

**ZP-22-489; 251-253 South Union Street**  
**Re: Architectural Design Standards 3. Building Openings**

The rehabilitation and conversion of the primary historic structure is currently a federally certified Historic Rehabilitation by the National Park Service, and we continue to be guided by the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as we design this new exterior addition to the historic building.

The addition was therefore designed to meet key goals as put forward by the NPS in *Preservation Brief 14*, which provides guidance on this subject:

- A new addition should not be highly visible from the public right of way; **a rear or other secondary elevation** is usually the best location for a new addition.
- The construction materials and the color of the new addition should be **harmonious** with the historic building materials.
- The new addition should be smaller than the historic building—it should be **subordinate** in both size and design to the historic building.
- A new addition should be simple and unobtrusive in design, and **should be distinguished from the historic building**—a recessed connector can help to differentiate the new from the old.

Thus, the mass and sightlines of the new building were carefully considered to **remain secondary** to the historic building, to **extend off the rear elevation**, and to **not detract** from its significance at the street level. We also took advantage of site features such as existing trees and the sloping terrain to **minimize the new construction** and its impact on the historic property. We designed the new construction to best meet a use that is **compatible with the original character of the building**, i.e. residential, while also considering sometimes competing values such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and modern livability standards. Finally, the submitted design was also informed by the Standards and guidelines to NOT duplicate the form, style, and detailing of the historic building so that the **new work can be distinguishable** from the historic fabric.

We recognize that this last consideration is somewhat subjective and can be a small needle to thread. We interpret it to mean that although the new building should be compatible in scale and design, it also needs to be distinguished as a contemporary addition. With sensitivity to the historic massing of the primary structure, the addition has been designed so that only the northern elevation is visible from the street; the southern elevation is essentially a rear elevation, entirely screened by the angle of the original building and the slope (and therefore of low priority for federal guidelines regarding historic additions).

It is our opinion that although the northern elevation fenestration plan should maintain a relationship to the primary structure, it should also reflect current design and modern livability standards. We agree with the department's initial finding that the first and second floor windows on that elevation could be better scaled and aligned to match the existing north elevation, but we would argue to maintain the five slender vertical windows as 1) inoffensive, highly efficient

ways to meet the habitability and natural light minimums for modern residential construction; 2) an important distinguishing element from the historic structure; and 3) borrowing ratios that creatively echo the existing architectural features on the north elevation (e.g. the projecting bay window, which itself is an eclectic yet distinguishing feature of the historic structure).

Below, we provide a few examples from NPS Preservation Brief 14 that we referenced when working with our architect and historic preservation consultant.



*“Figure 27a. The compatible addition is set back and does not compete with the historic building. Photo: Chadd Gossmann, Aurora Photography, LLC”* [Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns \(nps.gov\)](#). Please note that the new exterior addition has fenestrations that echo the aesthetic rhythm of the historic structure in a more creative way – the new windows are larger, allowing more light.



*“Figure 14. This glass addition was erected at the back of an 1895 former brewery during rehabilitation to provide another entrance. The addition is compatible with the plain character of this secondary elevation.”* [Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns \(nps.gov\)](#) Note that on a rear elevation, the standard for assessing compatibility is given much more room for interpretation – in this case, an all glass enclosure is still seen as “plain” in total even though the fenestrations do not match the existing historic fenestrations. The addition is assessed as a whole.



*Figure 1. The addition to the right with its connecting hyphen is compatible with the Collegiate Gothic-style library. The addition is set back from the front of the library and uses the same materials and a simplified design that references, but does not copy, the historic building. Photo: David Wakely Photography. [Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns \(nps.gov\)](#) Note that fenestrations borrow ratios from other design elements while favoring the ability to bring in maximum natural light.*