

MANISTEE CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Worksession of Thursday, November 17, 2016

2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall

70 Maple Street - Manistee, Michigan

AGENDA

I Call to Order

II Roll Call

III Items for Discussion

1. In-Fill Construction Guidelines/Policy

2. Misc.

IV Adjournment



City of Manistee Planning & Zoning Administrator



MEMORANDUM

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TO: Historic District Commissioners

FROM: Denise Blakeslee, Planning & Zoning

DATE: November 10, 2016

RE: Historic District Commission Worksession November 17, 2016

Commissioners, Chair Kracht scheduled a worksession at the November Meeting for the commission to review/discuss Infill Guidelines/Policy. The worksession has been scheduled for 3 pm on Thursday, November 17, 2016 in the Council Chambers. Your packets include:

- Guideline #8 Infill Construction
- Excerpts from the Sense of Place: Design Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts, A Publication of the Presentation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia including:
 - Four Strategies for Additions to Historic Settings
 - Preliminary Design Guidelines
 - Recommended Approach and Design Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts

A comparison was developed from these documents for discussion at the worksession. If you are unable to attend the worksession please call me at 398-2805.

Comparison between current Guidelines and Preliminary Design Guidelines & Design Guidelines from Sense of Place: Design Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts (Greater Philadelphia)

Guideline #8 in-Fill Construction	Preliminary Design Guidelines	Design Guidelines
<p>Width - An in-fill building should reflect the characteristic width of facades on the street. Wider facades should be broken down into a series of smaller “structural” bays.</p>	<p>General - compatibility with the size, scale, color, material and character of the district, sub-area or block (preferred) or creating meaningful juxtapositions with the existing context</p>	<p>General - New buildings should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the district, sub-area or block. New buildings may be designed in a variety of architectural styles including styles that are intentional restorations, inventions within an historic style, or abstract reference to styles present in the district, so long as the design reflects the sense of place of the specific district and creates a continuity of character.</p>
<p>Height - Historically commercial buildings are generally similar in height. An in-fill building should not be much higher or lower than the mean height of surrounding structures.</p>	<p>Height - consistency with the existing height of the district, sub-area and/or immediate block Consistency with adjacent rooflines by not exceeding rooflines by one story, or stepping back from a prevailing roof or cornice line</p>	<p>Height - New buildings should generally be consistent with the existing height of buildings in the district, sub-area and/or immediate block. Absolute alignment with the rooflines or cornice lines of adjacent buildings is not essential, but buildings should not exceed the height of their neighbors by a significant amount. Buildings at the corners of major named and numbered streets, however, may exceed the height of adjacent buildings, particularly if there is a prevailing pattern of such height differentiation in the immediate area.</p>
<p>Relationship to Street - An in-fill building should have a relationship to the street (primarily an issue of set-back) which is consistent with neighboring facades</p>	<p>Street line - maintaining the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block, including porches. Continuity of the building wall of the block</p>	<p>Street wall - New buildings should maintain the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block</p>
<p>Facade Proportion - The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing facades should be respected.</p>		<p>Massing - Mid-rise and high-rise buildings should relate the massing of the building to the heights and character of the immediate area. The base or podium of the building should relate to the scale of other buildings in the area, and the design of towers should include elements that reduce the overall scale and impact of the size of the building.</p>
<p>Visual Composition - The visual composition of the in-fill facade (that is, the organization of its visual parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.</p>	<p>Facade composition - maintaining a tripartite building facade composition divided into base, middle and top. Maintaining a vertical orientation to the facade Defining the top edge of a building by a cornice line or similar articulation. Fenestration patterns and proportions, and a percent of the facade devoted to fenestration</p>	<p>Facade composition - Facade composition should include the following elements: A tripartite building composition divided into base, middle and top A vertical orientation to the facade; A top edge of a building defined by a cornice line or similar articulation Fenestration patterns and percent of facade devoted to fenestration that is consistent with the district or block Avoidance of blank, mirrored or opaque facades</p>

	<p>that is consistent with the district or block</p> <p>Avoidance of blank mirrored or opaque facades</p> <p>Providing a sufficient percentage of windows and door openings particularly at the first floor, so as to create a pedestrian friendly scale</p> <p>Alignment with cornice lines or window sills and heads of adjacent buildings.</p>	<p>A sufficient percentage of windows and door openings, particularly at the first floor, so as to create a pedestrian friendly scale</p> <p>Alignment with cornice lines, window sills and headers of adjacent buildings as much as possible</p> <p>Avoidance of introduction of garage doors at the first floor, except on individual houses sufficiently wide enough to maintain 33% of the facade as windows.</p>
<p>Facade Rhythms - Visual rhythms which unify the blockscape in their consistency (window and storefront rhythms) should be incorporated into in-fill facades.</p>	<p>Rhythm / Pedestrian experience - inclusion of architectural elements that divide facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale.</p> <p>Using windows and doors in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district or block.</p>	<p>Rhythm / Pedestrian experience - New buildings should incorporate architectural elements that divide the facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale. Windows and doors should be placed in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district or block.</p>
<p>Proportion of Openings - The size and proportion of window and door openings should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.</p>		<p>Continuity of wall surface - New buildings should maintain the continuity of the wall surface of the block, with wall surface predominating over window openings and window openings appearing to be cut into the wall surface. The introduction of bay windows should not disrupt the feeling of continuity of the wall surface.</p>
<p>Use of Materials - An in-fill facade should be composed of materials which relate to adjacent facades</p>	<p>Materials and details - use of materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar color</p> <p>Use of materials in a manner that creates details, incorporates textures or small scale elements that give buildings a three-dimensional character and a “human scale</p>	<p>Materials and details - New buildings should use materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar color. Materials should be used in a manner that creates details, incorporates textures or small-scale elements that give buildings a three-dimensional character and a “human scale” especially at the ground level.</p>
<p>Roof Form - The roof type of an in-fill building should correspond to those of adjacent buildings. On commercial streets, this usually means a flat roof not visible on the front façade.</p>		



Historic District Commission
Planning & Zoning Department
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Guideline #8 In-Fill Construction

These Guidelines have been developed by the Historic District Commission to assist applicants. Each request will be reviewed individually by the Commission based on its own merit. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by the Commission on a case by case basis.

The Historic District Commission uses the Secretary of the Interior's [Standards for Rehabilitation](#) as interpreted by the [Preservation Briefs](#). Copies are available at the Manistee County Historical Museum and the Planning & Zoning Department at City Hall.

The construction of new buildings along the traditional commercial street is a valid tool for downtown revitalization. Since these buildings are often constructed on vacant lots, thus filling a “hole” in the street, they are called in-fill construction. It is extremely important, however, that these new buildings relate harmoniously with the older buildings which surround them. Exact reproductions of Victorian buildings using historically accurate materials such as old-growth lumber must be identified as such. Interpretative reproductions using contemporary construction materials and/or techniques may be approved. False interpretations such as “fussy” Victorian is generally not recommended in the Historic District.

Visually, the design of an in-fill building, particularly its front facade, should be influenced by the other facades on the street. It should “grow” out of them. The new design should not, however, duplicate the design of the neighboring facades. Rather, it should be a contemporary design influenced by its surroundings...a blend of new and old. **The in-fill facade should not pretend to be historic by using false “historic” detail.** Pseudo-Colonial or Victorian elements are often used to blend a new building with older surroundings. This approach generally ends up only compromising what is authentically historic in the environment.

Since good in-fill design responds directly to its surroundings, it is not possible to develop specific guidelines which apply to all cases. There are, however, several general ideas which should govern the visual ties between an in-fill building and its neighbors.

FACADE SHAPE

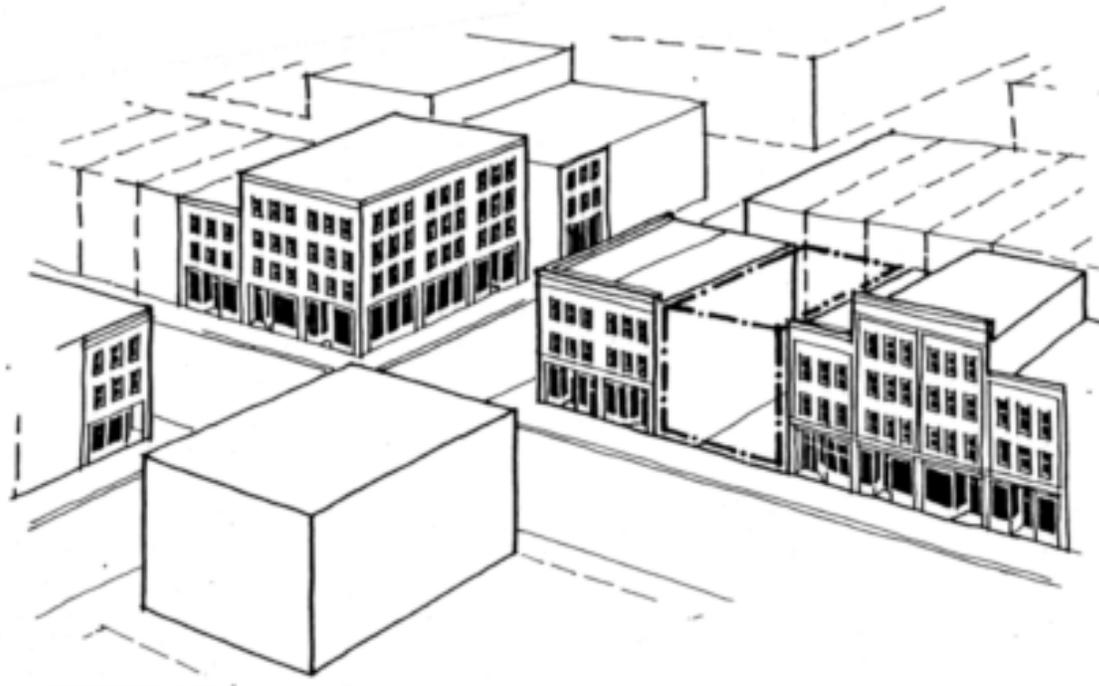
The concepts and characteristics presented on the following page are those of the existing architecture which should determine the “rough” shape, size and location of the in-fill facade.

Height

Historically commercial buildings are generally similar in height. An in-fill building should not be much higher or lower than the mean height of surrounding structures.

Roof Forms

The roof type of an in-fill building should correspond to those of adjacent buildings. On commercial streets, this usually means a flat roof not visible on the front facade.



Width

An in-fill building should reflect the characteristic width of facades on the street. Wider facades should be broken down into a series of smaller “structural” bays.

Relationship to Street

An in-fill building should have a relationship to the street (primarily an issue of set-back) which is consistent with neighboring facades

Facade Proportion

The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing facades should be respected.

FACADE DESIGN

The concepts and characteristics presented on this page are those of the existing architecture which should determine the “detail” design of the in-fill facade.

Visual Composition

The visual composition of the in-fill facade (that is, the organization of its visual parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.

Facade Rhythms

Visual rhythms which unify the blockscape in their consistency (window and storefront rhythms) should be incorporated into in-fill facades.

Proportion of Openings

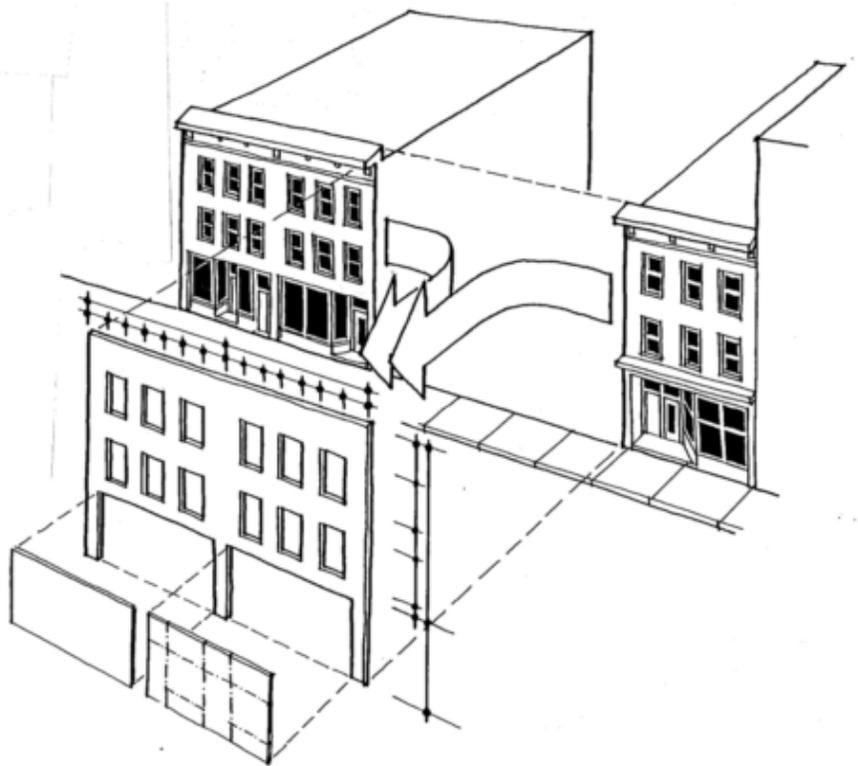
The size and proportion of window and door openings should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.

Use of Materials

An in-fill facade should be composed of materials which relate to adjacent facades

Use of Colors

The colors chosen for an in-fill facade should tie it to its neighbors



FOUR STRATEGIES FOR ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC SETTINGS

Literal Replication

The strategy of replication prioritizes compatibility and minimizes differentiation. This strategy will likely sustain the character of an existing setting so long as the historic elements to be replicated are well understood, the technical means to effect replication are available, and so long as the scale of the replication is modest relative to the original building. Despite frequently- expressed disapproval of this strategy by many contemporary preservation theorists and officials, it has the sanction of history. Architects have often chosen to add to existing buildings by reproducing a previous architect's work, sometimes even centuries afterward, usually for the sake of completing an intended but unrealized symmetry or extending a pattern already established. In such cases, the resource is defined as the design concept as a whole rather than any isolated part of it as it appears at a given time.

Invention within a Style

This strategy, while not replicating the original design, adds new elements in either the same or a closely related style, sustaining a sense of continuity in architectural language. The intention is to achieve a balance between differentiation and compatibility, but weighted in favor of the latter. This strategy also has a long history: In fact, it is what most architects have always done.

Abstract Reference

The third strategy seeks to make reference to the historic setting while consciously avoiding literal resemblance or working in a historic style. This approach seeks to balance differentiation and compatibility, but with the balance tipped toward the former. This is a difficult strategy to execute because it requires an artistry and skill that are not often available.

Intentional Opposition

Finally, the fourth strategy is one of conscious opposition to the context and the determination to change its character through conspicuous contrast, prioritizing differentiation at the expense of compatibility. Modern architects did not invent this idea. Andrea Palladio, who famously loathed gothic architecture, wrapped the medieval town hall of Vicenza with elegant arcades to conceal the geometric irregularities of the older building. Palladio's arcades became a model of urban amenity and there is no question that the center of Vicenza is the richer for this facelift. Sometimes contrast is the appropriate response to a context that is weak or otherwise unsatisfactory, but we must be careful making such judgments. The most suitable use of this strategy is to repair damage to the historic setting brought about by previous insensitive or oppositional interventions. The use of this strategy intentionally to diminish a valued historic context is usually inappropriate.

RETHINKING DIFFERENTIATION AND COMPATIBILITY

These four strategies represent four variations on the relationship of differentiation and compatibility, two terms that represent a logical contradiction if we treat them as equally important values. In my view, the fundamental interests of preservation can only be served if compatibility is given greater weight, since it alone allows us to sustain valued historic character in the face of the many forces threatening it. To insist on differentiation by means of a contrasting modernist style for new construction, as some authorities have in recent years, condemns historic buildings and districts to change in ways alien to their historic patterns and typologies.

When consistently applied, this policy leads to the gradual erosion of historic character as the inevitable consequence of the preservation effort itself—an unacceptable contradiction in contemporary preservation practice.

The doctrine of differentiation has too often been used to mask simple stylistic bias. The Secretary's Standards and the Venice Charter both assumed that the modernist aesthetic would remain normative for contemporary building indefinitely. But current practitioners have revived traditional architecture and urbanism so that "contemporary" no longer necessarily means "modernist." Preservation regulations, including the Secretary's Standards, should not be construed to support the acceptance or rejection of any proposed project solely on the basis of style.

Consequently, alterations or additions to historic settings that improve or strengthen the pre-existing character should be welcomed, regardless of their style; changes that weaken or diminish the historic character should not be permitted, again regardless of style. Additions or new construction may be in the same style as the historic buildings, provided that the new construction is consistent with the typology, composition, scale, proportion, ornament, materials, and craftsmanship typical of the setting. Violation of these attributes for the sake of a questionable principle of differentiation leads inevitably to the loss of historic character and, thereby, loss of the resource in its truest sense.

When additions or new construction are appropriate at all, they should be added in such a way that the new is distinguishable from the historic fabric by informed observers or trained professionals. No differentiation should be made that would result in an incongruous appearance or a ruptured integrity. Where the new construction might not be readily distinguishable by the public at large, interpretive materials should clarify the construction history of the site rather than expecting this to be self-evident from the appearance of the new construction alone. De-emphasizing differentiation and prioritizing compatibility would allow historic buildings and districts to grow and change in accordance with their historic patterns and styles, thereby assuring a continuity of character through time. This, in my view, is the proper way to protect the resources to be conserved in our historic buildings and districts.

Compatibility requires more than similarities of massing or abstract references; it must be a primary objective of the designer and an integral part of the design process for projects in historic settings. What makes buildings from different eras and styles compatible is that they share the same underlying principles of space, structure, elements, composition, proportion, ornament, and character. If these principles are consistent among the buildings along a street or around a square, they will be compatible, regardless of style. Compatibility is not uniformity; however, if the principles embodied by neighboring buildings are antithetical, no alignment of cornices or adjustments of massing will be sufficient to maintain a relationship of civility among them.

The decision about which of the four strategies to follow cannot be made lightly. It is a question of what is most respectful of the existing architectural and urban conditions or, if these are not suitable, what will produce the greatest degree of harmony and wholeness in the built environment. Such decisions cannot be made one building at a time, but must recognize the potentially exemplary nature of every architectural act. If we pay more attention to the historic urban setting than to the individual building and move beyond an obsessive concern with the chronology of construction, our choice of strategy can fulfill our obligation as citizens to make the city more beautiful, sustainable, and just. If we adopt this ethic, we will naturally seek not the architecture of our time but, more importantly, the architecture of our place.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN GUIDELINES

The examples summarized above suggest that compatibility with the existing character of an historic district is more to be valued than significant difference. They also suggest a composite list of design criteria that are likely to enable new buildings to be designed in manner that is consistent with the character of an historic district regardless of their architectural style. This list of composite criteria is as follows:

General

- compatibility with the size, scale, color, material and character of the district, sub-area or block (preferred) or
- creating meaningful juxtapositions with the existing context

Height

- consistency with the existing height of the district, sub-area and/or immediate block
- consistency with adjacent rooflines by not exceeding rooflines by one story, or stepping back from a prevailing roof or cornice line

Street line

- maintaining the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block, including porches
- continuity of the building wall of the block

Facade composition

- maintaining a tripartite building facade composition divided into base, middle and top
- maintaining a vertical orientation to the facade
- defining the top edge of a building by a cornice line or similar articulation
- fenestration patterns and proportions, and a percent of the facade devoted to fenestration that is consistent with the district or block
- avoidance of blank mirrored or opaque facades
- providing a sufficient percentage of windows and door openings particularly at the first floor, so as to create a pedestrian friendly scale
- alignment with cornice lines or window sills and heads of adjacent buildings

Rhythm / Pedestrian experience

- inclusion of architectural elements that divide facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale
- using windows and doors in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district or block

Materials and details

- use of materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar color
- use of materials in a manner that creates details, incorporates textures or small scale elements that give buildings a three-dimensional character and a "human scale"

Recommended Approach and Design Guidelines For New Construction in Historic Districts

The examination of case studies indicated that there were some issues not addressed in the preliminary design guidelines listed at the end of Part Four. In addition, the case studies also indicated that the way the guidelines are applied to specific districts is dependent on first examining the overall characteristics of the districts, the presence of sub-areas and of significant land- marks.

The Preservation Alliance recommends the following approach and design guidelines for evaluating, and for designing, new buildings in historic districts.

APPROACH

- Determine whether the district has a single overall environmental and architectural style or whether there are sub-areas.
- If the district or sub-areas have a single overall environmental and architectural style, identify and document that style through photographs of typical environmental patterns and architectural character. Adopt a guideline that requires new construction to adhere to that environmental and architectural style or to do so with only minor variations consistent with the environmental and architectural style. (Semmes's literal replication or invention within a style.)
- For districts with a variety of architectural styles, identify the common approach to the design characteristics listed in the guidelines below and apply those characteristics to the evaluation (or design) of new buildings in the district. These designs may take the form of literal restorations, inventions within a style or abstract reference depending on the particular circumstance and location of the new building.
- Identify significant landmark buildings in the district whose importance justifies the creation of a "zone of respect" around those buildings. Determine the appropriate size of the zone of respect and the special design guidelines that should apply in this zone of respect. Height may be the most significant factor of the guidelines for these zones of respect.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

General

- New buildings should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the district, sub-area or block.
- New buildings may be designed in a variety of architectural styles including styles that are intentional restorations, inventions within an historic style, or abstract reference to styles present in the district, so long as the design reflects the sense of place of the specific district and creates a continuity of character.

Height

- New buildings should generally be consistent with the existing height of buildings in the district, sub-area and/or immediate block. Absolute alignment with the rooflines or cornice lines of adjacent buildings is not essential, but buildings should not exceed the height of their neighbors by a significant amount. Buildings at the corners of major named and numbered streets, however, may exceed the height of adjacent buildings, particularly if there is a prevailing pattern of such height differentiation in the immediate area.

Massing

- Mid-rise and high-rise buildings should relate the massing of the building to the heights and character of the immediate area. The base or podium of the building should relate to the scale of other buildings in the area, and the design of towers should include elements that reduce the overall scale and impact of the size of the building.

Street wall

- New buildings should maintain the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block

Continuity of wall surface

- New buildings should maintain the continuity of the wall surface of the block, with wall surface predominating over window openings and window openings appearing to be cut into the wall surface. The introduction of bay windows should not disrupt the feeling of continuity of the wall surface.

Facade composition - Facade composition should include the following elements:

- a tripartite building composition divided into base, middle and top
- a vertical orientation to the facade;
- a top edge of a building defined by a cornice line or similar articulation
- fenestration patterns and percent of facade devoted to fenestration that is consistent with the district or block
- avoidance of blank, mirrored or opaque facades
- a sufficient percentage of windows and door openings, particularly at the first floor, so as to create a pedestrian friendly scale
- alignment with cornice lines, window sills and headers of adjacent buildings as much as possible
- avoidance of introduction of garage doors at the first floor, except on individual houses sufficiently wide enough to maintain 33% of the facade as windows.

Rhythm / Pedestrian experience

- New buildings should incorporate architectural elements that divide the facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale. Windows and doors should be placed in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district or block.

Materials and details

- New buildings should use materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar color. Materials should be used in a manner that creates details, incorporates textures or small-scale elements that give buildings a three-dimensional character and a “human scale” especially at the ground level.