

TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL
HISTORIC CONSERVATION GUIDELINES
15 West Sixth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Building Context

Within the context of these historic conservation guidelines, “Terrace Plaza Hotel” refers the building located at 15 West Sixth Street. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is an International-style mixed-use skyscraper in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. Designed in 1945-1946 and completed in 1948 by the firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), the building was developed by John J. Emery, Jr. The building’s bold massing reflects a complex mixed-use program comprising a 7-story commercial base, originally occupied by two department stores, Bond and J.C. Penney, and office space, that spans the block-long site, topped by a set-back 12 story hotel block and terrace, for which the hotel is named. On top is a tall penthouse occupied by what was once the Gourmet Restaurant and mechanical space. The structure is steel with brick curtain walls. The street level is defined by a band of storefronts, and the façade above is clad in thin terra-cotta-colored brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Above the storefronts, the base is windowless, while the hotel block is characterized by a continuous window wall at the eighth floor and a regular grid of wide windows above. Facing north on Sixth Street and spanning between Vine and Race streets, the building stands amid mostly low- and mid-rise buildings, making it very visible in its urban setting. Despite alterations, the integrity of Terrace Plaza remains high, with its signature cubic massing, masonry skin, and interior spatial organization.

Rehabilitation

Intent and General Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to ensure that rehabilitation will maintain significant features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Guidelines are used by the Historic Conservation Board as a guide to assess the compatibility and appropriateness of proposed rehabilitation changes. Reviews by the Board are limited to exterior changes proposed for the buildings. Repair and maintenance not changing significant features and clearly complying with the intent of these guidelines does not require review by the Board. Alterations made to the interior are not purview of the Board, and are not subject to their review.

The following guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. If a change or alteration to the building is not addressed in the below guidelines, The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation and any National Park Service documents supporting the Standards, such as but not limited to Interpreting the Standards and Preservation Briefs shall be consulted for guidance when preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring the building.

The following overarching approaches are recommended:

1. **Repair and Maintenance.** Ordinary repair and maintenance of like and kind to match the original construction, where visible and which does not change the appearance of the building, is acceptable under these guidelines. Rehabilitation may include preservation, restoration, reconstruction, or a combination of these, as appropriate and reasonable for the building.
2. **Maintenance.** Existing visible features that contribute to the overall character of the building on good condition should be maintained and where possible, preserved or conserved. Damaged visible features that can be repaired should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible.
3. **Replacements.** Replacements of significant features badly damaged, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing shall sensitively harmonize with characteristics, including design, color, texture, material, and visual quality, of the original feature. Replication based on historic documentation is appropriate, but not required.
4. **New Additions, Alterations, and New Construction.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Specific Guidelines

The following specific approaches to elements, features, and visible components are recommended:

1. **Materials:** Materials for visible features that are badly damaged, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing shall be replaced with materials or components that match as closely as possible the style, shape, color, treatments, and texture of elements replaced. Composition, type of joint, size of units, visible measures, placement, and detailing shall be appropriate for the buildings. Because of ongoing technological innovations, synthetic materials that closely match existing characteristics may be utilized.
2. **Door and Window Openings floor 2-7:** One of the defining characteristics of the Terrace Plaza Hotel is brick curtain wall on floors 2-7 with limited openings at the second floor. Among the important features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel are their door and window openings and the lack of window openings on floors 2-7. Any original openings that have been bricked in may be brought back to their original design. New window openings that are incompatible with the design intentions of the original design are inappropriate.
3. **Door and Window Openings floor 8-20 (historic hotel levels):** Among the important features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel levels are their door and window openings. The size and location and of openings are an essential part of the overall design. Original wall openings shall not be significantly altered or filled in on primary facades. On secondary facades, original wall openings should not be significantly altered without consideration of their impact to the overall character of the original design.
4. **Doors and Window Sash:** Original doors and window sashes shall be repaired rather than replaced where feasible and where appropriate access and security can be achieved in compliance with building codes. If replacement of doors or windows becomes necessary due to deterioration or to replace missing or nonconforming units, new doors and windows on primary facades shall fill the original openings and be compatible with the building in scale, materials, size, type, kind, style, color, and finish as closely as possible. If reuse of historic windows is not feasible due to deterioration, new windows shall match originals as closely as possible in

materials, scale, configuration, mullion style, size, and color. Minor variations in mullion and sash frame dimensions of replacement windows may be considered. Vinyl replacement windows or glass block windows shall not be used.

5. **Storefronts:** Nonconforming storefront features including doors, display windows, infill panels and canopies/awnings may be removed or replaced with new materials compatible with the building's original design. Entrance locations to the storefronts may diverge from the original design as long as they are in the storefront system.
6. **Awnings:** Fabric/Canvas Awnings are acceptable for seasonal use, provided they adhere to National Park Service Preservation Brief 44 for the use of awnings and historic buildings. The building historically had open traditional fabric awnings on the east and west storefronts. Internally illuminated awnings are not acceptable.
7. **Canopies:** A distinguishing feature of the Terrace Plaza Hotel is the canopy along 6th Street. As the existing design configuration is not original, any changes to the awning should be in keeping with the original design intent of the building. A restoration or recreation of the original canopy would be an appropriate treatment.
8. **Ornamentation:** Significant architectural features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel shall be preserved or conserved. Do not make replacements or substitutions of different scale, size, design, or incompatible materials. Replace ornamentation to match originals in character, scale, configuration, style, size texture, and color. Some synthetic materials including fiberglass castings or composite materials may be considered.
9. **Roofs:** Parapets and other architectural features that define the roofline of the buildings shall be preserved. On the primary facades, vents, skylights, rooftop utilities, equipment, and other roof elements shall be inconspicuously placed or screened where necessary.
10. **Painting:** Repaint building elements that have been historically painted. Stone and masonry that has not been painted in the past shall not be painted. Use colors that are appropriate to the building's age, history, and style.
11. **Outside Attachments:** Exterior light fixtures should be appropriate to the style of the building, or simple and contemporary. Mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium, and other light sources that impart distortions of color when illuminated are not appropriate to primary facades. Exterior light fixtures shall be mounted or constructed so as not to cast undue glare onto neighboring buildings or damage the building on which they are mounted.
12. **Signs.** Signs should be designed for clarity, legibility, and compatibility with structures on the site. Their design should be simple and contemporary or shall match historic documented designs. **A signage package that matches the historic design, placement and types of signs may be considered with any relevant zoning relief.** Billboards and roof top signs are not appropriate.
13. **Additions:** Additions shall follow all current codes and regulations and shall be limited to the non-primary façades. Any addition shall be compatible in character with the original building, with sensitivity to existing materials, massing and scale, site, and appearance within the context of the original buildings. Additions shall be sympathetic, may be complementary, but should not be imitative in design. Additions should be designed to relate architecturally, not overwhelming the original building and shall be designed in a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form, and integrity of the property and its environment would be unimpaired.
14. **Parking and Paving:** If a parking garage is included in a proposal, any new openings for an interior garage entrance shall be on the south facade of the building and may be considered on the west façade. **Additional opening required for garage ventilation may be considered on the south façade is discreetly placed and not highly visible from the street.**

15. **Landscaping:** An important feature of the Terrace Plaza Hotel was the landscaped outdoor spaces at both the 8th and 20th levels. Landscaping at these levels that is visible from the street is an appropriate part of the design of the building.
16. **Noncontributing buildings:** There are no noncontributing structures covered by this designation.
17. **Demolition:** Any demolition, alterations, or modifications to the Terrace Plaza Hotel, and minimum maintenance requirements, are governed by Section 1435-09: Alterations and Demolitions; Certificates of Appropriateness; Minimum Maintenance, of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, ordained by Ordinance No. 217-2012, §1, effective July 20, 2012.