

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of new construction guidelines is to present concepts, alternatives, and approaches that will produce design solutions that recognize the characteristics of the Cottage Home conservation area and bring harmony between new and existing buildings. The guidelines are not meant to restrict creativity, but to set up a framework within which sympathetic design will occur. It should be noted that within an appropriate framework there can be many different design solutions that may be appropriate. While guidelines can create an acceptable framework they cannot ensure any particular result. Consequently people may hold a wide range of opinions about the resultant designs since those designs are largely a factor of the designer's ability.

NEW CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES: CONTEXT

Guidelines serve as aids in designing new construction that reacts sensitively to the existing context in a manner generally believed to be appropriate. Therefore, the most important first step in designing new construction in any conservation district is to determine just what the context is to which the designer is expected to be sensitive.

Every site will possess a unique context. This will be comprised of the buildings immediately adjacent, the nearby area (often the surrounding block), a unique subarea within the district, and the district as a whole.

Generally, new construction will occur on sites that fall into the following categories. For each one described below, there is an indication of the context to which new construction must be primarily related.

1. DEVELOPED SITE

This is usually a site upon which there already exists an historic primary structure. New construction usually involves an addition to an existing building(s).

Context

New construction must use the existing historic building as its most important, perhaps only, context.

2. ISOLATED LOT

This is usually a single vacant lot (sometimes two very small lots combined) that exists in a highly developed area with very few, if any, other vacant lots in view.

Context

The existing buildings immediately adjacent, in the same block, and in the facing block provide a very strong context to which any new construction must primarily relate.

3. LARGE SITE

This is usually a combination of several vacant lots, often the result of previous demolition.

Context

Since this type of site was usually created as a result of relatively extensive demolition, its surrounding context has been weakened by its very existence. However, context is still of primary concern. In such cases, a somewhat larger area than the immediate environment must also be looked to for context, especially if other vacant land exists in the immediate area.

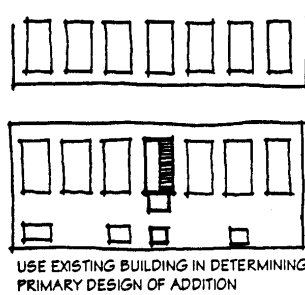
4. EXPANSIVE SITE

This site may consist of a half block or more of vacant land or the site may be a smaller one surrounded by many other vacant sites. Often there is much vacant land surrounding the site.

Context

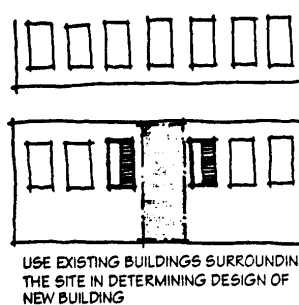
The context of adjacent buildings is often very weak or non-existent. In this case, the surrounding area provides the primary context to the extent that it exists. Beyond that, the entire historic area is the available context for determining character. This type of site often offers the greatest design flexibility. Where the strength of the context varies at different points around a site, new design should be responsive to the varying degrees of contextual influence.

DEVELOPED SITE
ADDITION TO EXISTING BUILDING



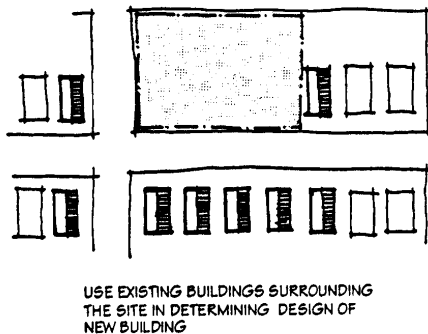
USE EXISTING BUILDING IN DETERMINING PRIMARY DESIGN OF ADDITION

ISOLATED SITE
NEW BUILDING ON SINGLE LOT



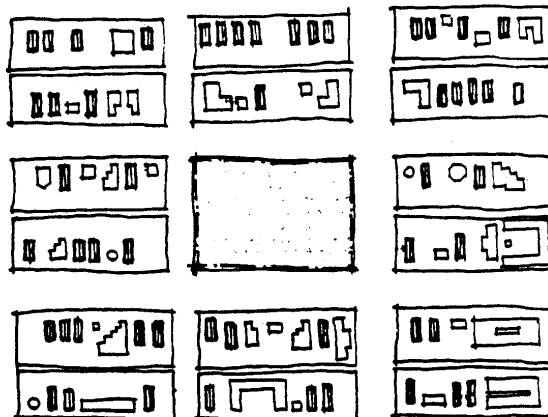
USE EXISTING BUILDINGS SURROUNDING THE SITE IN DETERMINING DESIGN OF NEW BUILDING

LARGE SITE
NEW BUILDING ON SEVERAL SITES



USE EXISTING BUILDINGS SURROUNDING THE SITE IN DETERMINING DESIGN OF NEW BUILDING

EXPANSIVE SITE
NEW BUILDINGS ON LARGE SITE



USE EXISTING BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT THE AREA IN DETERMINING DESIGN OF NEW BUILDING

NEW PRIMARY STRUCTURES

SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- **Construction of any new primary building.**

The first step to take in designing new construction is to define the context within which it will exist. Once the context is understood, the following guidelines are meant to assist in finding a compatible design response. Setbacks, orientation, spacing, heights, outline, and mass are elements that generally relate to a building's fit within its surrounding street character. Style, fenestration, foundation, entry, and materials are elements that generally describe the architectural compatibility of a new building to its existing neighbors.

ACCESSIBILITY:

The City of Indianapolis - Marion County recognizes the need to accommodate and include persons with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. With regards to historic areas, the goal is to facilitate universal access for all persons.

When designing new structures, the guidelines listed below should be followed.

RECOMMENDED

1. Building elements and site design intended to provide accessibility should be designed as integral parts of the building and/or site. This is best accomplished if such elements receive the same level of design consideration as all other elements of the building. Such elements should:
 - be integrated into the architectural design and expression of the building, and
 - reflect the same attention to detail and finish as the rest of the building, and
 - be constructed of the same quality and type of materials as the rest of the building.
2. Innovative design is encouraged as a way to achieve accessibility in new construction. Accessibility may be a challenge when it conflicts with established, traditional design principles. An example is a street where all the historic houses and porches are many steps above ground level. However, new construction allows the ability to design from scratch using innovative methods to achieve visual compatibility with the surroundings and also provide practical, first-class accessibility.

NOT RECOMMENDED

Site development and building design for accessibility should not result in the appearance that accessibility is simply “accommodated” rather than consciously designed in an integrated manner. Such elements should not appear to be “after-thoughts.” To accomplish this, the following should be avoided:

1. Materials that are of inferior quality than those used elsewhere in the building.
2. Design that visually conflicts with the site and the building.
3. Accessible paths and entrances that are awkward, not readily usable, or add excessive travel time to use.

Note: The IHPC is not responsible for ensuring that applicants meet federal, state, and local accessibility requirements. The recommendations in this plan are guidelines and are not descriptions of legal requirements regarding accessibility. Consult the local building code and state and federal laws and regulations to determine legal requirements for accessibility.

ENTRY:

The actual and visually perceived approach and entrance to a building.

RECOMMENDED

1. Entrances may characteristically be formal or friendly, recessed or flush, grand or commonplace, narrow or wide. New buildings should reflect a similar sense of entry to that which is expressed by surrounding historic buildings.
2. Accessibility for all new buildings is encouraged (see “Accessibility” on page 19).

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Entrances that are hidden, obscured, ambiguous, or missing.
2. Designing approaches to buildings that are uncharacteristic within the area.

FENESTRATION:

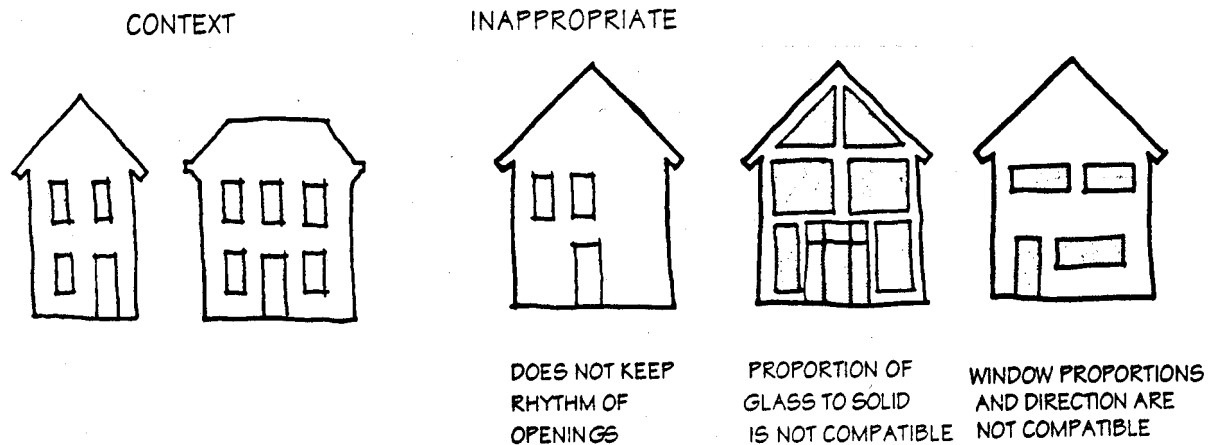
The arrangement, proportioning, and design of windows, doors, and openings.

RECOMMENDED

1. Creative expression with fenestration is not precluded provided the result does not conflict with or draw attention from surrounding historic buildings.
2. Windows and doors should be arranged on the building so as not to conflict with the basic fenestration pattern in the area.
3. The basic proportions of glass to solid that is found on surrounding buildings should be reflected in new construction.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Window openings that conflict with the proportions and directionality of those typically found on surrounding historic buildings.
2. Window sash configurations that conflict with those on surrounding buildings.



FOUNDATION:

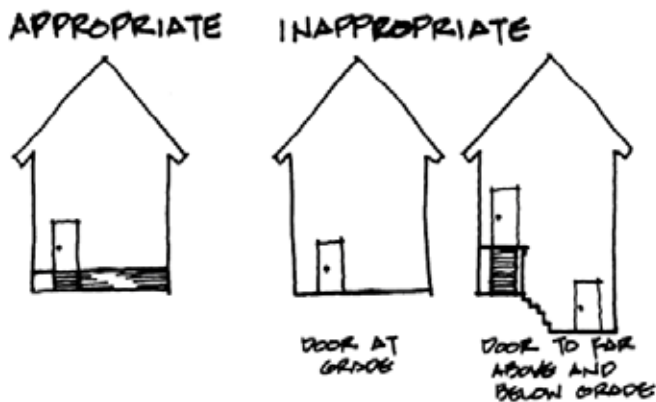
The support base upon which a building sits.

RECOMMENDED

1. New construction should reflect the prevailing sense of foundation height on contiguous buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. High, raised entrances if surrounding buildings are raised only two or three steps off the ground.
2. Designs that appear to hug the ground if surrounding buildings are raised on high foundations.



HEIGHT:

The actual height of buildings and their various components as measured from the ground.

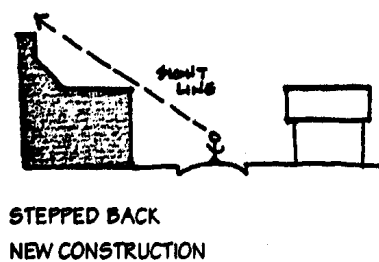
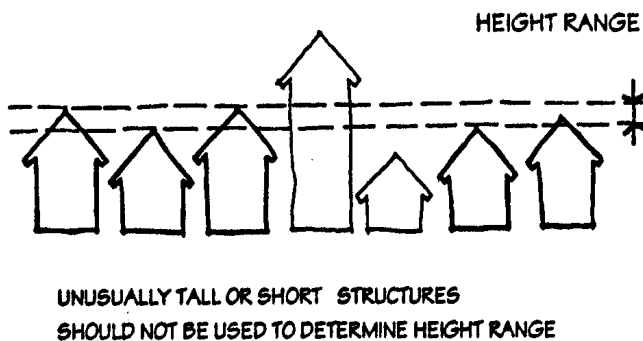
Note: In areas governed by this plan, heights should be determined using these guidelines rather than those noted in the zoning ordinance.

RECOMMENDED

1. Generally, the height of a new building should fall within a range set by the highest and lowest contiguous buildings if the block has uniform heights. If the pattern of the block is characterized by a variety of heights, then the height of new construction can vary from the lowest to highest on the block; however, uncharacteristically high or low buildings should not be considered when determining the appropriate range.
2. Cornice heights can be as important as overall building heights and where there is uniformity, should conform with contiguous buildings in a similar manner.
3. New construction at the end of a block should take into account building heights on adjacent blocks.
4. If the area immediately contiguous to new construction does not offer adequate context to establish an appropriate new building height, the larger historic area context should be assessed.
5. Porch height can have an impact on the height relationships between buildings and should align with contiguous porch foundation and roof heights in a similar manner to building heights.
6. Foundation and floor line heights should be consistent with contiguous properties.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Any building height that appears either diminutive or overscale in relation to its context.



MASS:

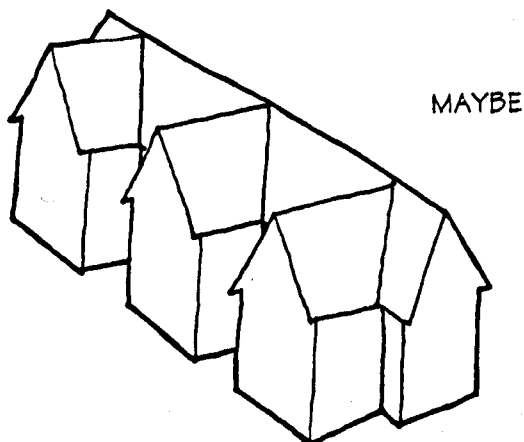
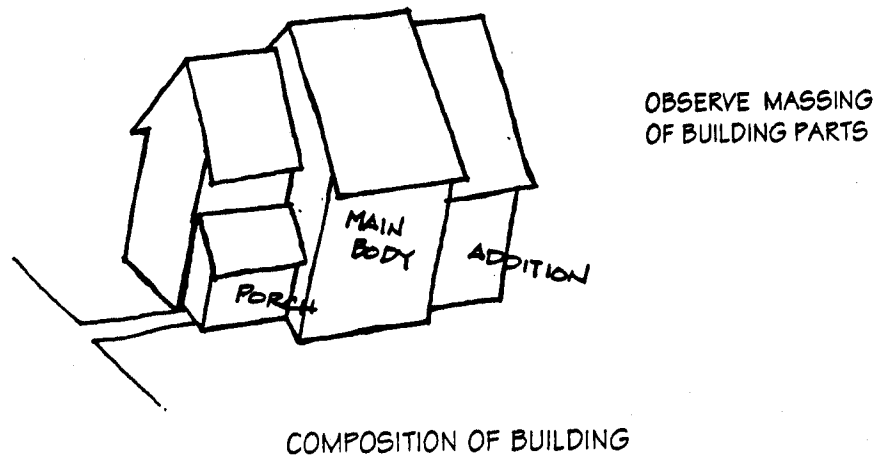
The three-dimensional outline of a building.

RECOMMENDED

1. The total mass of a new building should be compatible with surrounding buildings.
2. The massing of the various parts of a new building should be characteristic of surrounding buildings.
3. If the context suggests a building with a large mass but the desire is for a smaller space, consider more than one unit as a means to increase the size of the building.
4. A larger-than-typical mass might be appropriate if it is broken into elements that are visually compatible with the mass of the surrounding buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Near total coverage of a site unless doing so is compatible with the surrounding context.



MATERIALS:

The visual, structural, and performance characteristics of the substances visible on a building exterior.

RECOMMENDED

1. Textures, patterns, and dimensions of building materials should be compatible with those found on historic buildings in the area.
2. Natural materials are preferred, although synthetic or composite materials may be considered provided they appear and perform like natural materials.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, and any similar siding generally do not have visual and physical characteristics similar to natural materials and should be avoided.

TYPICAL SIDING ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS



MAY BE APPROPRIATE ON NEW CONSTRUCTION



INAPPROPRIATE



TOO WIDE



WRONG DIRECTION



DIAGONAL



TOO RUSTIC/GRAINY

ORIENTATION:

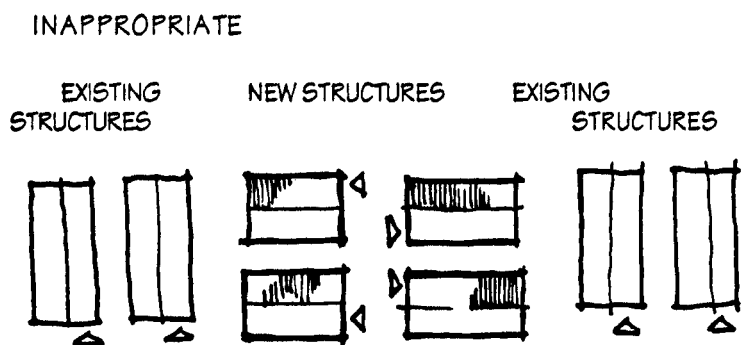
The direction that a building faces.

RECOMMENDED

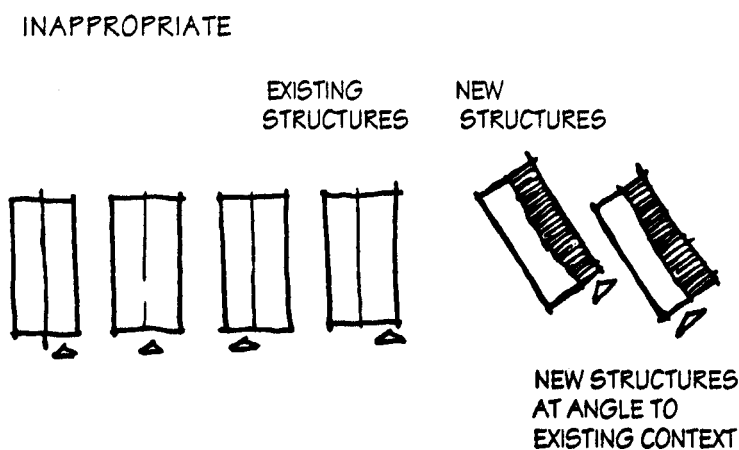
1. New buildings oriented toward the street.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. New buildings at angles to the street that are not characteristic within the building or neighborhood context.
2. Buildings or building groupings that turn away from the street and give the appearance that the street façade is not the front façade.



NEW STRUCTURES DO NOT FACE THE STREET AS EXISTING STRUCTURES



OUTLINE:

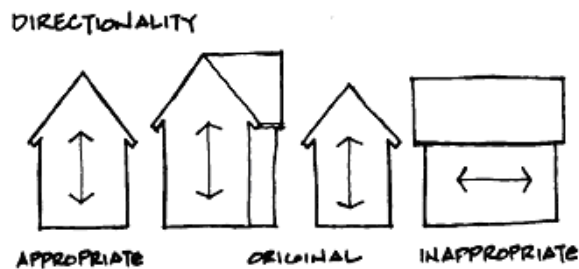
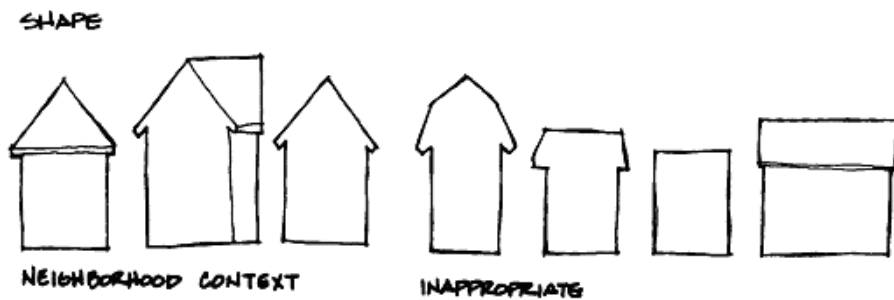
The silhouette of a building as seen from the street.

RECOMMENDED

1. The basic outline of a new building should reflect building outlines typical of the area.
2. The outline of new construction should reflect the directional orientations characteristic of the existing buildings in its context.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Roof shapes that create uncharacteristic shapes, slopes and patterns.



SETBACK:

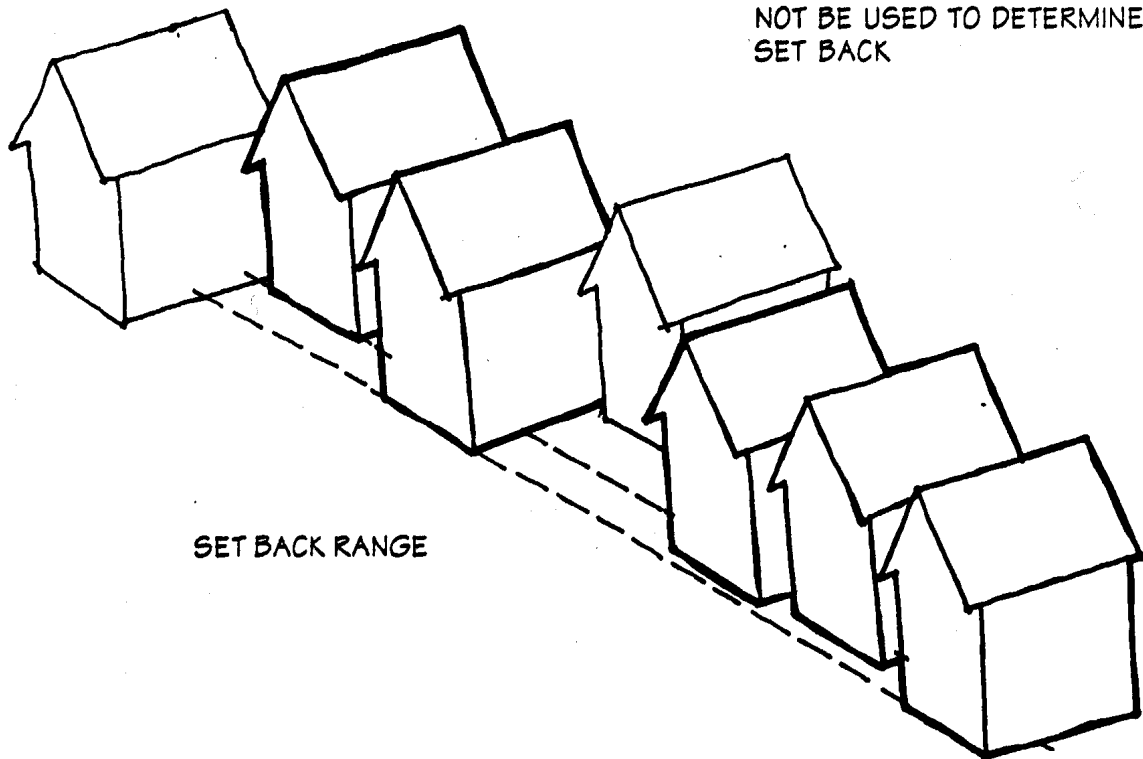
The distance a building is set back from a street.

RECOMMENDED

1. A new building's setback should relate to the setback pattern established by the existing block context rather than the setbacks of building footprints that no longer exist. If the development standards for the particular zoning district do not allow appropriate setbacks, a variance may be needed.
2. If setbacks are varied, new construction can be located within a setback that falls within an "envelope" formed by the greatest and least setback distances.
3. If setbacks are uniform, new construction must conform.
4. On corner sites, the setbacks from both streets must reflect the context.

CLOSER TO STREET THAN MOST
AND SHOULD NOT BE USED TO
DETERMINE SETBACK

SET BACK MUCH MORE
THAN MOST AND SHOULD
NOT BE USED TO DETERMINE
SET BACK



SPACING:

The distance between contiguous buildings along a blockface.

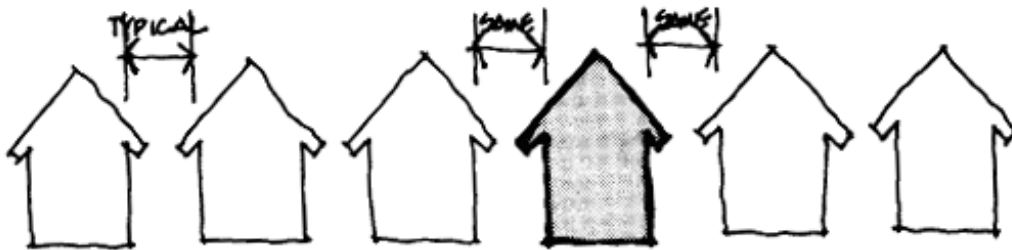
RECOMMENDED

1. New construction that reflects and reinforces the spacing found in its block. New construction should maintain the perceived regularity or lack of regularity of spacing on the block.

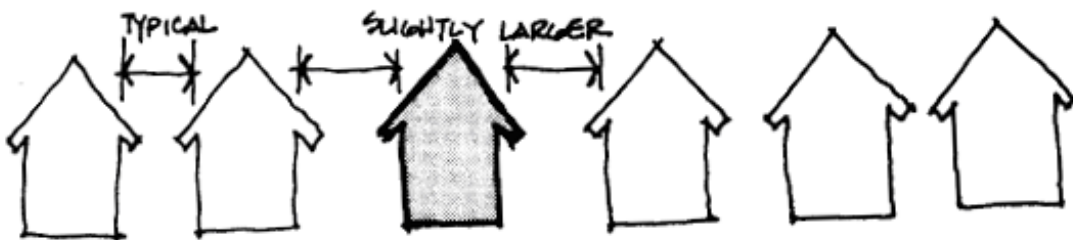
NOT RECOMMENDED

1. The creation of large open spaces where none existed historically. Such spacing is uncharacteristic and establishes holes in the traditional pattern and rhythm of the street.

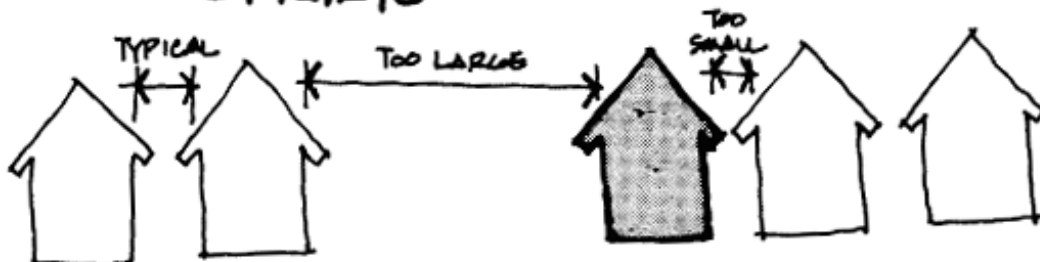
APPROPRIATE



MAYBE



INAPPROPRIATE



STYLE AND DESIGN:

The creative and aesthetic expression of the designer.

RECOMMENDED

1. No specific styles are recommended. Creativity and original design are encouraged. A wide range of styles is theoretically possible and may include designs that vary in complexity from simple to ornate.
2. Surrounding buildings should be studied for their characteristic design elements. The relationship of those elements to the character of the area should then be assessed. Significant elements define compatibility. Look for characteristic ways in which buildings are roofed, entered, divided into stories, and set on foundations. Look for character-defining elements such as chimneys, dormers, gables, overhanging eaves, and porches. For commercial buildings, examine typical façade components such as storefront elements (kickplates, transoms, display windows, and entrances), ornamentation, signage, and awnings.

UTILITIES & EQUIPMENT:

Any utilities that might be above ground and visible (such as meters and electric lines) and any mechanical equipment associated with the building (such as air-conditioning equipment).

RECOMMENDED

1. Electric lines, cable TV, and other utility wires should be buried below ground when new construction occurs.
2. Mechanical equipment, such as permanent air conditioning equipment and meters, should be placed in locations that have the least impact on the character of the structure and site.

NEW ADDITIONS, GARAGES & ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- **Construction of any new garage and/or other large accessory structure**, built on a permanent foundation and having a total square footage greater than 144 square feet.
- **Construction of any new enclosed addition, including an attached garage**, to any building.

NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- **Construction or installation of small storage sheds or accessory buildings**, provided the total square footage of the structure does not exceed 144 square feet and that it is not built on a permanent foundation.

When designing a new addition to an historic building or a new accessory building such as a garage or storage building, the context to which the designer must relate is usually very narrowly defined by the existing building on the site. For the most part, the guidelines pertaining to new construction of primary structures (see previous section) are applicable to additions and accessory buildings as long as it is remembered that there is always a closer and more direct relationship with an existing building in this case. The following guidelines are specific to additions and accessory buildings and are particularly important when undertaking such a project.

RECOMMENDED

1. Accessory buildings should be located behind the existing historic building unless there is an historic precedent otherwise. Generally, accessory buildings should be of a secondary nature and garages should be oriented to alleys.
2. The setback of a new accessory structure should relate to the setback pattern established by the existing accessory structures in the surrounding area.
3. Attached garages should not face the main street unless that is typical of the area's historic character. Otherwise, attached garages should be designed to not be obvious from the front of the property.
4. Additions, garages, or other large accessory buildings should be of a scale, height, size, and mass that relates to the existing primary building and does not overpower it.
5. Additions should be located at the rear, away from the front façade.
6. The mass and form of the original building should be discernible, even after an addition has been constructed.
7. Additions and accessory buildings should be discernible as a product of their own time.

8. Additions to non-contributing buildings should be compatible in design with the original building and with surrounding historic buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Obscuring significant architectural detailing with new additions.
2. Altering the roof line of an historic building in a manner that affects its character.
3. Additions near the front façade and at the side.
4. Imitating historic styles and details, although they may be adapted and reflected.

