

Chapter 5: Guidelines for Additions

The design guidelines that follow apply to all properties in the Historic Downtown District. The City's Historic Landmarks Board will use the "Guidelines for Additions" in formal reviews of proposed changes to historic properties.

Many buildings had additions over time as need for additional space occurred, particularly with a change in use. When planning a new addition to a structure, however, the negative effects that may occur to the building should be minimized, especially if the building is historic. Two distinct types of additions should be considered. First, ground-level additions, which involve expanding the footprint of a structure, may be considered. Placing such additions to the rear or side of a building will have the least impact on the historic character of a building, but there may be limited opportunities to do this.

The materials, window size and alignment of elements on the addition should be similar to that of the existing structure. In almost all cases, the most appropriate front yard setback for side additions on Main Street is at the sidewalk edge. In any case, an addition must adhere to current zoning requirements for setbacks. (See Section 156 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of St. Charles).

Locating an Addition

Existing original site features include building setbacks, walkways, landscaping and service and parking areas—and all may be affected when constructing an addition. It is the goal of the HLPARB to not destroy any of these features; therefore, an addition should be designed with as little intrusion on the district as possible.

5.1 For residential buildings, an addition should not significantly alter original landscape features, when feasible.

- a. These features include: walkways, fences, street trees and other ornamental site features.
- b. Destroying the perception of a public or private space, such as a front yard, with an addition is inappropriate.

5.2 An addition should be made to the rear of a building.

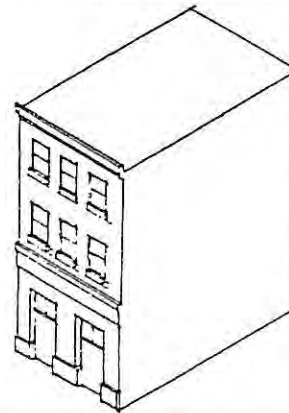
- 1) Given the depth of the lots in the district, additions made to the rear of buildings might be the most feasible.
- 2) Step a rear addition down in height as it approaches the rear of the lot. This will keep a building at a human scale.

5.3 Although an addition should generally not be made to a primary facade, one may be considered if it will reconstruct missing stories, roofs, balconies or galleries.

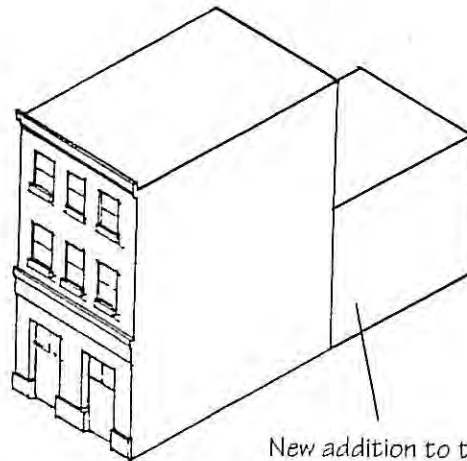
- a. The district has seen a number of train accidents, tornadoes, fires and other natural disasters that have caused the loss of upper stories, balconies and galleries.
- b. Lacking historical precedent, however, a rooftop addition is inappropriate.

5.4 An addition may be made to the side of a building if it does the following.

- a. An addition should maintain the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper-story windows—as seen on the existing building and its surrounding context.
- b. When an addition to the side of a building is needed, consider reconstructing the storefront or building that was in that location historically.

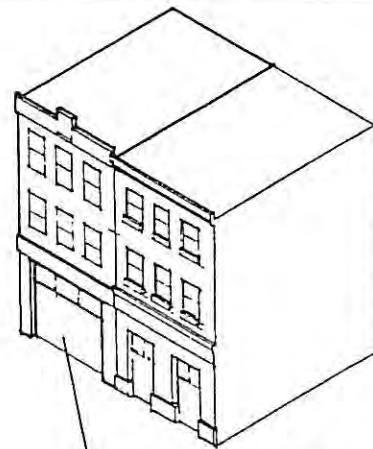


An original three-story building, before an addition: compare with sketches below.



New addition to the rear

An addition should be made to the rear of a building.



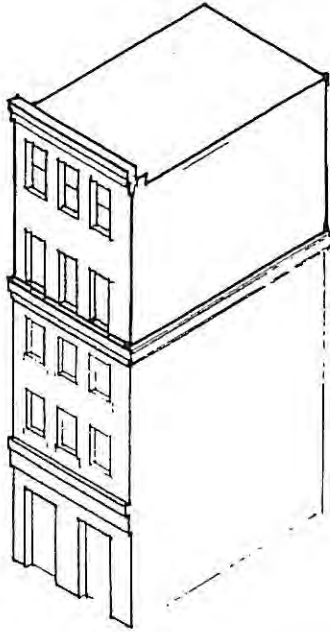
New addition to the side

When an addition to the side of a building is needed, consider reconstructing the storefront or building that was in that location historically.

Form, Mass and Scale of an Addition

The form, mass and scale seen currently lends itself to a visual continuity that should not be altered by additions or new construction.

- 5.5 A new addition should be subordinate to the historic structure.**
- a. Set back an addition from historically important primary facades in order to allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent.



This addition, made to the top of the building is inappropriate. A new addition should be subordinate to the historic structure, and placed to the rear when feasible.

Materials

The materials used to construct a new addition should appear similar to those used historically. The building material seen on the primary structure should be employed for a new addition. Brick is the most common material for historic buildings in the district; however, stone and wood were also used.

- 5.6 Materials should appear similar in character to those used historically.**
- a. Using materials that are the same as those employed historically is preferred. Brick is preferred for an additions to a brick building.
- b. Wood frame construction was often used for minor rear additions and rear porch enclosures, and may be considered.
- c. New materials may be considered, but they should appear similar in character to those used traditionally.
- d. New materials should also have a demonstrated durability in this setting. For example, some facade materials used in new construction are more susceptible to weather and simply do not last as long as stone or brick.
- e. Materials should be used in a manner similar to that used historically.
- 5.7 When wood is to be used in an exterior application, it should be painted or stained.**
- a. Pressure-treated wood or a wood and polymer composite that are not painted or stained do not withstand the climate and should not be used. Pressure-treated lumber should be left unpainted for several weeks to allow thorough drying.

Architectural Details

An addition should generally remain subordinate to the primary structure.

Note: When considering adding a balcony, gallery or porch to a historic building the "Guidelines for Historic Properties" (on pages 39-40) will apply. Also see the "Architectural Styles" (starting on page 17) to determine if a balcony, gallery or porch was appropriate for the building at hand.

- 5.8 Preserve, do not obscure, original architectural details of the structure.**
- a. An addition should not obscure historically or architecturally significant features.
 - b. When preserving original details, follow the guidelines for the preservation of architectural details in the "Guidelines for Historic Properties."
 - c. Do not obscure existing building details such as brackets, cornices, parapets, bargeboards, windows or doors.
- 5.9 A new addition that creates an appearance inconsistent with the historic character of the building is inappropriate.**
- a. For example, an addition that is more ornate than the original building would be out of character.
 - b. An addition that seeks to imply an earlier period than that of the building also is inappropriate because it would confuse the history of the building.
 - c. The addition should be consistent with the character of the historic building.
- 5.10 Using down spouts and gutters that are in character with those used historically is encouraged.**