

Chapter 4

New Construction, Additions, Demolition and Relocation

Introduction

The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Dover (Article 3, Section 21, Historic District) requires that all proposals for new construction, additions to existing buildings and demolition of buildings within the Dover Historic District zone must receive an Architectural Review Certificate from the Planning Commission, prior to the issuance of a building permit. An Architectural Review Certificate will be granted:

...if it is found that the architectural style, general design, height, bulk and setbacks, arrangement location and materials affecting the exterior appearance are generally in harmony with neighboring structures.

The purpose of this requirement is to encourage and accommodate new construction that preserves and enhances the existing character of the community. New construction and additions planned for any of the four contexts within the Dover Historic District should complement the historic fabric of the city and should have a positive visual and functional relationship to the historic buildings already in the District. New construction and additions should enhance the perceptual quality of the District.

These guidelines are intended to encourage contemporary design that is compatible with the character of the various historic contexts within the District. Unfortunately, good architectural design cannot be reduced to a formula or a recipe of elements. It must be recognized that strict adherence to the design principles presented in these guidelines is no guarantee that good buildings will result. Creativity, inspiration and innovation must still be brought to bear on the design of new buildings within the Dover Historic District, but the creativity must be directed and tempered by the principles of historic preservation. Conversely, if the design guidelines presented here are *not* followed, new construction will probably not be compatible with the visual character of the Dover Historic District, resulting in the progressive loss of that character.

Compatibility, as defined in these guidelines, does not pertain to literal reinterpretation or reiteration of historic buildings and styles. Rather, it refers to buildings that, in a broad sense, will "fit" into and blend with the visual character of the Dover Historic District. The wide range of styles and appearance of the buildings within the Dover Historic District make available to the designer of new

no way compromise the historic character of the existing structure on the lot. Ideally, the secondary structure should be located so as not to be visible from the street. In any case, secondary structures should be located as far to the rear of a lot as possible.

Secondary structures should be free-standing and not linked to the primary structure. The design guidelines above regarding proportions, massing, materials, form, orientation and siting apply to secondary structures as well.

Archeological Resources

The Secretary of the Interior's Standard #8 requires the preservation and protection of archeological resources. There is a strong likelihood that excavation for new construction in the Dover Historic District, especially in the Green, Loockerman and Capitol Square contexts, will involve archeological resources. While efforts should be made to consider and protect those resources, the extent to which this consideration will affect the evaluation of appropriateness will vary from project to project. Certainly, applicants for Architectural Review Certificates should be cognizant of a project's possible impact on archeologically sensitive areas. Excavations should be closely monitored by qualified individuals whenever possible, to confirm that valuable resources are not being lost. It should be noted that projects benefiting from either federal or state funding will require archeological mitigation.

Additions to Existing Buildings

Additions to existing buildings in the Dover Historic District include construction that

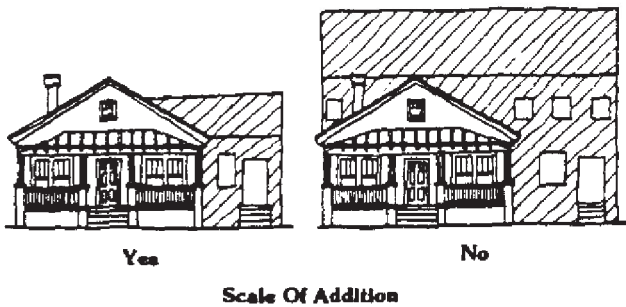
results in additional habitable space, as well as porches and decks. The design guidelines for new construction above apply to additions to existing buildings, with the exception that instead of compatibility and relationship to its neighbors, an addition has the original building as its strongest context and precedent. Historic additions older than fifty years, many of which are well done, are prevalent in the Dover Historic District and also may serve as precedents for the design of new additions.

In general, to conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards #9 and #10, an addition to a building in the Dover Historic District should be subordinate to the original building, and should read clearly as an addition. Standard #9 states that contemporary design and additions to existing properties should not destroy significant historic architectural fabric and should be compatible with the design of the property and neighborhood. Standard #10 states that wherever possible additions to structures shall be done so that future removal will leave unimpaired the essential form and integrity of the historic structure.

Specific guidelines to be considered in permit applications for additions to structures within the Dover Historic District are as follows:

Siting: Additions should be sited to have the least possible visual impact possible from the street. There should be no new additions to front facades, and additions to side facades should be held back as far as possible from the street, but one bay at a minimum. Rear additions are most appropriate, and, given the narrowness and depth of most residential lots in the Dover Historic District, often the most feasible.

Scale: An addition should be smaller than, and subordinate to, the original building.



Elevation of the first floor: The first floor elevation of an addition may be equal to or slightly lower than the original building, but should not be higher than that of the original building.

Floor-to-floor heights: Floor-to-floor heights should be equal to or no more than 10% less than the original building, but should not be taller than those of the original building.



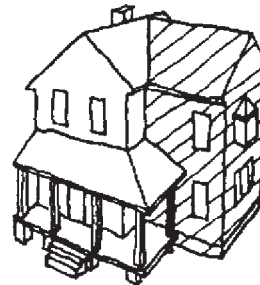
First Floor And Floor-To-Floor Heights Of Additions

Massing: The massing of an addition--the relationship of solid-to-void--should complement, but not necessarily be the same as, the original building. For example, a glassed-in porch on a rear facade may be a "lighter" variation of the original facade massing. However, a solidly infilled rear porch is not appropriate.

Orientation: The addition should be located, planned and detailed so as not to confuse the dominant historic orientation of the original building. The addition may or may not have its own hierarchy of facades, but it should not

have the effect of creating a primary facade out of a secondary facade. The addition should not assert itself visually, but should be screened from the street as much as possible.

Proportions: The proportions of the addition should be complementary to the proportions of the original building. A long, low addition to a vertical house might not be as appropriate as a two-story ell at the back of the building. The addition should be smaller in proportion to the original building, both in its overall square footage and in its footprint. Ideally, the addition should not exceed approximately half of the original building's total floor area or footprint.



Appropriately Proportioned Addition

Materials: An addition may be made of the same material as the original building, or it may be made of subordinate material (i.e. wood is subordinate to brick which is subordinate to stone). A brick building should have a brick or wood addition, but a wood house should not have a brick addition. The material restrictions in the section on new construction, above, apply to additions to existing construction.

Forms: Similar to proportions, the form of additions should be complementary to the overall form of the house. A shed-roof addition is appropriate on a gable-roofed or hip-roofed structure, as would be a gable or hip roof. Flat roofs are rarely appropriate for additions in the Dover Historic District.



Forms Of Additions

The following are additional guidelines for additions to existing construction:

- New front porches should not be added to a historic building without precedent for a porch.
- It is inappropriate to enclose front porches.
- Handicapped access ramps should not be located on the primary facades of historic buildings, unless they can be located and designed to be unobtrusive. Regardless of where they are located, the sloped run of the ramp should be screened such that the slope of the ramp does not detract from the horizontal elements of the building to which it is attached. A new ramp should be constructed in a manner that does not require the removal of historic fabric, and does not damage the existing building. The ramp should be constructed in a manner such that its future removal will not damage existing historic fabric.
- Roof-top additions should not be constructed. These would disturb the

proportions of the building and the historic form of the roof.

- The addition of dormer windows and skylights is not recommended, but may be acceptable if kept to the rear of the building, not visible to the street.
- The design of the addition should make clear what is new and what is original. This may be done in a variety of ways, including simplifying of details, changing materials, slightly altering proportions, or even slightly varying paint color.
- Decks are inappropriate on front or side facades. When decks are constructed on rear facades, they should be screened from the street with landscape materials.
- The architectural style of an addition should not be older than the style of the existing building.

Demolition

The pressure to demolish buildings within any historic district is a regrettable fact of life. Either through catastrophic damage or through years of neglect, there are and will continue to be situations when a building is deemed beyond repair and "not worth" preserving. As the Dover Historic District continues to attract new residents and businesses, there will be pressure to "make way" for the "progress" that new construction is believed by some to represent.

Whereas issues of design guidelines for preservation and new construction are driven by architectural and aesthetic considerations, demolition, especially of repairable structures,

is more frequently an economic issue. Indeed, the only other legitimate reason for consideration of demolition is if the building poses a threat to public safety. In considering applications for demolition, especially those based on economic or development considerations, the City must weigh issues beyond matters of architectural appropriateness, for demolition of an historic building in an Historic District is rarely if ever appropriate. Rather, the City must be convinced that all possible means of saving the building have been exhausted.

It should be noted that the City of Dover is trying to prevent unnecessary demolition by giving the Historic District Commission the authority to determine when "Demolition by Neglect" is occurring. "Demolition by Neglect" is defined as "improper maintenance or lack of maintenance of a building, structure or object which results in substantial and widespread deterioration of the building, structure or object which threatens the likelihood of preservation and which presents a threat to the public safety, health and welfare of the immediate community." Once the Historic District Commission determines that a property is in a state of Demolition by Neglect, it can direct the building inspector to take actions under the City's Dangerous Building Code or Housing Code to order repairs. It is the responsibility of all citizens to look for and report instances of Demolition by Neglect to the City of Dover Historic District Commission.

The following criteria should be evaluated in considering applications for the demolition of historic buildings within the Dover Historic District:

- To determine the financial implications of maintaining a property versus demolishing it, the City may ask an

applicant to submit documentation pertaining to differential costs, structural soundness, suitability for rehabilitation, estimated market value of the property as is and after renovation for continued use, economic feasibility of rehabilitation, purchase price, income, and cash flow information (relating to the property only) and any other information considered necessary.

- Regardless of economic issues, the relative significance of the building slated for demolition should be evaluated. If the building is not considered a contributing structure in the District, then its demolition may not be objectionable. If a building is significant, then even a finding of economic hardship may not be sufficient to allow demolition. Some buildings, such as the Richardson mansion, the Parke-Ridgely House, the Rose Cottage, etc., are so significant that extraordinary measures should be made to delay or prevent their demolition. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is always preferable to demolition and new construction.
- In development-related applications, the City should review schematic plans for the new structure, in order to help weigh the virtues of the new versus what exists.
- Further, in order to provide some slight mitigation of the effects of unavoidable demolition of historic structures within the Dover Historic District, owners should be required to provide adequate recordation of a property. The extent of such recordation would depend on the

significance of the property. At the least, archival photographs should be produced for every historic building that is lost to demolition within the District. When the demolition of an extremely significant building is unavoidable, measured drawings should be produced that comply with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

- Lots left vacant by demolition should be treated in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic context. In the residential and commercial contexts, a 5' high opaque barrier should be constructed at the building line, either a fence or plant materials or both. Parking should not be permitted on vacant lots. Community gardens or parks should be encouraged.

Relocation of Existing Buildings

Moving historic buildings out of, into or within the Historic District should be discouraged. The removal of historic buildings from the District has the same effect as demolition on the historic character of the District. Moving historic buildings within the District confuses the actual history of the District. Moving historic buildings into the District falsifies the existing historic record by adding a building that does not belong to either time or place. Relocating a building, however, is always preferable to its demolition.