

# *Jersey City Style Book*



*Jersey City Neighborhood  
Salisbury, NC*

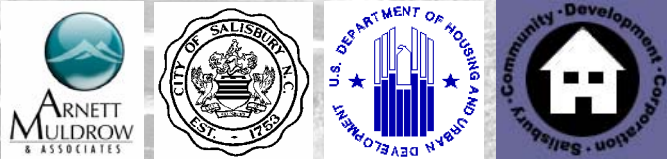


*Arnett Muldrow & Associates*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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Jersey City is one of the oldest and strongest neighborhoods in Salisbury and truly is a pillar of the community. Despite generations of change within the neighborhood and Salisbury as a whole, Jersey City still retains the characteristics that define authentic and lasting communities. Its importance to the history of Salisbury and the African American community is immeasurable, and should be preserved.

### A. *Background*

The community leaders of Jersey City have a history of engaging its residents in planning processes in order to strengthen the neighborhood and protect the qualities that distinguish it from others. Two recent planning processes have focused on the revitalization of the community. First, the City of Salisbury and the Salisbury Community Development Corporation (CDC) identified Jersey City as a target for revitalization. The CDC ultimately rehabilitated one existing home and constructed eleven new homes in the neighborhood. Each of the new homes was then sold to new homeowners. Considering this relatively small neighborhood has just over fifty homes, the project resulted in a twenty percent increase in new and rehabilitated homes. This made a significant difference in the neighborhood and served to strengthen its overall neighborhood fabric.

The second planning effort, completed by the Ezra Nehemiah Group, was entitled “**A Community-Driven Vision to Revitalize the Jersey City Neighborhood**”. The consultants engaged the community in an effort to clearly define the boundaries of the neighborhood, identify challenges and opportunities facing Jersey City’s future, develop a consensus on a neighborhood vision, and identify target projects to help move towards the common vision.

Various focus groups and team-building workshops resulted in the following, two-part vision:

- Focus on the preservation and beautification of Jersey City’s places, historic homes, and architecture; and
- Build neighborhood capacity to preserve and to pass on the land and its history to the next generation.

This vision focuses heavily on both the preservation of the physical (places and architecture) as well as the intangible, the legacy of Jersey City as passed down to future generations. Through continued housing construction, rehabilitation, and infrastructure improvements, the consultants concluded that a strong base could be built to continue the preservation of the neighborhood.

## ***B. Architectural Survey***

As a continuation of this planning process, the City of Salisbury retained Arnett Muldrow & Associates of Greenville, SC, to conduct a **historic resources inventory and architectural stylebook** for the Jersey City Neighborhood. While the previous visioning effort addressed a wide range of issues threatening the vitality of the neighborhood, this process centers on the physical, particularly as it relates to the architecture of Jersey City.

The purpose of this project is to first provide the baseline information from which to build a preservation effort, and then to present a mechanism for neighborhood preservation to occur. The project includes:

### *Historic Resources Inventory*

A database with architectural information on each individual building including photography, architectural styles, dates of construction, significant architectural features, and historical information. This database is provided in digital format and represents a snapshot of the existing historic resources and current conditions of the structures within the district.

### *Jersey City Style Book*

The style book defines the important architectural features unique to Jersey City and essentially presents the Jersey City “Style”, a palette of architectural elements to preserve and protect. Preferred methods for the continuation of this style, as well as overall neighborhood design, are presented in the areas of architecture, site planning, and landscape. The style book focuses on the preservation of the existing neighborhood fabric, but, just as important, encourages the incorporation of the high quality design into new construction.

### *Planning Recommendations*

The final section of this report presents critical planning tasks that should be completed in order to stabilize the Jersey City community. This goes beyond historic preservation and focuses on policy changes and infrastructure improvements necessary to prevent further deterioration in the neighborhood.

## C. Jersey City Boundary

The boundaries of the Jersey City Neighborhood used for the purposes of this study are those identified by the community during the Ezra Nehemiah Group planning process. The area generally includes the homes along either side of Best, Holmes, Craige, and Cemetery Streets as bounded by Caldwell, Mocksville and West, with the Freirich Foods plant as the western boundary.

The Freirich Plant, the Southern Railroad, and the medical offices along Mocksville Avenue create strong edges surrounding Jersey City. This non-residential buffer around the community somewhat isolates it from nearby neighborhoods and uses.

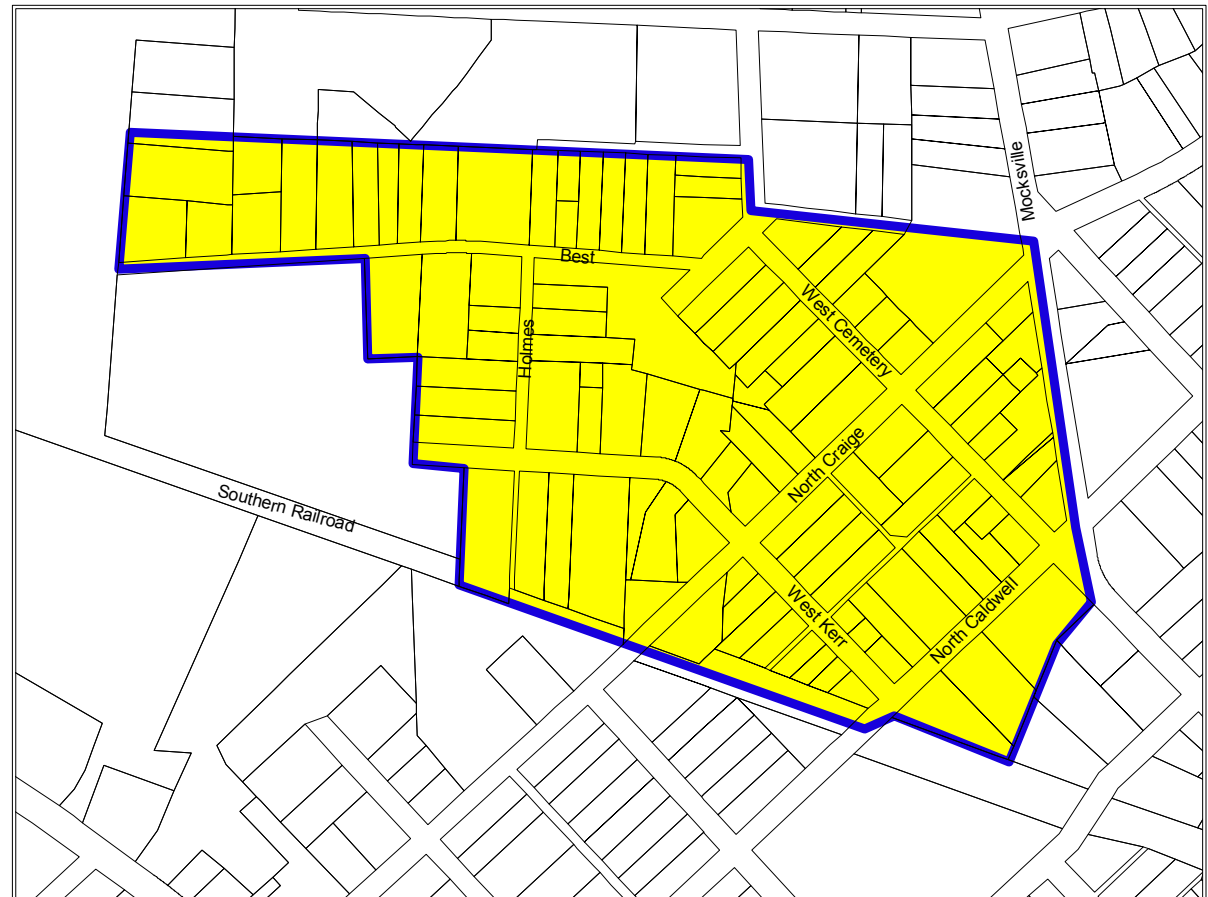


Figure 1: Jersey City Neighborhood

## **D. History**

While history of the Jersey City community does indeed run deep, much of that history has been passed down orally from generation to generation. Unfortunately, with the population of the neighborhood aging as many of the younger residents have moved away, there are not as many links to the past as there once was. However, there are some families still living in Jersey City who have ties to the early families who helped settle the neighborhood. The community has always been described as a tight knit, close neighborhood. This is evidenced even today at the annual “Jersey City Community Reunion” where current and past residents gather together to celebrate the legacy of their community and pass on a little of its history to future generations.

### *Early History*

The history of Jersey City begins shortly after the Civil War when freed slaves moved to the area looking for their own land and a new life. Local historians tell of how the neighborhood became known as “Jersey City”. The original settlers of the community were slaves from plantations in Lexington County. Some folks say the name comes from Jersey cows that once grazed in the pastures in the area, recounting that the original slave owners raised the cows and the slaves were called “Jersey slaves”. Eventually, these freed slaves raised the animals in their new settlement. Another person reflects that original settlers came from area called “Jersey Land” in Lexington, perhaps the former plantations. One thing is for certain though – whether the cows originally grazed in Lexington or Rowan County, the name

“Jersey City” has stuck on this neighborhood, one of the oldest in Salisbury.

Jersey City’s settlement occurred in the 1870s & 1880s. The oldest existing buildings date to the earliest part of the twentieth century. While there are a structures in the neighborhood that were built as late as 2004, the primary period of development of the neighborhood was between 1915 and 1930. The area was included in a major annexation in 1915 that took in not only Jersey City, but also the hospital area and neighborhoods west along Statesville Boulevard, including Milford Hills. One of the earliest homes still existing is that of Alonzo and Mary Redd at 706 West Kerr Street. The small, one-story side-gabled home with a full shed-roof porch on wood columns and bases is typical of the style of Jersey City homes. Another archetypal example is 625 West Kerr Street. This 3-bedroom home is identical to 706 with the exception that its porch has a hipped roof on wrought iron columns. According to the original resident of this home, Mr. Ezra Gillam, this house was constructed in 1919 for just \$618. Some early homes along the lower portion of Kerr were described as shanties. Many early buildings were eventually torn down during the urban renewal period.

### *People*

Dobson and Hargrave are family names of some of the original free families who settled here. According to old city directories, multiple Hargraves lived in the neighborhood up through the mid-1940s and beyond. Other early family surnames included Hall, Mitchell, Massey, Redd, Holt, and Kelley, among others.

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One of the first white families in the neighborhood was named Kepley and had a house at the corner of Craige and Cemetery Streets. Alonzo and Mary Redd operated a small store at 706 West Kerr Street. This small building still exists adjacent to the main house and across Kerr Street from the neighborhood park.

## *Daily life*

Jersey City got electricity later than other neighborhoods in Salisbury. It wasn't until 1919, after many of the original homes were built, that electricity was installed in Jersey City. Originally dirt roads, the majority of the streets finally received pavement in the 1960s. In fact, an editorial in the Salisbury Post in February of 1968 mentions the poor condition of the unpaved streets in Jersey City. The neighborhood was originally platted with alleyways behind the houses. Early residents had their outhouses in the alley where a worker would come by once a week with a shovel and a horse to carry the waste away. If a fire broke out in Jersey City, firemen would direct a horse-drawn tank of water down the alleys. Some remember seeing the Kelsey funeral wagon being pulled by horse down the street. The Kelsey funeral home served the residents of Jersey City as well as all black residents. A stream once ran through the neighborhood (now evidently diverted underground in the proposed greenway area near Best Street). One early resident recounts catching crayfish in the stream.

Across from where the Redd's house now stands, the Hargrave's put up the first peach basketball goal in town. The park soon became a neighborhood gathering place where residents would meet every Saturday. It was quite popular as a play area for

children, particularly with the Redd's store across the street and the availability of candy. Eventually, the play area was taken over by the City of Salisbury and is now a small pocket park. The park serves as the location of the annual community reunion event.

Many of the early neighborhood residents worked for the railroad, as the industry was at its height during the early part of the twentieth century. Later, White Packing Company located immediately adjacent to the neighborhood to the west. The plant served as a place of employment for neighborhood residents, some of whom were employed as livestock killers. Residents relate stories of the early history of the slaughter house where the industry would burn hides late in the afternoon creating strong odors as easterly winds carried the fumes throughout the neighborhood. As development occurred around the plant along Innes Street, the odors seemed to diminish as the operators waited until evening to dispose of the hides. The industrial operation, now Freirich Foods Company, still exists today in the same location as the original White Packing.

## *Institutional*

While some local residents would walk up the railroad tracks towards town to Mt. Zion Baptist Church, most people went to Soldier Memorial AME. Many of the elderly residents existing in the community today still are members of Soldier Memorial. The Freedman Building in Dixonville served as the chief source of black education. Livingstone College had a grammar and high school for African Americans, including serving Jersey City



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residents, until the 1923, when Monroe Street School was built across the street from the college. Named the J. C. Price High School, it served high school as well as elementary aged children. Later, in 1923, another public high school for African Americans was built at 1300 West Bank Street. This new school took the former schools name and served only high school students. The original school was renamed Monroe Street School and educated elementary aged children (Mattson, Alexander and Associates Inc., National Register of Historic Places nomination for Monroe Street School, December 2003.

## **E. Issues**

Jersey City has remained a close, tight knit community through the years. However, many of the issues it faces today have deep roots. For example, the *Salisbury Evening Post* reported in July of 1967 the need for significant improvements in the neighborhood. While the streets have since been paved, other issues such as the condition of owner occupied and rental housing, vacant lots, the need for improved recreation facilities, better drainage, and overall safety are still on the community's checklist.

Of course, while the concerns have persisted, so has the determination of the residents of the neighborhood. In 1968, for example, Jersey City won a community development award for urban neighborhoods in Rowan County. That same determination has lingered on and been the impetus for continued planning efforts in the community, including this report. Unfortunately, as the population ages and longtime families move out, community leadership is dwindling. It is critically important, now more than ever, to successfully address the issues threatening the long term vitality of the neighborhood.

While there are certainly other areas for improvement, this stylebook focuses primarily on the physical environment as it relates to the overall neighborhood fabric and quality of life for the residents.

A summary of issues includes:

- The **physical condition of housing** has continued to decline. Most homeowners have done an excellent job of maintaining their homes, but there still exist homes, primarily rental, that have fallen into disrepair, represent an eyesore, and have a negative impact on property values.
- Many homes deteriorated beyond repair resulting in a number of **demolitions** in the neighborhood. This has created not only an abundance of vacant lots, but also a loss of historic architecture.
- Fortunately, there has been a significant amount of **new construction** in Jersey City. It is critically important, however, that this new construction be sensitive to the historic architecture of the neighborhood.

The **Salisbury CDC** has done an exceptional job of acquiring vacant dilapidated homes, demolishing them, and constructing new structures for first time homeowners. The eleven homes the CDC built in Jersey City represent a significant percentage of the entire housing stock. Perhaps just as important as the construction of the new homes, the CDC created architectural designs that complement and enhance the historic character of Jersey City. For its efforts, the CDC received a "Housing North Carolina Award" recognizing the project as a model for affordable housing

development and neighborhood revitalization. Part of the criteria for the award was how the overall quality of design blends in with the neighborhood, improves the overall housing stock, and makes the neighborhood more sustainable. While this commitment to neighborhood revitalization will have tremendous, long term effects, the CDC has now targeted another threatened neighborhood in Salisbury and it will have a reduced presence in Jersey City.

Unfortunately, other builders have not paid as much attention to design as did the Salisbury CDC and a few of the newer homes in the neighborhood lack any character or share any of the design elements of the remaining architecture. These non-descript structures stand out and contribute very little to the fabric of the neighborhood.



**Figure 2:** Many non-descript homes contribute nothing to the character nor respect the history of Jersey City.

Jersey City has always had to deal with the **encroachment of business uses** in the neighborhood. Residents have accepted its non-residential neighbors and have generally coexisted peacefully with them. With the medical industry expanding along Mocksville, the Railroad, the packing plant, and apartments and offices to the north, Jersey City is somewhat isolated from nearby neighborhoods and services. It is critically important that no more non-residential uses be developed within the boundaries of the neighborhood, and that external uses respect the edges of Jersey City with safe and attractive landscape buffers.

The business uses that currently exist within the neighborhood, primarily the day care center and the packing plant must also respect the residential nature of Jersey City.

- There is a need for various **infrastructure improvements** in the neighborhood, particularly related to the condition of the streets and the lack of a good sidewalk and street lighting network. The streets have suffered somewhat from the relationship of the adjacent industrial use to the neighborhood. Large trucks have created potholes, broken curbs and brought on erosion in some areas where they cut corners. The sidewalk network is virtually non-existent and is desperately needed to connect the neighborhood to surrounding office, employment, and commercial uses. This is even more important considering the two non-residential uses

within the neighborhood which create a significant amount of traffic.



**Figure 3:** Curb and landscape destroyed by tractor trailers.

- There are several other issues that should be noted here. Although they are not within the scope of this project, they should not be discounted.
  - The abundance of absentee landlords
  - Aging population and vanishing ties to the past
  - Overgrown and neglected lots
  - Overall safety of the neighborhood

- **Potential development projects** have been either identified as a desire of the community or are in planned by the City or private sector. Residents have long desired a community center and improved recreation facilities at the park on West Kerr Street. A gateway project in the “five points” area created by Mocksville, Caldwell, and Cemetery Streets is currently being planned by the City. Finally, there are two key development sites immediately adjacent to Jersey City that will ultimately be developed and will impact the neighborhood. One is the former Pope and Arey site across Caldwell as well as a former Kentucky Fried Chicken site in the triangle area formed by West Cemetery and Mocksville.

## **II. DESIGN GOALS**

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The intent of the Jersey City Style Book is to provide a tool for the town to use to guide public and private redevelopment of Jersey City by encouraging design quality of new construction and redevelopment as it relates to site planning, architecture, and landscape design.

The specific design goals are:

1. Protect the existing historic structures and architectural elements of Jersey City.
2. Encourage a high quality of design in new construction that is compatible with the Jersey City style.
3. Help preserve those elements that make up the strong neighborhood fabric in Jersey City including connected streets, consistent building lines, and orientation to street.
4. Enhance the linkages to adjacent areas and other services including the park, commercial activity, employment and main thoroughfares of Innes and Mocskville.
5. Improve quality of life for residents through good urban design

## III. THE JERSEY CITY STYLE

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The section will present the distinct styles and characteristics of the architecture found in Jersey City, as well as the general development patterns that define the neighborhood.

### A. Architecture

The architecture of Jersey City can generally be categorized into three different areas, each representing a certain time frame of development in the neighborhood, and each generally located in different areas of the community.

#### *The Cottage*

Most of the oldest homes in Jersey City no longer exist. The earliest structures represented today were constructed around the turn of the twentieth century to its early teens. The homes are small, one-story worker cottages and come in two designs. They exist throughout the neighborhood, but the largest concentration is along West Kerr Street.

The most common design is the one-story, end gable roof with weatherboard siding. Like the Redd House at 706 West Kerr, these houses have a rear ell and either a shed or hip-roofed porch. The porch generally extends across the full front and is supported on four wood columns on brick bases. The homes either have a shingled or metal seem roof. Window variations range from simple, two-over-two double hung, to larger plate glass front windows flanked by side lights or double-hung sashes. Casement windows are also found.



**Figure 4:** 706 West Kerr Street



**Figure 5:** 615 West Kerr Street

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The window variations reflect bungalow designs of the more elaborate homes found along West Cemetery and discussed in the following section. Other variations include a front gable in the center of the roof above the porch, and wrought iron columns supporting the porch. Like the window configurations, the wood column on brick base porch design is also common on bungalow architecture.

The second worker cottage design has few examples remaining in the neighborhood as most have been demolished. Of the row of these houses that once existed along the south side of West Kerr Street, only 605 West Kerr remains. There are, however, two more examples on Best Street. This square planned home has a hipped roof with an engaged porch extending across only half of the front façade. It is possible that this front porch is altered, yet the fact that each example that remains in the district has this design, as did others that have since been demolished, suggests that this porch design may be original.

605 West Kerr has a hipped roof dormer window in the center of the metal shingled roof. Each remaining example has weatherboard siding and simple, two-over-two, double hung windows. The porch is supported either on square wood or wrought iron columns. Due to half porch, this example has an entry slightly offset from center.



**Figure 6:** 605 West Kerr Street

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## *The Bungalow*

The most elaborate of architecture in Jersey City belongs to the bungalows found throughout the district, but concentrated on West Cemetery Street. In fact, the majority of historic buildings in the neighborhood, including the simple cottages described in the previous section, could be described as having elements of bungalow architecture. While these cottages display the occasional bungalow element, there are true Craftsman Bungalows existing in the Jersey City community. Craftsman bungalows display a unique and detailed architecture that distinguish themselves from other styles. Low-pitched gable roofs, overhanging eaves, exposed beams, and front porches on tapered columns are the most identifying features of the style. In Jersey City, these structures represent the largest and most stylized residences. Bungalows were generally constructed between 1905 and 1925.

The best example of the Craftsman style is the home located at 723 West Cemetery Street. From the wooden tapered columns on brick bases that support the porch, to the exposed rafter tails and brackets along the roof line, this home possesses all of the characteristic elements of Craftsman Bungalows. The one-story brick house has a clipped-gable roof with a clipped-gable porch offset on the front of the house. The pediment area of the roof is clad in wooden shingles and the house is supported on a brick foundation with vents. Commonly found on bungalows, the house has a large, multi-paned window opening under the porch and a paired, 6-over-1 double-hung window flanking the



**Figure 7:** 723 West Cemetery Street



**Figure 8:** 403 Caldwell Street



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other side of the door. Craftsman bungalows often have a variety of window configurations which is one of its many elements that distinguish itself from other types of historic residential architecture.

A simpler version of the bungalow is found at 403 Caldwell Street. This home also has an offset, gabled porch supported on tapered columns on brick bases, as well as exposed rafter tails and brackets. The weatherboard home has two sets of ribbon windows flanking each side of the front entryway. Each narrow window has a three-over-one pane configuration that is common on some bungalows. Other bungalow elements found on homes in Jersey City include engaged front porches, center and paired dormer windows, low porch railings either with balusters or masonry, and overhanging roofs.

**Indeed, the “Jersey City Style” can be described as the bungalow style, whether it be the smaller worker homes found on West Kerr, or the more elaborate Craftsman architecture found on Cemetery.**



**Figure 9:** 623 West Cemetery



**Figure 10:** 719 West Cemetery



**Figure 11:** 418 Caldwell Street

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Hip-on-gable roof

Low-pitch roof with overhang and exposed rafter tails

Brackets

Tapered columns on brick bases

Large, multi-paned picture window

End gable roof



*The Bungalow*



*The Cottage*

6-over-1 double hung window

Center front gable with roof vent

Shed roof porch on wood columns

Wooden porch balustrade

**Figure 12:** The Jersey City Style

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## *Infill Architecture*

The final category is more inclusive, and comprises the homes built after the 1930s or so. These homes, while varied, have no one common style and exist scattered throughout Jersey City. Most have been built either on vacant lots, or represent redevelopment of demolished housing. There are examples of single-level ranch houses, manufactured or modular homes, duplexes, and small simple boxes. The form of infill buildings varies significantly, and so does their contribution to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been constructed inconsistent with historic patterns with no attention to detail or the Jersey City style. Others, like 708 West Cemetery, present a contemporary design incorporating historic elements into its architecture. With its low-pitched front gable porch supported by wood columns on brick bases, the house borrows elements from the bungalow architecture found in Jersey City. Or, like the home at 711 West Cemetery, a modern design complements the character of the historic homes with its variation in materials, front porch addressing the street, and overall scale in comparison to its neighbors. Finally, 516 Best Street is a newly built recreation of the original home with engaged front porch, hipped roof, and concrete balustrade.

These homes certainly do not define the Jersey City Style, but complement its architecture and overall neighborhood fabric.



**Figure 13:** 711 West Cemetery Street



**Figure 14:** West Kerr Street



**Figure 15:** 708 West Cemetery Street

## **B. Site Planning**

The Jersey City Style is defined as much by the layout of the neighborhood as much as its architecture. Just like the other historic districts in the City of Salisbury, Jersey City was planned on a pedestrian friendly scale.

### *Form*

Homes are built on narrow lots, typically fifty feet wide, and are setback rather close to the street. The houses address the street with porches that are oriented towards the street. Many of the houses have short concrete walks between the porch and the road. The smaller lots dictate a scale that is somewhat smaller. The majority of the homes in Jersey City are one or one and one-half stories tall. Most of the homes were built in the first half of the twentieth century and therefore do not have garages. Cars either park on the street or in drives in front of the house.

### *Infrastructure*

While there is a need for improved access outside of the neighborhood, the streets in Jersey City are well connected to each other and are set on a modified grid. The neighborhood is very walkable, although in desperate need of sidewalks.

Other than the lack of sidewalks, the overall layout of the neighborhood is inherently safe and comfortable. This type of traditional neighborhood design should be preserved as much as the architecture itself.

### **Key Characteristics:**

- Narrow lots throughout neighborhood
- Modified grid layout of streets
- Consistent setback of houses both from street and other homes
- Similar scale of homes – most 1 or 1-1/2 stories and around 1200 to 1600 square feet.
- Small sheds and the occasional detached garage
- Park centrally located and accessible to all areas of neighborhood
- Lack of sidewalks throughout neighborhood
- Front porches – most based on bungalow style
- Variety of window configurations – common to bungalow neighborhoods
- Weatherboard or brick wall construction.

## IV. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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### A. ARCHITECTURE

Jersey City includes a variety of architectural styles. The most common of which is the bungalow with its low-pitched roofs, overhanging eaves, front porches on wood and masonry columns, open façades with numerous windows, among other characteristics. These design elements define a charming, comfortable neighborhood where people sit on their front porches and speak to their neighbors as they walk by, where children can safely walk to the Jersey City Park, and where generations of families have lived since its founding.

These architectural design principles focus on the preservation and proliferation of the Jersey City Style as the neighborhood continues to change over time. It is not intended to create a community where every home looks like the prototypical bungalow commonly found in the community. Rather, it seeks to support the preservation and maintenance of existing architecture, while encouraging a variety of architectural styles that incorporate elements of the Jersey City Style. New construction, if at all possible, should contribute to the visual continuity of the neighborhood and the proliferation of the Jersey City Style.

#### *Specific Principles:*

##### 1. Preservation and Maintenance

- Further deterioration and loss of historic resources in the neighborhood through neglect and demolitions should be discouraged. Whenever facing a demolition, the City should institute a policy where alternative solutions are sought and demolitions occur only as a last resort.



**Figure 16:** Deteriorated and Boarded-up Home

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- Preventative maintenance of historic homes is critical to prevent the deterioration of the individual home. Periodic painting of wood siding, cleaning of gutters and downspouts, keeping foundations clear of brush and debris, ensuring windows and roofs are watertight, and regular termite inspections will prevent a home from needing substantial repairs and rehabilitation.
- Architectural elements that define the character of the historic home should be preserved whenever possible. Make every attempt to repair deteriorated features to their original and functional condition.



**Figure 18:** Character defining architectural elements, such as the overhanging roofs and exposed rafters on a bungalow, should be preserved.



**Figure 17:** Significant architectural features in Jersey City include porches, overhanging roofs, window detailing, and dormer windows.



**Figure 19:** Front porches, like 622 West Cemetery Street, are important to the overall neighborhood fabric of Jersey City.

- The integrity of materials is important to any neighborhood with historic structures. When a feature requires repair or replacement, try to use materials similar to the original. If alternative materials such as vinyl siding or aluminum and vinyl windows are used, make an attempt to select a product that complements the original design of the home. There are a number of synthetic materials on the market which are designed for incorporation on a historic structure.



**Figure 21:** Homes in Jersey City are generally constructed of wood and masonry. Artificial siding is also found in the neighborhood.



**Figure 20:** When applied, care should be taken to use synthetic siding material that not only reflects a similar appearance of the original, but also that it does not obscure architectural.

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- Window configurations in Jersey City vary greatly on the historic bungalow architecture. The repair of deteriorated windows is encouraged, but synthetic products such as vinyl and aluminum clad windows are appropriate In Jersey City, particularly given their energy efficiency when compared to dilapidated windows. Like wall materials, there are many synthetic window products on the market designed specifically for historic homes.
- Storm windows can be an effective way of protecting the historic window from the elements and further deterioration.



**Figure 22:** Window configurations range both in size of fenestration, but also the design of the window panes.



**Figure 23:** This replacement window appropriately fits within the openings of the original building.



## 2. Design Style:

- Design new homes in Jersey City to respect the scale of the architecture already existing in the single-family neighborhood. Similar building footprints and heights are encouraged for new construction. Existing homes have a rectangular form and range from one to two stories in height. Most homes, however, are one-story tall.



**Figure 24:** New homes in Jersey City, like 708 and 711 West Cemetery Street, can be contemporary designs that respect the form and architectural elements of existing historic houses.



- Primary entrances should be oriented towards the street and, if possible, provide a walkway to the driveway and street. Porches, stoops, and clearly defined entryways are encouraged.
- Front porches are critical to the character of the neighborhood and are encouraged on any new building. A new home with a simple plan can blend in and complement the character of the neighborhood with a porch that addresses the street. Builders should make an attempt to use design characteristics of the bungalow style porches found throughout the district.



**Figure 25:** New construction can also be a representation of an historic home rather than contemporary design.

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- A variety of roof forms for new homes in the district is appropriate, but simple, gable roofs are encouraged. A roof form that mimics the low-pitched roofs with overhangs and exposed rafters found on existing historic homes, are particularly encouraged. Dormer windows are found in the neighborhood and are appropriate on new construction. Roofs of porches should be carefully integrated into the design of the home.



**Figure 26:** Roofs should be simple, with both gable and hipped roofs being appropriate. Clipped gable roofs and shed or gable dormer windows are also appropriate to the Jersey City Style.



- Architectural detail of many of the buildings in Jersey City is interpreted through simple to elaborate window configurations. New homes are encouraged to use a variety of window designs, particularly those that complement the size, location, and design of existing bungalow architecture.
- There are very few garages in Jersey City due to both the narrow width of existing lots as well as to the Jersey City style of architecture. If a new garage is constructed in conjunction with a new or existing home, a simple design of a detached structure is encouraged. Small outbuildings are found in rear yards throughout the district.



**Figure 27:** Simple detached garages are encouraged, like this example at 706 West Kerr Street.

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- New homes should make an attempt to use traditional materials of wood weatherboards and detailing, as well as brick facades and foundations. However, synthetic materials that complement existing architecture are appropriate.



**Figure 28:** Synthetic materials that complement existing architecture are appropriate.

- The Jersey City Style is characterized by its single-family residential architecture. There are examples of infill duplexes in the neighborhood, but further proliferation of this building type should be prevented through changes to zoning codes. Similarly, other non-single family uses should be prohibited in the community.



**Figure 29:** Jersey City is characterized by its single-family nature. Infill duplexes or conversions to multi-family residential do not fit the Jersey City Style.

## **B. SITE PLANNING**

The Jersey City Style is also defined by its overall neighborhood layout and site planning. Narrow lots front on narrow streets which are well connected in a modified grid layout. While the neighborhood originally had small, narrow alleys for service uses, these alleys no longer exist. Jersey City is somewhat isolated due to the railroad and industrial uses comprising its western and southern borders, but is directly adjacent to residential, office and commercial areas to the north and east.

This section focuses on those design principles for general neighborhood layout and infrastructure.

**Figure 30:**

Consistent setbacks and front porches that address the street are important characteristics of the Jersey City Style. New construction should respect these site elements.



### ***Specific Guidelines:***

#### **1. Site Planning**

- Homes in Jersey City share consistent building setbacks from the street and each other. The majority of the residences sit about twenty five to thirty feet back from the street. This creates a consistent “building wall” and visual continuity along the street. Side setbacks are also similar and tend to be about ten to fifteen feet. New residential development should maintain the line of the building fronts as well as the side yard setbacks of existing construction.

Some lots are slightly larger than others, particularly along the bend in West Kerr Street. The combination of adjacent lots for the purposes of the construction of a more substantial home would interrupt the continuity of the traditional development and is discouraged.

- Small front yards and porches oriented toward the street are common in the neighborhood and create an intimate and inviting setting. The proximity of the public realm (street) and the private realm (front porch) creates an interactive environment and is an important design element of traditional neighborhoods. New buildings in Jersey City should be also be oriented toward the street and engage the public realm with a front porch or entryway.
- Front yards are intended to be transitional spaces between the public and private realms. In Jersey City, these grassy lawns generally have a walk from the entryway to the street and are sometimes landscaped. Parking typically occurs in the driveway to side of the lot or on the street. Parking areas in the front yard space directly between the street and building front is discouraged.



**Figure 31:** Front yards, like this one at 621 West Cemetery Street, are generally grassy lawns with a walkway to the street. Parking is either on the street or to the side of the home.

## 2. Infrastructure

- Jersey City has sidewalks only in front of the three new structures on a small portion of West Cemetery Street. There are no sidewalks connecting the homes to the centrally located park, day care center, or nearby commercial and office uses. A policy to create sidewalks is needed in Jersey City. Whether it is a worker walking from his or her home to the packing plant, parents walking their child to the day care center, or a resident walking to the convenience store at the five points area, sidewalks are critical to the general safety of the pedestrian.

Sidewalks not only clearly delineate pedestrian from vehicular zones, they also serve to slow traffic and encourage pedestrian activity. New homes, like those located on West Cemetery, are encouraged to incorporate sidewalks into their site design.



**Figure 32:** Sidewalks are needed throughout Jersey City, but particularly along Kerr Street leading from homes to the Jersey City Park.

# Jersey City Style Book

- Because of the small front yards, sidewalks in Jersey City would need to be narrow, but should be separated from the curb by a narrow grass strip and should be well lit with pedestrian scale lighting in the evenings.



**Figure 33:** Simple, narrow sidewalks with a small grass strip separating them from the street would improve pedestrian safety in Jersey City.

- Safe connections should be provided to adjacent uses, particularly the commercial areas around the five points intersection formed by Mocksville, Cemetery, and Caldwell Streets. An improved, well marked crosswalk across Mocksville Avenue from Jersey City would create a safe pedestrian access to the convenience store and office uses on the east side of Mocksville, as well as connect Jersey City to adjacent residential areas.



**Figure 34:** Safe connections to adjacent uses within the five points intersection are needed (above). By simply striping pedestrian crossings (left), traffic will slow down, pedestrian areas will be clearly delineated, and access to nearby uses will be safer.

- Other means of connectivity between the neighborhood and surrounding uses should be explored. A pedestrian connection to Innes Street, perhaps as part of the City of Salisbury's greenway plan, could connect the neighborhood to more commercial areas, office, and employment uses.

## V. PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

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Jersey City's unique architecture sets it apart from other neighborhoods and its history and traditions as an African American neighborhood rich in the qualities that define the word community make it important to the development of the City of Salisbury and worthy of preservation. Salisbury and its leaders are known statewide as a leader in historic preservation. However, the techniques commonly used in historic districts like downtown, West Square, and Brooklyn South Square, among others, are not available for Jersey City.

It is not the intent of this style book to require owners to have improvements to their property reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. Rather, this report is intended to define the Jersey City Style and present voluntary design principles aimed at preserving the neighborhood's unique architecture while also fostering new development that is in harmony with Jersey City's sense of place. Still, other methods should be employed to insure the preservation of the neighborhood.

### ***Preservation Tools***

The City of Salisbury has a variety of preservation tools at its disposal that should be offered to the residents of Jersey City. The first of these is the Historic District Design Guidelines document. These guidelines are used by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for review of exterior changes, new construction, and demolition in the City's five local historic

districts. While the document is a regulatory device, it also exists as a tool for any owner of an historic property in Salisbury to understand the best practices for undergoing preservation projects. In this capacity, the guidelines are educational and have no regulatory authority. By providing access to this document, residents and builders within Jersey City will know the correct methods of undergoing maintenance, preservation, revitalization, and redevelopment.

Similarly, the HPC is made up of professionals experienced in the fields of architectural design, preservation, history, and real estate development, among others. One of its duties is to serve as an educational body to the citizens of Salisbury. It does this through the City's historic preservation planner. This staff person has access to a vast amount of data concerning preservation including lists of appropriate materials, knowledge of local contractors, *Preservation Briefs* reports authored by the National Park Service detailing specific project-related practices, and architectural surveys of historic areas throughout Salisbury, including Jersey City. The HPC should engage the citizens of Jersey City in a discussion on preservation practices by making its preservation resources readily available to the community.

## ***Demolition Process***

The City of Salisbury should adopt a policy to prevent the further deterioration and ultimate demolition of historic resources in Jersey City. Demolition, unfortunately, is at times a necessary evil and the City and the Salisbury Community Development Corporation have done an exemplary job of redeveloping lots where homes have had to be demolished. Still, the fact remains that Jersey City has been losing its historic architecture. The City should incorporate a policy whereby vigilance is applied to the demolition process in a manner similar to properties in local historic districts.

Short of an approval process for demolition, the City should employ methods whereby, through the planning office, alternatives to demolition are explored including renovation, adaptive use, and relocation of the home. At the very least, the City can enter into a dialogue with the property owner to explore options. This should be done whether the developer of the property is a private property owner, the Community Development Corporation, or the City itself.

## ***Community Design Review***

The City should institute a policy where private developers of property within and adjacent to the Jersey City neighborhood should engage the citizens in a pre-construction discussion of the planned development. Occurring at any time before a building permit is issued, this would be a community meeting where residents are invited to discuss the details of the project. Other than the act of holding the community meeting, there would be no official outcome required at this meeting. The

purpose of the meeting would simply be to give the community the opportunity to provide input to the developer prior to the development of the final plans.

## ***Preservation Grants***

The City currently offers small matching grants to owners of historic properties in local historic districts. The competitive grants are given twice a year and awarded based on four criteria: extensiveness of the project; income level of the property owner; total cost of the project; and the structure's historic contribution to the neighborhood. The program is heavily weighted to stabilization projects and income levels. The grants can fund simple projects such as painting, to substantial projects like re-roofing an entire home.

The City currently appropriates money each year for the program. This project goes a long way to foster historic preservation, but the appropriation is small and must be earmarked for the local historic district program. However, the City's planning office should seek other funding sources and grants with the intent of expanding this successful program to threatened historic neighborhoods like Jersey City.

## ***Zoning Changes***

Salisbury may want to incorporate changes to the zoning in Jersey City to reflect historic development patterns of the neighborhood. At the time of the drafting of this report, the City was rewriting its land development code as a key component of the Salisbury 2020 Comprehensive Plan. This code should be reviewed to insure that new development in



Jersey City meets historic precedent as well as the site design principles of this report. Simple code changes such as size limitation (lot and height), and “build to” requirements rather than set backs could insure proper site development. Other changes such as a rezoning of the neighborhood to be strictly single-family may also be appropriate. Finally, buffering and connectivity standards of non-residential development adjacent to Jersey City would insure a compatibility of land uses.

### ***Codes enforcement***

Much of the deterioration in the neighborhood is connected to absentee ownership and rental property. The fact that rental property exists in the neighborhood should not be a problem, but absentee landlords can create a situation where the properties are neglected because they are out of site and mind of the ownership. Aggressive enforcement of minimum housing and nuisance codes can help prevent continued deterioration of individual properties in the neighborhood.

### ***Sidewalks & Lighting***

It has been stated previously in this report, but Jersey City is woefully lacking in sidewalk and adequate street lighting. With a crowded day care center on Best Street, a park centrally located in the neighborhood, and an Industrial use with its only access through Jersey City, sidewalks are critical for the safety of the residents. With an aging population, as well as the presence of some moderate and low income residents, transportation and provision of pedestrian amenities is even more important. The City should research grant resources to help fund sidewalk improvements throughout the

neighborhood, but particularly along Kerr Street past the park and to Freirich Foods, as well as along Cemetery connecting the neighborhood to adjacent commercial and office uses along Mocksville Avenue.

### ***Minority Business Assistance***

The gateway at the “five points” area has two critical parcels of property that, for whatever reasons, have not been developed. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the City and the Salisbury CDC to recruit minority-owned businesses to develop these properties with uses that could serve Jersey City as well as surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***Other Projects***

Other projects that have been outlined in previous reports should continue to be pursued. These include but are not limited to:

- Gateway improvements in the five points area
- Connection to City’s greenway network
- Potential to develop pedestrian and/or vehicular connection from neighborhood to Innes Street.
- Access to City’s transportation network
- Potential for community improvements to the park
- Continued streetscape improvements

## VI. RESOURCES

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### **City of Salisbury Planning Department**

217 South Main Street

Salisbury, NC 28144

(704) 638 -5242

<http://www.salisburync.gov/lm&d/>

### **Salisbury Community Development Corporation**

1400 West Bank Street

Salisbury, NC 28144

(704) 638-4474

<http://www.salisburycdc.org/>

### **North Carolina Office of Archives and History State Historic Preservation Office**

515 North Blount Street

Raleigh, NC

(919) 733-6545

<http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>

### **US Department of Housing and Community Development**

451 7th Street S.W.

Washington, DC 20410

(202) 708-1112

<http://www.hud.gov/>

City of Salisbury. Historic District Design Guidelines for Residential Properties. 1993.

<http://www.salisburync.gov/lm&d/historic/intro.html>

National Park Service. *Preservation Briefs*. Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Services. 1990.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

National Park Service. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Washington, DC. 1990.

Morton III, W. Brown, Gary L. Hume, Kay D. Weeks and H. Ward Jandl.: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. 1997.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/>

VII. APPENDICES

Developable Land

