



Historic District Design Guidelines

City of Houston

December 1, 2016

Introductions

- City of Houston

Steph McDougal, Project Manager

- Winter & Company

Noré Winter, Principal

Julie Husband, Senior Urban Designer



Tonight's Agenda

- Introduction
- What We've Learned
- Understanding Historic Preservation
- Defining the Tools that are Available to Address Building Design
- Activity : Testing the Draft Survey



Process – Phase 1

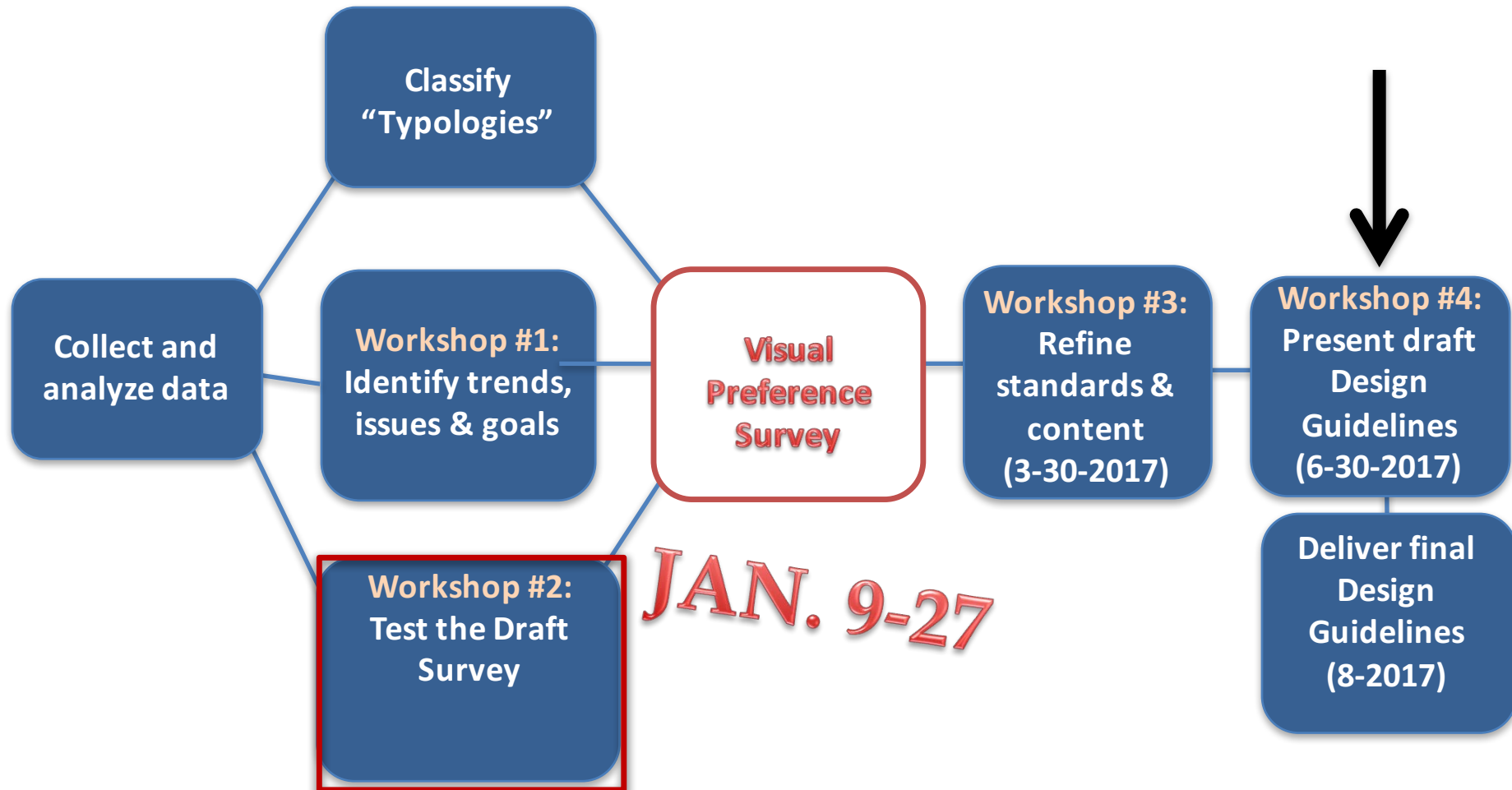
**Step 1:
July 2016**

**Step 1:
August –
December 2016**

**Step 2:
January –
March 2017**

**Step 2:
March
2017**

**Step 3 & 4:
April –
August 2017**



Opportunities to Participate

- Online versions of tonight's workshop exercises (through Monday, Dec. 5)
- Visual Preferences Survey January 9-January 27 (mailed and online option)
- Workshop #3: Review of Strategy Paper March 30, 2017





What We've Learned Summary of Workshop #1

What we've learned

HOUSTON HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

For the Freeland, Norhill, Old 6th Ward, Woodland Heights, and Houston Heights Historic Districts from September 27th to October 27th, 2016



THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

November 21, 2016

Property owners generally agree:

- Small additions and infill construction are considered “compatible.”
- Extremely large additions and infill construction are usually considered “incompatible.”

Not as much clear direction on medium-sized additions and infill – need to explore further for several districts.

<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>

What we've learned

Activity #1: Issues Summary

Objective: To identify current issues and/or concerns in your historic district

Categories of Identified Issues

- Neighborhood Character
- Site Design
- Treatment of Historic Buildings
- Additions to Historic Buildings
- New Infill Buildings
- Review Process
- Other

Example of Issues

- Maintain open ditches
- Maintain traditional parking locations
- Loss of green space, mature tree canopy
- Maintain existing setbacks
- Maintain the diversity of architecture
- Overall height consistent with context

What we've learned

Activity #2: Typologies

Objective: To review and identify a typology location within your historic district

We updated the typology characteristics in response to your comments.

These may help in defining a larger context for some projects.

May be renamed as *Character Areas*

TYOLOGY	3A	3C	3D
Neighborhood Characteristics			
Street Pattern	Grid pattern		
Street Width	20 ft.		
Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO curb & gutter • Tree lawn between street and sidewalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% curb & gutter • 50% NO curb & gutter. • Tree lawn between street and sidewalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb & gutter. • Tree lawn between street and sidewalk
Consistency	High consistency	Moderate consistency	Low consistency
Alleyway	Yes		
Site Characteristics			
Lot Orientation	East / West		
Lot Depth & Width	135'x50'		
Lot Size	5,000 sf.-8,000 sf. (with few 10,000+ sf.)	5,000 sf.-8,000 sf. (with some 8,000 sf. -9,000 sf.)	
Lot Coverage	30%-50% (with few 51%-60%)	30%-50% (with some 51%-60% and few 20%-29%)	30%-60% (with few 20%-29%)
Block End Cap	50%		
Building Setbacks	20 ft.-25 ft.	20 ft.-25 ft.	15 ft.-20 ft.
Parking	Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage	Mix of parking. Side drive to rear; Front garage; alley access; etc...	Mix of parking. Front garage; side drive to rear; alley access; etc...

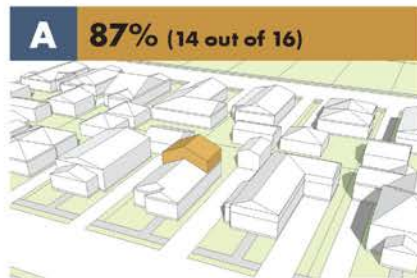
What we've learned

Activity #3: Historic Building Additions

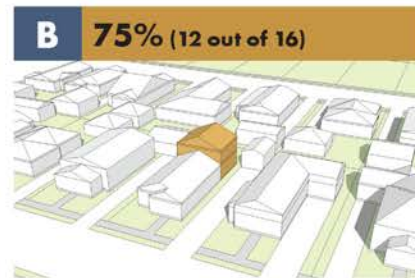
Objective: To gain an initial understanding of how massing of an addition may affect the integrity of a historic house.

The most noted compatible and incompatible additions models are shown below.

Compatible:

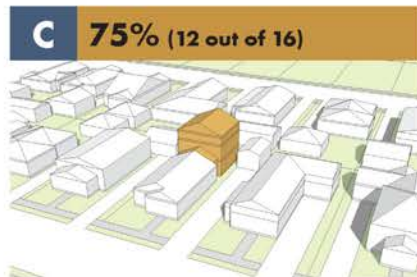


A modest second story roof-top addition, significantly set back on a one-story historic building, is clearly considered compatible.

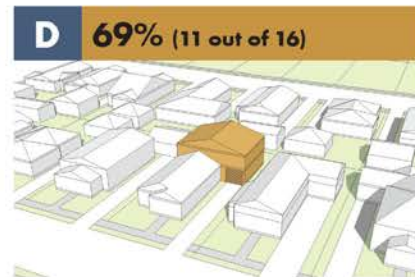


A modest two-story rear addition is clearly considered compatible.

Incompatible:



A large two-and-a-half-story rear addition is clearly considered incompatible.



A large two-story rear addition is clearly considered incompatible.

Observation... Height and lot coverage may affect opinions about compatibility.

Norhill

What we've learned

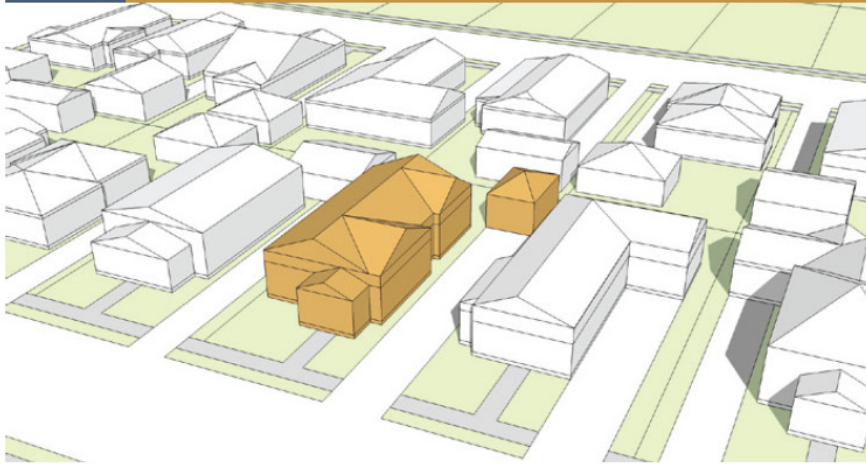
Activity #4: New Construction

Objective: To gain an initial understanding about the “threshold” of compatibility for new, larger houses in each historic district

The most noted compatible and incompatible new infill models are shown below.

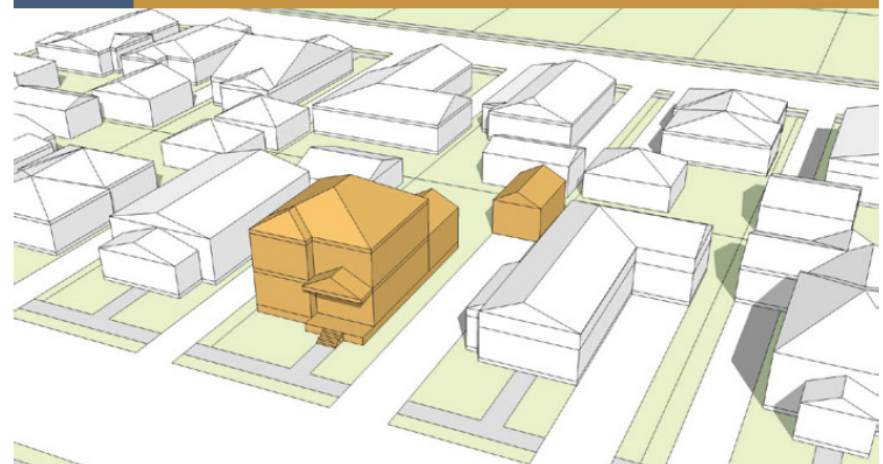
Compatible:

A 75% (12 out of 16)



Incompatible:

B 75% (12 out of 16)



Observation... Two-story mass in front may affect opinions about compatibility.

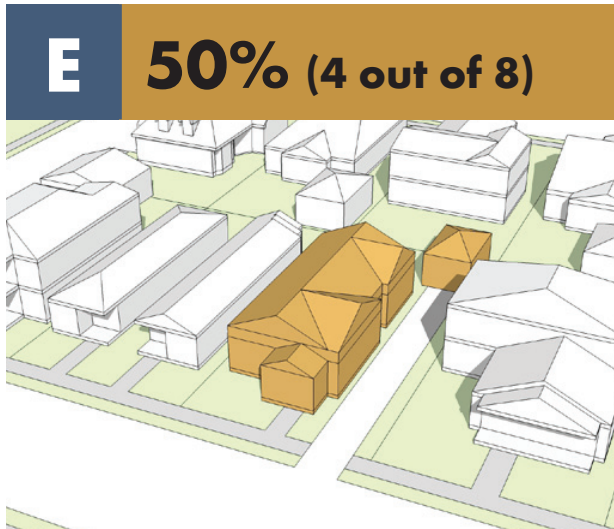
What we've learned

Activity #4: New Construction

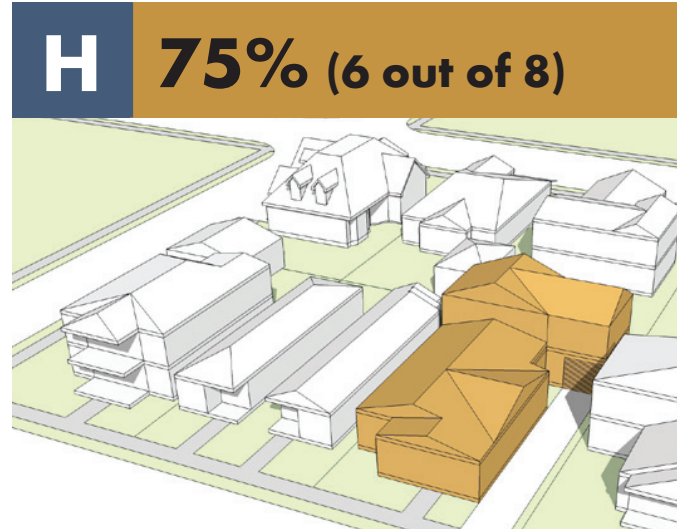
Objective: To gain an initial understanding about the “threshold” of compatibility for new, larger houses in each historic district

The most noted compatible and incompatible new infill models are shown below.

Compatible: 



Incompatible: 



Observation... Increased lot coverage may affect opinions about compatibility.

Old 6th Ward

What we've learned

Activity #5: Visual Preference Survey

Objective: To identify features that may affect compatibility of new construction in historic districts



The most popular image throughout all districts.

The photographs in this activity were selected from other communities, intentionally.

What we've learned

Activity #5: Visual Preference Survey

Objective: To identify features that may affect compatibility of new construction in historic districts



The second most popular image for many districts.



Understanding Historic Preservation

Basic Terms and Concepts

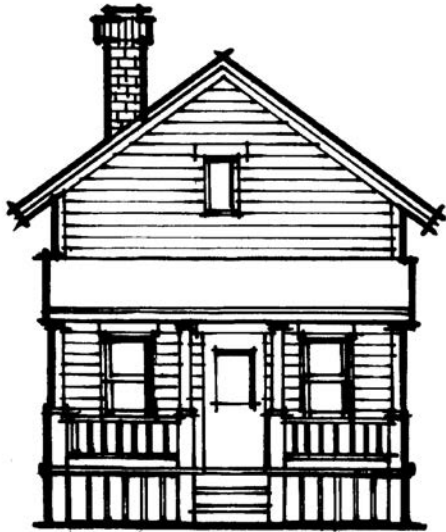
- Historic significance
- Integrity
- Key character-defining features
- Compatibility
- Context



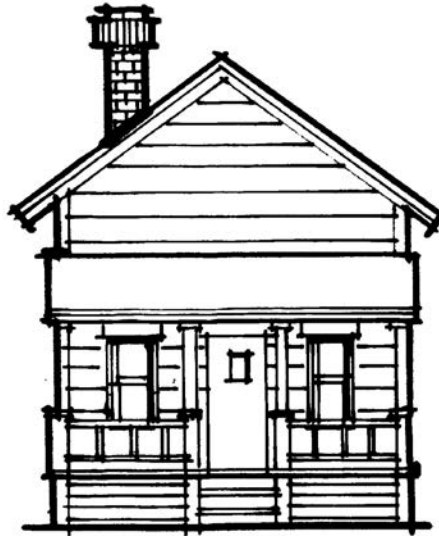
Historic Significance

- What makes this district historic?
 - Architectural character, style, quality
 - Association with important people or events
 - Pattern of community development
 - Evidence of archaeological resources
 - Valued by community, element of public pride
- How does this property *contribute* to the significance of the district?

Integrity



A. Integrity is intact;
few (if any) changes to
original appearance



B. Integrity is diminished;
despite some changes,
still retains much of
original appearance



C. Integrity has been lost,
due to extent and number
of alterations

Integrity... 1. Conveys its historic character? 2. Retains enough original building material?

Integrity intact



Remains intact...

- On-going maintenance is best practice.

Integrity diminished

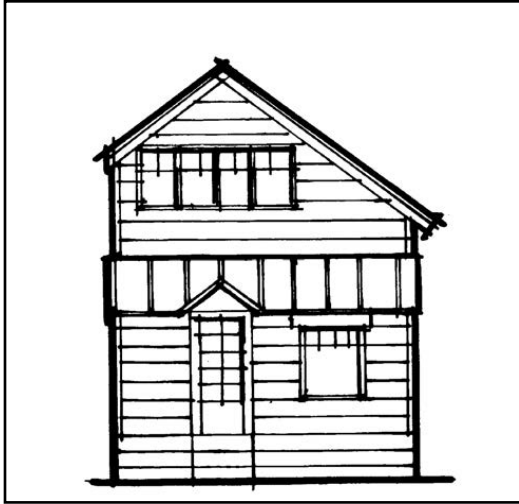


Altered, but sufficient fabric remains...

- Still retains historic significance
- Can be restored



Integrity lost



Integrity is lost by an addition that overwhelms the historic **one-story** house and by substantial loss of original building fabric.

Substantial loss of key, character-defining features...

Key, Character-defining Features



The Craftsman Bungalow



The Bungalow in context

Key, Character-defining Features



The Bungalow Facade

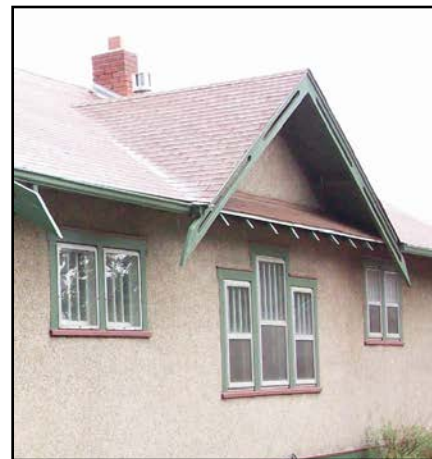
Key, Character-defining Features



Left side wall



Right side wall



Key, Character-defining Features



Rear part of left side wall



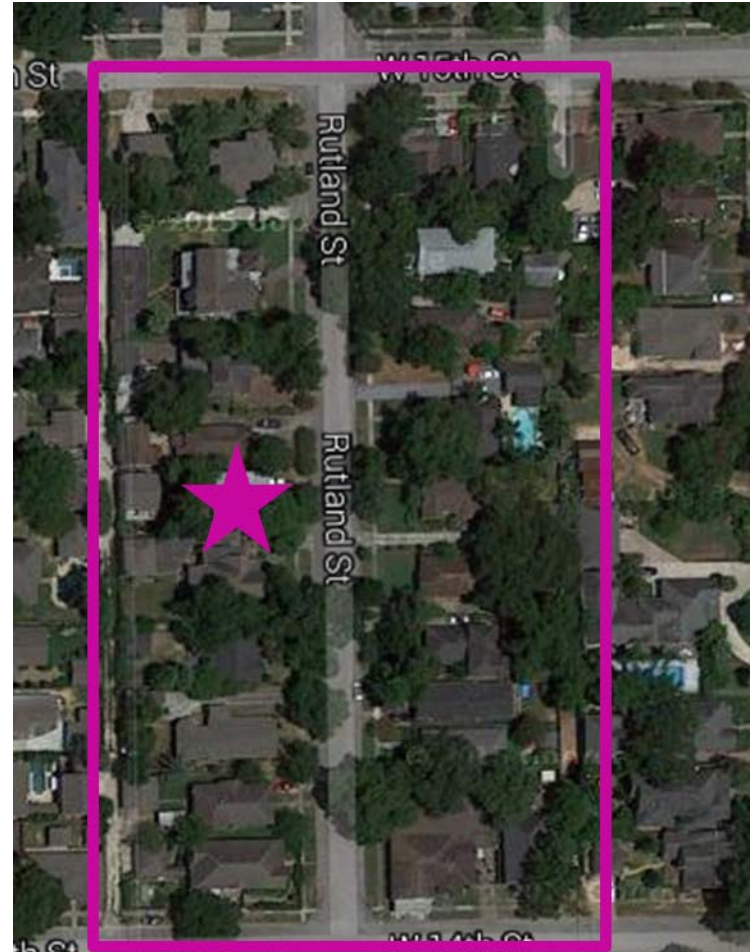
Rear wall

Locating key, character defining features help identify areas where more flexibility may be considered.

Compatibility and Context

Proposed projects are evaluated based on their *compatibility* with surrounding properties.

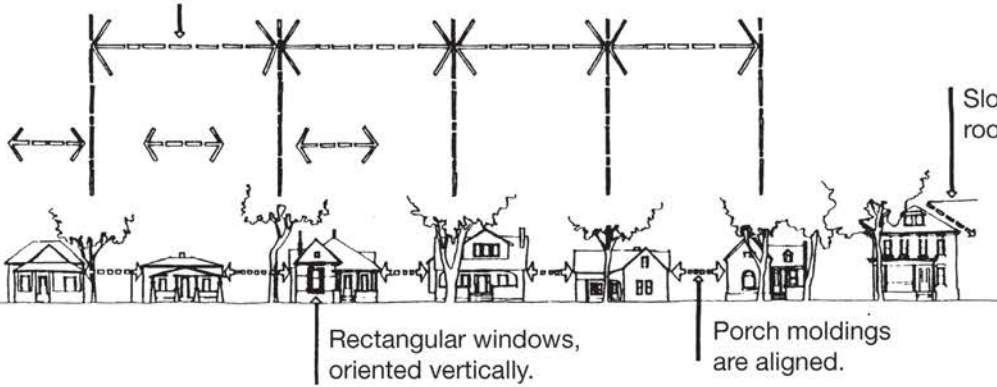
- Massing
- Size
- Scale
- Material
- Character
- Lot Coverage
- Setbacks



These are criteria set forth in the ordinance.

Considering Context

Street trees are evenly spaced and aligned, which creates a strong pattern.



Front Facades Aligned

Similar Shapes are Repeated

Covered Porches

Building Widths are Similar

Steps Define Entrances

Main Entrances Open onto the Street

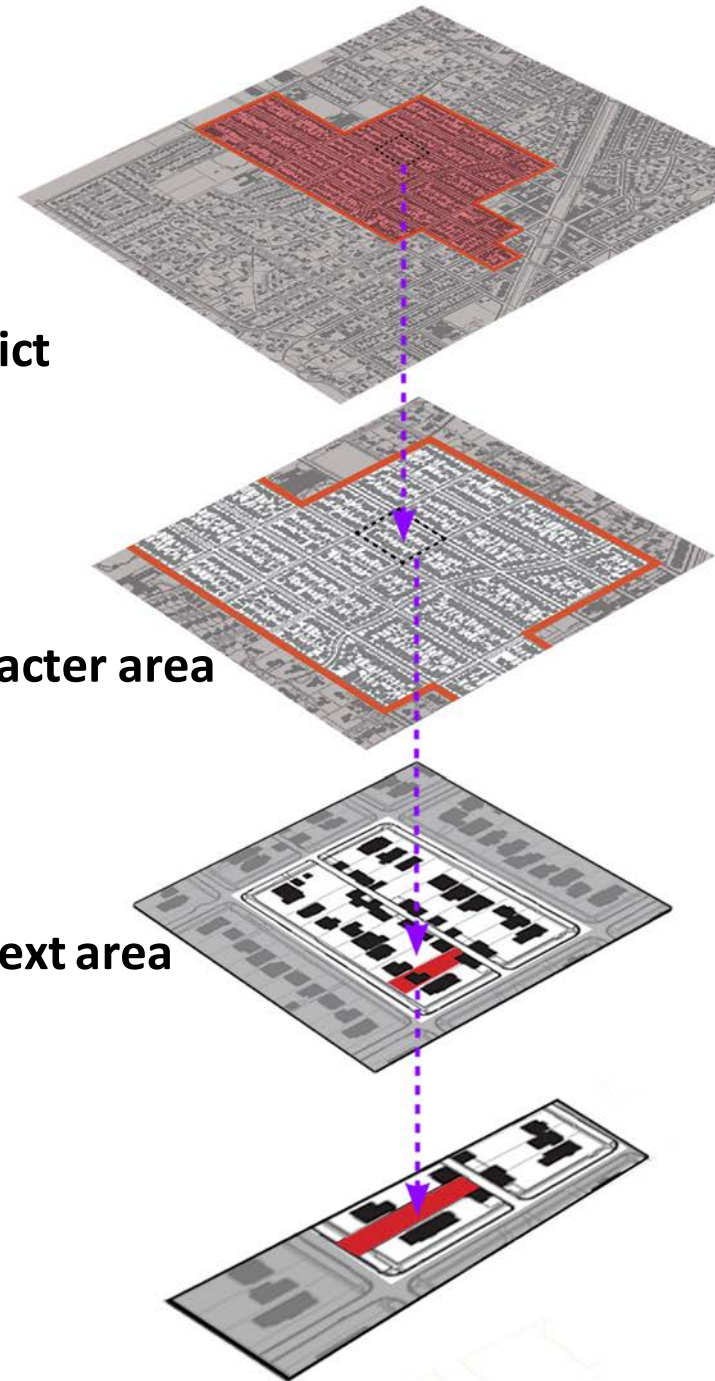
Raised Foundations

District

Character area

Context area

Site

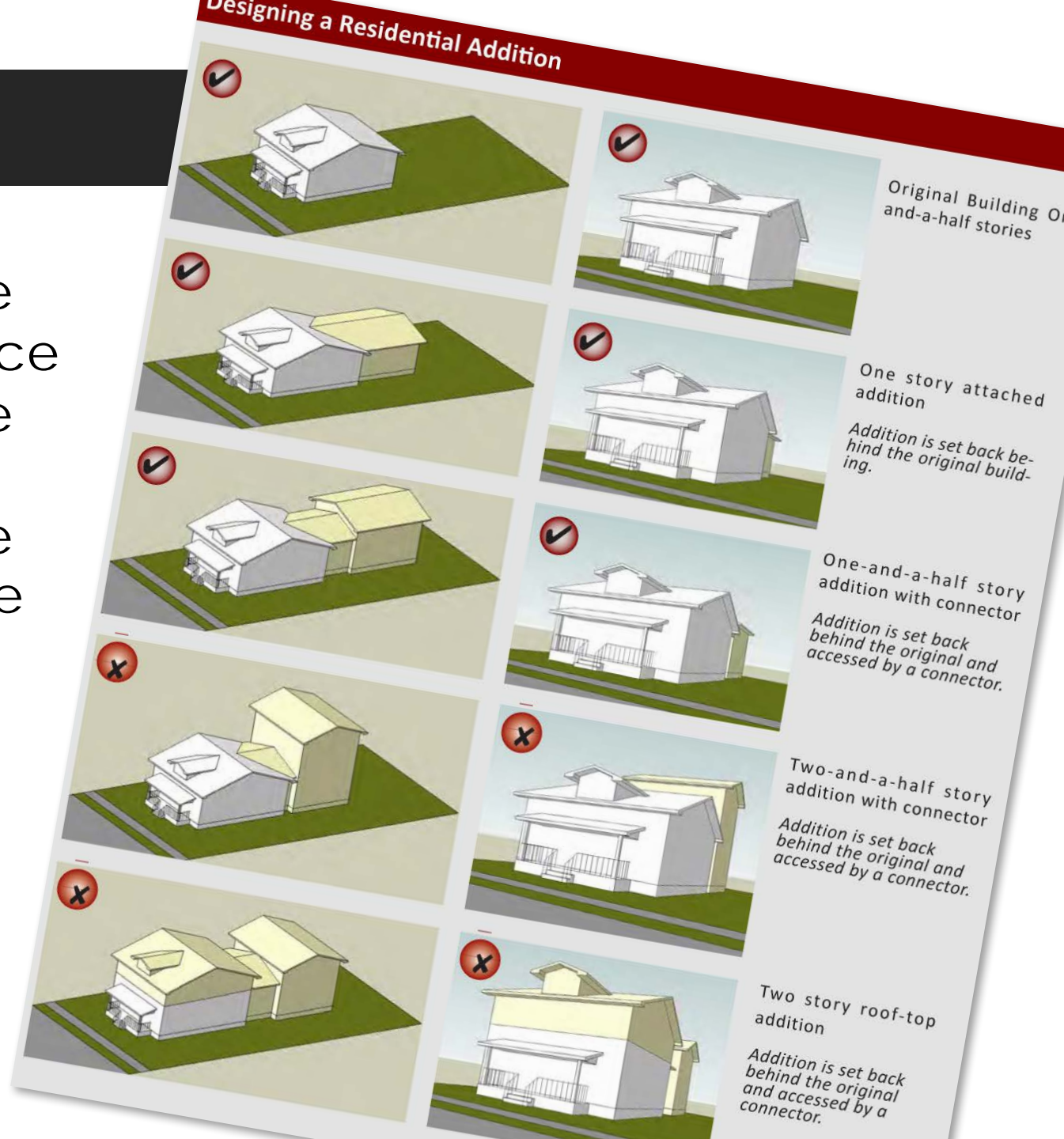


Additions

Considerations...

1. Impact on the historic resource
2. Impact on the context area
3. Impact on the district at large

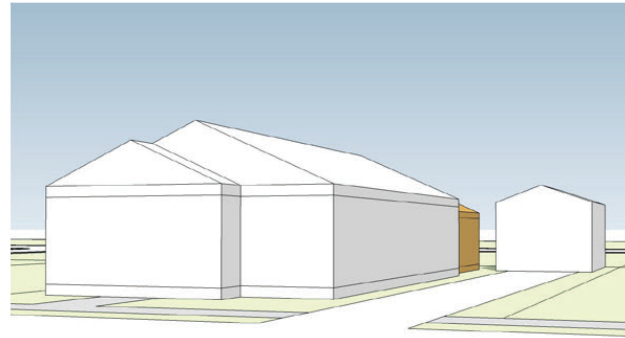
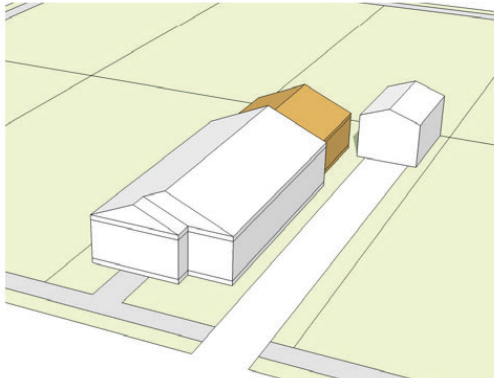
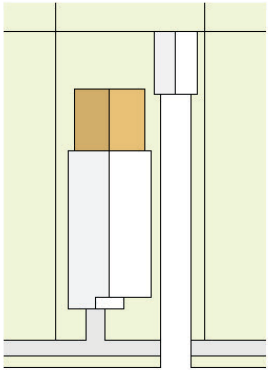
Sample page from
Galveston, TX Design
Guidelines



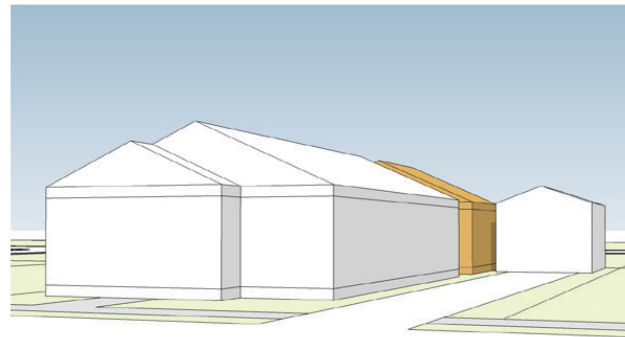
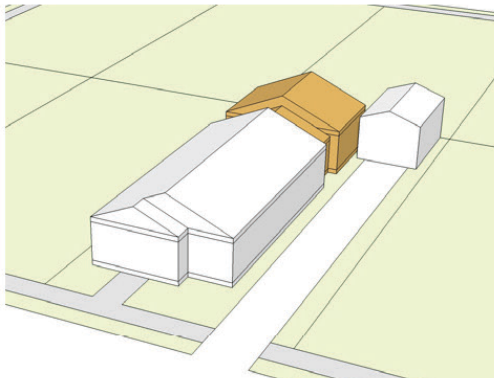
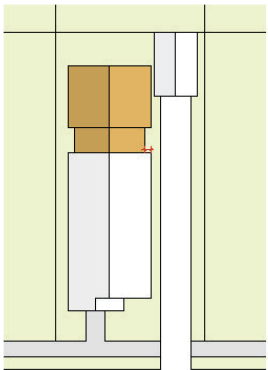
Additions

These additions are compatible.

REAR ADDITION 2: 1-STORY, OFFSET



REAR ADDITION 3: 1-STORY, CONNECTOR

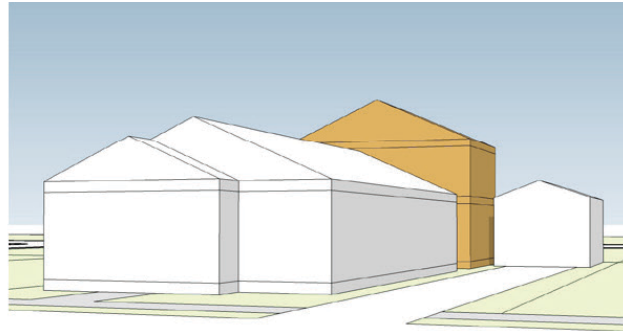
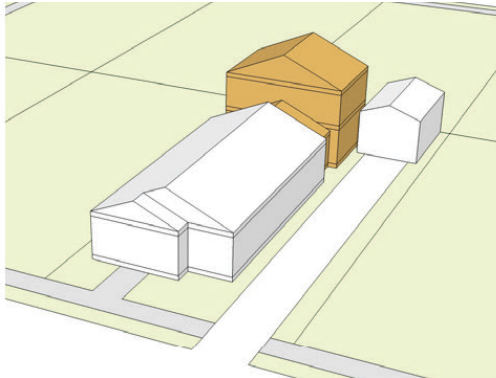
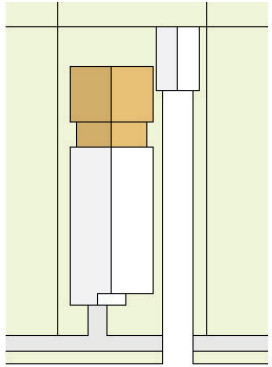


Additions

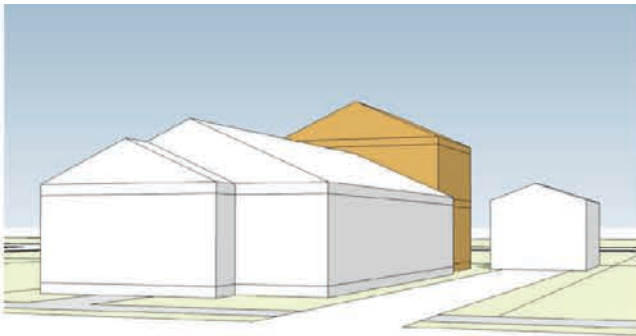
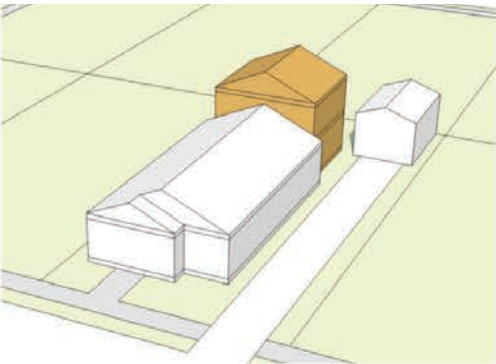
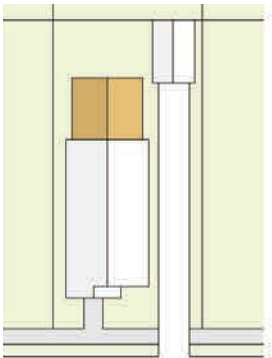


These additions MAY be compatible, depending upon details and context.


REAR ADDITION 4: 2-STORY, CONNECTOR



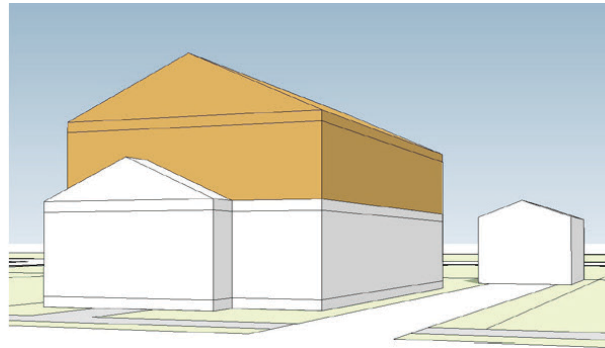
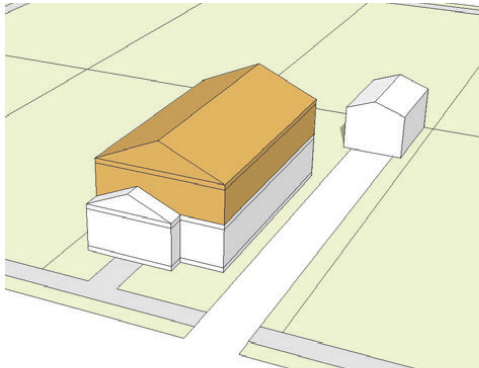
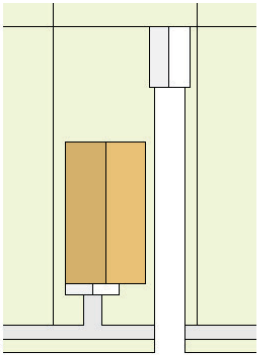
REAR ADDITION 5: 2-STORY, OFFSET



Additions

 This addition is not compatible.

ROOF ADDITION 8: 1-STORY





Defining the Tools that are Available to
Address Building Design

Potential Design Tools



Houston Preservation Design Guidelines Project **POTENTIAL DESIGN TOOLS**

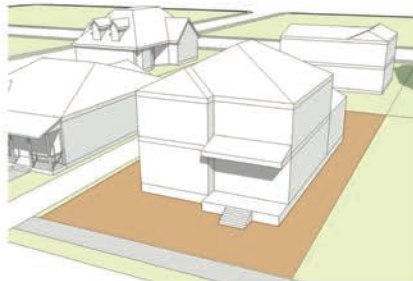
Introduction

The City of Houston regulates changes to properties in locally designated historic districts through a review of proposed projects before they are built. This includes alterations to the exterior of buildings, additions, demolitions, relocations, and new construction. If approved, the project receives a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Planning Department and the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission (HAHC).

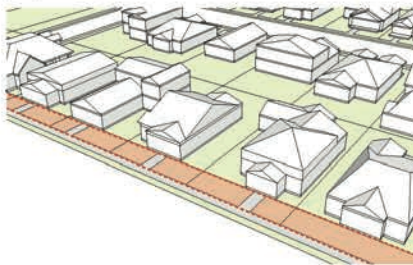
In order to help property owners in historic districts plan such projects, the City is developing design guidelines for seven historic districts to illustrate the criteria that the Planning Department and HAHC use to evaluate COA applications. The three Houston Heights Historic Districts (East, West, and South) will share one set of guidelines, while the Norhill, Freeland, Woodland Heights, and Old Sixth Ward Historic Districts will each have their own design guidelines.

One section of the guidelines for each historic district will address ways to design additions and new buildings so that they are compatible with surrounding properties in the district, in terms of setbacks, scale and proportion, and height. Some of the design tools that could be used to determine compatibility are discussed in this paper. It focuses on those design and construction variables that can be measured, while also considering qualitative aspects of the context area (the blockface on which the proposed project will be located, as well as the opposing blockface).

A few examples of design tools are presented below.



The proportion of a building's size can be set to be in proportion to its lot size.



Maintaining uniform setbacks can be a requirement in some districts.

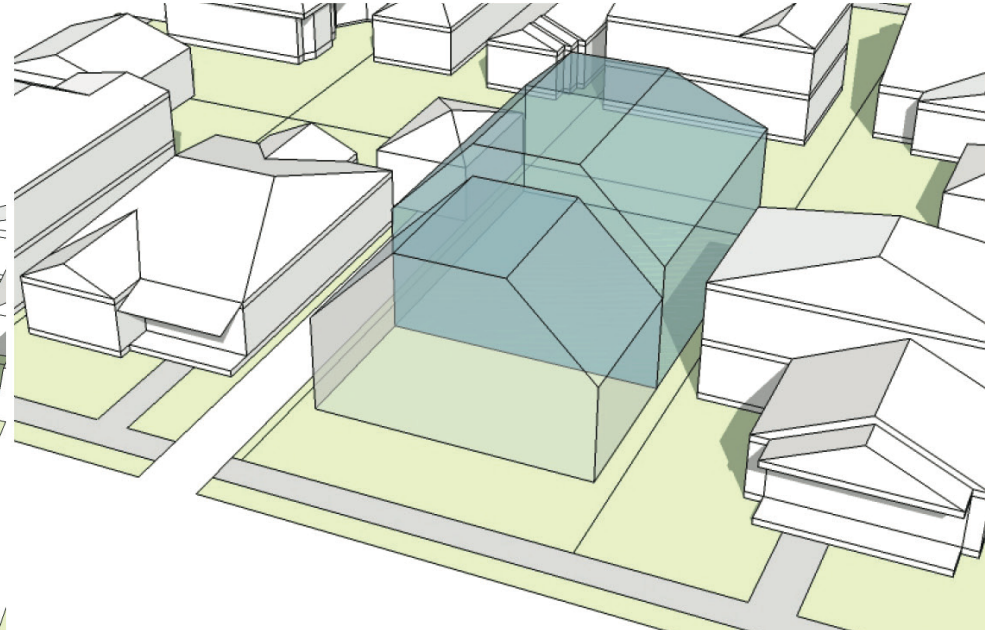
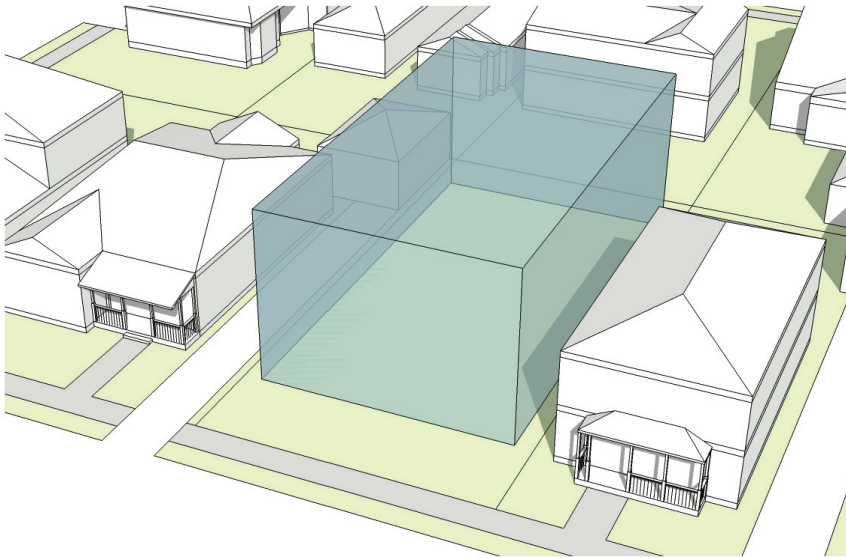
Note that these are
POTENTIAL tools, for
discussion.

This document is on line at...

<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>

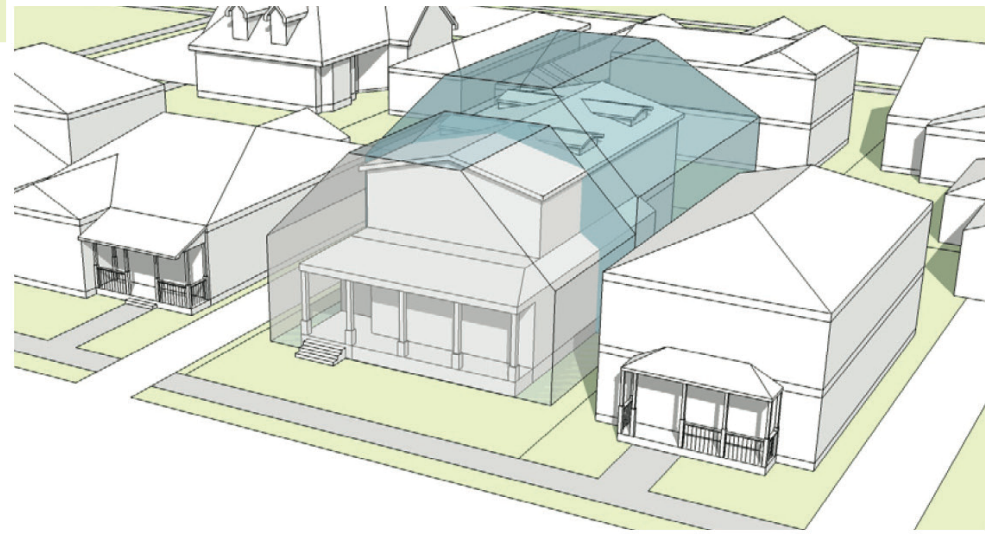
Potential Design Tools

Maximum Building Envelope



Building mass fits within the envelope.

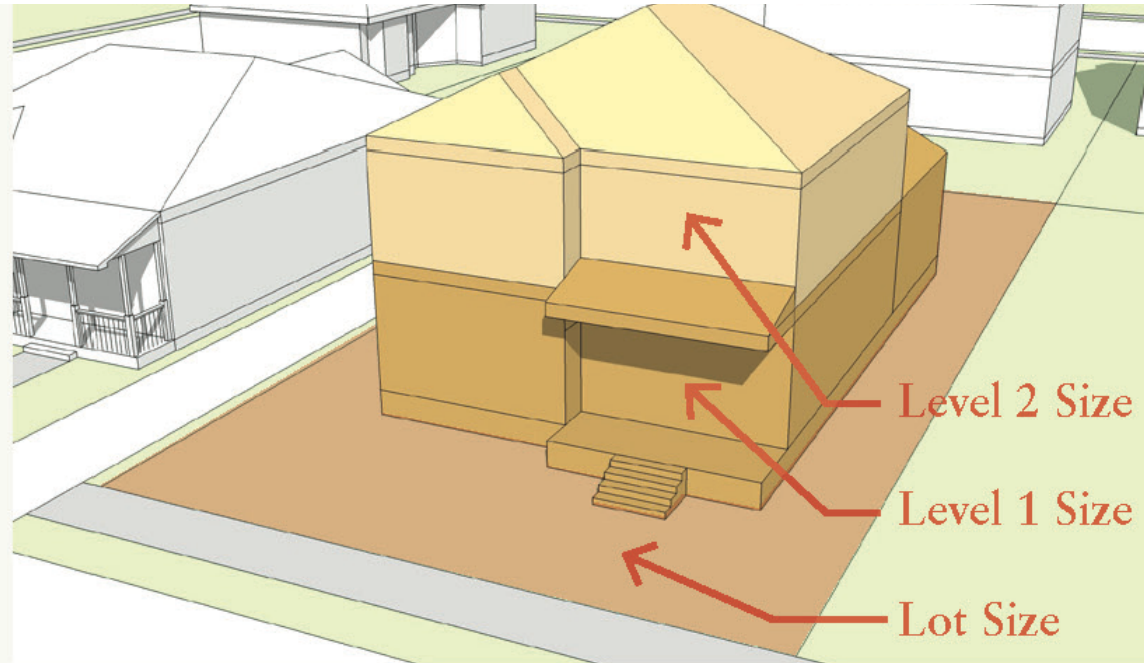
- Can minimize looming effects
- Can maintain solar access for neighbors



Potential Design Tools

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Size of house is in proportion to size of lot.



Level 1 Size = 1250 sqft.

+ Level 2 Size = 750 sqft.

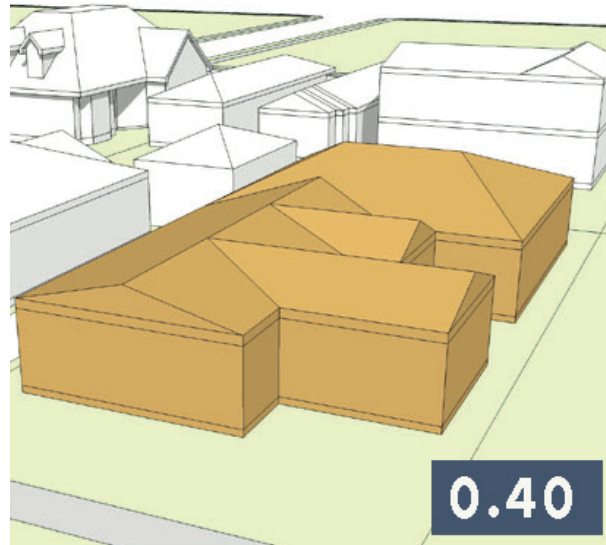
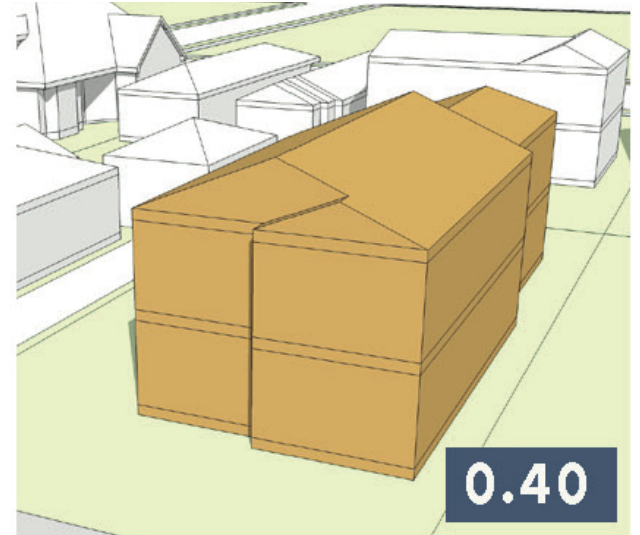
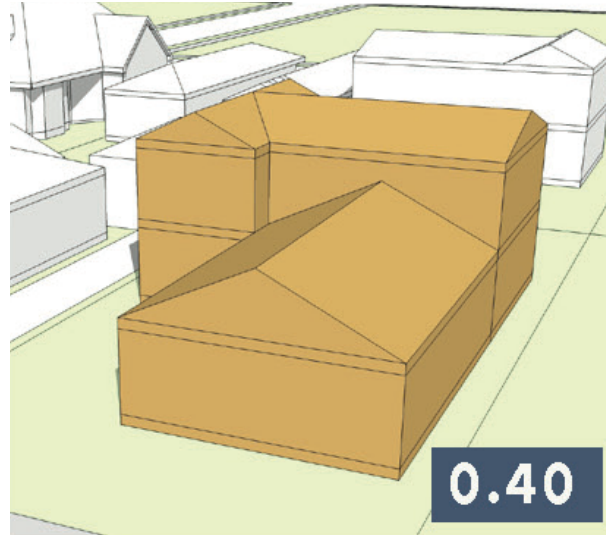
Lot Size = 5,000 sqft.

2,000 sqft.

$\text{FAR} = (2,000) / 5,000 = 0.40 \text{ FAR}$

Potential Design Tools

Floor Area Ratio
(FAR) of 0.40 in 3
different designs

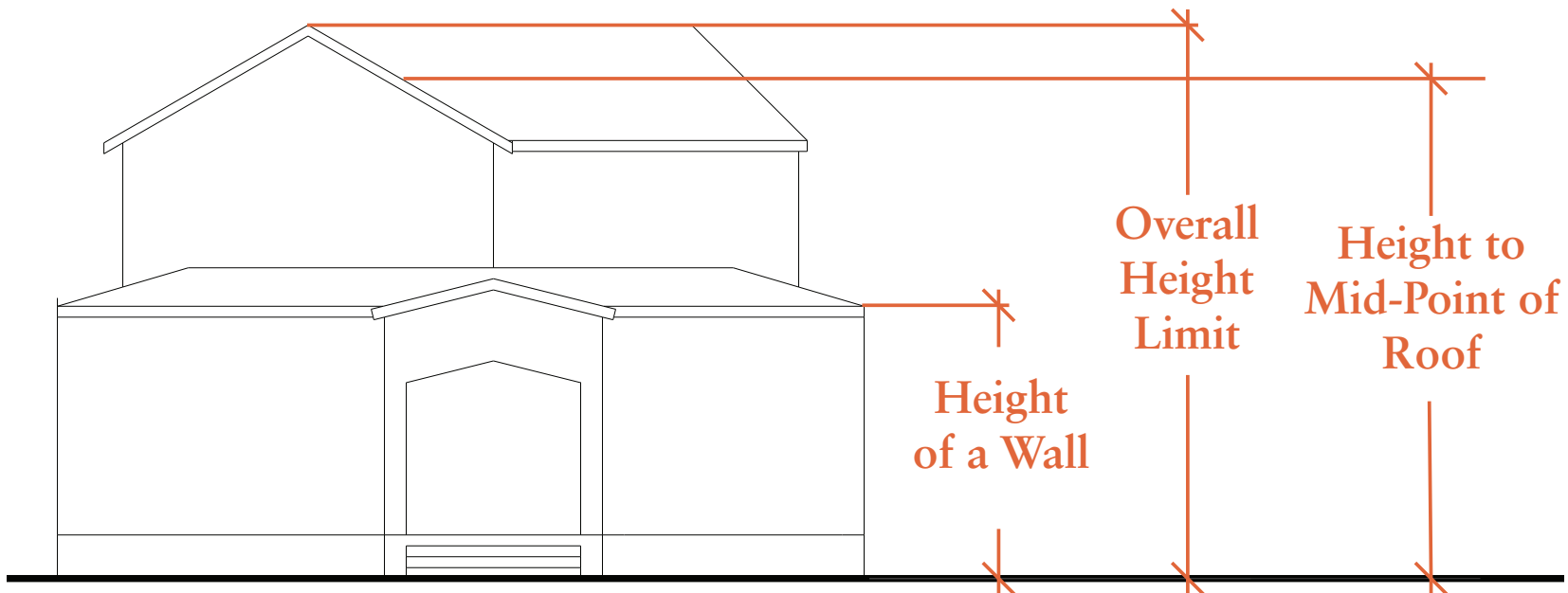


Potential Design Tools

Building Height Limits

Height Limit categories...

1. Overall height limit
2. Height to mid-point of roof
3. Height of a side wall

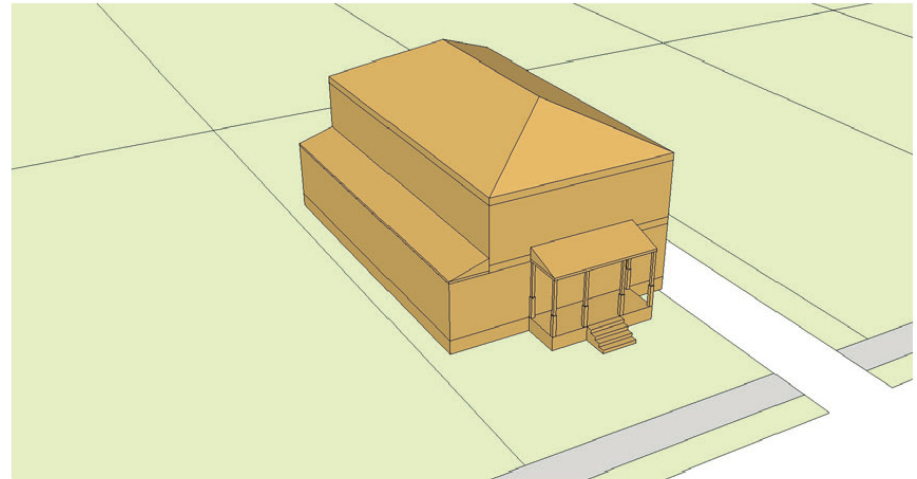


A key to compatibility in scale

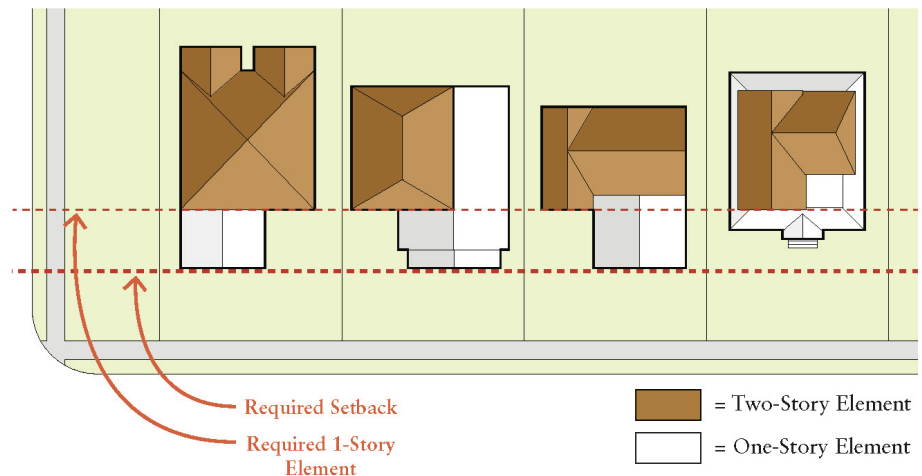
Potential Design Tools

One-Story Element

- Types...
 - Porches
 - Front rooms
 - Side wings
 - Rear wings
- Reduces perceived size of building at edges
- Maintains historic patterns

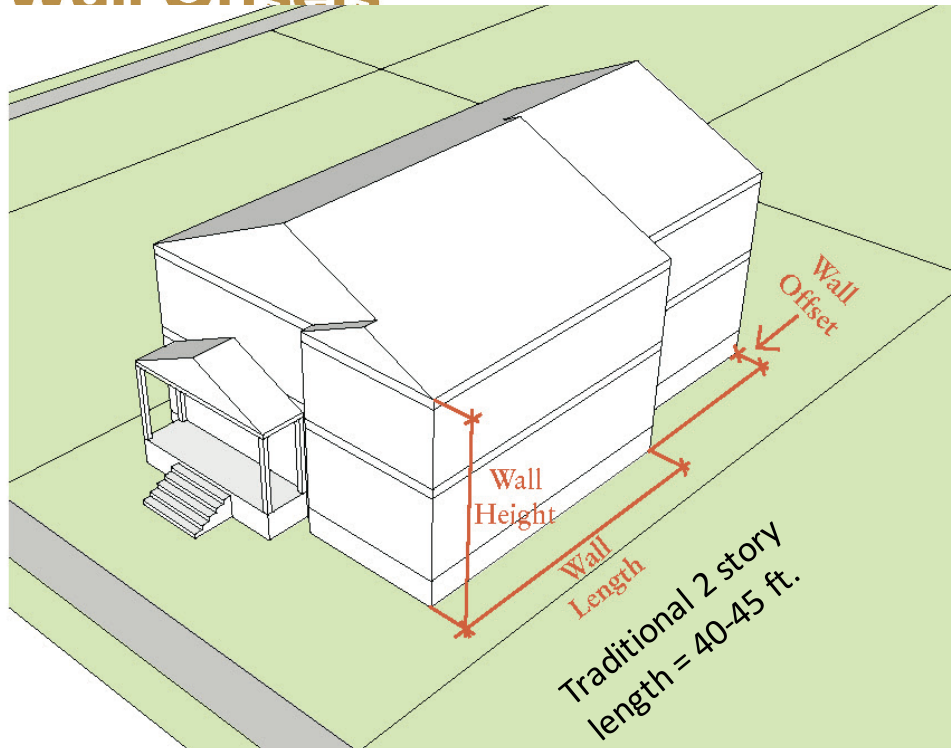


A one-story element on the side of a residence may reduce the perceived mass of the building to its neighbors.

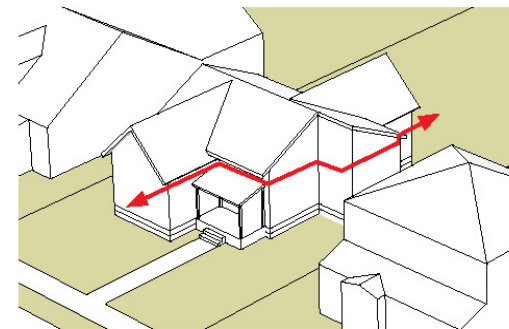
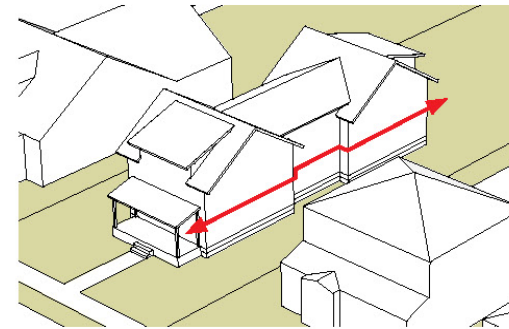
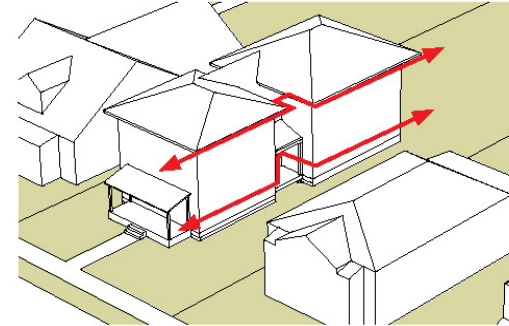


Potential Design Tools

Wall Offsets

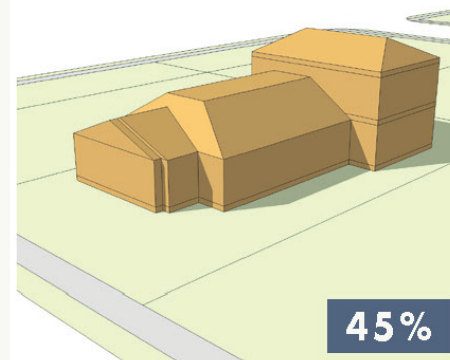
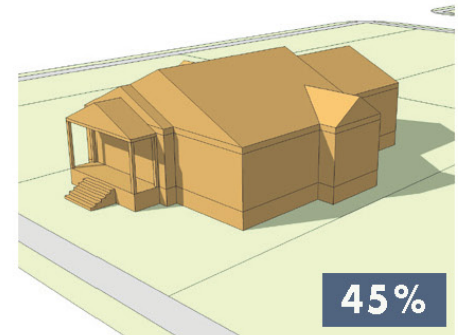
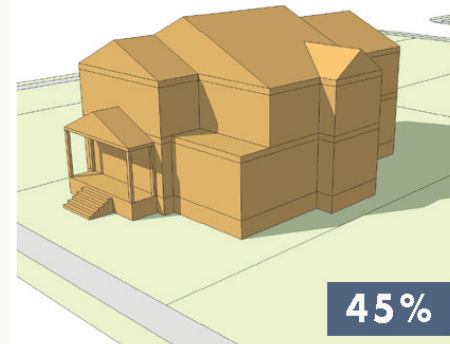
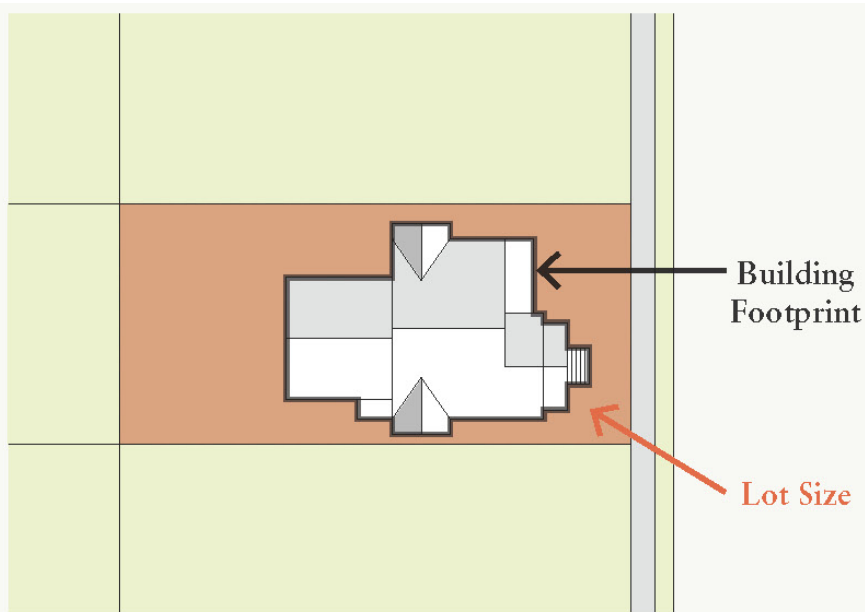


A sidewall offset tool can encourage a building form that appears similar in massing to neighboring properties. This can impact the sense of “looming” into a neighboring side yard.



Potential Design Tools

Lot Coverage



Building Footprint Size = 2,250 sqft.

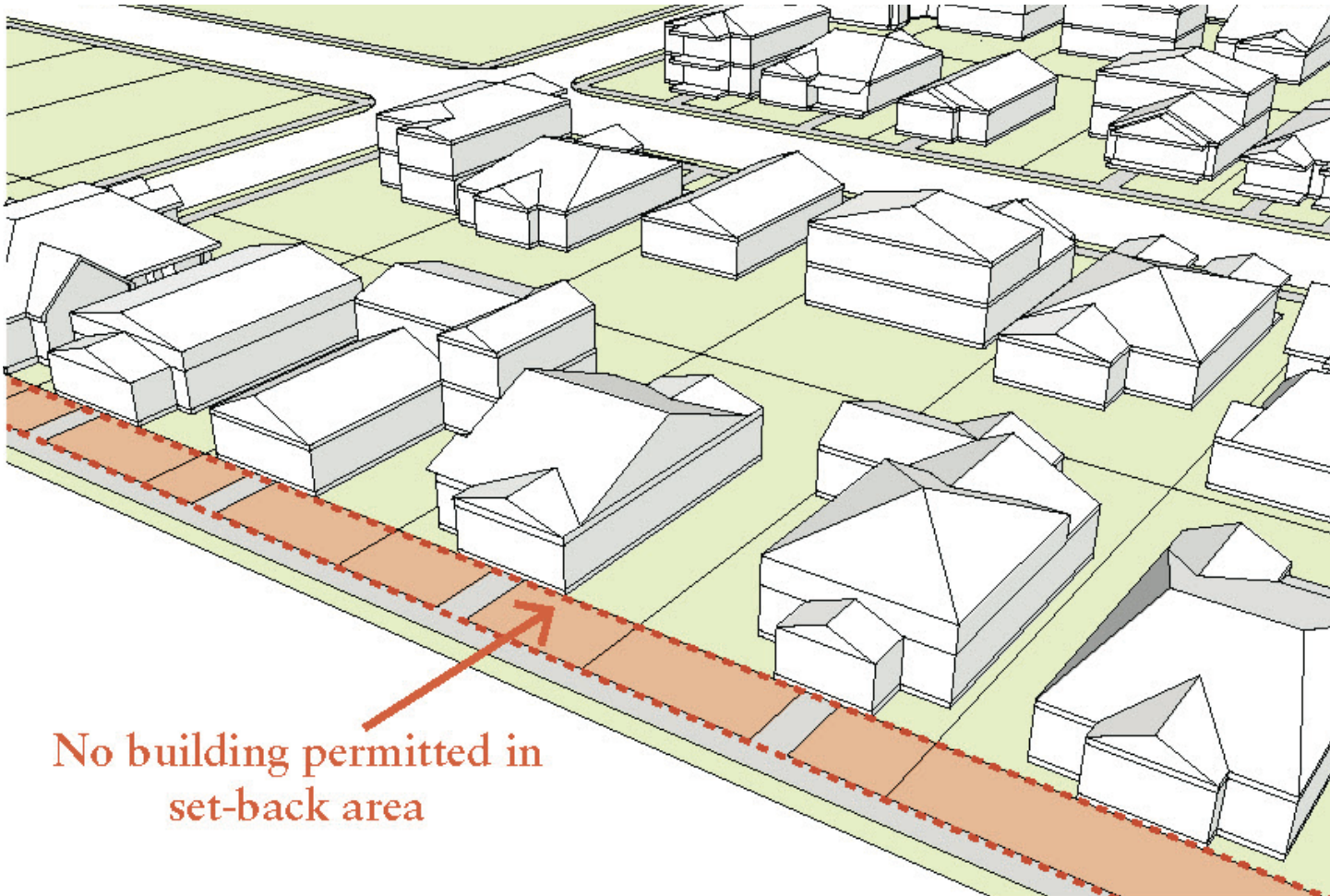
Lot Size = 5,000 sqft.

Building Coverage = $2,250 / 5,000 = 0.45$

Building Coverage = 45%

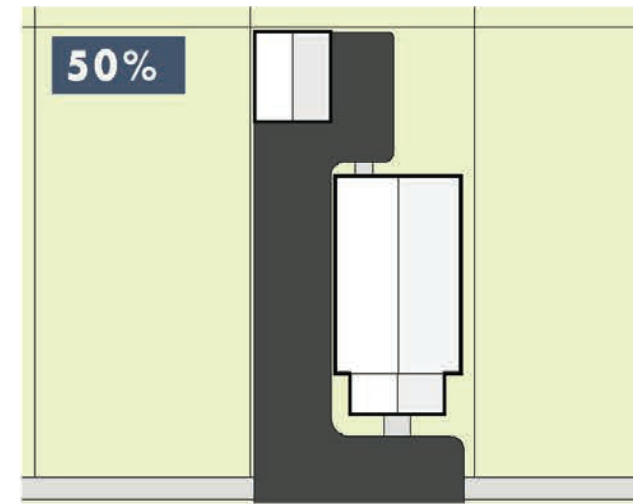
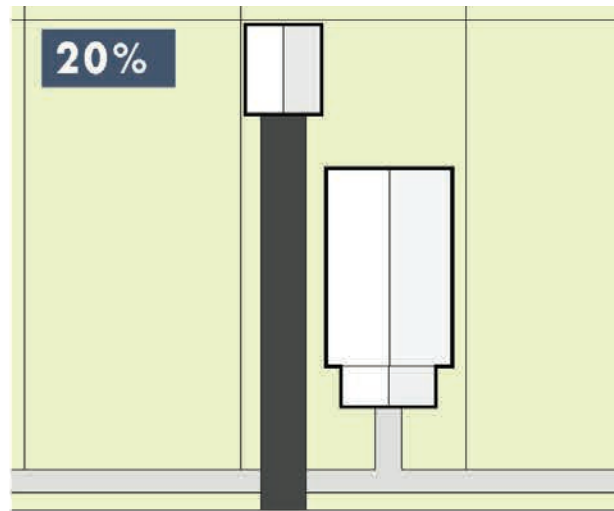
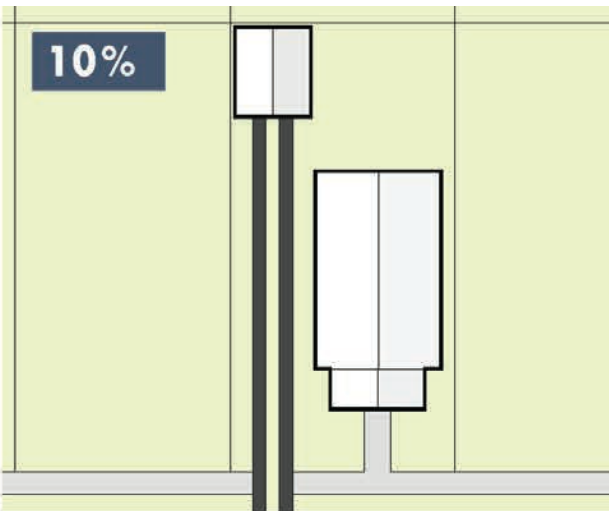
Potential Design Tools

Minimum Building Setback



Potential Design Tools

Impervious Surface Limits



Addresses

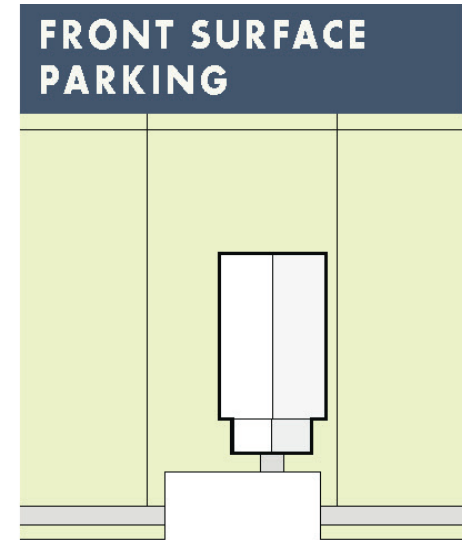
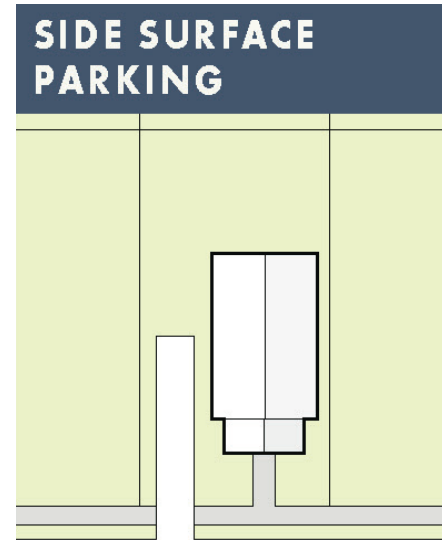
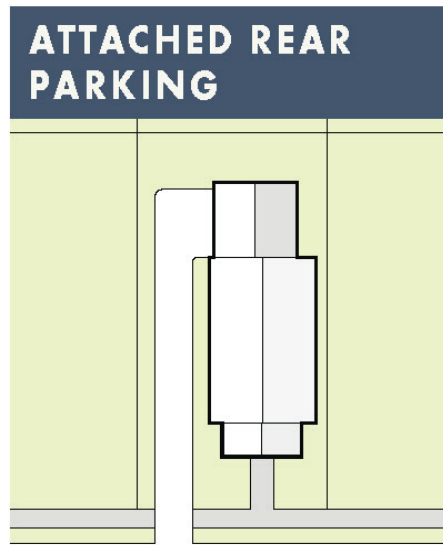
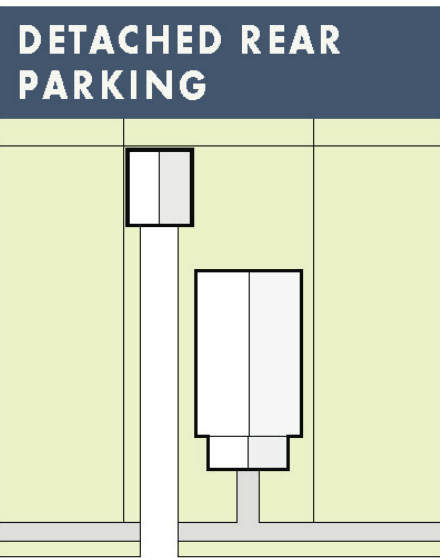
- Open space
- Storm water



Pervious paving may be calculated differently from a completely hard surface

Potential Tools

Parking Design Standards



Appropriate locations may be tailored to different contexts or districts.



END OF PRESENTATION

NEXT, WORKSHOP ACTIVITY...

1. You will help test the draft Compatible Design Survey, individually.
2. The survey is different for each Historic District.
3. There are 3 sections to the survey.
4. We will walk through each section one-at-a-time.
5. Please respond to each question.
6. Also provide any comments about the content and format of the survey.
7. When you are finished, leave the survey on your table.

The Draft Survey...



COMPATIBLE DESIGN SURVEY

HOUSTON HEIGHTS SOUTH

Introduction to the Survey

What is the key to designing a compatible house in a historic district? At a public workshop on September 27th, 2016, participants evaluated a series of computer-generated building models that presented alternative designs for new houses and additions for a parcel in a typical block. Some of those models were chosen by most respondents as being clearly appropriate. Others were strongly rejected. Still other designs received mixed results. Using the information gathered from that workshop, this survey focuses in on that “middle range” of compatibility with new designs to consider. The intent is to help identify features of individual buildings that contribute to a compatible design and those that do not.

At the September workshop, participants also listed several issues related to historic preservation that they felt should be considered in the guidelines project. We ask you to respond to those comments as well.

The survey is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Overall Issues In the District

This section of the survey lists a number of issues mentioned in the September workshop and asks if you agree or disagree with those statements.

Part 2: Building Design Tools

This section describes some design techniques, or “tools,” that can affect compatibility, in terms of mass, scale, and relationship to neighbors. Each tool is illustrated and you are asked to comment on how useful you think they may be.

Part 3: Building Scenarios

Eight (8) single-family building scenarios are illustrated in this section. Three (3) scenarios depict additions to a historic single-family home, and five (5) scenarios illustrate new single-family homes in the historic district.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for participating in this Compatible Development Survey for the Houston Heights South Historic District! This survey is tailored to your district to help you consider the compatibility of potential new building in the district.

A sample starting page...

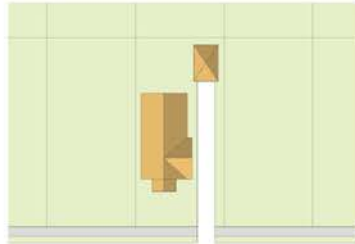
The Draft Survey...

PART 2: Building Design Tools

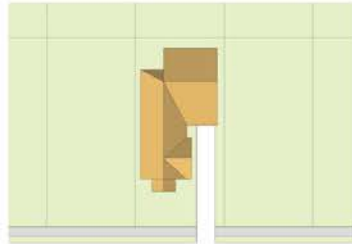
Objective: to identify some of the design techniques that should be addressed in the design guidelines.

Lot Coverage

All areas of a property that are covered by buildings and roofed porches are included in lot coverage.



Building with a lower lot coverage.



Building with a higher lot coverage.

2. "A limit on the percentage of lot coverage should be considered to help maintain open space."

Strongly Disagree



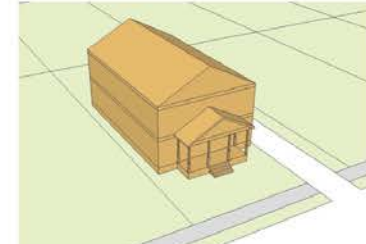
Strongly Agree

One-Story Element

A one-story element (to the front or side of a house) can help reduce its perceived size.



Building with no one-story element.



Building with a one-story element.

3. "Using a one story element (such as a porch or a wing of the house) should be addressed in the design guidelines."

Strongly Disagree



Strongly Agree

This part of the survey is the SAME for all districts.

The Draft Survey...

PART 3: Building Scenarios

Objective: to identify some of the design techniques that can influence compatibility and to see if there is a “threshold” of building scale that is inappropriate.



This part of the survey is **DIFFERENT** for each district.

1. Lot coverage is compatible.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

2. Size of addition is compatible.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

3. Height of addition is compatible.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Next Steps

- December – We will revise the survey, based on your feedback
- January 9, 2017 – The survey will be mailed and posted on line
- January 27, 2017 – Your responses are due
- February, 2017 – We will develop the strategy report, including survey results



End of Activities

Questions & Answers

For more information and to access the on-line survey...

<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>



Thank You!