

# Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations

A Practical Series for the Preservation and Maintenance of Rockville's Historic Resources

## 4: New Additions

### Background

Standards of comfort are different today than they were when many of Rockville's historic homes were constructed. A major misconception about historic preservation is that additions are not allowed on designated buildings. However, sensitively designed additions allow historic buildings to compete with contemporary ones in terms of livability. They preserve historic homes by preventing obsolescence and keep them available for the continued use and enjoyment of Rockville's residents.

A new addition should be designed to respect a building's character and to preserve its historic integrity. This generally means using existing rooflines, trim lines, material and massing as a guide for designing the new addition. It is critical that additions do not visually overpower the original building.

It is almost always preferable to attach a new addition to the rear in order to better preserve the historic appearance of the property from the public view. Adding an additional story to a historic building will alter its character, and should be carefully considered.



The addition on the center house is well designed. It respects the form and scale of the house and its neighbors. It is inset slightly and has a lower roofline so as not to overwhelm the adjacent buildings.

Care should be taken when planning an addition to consider the impact on other historic features on the property, including walkways, trees, outbuildings and other garden features.

Additions that replicate the features of a historic building must be clearly differentiated as new construction to preserve the visual understanding of the

original historic building. This differentiation can be accomplished by breaking the plane of a wall to inset the addition, giving the addition a lower roofline or using a different material. Contemporary designs may be acceptable on the rear elevation.

### HDC Policy

The Historic District Commission follows *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and the accompanying *Guidelines*, and recommends the following practices:

1. Make retention of the building's historic character and materials the focus of the addition's design. Use existing roofline, trim lines, materials and massing for guidance in the new design.
2. Avoid the loss of historic materials and features such as trees, outbuildings and landscape walls.
3. Whenever possible, place addition on rear. Build back on the lot rather than up.
4. Design the addition so it does not overwhelm the historic building, or adjacent neighbors, in scale or massing.
5. The design of doors, windows, shutters, trim and exterior siding should all be compatible with the historic structure, although modern materials may be considered by the HDC. The view of new garage doors should be minimized from the public street.



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## 4: New Additions *(continued)*

### HDC Policy *(continued)*

- Utilize the HDC staff and courtesy review process for assistance in designing a compatible addition.
- Ensure that the addition complies with all City zoning requirements.



*Left: House in 1890*

*Below: House in 2003 with substantial additions and alterations.*

### Certificate of Approval

**PLEASE NOTE - If repair or replacement materials match the existing materials *exactly*, no Certificate of Approval is required**

If changes are requested, the application for a Certificate of Approval must include the following:

- Site plan showing location and scale of proposed addition, with location of significant trees and vegetation
- Existing and proposed elevation drawings
- Schedule of building materials
- Grading plan, if extensive grading is required (to avoid potential loss of archaeological resources)
- Justification for design (may be required)

### Tax Credit Information

Tax credits are not permitted for new construction, but would be given for maintenance on historic fabric undertaken at the same time as the new work.

### Contact Us

For additional information and questions, please contact:  
Historic District Commission  
Department of Community Planning and  
Development Services

Rockville City Hall  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-314-8230 voice  
240-314-8210 fax  
history@rockvillemd.gov

### Additional information

*Adopted Architectural Design Guidelines for the Exterior Rehabilitation of Buildings in Rockville's Historic Districts*, Rockville Historic District Commission, 1977.

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation*, National Park Service, 1995 -  
[www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab\\_index.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_index.htm)

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