(A clear vision and strong design principles will help guide the Board of Architectural Review in its decisions. Recognizing that Charleston is unique in its collection of historically and architecturally significant buildings, the standards below have been adapted from the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. These basic principles were created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs.

The Charleston Standards apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, and types. They are intended to be applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility; they are not hard and fast rules, but rather are meant to serve as principles to assist in determining appropriate treatments for historic buildings.)

1. The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property may negatively impact the historic character and should be avoided.

2. The buildings of Charleston provide a physical record of their time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, obscure that record and are not encouraged.

3. Many of Charleston’s buildings have evolved over time. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be retained and preserved as a part of its history.

4. Charleston has a tradition of expert craftsmanship in even its simplest structures. Examples of craftsmanship such as distinctive materials, architectural features, finishes, and construction techniques should be protected.

5. It is important to maintain the historic fabric of Charleston as much as possible; therefore, deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. When deterioration is so severe that replacement is necessary, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Wherever possible, replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

6. Chemical or physical treatments should be matched to the period of the building on which they are used. They should be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Modern treatments that may cause damage to historic materials should not be used.

7. Additions or exterior alterations to historic properties should be sympathetic to historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work should be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its setting. To respect the authenticity of the historic structure and its context and setting, the new alterations or addition should be clearly discernible from the old. The differentiation may or may not be stylistic, and may be as subtle as a change in building footprint, material, or other means.

8. New construction should be sympathetic to the historic features that characterize its setting and context. To respect the significance of the historic context, the new work should respect the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of its setting.

9. Additions, adjacent or related new construction, and modifications should be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its context and setting remain unimpaired.
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at their December 10, 2014 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted regarding the installation of hardscaping in the Old and Historic and Old City Districts:

The City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance defines structures as “Anything constructed or erected, the use of which demands its permanent location on the land; or anything attached to something having a permanent location on the land.” As such, elements like fences, walls, gates, paving, etc., are considered to be structures and are under the purview of the Board of Architectural Review. Therefore, the Board of Architectural Review makes the following statement of policy:

1. Materials used shall be of a quality commensurate with Charleston’s architectural heritage.

2. Fences and walls should be appropriately scaled for their context so as to prevent a fortress-like appearance.

3. Metal fences are to be hot rolled steel or wrought iron with welded joints and concealed fasteners. Premanufactured aluminum fences are generally not acceptable for use in a historic district. Some exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for commercial properties.

4. Masonry walls must be modular brick or 3-coat stucco on block. No unfinished or painted CMU block is allowed.

5. Wood fences should be detailed and finished to present an urban appearance. Dog-ear tops, shadowbox style, clear stains, and unfinished wood are not acceptable.

6. Paving should be limited to the minimum required for driveway access and a reasonable amount for recreational uses. In no case should an entire lot be paved for parking.

7. Pervious paving materials are desirable. Where concrete is permitted, it shall not be worked to imitate other materials (e.g., brick or stone). Plantation mix is preferable to gravel, but in each case, edges of paved areas shall be clearly defined with appropriate edging and planting beds. No gravel larger than #7 shall be permitted. An apron must be provided to contain the material and prevent its entrance into the stormwater system.

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:

Chair, Board of Architectural Review

Date
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at the September 13, 2006 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted regarding the installation of hurricane protection panels installed in the Old and Historic and Old City District.

The Board understands the necessity of allowing property owners, particularly those of historic buildings, to protect their structures in the event of an impending storm through the use of hurricane panels over door and window openings. It is also imperative in where possible as little alteration of historic fabric occur. Therefore the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Where possible, existing swing type shutters should be used in lieu of panelized systems. In many instances, installation of these types of traditional shutters may be preferable to a panelized system, depending on the building under consideration. (Note that in the case of historic buildings, the shutters must be made of wood.)

2. Any panel system should be installed in a manner that is completely reversible, resulting in as little damage to the fabric of the building as possible.

3. Permanent Fasteners:
   a. Shall be recessed “female type”, installed such that the face is flush with the existing trim material.
   b. The fasteners shall be stainless steel or other rustproof material, and shall be painted to match the adjacent trim.
   c. The number of fasteners installed shall be as few as possible to meet the manufacturer’s recommendations.
   d. Fasteners should be set in sealant to minimize water intrusion and potential deterioration of historic material.
   e. Any caps installed over the fasteners should be painted to match the adjacent trim.

4. Installation of the panel itself is only allowed in the event of an approaching storm, and must be removed within 14 days once the threat has passed.

5. No other more visible permanent alterations such as tracks, metal angles or other supports, raised bolts, etc., shall be permitted.

6. The panel shall fit within the opening (as opposed to the face of the adjacent wall surface) if at all possible.

7. In the case of masonry buildings, the panel shall fit within the masonry opening and be attached to the door or window trim if possible. If it is necessary to insert the permanent fasteners to a brick surface, the fasteners should be installed within the mortar joints.

8. Where plywood panels are to be simply installed over openings, screws are encouraged in lieu of nails to minimize damage to historic fabric.

9. This policy statement also encourages the use of interior panel systems for protection where possible to minimize damage to exterior fabric.

The above criteria are intended as general guidelines. Applications for the installation of hurricane panel systems shall be considered on a case by case basis.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on September 13, 2006.
When considering an application for the enclosure of a piazza, the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) must consider the historic, architectural, and aesthetic features of the piazza, the nature and character of the surrounding area, the use of the structure and the piazza, and the importance to the City. The BAR will make the following observations when hearing such an application:

1. The Charleston piazza/porch is a building feature unique to, and closely identified with, the architectural history and urban character of the city.

2. This unique feature of the Charleston Single House should be preserved in order to retain the prevailing character of our vernacular architecture.

3. To enclose the piazza and incorporate it into the interior of a building eliminates this unique feature, and eliminate the use of the piazza as a transitioning space between the interior and its surrounding urban environment.

4. Enclosing piazzas in whole, or in part, may result in irreversible damage to our architectural heritage.

Therefore, the Board of Architectural Review resolves closely to review applications for piazza enclosures, and will consider those applications which, after review by the Preservation Officer, meet the following criteria:

1. The necessity for the additional area which results from the enclosure must be sufficiently compelling and extreme that no other alternative could reasonably accomplish this purpose. The applicant must demonstrate through floor plans, elevations, and photographs that any other alternative solution shall result in unacceptable alterations to the historic fabric of the structure.

2. The location of the piazza enclosure shall be to the rear of the piazza, be minimal in size, and not alter the conceptual relationship between the house and the piazza.
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at their December 10, 2014 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted regarding the repair and/or replacement of historic roofs in the Old and Historic and Old City Districts:

Roofs are a character-defining feature of historic buildings. Historic roofing types like slate, standing-seam metal, wood shingle, and tile are highly significant elements of the buildings in Charleston’s historic districts and should be preserved. Not only do roofs protect the buildings beneath, but they also form an important part of the visual experience of the city. Therefore, the Board of Architectural Review makes the following statement of policy:

1. Wherever possible, historic roofs should be repaired rather than replaced. No historic roof shall be replaced in toto unless it can be documented that the roof is beyond reasonable repair.

2. When a historic roof must be replaced due to deterioration, it shall be replaced in kind. Construction methods should match the historic roof. In the absence of terne metal, available materials such as aluminum or coated copper may be approved by staff as an in-kind replacement.

3. Replacement of standing-seam terne metal with standing-seam copper (uncoated) may also be approved by staff except on Category 1 and Category 2 structures.

4. All standing-seam metal roofs shall be of traditional hand-crimped detailing. Modern snap-lock or commercial-grade metal roofs are inappropriate for historic structures and will not be approved.

5. Synthetic materials (for example, artificial slate or tiles) are generally not appropriate for use in historic districts.

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:

Chair, Board of Architectural Review  
Date
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at the August 24, 2005 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted concerning screening of piazzas and porches in the Old and Historic District and Old City District.

The piazza is a building feature unique to, and closely identified with, the architectural history and urban character of Charleston. This unique feature of the Charleston Single House should be preserved in order to retain the prevailing character of our vernacular architecture. Likewise, porches are character-defining features of historic buildings and should be preserved.

1. Screening for a piazza or porch should be installed in a manner that is completely reversible, resulting in as little damage to the fabric of the building as possible.

2. The framework of the screening should be as minimal as possible.

3. The framework should be constructed interior of the columns, porch beam, and balustrade so that these elements remain in the forefront.

4. The color of the framework should generally be flat black so it recedes into the background or painted to match the columns and balustrade. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

5. Aluminum screening will not be allowed.

The above criteria are intended as general guidelines. Applications for screening piazzas and porches shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on August 24, 2005.
The properties in question constitute the City's largest collection of cast iron facades for which the City of Charleston holds conservation easements. These storefronts should be carefully maintained, and be treated consistently in regard to their signage.

1. Primary signs are to be placed in the flat fascia area above the storefronts. The traditional location of permanent signs would have been in this location, or on the glass storefront.
2. Alternative locations for signage would include the transom above the primary entrance or the glass storefront.
3. Typical signs should be individually mounted three-dimensional letters, or painted flat façade signs of such length, width and depth to fit the storefront fascia.
4. Awnings, right angle signs and rooftop additions are not permitted.
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at the November 28, 2007 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted regarding the installation of signs in the Old and Historic and Old City Districts:

As part of the built environment, signs have a significant visual impact. In the past, businesses were primarily locally-owned and signs reflected local aesthetics. In the global age, many businesses answer to national or international corporate entities. Signs developed by these global marketers are often intended for suburban, high-traffic areas and are not compatible with pedestrian-oriented streets. Therefore, the Board of Architectural Review makes the following statement of policy:

1. Standard corporate sign packages that make no reference to their context, surroundings or background generally will not be allowed. Signs should respect the size, scale and design of the building.

2. Signs should be reviewed as part of an overall graphics system for a building. If multiple tenants occupy one building, their signs should be coordinated in terms of size and placement.

3. Signs should contain the business name and the minimum amount of information necessary to convey the type of business. Repetitive signs or extraneous information will not be allowed.

4. Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building and should not obscure significant architectural features. Lighted signs are generally not appropriate for the historic district.

5. Signs should be attached to the building carefully to prevent damage to historic fabric (for example, fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick).

6. This policy statement is intended to supplement, not supersede, previous site specific signage policy statements.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on January 9, 2008.
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at their December 10, 2014 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted for King Street signage to aid the general public and the Preservation Staff as new signs are reviewed.

1. **Design**: Each sign shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Generally a façade sign shall be appropriately proportioned to the storefront, and its design shall be compatible with the architectural style of the façade.

2. **Materials**:
   a. The signs shall incorporate materials, colors, and design elements that are appropriate to the surrounding context.
   b. Channel letters, sandblasted signs, and plastic letters or plastic sign faces generally will not be permitted.
   c. Reader boards are not permitted.

3. **Illumination**:
   a. External or internal illumination generally will not be permitted. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
   b. The use of exposed neon is generally not permitted.
   c. No flashing electronic signs will be permitted.
   d. Parking lot directional signs are not to be illuminated.

4. **Banners**: Banners generally will not be permitted on King Street.

5. **Menu Boards**: Menu boards shall not exceed six (6) square feet. Permanently displayed menus may be properly installed inside the business window, or in an approved wall-mounted display case adjacent to the business entrance.

6. **Right angle signs**: Right angle signs should be of a unique design reflecting the character or nature of the business, relate to the architecture of the building and its context, and must be appropriately scaled to the building façade.

7. The application of extraneous information, such as telephone numbers, hours of operation, products and/or services sold, etc., is generally not permitted on façade, awning, or right-angle signs. Some of this information may be permitted as window graphics.

8. **Awnings**:
   a. An awning should fit over only the opening that it covers and not extend across the entire façade.
   b. Vinyl awnings will not be permitted.
   c. Graphics generally will be permitted only on the valence.

9. A business may utilize up to two out of four signage options (façade sign, awning sign, window sign or right angle sign), except that a right angle sign may not be used in combination with an awning sign.
The above criteria are intended to provide a general framework for sign design and approval in this area of the City of Charleston. Staff is to address each application on a case-by-case basis.

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:

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Chair, Board of Architectural Review  Date
As non-conforming signs in Charleston are changed, the City and the BAR have a unique opportunity to improve the visual quality and character of the western end of the Spring and Cannon corridor. The following guidelines were adopted for the above mentioned signs to aid the general public and the Preservation Staff as these signs are changed:

1. Size: Each sign shall be evaluated on a case by case basis. Generally, the height shall be limited to no taller than 12 feet, with each sign face no greater than 35 square feet.

2. Materials: The sign shall incorporate materials, colors, and design elements that are appropriate to the surrounding context. Plastic sign faces are not allowed.

3. Illumination:
   a. Externally Illuminated: Light sources shall be shielded in order to direct light onto the sign face only. Fixtures shall be hidden through planting or other means unless the fixtures are decorative. Light output shall be a maximum of 10 foot-candles.
   b. Internally Illuminated: Sign face is to be constructed of aluminum or similar material. Text and/or graphics are to be routed from the sign face and backed with translucent plastic to form the only lighted portion of the sign.
   c. Channel Letters: Reverse-channel letters (backlit) may be used.
   d. Neon: The use of exposed neon is generally not permitted.

4. Extraneous Information: The application of extraneous information, such as telephone numbers, hours of operation, etc. is not permitted.

5. Directional Signs: Parking lot directional signs, etc. shall not be illuminated.

6. Reader boards: The use of reader boards will not be permitted.

The above criteria are intended to provide a general framework for sign design and approval in this area of the City of Charleston. Staff is to address each application on a case by case basis.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on February 28, 2001.
The following guidelines were adopted for Market Street signage to aid the general public and the Preservation Staff as new signs are reviewed:

1. Design: Each sign shall be evaluated on a case by case basis. Generally a façade sign shall be appropriately proportioned to the storefront, and its design shall be compatible with the architectural style of the façade.

2. Materials:
   a. The sign shall incorporate materials, colors and design elements that are appropriate to the surrounding context.
   b. Individually pin-mounted letters are encouraged as generally they do not detract from the architecture.
   c. Channel letters, sandblasted signs and plastic letters or sign faces generally will not be permitted.
   d. No reader boards.

3. Illumination:
   a. External or internal illumination generally will not be permitted.
   b. The use of exposed neon generally will not be permitted.
   c. No flashing electronic signs will be permitted.
   d. Parking lot directional signs are not to be permitted.

4. Banners: Banners generally will not be permitted.

5. Menu Boards: Menu boards shall not exceed six (6) square feet. Permanently displayed menus may be properly installed inside the business window or in an approved wall mounted display case adjacent to the business entrance. Only one menu board will be permitted per establishment.

6. Right Angle Signs:
   a. Will generally not be permitted in conjunction with façade signs or awnings.
   b. Shall not exceed nine (9) square feet in size.

7. The application of extraneous information, such as telephone numbers, hours of operation, products and/or services sold, etc. is not permitted on façade signs. Some of this information may be permitted as window graphics.
8. Awnings:
   a. Awnings should fit over only the opening that it covers and not extend across the entire façade.
   b. Vinyl will not be permitted.
   c. Graphics general will only be permitted on a valence.

The above criteria are intended to provide a general framework for sign design and approval in this area of the City of Charleston. Staff is to address each application on a case by case basis.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on January 8, 2003.
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at their December 10, 2014 meeting, the authority was granted to the Preservation Staff to process applications for the following within the historic districts:

1. **Repairs and/or In-kind Replacements**: Staff may process applications for any exterior repairs and/or painting that do not involve changing the appearance of the structure.

2. **Signage**: Staff may process applications for signage, using the standards adopted by the Board, except for signs and/or murals painted on the building.

3. **Painting**: Staff may process applications for color changes. A test patch may be required at staff’s discretion. Painting of previously-unpainted masonry requires Board review.

4. **Awnings**: Staff may process applications for a new awning or any change to an existing awning.*

5. **Storm Windows**: Staff may process applications for storm windows using the policy adopted by the Board.*

6. **Mechanical Units**: Staff may process applications for location of service meters and HVAC and any necessary screening.*

7. **Landscape Elements**: Staff may process applications for walks, paving, lighting, benches, permanent planters, screening of garbage cans, pools, trellises, arbors, gazebos, walls, and fences.*

8. **Rear Additions**: Staff may process applications for the construction of rear additions that are minimally visible (as determined by staff) from the public right-of-way.*

9. **Accessory Buildings**: Staff may process applications for the construction of minor accessory buildings that are minimally visible from the public right-of-way.*

10. **Demolitions**: Staff may process applications for garages, utility buildings, and additions or annexes that are of no historic or architectural value, and are considered non-contributing in their context.*

*ALL APPLICATIONS FOR ALTERATIONS TO CATEGORY 1 & 2 STRUCTURES ARE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, AND ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE LIST EXCEPT FOR NUMBERS 1, 2 AND 3.

STAFF MAY REFER ANY APPLICATION TO THE BOARD. APPLICANTS MAY APPEAL ANY STAFF DECISION TO THE BOARD.

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:

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Chair, Board of Architectural Review   Date
By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at the June 13, 2007 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted concerning the use of mechanical tools in the rehabilitation of historic properties where under the purview of the B.A.R.:

1. **Paint Removal:** As described in the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, paint removal from historic buildings—with the exception of cleaning, light scraping, and hand sanding as part of routine maintenance—should be avoided unless absolutely essential.

   Where paint must be removed, abrasive measures using mechanical means such as rotary drill attachments (disk sanders, wire strippers, etc.), belt sanders, waterblasting, and sandblasting are strongly discouraged, as these tools have the clear potential to damage historic fabric and are largely unnecessary. Orbital sanders may be used, provided no damage occurs.

2. **Mortar Removal:** Generally speaking, mortar that has substantially failed to the point of requiring re-pointing typically requires minimal effort for removal and/or may have already been displaced.

   Where mortar is deemed necessary for removal, mechanical tools such as electric chisels, rotary drill attachments, etc., are strongly discouraged. Similar to above, these tools can cause irreparable harm to historic masonry.

The above criteria are intended as general guidelines in order to discourage the use of the mechanical tools, and apply to other materials and locations in rehabilitation and renovation work where historic fabric is present.

Any damage to historic fabric through the use of the tools, such as gouging, pitting, circular depressions, cutting of brick, etc.—WILL RESULT IN THE ISSUANCE OF AN IMMEDIATE STOP WORK ORDER, and the building permit will be revoked. In many cases, a Municipal Summons will be issued, requiring appearance before Livability Court, and may result in a fine and/or incarceration. Work will not be allowed to commence until any damage is repaired, reviewed and approved by the B.A.R.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on June 13, 2007.
POLICY STATEMENT
FOR STORM WINDOWS

By motion of the Board of Architectural Review at the April 14, 2010 meeting, the following guidelines were adopted concerning the use of storm windows in the Old and Historic District and Old City District.

The use of storm windows should be undertaken with caution as condensation that forms between the storm window and the window may cause deterioration of wood. Also, please note that the installation of storm windows may render shutters inoperable. The following criteria are intended as general guidelines. Applications for storm windows shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

1. Only single-pane, clear glass storm windows will be approved. The frame of the storm window must fit within the frame of the existing window.

2. All storm window frames and sashes must be painted to match the existing trim color. In no case will unpainted aluminum be acceptable. Where an intermediate frame member is required, the frame shall align with the existing window’s sash or muntin.

3. Vinyl is not an appropriate material for storm windows and will not be approved.

4. Triple track storm windows will only be approved if the width of said triple track storm window does not exceed the width of a double track storm window. In either case, storm windows are only acceptable provided the frame does not protrude beyond the plane of the window trim.

5. Storm windows are not permitted on Category 1 or 2 structures.

This policy statement was approved by resolution by the Board of Architectural Review on April 14, 2010 (revised August 24, 2005 and July 23, 1980).