

Chapter 8: New Construction



In this chapter you will find:

New Construction

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Photograph on cover page:
View north along North Delaware Avenue within the Truman Heritage District, 2010.

New Construction

The purpose of this chapter is to aid in the effort of designing new construction (including additions) and infill construction, on a historic property or within a historic district, that blends in with the surrounding architecture and the existing development pattern. Creative and sensitively designed new construction that relates to its historic context will benefit the community as a whole, and encourage new development within the existing historic neighborhoods and commercial districts without detracting from the surrounding traditional architecture.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* below, written by the National Park Service, shall be followed when designing new construction and infill construction within a historic neighborhood:

- 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10.** New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Designing a New Building Within a Historic Neighborhood

When considering constructing a new residence or commercial building within an existing neighborhood, there are several factors that should first be considered:

1) What is the predominant style of architecture in the area?

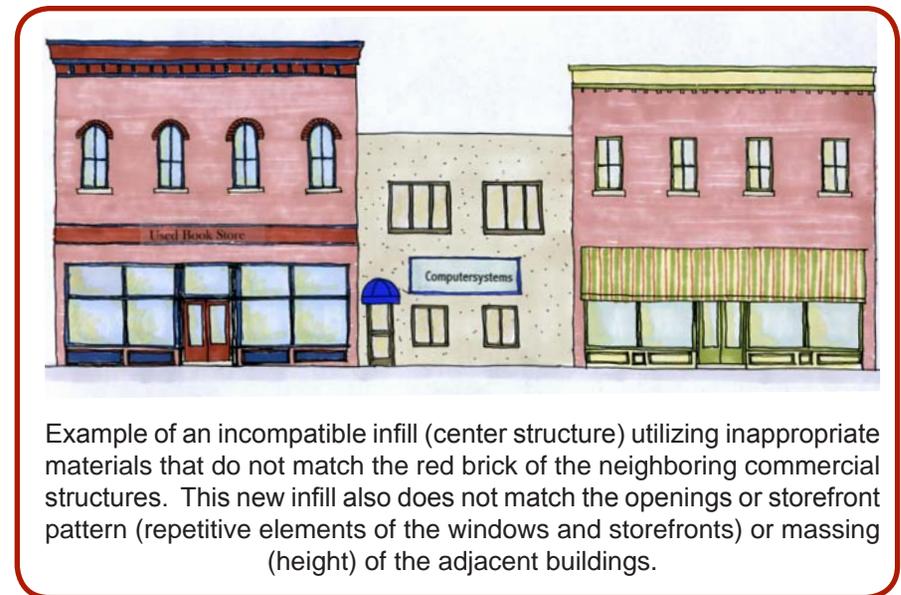
- A new building can incorporate elements of that style but should not strive to replicate the style.
- New construction should easily be identified as new when walking or driving by.

2) What are the typical height, orientation, and setbacks of most of the neighborhood or district?

- Walk the area and determine what the average setback (area from the front plane of the buildings to the property line), average number of stories, and the direction that the front of the buildings face. (For example, were the houses built on a 45 degree angle facing the street or a 90 degree angle?)
- Base all new construction on the typical neighborhood design. Do not exceed the height of the highest building. Also, be sure and check all current City zoning requirements when at this design stage for additional setback and lot coverage requirements.

3) What are the typical materials used in the district?

- While new construction has much more flexibility than rehabilitation of an existing historic building, consider what is complimentary to the surrounding buildings. For instance, it may not be appropriate to build a glass and metal framed house in an area with Tudor Revival and Minimal Traditional houses that display stucco and wood exteriors. Instead, utilization of complimentary new materials (in this case wood composite cladding) to differentiate the new house from the surrounding historic houses is encouraged.



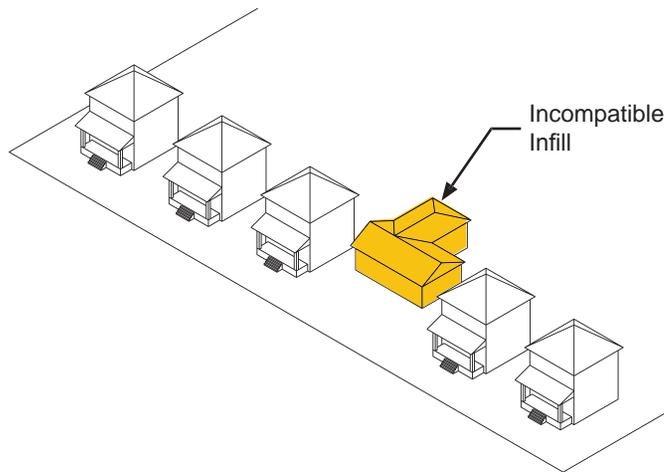
Example of an incompatible infill (center structure) utilizing inappropriate materials that do not match the red brick of the neighboring commercial structures. This new infill also does not match the openings or storefront pattern (repetitive elements of the windows and storefronts) or massing (height) of the adjacent buildings.



New Construction Checklist:

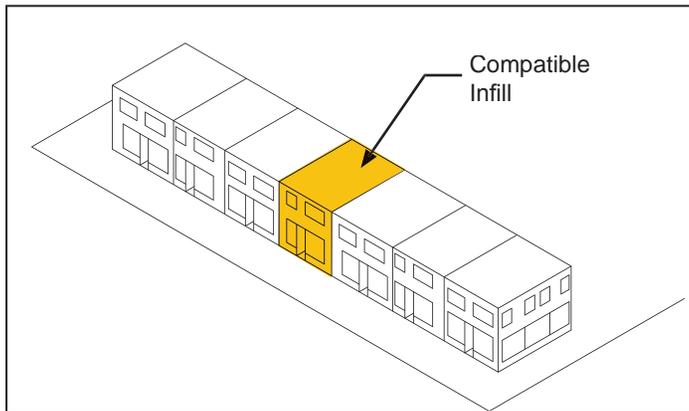
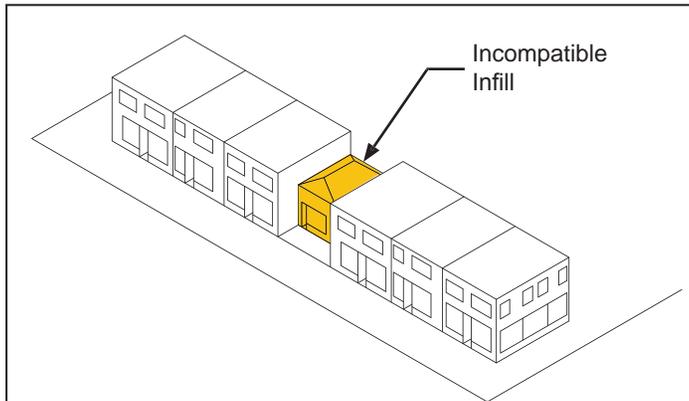
The Heritage Commission will consider the following when reviewing new construction or infill Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications:

- ✓ **Height** - Does the height of the proposed building match that of the surrounding buildings?
- ✓ **Materials** - Do the proposed, contemporary materials complement that of the buildings in the district?
- ✓ **Orientation** - Does the building face the same direction as surrounding buildings?
- ✓ **Setbacks** - Does the building set back from the street the same distance as its neighbors? (Setbacks are often grandfathered in for existing structures but may be more restrictive for new construction.)
- ✓ **Architectural Style** - Does the new construction blend well with the district while looking new?
- ✓ **Demolition** - Refer to Chapter 11 for information about Heritage Commission review of demolition.



Residential New Construction:

Pay close attention to the surrounding buildings when designing a new building or addition. This is an example of incompatible residential infill that does not utilize the surrounding building mass, proportion, pattern, or alignment in its design. This interrupts the rhythm of the front porch streetscape.



Commercial Infill Construction:

The top diagram indicates an incompatible infill design that does not match the mass, proportion, or alignment of the surrounding buildings. This proposed infill disrupts the continuity of the commercial streetscape. The bottom diagram illustrates a compatible infill design, which is complimentary to and is in keeping with the surrounding buildings.

Elements of Design

Mass, proportion, pattern, alignment, and materials are all important elements of design to take into consideration when constructing in a historic neighborhood.

Mass: Mass refers to the overall dimensions of a building (height, width, and depth create volume and form). The overall volume and form of a new building or addition should resemble that of the surrounding buildings. Mass plays an important role in the streetscape of a historic neighborhood. Historic neighborhoods typically have buildings which relate to one another through their similar masses. An incompatible building in volume and form which does not relate to its surroundings, distracts from the streetscape.

Proportion: Proportion is a harmonious relationship between the dimensions of one object to another. If the elements of the building are too large or too small in relation to the whole building or to another object, it is said to be “out of proportion.”

Alignment: Alignment is the way buildings line up together along a street. It is usually created by the required zoning set back. Alignment can also occur vertically by lining up the rooflines or heights of adjacent buildings.

Pattern: Pattern is a repetition of elements or form. Patterns can be found in individual buildings in elements such as windows or in groupings of buildings with similar elements situated along a street. A building that breaks the pattern of a streetscape tends to look out of place.

Materials: Materials differ between commercial and residential historic neighborhoods. Commercial buildings are typically brick or stone with metal, wood, or masonry trim. Materials found within residential neighborhoods are typically wood frame with wood siding, brick, or stone, with wood windows and shingle roofs. The consistency and repetition of building materials of the neighborhood form a cohesive environment.

NEW CONSTRUCTION



An example of a new garage, constructed at the rear of a lot, behind the main historic house, which incorporates similar massing, materials, and details from the main house, 800-900 Block along Truman Road, 2011



An example of an existing garage outbuilding located behind the historic house, at the rear of the lot, 411 North Delaware Street, 2011

Outbuildings

Outbuildings, such as garages, sheds, and barns are often necessary for storage of cars and other equipment. Traditional outbuildings (garages, barn, or carriage houses) were historically constructed as structures (non-habitable spaces) separate from the main house. They can be found throughout the urban core and into eastern Independence on large agricultural parcels.

Outbuildings, such as garages and sheds, were often located at the rear of the property when in an urban/suburban setting. These outbuildings could often be accessed from a driveway leading from the street or from a rear alley.

The construction of new outbuildings is preferred in a vacant location. Demolition of existing outbuildings to accommodate new outbuildings should be avoided. New outbuildings should complement the adjacent home, utilizing similar proportion, style, color, and materials found on the existing building, as well as reflect a similar design to other outbuildings in the neighborhood.



An example of a new garage outbuilding located behind the historic house, 826 Truman Road, 2011



Outbuilding - New Construction Checklist:

The Heritage Commission will consider the following when reviewing new outbuilding construction Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications:

- ✓ **Height** - Does the height of the proposed building match that of the surrounding buildings?
- ✓ **Materials** - Do the proposed, contemporary materials complement that of the main house?
- ✓ **Orientation** - Does the building face the same direction as the main building?
- ✓ **Setbacks** - Does the structure meet the current building setback requirements? (Setbacks are often grandfathered in for existing structures but may be more restrictive for new construction.)
- ✓ **Architectural Style** - Does the new structure complement the other structures in the area?
- ✓ **Location** - The new outbuilding is not viewed from the right-of-way (street or sidewalk)?
- ✓ **Demolition** - *Refer to Chapter 11 for information about Heritage Commission review of demolition.*