

Changes to the Building Exterior

2.14 ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY



Example of accessibility ramp on the rear of a building

The majority of buildings in Covington's historic neighborhoods were built before modern building, fire, and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 code requirements. Often when buildings are substantially rehabilitated there is a need and requirement to meet these current codes. In Kentucky, Chapter 34 of the Kentucky Building Code (Applying the Building Code to Existing Buildings), provides a method and guidance for the code official to use discretion in the application of the Building Code to projects affecting existing buildings. All new works still must comply with the existing codes and cannot compromise life safety and accessibility requirements. However, both the Building Code and the ADA of 1990 provide some flexibility in compliance when a historic building is involved.

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GUIDELINES:

1. Meet current accessibility and life-safety building code requirements in such a way that the historic site and building character are preserved.
2. Locate wheel chair ramps, elevators, and other additions that are required to meet code requirements on non-character defining façades. If this is not possible the additions must be designed in a way as to not detract from the building and must follow the new construction guidelines.
3. If needed, introduce new or additional means of access that are reversible and that do not compromise the original design of a historic entrance or porch.
4. Locate required fire doors, exterior fire stairs/fire escapes, or elevator additions on side or rear elevations, whenever possible. Fire escapes should be painted black or the same color as the building and the design, scale, proportion, and finish should be compatible with the historic building.



Example of an elevator addition on the side of a building



Example of fire escapes