

Chapter VI: Guidelines for New Construction and Alterations to Non-Contributing Structures

These Guidelines shall apply to all new construction in the South Main Street Historic District, except additions to historic structures. The city's Historic Landmarks Preservation and Architectural Review Board will use the Guidelines for All New Construction in formal reviews of proposed changes to these undeveloped properties. They are also for use by property owners and their architects when developing designs for the addition of new secondary structures, except where the Guidelines note otherwise.

The historic district conveys a sense of a past time and place, which is retained through preservation of existing structures. One of the purposes of design review is to assure that any potential negative visual impact of new construction is eliminated or minimized. In the best situation, new construction can aid in the understanding of a district by strengthening the sense of visual continuity. Few opportunities exist for such "infill" in the District. However, even one large, inappropriate building impede one's ability to interpret the historic character. Therefore, the design of new construction must be carefully considered.

Designing a building to fit within a historic district requires careful thought. First, it is important to realize that, while a historic district conveys a certain sense of time and place associated with its history, it also remains dynamic, with alterations to existing structures and construction of new buildings occurring over time.

Designating a district does not freeze it in time, but it does assure that, when new building does occur, it will be in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of the area.

A new building may do so by drawing upon basic ways of building that make up a part of the character of an individual historic district. Such features upon which to draw include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street and its basic mass, form and materials. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally in the area, visual compatibility results.

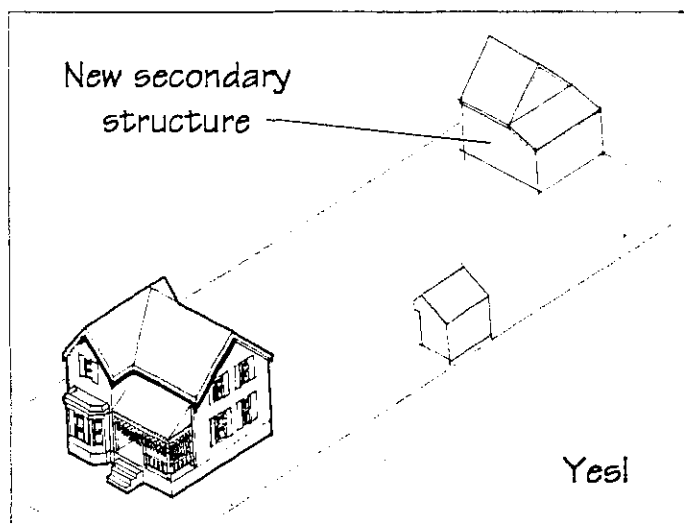
Designs that accurately conveys the styles of buildings seen historically in the District also may be employed. Care must be used in this case to assure that the basic form, mass and scaling of the new building is similar to that of the historic references upon which the design may draw, in addition to using details from the historic period. If not, the character of the historic style may be mis-conveyed and the continuity of the District may be weakened.

Site Planning for a New Building

Site features such as building setbacks, walkways, fences, landscaping, and gardens are all significant elements of the South Main Street Historic District. It is the goal of the District not to interfere with the use of such elements and to maintain the visual continuity which they create. Sites in the District which are available for new development should retain historic site features or they should be replaced in kind. New construction projects shall do their best to include such character-defining features so as to become an integral element within the District itself.

- 6.1 With a new primary building, create a similar relationship of the structure to its site and the street.**
 - a. Orient a new building parallel to the lot lines, maintaining the traditional pattern of the District.
 - b. Avoid destroying the perception and definition of public and private space, such as a landscaped tree-lawn, front yard edge and front yard.
- 6.2 On a previously undeveloped site, align a new structure at the sidewalk edge.**
 - a. An exception is where buildings in the immediate context are set back from the street. In such a case, the new building should align with its neighbors.
- 6.3 Orient a primary entrance towards the street.**
- 6.4 Orient a new secondary building similar to that of other, historic secondary buildings.**
 - a. Orient a secondary structure parallel to the lot lines as well.
 - b. Locate a secondary structure at or near the rear of the lot.
- 6.5 Driveways and curb-cuts are not allowed from South Main Street.**

- 6.6** Shield security and site lighting so as not to be noticeable from the street.
- 6.7** Minimize the unpleasant visual appearance of service areas.
- New structures which require service areas, due to code compliance for example, should place them at the rear of the structure out of sight from public ways.
 - Service areas which must be to the side of the structure should be appropriately shielded so as not to distract from the character of the District.
- 6.8** Preserve original landscape features, such as walkways, patios, walls, fences, street trees, special plantings and other ornamental site features, when feasible.
- Respect existing original site features in planning new buildings.
- 6.9** When walkways and patios are removed or destroyed during construction, select replacement materials that are compatible with the historic character of the site.
- Walks shall be of select common red brick, random irregular fine grained sandstone, limestone or field stone on concrete or granular fill.
- 6.10** When walls and planters are removed or destroyed during construction, select replacement materials that are compatible with the historic character of the site.
- Retaining walls shall be faced with select common or water struck red brick or quarry-face limestone with 1/2 inch minimum raked or brushed joints.
 - Concrete shall not be used.
- 6.11** When fences and gates are removed or destroyed during construction, select replacement materials that are compatible with the historic character of the site.
- Consider a vertical board fence made up of 6 or 8 inch wide boards with or without a molded top rail.
 - Consider a wood picket fence of 2-1/2 inch face size, 5 inch centers and a pointed or molded top rail.
 - Consider a horizontal board fence with 6 or 8 inch wide horizontal rails and the same size board as a top rail which is laid flat.
 - Horizontal board fences should not be used in the front of dwellings.
 - Consider a wrought iron fence with 7/8 inch square or 1 inch square balusters, 5 inches on center, with an iron top rail or ornamental cast iron baluster.
 - Wrought iron fences should only be used in connection with 19th century structures.



A new secondary building should be oriented similar to that of other historic secondary buildings.

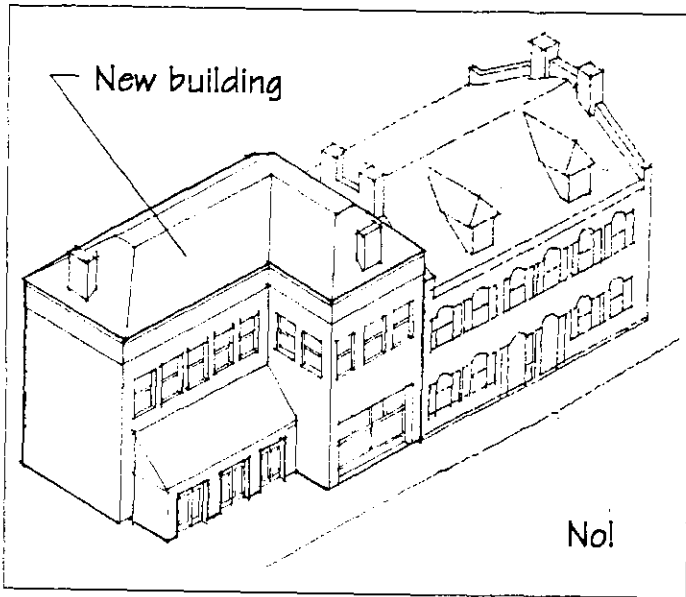
- 6.12** When landscaping is removed or destroyed during construction, select replacement materials that are compatible with the historic character of the site.
- Plant materials shall be of those types native to the St. Charles area. Hawthorne, Dogwood, Red Bud, Crab Apple, Sycamore, Maple, Ash and Sweet Gum trees are all acceptable.
 - Consult with the City Parks Department to arrange for the proper installation of planting materials and to select appropriate species.

Building Form, Mass and Scale

The form, mass and scale of a building are some of the most important design issues in the historic district. The traditional scale of the District dominates much of the neighborhood and this enhances the "pedestrian friendly" character of the street. The form, mass and scale seen currently in the District lends itself to a visual continuity which must not be destroyed by alterations, additions or new construction.

6.13 A new buildings shall appear similar in scale to historic structures found traditionally in the area.

- a. A building shall have a simple rectangular mass as its primary form.
- b. Break up the mass of a larger structure into a grouping of "modules," each of which is within scale with buildings seen traditionally.
- c. The primary ridge line of a structure shall not exceed the typical maximum length of those seen on historic buildings in the District.
- d. A single wall plane in the front facade shall not exceed the typical maximum width of that seen on comparable historic buildings in the District.



The new building seen here does not relate to its neighbor. Although it is similar in height, the L-plan and floor-to-floor heights are inconsistent with historic examples.

6.14 A new building shall appear similar in height to those seen traditionally in the District.

- a. Historically, most buildings were one and two stories in height.
- b. The building front shall not exceed two stories.
- c. See the Code of Ordinances of the City of St. Charles, Section 156.039.1(D), for the maximum height limits.

6.15 Employ floor-to-floor heights which appear similar to those seen historically.

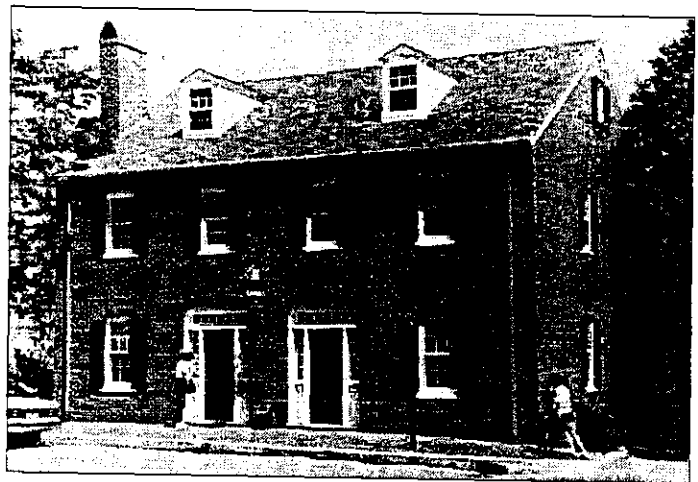
- a. In particular, the first floor windows should appear similar in height to those seen traditionally.

6.16 Maintain the historic solid-to-void ratio seen traditionally in the District.

- a. Depending upon the type of structure (i.e. Federal, Victorian commercial or Victorian residential).
- b. For Federal-influenced buildings the solid-to-void ratio should be 3:1.
- c. For Victorian commercial buildings the solid-to-void ratio should be 1:2.
- d. For Victorian residential buildings the solid-to-void ratio should be 2:1.

6.17 A secondary structure shall be similar in form, mass and scale to secondary structures traditionally seen in the District.

- a. A garage, for example, should reflect traditional secondary structure design (i.e. carriage houses) despite their planned use.



Appropriate: A new building shall appear similar in form, mass and scale to those seen traditionally in the District, as this one does.

Roofs

Typical roof shapes for historic buildings in St. Charles are gabled, and hipped, as well as flat for some commercial buildings. In some cases, roofs are complex and may include several of these types plus dormers. Most historic roofs overhang, creating distinguishable shadows. These eaves are also a location for important detailing such as brackets, cornices and bargeboards. Such roof details should also be seen in new construction.

6.18 Use a roof form similar to that used historically.

- a. The roof angle must be similar to that used historically.
- b. Maintain the perceived line and orientation of the roof to the street.
- c. Incorporate historic features such as brackets, cornices, parapets, bargeboards and gable-end shingles.

6.19 A skylight is not permitted to be installed on front portions of a roof without historic precedence.

- a. A flat skylight mounted flush with the roof may be considered on other, less visible sides.
- b. A bubbled or domed skylight is prohibited.

6.20 Match a roof on a secondary structure with the roof form of the primary structure.

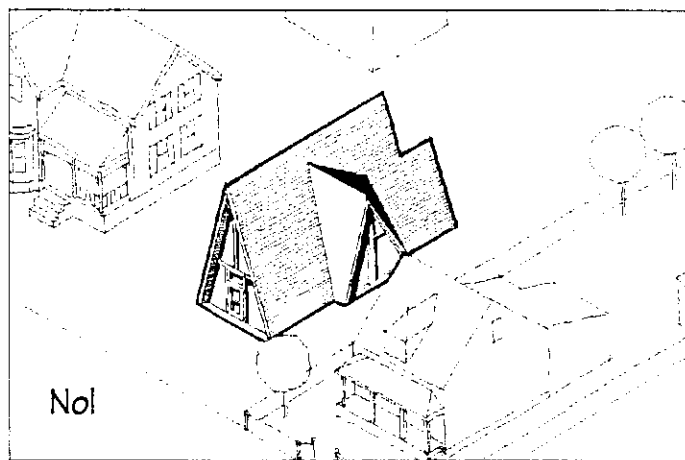
6.21 An exotic roof form is inappropriate.

6.22 The roof must appear to be in the same manner as that of historic structures.

- a. Use materials similar to those used historically. Low profile asphalt shingles, for example, are appropriate in place of wood shingles.
- b. Maintain a similar color. Gray, black and brown are typical of many historic roof materials. Consider the neighborhood context for color.

6.23 Eave depths shall be similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood.

6.24 Using down spouts and gutters that are in character with those employed historically is encouraged.



An exotic roof form is inappropriate.

Architectural Details

Architectural details play several roles in defining the character of a building; they add visual interest, define certain building styles and types and often showcase superior craftsmanship and architectural design. Features such as window hoods, brackets, columns, mouldings and cornices are all typically part of historic structures. These same elements, in one way or another, should be incorporated into the design of infill construction.

6.25 Architectural features that provide visual interest to pedestrians are encouraged.

- a. Building facades without ornamentation are inappropriate. It is part of the character of the District to have stylistic elements (i.e. cornices, pediments, brackets, dormers, joined chimneys, wooden shutters, transom and side lights, etc.) seen on the historic structures.

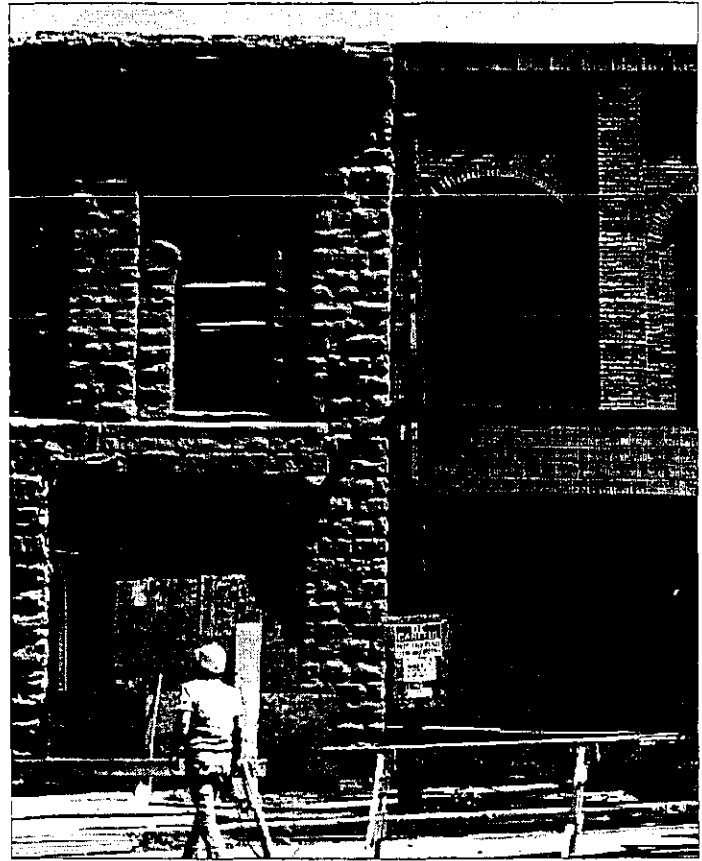
6.26 Maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block, including building cornices.

- a. This alignment occurs because many of the buildings are similar in height.
- b. Window sills, moldings and cornices are among those elements that may be seen to align.
- c. These elements shall align, wherever possible, to similar elements on adjacent historic properties.
- d. For example, in the context of a set of Victorian era houses, align roof and porch eaves with similar elements on nearby historic buildings.
- e. In the context of Federal-influenced buildings, roof lines, align balconies and windows with neighboring Federal era structures.

6.27 A literal imitation of historic features is permitted.

- a. Use only materials and details similar in character to those employed historically on similar buildings.
- b. Using the same kind of material as the original is preferred. A substitute material is acceptable if the form and design of the substitute itself conveys the visual appearance of the original material. For example, a metal window frame may be considered if it accurately conveys the dimension and profile of the original wood window. The finish shall match the original in appearance as closely as is possible.

6.28 A new architectural detail should relate to comparable historic elements in general size, shape, scale and finish.



Appropriate: A contemporary interpretation of historic details are permitted. The new element should relate to comparable features in general size, shape, scale and finish.

Materials

The materials used to construct a new building should appear similar to those used historically. Brick is the most common material for historic buildings in St. Charles; however, stone and wood were also used.

6.29 Materials shall appear similar in character to those used historically.

- a. Using materials that are the same as those employed historically is preferred.
- b. Substitute materials may be used for individual building elements, but shall not be used for the primary building material. For instance, brick must be similar in size to that used historically.
- c. New materials must have a demonstrated durability in this setting.
- d. Materials must be used in a manner similar to that used traditionally.

6.30 Simple material finishes are encouraged.

- a. Matte finishes are preferred.
- b. Polished stone, for example, is inappropriate as a primary material.

Street Facades

The front of a new building should be composed to appear similar in character to that of historic structures in its immediate context.

6.31 Incorporate the following character-defining elements of the street facade in all new, Federal-influenced structures.

- a. Use 6/6 double-hung windows with operable shutters.
- b. Galleries may be considered.
- c. For primary entrances, use a single wide door with transom and sidelights.
- d. Dormers may be used.
- e. First floor commercial uses shall not incorporate large expanses of glass not suitable to the Federal-influenced vernacular.
- f. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*

6.32 Incorporate the following character-defining elements of the street facade in all new, Victorian commercial structures..

- a. Recessed entries and large expanses of glass (possibly broken into multiple lights).
- b. Ornate cornice and midbelt cornice.
- c. Tall second floor 6/6 double hung windows.
- d. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*

6.33 Incorporate the following character-defining elements of the street facade in all new, Victorian commercial structures.

- a. Employ brackets, turned posts and other special details.
- b. Front yard setbacks should not be cluttered with inappropriate commercial signage or products.
- c. Maintain residential character despite a possible commercial use.
- d. Windows and projecting bays shall not incorporate larger expanses of glass or other recent commercial structure innovations.
- e. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*

6.34 A secondary structure shall not be designed with a storefront and therefore not positioned on the lot in such a manner requiring a storefront.

- a. Locate a secondary structure to the rear of a lot.

Doors and Entries

Front doors and primary entrances are among the most important elements of any building. The ability for the pedestrian to easily move between the street and their destination is of utmost importance in the District. Primary doors and entrances on a new building should relate to historic structures in terms of their proportion, detailing, materials and location.

- 6.35 Clearly identify the primary entrance into the building.**
- a. The primary entrance should be easily identified from the street.
- 6.36 A new door shall reflect the proportions of historic doors found in the District.**
- a. A door shall appear to be similar to historic doors found throughout the District.
 - b. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.37 For a new door, use a design similar to those found historically on comparable buildings.**
- a. A door should be trimmed in wood. Use trim with a dimension similar to that used historically.
 - b. Use door lights which are similar in number and size as seen on historic buildings.
 - c. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*

Windows

Windows, along with the elements that surround them and their relationship to one another, are among the most important character-defining elements of a historic structure. A new building, which needs to visually appear similar to historic structures, should incorporate such window sizes and location into the design.

- 6.38 A windows shall be similar in character to those of historic buildings in the District.**
- a. If a window historically had multiple panes, windows on new buildings must reflect this.
 - b. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.39 A window with vertical emphasis is encouraged.**
- a. A general rule is that the height of the window should be twice the dimension of the width.
- 6.40 Use materials that appear similar to those seen historically.**
- a. New windows should be of similar design and construction of historic windows (i.e. wood). However, other materials may be considered if the appearance is similar to that of the historically significant wood window in dimension, profile, and finish.
 - b. Windows should be trimmed in wood. This trim must have a dimension similar to that used historically.
 - c. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.41 Dormers shall be in scale with those used in the District.**
- a. Dormers shall be subordinate to the roof itself, and lower than the ridge line.
 - b. Use dormers only in instances where they would have been used historically.
 - c. *See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.42 A window shall be simple in shape.**
- a. Odd window shapes such as octagons, circles, diamonds, etc. are prohibited.

Balconies and Galleries

The balconies and galleries seen on the primary facade of many commercial buildings throughout South Main Street have become an integral part of the visual continuity of the District. Historically, these balconies and galleries were seen on the Federal-influenced vernacular buildings, although several have been recently added or reconstructed. New commercial buildings constructed in similar styles might want to reflect the use of these balconies and galleries.

- 6.43 Balconies and galleries, as a part of new structures, shall be similar to those seen traditionally in form and detail.**
- Use materials that are similar to originals.
 - Decorative elements that are not known to have been used historically are inappropriate.
 - See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.44 Balconies or galleries shall be compatible with the primary structure.**
- Using similar material is appropriate. In some cases, a simpler, less noticeable material also may be appropriate.
 - They must be in proportion to the primary structure.
- 6.45 Balconies or galleries shall remain subordinate to the primary structure.**
- Its materials, finish and details must not call attention away from the primary structure.
- 6.46 Indicate the construction date on a new balcony or gallery so as not to confuse the history of the District.**

Porches

Porches are a uniquely residential feature. A porch is often one of the most important character-defining elements of the primary facade of a historic house. New residential structures should consider incorporating porches in their design in order to maintain the synergy of the District.

- 6.47 Build porches to match original porches in form and detail.**
- Use materials that are similar to originals.
 - Decorative elements that are not known to have been used historically are inappropriate.
 - See Guidelines for Historic Properties.*
- 6.48 Porches must be compatible with the primary structure.**
- Using similar material is appropriate. In some cases, a simpler, less noticeable material also may be appropriate.
 - Build porches in proportion to the primary structure.
- 6.49 Porches shall remain subordinate to the primary structure.**
- Its materials, finish and details must not call attention away from the primary structure.
- 6.50 Do not enclose a porch with opaque materials.**
- Enclosing a porch with any material is inappropriate.
 - A porch should remain open to the air.
- 6.51 Indicate the construction date on a new porch so as not to confuse the history of the District.**