

METAL

DESIGN GUIDELINES



Traditionally, metals were used for a variety of applications including fences, columns, roofs, and other decorative features. Traditional metals include cast iron, steel, and copper. Traditional metal elements should be preserved. Deteriorated metal features should be restored and retained wherever possible, and should not be removed without an in-kind replacement. Such replacement and restoration processes should adhere to the guidelines below.

Original Metal Features

Metal features add important detail and character to historic properties and districts throughout Louisville and should be preserved wherever possible.

- M.1** Preserve an original metal feature.
- M.2** Repair a metal feature by patching, splicing, or otherwise reinforcing the original metal wherever possible.



Preserve an original metal feature.

PRIOR TO CLEANING

Prior to starting a cleaning treatment, ensure that the treatment is in compliance with Louisville Metro Government's municipal air pollution standards. To read about these standards, visit:

<https://louisvilleky.gov/government/air-pollution-control-district/air-pollution-regulations-and-laws>



Clean a metal feature using appropriate techniques and materials so that the historic color, texture, or patina will not be damaged.



Preserve an original metal feature, such as this decorative metal lantern.



Clean hard metals, such as these cast-iron piers, to remove corrosion and paint build-up. Low-pressure grit blasting may be used only if additional cleaning is required.

Maintenance and Cleaning

The maintenance and cleaning of original historic metal detail is an extremely important component to maintaining the historic character of a building and district. Cleaning and repair techniques should be applied carefully to metal surfaces, ensuring that the appropriate treatments are being used on each type of metal.

M.3 Clean a metal feature using appropriate techniques and materials so that the historic color, texture, or patina will not be damaged.

- » Test a cleaning method in an inconspicuous location prior to cleaning the entire surface.
- » Clean soft metals such as tin, lead, copper, terneplate, and zinc using appropriate methods, since blasting methods damage and pit their surfaces.
- » Clean hard metals such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel with hardscraping or wirebrushing to remove corrosion and paint buildup. Low-pressure grit blasting may be used only if additional cleaning is required.

Painting

Historically, painting metal elements was done for decoration and to protect the metal. The use of paint on historic metal elements and details to historic buildings should reflect the historic use of the property and should only be done if the metal was historically painted. Care should also be taken when cleaning metal surfaces that generally utilize paint as a protective coating. Paint may also be used to reduce the visibility of new metal elements that are needed for modern conveniences.

M.4 After cleaning, reapply paint or a coating system to a previously painted metal feature to prevent corrosion.

M.5 Paint a replacement gutter, downspout, metal frame screen, storm door and window, roof-vent assembly, or fire escape to match wall, trim, cornice, or roof color of the historic building, whichever is most effective in reducing the visibility of these elements.

M.6 Do not expose metal that requires protection. Apply paint or other coatings to a metal that was historically meant to be exposed, such as copper, bronze, or stainless steel.

M.7 Do not place incompatible metals together without a protective barrier since this can result in corrosion.