

Section 4

Additions and New Construction



4.1 Decks

Historic buildings generally did not have decks, as we know them today. A "deck" would have been a raised, paved or tiled patio with low masonry walls and steps. The paving and masonry construction usually matched the building materials and were designed to withstand the weather elements with little or no maintenance.

A deck should be constructed with the deck level close to the floor line of the building. It should be constructed of materials that are compatible with the building, but can be differentiated from the building. The scale must be reasonable so the size will not detract from the building. It should be located on the rear or concealed side of the building and be constructed so it could be removed without causing damage to the original building.

Points to consider before adding a deck:

When designing the deck, consider the location so as to be unobtrusive and not detract from the facade it adjoins or cause mature tree removal. Screening of the deck or yard where it is located will help provide privacy as well as any visual impairment from the street. Materials should be well researched to allow for minimum maintenance.

Copper, aluminum, or galvanized fasteners, nails, screws, etc. can be used. Pressure treated lumber should provide for a longer life cycle. Some pressure treated wood requires some time period to weather before painting. Any concealed structural framing and the wood decking should be pressure treated.

Lattice panels, masonry, or evergreen shrubs should be considered as a screen for the underside and structure of the deck.

The building code requires railings for decks that are over 30 in. above the ground level. Steps should have handrails.

Select a design and details that do not imitate the architectural style or details of the historic building, but that complement it in materials and scale proportions.

4.1 Decks: Guidelines

Recommended

- .1 Locate the deck where it will be the least visible from the street.
- .2 Do not damage the building facade or attach permanently to it.
- .3 Do not remove site elements such as large trees but instead incorporate them into the design so as not to cause them damage.
- .4 The deck floor level should be close to the building floor level.
- .5 The colors should match the building colors.
- .6 The scale of the deck and its components should not overpower the building scale
- .7 The deck framing or other concealed parts should be of pressure treated wood.

Not Recommended

- .8 Removal of original historic porches.

4.2 Additions to Historic Buildings

Identify, retain and preserve are key words throughout the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation and must be adhered to in planning any additions to a historic building. To damage or remove any historic elements to facilitate an arbitrary addition should not be considered.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards makes the following statement:

"An attached exterior addition to a historic building expands its 'outer limits' to create a new profile. Because such expansion has the capability to radically change the historic appearance, an exterior addition should be considered only after it has been determined that the new use cannot be successfully met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces. If the new use cannot be met in this way, then an attached exterior addition is usually an acceptable alternative. New additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of the historic building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. New design should always be clearly differentiated so that the addition does not appear to be part of the historic resource."

When constructing an addition to a historic building, locate it at the rear or side. Connect to the original building by using as narrow a corridor as possible at an existing door opening. Do not cover the entire facade with the expansion. Any facade material should be protected and covered so that in the future, if the addition is removed, the original building elements will be intact.

An addition should be compatible in scale, materials, and character with the main building. Using similar materials is recommended. In some cases a simpler, less noticeable material, also may be appropriate. The materials should be in proportion to the historic building. Materials, finish and details on any addition should not call attention to the new space.

Points to Consider

In order to obtain a building permit for an addition, the building code requires that the original building be brought up to the current code requirements if an addition is proposed. Such things as electrical, plumbing, heating, cooling and exits may be affected. Buildings used for commercial purposes will require handicap accessibility as well.

Be sure to verify what the zoning ordinance allows for percentage of lot coverage. There are also parking space requirements based on certain occupancies. The property setbacks also affect the amount of area that can be used for building. A corner lot has a front yard and a corner side yard setback, which is more detrimental for allowable building area. Owners of corner lots should be discouraged from adding on to the historic building since it will be viewable from one or more streets.

As a checklist in contemplating an addition, consider the following:

- a. Total percentage of lot coverage allowed
- b. Building setbacks
- c. Parking requirements
- d. Building code changes to the original building
- e. See [Section 4.3](#) Sample-Site Layout Sketch.
- f. See NPS Preservation Brief #14: "New Exterior Additions to Historic buildings: Preservation Concerns."

4.2 Additions to Historic Buildings: Guidelines

Recommended:

- .1 Placing functions and services required for the new use in non-character-defining interior spaces rather than constructing a new addition.
- .2 Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- .3 Designing a new addition in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.
- .4 Considering the design for an attached exterior addition in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.
- .5 Placing a new addition on a non-character-defining elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.
- .6 Designing a rooftop addition when required for the new use that is set back from the wall plane, and as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.



Not Recommended:

- .7 Expanding the size of the historic building by constructing a new addition when the new use could be met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces.
- .8 Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- .9 Duplicating the exact form, material, style, and detailing of the historic building in a new addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic building.
- .10 Imitating a historic style or period of architecture in a new addition.
- .11 Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.
- .12 Designing a new addition that obscures, damages, or destroys character-defining features of the historic building.
- .13 Constructing a rooftop addition so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

4.3 New Construction



New construction, whether for additions or new buildings, should not be considered a threat in a historic district. It shows a good sign that the district is active. A well designed new addition or new building can be an asset to the district. In neighborhoods where excessive demolition has left vacant lots, new buildings can be used to reinforce the district's heritage. Inappropriate new buildings also have the potential to destroy historic district character. A new building should not try to imitate earlier styles or building types but should stand as a compatible contemporary design. Part of any good design is a respect for the surroundings. Alterations and additions should be such that they could be removed in the future without destroying the original building. This leaves future owners the option of retaining the new addition or removing it to create a more original appearance.

Building setbacks are usually established by the zoning ordinances as a minimum distance to the property lines (see zoning and codes). In this district, there are enough buildings along a street that a setback has been established. Likewise, ancillary buildings off of the alleys have existing setbacks. The Belle Grove Historic District has such a variety of building sizes, masses, and heights within any given block that it will be a challenge to "match" these elements in new designs and additions. The new building should compliment the others on the street by using similar materials (usually brick or wood siding) to achieve a more unified block setting.

4.3 New Construction: Guidelines

Recommended:

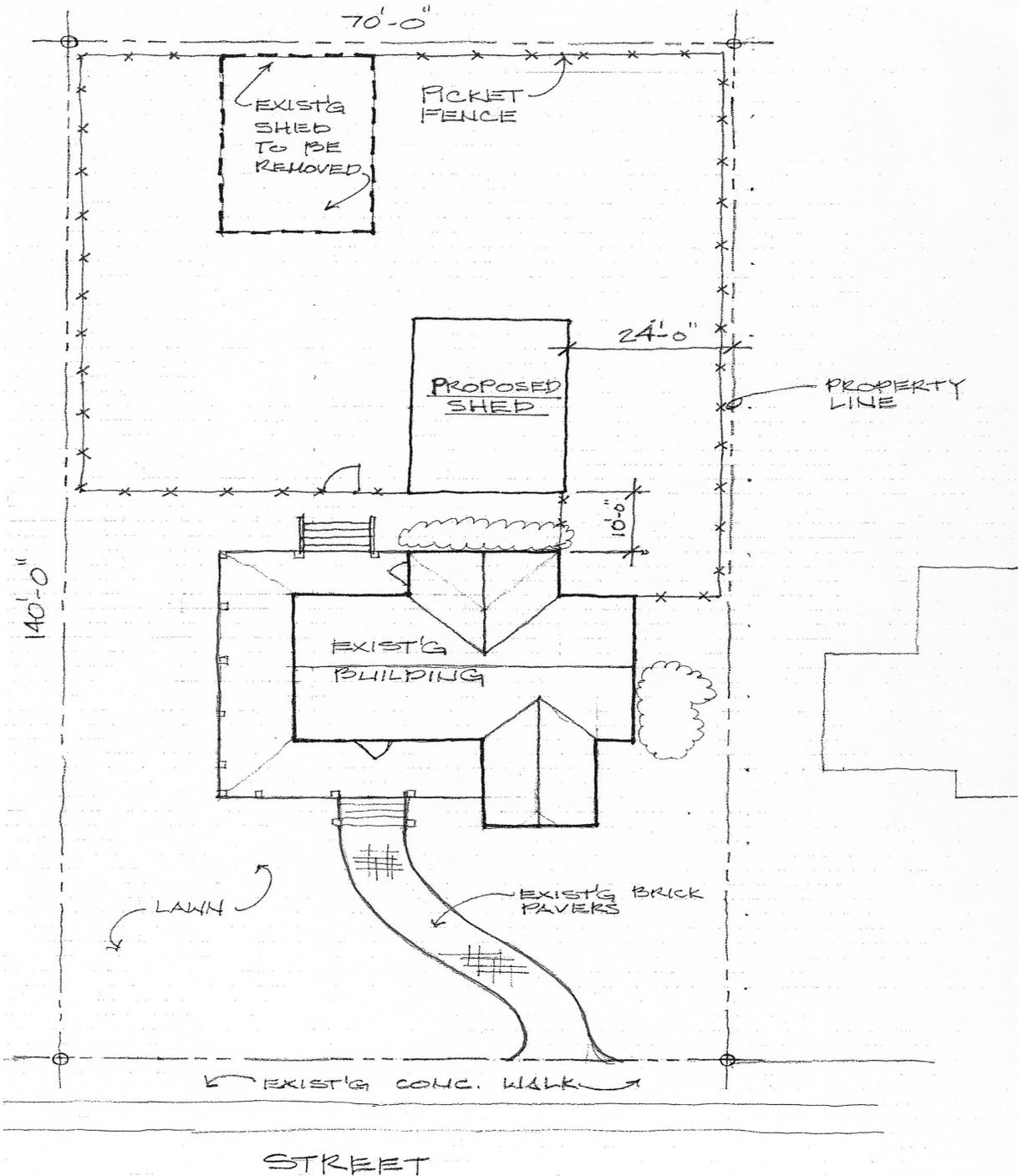
- .1 New construction shall maintain, not disrupt, the existing pattern of surrounding historic buildings along the street by being similar in the following:
 - a. Scale (height and width)
 - b. Shape
 - c. Roof shape
 - d. Orientation to the street
 - e. Location and proportion of entrances and windows
 - f. Foundation/first floor height
 - g. Floor-to-ceiling height
 - h. Material and material color
 - i. Texture
 - j. Placement on the lot
- .2 **Building Orientation** - Align the front facade of the new building with the established setbacks of the area and to the street.
- .3 **Building Form and Scale** - New buildings should appear similar in mass and scale with historic structures in the area. Use building forms and a scale that match those used historically.
- .4 **Use Roof Forms That Match Those Used Historically** - Roof types on new buildings in historic districts should conform to those found historically.
- .5 **Materials** - Use building materials that are similar to those employed historically for all major surfaces.
- .6 **Entrances** - Orient the main entrances of the building at the front (street) in a manner similar to established patterns in the district.
- .7 **Windows** - Use window sizes, proportions and lites (panes) similar to historic designs.
- .8 **Site Design Standards** - Pay particular attention to the block.

Not Recommended:

- .9 Arbitrary designs having no regard for the district, neighborhood or the historic significance of the district or those recommended elements.



BELLE GROVE HISTORIC DISTRICT



SAMPLE SITE LAYOUT SKETCH