



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Historic District Commission

Guidelines for Small Scale New Construction & Additions

NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS

New building construction is a sign of economic health and vitality in a city. It can take many forms, including a new primary building, an addition to an existing building or a new secondary building such as a garage or shed.

All forms of new construction within a historic district can be dynamic and vibrant, but at the same time should be sensitive to their 100- and 200-year-old neighbors. Vacant lots and structures that are non-contributing to the Historic District provide the greatest opportunity for creative and sensitive new ground-up construction, while an addition or new secondary building can allow the continued use of a historic building or property while meeting current and future needs.

Prior to undertaking a new construction or addition project, the City encourages property owners to understand the unique architectural character of Portsmouth and its streetscapes and allow that understanding to inform their design. Property owners are strongly encouraged to contact the HDC Staff in the Planning Department early in the design process if considering an addition, new construction, relocation or demolition project. The Planning Staff can identify potential issues, offer guidance, clarify specific submission requirements and identify other required reviews, potentially streamlining the process.

These *Guidelines* were developed in conjunction with the City of Portsmouth's Historic District Commission (HDC) and the Planning Department. Please review this information during the early stages of planning a project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project quickly through the approval process, saving applicants both time and money.

In its review, the HDC considers a property's classification, recommending the greatest historic authenticity at focal buildings, with more flexibility at contributing structures, and the most at non-contributing properties. The HDC Staff in the Planning Department is available to provide informal informational meetings with potential applicants who are considering improvements to their properties.

Additional *Guidelines* addressing other historic building topics are available at City Hall and on the Commission's website at www.planportsmouth.com/historicdistrictcommission. For more information, to clarify whether a proposed project requires HDC review, or to obtain permit applications, please call the Planning Department at (603) 610-7216.



New buildings should be designed in a manner that is consistent or compatible to their surroundings to preserve the cohesive historic context. In this example, the street elevation includes a traditional form, window and shutter arrangement and materials, while the more contemporary garage doors and projecting oriels are located on a secondary side elevation.

REVIEWS BY OTHER CITY AGENCIES

Property Use: The Historic District Commission (HDC) does not have the authority to control the use of a property. All proposals for work on a property under the jurisdiction of the Commission must conform to the City of Portsmouth Ordinances. Applications to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for variances to the City of Portsmouth Ordinances or other codes may be made concurrently with an HDC Application in order to reduce review and processing time.

Concurrent Reviews: The Commission works with other branches of City Government to coordinate approvals involving use, zoning, appearance and other regulated items. The HDC often provides comments to the reviewing bodies including the Planning and Zoning Board and City Council when appropriate. Inter-departmental meetings can be arranged on an as needed basis. The approval issued by the HDC for work must be presented to the Portsmouth Inspection Department when applying for a Building Permit.

Zoning Requirements: Designs for new buildings, structures or additions must conform to or obtain relief from zoning requirements.

COMPATIBLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The development of Portsmouth followed its own pattern and rhythm. As the heart of Portsmouth, the heritage and culture of Portsmouth’s early inhabitants are expressed through the architectural and built environment. To continue the District’s evolution and respect the high degree of architectural and historic diversity and integrity across the district, the HDC encourages design excellence and creative design solutions for new construction and additions that are sensitive to the character of their surrounding context. Generally, there are three appropriate design approaches in Portsmouth:

- **Present Day:** A contemporary design compatible within the context of the property and neighboring sites
- **Reconstruction:** A design that faithfully duplicates details and materials based upon clear documentary evidence
- **Traditional:** A design that is consistent with the surrounding context or, a design that could have been constructed on a property for which there is insufficient evidence

The appropriate approach, style and type of new construction or an addition will vary at each site depending on the specific context, its authenticity and historic integrity as well as the architectural and historic importance as guided by its level of significance. Recognizing that what might be appropriate at one property is not appropriate at another, the HDC does not mandate specific design “solutions” for new construction or additions. However, when determining the appropriateness of new construction or additions, the HDC is guided by *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards* and the general design principles below:

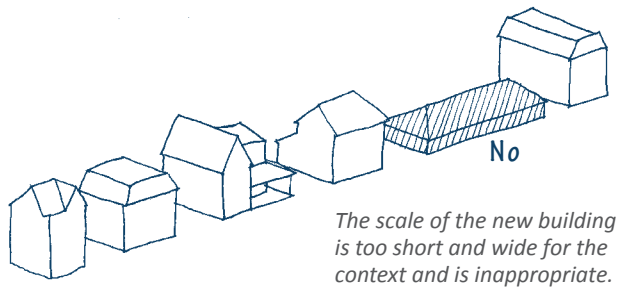


Additions should generally be located at the rear of a property and subservient to the historic portion of the building.

Design Within a Historic Context

It is not required that historic properties or styles be “copied” in new construction, but the HDC encourages new construction to be well-designed and sympathetic to its distinctive surroundings. In many but not all cases, successful new buildings are those that are clearly contemporary in design but compatible with the character of neighboring properties. Additions should be constructed in a manner that is stylistically compatible and subservient to the existing building. The information presented in this *Guidelines* section is intended to provide the principles of appropriate design for small scale structures when constructing a new building or addition in historic Portsmouth’s context, regardless of architectural style.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES	NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS
Scale: Height & Width	Proportions and size of the new building/addition compared with neighboring buildings/existing building
Building Form & Massing	The three-dimensional relationship and configuration of the new building/addition footprint, its walls and roof compared with neighboring buildings/existing building
Setback	Distance of the new building/addition from the street or property line relative to the setback of other buildings on the block/existing building
Site Coverage	Percentage of the site that is covered by building/addition, when compared to nearby sites of comparable size
Orientation	Location of the front of the new building/addition and principal entrance relative to other buildings on the block
Alignment, Rhythm & Spacing	Effect the new building/addition will have on the existing patterns on its block
Architectural Elements & Projections	Size, shape, proportions and location of each entrance, balcony, gallery, porch, roof overhang, chimney, dormer, parapet and other elements that contribute to the building’s overall shape and silhouette relative to neighboring buildings
Façade Proportions: Window & Door Patterns	Relationship of the size, shape and location of the new building/addition façade and building elements to each other, especially when compared to other buildings on the property, block/existing building
Trim & Detail	Moldings, decorative elements and other 3-dimensional features of a building that are secondary to major surfaces such as walls and roofs and how they relate to the neighboring buildings/existing building
Materials	Products with which an addition or new building is composed or constructed and how these relate to neighboring buildings/existing building



The scale of the new building is too short and wide for the context and is inappropriate.

PRINCIPLES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Scale: Height & Width

The proportions of a new building and its relationship to neighboring buildings establish its consistency or compatibility within a neighborhood or block. The height-width ratio is a relationship between the height and width of a street façade and should be similar in proportion to neighboring buildings. New construction should neither be visually overwhelming or underwhelming when compared to its neighbors.

Where 2- and 3-story buildings are the norm, buildings that digress from these standards by any great degree can negatively impact a neighborhood. If large-scale construction is considered, particular attention will be given to the location, siting, setbacks of the building and its upper stories, façade treatments (materials, window and door openings, etc.) and the effect of the proposed building on the streetscape and neighborhood as a whole.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

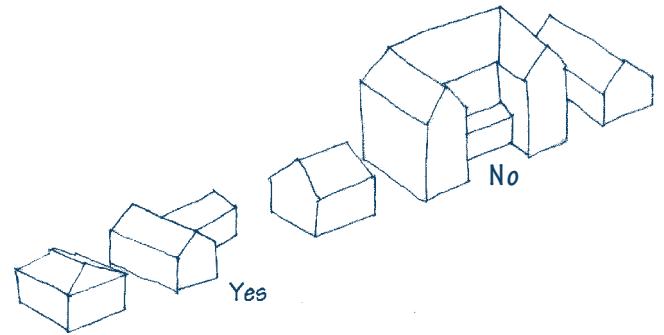
- Construct a new building that is similar in height and width to buildings on adjacent sites
- Construct a new building that is larger than adjacent buildings by breaking up the building mass, by dividing its height or width to conform with adjacent buildings
- Construct portions of the buildings taller than neighboring buildings away from the street



The one-story residence is not appropriately scaled nor does it have appropriate form and massing for the streetscape. The form has a horizontal rather than vertical emphasis. The building to the right has a similar scale and form to the existing buildings.

Building Form & Massing

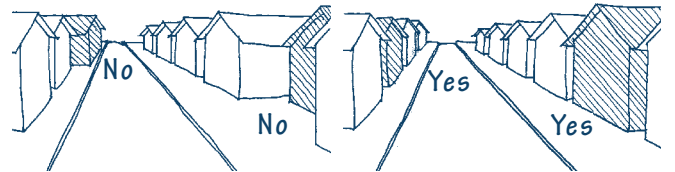
Building form refers to the shape of major volumes while massing refers to the overall composition of the major volumes, its overall “bulk” and how it sits on the site. Elements that are typically used to define building form and massing include the roof form, as well as wings, ells and other projecting elements, such as bays. New buildings with form and similar massing to adjacent construction will allow the new building to be consistent or compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.



The one-story, “L”-shaped building to the left is of a similar form and mass to other buildings along the streetscape. The 2 1/2-story building to the right has a much more complex form and is substantially more massive than those along the street.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct a new building with similar form and massing to buildings on adjacent sites
- Construct roof forms, wings, ells and bays and other projecting elements that are similar to those found on the block of the proposed building
- Match adjacent cornice heights



New construction should match prevailing setbacks along a streetscape and should not step forward or behind adjoining buildings.

Setbacks: Yards (Front, Side and Rear)

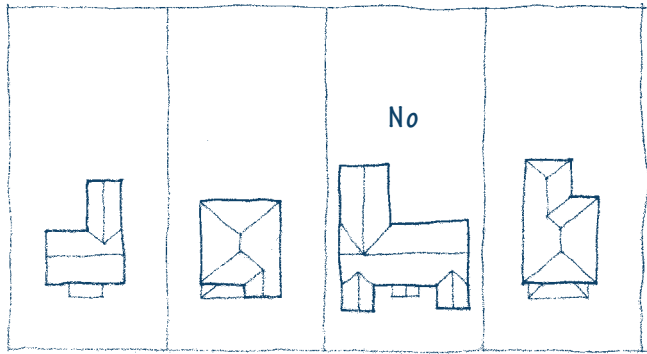
New construction should reflect prevailing setbacks and yard dimensions (distances between the building and the property line, adjacent buildings, street and/or sidewalk) are determined by zoning requirements. Physical elements that define historic properties and buildings create visual continuity and cohesiveness along a streetscape. These elements typically include walls, fences, building façades, porches and balconies. A consistent setback maintains the visual rhythm of the buildings and site elements in the neighborhood and makes new construction more consistent or compatible in its setting.



New construction should not step forward or recede back from buildings within the streetscape context.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Keep the visual mass of the building at or near the same setback as buildings on adjacent sites
- Keep landscape elements, such as walls and fences, and projecting elements, such as porches and balconies, at setbacks similar to those at adjacent buildings



Street Edge

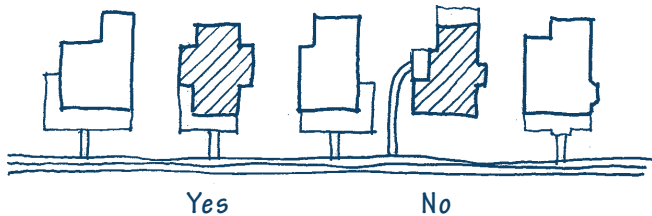
Although the new building might meet setback requirements, its footprint greatly exceeds its neighbors and is inappropriate.

Site Coverage

The percentage of a lot that is covered by buildings should be similar to those of adjacent lots. Although City of Portsmouth Ordinances regulate the maximum allowable coverage area and minimum setbacks, the overall building-to-lot area should be consistent along a streetscape. If parcels are combined for a larger development, the site coverage proportions should be minimized by breaking large building masses into smaller elements to be more compatible with adjacent buildings.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Maintaining the building-to-lot proportions found on adjacent lots
- Adjusting the massing to suggest building-to-lot proportions found on adjacent sites
- Screening parking, mechanical equipment and garbage collection from public view with walls or fencing



The primary entrance for residential buildings should face the street unless the building historically had a different orientation.

Orientation

The principal façade of new construction should be oriented in the same direction as the majority of the buildings on the streetscape, with main entrances located on the principal façade. In the case of new construction on a corner site, the front façade should generally face the same direction as the existing buildings on the street and follow the rhythm of the streetscape. (Refer to the City of Portsmouth Ordinances for specific site orientation requirements.)

It is Generally Appropriate to...

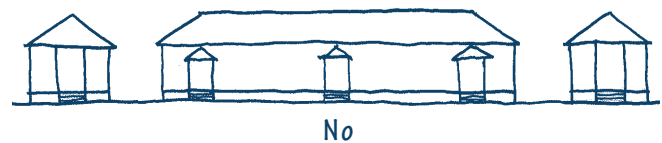
- Orient a building's roof form in a manner that is comparable to neighboring buildings
- Orient the primary façade and principal door parallel with the street

Alignment, Rhythm & Spacing

Although the architecture of Portsmouth is characterized by great variety of building types and styles, within each block there tends to be consistency in façade proportions and the space between buildings. The consistent spacing establishes a rhythm which should be applied to new construction. This rhythm and spacing not only refers to the building, but also the porch projections along the streetscape.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Align the façade of a new building with the façades of existing adjacent buildings
- Align roof ridges, porches, cornices, eaves and parapets with those found on existing adjacent buildings
- Construct new buildings that have similar widths and side yard setbacks relative to neighboring buildings
- Construct new buildings larger than those on adjacent sites, only if the larger building is visually divided to suggest smaller building masses



When constructing larger-scale buildings, they should be visually divided to suggest the rhythm and spacing of buildings on the streetscape. The projecting porches on the lower example suggest multiple residences of spacing similar to adjacent buildings, and is more compatible than the upper example.

Architectural Elements & Projections

Throughout Portsmouth, the rhythm of the streetscapes is highlighted by the projection of bays, porches and balconies to relieve otherwise flat façades. At the roofline, extended eaves, projecting chimneys, dormers and parapets contribute to a building's overall shape and silhouette. The choice, size, location and arrangement of elements of a proposed building should reflect those of surrounding buildings. In most cases, these projections are parallel to the street and provide shelter for the primary building entrance. In the case of porches, the entrances are raised a few steps above ground level.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct a building with an architectural element or projection designed and detailed similarly or more simply to those found at neighboring buildings
- Construct porch floor and ceiling heights at heights similar to those found on neighboring buildings where permitted by code



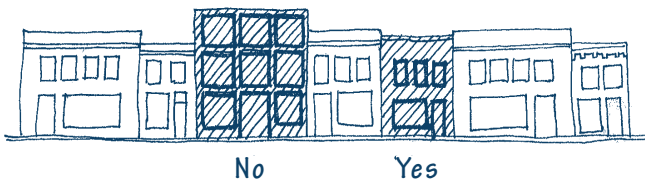
The massing and materials at this new building are similar to historic buildings in the area, however the design would be more sympathetic if the shutters were sized to fit the window openings and if the windows were separated.

Façade Proportions; Window & Door Patterns

The rhythm and pattern of principal façades of new construction should reflect and maintain neighborhood patterns. Across the width of a façade, rhythm and patterns typically include the number of bays and the location and spacing between doors, windows and shutters. There are also vertical components of rhythm and pattern. These include the distance from the ground level to the first floor or porch above ground level, building floor-to-floor heights, cornice heights, and the distance between rows of windows. In some instances, where the proposed use and scale of a new building prevents maintaining rhythms and patterns, the property owner is encouraged to incorporate detailing to suggest the rhythm with elements such as pilasters that give the impression of bays or multiple buildings.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct a new building whose façade height and width proportions are similar to existing adjacent buildings
- Use similar proportions, sizes, locations and numbers of windows and doors as adjacent sites
- Install windows and doors at new construction stylistically compatible with those found on existing neighboring buildings

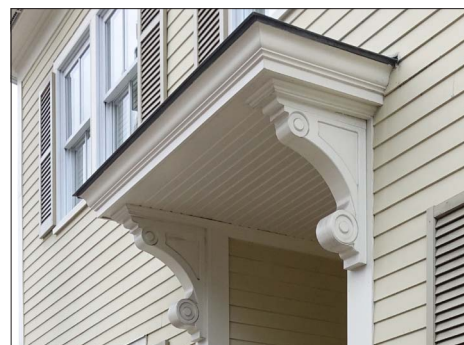


The streetscape generally has first floor storefront windows and doors with smaller punched windows at the upper floor, similar to the right example. The building to the left has a grid pattern of large windows at each of the floors which is inconsistent with the streetscape.

Trim & Details

Trim and details include the moldings, decorative elements and features of a building that are secondary to major surfaces such as walls and roofs. Historically, they were often installed to serve functional needs. Over time, trim and details were modified to enhance the building type and style. Trim is decorative and often serves to infill or provide a transition between different materials or building elements such as walls and windows. Functional and decorative detail elements include cornices, lintels, balustrades, chimneys, shutters, columns, posts and other common architectural features. For example, louvered shutters visually frame a window opening, provide security and can regulate light and air when closed. By contrast, shutters screwed into a building wall do not serve a functional purpose.

In most cases, the exterior details and forms of new construction should provide a visual link to neighboring historic buildings. In the same way that new buildings should be consistent or compatible but not necessarily be a true copy of historic buildings, new details should be compatible and not necessarily copy historic trim and details. However, existing details and trim on other buildings may be used as the basis for those on new buildings. The trim and details of new construction should be used to accomplish purposes similar to those used historically, both functionally and decoratively, and incorporate 3-dimensional elements that project and recede from the principal wall plane. When installed, they should unify a building and should be consistent or compatible with the context of the neighborhood.



This wood bracketed door hood is located on a new building. The details represent a simplified interpretation of a Victorian-period door hood.

Materials

The materials used in the construction of a new building, including walls, roofs, windows, doors, trim, porches and other exterior visible elements, contribute to a building's character and appearance. Typically, materials for new construction should match those predominantly found on surrounding buildings. However, materials need not be identical to those found locally if they are complementary, particularly along streets where existing buildings are of diverse materials.

Inappropriate materials include those which unsuccessfully pretend to be something they are not, such as plastic "bricks," aluminum or vinyl "weatherboards," or synthetic stucco and EIFS. All are imitations which fail to produce the texture, proportions and colors of the real materials. It is important to note that the size, texture, color and other characteristics of exterior materials can be as important as its composition.

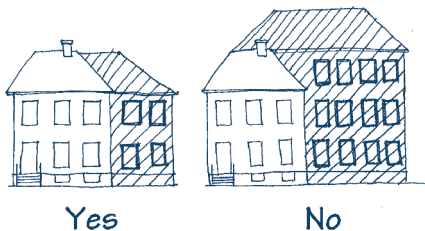
ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

Historically, the need for increased space was often addressed by constructing additions to existing buildings. Additions to existing historic buildings can provide increased space while maintaining the historic character of the original building and streetscape.

Consistent with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, an addition to a historic building should be subordinate to the historic building and read as an addition. The subordinate appearance of an addition can be achieved through its placement, form, size, massing, materials and details. Traditional or contemporary design and additions to existing properties should not obscure, damage or destroy significant architectural material, and should be compatible with the design of the property and the neighborhood. Whenever possible, additions should be constructed in a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.

It is Generally Appropriate to:

- Locate additions at rear or side elevations that are subordinate to the historic building and consistent or compatible with the design of the property and surrounding neighborhood wherever possible
- Construct additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed
- Review *Guidelines* to better understand the historic context and appropriate design and materials
- Consult zoning requirements at the beginning of the design process



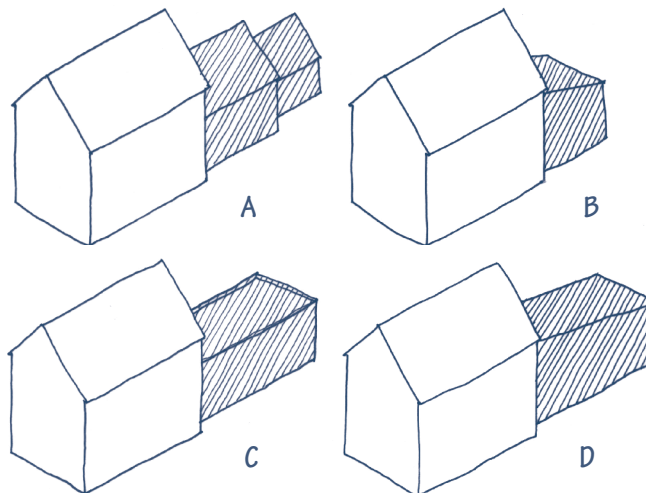
The addition to the left has lower floor-to-floor heights and smaller and more closely spaced windows than the historic house. The addition at the center has a scale, proportion, overall form and window pattern similar to the existing building. The addition to the right is significantly larger than the existing building and is visually overwhelming and inappropriate.

Building Form & Massing

Building form refers to the shape of major volumes while massing refers to the overall composition of the major volumes. The form and massing of an addition should complement, but not necessarily match, the original building. For example, it is often appropriate to construct a smaller gable roof form at the rear of an existing gable roof building.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct an addition with similar form and massing to the existing building and buildings on adjacent sites
- Construct roof forms, wings, ells and bays and other projecting elements that are similar to those found on the existing building and the block of the proposed building



Example A: The two gable roof additions with decreasing roof heights and widths represent an appropriate composition with regard to form, mass and proportions to the original gable roof building. Additions with decreasing geometry similar to these are typical of historic construction.

Example B: The small shed roof addition is appropriate in some locations.

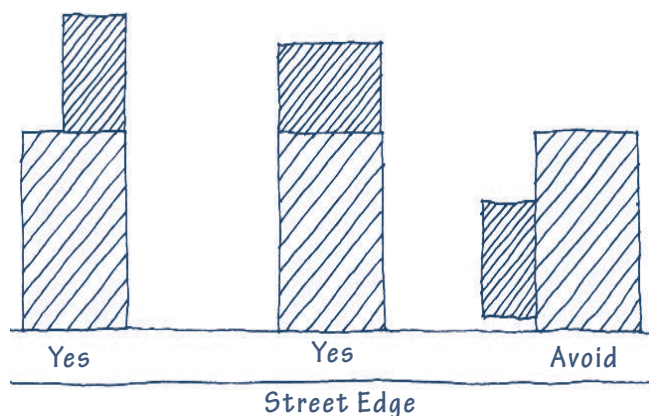
Examples C and D: The flat roofed addition and long shed roof addition are inappropriate for the original gable roof building. The length of the single mass competes visually with the original building.

Setback

An addition should be positioned to have the least visible impact to the streetscape. An addition at a front façade generally is prohibited and a rear addition generally is appropriate. An addition at a side elevation is rarely appropriate and, if proposed, should be located as far as possible from the street.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct the addition at the rear of the building or at a side elevation as far back on the site as possible
- Use landscape elements, such as walls and fences, to screen the addition visually



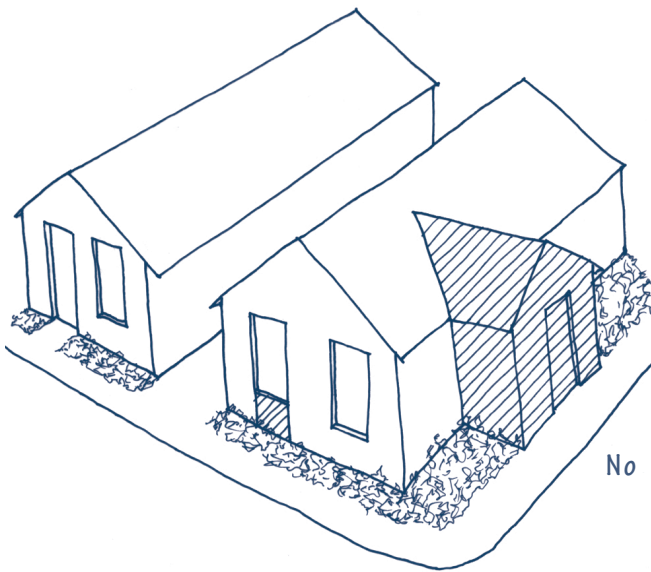
In this site plan, the visibility of the left and middle examples would be limited from the sidewalk and the street. The addition to the right is visible from the sidewalk and street and should be avoided, particularly at corner properties.

Orientation

The principal façade of a building should be oriented in the same direction as the majority of the buildings on the streetscape unless originally designed with a corner entrance. When adding to an existing building, the addition should be located, planned and detailed so as not to confuse the dominant historic orientation of the original building. In most instances, the addition should not have the effect of creating a new primary façade and it should not be visually dominant, and it should be screened from the public right-of-way as much as possible.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Maintain the visual prominence of the historic front door even if it is not longer used as the primary entrance
- Orient the a primary façade or principal elevation of a building towards the street elevation



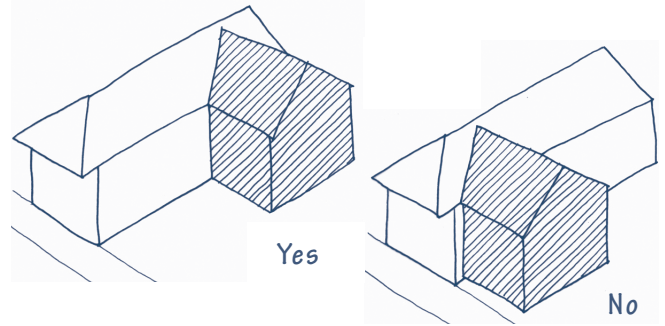
The addition to the right building is inappropriate as it relocates the entrance door to the side elevation and eliminates the original entrance door.

Alignment, Rhythm & Spacing

The consistent spacing of buildings establishes a historically prevalent rhythm along a streetscape and should be applied to an addition at an existing building. The construction of an addition should not make an existing building appear substantially wider or closer to its neighbors than the existing visual arrangement. Vertical considerations for alignment, rhythm and spacing include floor-to-floor heights; first floor, porch and balcony heights above the ground; and cornice heights.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct an addition in a manner that does not significantly alter the visual alignment, rhythm or spacing of buildings along a streetscape
- Construct an addition in a manner that does not significantly increase the apparent visual size of a building on a property when viewed from the public right-of-way



An addition at a side elevation should be as far back from the street as possible.

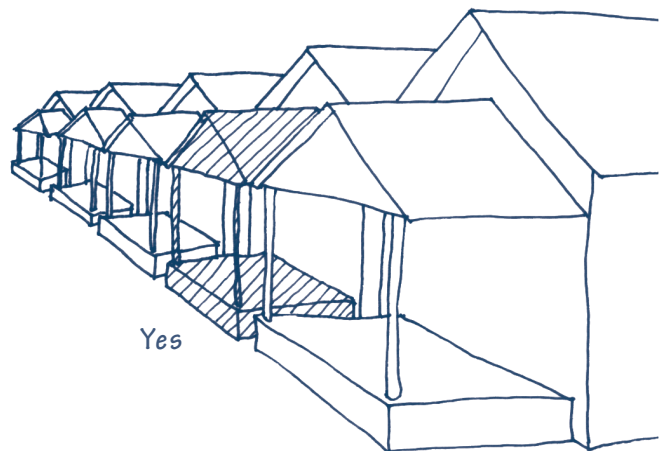
Architectural Elements & Projections

Throughout Portsmouth, the rhythm of the streetscapes is highlighted by the projection of porches and bays which relieve otherwise flat façades. Projecting chimneys, dormers and parapets also contribute to the overall shape and silhouette of the buildings and the skyline.

Adding a new architectural element or projection to a building's street elevation is generally not appropriate unless there is evidence that it existed previously or is common for the particular type or style. A new architectural element or projection is more appropriate at a rear elevation or towards the rear of a non-street elevation. (Refer to *Dormers and Chimneys, Guidelines for Roofing*, page 04-5 and *Guidelines for Porches, Stoops & Decks*.)

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Replace a missing architectural element or projection designed and detailed similar to those found at neighboring buildings or according to documentation at a building whose type and style would have included one
- Install consistent or compatible, simplified detailing on new architectural elements or projections, particularly if they will be located at a side or rear elevation rather than a new "historicized" architectural element at a building that would not have included one historically



The HDC encourages the reconstruction of a removed porch in a manner that is compatible in size and scale to the building and streetscape on which it is being proposed with appropriate documentation.

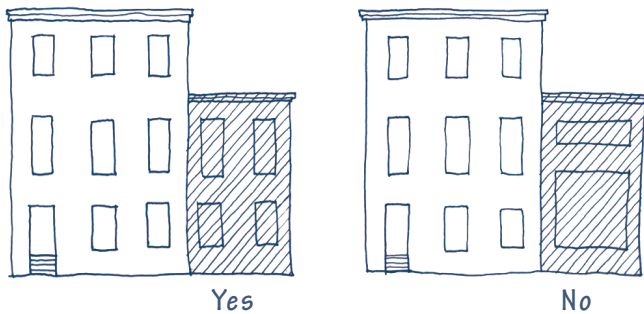
Façade Proportions; Window & Door Patterns

The rhythm and patterns of a principal façade of an addition should reflect that of the existing building. Similar to new construction, the dominant patterns at a façade are determined by the number of bays and spacing between windows and doors and major building features, such as cornices. On a smaller scale, these patterns can be reflected in the selection of wall materials and details like brackets or repetitive trim or moldings.

Windows and doors on additions should be of similar size, shape, design, proportion, spacing and placement to those in the existing building. Windows should be proportionally and functionally similar, and have comparable muntin or grid patterns as the existing windows. Doors should reflect the original type and the proportions of windows and panels should be similar. It is important to keep in mind that shutters act as an extended “frame” for windows and doors and should be considered in the overall composition. In some instances, where the proposed use and scale of an addition prevents maintaining the existing pattern, the design should incorporate detailing to suggest them, such as false windows and pilasters that give the impression of bays or multiple buildings. This is particularly important at a street-facing façade.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct an addition with a façade height and width comparable to the existing building and adjacent sites
- Use similar proportions, sizes, locations and types of windows, doors and shutters as found on the existing building and adjacent sites



The proportions of the windows of the left addition are consistent with those found at the original building. By contrast, the windows of the right addition are much wider with the first floor window being significantly taller and the second floor much shorter.

Trim & Details

In the same way that the form and mass of an addition should be compatible with, but not necessarily a copy of a historic building, new details should be compatible with, but not necessarily copy, historic trim and details. Existing details and trim may be used as the basis for those on an addition and be simplified to provide compatibility without requiring duplication of historic features. Using similar forms such as those found at parapets, rooflines, windows, doors, trim, porches, decks and other façade elements, can help establish continuity and compatibility within a building, block and the historic setting as a whole.

Detail and trim should be used to accomplish purposes similar to those used historically. Examples of functional and decorative elements include cornices, lintels, arches, balustrades, chimneys, shutters, columns, posts and other common details. When used, details and trim should create a unifying effect on a building and be consistent or compatible with the context of the neighborhood.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Construct an addition with details and trim that complement historic neighboring trim and details
- Install detail that is functional with a high level of craftsmanship rather than simply applied decoration
- Apply detail and trim that is stylistically consistent or compatible to the existing building at the addition
- Apply simplified trim at a lesser addition



Additions should include forms, proportions, trim, details and materials similar to the historic portion of the building.

Materials

The materials used in the construction of an addition for walls, sloped roofs, windows, doors, trim, porches, decks and other exterior visible elements contribute to a building’s character and appearance. Typically, materials for an addition should match or complement the materials found on the existing building. However, there are times when this is not economically feasible or practical. In these cases, it is appropriate to alter materials on additions, as long as the material is a “lesser” material than the original construction. This would include adding a wood clapboard or stucco addition to a stone or brick building; it is not appropriate to construct a brick addition onto a wood clapboard building.

Inappropriate materials include those which unsuccessfully pretend to be something they are not, such as plastic “bricks,” aluminum or vinyl “clapboards,” or synthetic stucco and EIFS. All are imitations which fail to produce the texture, proportions, finish and color of the real materials. It is important to note that the size, texture, color and other characteristics of exterior materials can be as important as their composition.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Many residential properties in Portsmouth include more than a principal building. In most instances, a secondary building or structure and landscape features contribute significantly to the overall property, setting and historic context. A secondary building or structure in Portsmouth can be a service or accessory outbuilding, a garage, pool house, shed or boat house.

Secondary buildings and structures contribute significantly to the understanding of Portsmouth’s history and development. Although most secondary buildings were designed to be utilitarian, those associated with a residence, such as a service or accessory outbuilding, were constructed to be complementary to the property’s principal building. This complementarity can include the building’s form, materials and simplified detailing.

In general, a secondary building or structure is historically or architecturally significant if it was:

- Constructed at or about the same time as the principal building on the site
- Constructed after the principal building on the site but was used for a significant function
- Representative of an important architectural design or in an important construction method
- Associated with an important event or person related to the property
- Built incorporating distinctive characteristics of form, style, materials or detailing, or shares those characteristics with other buildings on the site

The HDC reviews the alteration, construction or demolition of any secondary building or structure in Portsmouth.

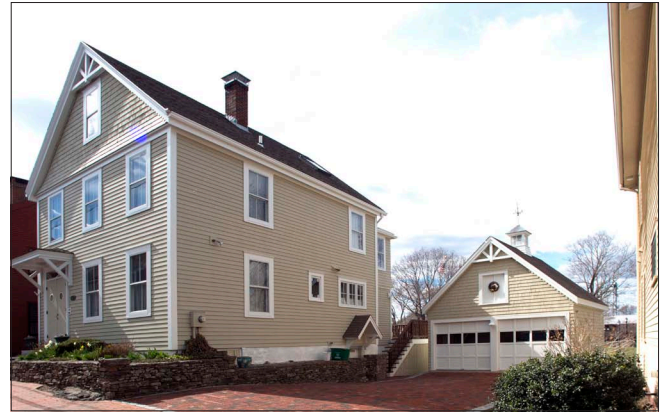
Property owners are encouraged to contact the HDC to obtain the significance of a secondary building or structure prior to application submission for an alteration or demolition.

NEW SECONDARY BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Similar to an addition, a secondary building or structure should be subordinate to and visually compatible with the primary building without compromising its historic character. Although the type and location of these features can be limited by zoning and other requirements, ideally, the secondary building or structure should be located so it is minimally visible and does not detract from historic buildings. Contact the Planning Department to determine the allowable location, footprint, height and applicable regulations for a proposed secondary building or structure prior to submitting a design to the HDC.

Allowable Secondary Buildings & Structures

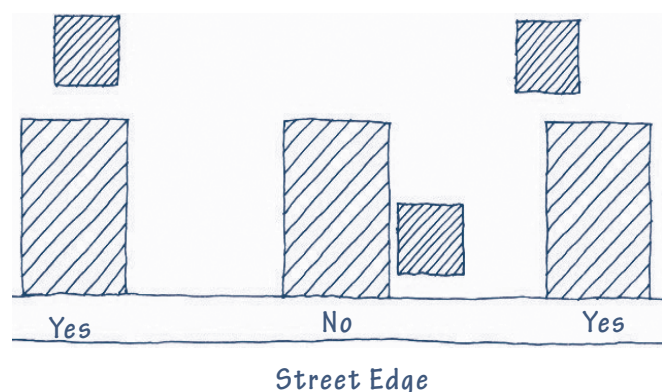
Prior to application submission to the HDC, contact the Planning Department to discuss the allowable location, site coverage, height and applicable regulations for a proposed secondary building or structure.



Secondary buildings, such as garages, should be located to the rear of the historic building and constructed in a manner that is appropriate to the historic context.

It is Generally Appropriate to...

- Maintain a historically and/or architecturally significant secondary building or structure as carefully as the principal building
- Design a new secondary building or structure to complement the period and style of the principal building and other buildings on the site; this includes using similar form, materials, colors and simplified detailing
- Locate a secondary building or structure, including a garage, storage building, shed, animal shelter or pool house, away from the principal entrance or street elevation
- Construct a new secondary building in a manner that does not damage other resources on the site, respecting the footprints and foundations of previous secondary structures, as well as potential archaeological resources
- Adapt functionally obsolete buildings for new uses such as converting a service building into additional living space, a play house or storage
- Use exterior materials for an addition that are present in the existing building
- Install materials that are compatible with each other and will not react chemically with existing materials – Refer to specific *Guidelines* sections or contact HDC Staff for more information



The visibility of the secondary buildings or structures at the right and left is limited from the street. The secondary building or structure in the middle example does not conform with the street pattern, is very prominent, and should be avoided.

DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Once resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, they cannot be replaced. The demolition of all or portions of resources on properties or within a historic area is considered a drastic action since it alters the character of the streetscape, surrounding buildings and the demolition site. This could represent a lost educational resource for the community, whether the building was an example of past construction techniques or has associations with a significant individual or event in the City's history.

As a result, demolition of focal or contributing buildings within a historic area is rarely considered to be an appropriate option, and is strongly discouraged by the HDC. The only instance where demolition could be considered is where the proposed demolition is limited to non-contributing primary and secondary buildings, structures or portions of buildings. (Refer to *Demolition Application Review, Guidelines Introduction*, page 01-7.)

As an alternative to demolition of focal or contributing buildings or structures, property owners are encouraged to re-purpose the building for an alternative use or evaluate whether a compatible addition would provide needed functionality to allow the continued preservation of the historic building or structure.

ARCHAEOLOGY & EXCAVATION

It is recommended that property owners treat below-grade areas with potential resources carefully. Many of the City's properties, particularly those near water, may have archaeological deposits. These deposits can include Native American shards and objects as well as remnants of earlier buildings and related construction, such as wells and privies, that might yield additional materials such as discarded household items and animal remains. The African Burying Ground rediscovered in 2003 under what is now Chestnut Street, is one example of such a historic site.

Once a site has been disturbed without proper care, the ability to understand the site through professional interpretation might be lost forever. If the construction of a new building or addition will require substantial excavation at a previously undisturbed site, there is potential to destroy important archaeological resources.

It is recommended that property owners with known archaeological resources locate new construction or ground-disturbing activities in a manner that avoids affecting the archaeological resources until it can be professionally excavated and recorded. The HDC encourages property owners to contact the HDC for additional information. (Refer to *Archaeology & Excavation, Guidelines Introduction*, page 01-13.)

HDC CRITERIA FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITION REVIEW

When evaluating new construction on a site or an addition to an existing building, the HDC's goal is to preserve the integrity of the remaining historic fabric in Portsmouth's Historic District to ensure continued access to this shared heritage. One of the major factors in the review process is the property's historical and/or architectural value as determined by the historic designation. The more significant the property, the more critical is maintaining its authenticity.

- **Focal Properties** — Maintain the highest historic integrity with a focus on preserving historic building elements while limiting alteration or demolition of significant buildings, structures or building components
- **Contributing Properties** — Maintenance of historic building, structures and building elements encouraged, particularly at street-facing façades; more flexibility is possible at secondary side or rear elevations with limited visibility from the street
- **Non-Contributing Properties** — Provides greatest possibility for alteration, including possible demolition of non-contributing building, structures or building elements

When is HDC Review Not Required?

A Certificate of Approval is not required for:

- Construction, alteration or demolition of any structure or element of a structure that the Code Official documents as being necessary to avoid an immediate health or safety emergency prior to the Commission convening a meeting to consider the matter

The HDC recommends:

- Limiting demolition to those buildings, structures or portions of buildings that are non-contributing
- Constructing new primary and secondary buildings and structures that follow the *Compatible Design Principles* outlined in this *Guidelines* section
- Minimizing disruption of archaeological resources when considering new construction or additions — If it is not possible to prevent disruption, conducting archaeological investigations prior to construction is recommended

The HDC discourages:

- Demolishing a focal or contributing building or structure that does not pose an immediate health or safety hazard
- Installing a pre-manufactured metal shed, carport, enclosure or outbuilding at a property

