

section *seven*

Landscape Design Guidelines

Following are landscape guidelines specific to Milledgeville. This section provides guidance to property owners and the City of Milledgeville in making sound decisions when planning and carrying out a landscape project. Although the Milledgeville Preservation Commission doesn't review applications for landscape changes in the public right-of-way, this section can provide guidance to the City of Milledgeville in planning right-of-way projects.

Any property owner or occupant wishing to make an alteration to any landscape feature within the Milledgeville Historic District must make an application to the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The Commission reviews each request as a unique case and bases its decision on the design guidelines and the circumstances surrounding the property such as its condition, age, and significance. Properties that do not currently meet the design guidelines will be required to conform to the guidelines when changes, replacements, repairs, or new construction occurs.

The first part of this section lists the guidelines in numerical order for quick review. The second part of the section provides additional information and photos for interpreting the guidelines.



Landscape Design Guidelines in Numerical Order

7.1 Streetscape

- 7.1.1 Green space buffers between the road and sidewalk should be preserved.
- 7.1.2 Medians on Jefferson Street and Washington Street should be preserved and plantings maintained.
- 7.1.3 Historic paving materials, such as granite curbs, should be preserved.
- 7.1.4 Sidewalk improvements should duplicate historic patterns.
- 7.1.5 New curb cuts should be kept to a minimum.

7.2 Trees

- 7.2.1 Trees under power lines should be lightly pruned on an annual basis rather than periodic severe pruning which destroys the effect of the historic street canopy.
- 7.2.2 When thinning street trees, no more than 25% of the tree foliage should be removed. Sufficient branch structure should remain on the interior of the tree to avoid splitting the trunk.
- 7.2.3 Replace aging or diseased trees with tree species typically found in the district such as water oak, pecan, dogwood, and sugar hackberry.

7.3 Commercial Parking Areas

- 7.3.1 Parking areas in the district should be edged with tree plantings and hedges around open parking lots. This will help to buffer and screen these spaces as well as preserve visual edges.
- 7.3.2 Parking areas in the rear of buildings rather than in front of buildings is always encouraged.

7.4 Residential Parking Areas

- 7.4.1 Historic driveways should be preserved and historic materials repaired rather than replaced.
- 7.4.2 Residential buildings that have a commercial use or commercial buildings in residential areas are strongly encouraged to place parking at the rear or side of a property. If necessary, a front parking area should be appropriately landscaped to preserve the appearance of a front yard by leaving a substantial green strip between the sidewalk and parking area.

7.5 Commercial Area Landscape Elements

- 7.5.1 Historic paving and scoring patterns in sidewalks should be preserved if possible. New paving should strive to replicate historic precedents.
- 7.5.2 Street furnishings such as benches, sidewalk trash receptacles and planters should compliment historic architecture but not appear to be historic artifacts.
- 7.5.3 Railroad ties and barrel planters are not appropriate to the period of the historic district.

- 7.5.4 Vending machines should be located inside buildings as they detract from the historic character of the district.
- 7.5.5 Commercial trash receptacles should be located at the rear of a building and be screened from the right-of-way by lattice fencing or vegetation.
- 7.5.6 Consider introducing only new plant materials that are native or that would have been available during the district's period of significance.
- 7.5.7 New exterior lighting should be compatible with the architectural styles present in the historic district.

7.6 Residential Area Landscape Elements

- 7.6.1 Every effort should be made to preserve significant historic plant materials such as boxwood hedges.
- 7.6.2 Consider introducing only new plant materials that are native or that would have been available during the district's period of significance.
- 7.6.3 The appearance of uninterrupted front lawns on a street should be preserved. New fences would not be appropriate in such a setting.
- 7.6.4 Historic fences should be preserved and repaired rather than replaced.
- 7.6.5 Low brick retaining walls with metal railings are characteristic of the district and are encouraged.
- 7.6.6 New fences should be appropriate to the period and style of the building's architecture.
- 7.6.7 Chain link, vinyl, or wood picket fences are not appropriate for the historic district.
- 7.6.8 Railroad ties are not an appropriate landscape design treatment.

Interpreting the Landscape Design Guidelines

7.1 Streetscape

7.1 Streetscape

- 7.1.1 Green space buffers between the road and sidewalk should be preserved.
- 7.1.2 Medians on Jefferson Street and Washington Street should be preserved and plantings maintained.

Typical streetscape layout in Milledgeville includes the road, green buffer strip, sidewalk and front yard. Mature trees and other historic plantings that are located in the buffer strips and medians should be preserved to the extent possible or replaced with appropriate substitute vegetation when retention is no longer possible. Nonhistoric plant material may be removed if it detracts from the general streetscape character. In addition to providing an area for planting, green space buffers provide a sense of safety for pedestrians on the sidewalk.



Granite curbs and median plantings give Washington Street its unique identity.

- 7.1.3 Historic paving materials, such as granite curbs, should be preserved.
- 7.1.4 Sidewalk improvements should duplicate historic sidewalk patterns.
- 7.1.5 New curb cuts should be kept to a minimum.

Sidewalk improvements within the historic district should follow the established pattern of a green space buffer between the roadway and sidewalk in the residential areas, and street trees and planters in the commercial downtown. When undertaking sidewalk improvements, handicap accessibility issues should be addressed.



The traditional rhythm of residential streets, created by historic curb cuts, granite curbing, and the sidewalk setback should be respected when undertaking sidewalk improvements.

7.2 Trees

7.2.1 Trees under power lines should be lightly pruned on an annual basis rather than periodic severe pruning which destroys the effect of the historic street canopy.

7.2.2 When thinning street trees, no more than 25% of the tree foliage should be removed. Sufficient branch structure should remain on the interior of the tree to avoid splitting the trunk.

7.2.3 Replace aging or diseased trees with tree species typically found in the district such as water oak, pecan, dogwood, and sugar hackberry.

Street trees in Milledgeville add to the character of the local historic district. Besides being visually pleasing, the trees provide environmental benefits and improve property values. In order to reap the benefits that trees provide, they must be properly maintained.



Substantial pruning has occurred on this tree to avoid a utility conflict. The effect of the tree canopy has been diminished.



Severe pruning effectively destroyed the tree canopy. Trees with a shorter maximum height, such as dogwood, are appropriate replacements in green buffer strips beneath power lines.

7.3 Commercial Parking Areas

7.3.1 Parking areas in the district should be edged with tree plantings and hedges around open parking lots. This will help to buffer and screen these spaces as well as preserve visual edges.

7.3.2 Parking areas located to the rear of buildings rather than in front of buildings is always encouraged.

Other than on-street parking, additional parking lots should always be relegated to the rear of lots. Parking areas in front of buildings should be avoided because they break the rhythm of the streetscape. When parking areas are in the center of street blocks, the edge of the parking area should be landscaped to continue the edge of the buildings on either side. Both the paving and landscaping in parking areas should be well maintained.



Landscaping around open parking lots and parking garages should provide ample screening, which can not be produced by this small planting bed.



This off-street parking lot retains the green buffer strip setback and is nicely landscaped with shade trees and grass bumpouts.

7.4 Residential Parking Areas

7.4.1 Historic driveways should be preserved and historic materials repaired rather than replaced.



Driveways have historic precedent that dates to the early 1900s. Most drives were traditionally gravel or dirt. Concrete strips and solid concrete became a more prevalent material in the mid-twentieth century. Although asphalt is now a common driveway material, the use of more traditional materials is encouraged.

The unpaved grass strip is an example of an early twentieth-century driveway material.

7.4.2 Residential buildings that have a commercial use or commercial buildings in residential areas are strongly encouraged to place parking at the rear or side of a property. Parking areas should be appropriately landscaped to preserve the appearance of a front yard by leaving a substantial grass buffer between the sidewalk and parking area.



Building lots in a residential area should retain a residential character. Parking for commercial establishments in residential areas should be of appropriate size and scale and be screened from the public right-of-way. A large swath of asphalt paving with no vegetative buffer destroys the established rhythm of a residential neighborhood.

This new landscaping provides an adequate buffer from the street parking.

7.5 Commercial Area Landscape Elements

7.5.1 Historic paving and scoring patterns in sidewalks should be preserved if possible. New paving should strive to replicate historic precedents.



Historic paving materials should be well maintained and replaced in kind when possible. Historic paving patterns can provide an architectural detail that enhances the character of the historic district.

The historic granite curb should be preserved and maintained.

7.5.2 Street furnishings such as benches, sidewalk trash receptacles and planters should compliment historic architecture but not appear to be historic artifacts.

7.5.3 Railroad ties and barrel planters are not appropriate to the period of the historic district.

7.5.4 Vending machines should be located inside buildings as they detract from the historic character of the district.

7.5.5 Commercial trash receptacles should be located at the rear of a building and be screened from the right-of-way by lattice fencing or vegetation.

7.5.6 Consider introducing only new plant materials that are native or that would have been available during the district's period of significance.

7.5.7 New exterior lighting should be compatible with the architectural styles present in the historic district.



Street furnishings should be well maintained and should not overwhelm the historic architecture. Contemporary street furnishings compatible with the architecture are encouraged. The use of period furnishings not appropriate to the period of significance for the district creates a false sense of history.

This is an example of the existing trash cans used in Milledgeville and is properly maintained.

7.6 Residential Area Landscape Elements

7.6.1 Every effort should be made to preserve significant historic plant materials such as boxwood hedges.

7.6.2 Consider introducing only new plant materials that are native or that would have been available during the district's period of significance.

There are remnants of nineteenth-century formal gardens throughout the historic district. These formal gardens should be preserved. Early-to-mid-twentieth century yards tended to have more informal landscaping. This simpler landscaping is a character-defining feature of early-to-mid-twentieth century architectural styles and should also be preserved.

7.6.2 The appearance of uninterrupted front lawns on a street should be preserved. New fences would not be appropriate in such a setting.

7.6.3 Historic fences should be preserved and repaired rather than replaced.

7.6.4 Low brick retaining walls with metal railings are characteristic of the district and are encouraged.

7.6.6 New fences should be appropriate to the period and style of the building's architecture.

7.6.7 Chain link, vinyl, or wood picket fences are not appropriate for the historic district.

7.6.8 Railroad ties are not an appropriate landscape design treatment.

Fences are most often a feature of nineteenth-century houses although some 20th century houses had them as well. The twentieth-century brought about the idea of yards on a street flowing into each other resembling a park-like atmosphere. Uninterrupted front yards on a street should not be interrupted by fences. Milledgeville has a number of fences throughout the residential area. Most of the fences consist of low brick retaining walls with either ornate metal fences or simple metal rails topping them. This tradition should be encouraged.



A well-maintained low brick retaining wall.



An old iron fence on a brick retaining wall that should be preserved. Overgrown plant material should be cut back to prevent masonry damage.



Historic brick gate piers create a distinctive entrance.



Chain link fencing is discouraged in the historic district, especially for front yards. Landscaping to obscure a fence, as in this yard, lessens the impact chain link fencing has within the district.