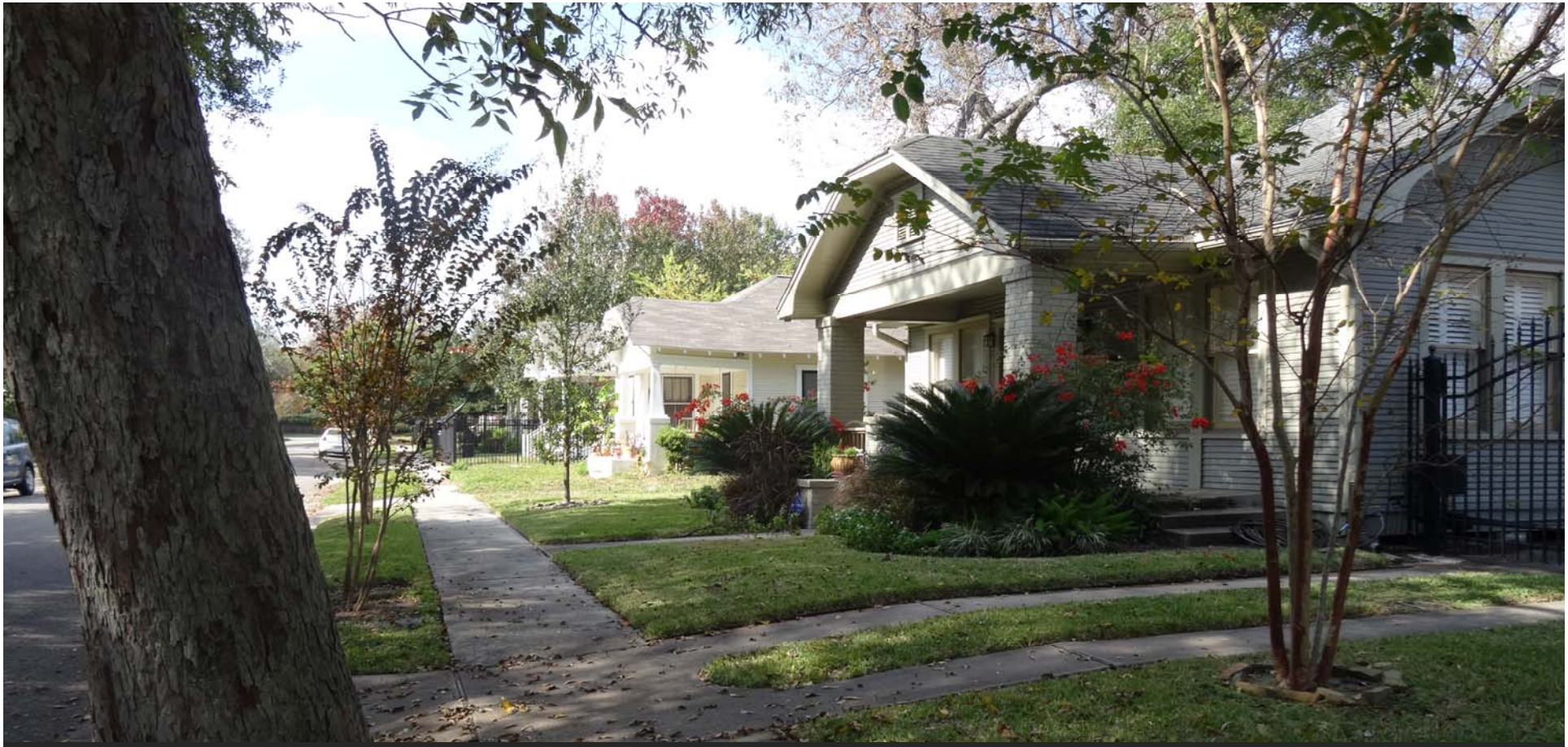


Houston Heights Historic Districts Design Guidelines Public Review Draft

City of Houston
June 20, 2017

Introductions

- City of Houston

  Steph McDougal, Project Manager

- Winter & Company

  Noré Winter, Principal

  Julie Husband, Senior Urban Designer

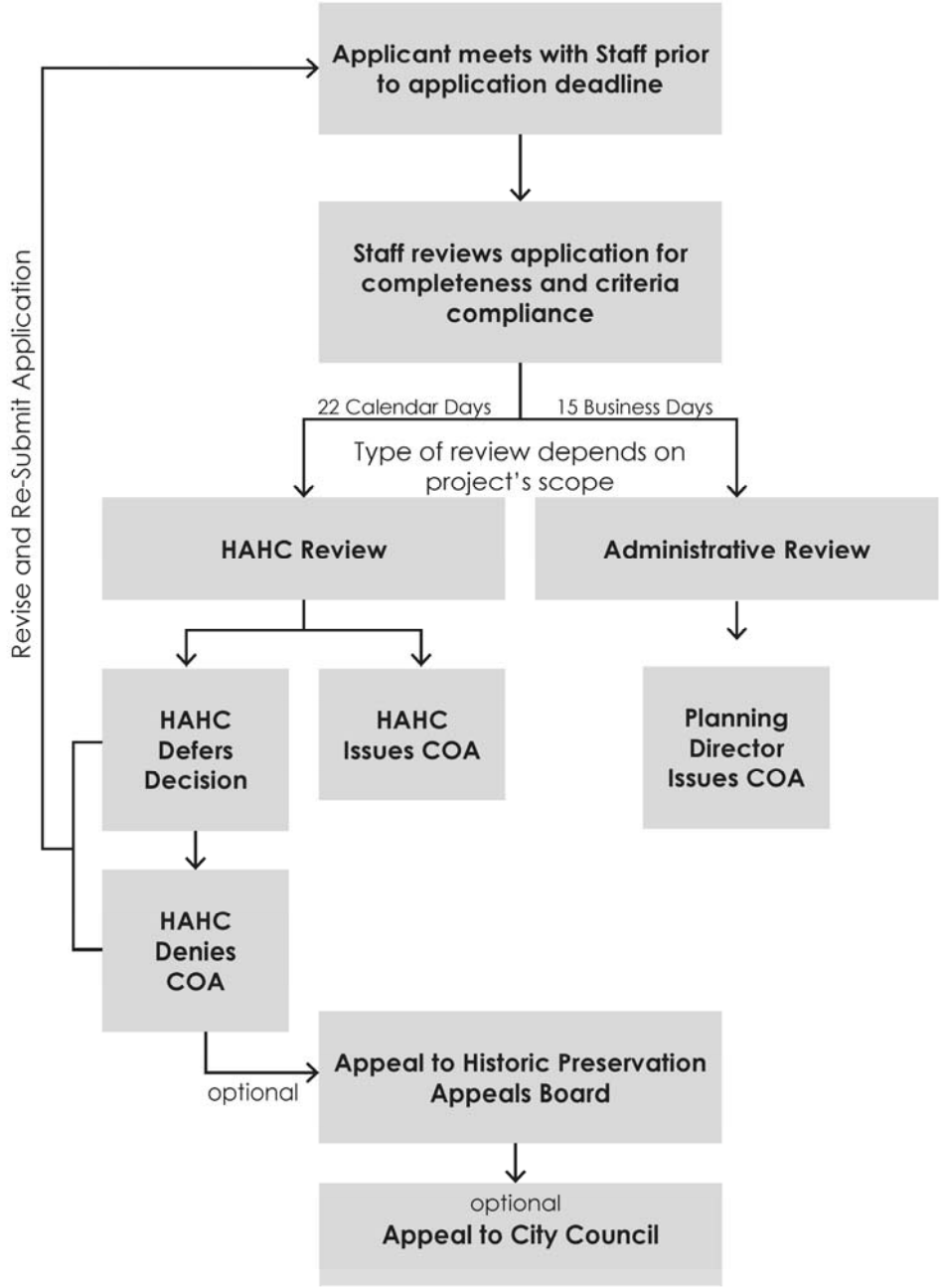
Project Scope

- NOW: Draft design guidelines for Houston Heights Historic Districts (East, West and South)
- NEXT: Norhill, Woodland Heights, and Freeland Historic Districts and Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District
- PHASE 2: Main Street-Market Square and Glenbrook Valley Historic Districts

Background

- Design guidelines for Houston Heights Historic Districts (East, West and South) required by ordinance as amended in 2015
- Based on requests from citizens and builders for a more predictable Certificate of Appropriateness/design review process
- Design guidelines illustrate how the historic preservation ordinance applies to a specific historic district (or districts, in this case)

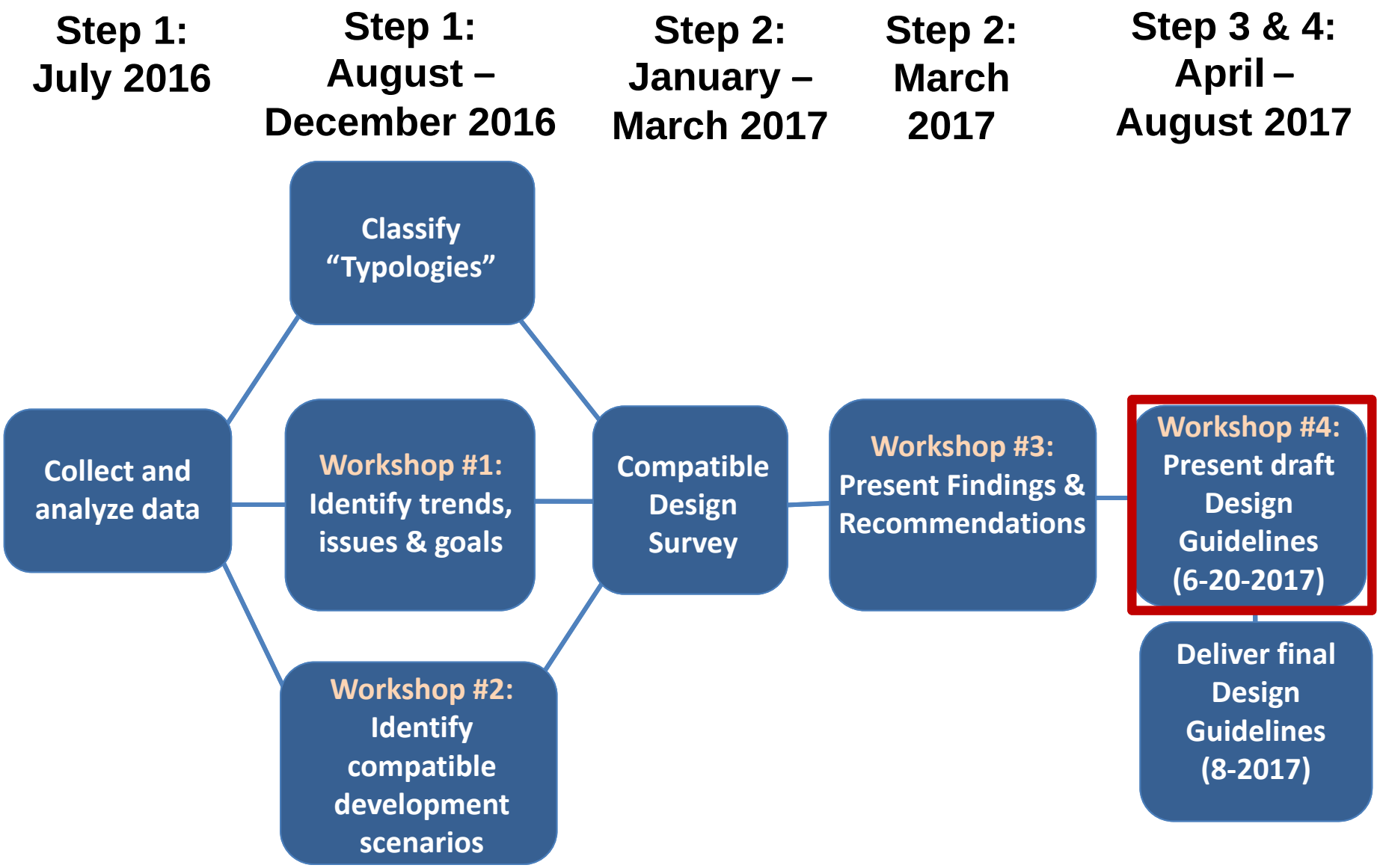
COA Process


Applicant meets with Staff prior to application deadline
Staff reviews application for completeness and criteria compliance
22 Calendar Days
15 Business Days
Type of review depends on project's scope
HAHC Review
Administrative Review
HAHC Defers Decision
HAHC Issues COA
Planning Director Issues COA
HAHC Denies COA
Revise and Re-Submit Application
optional
Appeal to Historic Preservation Appeals Board
optional
Appeal to City Council

COA Approval Rates

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total COAs	407	364	347	348
Approved administratively or at first hearing	342 (84%)	298 (82%)	316 (91%)	299 (86%)
Approved after first hearing	37	37	21	18
Denied (no further action)	28	29	10	31
Ultimately Approved	93%	92%	97%	91%

Process – Phase 1



Data-Driven Process

Community-Driven Process

- 24 meetings with the various historic districts between December 2015 and June 2017
- Several hundred unique participants over the course of the project so far

Compatible Design Survey

- Publicized with help from neighborhood associations
- Postcards mailed to all property owners in advance
- Flyers in retail shops
- Door hanger reminders
- Survey mailed to property owners with online option

Links to the Compatible Design Surveys for each Historic District can be found on the project web page at http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html

Survey Participation

Survey Participation Overview by Historic District

Houston Historic Districts Compatible Design Survey - January 2017				
Historic District	Number of Surveys Mailed	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Margin of Error
Freeland	36	23	64%	12%
Houston Heights East	905	246	27%	5%
Houston Heights South	788	192	24%	6%
Houston Heights West	521	134	26%	7%
Norhill	850	205	24%	6%
Woodland Heights	386	123	32%	7%
	3,483	923	26.5%	

Tonight's Agenda

- Discuss hot topics
- Process for providing comments (due June 30th)
- Q&A

Table of Contents

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Preservation Fundamentals
- Section 3: About the Historic Districts
- Section 4: Exterior Alterations to Contributing Structures
- Section 5: Additions to Contributing Structures
- Section 6: Alterations and Additions to Noncontributing Structures
- Section 7: New Construction
- Section 8: Relocation and Demolition
- Section 9: Additional Resources

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This set of historic district design guidelines have been developed for Houston Heights Historic District East, Houston Heights Historic District West, and Houston Heights Historic District South. They illustrate how the City of Houston's historic preservation ordinance (as amended in Fall 2015) applies to resources in these three historic districts.

Property owners and their design professionals (architects, builders, etc.) should consult these design guidelines when planning a project that involves a change to the exterior of a building or construction of a new building within these historic districts. The City's Historic Preservation staff in the Planning and Development Department and the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) will also use these design guidelines to determine whether to approve an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), for a project that proposes to make changes to a building in these historic districts.

When all of the people who are involved in the COA process — property owners, design professionals, Planning staff, and members of the HAHC — are using the same reference material as provided in these design guidelines, the results should be more consistent and predictable.

This section explains the City of Houston's historic district rules, why design guidelines are needed, who should use design guidelines, how this design guidelines document is organized, and how to use it most effectively.

IN THIS SECTION

Background **1-1**
Houston's Historic Districts 1-2
Criteria for Evaluating COA Applications 1-4
How do design guidelines help? 1-5
How were the design guidelines developed? 1-6
How are the design guidelines organized? 1-7
Format of the design guidelines 1-9
Who should use these design guidelines? 1-10
Contact staff for assistance 1-10

NOTE:

These design guidelines can be downloaded as PDF files from the City of Houston Historic Preservation website at: http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist_pres.html.

Which Sections Apply To My Project

	Section 1: Introduction	**Section 2:** Preservation Fundamentals	**Section 3:** About the Historic Districts	**Section 4:** Exterior Alterations to Contributing Structures	**Section 5:** Additions to Contributing Structures	**Section 6:** Alterations and Additions to Noncontributing Structures	**Section 7:** New Construction	**Section 8:** Relocation and Demolition	**Section 9** Additional Resources
Altering a contributing building, such as: • Replacing windows • Replacing siding	X	X	X	X					X
Altering a noncontributing building	X	X	X			X			X
Adding on to a contributing building	X	X	X		X				X
Adding on to a non-contributing building	X	X	X			X			X
Constructing a new building or structure, such as: • Building a new house • Building a new garage	X	X	X				X		X
Relocating a building or structure	X	X	X					X	X
Demolishing a building or structure	X	X						X	X

More than one of these project types may apply to a single Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Format of the Design Guidelines

Legend

A Topic
Describes the design topic addressed by the Design Guidelines that follow.

B Purpose
Explains the desired outcome for the design topic and provides a basis for the design guidelines that follow. If a guideline does not address a specific design issue, the intent statement will be used to determine appropriateness.

C Desired Outcomes
Describes a desired performance-oriented design outcome.

D Additional Information
Provides a bulleted list of suggestions on how to meet the intent of the design guideline. These are not the only alterations that can be applied.

E Images
Clarify the intent of the design guideline by illustrating appropriate and inappropriate design solutions (see below):

Appropriate
Images marked with a check illustrate appropriate design solutions.

Inappropriate
Images marked with an X illustrate inappropriate design solutions.

Sample Quantitative Guideline

A → **Historic Building Materials**

B → These design guidelines apply to all materials that are original to the building, including wood, stone, brick, metal, stucco, plaster, and concrete. Historic building materials should be preserved in place, as much as possible, and repaired when necessary. If the material is damaged beyond repair, only then should you consider replacing it. Only replace material that is damaged, and use replacement material that matches the original.

If historic materials have been covered, consider removing the covering; do this carefully, so that the underlying original building material is not damaged, and repair the original material as needed, once it is exposed.

C → **4.5 Preserve historic building materials.**

- Do not remove original material that is in good condition.

D →

- Provide proper drainage away from historic materials to minimize damage to them. For example, provide storm drains, flashing, coping, gutters, etc.
- Do not cover or obscure historic building materials.
- Consider removing later covering materials that are inappropriate.

E →

Before: A historic house with inappropriate synthetic siding

After: The same house, after the historic siding was uncovered

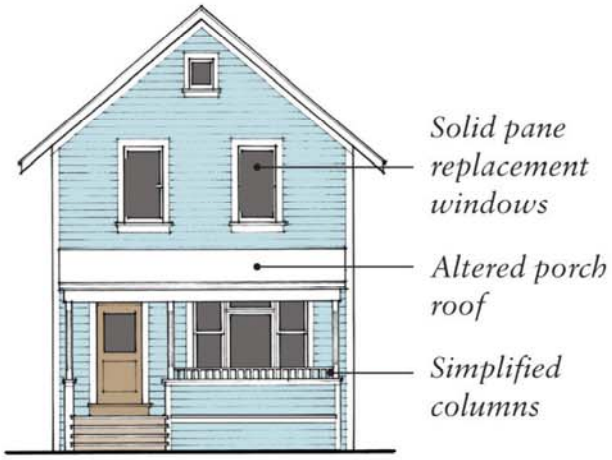
Building Integrity

Building Integrity

Original design

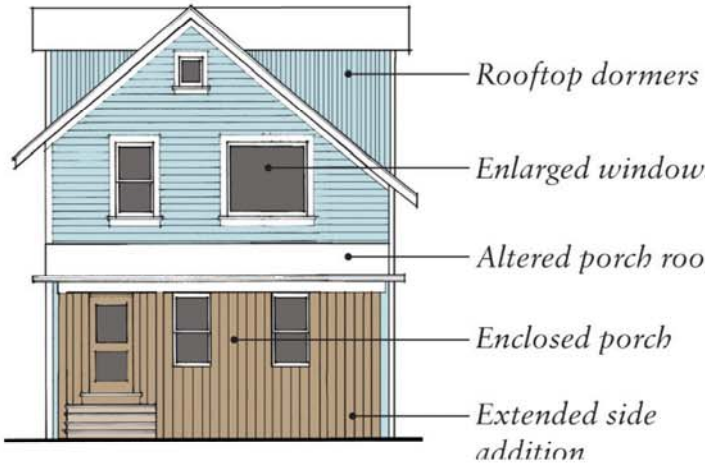
"Contributing" Structure: This building retains its integrity.

Partially altered



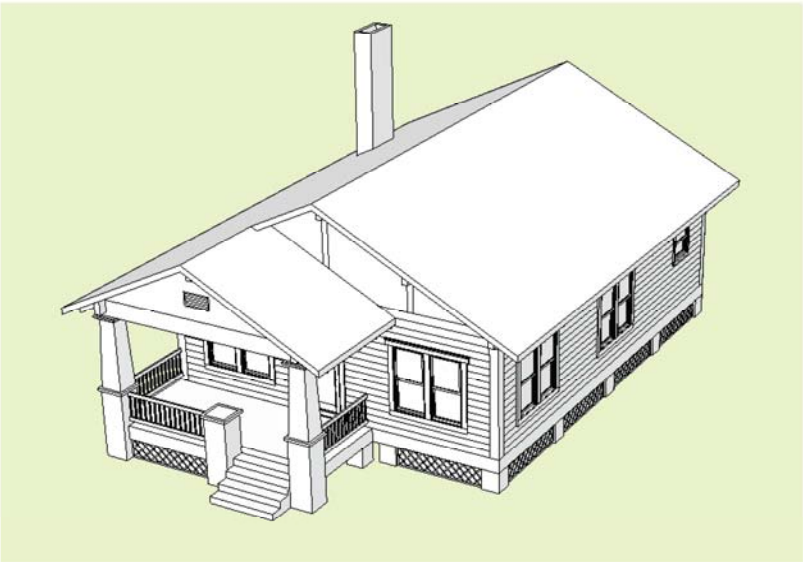
"Contributing" Structure with some alterations: This building remains contributing with opportunity for restoration.

Substantially altered



"Noncontributing" Structure with major alterations: This building does not retain its integrity.

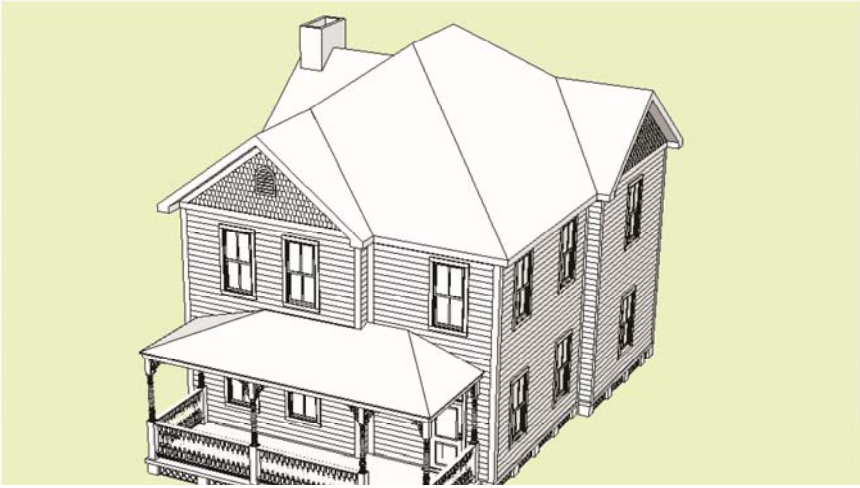
Character-Defining Features



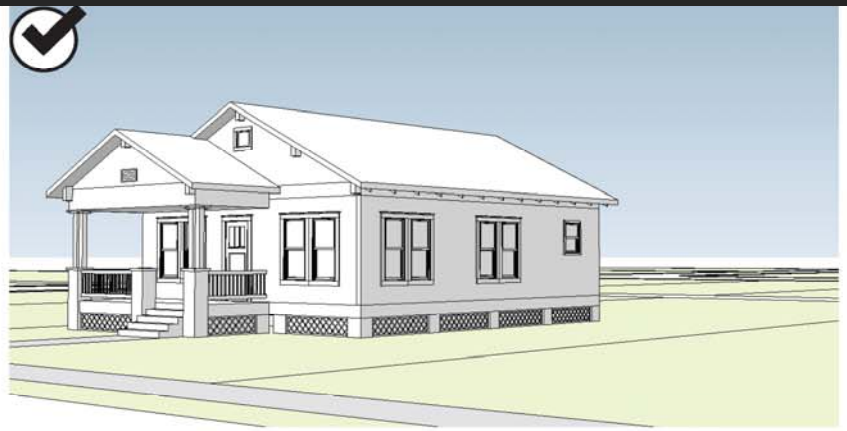
KEY:	
A	Gabled Roof (can also be hipped)
B	Chimney
C	Decorative Roof Beam/ Triangular Knee Brace
D	Attic Vent or Window
E	Exposed Rafter Tail
F	Double-Hung Windows (often paired or multiple in the same frame)
G	Columns/Posts (sometimes tapered)
H	Squared Piers
I	Porch Railing
J	Foundation Piers
K	Foundation Screening

Character-Defining Features

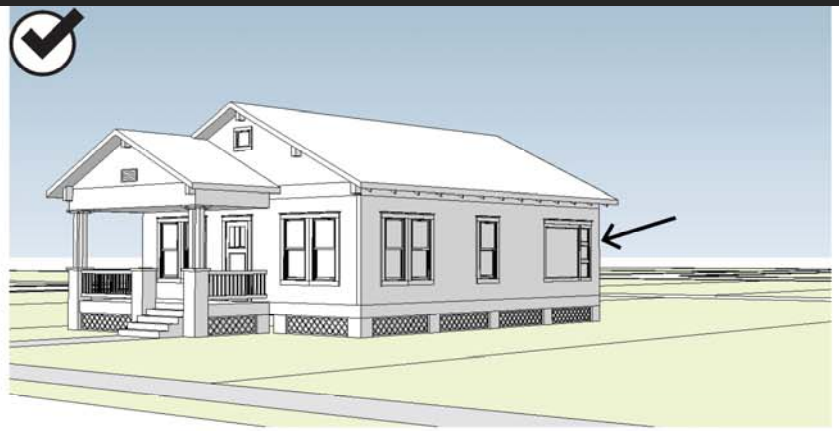
KEY:	
A	Steep, Complex Hipped Roof
B	Chimney
C	Attic Vent or Window
D	Gabled Roof, Hipped Roof
E	Double-Hung Windows
F	Spindlework or Jigsawn Elements
G	Turned Columns/Posts
H	Primary Entry Door
I	Foundation Piers



Cumulative Effects of Multiple Alterations



1. Original condition



2. Window on the side has been altered

3. Side addition with gable roof

4. Large rear addition

Preferred Sequence of Work

1. Preserve

If a historic feature is intact and in good condition, preserve it with regular maintenance to maintain its integrity.

↓

2. Repair

If a historic feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to its original condition.

↓

3. Replace

Replacement is only permitted for a feature or portion of a feature that cannot be reasonably repaired. If replacement is permitted, replace the feature *in-kind* (that is, using the same materials, detail, and finish).

↓

4. Reconstruct

If all or part of a historic feature is missing, reconstruct it based on appropriate evidence, such as historical photographs or from studying features on similar adjacent properties.

SECTION 4: EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS TO CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

The City of Houston has established historic districts as a way to preserve the character of neighborhoods which possess cultural, historical, and architectural significance. Good stewardship involves the responsible use and management of historic properties, protecting them for future generations. This is best practiced by maintaining the features that define the character of individual historic buildings, structures, sites, and objects of historic significance. When individual historic resources are appropriately maintained, the historic district — the collection of those resources — will be preserved as well. By taking the time to learn about character-defining features and how to treat them sensitively, we can serve as good stewards for properties in historic districts, while they are in our care.

This design guidelines document, as a whole, applies to all structures in locally designated historic districts. For ease of use, we have divided the document into sections based on the type of work being considered and the type of historic resource or property that the proposed project would affect. **This section (Section 4) focuses exclusively on exterior alterations for contributing structures.**

For additions to contributing structures, see Section 5. For exterior alterations or changes to noncontributing structures, see Section 6. For new (infill) construction, see Section 7. For relocation or demolition of any structure, contributing or noncontributing, see Section 8.

IN THIS SECTION

Applying The Design Guidelines **4-2**
Reminder: Character-Defining Features 4-7
Reminder: Minimizing the Cumulative Effects of Alterations 4-7

General Guidelines For Exterior Alterations **4-8**
Mass, Form, and Scale **4-8**
Historic Additions 4-8
Historic Building Materials 4-9

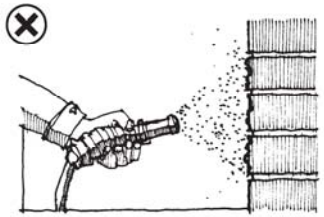
Specific Guidelines For Building Elements 4-10
Building Foundations **4-16**
Wood Siding 4-19
Decorative Shingles 4-21
Porches 4-22
Doors 4-23
Accessibility 4-26
Windows 4-29
Historic Shutters 4-30
Awnings 4-35
Burglar Bars 4-36
Roofs 4-37
Dormers 4-38
Chimneys 4-41
Roof Equipment 4-45

A house with original building materials

NOTE:

For more information about appropriate maintenance methods, please see the National Park Service's Preservation Brief No. 47: *Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings*.

Inappropriate siding being removed from a historic brick Italianate building



Harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, can damage historic materials, changing their appearance. Such procedures are inappropriate.

Historic Building Materials

These design guidelines apply to all materials that are original to the building, including wood, stone, brick, metal, stucco, plaster, and concrete. Historic building materials should be preserved in place, as much as possible, and repaired when necessary. If the material is damaged beyond repair, only then should you consider replacing it. Only replace material that is damaged, and use replacement material that matches the original.

If historic materials have been covered, consider removing the covering; do this carefully, so that the underlying original building material is not damaged, and repair the original material as needed, once it is exposed.

4.4 Keep historic building materials clean.

- If building materials become dirty or mildewed, use gentle cleaning products and methods, rather than harsh chemicals or abrasive treatments.
- A low-pressure water wash is preferred; avoid high-pressure or abrasive methods, which can damage historic building material.
- Mild chemicals should be tested in an inconspicuous location.

4.5 Preserve historic building materials.

- Do not remove original material that is in good condition.
- Provide proper drainage away from historic materials to minimize damage to them. For example, provide storm drains, flashing, coping, gutters, etc.
- Do not cover or obscure historic building materials.
- Consider removing later covering materials that are inappropriate.

Before: A historic house with inappropriate synthetic siding

After: The same house, after the historic siding was uncovered

Windows

storm windows are available and easy to install and remove.

- Use clear ultraviolet (UV)-blocking films or low-e films to prevent heat gain. If using low-e films, place them on the most exterior window surface.

4.45 If replacement cannot be avoided, match a new window to the original.

- Match the original sash configuration; single-hung, double-hung, casement, etc.
- Select a similar profile and depth of trim, as well as the arrangement and number of layers of trim from the frame to the glass. All new windows must be recessed.
- If the original window had divided panes (lites), select a replacement window that is made with genuine muntins, with panes of glass set between them. Do not choose a window with strips of material located between large panes of glass to simulate muntins.
- Use the same material as the original window, especially on highly visible walls. Consider an alternative material only if the appearance of the window components will match those of the original in dimension, profile, and finish. The type of material is likely to affect the dimensions of the sash components; historic wood windows often have more narrow sashes and frames than modern synthetic windows, due to the nature of the material and manufacturing process.
- Use clear window glass (glazing) that conveys the visual appearance of historic glass. Visible differences in the reflectivity of new vs. historic glass can have a negative impact. If transparent low-e glass is used, ensure that the low-e glass is the outer-most surface and not covered with a storm window.
- While windows with unfinished metals, metallic finishes, and reflective window glazing are allowed, if mounted appropriately, they are not recommended.
- Vinyl windows may be used but most be recessed and inset to simulate a traditional window profile. Fin-mounted windows are not appropriate or compatible within the historic districts.

Using a new window that lacks the depth in trim profile is inappropriate.

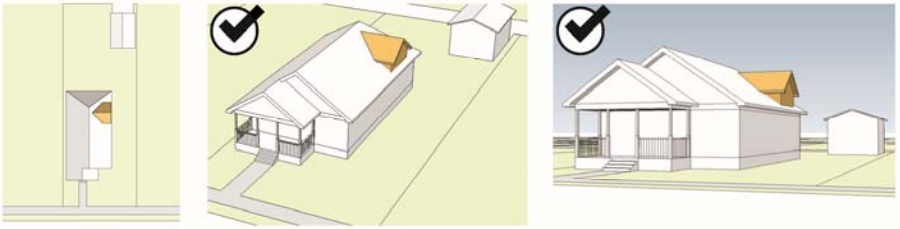
Unfinished metal windows such as these alter the character of window openings, and should not be used in highly visible locations.

If replacement cannot be avoided, match a new window to the original.

Dormer Designs

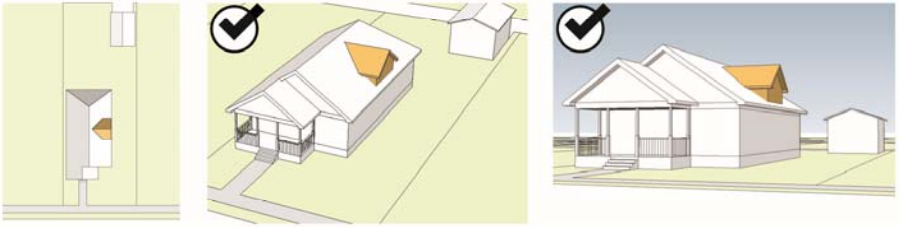
Single Gable Dormer at Rear of Roof

- Ridge line maintained
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions



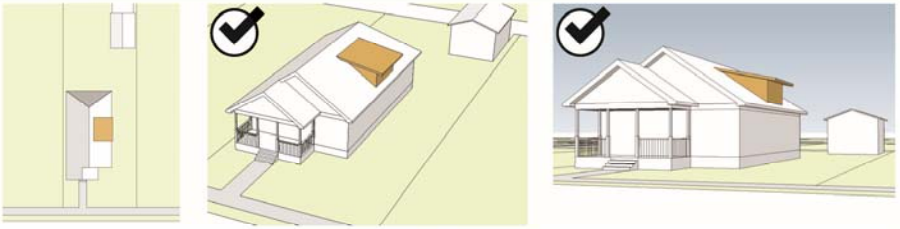
Single Gable Dormer at Mid-Point of Roof

- Ridge line maintained
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions



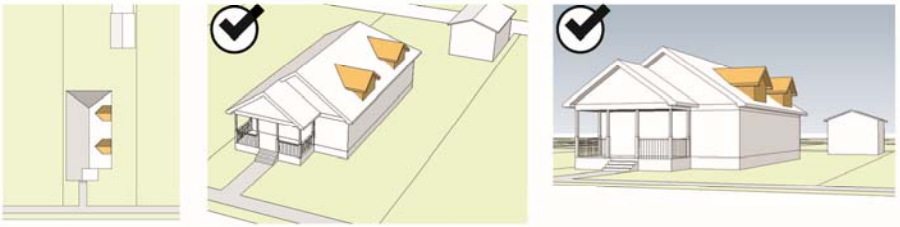
Single Shed Dormer at Mid-Point of Roof

- Ridge line maintained
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions



Two Gable Dormers, Traditional Spacing

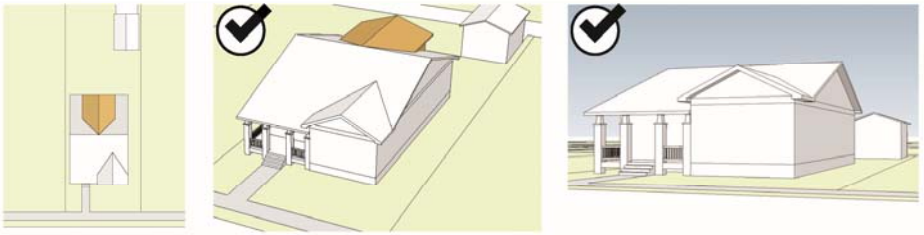
- Ridge line maintained
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions



Dormer Designs

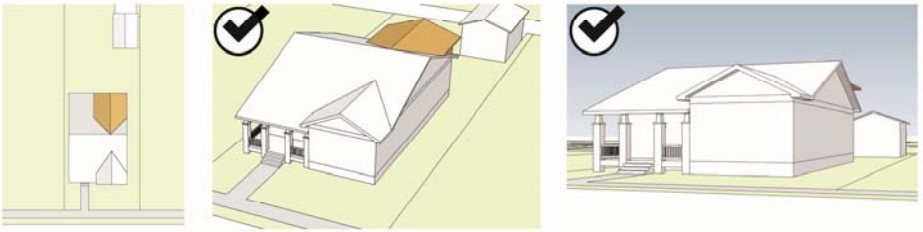
Single Gable Dormer at Rear of Side-Gable Roof (centered)

- Dormer aligns with historic ridge line
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions
- Dormer hidden from street view



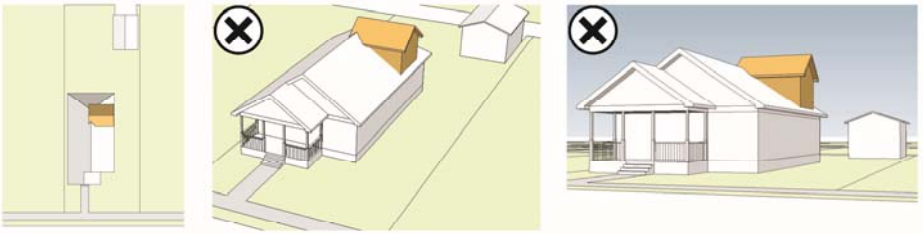
Single Gable Dormer at the Rear of Side-Gable Roof (moved to one side)

- Dormer aligns with historic ridge line
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions
- Dormer minimally visible from street view



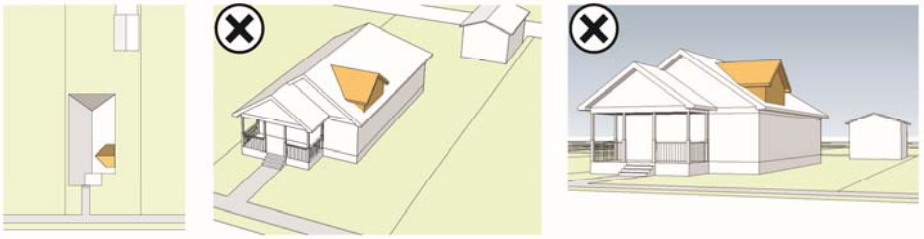
Tall Gable Dormer at Rear of Roof

- Dormer extends past ridge line
- Eave line not maintained
- Dormer is out of proportion



Single Gable Dormer at Front of Roof

- Dormer is not in a subordinate location
- Ridge line maintained
- Eave line maintained
- Dormer in historic proportions



SECTION 5: ADDITIONS TO CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

Historic buildings change over time, sometimes with the addition of an extra room or rooms to add space or functionality. An addition to a contributing structure must be compatible with that structure and with other contributing buildings in the context area. It also must preserve the integrity of the existing structure. An earlier addition may be considered historic and, therefore, worthy of preservation, if it was constructed during the period of significance and retains its historical and architectural integrity.

This section covers new additions to contributing structures, with qualitative design guidelines and quantitative (measurable) design standards. For alterations to previous additions, see Section 4; for additions to noncontributing structures, see Section 6.

Some additions that meet very specific criteria are required to be approved by the Planning Director; those are sometimes referred to as "shall approve" criteria. They are included at the end of this section.

IN THIS SECTION

Rules for Additions to Contributing Structures.....5-2

Measurable Design Standards for New Additions.....5-

Table 1: Setbacks.....5-

Table 2: Maximum Floor Area Ratio.....5-

Table 3: Maximum Lot Coverage.....5-

Table 4: Eave Height.....5-

Table 5: Building Wall (Plate) Height.....5-

Table 6: Garage Ridge Height.....5-

Table 7: Front Wall Width and Offsets.....5-8

Table 8: Side Wall Length and Offsets.....5-9

Table 9: Porch Eave Height.....5-10

Table 10: Front Porch Width and Depth.....5-11

Design Guidelines for Additions to Contributing Structures.....5-12

Mandatory Approvals for Additions.....5-13

.....5-14

.....5-31

NOTE:

The recommended design standards are in draft form for discussion purposes only. This material has not been reviewed by the City's legal counsel and is not final until after council consideration.

Design Guidelines for Additions

The addition above is located to the rear of the existing building and is subordinate in scale and character.

The addition above is set back from the contributing building with a hyphen. It is subordinate in scale and character even though it is offset, because it is the same height and has a smaller footprint.

5.4 Keep additions visually subordinate to the historic building.
Because contributing structures are the most important buildings in the historic district, they must remain prominent. That means that an addition should be visually subordinate, or secondary, to the original building. (See Criteria 1, 4, 8, 9, and 10 on page 5-3)

- Locate the addition where it will not be highly visible from the public right-of-way.
- If the contributing structure is fairly simple in design, the addition should similarly be fairly modest. If the contributing structure is more highly ornamented or exuberant in design, the addition can reflect that higher level of complexity.

5.5 Keep the addition compatible in terms of scale and proportions.
Another way to keep the contributing structure visually prominent is by managing the addition's scale (size) and proportions (relationships between building elements). Keep the size of the addition modest in relation to the contributing structure.

- A rear addition may be one story or two stories tall. The plate heights should be similar to the existing building.
- One-story side additions may be added to a one-story or two-story building.
- Two-story side additions may be added only to two-story

ALTERATIONS ON A CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE

An alteration to a historic building may be considered where it will not affect character defining features. For most historic buildings, the front facade is the most important to preserve intact. Many side walls are also important to preserve where they are highly visible from the street. By contrast, portions of a side wall that are not as visible have more flexibility. The rear wall is usually the least sensitive.

LOCATION A: PRIMARY FAÇADE

Preservation and repair of features in place is the priority.

LOCATION B: HIGHLY VISIBLE SECONDARY WALL

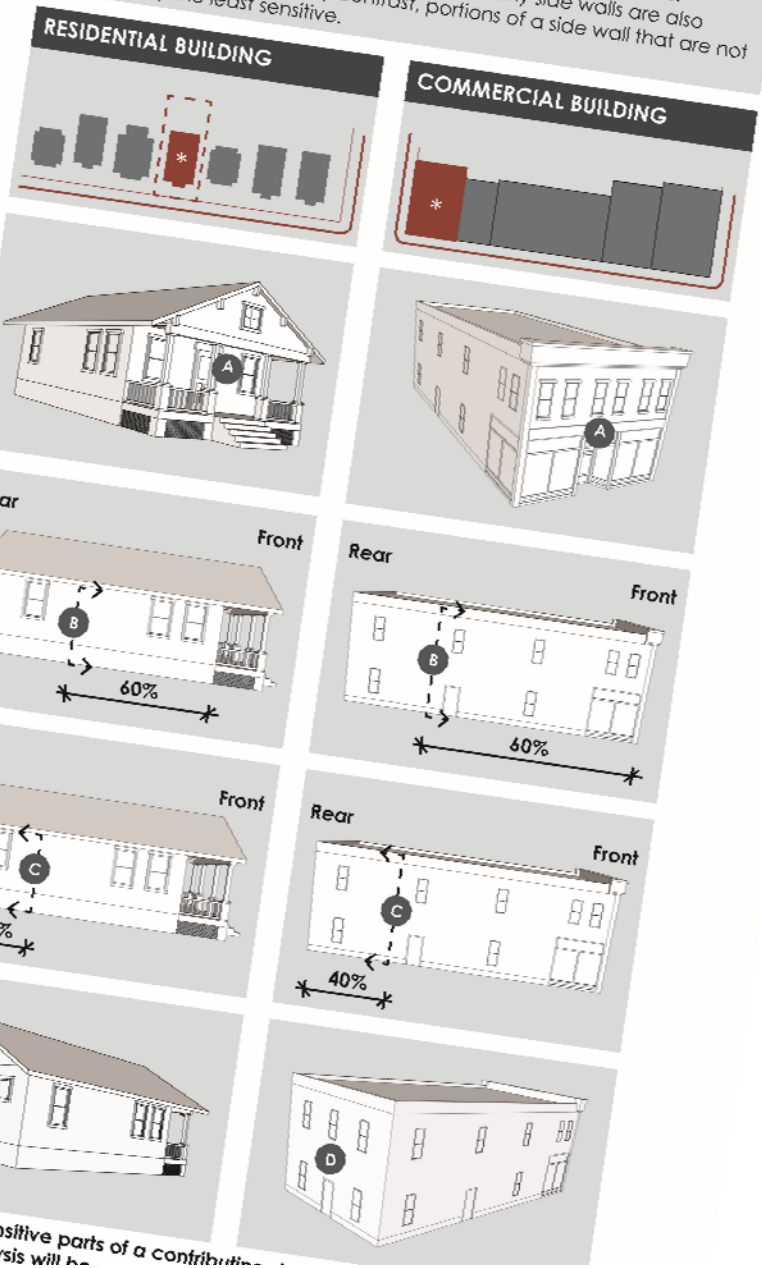
Preservation and repair of features in place is the priority. Location B is the front 60% of the historic side wall length, measured from the front wall plane.

LOCATION C: LESS VISIBLE SECONDARY WALL

Preservation is still preferred, but additional flexibility exists for compatible alterations. Location C is the rear 40% of the historic side wall length, measured from the front wall plane.

LOCATION D: NOT VISIBLE REAR WALL

Alterations to the rear that are not visible from the street do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

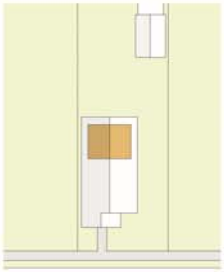


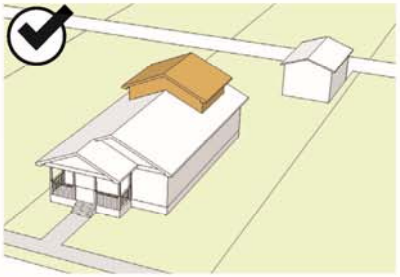
This chart illustrates the relative position of the most sensitive parts of a contributing considered on a case-by-case basis, this type of analysis will be an example, a new window may be installed in building. On the other hand,

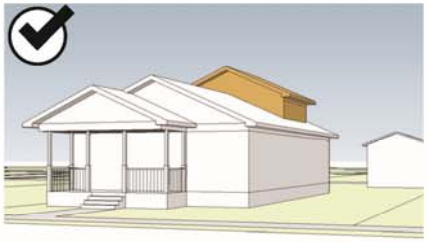
Roof Additions

1. Addition Set Back 60% with Low Walls Inset from Historic Walls

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained

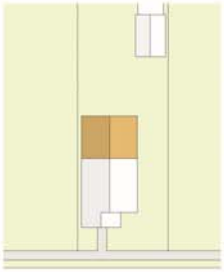


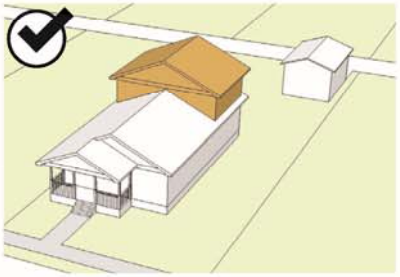




2. Addition Set Back 60% with Tall Walls Inset from Historic Walls

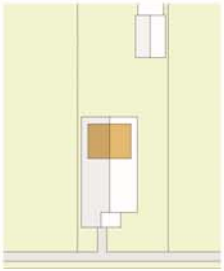
- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained

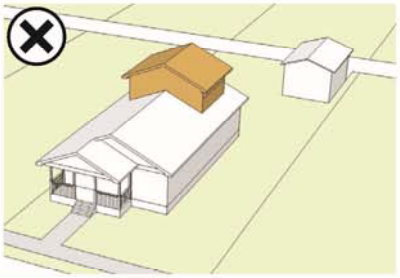




3. Addition Set Back 60% with Tall Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained

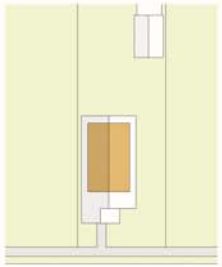


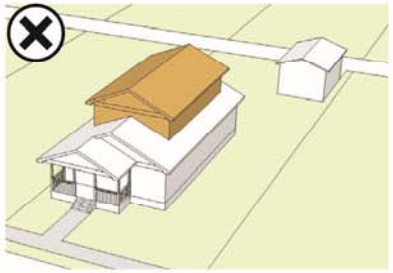


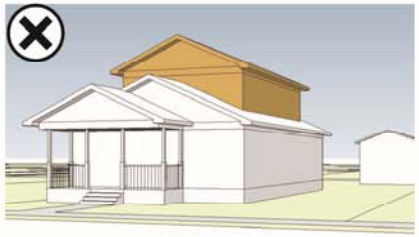
Roof Additions

4. Addition Set Back 20% with Low Walls and Inset from Historic Walls

- Addition is set back 20% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Addition is not subordinate to historic building

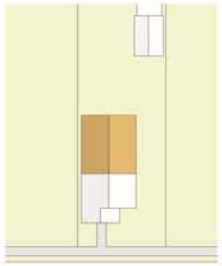


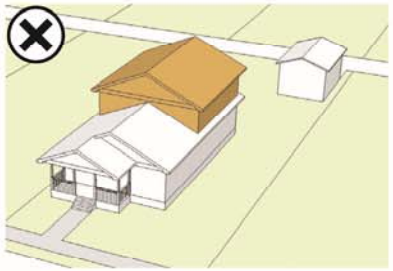




5. Addition Set Back 40% with Tall Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

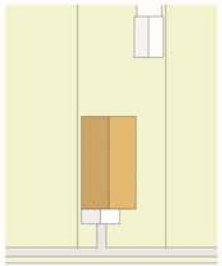
- Addition is set back 40% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Addition is not subordinate to historic building

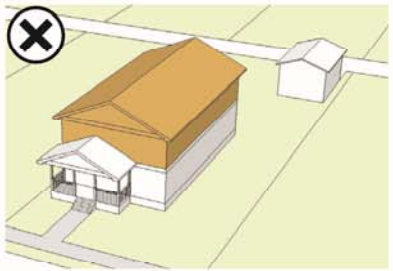




6. Addition Set Back 0% with Tall Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

- Addition is set back 0% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line is not maintained
- Addition is not subordinate to historic building





Addition Combinations

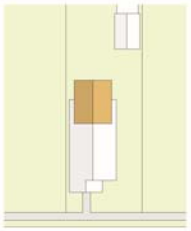
1. Combination of Rooftop Addition and Moderate Two-Story Rear Addition

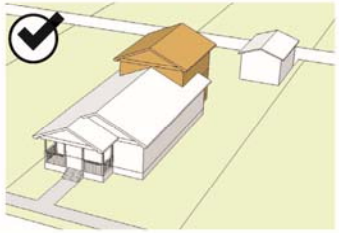
Rooftop Addition:

- Set back from front wall plane 75% of historic side wall length

Rear Addition:

- Inset from side wall: 3 ft.
- Addition length: 25% of historic side wall





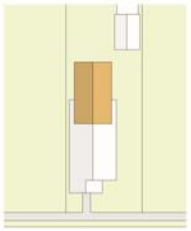
2. Combination of Rooftop Addition and Long Two-Story Rear Addition

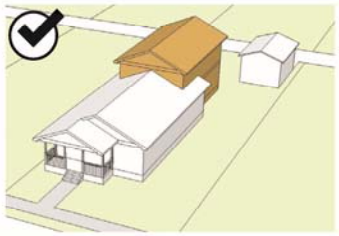
Rooftop Addition:

- Set back from front wall plane 75% of historic side wall length

Rear Addition:

- Inset from side wall: 3 ft.
- Addition length: 50% of historic side wall





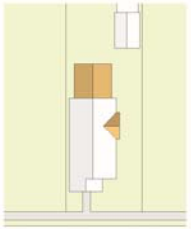
3. Combination of One-Story Side Addition and Moderate One-Story Rear Addition

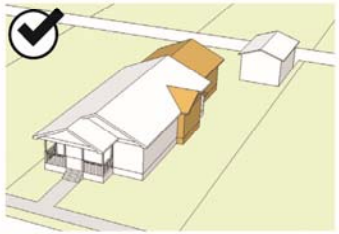
Side Addition:

- Set back from front wall plane 60%
- Extruded 2 ft.
- Length: 25% of historic side wall length

Rear Addition:

- Inset from side wall: 3 ft.
- Addition length: 50% of historic side wall





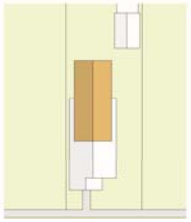
4. Combination of Large Rooftop Addition and Large Two-Story Rear Addition

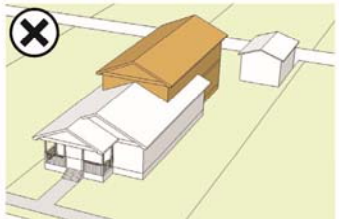
Rooftop Addition:

- Set back from front wall plane 50% of historic side wall length

Rear Addition:

- Inset from side wall: 3 feet
- Addition length: 50% of historic side wall

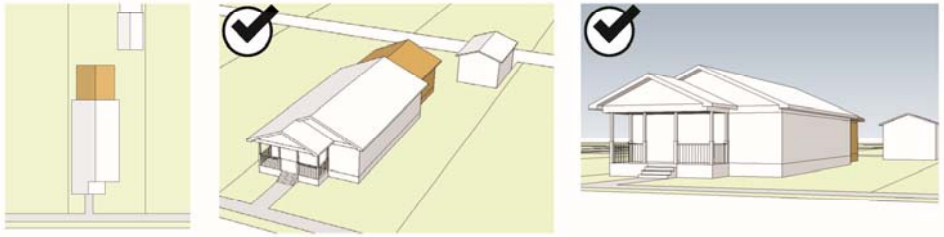




Addition To the Rear

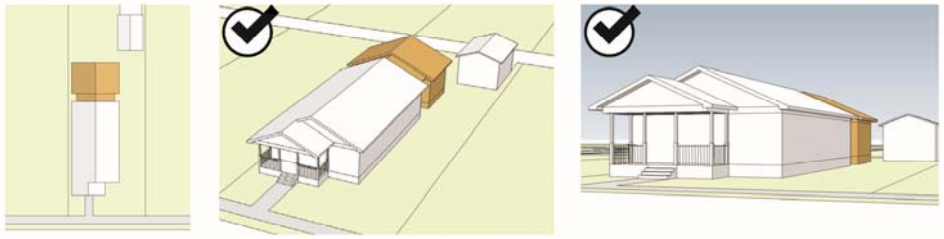
1. One-Story Addition Inset from Historic Walls

- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Height and width of historic building is maintained
- Maintains all corners of historic structure



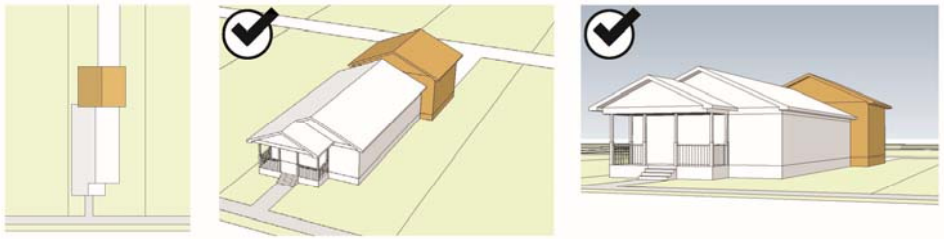
2. One-Story Addition with Connector and Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Height and width of historic building is maintained
- Maintains all corners of historic structure



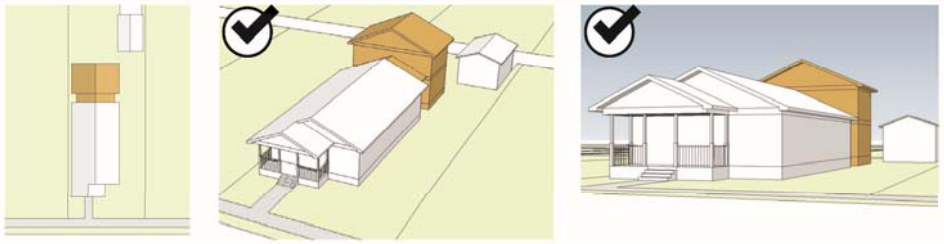
3. One-Story Addition Inset from One Historic Wall and Offset from One Historic Wall

- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Width of historic building is maintained
- Maintains 3 corners of historic structure



4. Two-Story Addition with Connector and Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

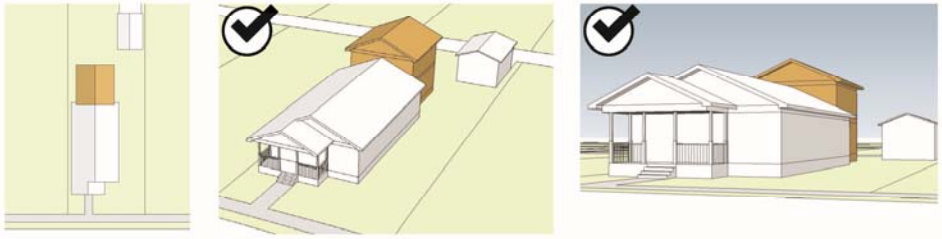
- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Width of historic building is maintained
- Maintains all corners of historic structure



Addition To the Rear

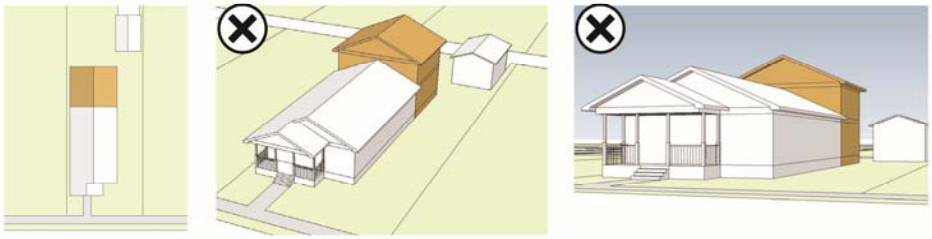
5. Two-Story Addition Inset from Historic Walls

- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Width of historic building is maintained
- Maintains all corners of historic structure



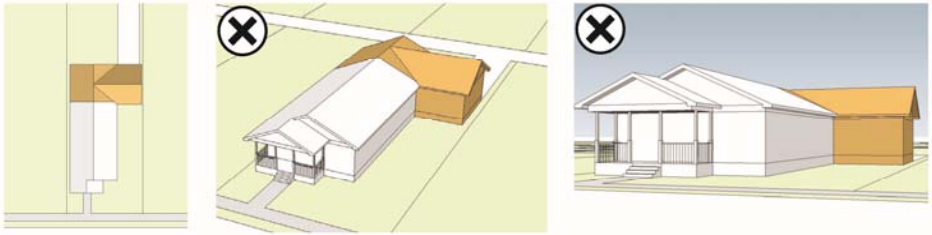
6. Two-Story Addition with Walls Aligned with Historic Walls

- Roof pitch matches historic building
- Eave line maintained
- Height overwhelms historic building
- Does not preserve rear corners
- Does not maintain corners of historic structure



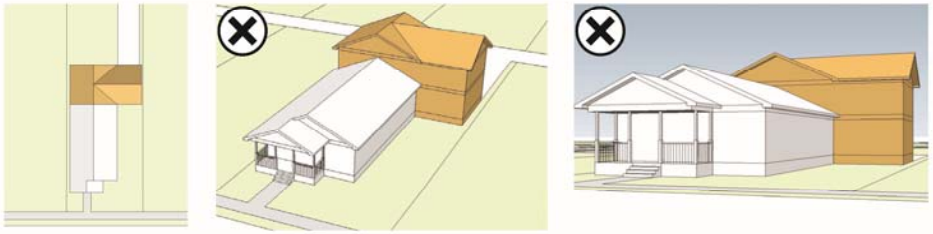
7. One-Story Addition with Offset from Historic Walls in "L-Form"

- Eave line maintained
- Width of historic building is not maintained.
- Form is out of character
- Does not maintain corners of historic structure



8. Two-Story Addition Offset from Historic Walls in "L-Form"

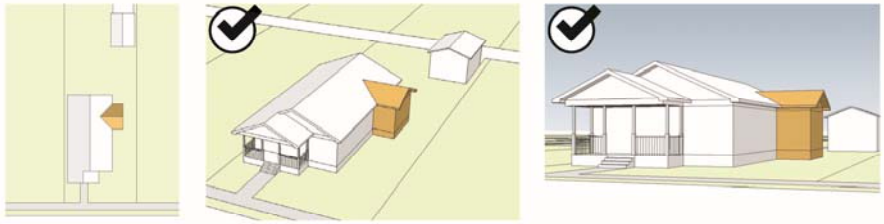
- Eave line maintained
- Height overwhelms historic building
- Does not maintain corners of historic structure



Addition To the Side

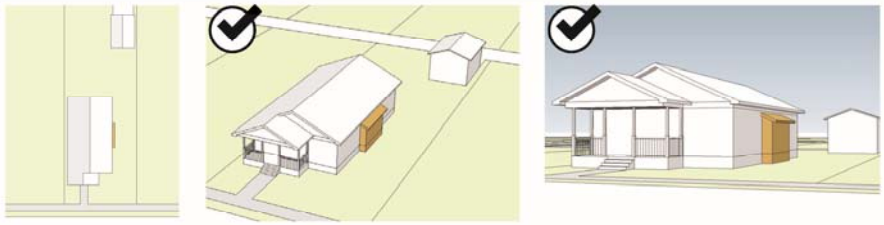
1. One-Story, Moderate Size Addition at Rear of Side Wall

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 30% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 25% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line not maintained



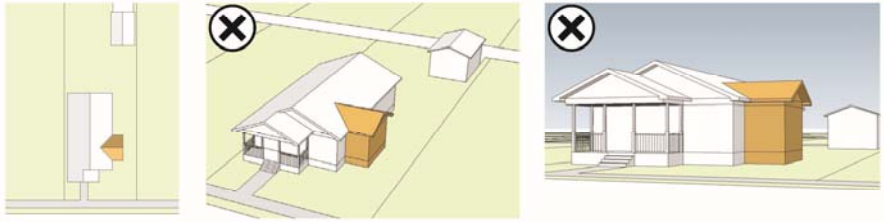
2. One-Story, Small Size Addition at Mid-Point of Side Wall

- Addition is centered at the mid-point of side wall
- Addition is 30% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 7% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line is maintained



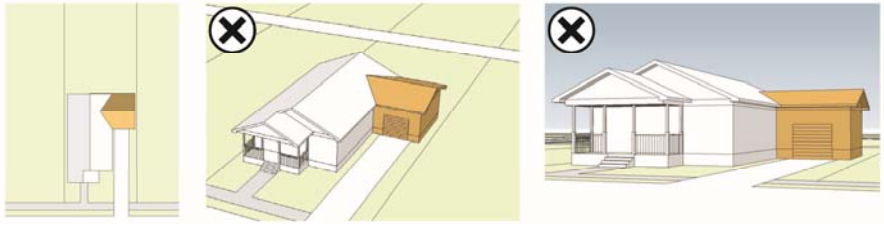
3. One-Story, Moderate Size Addition at Front of Side Wall

- Addition is set back 25% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 30% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 25% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line not maintained



4. One-Story, Large Size Garage Addition at Rear of Side Wall

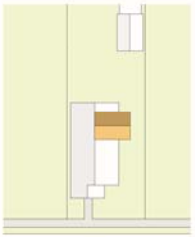
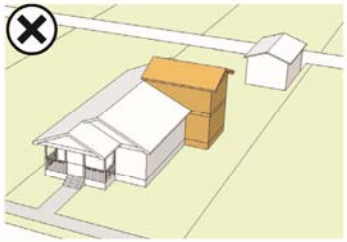
- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 42% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 50% as wide as historic front wall plane length



Addition To the Side

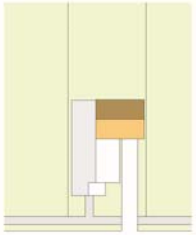
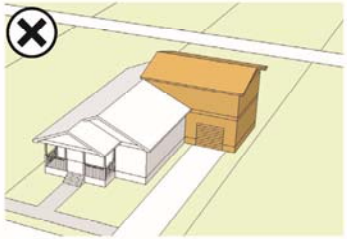
5. Two-Story, Moderate Size Addition at Rear of Side Wall

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 25% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 30% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line not maintained

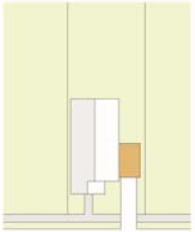
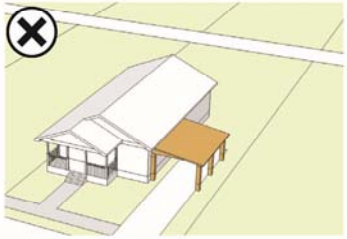
6. Two-Story, Large Size Addition at Rear of Side Wall

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 42% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 50% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line is maintained

7. Attached Car Port Addition at Front of Side Wall

- Addition is set back 60% of the length of the historic side walls from the front wall plane
- Addition is 42% as long as historic side wall.
- Addition is 25% as wide as historic front wall plane length
- Eave line is maintained

SECTION 6: ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO NONCONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

A structure may be classified as noncontributing because it was constructed after the end of the historic district's period of significance (see page 2-3), has been altered in a way that removes or conceals character-defining features (see page 2-6), or otherwise does not share the characteristics that make the historic district, as a whole, significant. Since noncontributing buildings already do not support the historic qualities of the district, the criteria for making changes to them are less strict than those for contributing structures. However, the visual qualities of noncontributing structures still impact the character of the historic district, so many changes to them must be managed.

In addition, a building that is classified as noncontributing due to previous inappropriate alterations may have the potential to be restored. It is important to recognize whether a building has the potential to contribute to the significance of the historic district and avoid destroying that potential with additional changes, if possible.

IN THIS SECTION

Rules for Alterations and Additions to Noncontributing Structures **6-2**

Measurable Design Standards for New Additions **6-4**

Table 1: Setbacks 6-4

Table 2: Maximum Floor Area Ratio 6-5

Table 3: Maximum Lot Coverage 6-6

Table 4: Eave Height 6-7

Table 5: Building Wall (Plate) Height 6-8

Table 6: Garage Ridge Height 6-9

Table 7: Front Wall Width and Offsets 6-10

Table 8: Side Wall Length and Offsets 6-11

Table 9: Porch Eave Height 6-12

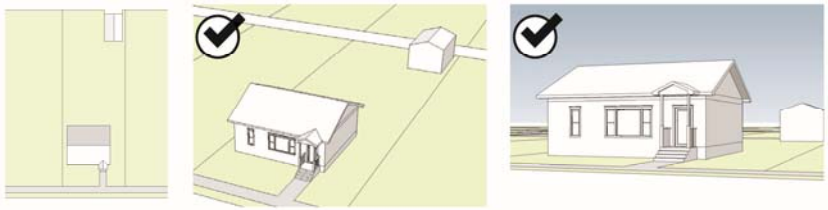
Table 10: Front Porch Width and Depth 6-13

Design Guidelines for Alterations and Additions to Noncontributing Structures **6-14**

NOTE:

The recommended design standards are in draft form for discussion purposes only. This material has not been reviewed by the City's legal counsel and is not final until after council consideration.

Additions



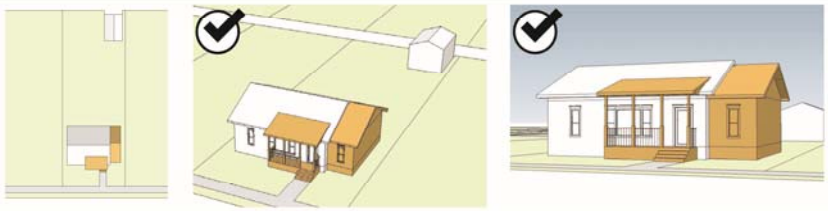
2. Side and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 1-story in height



3. Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

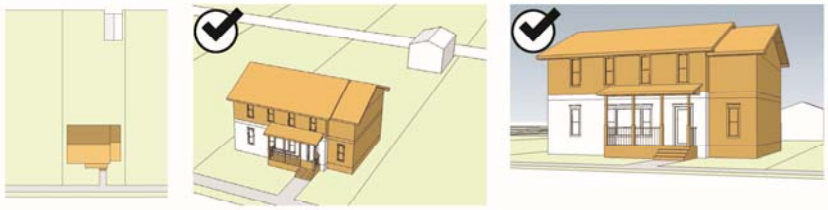
- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition
- Appropriate scale and style
- Compliments existing window patters



4. Inappropriate Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

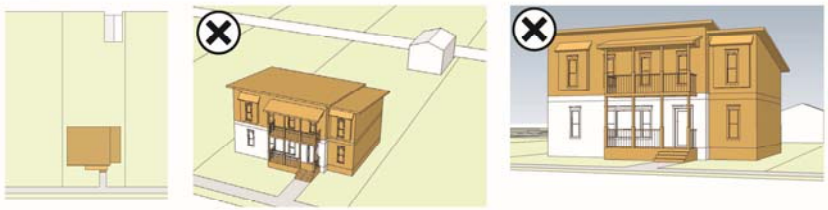
- 50% of front wall plane
- Inappropriate scale

Side Addition:

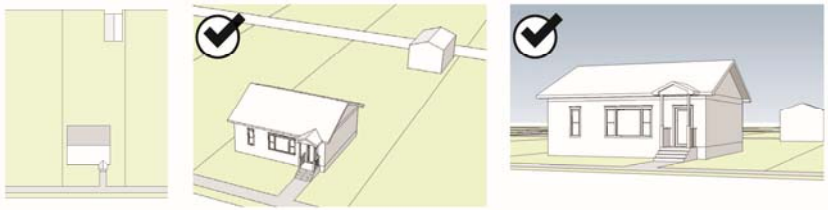
- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height
- Inappropriate roof form and style

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition



Additions



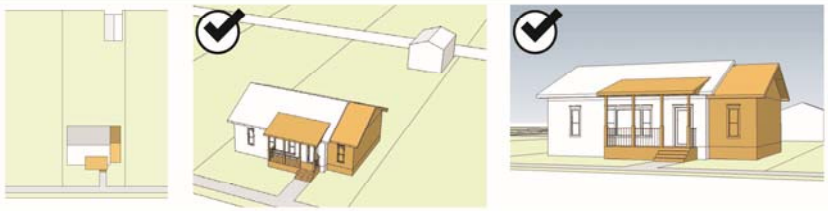
2. Side and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 1-story in height



3. Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

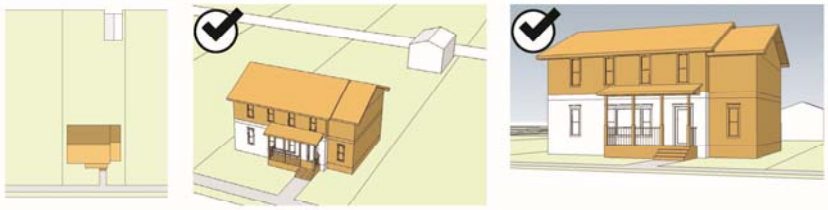
- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition
- Appropriate scale and style
- Compliments existing window patters



4. Inappropriate Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

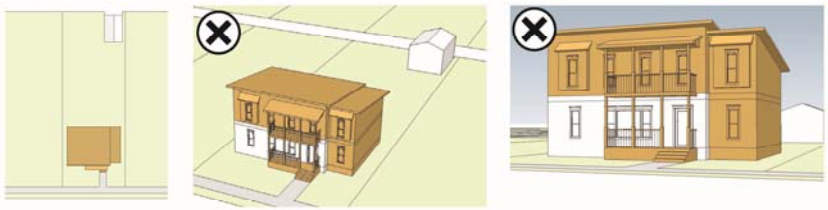
- 50% of front wall plane
- Inappropriate scale

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height
- Inappropriate roof form and style

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition



Design Standards – Section 5 & 6

1. Setbacks
2. Floor Area Ratio
3. Lot Coverage
4. Eave Height
5. Building Wall (Plate) Height
6. Garage Ridge Height
7. Side Wall Length and Offsets
8. Porch Eave Height

SECTION 7: NEW CONSTRUCTION

Historic districts can change over time and still retain the qualities that make the area historically, culturally, and architecturally significant. We accomplish this by managing the construction of new buildings and changes to existing ones. For the purposes of this document, new construction means an entirely new building or structure, rather than an addition. The cons[illegible] new building or structure within a historic district requires a Certificate of Appropri[illegible]eness.

IN THIS SECTION

Rules for New Construction 7-1

Design Standards for New construction 7-2

Measurable Design Standards for New Construction ..... 7-[illegible]

Table 1: Setbacks ..... 7-[illegible]

Table 2: Maximum Floor Area Ratio ..... 7-[illegible]

Table 3: Maximum Lot Coverage ..... 7-[illegible]

Table 4: Eave Height ..... 7-[illegible]

Table 5: Building Wall (Plate) Height ..... 7-1[illegible]

Table 6: Garage Ridge Height 7-11

Table 7: Front Wall Width and Offsets 7-12

Table 8: Side Wall Length and Offsets 7-13

Table 9: Porch Eave Height 7-14

Table 10: Front Porch Width and Depth 7-15

7-16

7-17

NOTE:

The recommended design standards are in draft form for discussion purposes only. This material has not been reviewed by the City's legal counsel and is not final until after council consideration.

Section 1: Introduction

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

This document provides both qualitative design guidelines for new construction, as well as quantitative (measurable) design standards. The design guidelines that follow require interpretation and good judgment, to ensure that the proposed project is compatible with the contributing structures in the context area. Each project is considered on its own merits; even if the same building were proposed to be constructed in multiple locations within the historic district, the differences in context areas for those various locations could result in different decisions regarding compatibility.

7.1 Design a new building to reflect contemporary trends in architecture.

New construction should reflect the time period in which they were built. While many people think that new buildings in a historic district should look "historic," best practices in historic preservation — in place for more than 50 years, and applied all over the United States — encourage new buildings and additions to look new.

Designs should be "differentiated but compatible." Attempts to design new "historic" buildings often fail because of inaccurate scale, proportions, and detailing. Instead, new buildings and additions or changes to noncontributing structures should either incorporate new design elements with traditional building forms, or utilize traditional design elements but apply those to unconventional or contemporary building forms. Either approach, if executed well, can result in the design being compatible with the context area but still easily identifiable as new.

If most contributing structures in the context area are fairly simple in design, the new building should similarly be fairly modest. In a context area where buildings are more highly ornamented or exuberant in design, a new structure could reflect that higher level of complexity.

Construct a new building to be compatible with contributing buildings in the context area.

Contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details are encouraged.

This new, contemporary infill building would be appropriate in most contexts; however, the roof material is inappropriate.

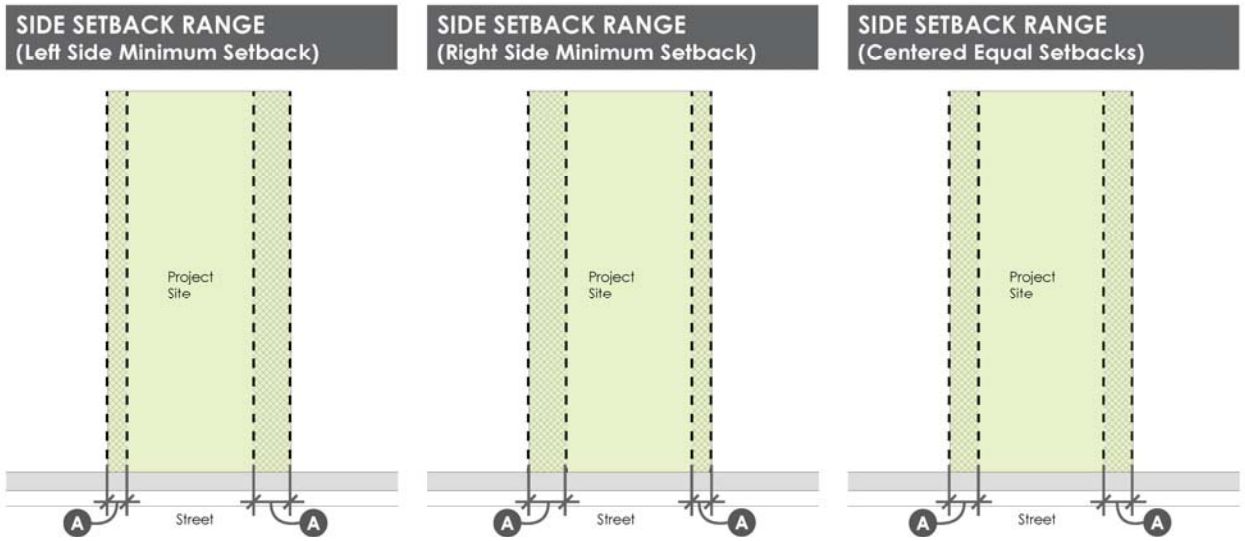
Design Standards – Same as Sec. 5 + 3 more

1. Setbacks (Front and Side)
2. Floor Area Ratio
3. Lot Coverage
4. Eave Height
5. Building Wall (Plate) Height
6. Garage Ridge Height
7. Front Wall Width and Offset
8. Side Wall Length and Offsets
9. Porch Eave Height
10. Front Porch Width and Depth

Setbacks

Table 1: Setbacks

Additions must be located at a minimum distance from the side property lines. Those distances, also known as setbacks, are measured from the property line to the closest wall, porch, or exterior feature.



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	5 FT.	Each side wall must be a minimum distance from the property line.
	15 FT.	The minimum cumulative side setback is calculated by adding the lengths of the two side setbacks.

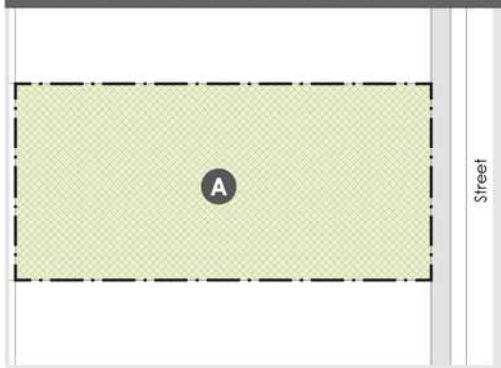
NOTE:

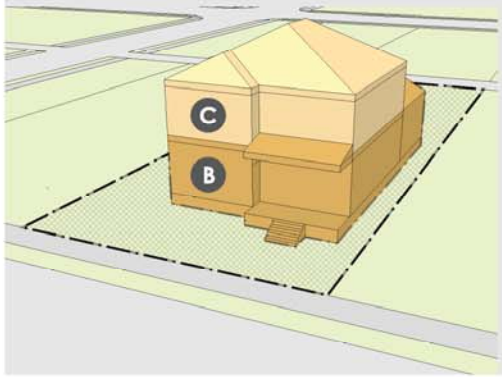
The above side setback examples only illustrate three of numerous combinations that comply with the cumulative 15 ft. minimum setback.

= Non-Contributing Structure
= Contributing Structure
= Building Setback Range

Floor Area Ratio

CALCULATING FLOOR AREA RATIO





A	Lot Area
B	1st Floor Area
C	2nd Floor Area

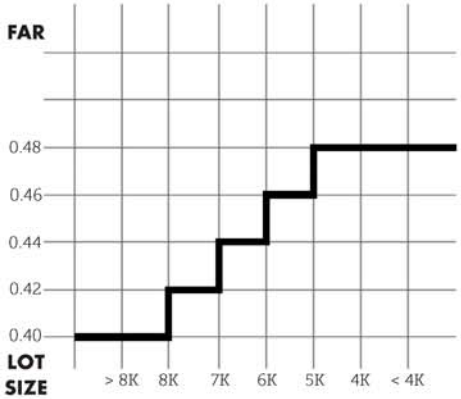
Example:

1st Floor Area = 1,307 sf.
+ 2nd Floor Area = 1,280 sf.

Total Building Area = 2,335 sf
÷ Lot Area = 6,600 sqft.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) = 0.35

LOT SIZE	MAXIMUM FAR
<4000	.48
4000-4999	.48
5000-5999	.46
6000-6999	.44
7000-7999	.42
8000+	.40



Floor Area Ratio Case Study

LOT SIZE	MAXIMUM FAR
<4000	.48
4000-4999	.48
5000-5999	.46
6000-6999	.44
7000-7999	.42
8000+	.40

Existing House: 1,800 square feet
(not including 120 sf open front porch)
Detached Garage: 400 square feet
(250 sf of detached garage is exempt)
Lot: 6,600 square feet (50 x 132)

How big can an addition be?

Maximum FAR = 6600 sf x .44 = 2,904 sf
Garage = 400 sf – 250 sf exempt = 150 sf is included

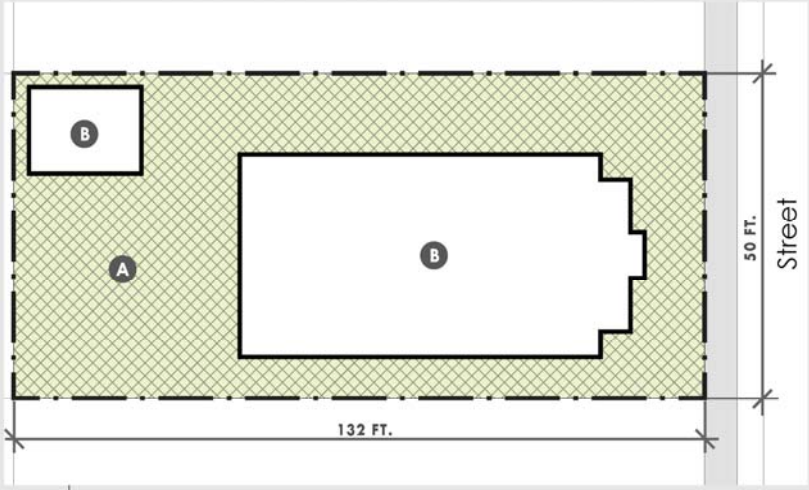
Maximum FAR = house + garage + addition
2,904 sf = 1,800 sf house + 150 sf garage + X sf addition
2,904 – 1,800 – 150 = X addition
954 sf = maximum FAR of addition

Lot Coverage

LOT SIZE	MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE
<4000	44%
4000-4999	44%
5000-5999	42%
6000-6999	40%
7000-7999	38%
8000+	38%

Property Line =
Lot Area =

CALCULATING LOT COVERAGE



A	Lot Area
B	Building Footprint

Example:

Lot Width = 50 ft.
X Lot Length = 132 ft.

Lot Area = 6,600 sf.

Building Footprint = 2,500 sf.
÷ Lot Area = 6,600 sf.

Lot Coverage = 38%

Lot Coverage Case Study

LOT SIZE	MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE
<4000	44%
4000-4999	44%
5000-5999	42%
6000-6999	40%
7000-7999	38%
8000+	38%

Existing House: 1,800 square feet
+ 120 sf open front porch = 1,920 sf total
Detached Garage: 400 square feet
(250 sf of detached garage is exempt)
Lot: 6,600 square feet (50 x 132)

How big can an addition be?
Maximum Lot Coverage = 6600 sf x 40% = 2,640 sf
Garage = 400 sf – 250 sf exempt = 150 sf is included

Total max lot coverage = house + garage + addition
2, 640 sf = 1,800 sf house + 150 sf garage + X sf addition
2,640 – 1,800 – 150 = X
690 sf = maximum lot coverage of addition

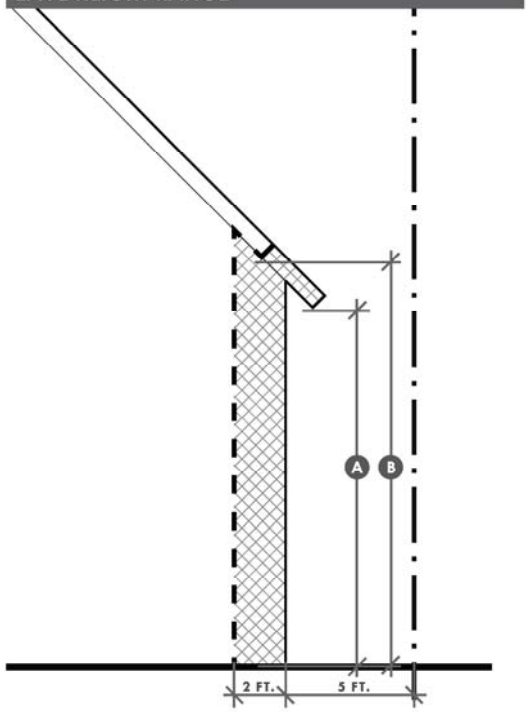
FAR and Lot Coverage Case Study

Existing House: 1,800 square feet
(+ 120 sf open front porch)
Detached Garage: 400 square feet
(250 sf of detached garage is exempt)
Lot: 6,600 square feet (50 x 132)

How big can an addition be?
954 sf = maximum FAR of addition
690 sf = maximum lot coverage of addition

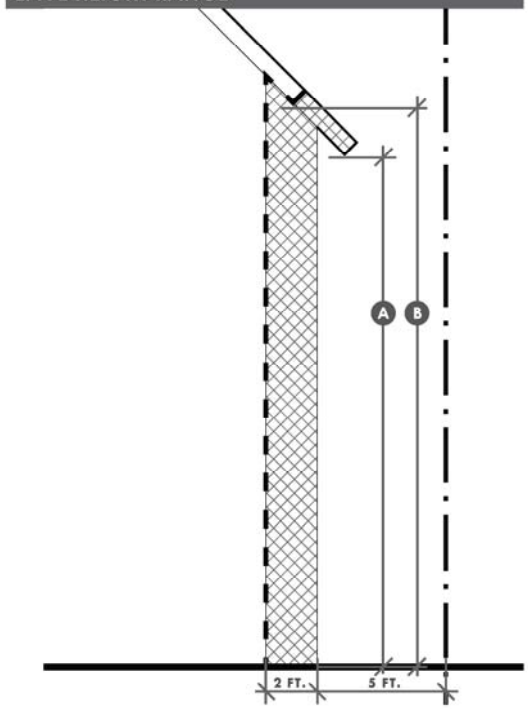
Eave Height

PRIMARY BUILDING 1-STORY
EAVE HEIGHT RANGE



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	**14 FT.**	Maximum 1-story eave height at the 5 FT. MIN. side setback
B	**16 FT.**	Maximum 1-story eave height with an increase of one foot (1') in height for each one foot (1') increase in side setback

PRIMARY BUILDING 2-STORY
EAVE HEIGHT RANGE



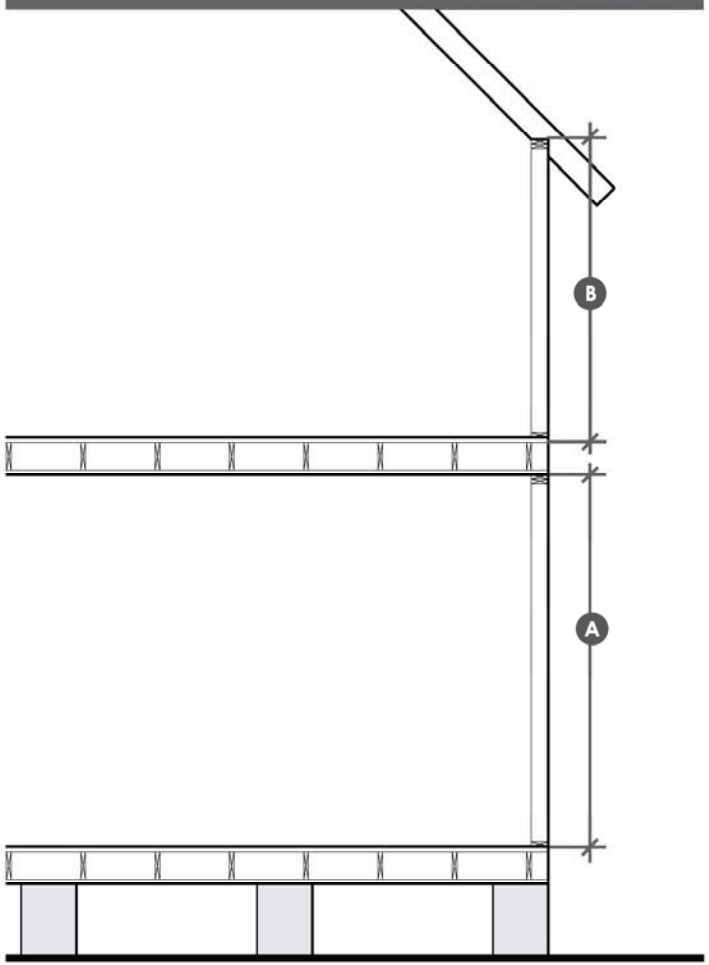
KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	**20 FT.**	Maximum 2-story eave height at the 5 FT. MIN. side setback
B	**22 FT.**	Maximum 2-story eave height with an increase of one foot (1') in height for each one foot (1') increase in side setback

Property Line = — · — · —
Range =

Building Wall (Plate) Height

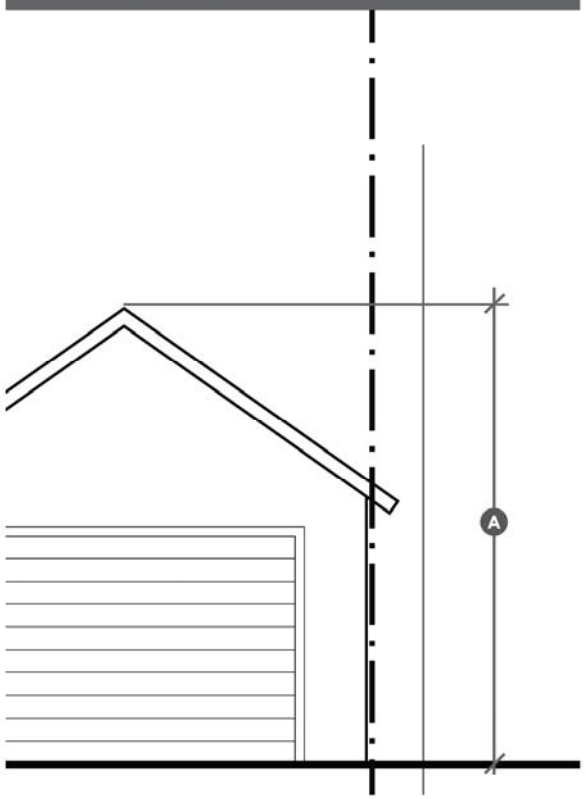
KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	10 FT.	Maximum first floor plate height *See guideline 5.5 on page 5-14
B	8 FT.	Maximum second floor plate height

PRIMARY BUILDING WALL PLATE HEIGHT



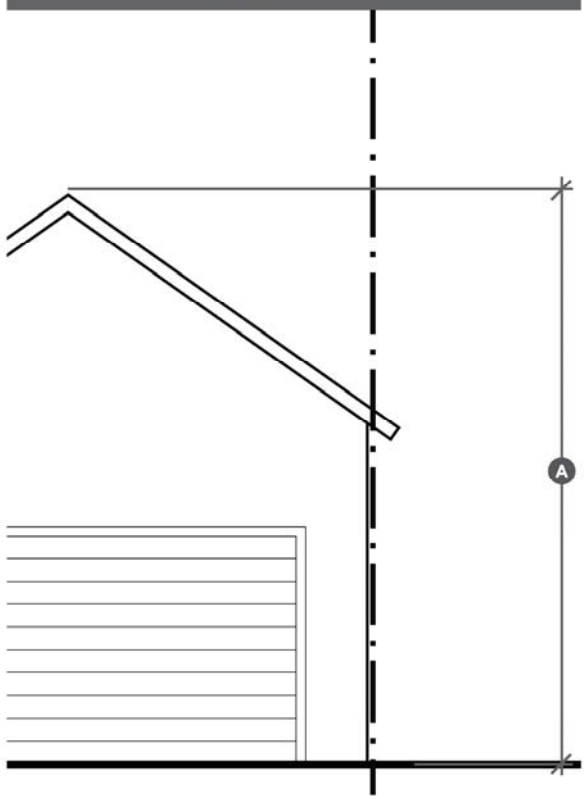
Garage Ridge Height

GARAGE 1-STORY RIDGE HEIGHT



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	16 FT.	Maximum 1-story garage ridge height

GARAGE 2-STORY RIDGE HEIGHT

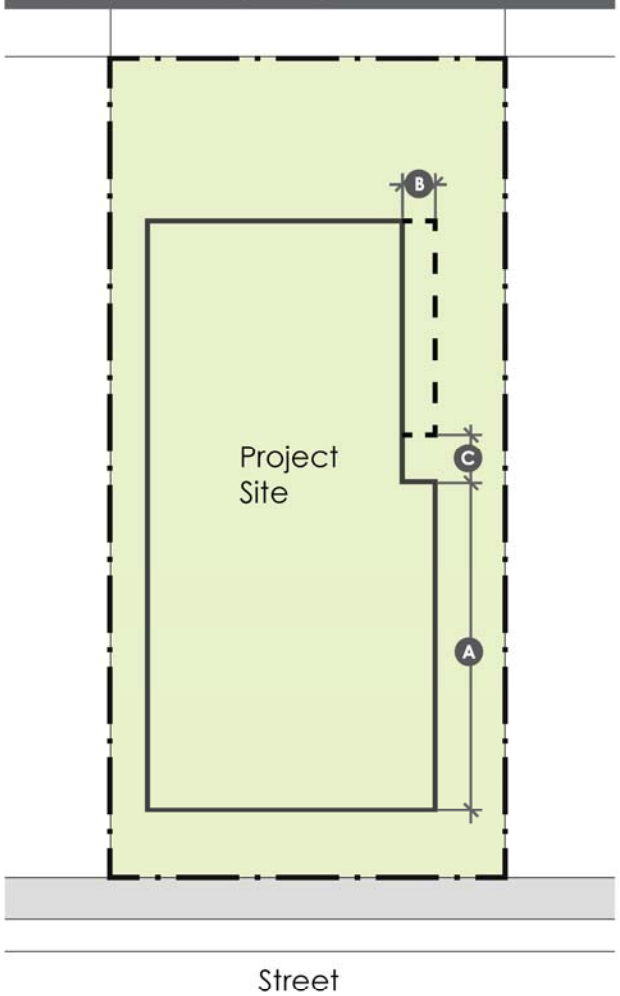


KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	25 FT.	Maximum 2-story garage ridge height

Property Line = — · — · —
Range =

Side Wall Length and Offsets

SIDE WALL LENGTH (DEPTH)



SIDE WALL LENGTH (1-STORY BUILDING)

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	50 FT.	Maximum side wall length without offset
B	1.5 FT.	Minimum depth of inset section of side wall
C	6 FT.	Minimum length of inset section of side wall

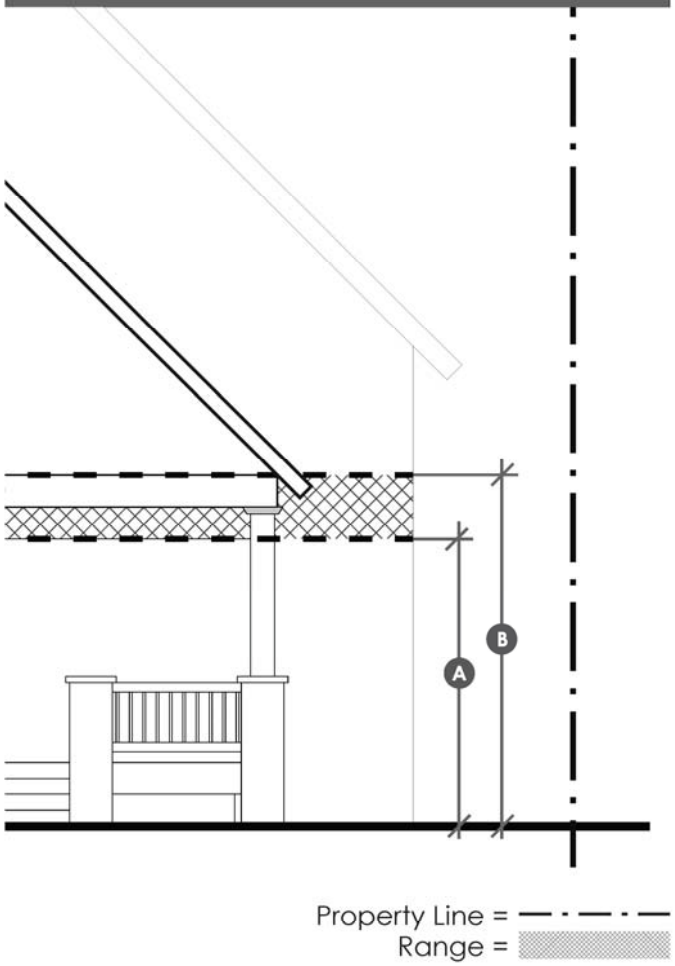
SIDE WALL LENGTH (2-STORY BUILDING)

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	40 FT.	Maximum side wall length without offset
B	1.5 FT.	Minimum depth of inset section of side wall
C	6 FT.	Minimum length of inset section of side wall

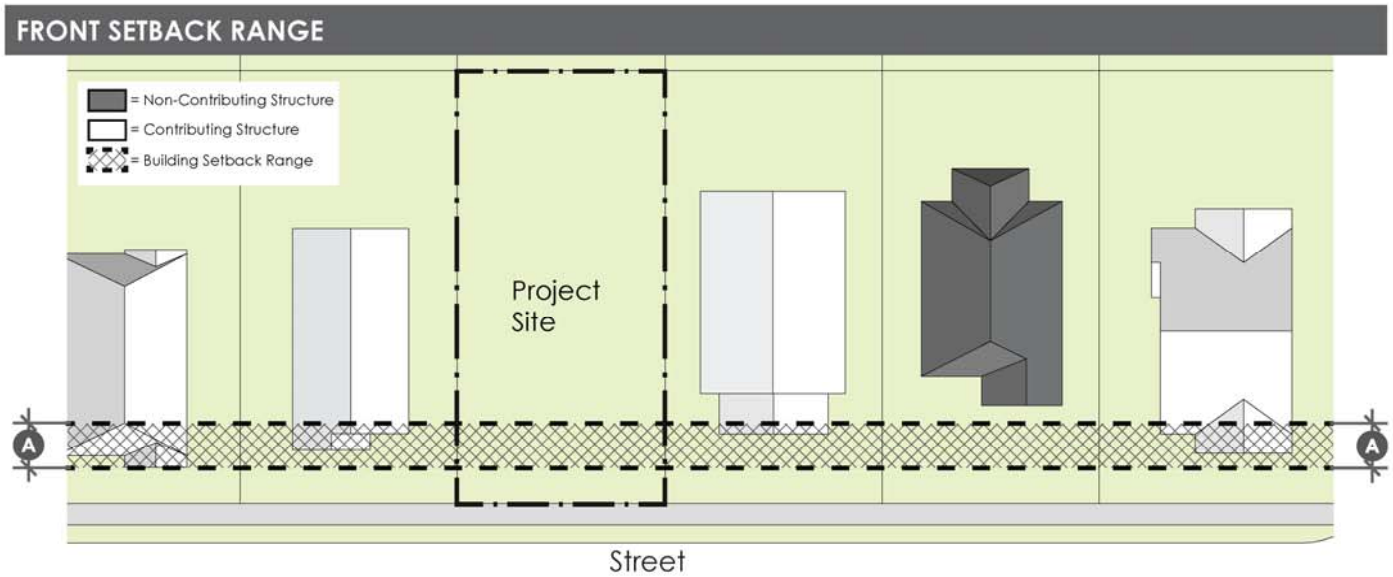
Porch Eave Height

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	9 FT.	Minimum 1-story porch eave height.
B	11 FT.	Maximum 1-story porch eave height.

FRONT AND SIDE PORCH EAVE HEIGHT RANGE



Front Setback



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	**RANGE**	Locate the front of the primary building within the range of front setbacks for contributing buildings within the context area.
B	**5 FT.**	Each side wall must be a minimum distance from the property line.
	15 FT.	The minimum cumulative side setback is calculated by adding the lengths of the two side setbacks.

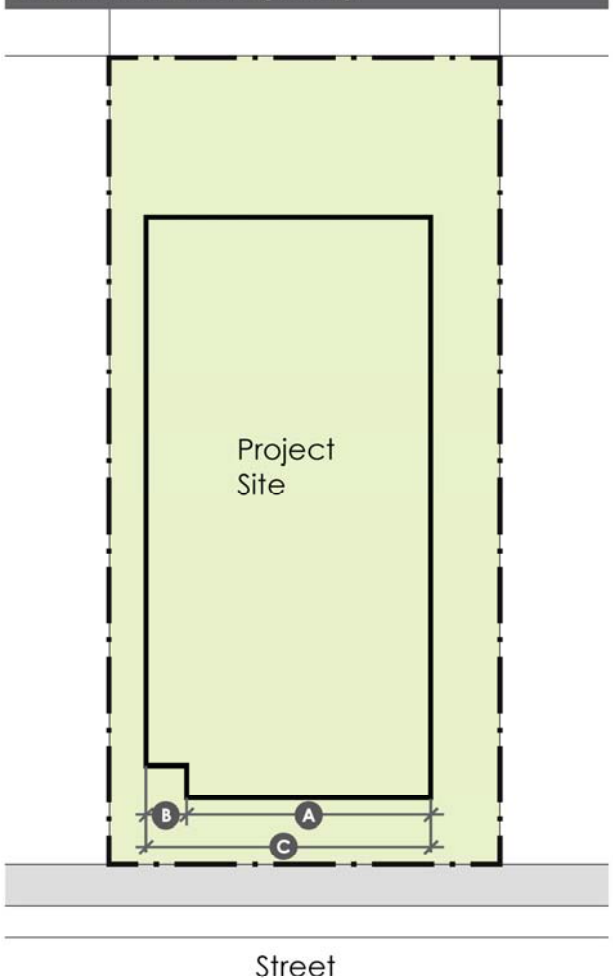
NOTE:

The above side setback examples only illustrate three of numerous combinations that comply with the cumulative 15 ft. minimum setback.

Front Wall Width and Offsets

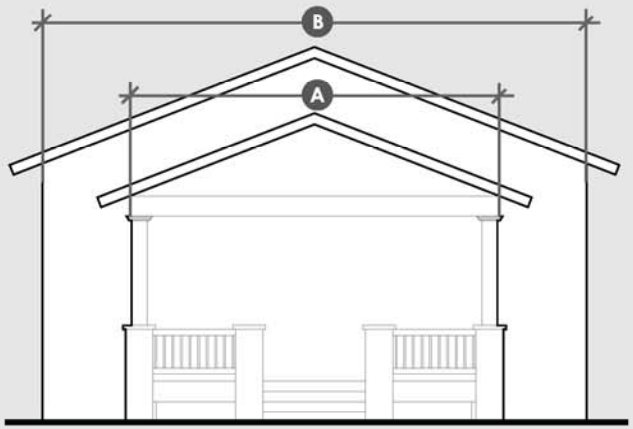
KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	30 FT.	Maximum front wall width before inset
B	4 FT.	Minimum width of inset section of front wall
C	35 FT.	Maximum width of building for lots </= 50 ft wide
	50 FT.	Maximum width of building for lots > 50 ft wide

FRONT WALL LENGTH (WIDTH)



Front Porch Width and Depth

FRONT WALL-TO-PORCH WIDTH

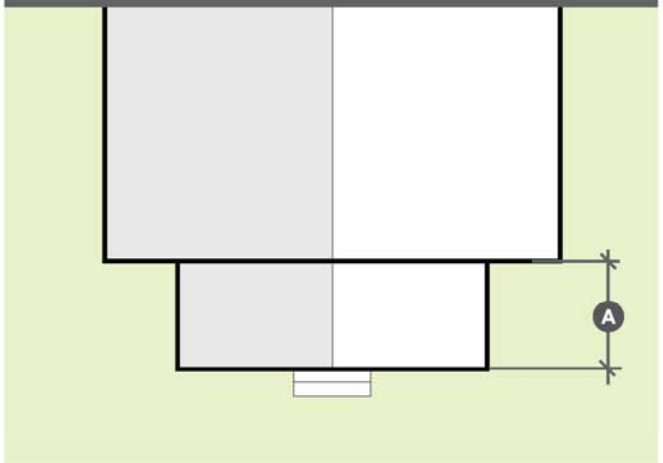


A	Porch Width
B	House Width at Front Wall

Example:
Porch Width = 18 ft.
÷ House Width at Front Wall = 35 ft.
Porch Front Wall Percentage = 51%

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	**50%**	Minimum width of front wall that is covered by porch

FRONT PORCH DEPTH



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	**6 FT.**	Minimum depth of front porch

SECTION 8: RELOCATION AND DEMOLITION

Together, all of the properties within an historic district establish the character of the neighborhood. The relocation and demolition of historic resources can have serious and permanent effects on the character of a historic district. In nearly all cases, we discourage both of these activities; however, either relocation or demolition may be justified under special circumstances. The City of Houston's historic preservation ordinance outlines the criteria that applicants must meet in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for these activities.

Because contributing buildings have a greater effect on the overall character and significance of a historic district, the requirements for relocating or demolishing them are necessarily higher than for a noncontributing building.

IN THIS SECTION

Relocation 8-2

Demolition 8-5

SECTION 9: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A wide variety of resources are available to assist property owners and design professionals as they plan building projects in historic districts.

City of Houston

Complete information about the City of Houston's historic preservation programs and design review process are available online at www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/.

Texas Historical Commission

State-specific information about the National Register of Historic Places and preservation programs, including the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit program, is available at www.thc.texas.gov.

National Park Service

Publications from the National Park Service provide technical information about the repair and maintenance of historic building materials and systems. Hard copies are available to order; electronic versions can be accessed online at www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm.

NPS also publishes The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, available online at www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm.

IN THIS SECTION

For More Information **9-1**
- City of Houston 9-1
- Texas Historical Commission 9-1
- National Park Service 9-1

Good Practices **9-2**
- Fences and Walls 9-3
- Sidewalks and Walkways 9-4
- Driveways and Parking Areas 9-4
- Exterior Lighting 9-5
- Satellite Dishes 9-5
- Building Systems Equipment 9-6
- Painting and Exterior Colors 9-6
- Hurricane Shutters 9-7

Glossary **9-8**

Inventory **9-15**

Fences and Walls

Fences and walls should not create a visual barrier between a historic house and the street. Fences in the Houston Heights Historic Districts are often powder-coated cast metal with decorative finials. These fences have slender posts and balusters. They are commonly finished in a matte black or dark gray color and stand between 36–42" high.

Wooden picket fences, where present, should be regularly maintained and painted.

Solid wood fences or masonry walls are often used along side and rear property lines to provide privacy for the back yard.

Good Practices

Maintain historic fences.

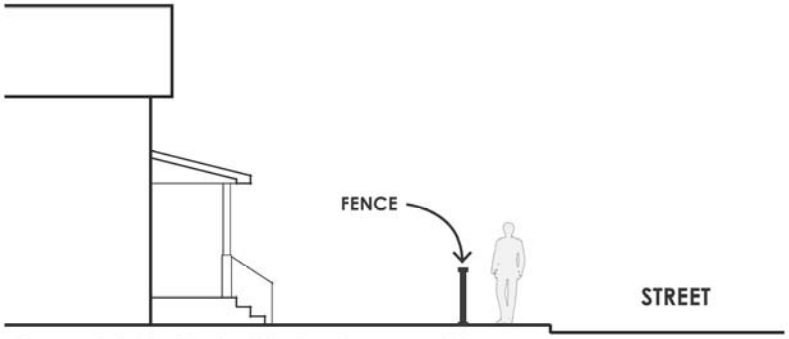
Install metal or wooden picket fences consistent with those found in the neighborhood. If using composite materials, choose a durable alternative that looks like wood or metal.

Use wooden privacy fences and masonry walls to screen the back yard, rather than in front of the house. The finished side of the fence should face the public right-of-way.

Avoid chain-link and wire fences, vinyl or PVC fence materials, and concrete block walls.

Avoid using brick columns in place of fence posts.

FRONT YARD FENCE HEIGHT



A fence height of 36 to 42 inches is appropriate.

Wooden picket fences should be regularly maintained and painted.

Maintain historic fences.

Install metal fences consistent with those found in the neighborhood.

Hurricane Shutters

Houston is at risk of hurricanes and tropical storms for about five months out of the year. When possible, it is less damaging to use hurricane shutters (rather than plywood) to protect a historic building from windstorms.

Good Practices

Consider using impact-resistant window glass or window films that are transparent and not visible from the street.

When it is necessary to install hurricane shutters on a historic building, try to avoid damaging historic materials such as siding and trim.

Use stainless-steel hardware with plastic endcaps to prevent corrosion and minimize the visual impact of wall-mounted anchors.

When it is necessary to install hurricane shutters on a historic building, try to avoid damaging historic materials such as siding and trim.

Use stainless-steel hardware with plastic endcaps to prevent corrosion and minimize the visual impact of wall-mounted anchors.

Next Steps

1. Collect comments
2. Houston Heights Historic Districts Design Guidelines
   - Comments Due: June 30th, 2017

Questions

How to Provide Comments

Have questions or comments?

Steph McDougal, project manager
Planning & Development Dept., City of Houston.
Phone: 832-393-6541
Email: steph.mcdougal@houstontx.gov

Letters:
Steph McDougal
Planning & Development, 6th Floor
City of Houston
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251-1562