

# New Additions to Historic Buildings

An attached exterior addition to a historic building expands its “outer limits” to create a new profile. Because such expansion has the capability to radically change the historic appearance, an exterior addition should be considered only after it has been determined that the new use cannot be successfully met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces. If the new use cannot be met in this way, then an attached exterior addition is usually an acceptable alternative. New additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of the historic building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. New design should always be clearly differentiated so that the addition does not appear to be part of the historic resource.





**Recommended**

Placing functions and services required for the new use in non-character-defining interior spaces rather than constructing a new addition.

Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

**Not Recommended**

Expanding the size of the historic building by constructing a new addition when the new use could be met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces.

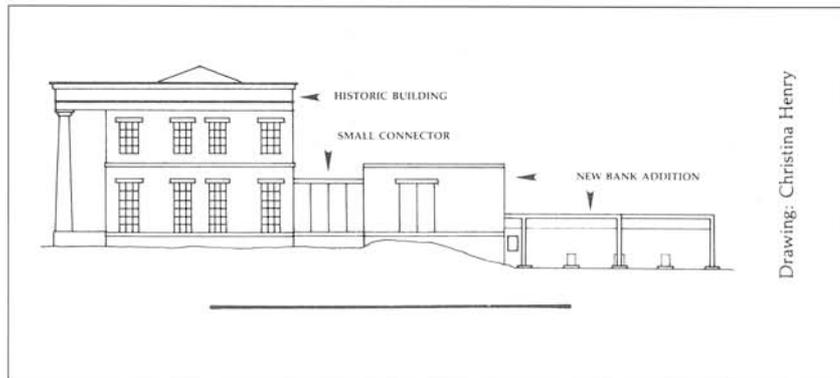
Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

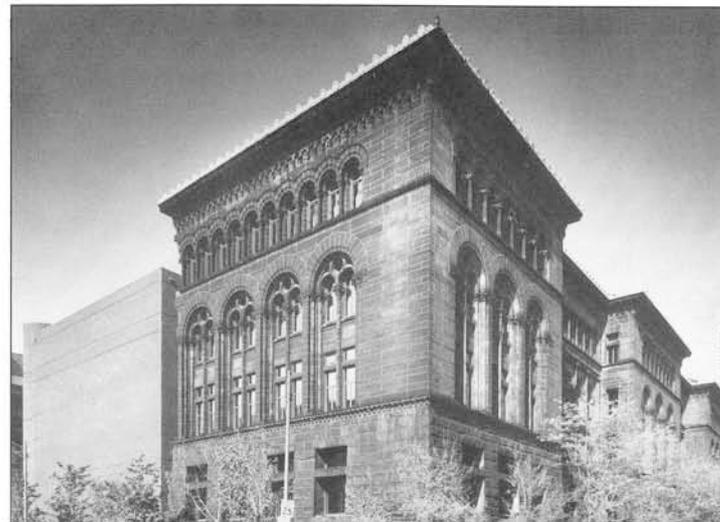
Duplicating the exact form, material, style, and detailing of the historic building in the new addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic building.

Imitating a historic style or period of architecture in new additions, especially for contemporary uses such as drive-in banks or garages.

*An 1847 residence was successfully converted into a bank, with the construction of a low-scale addition. The drawing shows how the three-unit addition has been stepped down the hill, each unit set further back from the historic structure as it extends horizontally. As a result, the new addition is only partially visible from the historic "approach." The small connector was sensitively designed to minimize loss of historic building materials.*



Drawing: Christina Henry



*A new 10-story wing added to the back of a historic library constitutes major expansion, yet is compatible because it reads as a subsidiary unit to the much larger historic building.*



*Left: This rooftop addition has substantially altered the historic profile and proportions of a three-story row house; more important, it has interrupted the uniform roof height of the block. The greenhouse is also a jarring element in an otherwise intact 19th century streetscape. Below: A sizeable employee lounge was added atop this four-story historic commercial building. Because the rooftop addition has been set back from both the front and side roof edges against a party wall, the historic character of the building and the district have been preserved.*



#### Recommended

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

#### Not Recommended

Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.

Using the same wall plane, roof line, cornice height, materials, siding lap or window type to make additions appear to be a part of the historic building.



### Recommended

Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

*The historic residence is on the right. By copying the decorative gable and three-part window in the new addition, the old and new portions are virtually indistinguishable. This approach violates the Standards for Rehabilitation.*

### Not Recommended

Designing new additions such as multi-story greenhouse additions that obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features of the historic building.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.



*In rehabilitating a historic bank for a new use, a small restaurant addition was built on the rear. The new addition is compatible with the historic building primarily because of its scale and location.*



*Two small Victorian cottages, above, were connected to provide additional floor space in a commercial rehabilitation. The inappropriate infill connector, below, is on the same plane as the historic facades, essentially making the two cottages appear as one building. If the new infill had been substantially set back from the facade, the distinct form of each cottage would have been retained.*