

RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

3

PRESERVING HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

The majority of buildings in the Northville Historic District are houses. In the following section, preservation issues specific to residential buildings are presented in detail. Where the term "residential" is used, it refers to historic residential buildings, or residences within the Historic District. The *Standards* do not apply to residences outside of the Historic District boundaries. (See map on page v.)

The examples and photos included in this section show the range of design approaches and existing conditions within the Historic District. The intention is not to single out, promote, or criticize building owners or properties, but rather to use local, real-life examples to help illustrate the issues where possible.

Landscaping

Landscaping is a means of individual expression. Good landscaping can provide protection from the elements, enhance or frame building views, and increase privacy. On the other hand, inappropriate landscaping can change the perception of the setback, block views, and in extreme cases damage historic building materials.

The Zoning Ordinance prohibits some types of plants in the area between the sidewalk and street (the right-of-way). Plants that interfere with visibility from a driveway or intersection are prohibited as are Box Elders, Horse Chestnuts, Soft Maples, Poplars, Willows and Catalpas.

Landscaping is a "reversible" alteration that is not strictly regulated by the HDC, but the following guidelines for appropriate landscaping are provided.

Landscaping Guidelines

- Don't plant trees up against house. The roots can crack the foundation.
- Remove ivy and climbing vines from walls. The vines trap water which will cause peeling paint, spalling brick, and mortar deterioration.
- Don't plant tall hedges along the front and side property lines to avoid an opaque fence-like effect. No hedge in the front yard may be over 3 feet tall. More leeway is given for corner lots, to provide privacy for exposed rear yards.
- Locate fountains, gazebos, and yard ornaments in the rear yard.
- Avoid using railroad ties to construct retaining walls and planters in front of the house. This is not a traditional application. Stone retaining walls and wood planters are more appropriate.
- Use plants to screen necessary anachronisms such as air conditioning condensers.



Historically appropriate retaining wall.



Inappropriate railroad tie retaining wall.

Fences

Fences provide privacy, safety for children and pets, restrict access, control circulation, and are landscape accent elements. Poorly designed and located fences can alter visual perception of the setback, disrupt streetscape continuity, and block views of the house. Fences are a reversible alteration, but they are reviewed by the HDC because they are so visible. Fences are also regulated by the Northville Zoning Ordinance.

Fence Guidelines

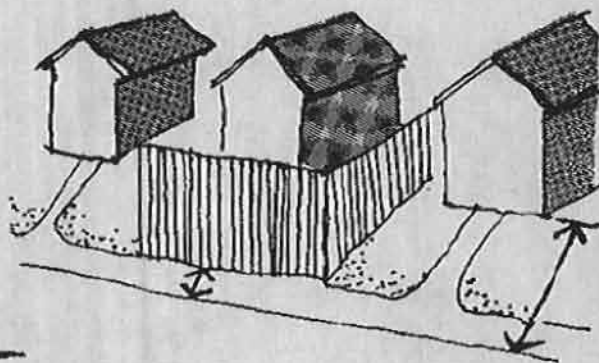
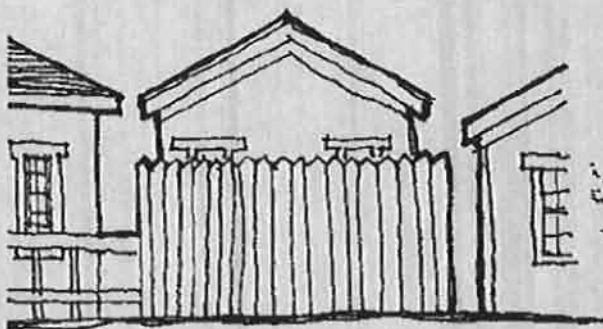
- No fence or wall in the front yard (or side yard on corner lots) may be higher than 3 feet.
- No fence in the side or rear yard may be higher than 6 feet tall.
- No barbed wire, stockade, or split rail fences are allowed.
- No chain link fences in the front yard are allowed.



This fence meets the Standards for height, but the split rail detailing is more appropriate to a rural setting. It may not meet zoning requirements.



An appropriate fence for this setting, although it may not meet zoning requirements.



Improperly sized or located fences can obscure the architecture and interrupt the perceived setback.

Preserving Roofs and Roofing

The shape, size, and color of a roof is a dominant visual feature of any building. Some of the character defining roof features that are to be preserved are illustrated below. Proposed changes to a historic roof will be carefully reviewed, particularly when part of an addition or new construction. (See "Residential Additions and New Construction.") The technical aspects of roofing preservation are explained in Part 5, "Preserving Building Materials." For an illustration of roofing components, see Part 5.

Roof Guidelines

- Retain the original roof shape, size, and slope.
- Retain the existing historic roofing material whenever possible.
- Repair or replace roofing materials with roofing to match the historic in material, size, shape, texture, and color.
- Do not remove historic roof features such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, verge boards, chimneys, cresting, weathervanes, gutters, downspouts, and lightning rods.
- City ordinances require gutters on buildings. Retain existing historic gutters and downspouts, and make repairs to match existing gutters and downspouts.
- If gutters and downspouts are being added in order to comply with the City requirements, new gutters and downspouts should be of a style compatible with the building. For instance, half round or ogee gutters with round downspouts of copper or galvanized sheet metal were more common prior to 1940. Contemporary square aluminum gutters and downspouts may not be appropriate.
- Repair and maintain existing historic built in gutters, if existing, rather than installing external gutters and downspouts. Built in gutters are more common on Italianate houses.



The dormers and roof slope are characteristics of the Italianate style of this house, and should be preserved. Such features should not be added to historic homes that never had them.



The chimney, fascia, and carved brackets are roof features to be preserved.



Gutters, downspouts, and mounting brackets may be features to be preserved.

Preserving Windows

Window replacement and modification is often proposed because of maintenance concerns, thermal performance, style, or function. Thermal performance is becoming more of a concern due to new Model Energy Code requirements. Windows are character defining architectural features that will be carefully regulated by the HDC. There must be a balance of thermal performance with historic appropriateness.

At a distance, window openings add variety and texture to exterior walls. The appropriate size of the windows in relationship to the walls gives scale and proportion to the facade, and window spacing and pattern lends rhythm and balance to the facade design.

Window details cannot be ignored. Small details are repeated and add up to a major impact on the building image. Sash width, mullion profiles, size and type of glass, and hardware are all details that matter. The goal is to retain the size and shape of the original openings so that the configuration of the facade is not changed. The original materials of the windows should be retained, repaired, or duplicated.

For an illustration of window components, see Part 5, "Preserving Building Materials."

Window Guidelines

- Retain and repair existing windows including the window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, hoods, and all hardware. Wholesale replacement of existing windows is not permitted unless they are deteriorated beyond the point of repair.
- If windows are beyond repair, then any replacement window must match the design, size, proportions, and profile of the existing original windows. Some minor variation may be acceptable, upon review by the HDC.



The metal awning and inoperable shutters are not historically appropriate window treatments. The awning also obscures the original window hood trim.

- Many replacement window materials, including vinyl or aluminum clad replacement windows, may be approved by the Historic District Commission, if such windows match the size, proportions, and profiles of the existing windows.
- Do not install inappropriate new window features such as aluminum storm and screen windows, insulating glass that requires the removal of original windows, awnings made of plastic or metal stripping, or fake shutters. These detract from the character and appearance of the building.
- No new window openings into the principal elevations are allowed.
- No enlargement or reduction of original window openings is permitted.
- No infill of original window openings is permitted.
- Install replacement windows in the same relationship to the exterior wall as the original sash.
- No tinted or mirrored glass is permitted.
- Do not use interior grilles, grilles between layers of insulating glass, or flat, stenciled mullions in lieu of true divided lights or exterior mullions.
- Do not install security bars over historic windows.



Inappropriate reduction of historic window opening to fit standard sized replacement window. ("Panning")



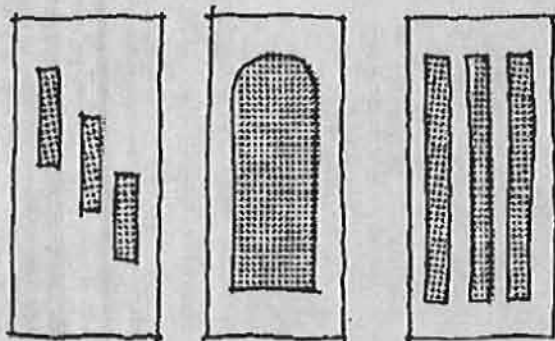
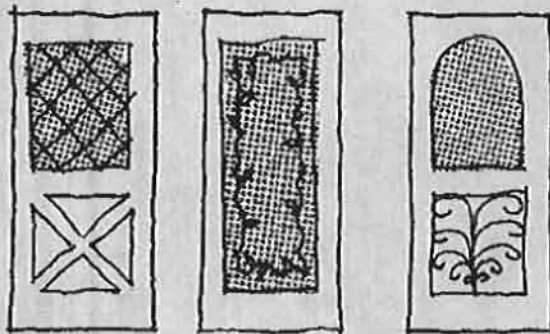
Inappropriate replacement window on first floor. The dividing mullion and historic casing have been cut and a non-historic picture window inserted.

Preserving Doors

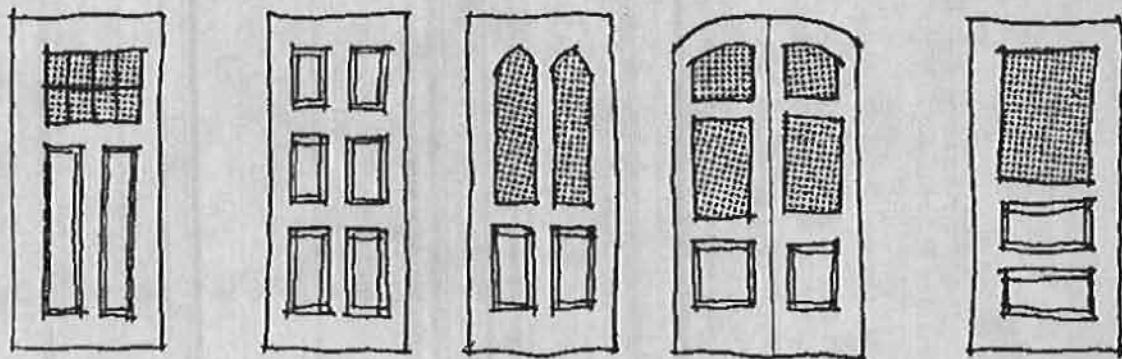
The door is an important feature of the residential exterior, and one that is seen closely by every visitor. The entry is the focal point of a facade. The historic tone of the building is affected by the authenticity of the door. Historic doors are typically stile and rail panel doors made of wood. Glass area is relatively small. Queen Anne style homes may have had colored, leaded, or beveled glass. Flush (flat) doors, aluminum screen doors, and aluminum storm doors are not appropriate for the historic homes in Northville.

Door Guidelines

- Retain original doors and door openings including doors, casings, pediments, canopies, and other door trim.
- Do not remove existing doors and hardware if they can be restored or repaired.
- No aluminum storm and screen doors are permitted.
- No enlargement of original door openings is allowed, unless required by Barrier Free code.
- No infill, reduction or relocation of original door openings is allowed.
- Do not mix and match historic styles when selecting a replacement door. New doors to be of the style of the house.



NOT APPROPRIATE



GENERALLY APPROPRIATE

Preserving Ornament and Details

Decorative details are part of what defines a building's style. Unregulated renovation can result in destruction of character-defining detail, or addition of details which are inappropriate to the house's style or period. Character defining details of a style are, at minimum, those details listed in the Architectural Styles section of the *Standards*.

In the case of ornamental detail, it is not enough to be historic. The historic accuracy of details, as well as the period which details represent has a crucial effect on the overall character of a property. The details must be of the *appropriate* historic style. Mixing historic styles and adding details that were never part of a building creates a false sense of history that is in direct conflict with the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Sometimes historic ornament is replaced with contemporary "stock" components that may seem close enough, but are in fact either simplified, streamlined, or of exaggerated proportions.

Ornament Guidelines

- Retain and preserve existing historic ornament.
- Repair or replace ornament with ornaments that match the historic in material, size, and profile.
- Do not add ornament that was never a part of the building, even if it seems historic.
- Do not confuse true period architectural details with "symbols" of history such as flags or American eagles.
- Restore ornament using photographic evidence.



Possibly stylized and simplified verge board.



The details on this house are well preserved, with the exception of the added wood shutters.

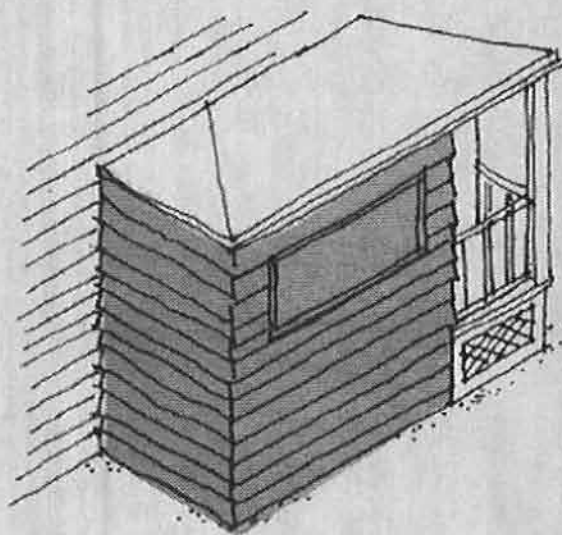
Preserving Porches

As a part of the entrance, the porch is often the focal point of a building. Open air porches are one of the strongest character defining elements of traditional American houses. Many original open air porches are being enclosed or filled in because owners want screened porches to keep out insects and to provide cool summer relaxation areas. This has a detrimental impact on the visual character of residential buildings, because doors, frames, and screening are not truly transparent. Even glass enclosures are reflective and not truly transparent. Enclosed porches can look like solid masses. In the worst cases, open air porches have been fully enclosed with walls and windows and converted into rooms.

In addition to prominent details like columns, steps and sometimes a roof, the porch is a location for many small but character defining details like handrails and balustrades. These details should be retained.

Porch Guidelines

- No permanent enclosure with walls and windows on primary facades is allowed. Partial enclosure with windows on secondary facades is permitted if the overall visual character of the porch (e.g. columns and solid/void relationships) is maintained.
- Screening-in may be permitted. Design screens to preserve the character of the porch including solid/void relationships, handrails, ornamentation, and moldings. Set screens back behind porch columns and minimize screen frame sizes.
- Do not remove original handrails and balustrades. No anachronistic metal railings are allowed.
- No indoor/outdoor carpet on the porch floor is allowed.
- No replacement of wood steps or porch with concrete or concrete block is allowed.
- Ramps for barrier free access will be reviewed on an individual basis.



Improper enclosure of an open front porch with walls and windows.



Sensitive placement of screens behind columns and balustrade.

Preserving Siding

Aluminum or vinyl siding hides historic building materials, and often covers and damages details, or necessitates their removal. A common problem with substitute siding is that the siding is of a different exposure (board width) and texture than the historic wood siding. Certain standard vinyl/aluminum siding installation details and practices are visually objectionable. One such practice is installing "J" beads at corners, windows, and around ornamental wood trim. The "J" bead provides a finished edge for the siding, but it also adds a distracting outline around the architectural features. Another common practice is to enclose molded or cut trim with smooth aluminum or vinyl to reduce maintenance. Although when properly selected and installed manufactured siding can replicate the clapboards, there are not vinyl and aluminum products that can replicate moldings. In Northville, Gothic verge boards and window hoods are at highest risk.

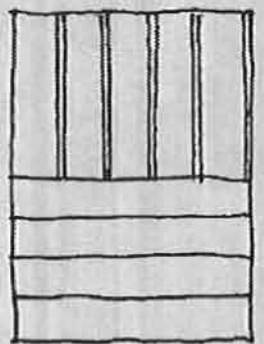
Many homeowners believe that aluminum and vinyl siding will protect wood and make the house more weathertight, unaware of the technical pitfalls. Siding can trap moisture in the wall, resulting in wood rot. Open seams funnel water into cavities, and insects can proliferate in the small spaces.

Siding Guidelines

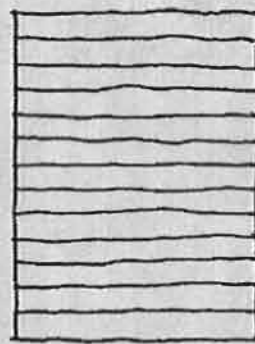
- Preserve or repair historic wood siding. Removal of existing substitute siding and restoration of the original cladding is strongly encouraged.
- Aluminum and vinyl replacement siding are not permitted. Applicants may petition the HDC for an exception.
- If approved, replacement siding may only cover wood clapboards. No enclosures around decorative wood trim are allowed; including but not limited to window casings, verge boards, columns, window hoods, brackets, and cornices.
- Replacement siding, if approved, must match the historic board exposure.
- No new aluminum or vinyl siding on designated landmark buildings is allowed. Existing siding may remain.



Inappropriate enclosure of historic wood trim with aluminum.



INAPPROPRIATE REPLACEMENTS



HISTORIC SIDING

Preserving Atypical Styles

Many of the homes within the Northville Historic District are either not yet historic or are not perceived as historic. Even so, if the homes are over 50 years old, they may be eligible for individual designation. Changes to these buildings may be regretted in later years when the style is appreciated as an example of its time. Modifications to these buildings affect surrounding historic buildings and therefore, proposed changes will be reviewed by the HDC.

Atypical Styles Guidelines

- Do not turn a modern building into a historic looking building by adding inappropriate historic details that were never a part of the building.
- Evaluate the key architectural features as if the building were historic. For example, "what is the character of the roof, windows, and ornament?"
- Retain the original character defining features.

RESIDENTIAL ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

Homes built prior to the mid 20th century are often strained to meet the space requirements of late 20th century living. Many historic 19th century homes received kitchen additions in the early 20th century, which are today inadequate for the needs of some families. Additions are often desired to accommodate growing families (extra bedrooms and baths), changes in life-style (family rooms), modern conveniences (larger kitchens), and changing preferences in recreation and relaxation (greenhouses, sun rooms, decks, patios). Adding on to a house is not a new phenomenon. Houses have always grown over time. Many additions to historic homes have become historic in their own right.

When creating an addition to a historic building, it is important to make decisions that do not compromise the historic character of the original. Additions on the fronts, sides, or roofs of houses have a significant detrimental impact on their character. Additions at the rear of houses are less conspicuous, but still may result in loss of historic materials or details. Some historic building styles are so strongly defined by their floor plans or facades that additions will overwhelm and essentially destroy the historic character of the house.

Population growth and economic development has led to the construction of entirely new homes in the Northville historic district. Most residential lots in the historic district are already developed, but subdivision of some large lots might create opportunities for new construction. Trends in contemporary residential design yield houses which are usually much larger than house sizes in the historic neighborhood. These new homes have incredible impact on the historic character of the neighborhood. Budget, function, and style preference can sometimes be in conflict with preservation, but this does not have to be the case.

General Design Issues

The Historic District Ordinance does not prohibit additions or new buildings. It does not require using any one style for the construction of an addition or new building. Architectural compatibility is dependent on taking into consideration the physical aspects that influence design: setback, spacing, mass, height, scale, proportion, rhythm, materials and details. These will be carefully reviewed.

Setback and Spacing

Setbacks are the distance that a building must be located behind the property line. Setbacks are regulated by the Northville Zoning Ordinance. They vary from area to area and are determined by the zoning of the piece of property. The front setback is the distance behind the front (usually street facing) property line. Side and rear setbacks are also regulated.

The setback is one of the most basic character defining elements of a neighborhood. Consistent front setback gives continuity to the streetscape. Consistent spacing between buildings gives regularity and rhythm. Therefore, within the Northville Historic District, the setback approval process may be more strict than the Zoning Ordinance, or it may be less strict. The goal of the HDC review is to preserve the *established* historic rhythm and continuity of the street.

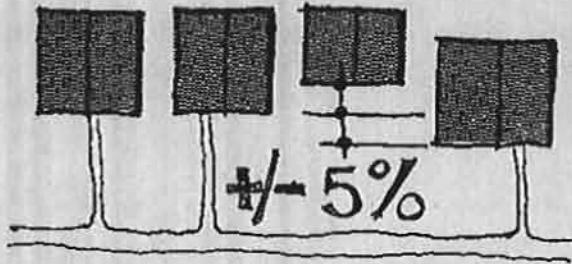
Setback and Spacing Guidelines

- Keep established historic front setbacks. The proposed setback for new construction should not be more than five percent (5%) in front of or behind the average of the setbacks of buildings within a 300 foot radius.
- In areas where adjacent structures vary greatly from the traditional, established residential setback, the setback will be reviewed on an individual basis. The intention is to restore the historic setback rather than to repeat inappropriate setbacks of adjacent structures.

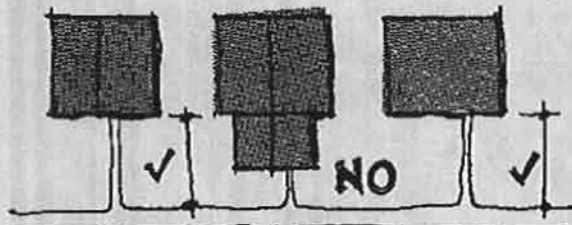


The house in the middle is set back much further than its neighbors. Although probably in keeping with zoning, it does not follow Historic District Standards for compatibility.

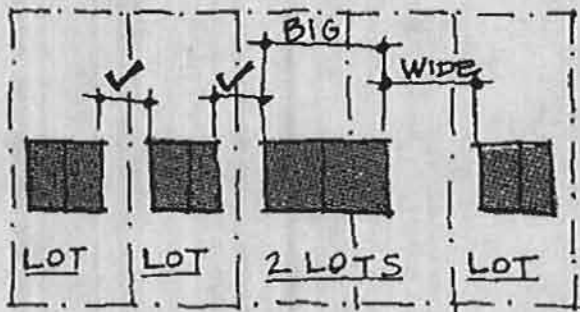
- Keep consistent spacing between homes. The rhythm of structural mass to open space between structures should be consistent with the pattern established by buildings within a 300 foot radius.
- Maintain historic residential setback and character when residential buildings are converted to commercial use.
- Maintain historic residential setback and character when buildings are constructed on the edges of residential neighborhoods and in the transition spaces between residential and commercial zones.
- No additions are allowed that extend into the front setback as defined by the setback of adjacent structures within a 300 foot radius.
- No houses that "straddle" combined lots are permitted. This has the effect of interrupting the setback and spacing, as well as resulting in houses that are too large. (See "Mass.")
- Do not locate tall fences or hedges within the front setback. (See "Fences" and "Landscaping.")



5% variation from the established setback is allowed in the historic district, even if the setback per zoning is different.



Do not build additions into the front setback. Do not locate new houses within the setback.



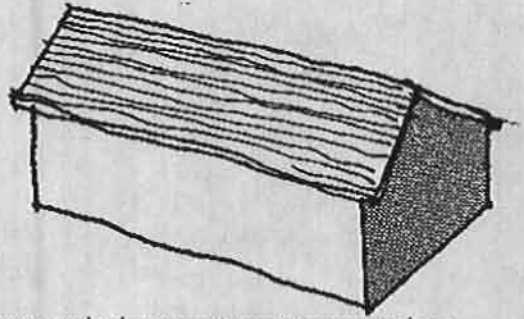
Combining lots and "straddling" lot lines results in houses that are too big, and in irregular spacing between houses.

Mass

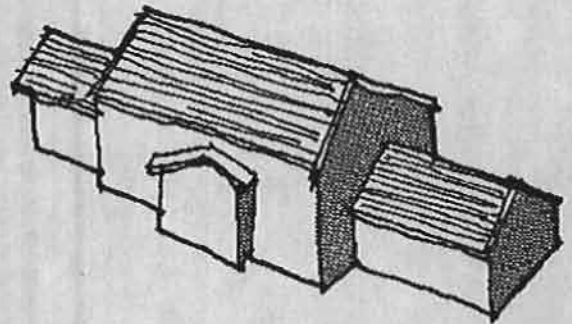
Mass is the overall volume, or bulk, of the building. In downtown and residential settings it is usually desirable to break up large forms into smaller parts through variations in building height, rooflines, and detailing.

Mass Guidelines

- Break large forms into smaller, varied masses that are common on most residential buildings.
- Repeat the established rhythm of building widths in the block and minimize long expanses of unbroken horizontal building elements.
- Use design elements such as columns and pilasters, or changes in color or material to express this rhythm.
- Maintain traditional established breaks that occur between buildings. (See "Setback and Spacing.")



A large, unbroken mass is monotonous and not conducive to pedestrian scale.



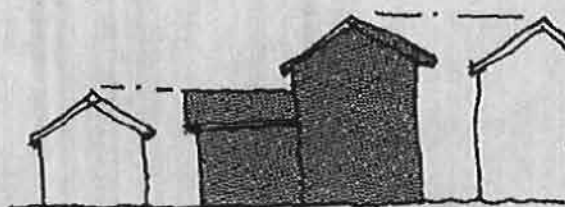
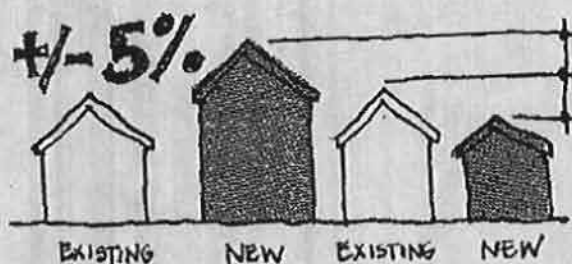
The same floor area can be divided into smaller masses for a more compatible architecture.

Height

Height is the actual dimension from the ground to the top of the building. Actual height and perceived height are sometimes different. A three story home may appear much taller than it is if the adjacent houses are one story ranch homes. The same three story home may appear much shorter than it is when located next to a high rise commercial building. The actual and perceived height should be compatible with adjacent houses in the historic district.

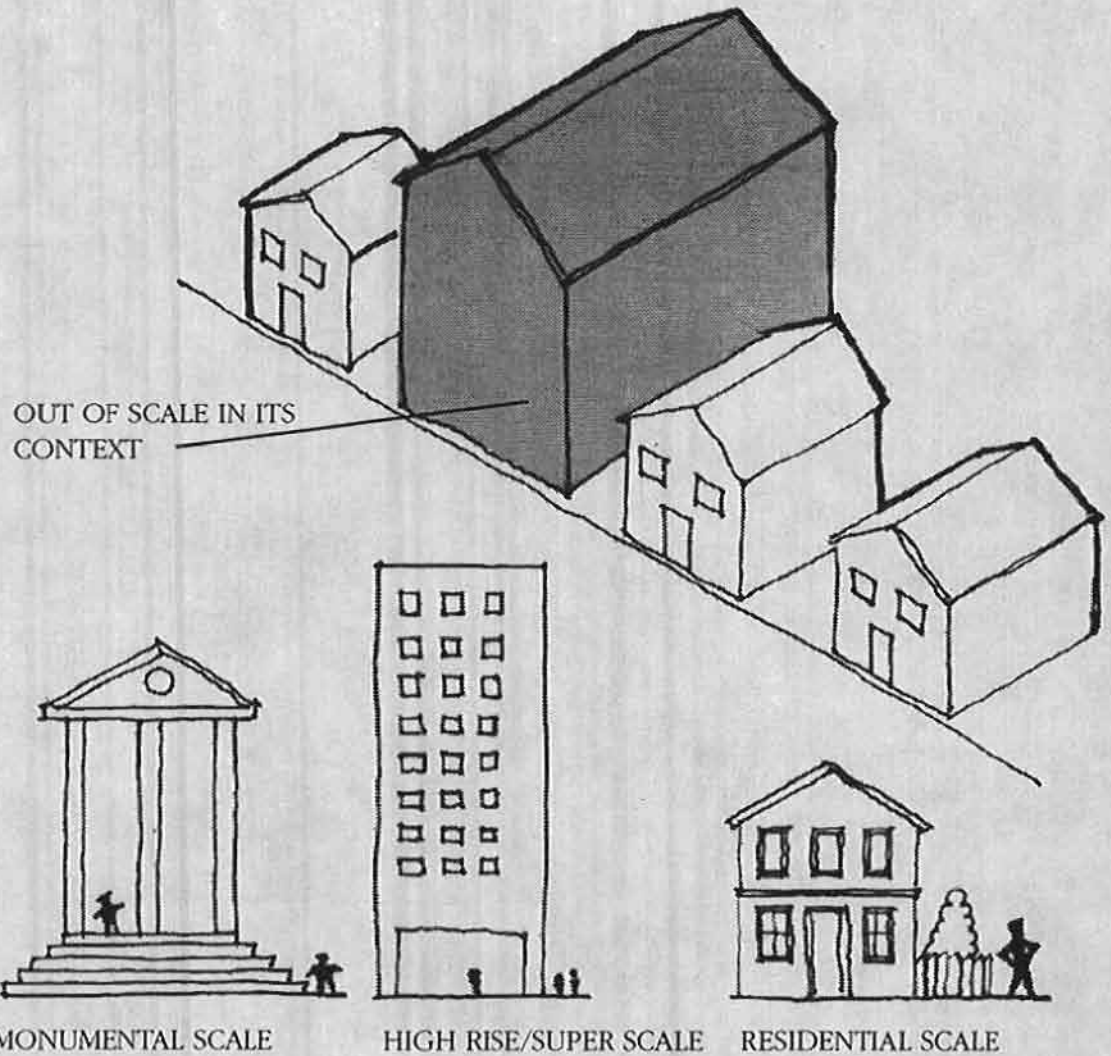
Height Guidelines

- The proposed roof shape and skyline should relate to the structures existing within a 300 foot radius.
- The proposed highest height should be within 5% of the average height of the structures existing within a 300 foot radius.
- In neighborhoods that are primarily residential in character, retain the horizontal lines of the facades on the block.
- No addition may be higher than the historic ridge line of the predominant historic roof. Towers and cupolas may not be added unless based on historic evidence.
- Provide incremental transitions in height between new and existing buildings.



Scale

Scale is the human perception of the size of an object relative to other objects. Scale varies with function and location. The perception of scale is influenced by height and the proportion of building elements.



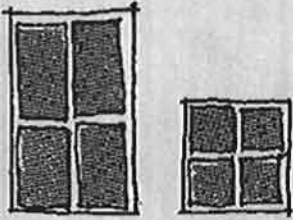
Scale Guidelines

- New construction and additions should be compatible with the scale of adjacent homes.
- Commercial or institutional or monumental scale is not appropriate within the residential historic district.
- Refer to "Height" and "Proportion" for additional guidelines related to scale.

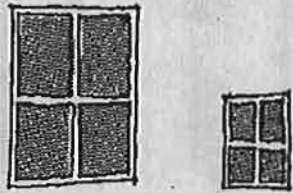
Proportion

Proportion is the relationship between actual dimensions of elements. A design element such as a window may have the same shape as adjacent windows, but may appear out of proportion because the dimensional relationships are not the same.

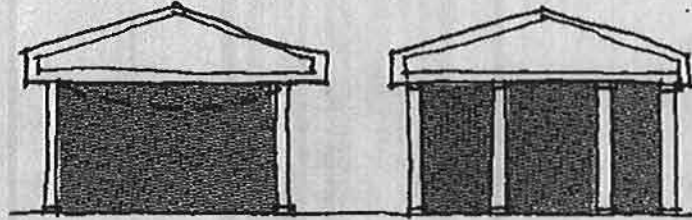
Building materials have physical proportional limits based on their strength. Elements may appear out of proportion if it looks like the material has been stretched close to or beyond its physical limits.



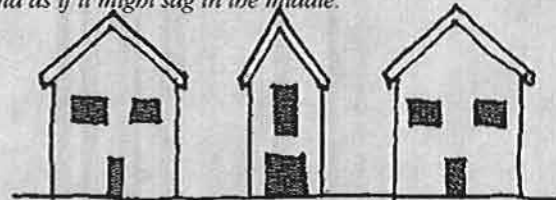
Different proportions



Same proportions, different size



At left, it looks as if the columns would not support the pediment, and as if it might sag in the middle.



The house in the middle is the same height and scale as the others, but is not of the same proportion. The relationship of the height to width of the facade and openings is different.

Proportion Guidelines

- The relationship of the height to the width of the front facade should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent structures.
- The relationship of the height to the width of windows, doors, and other openings should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent structures.
- Modern materials may be structurally capable of greater spans than they are visually. Base opening sizes and column heights on adjacent historic examples, not solely on engineering limits.



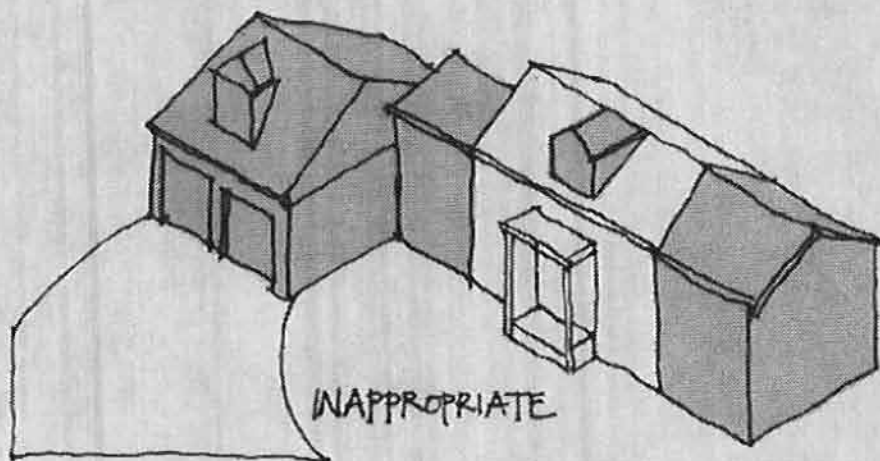
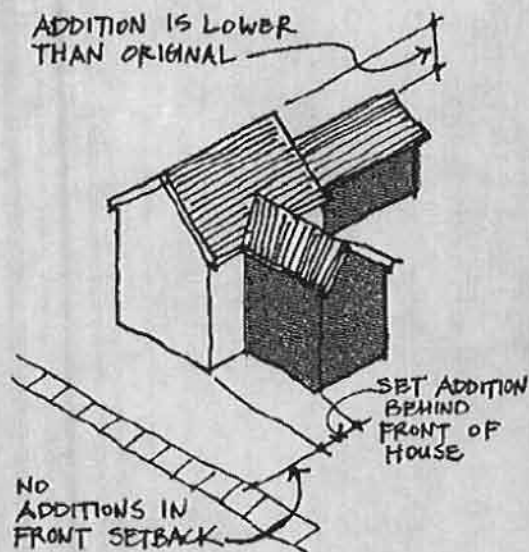
The wood columns are structurally capable of supporting this roof, but they are not in proportion. They are too thin for their height. (The use of spindles instead of columns is not a historically accurate detail.)

Hierarchy

Hierarchy is a means of defining the importance of an architectural element by its size, shape, or placement relative to the other forms. Visual hierarchy helps orient the user, whereas lack of hierarchy may confuse the user. In the historic district, a good hierarchical arrangement will put the emphasis on the historic building, rather than on the addition. The addition should be visually subordinate to the original house. This can be achieved by stepping the additions down and back from the historic roof and facade so that the original shape and volume are clearly visible.

Hierarchy Guidelines

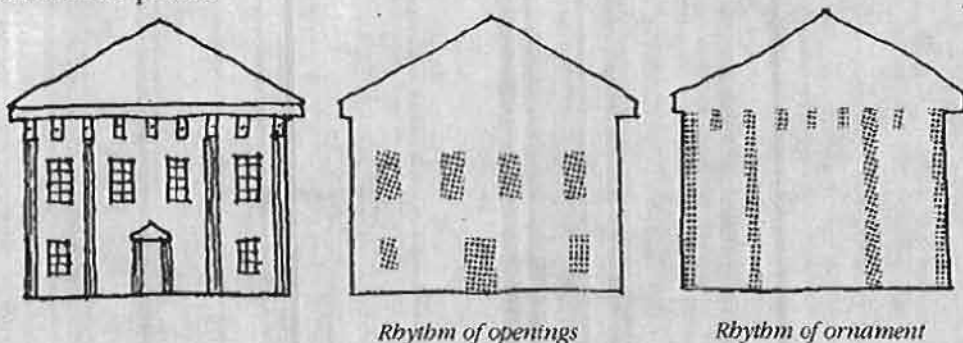
- Set additions at least 1 foot behind the front facade. No additions that extend the front facade, or which extend into the front setback are permitted.
- Keep additions at least 1 foot lower than the original and/or historic portions of the house so that the addition comes in below the historic eave and fascia. Houses with recent and possibly inappropriate additions will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- Apply less ornament to the subordinate addition.
- Do not engulf the house with additions. Limit the increased square footage of the addition to 50% of the historic house.



The historic house (unshaded) has been inappropriately added to. The details may be compatible, but the added portions are larger than the original and are not subordinate to it. The garage is more prominent than the house. The ridge has been extended and the original profile is obscured.

Rhythm

Rhythm and pattern are created by the juxtaposition of repetitive elements in a design. Windows, columns, pilasters, brackets, and gables are some common residential elements that are rhythmic. Rhythm gives variety to building surfaces and it helps divide walls and masses into residential scale pieces.



Rhythm Guidelines

- The rhythm of solids and voids (walls and openings) across the front facade should be consistent with the pattern established by adjacent structures.
- The rhythm of architectural features, including but not limited to: columns, brackets, and window hoods should be consistent with the pattern established by adjacent structures.

Materials

Materials influence the color, durability, pattern, scale, and proportion of a building. Texture is the nature of the surfaces. Texture can be the result of the material selection, tooling, and shadow. Texture adds visual and tactile character.

Materials Guidelines

- The proposed construction materials and textures should be the same type as those that have already been frequently used in structures existing within a 300 foot radius. They should be materials commonly used in the era *and* neighborhood.
- Colors, whether of natural materials such as brick and stone, or applied colors such as paint, should be colors commonly used in the era *and* neighborhood.
- Materials that are generally compatible include but are not limited to: wood and wood siding, asphalt shingles, brick, clear glass, stucco, and slate.
- Materials that were neither commonly used during the given era, nor in the Northville district are not acceptable. Examples include, but are not limited to: exposed concrete block, cast in place concrete, enameled metal panels, split shakes, vertical board and batten siding, aluminum siding, vinyl siding, imitation stone, stone facades, and imitation stucco. Aluminum and vinyl siding are specifically prohibited in the district.

Details

Decorative details are part of what defines a building's style. Character defining details of a style are at minimum those details listed in the "Architectural Styles" section of Part One, "Background." Details on additions and new construction need to meet difficult criteria. They need to be compatible with existing historic details but subordinate to the original details so that the original portion remains distinct.

Details Guidelines

- The proposed detail and ornament should be the same type as those that have already been frequently used in existing adjacent structures, and their size shall be in pleasing proportion to the whole.
- Although in restoration and preservation new ornaments should match the existing exactly, variations in color, size, profile, and material may be used to differentiate an addition from the original.
- Maintain the rhythm, proportion and alignment of historic ornament, while varying the color size or profile to differentiate new details from historic details.
- Do not use symbols of history, such as stars and eagles, as replacements for authentic period details.



The railing of this new porch is made of traditional elements, but they are not arranged in a typical pattern. The brackets are also traditional, but perhaps too large for the application. Concrete block is not an appropriate material for a house of this type. (See "Preserving Porches.")

Special Types of Residential New Construction

Decks

Decks provide a convenient level surface for outdoor entertaining, but they are a modern amenity. Decks are semi-permanent construction attached to the house. In effect, they are additions, and will be considered using the *Standards* for new construction.

Deck Guidelines

- No decks on the front of the house are allowed.
- No decks that extend into the side setback or the established pattern of open spaces between houses are allowed.
- Unfinished wolmanized decks and balconies are not compatible with typical historic materials and are not allowed.
- Decks should be painted wood and of porch-like construction and detailing.
- Locate decks to minimize removal of historic material, details, and openings.
- Level paved areas ("patios") in the rear yard are preferable to deck additions.

Dormers

Dormers are usually added to a roof to provide more headroom and living space in the attic. The roof is a major character defining feature of a house. Dormers are very visible additions which can completely change the shape and mass of the roof.

Dormer Guidelines

- Dormers that raise the entire roof line or which span across the entire width of the roof are not permitted. Rather, dormers should be divided into narrower elements with one or two traditionally scaled windows in each dormer.
- Dormers on the front of the roof are discouraged because they change the historic primary facade. They may be permitted if consistent with the style and scale of the house.
- Dormers may be added to the rear of the roof.
- No dormers higher than the historic roof ridge may be added.

Garages and Carports

Cars and garages have become a fact of modern life. Home owners desire permanent enclosure to protect their cars, and provide storage space. Some prefer the enclosure to be attached to the house. Attached garages may result in damage to historic materials and are seldom an historically appropriate building type. Carports have less visual impact than garages, but they are a 1950's-era building type, and they are anachronistic to houses from earlier periods.

Garage and Carport Guidelines

- Detached garages must be to the rear of the house. No garages in parallel with, or in front of, the front of the house are allowed. Where lot size and orientation do not permit this, the location will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Attached garages are not permitted except when such a garage is a common feature of the architectural style (e.g. Ranch or Modern).
- Semi-attached garages (e.g. with breezeways or canopies) may be used when site restrictions do not permit garages in the rear yard. Canopy location and attachment method should minimize damage to historic materials.
- No garages or carports within the front setback (as defined by the average setback of the homes within a 300 foot radius).
- Garages and carports may not fill the established pattern of spaces between houses. (See "Setback and Spacing.")
- Use two small garage doors instead of one large door.
- No garage taller or wider than the existing historic house is permitted, because this is inappropriate hierarchy.
- Eave lines should be maintained at one story height. Hipped or gable roofs are generally appropriate. Mansard and gambrel roofs are not common to the Northville district.
- Details and materials should be compatible with the house, but the garage should be visually subordinate and less decorative than the house.
- Driveways are to be single car width between the street and the front of the house.
- No parking pads, paved or otherwise, are permitted in the setback.



The materials of this garage are not compatible with the materials and details of the house.



Two garage doors are preferable to one large door. Historic details were most likely destroyed by attaching this garage to the house. Detached garages are preferred.



Damage to historic materials is less with a carport addition. In this case the roof should not be continuous with the porch roof, a prominent feature of the front of the house.

Adaptive Reuse of Historic Residential Buildings

There are several residential buildings located in the commercial district, with commercial zoning. There are also homes located in the residential district with special commercial zoning. These homes are being altered to meet commercial needs. Often the alterations are at the expense of historic character.

The Historic District Commission recognizes that commercial needs are not the same as residential needs. Modifying a historic home for commercial use is preferable to demolition of the house and replacing it with a new commercial building. Additions and modifications to these hybrid commercial/residential buildings are not prohibited and will be evaluated according to their context. A commercial addition to a house adjacent to other residential buildings will be reviewed for its compatibility with those adjacent buildings and for the impact on the architectural character of the house. A commercial addition to a house adjacent to other commercial buildings will be reviewed primarily for the impact of the addition on the house. The addition is not expected to look like commercial types.

Adaptive Reuse Guidelines

- Choose commercial functions, such as professional offices, that are a good fit with residential buildings. Retail functions usually require large windows and street frontage not available in a house.
- Preserve open space between residential buildings, even when they are located in the commercial district.
- Do not add “false fronts” with commercial details and cladding to houses.
- Do not engulf the house in commercial additions. Guidelines for residential additions apply.
- No additions between the historic front setback and the street are allowed.
- No awnings, covered walks, or decks stretching between the street and the front of the house are allowed.
- Locate barrier free access ramps on the side when possible.