



# Trees and Planting Beds



## LANDMARKS INFORMATION SERIES • NO. 2

### Why is this important?

The relationship between a historic building and its site features such as green spaces, trees, planting beds, border walls and grade levels is important in defining the overall historic character of the building and the surrounding historic district.



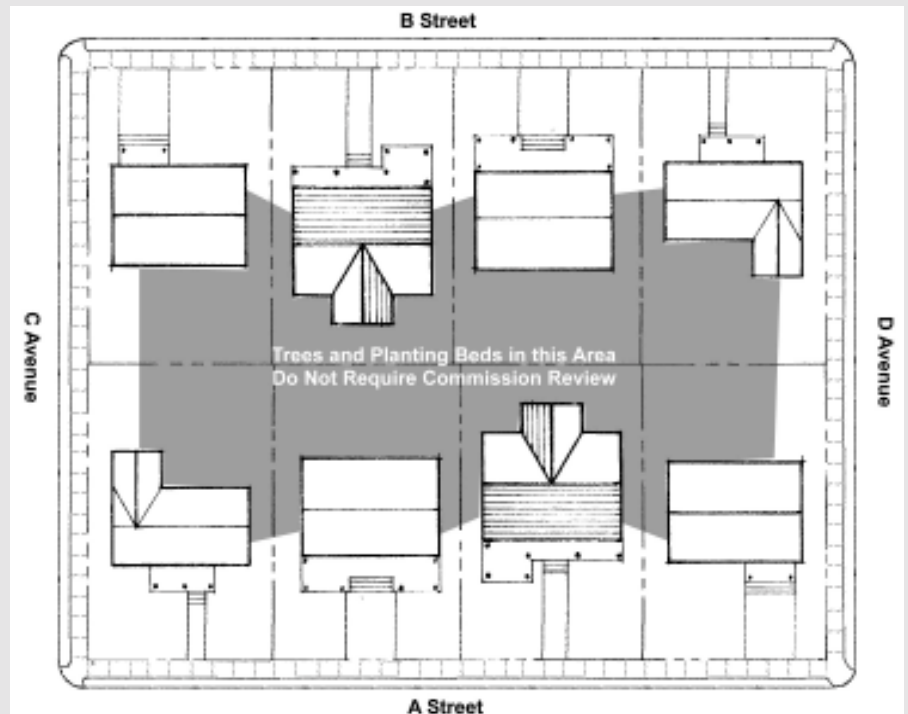
Gladstone Boulevard

**NOTE:** Retaining walls, hedge rows, fencing, sidewalks, and yard lighting require the review of the Landmarks Commission. Please contact Landmarks Staff for more information on these types of projects.

Landmarks Commission  
of Kansas City, MO  
414 E. 12th Street,  
26th floor City Hall  
phone: (816) 513-2902  
fax: (816) 513-2899

### Where does the Commission review changes to Trees and Planting Beds?

In general, those portions of a building adjacent to the public right of way are significant to the character of the historic district or building and “substantial” changes to those areas will require the review of the Commission. If there is any question on whether or not your improvements require review, please contact the Landmarks staff at 816-513-2902 for further assistance.



### Existing Trees

In residential areas containing diverse styles of architecture, trees confer a sense of visual unity to the neighborhood. Shady streets not only add to the visual character of a neighborhood, but also provide environmental benefits, such as natural cooling and air purification.

Existing trees should be preserved through proper pruning. Light annual pruning rather than severe pruning is recommended. Regular pruning does not require Commission review. A replacement program should be considered for aged or diseased specimens.

*Removal of trees over 12 inches in diameter is considered “substantial” and would require the review of the Commission.*

Trees along boulevards and parkways are often on City property; you should call the Parks and Recreation Department at (816) 513-7592 for information on trimming and/or replacement.

## New Trees

*Planting trees that would obscure the majority of the front facade from public view is discouraged and would require the review of the Commission.* When planting trees, remember that it is important to maintain the “open” relationship of the building to the street. While a tree may be small when planted, over time it can obscure the front of a building and alter the character of district.



*Recommended*  
Maintaining the Open Relationship

*Not Recommended*  
Completely Obscuring the Front Facade

Planting trees and shrubbery next to the building foundation is not recommended since this could lead to deterioration of the building.

## Planting Beds

Installation, replacement or removal of planting beds with planting materials less than 3 feet in height, *unless part of a designed historic landscape*, are not considered “substantial” and do not require the review of the Commission.

## Borders

Borders less than 12 inches in height that differentiate a planting bed or walkway from its surroundings are not considered “substantial” and do not require the review of the Commission. When choosing an appropriate border material, look at historic materials used on the surrounding properties such as stone, brick or decorative Victorian wire borders.

## Vines

Vines or other vegetation allowed to grow directly on a building without a trellis or other framework can cause damage from roots eroding mortar joints and foundations as well as dampness being held against surfaces which can lead to deterioration. Removal of vines is encouraged. *Planting of vines on historic structures require the review of the Commission.*

*If you have specific questions, please call the Landmarks Office.  
We are happy to help owners with the preservation of Kansas City's historic treasures.*