New Construction of Garages, Carports, and Accessory Buildings

The location, size, scale, materials, architectural style, and use of garages, carports, and accessory buildings in Chapel Hill's historic districts varies greatly and is illustrative of the evolving transportation, storage, and lifestyle needs of the districts' residents. As with any new construction, a new garage, carport, 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, carport, 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, carports, 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, carport or accessory building.

The form, height, and scale of new buildings should be consistent with that of existing garages, carports, 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-twenty-first 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, carports, or accessory buildings must be related to and remain secondary to that of the primary building on the site. New garages, carports, 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, carports, and accessory structures often have 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 emulate historic materials in their size, installation, and finish. For a new garage, selecting doors resembling the appearance of 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, 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, Carports, and Accessory Buildings:

Note: The design of new garages, carports, and accessory buildings should also follow the standards for New Construction including: Building Materials and Architectural Details; Doors and Windows; and Porches. Garages that are attached to the house must also follow the standards for Additions.

Commented [HW1]: Does this need to be called out/referenced further within the guidelines to ensure that the garages aren't just being tacked on??

1. Introduce compatible new garages, carports, and accessory structures, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.

2. Site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings in traditional locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site.

3. Site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings to be consistent with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings, both in orientation to and setback from the street as well as in spacing between and distance from other buildings. Whenever possible, locate garages, carports, 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, carports, and accessory structures are generally not appropriate in front yards.

4. Design and site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, and significant site features.

5. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings so that their size, scale, and form do not visually overpower the primary building on this or adjacent sites. Garages, carports, 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, carports, and accessory buildings to be compatible in height, form, and proportion with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings.

7. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings that are compatible with, but discernible from, historic garages and accessory buildings in the districts.

8. Design new garages, carports, 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, carports, 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.

Commented [HW2]: AS: We have been allowing single double-wide doors.

Needs committee discussion.

10. Locate new metal- or wood-framed storage buildings or carports 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 and metal 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—including stone walls and mature trees--from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

12. It is not appropriate to construct a new garage, carports, 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.

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 complement 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.

An initial and important consideration for additions is their location and footprint. Rear elevations generally provide inconspicuous locations for modest additions, minimizing visibility 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. Stepping the addition in 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. Additions should be sized so that they do not visually compete with the original building. Furthermore, the footprint of the addition should not significantly alter the site's ratio of built mass to unbuilt area, and private open space at the rear of the property should be maintained.

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 insetting the addition from the rear corners of the building, including a "hyphen," other small-scale transitional element, 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 building's 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.

Commented [HW3]: Will include examples in the photos/illustrations

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.

Commented [HW4]: Will include examples of both in illustrations.

Needs committee discussion

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 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 elevations 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 on the rhythm of the streetscape or character-defining open spaces. Additions are never permitted on front 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 front 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.

Commented [HW5]: Does LUMO regulations regarding setbacks do enough to cover this? Can/should we just delete this sentence entirely?

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 stepping back the wall plane of the addition and/or utilizing a hyphen or other small-scale transitional element to connect the addition to the existing building.
- Where additions compete in size with the original building, include a hyphen or small-scale connecting wing or to separate the historic building from its new addition.
- 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.

Commented [HW6]: If the wall is already inset, the foundation will be as well. Maybe we don't need this phrase at all.

- 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: materials, 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 with materials that are compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings.

- 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 (i.e. wood siding applied horizontally).
- Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for additions.
- It is generally inappropriate to use synthetic (vinyl, aluminum, PVC, plastic, resin, fiberboard) siding and details on additions within the historic districts unless it can be demonstrated that the material and finishes are compatible with the original building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color.

Commented [HW7]: Needs committee discussion.

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

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

Addition of Dormers

Roof form is an important visual element that both defines the style of a particular building and contributes to the rhythm and continuity of the streetscape. Therefore any alterations to the roofline of a building should be carefully considered. The addition of dormers should be considered for one- or one-and-a-half-story houses only if there are no other alternatives for increasing the square footage of the house. For example, dormer additions may be appropriate when the house is located on a small lot and there are no opportunities for expansion elsewhere on the property.

Commented [HW8]: Most standards in NC don't address dormers specifically. Denver only allows them on one-story houses. I've added one-and-a-half story to cover larger bungalows. Do we want to similarly limit?

Needs committee discussion.

The design and location of roof dormers should correlate to the particular style of the building. Historically, dormers were most often applied to Craftsman- and Colonial Revival-style houses. Craftsman-style houses featured dormers constructed with low-pitched gabled or shed-roofed roofs and dormers were limited to a single, centered dormer on each elevation. They often featured exposed rafter tails, knee brackets or purlins in the gables, and grouped double-hung or casement windows. Conversely, Colonial Revival-style houses frequently included 2-3 smaller, front-gabled dormers, equally spaced across the façade, and/or a wide, shed-roofed dormer on the rear elevation. These dormers tended to replicate the colonial detailing found on the main part of the house, including boxed eaves, cornices, and double-hung multi-light windows. Decorative gables and dormers were sometimes included on Queen Anne-style homes, though they were never large enough to accommodate living space. Low-pitched, shed-roofed dormers are sometimes found on Modernist or Contemporary housing from the late twentieth century.

**Sidebar: For more information about architectural and dormer styles consult the Glossary of Architectural Styles on page -- and/or the architectural style guides referenced in the Bibliography.

In addition to compatibility with the style of the house, it is essential that new dormers do not visually overpower the original building, compromise its architectural integrity, misrepresent its chronology, or destroy significant features of the building or site. Carefully designed dormers should be compatible with, but differentiated from, the original building and may respect the original without directly copying historic design features.

As with any addition, dormers 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 complement the historic building.

Considerations for the Location of Dormer Additions:
An initial and important consideration for dormer additions is their location. Like any addition, dormers are not appropriate on a front façade. Rear elevations generally provide inconspicuous locations for dormer additions, minimizing visibility from the public right-of-way. Locating dormers a minimum of several feet from the wall plane also helps to limit their visibility from the street. It is also important to locate dormer additions where they will not damage or conceal significant building features.

Considerations for the Scale, Form, and Massing of Dormer Additions:
Dormers should be sized and scaled to the architectural style of the original building and so that they do not visually compete with the massing of the original building. The form, mass, and roof pitch should be consistent with any historic dormers on the building and/or with the architectural style of the building. The construction of new dormers must never result in the alteration of the main roof form or height.

Considerations for the Materials and Design Details of Dormer Additions:
The next level of design considerations is the selection of compatible finish materials and architectural details, including the careful selection and placement of windows. Dormers may replicated historic details or may incorporate contemporary finishes and details that are neutral in design and do not detract from the original building.

Finish materials and architectural details should follow the standards for New Construction including: Building Materials and Architectural Details; and Doors and Windows.

Standards for the Addition of Dormers:

1. Introduce compatible new dormers, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.

2. Construct dormers in locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site and are minimally visible from the street, typically on rear elevations. Dormers may be constructed on side elevations only when located near the rear of the elevation in order to minimize their impact on the building and the rhythm of the streetscape. Dormers are never permitted on front facades.

Commented [HW9]: Needs committee discussion

3. Rear dormers shall be inset a minimum of two feet from the side elevations of the building to reduce potential visual impacts and help preserve the existing roof form and historic building materials.

4. Design dormers to be compatible with the existing building in their size, scale, and roof form so that they do not visually overpower the building on this or adjacent sites.
- The number and size of dormers shall be limited on a roof, such that the primary roof form remains prominent.
- Utilize similar roof forms and pitches for dormers. Gabled, hipped, or shed dormers are appropriate for most structures.
- Roof ridges for dormers must be secondary to (lower than) those of the main structure and set in from the eave of the 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 dormers.

5. Design dormers with materials that are compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings.
- 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 (i.e. wood siding applied horizontally).
- Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for additions.
- It is generally inappropriate to use synthetic (vinyl, aluminum, PVC, plastic, resin, fiberboard) siding and details on additions within the historic districts unless it can be demonstrated that the material and finishes are compatible with the original building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color.
- Whenever possible, match new roof materials to those on the existing house.

6. Design dormers with architectural details that are compatible with, but discernable from and secondary to, the existing building.

- The style of the dormer should relate to the style of the house.
- Incorporate materials and details derived from the primary structure.
- Utilize eave designs and materials that compliment the architecture of the existing house.
- Extend the architectural hierarchy of architectural details to the addition with architectural embellishments and detailing simplified on less visible side and rear elevations.

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

8. It is not appropriate to obscure, cover, or remove historic features when adding a dormer.

Decks & Patios

Decks and patios are contemporary translations of the traditional porch or terrace that 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. Occasionally, decks may be roofed and converted to screened or sun porches. Patios are typically constructed at grade and may be laid with concrete, brick, slate, or other masonry.

Commented [HW10]: AS: What about screen- or window-enclosed sunrooms/porches? In between additions and patios…should we address separately?

Commented [HW11]: It think enclosed/sunroom is really an Addition. We could add screened porches if you don't think it's covered under "porches" in the early section.

Preservation Considerations and Best Practices

As with any exterior change, careful attention must be given to the location, scale, height, design, material, 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 stepping the deck back 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. When possible, design decks around mature trees or accommodate those trees within the footprint of the deck.

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 reduce 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 and 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 reduce 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 inches 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:

Note: The addition of screened porches and sunrooms, or the conversion of decks to screened porches or sunrooms, should follow all guidelines for Porches and Additions. Pergolas and other freestanding coverings over decks or patios should follow all guidelines for District Setting.

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 patio by designing them to be inset from the building’s 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 or high foundations, consider multi-level decks that step down to follow the topography of the site.

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 a 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.