

# Exterior Alterations, & Additions

## Revitalizing Existing Conditions



*Two examples of successful rehabilitation - view looking through restored corner of the Plank and Hoge building to the old Preston Hotel at the corner of College Avenue and Main Street.*

*Use this pamphlet when:*

- adding to an existing building*
- making exterior changes or repairs*
- adding an outbuilding or accessory structure*

### **PRINCIPLES for ADVISORY GUIDELINES**

Through an understanding of established building patterns, changes in the district can enhance its integrity and contribute to a positive identity of the town. Exterior alterations and additions, that respect historic features, reinforce and conserve irreplaceable fabric of the district and the tangible connection between past and present.

Innovative projects linking new ideas with tradition can promote investment into the historic fabric and encourage sustainable growth in the area.

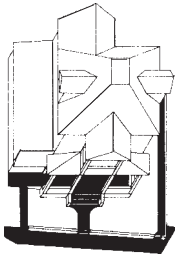
Changes to historic materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships need to retain a sense of wholeness of the district. In the presence of ongoing change, the distinction of the historic setting, including topography, vegetation, the original town grid, and buildings, sustains the memory of an area through time.

## RETAINING ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

In exterior alterations and additions, compatibility with existing elements can make a building fit into the surrounding district. Style and standard of design varies with the eclectic nature of the area. Care should be taken to re-establish scale and content of the historical elements with new design. The illustrations below depict an original commercial storefront (left) and a recent alteration (right).

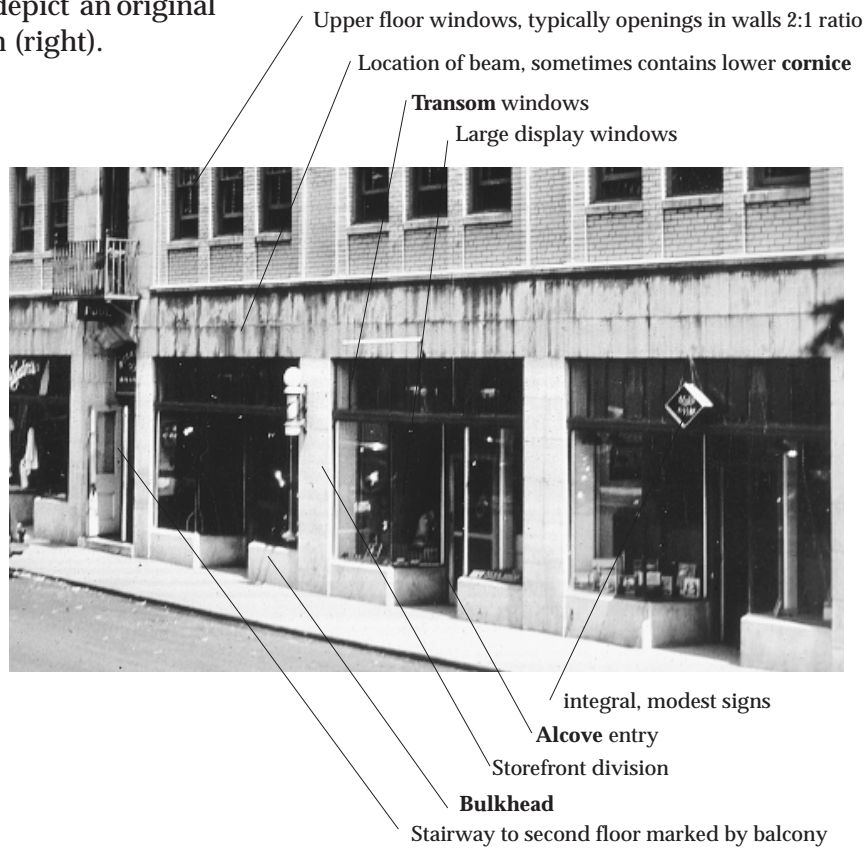
### Building Elements

- Remove siding or other inappropriate materials covering historical features with care.
- Repair original elements wherever possible or replace if unrepairable.
- Avoid alterations that create a false sense of historic appearance.
- Maintain dimensions of historical elements in rehabilitated facades.
- Preserve the composition of **doors, windows, and columns** in historic storefronts and building frontages.



- **Porches** usually have a stature that fits the building's use, and contributes to street frontage continuity. Enclosure of porches should acknowledge the historic character.

- In historic structures, when **windows, doors** or other building elements are missing or beyond repair match replacements of original in material, design, composition, color and texture.
- In historic structures, rather than replacing drafty but otherwise sound **windows and doors**, improve energy efficiency by installing storm windows and doors in keeping with historic and architectural detail.
- **Signs, awnings and light fixtures** should be compatible with, and should not damage or obstruct historic features.
- Screen new **decks** from principle views.
- Air conditioning units, television antennas, satellite dishes, and ramps are best screened with low walls, fences and plantings.



**Lyric storefronts circa 1940**



- Fence emphasizes street continuity
- Roof lines generally gabled or hipped
- Porches establish relationship to street
- Original chimney maintained

**209 Wharton Street**

Additions that are in scale with adjacent structures maintain the identity and integrity of the neighborhood. Building elements such as doors, columns, windows, and cornices define the building face and street frontage. Historically, the quality of craft is often a significant feature of the construction. The photograph at the bottom of the page shows typical residential elements.

**Open corner** re-established with free standing **column**

Glass divisions match Lyric storefront

**Transom** windows re-established

Large transparent openings



**Alcove** entry

Store division 25' apart or less

**Bulkhead** re-established with **corbling**

Facade division matches 25' storefront limits

### Additions

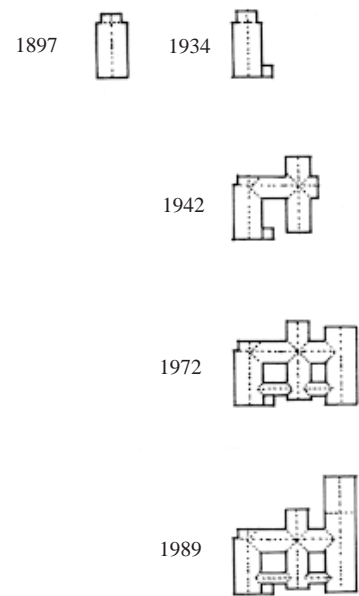
- Additions should be added to the rear of existing buildings, to the side at least 2'-0" behind the front plane of the existing structure, or as detached outbuildings at the rear of the lot.
- Relate additions to the proportional massing of the existing structure.
- The roof lines and facades of additions should accentuate the neighborhood fabric by relating to the overall volume and pattern of neighboring buildings.
- Avoid additions that create a false historical appearance.
- Consider removing additions and elements that detract from the historic character of a building.
- Additions that recreate missing historic features such as porches and dormers should be based on architectural or historic evidence.

### Alteration at corner of Main Street and College Avenue



Porches maintained and kept free of indoor furniture

Mature trees maintained



Original Christ Church building with four successive additions. Individual volumes are defined reducing the scale of the total mass.

## REINFORCING the HISTORIC SETTING

Exterior alterations and additions should retain and enhance street frontage. Low walls and fences, street trees and other vegetation are viewed as important parts of the overall setting. In primarily residential areas, buildings have varying setbacks with a variety of large trees in front yards while hedges provide street continuity. In commercial areas there is typically no setback. Buildings meet the sidewalk and trees line the street.

### Street Edge

- Maintain and reinforce the street plan with street edge elements or plantings, such as low fences and hedges, planting beds, street trees, and decorative paving materials.



House along Progress Street showing typical landscape elements defining the street edge

- Retain or re-establish the historic residential front yard or setback specific to the surrounding area.
- Provide walkways that link the front entry to sidewalk or street.
- Screen remote satellite dishes, trash containers and other accessory equipment with low walls, fences or plantings.
- Repair and maintain the character-defining features of a historic setting including outbuildings, fences, retaining walls, gateposts, gates, arbors, steps, walks, streetlamps, signs and paving.

### Site Elements

- Maintain or replace trees, plantings, hedges and other site elements in a manner consistent with original or historic pattern.
- Large existing trees need to be protected if a grade change is necessary.
- Changes in topography should be made with retaining walls, preferably stone and mortar.
- Maintain the natural setting of streams as urban amenities.
- Be alert to archaeological significance of building remains, related features, and landscape. Consider appropriate action that conserves the historic fabric.



Original building of Christ Church showing additions of similar massings separated by courtyards. Streetscape is maintained by repetitive volumes in scale with existing buildings and landscaped edge.

Articulated two story facades comprise fronts facing the street



Roanoke Street elevation from Church Street

## BALANCING PEDESTRIAN SCALE and PARKING

Neighborhoods should be pleasant for walking with a balance maintained between parked cars and pedestrians. The siting of parked cars can enhance the quality of the district.

### Site Elements

- To encourage pedestrian activity, changes to the existing setting should include parking for cars behind the front of buildings, garaged or situated in a landscaped court and screened from view.
- Retain and repair historic driveways, such as the two-strip concrete type.
- Retain narrow curb cuts and single lane driveways 8 - 12 feet in width is encouraged.
- Avoid removing mature landscape plantings and elements when providing new driveways.



207 Church Street  
cars are parked behind building  
while street edged is maintained with  
shallow setback and landscaping

Building mass along the street comprises vertical, close packed volumes



Church Street to Wharton showing range of building mass along the street

## MATERIAL, CRAFTSMANSHIP and RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

The set of materials in the historic district provides a basis for understanding compatible and coherent construction practices and craftsmanship. Most historic buildings use materials in a way appropriate to recommended building methods and finishes.

Care should be given to adjust prefabricated building products to the local setting. Material selection should be considered in conjunction with use in construction.

### Materials

- Construct alterations and additions at a quality level consistent with existing structures.
- Select materials to reflect the context and the specific construction type.
- Replacement of historic materials should match the original material in dimension, shape and texture. Installation should not damage intact historic materials and elements.
- Alternative materials may be acceptable when repair or replacement of original materials is not technically or economically feasible. For example, alternates for some materials might include:
  - cast concrete steps for stone steps
  - a similar prefabricated metal system for standing-seam metal roofs
  - synthetic siding for wood siding - original dimension and detail should be retained without obscuring decorative features.
  - fiberbased shingles for slate shingles
  - A detailed list is available from town staff.
- Where materials are historically unpainted, they should remain so. Protect traditionally unpainted elements with appropriate chemical preservatives or clear finishes.
- Avoid the use of pressure treated wood in the front of structures. When used, paint or stain.
- Paving for new driveways and parking areas should have surface texture. Masonry pavers are preferred over asphalt.
- For additions, materials are not limited, but should relate to the existing context.
- Material selection for additions includes innovative use of standard or new materials but requires appropriate detailing and craftsmanship.



A house on Main Street is an example of a conversion to a business where the detail has been maintained



Christian Science Center is an example of innovative use of plywood siding in a manner that is consistent in scale and quality of the neighborhood

The durability of a material and subsequent maintenance are important factors for historic buildings. Early builders often chose materials that required regular maintenance.

Construction practices that use the craft of building assist in the longevity of historic fabric. Careful repair and replacement of historic materials is necessary to maintain the integrity of the district.

### Recommended Practices

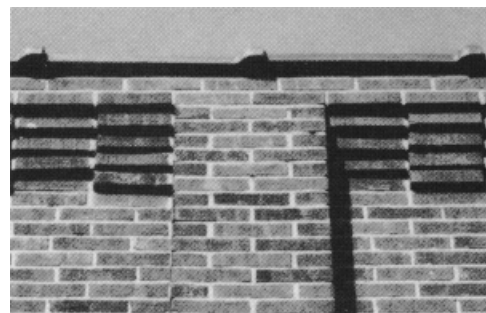
- When cleaning surfaces, select and use the most gentle available methods to prevent damage or deterioration, and to retain appearance of historic materials. Avoid abrasive or reactive cleaning techniques such as sand blasting, high pressure water cleaning, acid washes, and chemical treatments.
- When repairing fragile materials, first try to stabilize and conserve original materials with consolidants like epoxies. If too deteriorated, repair by patching or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- Where there is evidence of deterioration in mortar joints, selectively and carefully repoint. To avoid damaging masonry, remove deteriorated mortar by hand-raking the joints.
- When weatherizing requires blown-in insulation, use techniques that do not scar historic siding, such as plugged holes or untrimmed foam.
- Where repairs have failed to arrest water penetration in historic masonry, water-repellant coatings can be applied. Be aware that such coatings may change the appearance of historic masonry and can accelerate deterioration.



The original National Bank of Blacksburg offers an example of detail at the parapet on a commercial building



An example of innovative use of prefabricated material -- corrugated metal. These original metal infill panels are consistent in scale and quality with downtown commercial buildings



An example of brick corbelling on a downtown building

## **PROPOSAL REVIEW and COMMENT** (per ordinance 1222)

Projects requiring a review will need a review letter as part of the building permit approval process. The applicant is encouraged to consider the contribution that components of a proposal make to the block and street, as well as the individual parcel.

**To assist discussion, the following items are suggested:**

- Map showing marked location of property under consideration;
- Site plan indicating location of existing and proposed structures and accessory structures including walls, fences, walks, trees and other landscape, and exterior lighting;
- Recent photographs of all sides of the structure or site under consideration, and of adjoining area; and
- Sketches, drawings, or architectural elevations depicting the areas to be affected by alteration and describing how materials are to be employed.

### **Review Process**

Once application and accompanying materials have been submitted to the Town, town staff will review projects requiring an administrative review. If the proposal requires a review by the review board, the project will be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Review Committee meeting. At the applicant's request, members of the review board or town staff may consult informally with applicant before or after submittal of application. This informal consultation is intended to help applicants understand and interpret the design guidelines prior to the public meeting. Neither the Review Committee nor staff may formally act on the proposal outside of the public meeting.

Processing of applications includes the following actions on the part of the Town staff or review board members:

- Town staff will review project proposals to determine whether they will require an administrative review or review by the review committee
- For projects going to the review board, town staff will notify applicant of adjoining properties that the proposal will be discussed at a public meeting;
- the applicant, other property owners in the district, and other potentially affected parties will have an opportunity to comment on the proposal at a public meeting;
- Project proposals will be reviewed according to Design Guidelines and town staff or the board will render an assessment;
- Town staff will notify applicant in writing of the assessment regarding the proposal. Town staff will maintain minutes of the review board meeting that outline the facts of the proposal assessment.
- The review letter issued to the property owner must be submitted with a building permit application.