

Chapter 3

New Construction & Additions

- A. Introduction
- B. Setback
- C. Spacing
- D. Massing & Footprint
- E. Height & Width
- F. Scale & Orientation
- G. Roof
- H. Windows & Doors
- I. Porches
- J. Street-level Design
- K. Foundation
- L. Materials & Exterior Texture
- M. Paint
- N. Details & Decoration
- O. Additions

A. INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines offer general recommendations on the design for all new buildings and additions in the Falmouth Historic District. The guidelines are flexible enough to both respect the historic past and to embrace the future. The intent of these guidelines is not to be overly specific or dictate certain designs to owners and designers. The intent is also not to encourage copying or mimicking particular historic styles. These guidelines are intended to provide a general design framework for new construction. Designers can take cues from the traditional architecture of the area, and have the freedom to design appropriate new architecture in the Falmouth Historic District. These criteria are all important when considering whether proposed new buildings are appropriate and compatible; however, the degree of importance of each criterion varies within each area as conditions and context vary.

For instance, setback and the massing and footprint of a building may be more important than height and width or spacing in one particular area or street of the historic district. All criteria need not be met in every example of new construction although all criteria should be taken into consideration in the design process. When studying the character of buildings in a particular part of the historic district, examine the forms of the historic buildings and avoid taking design cues from Grade 3 and Grade 4 buildings.

There may be the opportunity for more flexibility in designing new buildings or making an addition depending on the level of historic integrity of a particular area. For instance, a new building constructed in an area of the historic district densely packed with historic buildings should conform to all the guidelines listed in this chapter. However, more latitude and flexibility may be bestowed on a new building constructed in those portions of the historic district where little or no historic fabric exist.

Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. *Green building* means building practices that use energy, water, and other resources

wisely. The Jamaica National Heritage Trust, Heritage Development Review Committee, and the Falmouth Parish Council support the principles of green building and sustainable design in order to create a community that is healthy, livable, and affordable:

- Mixed-use development provides an alternative to sprawl that allows residents to live within walking distance of daily activities.
- Infill development is an efficient use of land that can provide diversity in housing sizes and types, but should be carefully considered so as to avoid compromising the historic character of the district.
- Adaptive reuse of an historic building or living in an historic house reduces consumption of land and materials for new construction, and may reduce housing costs.
- Designing buildings for the local climate helps conserve energy.
- Durable building materials such as brick, wood, stone, and metal roofs are economical, and are compatible with the character of the community.
- Locally obtained building materials, rapidly renewable or recycled materials, and non-toxic materials and finishes provide sustainable choices.
- Low-Impact development methods (porous pavement, green roofs, and vegetated buffers) retain storm water on site and protect stream water quality by filtering runoff.

Sustainability and preservation are complementary concepts, and both goals should be pursued. Nothing in these guidelines should be construed to discourage green building or sustainable design. If such a design is found to conflict with a specific guideline, the HARB shall work with the applicant to devise a creative design solution that meets the applicant's goals for sustainability, and that is compatible with the character of the district and the property.

A. INTRODUCTION

When designing new buildings in the historic district, one needs to recognize that while there is an overall distinctive district character, there is, nevertheless, a variety of historic building types, styles, and scales. Likewise, there are several types of new construction that might be constructed within the district, the design parameters of which will depend on the type of proposed to be constructed.

A. Traditional Commercial Infill

Traditional commercial infill buildings are the forms that fill in holes in a larger block of buildings, such as along Market Street or Duke Street. This type of building generally has a limited setback, attaches to or is very close to neighboring structures, and takes many of its design cues from the adjoining buildings.

B. Residential Infill

These buildings are new dwellings that are constructed on a vacant lot in the historic district. Setback, spacing, and general massing of the new dwelling are the most important criteria that should relate to the existing historic structures, along with residential roof and porch forms.

C. Neighborhood Transitional

Neighborhood transitional commercial/office buildings are located on sites that adjoin residential areas. The design of these buildings should attempt to relate to the character of the adjacent residential neighborhood as well as the commercial area. While these buildings may be larger in scale than residential structures, their materials, roof forms, massing, and window patterns should relate to residential forms.

D. Institutional

Government buildings, churches, schools, and libraries are all structures that represent a unique aspect of community life and frequently have special requirements that relate to their distinct uses. For these reasons, these buildings usually are freestanding and their scale and architectural arrangements may be of a different nature than their residential and historic neighbors, but their materials should blend with the character of the district.

E. Multi-lot

Often new commercial or multiuse buildings will be constructed on sites much larger than traditionally sized lots. Many sites for such structures exist along Market Street and Water Square, and potential future sites for such buildings exist along Fisherman's Wharf or near Hampden Wharf. These assembled parcels can translate into new structures whose scale and mass may overwhelm other neighboring buildings. Therefore, while this building type may need to correspond to the various building conditions of the site, it should also employ design techniques to reduce its visual presence. These could include varying facade wall planes, differing materials, stepped-back upper levels, and irregular massing.

B. SETBACK

The term “setback” for these guidelines is defined generally as the area between the street and the wall of the building.

1. Construct new commercial buildings, for instance in Water Square or along Market Street, with a minimal setback in order to reinforce the traditional street wall.
2. Use a minimal setback if the desire is to create a strong street wall or a setback consistent with the surrounding area. For instance, a minimal setback and colonnaded walkway for pedestrian traffic would be appropriate along Market Street.
3. At transitional sites between two distinctive areas of setback, for instance between new commercial and historic commercial along Market Street, consider using setbacks in the new construction that reinforce and relate to setbacks of the historic buildings.
4. For new governmental buildings or institutional buildings, either reinforce the street wall through a minimal setback, or use a deep setback within a landscaped area to emphasize the civic function of the structure.
5. Keep residential setbacks within 20 percent of the setbacks of a majority of neighboring dwellings.



Above: Commercial buildings along Market Street are minimally setback and reinforce a traditional street wall. Below: A residential street in Falmouth where houses are only minimally setback from the street.

C. SPACING

Spacing between buildings depends on the size of the lot, and the size of the building. Consistent spacing between a row of buildings or houses helps to establish an overall rhythm along a street.

1. Maintain existing consistency of spacing in the area. New residences should be spaced within 20 percent of the average spacing between houses on that block.
2. Commercial buildings in areas that have a well-defined street wall, such as Market Street, should have minimal spacing between them.
3. In areas that do not have consistent spacing, consider limiting or creating a more uniform spacing in order to establish an overall rhythm.



Left: A commercial building on Market Street sits quite close to its neighbor on the left. Right: Residences along a street in Falmouth also tightly spaced together, forming a dense urban fabric that gives the historic district its distinctive character.

D. MASSING & FOOTPRINT

New commercial buildings, along Market Street and Duke Street for instance, may be larger than historic commercial buildings in the area. It is important that even large buildings contribute to the human scale and pedestrian orientation of the district. Any new buildings constructed in the Falmouth Historic District may not exceed 3 storeys in height.

1. New commercial infill buildings' footprints will be limited by the size of the existing lot in Water Square or along Market Street. Their massing, in most cases, should be simple rectangles like neighboring buildings.
2. New infill construction in residential areas of the historic district should relate in footprint and massing to the majority of surrounding historic dwellings. If the block is relatively devoid of any extant housing, for instance in certain blocks west of Pitt Street, new construction should be compatible in massing and footprint with historic buildings found in adjacent blocks.
3. Neighborhood transitional buildings should have small building footprints similar to nearby dwellings.
 - a. If their footprint is larger, their massing should be reduced to relate to the smaller-scaled forms of residential structures.
 - b. Techniques to reduce massing could include stepping back upper levels, adding residential roof forms of varying scales and heights,

incorporating porches and balconies, and using sympathetic materials.

4. Institutional and multi-lot buildings by their nature will have large footprints, particularly along Market Street and Duke Street, as well as Water Square.
 - a. The massing of such a large scale structure should not overpower the traditional scale of the majority of nearby buildings in the historic district.
 - b. Techniques could include varying the surface planes of the building, stepping back the buildings as the structure increases in height, and breaking up the roof line with different elements to create smaller compositions.



A new commercial building on Market Street that is compatible with the massing and footprint of nearby historic commercial buildings.

E. HEIGHT & WIDTH

The actual size of a building can either contribute to or be in conflict with the historic district. These guidelines address the relationship of height and width of the front elevation of a building mass. A building is horizontal, vertical, or square in its proportions. Houses in the historic district, for the most part, range from one to two storeys. Most historic residential buildings range in width from 15 to 50 feet. While some commercial buildings are larger, the majority are two storeys in height and range 10 to 60 feet in width. Commercial buildings may be divided between horizontal and vertical orientation depending on their original use and era of construction.

1. Respect the directional expression of the majority of surrounding buildings. Along commercial streets, respect the expression of any adjacent historic buildings, which generally will have a more vertical expression.
2. A building in the Falmouth Historic District may not exceed 3 storeys in height. Attempt to keep the width of new buildings consistent with neighboring historic buildings, and consider modulating the facade with bays or varying planes.



A new residential infill development in the Falmouth Historic District. This two-story house is compatible with surrounding residential homes in the area.

F. SCALE & ORIENTATION

Height and width also create scale, the relationship between the size of a building and the size of a person. Scale can also be defined as the relationship of the size of a building to neighboring buildings and a building to its site. The design features of a building can reinforce a human scale or can create a monumental scale. For large institutional or multi-lot buildings, a more human scale may be created by employing design features such as storefronts or fenestration along the elevations. Orientation refers to the direction that the front of a building faces.

1. Provide features on new construction that reinforce the scale and character of the surrounding area, whether human or monumental. Include elements such as storefronts, vertical and horizontal divisions, upper-story windows, and decorative features.
2. New commercial construction should orient its facade in the same direction as adjacent historic buildings. For instance, along Market Street, new construction should face the street. However, along Fisherman's Wharf and Upper Harbour Street, new construction should respond to the street as well as the waterfront.
3. Front elevations oriented to side streets or to the interior of a lot should be discouraged.
4. As an exception, new institutional or governmental buildings may be more appropriate on a monumental scale depending on their function and their site conditions.



Above: A new commercial building in the historic district oriented facing the street. The upper balcony is also consistent with other commercial buildings in the district as shown in the image below.

G. ROOF

Roof design, materials, and textures should be consistent with the existing structures in the historic district. Low roof profiles are a dominant feature on both large and small buildings in the Falmouth Historic District, as are the use of multiple roof systems. The most common roof forms are the hipped roof, M roof, and treble roof. Other forms found in the district include gable roofs, pyramidal roofs, and shed roofs, as well as combinations of the above. With the exception of the cap-n-comb, there is an overall absence of dormers, chimneys, and roof decoration of any kind. For new construction, attention should be paid to designing roof forms that are consistent with the historic character of the district.

1. Roof Forms and Pitches

- a. The roof design for commercial infill buildings should generally employ multiple hipped roofs as is commonly found on historic commercial buildings in Falmouth.
- b. The roof design for residential infill buildings should relate to neighboring historic buildings, and generally should utilize hipped or pyramidal roof forms. In some cases, gable roofs would also be an acceptable roof form. Mansard roofs should be avoided as there is no precedent for this roof form in Falmouth.
- c. Large-scale multi-lot buildings should have a varied roof line to break up the mass of the design, using primarily hipped roof forms.
- d. Shallow pitched roofs and flat roofs should generally only be used to cover

outbuildings and porches in the historic district.

2. Roof Materials

- a. Common roof materials in the historic district include wood shingles, concrete decking, stamped metal sheathing, and corrugated metal.
- b. For historic structures in the historic district, wood shingles are preferred, but corrugated metal is an acceptable roofing material. Concrete decking should be avoided for historic structures in the district.
- c. For new construction in the historic district, corrugated metal, stamped metal sheathing, composition asphalt shingles, and concrete decking are acceptable roofing materials.

3. Rooftop Screening

- a. If roof-mounted mechanical equipment is used, it should be screened from public view on all sides.
- b. The screening material and design should be consistent with the design, textures, materials, and colors of the building.
- c. The screening should not appear as an afterthought or addition to the building.

H. WINDOWS & DOORS

Windows are a major character defining feature of buildings in the historic district. The most common window articulation is the 6/6 double hung sash window with sidelights made of glass or wooden jalousies, intended to promote greater air circulation. Another common window type is the triple sash 6/6/6 with glass sidelights or wooden jalousies. A third typical window configuration is the standard 6/6 double hung sash window.

1. The rhythm, patterns, and ratio of solids (walls) and voids (windows and doors) of new buildings should relate to and be compatible with adjacent historic facades.
 - a. The majority of existing buildings in the Falmouth Historic District have a higher proportion of wall area than void area except at the storefront level.
 - b. New buildings should reinforce this traditional pattern in commercial areas.
2. The size, proportion, and type of window, as well as the ratio of width to height of window and door openings on new buildings' primary facades, should be similar and compatible with those on surrounding historic facades.
 - a. The general proportions of upper floor windows on both commercial and residential buildings in Falmouth are vertical rather than horizontal.
 - b. Glass storefronts would generally have more horizontal proportions than upper floor openings.
3. Window openings for residential or mixed-use buildings in the historic district should be more vertical than horizontal, and should have casings similar to those found in neighboring historic buildings in the district.
4. Window sills and lintels should be consistent throughout the building and reflect styles visible in historic buildings in the district. Jack arches, segmental arches, quoin surrounds and keystones are acceptable window details.
5. Many entrances in the Falmouth Historic District have special features such as decorative grilles or fretwork in transoms, or lattice enclosed doorways. Consideration should be given to incorporating such elements in new construction.
6. Darkly tinted or mirrored glass is not an appropriate material for windows in new buildings within the historic district.
7. If small-paned windows are used in a new construction project, they should have true divided lights and they should not use clip-in, fake muntin bars.
8. If simulated divided lights are used, they must have permanently affixed interior and exterior muntin bars and integral spacers between the panes of glass.
9. Avoid designing false windows in new construction.
10. "Coolers" are a common element found on historic buildings throughout the district, which served to shade the interior from direct sunlight and promote air circulation. A similar type of awning projection may be appropriate for new construction in the historic district.

I. PORCHES

Porches, balconies, and exterior galleries and staircases are a common feature of historic commercial, institutional, and residential buildings in the Falmouth Historic District. There is much variety in the size, location, and type of porches, balconies, and staircases. Strong consideration should be given to including a porch or similar form in the design of any new residence in the historic district. Consideration should also be given to the particular way in which historic porches are detailed and decorated so that porches on new construction are compatible with the historic structures in the surrounding area.

As was common in historic buildings in Falmouth, relocating staircases to the exterior of a building facilitated the use of porticos, second floor balconies, and galleries, which provided shady outdoor walking areas and respite from the heat and sun. Providing such amenities by recessing ground floors and designing second floor balconies in new construction along commercial corridors is conducive to pedestrian traffic and consistent with Falmouth's historic character.



These images demonstrate the prevalence of porches found in buildings throughout the Falmouth Historic District.

J. STREET LEVEL DESIGN

1. Street level facades of all building types, whether commercial, office, or institutional, should not have blank walls and should provide visual interest to the passing pedestrian.
2. When designing new storefronts or elements for storefronts, conform to the general configuration of traditional storefronts depending on the context of the area, such as Water Square or Market Street. New structures do offer the opportunity for more contemporary storefront designs.
3. Keep the ground level facade(s) of new retail commercial buildings at least 80 percent transparent up to a level of ten feet.
4. Include doors in all streetfronts to reinforce street level vitality.
5. Articulate the bays of institutional or multi-lot buildings to provide visual interest.
6. Institutional buildings, such as post offices, generally do not have storefronts, but their street levels should provide visual interest and provide pedestrian space or first floor windows in the design scheme.
7. For commercial infill construction along Market Street, a recessed colonnaded first floor should be incorporated into the design to maintain consistency with other historic buildings on the street and to provide shade for pedestrians
8. Neighborhood transitional buildings in general should not have transparent first floors, and the design and size of their facade openings should relate more to neighboring residential structures.
9. Secondary (rear) facades should also include features to relate appropriately to any adjacent residential areas or important environmental areas, such as those lots adjacent to Victoria Park or the waterfront.
10. Any parking structures facing important streets or pedestrian routes must have storefronts, display windows, or other forms of visual relief on the first floors of these elevations.



These commercial buildings on Market Street show how the first floor is often recessed in order to provide a shady walking area for pedestrians. This method of construction also helps articulate the bays of a structure and provide visual interest.

K. FOUNDATION & EXTERIOR WALLS

The foundation forms the base of a building. On many buildings, it is indistinguishable from the walls of the building, while on others it is a different material, texture, or colour. Solid masonry foundations are common for both residential and commercial buildings. Masonry piers, most often of brick or concrete (a mixture of crushed stone and lime mortar), support many porches and small historic homes.

1. Distinguish the foundation from the rest of the structure through the use of different materials, patterns, textures, or colours.
2. Respect the height, contrast of materials, and textures of foundations on surrounding historic buildings.
3. If cast concrete or concrete block is used as the foundation for new construction, it should be parged with concrete or stucco and painted an appropriate colour.



Above: Often the lower portion of a house will be painted grey or dark red to distinguish the foundation from the rest of the structure. Below: A new concrete home constructed in the historic district that was appropriately parged and painted.

L. MATERIALS & EXTERIOR TEXTURE

Using the appropriate material palette for new buildings in Falmouth is a critical part of maintaining the historic appearance of the town and protecting the integrity of the historic district. Wall materials can contribute to the appeal of new buildings and accentuate the existing historic architectural fabric. Materials should be consistent with the arrangement and articulation of traditional building methods.

1. The selection of materials and textures for a new building should be compatible with and complementary to neighboring buildings.
2. In order to strengthen the traditional image of the residential area of the historic district, brick, stucco, lime washes and renders, and wood siding are the most appropriate materials for new buildings.
3. Large-scale, multi-lot buildings, whose primary facades have been divided into different bays and planes to relate to the character of the historic district, can have varied materials, shades, and textures. However, variation in materials should be reduced to two or three different elements so as to avoid a “busy” appearance.



Left: Cast concrete and concrete block are appropriate materials for new construction in the Falmouth Historic District, but should be parged and painted in an appropriate way. Right: Concrete block walls as shown in this image should not be left exposed.

4. Synthetic siding and trim, such as vinyl, fiberglass-reinforced plastic, metal panels, and aluminium, are not compatible with the historic district and should not be used.
5. Corrugated metal should not be used as siding for structures in the historic district.
6. Cementitious siding, such as HardiPlank boards and panels, are appropriate.
7. If concrete block is used to construct the walls it should be parged and painted. If cast concrete is used to construct the walls, it should be painted.
8. If stone is used on the exterior of a building, it should be of roughly similar quality and size to the historic local cut limestone and should be covered with a lime wash.
9. If both stone and wood materials are used in a single structure, stone should only be used for the lower floor and timber only for the upper floor, so as to maintain consistency with other historic buildings in the district.



M. PAINT

1. The selection and use of colours for a new building should be coordinated and compatible with adjacent buildings.
2. It is proper to paint individual details different colours.
3. More lively colour schemes may be appropriate in certain areas of the historic district depending on the design of the building.
4. For Grade 1 and Grade 2 buildings, the proposed exterior colour is subject to review by the HARB. For Grade 3 and Grade 4 buildings, the proposed exterior colour is not subject to review by the HARB.
5. Sand-dashing was a common exterior treatment for historic homes in Falmouth as it served to reflect sunlight and keep interiors cool. Applicants maintaining or restoring historic homes in the district are highly encouraged to employ this type of exterior treatment.



Top: More vibrant colours such as the one used at 40 Cornwall Street may be acceptable. Middle: Subdued greens with white trim shown here at 11 Queen Street are appropriate for buildings in the historic district. Below: Mixing colours in a visually pleasing way as shown in this image is also appropriate.

N. DETAILS & DECORATION

The details and decoration of Falmouth's historic buildings vary with different styles, periods, and types. Such details include keystone lintels, cap-n-combs, fretwork in transoms, decorative brackets and vergeboards on porches, decorative corner quoins, "coolers" or awning projections around windows, wrought iron balconies found in front of windows, cast iron railings, and decorative metalwork to screen porches.

The important factor to recognize is that many of the older buildings in the historic district have decoration and noticeable details. Also, many of the buildings were simply constructed by skilled craftsman on limited budgets that precluded costly specialized building features.

New construction should not imitate or copy historic details, but rather should reinterpret traditional decorative elements in a new way so the structure reads as a contemporary building.

If decorative corner quoins are employed in new construction, they should typically run 3 courses wide if made of brick and 1 course wide if made of stone.

If columns are used in new construction, they should be of the Tuscan order and proportionate to the building.



Above: A newly constructed fence on a historic home appropriately utilizes detail and decoration consistent with the historic district. Below: A newly constructed home employs details consistent with Falmouth's historic fabric, including quoins and a decorative gable roof over the entrance.

O. ADDITIONS

As development pressure increases in the Falmouth Historic District, many of the commercial buildings around Water Square and along Market and Duke Streets may be enlarged. These existing structures may be increased in size by constructing new additions on the rear or side, or in some cases, by carefully adding on extra levels above the current roof (although no building in the historic district may exceed 3 storeys). The design of the new additions on all elevations that are prominently visible should follow the guidelines for new construction as described earlier in this section. Several other considerations that are specific to new additions in the historic district are listed below:

1. Function and Size

- Attempt to accommodate needed functions within the existing structure without building an addition.
- Limit the size of the addition so that it does not visually overpower the existing building.

2. Location

- Attempt to locate the addition on rear or side elevations that are not visible from the street.
- If additional floors are constructed on top of a building, set the addition back from the main facade so that its visual impact is minimized.
- If the addition is located on a primary elevation facing the street or is a rear addition faces a street, parking area, or an important pedestrian route, the facade of the addition should be treated under the new construction guidelines.

3. Design

- New additions should not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

- The new work should be differentiated from the old and should be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

4. Replication of Style

- A new addition should not be an exact copy of the design of the existing historic building. The design of new additions can be compatible with and respectful of existing buildings without being a mimicry of the original design.
- If the new addition appears to be a part of the existing building, the integrity of the original historic design is compromised and the viewer is confused over what is historic and what is new.

5. Materials and Features

- Use materials, windows, doors, architectural detailing, roofs, and colours that are compatible with historic buildings in the district.

6. Attachment to Existing Building

- Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to existing buildings should be done in such a manner that, if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building would be unimpaired.
- The new design should not use the same wall plane, roof line, or cornice line of the existing structure.