

Infill Construction



The height of a new building should reflect its historic context. Window rhythm and storefront treatment are important. Materials should be substantial and reflect the palette of materials in the district.



Stucco is not a preferred material in Troy's historic district. Bring samples and discuss your material selections with the HRC.

The construction of new building on vacate lots in the historic district is encouraged. The design of new infill building there is no formula for what is good infill design. In general infill design, additions should look new and similar to its neighbor in materials and detailing. Mimicking older facades in modern material and construction techniques seldom, if ever, succeeds.

The salient principal behind good infill design is respect to those around it. New designs that are based on the defining characteristics of those of its neighbors are most likely to be compatible. If the organization of its parts are based on the surrounding streetscape, a great deal of freedom in design can be accommodated. After all, most blocks of downtown reflect an assortment of architectural styles and growth over the years. The key to the overall pleasing appearance of downtown blocks is achieved with common materials, scale, composition, rhythm, and a modest design philosophy to fit in and not call too much attention to itself. Many downtown building are themselves a product of several periods as single family homes were converted to first floor shops with residential units above. A scale of shop window and entrances designed for pedestrians provides continuity for wealth of diverse designs.

The National trust for Historic Preservation main Street Program has produced a set of guidelines in its publication Keeping Up Appearances which should be studied by all design professionals undertaking infill projects.

It discusses in general terms the appearances of downtown streetscapes and then identifies ten general concepts to be considered; height, width, proportion, relationship with the street, roof and cornice forms, composition, rhythm, proportions of openings, material and color. The guide offers simple easy to understand illustrations of what works and what does not work well. The HRC endorses the principals embodied by this guide while recognizing that there are lots of successful historic example where one or more of these principals are ignored:

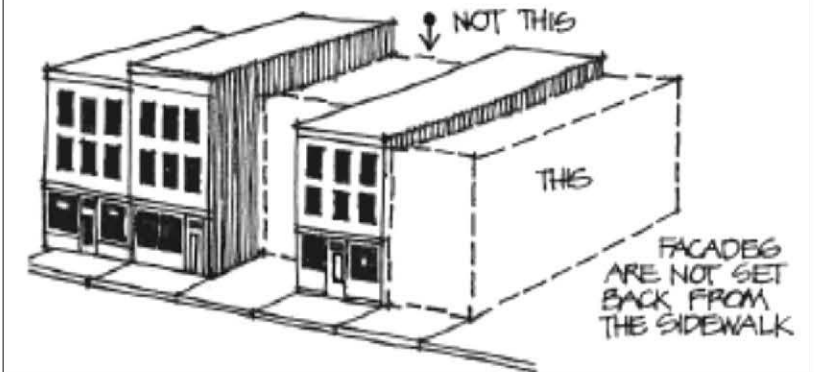
APPROPRIATE TREATMENT GUIDE

All infill construction is subject to HRC review. Meet with HRC during the schematic design phase.

- Respect adjacent and surrounding building height. This does not mean exactly aligning with any building but keeping within a range of those on the street.
- Respect the spacing between existing buildings.
- Maintain the proportion of width to height seen in adjacent buildings.
- The front of the new building should align with its neighbors. In Troy, respecting the building lines means abutting the sidewalk.
- The rhythm and proportions of window openings and divisions, should be similar to that of adjacent historic buildings
- The overall ratio of openings to wall area should closely match historic buildings nearby.
- Infill buildings should be designed to complement adjacent building not to imitate them. This might mean materials with horizontal visual emphasis to continue the horizontal pattern of brick buildings.
- Color has the potential to be controversial. Ideally infill keeps within the range of colors and materials on the street.



This large addition, left, is a successful example of appropriate infill. Height, mass, rhythm and materials are all complimentary with and informed by the original building.



From MAIN STREET Keeping Up Appearances a very helpful publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation



This block of Fifth Avenue in Troy suffered several inappropriate infill projects in the 1970's



A lack of upper story windows and a gap in the street wall deemed this infill design inappropriate



New materials can be utilized if height, massing and rhythm of the building design is successful



Meet with the HRC in the early phases of schematic design for smooth and informative review process.