HOUSING THROUGH PRESERVATION

OREGON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Creating Housing in Historic Buildings and Districts

An Oregon Resource



Acknowledgments

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We want to provide special thanks to our partners in creating this document:

Ian Johnson, Deputy Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer
Kuri Gill, Oregon Heritage Grants & Outreach Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office
Joy Sears, Oregon State Restoration Specialist, State Historic Preservation Office
Dawn Hert, Eastern Oregon Regional Representative, Department of Land Conservation and Development
Thea Chroman, Housing Planner, Department of Land Conservation and Development
Kimberli Fitzgerald, City of Salem Historic Preservation Program Manager & City Archaeologist
Paul Falsetto, Architect
Judy Gerrard, Chair, City of Dayton Historic Landmarks Committee

Dudek prepared this document on behalf of the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office:

Adrienne Donovan-Boyd, Senior Architectural Historian
Holly Borth, Architectural Historian
Raoul Ranoa, Visual Storytelling Manager
Aaron Atencio, Visual Storyteller
Ben Dianna, Visual Storyteller
Jamie Waugaman, Visual Storyteller
Melanie Betlach, Document Design and Layout Manager
Laura Reed, Page and Layout Designer
Felisa Pugay, Document Accessibility





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Introduction and Purpose

HOUSING THROUGH PRESERVATION

1 Introduction and Purpose

In 1926, the Hotel Merwyn opened in downtown Astoria with 80 rooms. After sitting vacant for roughly 30 years, it was close to being demolished. Today, it provides 40 homes, 36 of them affordable, behind the same brick-and-stucco façade. Projects like this are the reason this document exists: Oregon's historic buildings and neighborhoods can help meet the state's housing needs while keeping what makes each community distinctive. People have repaired, adapted, reused, expanded, converted, and occupied older buildings for generations. Thoughtful change is not a departure from preservation; it is part of these places' history. This document treats historic preservation and additional housing development as complementary goals and provides a practical framework for adding housing to historic neighborhoods.

This document is intended for property owners, builders, designers, planners, local review bodies, and community members who are planning, evaluating, designing, or reviewing housing projects that involve historic resources. It may be used to offer ideas and resources that encourage using Oregon’s existing historic building stock to create more housing units and to show the flexibility these opportunities provide in their design.

The core approach to using this document is straightforward. It encourages homeowners, planners, builders, and developers to identify the historic qualities that define a property or neighborhood, then design the new housing to fit within that context.

Preserve What Matters.

Build What is Needed.

Let Preservation and Development Work Together.

1.1 Historic Precedent for Increasing Housing Density

Since statehood in 1859, Oregon communities have continually adapted. Neighborhoods, downtown cores, and rural communities have developed in response to the changing world. They have adapted to changing economic conditions, transportation advances, shifting demographics, and individual community needs. People have expanded homes to accommodate growing families, and larger homes have been converted into duplexes and apartments. People have long transformed commercial and accessory buildings into living spaces. Oregon’s historic downtowns already include many buildings designed for mixed, flexible, and residential use. For example, the upper stories of traditional commercial buildings often supported apartments, lodging, fraternal halls, offices, or production space above active ground-floor retail. This history matters because adding housing to our historic resources and districts continues an established pattern of change that improves our communities.

The buildings and neighborhoods in Oregon now considered historic reflect more than 150 years of incremental change, ongoing reinvestment, and evolution, not a single moment in time. Most historic districts show evidence of multiple generations of housing development and, if you look closely, ongoing adaptation to meet today's needs.

Settlement and Early Town Development (1850s-1880s)

In Oregon's early decades, housing was closely tied to farming, trade, transportation, and resource industries. Homes were often built incrementally as communities grew—commercial districts frequently combined business and residential uses, with families living above stores or near workplaces. Boarding houses, hotels, and rooming houses housed workers and newcomers in Oregon's growing communities. Many early Oregon towns, like Jacksonville and Oregon City, developed compact commercial cores because walking was the primary way to get around. Housing, shops, churches, schools, and government buildings were often located within a relatively small area, which, by necessity, created dense and interconnected communities.

You do not need a building or district to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places to use this document. In fact, many of the design principles and housing strategies discussed here can be successfully applied to any older building or neighborhood.

Streetcar-Era Growth and Neighborhood Expansion (1880s-1920s)

As cities grew, new transportation modes changed urban development. Horse-drawn streetcars, and soon after electric streetcar systems, expanded, and Oregon communities developed neighborhoods outside the city's central core. Local builders constructed a wide variety of housing in numerous forms to meet buyers' needs. Single-family houses remained common, but duplexes, apartments, courtyard housing, boarding houses, mixed-use buildings, and accessory structures often accompanied them. In many communities, these housing types existed side by side and were considered normal components of a neighborhood. What is now often called "missing middle housing" was common during this era. Multi-family housing, such as small apartment buildings, duplexes, and courtyard apartments, provided additional housing while maintaining compatibility with surrounding homes. Many historic neighborhoods, like the South Salem/Pioneer Cemetery Area in Salem and the Montavilla Neighborhood in Portland, include these building types because they were part of the neighborhood's original design.

Automobile Era and Suburban Expansion (1920s-1970s)

As Americans became more dependent on the automobile, development patterns changed. New neighborhoods expanded farther from downtown, commercial districts adapted to automobile traffic, and residential subdivisions grew larger.



***Above**: Example of 1940s multi-family housing found in Portland, Oregon, that utilizes residential cottage design features to integrate with surrounding houses.*

Even during this period, existing historic neighborhoods continued to evolve. Houses were enlarged, subdivided, and converted to provide additional housing units. Many areas added apartment buildings to increase housing in existing neighborhoods. These different housing types were added in neighborhoods outside the streetcar neighborhoods and often included carports and parking areas. These changes reflected the continuing need for housing while responding to new technologies and transportation patterns. Many alterations dating from this period are now historic in their own right.

Preservation, Reuse, and Housing Production (1970s-Present)

Beginning in the late twentieth century, communities increasingly recognized the value of preserving historic buildings and neighborhoods. At the same time, Oregon communities continued to face growing housing demand. Historic buildings have often provided opportunities to accommodate growth through adaptation and reuse. People have converted commercial buildings into apartments, returned upper stories to residential use, divided large houses into multiple units, and added compatible additions, accessory dwelling units, and infill development to create new housing.

Recent efforts to address housing needs have often drawn inspiration from historic patterns of development. Duplexes, fourplexes, courtyard housing, mixed-use buildings, and upper-story apartments are now being reintroduced in many places because they reflect housing forms that historically existed within Oregon communities while helping meet current housing needs.



***Above**: Example of 1970s multi-family housing that utilizes landscaping and interior courtyard parking to minimize visibility from the street and neighbors.*

1.2 How to Use This Document

Use this guide to see what makes a historic building or district significant and then design new housing that respects it. Preservation doesn't mean freezing a place in time. Historic neighborhoods are great places to live, and more people should have the chance to live in them.

Use this document early in project planning, before design decisions become fixed. Early review can help identify historic features, avoid unnecessary conflicts, and reduce redesign during local land use, historic resource, or building code review. Begin by looking closely at the building, site, block, and district, if applicable, then use the design topics in Chapters 2 and 3 as a checklist for shaping the project.

A good first step in any project is to identify the characteristics that make a historic property or district significant. When available, consult National Register nominations, local historic survey information, historic research inventory forms, local context statements, and any applicable local design review standards or guidelines. If a property is significant for its historical associations, some physical alterations may be okay, provided the project retains the features that convey the historic significance. If a property is significant for its architecture, carefully review alterations to avoid losing historic architectural features.

Define the type of housing project before beginning design review: interior conversion, upper-story reuse, basement or attic conversion, addition, accessory dwelling unit, garage or outbuilding conversion, or new infill construction. Then think about the following:

1. For projects involving an individual historic property, focus on the property's character-defining features and historic significance.
2. For properties within a historic district, look at both the individual property and the broader district pattern. Look at setbacks, height, massing, roof forms, porch patterns, window and door openings, materials, parking, landscape, and accessory buildings.
3. Coordinate early with local planning, preservation, and building officials. Historic design review and code review work better when everyone understands the project goals at the beginning.
4. Document any place where the local context supports a different approach. Oregon communities are not all the same.

Quick Start Guide

- **Adding a unit to your house?** Go to 3.1.1 Single-Family Homes and 3.2.4 ADUs.
- **Converting a downtown building?** Go to 3.1.3 Commercial Buildings.
- **Building on a vacant lot in a historic district?** Go to 3.2.4 and the Bend Old Town case study.
- **Reviewing a project for your city?** Start with Chapter 2, then Chapter 4.
- **Working through code issues?** Look at Chapter 5.

2

Preservation and Design Principles



2 Preservation and Design Principles

This chapter introduces the design principles that support successful housing projects in historic buildings and districts. These principles focus on the physical characteristics people experience every day. Together, these elements create the identity and sense of place that define Oregon's historic communities and make them meaningful places to live.

The principles in this chapter are intended to help inform decision-making rather than prescribe a single design solution. Every building, site, and historic district has its own history, setting, and design challenges, and successful projects must respond to those unique conditions. There is no one right answer for compatible infill; sensitive design allows more creative approaches to these principles. Instead, this document provides an outline for evaluating design choices and understanding how new construction, additions, adaptive reuse projects, and residential conversions may affect both an individual historic resource and, where applicable, the broader historic district.

The goal is to encourage thoughtful design that accommodates new housing opportunities while preserving the qualities that contribute to a property's historic significance and community character.

Key definitions for the following principles include:

Compatible infill relates to the historic building, site, or district through similarities in scale, massing, form, siting, materials, proportions, and architectural features, while remaining identifiable as contemporary work rather than an imitation of historic design. Each project has plenty of flexibility and room for individual interpretation, since each historic property is also an individual interpretation of its time.

Character-Defining Features are distinctive materials, forms, architectural elements, landscape features, details, or other physical characteristics that contribute to a property's historic character, significance, and identity.

False Sense of History can occur when a building, addition, or feature appears historic but is new. This false sense of history typically occurs when new work replicates or imitates historic designs, materials, details, or architectural styles so closely that it is difficult to distinguish from the original.

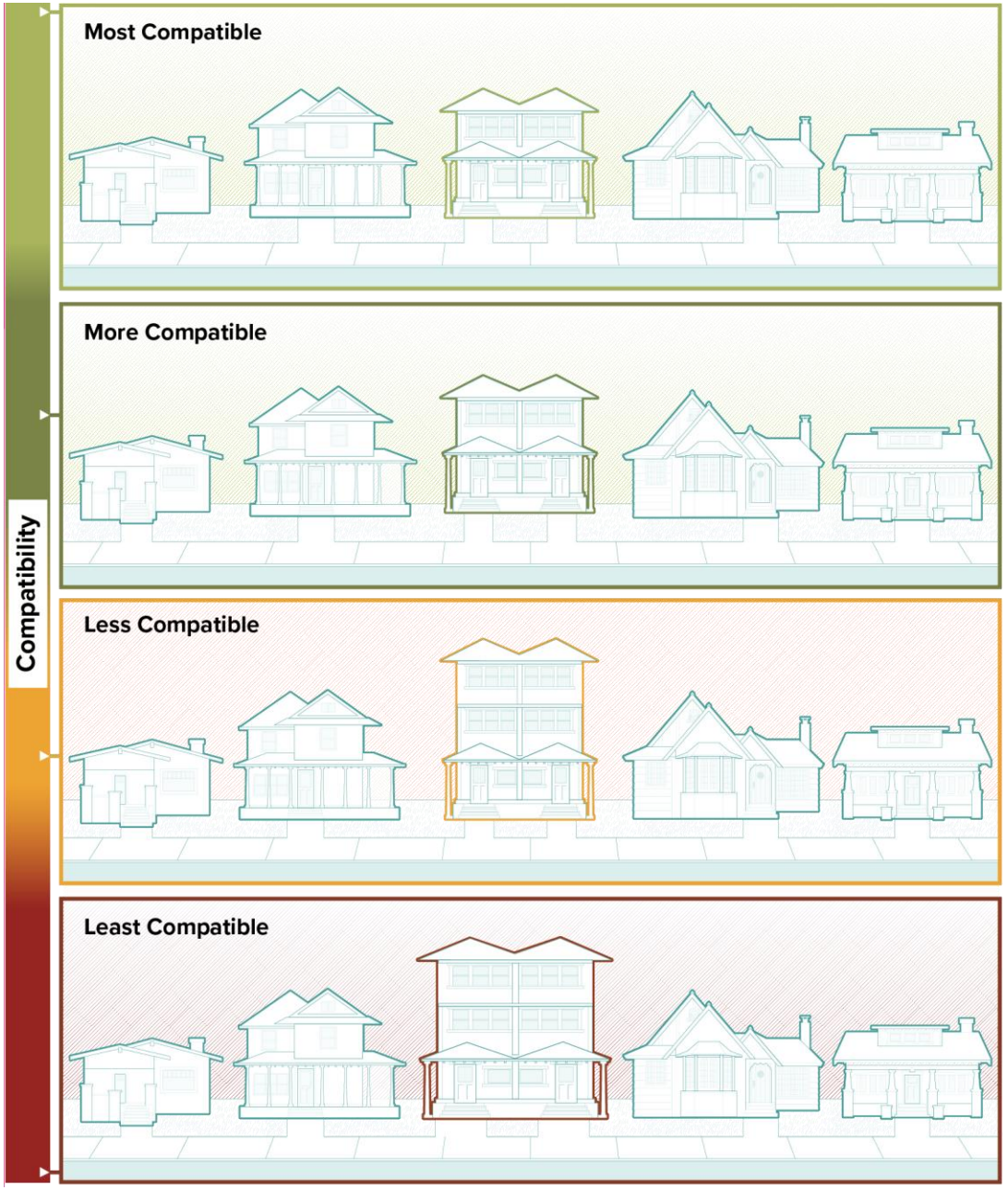
In-Kind materials match the original in material, design, dimensions, appearance, and other visual characteristics as closely as possible.

Throughout this document, we will refer to what is compatible with historic buildings and districts. But keep in mind that "incompatible" does not mean *wrong* or *not allowed*. It just is an opportunity to adapt and be creative. Always work with your local reviewers to identify what will be approved.

2.1 Scale

Scale refers to the relative size of a building and its individual components, determined by its height, width, and overall shape. In historic districts, scale refers to the general range of heights and widths of the individual historic buildings that contribute to the district's history.

Right: *In this example, a new duplex is being added to a historic district. Neighboring houses range from 1 to 2 stories tall, so much taller buildings are less compatible in scale.*



Tips for Compatibility

- Design additions so the historic building remains visually identifiable
- Design new construction so the historic buildings are still prominent
- Attach additions to the rear or other less visible sides of a building
- Construct additions so that the historic building remains if the addition were removed in the future
- Use scale and massing that respond to the historic building or district and surrounding development pattern
- Do not design additions or new construction that are larger in scale than the historic buildings

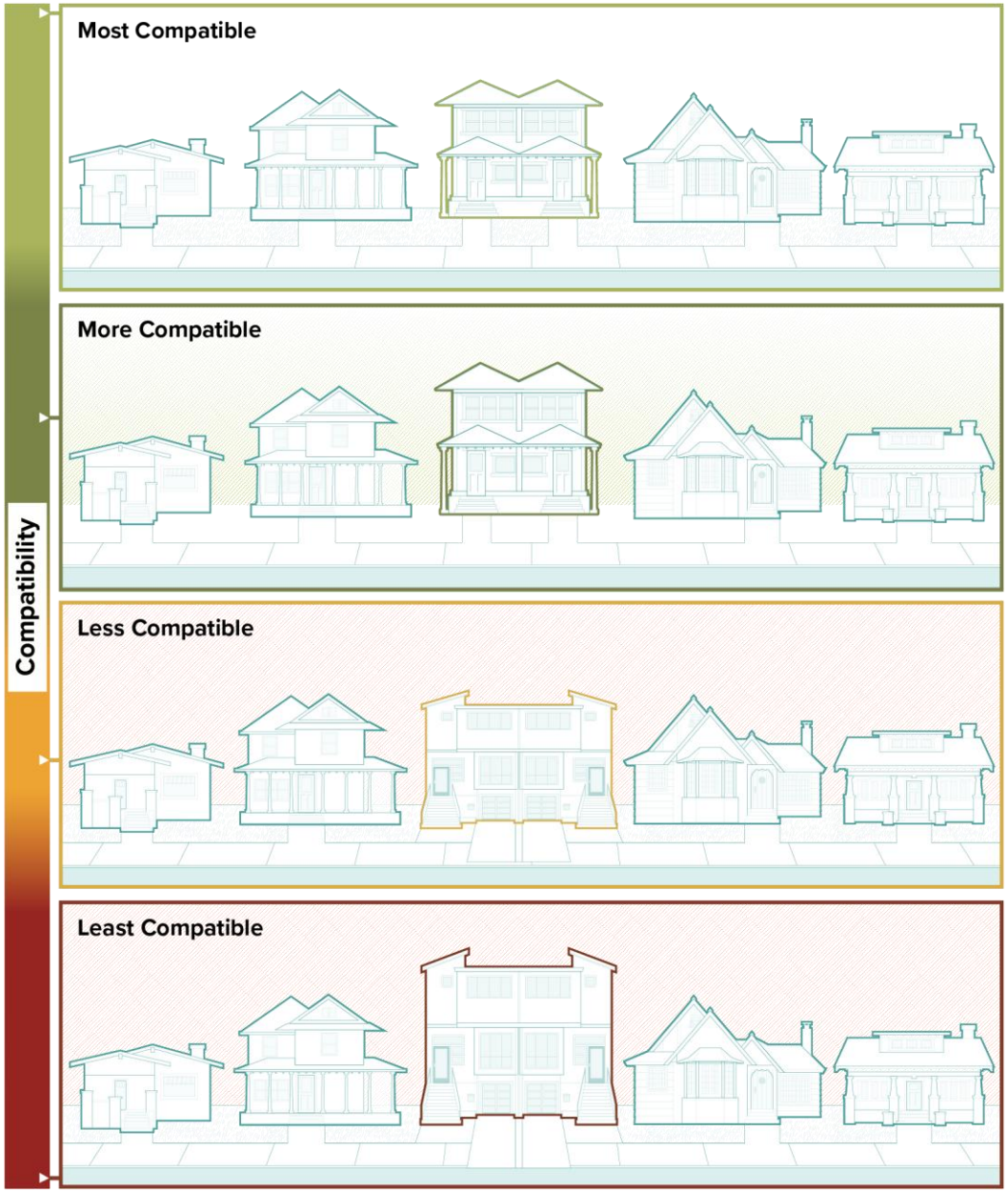
2.2 Form and Massing

Form and massing describe a building's overall shape, volume, and three-dimensional configuration. These characteristics include the building's footprint, height, width, and depth; its roof forms; and how the building's volumes are arranged.

***Right**: In this example, a new duplex is being added to a historic district. Neighboring houses feature pitched roofs and building shapes that are made up of smaller, varied sections. Because the new duplex is boxy, has a flat roof, and shows little variation in overall form, it is less compatible with the surrounding historic buildings in form and massing.*

Tips for Compatibility

- Retain and preserve the original roof form and any decorative features
- Design infill to relate to the form and massing of surrounding historic homes
- Do not duplicate the exact form, material, style, and detailing of a historic building
- Set a new story back from the primary wall plane and make it as inconspicuous as possible
- Design additions to be compatible with the historic character of the building



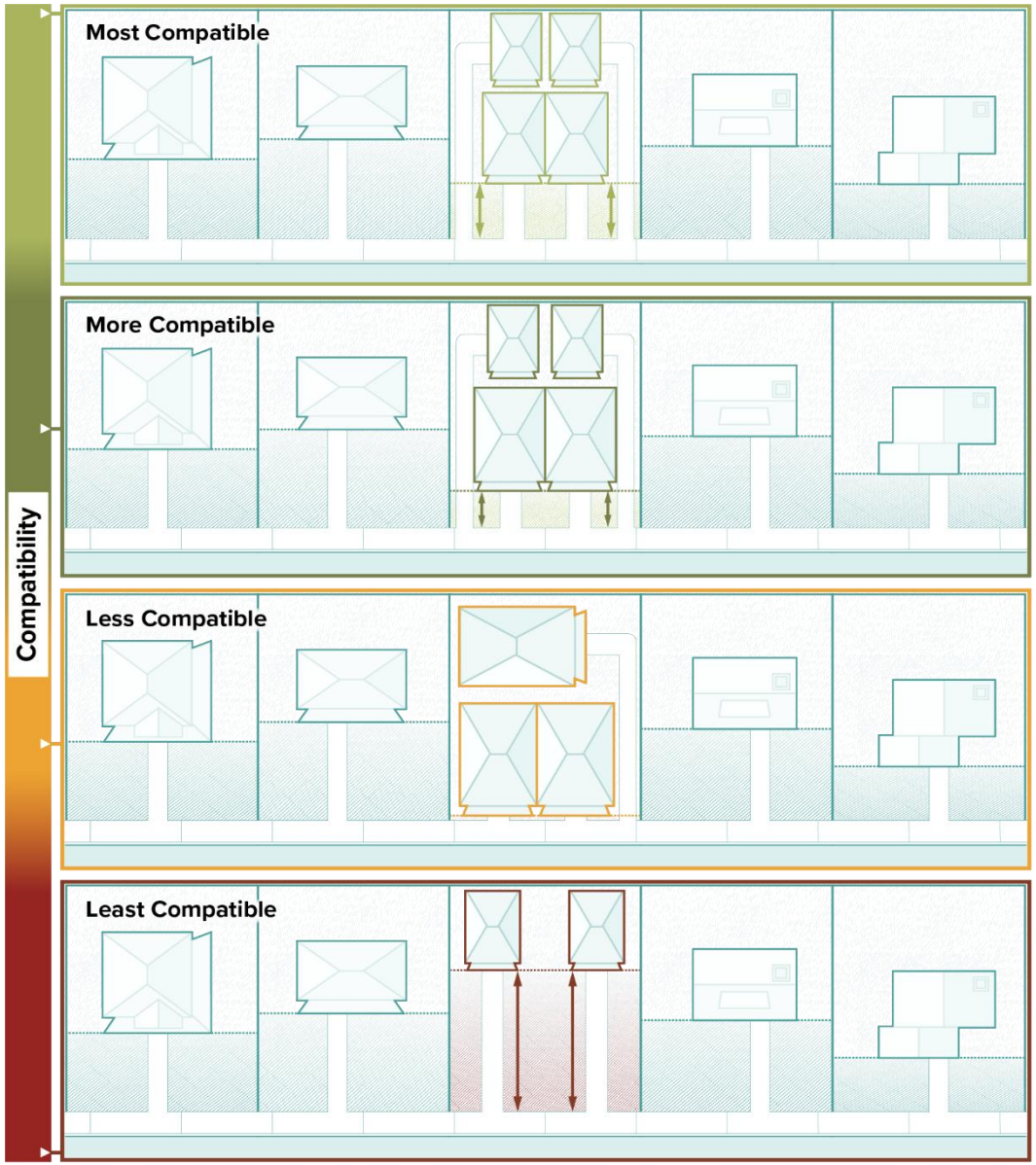
2.3 Setback

A Setback is the distance between a building and its property lines. In historic districts, the front setback matters most. When houses on a block sit about the same distance from the sidewalk, the street reads as a whole, and a new building that sits noticeably closer or farther back stands out. Side setbacks set the spacing between buildings, which gives a block its rhythm. New housing should generally match the front setback of neighboring historic buildings.

Right: *In this example, a new multi-plex is being added to a historic district. Nearby buildings are set at similar distances from the street, creating a regular pattern along the block. Because the new housing units are set closer to the street than the neighbors, they are less compatible in terms of setback, and setting them too far back underutilizes the potential for more housing.*

Tips for Compatibility

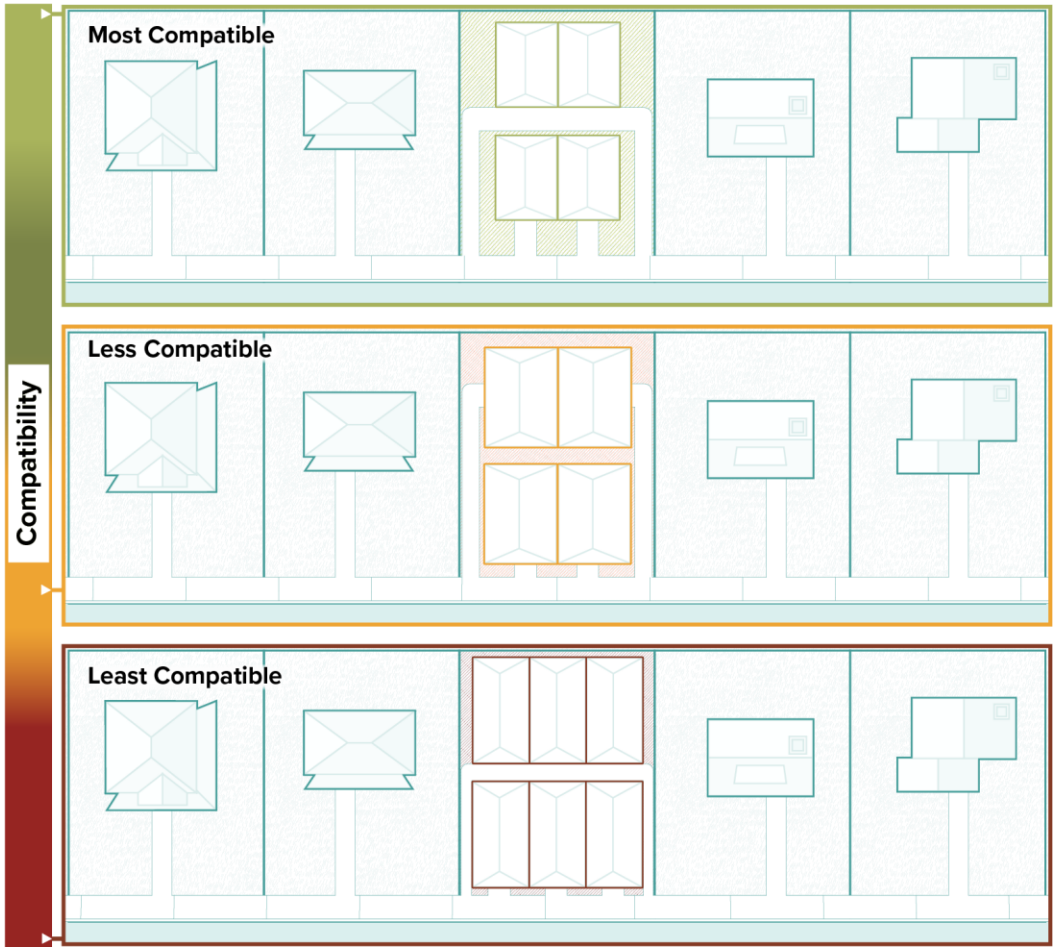
- Match setbacks of neighboring properties
- Design parking to be as unobtrusive as possible
- Do not design in such a way that there is no room for landscaping
- Retain the historic setbacks and landscaping established by neighboring properties



2.4 Siting

Siting refers to a building's placement on a parcel and its relationship to the lot's boundaries, streets, open spaces, natural features, and adjacent buildings. Siting influences how a building relates to its surroundings and contributes to the overall character of a historic property or district. Historic development patterns often have consistent approaches to lot coverage, building placement, and orientation.

Right: *In this example, a new multi-plex is being added to a historic district. Neighboring buildings occupy a similar portion of their lots, leaving open space around them. As the new multi-plex covers more of the lot and reduces open space, it is less compatible in terms of siting.*



Tips for Compatibility

- Retain historic relationship between buildings and landscape
- Locate new entrances to minimize the loss of character-defining features and maintain the building's relationship to the street.
- Maintain established side yard spacing pattern
- Create shared parking areas to limit paving
- Remove only non-significant buildings, building additions, features, or landscaping

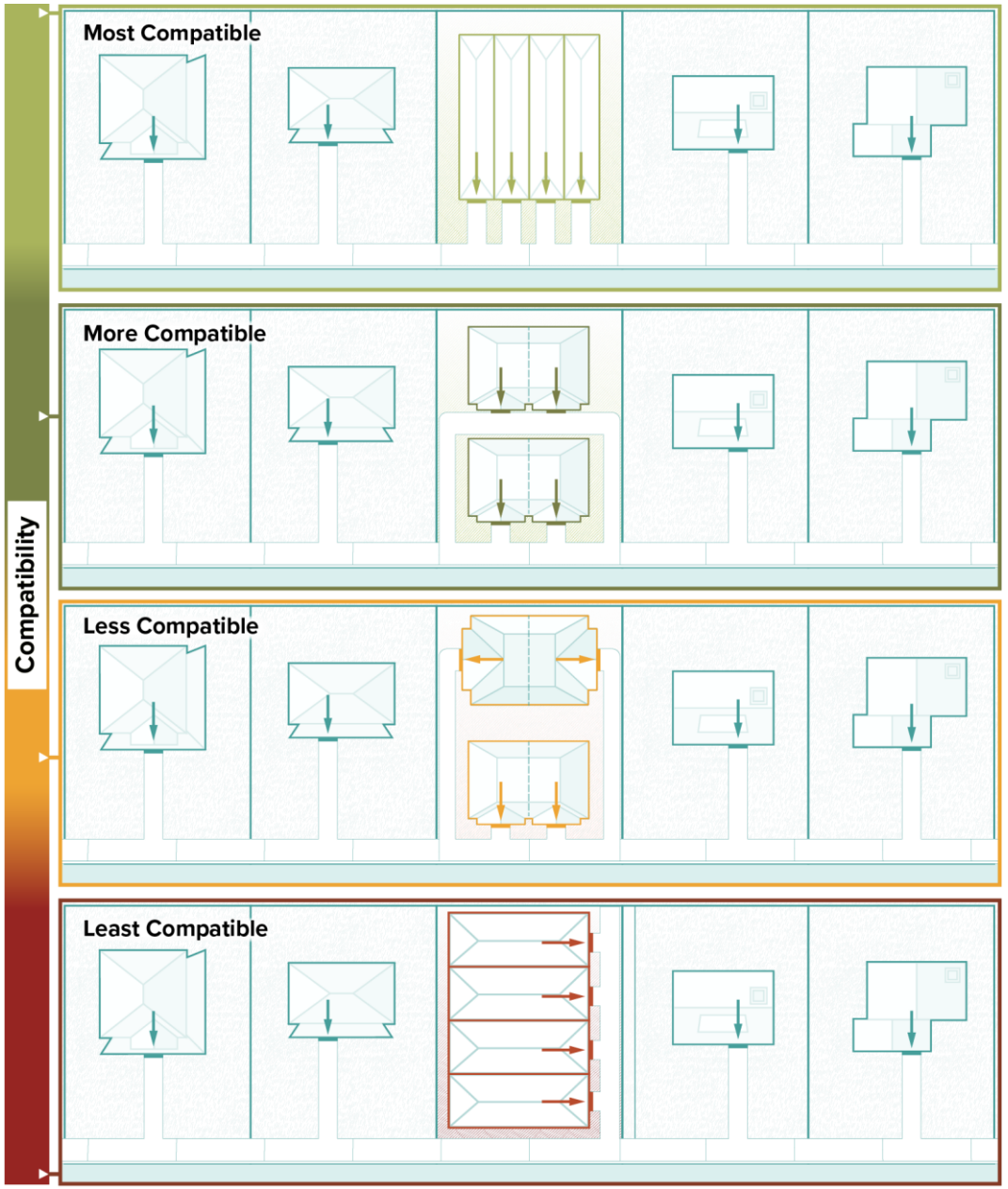
2.5 Orientation

Orientation refers to the way a building is positioned on its site and how its primary façade, entrance, and major architectural features relate to the street, open spaces, and surrounding buildings.

***Right**: In this example, a new quadplex is being added to a historic district. Neighboring buildings have primary entrances that face the street. Because the new quadplex directs some or all of its entrances to the side rather than the street, its orientation is less compatible than it could be.*

Tips for Compatibility

- When possible, retain the original front door and entrance configuration
- Make new entries secondary to the historic front door
- Limit new entrances or porches to secondary elevations
- Orient new buildings the same way as the historic buildings



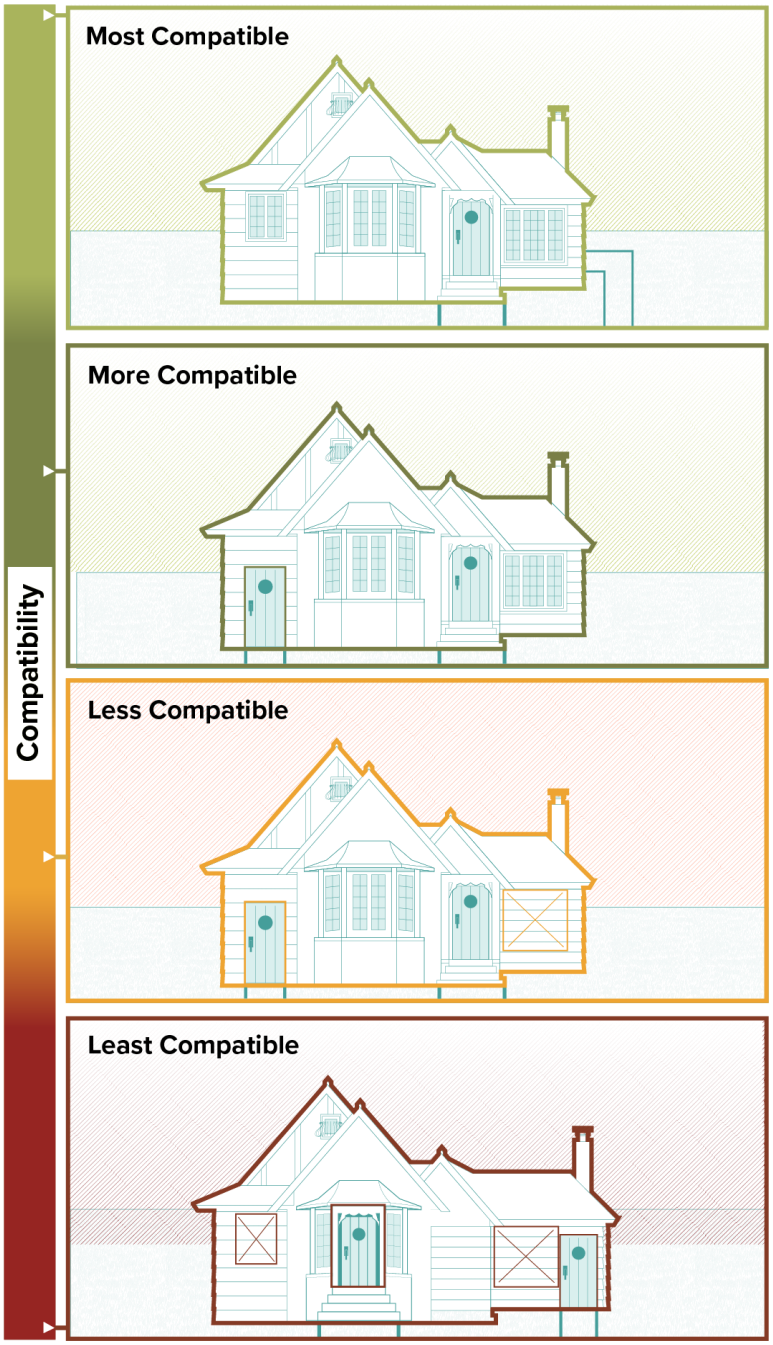
2.6 Alignment, Rhythm, and Spacing

Alignment, spacing, and rhythm describe the visual patterns created by the placement of buildings and architectural elements within a historic district. These patterns include building placement on lots, the distance between buildings, the relationship of setbacks and entrances to the street, and the regular arrangement of windows, doors, porches, storefronts, and other façade features.

***Right**: In this example, a historic single-family house is being converted into a duplex. The original window and door placements contribute to the building's historic character and reflect the patterns found throughout the neighborhood. As new doors and windows are added or altered, the building becomes less compatible in alignment, spacing, and rhythm.*

Tips for Compatibility

- Identify, retain, and preserve original features
- Conduct an in-depth survey of existing conditions as soon as possible, so that repair and upgrading methods and possible replacement options can be fully explored
- Place a new building in rhythm with the neighbors
- Avoid changing the number, location, size, or glazing patterns of windows
- Avoid cutting new openings, blocking windows, or installing replacement sashes that do not fit the historic openings



2.7 Architectural Elements

Architectural elements are the components and features that help define a building's appearance, character, and architectural style. These elements include windows, doors, porches, balconies, dormers, chimneys, roof overhangs, storefronts, columns, foundations, and other features that contribute to a building's overall design and relationship to its historic context.

Tips for Compatibility

- Retain and maintain all original elements
- If original elements are beyond repair, replace in-kind
- Make new elements distinct but compatible with historic elements
- Accurately restore missing features using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation
- Identify, evaluate, and treat the causes of any deterioration



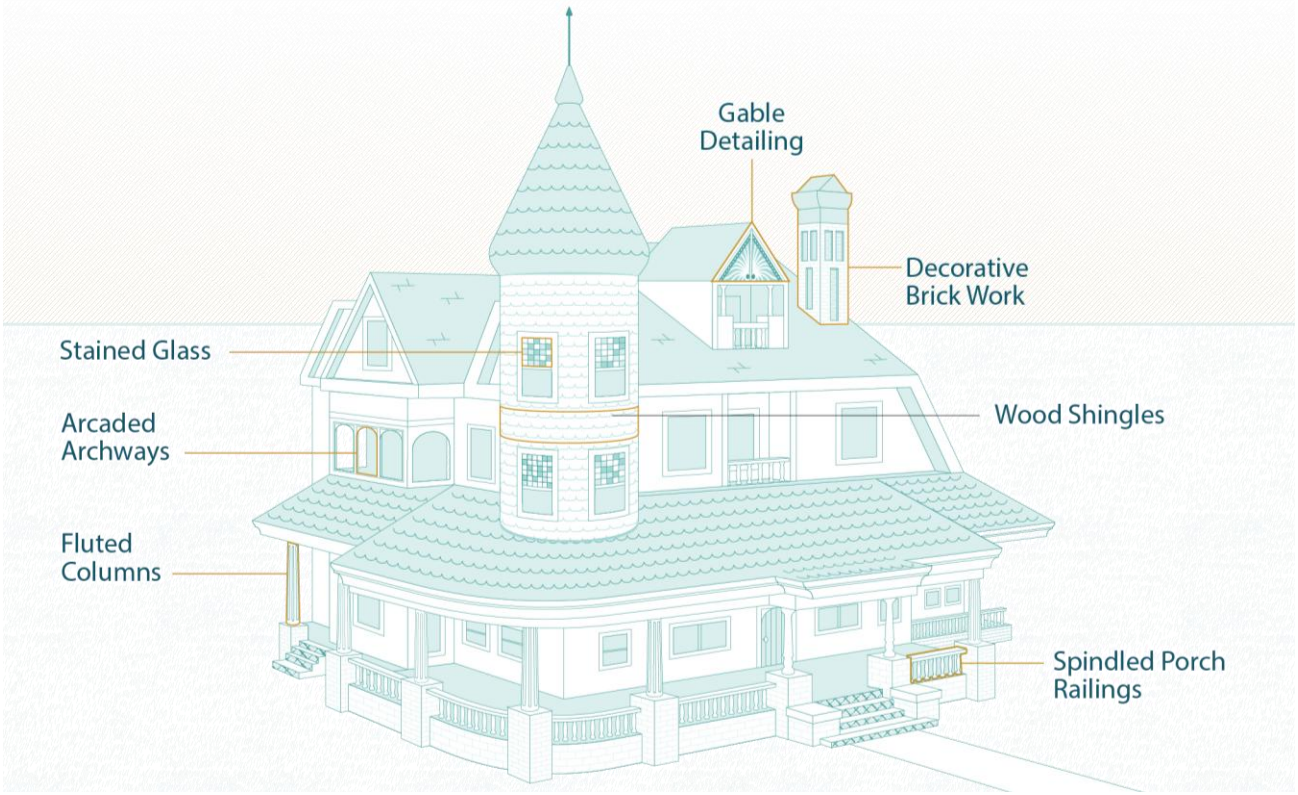
***Left**: This illustration identifies common architectural elements found on historic buildings. Preserving these features helps maintain a building's historic character and architectural style.*

2.8 Materials and Details

Historic materials are the physical components used to construct and finish a building, such as wood, brick, stone, concrete, stucco, metal, and glass. The choice, texture, color, finish, and detailing of materials play an important role in defining the character of a historic building or district.

Tips for Compatibility

- Retain and maintain as much original and historic material as possible
- If original or historic material is beyond repair, replace it with an in-kind material
- Make new elements distinct but compatible with historic elements
- Protect and maintain materials through appropriate surface treatments that cause the least damage possible
- When possible, and/or appropriate, reuse decorative material or features
- Identify, evaluate, and treat the causes of material deterioration



***Left**: This illustration identifies decorative features that add craftsmanship, texture, and visual interest to a building. These features, such as brackets, railings, shingles, decorative masonry, and ornamental woodwork, help express a building's architectural style and historic character.*

2.9 Interior Spaces

Interior spaces are the rooms, circulation patterns, and spatial relationships that contribute to a building's historic character and function. These spaces may include entry halls, stairways, corridors, parlors, living rooms, assembly spaces, storefront interiors, and other primary or secondary areas. The size, proportion, arrangement, and sequence of interior spaces can be as important to historic character as exterior architectural features.

Tips for Compatibility

- Install permanent partitions in secondary spaces
- Install removable partitions in primary spaces
- Identify, retain, and preserve historically important floor plans or interior spaces
- Place new stairways or elevators in secondary spaces
- Place new service equipment in secondary spaces
- Do not damage or obscure features such as fireplaces, niches, stairways, or alcoves
- Do not demolish principal walls and partitions
- Avoid altering or destroying interior spaces by inserting floors, cutting through floors, lowering ceilings, adding walls, or removing walls

3

Adding Residential Units



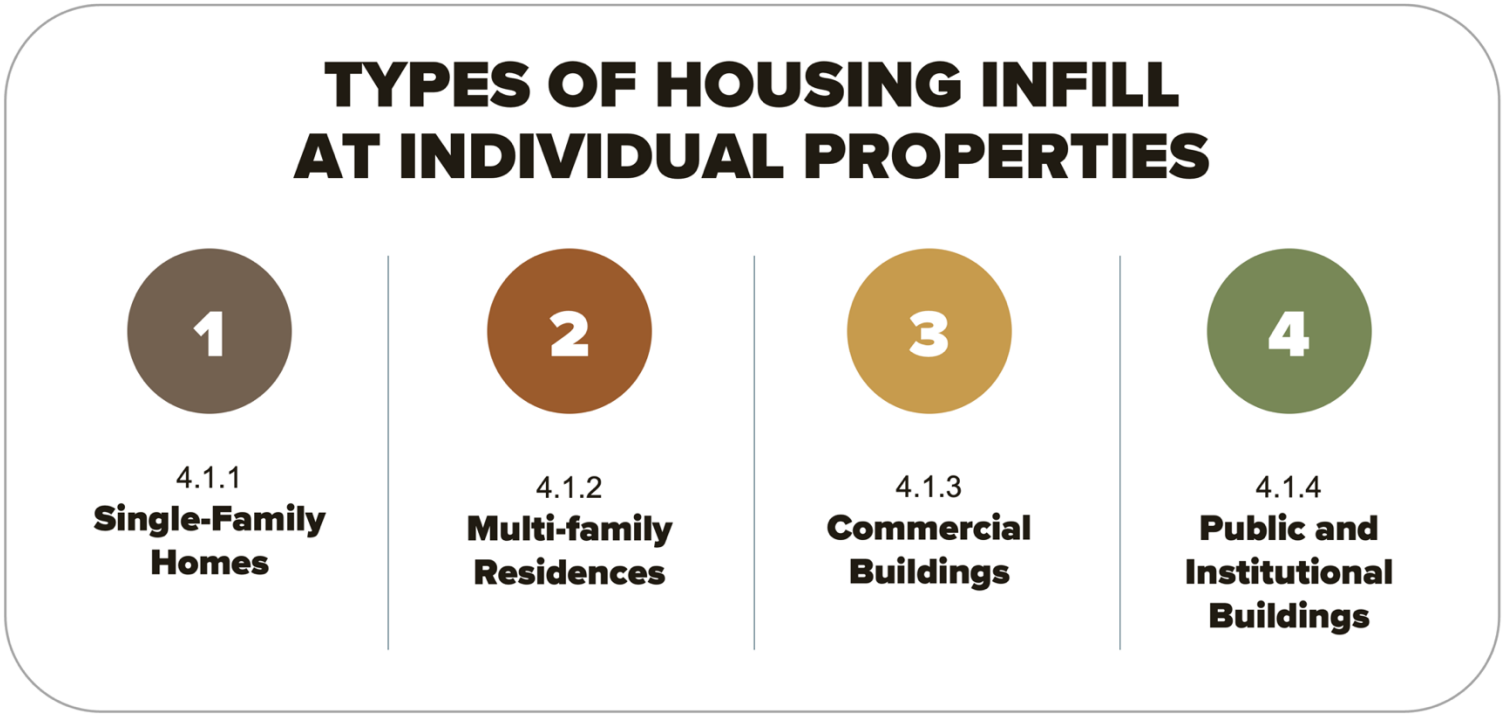
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3 Adding Residential Units

This chapter provides specific guidance for accommodating additional housing within historic buildings, on historic properties, and within residential historic districts. This document focuses on design approaches that increase residential density while preserving the historic character, integrity, and significance of individual resources and their broader historic contexts.

3.1 Individual Properties

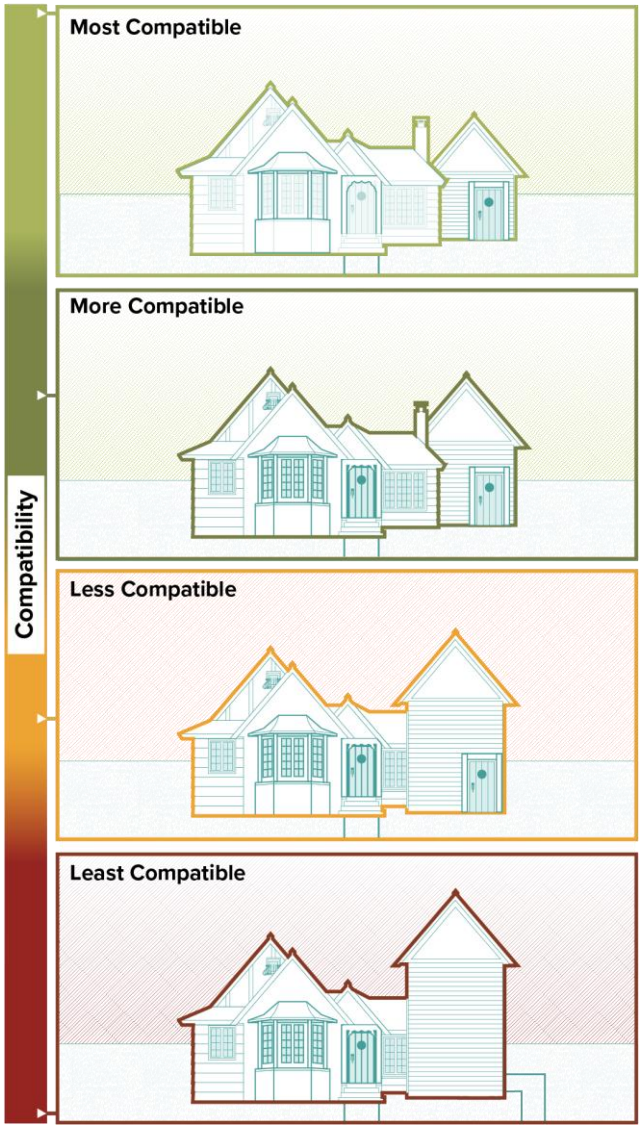
Existing houses, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, schools, hotels, and other historic buildings can all offer new housing opportunities without losing their historic character. Every historic property is unique, but successful housing projects share a common approach: they work **with** the building, rather than against it. This section focuses on projects involving individual historic properties. In many cases, historic buildings can accommodate substantial change while retaining the features that define their character.



3.1.1 SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Single-family homes contribute to neighborhood character through their scale, massing, roof forms, materials, site layout, and relationship to the street. Many historic homes can accommodate additional housing with little or no change to their street-facing appearance.

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Exterior additions	▪ Place additions at the rear or an inconspicuous side ▪ Do not overwhelm the original building ▪ Do not cover the primary façade
Attic conversions	▪ Maintain the existing roof line where possible ▪ Dormers should fit the scale and geometry of the roof
Basement conversions	▪ Keep foundation height, front yard grade, stairs, windows, and entries compatible with the house and streetscape
Garage conversions	▪ Treat historic garages and outbuildings as part of the property



***Right**: In this example, an addition is being constructed on a historic single-family home. The addition is most compatible when it remains smaller than the historic building and is located to the rear or on a less visible side. As the addition becomes larger and more prominent, it is less compatible because it competes with the historic building for visual attention.*

Key Design Principles

- Scale
- Form and Massing
- Orientation
- Alignment, Rhythm, and Spacing
- Architectural Elements
- Materials and Details
- Interior Spaces

CASE STUDY

East Burnside Street, Portland

Background

This project introduced a sizable multi-family housing development on a site between two older homes. The project shows that relatively large residential developments can be designed to reduce their visual impact while maintaining important aspects of neighborhood character.

Project Challenges

The development had to accommodate greater density while remaining compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The primary challenge was managing the visual impact of a larger building in an established residential setting of smaller historic houses.

Solutions

One of the project's most successful design strategies was using the site's natural topography. The development uses grade changes to reduce the buildings' apparent scale. The site's slope helps reduce the perceived mass of the new construction from key public viewpoints. The project also demonstrates how building placement can influence compatibility. From the street, the development reads as a series of residential-scale building forms rather than a single large structure.

WHAT WORKS WELL

- The natural grade reduces the perceived height and bulk of the development.
- Building mass is broken into smaller forms that relate more closely to the surrounding neighborhood.
- The project provides a substantial increase in housing density within an already developed area.
- Street-facing views are carefully considered, helping to lessen the visual impact of the larger development.







3.1.2 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCES

Historic multi-family properties offer opportunities for additional housing through additions, rooftop expansions, interior reconfiguration, adaptive reuse of underutilized spaces, and compatible infill on larger sites. New construction and additions generally work best when they are subordinate to the historic building and reinforce the property's established development patterns.

Key Design Principles

- Scale
- Form and Massing
- Orientation
- Architectural Elements
- Materials and Details
- Interior Spaces
- Alignment, Rhythm, and Spacing

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Exterior additions	▪ Place at the rear or on secondary elevations ▪ Use compatible scale, massing, roof forms, window patterns, and materials ▪ Design to be subordinate to the historic building
Add stories	▪ Set new stories back from the primary wall plane ▪ Minimize visibility from primary streets and public spaces ▪ Preserve cornices, parapets, rooflines, and other character-defining features
Build a new residential building on a multi-family property	▪ Locate new buildings in rear yards, side yards, or other secondary locations ▪ Use a scale, height, and massing that is subordinate to or compatible with the historic building ▪ Design new buildings to be compatible but distinguishable from historic buildings ▪ Locate parking behind buildings or screen it from public view
Reconfigure Existing Space for Additional Units	▪ Retain exterior window and door openings ▪ Retain significant interior spaces and layout ▪ Preserve historic finishes, detailing, trim, and ceiling heights ▪ Introduce new kitchens, bathrooms, and utilities in ways that minimize impacts on character-defining features

3.1.3 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial buildings can accommodate housing in several ways, including upper-story residential conversions, mixed-use development, adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, and carefully designed additions. In many communities, these projects bring more people downtown, support local businesses, and use existing infrastructure and services efficiently.

Key Design Principles

- Orientation
- Alignment, Rhythm, and Spacing
- Scale
- Form and Massing
- Architectural Elements
- Materials and Details
- Interior Spaces

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Convert an upper story to housing	▪ Retain storefront configurations ▪ Retain historic window and door openings ▪ Retain corridors, stairs, transoms, and other character-defining features ▪ Use existing floor plans and circulation patterns where feasible to reduce intervention in historic fabric
Add housing to mixed-use buildings	▪ Support the district's storefront rhythm and pedestrian-oriented character ▪ Step back new upper stories to reduce perceived height and bulk ▪ Incorporate housing entrances in ways that maintain an active street frontage
Fully convert a commercial building to housing.	▪ Treat large floor plates, high ceilings, industrial windows, and structural systems as amenities that can enhance residential units ▪ Use flexibility in unit design to work with existing building conditions rather than forcing standard apartment layouts
Add new stories	▪ Design additions to be subordinate to the historic building ▪ Step back new upper stories to reduce perceived height and bulk ▪ Differentiate new construction while maintaining compatibility

CASE STUDY

Hotel Merwyn, Astoria

Background

The Hotel Merwyn is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource of the Astoria Downtown Historic District. Built in 1926, the building was originally an 80-room hotel. After sitting vacant for roughly 30 years, it had deteriorated to the point that demolition was a real possibility. Rather than losing a historic landmark, community partners transformed the building into a mixed-income housing development that now provides 40 housing units, including 36 affordable units.

Project Challenges

Vacancy, deferred maintenance, environmental remediation needs, and extensive rehabilitation costs made the project difficult to finance through conventional redevelopment approaches.

Solutions

Affordable housing ultimately provided the path forward because it let the project leverage multiple funding sources that would not otherwise have been available. The project succeeded through a partnership between community organizations, preservation professionals, local government staff, and housing advocates. The development team evaluated building conditions, created a rehabilitation strategy, assembled multiple funding sources, and worked closely with local stakeholders throughout the process.





CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES RETAINED

- Four-story height
- Primary entrance
- Exterior window and door openings
- Brick veneer
- Stucco
- Plaster crests
- Flat-arched, wood transom windows
- Molded cornice
- Six-over-one wood double hung windows
- Lobby space, including wall finishes and mailboxes
- Corridors and wall finishes

3.1.4 PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

Converting public and institutional buildings to housing can be more complex than other adaptive reuse projects because of their size, configuration, and unique architectural features. In most cases, successful projects preserve the building's overall form, significant spaces, and character-defining architectural features while allowing the building to continue serving the community in a new way.

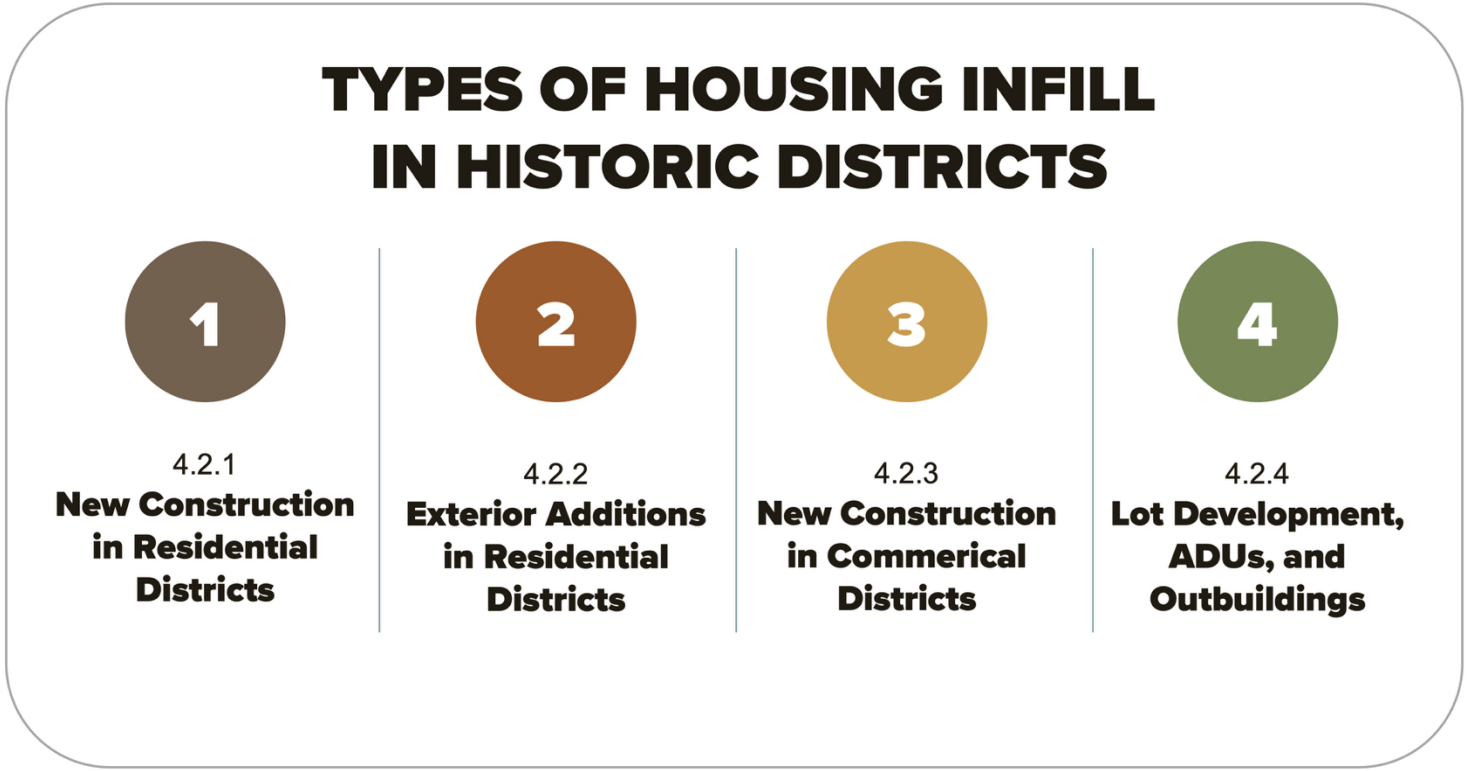
Key Design Principles

- Scale
- Form and Massing
- Orientation
- Architectural Elements
- Materials and Details
- Interior Spaces

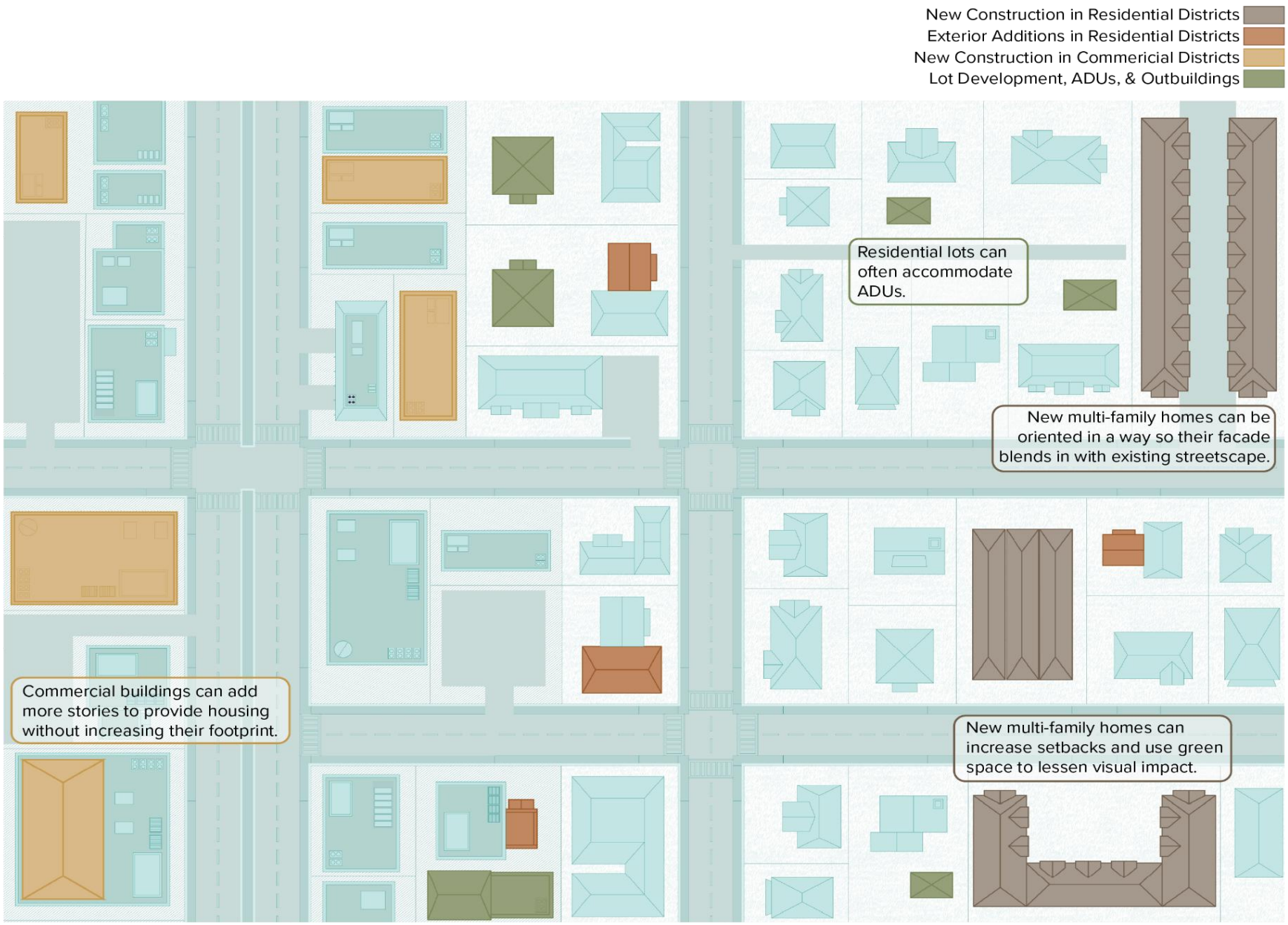
If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Convert classrooms or other purpose-specific rooms to housing	▪ Retain original front façade configurations that convey its historic use ▪ Retain historic window and door openings ▪ Retain corridors, stairs, transoms, and other character-defining features ▪ Use existing floor plans and circulation patterns where feasible to reduce intervention in historic fabric
Convert to a mixed-use building that includes housing	▪ Incorporate housing entrances in ways that maintain an active street frontage
Fully convert an entire building to housing	▪ Treat large floor plates, high ceilings, and structural systems as amenities that can enhance residential units ▪ Use flexibility in unit design to work with existing building conditions rather than forcing standard apartment layouts
Add new stories	▪ Locate additions to minimize visibility from primary streets ▪ Design additions to be subordinate to the historic building ▪ Differentiate new construction while maintaining compatibility ▪ Step back new upper stories to reduce perceived height and bulk

3.2 Historic Districts

A historic district is more than a group of old buildings. Much of its character comes from how everything fits together: how far houses sit from the street, how big the lots are, where garages and driveways go, and how front yards meet the sidewalk. New construction that follows those patterns can sit comfortably on a historic block, even if its design is clearly contemporary. That's the approach this section takes. New construction should fit in with its neighbors in size, placement and overall form, but it shouldn't copy them. This follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which call for new work to be compatible with historic buildings while still being distinguishable from them. The following guidance addresses common housing-related projects in historic neighborhoods and districts, including residential and commercial infill, additions, accessory dwelling units, lot development, and site improvements. Done well, these projects add homes to neighborhoods that are already walkable and close to services, without losing what makes them historic.



Creating Housing in Historic Buildings and Districts: Four Approaches



3.2.1 NEW CONSTRUCTION IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

When thoughtfully designed, new construction can add housing options while reinforcing the qualities that make a historic district special. New buildings should relate to the surrounding district while remaining clearly identifiable as buildings of their own time. In most historic residential districts, successful infill development reflects the established relationship between buildings and the street.

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Determine building placement	▪ Match or closely relate to established setbacks, front yard depth, and entry orientation on the block
Determine building height and massing	▪ Design height, width, massing, and foundation height to fit within the range of contributing buildings on the block
Design the roof form	▪ Use roof forms and roof orientations commonly found within the district
Design porches and entries	▪ Use porches, stoops, and entry features where they are common within the district
Design windows and doors	▪ Use window and door proportions, trim depth, and solid-to-void patterns that relate to nearby historic buildings
Design garages and parking	▪ Locate parking behind buildings or accessed from alleys where that pattern exists. Keep garages subordinate to the house
Select exterior materials	▪ Use exterior materials that are compatible with materials commonly found in the district
Design higher-density infill	▪ Design new housing to maintain the appearance of house-scale residential development

CASE STUDY

Southeast 55th Avenue Condominiums, Portland

Background

This project added multiple new condominium units on a residential lot within an established neighborhood of primarily small-scale houses. Although the project introduces substantially more housing than a traditional single-family lot, much of the new development is largely hidden from public view.

Project Challenges

Many historic residential neighborhoods have lots that can easily accommodate additional housing. The challenge for this project was to increase housing density while maintaining the neighborhood's established pattern of detached houses, generous setbacks, landscaping, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Solutions

The project's greatest success is how it organizes additional housing units on the site. From the public street and sidewalk, observers primarily see a row of detached, single-family, house-scale buildings that maintain the block's established residential character. Aerial imagery shows additional residential units behind the street-facing condominiums. This approach allows the development to accommodate significantly more housing while preserving the neighborhood characteristics most visible to residents and visitors.



WHAT WORKS WELL

- Additional housing is placed behind street-facing buildings rather than dominating the streetscape.
- The traditional pattern of houses fronting the street is maintained.
- Existing trees and landscaping help soften and screen new development.
- Most of the increased density is not readily apparent from public viewpoints.
- The project demonstrates how deep lots can accommodate housing growth without dramatically altering neighborhood character.

3.2.2 EXTERIOR ADDITIONS IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

In historic districts, additions should be designed with both the individual building and the surrounding streetscape in mind. While additions may increase a house's size, the historic building should remain the visual focus when viewed from the street. This approach helps preserve the historic character of both the building and the district while allowing for continued use and adaptation over time.

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Determine the location of an addition	▪ Place at the rear or secondary elevation ▪ Follow established street setbacks ▪ Keep the relationship between the original building, open space, landscape, and accessory structures readable ▪ Use site features, slopes, and landscape to reduce visual impact ▪ Orient the main entrance to match the district pattern
Determine the size and massing of an addition	▪ Scale additions to be subordinate to the original building ▪ Break larger volumes into smaller forms
Design architectural elements	▪ Use window and door proportions that match the historic windows and doors ▪ Maintain a rhythm and alignment of openings like the historic
Select exterior materials and details	▪ Differentiate new construction from historic construction ▪ Choose materials that are compatible in scale, texture, finish, color range, and detailing. New materials may be different if they fit quietly.



***Above**: In this example, an addition containing an accessory dwelling unit (left) has been constructed alongside a historic home and its original garage (right and middle). The addition differs from the historic building while remaining compatible in size, scale, and design. Because the historic house remains the property's primary visual focus, the addition is highly compatible with the site's historic character.*

3.2.3 NEW CONSTRUCTION IN COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Consistent storefront rhythms, building widths, street-wall alignment, upper-story window patterns, and pedestrian-oriented design often define commercial districts. New buildings should reinforce these characteristics while still feeling like buildings of their own time.

If You Want To...	Tips for Compatibility
Determine building placement	▪ Align the building with the established street wall and build-to line ▪ Maintain active storefront frontage along the sidewalk ▪ Locate parking, loading, and service functions behind buildings or away from primary street frontages
Design storefronts and entrances	▪ Provide transparent ground-floor storefronts and pedestrian-oriented entrances ▪ Reflect the traditional rhythm of storefront bays and lot widths through façade articulation
Determine scale and massing of a new building	▪ Design height and massing to fit within the range of historic buildings on the block ▪ Use upper-story setbacks where needed to reduce perceived scale ▪ Do not introduce a building that overwhelms adjacent historic buildings through excessive height or bulk
Select materials and details	▪ Use materials and architectural details that are compatible with the district ▪ Design new buildings to be compatible yet distinguishable from historic buildings

***Right**: The Joyce Building in downtown Portland was originally constructed in 1912 as the Hotel Alton. In 2023, it was rehabilitated and adaptively reused as housing for individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness. The project team, which included Community Partners for Affordable Housing and Carleton Hart Architecture, won a DeMuro award from Restore Oregon for the project.*

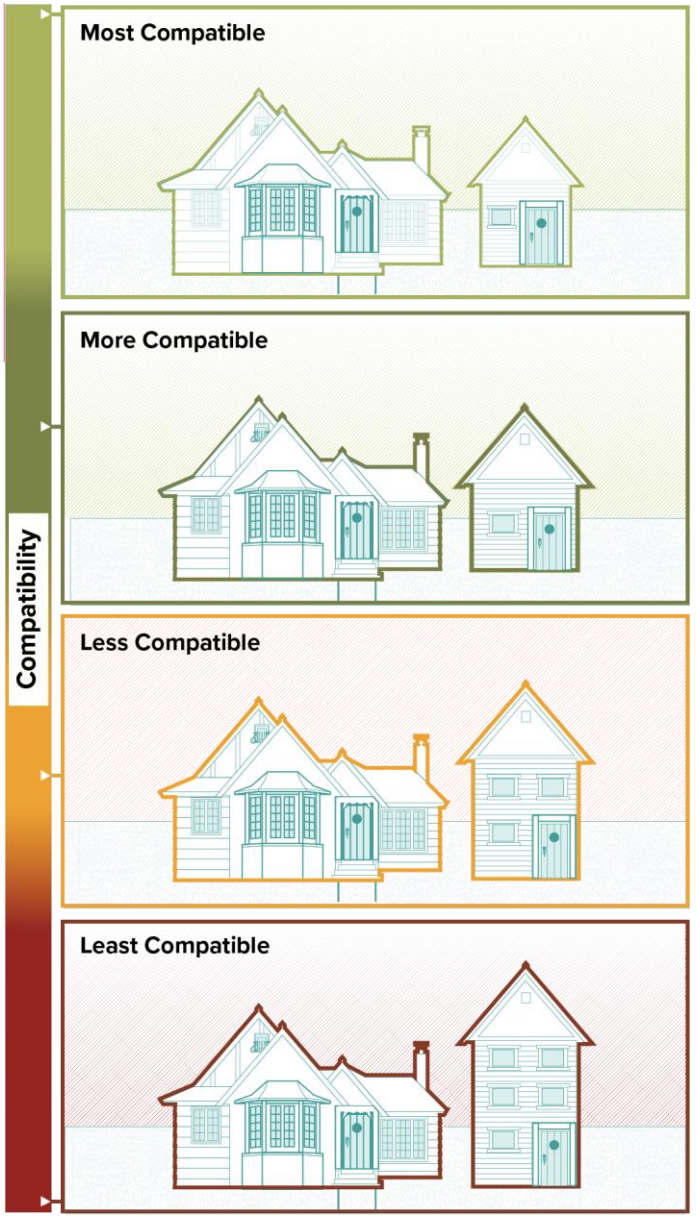


3.2.4 LOT DEVELOPMENT, ADUs, AND OUTBUILDINGS

ADUs, detached cottages, and converted outbuildings can provide new housing opportunities in historic districts while preserving the primary historic building.

***Right**: In this example, a historic garage is being converted into an accessory dwelling unit. Historic garages and other outbuildings are most compatible when they remain secondary to the primary house in size, height, and visual prominence. As the converted garage becomes larger and more noticeable, it is less compatible because it competes with the historic house for visual attention.*

If You Want To…	Tips for Compatibility
Construct an ADU	▪ Keep new buildings subordinate in size, height, and scale to historic buildings ▪ Use roof forms and materials that relate to the primary building or district. ▪ Maintain established patterns of lot development and open space. ▪ Locate parking behind buildings or in secondary locations.
Convert a historic outbuilding	▪ Retain character-defining features and exterior materials
Develop a vacant lot	▪ Preserve mature trees, landscape features, and historic site elements ▪ Design infill to match the form and massing of surrounding historic homes ▪ Do not construct infill housing that is drastically taller or shorter than the range established by the district



CASE STUDY

Bend Old Town Historic District

Background

The Bend Old Town Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places because it developed during Bend's early growth as a railroad and lumber community and contains a concentration of historic residential buildings, many reflecting Craftsman-era design traditions. The property at 201 NW Harriman Street contained a 1920 house with a large adjacent open lot. The site presented an opportunity to add new residential units while maintaining the character of the surrounding historic neighborhood. This project constructed a new duplex while retaining the existing house. The existing house is a non-contributing resource of the historic district.

Project Challenges

Introducing new housing within a historic district can be challenging because the new building must fit an established pattern of development without appearing as a false historic replica. The project needed to balance housing goals with preservation objectives and respond to a highly visible neighborhood setting.

Solutions

The project kept the 1920 house and built a new duplex on the adjacent open lot. Instead of copying a historic building, the design borrows familiar Craftsman features from the surrounding district: a gabled roof, a full-width front porch, exposed rafter tails, knee braces, and horizontal lap siding. It then uses current materials, including fiber-cement siding and aluminum-clad wood windows. Solar panels sit on low-visibility roof areas. The result reads as part of the block and neighborhood while clearly being a new addition.





CRAFTSMAN-STYLE FEATURES WITH A MODERN TOUCH

- Full-width front porch with detailed columns
- Exposed rafter tails
- Gabled roof form
- Horizontal lap (fiber-cement) siding
- Brick chimney and masonry accents
- Aluminum-clad wood windows
- Dormers and knee braces
- Solar panels in low-visibility areas
- Maintaining traditional landscape patterns and pedestrian-oriented site design consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Demonstrating compatibility through analysis of surrounding contributing resources and district-defining characteristics



4 Regulatory Framework

HOUSING THROUGH PRESERVATION

4 Regulatory Framework

Federal, state, and local regulations shape the ability to create new housing within historic buildings and districts, guiding both preservation and development. This section outlines the regulatory framework that may apply to infill housing projects in Oregon. Understanding how these policies and review processes work together may help you navigate project approvals and design compatible improvements that preserve historic character while supporting community housing needs.

4.1 The National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966 and established a national program to preserve the country's historically significant properties at the state and local levels. It created the National Register of Historic Places, regulatory procedures for identifying and protecting historically significant properties (Section 106 and Section 110), the Historic Preservation Fund for states and individuals, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This independent federal agency advises the President and Congress on historic preservation matters.

4.1.1 The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic places worthy of preservation. It includes individual buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts that help tell the story of our communities, state, and country. In Oregon, properties range from houses, schools, churches, and commercial buildings to downtown districts, farms, bridges, and cultural landscapes. While these places are recognized for their historic significance, they are not frozen in time. Most have changed over the years to meet new needs, and many continue to evolve today.

A common misunderstanding is that listing a property in the National Register prevents owners from making changes, but that is far from true. Instead, it helps identify the features and qualities that make a place historically significant. Understanding those characteristics is an important first step when planning a rehabilitation project, addition, adaptive reuse, or new housing development.

National Register listing may also create opportunities for preservation incentives, including historic rehabilitation tax credits and certain grant programs. In some cases, projects involving federal funding, permits, or licenses may require additional review. However, most housing projects are reviewed through local planning, zoning, and historic preservation processes. For housing projects in historic buildings and districts, the National Register of Historic Places provides an important foundation for making informed design decisions. By understanding what makes a place significant, property owners, developers, and communities can add housing while preserving the character that makes Oregon's historic places special.

4.1.2 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (often called the "Standards") are a set of nationally recognized guidelines for working with historic buildings.

They help property owners, designers, developers, and review bodies make changes that meet modern needs while keeping the historic character that makes a place special. The Standards describe four approaches, or "treatments," for historic properties: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

Preservation focuses on maintaining and repairing existing historic materials and features while keeping a building largely as it exists today. This approach is often used when a building remains in good condition and needs only limited changes.

Restoration depicts a building as it appeared during a specific period in its history by preserving features from that time and removing later alterations. It is mostly used for museums, landmark properties, and interpretive sites.

Reconstruction recreates a building, structure, or feature that no longer exists. Because it relies on historical documentation and physical evidence, reconstruction is used relatively rarely.

Rehabilitation is the treatment most relevant to housing projects and the primary focus of this document. Rehabilitation recognizes that historic buildings must often change to remain useful. It allows for repairs, upgrades, additions, accessibility improvements, and new uses while preserving the features that convey a property's historic character.

The key idea behind rehabilitation is **compatibility**. New additions, alterations, and infill development should fit comfortably within their historic surroundings without copying historic buildings. Compatible designs consider scale, massing, materials, and placement so new

The 10 Standards for Rehabilitation are:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change.
2. Retain and preserve the historic character of a property. Avoid removing features that characterize a property.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Do not create a false sense of history.
4. Alterations to a property that have acquired historic significance will be retained and preserved.
5. Preserve the distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property.
6. Repair deteriorated historic features before replacing them. When deterioration is beyond repair, replace in-kind.
7. Use the gentlest cleaning treatments possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic elements, will be differentiated from the old, and be compatible.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

construction complements historic buildings while remaining identifiable as a product of their own time. The goal is not to freeze historic buildings in time. The goal is to help these old buildings continue to serve their communities. When applied thoughtfully, the Standards provide a flexible framework for creating new housing, supporting local investment, and ensuring that Oregon's historic buildings and districts remain viable places to live for future generations.

4.1.3 Federal Historic Tax Credits

The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit can help housing projects be more financially feasible. The program encourages investment in historic buildings by providing a federal income tax credit equal to 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenses for income-producing properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either as an individual historic property or as a contributing resource to a historic district. To qualify for the tax credit, a project must follow the Standards for Rehabilitation.

For many communities, historic tax credits have been an important tool for bringing vacant or underused historic buildings back into productive use. Across Oregon, it has helped transform former schools, hotels, warehouses, commercial buildings, and other historic properties into housing, mixed-use developments, and community assets. When available, historic tax credits can help bridge financing gaps, making it easier to preserve historic buildings while creating new housing opportunities. More information about eligibility and application requirements is available from Oregon SHPO and the National Park Service.

Although not every housing project will pursue historic tax credits, the program provides useful examples of how rehabilitation can successfully balance preservation and development goals. Many of the design approaches highlighted throughout this document reflect the same principles that have helped historic tax credit projects add housing, attract investment, and keep historic buildings occupied and maintained.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, between 2001 and 2025, 166 rehabilitation projects on historic properties in Oregon received Federal Income Tax Credits amounting to over $1.17 billion in development costs, over $1.02 billion of which were qualified rehabilitation expenses, resulting in over $204 million returned to property owners through the program and creating over 19,000 jobs. Of those,

4.2 Oregon Land Use Law/Goals/Statutes

You don't need a background in planning or preservation to use this guide. But if you're working on a housing project that involves a historic property or district, you'll probably run into rules and terms you haven't dealt with before. This section explains the ones that come up most often and how they affect housing projects. This overview explains what these terms mean and why they matter in the context of housing and historic preservation. Most projects are ultimately reviewed at the local level, but a broader state framework shapes local regulations and influences how communities plan for housing, growth, and historic resources.

Why this matters: Knowing where the rules come from makes it easier to work through local requirements and to find help when you need it.

4.2.1 Oregon Statutes (ORS)

What they are: Laws passed by the Oregon Legislature.
Why they matter: Most regulations, programs, and planning requirements affecting housing and historic resources ultimately originate in state law. ORS provides the legal foundation for Oregon's land use planning and preservation systems.

ORS Chapter 197 and 197A
What it is: The section of Oregon law that establishes the statewide land use planning system.
Why this matters: These chapters spell out what cities and counties must do when they plan for housing and growth. Many local housing rules, including requirements to allow certain housing types, come from here.

ORS Chapter 358
What it is: The section of Oregon law that establishes many of Oregon's historic preservation programs and authorities.
Why this matters: ORS 358 provides the legal foundation for many preservation activities, including programs administered by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. If you're working with a historic property, some preservation requirements, incentives, or review processes may originate here.

4.2.2 Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR)

What they are: Regulations that state agencies adopt to implement state laws.
Why they matter: While statutes establish broad policy, OARs provide more detailed direction for how those laws are applied. They often influence how local governments administer planning and development regulations.

4.2.3 Statewide Planning Goals

What they are: Oregon's statewide policy goals for land use planning.
Why they matter: These goals set the state's priorities for housing, historic resources, transportation, economic development, and natural resources. Local comprehensive plans and development regulations are built around these goals. Each goal carries equal weight; no single goal is intended to outweigh the others.

Goal 5, Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces
What it is: Oregon's statewide planning goal for historic, cultural, archaeological, scenic, and natural resources.
Why this matters: Goal 5 helps communities identify important resources and consider them as they plan for growth and change. Many local preservation programs and historic resource protections are guided by Goal 5.

Notes for readers: Historic District Status
The existence of a National Register Historic District does not, by itself, qualify land or buildings for exemptions. The land or resource must be designated as a Goal 5 historic resource in a jurisdiction's acknowledged comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

Goal 10, Housing
What it is: Oregon's statewide planning goal for housing.

Why this matters: Goal 10 directs communities to plan for current and future housing needs and provide for a variety of housing types available to different income levels. Many local housing policies, zoning regulations, and housing initiatives are shaped by the goal's objective of ensuring adequate housing capacity and choice.

4.2.4 Oregon State Agencies

Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission
What it is: Oregon's policymaking body for statewide land use planning.
Why this matters: Adopts Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals, which influence how communities plan for housing, development, transportation, natural resources, and historic resources. These goals help shape the local regulations that affect individual projects.

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
What it is: The state agency that administers Oregon's land use planning program.
Why this matters: Helps communities implement statewide planning requirements and guides on planning issues. DLCD resources and technical assistance support many local planning efforts.

Housing Accountability and Production Office
What it is: Oregon's state office that supports housing production and helps ensure local governments comply with state housing laws.
Why this matters: Provides guidance, model code technical assistance, and oversight related to Oregon's housing requirements. Communities, planners, and project teams may look to HAPO for information about complying with housing policies, approval processes, and local regulations that affect housing development.

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
What it is: Oregon's lead agency for historic preservation.
Why this matters: Provides technical assistance, educational resources, preservation incentives, and guidance on historic buildings and districts. Communities, property owners, and project teams frequently look to SHPO for information about preservation best practices and programs.

4.3 Local Regulations

Local regulations govern most housing projects. Zoning codes, development standards, historic preservation ordinances, and design review criteria can influence what types of housing are allowed, where development may occur, and how projects are reviewed. Because these regulations vary by community, it is important to understand local requirements early in the planning process. Doing so can help identify opportunities, avoid surprises, and streamline project development.

4.3.1 Historic Review Boards and Commissions

Many communities have a historic review board, landmarks commission, or similar body that reviews projects affecting designated historic resources. If your project involves a historic building or property within a historic district, a review board may be part of the approval process. The goal is generally to help ensure that changes respect the character of historic places while accommodating ongoing investment, use, and community growth. Local procedures and review criteria vary by jurisdiction, so early coordination with planning staff can clarify what your project may require.

4.4 Middle Housing and Historic Places

Middle housing refers to housing types between detached single-family homes and larger apartment buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage clusters, and townhouses. These housing types were common before single-family zoning became common, making them ideal candidates for maximizing housing infill in historic districts when opportunities arise.

What is known today as middle housing has been a part of Oregon's historic building practices for decades and is becoming an increasingly important part of Oregon's housing landscape. Recent changes to state and local regulations have expanded opportunities for these housing types in many communities. While the specific rules vary by jurisdiction and are beyond the scope of this resource, middle housing may be part of the conversation when planning new housing in historic neighborhoods or adapting existing buildings for residential use. Many of the design considerations discussed in this guide, such as scale, massing, setbacks, site planning, and compatibility with surrounding development, can be applied regardless of whether a project involves a duplex, cottage cluster, apartment building, adaptive reuse project, or single-family home. This guide does not explain middle housing regulations; it helps communities, property owners, and designers consider how housing can fit successfully within historic contexts.

Note: Population Threshold

Most cities below 2,500 are exempt from middle housing ORS 197A.420.



Above: *This apartment building in Portland is listed in the National Register as the Charles O. Sigglin Flats. It received Federal Tax Credits for its rehabilitation, which added valuable housing units to the city in 2019.*

The table below lists some of the most relevant ORS and OAR for adding infill to historic buildings and districts, and how they apply to designing infill in historic buildings and districts. Note that this list is not exhaustive.

Potentially Relevant ORS and OAR

Subject and Law	Notes	Applicable Citation
Middle Housing **ORS 197A.420; OAR 660-46**	Local governments can apply historic resource regulations to middle housing but cannot prohibit middle housing where single detached dwellings are allowed.	OAR 660-046-0010(3)(a)(B)
Accessory Dwelling Units **ORS 197A.425**	Historic resources/areas are not exempt from this law	ORS 197A.425(1)(a)
Clear and Objective standards, procedures **ORS 197A.400**	Clear and objective requirements are not applicable for historic resources/areas.	ORS 197A.400(2)(b)
Residential Design Standard Exemptions **SB 974, Section 8**	Historic resources/areas are not exempt from this law	SB 974, Section 8(2)
Mandatory Adjustments for housing **SB 1537, Section 38**	Historic resources/areas are not exempt from mandatory adjustments	SB 1537, Section 38(1)(b)(B)
Residential treatment facilities **ORS 197A.385**	The requirement to permit residential treatment facilities applies to historic resources/ areas.	ORS 197A.385(2)(b)(B)
Home start lands **ORS 197A.447**	Development of home start lands is applicable for historic resources/areas.	ORS 197A.447(3)(d)(B)
By-right affordable housing **ORS 197A.445-470**	Requirement to permit affordable housing is applicable for historic resources/areas.	ORS 197A.445(4)(c)(D)(ii) ORS 197A.447(3)(d)(B) ORS 197A.449(2)(d) ORS 197A.460(3)(b)(D)(ii)

5

Building Code, Permitting, and Coordination with Other Land Reviews



HOUSING THROUGH PRESERVATION

5 Building Code, Permitting, and Coordination with Other Land Use Reviews

Housing in historic buildings often depends on early coordination. The design team, property owners, local planners, preservation reviewers, building officials, accessibility specialists, fire officials, and engineers may all need to solve the same puzzle together: how to make the building safe and usable while protecting what makes it historic.

5.1 Start Code Conversations Early

Building code requirements for fire safety, egress, seismic upgrades, and accessibility can affect character-defining spaces, features, and finishes, so plan for them from the start. Talk with building officials and pursue permits and occupancy approvals early in rehabilitation planning, before the design is final. There is still room to find solutions that protect historic features. This is especially true for upper-story projects. Oregon Heritage's Upper Story Report describes the regulatory and technical barriers to these projects as a maze. It notes that differences in how local officials interpret the code, along with liability concerns, can slow them down, and it recommends a more flexible, supportive regulatory approach.

5.2 Explore Equivalent Methods Before Damaging Historic Fabric

When a building needs fire protection, seismic work, accessibility upgrades, or new egress, first identify the features and spaces that need protection. Then work with local code officials to explore systems, methods, or devices that are at least equivalent in effectiveness and safety, if not more so, so you can avoid unnecessary alterations.

- Locate new stairs, elevators, ramps, and lifts in secondary spaces, so that character-defining spaces and features can be preserved where possible.
- Use fire suppression and life-safety systems in ways that retain historic finishes and details where possible.
- Place new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing runs in secondary or service spaces when feasible.
- For accessibility, aim for the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact.

5.3 Coordinate Historic Review with Land Use Review

Historic review should not happen in isolation. Setbacks, parking, density, building height, utilities, fire access, and accessibility can all shape the design. Local processes should help applicants understand which standards apply, who reviews each piece, and when they can still make design changes without wasting time and money.

Clear standards and ample guidance are the highly encouraged. Those, combined with supportive advisory and voluntary tools, such as, but not limited to, early design advice, incentives, zoning flexibility, model code language, and workshops or training that bring officials, designers, property owners, and other partners together, can lead to great housing solutions that preserve Oregon’s important historic properties.

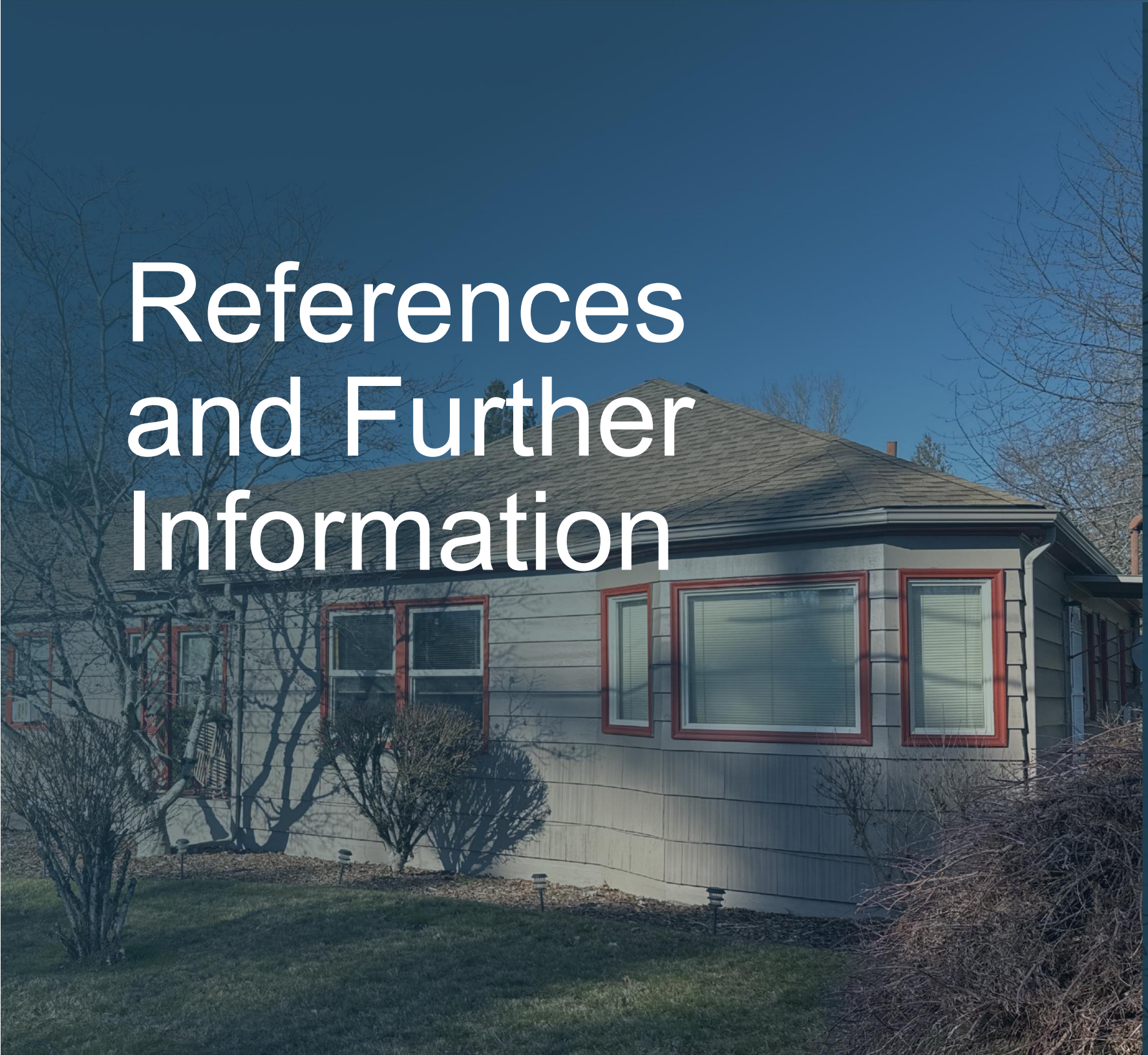
5.4 A Practical Coordination Sequence

1. Confirm the historic status of the property or district and gather available nominations, surveys, local context information, and applicable design criteria.
2. Identify local code and zoning regulations applicable to the project. Contact the local regulatory agency early with any questions.
3. Identify if there is a local historical commission or review body, and their approval process. Contact their local liaison early with any questions.
4. Walk the property and site to identify character-defining features and areas that can accept change.
5. Meet early with local planning, building, fire, accessibility, and preservation staff to identify likely review paths and code issues.
6. Use the design principles in Chapters 2 and 3 to refine massing, placement, service areas, circulation, and materials.
7. Document the design response clearly, including how the project protects historic character while adding housing.



***Above**: This new courtyard apartment building introduces additional housing while maintaining compatibility with neighboring historic buildings. Its scale, placement, and overall form reinforce the street's existing character without copying historic architectural styles.*

References and Further Information



HOUSING THROUGH PRESERVATION

References

Historic Preservation League of Oregon. 2011. HPLO Special Report 2011: Compatible Infill Development in Oregon's Historic Districts. Portland, Oregon: Historic Preservation League of Oregon.

Restore Oregon. Compatible Infill Development in Oregon's Historic Districts. Portland, Oregon: Restore Oregon.

Oregon Heritage. Upper Story Report Final: A Playbook for Activating Oregon's Upper Stories. Salem, Oregon: Oregon Heritage Program.

Oregon Heritage. Supporting the Upper Floor Housing Wave. Salem, Oregon: Oregon Heritage Program.

Further Information

Housing Law Library: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/870455bc2ca2460c84cdc94314018c5c/page/Housing-Law-Library?views=Inquiry-Topic%2CSearch-All-Records

National Register of Historic Places: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm

National Park Service Preservation Briefs: https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development: https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/pages/index.aspx

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office: https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/oh/pages/default.aspx

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/secretary-standards-treatment-historic-properties.htm