
CHAPTER 4:

ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC PROPERTIES

INTRODUCTION

Many historic buildings, including accessory structures and outbuildings, received additions over time as the need for more space occurred. In some cases, owners added a wing onto a primary structure for use as a new bedroom, or to expand a kitchen. Typically, the addition was subordinate in scale and similar in character to the main building. The height of the addition was usually lower than that of the main structure and was often located to the rear, such that the original primary facade retained its significance.

The tradition of adding onto buildings should continue. It is important, however, that a new addition be designed in such a manner that it preserves the historic character of the original structure.

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Basic Principles for an Addition

The overall design of an addition should be in keeping with the design of the primary structure. Design elements should take their cue from the primary structure, but this does not preclude contemporary interpretations, nor discourage differentiating the addition from the historic building. Keeping the size of the addition small, in relation to the main structure, also will help minimize its visual impacts.

It is also important that an addition not obscure any significant features of a building. If the addition is placed to the rear of the existing structure, it is less likely to affect such features. Side additions are generally discouraged.



Guideline 17.1: Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right. This addition, for example, should be preserved. (St. Genevieve, MO)

17.0 EXISTING ADDITIONS

An addition may have taken on historic significance itself. It may have been constructed to be compatible with the original building and it may be associated with the period it was constructed in, therefore meriting preservation. Such an addition should be carefully evaluated before developing plans that may involve its alteration or removal.

In contrast, more recent additions usually have no historic significance. Some later additions, in fact, detract from the character of the building, and may obscure significant features. Removing such additions should be considered.

Design Objective

Preserve additions that may have developed significance in their own right.

17.1 Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.

- Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original building in terms of materials, finishes and design.
- For example, a porch or a kitchen wing may have been added to the original building early in its history.

17.2 A more recent addition that is not historically significant may be removed.

18.0 DESIGN OF NEW ADDITIONS

When planning an addition to a historic building, one should minimize negative effects that may occur to the historic building. While some destruction of historic materials may be necessitated, such a loss should be minimized. Locating an addition such that an existing rear door may be used for access, for example, will help to minimize the amount of historic wall material that must be removed.

The addition also should not affect the perceived character of the building. In most cases, loss of character can be avoided by locating the addition to the rear. The overall design of the addition also must be in keeping with the design character of the historic structure as well. At the same time, it should be distinguishable from the historic portion, such that the evolution of the building can be understood. This may be accomplished in a subtle way, with a jog in the wall planes or by using a trim board to define the connection.

Keeping the size of an addition small in relation to the main structure also will help minimize its visual impact. If an addition must be larger, it should be set apart from the historic building, and connected with a smaller linking element. This will help maintain the perceived scale and proportion of the historic portion.

Design Objective

Design a new addition to be compatible with the primary structure.

18.1 Place an addition at the rear of a building to minimize its visual impacts.

- This will allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent.
- Locating an addition at the front of a structure is inappropriate.
- Locating an addition to the side of a structure is generally inappropriate. However, special site constraints, such as sloping topography or location of a champion or specimen tree, may require a side addition.
- An addition to the rear of a structure must also conform to Montgomery County and municipality setback requirements.

New Additions

National Park Service Preservation Brief #14 provides guidance on new exterior additions to historic buildings. Reference Appendix page APP-2 for more information.

NO



Inappropriate: This addition is too large and is directly attached to the historic structure.

NO

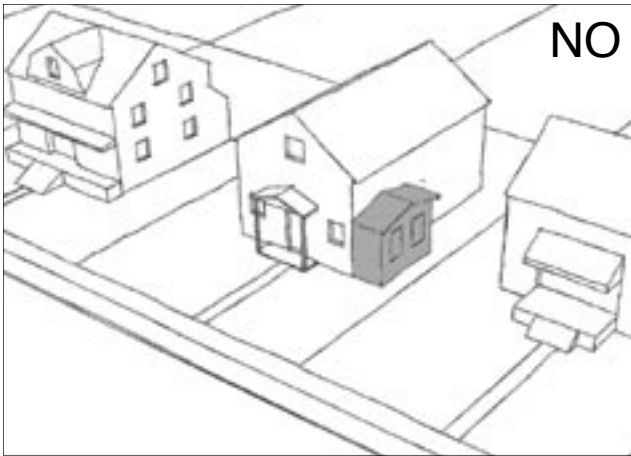


Inappropriate: This addition remains too massive. A small connector is used, but is insufficient to adequately separate the two masses.

YES



Appropriate: This addition is reduced in scale and is more clearly separated from the historic building.



Guideline 18.1: It is not appropriate to attach an addition to the side of a building.



Guideline 18.4: Design a new addition such that the original character can be clearly seen. This addition to the front of a historic house is inappropriate. (Salt Lake City, UT)

18.2 Do not obscure, damage, destroy or remove original architectural details and materials of the primary structure.

18.3 An addition should be compatible in scale with the primary structure.

- An addition should relate to the historic house in mass, scale and form. It should be designed to remain subordinate to the main structure.
- One option to help visually separate an addition from the primary building is to link the primary structure with a smaller breezeway.
- For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic house.
- An addition should be simple in design to prevent it from competing with the primary structure.

18.4 Use building materials that are compatible with those of the primary structure.

18.5 An addition should be compatible in character with the primary structure.

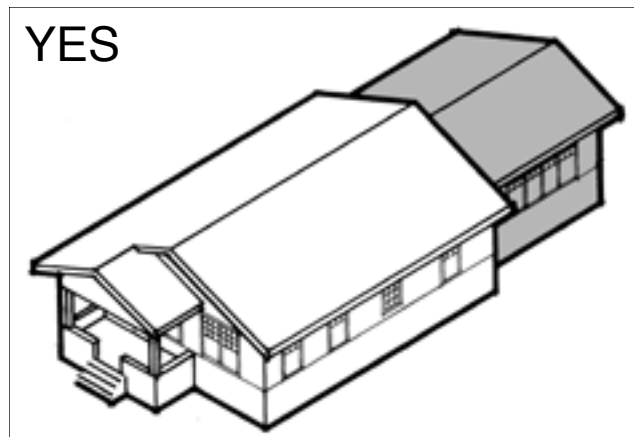
- An addition should be made distinguishable from the historic building, even in subtle ways, such that the character of the original can be interpreted. An addition should draw design elements from the historic structure, expressing them in a simplified or contemporary manner rather than striving to perfectly recreate historic building features.
- A change in setbacks of the addition from the historic building, or applying a new trim board at the connection point can help define the addition.
- An addition that seeks to imply an earlier period than that of the primary building also is inappropriate. For example, an addition that is more ornate than the original building would be out of character.

18.6 Use windows that are similar in character to those of the main structure.

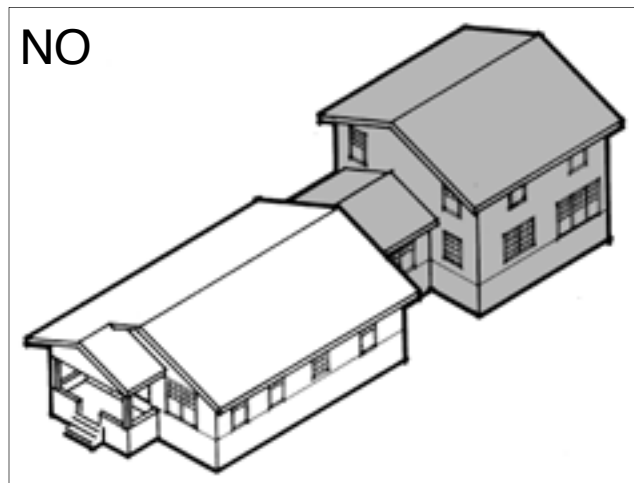
- If the original windows were a wood, double-hung style, for example, then new windows that appear similar to them would be appropriate. Windows of suitable contemporary design might also be appropriate.

18.7 The roof form and slope of a new addition should be in character with and subordinate to that of the primary building.

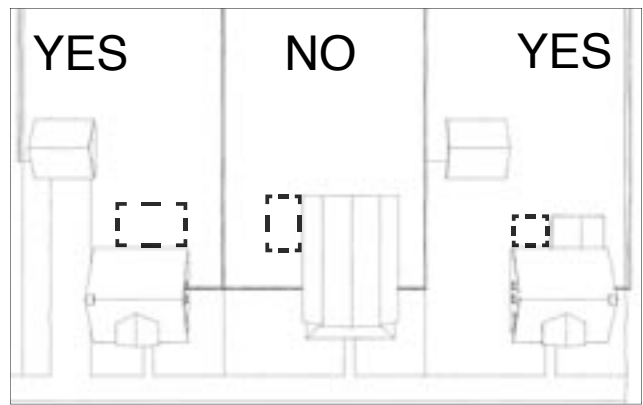
- It is important to repeat the roof lines and slopes found on the primary structure. Typically, gable, hip and shed roofs are appropriate for residential-type building additions. Flat roofs may be appropriate in certain cases, such as for some commercial buildings.
- Eave lines on the additions should be no higher, and preferably lower, than those of the historic building or structure.



Guideline 18.7: It is important to repeat the roof lines and slopes found on the primary structure.



Guideline 18.7: Eave lines on the addition should be no higher than those of the historic building.



Guideline 18.1: Place an addition to the rear of a building to minimize its visual impacts.



Guideline 18.7: Eave lines on the addition should be lower than those of the historic building.

