



Additions To Historic Buildings



Conversion of the former Jacob Geiger mansion into United Missouri Bank of St. Joseph necessitated the construction of an addition to the house. Note how details from the mansion's exterior were incorporated into the new design.



A new addition with two-car garage is added to this 1930's Tudor Revival style home on Lover's Lane with a sensitive eye to the original building's style and detailing.

In an effort to make historic buildings more suitable for modern day living, many property owners are looking at new additions as a means of obtaining more living space. Such additions to historic buildings change the footprint of the original structure. If not treated with extreme care and sensitivity, they can change the character of the historic resource and cause the destruction of the original building fabric.

Additions to historic buildings are appropriate if the new construction does not visually overpower the original building and obscure or destroy character-defining, architectural features, forms, and materials. Additions should be located in side or rear yard areas and should be of a height, scale, size and proportion that relate to the historic building and do not diminish its visual importance. Additions should be designed so that they can be removed from the original building without substantial loss to historic building fabric.

Additions will be evaluated on the basis of their compatibility with the original building in terms of massing, scale, height, materials, roof forms, proportion, spacing of doors and windows, style, details, texture, and location. Contemporary interpretations of the original building style and details in additions are encouraged in order to help differentiate new construction from the original building. A more literal interpretation of the historic building's style and detailing in the new construction is also appropriate.

In siting additions, consideration should also be given to landscape/site features and view corridors. Efforts should be made to minimize destruction of mature vegetation and indigenous plantings that are found throughout the historic districts. Locating additions in areas that will necessitate the relocation or demolition of historic buildings should be avoided. Whenever possible, new additions should be designed so as not to intrude upon important private open spaces or obscure important vistas.

Existing additions to historic buildings should also be evaluated in any rehabilitation project. Alterations and additions that have taken place over time may acquire significance in their own right and merit preservation. Those that are at least fifty (50) years old will be evaluated for their contributing value to a building's architectural and historic character. In cases involving academic restorations, the Commission must weigh the value of restoration against preserving significant, character-defining changes that reflect the evolution of the building over time. Such considerations must be handled on a case-by-case basis.

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St. Joseph Landmark Commission

Many of St. Joseph's historic buildings in residential neighborhoods are located on narrow lots with little room for expansion of the building footprint due to zoning setback and lot coverage requirements. A variance may be necessary in order to construct an addition to a historic building. Property owners are advised to meet with the staff of the City's Planning and Zoning Division as a first step in determining the possibility of expanding an existing structure.

Additions To Historic Buildings: Guidelines

1. Locate additions in side or rear yard areas so as to have minimal impact in primary, character-defining elevations of historic buildings.
2. Consult with the City's Planning and Zoning Division to ensure that expansion of the building footprint is possible. Pursue a variance if necessary.
3. Consider the height, scale, size, and proportion of the new addition to ensure that it relates to the historic building and does not overpower it.
4. Design an addition so that it can be removed from the original building in the future without substantial loss of historic building fabric.
5. Design an addition so that it is compatible with the historic building in terms of massing, scale, height, materials, roof forms, proportion and spacing of doors and windows, style, details, texture, and location.
6. Select building materials for the addition that are consistent with the materials on the historic building. The building material palette shall be limited to what was available at the time of the historic building's construction. Contemporary or synthetic materials may be used in limited applications.
7. Create additions with similar roof forms and pitches. Eave lines for additions should generally align with those of the original building.
8. Match the foundation materials, height, and style of the original building.
9. Design additions that are contemporary interpretations of the original building's architectural style and details. This will help to differentiate the new from the old. A more literal interpretation of architectural forms and details is also acceptable.
10. Respect the architectural hierarchy that exists on most historic buildings. Generally, architectural embellishments and detailing were scaled down or simplified on less visible secondary and rear elevations. This hierarchy should be respected in the new construction.



A modern window unit located in a new addition on an early 20th century Ashland Avenue home provides a visual clue that this portion of the house is not original construction. Note how siding and gable timbering details have been faithfully copied to tie together old and new construction.



Additions To Historic Buildings

Additions To Historic Buildings: Guidelines continued

11. Locate additions in areas that will not adversely impact character-defining open spaces nor obscure important vistas or other historic buildings.
12. Avoid locating additions in areas that will necessitate the relocation or demolition of historic accessory buildings such as garages or carriage houses.
13. Locate additions in areas that will not necessitate the removal of mature vegetation or indigenous plant materials, whenever possible.
14. Consider the architectural significance of later additions and alterations and weigh their contribution to defining the historic building's character. Generally, additions and alterations that are at least fifty (50) years old have acquired significance and should be evaluated to determine the merits of their preservation.
15. Use color as one means of harmonizing the new addition with the historic building.
16. If an additional story is proposed for a building, it is generally appropriate to set it back from the wall plane and make it as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.
17. Treat porch enclosures and other construction activities that involve the reconfiguration of the building footprint in a similar manner to new additions. Enclosures should meet the guidelines contained in the section as well as other applicable sections including EXTERIOR ENTRANCES AND PORCHES.