Carlisle Street in 1910. Photo courtesy of Gettysburg National Military Park.

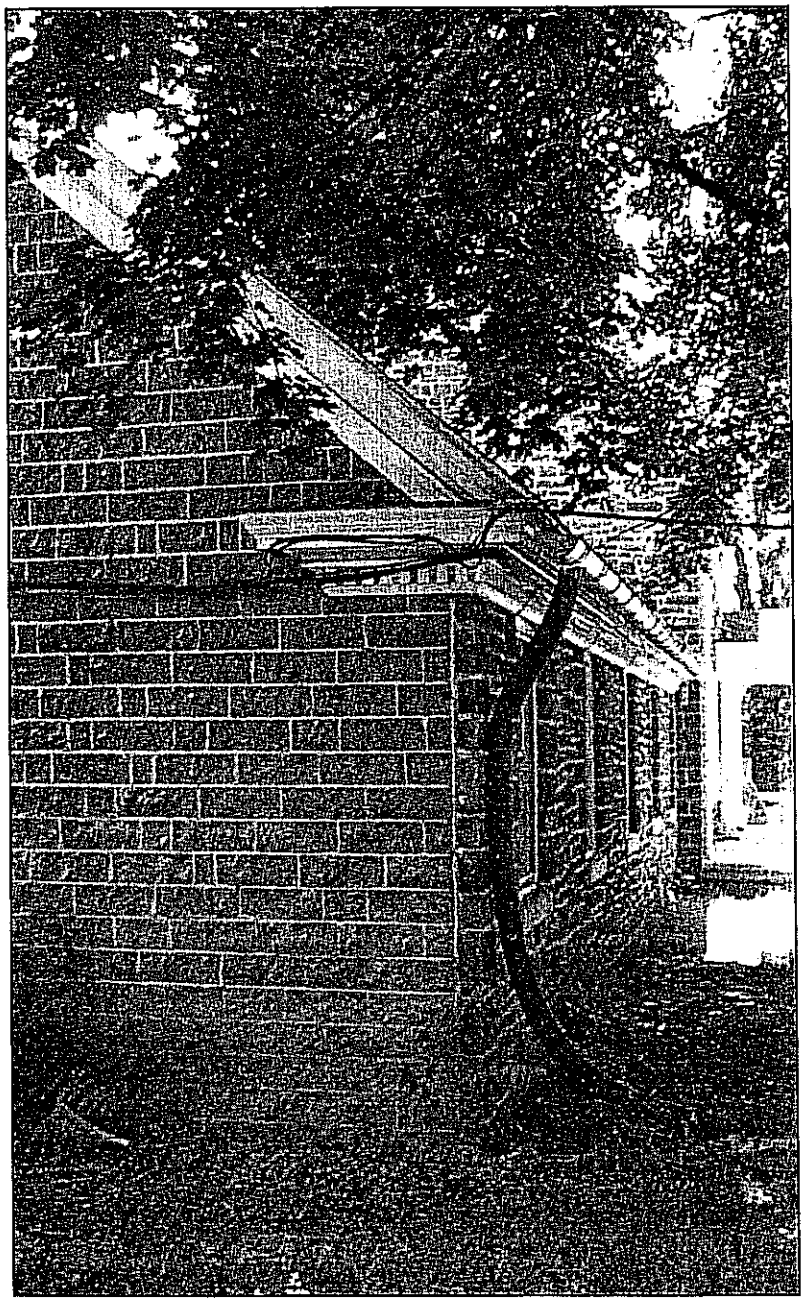
UTILITIES & ACCESSIBILITY

UTILITIES & ACCESSIBILITY

As time goes by, modern improvements, contemporary conveniences, and enlightened thought enhance our quality of life. They also affect our historic buildings.

Improvements in telecommunications, electric, gas, and water service, and in heating and air-conditioning have made living spaces much more comfortable year-round. However, these conveniences visually and physically alter structures and streetscapes with wiring and equipment.

Better and more widely distributed information has made us aware of the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities, and of their right to participate more fully in the experience of historic structures. This enlightenment presents us with the challenge of making our historic resources accessible without destroying the character that makes them special.

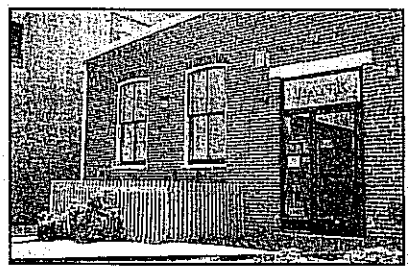


A cornice on Carlisle Street partially hidden by multiple cables.

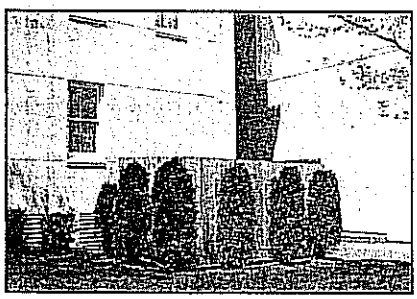
UTILITIES

What to do with Dumpsters

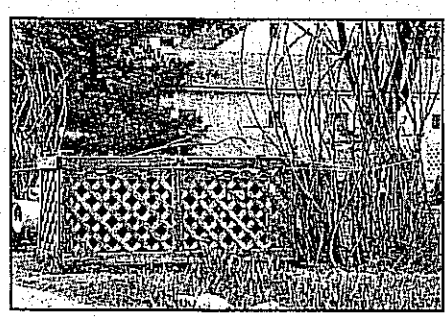
- Dumpsters should be located at the rear of the building or on inconspicuous sides of the building.
- Dumpsters should not hide or damage significant historic features of the building, site, or landscape.
- Dumpsters should be placed in locations that are easily accessible to all users, including trucks, so that potential damage to the building is minimized.
- Living fences and wooden fences can be used to hide dumpsters.



Fenced mechanical equipment at the Bank of Hanover.



Mechanical equipment hidden behind a landscaped fence at the Gettysburg Hotel.



Lattice panels hide garbage cans on the alley behind East Stevens Street.

UTILITIES

Because utility meter boxes, air handling units, and other service equipment are so common, the appropriate placement of these objects on historic buildings is often overlooked. Historically, service equipment was placed near the service entrance, which was located at the rear or side of the building. This placement on unobtrusive walls of buildings should be continued. There are three options for the placement of service equipment:

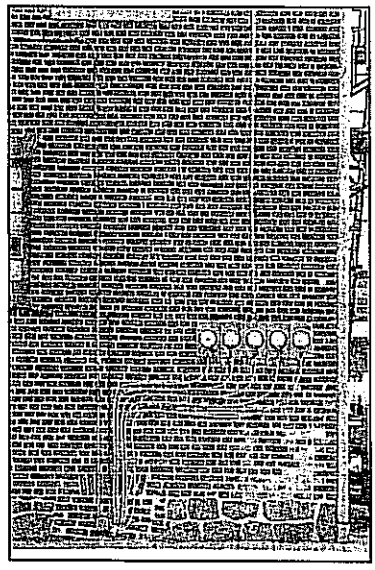
1) attached to wall,
2) placed on a roof, or
3) located on the ground.

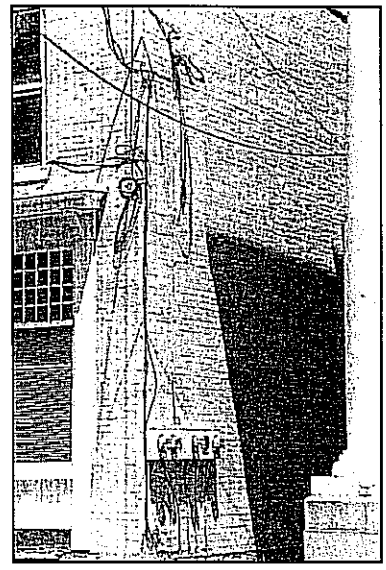
Appropriate placement depends to a great extent on the type of equipment being installed; however, in all locations, the key to compatibility with historic resources is **concealment.**

Methods of Concealment

- Locate equipment on rear or inconspicuous side walls.
- Plant vegetation to hide equipment on the ground or on the wall. Coordinate new vegetation with old.
- Erect appropriate fencing to shield equipment on the ground. Coordinate all fencing on the property.
- Paint wall-mounted equipment to blend with the wall.
- Set rooftop equipment back from the edge of the roof to reduce visibility from the street.

Additional guidelines for service equipment are listed below and on the following page.





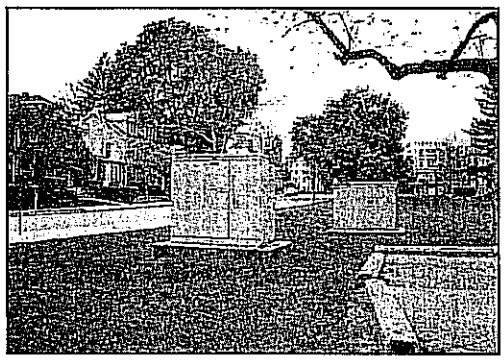
Meters and cables on brick walls in Gettysburg.

Meter Boxes

- Utility meters, wires, piping, boxes, and related equipment should be installed in unobtrusive locations on rear or secondary walls.

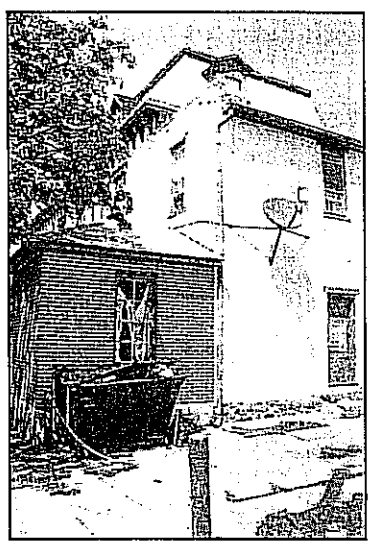
Mechanical Equipment *(including air handling units, vent stacks, chillers, condensing units, elevator equipment, rooftop access equipment, etc.)*

- Grade-mounted mechanical equipment should be restricted to rear yards and inconspicuous side yards, and should be shielded with plantings or appropriate fencing.
- Keep what cannot be concealed at the rear of the house.



Mechanical equipment in open view near the Eisenhower House on the Gettysburg College campus.

- Equipment should not be placed on residential roofs. On other buildings, all rooftop equipment should be recessed from the edges of the roof to minimize visibility from the street.
- If additional mechanical equipment is required at the interior, avoid dropping ceilings across window openings to accomodate it.
- Do not overload the building structure with the weight of new equipment, particularly on the roof and in the attic.



A satellite dish and a dumpster in full view at the corner of Washington and W. Middle Streets.

Satellite Dishes and Antennas

- Satellite dishes should be minimal in size.
- Satellite dishes should be attached to rear or inconspicuous side walls of buildings. Locations that are not visible from the street are preferred.
- Satellite dishes should be attached to buildings using methods that do not cause damage to building materials or to historic features.
- Antennas that are no longer functional should be removed.

UTILITIES

Window Air Conditioners

- Window air conditioners should be installed on rear or secondary walls, rather than primary walls.
- The use of window air conditioners should not result in the removal or replacement of window sash or in the alteration or damage of any window materials.
- Through-wall air conditioners are inappropriate for historic buildings. Avoid cutting through walls or removing other historic materials to add mechanical equipment.

Priorities for Service Equipment in Gettysburg

- Relocate all overhead wiring underground, possibly in conduit.
- Relocate meter boxes and related equipment to unobtrusive locations.
- Increase landscaping to hide mechanical equipment throughout the borough.
- Use shutters, operable windows, porches, curtains, awnings, shade trees, and other historically appropriate non-mechanical features to reduce heating and cooling needs.

ACCESSIBILITY

Process for Implementing Accessibility Modifications

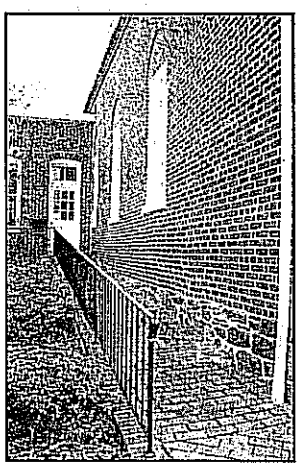
1. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features. Alteration of these features should be avoided when making changes or additions for accessibility.

2. Assess the existing and required levels of accessibility. Identify all barriers in the structure and on the site. Review all local codes and state and federal laws.

3. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context. The goal is to provide a high level of accessibility with minimal impact on the historic property.

Note

Seek the assistance of preservation professionals, code officials, and persons with disabilities. The expertise of each will be critical in determining the full range of options for accessibility.



A ramp providing side access to the GAR Building at 53 East Middle Street.

ACCESSIBILITY

Historically, buildings and landscapes were not designed to be readily accessible for people with disabilities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, access to properties open to the public is now a civil right. The goal is to provide barrier free access that promotes independence for disabled persons to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant features of the historic resource. Building accessibility for individuals with disabilities should be achieved without compromise to historic materials or to character-defining elements of historic buildings and sites. Each case is individual, but the guidelines below should be followed.

Guidelines

- Seek to provide barrier free access that promotes independence for disabled persons to the highest degree practicable while preserving historic features.

- The design of new ramps should be compatible with the original structure and the overall site.

- Compatibility can be achieved through appropriate location. Ramps and elevators should be located on rear or secondary walls.

- Increase the compatibility of new ramps by constructing them of materials equal to or similar to the materials of adjacent stairs and walks.

- Consider providing barrier-free access through removable or portable ramps, if installing permanent ramps would damage distinctive historic features.

- Utilize landscaping elements to shield ramps and elevators.

For more information on accessibility, see *Where to Go for Help* near the end of this manual.