

# Design Guidelines: Cornices & Friezes

**C1** Original cornice and frieze elements should be preserved and maintained. Removal of these results in a blank, unfinished look on an historic building.

**C2** Repair damaged or deteriorated portions of a cornice or frieze in kind. New work should match the existing in materials, size, texture, details and other design elements.



*The ornate metal cornice – as well as the decorative brickwork below – is a key architectural feature for this North Capitol Avenue building. The multicolor paint scheme serves to highlight the detail.*

**C3** When a cornice has deteriorated beyond repair or has been removed, the new cornice should match the original or the style of the building in size, proportion, detailing, and massing.

**C4** Wood, cast-iron and metal were traditional cornice materials, and should be the first option for repair or replacement work. Modern materials such as composites may be appropriate if finished in a traditional manner, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**C5** When it is cost prohibitive to replicate a missing cornice, consider using paint to give a similar visual ‘cap’ to the building.

**C6** Maintain and preserve existing eave trim such as decorative brackets or braces.

**C7** Avoid covering cornice areas with aluminum or vinyl siding or other applied materials.

**C8** Protect historic cornice or frieze details during roof or siding work.

**C9** Avoid adding a new cornice or frieze detailing to a building without physical or pictorial evidence that such elements existed historically on the building.

**C10** If constructing a new building in a location where cornices are a common character-defining feature, consider incorporating some type of simplified cornice element atop the new building.