embodied Energy

In seeking innovative designs, architects and developers today often embrace the use of "green" practices and materials in new building construction. Yet, the bottom line is that new construction requires a new expense of energy. From the extraction of raw natural materials, to their transportation, manufacture, and distribution, to the physical act of construction, energy is spent. In contrast, an existing building represents the physical embodiment of energy, already spent. This energy, in the inert form of a building, remains in place as long as the building stands. If razed, the building's embodied energy is lost; the very demolition represents an expenditure of new energy. Loading and hauling the building debris to a landfill requires additional energy and loss of resources. Thus, an existing building is literally a mass of invested energy. Demolishing a sound building squanders that investment.



*Embodied energy is illustrated by this poster from the National Trust in 1980 depicting the amount of energy represented in a typical commercial building.*

## Energy Efficiency

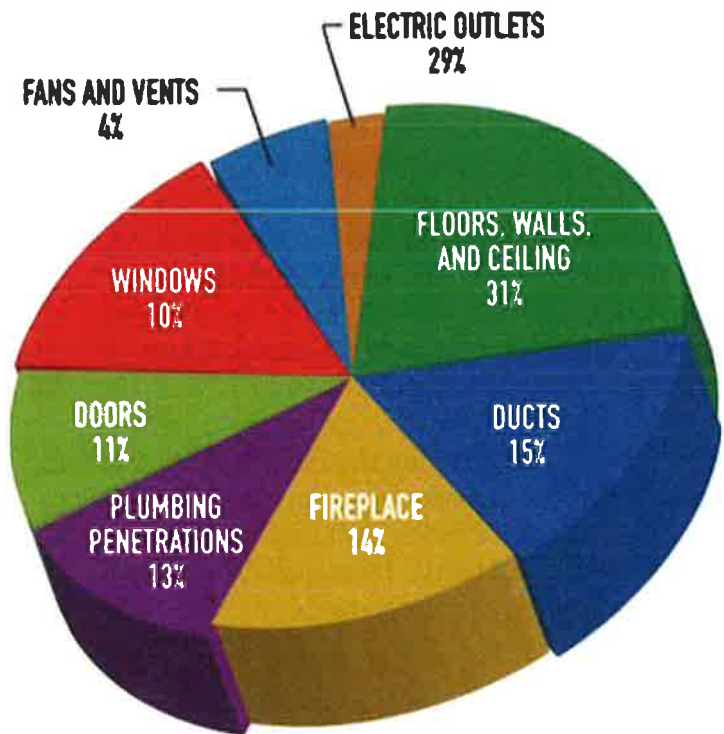
The thick masonry walls of older commercial buildings help retain interior heat in the winter and also help lengthen the time it takes for summer heat to penetrate the building. Form-to-function architectural elements include operable transoms and high ceilings, which allow the escape of hot air. Storefronts were also designed to allow sunshine into the interior in the winter and block the summer heat through retractable awnings. It logically follows that the traditional considerations of construction produced building stock of inherent energy-efficiency. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency found that buildings constructed before 1920 are actually more energy-efficient than those built during the last two or three decades of the twentieth century. Only in recent years, as consumers started considering their energy use, have builders begun to design more energy-efficient buildings. Yet, contrary to common thought, these newer buildings often use more energy because they are not designed to take advantage of the natural benefits of their site.

### Retro-fitting and Weatherization

Bell Buckle's one hundred-year-old commercial buildings often have inherent energy-efficient design features. Still, numerous windows and minimal insulation can result in energy losses in older buildings. Owners of historic buildings need not compromise their historic character for improved energy efficiency. Simple non-altering upgrades to historic buildings include the addition of attic insulation, installation of storm windows, and more efficient heating and cooling systems. In particular, repairing and weatherstripping historic wood windows and adding storm windows often result in energy performance equal to or exceeding that of new windows and at much less cost. Installing new windows becomes a cycle, as they have a limited life expectancy.



*Adding ceiling insulation is one of the most cost effective methods of saving energy in commercial buildings.*



*Energy loss through windows is much less of a factor than other parts of a building (courtesy U.S. Department of Energy).*

## APPENDIX C - GLOSSARY

**Acceptable:** Work that will be approved.

**Adaptive Use:** Rehabilitation of a historic structure for use other than its original use such as a residence converted into offices.

**Addition** New construction added to an existing building or structure.

**Alteration** Work which impacts any exterior architectural feature including construction, reconstruction, or removal of any building or building element.

**American bond** A brickwork pattern where most courses are laid flat, with the long "stretcher" edge exposed, but every fifth to eighth course is laid perpendicularly with the small "header" end exposes, to structurally tie the wall together.

**Appropriate:** Especially suitable or compatible.

**Arch** A curved construction of wedge-shaped stones or bricks which spans an opening and supports the weight above it. (see flat arch, jack arch, segmental arch and semi-circular arch).

**Bay** The portion of a facade between columns or piers providing regular divisions and usually marked by windows.

**Bay window** A projecting window that forms an extension to the floor space of the internal rooms; usually extends to the ground level.

**Belt course** A horizontal band usually marking the floor levels on the exterior facade of a building.

**Board and batten** Siding fashioned of boards set vertically and covered where their edges join by narrow strips called battens.

**Bond** A term used to describe the various patterns in which brick (or stone) is laid, such as "common bond" or "Flemish bond."

**Bracket** A projecting element of wood, stone or metal which spans between horizontal and vertical surfaces (eaves, shelves, overhangs) as decorative support.

**Building:** A structure used to house human activity such as a dwelling or garage.

**Bulkhead** The structural panels just below display windows on storefronts. Bulkheads can be both supportive and decorative in design. nineteenth century bulkheads are often of wood construction with rectangular raised panels. twentieth century bulkheads may be of wood, brick, tile, or marble construction. Bulkheads are also referred to as kickplates.

**Carrara Glass** Tinted glass widely used for storefront remodeling during the 1930s and 1940s. Carrara glass usually came in black, tan, or dark red colors.

**Capital** The head of a column or pilaster.

**Casement window** A window with one or two sashes which are hinged at the sides and usually open outward.

**Character:** The qualities and attributes of any structure, site, street or district.

**Classical order** Derived from Greek and Roman architecture, a column with its base, shaft, capital and entablature having standardized details and proportions.

**Column** A circular or square vertical structural member.

**Compatible:** In harmony with location and surroundings.

**Configuration:** The arrangement of elements and details on a building or structure which help to define its character.

**Contemporary:** Reflecting characteristics of the current period. Contemporary denotes characteristics which illustrate that a building, structure, or detail was constructed in the present or recent past rather than being imitative or reflective of a historic design.

**Context:** The setting in which a historic element, site, structure, street, or district exists.

**Corbel** In masonry, a projection, or one of a series of projections, each stepped progressively farther forward with height and articulating a cornice or supporting an overhanging member.

**Cornice** The uppermost, projecting part of an entablature, or feature resembling it. Any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a wall, building, etc.

**Cresting** A decorated ornamental finish along the top of a wall or roof, often made of ornamental metal.

**Demolition:** Any act which destroys in whole or in part a building or structure.

**Demolition by Neglect:** The destruction of a building or structure through abandonment or lack of maintenance.

**Dentils** A row of small tooth-like blocks in a classical cornice.

**Design Guidelines:** Criteria developed to identify design concerns in an area and to help property owners ensure that rehabilitation and new construction respect the character of designated buildings and districts.

**Double-hung window** A window with two sashes, one sliding vertically over the other.

**Element:** A material part or detail of a site, structure, street, or district.

**Elevation** Any of the external faces of a building.

**Engaged column** A column attached to a wall.

**Entablature** A part of a building of classical order resting on the column capital; consists of an architrave, frieze, and cornice.

**Fabric:** The physical material of a building, structure, or community, connoting an interweaving of component parts.

**Facade:** Any one of the external faces or elevations of a building.

**Fascia** A projecting flat horizontal member or molding; forms the trim of a flat roof or a pitched roof; also part of a classical entablature.

**Fenestration** The arrangement of windows on a building.

**Finial** A projecting decorative element, usually of metal, at the top of a roof turret or gable.

**Flashing** Thin metal sheets used to prevent moisture infiltration at joints of roof planes and between the roof and vertical surfaces.

**Flat arch** An arch whose wedge-shaped stones or bricks are set in a straight line; also called a jack arch.

**Flemish bond** A brick-work pattern where the long "stretcher" edge of the brick is alternated with the small "header" end for decorative as well as structural effectiveness.

**Fluting** Shallow, concave grooves running vertically on the shaft of a column, pilaster, or other surface.

**Foundation** The lowest exposed portion of the building wall, which supports the structure above.

**Frieze** The middle portion of a classical cornice; also applied decorative elements on an entablature or parapet wall.

**Ghosts** Outlines or profiles of missing buildings or building details. These outlines may be visible through stains, paint, weathering, or other residue on a building's facade.

**Guardrail** A building component or a system of building components located at or near the open sides of elevated walking surfaces that minimizes the possibilities of a fall from the walking surface to a lower level.

**Handrail** A horizontal or sloping rail intended for grasping by the hand for guidance or support.

**Harmony:** Pleasing or congruent arrangement.

**Height:** The distance from the bottom to the top of a building or structure.

**Historic District:** A geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces, or objects unified by past events, physical development, design, setting, materials, workmanship, sense of cohesiveness or related historical and aesthetic associations. The significance of a district may be recognized through listing in a local, state, or national landmarks register and may be protected legally through enactment of a local historic district ordinance administered by a historic district board or commission.

**Historic Imitation:** New construction or rehabilitation where elements or components mimic an architectural style but are not of the same historic period as the existing buildings (historic replica).

**Hood molding** A projecting molding above an arch, doorway, or window, originally designed to direct water away from the opening; also called a drip mold.

**Infill** New construction where there had been an opening before, such as a new building between two older structures; or block infill between porch piers or in an original window opening.

**Jack arch** (see Flat arch)

**Keystone** The wedge-shaped top or center member of an arch.

**Landmark:** A building, structure, object or site which is identified as a historic resource of particular significance.

**Landscape:** The totality of the built or human-influenced habitat experienced at any one place. Dominant features are topography, plant cover, buildings, or other structures and their patterns.

**Lintel** The horizontal top member of a window, door, or other opening.

**Luxfer glass** A glass panel made up of small leaded glass lights either clear or tinted purple. These panels were widely used for storefront transoms during the early twentieth century.

**Maintain:** To keep in an existing state of preservation or repair.

**Masonry** Exterior wall construction of brick, stone or adobe laid up in small units.

**Massing** The three-dimensional form of a building.

**Material Change:** A change that will affect either the exterior architectural or environmental features of an historic property or any structure, site, or work of art within an historic district.

**Mortar** A mixture of sand, lime, cement, and water used as a binding agent in masonry construction.

**Mullion** A heavy vertical divider between windows or doors.

**Multi-light window** A window sash composed of more than one pane of glass.

**Muntin** A secondary framing member to divide and hold the panes of glass in multi-light window or glazed door.

**New construction:** Construction which is characterized by the introduction of new elements, sites, buildings, or structures or additions to existing buildings and structures in historic areas and districts.

**Obscured:** Covered, concealed, or hidden from view.

**Oriel window** A bay window which emerges above the ground floor level.

**Paired columns** Two columns supported by one pier, as on a porch.

**Paneled door** A door composed of solid panels (either raised or recessed) held within a framework of rails and stiles.

**Parapet** A low horizontal wall at the edge of a roof.

**Pilaster** A square pillar attached, but projecting from a wall, resembling a classical column.

**Portland cement** A strong, inflexible hydraulic cement used to bind mortar. Mortar or patching materials with a high Portland cement content should not be used on old buildings. The Portland cement is harder than the masonry, thereby causing serious damage over annual freeze-thaw cycles.)

**Preservation** The act of maintaining the form and character of a building as it presently exists. Preservation stops deterioration and stabilizes the structure.

**Pressed tin** Decorative and functional metalwork made of molded tin used to sheath roofs, bays, and cornices.

**Proportion:** Harmonious relation of parts to one another or to the whole.

**Reconstruction:** The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or a part thereof, as is appeared at a specific period of time.

**Rehabilitation:** The act or process of returning a property or building to usable condition through repair, alteration, and/or preservation of its features which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

**Restoration:** The act or process of accurately taking a building's appearance back to a specific period of time by removing later work and by replacing missing earlier features to match the original.

**Retain:** To keep secure and intact. In the guidelines, "retain" and "maintain" describe the act of keeping an element, detail, or structure and continuing the same level of repair to aid in the preservation of elements, sites and structures.

**Re-use:** To use again. An element, detail, or structure might be reused in historic districts.

**Rhythm:** Movement or fluctuation marked by the regular occurrence or natural flow of related elements.

**Ridge** The top horizontal member of a roof where the sloping surfaces meet.

**Sash** The moveable framework containing the glass in a window.

**Scale:** Proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials, and style of buildings.

**Segmental arch** An arch whose profile or radius is less than a semicircle.

**Semi-circular arch** An arch whose profile or radius is a half-circle the diameter of which equals the opening width.

**Setting:** The sum of attributes of a locality, neighborhood, or property that defines its character.

**Sheathing** An exterior covering of boards or other surface applied to the frame of the structure. (see Siding)

**Shed roof** A gently-pitched, almost flat roof with only one slope.

**Sidelight** a vertical area of fixed glass on either side of a door or window.

**Siding** the exterior wall covering or sheathing of a structure.

**Significant:** Having particularly important associations within the contexts of architecture, history, and culture.

**Sill** The bottom crosspiece of a window frame.

**Stabilization** The essential maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

**Streetscape** The general appearance and configuration of the many buildings which define the street.

**Stretcher bond** A brickwork pattern where courses are laid flat with the long "stretcher" edge exposed.

## APPENDIX D - FEDERAL TAX CREDITS FOR REHABILITATION

### Federal Tax Credit

Since 1976, more than 42,000 buildings have been rehabilitated across the country, generating over \$84 billion in private investment in historic buildings nation-wide. The Federal Tax Credit for Rehabilitation reduces the cost of restoration and rehabilitation to the owner of an income producing historic property as an income tax credit. The credit is 20% of what an owner spends rehabilitating the building, not including acquisition costs or costs of site work or new construction.

#### To qualify for the 20% Credit:

1. The building must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or listed as a contributing structure within a National Register Historic District. Not every building in a district is contributing. The applicant building must be designated by the National Park Service as a structure that retains historic integrity and contributes to the historic character of the district, thus qualifying as a "certified historic structure." Your Certification by the National Park Service may be initiated by completing and submitting Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application. **NOTE: Most buildings in the Bell Buckle Historic District would be considered contributing and qualify for the tax credit.**
2. The rehabilitation project must meet the "substantial rehabilitation test," which means that the cost of rehabilitation must exceed the pre-rehabilitation cost of the building. Generally, this test must be met within two years or within five years for a project completed in multiple phases. The cost of a project must exceed the greater of \$5,000 or the building's adjusted basis. The following formula will help you determine if your project will be substantial:

$$A - B - C + D = \text{adjusted basis}$$

A = purchase price of the property (building and land)

B = the cost of the land at the time of purchase

C = depreciation taken for an income-producing property

D = cost of any capital improvements made since purchase

3. After rehabilitation, the structure must be income producing for five years (e.g., commercial, rental, B&B). Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit. The 20% credit is available only to properties rehabilitated for income-producing purposes, including commercial, industrial, agricultural, rental residential or apartment use. The credit cannot be used to rehabilitate your private residence.

However, if a portion of a personal residence is used for business, such as an office or a rental apartment, in some instances the amount of rehabilitation costs spent on that portion of the residence may be eligible for the credit.

4. The rehabilitation must meet [The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings](#).

## APPENDIX E - STRATEGIES FOR DETERIORATED PROPERTIES

In seeking to preserve its historic character, the Town of Bell Buckle is pursuing recommendations for strategies to address deterioration of historic buildings. The foremost strategy against deterioration is prevention. Stringent observation of routine maintenance of historic materials is key to preservation. Vacant buildings are most prone to decay, which accelerates in a continuing state of neglect. Occupied buildings can fall into a state of disrepair when the property owners are unable to provide regular maintenance or make improvements due to legal or financial obstacles. Many towns and cities have adopted into their municipal code an ordinance specifically to address demolition by neglect of historic buildings. States can also enact legislation to address problematic heirs' property and assistance with property taxes for elderly or disabled property owners. These strategies are addressed below.

### **Demolition by Neglect**

Demolition by neglect is the act of intentionally allowing a historic property to deteriorate beyond the point of repair. Over time, nature's effect on a neglected property can constitute demonstrable evidence of deterioration beyond reasonable repair. Demolition by neglect circumvents the repair of an unwanted historic building. Many communities have enacted a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance and sample language is below:

In order to avoid demolition by neglect cases, buildings with observed lack of minimum maintenance standards may be brought before the local historic zoning commission. The initial identification of a potential case may be referred by the building inspector or a local resident or business owner in the historic district. The chairman of the historic zoning commission can send a letter by certified mail to inform the property owner on record that the commission will review the property's status at its next regular meeting at which he or she will have the opportunity to address the commission about the preliminary findings. At that meeting, the building inspector shall present his or her report, identifying any defects that constitute, in the inspector's opinion, a failure to meet the minimum standards of maintenance. The historic zoning commission may by majority vote initiate a citation to the property owner and prepare an application for a certificate of appropriateness specifying corrective work that is required within a reasonable timeframe.

This process and the specifics of violation should be outlined in detailed language in the adopted municipal code. For example, failure to meet minimum maintenance requirements may be characterized by one or more of the following:

- (1) Buildings with parts or components that are potentially hazardous to the public;
- (2) Foundations that are deteriorated or inadequate;
- (3) Floor supports that are defective or deteriorated or floor supports insufficient to carry imposed loads with safety;
- (4) Members of walls, or other vertical supports that split, lean, list or buckle due to defective material or deterioration;
- (5) Members of walls or other vertical supports that are insufficient to carry imposed loads with safety;
- (6) Members of ceilings, roofs, ceiling and roof supports, or other horizontal members which sag, split, or buckle due to defective material or deterioration;

- (7) Members of ceilings, roofs, ceiling and roof supports, or other horizontal members that are insufficient to carry imposed loads with safety;
- (8) Fireplaces or chimneys which list, bulge, or settle due to defective material or deterioration;
- (9) Important defining architectural features that are substantially deteriorated;
- (10) Buildings with the peeling of external paint, rotting, holes, and other forms of decay;
- (11) Unsafe electrical and/or mechanical conditions;
- (12) Exterior plaster or mortar that is deteriorated or crumbling;
- (13) Those buildings with a lack of maintenance of the surrounding environment that is associated with the defining historical character of the structures; e.g. fences, gates, sidewalks, steps, signs, accessory structures, and landscaping;
- (14) Any fault, defect, or condition in the building which renders the same structurally unsafe, not properly water tight, or likely to lead to the deterioration characteristics listed above.

If the property owner(s) does not complete the corrective work within the required timeframe, the historic zoning commission will restate the violations of the minimum maintenance requirements related to the property. The owner(s) will then be provided with the opportunity to address the concerns of the commission, to provide evidence, and to show cause why a citation should not be issued regarding the alleged violations. Upon a majority vote of the commission, the building inspector may be authorized to issue a citation to the owner(s) for failure to comply with the minimum maintenance requirements of the ordinance. This citation should include a list of the minimum maintenance requirements still in violation and a written schedule of the time allotted to correct the violations.

If the owner(s) fails any approach to address the defects of the subject property, the local historic zoning commission may elect various recourse, including: (a) require the property owner(s) to attend the next meeting of the historic zoning commission to explain why the corrections have not been made and to show cause why the commission should not initiate additional enforcement action. Whereupon, the commission may defer the matter to provide the owner(s) more time either to correct the deficiencies, make a proposal for repairs, or perhaps sell the property. (b) The commission, upon majority vote, may request the board of mayor and aldermen to direct the town attorney to take the appropriate legal action, either civil or criminal, against the owner(s). (c) Charges may be brought against the owner(s) in the municipal court of the town for the violation(s) of the ordinance. (d) The commission may upon majority vote, request the board of mayor and aldermen to cause such property to be repaired by the town at the town's expense at such time funds are available. In this case, the town attorney shall file the necessary affidavits with the courts and/or the register of deeds establishing a lien on the property for the benefit of the town to the extent of the amount of money spent for said repairs plus interest accrued at bank prime rates in effect beginning at the completion of said repairs and continuing until the lien is satisfied. (e) The commission may, upon majority vote, request the board of mayor and aldermen to exercise its power of eminent domain if it is determined that no alternate course of action is feasible. The board may work with any agent to develop a plan for the purchase and the repair of the cited building. Upon obtaining ownership of the property, the town may transfer said ownership to any party or agent that enters into and consummates an agreement with the board of mayor and aldermen to make the necessary building repairs and maintenance corrections in an agreed upon period of time.

The determination of the historic zoning commission related to the citation shall on the date it is authorized be a final administrative decision subject only to the application process for unreasonable economic hardship and appealable only to the appropriate state court. Any appeal of the historic zoning commission's decision to the

state court must be made within thirty (30) days. Economic hardship must also be defined with specific language in the adopted ordinance. Unreasonable economic hardship pertaining to the enforcement of minimum maintenance may apply when there is no reasonable return possible on the property as it is, there is no profitable use to which the property could be adapted, and the sale or rental of the property is impractical or not feasible at a reasonable price.

The owner(s) of property cited for demolition by neglect must inform the historic zoning commission in writing of his or her intent to file an application for a certificate of economic hardship within ten (10) days of the date the original citation was issued. Within thirty (30) days of the date the citation was issued, a completed application for a certificate of economic hardship must be filed with the historic zoning commission and must be submitted with the following information: (a) A copy with the current recorded deed. (b) The amount paid for the property and purchase date. (c) The current assessed value. (d) Past and current use of property. (e) Current market value of the property preferably determined by a recent appraisal(s) or if not through county tax records. (f) Ownership structure of property (partnership, corporation, joint venture, not for profit, sole proprietorship, etc.) (g) Mortgage history of the property including any current mortgage principal balance and interest rate, and any other financing secured by the property including a detail of principal and interest. (h) Equity in current use and in previous alternative uses. (i) Tax bracket of ownership, and federal income tax returns for previous two (2) years. (j) Past and current income, expense, and net worth statements for a two (2) year period. If the property is income producing, annual gross income from the property and the itemized operating and maintenance expenses for the previous two (2) years. In addition the depreciation deduction and annual cash flow before and after debt services, if any, during the same period. (k) Past capital expenditures during ownership of the current owner(s). (l) Estimate of the cost of the proposed construction, alteration, demolition, or removal related to the corrective measures detailed in the citation issued by the historic zoning commission. (m) A detailed description of what alternative legal adaptive uses have been considered by the owner(s). (n) A detailed description of what efforts have been made by the owner(s) to sell the property, including any listing of the property for sale or rent, price asked, and offers received, if any. (o) A detailed description of what efforts have been made by the owner(s) to obtain financial assistance, tax credits, transfer of density, etc. that might generate funding for the needed improvements. (5)

The historic zoning commission shall schedule and hold a public hearing on the application for a certificate of economic hardship within thirty (30) days from receipt of the application. Notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be provided to the owner(s) a minimum of seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. The historic zoning commission shall review all the evidence and make a determination within thirty (30) days following the conclusion of the hearing. Written notice of the determination will be provided to the applicant along with the reasons justifying the decision by the historic zoning commission. If the historic zoning commission grants a certificate of economic hardship, the commission must detail options it has considered that would bring the property up to minimum maintenance requirements and why each option is not deemed feasible. In granting a certificate of economic hardship, the historic zoning commission may determine that some corrections may be feasible while others cannot be implemented due to economic hardship. Under such circumstances, the historic zoning commission must authorize the building inspector to issue a building permit for any activity that is deemed feasible under the conditions detailed in the certificate of economic hardship. In granting a certificate of economic hardship, the historic zoning commission may also detail any feasible plan to relieve any aspect of the economic hardship. The plan may include, but is not limited to, tax relief, loans and grant available from any source public or private, building code modifications, etc. The commission may recommend that the planning commission consider changes in zoning. The commission may also request the board of mayor and aldermen to consider relaxation of the provisions of the ordinance sufficient to allow reasonable beneficial use of or return from the property. If no alternative cause of action has been deemed feasible, the commission may request the board to consider acquisition through eminent domain.

If the historic zoning commission denies a certificate of economic hardship, the commission must detail in writing the economic and financial options that in the judgment of the commission will allow the improvements to be made to the property as required in the citation issued. If a certificate of economic hardship is denied by the historic zoning commission, the commission will revise, to the extent necessary, the designated schedule for completion of the corrective measures detailed in the citation taking into account any reasonable need for additional time due to time lost during consideration of the certificate application. The commission will notify the owner(s) in writing of any schedule amendments with the notification of the denial of the certificate.

The determination by the historic zoning commission of an application for a certificate of economic hardship, either approving or disapproving, shall on the date it is issued be a final administrative decision appealable only to the appropriate state court. Any appeal of the historic zoning commission's decision to state court must be made within thirty (30) days. Any person violating any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each offense. Each day such violation shall continue shall constitute a separate offense.

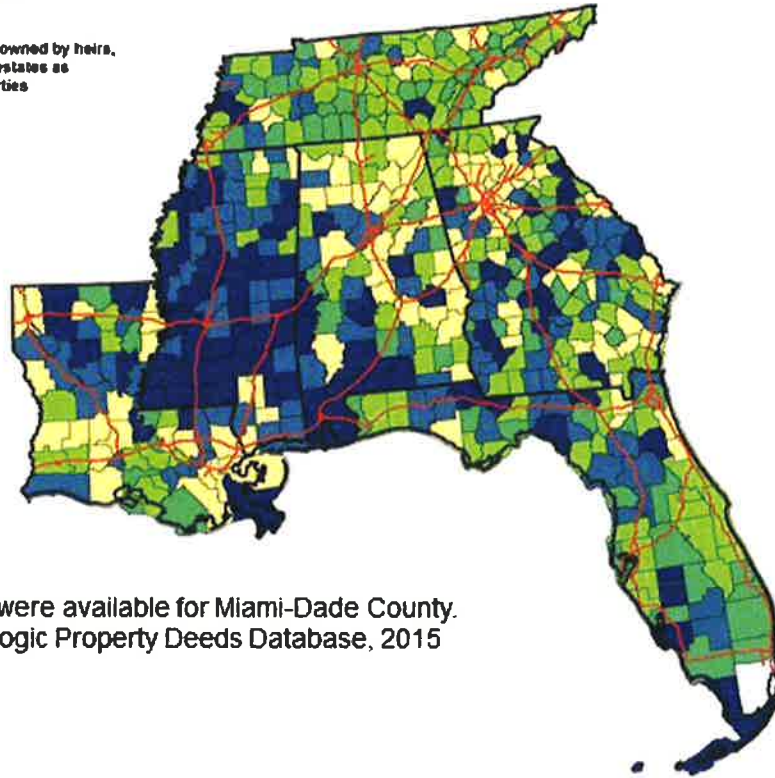
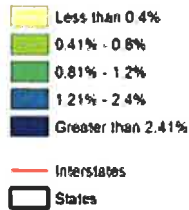
### **Heirs' Property**

One particular issue that may come to light with neglected or abandoned property is problematic ownership or incomplete deed information. This situation is not uncommon in the South and occurred most often among African Americans deeded land after the Civil War. The transfer of land ownership occurred without a probably administered will from one generation to the next, resulting in a lack of clear title on property. The term heirs' property refers to residential, agricultural, commercial, or vacant land inherited by default through generations without the benefit of a will. The situation becomes increasingly complicated over many generations, as the property is held in common by all heirs as tenants in common, or co-tenants, whether or not they live there, pay taxes, or have ever stepped foot on the property.

This circumstance requires complete agreement among the family on decisions pertaining to the property. The situation may become exacerbated if there is conflict between co-tenants or confusion over unknown or absentee heirs. The absence of a clear title on the property prevents its sale or the ability of the owners to secure loans for property improvements. Heirs' property owners often cannot access credit, sell natural resources, or participate in state and federal land improvement and natural disaster programs. Heir's property is often associated with minority demographics in rural settings, but urban examples exist as well and may contribute to blighted and abandoned properties in cities.

## Percentage of Residential Heirs' Properties by County in the Southeast

Percentage of properties owned by heirs, tenants in common, and estates as a percentage of all properties



Note: No data were available for Miami-Dade County.  
 Source: CoreLogic Property Deeds Database, 2015

Various research efforts to identify heirs properties has resulted in some conversation on policy to address the problem. Assistance at the local level can include legal help to affect a clear title on a property. Strategies for alleviating the problems associated with heirs' properties include education at the local level policy development at the state level.

The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA) was drafted in 2010 at the Texas A&M University School of Law, which several Southern states have enacted. The UPHPA provides due process protections such as notice, appraisal, and right of first refusal for a property. If the end result is partition of a property, the process occurs on a strict schedule overseen by the courts to ensure a fair market value and equitable distribution of the property among the heirs. Property can be divided either by division of the property into separate portions, called a partition in kind, or by sale of the entire property sold, with the proceeds divided equally among the co-tenants.

The Tennessee State Legislature took up the UPHPA in its 2018 session. The bill passed in the State Senate but was held up and died in the House. Supporters hope to re-introduce and pass the bill in the next legislative session. If enacted, the UPHPA would require the plaintiff in a partition action to post notice of action on the subject property identifying the name and address of the court and the common designation by which the property is known. The court may require the plaintiff to publish on the sign the name of the plaintiff and the known defendants. The court would determine the fair market value of the property by ordering an appraisal by a disinterested real estate appraiser licensed in this state. The court would notify any co-tenant, except a co-tenant requesting partition by sale, who may give notice to the court that it elects to buy all the interests of the co-tenants that requested partition by sale. The purchase price for each of the interests of a co-tenant that requested partition by sale would be the determined value of the entire parcel multiplied by the co-tenant's fractional ownership of the entire parcel.

The UHPHA would also consider factors pertaining to whether partition in kind would result in great prejudice to the co-tenants as a group, such as:

- Whether the heirs property practicably can be divided among the co-tenants;

- Whether partition in kind would apportion the property in such a way that the aggregate fair market value of the parcels resulting from the division would be materially less than the value of the property if it were sold as a whole, taking into account the condition under which a court-ordered sale likely would occur;

- Evidence of the collective duration of ownership or possession of the property by a co-tenant and one (1) or more predecessors in title or predecessors in possession to the cotenant who are or were relatives of the co-tenant or each other;

- A co-tenant's sentimental attachment to the property, including any attachment arising because the property has ancestral or other unique or special value to the co-tenant;

- The lawful use being made of the property by a co-tenant and the degree to which the co-tenant would be harmed if the co-tenant could not continue the same use of the property;

- The degree to which the co-tenants have contributed their pro rata share of the property taxes, insurance, and other expenses associated with maintaining ownership of the property or have contributed to the physical improvement, maintenance, or upkeep of the property; and

- Any other relevant factor as determined by the court.

Towns and cities can assist in the matter of heirs property at the local level with programs like the one adopted by the City of Birmingham. The City developed a strategy to clear problematic heirs' property titles efficiently through a "quiet title action" process for tax-delinquent properties. The process allows the local land bank to sell or transfer the property, with a cleared title, for productive use.

### **Property Tax Relief Programs**

The State of Tennessee has several property tax programs that may be helpful to prevent deterioration. The Tax Relief Program is a state-wide program administered at the county level by the county trustee. Bedford County encourages individuals who are 65 years or older or a disabled homeowner or a 100% disabled veteran to contact the trustee's office at (931) 684-4303 to discuss the qualifications of this program. This program has been in effect since 1976. Participants are not exempt from paying taxes, rather, they receive a reimbursement from the state for a part or all of their taxes paid. Thus, eligible participants must own the home, which must be their primary residence. The amount of tax relief received is based on the property assessment and county or city tax rate. Income from all sources is considered, including salaries or wages, Social Security, and retirement, and the maximum income for an applicant, which includes the spouse and all owners of the property, is \$29,180. Each applicant must prove he or she is at least 65 years old if they do not draw Social Security or if disability payments aren't through Social Security. Disabled applicants must be totally and permanently disabled to qualify.

A similar program is the Tax Freeze Act of 2007, which permits local governments to allow for a "freeze" on property taxes for qualifying residents age 65 and older. The freeze applies to the tax amount due for the year in which they qualify. Annual re-application is required to extend the freeze.

Applicants must prove they are 65 or older and prove ownership of the property, as well as Applicant income level is considered in the qualification process. The total income for anyone who holds ownership of the property cannot exceed \$41,660 (i.e., if two names are on the deed, their combined is counted). The tax freeze only freezes the amount of taxes paid, not the value of the property. Property owners still reap the benefit of growing home equity.