

# CHAPTER 9

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR ADDITIONS



### Introduction

This chapter presents design policies and guidelines for the treatment of additions to historic properties, including existing additions, as well as the design of new ones. Constructing additions is part of the design tradition of Truckee, even from its earliest history. These often reflected needs for additional space or a change in use.

An early addition typically used forms and materials that were similar to the main building and it remained subordinate in scale and character. The height of the addition was usually positioned below that of the main structure and it was often located to the side or rear, such that the primary facade remained predominate. In some cases, an owner simply added a dormer to an existing roof, creating more usable space without increasing the footprint of the structure. This tradition of adding on to buildings is anticipated to continue and these early principles should be continued. Greater flexibility in designing an addition is available to properties rated as “supporting”.

### Topics Discussed in this Chapter:

1. Existing Additions
2. New Additions
3. Roof and Dormer Additions

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#### References:

☞ Also consult *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, Standards 9 and 10.*

## 1. Existing Additions

An early addition to a building may be evidence of the history of the structure, its inhabitants and its neighborhood. This may have developed significance in its own right, and should be respected.

### A. Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.

- 1) For example, a porch or a kitchen wing may have been added to the original building early in its history. Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original building in terms of materials, finishes and design.

### B. A more recent addition that is not historically significant may be removed.

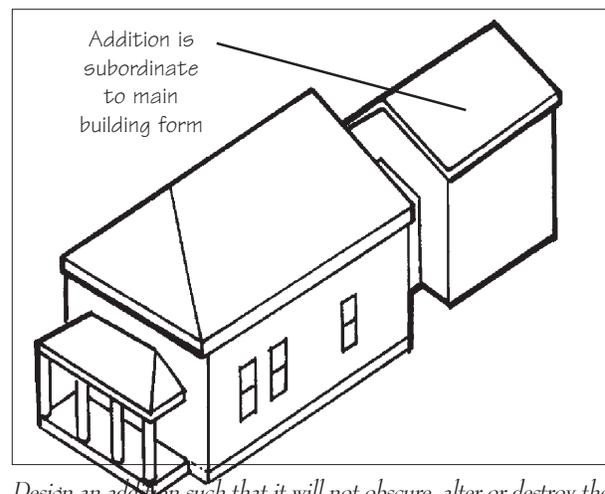
- 1) For example, a new room may have replaced a front porch within the last several decades. Such an addition has not achieved historic significance, and removing and restoring the original facade is preferred.

## 2. New Additions

When planning an addition consider the effect it will have on the historic building itself. The new work should be recognized as a product of its own time and yet it should be visually compatible with the original, and the loss of the historic fabric should be minimized as well. A design for a new addition that would create an appearance inconsistent with the historic character of the building is inappropriate.

### A. Design an addition such that it will not obscure, alter or destroy the character of the original building.

- 1) An addition that seeks to imply an earlier or later period than that of the building is inappropriate.
- 2) An addition that conveys an inaccurate variation on the historic style is inappropriate. For example, introducing very ornate "Victorian" details is inappropriate on the simple cottages of Truckee.
- 3) An addition should not obscure or damage character-defining features (such as windows, doors, porches, brackets or roof lines).



*Design an addition such that it will not obscure, alter or destroy the character of the original building.*

**B. An addition should be visually subordinate to the main building. This is especially important for buildings rated "Essential" and "Contributing."**

- 1) An addition should respect the proportions, massing and siting of the historic building.
- 2) The form and detailing of an addition should be compatible with the historic building. Simpler details on an addition can help distinguish it from the original structure.
- 3) Set an addition back from the primary facade in order to allow the original proportions, form and overall character of the historic building to remain prominent.
- 4) If an addition would be taller than the main building, set it back substantially from primary character-defining facades.
- 5) A small "connector" linking the historic building and the addition may be considered.



*A small "connector" linking the historic building (left) and the addition (right) may be considered.*

**C. A substantial addition should be distinguishable from the historic building so it can be understood as a more recent change.**

- 1) This can be accomplished with a jog in the wall planes, or by using a cornerboard to define the connection, or a subtle change in material or a subtle differentiation between historic and more current styles.

**D. The materials of an addition should be compatible with those of the primary structure.**

- 1) Matching the historic material is an appropriate approach, although new materials also may be considered.

**E. Windows in an addition that are visible from the public way should be compatible with those of the historic structure.**



*As seen from the street (top photo) the addition to the rear of this structure is not visible. This is encouraged.*

### 3. Roof and Dormer Additions

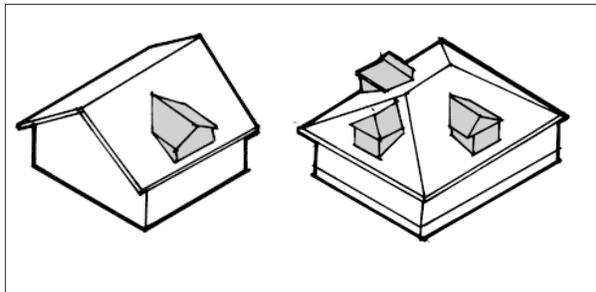
Dormers had limited use in Truckee, but they were sometimes employed. Most dormers had vertical emphasis, and only one or two were used on a side of a building. A roof or dormer addition should be designed in a manner that minimizes damage to historic building fabric, does not alter the perceived character from the street and is in keeping with the original structure.

#### A. A roof addition should be in character with the style of the primary structure.

- 1) The size of a roof addition, including dormers, should be kept to a minimum and should be set back from the primary facade so that the original roof line and form is perceived from the street.
- 2) Gabled dormers are appropriate for most architectural styles, and hipped dormers may be appropriate for some architectural styles.

#### B. A new dormer should remain subordinate to the historic roof in size and character.

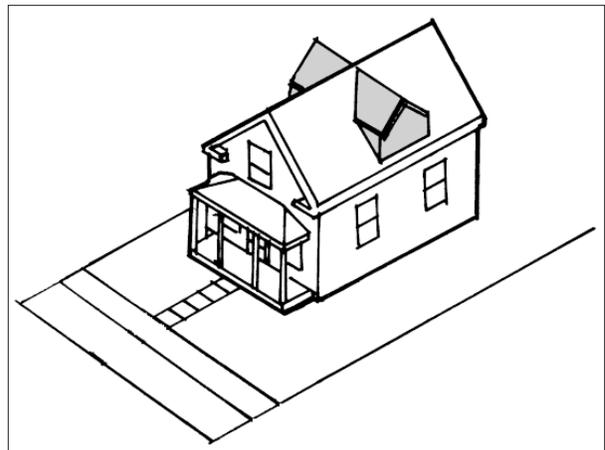
- 1) A new dormer should be lower than the primary ridge line and set in from the eave.
- 2) Greater flexibility may be considered for buildings rated "Supporting."



A roof addition should be in character with the style of the primary structure. Gabled dormers (left) are appropriate for most architectural styles, and hipped dormers (right) are appropriate for many architectural styles.



A new dormer should be constructed in a manner similar to those seen historically.



A new dormer should remain subordinate to the historic roof in size and character.