Following are rehabilitation guidelines specific to the commercial, institutional and other non-residential properties within the Stone Mountain Historic District. These guidelines will help developers, property owners and business owners make the best decisions when it comes to planning repair and rehabilitation projects that require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Any property owner or occupant wishing to make an exterior alteration to any building, structure, or site within the Stone Mountain Historic District must make an application to the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Demolition, relocation, or new construction in the district also requires a COA.

The Historic Preservation Commission reviews each property as a unique case and bases their decision on the Stone Mountain Design Guidelines and the circumstances surrounding the property, such as its condition, age, and significance. All properties, regardless of current appearance, will be required to conform to the guidelines when changes, replacements, repairs, or new construction occurs.

The Considerations for Planning section discusses issues to consider prior to the undertaking of a project. It is followed by the Design Guidelines section that lists specific guidelines for commercial, institutional and industrial rehabilitation.
Considerations for Planning Projects

Historic commercial, institutional and other non-residential buildings are some of the most distinctive historic resources within the historic district. Historic storefronts in the Stone Mountain commercial district play a vital role in the community’s advertising and merchandising strategy due to their prominence. The street-level storefronts, as well as the rest of the buildings, have a distinct character that is different and, often times, more visually appealing than that of modern construction. Therefore, it is vital that repair or rehabilitation work on commercial buildings be planned carefully to consider the entire building and to retain any character-defining elements, such as window patterns and exterior materials.

Historic institutional, transportation-related and industrial resources in Stone Mountain also have distinct character-defining elements that should be retained, as well as original building forms. For instance, the historic design of churches relates directly to their function as a public place of worship. Changes and additions to churches should not disguise the original use and appearance of the building, even if the use of the building changes. Similarly, the historic railroad depot on Main Street should always have its historic appearance as a depot preserved. Despite its new use for city government offices, the fundamental historic form and appearance of the building is as a transportation-related resource and it should be preserved and maintained as such if at all possible.
Chapter 6: Nonresidential Rehabilitation Guidelines

Design Guidelines

6.1 Storefronts

6.1.1 Identify, preserve and maintain historic character-defining elements of commercial storefronts, such as windows, transoms, doors, architectural details and materials. The removal or radical change of the original appearance and significant elements of a historic storefront is not appropriate within the historic district.

6.1.2 When necessary, repair deteriorated storefronts by reinforcing historic materials and by replacing original materials with in kind materials or with compatible substitute materials. Replacement materials should be compatible in size, scale, materials, and design to the surviving part of the storefront.

6.1.3 Historic changes to storefronts that have become significant over time, or historic in their own right, should be preserved.

6.1.4 The reconstruction of a partially, or completely, removed storefront should be based on historical, pictorial or physical documentation. It is not appropriate to create a storefront with a false historic appearance.

6.1.5 A storefront that has entirely lost its significant historic features and cannot be documented, or a storefront that is less than 50 years old, should have a contemporary storefront design that is compatible to historic examples, yet does not attempt to be a reproduction of a historic architectural style. The new storefront should follow the guidelines for new construction in this section.

6.1.6 The removal of non-historic cladding, false fronts, or inappropriate additions to historic storefronts is greatly encouraged in order to reveal the historic character of the building.

6.1.7 The covering of character-defining elements of storefronts with non-historic cladding, false fronts or inappropriate additions is not appropriate.

6.1.8 The alteration of a historic commercial storefront so that it appears to be residential in character is not appropriate.
6.2 Exterior Materials

6.2.1 Retain and maintain original exterior materials if at all possible. Such materials can include masonry, metal, wood or other historic material.

6.2.2 Regularly inspect exterior materials in order to identify, evaluate and treat causes of deterioration, such as leaking gutters, roofs or flashing; cracks or holes; faulty caulking; insect infestation; or vegetative growth.

6.2.3 Maintain exterior materials by providing proper drainage so that water does not stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in curved decorative features. Excessive moisture can cause mortar joint deterioration, metal corrosion and wood deterioration.
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6.2.4 Only clean exterior materials when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling. Clean exterior surfaces with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and detergents, using natural brushes. Sandblasting, high-pressure waterblasting or caustic chemical treatments are never appropriate cleaning methods and will permanently damage exterior surfaces. Tests should be conducted before using any cleaning methods on historic materials.

6.2.5 Retain historic surface treatments coatings on exterior materials, such as paint or original varnishes, in order to protect the material from moisture and ultraviolet light. Paint removal is inappropriate for a historically painted surface unless deteriorated surface treatments needs to be removed prior to replacement. Careful removal of paint should be completed by handscraping, handsanding, thermal devices and limited use of chemical strippers where necessary.

6.2.6 Exterior materials that were historically unpainted should generally remain unpainted. Appropriate non-historic protective coatings may be applied to exterior materials where needed to protect the original material, such as in areas of high pedestrian use.

6.2.7 When replacement of exterior materials is necessary, replace only deteriorated materials and match the original material in size, shape, profile, texture, and type.

6.2.8 When repair or replacement of new mortar is needed, the new mortar should duplicate the old in strength, composition, color, texture, and mortar joint width. A high content of Portland cement should not be used in repointing historic masonry joints.

6.2.9 Stucco facing should be repaired with a stucco mixture that comes very close to duplicating the original material in both appearance and texture.

6.2.10 The application of non-historic exterior siding, such as brick veneers, asphalt shingle siding, exterior insulating finishing systems (stucco), dryvit, aluminum siding and plywood, over historic materials is not appropriate within the historic district.

6.2.11 The use of substitute materials to replace deteriorated historic material on a building must meet one of the following circumstances: a) the unavailability of historic materials; b) the unavailability of skilled craftsmen; c) inherent flaws in the original materials; or d) code-required changes.

6.2.12 If the use of substitute materials is warranted, the new material must be a) compatible with the original historic material in appearance; b) its physical properties must be similar to those of the historic material; or be installed in a manner that tolerates differences; and c) it must meet certain similar performance expectations as those of the original historic material.
6.3 Architectural Details

6.3.1 Architectural details that are character-defining features of a historic building should be preserved and maintained.

6.3.2 The application of details that are inappropriate to the period or style of a house is not appropriate.

6.3.3 Repair, rather than replace, damaged architectural elements when possible.

6.3.4 Architectural details that are beyond repair may be replaced, provided that the replacement details are compatible in design, scale and material.

Although the building is not longer used as a bank, this marble inset is important to the history and visual character of the building and should be retained.

This historic cast iron column is in need of painting, and possibly treatment for corrosion, in order to halt the deterioration of this character-defining architectural element.
6.4 Entrances

6.4.1 Retain original entrances of a historic building, including character-defining features such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, transoms, entablatures, balusters, columns, railings, brackets, stairs and roof detailing.

6.4.2 Protect and maintain original materials to the entrances of historic properties through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems.

6.4.3 Repair of entrance details, if seriously deteriorated, should involve the limited replacement of original material with in-kind materials or a compatible substitute. If replacement materials must be introduced, the new material should match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, material.

6.4.4 The replacement of an original entrance that is missing may be accomplished in two ways: 1) an accurate restoration can be completed when historical, pictorial, and physical documentation is available, or 2) a new design that is compatible with the design and historic character of the building can be constructed.

6.4.5 The addition of materials, architectural details, and light fixtures not appropriate to the period or style of the historic building is not appropriate.

6.5.6 The addition of screen and storm doors should not detract from the character of the historic building and should be compatible with the original entrance.

6.4.7 Retain original doors and their decorative surrounds. If a deteriorated door must be replaced, the new door and surround should be similar to the original in design and material.
6.5 Windows

6.5.1 Existing windows, including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, frames, moldings, shutters, and all hardware, should be retained and repaired through routine maintenance whenever possible.

6.5.2 When deteriorated elements must be replaced, new materials should be compatible with original materials in terms of size, material, design and hardware.

6.5.3 A replacement window should match the original opening and should duplicate proportions and pane configurations of the original window. Vinyl and aluminum windows with snap-in grid systems may be suitable replacements for wooden windows in the historic district provided wooden replacement are not practical and the design detail of the historic windows can be matched. Care should be taken to match the mullions, muntins and meeting rails, size and configuration of the replacement window to the original window so that features of the historic window are not lost. If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim.

Residential style entryways (left photo) are not appropriate to commercial buildings. The original arched entryway of this building (right photo) has been retained. All original openings, especially front entrance openings, should be retained during renovation projects.

The replacement of historic sash windows with a different type of window is not appropriate because it alters the historic appearance of the building.
6.5.4 Instead of replacing original glass with double-glazing, thermal upgrade should be achieved by installing or replacing inadequate or damaged weather stripping and caulking. The installation of exterior storm windows is another appropriate option for obtaining energy efficiency. Care should be taken to match the mullions, muntins and meeting rails, size and configuration of the storm to the primary window so that features of the historic window are not obscured. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.

6.5.5 Original window openings should not be permanently covered or infilled. Any covering of windows should be of a temporary nature and should not damage or destroy historic materials.

6.5.6 The creation of new window openings on the facades of historic buildings is not appropriate.

6.5.7 The use of mirrored or tinted glass is not appropriate and is to be avoided.

6.5.8 Shutters should not be added to buildings that did not historically feature shutters.

6.5.9 Where historical documentation exists, new shutters should be appropriate to the style and period of the building in terms of material and design.

6.6 Awnings and Balconies

6.6.1 Historic awnings or balconies that are character-defining to the building should be retained and repaired whenever possible.

6.6.2 The replacement of an original historic balcony or awning that is missing may be accomplished in two ways: 1) an accurate restoration can be completed when historical, pictorial, and physical documentation is available, or 2) a new design that is compatible with the design and historic character of the building can be constructed.

6.6.3 The addition of new balconies and awnings to a historic commercial building are appropriate on the rear facade, or on an unobtrusive facade, of a building, as long as they comply with local ordinances and codes. The new decks should be compatible with the building’s size, scale, materials, and design, and should be installed in such a manner that they can be removed without harming the original historic materials. New decks and balconies should not obscure significant character-defining features of a historic building.
6.6.4 The use of unpainted pressure treated lumber or composite materials for balconies is not appropriate for the character of the historic district. Balconies should be painted or treated with an appropriate surface treatment.

6.6.5 Canvas awnings placed over display windows of new buildings are encouraged and often are suitable locations for signs. Canvas awnings are recommended. Residential style metal, plastic, and wood awnings are strongly discouraged. Other materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6.6.6 Awning shapes should match the window and door shapes that are covered or shaded.

6.6.7 Awnings and balconies should be free-standing and not impede pedestrians by attaching to the sidewalk in any way.

6.7 Roofs

6.7.1 Retain the original shape and pitch of the roof with original features and original materials when possible.

6.7.2 Historic roofing materials, such as clay and pressed metal, should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, new materials should match as closely as possible the texture, color, design, and composition of the historic roofing material.

6.7.3 No addition to a building should greatly alter the original form of the roof or render that form unrecognizable.

6.7.4 Historic roofing materials visible from the public right-of-way should be repaired rather than replaced.

6.7.5 If replacement of historic roofing material is necessary, new materials should match as closely as possible the scale, texture, and color of the historic roofing materials.

6.7.6 Historic gutters and downspouts should be retained. If gutters and downspouts are deteriorated and need to be replaced, new gutters and downspouts should be similar to the original in material and appearance.

6.7.7 Buildings that have never had gutters and downspouts should add them in such a manner as to be unobtrusive. New and innovative gutter systems are encouraged.
6.8 Mechanical Systems

6.8.1 The preservation of historic mechanical systems is highly encouraged; such mechanical elements may include radiators, vents, fans, grilles, plumbing fixtures, switchplates, and lights.

6.8.2 Where new mechanical systems are required for a building, it is recommended that installation of the systems cause the least alteration possible to the exterior elevations of the building and the least damage to historic building materials.

6.8.3 The front facade of a building should not be disrupted by the addition of room air conditioner units. These units should be placed at the rear or side facades of a building and landscaped to shield them from being visible from public right-of-way. They should be installed in such a manner to avoid damage to historic material, including windows sashes and frames.

6.8.4 Satellite dishes and other antennae should be located unobtrusively to the side or rear of the primary building.

6.8.5 Satellite dishes and other antennae located on the property, but not on a building, should be sited unobtrusively to the side or rear of the property and should be screened by landscaping where possible.

The placement of air conditioning units on the rear portion of the roof of a building is an appropriate, unobtrusive design solution.

The placement of room air conditioners on the front facade of buildings is not appropriate. Such mechanical systems should be placed on rear or side facades so as not to disrupt the historic integrity of the property. The historic transom of this building has also been inappropriately covered.

6.7.8 Historic roof dormers should be retained with their original windows.

6.7.9 Additions to roofs that would be visible from the right-of-way are discouraged. If an addition is necessary, it should be placed away from a building's prominent facades so as to have a minimal visual impact.

6.7.10 New dormers, roof decks and balconies may be permitted on the rear facade or side facades if they are not prominent facades visible from the right-of-way. These new features must compatible with the period, style and details of the historic way. They should be attached in such a way that if removed they will not damage the original material.

6.7.11 Skylights should be installed in unobtrusive locations, preferably at rear rooflines or behind dormers. Convex or bubble skylights are strongly discouraged.
6.9 Additions

6.9.1 Historic additions and alterations that have acquired significance in their own right should be preserved.

6.9.2 Additions to historic buildings should be designed so it is clear what is historic and what is new.

6.9.3 Additions should be designed to have the least effect possible on historic materials or character-defining elements of the historic building or landscape, including significant mature trees on the site.

6.9.4 New additions should be placed away from the front facade of the primary building, ideally in the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the historic building, and should be compatible with the original building in terms of materials, relationships of solids to voids, and color. The size and scale of the addition should be limited in relationship to the historic building.

6.9.5 Additions to the side of a historic building should not be flush with the front facade of the historic building. At the very minimum, appropriately-designed side additions to historic buildings are stepped back from the front facade. It is recommended that additions to the sides of historic buildings be placed as far back as possible.

6.9.6 The design of a new addition should be clearly differentiated so that the addition is not mistaken for part of the original building.

6.9.7 New additions should be designed so that a minimum of historic material and character-defining elements are obscured, damaged or destroyed.

6.10 Adaptive Reuse

Historic residential properties that are converted to commercial uses must comply with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements as described below in Section 5.10.

6.10.1 Proposed new uses for historic commercial buildings should be compatible with the historic property so that minimal changes are necessary. The property should be recognized as a historic commercial property, even after a conversion.

6.10.2 The arrangement and symmetry of the front facade should be preserved during any adaptive reuse project.
6.10.3 If a historic porch must be enclosed as a requirement for a new use, the enclosure of the porch should be carefully designed in a manner that preserves the historic character of the building. This can include using large sheets of glass and recessing the enclosure wall behind existing scrollwork, posts, and balustrades.

3.10.4 If an additional entrance or porch is required for a new use, it should be constructed in a manner that preserves the historic character of the buildings, such as limiting such alterations to non-character-defining elevations.

3.10.5 If additional windows on rear or other-non character-defining elevations are required by the new use, new window openings should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

3.10.6 If a dropped ceiling is required for the new use of the historic building, a setback in the design of the dropped ceiling is strongly encouraged to allow for view of the full height of the window openings from the exterior.

3.10.7 Additional stories, when required for a new use, should be designed to be set back from the wall plane and be as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

3.10.8 Signage for businesses should respect the size, scale, and design of the historic building as well as the surrounding area.

3.10.9 Sign materials, including the sign face and support structure, should be compatible with the character of the historic building and the surrounding neighborhood.

3.10.10 The historic landscape features of the property should be preserved and maintained despite a change in use of the property.

6.11 Health, Safety and Accessibility Considerations

In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed. This Act states that access to properties open to the public is a civil right. Historic buildings are not exempt from ADA requirements, but there are provisions in the Act that take into account the preservation of historic buildings. Commercial uses are only required to meet the ADA when they alter their facility. In general, where changes required by the ADA would threaten or destroy the significance of a qualified historic building there are special requirements to address conditions of limited accessibility.
These guidelines highlight some of the special requirements of the ADA and give a general overview of issues that may need to be addressed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The National Trust for Historic Preservation published a "Self- Guided Training Course for Historic Preservation Commissions." This training course, and Preservation Brief #32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible," is the underlying framework for these guidelines.

The following guidelines are not meant to substitute for meeting the ADA requirements. Portable ramps do not meet the accessibility requirements of the ADA but may be used as a temporary measure until a better solution is found.

6.11.1 Identify the historic building’s character-defining elements so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.¹

6.11.2 Comply with the requirements of applicable building and fire safety laws, ordinances, codes, standards, rules, or regulations in a manner that character-defining elements are preserved.

6.11.3 Local citizens and officials should work together for creative solutions to provide accessibility in the downtown commercial area of the historic district, while also striving to protect the historic character and materials of buildings and landscapes.

6.11.4 Ramps/lifts should meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design. In addition, they should be built of new materials that are compatible with the historic material of the building. Lifts should be located under a cover to protect the user and the mechanism.

6.11.5 Attempt to place ramps/lifts on the side or rear facade of the building in order to preserve the symmetry of the front facade. Avoid ramp switchbacks on the front of a building that destroy the appearance of the front facade.

6.11.6 Accessibility structures should be compatible with the symmetry and scale of the historic building and should avoid blocking existing windows and doors. Every effort should be made to avoid the removal of historic material and/or significant character-defining features.

6.11.7 Ramps can be constructed with a variety of materials including wood, brick, and stone. Unpainted pressure-treated wood or composite materials should not be used to construct ramps because they are not visually compatible with most historic properties.
6.11.8 The enlargement of door openings on the front facade is discouraged.

6.11.9 The use of appropriate door hardware, such as lever handles, is encouraged. Historic hardware should be preserved in storage.

6.11.10 The installation of handicap accessible facilities should be done in a manner that, when removed, will not damage or destroy historic fabric.

6.11.11 The addition of new stairways or elevators to meet health and safety codes should be done in a manner that preserves adjacent character-defining elements. Where possible, locate fire exits, stairs, landings, and decks on the rear or an inconspicuous side of the structure.

6.11.12 When fire escapes are necessary, every effort should be made to use low visibility fire escapes designed for historic buildings or portable escapes.

6.11.13 New fire doors should be as similar as possible to existing doors in proportion, location, size and detail.

6.11.14 Additional fire exits should be placed on the rear or side facades of buildings and should match historic doors in scale and detail.

1Reference Preservation Brief # 17, as listed in the Appendix, for a methodology for identifying character-defining elements of historic properties.

### 6.12 New Construction

*Area of influence: Each site within a historic district will have its own unique area of influence. Shown here are two different examples with suggested minimum areas that might be considered. Neighboring buildings should be examined to determine the consistent patterns of design concepts and architectural elements that are present.*

6.12.1 New buildings should match the scale, directional emphasis, setback and height of historic buildings within their area of influence.
6.12.2 New buildings may be constructed of materials that are compatible with surrounding historic buildings in the residential district. Stucco, brick, wood siding and vinyl siding are examples of appropriate new materials.

6.12.3 Metal-sided buildings are not appropriate for the historic district.

6.12.4 The shape and pitch of a roof on a new building should be consistent with those buildings within their area of influence.

6.12.5 New buildings should be a product of their time and not attempt to be an exact reproduction of historic architectural styles. Referencing historic architectural details or building types is appropriate for new construction within the historic district; however, constructing a new building that is indistinguishable from a historic building is not appropriate. A rule of thumb is that the average citizen should be able to tell the difference between a historic building and a contemporary building.

6.12.6 New buildings should echo the dominant building patterns established within their area of influence or neighborhood. The arrangement of windows and entrances, materials, and other orientation to the street are some of the features that should be replicated.

This example of new construction (left photo) successfully maintains the established rhythm of window and door openings, heights and proportions within this historic commercial block. Meanwhile, this example (right photo) illustrates an inappropriate infill due to the overwhelming scale, height and orientation of the new building.

The scale of the proposed building in the middle is compatible with that of the historic buildings to either side.

The scale of the proposed building in the middle is incompatible with that of the historic buildings to either side.
Scale/Height - Illustration of Different Scales: These buildings obviously express different scales.

Shape - Roof Pitch - Inappropriate/Appropriate Examples: These two comparisons depict relationships between historic and new buildings in terms of roof pitch. The example on the top is that of a historic house (shaded) with a steeply-pitched roof standing next to a new building with an inappropriate shallow-pitched roof. The example on the bottom shows a more compatible roof pitch on the new building.

Building Setback - Inappropriate: This example shows a new building in violation of the established setback found along this street. The new building, however is properly orientated front-to-back on its site.