

# Richfield Design Guidelines for the Historic District

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**Richfield Historic District**

**Design Guidelines**

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Summary of Inventory

Building Styles

Design Elements

Design Guidelines

Inventory

11/17/14

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## **Summary of Inventory in the Richfield Historic District.**

The Richfield Historic District Resolution (62-1994 Exhibit B) lists 156 addresses for buildings within the Historic District although demolitions may have reduced the number to 147 identified buildings. A comprehensive examination of published documents of structures was conducted in 2013/2014 searching the following records: the Richfield Historic Society files of the properties within the district, a list of “Richfield Historic Homes” 1995/1996 RHS, “Century Homes Named” 1974 RHS and the Ohio Historic Inventory by J.D. Brown 1991/1992. In addition the Summit County Fiscal Officers property records were examined for their listing of year constructed. In a number of cases the local historic district dates were different than the county records which were often an approximate date (such as “about 1850”) and in those cases the local specific dating was used. Field surveys were also conducted throughout the district photographically documenting the historic buildings. A comprehensive matrix “Richfield Historic District Inventory – November 2014” (revised 11/13/2014) was prepared compiling the findings of the multiple sources.

Of the 147 addressed buildings, 77 or 52.4% were identified as being historic and century (pre 1915) buildings. The documents for historic buildings were not entirely complete in the dating of structures, therefore the remaining building dates were collected from the Summit County Fiscal Office records. Over half of the structures in the District are historic homes. Of the 77 identified historic structures, 45 have specified dates of construction erected before the civil war (pre-1861). Of those pre-civil war buildings, eighteen homes may have been constructed (in whole or in part) between 1815 and 1849. The street segments with the most buildings and most historic buildings is Streetsboro with 74 buildings of which 40 were designated as historic or century buildings. The streets within the District with the largest percentage of historic buildings are Park (2 of 2 =100%), Broadview (17 of 23 =73.9%), Streetsboro (40 of 74 =54%) and Brecksville (6 of 12 =50%). The other street segments in the District containing a smaller percentage of historic homes are: High (5 of 13 =38%), Grant (6 of 16 =37%), and Humphrey (1 of 7 =14%).

The style of buildings within the Richfield Historic District is predominately Greek Revival which was a style of housing design primarily between the years 1820 and 1850 - a period of substantial construction in Richfield center. In addition there were a few examples of Federal, Italianate and Queen Anne styles which were popular in the periods of 1780-1820, 1845-1875, and 1880-1910, respectively. Two other styles were found including Stick/Victorian vernacular 1855-1895 and Colonial Revival 1885-1915.

Richfield is part of the Western Reserve of Connecticut and was settled shortly after Moses Cleaveland began surveying the area referred to as the Western Reserve. As chronicled in an October 21, 2013 article titled “*Origin of the Western Reserve of Connecticut*” by Richard

## Richfield Design Guidelines for the Historic District

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Zimmerman, “In many of the structures erected across northeastern Ohio that transplanted New England character manifest itself as a stylistic amalgam of Classical [Greek Revival], Federal, Georgian, Queen Anne, Victorian and Farmhouse Colonial elements that has since been described as Western Reserve Architecture”. A primary book on architecture in northeast Ohio is “Architecture of the Western Reserve, 1800-1900” by Richard Campen, documents numerous original structures and architectural forms found in the Western Reserve in its first century of development. He provides an example of what is commonly identified as Western Reserve style in the Barnes-Goddard house (c.1832) located in Unionville, Lorain County. This small two-story Greek Revival home has a one story addition and “a separate entry through a side wing fronted by a porch”. “This plan, along with other features - corner posts or pilasters, broad frieze boards with low upper windows.. and large box cornices - are supposedly the constituents of a “*Western Reserve Style*”.” The referenced house is similar to a couple house examples found in Richfield specifically at 3967 Broadview Road and 4076 Broadview Road.

Richfield examples of Greek Revival Plan often referred to as “Western Reserve Style”



3967 Broadview



4076 Broadview

The primary building style found in the historic inventory was Greek Revival (20 of 52) as this was the primary building style when most of the historic homes were constructed between 1820 and 1869. The second most common style was Vernacular (16) which was a simple form of Victorian, Stick and Greek Revival form of a simple rectangular floor plan with front gable but without the fine details of pediments on gable ends, windows and doors, deep cornices, side wings, multi-paned windows or elaborate doorways. The majority of the historic homes in the district were two stories (35) in height with one and a half story homes second most prevalent (14). A few one story and two and a half story homes/structures were also found. A very common form were multi-level structures with two story main structure and a one story wing: a form that is common in Greek Revival and also in a style referred to as Western Reserve.

The most common material used in the facades of the historic houses was clapboard siding (20) and typically wood siding most common in Greek Revival homes. An equal number of homes

## Richfield Design Guidelines for the Historic District

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had siding (of vinyl, metal or wood) in the same form as clapboard. There were also a few examples of shiplap siding and a few flushboard siding used in Federal style homes. Brick was rare in home facades but more common in the institutional/governmental buildings which were all masonry. The vast majority of the structures surveyed had gable roofs and more than half had multiple gables with “L” or “T” floor plans. Gable roofs are the predominate roof form in Greek Revival, Federal and Vernacular styles. The roof material was almost universally asphalt shingle with only a handful of other including wood shingle, standing seam metal and slate. Originally many of the historic homes probably would have had slate roofs.

In window forms nearly all the windows were double hung windows and for the Vernacular homes the type was typically one pane over one pane. The second most common window form was 6 pane over 6 pane which is common in Federal and Greek Revival homes and more common in more historic homes where large pane windows would not have been available.

The color of home exteriors, trim and shutters were tabulated with all white finish the most common (30) with grey and beige the next most common building color. There were a few darker colors of green, blue or ochre which often were used in Stick, vernacular or Victorian homes often to accentuate the minor building details such as millwork or spindles. Trim (window frames, corner boards, window trim, doors etc.) were primarily white (41) in color. The second most common was white plus a second color (12) or in one solid color (12). Shutters were found on about half of the historic buildings (32). Almost half were black in color with red (including rust and burgundy), green and grey a distant second third and fourth (6, 5 and 4). Rare were white, beige and blue with one example each.

Early dwellings found in Richfield are primarily classical Greek Revival in style, generally simple forms and coloration of white matching the common white-washing favored by New England immigrants for its simplicity and frugality. Original homes of the Western Reserve were typically one or two story in a simple rectilinear form or several attached in an “L” or “T” floor plans. Most were gable roofed with large stone hearth or chimney(s) at gabled end walls. Windows were modest sized rectangular double hung with multiple glazed lights. The primary entrance door could be centered on a façade often flanked by symmetrical and equally spaced windows, especially in the early Federal and Greek Revival styles.

Over time and with greater prosperity, homes would be decorated with added stories and wing additions, porches and more elaborate details such as dormers, pediments, balustrades, friezes, ornate cornices, and entrances with transoms, pilasters, entablatures and sidelights. These design elements and building plans being an amalgam of Greek Revival, Federal, Georgian and Queen Anne formed a local style referred to as Western Reserve. It is this style and the collection of design elements from these historic styles that form the character of the Richfield Historic District which should be preserved, encouraged in restorations and new homes built within the District.