

# Guidelines for New Construction in Albany's Residential Historic Districts & Neighborhoods



Examples of new construction that fit into the historic neighborhood.

# **New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods**

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Albany's historic residential neighborhoods developed over many decades, and contain houses of many different styles, shapes and sizes. Because of this, there is no single blueprint for a new house that will be compatible with any given historic neighborhood. However, the architectural character and details found on Albany's historic buildings provide the "architectural vocabulary" that can be used in designing new buildings that are compatible with Albany's historic neighborhoods. The careful, sensitive and thoughtful design of any new construction in the districts is of the utmost importance because it must harmonize with the character of the neighborhoods and also be made compatible with existing historic structures.

## **PURPOSE OF NEW CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to help property owners and contractors choose an appropriate approach when building in a historic district so that projects satisfy the standards and review criteria in the Albany Development Code (Article 7, Historic Overlay Districts).

These guidelines are also intended to help property owners and others understand the special features and characteristics of Albany's historic structures, and incorporate that understanding into designs for new construction.

Objectives of the Guidelines:

- Help projects meet the review criteria and Secretary of Interiors Standards in the Albany Development Code.
- Maintain the integrity of our historic buildings and neighborhoods. Protect the existing historic buildings in the districts.

## **HISTORIC REVIEW**

To protect the integrity of the Albany's historic resource, the City of Albany adopted the preservation ordinance in 1985. It requires all buildings built before 1946 in the National Register Historic Districts and those included on the City's official Local Historic Inventory to get historic approval for new buildings over 100 square feet.

## **DEVELOPMENT CODE REVIEW CRITERIA**

7.270 New Construction Review Criteria. The Community Development Director or the Landmarks Advisory Commission must find that the request meets the following applicable criteria in order to approve the new construction request:

- (1) Within the Monteith and Hackleman Districts:
  - (a) The development maintains any unifying development patterns such as sidewalk and street tree location, setbacks, building coverage, and orientation to the street.
  - (b) The structure is of similar size and scale of surrounding buildings, and as much as possible reflects the craftsmanship of those buildings.
  - (c) Building materials are reflective of and complementary to existing buildings within the district.

# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

## WHAT MAKES A NEW BUILDING “COMPATIBLE” IN A HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD?

A new building should contribute to that character by respecting the location, design, materials, and other character-defining features of historic buildings in the neighborhood. This doesn't necessarily mean building a replica of the house across the street, or a house that tries to create a false historic appearance. So the **first step** in designing a new building that works is to **look for patterns in the existing buildings** in the vicinity of the site. Compatibility can be achieved through careful attention to the following aspects of a building:

- |                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| orientation    | rhythm of window & door openings |
| site location  | materials                        |
| scale and mass | decorative finish details        |
| proportions    | foundations                      |
| height         | garage location                  |
| roof shape     |                                  |
| porches        |                                  |



*Three new houses fit into the historic neighborhood.*

## ORIENTATION, SETBACKS & BUILDING PLACEMENT

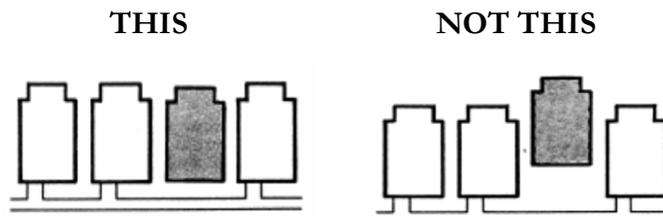
Building location and orientation toward the street are key characteristics of Albany's historic neighborhoods. Orientation of windows, main entrances, and porches toward the street and consistent setbacks and patterns contribute toward a pedestrian-friendly street environment.

### REVIEW CRITERIA

7.270(1)(a) The development maintains any unifying development patterns such as sidewalk and street tree location, setbacks, building coverage, and orientation to the street.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Orient windows, main entrances, and primary building façade elements towards the street. The front entrance should be clearly defined.
2. Buildings should maintain the historical front and side yard setbacks on the block.
3. to maintain the rhythm of buildings and open space on the street. If setbacks vary, a new building should be located within the range of setbacks found on the block face on which the building is to be located.



# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

## SCALE, MASS, PROPORTION, HEIGHT & RHYTHM



- Scale is the relative or apparent size of a building in relation to its neighbors. Scale is also the apparent size of building elements, such as windows, doors, cornices, and other features to each other and to the building.
- Proportion is the relationship of the dimensions of building elements, such as the height to width dimension of windows, doors and other building elements, their sizing to each other, and to the facade of the building.
- A building's massing is the arrangement of its volumes, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, in a central block, L-shaped, or arranged in wings. Mass and scale also relate to lot coverage.
- Height includes foundation walls, porch roofs, and main roofs. Albany's buildings range from one to two and a half stories tall.
- Rhythm is the spacing and repetition of elements on the front of the building and fronts along a street. It can be thought of the 'music' made by the building. The location of porches, windows and door openings affects the rhythm of a building.
- Neighborhood block frontages are often characterized by a consistent rhythm of development created by recurring building patterns.
- Craftsman, Bungalow, and Mid-century architectural styles emphasize horizontality. Victorian styles – Italianates and Queen Anne's typically emphasize verticality.

### REVIEW CRITERIA

7.270(1) (a) The development maintains any unifying development patterns such as building coverage.

(b) The structure is of similar size and scale of surrounding buildings.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

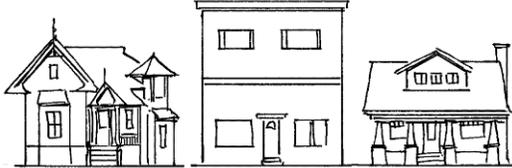
*New construction will be compatible to other buildings on the block in scale, proportion, height, spacing, and rhythm of window and door openings.*

#### **THIS**

#### **NOT THIS**

<b>Scale &amp; Proportion</b>	New buildings should relate in scale and proportion to adjacent historic buildings. 	Avoid buildings that are too large or too small in scale or massing to adjacent buildings. 
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# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

	<b>THIS</b>	<b>NOT THIS</b>
<b>Scale &amp; Proportion</b>	<p>New buildings should relate in scale and proportion to adjacent historic buildings.</p> 	<p>Avoid buildings that are too large or too small in scale or massing to adjacent buildings.</p> 
<b>Mass</b>	<p>Break up boxlike forms into smaller, varied masses using porches, windows, roof forms common on historic buildings.</p> 	<p>Avoid single, monolithic forms that are not relieved by variations in mass.</p> 
<b>Height</b>	<p>Building height should be within the range of heights of area buildings. Step larger buildings down to smaller buildings.</p> 	<p>Avoid construction that greatly varies in height from buildings in the same block.</p> 
<b>Rhythm</b>	<p>Window and door openings should be located to create a pattern similar to those found on historic homes. Continue established building rhythms along the street.</p> 	<p>Avoid "odd" window and door shapes and sizes and lack of rhythm in their placement.</p> 



This new house uses appropriate detailing, scale, & rhythm.

## CRAFTSMANSHIP

A lack of attention to the character of the design, the materials and details, and to the context within which the building will be placed can have a significant adverse impact for the area that can last a long time. The craftsmanship and architectural details are critical to making a new building be consistent with the character of the historic neighborhood. Several areas of the building design offer opportunities to incorporate appropriate levels of craftsmanship into a new building.

### REVIEW CRITERIA

7.270(1)(b) The structure ... as much as possible reflects the craftsmanship of those buildings. Building materials are reflective of and complementary to existing buildings within the district.

### A. ROOFS

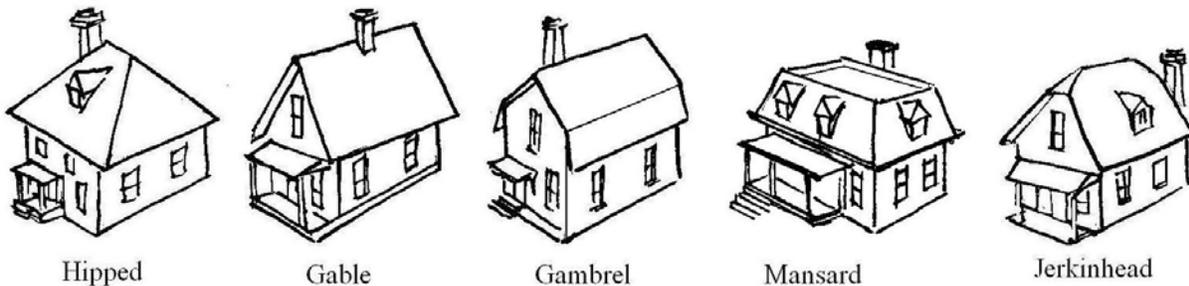
Roof shapes, patterns and colors are important to the character of buildings, both individually and as they are repeated along a streetscape.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

*New buildings shall use common roof forms found in the historic districts and shall include gable and eave details appropriate to the building style.*

1. Roof Shape. The roof shape of a new building shall respect the type and pitch of roofs for houses of similar architectural style and on neighboring houses. Most of Albany's residential roofs are traditional gable and hipped roofs; with a few mansard and gambrel roofs.

#### THIS



1. Avoid complex and unbalanced roof forms as well as flat or boxy roofs for the main part of the house.

#### NOT THIS



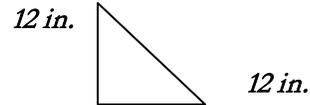
## New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

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2. Roof pitch. Bungalows typically have gable roofs with pitches of at least 4:12, and other architectural styles typically have a roof pitch of 8:12 or greater.

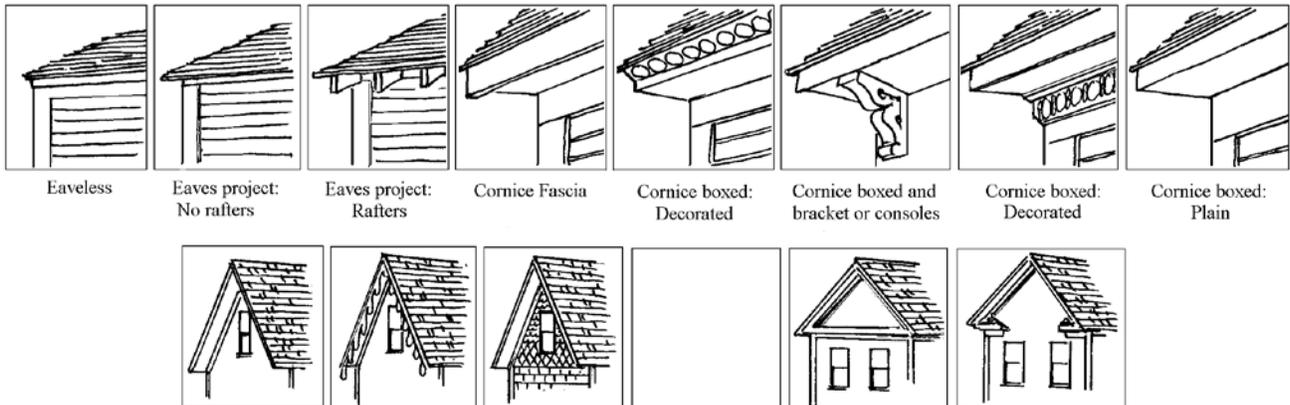


*Pitch = the ratio of vertical inches to horizontal inches. A 12:12 pitch refers to 12 inches of rise to 12 inches of horizontal span.*



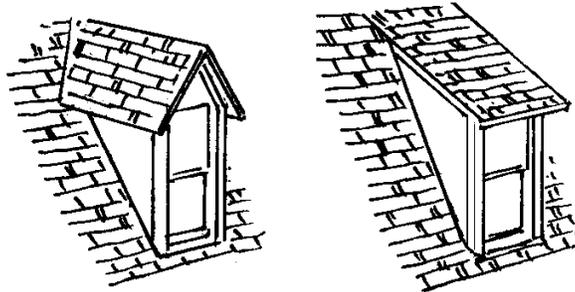
*A steeply pitched front gable roof on a Gothic Revival house, demolished on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE*

3. Eave and Gable End Details. Incorporate architectural elements (such as overhanging eaves, use of bargeboards, soffits, fascia boards, shingles, brackets, and boxed eave returns, and more as shown in several of the images below) that would be consistent with style of architecture of the new building and that are compatible surrounding buildings.





4. **Dormers.** Dormers provide additional use and light for upper levels and can further define and enrich the building architecture. If used, dormers should be modest in size and fit the scale of the house and the roof.



### B. PORCHES & ENTRIES

The front porch or covered entrance is a characteristic feature of many styles of historic residential architecture and plays a very important role in our buildings.



*Pre 1900: Typical chamfered columns, simple balustrade and newel posts.*



*Post 1900: Wide tapered columns on a porch wall.  
431 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW*

# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

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## DESIGN GUIDELINES

*Porches or covered entries on new buildings will be compatible in detail with those in the neighborhood.*

1. Porches, covered or recessed entries shall be included on new houses. Porches typically cover the entrance, and usually extend partially or fully across the main façade.
2. Porch columns and railings should be simple in design in square or round shapes. If balusters are used, they should be no more than two inches square or in diameter.
3. Columns should be a minimum of six inches and a maximum of ten inches square or in diameter.
4. Bungalows frequently featured boxed-in porch railings, though historic railings were not as high as the building code currently requires.
5. A porch may not be appropriate on new buildings in neighborhoods developed after 1925 that did not feature them originally. Recessed entries are features of some architectural styles.



*Recessed entry, Minimal Traditional*

## **B. WINDOWS & DOORS**

Historic architecture displays a thoughtful use of natural lighting, often with numerous and well-placed arrangements of windows. Window and door design/type and location are important in defining a house style and in being consistent with the rhythm of window and door openings on other houses.

*See the Albany's Architectural Styles brochure for information on what window designs are appropriate for different architectural styles.*

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

*Window and door openings shall be similar in style, materials and placement to historic houses.*

1. New windows should be rectangular sash whose proportions on the main facade should not be any less than two to one in height-to-width ratio.
2. Window and doors will be trimmed with smooth wood trim, usually 6 inches wide. Molding on the top piece of trim is appropriate for many house styles. Bay windows help break up facades and o

# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods



- No horizontal sash, casement, or awning-type windows should be placed on the fronts of buildings.
- The use of plastic or "snap-in" muntins (window pane dividers) is not permitted.

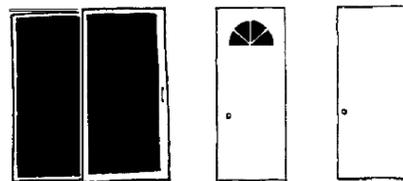
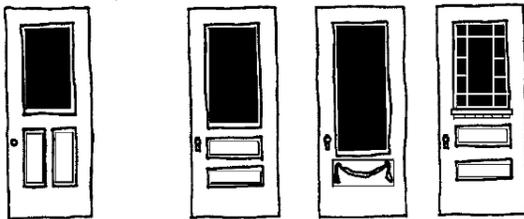
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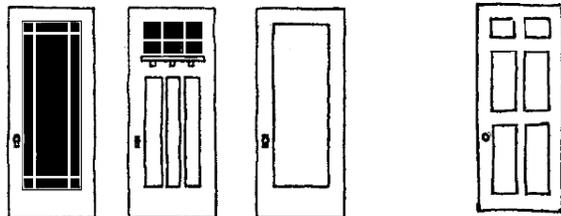
**THIS**

**NOT THIS**



Italianate &  
Queen Anne

Turn of the Century



Bungalow and Craftsman

Colonial Revival

## C. EXTERIOR FINISHES & MATERIALS

The size, texture, surface finish and other defining characteristics of exterior materials are as important as the type of material itself. The predominant materials in Albany's historic neighborhoods are wood - for siding, windows, trim and decorative details, although some housing from the 1920s and 1930s feature brick or stucco exterior walls. Incorporate details that are compatible to the neighborhood and the style of building that is planned to be built.

### REVIEW CRITERIA

7.270(1)(b) Building materials are reflective of and complementary to existing buildings within the district.



### DESIGN GUIDELINES

*Materials and finishes used on new buildings should be consistent with the predominant materials used on other houses in a neighborhood.*

1. Select a particular style that is appropriate for the building use and size. Maintain stylistic consistency in the design of the building; some variety is typical.
2. Use the same level of architectural details found on historic buildings, including eave details, such as whether rafter tails are exposed or boxed-in, the use of a rake and/or barge boards, shingle moldings, and wide window surrounds.
3. Using similar wall materials – such as lap (bevel, clapboard) or drop (channel, v-notch, shiplap) siding.
4. Using moldings and other decorative details that are generally similar, but somewhat simplified or otherwise distinguishable from the originals.



## New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

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5. Fabricated wood siding such as T-1-11, along with exposed concrete block, aluminum, and vinyl are not recommended.
6. Foundation material and the height of the exposed area between the ground and the bottom of the walls should be consistent with other historic buildings in a neighborhood.
7. Poured concrete and concrete block covered with stucco are generally appropriate.
8. Exposure of one to three feet is generally consistent with most historical housing types in Albany.

## New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

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### GARAGE AND OUTBUILDING LOCATION, SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

Garages and outbuildings must not be overlooked as important components of historic properties. They, too, must fit into the historic neighborhood.

### GARAGE AND OUTBUILDING DETAILS

- Common garage and outbuilding roof forms in Albany include gable, hipped, and flat.
- Floors were usually poured concrete, but some were gravel, or simply board or dirt.
- The historic garage and outbuilding had windows to provide ventilation and light. One window on each wall was typical and the stock sash units were common and occasionally hollow clay was used for fireproof.
- Early garages often had exposed rafter tails; some have eaves finished in the same manner as the house.
- Accessory buildings are subservient to the primary building and should be placed at the rear of the lot behind the house to limit their visual impact as seen from the street. If alleys exist, they front the alley.
- The *garage door* is the key element in garage design and will help date the structure. The first garage doors were similar to barns, with big strap hinges, and doors that swung outward. New door types were soon invented, with sliding doors on tracks, divided into vertical sections, sliding along the interior wall of the garage. Bifold and accordion doors were also common. Typical early garage doors were often paneled, with the top third glazed. The sectional roll-up door, the most popular today, appeared in the late 1910s.
- Whatever paint color is most appropriate to the style and age of the house also applies to outbuildings.
- Although uncommon in Albany's historic districts, there was ultimately a complete integration of house and garage. Basement-level garages were built under the main living quarters, sometimes with a steep down-sloping driveway. With the post World War II boom and full acceptance of the automobile, the blank-faced double-garage door was unabashedly displayed on the primary facade of the house.



### REVIEW CRITERIA

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# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

*Garage and out buildings should reflect the character and scale of the house and other accessory buildings in the neighborhood.*

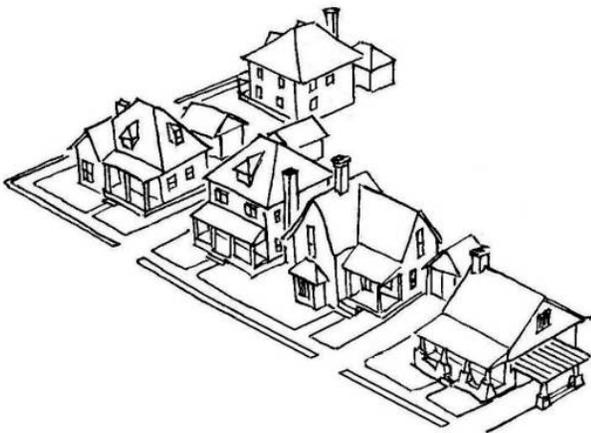
1. If you're rebuilding a historic garage or building a new one, echo the shape, pitch, eaves and material of your house's roof.
2. Garages and other out buildings should be located behind the house and not attached. If alleys are present, garages should be located off of an alley and accessible from the alley.
3. Garage doors should be consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood. Flat and raised panel roll up doors with no windows are not appropriate.
4. Sidewalks should be separated from the driveway and connect directly to the sidewalk and not to the driveway.

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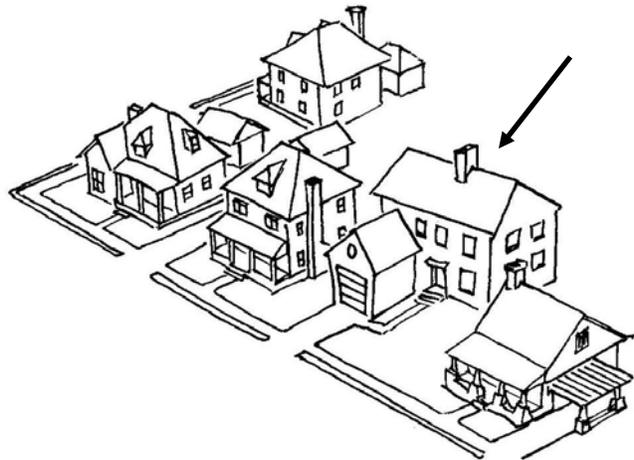


524 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. This original garage uses the same roof pitch and style and is set back behind the house.

THIS



NOT THIS



# New Construction in Historic Districts & Neighborhoods

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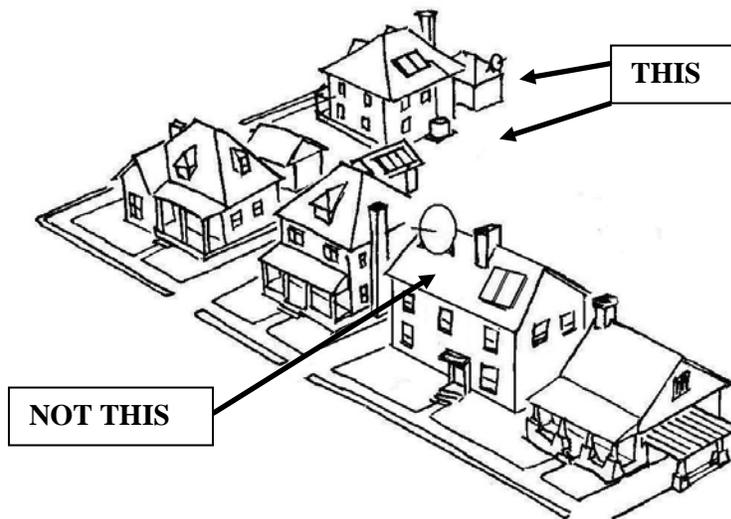
## SOLAR PANELS, SKYLIGHTS & UTILITY SYSTEMS

### REVIEW CRITERIA

7.270(1)(b) Building materials are reflective of and complementary to existing buildings within the district.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Solar panels, skylights, satellite dishes, and other external utility systems on infill development in historic neighborhoods should be installed to the rear or side of a building where they will not be visible from the street.
2. Panels/skylights shall be installed flat and not alter the slope of the roof.



### DISCLOSURE

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