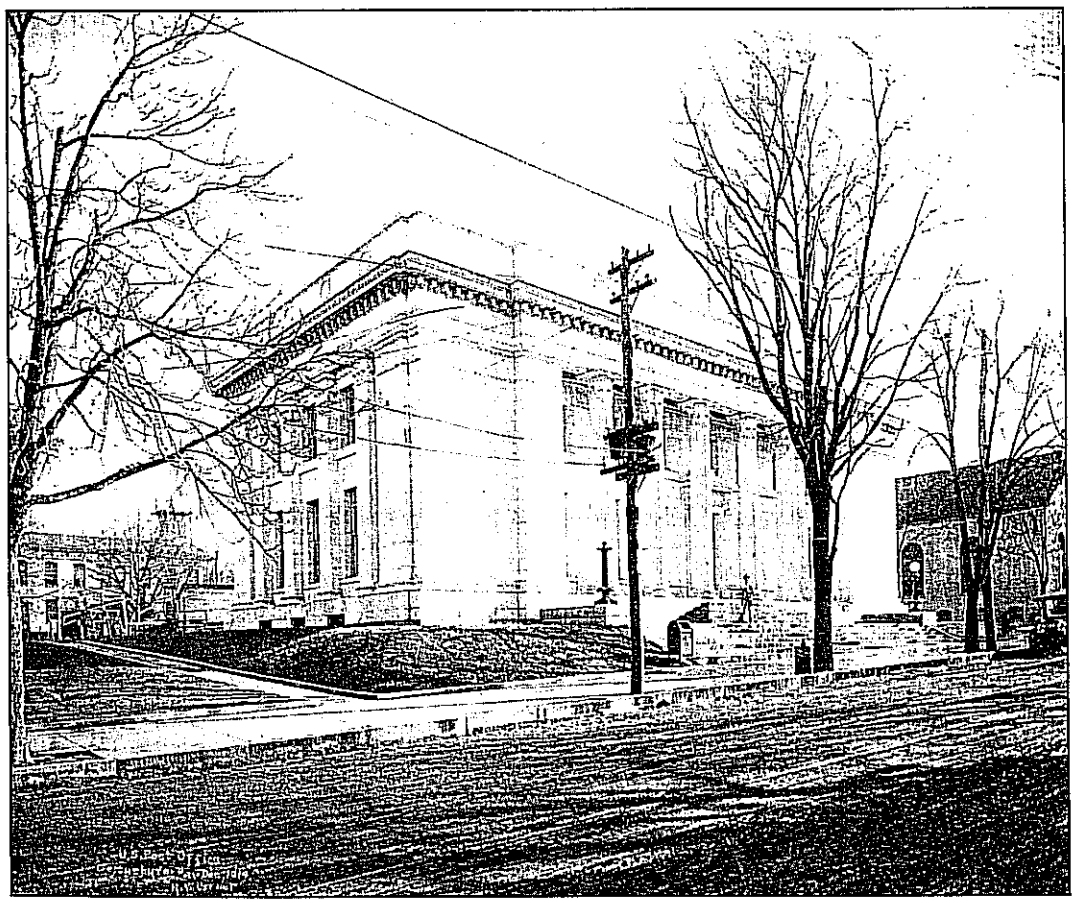
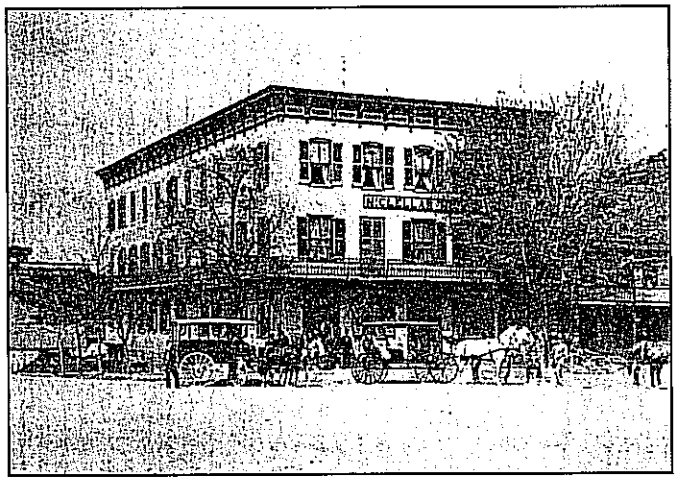
NEW CONSTRUCTION, ADDITIONS & DEMOLITION



The U.S. Post Office in Gettysburg in 1914, now the Adams County Public Library.
Photo courtesy of the Borough of Gettysburg.



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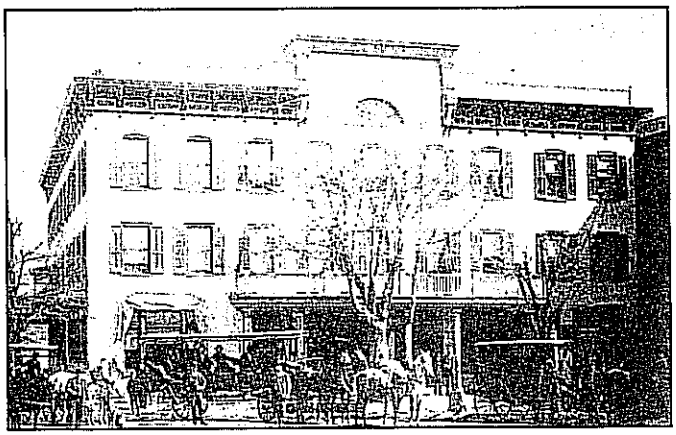

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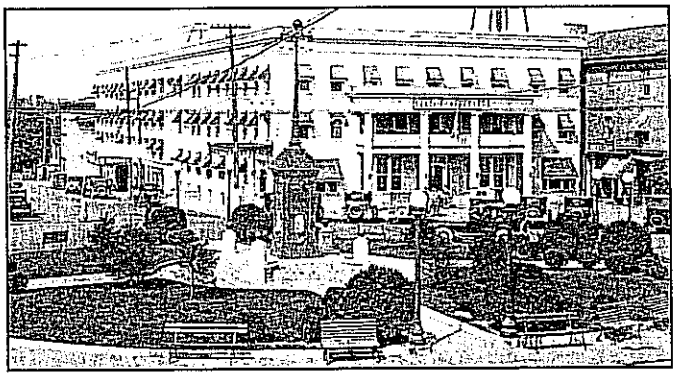

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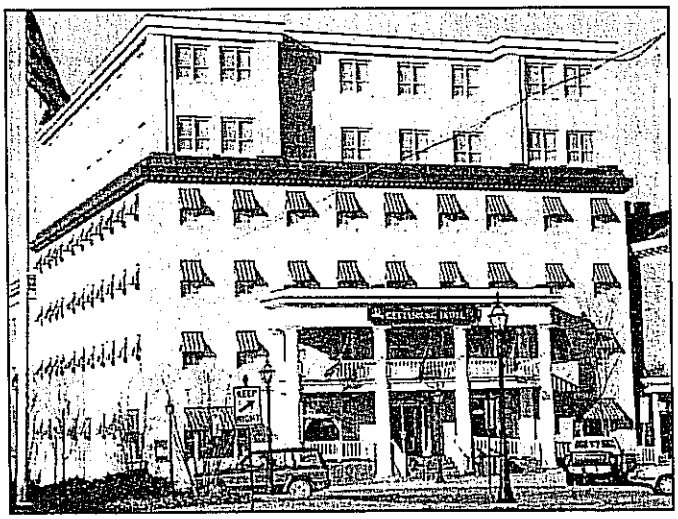

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NEW CONSTRUCTION ADDITIONS & DEMOLITION

New construction is a sign of economic health and community vitality. But, it leaves an indelible mark on our communities. New buildings and additions can dramatically change the appearance of a neighborhood. For this reason, new construction and additions should be compatible with historic buildings. They should not pretend to be historic or duplicate historic buildings, lest they diminish the importance of the historic buildings. New construction and additions should achieve compatibility through appropriate massing, shape, size, materials, etc.

Borough Regulations

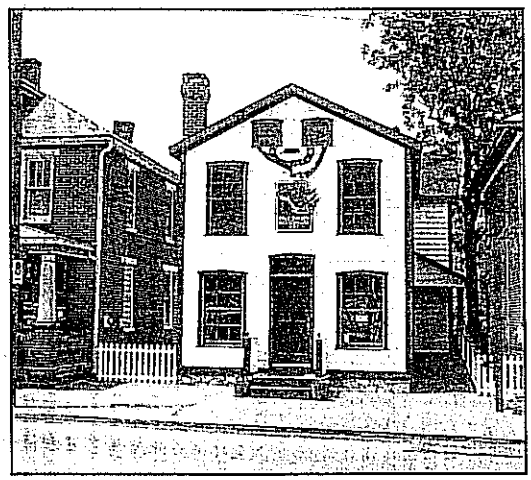
In addition to the review provided by HARB for new construction and additions in the historic district, there are other regulatory considerations to be taken into account for such projects. Building codes and zoning regulations of the Borough must also be met. For more information on these requirements, contact the Code Enforcement Officer at 334-1160. In addition to the borough's requirements, the county has regulations that must also be met. Call the county at 334-6781 for more information.

The Hotel Gettysburg has undergone a number of additions. 1: The hotel in 1890. 2: The hotel in 1895. Both photos featured in *Hotel Gettysburg* by E.S. Fox. 3: The hotel in 1926, with a large rear annex and an enlarged front portico. Photo courtesy of Gettysburg Borough. 4: The hotel in 1997. The photo shows the upper three stories added in 1990. The large size of the latter addition was determined appropriate for this building because of its location. Historically, in some urban areas, larger structures were often erected on corner lots than were typically erected elsewhere.

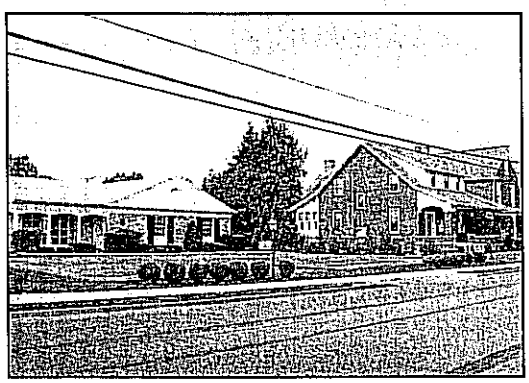
NEW CONSTRUCTION

Guidelines for New Construction

- New construction should be compatible with historic buildings, while maintaining a contemporary appearance.
- New buildings should not visually overpower surrounding buildings.
- New buildings should not duplicate the design of nearby historic buildings.



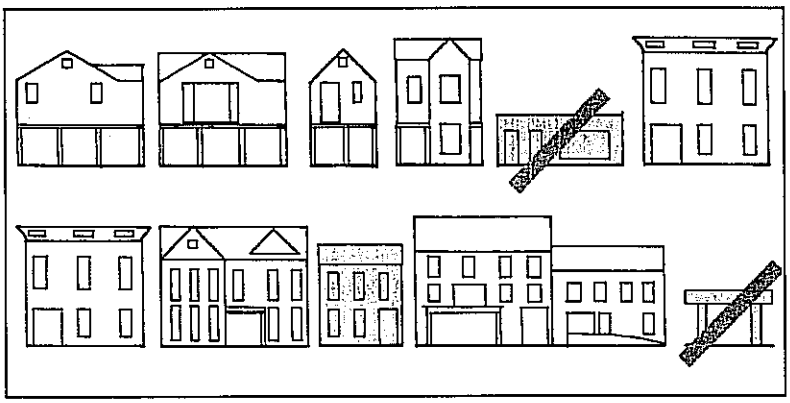
A new building on Steinwehr Avenue that uses forms and details that are compatible with the other buildings on the street.



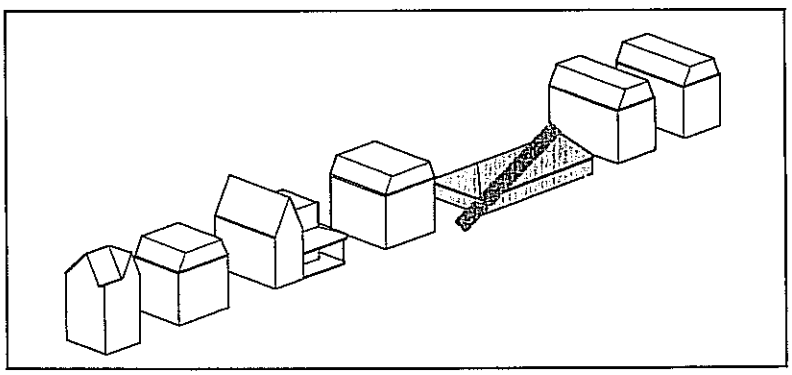
A modern building with a deep setback adjacent to an historic building with a minimal setback. This change in setback breaks the continuity of the historic streetscape on West Middle Street.

COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

New construction in the historic district of Gettysburg should relate closely to buildings in the immediate neighborhood. In the following diagrams, buildings that are shaded represent new construction.

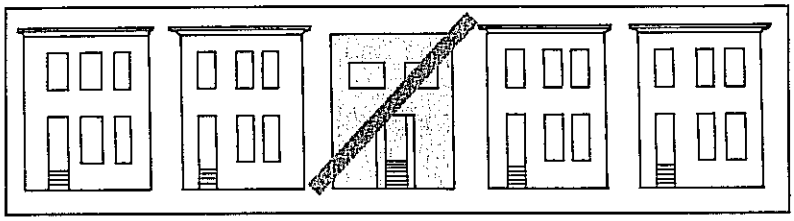


Size, Scale, Proportion. New construction should relate to the dominant proportions, size and scale of buildings in the district. New construction should not exceed the height of buildings in the district by more than ten percent. Long, low buildings are inappropriate amid taller structures.

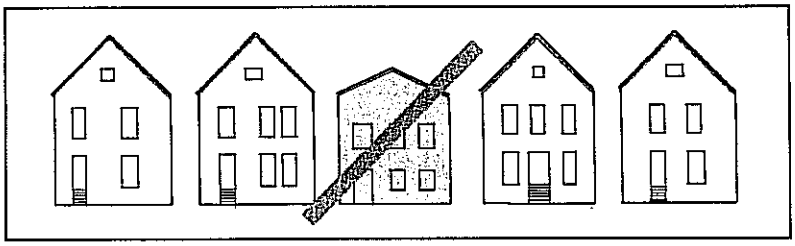


Shape and Massing. New construction should incorporate massing, building shapes, and roof shapes that are present in surrounding buildings.

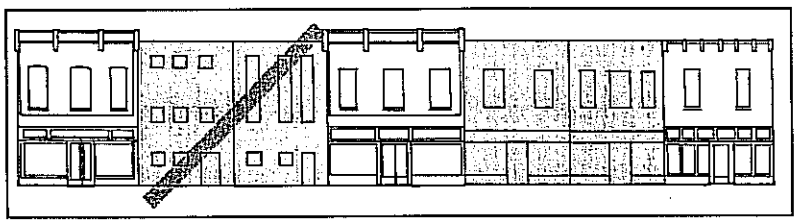
Materials. Building materials should be compatible with those of the surrounding buildings. Traditional materials that are common in the district, such as wood, brick, and stone, are preferred.



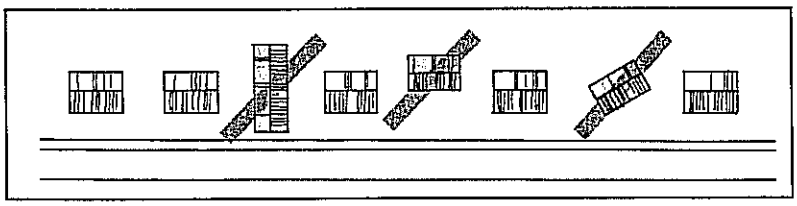
Patterns and Rhythm. The rhythm of facades along the street and components thereof should be maintained. Large buildings can be divided into bays to reflect neighboring rhythms.



Cornice and Floor-to-Floor Heights. New construction should continue the floor-to-floor and cornice heights of historic buildings in the district, or should incorporate detailing that suggests those heights.



Windows and Doors. New construction should use window and door openings of design and size typical of those of historic buildings in the immediate neighborhood.



Orientation and Location. Principal facades of new construction should face the same direction as the rest of the buildings on the street. The prevailing setback line at the street should be preserved. For more information, see the previous chapter.

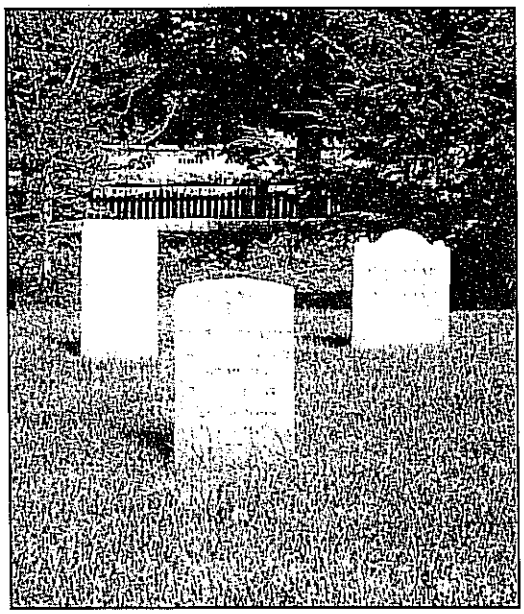
NEW CONSTRUCTION

Excavation and Archaeological Resources

If your building project will involve substantial excavation under or adjacent to an existing building, or to a previously undisturbed area, there may be potential to discover archaeologically important resources. Potential for this is greater on sites that were previously occupied by cemeteries. These include:

- The Old "Colored" Cemetery between 3rd and 4th Streets.
- The Old Catholic Cemetery on South Washington Street.
- The Old Presbyterian Cemetery on West High Street.

If you will be excavating in any of these areas, or if work has begun and you uncover what seems to be an important archaeological resource, call the Borough's Historic Preservation Officer at 334-1160.



The Methodist Episcopal Cemetery.

ADDITIONS

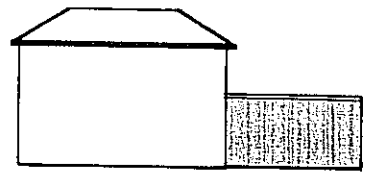
Guidelines for Additions

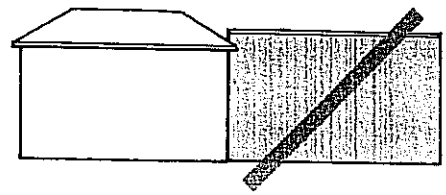
- Construct additions to minimize the loss of historic material.
- Place additions so that they are inconspicuous to the public eye. Use rear or side walls whenever possible.
- When adding stories to a building, set them back from the front wall to differentiate them and make them less conspicuous from the street.
- Design additions so that it is clear what is historic and what is not. Contemporary designs for additions are not discouraged when compatible with the character of the building.
- Additions to non-historic buildings should not clash with or visually overwhelm nearby historic structures.
- Additions should be constructed so that their removal will not harm the historic form or integrity of the building.
- Build additions so that walls of historic buildings that face the street are not hidden, damaged, or destroyed.
- Avoid duplicating the appearance of the original building.
- Avoid using materials or details that draw attention away from the historic building.

COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

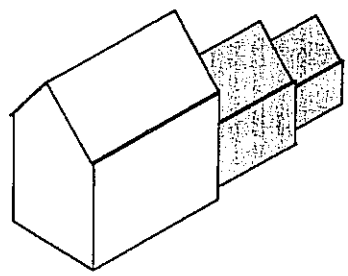
An addition to a building in the historic district should relate closely to the existing building, while maintaining the visual prominence of the historic building. In the following diagrams, shaded buildings represent additions.

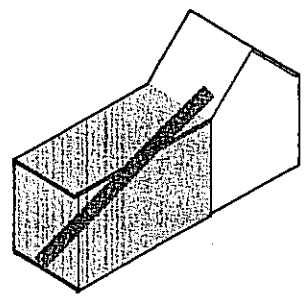
Size, Scale, and Proportion. The height and width of an addition should not exceed that of the historic building.





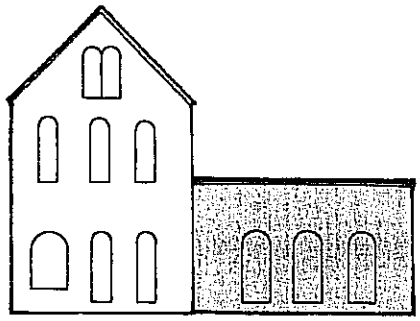
Shape and Massing. Additions should incorporate massing techniques used by the historic building. Using the dominant roof shape and pitch of the historic building will increase compatiblility.

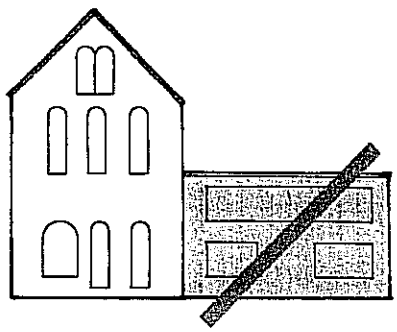




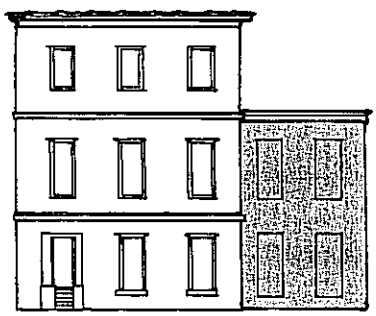
Materials. Building materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Traditional materials are preferred.

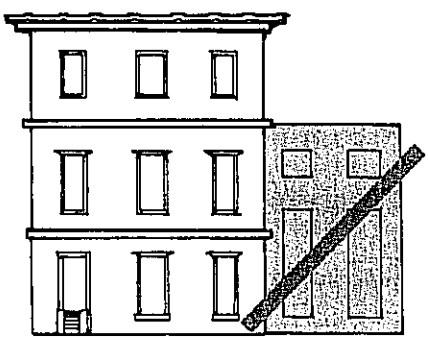
Windows and Doors. Windows and doors in an addition to a historic building should relate in size, shape, scale, and proportion to original openings in the existing building.





Floor-to-Floor Heights. Additions should conform to the floor-to-floor heights of the historic building, or should incorporate detailing that suggests consistent floor-to-floor heights.

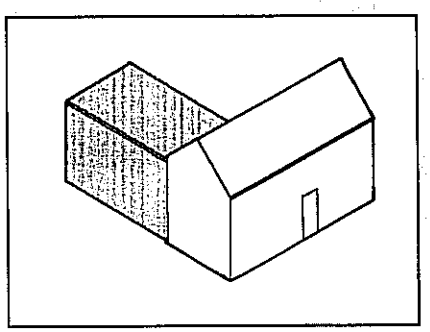




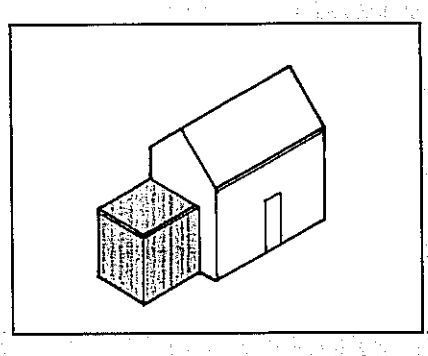
ADDITIONS

Location

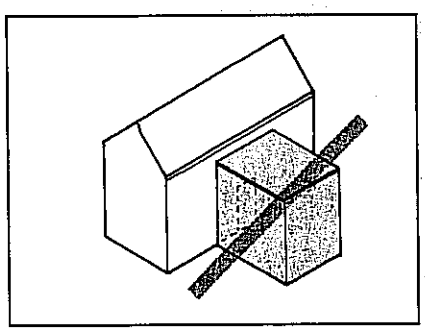
Additions should maintain the proportions and profile of the original building. Position additions at the rear or on view-obstructed sides of buildings.



Set additions back from the front wall of the existing building.



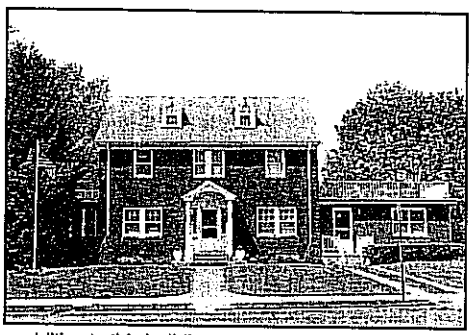
Construct additions so that important details and materials of the historic building are not hidden, damaged, or destroyed.



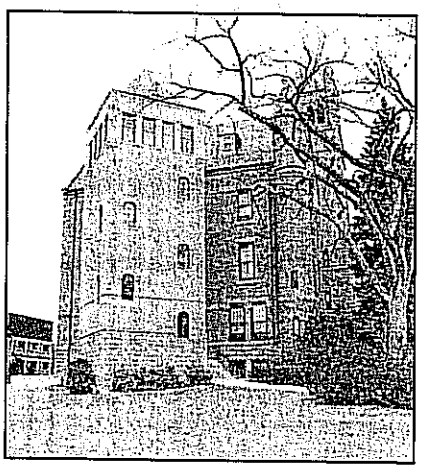
ADDITIONS

Additions in Gettysburg

The recessed location and use of transparent glass in this added passageway at 143 Carlisle Street help make this new structure compatible with the adjacent historic buildings.



The addition to this building at 10 East Broadway uses similar materials and a setback to increase its compatibility with the original building.

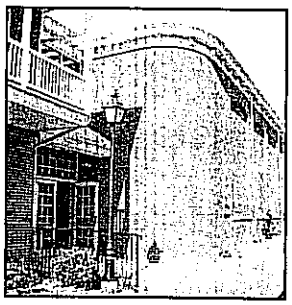


The Glatfelter Hall elevator tower addition uses appropriate massing, placement, materials, and arched window openings to make it compatible with the historic structure.

OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONS

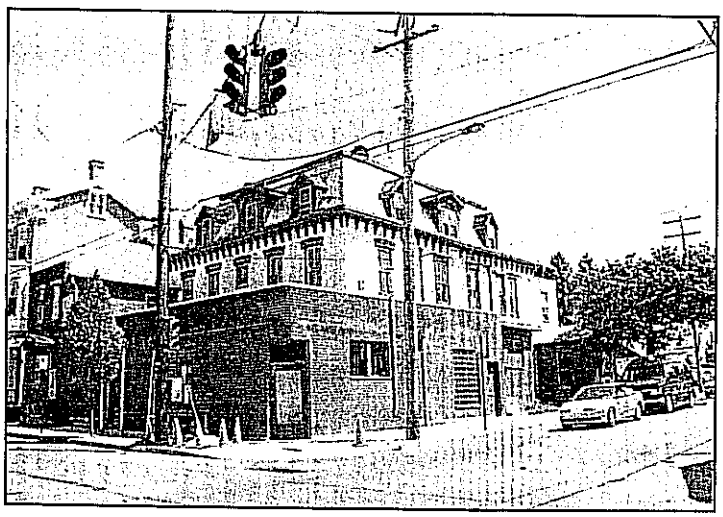
1 **FIRST CHOICE:** Accommodate the new use proposed for the addition in an existing area of the historic building rather than construct an addition.

2 **SECOND CHOICE:** Locate the addition on the rear wall of the building, following the guidelines below, if that wall is not readily visible from a public street or alley, and if no historic materials or features will be damaged or destroyed.



The placement, massing, and materials of the rear addition to the Presbyterian Church office at 208 Baltimore Street help make it compatible with the historic structure.

3 **THIRD CHOICE:** Locate the addition on a side wall that is shielded from public view, following the guidelines on the previous page, if no historic materials or features will be negatively affected.



The placement of a one story addition in front of the main walls of this building at the corner of S. Washington and W. Middle Streets significantly altered the appearance, character and integrity of the historic structure.

DEMOLITION

The demolition of a historic structure is irreversible and its negative impact is far-reaching. Demolition is not an appropriate treatment for historic buildings because:

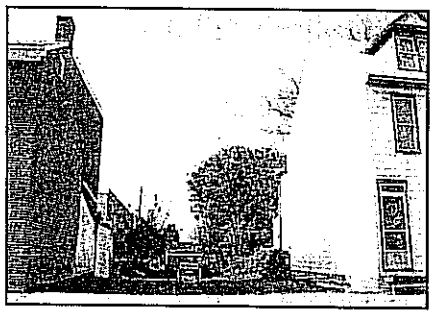
- The demolition of a building can have great negative social and psychological effects on the residents of a neighborhood. The loss of familiar and meaningful landmarks is disturbing, upsets the established sense of community, and decreases livability.

This building previously stood at 135 West Middle Street. It was demolished in 1994. Photo courtesy of Gettysburg Borough.

- Demolition also has a negative effect on the environment and the economy. It adds materials to our already overcrowded landfills, and it necessitates the use of money, energy, and materials to rebuild, with the energy and materials coming from already depleted natural resources.

- A demolished historic building is a lost educational resource. It can no longer illustrate the accomplishments of historical figures, the occurrence of historical events, or the construction techniques of the past.

- The demolition of a historic building creates a great physical loss in the streetscape. The loss is particularly harsh in a historic area that derives its character from the consistent appearance of more or less equally spaced buildings on the street.



Demolition creates a dramatic physical loss in the streetscape. The building pictured in the photo at the top of the page previously stood in this empty lot.

Demolished buildings cannot be recreated. Because demolition can have such severe, long-term impact, it is considered appropriate in very few cases.

When DEMOLITION *may* be Appropriate:

1. When the public safety and welfare requires the removal of the structure.
2. When the structural instability of the building has been amply demonstrated by the report of an engineer or architect, and after sufficient documentation.
3. When the building does not contribute to the historic district.
4. When economic hardship requirements have been met.

DEMOLITION

Demolition of Parts of Buildings

Demolition of any part of a building in the Gettysburg Historic District requires a permit, and, because all parts of a building contribute to the overall character of the building, demolition in part is rarely advisable. This type of demolition may be appropriate when the building element:

- Is deteriorated beyond repair,
- Is in danger of collapse,
- Cannot be stabilized,
  and
- Only after it has been thoroughly documented.

Removal of building elements is not acceptable if an appropriate replacement will not be constructed. If any building elements are removed, they should be recorded in photos prior to removal and should be stored for future use.

Guidelines for Demolition of Historic Structures:

- Document the structure with photographs and/or in drawings before demolition.

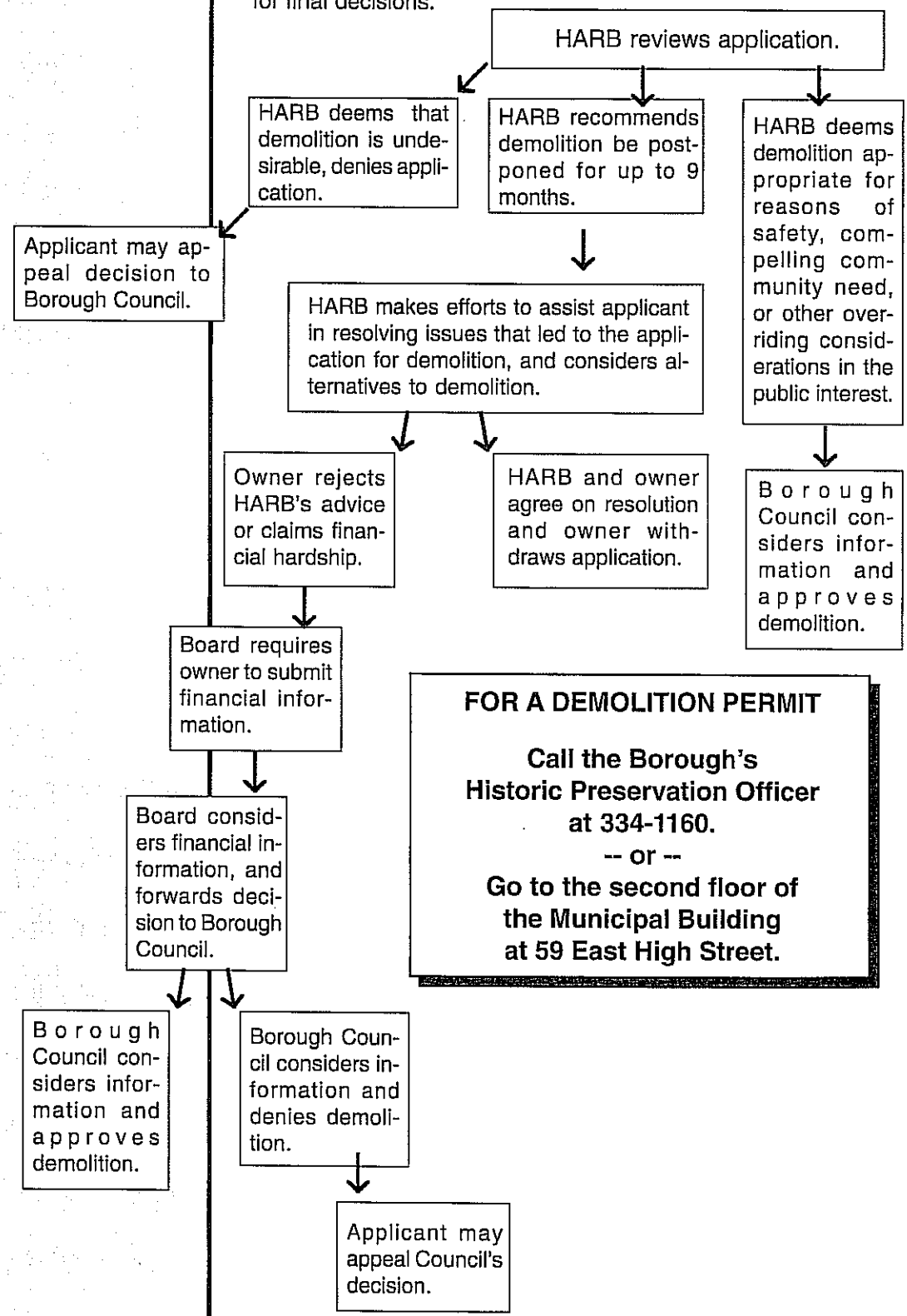
- Ensure that demolition will not damage other historic buildings.

- Consider donating salvageable materials (such as windows, doors, bricks, or siding) to an architectural warehouse, so that they may be used for other projects.

DEMOLITION

THE DEMOLITION APPROVAL AND PERMIT PROCESS IN GETTYSBURG

A permit is required for the demolition of any building, or any part of any building, in the historic district in Gettysburg. The steps of the demolition approval and permit process are outlined below. All HARB recommendations are forwarded to Borough Council for final decisions.



FOR A DEMOLITION PERMIT

Call the Borough's Historic Preservation Officer at 334-1160.

-- or --

Go to the second floor of the Municipal Building at 59 East High Street.