

*HARC GUIDELINES FOR*  
**ADDITIONS ON CONTRIBUTING, NON-CONTRIBUTING, AND NON-HISTORIC  
BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

These guidelines are intended to assist in the decision-making and evaluation of appropriate design that includes the alteration and additions to a building or structure. An addition, for the purpose of these guidelines, is an attached structure to a principal or secondary building on a site. That attachment can be through a connecting element or by partially or fully embedding the new structure to an existing building. An addition may require full or partial demolition of existing architectural elements or may directly obscure existing fabric.

Many of the contributing structures and buildings within the historic district have evolved through time with additions and alterations that were considered necessary at their time of construction. **Over time**, some of these additions have acquired historic significance **in** their own right and as such, they must be retained and preserved. Any changes to significant existing additions should be approached with the same care and sensibility as alterations and additions to the main building or structure.

In many cases, an addition is not historically significant or it was so poorly constructed that it is damaging the building where the addition is attached. Sometimes an addition detracts from the architecture of the original building or overshadows a portion of, or the whole, building to which is attached. In these cases, the **removal**, replacement, or alteration of the addition may be considered if it is replaced with a new addition that is compatible and is subordinate to the principal building, **or not reconstructed so as to restore the historic building footprint.**

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, as well as the National Park Services Preservation Brief 14, are essential tools to assist in understanding when alterations or additions are appropriate for a building and its site. In order to design an appropriate addition, it is paramount that the following principles are achieved:

- Preserve significant historic materials, features and forms;
- Be compatible with the existing building or structure and surrounding context;

- Be differentiated from the historic building in a subtle manner that respects the historic context.

These guidelines will be used for the review of proposed additions made to any building or structure within the historic district, including contributing, historic non-contributing and non-historic structures. They are also intended for the review of proposed additions to contributing buildings that are located outside the historic zoning districts. Where noted, certain design guidelines apply primarily to alterations to contributing structures.

### **ANALYSIS OF EXISTING BUILDING AND STRUCTURES ON SITE:**

Before starting the design process for an addition, it is important to study the current interior space and any existing accessory structures on the site, determine if that a rearrangement of the interior is possible or may be a better solution rather than altering the exterior of a building. The principle here is to minimize irreversible exterior changes to the three dimensional footprint of an existing building. If the solution for more space requires an addition, then, how minimal can that alteration be in order to accommodate the needed space? In most cases, additions to historic and contributing buildings involve the destruction of historic fabric, such as walls, roofs and structural components, which are important to preservation efforts. Additions may also alter the mass and symmetry of a building and they can negatively affect the scale and proportions of a structure, the relationship of a building to its neighbors, and in consequence, additions can jeopardize a building's historic architectural character and value, as well as surrounding buildings.

When designing an addition it is important to respect and preserve all character defining and distinctive elements of the existing building and site, and to consider:

- Have any existing additions acquired historical value and significance?
- How much historic fabric, including but not limited to walls, windows, doors, roofs, structural components are required to be destroyed in order to accommodate the addition? (Shall there be a maximum of removal/ demolition allowed for additions?)

- How is the basic form and scale of a building intrinsic to itself and its adjacent structures?
- Which are the primary and secondary elevations?
- What existing components of the building contribute to its character?

Additions should be complementary to the original building, and they shall also be clearly **but subtly** differentiated from the original **structure** to avoid confusion about the historical record and age of the building. Additions should reflect the on-going history of a building and shall be clearly read as part of its development over time. It is always important to understand that a new use to a historic building shall require minimal changes.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

The following guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation for Historic Buildings, which are adopted by Ordinance in the Land Development Regulations:

**Guideline 1: Additions shall require **no or** minimal changes to the character defining features of a building and its site.**

**Guideline 2: The removal of historic elements or material or the alteration of a feature that characterizes a building or its site must be avoided.**

**Guideline 3: Additions that create a false sense of history by the introduction of conjectural elements or other elements from another building are not appropriate.**

**Guideline 4: Additions to a historic building that have acquired historic significance shall be retained and preserved. If an addition is deteriorated to a point that it cannot be salvaged, it **may** be rebuilt and shall match the original addition in design, color, textures, and visual quality.**

**Guideline 5: Additions to a building must be designed in a manner that if removed in the future, the essential character defining features and the integrity of the form of the building and its site will be unimpaired. Whenever possible it is preferable to create a small connector or use an existing non-historic rear addition to attach a new addition.**

Specific Guidelines:

As described before, additions are considered alterations to an existing building and to the site. Additions are also new construction and as such, compatibility of the new element with its context is paramount in the preservation of the property. A compatible addition is a new structure that will fit harmoniously and be sensible to the building to which it will be attached and to its immediate surrounding context. An appropriate addition is one that requires minimal destruction of historic fabric, does not obscure character-defining features of a building and its site, and possess an adequate size, scale and massing in relation to the existing building.

The following principles and guidelines will assist through the planning and design process when an addition is the only feasible alternative for the new use:

Location	Proportion
Height	Rhythm
Massing	Building form
Materials/ Textures	Scale
Alignment	Setbacks
Colors	Reversibility or Removability

Assertive design techniques **may** be incorporated into new additions in order to create an appropriate structure, new additions must be secondary to the building, its site and the neighborhood.

**Location** - The location of existing buildings on their site and on the urban grid makes the building more or less exposed to the pedestrian experience. A new addition shall take into consideration the existing building form, as well as primary versus secondary elevations.

**Guideline 6:** Any proposed addition shall be attached to less public elevations. Whenever possible, additions shall be attached to the rear or least conspicuous side of an existing building. On a corner lot, an addition shall be located to be unobtrusive when viewed from either adjoining streets.

**Guideline 7:** Additions proposed on the front of a contributing or historic structure are prohibited unless factual evidence for the building or structure in question proves the contrary. The Commission will make a determination if the addition is appropriate to the structure, its site, and surrounding context based on submitted evidence.

Proposed rooftop additions on a contributing or historic building or structure can be a difficult and challenging task since they can destroy historic fabric as well as compromise the integral form, massing, and scale of the building and its roofline. Dormer additions to contributing or historic buildings can also negatively affect the form and character of a building.

**Guideline 8:** Additions proposed over an existing contributing or historic building or structure are prohibited, unless the proposed addition is attached over a non-historic portion of the building and it is not visible from any street.

**Guideline 9:** New dormers proposed for contributing or historic buildings must not be visible from any street or lane. Dormer proportion, scale, and mass shall be similar to historic dormers found on similar buildings.

**Guideline 10:** Elevating a contributing or historic building or structure in order to build a new addition under the existing structure is prohibited.

**Height and Scale** - A proposed addition can overwhelm and outsize the structure to which it is to be attached. Designing an addition that is taller than the main building usually diminishes the character of a historic building.

**Guideline 11: Additions to contributing and historic buildings shall limit its size and scale in relationship to the historic building. The addition shall be lower than the original building height.**

When designing an addition to a building that is larger and taller than the adjacent buildings it is important that the addition be harmonious to its surrounding context. Adding a structure that dominates and overwhelms adjacent buildings is inappropriate and contrary to preservation standards. Breaking the scale and height will help make an addition more compatible with surrounding structures.

**Guideline 12: Additions shall not dominate neighboring properties.**

**Building Form and Massing**-When planning an addition, it is important to understand the building form and massing. Building form is the overall shape of the structure, including exterior walls and roofs as well as elements that protrude like dormers, porches, chimneys and previous additions. Massing refers to the bulkiness of all components that conforms the building form. Any new addition to a building shall complement its form and massing. A new addition can lower its mass by creating different volumes and roof heights that relates to the principal building on the site and its adjacent neighboring structures.

**Guideline 13: New additions must have a similar building form found in the existing structure. New addition massing shall be similar or smaller than the massing found in the existing building and adjacent structures.**

**Guideline 14: New additions shall incorporate architectural forms found in the main building and surrounding structures. For additions to contributing or historic**

**buildings, the use of building forms that are foreign to the existing building and adjacent historic structures are prohibited.**

**Guideline 15: The addition of roof decks over pitched roofs or the removal or partial removal of a roof in order to accommodate a roof deck is prohibited. The introduction of parapet walls in order to make a roof accessible for human occupancy is prohibited. The addition of a widow's walk when pictorial documentation does not support that it was original to a building is prohibited.**

**Guideline 16: The addition of a second floor front or side porch or the expansion of an original front porch on a contributing structure visible from any street is prohibited, unless it can be proved by pictorial evidence that the porch and its proposed configuration was original to the building.**

**Guideline 17: Roof forms of contributing buildings cannot be altered if that portion of the roof is visible from any street.**

**Guideline 18: The design of an addition in order to attach two contributing buildings is discouraged. If the addition is found appropriate, it shall be located on a **less conspicuous** location, and shall not obscure any portion of the original historic fabric.**

**Guideline 19: The new addition must keep an appropriate massing and form and must preserve and maintain the building-to-lot proportion found on adjacent lots.**

**Proportions and Rhythm-**All proposed additions must respect the existing proportions of the building to which it will be added. Proportion is the relationship of height and width found in each elevation of a building. The term proportions can also be applied to each individual architectural component found on a building's elevation; windows, doors, porches, solid walls, etc. Rhythm is the pattern that is created on a building's elevation; for example, the height, and width of windows and doors, and their relationship to solid

portions of the wall, the columns of a porch and the spacing between them. These are some of the many relationships between architectural elements that create a rhythm on a building.

**Guideline 20: Expanding the existing building form and massing on a contributing building in order to add height to exterior walls and raising the roof is not an appropriate design solution.**

**Guideline 21: Proposed additions that alter the existing proportions and rhythm of a contributing building are prohibited. The installation of bay or picture windows or the introduction of any architectural element that alters the rhythm and proportions of a contributing building is prohibited.**

**Guideline 22: New additions must incorporate similar proportions, window and door sizes, and rhythms found in the main building. The installation of windows or doors that are visually incompatible with the existing building is discouraged.**

**Alignment and Setbacks** - These two principles are related to the location of an addition. A failure to consider how the new structure will relate to the existing building form and site and context patterns, can create an incompatible and inappropriate design. Alignment is how the main components of the addition are positioned in relation to the existing building. Setbacks are how much distance an addition will have to the original building and its components and to surrounding structures. Alignment and setbacks are design principles that can be used to differentiate new additions from the main structure. They are also used to prevent that an addition be visible from streets or lanes, and to reduce its impact on the historic resource and the surrounding context.

**Guideline 23: Additions at side elevations to contributing buildings are rarely appropriate since they alter the symmetry and balance of a historic building. If proposed, they shall be set back as far as possible from the street and shall not obscure original or historic walls, window fenestrations, or roofs, and should be no larger than 30% of the original floor area.**



**Guideline 24: The use of same wall plane or cornice height on a proposed addition to a contributing or historic building is **not recommended**.**

**Guideline 25: Additions to non-historic and non-contributing buildings shall respect existing patterns and setbacks found in adjacent buildings. New additions on non-historic and non-contributing structures that overshadow or diminish the historic character of contributing **adjacent buildings** is prohibited.**

**Materials, Textures and Colors** - These three principles contribute to the building's character, appearance and visual perception. Typically, materials, textures and colors for a new proposed addition should match or complement those found in the existing building as well as adjacent structures. New materials, textures, and colors do not necessarily need to be the same as the existing, but shall be harmonious.

**Guideline 26: New materials, textures, and colors for new proposed additions that stand out from a contributing building or its neighbors are prohibited. If a new addition for a non-contributing structure proposes materials, textures and colors different from the main building, all these elements need to be harmonious and similar to the ones found within the adjacent urban context.**

**Guideline 27: Changing historically used materials and textures on contributing buildings in order to match a proposed addition is prohibited.**

**Guideline 28: The use of materials in new additions that are incompatible with materials found in the existing building, or that can create chemical reaction or decay to the historic fabric is prohibited.**

**Reversibility or Removability** - This principle is one of the most challenging design elements on an addition; the removal and destruction of historic elements of a building, including structural components that are not visually exposed to the exterior are

irreversible. Once a historic component is lost, it may be duplicated, but its value in terms of uniqueness, craftsmanship, or age is gone forever. **Reversibility or** removability relates to how to limit the impact of an addition on a historic building so that the original structure is not compromised if a new addition is demolished or removed in the future. **This action will protect the integrity of the resource.**

It is important to understand that many historic buildings had undergone through rehabilitation or maintenance process, where original historic fabric may have been replaced. Usually finishes like siding, or roofing may not be the original materials, but the wall size, location and roofline, as well as their structural components, are still original to the building.

**Guideline 29: The destruction and demolition of original elements of the building in order to accommodate an addition must be minimized.**

**Guideline 30: Ideally, new additions should be attached to non-historic existing additions or to secondary extremely altered facades of a contributing building.**

**Guideline 31: The use of a recessed, small scale hyphen on a secondary elevation of building, to differentiate the original structure and the new addition is highly advised.**

**Guideline 32: The removal of non-historic additions that have altered character-defining features or that have changed the original three-dimensional footprint of a building is highly advised.**

**Guideline 33: Returning a building to its original state by the removal of alterations that have obscured, enclosed, or disguised character-defining features is highly advised.**

## EVALUATION BY GUIDELINES

The following questions are a tool to help understand if a proposed project for new additions is likely to be consistent with the new additions and alterations guidelines. If all answers are “yes” the new proposed addition probably meets the preceding guidelines.

**These questions are not intended to create a final determination of a project.**

1. Is the proposed addition the only and last resource on the site to accommodate the minimum space for the proposed use?
2. Does the proposed addition require minimal **or no** destruction and or obstruction of character defining elements of the existing building?
3. Is the new addition differentiated from the existing building **while** not reading **ing** as part of the original structure, **but respects its context**?
4. Is the proposed addition not visible from any streets or lane and located in a least conspicuous side of an existing building?
5. Is the proposed addition designed **ed** in a manner that if removed in **the future**, the essence and character defining features of the original building are not **destroyed**?
6. Is the proposed addition compatible with the scale, massing, proportions and height of the original building and surrounding structures?
7. Does the introduction of the proposed addition still preserve the original building’s form and proportions?
8. Is the new addition subordinate to the original building? **Are** the selected materials, textures, and colors **compatible with** the original building and adjacent structures?

9. Does the new addition respect and preserve the original building form, including but not limited to rooflines, walls and protruded architectural elements?

10. The new addition does not drastically change the original building and its site, and it does not overpower the original building or any adjacent structures?

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