
Chapter 12. New Construction in Historic Districts

These guidelines apply to the design of new principal buildings in the City's local historic districts. They apply in addition to specific historic district design guidelines for historic districts in PART III.

Creative solutions that are compatible with the established character of a historic neighborhood are strongly encouraged. Designs that seek to contrast with the existing context, simply for the sake of being different, however, are unlikely to be compatible and are discouraged. The goal of the guidelines in this chapter is to protect the historic and architectural character of each neighborhood, while allowing new, compatible design.

The Design Approach

Designing a building to fit within a historic district requires careful thought. Initially, 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 and additions to existing structures and the construction of new buildings occurring over time.

Designating a district recognizes this dynamic. It ensures that, when new building does occur, it will be in a manner that reinforces the basic visual and historical characteristics of the area. This does not mean, however, that new buildings should look old. Imitating historic styles found in a historic district is generally discouraged. It is preferable to be able to perceive the evolution of the street and neighborhood, discerning the apparent age of each building by its architectural expression and method of construction. Placing a building's architectural style in relative chronological order helps in interpreting the development of the neighborhood.

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These design guidelines apply to all new construction in historic districts. The General Issues section and the guidelines for the specific historic district in PART III will also apply.

A new building should relate to the essential characteristics of the district and setting and complement the character with creative yet compatible new design. To do so relies upon reading and understanding the patterns underlying the character of each district and each setting, as well as the role of time in creating and maturing these patterns, evolving the urban landscape. Such characteristics would include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street and its scale, height, massing, 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.

These basic design relationships are more fundamental than the details of individual architectural styles. It is possible, therefore, to be compatible with the historic context of the district, while creating a design that is identifiable as being newer than the historic buildings of the area.

The design guidelines that follow encourage contemporary creativity. At the same time, they promote new design that relates to the patterns and characteristics of the historic district.

The principal design features that help a building integrate with its context in any historic district in the city are described in the sections that follow, and in the two design criteria evaluations at the end of the chapter. More specific points about the unique character of each of the local historic districts follow in PART III of the preservation handbook.

Site Design Guidelines

Street and Block Patterns

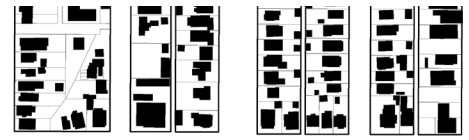
Historic settlement patterns, evident in street and alley plans and the form of the urban block, establish the distinctive identity of each of the City's historic districts, and the traditional 'grain' of the city. These patterns effectively create the 'infra-structure' of the character of the district. They are characteristics that should be respected and preserved. The detailed configuration of the pattern of streets and alleys varies for each district and frequently through the layout of each street block, often creating sub-areas within that individual district. These street plans, with their internal network of streets and alleys, establish the manner in which primary structures are sited and oriented. This pattern also influences the disposition of secondary structures and landscape features on the lot and the street block.

The street block, often with its network of secondary streets or alleys, provides a common, unifying framework for the pattern, scale, dimensions and orientation of the individual lots, and consequently the houses. Lot size often varies considerably, with smaller lots and houses being a common characteristic of the interior of many of the City's large blocks. The contrast in character between the exterior and the interior of some blocks establishes a variety in lot and building scale as a principal characteristic of several districts.

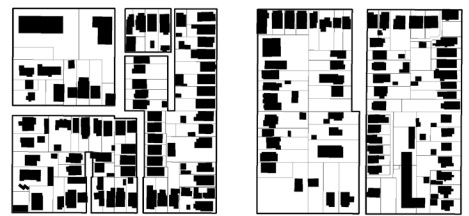
These ‘urban framework’ patterns are also influenced by topography. In The Avenues, University and part of Capitol Hill districts, the grid continues into notable inclines, creating interesting streetscapes and views as the houses step up or down the hill. In older sections of Capitol Hill, the street and block patterns respond more closely to the contours of the landscape, creating dramatic and unexpected streetscapes and relationships between buildings. The common patterns of lot and building facing the street are still maintained. See comparative layout plans (to scale) of four of the city historic districts.

12.1 The plan of alleys and streets in a historic district is essential to its historic character and should be preserved.

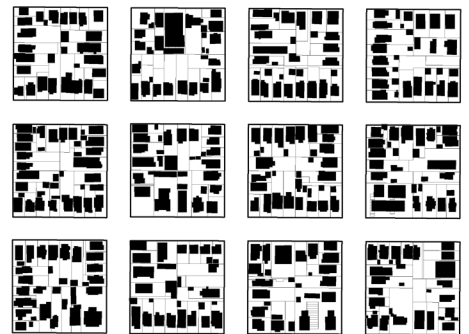
- Most historic parts of the city developed in traditional grid patterns, with the exception of Capitol Hill which has a more irregular street pattern.
- In Capitol Hill, the street system initially followed the steep topography, and later a grid system was overlaid with limited regard for the topography.
- The grid plan also takes different forms, with for example the much tighter pattern of urban blocks in the Avenues being one its distinctive characteristics and attractions.
- Closing streets or alleys and aggregating lots into larger properties would adversely affect the integrity of the historic street pattern.
- Refer to the specific design guidelines for the historic district for additional detail. (PART III of these guidelines).



University Historic District



Central City Historic District



The Avenues Historic District



Capitol Hill Historic District

PART II Design Guidelines

12.2 The role of the street pattern, including the layout of the individual block, as a unifying framework and setting for a variety of lot sizes and architecture, should be retained.

- The orientation, scale and form of a building has a role in supporting a coherent street pattern.

Building Placement and Orientation

In the historic neighborhoods of the city, the house tends to be situated towards the front of the lot with most of the private open space behind. Side yard space is usually limited and shared between the properties. Front setbacks may vary on occasion but tend to be within a well-defined range, establishing a common visual relationship between buildings of differing scale and character. The shared sense of openness enjoyed by residents in front and behind the property relies upon the situation of the buildings and coincidental private open space.

Buildings also tend to be sited in alignment with their lots, creating both a defined pattern of frontages and a sense of visual rhythm established by the space between the buildings. The frontage of the building also tends to be the focus of the greatest architectural interest.



Orientation of porch and entrance towards the street helps to integrate new design into the street setting.

Traditionally, a typical building had its primary entrance oriented to the street. Frequently this was accompanied by a front porch designed to create a semi-private space and functioning as a social interface with the street. This characteristic established a “pedestrian-friendly” quality, encouraging walking and social engagement. In most cases, similar entry ways and front porches were evenly spaced along a block, creating a rhythm that also contributed to the sense of visual continuity in a neighborhood.

Where they presently exist, these characteristics should be maintained in new design. Locating the entrance of a new building in a manner that is similar to those seen traditionally is a means of doing so. The front porch is often the characteristic element that reinforces this common pattern of orientation, as well as helping to retain a sense of human scale.

12.3 When designing a new building, the historic settlement patterns of the district and context should be respected.

- A new building should be situated on its site in a manner similar to the historic buildings in the area.
- This includes consideration of building setbacks, orientation and open space. (See also the individual district guidelines in PART III.)

12.4 The front and the entrance of a primary structure should orient to the street.

- A new building should be oriented parallel to the lot lines, maintaining the traditional grid pattern of the block.
- An exception might be where early developments have introduced irregular or curvilinear streets, such as in Capitol Hill.

Building Scale Guidelines

Mass & Scale

The mass and scale of a building are also important design issues in a historic district. The traditional scale of single-family houses is a characteristic of most of the neighborhoods. This similarity of scale, although it can range from single story to over two stories, also enhances the pedestrian-friendly character of many streets.

Often, earlier buildings were smaller than typical more recent houses; nonetheless, a new building should, to the greatest extent possible, maintain this established scale. While new buildings and additions may be anticipated to be larger than many of the earlier structures, new construction should maintain a compatibility with the established scale of the context. The visual continuity and cohesion of the district should be maintained.

12.5 A new building should be designed to reinforce a sense of human scale.

- A new building may convey a sense of human scale by employing techniques such as these:
 - Using building materials that are of traditional dimensions.
 - Providing a porch, in form and in depth, that is similar to that seen traditionally
 - Using a building mass that is similar in size to those seen traditionally.
 - Using a solid-to-void (wall to window/door) ratio that is similar to that seen traditionally.
 - Using window openings that are similar in size to those seen traditionally.



The massing of the building can be effectively integrated with the topography to reduce the scale of a new building.



Front and side facing gables, single story porch, materials and fenestration are characteristics compatible with the setting.



Traditional forms, including tall front porch, are used with materials to convey a strong sense of human scale.



A group of new dwellings are staggered along the street frontage, with front entrances, balconies, porches and stairs emphasizing rhythm and human scale.



Although distinctly different in design composition, the building in the foreground achieves a compatibility with its context in terms of massing and scale.



The massing of this building is designed to mediate between the scale of the adjacent single story and two story buildings, increasing in height incrementally as it steps back from the street frontage.

12.6 A new building should appear similar in scale to the established scale of the current street block.

- Larger masses should be subdivided into smaller “modules” similar in size to buildings seen traditionally, wherever possible.
- The scale of principal elements such as porches and window bays is important in establishing and continuing a compatibility in building scale.

12.7 The roof form of a new building should be designed to respect the range of forms and massing found within the district.

- This can help to maintain the sense of human scale characteristic of the area.
- The variety often inherent in the context can provide a range of design options for compatible new roof forms.

12.8 A front facade should be similar in scale to those seen traditionally in the block.

- The front facade should include a one-story element, such as a porch or other single-story feature characteristic of the context or the neighborhood.
- The primary plane of the front facade should not appear taller than those of typical historic structures in the block.
- A single wall plane should not exceed the typical maximum facade width in the district.

Height

A similarity in building heights also contributes to the visual relationships and continuity of an individual district. In this context, the height of a new building should not overwhelm historic structures in the immediate setting, and should fall within the range of height defined by historic structures in the district. Similarities in heights among prominent building features, such as porches and cornices, are equally important. These features often appear to align along the block and contribute to the sense of visual rhythm and continuity.

12.9 Building heights should appear similar to those found historically in the district.

12.10 The back side of a building may be taller than the established norm if the change in scale would not be perceived from the public way.



The height and width of these buildings equate with the scale of the immediate setting, while adopting an alternative front and side gabled form.

Width

In many of the districts, buildings were designed to be similar in width to nearby structures, often echoing similar lot widths. This helps to establish a relatively uniform scale for the neighborhood and, when these buildings were evenly spaced along a block, a sense of rhythm resulted. In such a case, the perceived width of a new building should appear similar in size to that of historic buildings in the neighborhood in order to help maintain this sense of visual rhythm and continuity. For example, if a new building would be wider than those seen historically, it should be divided into modules that appear similar in width to traditional buildings.

12.11 A new building should appear similar in width to that established by nearby historic buildings.

- If a building would be wider overall than structures seen historically, the facade should be divided into subordinate planes that are similar in width to those of the context.
- Stepping back sections of wall plane helps to create an impression of similar width in such a case.



The width of this building reflects building width and scale in this setting, while the strong horizontal emphasis of one street frontage is counter-balanced by the vertical emphasis of the modules of the other frontage.



The solid to void ratio here closely reflects that characteristic of the setting and the historic neighborhood.



Despite the contrasting geometric modules of this building, the subdivision of the fenestration helps to convey a sense of human scale and to integrate the design with setting.

Solid to Void Ratio

In most historic residential districts, a typical building appeared to be a rectangular solid, with holes “punched” in the walls for windows and doors. Most buildings had relatively similar amounts of glass, resulting in often fairly uniform solid to void ratio. This ratio on a new building, the amount of facade that is devoted to wall surface, as compared to that developed as openings, (known as the ‘solid to void ratio’) should be similar to that of historic buildings within the neighborhood.

12.12 The ratio of wall-to-window (solid to void) should be similar to that found in historic structures in the district.

- Large surfaces of glass are usually inappropriate in residential structures.
- Divide large glass surfaces into smaller windows.

Building Form Guidelines

Form and Visual Emphasis

While there may be great variety inherent in the architectural styles and composition in most districts, a similarity of building forms contributes to a sense of visual continuity and identity. In order to maintain this sense of relationship and visual continuity, a new building should have basic roof and building forms that are similar to those seen traditionally. Overall facade proportions also should be in harmony with the range found within the immediate area.

A building can also be categorized by its visual emphasis. This might be vertical, as found in for example Queen Anne or Victorian styles, horizontal as with the bungalow type, or more balanced in for example the Foursquare. Frequently, a street block might be composed of buildings reflecting this complete range.

The emphasis adopted in the design of a new building should be informed by an evaluation of its context. Look at the neighboring buildings on both sides of the street. From this review identify how a new design can both reflect and complement existing character. An increase in scale, for example, can be more effectively integrated using a design composition with more vertical emphasis.

12.13 Building forms should be similar to those seen traditionally on the block.

- Simple rectangular solids are typically appropriate.
- These might characteristically be embellished by front porch elements, a variation in wall planes, and complex roof forms and profiles.



Several building designs and forms create variety and visual vitality, yet instill a strong vertical visual emphasis using facade or module width. Single story porches and projecting window bays sharing a common eaves height establish a rhythm.



A variety of building forms, roof profiles and entrances share common heights with strong horizontal elements. Equally strong vertical features are evident in the columns, bays and dormer windows.



The steeply gabled roof design and chimney become the most important element, visually unifying the house around corner fenestration and understated doorway.



A strong vertical emphasis is created by the facade modules, tall entrance porchways and the composition and proportions of doors and windows.

12.14 Roof forms should be similar to those seen traditionally in the block and in the wider district.

- Visually, the roof is the single most important element in the overall form of the building.
- Gable and hip roofs are characteristic and appropriate for primary roof forms in most residential areas.
- Roof pitch and form should be designed to relate to the context.
- Flat roof forms, with or without a parapet, are an architectural characteristic of particular building types and styles.
- In commercial areas, a wider variety of roof forms might be appropriate for residential uses.

Proportion and Emphasis of Building Facade Elements

12.15 Overall facade proportions should be designed to be similar to those of historic buildings in the neighborhood.

- The “overall proportion” is the ratio of the width to height of the building, especially the front facade.
- The design of principal elements of a facade, for example projecting bays and porches, can provide an alternative and balancing visual emphasis.
- See the discussions of individual historic districts (PART III), and the review of typical historic building styles (PART I, Section 4), for more details about facade proportions.

Rhythm & Spacing of Windows & Doors

The manner in which openings are arranged across a facade, their grouping or individual placement, (the fenestration pattern) will be an essential component of the architectural composition. The fenestration can also be an important feature of a building's contribution to the street and the district. When similar patterns occur among buildings in a block, a sense of affinity and visual continuity can emerge from a variety of architectural forms or styles. When such characteristics occur, this sense of similarity and coherence should be preserved.

12.16 The pattern and proportions of window and door openings should fall within the range associated with historic buildings in the area.

- This is an important design criterion, because these details directly influence the compatibility of a building within its context.
- Where there is a strong fenestration relationship between the current historic buildings, large expanses of glass, either vertical or horizontal, may be less appropriate in a new building.



Much of the design composition of these buildings relies upon the fenestration pattern 'punched' into sheer white walls, strong gables and soaring chimney.



Although higher than would normally be appropriate in Salt Lake City historic residential neighborhoods, the spare openings in this tall gabled building effectively create a central focal accent for this building.



An interplay of several characteristic materials (brick, siding & stucco) and colors can help to integrate simple rectilinear forms with the palette of materials and colors of the context.



Creative use of new details can effectively draw from traditional architecture.

Building Materials and Details

Much of the character of a building resides with the variety and composition of architectural details, the windows and the materials. The combination brings a finer grain of design detail, texture and visual interest to each building and therefore to the street, helping to define architectural style and the richness and identity of that part of the district. Materials and details also help to convey a sense of the maturity of the building and that part of the neighborhood.

Traditional design elements, details and materials were frequently functional as well as decorative. A cornice, inspired by classical architecture for example, could have a strong projecting, profile composed of a complex hierarchy of detailed profiles. It might alternatively have decorative supporting brackets. At the same time the depth of the cornice or eaves will efficiently throw rainwater away from the walls and effectively shelter parts of the wall from direct exposure and splashback.

The choice of materials, and the way they are used, can help to reflect the sense of human scale inherent in a historic residential area. The individual brick or block of stone can be instinctly perceived as a dimensional unit with which we are familiar.

Building details and materials play a major role, not just in defining the detailed visual character of a building, but in establishing its age and maturity. The dimension of time is something we inherently read and interpret in a historic neighborhood. The durability and quality of both materials and design details should ensure that a new building endures ,and gradually mellows into the 'historical narrative' of the district.

Materials

12.17 Use building materials that contribute to the traditional sense of human scale of the setting.

- This approach helps to complement and reinforce the traditional palette of the neighborhood and the sense of visual continuity in the district.

12.18 Materials should have a proven durability for the regional climate and the situation and aspect of the building.

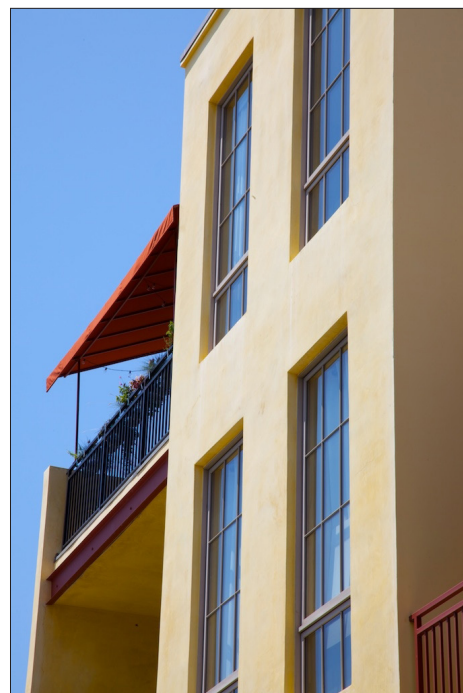
- Materials which merely create the superficial appearance of authentic, durable materials should be avoided, e.g. fiber cement siding stamped with wood grain.
- The weathering characteristics of materials become important as the building ages; they can either add to or detract from the building and setting, depending on the type and quality of material and construction, e.g. cedar shingles

12.19 New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing.

- Alternative materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture and finish to those used historically.

Windows

Window openings often provide a considerable degree of modeling to the building facades, with a distinctive recess (window reveal) of the plane of the window from the plane of the wall. This characteristic enhances the visual strength of a facade, conveying a sense of the depth and solidity of the wall, and distinct areas of shadow which change with the time of day and the season. This recess also helps to shelter the window and the window frame.



Window proportions, reveals and frame details can add visual strength and decorative embellishment to otherwise plain facades.



Window reveals and contemporary detailing to the porch and front dormer window add both a visual strength and human scale interest.



Pronounced eave lines, cladding details and a combination of materials and finishes can help establish both human scale and visual character.

Windows also provide a medium for fine detail and craftsmanship, using decorative pattern, lead and often stained glass.

12.20 Windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.

- A general rule is that the height of a vertically proportioned window should be twice the dimension of the width in most residential contexts.
- Certain styles and contexts, e.g. the bungalow form, will often be characterized by horizontally proportioned windows.
- See also the discussions of the character of the relevant historic district (PART III) and architectural styles (Ch.4, PART I).

12.21 Window reveals should be a characteristic of most masonry facades.

- This helps to emphasize the character of the facade modeling and materials.
- It should enhance the degree to which the building integrates with its historic setting.
- It also helps to avoid the impression of superficiality which can be inherent in some more recent construction, e.g. with applied details like window surrounds.
- Typical historic window reveals are 3-4" in depth.

12.22 Windows and doors should be framed in materials that appear similar in scale, proportion and character to those used traditionally in the neighborhood.

- Double-hung windows with traditional reveal depth and trim will be characteristic of most districts.
- Window profiles should project from the plane of the glass creating a distinct hierarchy of detail for the window opening and the composition of the facade.
- Durable window frame construction and materials should be used.
- Window frame finish should be of durable architectural quality, chosen to complement the building design.
- Wood, clad wood, and fiberglass are generally appropriate window materials.
- Vinyl windows are prohibited unless utilized as an affordable housing incentive pursuant to 21A.52.
- See also the rehabilitation section on windows (PART II, Ch.3) as well as the discussions of specific historic districts (PART III) and relevant architectural styles (PART I, Ch.4).

Architectural Elements & Details

12.23 Building components should reflect the size, depth and shape of those found historically along the street.

- These include eaves, windows, doors, and porches, and their associated decorative composition and details.

12.24 Where they are to be used, ornamental elements, ranging from brackets to porches, should be in scale with similar historic features.

- The proportion of elements such as brackets for example should appear to be functional as well as decorative.

12.25 Contemporary interpretations of traditional details are encouraged.

- New designs for window moldings and door surrounds, for example, can provide visual interest and affinity, while helping to convey the fact that the building is new.
- Contemporary details for porch railings and columns are other examples.
- New soffit interest and visual compatibility, while expressing a new, complementary form or style.

12.26 The replication of historic styles is generally discouraged.

- Replication may blur the distinction between old and new buildings, clouding the interpretation of the architectural evolution of a district or setting.
- Interpretations of a historic form or style may be appropriate if it is subtly distinguishable as new.

New Construction Design Criteria for Street Facades

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

1 STREET & BLOCK PATTERNS (12.1, 12.2)

Buildings maintain the street plan.

Front facades maintain the role of street pattern as a unifying framework for a variety of architecture.

2 BUILDING PLACEMENT
& ORIENTATION (12.3, 12.4)

Placement respects (or establishes) a consistent orientation & setbacks.

Frontage & entrance orient to the street.

BUILDING SCALE GUIDELINES

3 MASS & SCALE (12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8)

The sense of human scale, established by heights, widths, modules & porches, is reinforced.

A similarity of scale is maintained.

Roof forms & building massing fall within the established range.

Front facades are similar in scale.

4 HEIGHT (12.9, 12.10)

Heights fall within the established range.

5 WIDTH (12.11)

Building width reflects the established range.

6 SOLID TO VOID RATIO (12.12)

Solid to void ratio is a unifying factor.

BUILDING FORM GUIDELINES

7 FORM & VISUAL EMPHASIS (12.13, 12.14)

Building forms reflect the range in the context.

Roof forms vary within a defined range.

8 PROPORTION & EMPHASIS
OF FACADE ELEMENTS (12.15)

The proportions of the facades & principal design elements have a distinct vertical emphasis.

9 RHYTHM & SPACING WINDOWS/DOORS (12.16)

Fenestration patterns vary but have an affinity.

BUILDING MATERIALS & DETAILS

10 MATERIALS (12.17, 12.18, 12.19)

Materials contribute to the sense of human scale.

Materials appear to have a proven durability.

11 WINDOWS (12.20, 12.21, 12.22)

Windows share a vertical proportion.

Windows in masonry facades are emphasized by reveals.

Windows and doors are framed to reflect the setting.

12 ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS
& DETAILS (12.23, 12.24, 12.25, 12.26)

Building components echo those of the context.

Ornamental elements are in scale.

The interpretation of traditional details is contemporary.

Street Facade Evaluation



This is an illustration of the application of the Design Guidelines for New Construction for a Street Facade.

The design guidelines for New Construction are summarized above under the principal topic headings, with the numbers of the pertinent design guidelines.

The facing page evaluates the role and 'performance' of the design guidelines in the composition of this street facade, with the number reference relating to the design guideline topic above.

New Construction Design Criteria for Buildings

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

- 1

STREET & BLOCK PATTERNS (12.1, 12.2)

The historic street pattern and its role are respected.
- 2

BUILDING PLACEMENT
& ORIENTATION (12.3, 12.4)

Building placement, orientation and setbacks are reflected.

The frontage and entrance orient to the street.

BUILDING SCALE GUIDELINES

- 3

MASS & SCALE (12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8)

The massing of the modules stepping down towards the street helps achieve a human scale.

The building is subdivided into three principal modules equating with the scale of the context.

The flat roof forms at different heights mediate between buildings either side.

The front facades, arranged in three parts, are in scale with other buildings on this street block.
- 4

HEIGHT (12.9, 12.10)

Building height falls within the range established by the current street facade and mediates between adjacent buildings.
- 5

WIDTH (12.11)

Building width is similar and is modulated in three primary facade planes.
- 6

SOLID TO VOID RATIO (12.12)

Solid to void ratio is within the established range; glass is subdivided.

BUILDING FORM GUIDELINES

- 7

FORM & VISUAL EMPHASIS (12.13, 12.14)

The building design is composed with three rectangular sections, with front porch.

The flat roof form is a characteristic and equates with the immediate and wider setting.
- 8

PROPORTION & EMPHASIS
OF FACADE ELEMENTS (12.15)

The vertical emphasis of the bays is balanced by the horizontal eaves lines.
- 9

RHYTHM & SPACING WINDOWS/DOORS (12.16)

The fenestration pattern is within the local characteristic range.

BUILDING MATERIALS & DETAILS

- 10

MATERIALS (12.17, 12.18, 12.19)

Primary materials, brick, wood and stucco, contribute to the sense of human scale.

Facade materials are generally durable.
- 11

WINDOWS (12.20, 12.21, 12.22)

The horizontal emphasis of the windows is balanced by their vertical subdivision.

Window framing reflects traditional patterns.

Building Evaluation



This is an illustration of the application of the Design Guidelines for New Construction for an individual Building in context.

The design guidelines for New Construction are summarized above under the principal topic headings, with the numbers of the pertinent design guidelines.

The facing page evaluates the role and 'performance' of the design guidelines in the composition of this building, with the number reference relating to the design guideline topic above.

12 ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS & DETAILS (12.23, 12.24, 12.25, 12.26)

The building components - eaves, porch, door, window - are characteristic.

They are also in scale.

Contemporary interpretations are used in the design.

This architectural composition does not replicate a historic style.

