CAUGHT WITH CURB APPEAL: PRESERVING SUSSEX VA

CHARACTER

Sussex (also called Sussex-at-Hampton and Sussex Village) was constructed entirely in 1944 and features 192 brick houses. The buildings are identical in size, but are styled slightly differently to provide variety across the streetscape. The neighborhood was originally built for rental duplexes with entrances at the front and side, marked by porticos, but the buildings have gradually been sold and converted into single family homes.

The neighborhood is remarkably intact, retaining its original character throughout. Homeowners should embrace this character, which reflects the era of Sussex's development. The original design intent was a homogenous neighborhood, so differentiation inherently will detract from the historic character and should be undertaken in easily reversible ways:

- Original features and building elements, such as windows, shutters, and porticos, should be retained as feasible. If deteriorated or damaged, original fabric should be repaired or replaced in kind. To best comply with the Standards, look to reinstate front and side porticos, using shadow lines to determine original style and design. Because the houses featured identical details, designs for reinstating elements should be copied from intact neighboring houses.
- New additions should be added at the rear of the building. Garages are rare in the neighborhood due to the minimal space between houses and driveways were not original features of this neighborhood. Small parking pads or ribbon driveways to accommodate one car can be installed, but should be placed towards the edge of the lot, rather in the center. Otherwise, street parking is available throughout.
- Due to the small lot size and uniform house style, there is little room for major improvements to the exterior in the form of additions. These options provide a means to improve the home in an appropriate manner and remain in compliance with the Standards. Focus on landscaping and paint color as a way of personalizing homes.
  - PAINT: Paint color suggestions do not apply within Sussex. Sussex does not lend itself to a small set of appropriate colors due to the low level of architectural variety within the neighborhood. Paint is a means for homeowners to make their home standout.
  - LANDSCAPING AND SITE DESIGN: Landscaping and site design provide another way to personalize a home can provide variety in the streetscape in a way that doesn't contradict the Standards.

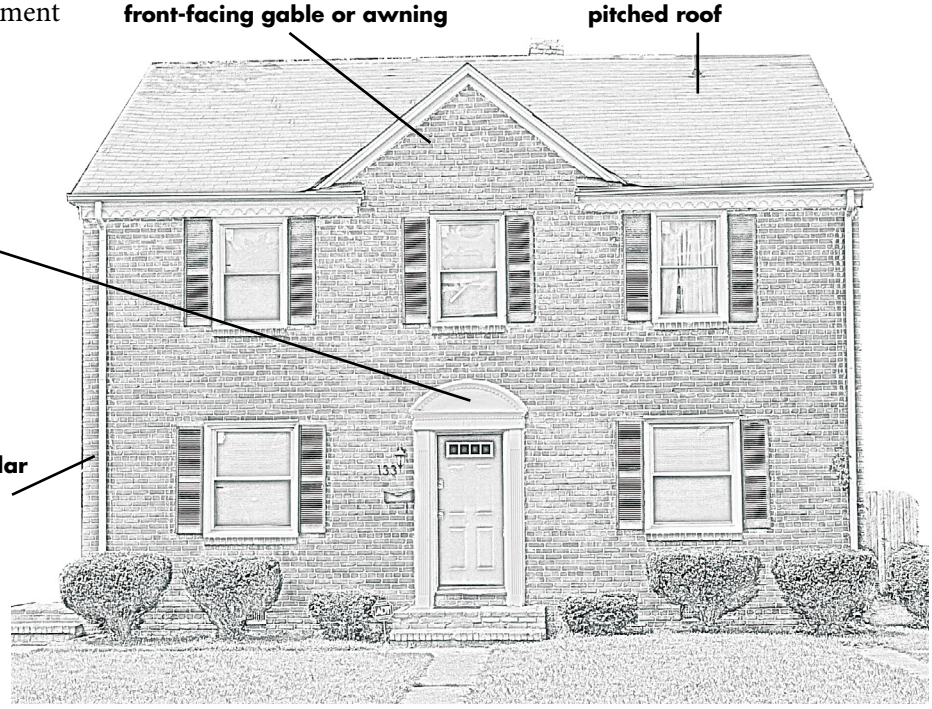
HOUSING TYPES & CHARACTERISTICS

The housing type in Sussex is a simple Colonial Revival, featuring a few variations on the style repeated throughout the neighborhood. Each features a symmetrical façade with a centered door flanked by windows, but varies in roof type to create visual interest along the street. The housing stock can be grouped based on these four distinct roof styles: Side gable, Side gable with pent roof, Side gable with non-projecting centered gable on façade, and Hipped.

COLONIAL REVIVAL

Curb appeal recommendations for the character-defining features of the Colonial Revival style of Sussex are as follows:

- Front portico or pediment
  - In many cases these elements remain. In other cases, it is clear these elements have been removed and/or replaced. Some homes feature visible shadow lines where these elements originally appeared, but have since either been removed or modified. In these cases, the shadow lines were visible because the original feature was removed entirely or the replacement feature was a different shape or size as the original. If shadow lines are visible, use these to reinstate original features of the home.
- Side portico:
  - The side portico originally served as a primary entrance, as the houses were constructed as duplexes. This element is seen throughout the neighborhood; however, in many cases it has been modified or removed. Modifications range from the removal of just the portico to the removal of the portico and stoop and in some cases the door has been replaced with a window. In order to return the home to its original configuration, the side portico should be reinstated. In many cases, the side portico was of the same style and design as the front portico. These elements should match.
- Shutters
  - Inappropriately sized shutters are original to the neighborhood and should be retained, as this reflects the character of the mass-produced neighborhood. Liberal use of paint colors on shutters will help to differentiate houses in a reversible way.
- Fencing
  - Existing chain link fencing should be replaced with wooden fences. Front yards should not be fenced in order to maintain a cohesive streetscape. Backyard fences should be made of wood and painted or stained.



RESOURCES

Kecoughtan Master Plan* | *hampton.gov/documentcenter

Virginia Dept of Historic Resources* | *dhr.virginia.gov

- Style Guides
  - Classic Commonwealth Style Guide (2015)
  - New Dominion Virginia Style Guide (2014)
- List of tradesmen

National Park Service* | *nps.gov

- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Preservation Briefs

A Field Guide to American Houses

SUSSEX
HAMPTON VA

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