



ENTRANCES

in Historic Downtown Montpelier

Entrances

The City of Montpelier believes that ongoing maintenance of historic buildings, such as reasonable repairs and use of quality materials, extends the life of these structures and contributes to the vitality of downtown Montpelier.

In providing this document to local citizens, the Department of Planning and Community Development seeks to encourage the proper maintenance of historic buildings in the City and make information available to property owners well before the final design of a project, thereby saving both the owners and the City valuable time and money.

The Value of Entrances

The entrance to a building is often one of its most important overall design elements. Entrances add dimension and individual character to the exterior of a building. They also create architectural unity with the overall design of a structure. Perhaps most importantly, entrances function as an important point of focus, transition, and entry for each visitor.

Distinct Features of an Entrance

As an important feature on any building, entrances often utilize different materials and techniques that represent a particular or familiar architectural style. In addition to the door itself, the following are features of an entrance that can define its character and architectural significance:

- **Casing:** the framework around the doorway.
- **Transom:** the crosspiece above the door; when the crosspiece is a window, it is referred to as a transom window.
- **Sidelight:** a window or other aperture for light on the side of the doorway.
- **Crown:** the ornamental termination of a point above the doorway.

The size and location of the entrance is also important. The size of the entrance can establish a balance and sense of scale with the rest of the building, while its location establishes a functional focal point on the building's façade.

This specific Design Review Brochure is intended for the use of property owners within the City of Montpelier's Historic District who wish to add, remove, preserve, rehabilitate, restore, or reconstruct an entrance to their historic structure.

Repair or Rehab

Before embarking on any rehabilitation project, it is important to assess the viability of all your options. Indeed, simple repairs are often the most preferable solution.

Entrances that are used daily are subject to significant wear and tear. Formal entrances that are rarely used can frequently be overlooked. Chipping paint and rust often indicate disrepair. While replacement of these materials may seem like your most viable option, simple maintenance over time may delay the need for an expensive repair job that could compromise the integrity of your building. Activities such as retouching paint, repairing rotten wood, and protecting surfaces from rust can extend and preserve the service life of many existing building elements.

Property owners may also consider replacing entrances because they are drafty and do not function properly. Simple weather-stripping and other air-sealing techniques can greatly improve the insulation provided by an entry. Often the cost of repairing or retrofitting an existing door and/or sill can easily correct this condition at a fraction of the cost of replacing the entire door. Furthermore, many doorways and entrances would be very expensive and difficult to match "in-kind" since they were constructed with different materials and sizes than are conventionally available today. Preserving and restoring existing doorways and entrances should therefore be the preferred course of action; replacing an entrance should only be considered in cases of extreme deterioration or special circumstances that prevent preservation.

Making Plans

Considerations Along the Way

Due to the factors discussed above, please consider the following guidelines when preparing to work on an entrance to your building:

Appropriate Actions:

1. Keeping historic doors and entrance features, performing regular maintenance to preserve features, and repairing them when necessary.
2. Maintaining the form and dimensions of historic doors and entrance features.
3. Matching materials as closely as possible if new materials are required.
4. If adding storm doors, matching the color and form of the existing door as closely as possible.
5. Avoiding any ornament that clashes with original entrance design.

Inappropriate Actions:

1. Removing historic doors or entrance trim.
2. Replacing existing doors or entryways with new ones of incompatible design or material.
3. Changing the size of existing doors or entrance openings.
4. Adding new storm doors of incompatible design or color.



"Green" it Up

Reduce air infiltration by weather-stripping your entryway and install door sweeps to reduce air leaks.

Also consider installing a high-quality storm door that is compatible with the design of the existing door to improve the energy efficiency of your building.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

City of Montpelier
Department of Planning and Community Development
39 Main Street, City Hall, Montpelier, VT 05602-2950
Tel: (802) 223-9506 | E-mail: planning@montpelier-vt.org
www.montpelier-vt.org

Prepared by the Department of Planning and Community Development and Historic Preservation Commission.

Photography: Jim Sheridan and Gary Seaton of Northern Exposure