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A D D I T I O N S



This chapter presents design guidelines for the following topics related to constructing an addition to a historic house:

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ADDITIONS

Many buildings have experienced additions over time. In some cases, an owner would add a wing for a new office, or expand the kitchen. In other cases, owners simply added dormers to an existing roof, creating more usable space without increasing the footprint of the structure.

The tradition of adding on to buildings is anticipated to continue in San Jose. It is important, however, that new additions be designed in a manner that respects the character of the original structure. It is also recommended that designers, architects and contractors become well-versed on the intent and purpose of these design guidelines. *Also note that for many of the design topics presented in this chapter other City regulations may apply, in particular Title 13 Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places and Title 20 Zoning Ordinance of the San Jose Municipal Code. Please consult the City of San Jose before planning a project to determine which requirements are applicable.*

Basic Principles for an Addition

The overall design of an addition should be in keeping with the design of the primary structure. Keeping the size of the addition small, in relation to the main structure, also will help minimize its visual impacts.

It is also important that an addition not obscure any significant features of a building. If the addition is placed to the rear of the existing structure, it is less likely to affect such features.



Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right. (Sainte Genevieve, MO)



A more recent addition that is not historically significant may be removed. (Memphis, TN)

Preservation of Additions

Preserve additions that may have developed significance in their own right.

Some changes to a building may be evidence of the history of the structure, its inhabitants and its neighborhood.

4.1 Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.

- For example, a porch or a kitchen wing may have been added to the original building early in its history. Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original building in terms of materials, finishes and design.

4.2 A more recent addition that is not historically significant may be removed.

- In the example pictured at left, removal of this addition and restoration of the original facade would be encouraged.

Design of New Additions

Design a new addition to be compatible with the primary structure.

When planning an addition, consider the effect the addition will have on the building itself. When creating an addition to a historic house, the new work should be recognized as a product of its own time and yet the loss of the building’s historic fabric should be minimized. A design for a new addition that would create an appearance inconsistent with the historic character of the building is discouraged.

4.3 Place an addition at the rear of a building or set it back from the front to minimize the visual impacts.

- This will allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent.
- Locating an addition at the front of a structure is inappropriate.
- An addition should be set back at least 10 feet from a primary facade.
- An addition to the rear of a structure must also conform to other City setback requirements.

4.4 Do not obscure, damage, destroy or remove original architectural details and materials of the primary structure.

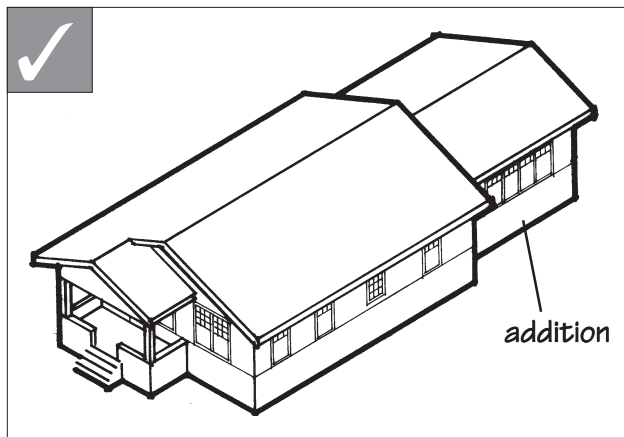
- When preserving original details and materials, follow the guidelines presented in *Chapter 3: Rehabilitation of Historic Houses*.



Design a new addition such that the original character can be clearly seen. This addition to the front of a historic house is inappropriate. (Salt Lake City, UT)



As seen from the street (top photo) the addition to the rear of this structure is not visible. This is encouraged. (Georgetown, CO)



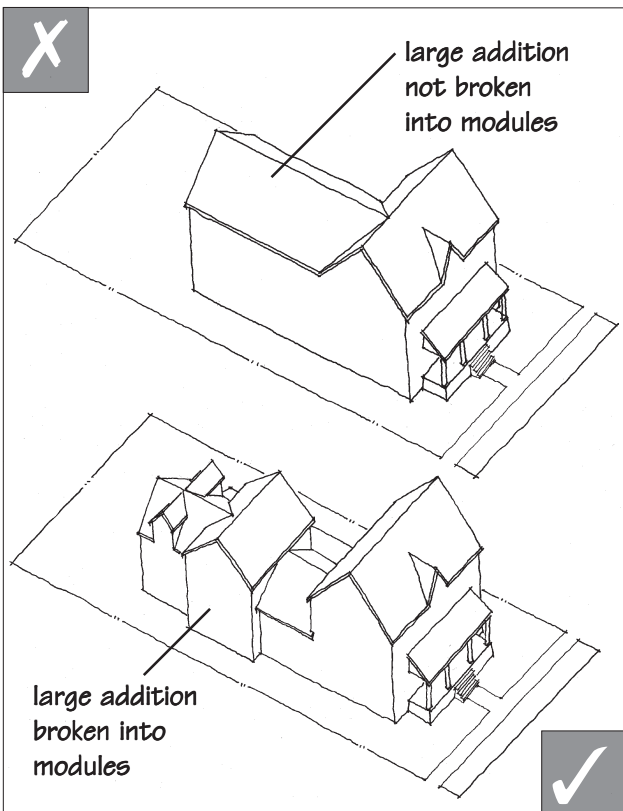
Place an addition at the rear of a building or set it back from the front to minimize the visual impacts.



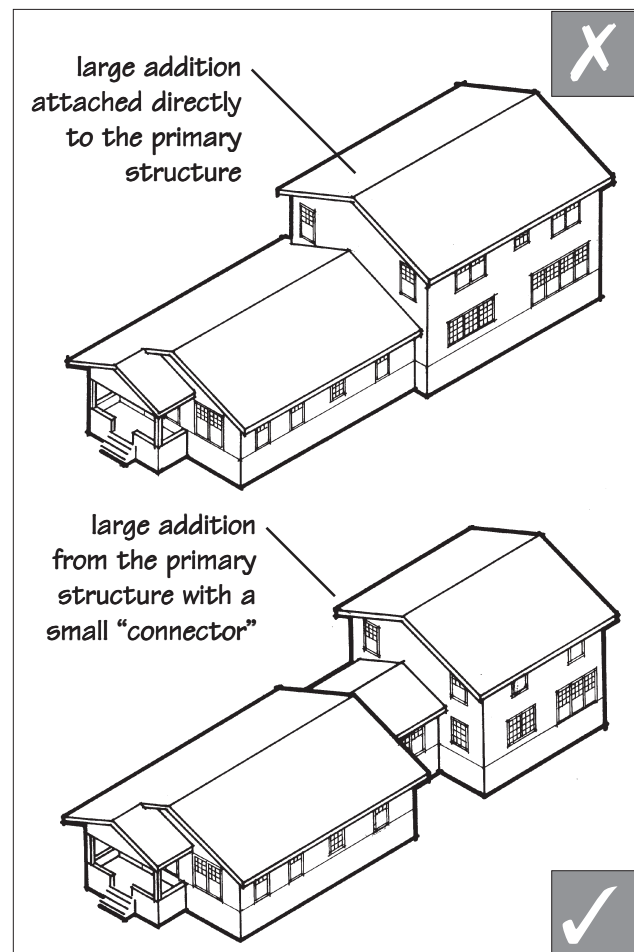
Design an addition to be compatible in size and scale to the main building. This addition appears to be in scale with the original building because it is separated with a smaller connecting structure. (Napa, CA)

4.5 An addition should be compatible in scale with the primary structure.

- An addition should relate to the historic house in mass, scale and form. It should be designed to remain subordinate to the main structure.
- While a smaller addition is visually preferable, if an addition would be significantly larger than the original building, one option is to separate it from the primary building, when feasible, and then link it with a smaller connecting structure.
- For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic house.
- An addition should be simple in design to prevent it from competing with the primary facade.



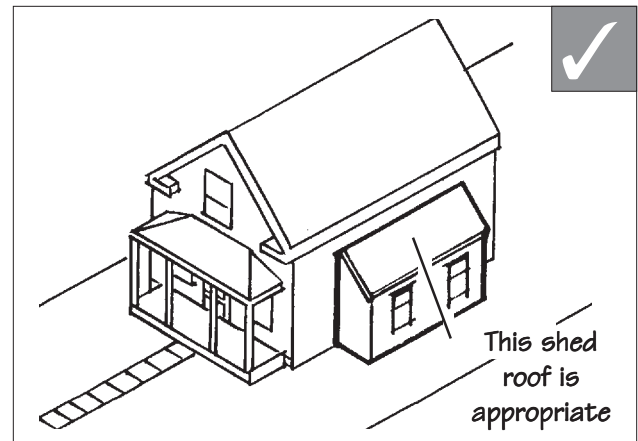
For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic house.



While a smaller addition is visually preferable, if an addition would be significantly larger than the original building, one option is to separate it from the primary building, when feasible, and then link it with a smaller connecting structure.

4.6 An addition should be compatible in character with the primary structure.

- For example, an addition that is more ornate than the original building would be out of character.
- An addition that seeks to imply an earlier period than that of the primary building also is inappropriate because it would confuse the history of the building.
- An addition should be made distinguishable from the historic building, even in subtle ways, such that the character of the original can be interpreted. A change in setbacks of the addition from the historic building, or applying a new trim board at the connection point can help define the addition.



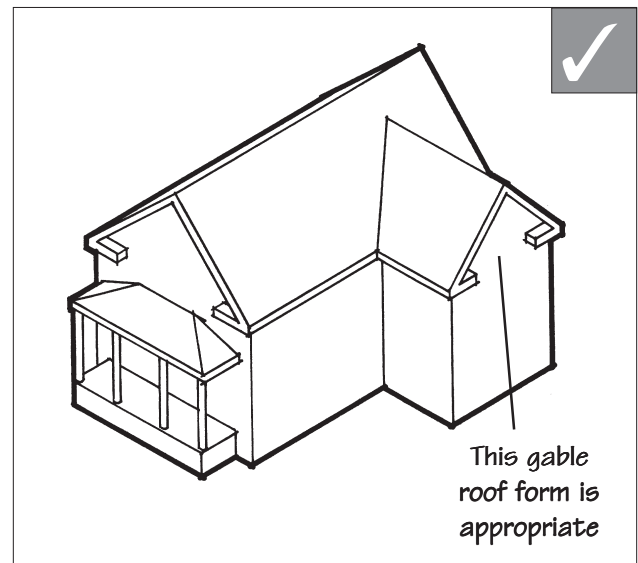
4.7 Use building materials that are compatible with those of the primary structure.

4.8 Use windows that are similar in character to those of the main structure.

- If the original windows were a wood, double-hung style, for example, then new windows that appear similar to them would be preferred.

4.9 The roof form of a new addition should be in character with and subordinate to that of the primary building.

- A basic rectangular building form is preferred.
- It is important to repeat the roof lines and slopes found on the primary structure. Typically, gable, hip and shed roofs are appropriate for residential-type building additions. Flat roofs may be appropriate for some corner store commercial buildings.



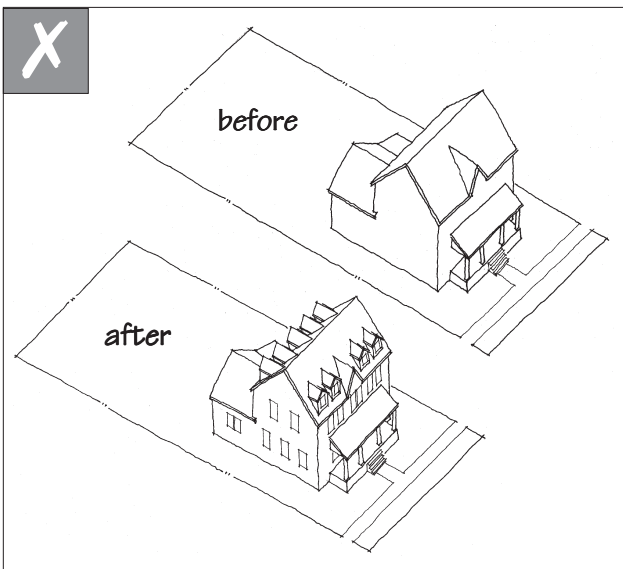
Use roof forms and roof pitches on additions that are compatible with the primary structure.



In some cases, a combination of space vertically and horizontally will minimize the visual impact and preserve the rear yard. (Boulder, CO)



A new dormer should remain subordinate to the historic roof in size and character. The dormers on the front and rear of this structure are too large and are inappropriate.



The number and size of dormers should not visually overwhelm the scale of the primary structure.

Roof-top Additions

Design a roof-top addition that does not visually overpower the primary structure.

Additional space can be created in a number of ways. It can be as simple as adding dormers to an attic; or, it can be as complex as adding a “pop-top,” or new floor. If these alterations are designed to be in proportion with the main structure, they may have a smaller design impact on the structure as compared to other approaches. In some cases, an additional level may be considered, usually to a one-story building. When this occurs, it should be designed such that the historic proportions of the main structure are retained.

4.10 When constructing a rooftop addition, keep the mass and scale subordinate to the primary building.

- The addition should not overhang the lower floors of the primary building.

4.11 Set a rooftop addition back from the front of the building.

- This will maintain the building’s original profile.
- A rooftop addition should be setback at least ten feet from the primary facade plane.

4.12 When adding a dormer, it should be in character with the primary structure’s design.

- A dormer should be subordinate to the overall roof mass and should be in scale with ones on similar historic structures.
- The dormer should be located below the ridge line of the primary structure.
- The number and size of dormers should not visually overwhelm the scale of the primary structure.
- Dormers are typically added to a structure to increase the amount of headroom in upper floors. Their design is traditionally as smaller elements. If significant increases in space are desired, do not consider oversized dormers. Rather, develop an addition to the rear of a structure.

Raising a Building

Raising a building may be considered only if the overall historic character will remain intact.

4.13 When raising a building for an addition, the height should remain substantially lower than that of the main floor of the building.

- In general, other alternatives, such as adding to the rear, should be considered first.
- A raised building should remain in proportion to similar buildings in the district.
- Raising a building should have historic precedence for the building style.

4.14 When raising a building, the visual impacts of any alterations must be minimized.

- For example, the design of a garage door must blend with the wall of the building.
- New window openings, in the raised portion of the structure, should align with original window openings on original part of the house.

4.15 Raising a building may be considered only if significant features are preserved.

- The historic porch design must remain intact.
- Minor alterations to porch stairs may be considered, but the overall design must be preserved.
- Porch stairs should also remain prominent. Do not add new stairs that effectively appear as ladders up to the main floor.



When raising a building, the visual impacts of any alterations must be minimized.

