



**NEW  
CONSTRUCTION**

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## NEW CONSTRUCTION

New construction in Easton's historic districts consists of additions to existing buildings as well as entirely new buildings. The design of new buildings and additions is critical to preserving the character of the districts. They should contribute to that character by respecting the location, design, materials and other character-defining elements of the existing historic buildings, as well as respecting the character of the landscape and other important features of the residential and commercial areas in which they are located. Additions and new buildings should be compatible with the existing environment without exactly duplicating existing buildings.

The key to the design of a new building or addition that enhances the existing environment is its compatibility with neighboring buildings and landscapes. Compatibility may be achieved in many ways. It is based on an understanding of the character-defining elements of the existing buildings, landscape, and other features of the districts. Typically, this understanding involves an analysis of how the design principles discussed below are used in the existing buildings and landscapes, and interpreting them in today's design philosophies, materials and construction techniques. To the maximum extent possible construction plans should preserve the existing historic landscape and natural features of the property.

Compatibility does not mean exact duplication. The addition or new building should be seen as a product of its own time. To reproduce an historic building, or to exactly copy a style of the past, will create a false sense of history. Rather an addition or new building should seek to show the districts' future evolution just as the existing buildings show their past development. In short, a new building or addition should be a good neighbor, changing the fabric of the districts for the better.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR ADDITIONS AND NEW BUILDINGS

Designing a new building or addition that contributes to, rather than detracts from, the character of the historic districts should begin with an analysis of the character-defining features of existing historic buildings and landscapes in its immediate neighborhood. Typically these character-defining features include: setback, orientation, scale, proportion, rhythm, massing, height, materials, color, roof shape, details and orientation. In the residential areas, the location and design of landscape features, such as plants, trees, fences, sidewalks and driveways also significantly contributes to their character.

### **Setback**

A building's setback is the distance it is located inside the property lines. Many commercial buildings have no setbacks on the front or side façades, and only a small setback at the rear façade. On the other hand most residential, institutional and religious buildings in the historic districts are free standing with setbacks on all four sides.

The location of a new building should respect the established setbacks of historic buildings on a street. Typically this means that commercial buildings in the commercial areas should have no setbacks on the front or side property lines. In the case of most of the residential areas, the front faced should align with the buildings on the street, and typically be centered between the side property lines.

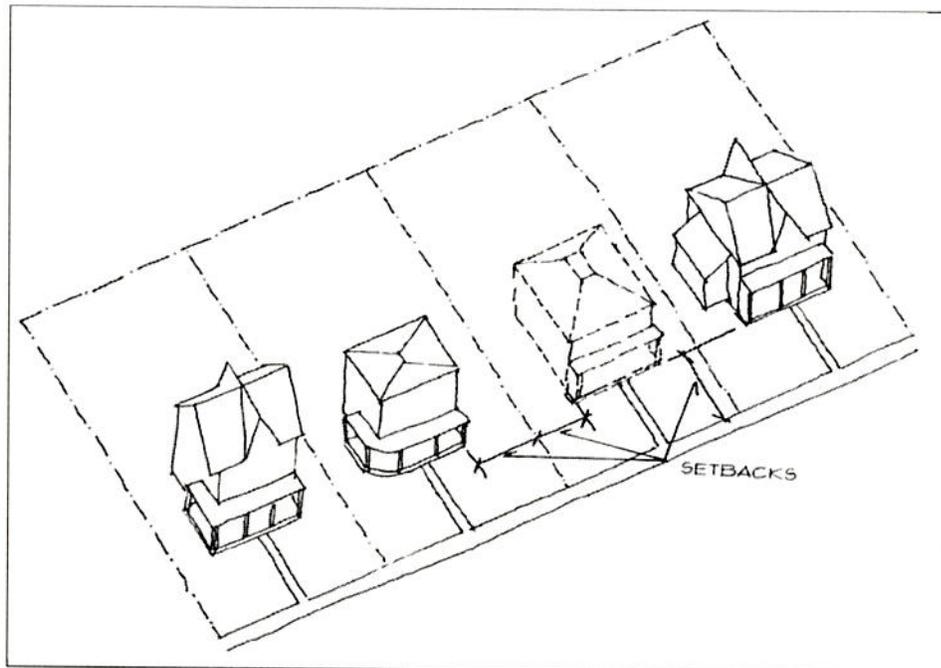
Additions to historic buildings should respect the front property line setback of the existing building, either by aligning with the front façade or being recessed behind it. If possible, additions should be attached to the rear façade

### Recommended

- The setbacks of a new building should be compatible with its neighbors.
- Additions to free standing buildings should be setback behind the front façade if possible.
- In most cases, the front façade of a side addition to zero lot line, party wall buildings should align with the front façade of the existing building.

### Not Recommended

- Locating the front façade of an addition to a free standing building closer to the street than the front façade of the building to which it is attached.
- Locating the front façade of a new building or side addition in the commercial areas so that it fails to align with the front façades of buildings in the block.



## Orientation

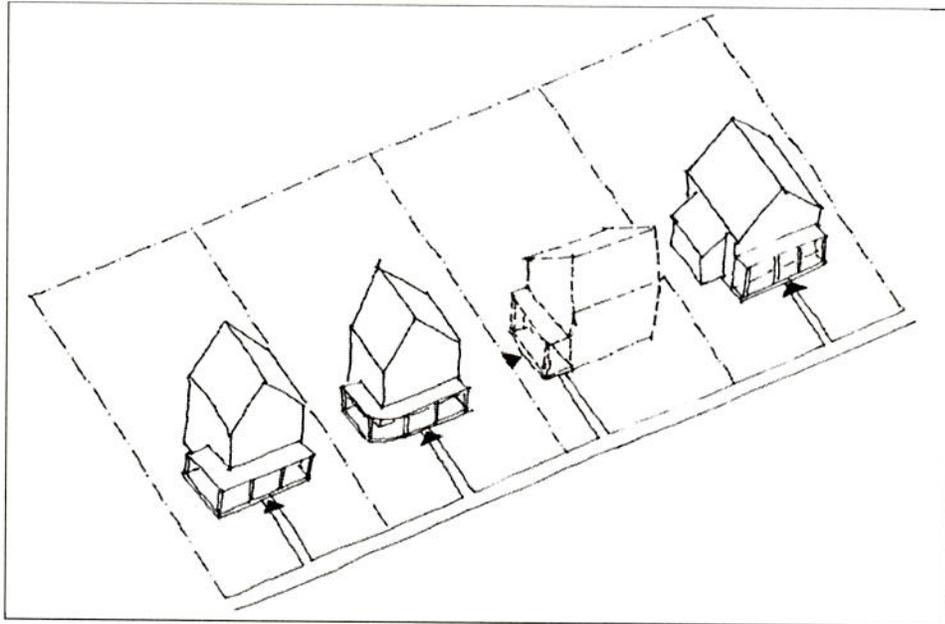
Orientation is the direction a building faces the street. Most historic residential and commercial buildings face a street, with their principal entrance in full view. Sometimes a building is oriented to a side yard or placed at an angle to a street. A new building should respect the primary orientation of its neighbors. An addition to an historic building should typically maintain the same orientation as the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- Orienting a new building so that it is compatible with the neighboring buildings.
- Orienting an addition so that it is compatible with the orientation of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Dramatically changing the orientation of a new building or addition.



## Scale

Scale is the relative or apparent size of a building in relation to its neighbors. Scale is also the relative or apparent size of building elements, such as windows, doors, cornices, and other features, to each other and to the building. Most buildings are designed to be of human scale; that is, they appear to be of a size appropriate for human occupancy and use. Other buildings are designed to be of monumental scale, giving them prominence and symbolic importance. Typically monumental scale is associated with governmental and religious buildings.

Human or monumental scale can be achieved in many ways. For example, windows, doors, cornices and other elements can be enlarged to impart a sense of monumentality or designed to be human in scale. Façades can be heavily rusticated, contributing to a sense of monumentality, or of plainer treatment, making the building appear human in scale.

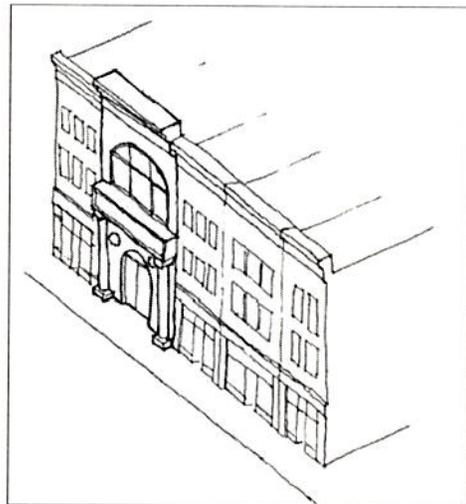
The scale of a new building should generally respect the prevailing scale of its neighbors. In a few cases, a new building's use and symbolic importance may make it appropriate for its scale to differ from that of its neighbors. The scale of an addition to an historic building should respect the scale of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The scale of an addition should be compatible to the scale of the building to which it is attached.
- The scale of a new building should be compatible to the scale of its neighbors.

### Not Recommended

- Drastically changing the scale of an addition or new building.



## Proportion

Proportion is the relation of dimensions of components of a building to each other and to the elevation of a building. Often proportions are expressed as mathematical ratios, drawn from the architectural theories of ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy. For example, many historic buildings designed in the Classical Revival style use mathematical proportions to locate and size windows, doors, columns, cornices, and other building elements. The façades of a new building should respect the existing proportions of neighboring buildings. The façades of an addition should respect those of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The proportions of a façade of a new building should be compatible with the façades of its neighbors.
- The proportions of a façade of an addition should be compatible to the façade of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Dramatically changing the proportion of an addition or new building.



## Rhythm

The spacing and repetition of building façade elements, such as storefronts, windows, doors, belt courses, and the like, give an elevation its rhythm. The space between free standing buildings, or lack of space between most commercial and other party wall buildings in Easton, as well as the height of roofs, cornices, towers, and other roof projections establishes the rhythm of a street. New buildings should respect the rhythm of its neighbors as well as the rhythm of the street. An addition to existing buildings should respect the rhythm of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The rhythm of a façade of a new building should be compatible with the façades of its neighbors.
- The rhythm of a façade of an addition should be compatible to the façade of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Drastically changing the rhythm of the façade on an addition or new building.



## Massing

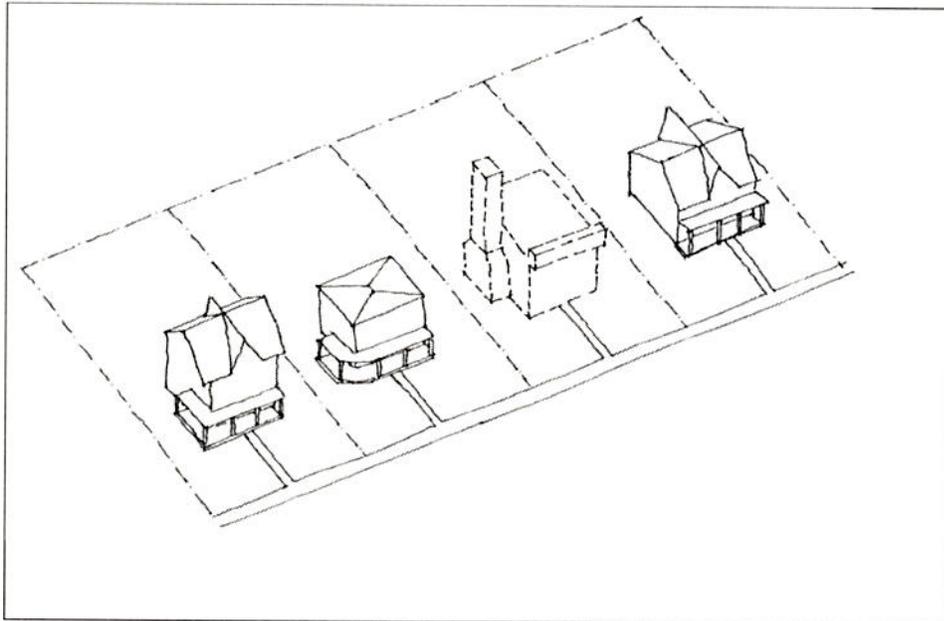
A building's massing is derived from the articulation of its façade through the use of dormers, towers, bays, porches, steps and other projections. These projections contribute significantly to the character of a street. A new building should respect the massing of neighboring historic buildings. An addition should respect the massing of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The massing of a façade of a new building should be compatible with the façades of its neighbors.
- The massing of a façade of an addition should be compatible to the façade of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Drastically changing the massing of the façade an addition or new building.



## Height

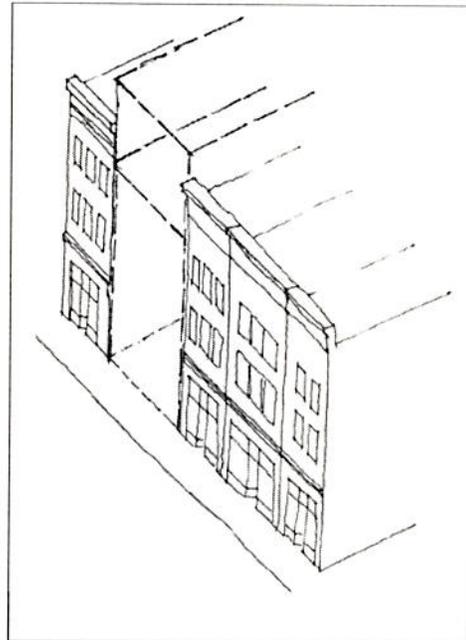
The height of walls, cornices, and roof ridges as well as the heights of bays, chimneys, and towers contributes to the character of existing buildings and districts. While new buildings or additions do not necessarily need to be exactly the same height as its neighbors or the building to which it is attached, they should be designed to respect existing building heights.

### Recommended

- The height of the front façade of a new building in the commercial areas should be compatible with the front façades of its neighbors.
- The height of the front façade of an addition in the commercial areas should be compatible to the front façade of the building to which it is attached. Taller additions should be located so they are not visible when viewing the principal façades.
- The height of a new building should be within ten percent of the height of surrounding buildings.
- The height of all façades of new buildings or additions in the residential areas should be compatible with its neighbors or the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Designing one-story buildings in the downtown commercial area.
- Adding new floors to existing buildings.
- Removing floors from existing buildings.



## Materials

The materials used for walls, sloped roofs and visible elements of historic buildings should be respected in the design of a new building or addition. In some districts, where all the buildings on a street use a limited number of exterior materials, the new building should probably use the same or similar material. On streets where buildings have diverse exterior materials, a wider range of material options for a new building is possible. Additions to existing buildings should use the same or similar material to the building to which it is attached.

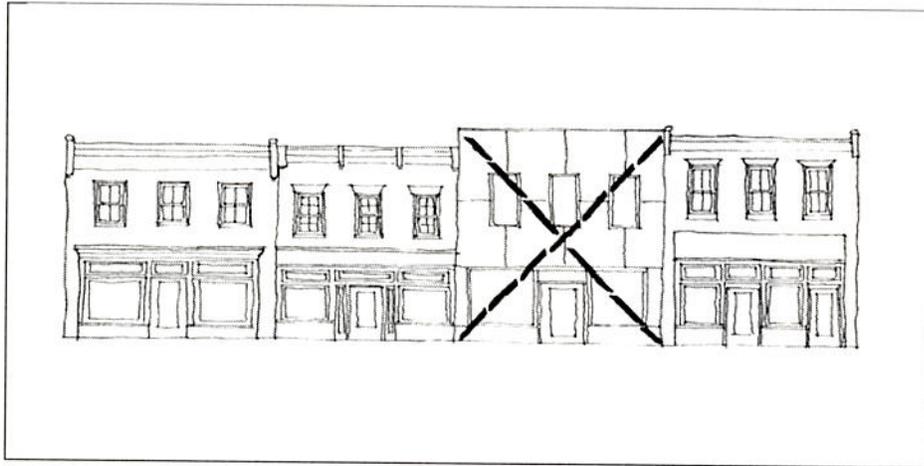
The size, texture, surface finish, and other defining characteristics of exterior materials are as important as the type of material. For example in a street of red brick façades, a new building constructed of glazed white brick would probably not be compatible.

### Recommended

- Exterior materials of a new buildings or addition should be compatible with surrounding buildings or the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Introducing dramatically different exterior materials for a new building or addition.



## Roof Shape

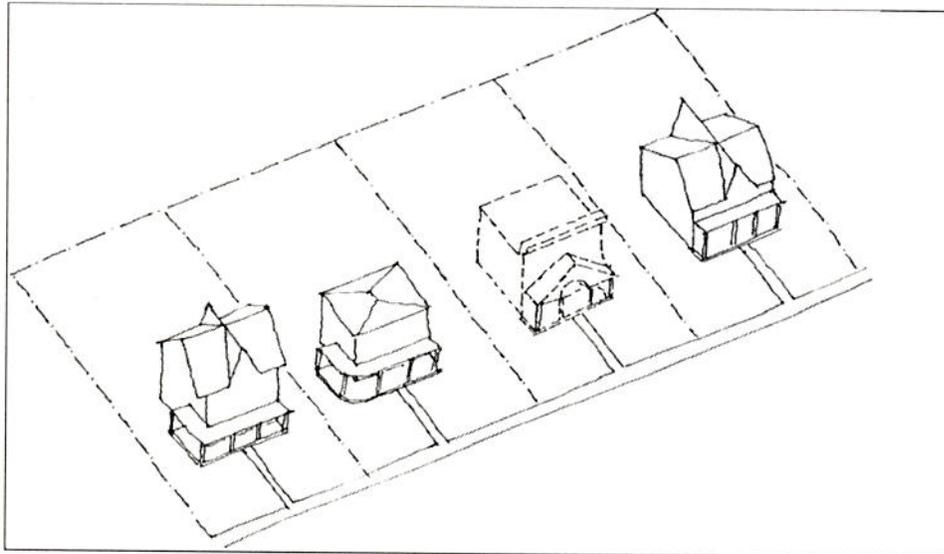
The roof shape of a new building should respect that of its neighbors. For example, in a street of buildings where gable end roofs predominate, introducing a different roof shape, such as a flat roof with an elaborate cornice would probably be not be in keeping with the existing character of the street. The roof shape of an addition should complement the shape of the roof of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The roof shape of a new building should be compatible with those of neighboring buildings.
- The roof shape of an addition should be compatible with the roof shape of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Introducing dramatically different roof shapes for a new building or addition



## Details and Ornamentation

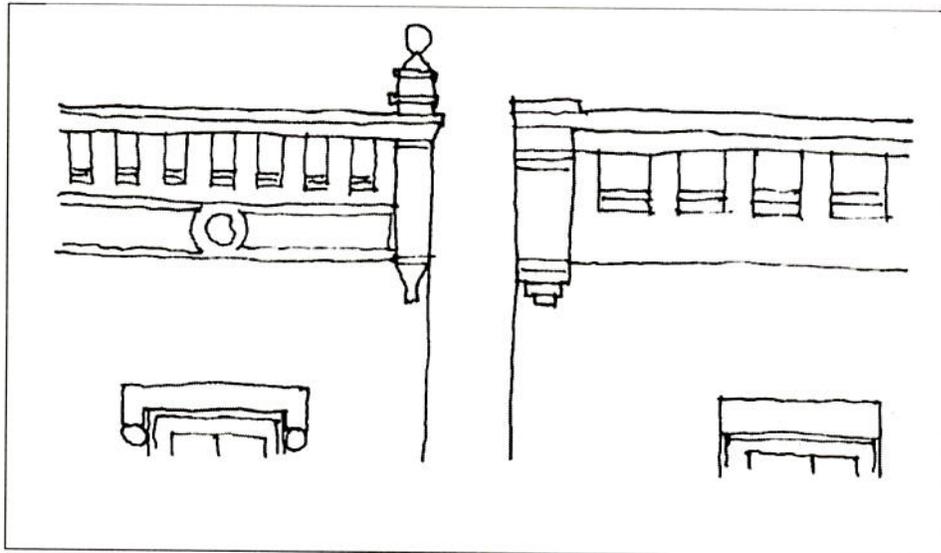
Many historic buildings in Easton contain elaborate details and ornamentation. A new building should consider the amount, location and elaborateness of details and ornamentation on neighboring buildings in its design. Existing details and ornamentation may be used as the basis for those on a new building, but they usually should not be copied exactly. Details and ornamentation on additions should complement, but not copy, that of the building to which it is attached.

### Recommended

- The details and ornamentation of a new building should be compatible with those of neighboring buildings.
- The details and ornamentation of an addition should be compatible with those of the building to which it is attached.

### Not Recommended

- Introducing dramatically different details and ornamentation on a new building or addition.
- Exactly copying details and ornamentation from existing buildings for a new building or addition.



## Color

Closely related to the materials selected for a new building is its color. Sometimes, the color is derived from the material itself, such as in the case of unpainted brick, stone, terra cotta, slate, asphalt shingle, copper, lead and other materials. In other cases, color is applied to materials by painting or staining. This is typically the case for wood, stucco, some metals, and sometimes concrete. The colors of a new building should be compatible with those of surrounding buildings. The colors of an addition should complement those of the building to which it is attached. Inappropriately intense or overly vibrant color schemes are not recommended. Typically no more than three colors should be used on a new building. Residents, property owners or contractors are encouraged to consider the Historic District Commission a resource for assistance on issues of appropriate color and material selections during the planning phase of any project.

### Recommended

- Using compatible exterior colors for a new building or addition.

### Not Recommended

- Using incompatible exterior colors for a new building or addition.
- Using more than three exterior colors for a new building or addition

## Landscape Features

Yards, plants, trees, fences, garden walls, sidewalks, driveways and other landscape features are important character-defining elements of many of Easton's residential areas. A new building or addition should respect the existing character-defining landscape features of the property on which it is located. The landscape design of a new building should be compatible with the landscape designs of neighboring properties

### Recommended

- Designing compatible landscaping for a new building's property.

### Not Recommended

- Unnecessarily removing character-defining landscape to construct a new building or addition.
- Designing an incompatible landscape for a new building or addition.

