

## **Introduction to New Construction**

Historic districts are not, and should not be, static museum-like environments that are resistant to change. Instead, they are constantly evolving as the needs of their residents change. Chapel Hill's historic districts were not constructed during a single period of development, but were rather built over time, representing, in the case of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, nearly three hundred years of building. The result of this gradual development is that the age and style of buildings within Chapel Hill's historic districts varies greatly with the architectural styles represented indicative of the era in which each building was erected, or in some cases, altered. However, the siting and overall form and massing of buildings within the historic districts, especially within a given block or street, create consistent and cohesive streetscapes.

New construction, when it is sensitively sited with regard to existing site features and carefully designed to respect the historic architecture and district context, can be a valuable tool for eliminating vacant lots and gaps in the urban fabric. Carefully designed new primary buildings, garages, and accessory buildings all illustrate the continued architectural evolution of the district and can enhance the overall character of a district streetscape. New construction need not mimic earlier architectural styles, but should instead reflect its time of design, whether through traditional or modern details.

Additions to historic buildings can allow for their continued use despite changing uses and evolving family and social requirements. Likewise, the construction of carefully sited new decks and patios can extend the indoor living space to the outdoors with little impact to the historic district.

Thus, the goal of the standards for new construction is not to limit or deny the construction of new buildings or additions within the historic districts, nor to specify or impose particular architectural styles. Rather, the standards address the appropriate form, scale, massing, and location of new construction. The review of these elements will ensure that the proposed new construction is not incongruous with, but rather enhances, the historic district while allowing for the specific taste and stylistic preferences of the owner.

The following pages provide standards for the Setback, Spacing, and Orientation of new buildings in order to ensure that they are consistent with surrounding buildings and contribute to the continuity of the streetscape. Standards for building Scale, Proportion, and Form and for Roof Forms, Materials, and Details will ensure that new buildings fit within the range of building forms within any given area. Standards for Building Materials and Architectural Details, Doors and Windows, and Porches are not intended to promote specific architectural styles, but instead to provide consistency with regard to the scale, materials, and detailing of new buildings.

An understanding of the existing site features, as well as the overall district setting, is essential for the successful design of new construction. The Character Essays in the introduction to this handbook provide specific information about the character-defining setting and landscape features of each of the three districts. The quality of the landscape can help new construction to blend in with the district setting, while creating a distinctive character for a new building. The standards for Neighborhood Setting provide information about appropriate paving, plantings, lighting, and other site features.

Finally, property owners should consult with Town of Chapel Hill Planning staff to ensure that the proposed new construction meets both these standards as well as Chapel Hill's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO).

**Commented [HW1]:** This is a broad introduction to this entire section of text. I started introductions to the other sections as well, but only decided to do them after the first submission, so you haven't seen the others. I'll either include them with the next section of writing or when we get to formatting.

## New Construction: Setback, Spacing, & Orientation

For the purposes of these design standards, the **setback** refers to the distance between the front property line or right-of-way boundary and the front building wall. The setback measurement does not typically include the porch, which may project beyond the setback. The **spacing** refers to the side yard distances between buildings. **Orientation** refers to the direction in which the front of the building, and specifically the front entrance, faces.

**Commented [HW2]:** See comment below in the guidelines.

Chapel Hill's historic districts contain a wide variety of resources including single-family houses, multi-family housing, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings. Despite variations in the size and use of the buildings, the rhythm of the streetscape in any given part of each historic district is consistent and cohesive due in large part to consistent building setbacks, spacing, and orientation.

The setback and spacing of buildings are loosely defined by land use. Commercial buildings are generally sited adjacent to the sidewalk and with sidewalls built to the property line resulting in a dense collection of adjacent buildings that together create a single streetscape façade. Institutional buildings—including churches and university buildings—have setbacks that are consistent with or deeper than their residential counterparts. The area in front of these buildings often incorporates landscaped plazas, wide walkways, and other features that convey a sense of openness.

The setback and spacing of residential buildings varies widely in the historic districts. Throughout the Franklin-Rosemary and Cameron-McCauley historic districts, parcels were subdivided and lots developed over time, creating variations in the ratio of open space to building mass. Setbacks and spacing in the Gimghoul Historic District are more consistent, reflective of its more concentrated period of development and the covenants that regulated early development and are still in place. Despite these variations, the setback and spacing of buildings in all three districts is generally consistent by street and block, the continuity establishing a streetscape rhythm that reinforces the character of the district and enhances the pedestrian experience.

When determining the placement of a new building on a given site, it is important to consider not only the immediate site and the setbacks laid out in Chapel Hill's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO), but also the setbacks, spacing, and orientation of existing and historic buildings in the surrounding area in order to reinforce the siting and development patterns of nearby historic buildings. The precedents set by neighboring historic buildings and the location of any mature trees or other significant site features should all factor into the proposed siting of a new building. Except for the introduction of appropriately scaled and sited accessory buildings or garages, the construction of new buildings in rear yards is not appropriate because it conflicts with the traditional pattern of setback, spacing, and siting of primary buildings in Chapel Hill's historic districts.

Finally, although ground disturbance is necessary for new construction, it is important to minimize any excavation and regrading and to limit the impact of construction equipment and related activities in the historic districts so that significant site features, including archaeological features, are not destroyed or damaged. All sitework must also follow the standards for Neighborhood Setting.

**Commented [HW3]:** This seems like it doesn't necessarily fit here, but I don't know where it would fit better. I think we need to address this basic site concern here as well as in the Neighborhood Setting section.

## Standards for Setback, Spacing, & Orientation:

Note: “Immediate surroundings” refers to sites adjacent to, as well as across the street from, the proposed new construction.

1. Maintain the established development patterns as well as established relationships between building mass and open space that exists on the block or streetscape.
2. Site new buildings with setbacks consistent with existing buildings in the immediate surroundings. Generally speaking, setbacks should be within 10% of adjacent setbacks and new buildings should not project beyond neighboring historic buildings. Porches are not included when considering setback.
3. For sites between two distinctive areas of setback—such as between commercial and traditional residential uses or between residential and institutional uses—setbacks should follow the buildings with the same historic use.
4. Site new buildings with spacing consistent with existing buildings in the immediate surroundings. Side yards shall be consistent in size to side yards of neighboring buildings.
5. Orient new buildings with the primary elevation and the primary entrance facing the street. Buildings on corner lots may also address the secondary right-of-way.
6. For commercial or institutional buildings with rear parking a primary entrance oriented to the front of the property is still required.
7. Design and site new buildings so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, significant site features, and distinctive views.
8. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during, or as a consequence of, related site work or construction.
9. It is inappropriate to site new buildings in locations that necessitate the relocation or demolition of historic buildings or outbuildings.

**Commented [HW4]:** Different guidelines address this differently. Some measure from the front wall of the house, some from the porch. Thoughts?

## **New Construction: Building Scale, Proportion, & Form**

In addition to siting, it is important that new buildings constructed within the historic districts are compatible with nearby historic buildings in terms of building scale, proportion, and form. For the purposes of these design standards, **scale** refers to the height and width of the building façade (including the roof) and their relationship to that of nearby buildings, structures, and open spaces.

Human scale, or pedestrian scale, refers to the relationship of the human form to the building and its components and is especially important in these walkable, neighborhood districts. There are a number of scale-reducing techniques that can help to minimize the visual impact of larger buildings, especially commercial or institutional buildings, within predominantly residential areas. These include dividing the façade into smaller bays, varying building planes by stepping back parts of the building, breaking up roof masses, using multiple materials, and taking design clues from nearby historic buildings.

Related to the building scale, **proportion** is the interrelationship of the vertical to horizontal dimensions, the height and width, of the building, specifically the façade. The proportion also determines the directional expression of the building. For example, buildings that are wider than they are tall are considered to have horizontal expressions. When designing new construction, it is helpful to consider the directional expression and overall proportion of nearby historic buildings in order to reinforce the existing rhythm of the streetscape. Further, buildings and spaces composed of harmonious proportions inherently relate to the human form, and create a pleasing environment.

While scale and proportion analyze the building size in two dimensions, form and mass describe the volume of the building in three dimensions. Building **form** is the overall shape, or volume, of the building and can be simple and boxlike or more complex with projecting and inset bays. Mass refers more specifically to the visual weight of a structure and can be considered both in terms of the relationship of one building to other, nearby buildings and in terms of the various building parts to one another. Some of the scale-reducing techniques noted above also reduce the mass of the building.

In order to maintain the cohesiveness of the streetscape and the character of the district, new construction should be consistent with the scale, proportion, and form of historic buildings in the immediate surroundings. New buildings should be consistent in height, scale, proportion, and overall form and massing, but need not replicate historic detailing. They should instead reflect their own era of construction.

Finally, the principles of scale and proportion can also be applied to individual building elements including porches, windows, doors, and architectural details like bracket, trim, and porch railings and columns. The scale and proportion of individual elements can help reduce the overall scale and mass of a building while also reinforcing the directional expression of the building. The scale and proportion of individual building elements is addressed in the standards for Building Materials and Architectural Details, Doors and Windows, and Porches.

## **Standards for Building Scale, Proportion, & Form:**

Note: “Immediate surroundings” refers to sites adjacent to, as well as across the street from, the proposed new construction.

1. Maintain the established patterns of scale and proportion that exists on the block or streetscape. Design new buildings so that their size and scale do not visually overpower historic buildings in the immediate surroundings.
2. Scale new buildings to be consistent with the height and width of existing, historic buildings in the immediate surroundings. The height of the historic buildings should be calculated from the original, historic ridgeline (not any later, taller additions).
  - Generally speaking, building heights, from the first floor level to the ridge of the main roof, should be within 10% of adjacent building heights.
  - The foundation height and first-floor level should be consistent with that on surrounding buildings. However, for new construction on the periphery of the districts, where there is greater variation in topography, the foundation height is less significant than the overall height, form, and massing of the new construction.
  - The height of new buildings should be no taller than the tallest building on the block of the same type (i.e. single-family house, multi-family house, church, commercial building).
  - The width of new buildings should be not more than ten (10) percent of the width of historic structures (of the same type) in the immediate vicinity, not including side wings or porches.
3. For sites between two distinctive areas of scale—such as between commercial and traditional residential uses or between residential and institutional uses—scale should follow the buildings with the same historic use.
4. Where base zoning allows for larger scaled buildings, especially on the edges of the districts that may be zoned for something other than single-family residential development, care should be taken to incorporate scale-reducing techniques to minimize the impact on adjacent historic buildings. Create human scale by including functional elements typical to the historic district, such as porches and porticos.
5. Design new buildings so that the proportion of their street facade is similar with those of neighboring historic buildings.
6. Design new buildings so that the directional expression (vertical, horizontal, or square) is compatible with that of surrounding buildings. For example, if the majority of buildings in the immediate surroundings have horizontal or square expression, avoid designing buildings with prominent vertical proportions.
7. Design new buildings with forms that relate to those of historic houses in the immediate surroundings. For example, if a street is comprised primarily of Colonial Revival-style houses with simple rectangular forms, do not introduce a new building with complex massing. Conversely, if the forms of adjacent buildings have a variety of projecting bays, dormers, etc., consider employing some of these elements in the new building.

## New Construction: Roof Form, Materials, and Details

Roofs and roof heights must be considered as part of the overall analysis of building scale, proportion, and mass discussed on the previous pages. However, additional considerations should be made for the appropriateness of roof form, materials, and details.

Roof **form** refers to the overall shape and pitch of the roof. The form may be gabled, hipped, shed, flat, or some combination of these. However, the roof form and orientation should correspond to other common roof forms in the immediate surroundings. The pitch, or slope, of the main roof should also be consistent with nearby roof pitches in order to retain a sense of continuity and rhythm along the streetscape and within the historic district. In general, steeply pitched roofs allow for significantly more roof surface to be visible from the public right-of-way, thus affecting the overall proportions of the building façade, and are not appropriate for prominent roofs.

Roof materials in the districts are generally limited to asphalt shingle, metal, and slate, with rubber or other membrane roofing sometimes used for flat, or nearly flat, roofs. These materials are also appropriate for new construction. Metal, which has gained popularity in recent years as a sustainable material with a long lifespan and energy-conserving qualities, may be appropriate as long as the color/finish and profile of the ridges is consistent with historic metal. See Guidelines for Roofs, Gutters, & Chimneys for more information.

Many historic houses in the districts have dormers, chimney, or other projecting features. The presence of dormers often correlates to specific architectural styles, most notably the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. Likewise, distinctive eave treatments, including brackets and exposed rafter tails, also correspond with specific styles. (See the architectural style guide in the appendix for more information). Dormers and decorative eave treatments should be included if they are appropriate for the style of the building. Chimneys on traditional-style houses should be faced with masonry, while other materials may be appropriate for houses with Modernist designs.

**Commented [HW5]:** What I'm really trying to say is that "master rib" metal roofing (which looks like the roofing on warehouses) is not appropriate.

**Standards for Roof Form, Materials, and Details:**

1. Design new roofs to be compatible in form, slope, and orientation with historic buildings in the immediate surroundings.
2. Utilize roof forms, such as gables or hipped, or combinations of roof forms that relate to existing surrounding buildings. For instance, if most nearby houses have steeply pitched hipped roofs, avoid low-slung, gabled roofs.
3. Design new roofs to be proportionate to the building and appropriate to the style, so as not to overwhelm the structure or be out of scale for the style of the building.
4. Utilize roof materials that are commonly found in the district and apply them in ways that are appropriate to the style of the building.
5. Consider employing roof dormers if they are appropriate to the style of the house. The form and style of the dormer should relate to the architectural style of the house.
6. Use eave details and materials that compliment those frequently found in the surrounding buildings and are appropriate for the style of the building.
7. Face chimneys with masonry unless houses are constructed in Modernist or Contemporary styles.

## **New Construction: Building Materials and Architectural Details**

After initial decisions of overall scale, proportion, and form are made, design considerations should turn to compatibility with neighboring historic buildings in terms of finish materials and architectural details. (The design of porches and the selection and placement of windows and doors are discussed in subsequent sections.) Ultimately, a successful design will merge all these considerations into a unified design that is compatible with, though differentiated from, neighboring historic buildings.

Buildings within Chapel Hill's historic districts incorporate a wide variety of building materials. These include wood siding, trim, and wall shingles; brick foundations, walls, chimneys, and porch piers; stone foundations, chimneys, and porch piers; and asphalt and metal roofs. The variety of building materials reinforces the diversity of architectural styles and contributes to each district's unique and rich character. For preservation guidance related to specific materials, see the guidelines for Materials.

Beyond simply weatherproofing a building, materials can be used to reduce the perceived scale and mass of a building and to reinforce its human scale. Materials also add texture, depth, and rhythm to otherwise flat surfaces. The texture of materials is tied to their innate properties. Brick is generally course and variegated while painted wood is smooth, but may be illustrate texture through its repetitive application. Rhythm refers to the regular or harmonious recurrence of lines and shapes in buildings, including the repetitive patterning of masonry and weatherboard surfaces. Additions and new construction should use materials in ways that provide a degree of texture and rhythm similar to surrounding buildings.

Substitute materials can, in some cases, replicate the appearance and qualities of some traditional materials. The cost, maintenance, and limited availability of quality of original materials (especially slow-growth wood) may necessitate the use of substitute, compatible materials for new construction. While contemporary materials may be used on new construction, they are to be appropriately proportioned for the style and scale of the house. Further, when applied to houses with traditional designs, contemporary materials should be used and installed in a conventional manner (i.e. siding should be installed horizontally with reveals matching those of nearby historic houses).

Visual texture is also obtained through the use and interaction of a variety of architectural details, elements that, together with building form, define the architectural style of a building. Architectural details include decorative wall materials, trim, cornices, door and window surrounds, cornerboards, skirtboards, and porch details, all of vary greatly throughout the districts. Beyond simple decoration, architectural details can affect the perceived mass and scale of buildings by subdividing the building into smaller, articulated panels.

Additions and new construction need not replicate historic styles, materials, and architectural details. Instead, contemporary and compatible design is encouraged. However, additions and new construction should contribute to a cohesive streetscape by using traditional or substitute materials and architectural details in traditional ways that reflect the established styles and details that characterize the district *or* by incorporating contemporary materials and architectural details to Modernist forms and designs that compliment the historic buildings in the immediate surroundings.

## Standards for Building Materials and Architectural Details:

1. Design new buildings and their features to be compatible in scale, materials, proportions, and details with neighboring historic buildings. New buildings should be compatible with, but discernible from, historic buildings in the districts.
2. Select exterior surface materials and architectural details that are compatible with those of neighboring historic building in terms of module, composition, texture, pattern, color, and detail.
3. Use compatible traditional materials on new construction that were traditionally found in the historic district, including but not limited to brick, stucco, stone, and wood.
4. Use contemporary materials, including cementitious siding, on new construction when they match the appearance, dimension, texture, color, sheen, and visual weight of their counterparts commonly found in the historic districts. Apply materials in a traditional manner that conveys the same visual appearance as historic materials. It is not appropriate to install cementitious siding with the faux-grained texture exposed.
5. Aluminum, vinyl, cellular PVC, Masonite, particle board/engineered wood, artificial brick veneer, thin-set stone veneer, split-faced concrete block, stamped concrete and similar types of contemporary materials that imitate historic materials are not appropriate in the historic districts. However, substitute materials may be considered for trim, porch elements, and other decorative features that are susceptible to repeated moisture infiltration and rot.
6. Use of modern materials is acceptable as a means of continuing the evolution of architecture through time.
7. Contemporary materials such as synthetic slate and fiberglass asphalt shingles are acceptable for sloped roofing regardless of building age. Contemporary membrane and roll roofing are acceptable for low-sloped roofs of a less than 1:12 pitch regardless of building age.
8. Architectural details should be appropriately scaled and compatible with the overall architectural style of the building. If emulating historic architectural styles, ensure that the proportion and scale of the trim or feature relates to the scale and proportion of trim and features on historic buildings within the immediate surroundings.
9. Architectural details should be differentiated from the historic details of buildings within the immediate surroundings. It is not appropriate to introduce exterior wall features, details, or surfaces to a building that would create a false historical appearance.

**Commented [HW6]:** Should we include examples?  
Poured/cast concrete, unpainted wood, etc.?

### **New Construction: Doors and Windows**

While door and window types and styles vary greatly in the districts, the ratio of solid wall to voids created by door and window openings is relatively consistent and lends continuity to the districts' streetscapes. The location, size, and proportion of door and window openings create a visual rhythm that unifies the façade of the structure and characterizes the building, streetscape, and district. Thus the door and window patterns employed in new buildings should reinforce the existing patterns found on buildings in the immediate surroundings. This, in turn, will reinforce the rhythm of the streetscape.

In addition to the location, size, and proportion of door and window openings, the style and articulation of the openings contribute to the architectural style of the building and the overall character of the streetscape and district. Thus, studying the door and window styles and patterns of existing buildings, within the context of the new design, will help define appropriate treatments for the new building.

Window Diagram

Door Diagram

Window/door styles diagram?

### **Standards for Doors and Windows:**

1. Design new buildings so that window and door openings are compatible with the buildings in the immediate surroundings. This compatibility includes:

- the ratio of solids (walls) and voids (windows and doors)
- the rhythm and placement of windows and door openings
- the proportion of window and door openings (ratio of width to height)
- the overall size and shape of window and door openings

2. Design new buildings so that the articulation of window and door openings is compatible with buildings in the immediate surroundings. For example, openings are generally recessed on a masonry building while doors and windows are surrounded by raised trim on a frame building. New openings that are flush with the rest of the wall are not appropriate on traditionally styled buildings.

3. Design new buildings so that the pattern and style of windows and doors are compatible with the windows and doors of buildings in the immediate surroundings and are consistent with the overall style of the building.

4. It is not appropriate to introduce windows, doors, or entrance features to a building that are inconsistent with the style of the building or create a false historical appearance.

5. It is not appropriate to install windows, doors, or sidelights with two-dimensional simulations of pane subdivisions, such as snap-in muntins. If not true divided light, glazing should have three-dimensional grills affixed to both the interior and exterior of the window with shadow bars between insulated glass panes. The ratio of muntin to glass should be consistent with historic buildings in the context of the new construction and appropriate to the style.

6. Install windows and doors constructed of materials that are compatible with the windows and doors of buildings in the immediate surroundings. These include wood and aluminum-clad wood windows as well as wood, metal, metal-clad wood, or fiberglass doors. Vinyl and vinyl-clad windows are not appropriate in the historic districts.

5. Install storm windows and doors following the standards for Windows and Shutters and Exterior Doors.

6. It is not appropriate to use tinted or mirrored glass where visible from the street. Translucent or low-e glass may be strategies to reduce solar heat gain.

7. Install wood or wood composite shutters without a faux wood grain. Metal or vinyl shutters are not appropriate in the historic districts. Shutters should be sized to fit the opening and mounted on hinges, even if fixed in the open position. It is not appropriate to install shutters on bay, double, or composite windows.

## New Construction: Porches

Porches are an integral part of both historic and contemporary homes. Traditionally, porches extended the living space into the outdoors, especially in the era before central heating and air conditioning. Today, porches continue to provide spaces for outdoor gathering that are sheltered from sun and rain.

Porch form is determined by the width and depth of the porch, its roof pitch and shape, and the location of the porch in relationship to the main entrance to the building. Porch form is intricately tied to the style of the building with prominent, wrap-around porches common on Queen Anne-style houses, more modest porches common on Craftsman-style houses, and small covered stoops typical on Colonial Revival-style houses. Similarly, the detailing of posts, railings, and other decorative elements relate directly to the architectural style of the building.

While porch form and details vary, adding variety to the streetscape, the presence of porches can add continuity to disparate architectural styles and building setbacks along the streetscape. Thus, when porches are appropriately designed and constructed, new residential buildings can better blend with nearby historic buildings in the district.

Porch parts diagram.

## Standards for Porches:

1. Design new buildings with porches that compliment the size, proportion, placement, and rhythm of existing historic porches in the immediate surroundings.
2. Design porches to provide usable outdoor space by ensuring a minimum depth of eight (8) feet.
3. Design porches to be compatible with the overall architectural style of the building. It is not appropriate to introduce porches to a building that are inconsistent with the style of the building or create a false historical appearance.
4. Select materials and architectural details that are compatible with both the architectural style of the building and with buildings in the immediate surroundings in terms of module, composition, texture, pattern, color, and detail.
5. Aluminum, vinyl, cellular PVC, Masonite, particle board/engineered wood, artificial brick veneer, thin-set stone veneer, split-faced concrete block, stamped concrete and similar types of contemporary materials that imitate historic materials are not appropriate in the historic districts. However, substitute materials may be considered for features that are susceptible to repeated moisture infiltration and rot.
6. Frame porches with raised foundations should have tongue-and-groove porch floors with boards laid perpendicular to the façade of the house. It is not appropriate to use wood decking for porch floors. Porches with floors at grade may have concrete floors.

**Commented [HW7]:** This was a measurement found in another set of guidelines. The goal here is to avoid really shallow porches (3-5' deep) that really have no purpose.

## **New Construction of Garages and Accessory Buildings**

The location, size, scale, materials, architectural style, and use of garages and accessory structures in Chapel Hill's historic districts varies greatly and is illustrative of the evolving transportation, storage, and lifestyle needs of the district residents. As with any new construction, a new garage or accessory building that is sensitively sited, appropriately scaled, and carefully designed to complement the architectural style of the house and the historic context of the streetscape can enhance the overall character of a district.

When determining the location and orientation of a new garage or accessory building on a given site, it is important to consider not only the immediate site and the setbacks laid out in Chapel Hill's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO), but also the setbacks, spacing, and orientation of existing and historic garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings. New garages and accessory buildings should always reinforce the siting and pattern of historic buildings in relationship to the primary building on the site, neighboring buildings, and the public right-of-way. The precedents set by neighboring garages and accessory buildings and the location of any mature trees or other significant site features should all factor into the proposed siting of a new garage or accessory building.

The form, height, and scale of new buildings should be consistent with that of existing garages and accessory structures in the district. Historic garages were typically only a single story in height. However, storage and lifestyle requirements in the late-twentieth and early-twentieth centuries resulted in the construction of garages up to one-and-a-half stories in height and with larger footprints that allow for car storage as well as additional storage and living space. The scale, building and roof form, and overall size of new garages or accessory buildings must be related to and remain secondary to that of the primary building on the site. New garages and accessory buildings should never compete with or diminish the prominence of the primary building on the site.

While secondary to the house in terms of size and scale, garages and accessory structures often contain the similar architectural details and materials and warrant the same attention to design that would be given to a primary building. New buildings should be compatible with, but discernable from, historic outbuildings in the immediate surroundings. Garages and accessory buildings are generally less detailed than primary buildings and care should be taken to avoid the application of excessive architectural details or elements that would give the building a false historical appearance. As with any new construction, traditionally designed buildings call for materials that replicate historic materials in their size, installation, and finish. For a new garage, selecting doors resembling the appearance of the hinged doors, rather than contemporary overhead doors, will enhance its compatibility within the historic district. However, buildings with overtly Modernist designs may incorporate materials that reinforce that design aesthetic.

Wood-framed utilitarian and prefabricated storage sheds may be considered for rear yard locations where they are not visible from the public right-of-way.

## **Standards for New Construction of Garages and Accessory Buildings:**

Note: The design of new garages and accessory buildings should also follow the standards for New Construction including: Building Materials and Architectural Details; Doors and Windows; and Porches.

1. Introduce compatible new garages and accessory structures, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.
2. Site new garages and accessory buildings in traditional locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site.
3. Site new garages and accessory buildings to be consistent with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings in orientation to and setback from the street as well as in spacing between and distance from other buildings. Locate garages or accessory structures behind the primary structure, in a rear yard. Structures may be placed in side yards only when rear setbacks do not allow for enough space. New garages and accessory structures are not permitted in front yards.
4. Design and site new garages and accessory buildings so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, significant site features, and distinctive views.
5. Design new garages and accessory buildings so that their size, scale, and form do not visually overpower the primary building on this or adjacent sites. Garages and accessory buildings should be compatible with, but secondary to, the primary building in size, scale, and building and roof form.
6. Design new garages and accessory buildings to be compatible in height and form with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings and so that the proportion of their street facade is consistent with those of garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings.
7. Design new garages and accessory buildings that are compatible with, but discernible from, historic garages and accessory buildings in the districts.
8. Design new garages and accessory buildings and their features to be compatible in scale, materials, proportions, and details with the overall historic character of the site and district and with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings.
  - Select exterior materials and finishes that are compatible with the primary building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color. Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for new accessory buildings.
  - For larger buildings, it is appropriate to echo the form and detailing of the primary structure. However, elements should be reduced in scale to compliment the smaller building form and should have less ornate detailing than that on the primary structure.
9. Design new garages or accessory building so that the placement, shape, scale, size, materials, pattern, and proportion of windows and doors are compatible with the windows and doors of the primary building on the site and with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings.
  - Windows should follow the standards for New Construction: Doors and Windows.

- Garage doors that are visible from the public right-of-way should be single-bay (single car wide) doors with multiple doors, rather than a single, wider door, installed to access two-car garages.
- It is not appropriate to install vinyl overhead garage doors.

10. Locate new wood-framed storage buildings in rear or side yard locations that are visually screened from the street.

- Smaller buildings and site improvements can serve as focal points for backyard landscapes, but should be minimally detailed and able to be easily removed without creating permanent damage to the site.
- Prefabricated wood buildings may be introduced if they are compatible in size, scale, form, height, proportion, materials, and detail with other accessory structures in the district. It is not appropriate to site prefabricated sheds in locations that are visible from the street.

11. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

12. It is not appropriate to construct a new garage or accessory structure if doing so will detract from the overall character of the site or district or if the construction will require the removal of a significant building element or site feature, such as a mature tree or side porch.

**Commented [HW8]:** Do you want to prevent metal-framed/metal covered sheds and carports in the districts?

## **Additions**

Over the years, improvements in building technologies, changes in building use, and even shifting family and social structures have necessitated changes to buildings within Chapel Hill's historic districts. The installation of electricity and HVAC systems required relatively minor changes to historic buildings while the construction of additional bathrooms and enlarged kitchens often required additions to the building footprint. These changes illustrate the continued evolution of the building over time and are important in understanding the history of an individual building as well as establishing trends in historic architecture and building usage.

In order for historic buildings to remain in use, allowances must be made for additions. However, proposed new additions must be carefully considered in terms of their potential impact on the historic and architectural integrity of the building and district and must be sensitively designed to compliment the historic building. It is essential that any new additions do not visually overpower the original building, compromise its architectural integrity, misrepresent its chronology, or destroy significant features of the building or site.

Preliminary considerations for additions include their location and footprint. Rear elevations generally provide inconspicuous locations for modest additions that are not visible from the public right-of-way. It is also important to locate additions where they will not damage or conceal significant building or site features. Insetting the addition a foot or more from either rear corner of the original building helps to differentiate it from the existing sidewall plane, protects original cornerboards and trim, and further diminishes its visibility from the street. The size of additions should be kept minimal so they do not visually compete with the original building and so that the footprint of the addition does not significantly alter the site's ratio of built mass to unbuilt area, but instead maintains private open spaces at the rear of the property.

The consideration of the overall form, proportion, and massing of additions is equally important. Additions should reflect the form and scale of the original structure, but should be visually differentiated from it. This can be achieved by inseting the addition from the rear corners of the building, including a "hyphen" to connect the original building to the addition, or simply reducing the scale of the addition to be secondary to the original building. Whatever the design solution, the addition should be visually differentiated from the historic building so the original form and massing is still apparent. This is especially true for the roof form and height. Additions may tie into original roof forms, but must never result in the alteration of the main roof form or height.

The next level of design considerations is the selection of compatible finish materials and architectural details, including the careful selection and placement of windows, doors, and, if applicable, porches that are compatible with the original building. Additions may echo the architectural style of the original building, with contemporary finishes and details that are in keeping with the original building, though the exact replication of historic styles and details is often only appropriate for work confined to a limited area. Alternately, additions may introduce a compatible, contemporary style that is more distinctly differentiated from the original building, as long as it is appropriately sited and scaled. Both approaches are appropriate in the historic districts and regardless of the approach, the finish materials and architectural details should follow the standards for New Construction including: Building Materials and Architectural Details; Doors and Windows; and Porches.

Ultimately, the combined result of all these design considerations is an addition that is compatible with, but differentiated from, the original building. In terms of construction, the connections of the addition to the original building should be minimized so that the removal or destruction of

historic fabric is limited and, when feasible, the addition should be structurally self-supporting. As with any construction within the historic districts, it is important to limit excavation, regrading, or ground disturbance and to protect significant site features.

### **Standards for Additions:**

Note: The design of additions should also follow the standards for New Construction including: Building Materials and Architectural Details; Doors and Windows; and Porches.

1. Introduce compatible new additions, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.
2. Site additions in locations in traditional locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site and are minimally visible from the street, typically on rear elevations. Additions may be located on side elevation only when rear setbacks do not allow for enough space *and* if additions have been carefully designed to retain the spacing of buildings in the district and to minimize their impact to the rhythm of the streetscape or character-defining open spaces. Additions are never permitted on building facades.
3. Site additions to be consistent with additions in the immediate surroundings and to retain the orientation of the existing building as well as the spacing between and distance from other buildings in the immediate surroundings. Maintain the original orientation of the structure with primary entrances on the façade of the building.
4. Design and site additions so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, significant site features, and distinctive views. It is not appropriate to introduce an addition if it requires the loss of a character-defining building or site feature, such as a porch or mature tree, or if it necessitates the relocation or demolition of historic garages or accessory buildings.
5. Design additions so that their size, scale, and form are compatible with the existing building and do not visually overpower the building on this or adjacent sites. It is not appropriate to introduce an addition if it will substantially alter the proportion of constructed area to unbuilt area on the site. In general, not more than 50% of a rear yard should be of impermeable material including roofs of additions, paving, patios, pools, and outbuildings
6. Design additions to be compatible with, but discernible from and secondary to, the existing building in their location, size, scale, and building and roof form.
  - Limit the size and scale of additions to minimize their visual impact and maintain private open spaces on the site.
  - Match the foundation height, style, and materials of an addition to the existing building, but differentiate the junction of old and new by recessing the foundation of the addition.
  - Differentiate the addition from the wall plane of the existing building, and preserve existing cornerboards and trim, by inseting the wall plane of the addition and/or utilizing a hyphen to connect the addition to the existing building.
  - Utilize similar roof forms and pitches for building additions and, when possible, align the height of the eave line of a new addition with the eave line of the existing building.
  - Maintain the roof pitch and ridgeline of the existing building. It is not appropriate to alter or raise the roof ridge of existing buildings in order to accommodate additions. Roof ridges for additions should be secondary to (lower than) those of the main structure.

7. It is appropriate to design additions using contemporary architecture provided they adhere to the characteristics of the historic district including: siting and setbacks, scale, height, form, proportion, and details.

8. Minimize damage to the historic building by constructing additions to be structurally self-supporting, where feasible, and attach them to the original building carefully to minimize the loss of historic fabric. Attach additions in such a manner that, if additions were removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.

9. Design additions and their features to be compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings in their materials.

- Select exterior materials and finishes that are compatible with the original building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color.
- Use traditional materials in conventional ways so that additions are in harmony with the buildings in the historic district (ie. wood siding applied horizontally).
- Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for additions.
- It is inappropriate to use synthetic (vinyl, aluminum, PVC, plastic, resin, fiberboard) siding and details on additions within the historic districts.

10. Design additions and their features to be compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings in their architectural details.

- Incorporate materials and details derived from the primary structure. Extend the architectural hierarchy of architectural details to the addition with architectural embellishments and detailing simplified on less visible side and rear elevations.

11. Design additions so that the location, shape, scale, size, materials, pattern, and proportion of windows and doors are compatible with the windows and doors of the existing building and with historic buildings in the immediate surroundings. Doors and windows should follow the standards for New Construction: Doors and Windows.

12. Design porches so that the location, shape, scale, size, materials, and details are compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, porches on the existing building. Porches should follow the standards for New Construction: Porches.

13. It is not appropriate to construct an attached garage on houses that predate the 1960s.

14. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

## Decks & Patios

Decks and patios are contemporary translations of the traditional porch or terrace that typically expands the living area of a home into the backyard. Decks and patios gained popularity by the mid-twentieth century as a more casual alternative to porches on rear elevations. Typically, decks are constructed of wood and are raised above ground level to align with the first floor of a house. Depending on the distance above grade, a deck may include a railing for safety and steps down to the yard. Patios are typically constructed at grade and may be laid with concrete, brick, slate, or other masonry.

### *Preservation Considerations and Best Practices*

As with any exterior change, careful attention must be given to the location, scale, height, design, and construction of decks and patios in order to avoid compromising the historic character of the building or visually overwhelming the building or site. Locating decks on the rear elevation of the building and inseting the deck from the rear corners of the building minimizes their visibility, increases privacy, and reduces the potential of damage to original architectural trim. Decks should also be located to protect significant building features, such as porches or projecting bays, and to ensure that important site features, including mature trees, are not lost.

The size of new decks should be modest in comparison to the house and site and should not significantly change the proportion of open area to built mass for the site. When possible, decks should be designed to be close to the ground to eliminate the need for handrails and extensive framing, thereby minimizing their visual impact. The steep topography of some sites makes the addition of a deck particularly difficult and may necessitate the construction of a multi-level deck that gently transitions into the landscape, keeping the height above the ground low to minimize the visual impact of the structural supports. When possible, deck structures and foundations should be screened with foundation plantings, shrubs, or lattice to further reduce their visual impact.

Despite efforts to keep decks low to the ground, many require railings for safety and steps down to the yard. Given the contemporary nature of decks, railings and steps should not imitate historic details, but should instead be simply detailed features that are compatible with the historic building in terms of their scale and proportion. The use of a compatible paint color or stain on a deck can both soften its visual impact and extend its life by protecting the wood from the deteriorating effects of ultraviolet light and moisture.

As with any construction activity in the historic district, the impact of the construction work on the site should be minimized by avoiding the use of heavy machinery that disturbs or compacts the soil and mature trees and other site features should be protected from damage. Damage to the building's historic fabric can also be minimized by constructing the deck to be structurally self-supporting, with minimal structural connections to the historic building. This also allows decks to be removed without damage to the historic building.

While patios tend to be less visually intrusive than decks, it is imperative to consider the size, location, and material of patios in order to minimize the impervious surface area of the site. In order to minimize damage to the historic building, patios with footings or other structural support should be self-supported and not tied to the structure of the historic building. Further, poured concrete patios should not abut the foundation of the house and should be gently sloped to drain water away from the house. A planting strip of at least 8" should be retained between the patio and foundation of the house in order to ensure that settling of the patio does not impact the foundation and that water does not collect along the building foundation.

### **Standards for Decks & Patios:**

1. Locate decks and patios on rear elevations or in inconspicuous areas that are minimally visible from the public right-of-way.
2. Locate decks and patios in locations that do not damage or conceal significant building or site features or details. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck or patio if it requires the loss of a character-defining building or site feature, including porches, projecting bays or wings, historic garages or accessory buildings, or mature trees.
3. Retain and preserve historic building materials and trim and minimize the visual impact of a deck or patios by designing them to be inset from the rear buildings corners.
4. Limit the size and scale of decks and patios to minimize their visual impact. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck or patio if it will visually overpower the building or site or substantially alter the proportion of constructed area to unbuilt area on the site.
5. Align decks with the building's first floor. For sites with steep topography, consider multi-level decks that step down to follow the topography of the site. For buildings with high foundations, consider installing a lower deck or ground-level patio to eliminate the need for handrails or excessive screening.
6. Design and detail decks and any related steps and railings to be compatible with the historic building in scale, material, configuration, and proportion. Consider designing deck piers and foundation infill to relate to the house in the same way that porch would. However, avoid replicating historic porch posts and railings for contemporary, uncovered decks.
7. Minimize damage to the historic building by designing decks and patios to be structurally self-supporting. Attach decks to the building carefully to minimize the loss of historic fabric and to allow for their removal in the future. Retain a planting strip between patios and building foundations to allow for proper drainage.
8. Screen the deck's structural framing with foundation plantings, lattice, or other compatible screening materials.
9. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during or as a consequence of deck- or patio-related site work or construction.