

Design Guidelines for sheds

Design Principles for Facades Chapter 3

1. INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 800 residential buildings and 200 commercial buildings in the Cambridge Historic District. In addition, there are a number of institutional, civic, and religious buildings in the Historic District. While facades are designed in different architectural styles, almost all are designed using the Design Principles of Setback, Orientation, Scale, Proportion, Massing, Rhythm, Materials, Symmetry, Height, Roof Shape, and Details and Ornamentation. Understanding these principles, which work collectively on individual buildings as well as streetscapes, is very important in any rehabilitation work, as well as when additions to historic buildings or entirely new buildings are contemplated (See the application of the residential design principles in Chapters 4, 5, and 6)

STREETSCAPE SCALE:

The Cambridge Historic District features a variety of streetscapes each with their unique character and scale. For example, on Mill Street, Oakley Street, and Belvedere Avenue, the roadway is wide and the houses of significant sizes are spaced out generously, while on Willis Street, Choptank and West End Avenue for example, the street itself is narrower, with smaller houses located close to each other. Proposed projects will be required to correspond to the scale of their streetscape and immediate surroundings, and be compliant with the Cambridge UDC.

GCL 5.2.G. Historically or architecturally significant constructed landscape features, such as garages and other outbuildings, shall be retained, preserved, and repaired in kind or in appropriate substitute materials.

GCL 5.2.I. New tool sheds, decks, pergolas, gazebos, swimming pools and other non-traditional constructed landscape features and other traditional constructed landscape that may be visible from the public right of way shall be compatible with the design of the main structure on the property as well as the Design Principles in Chapter 3.

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The design of landscapes that can be seen from the public right of ways is an important character defining features of historic residential buildings. The front yard, and to somewhat lesser extent, the visible side yards, establishes the context for the main house, as well as its outbuildings. The care and attention shown by owners to the front yard shows the pride that they take in their home and the neighborhood. Not visible, but also important are potential subsurface archeological features which are important in defining the history of the site.

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The most common outbuildings found in the residential area are garages and sheds, including significant watermen sheds. Often located in side or rear yards, garages and sheds constructed at the same as the main house often use the same materials and colors, with similar but less ornate details and ornamentation. Garages, sheds, and other outbuildings visible from a public right of way contribute to the character of the property and its neighboring buildings.

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GNHF 4.4.C. If metal and vinyl siding are present, and it is not practicable to restore the façade to its original non-synthetic material, they shall be replaced in kind by products of at least equal quality, and with dimensions, proportions and detailing commensurate with the original historic material (wood siding in most cases).

Chapter 6

2. NEW CONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The design of new buildings is critical to preserving the character of the Historic District. New buildings should be compatible with that character by respecting the setback, orientation, scale, proportion, rhythm, massing, height, roof shapes, details and ornamentations, and in the residential area landscape, of neighboring buildings and the streetscape.

The design of new buildings should not seek to duplicate the design of existing buildings.

Compatibility is based on a thorough understanding of the design principles of existing buildings, as well as those used to design any associated natural or constructed landscape features. Compatibility also involves analysis of how the Design Principles (Chapter Three) are used in the design of neighboring buildings and those in the streetscape.

Compatibility does not mean exactly duplicating existing neighboring buildings or those in the streetscape. New buildings should be seen as a product of its own time. To reproduce a historic building, or to copy exactly a style from the past, creates a false sense of history. By relating to the existing buildings and the streetscape, but being of its own time, new buildings shows the Historic Districts continuing evolution, just as the existing buildings show its past evolution. In short, new buildings should be a good neighbor, enhancing the character of the Historic District. Note: in addition to these Guidelines, all new construction must conform to requirements in the Cambridge Unified Development Code.

GNC. 6.2.A. New constructed landscape features, including outbuildings and accessory structures, shall be placed in side and rear yards. Locating new constructed landscape features so they obscure the existing principal building's character defining architectural, natural or constructed landscape features shall be avoided.

GNC. 6.2.B. The area in which the new construction is located shall be examined for potential archeological resources prior to start of construction. Also see requirements for Limits of Disturbance Plan in HPC Application and City's Building Permit.

GNC. 6.2.C. The scale of new construction shall be compatible with the scale of contributing structures on the block or same side of the street.

GNC 6.2.D. The proportions the new construction and its character defining features shall be designed to be compatible with the proportions of surrounding contributing buildings including their character defining features.

GNC. 6.2.E. Windows and doors visible from the public right of way in new construction shall be compatible in proportion, scale, and rhythm, with windows and doors of surrounding contributing buildings.