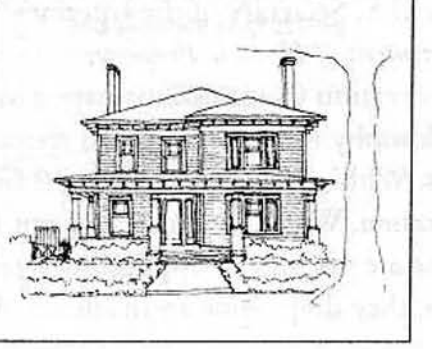


Guidelines for MAK district property owners

The McDonough-Adams-Kings Highway (MAK) Historic District is Decatur's first designated local historic district. A local historic district differs from a neighborhood placed on the National Register for Historic Places in that a city ordinance specific to the neighborhood requires a design review process to take place before buildings can be constructed, demolished or significantly altered. Decatur's Historic Preservation Commission has put together this booklet to answer questions MAK property owners may have about the local historic district and the design review process.



How and why did the MAK neighborhood become a local historic district?

One of Decatur's first residential subdivisions, the MAK neighborhood was developed by local businessmen Mayson & Weekes in the early 1900s. Many of the homes were designed by Adams Street resident Leila Ross Wilburn, one of the first female architects in Atlanta and author of many innovative "home plan" booklets used to build houses throughout the Southeast. The MAK neighborhood contains many fine examples of homes in the Craftsman/Foursquare, Craftsman Bungalow, Colonial Revival and (on College Avenue) Queen Anne styles.

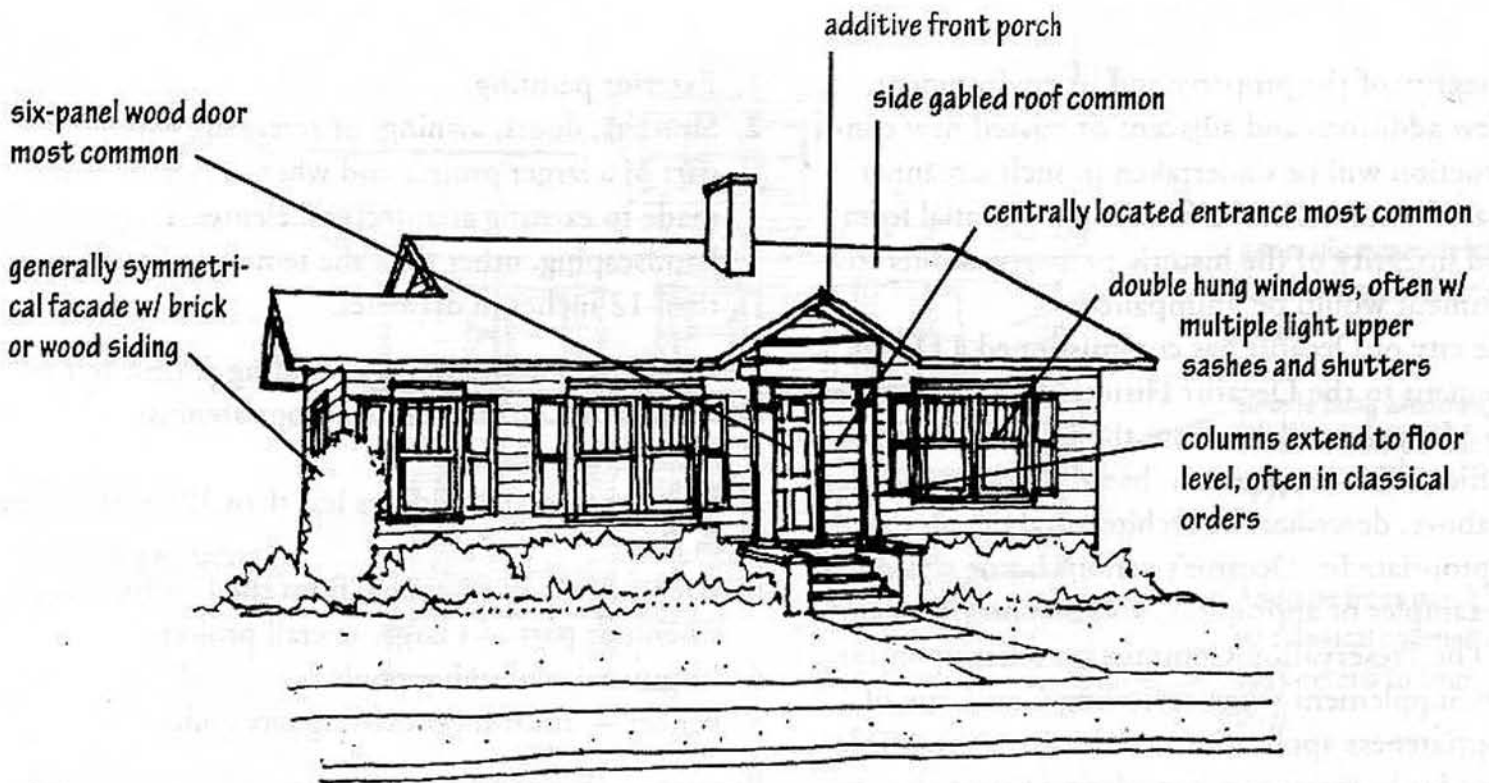
Over the years, institutional and commercial development within the MAK neighborhood caused many historic homes to be demolished. In 1998 MAK property owners agreed that the city's aid was needed in order to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. Residents prepared an application for local historic district status, which was accepted by Decatur's Historic Preservation Commission. Representatives from the neighborhood, from the commission and from Agnes Scott College then worked together to develop guidelines, which the city in turn used to write an ordinance. The ordinance designates MAK as a local historic district and specifies when property owners must apply to the city for a Certificate of Appropriateness when making changes to their homes.

What guidelines do the Preservation Commission follow when granting Certificates of Appropriateness?

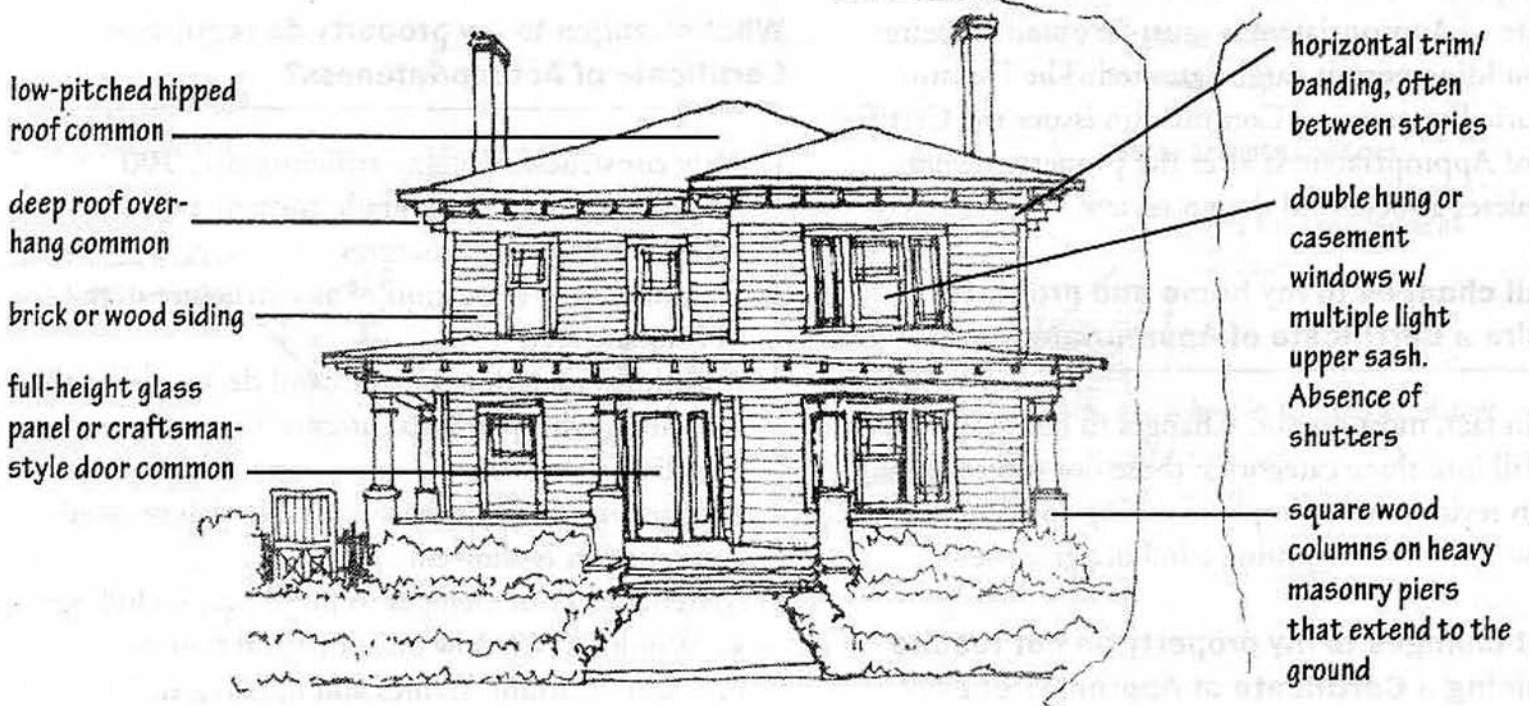
The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Revised 1995) provides Preservation Commissions nationwide with an overall philosophy for preserving and restoring historic buildings. Within the standards are *10 Guidelines for Rehabilitation*. While these rules are not inviolable and some are not strictly applicable to residential renovation, they do provide an invaluable framework for the

Preservation Commission's decision making:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of the deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the



Colonial Revival (One-Story Version)



Prairie (Foursquare)

integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

The city of Decatur has commissioned a Design Supplement to the Decatur Historic Preservation Resource Manual, available from the Historic Preservation office. This supplement, based on the principles listed above, describes the architectural details that are appropriate for Decatur's various home styles, and gives examples of appropriate and inappropriate additions. The Preservation Commission relies upon the Design Supplement when reviewing Certificate of Appropriateness applications, and it is an invaluable resource for homeowners considering major changes to their homes.

What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

When applying to the city for a building permit, MAK property owners may be informed that a Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained before the building permit can be granted. The Decatur Historic Preservation Commission issues the Certificate of Appropriateness after the property owner completes a successful design review.

Do all changes to my home and property require a Certificate of Appropriateness?

No. In fact, most do not. Changes to home and property fall into three categories: those not subject to any design review, those simply requiring an administrative review, and those requiring a full design review.

What changes to my property do not require obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness?

These changes require neither a building permit nor a Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Exterior painting.
2. Shutters, doors, awnings or screening when not part of a larger project and when no changes are made to existing architectural elements.
3. Landscaping, other than the removal of trees more than 12 inches in diameter.

These changes may require a building permit but do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. All interior work.
2. Exterior storage buildings less than 100 square feet in size.
3. Backyard decks accessible from the first floor when not part of a larger overall project.
4. In-ground swimming pools.
5. Fences — must meet existing city codes.

Repairs — When an owner makes exterior repairs, where a building permit is necessary but where no change in design or materials is planned, the Historic Preservation Commission's designated staff person has the authority to review the building permit application and issue a Certificate of Exemption.

What changes to my property do require a Certificate of Appropriateness?

1. New construction of any structure over 100 square feet. No slab on grade construction is allowed for primary structures.
2. Demolition or relocation of any structure over 100 square feet.
3. Additions, including porches and decks, above the first floor, with particular attention paid to construction that alters the streetscape (additions or changes visible from the street). No slab on grade construction is allowed.
4. Material exterior changes to buildings, including:
 - a. Windows, window locations and frames.
 - b. Door locations, frames and opening sizes.
 - c. Structural and/or material changes to porches.
 - d. Changes in detail and/or material to railings, balustrades and stairs.

hip or gabled roof form

bracketed cornice
common

wood railing verticals
(square or turned)

generally symmetrical
facade w/wood or brick
siding

double hung windows,
often w/multiple light
upper sashes and
shutters

Additive front porch
w/ classical columns
that extend to floor
level

Colonial Revival (Two -Story Version)

steeply pitched roof,
usually side gabled

brick or stone
construction, often
with half timbering

massive chimney, often
with decorative cap

stone accents and trim

double hung or casement
windows

heavily planked wood door

Tudor

- e. Changes in detail and/or material of columns.
 - f. Changes in siding material — the use of vinyl or aluminum siding is strongly discouraged.
 - g. Change in roof shape or materials.
5. Removal of canopy trees with a trunk width larger than 12 inches in diameter, unless the tree is dead or judged to be diseased by a certified arborist.

It should also be noted that Decatur's ordinance covering local historic districts contains a provision that prohibits "demolition by neglect," which happens when a building is allowed to deteriorate due to lack of maintenance or security.

How do I obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness?

When a property owner applies to the city for a building permit, he or she will be told whether a Certificate of Appropriateness is necessary for the project. The property owner will be given a form to fill out that also describes the items (architectural drawings, photos, etc.) to be submitted to the Preservation Commission so its members can study the proposal before the scheduled meeting. A sign will then be posted in the property owner's front yard, which must remain in place for at least seven days before the scheduled design review takes place. If an application is turned in to the commission at least 14 days before the Preservation Commission's regularly scheduled meeting (usually the first Tuesday of each month), the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness will be heard and decided upon at that meeting. The Preservation Commission can:

1. approve the application, with or without required conditions;
2. deny the application; or
3. request more detail or changes in the plan before the application is reconsidered at the next scheduled meeting. Property owners may appeal an application denial to the City Commission.

Property owners who are planning major con-

struction projects are encouraged to attend a Preservation Commission meeting and informally discuss the project before applying for the Certificate of Appropriateness, especially if they are undertaking the project without an architect or professional contractor. Commission members will be happy to provide advice and guidance throughout the design process.

Property owners planning major construction should pay close attention to:

1. **Exterior Materials.** The dominant exterior materials (brick, wood siding) used in a neighborhood contribute to the visual relationships among houses.
2. **Architectural details.** Stylistic details, such as brackets, corner boards, moldings, cornice details, decorative window and door trims and shingles are essential to the historic character of houses.
3. **Entrances and porches.** These are often the focus of old homes, and can be extremely important in defining their overall historic character.
4. **Windows.** Windows are very important in creating rhythm and scale on a house. Decorative windows with distinctive shapes or glazing patterns define the character of buildings and contribute greatly to the architectural variety of a neighborhood.
5. **Roofs, chimneys and dormers.** Original roof forms, with their shapes, slope, materials and features such as dormers, cresting and chimneys, are essential and character-defining features of houses.
6. **Foundations.** These are primarily functional, protecting the undersides of buildings, but can also contribute to the style of the house by utilizing contrasting materials.

What can I do to ensure that the design review proceeds as quickly and efficiently as possible?

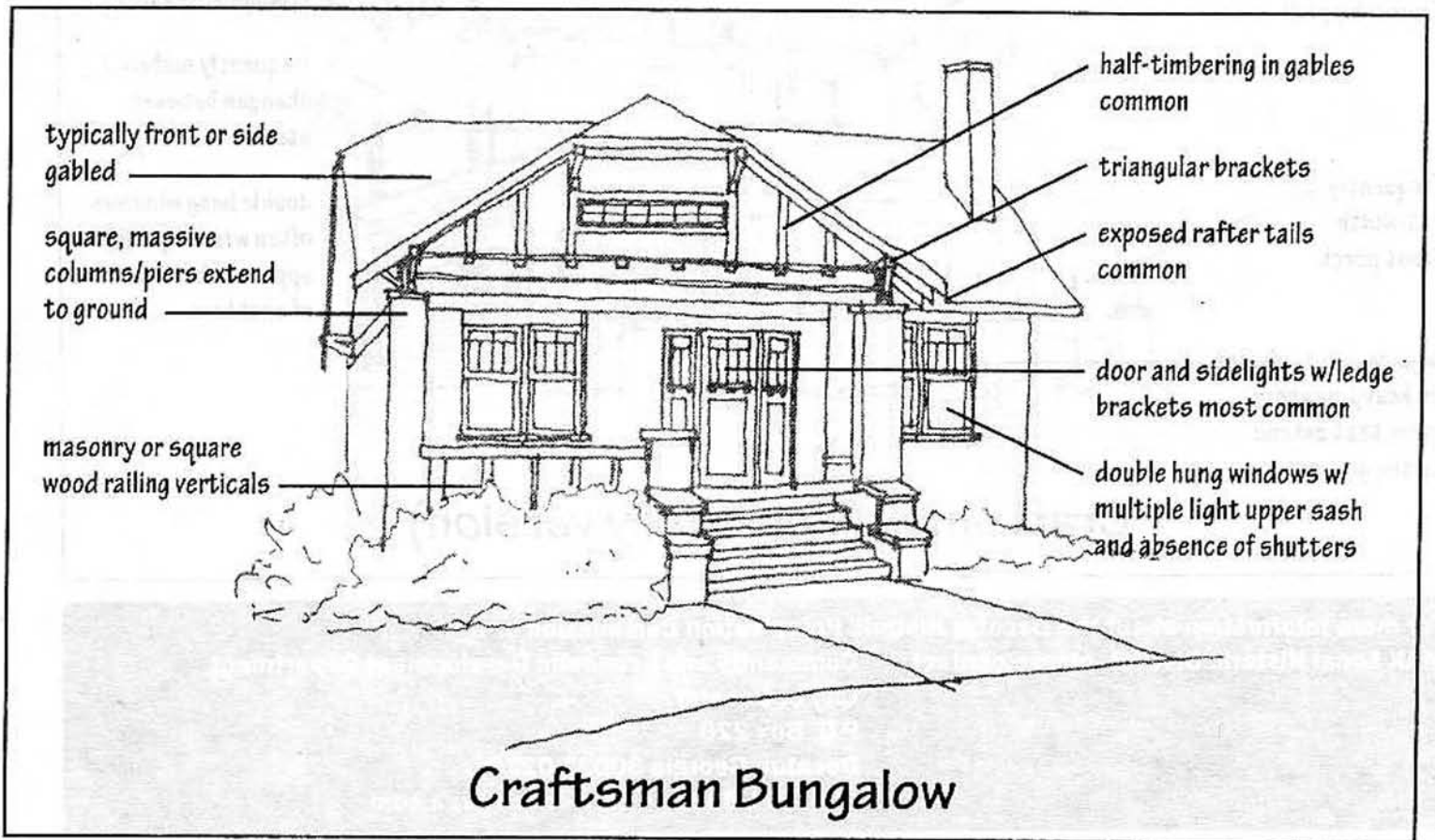
The design review process works most effectively and efficiently when a property owner provides the Preservation Commission with as much detail as possible about the project. This should include the following architectural drawings drawn to scale:

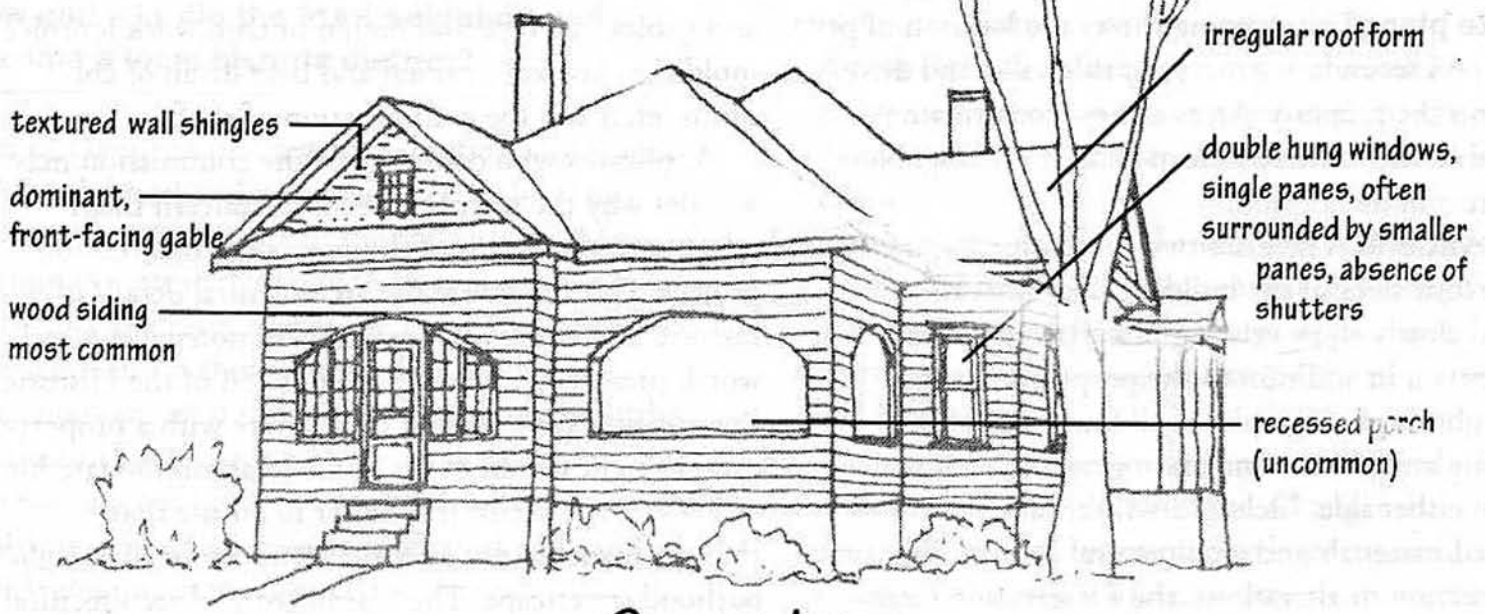
1. Site plan. This drawing shows the location of primary and secondary structures, sidewalks and drive-ways on the property. Areas of new construction should be differentiated from what is existing. Note any areas of demolition.

2. Elevations. These are two-dimensional drawings of the four sides of the building. Each elevation should clearly show existing materials and details that will remain in addition to the proposed changes. Also submit photographs of all four sides of the building and at least one photograph of each structure to either side. Include a written description of planned materials and architectural details. For new construction or alterations, the Preservation Commission will request information on the project's set-back from the street, location on the site, type and materials to be used for the foundation (no slab on grade), siding materials to be used, the type, size, mullion pattern and perimeter casing of windows and doors, the size and configuration of eaves, dormers

and gables, the type and design of trim work (cornice moldings, brackets, capital and base detail of columns, etc.) and the configuration of roofs.

Applicants who come before the commission may wonder why the members seem to concern themselves with the details of the proposed construction project. This is because the architectural details of our historic homes are what make them noteworthy and worth preserving. It is not the mission of the Historic Preservation Commission to interfere with a property owner's right to add to his home to accommodate his or her current needs; it is rather to ensure that changes made do not alter the character of the neighborhood streetscape. The placement and architectural detail of MAK's historic homes are what have attracted so many homeowners to the neighborhood in the first place; with the protections offered by MAK's local historic district status, the Preservation Commission hopes to preserve the best features of this neighborhood for generations to come.





Queen Anne



Craftsman (Two-story version)

For more information about the Decatur Historic Preservation Commission or the MAK Local Historic District, please contact:

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