

DESIGNING FOR CONTEXT WITH RETAINED ELEMENTS

SPECIAL TOPIC DESIGN GUIDELINES



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION / PLANNING COMMISSION

24 January 2019

San Francisco
Planning

Role of Existing Fabric



“Facadism” Policy Discussion History



March 18, 2015

HPC adopts Resolution No. 0746 to clarify expectations regarding the preparation of preservation alternatives in Environmental Impact Reports.

December 8, 2015

HPC discuss the issue of façade retention and explored a range of projects that featured some form of façade retention, both locally and nationwide.

April 6, 2016

HPC discuss various examples of façade retention projects in San Francisco with some additional context about the process of approvals for these projects.

August 2, 2017

HPC reviews draft policy on façade retention and directs staff to prepare as design guideline document for public use.

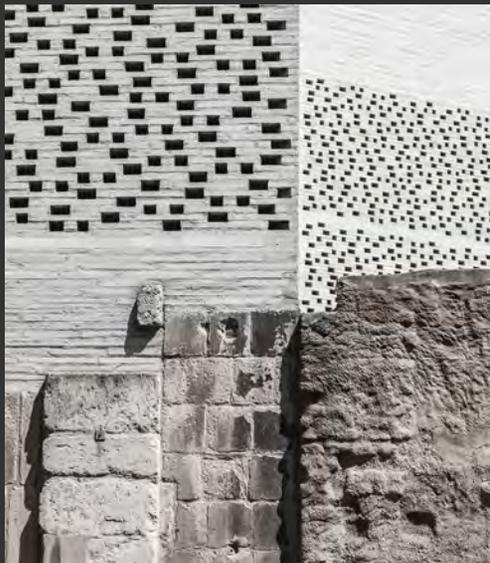
October 12, 2018

Department staff discusses façade retention guidelines with San Francisco Heritage Projects and Policy Committee

January 24, 2019

Joint HPC and Planning Commission hearing to discuss draft design guidelines

Role of Existing Fabric



Guideline Applicability

Does not apply to properties identified or listed as a historic resource. Recognizes that historic resources should be rehabilitated using the most historically sympathetic treatment possible.

Allows proposal to articulate the benefits with technical feasibility to Department, decision-makers, and the public. Clarifies benefit is:

- » to sustain neighborhood context,
- » to restore existing building features,
- » to maintain interior relationships behind the retained building features, and
- » to animate fine-scale neighborhood activity at the ground-floor level.



Central SoMa Examples



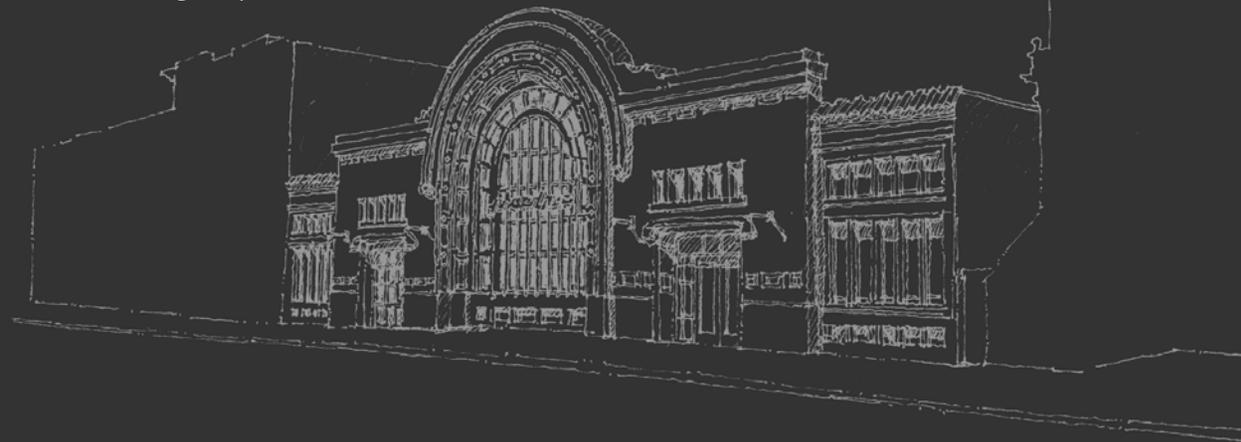
Weighing the Options

Determine the visual contributions of an existing structure as a component of the broader neighborhood context.

- » Does it include a public use, either currently or formally?
- » Does it function as an informal visual marker for the neighborhood?
- » Does the existing structure help establish a pattern of similar buildings in the neighborhood?
- » Is it of physical interest? If so, does it present features, scales, or qualities not found commonly in contemporary architecture?

Technically evaluate the existing structure to see if it can be feasibly integrated.

- » What is the structural and material condition of the existing structure?
- » Will its integration contribute important public-serving aspects in the project?



Weighing the Options

Determine the fundamental site relationships, massing, spatial or compositional ideas found in the existing architecture.

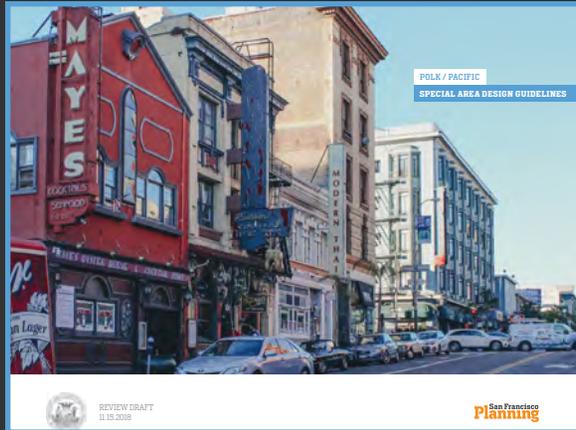
- » **How much of the existing structure should be retained to support neighborhood context and use?**
- » **Which critical materials, walls, volumetric elements or details** that embodies the existing structure should be retained?
- » **Using this document, what are the potential design options**, and do they find the right balance of public benefits and project objectives?

If a new building is proposed in lieu of the existing one, evaluate its replacement.

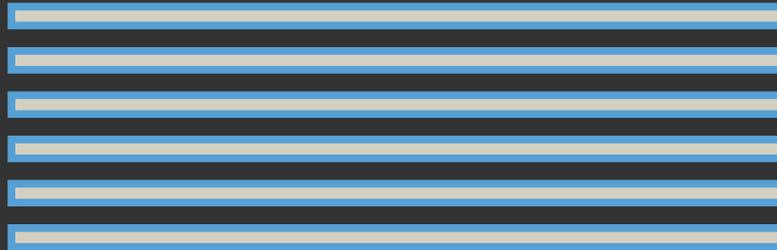
- » **Is the architecture of the replacement project as good** as or superior to the existing structure?
- » **Does the replacement project represent greater physical durability** and overall long-term contribution to the neighborhood context?
- » **Does the replacement project express the same level** of detail, materials, and response to distinct neighborhood conditions as the existing one?
- » If the existing building has a formal or informal public function, **does the replacement project provide the opportunity for distinction** and usability in a similar way?



Special Topic Design Guidelines



Special Topic Guidelines



Detailed guidelines supersede

+



Urban Design Guidelines

or

Historic Design Guidelines

or

Residential Design Guidelines

Base document

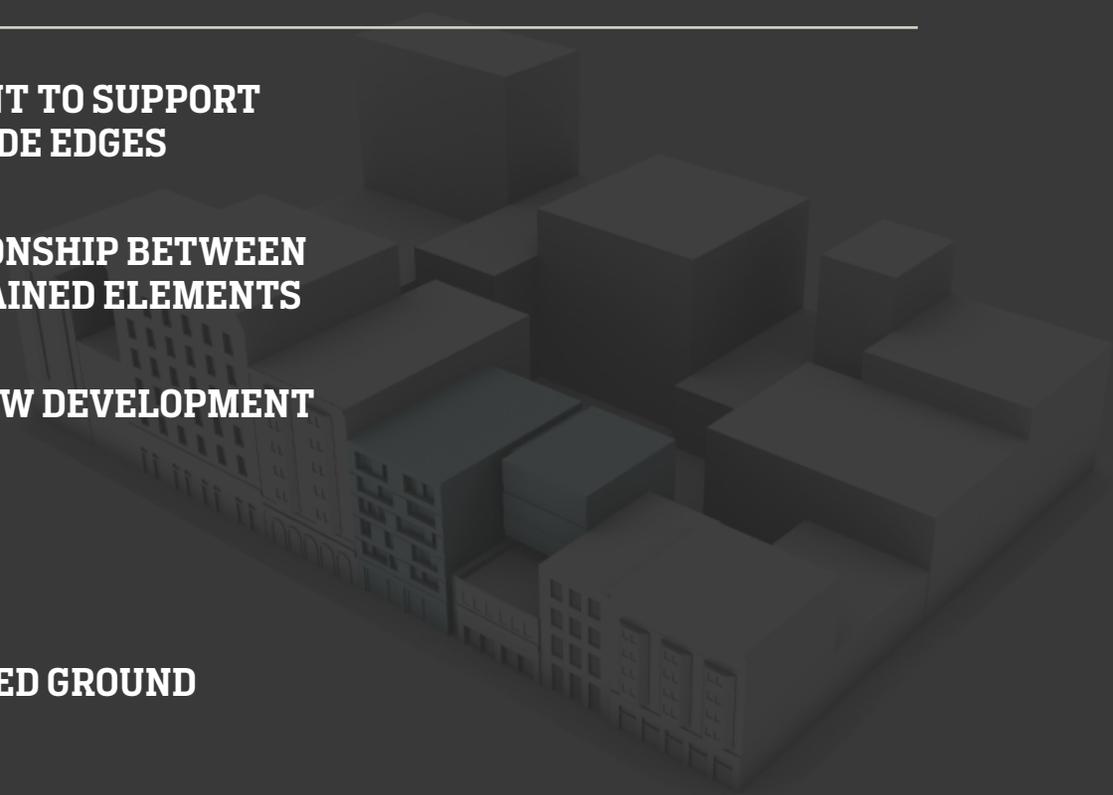
Designing for Context with Retained Elements

Site Design

- S1.1** SUSTAIN EXISTING FEATURES THAT DEFINE A NEIGHBORHOOD
- S2.1** ESTABLISH NEW MASSING TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CONTEXT

Architecture

- A2.1** MODULATE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT RETAINED MASSING AND FAÇADE EDGES
- A2.2** ARTICULATE A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW DEVELOPMENT AND RETAINED ELEMENTS
- A3.1** HARMONIZE MATERIALS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH RETAINED ELEMENTS
- A6.1** RESTORE EXISTING FEATURES
- A8.1** REVIVE AND ANIMATE RETAINED GROUND FLOOR ELEMENTS



Designing for Context with Retained Elements

Special Topic Design Guidelines

S1.1 SUSTAIN EXISTING FEATURES THAT DEFINE A NEIGHBORHOOD

S2.1 ESTABLISH NEW MASSING TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CONTEXT

A2.1 MODULATE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT RETAINED MASSING AND FAÇADE EDGES

A2.2 ARTICULATE A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW DEVELOPMENT AND RETAINED ELEMENTS

A3.1 HARMONIZE MATERIALS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH RETAINED ELEMENTS

A6.1 RESTORE EXISTING FEATURES

A8.1 REVIVE AND ANIMATE RETAINED GROUND FLOOR ELEMENTS

Base Design Guidelines

S1 RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO URBAN PATTERNS

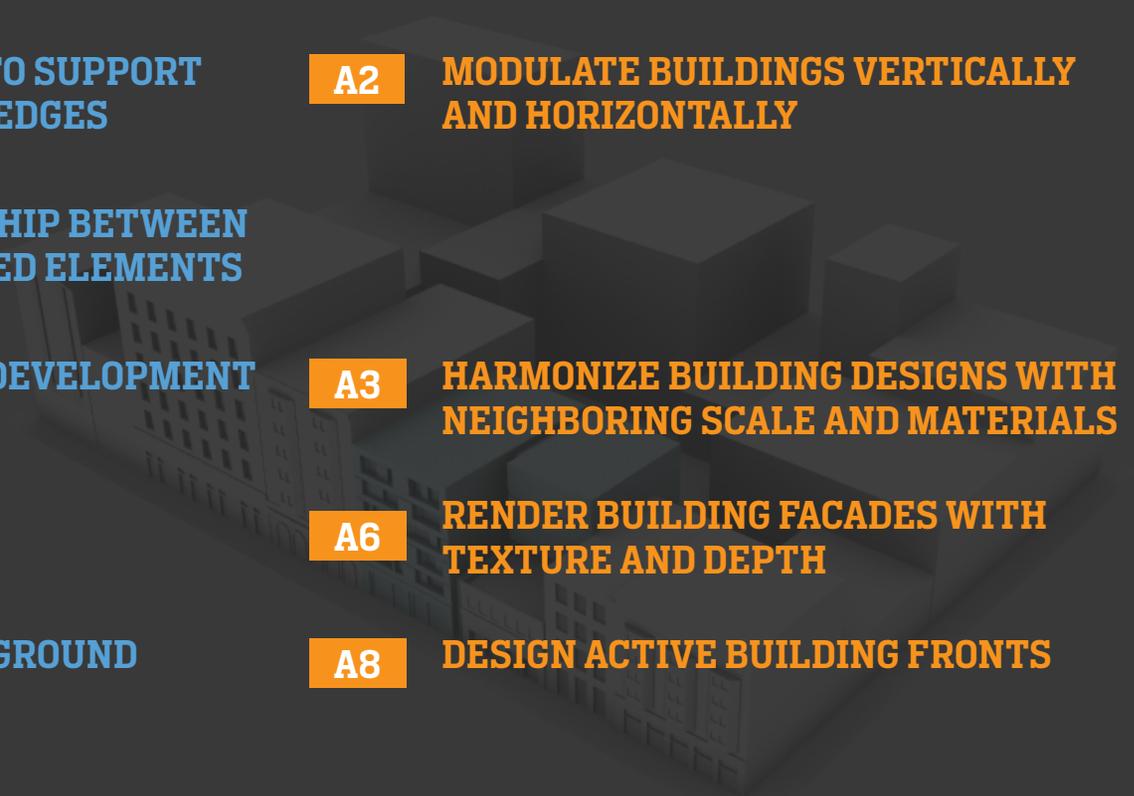
S2 HARMONIZE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BUILDINGS, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACE

A2 MODULATE BUILDINGS VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY

A3 HARMONIZE BUILDING DESIGNS WITH NEIGHBORING SCALE AND MATERIALS

A6 RENDER BUILDING FACADES WITH TEXTURE AND DEPTH

A8 DESIGN ACTIVE BUILDING FRONTS



SI.1 SUSTAIN EXISTING FEATURES THAT DEFINE A NEIGHBORHOOD

Buildings often present important and distinct elements that act as landmarks for residents and visitors. Examples include: spires, large signage, clocktowers, murals, gateways, unusual rooftop elements, or other distinct markers.



Analyze: Identify distinct volumes or large design features. Diagram how they are perceived in the neighborhood and how to maintain those vantage points.

- » Existing buildings often present distinct elements that act as visual markers for residents and visitors. Examples include: spires, large signage, clocktowers, murals, gateways, unusual rooftop elements, or other distinct features.
- » Retain interesting roof forms and elements, such as clocktowers, spires, architectural features, fenestration as part of the new building. Maintain their visually presence from key locations and public view corridors.
- » Maintain existing pedestrian pathways and gateways when possible to continue existing pathways, edges, and boundaries in the neighborhood and add new development

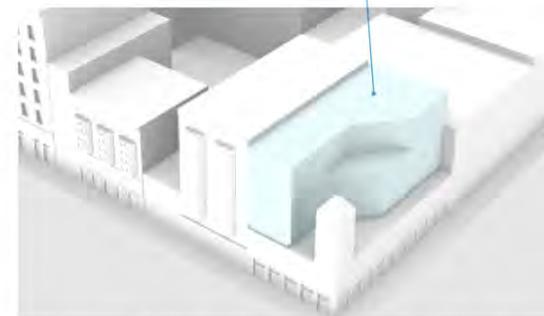


Types of important building elements that mark neighborhoods.

where volume already exists or naturally participates in the overall massing.

- » Retain partial walls only in exceptional circumstances where existing textures, material qualities, or architectural reference produces a distinct neighborhood experience.
- » Volumetric elements can be retained or isolated from other parts of existing structures if they are visually distinctive.
- » Maintain existing murals or art installations when recognized as important to the neighborhood or broader community. This can be done by either leaving them in place or providing a new and sustainable backdrop for their visibility. Provide additional protection for their long-term durability and maintenance.

NEW MASSING IS SCULPTED AROUND THE EXISTING STRUCTURE



Roof types that are more architecturally distinct (such as gabled, mansard, or hipped, etc.) may require further setbacks and sculpting to respond to the character of the roof form.

S2.1 ESTABLISH NEW MASSING TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CONTEXT

Add new building mass thoughtfully to existing building volumes so that it complements the existing scale, circulation, and forms on the site. This helps new project volumes feel natural to the city and extend familiar environments.

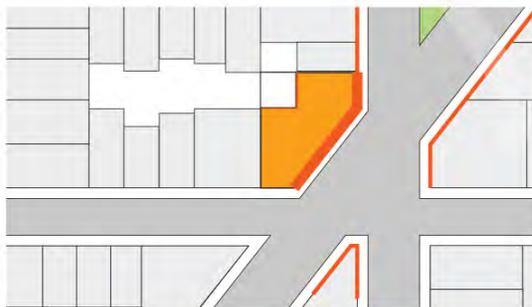
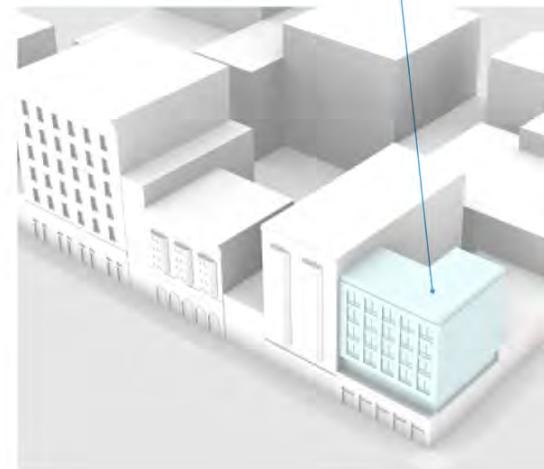
- » Discover the common widths, heights, and proportions of existing massing to see how added volumes can extend or build upon them.
- » At corner sites, turn the corner with the existing structure to maintain a reading of existing volume.

- » Look for natural or subordinate ways to place massing on a site with an existing structure, including underground, alongside, or behind, not just as a vertical addition.
- » Break new massing in proportion with the existing building helps synchronize new and existing volumes together.
- » Look at patterns of open space on the block or site to see how volume can complement its use and definition.

NEW MASSING FOLLOWS THE BLOCK PATTERN OF SMALLER FRONTAGES



NEW MASSING FILLS IN AN OPEN CORNER ENHANCING THE BLOCK



Analyze: Diagram the site volumes. Find common proportions, heights, widths, and open space patterns.



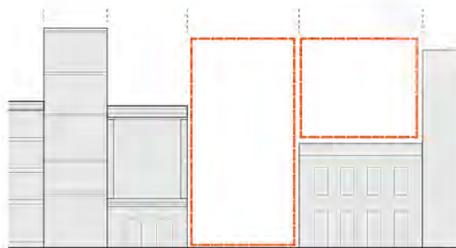
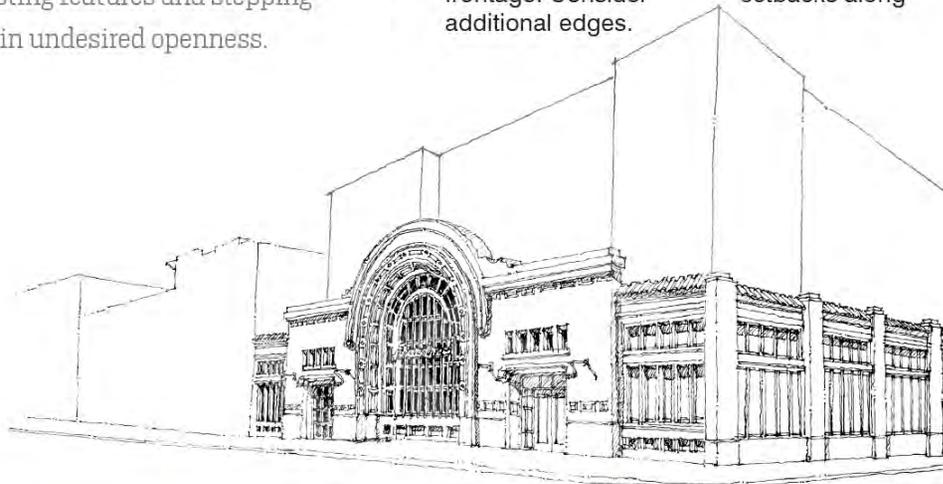
Common massing proportions and logics can help older and newer buildings relate to one another.

A2.1 MODULATE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT RETAINED MASSING AND FAÇADE EDGES

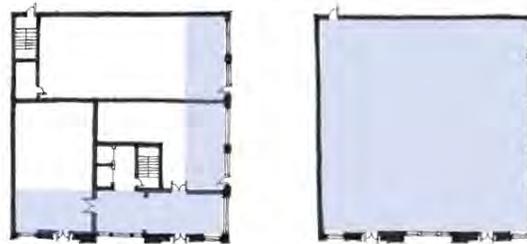
Where the existing structure location or streetwall presence varies on a more complex lot, the new development may complement it by stepping back behind important existing features and stepping forward to fill in undesired openness.

- » Avoid enveloping an existing facade with new development when the proposed project has a longer frontage than the retained element. In most cases, new development should only be in (or near) the same plane of the existing facade along one edge of the retained frontage. Consider setbacks along additional edges.

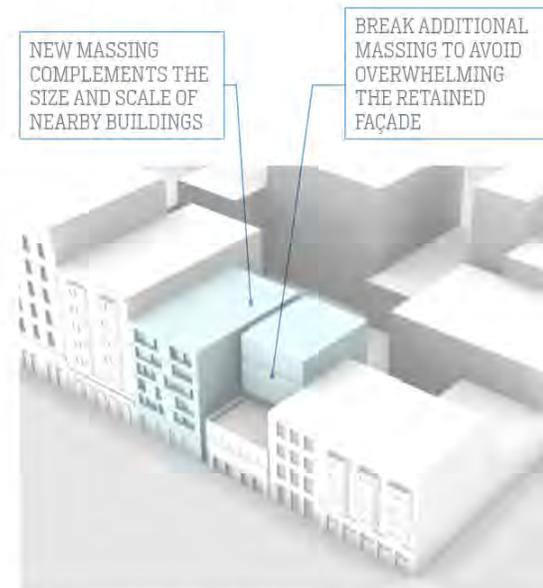
- » Provide breaks between retained elements and new massing, and along long new massing to help break down front facade scale in alignment with typical lot widths.
- » Create entries or public open space to highlight the breaks between existing and new masses.
- » Add bay windows, where contextually appropriate for the neighborhood pattern, to help modulate a new facade.



Analyze: Diagram the existing and potential streetwall to find ways to express similar widths and heights.



Evaluate how much of the facade and interior should be retained to maintain a durable use, expression, and presence.



Modulating a new facade behind an existing one helps two masses feel like a natural layering of the city.

A2.2 ARTICULATE A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW DEVELOPMENT AND RETAINED ELEMENTS

Demonstrating a clear or intentional relationship between new and old parts of building helps a viewer to read the more complex layers of a project. This layering of information, or expression of evolution feels natural in a city environment.



Analyze: Diagram the existing streetwall to understand the pattern of the urban room (defined by the surfaces of the public right-of-way and the building frontages).

- » New development should be volumetrically distinct from retained elements. Employ a vertical or horizontal "hyphen" to create a sense of volume change between new development and retained elements. Vertical hyphens should be tall enough that they do not visually collapse from the viewpoint of pedestrians.
- » Spatial volumes defined by existing elements and new development should be distinct. Front facades of or interior volumes within new development should not appear both "above" and "behind" an existing facade.

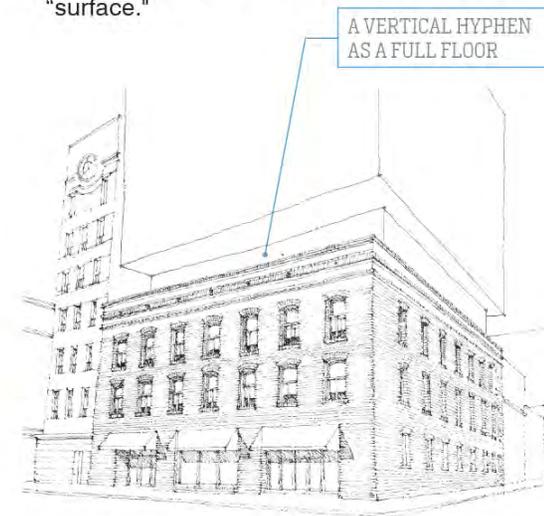


Hyphens can move with the profile of the existing structure.



Vertical additions can contextually fit on top of new development by crafting setbacks appropriate to pedestrian viewpoints.

- » For unique locations, such as abandoned industrial sites, retention of features, such as cobblestones, rail spurs, or existing "ruins" should highlight and authentically demonstrate their distinct landscape and organic edges.
- » Contrast material type between an existing wall and a new wall to clarify the use, meaning, access, or construction technique between the two projects. This is especially useful where entry points may be added.
- » Avoid minor or architecturally-scaled setbacks that only highlight an existing facade as a "surface."



Vertical additions can contextually fit on top of new development by crafting setbacks appropriate to pedestrian viewpoints.

A3.1 HARMONIZE MATERIALS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH RETAINED ELEMENTS

The choice, quality, location, and detailing of materials and openings can greatly enhance the compatibility between new buildings and existing structures. They should feel like a family rather than trying to match or have one part look like an accessory to the other.



Analyze: Look for common window patterns and material types on the existing structure and in the neighborhood.

- » Extend or express a sympathetic pattern of structural elements and organizing geometry that establish the overall rhythm and proportions of the existing building.
- » Extend a common architectural expression between existing and new development, such as: frame and infill, volumetric projections, layered volumes, compositional grids, etc.
- » The choice, quality, location, and detailing of materials and openings can greatly enhance the compatibility between new buildings and existing structures. There should be a relationship rather than an exact match or one part of the development appearing to be an accessory to the other.
- » Intentionally offset or inverse elements in the new development to provide conceptual consistency in the union of the existing and proposed architectural components.



Use a similar material in a different way to find harmony and intentional difference in architectural expression.

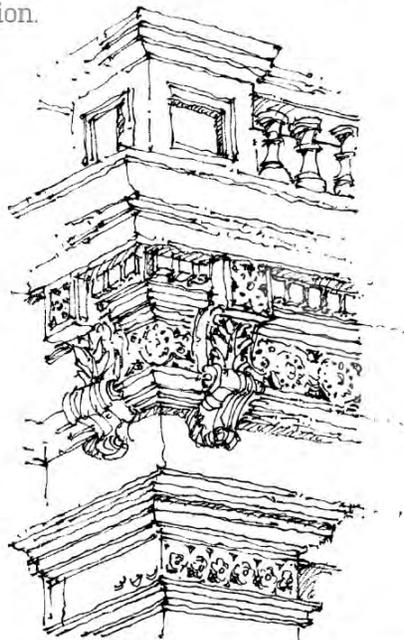
- » Contrast the material qualities of a new development in specific situations to highlight the existing element.
- » New facades should not only be harmonious with retained elements but offer their own architectural integrity.
- » Synchronize or extend fenestration and material patterns and proportions in retained elements; such as: deep punched openings, extensive glazed curtainwall, solid/void ratios, align elements between both parts even when other elements are more randomized.



Using a strong contrast of material qualities with a setback can help new development read as an urban layer.

A6.1 RESTORE EXISTING FEATURES

Over time, many existing buildings have been modified to accommodate new uses and needs. When renovated or incorporated into a new project, their retained elements should be restored or re-animated as they had originally been designed further enhancing authenticity and cohesion.



Cornices are an example of an architectural feature that should be restored, retained, or recreated. Contemporary materials, such as Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) or Fiber Reinforced Polyester (FRP), may be employed as a substitute for terra cotta, cast stone, or pressed metal. Ghosting, scarring, and other visual evidence may help explain alterations to building features and openings over time.

- » New space behind an existing facade should be aligned with its natural openings, floor heights, and geometry.
- » Some interior spaces, such as those within churches, warehouses, assembly halls, or other publicly-accessible spaces, contain details and spatial characteristics that convey a building's original use. Design sensitive transitions from the retained and new building elements to maintain this connection.
- » Open spaces in existing walls that were previously window or door openings to revive the originally intended wall transparency or operability.
- » Remove later layers and repair and restore original exterior cladding surfaces, where possible.



- » Repair or restore details or character elements, such as decorative entry or rooftop features, to original shape and /or texture.
- » Replace decorative features that were removed either through an authentic reproduction. In all features that are restored or replaced, use original or similar material types and finishes.
- » Provide moldings, trim, or other original features surrounding windows that have been previously removed or altered.
- » To ensure a harmonious relationship with the overall new development, all mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and interior partitions should not visually interfere with the existing building's character.



Restoration of existing elements, such as prism glass, can greatly contribute to the character of the development and its relationship to neighborhood context.

A8.1 REVIVE AND ANIMATE RETAINED GROUND FLOOR ELEMENTS

It is common in projects that reuse existing elements for the ground floor to be a key part of the retained piece. To avoid a superficial appearance, it is important that the interior space and use of ground floors match well to the exterior building façade.

- » Restore existing storefronts to maximize transparency, visibility into the depth of the commercial space, and physical access. Look for infilled masonry frames where material was added for easy places to restore visibility.
- » Include volumetric entries to support the original intent of storefront access and window shopping.

SUPPORT ORIGINAL ENTRIES

OPEN PANEL AREAS OF THE ORIGINAL FACADE THAT WERE FILLED IN

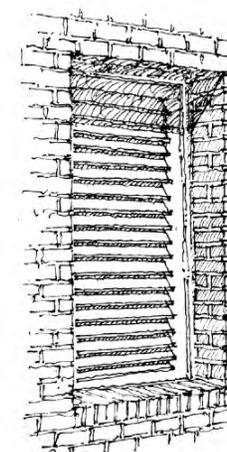
LOOK FOR ORIGINAL AREAS OF SIGNAGE



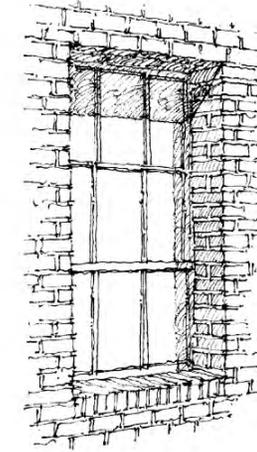
Analyze: use original drawings and physical evidence to evaluate the restoration of the ground floor elevation and plan.



- » Restore storefront openings including materials, configuration, and finishes. The ground floor interior should reflect the character of the existing structure and be distinct from any new development.
- » Include hierarchy in building entries so that residential and commercial openings are visually distinct.
- » Include and reference the original scale and types of signage in new sign programs.
- » Explore uniform lighting strategies that support highlighting special character elements on the facade visible to pedestrians.



Before



After

Creating Guidelines Process

Community Outreach

First Public Meeting

February 26, 6 - 8 pm at SF Planning

Call for Examples! Or for more information

Contact: Maia Small or
maia.small@sfgov.org

Tim Frye
tim.frye@sfgov.org

Draft Guidelines

Late Spring 2019

Return to Commissions for Informational

Early Summer 2019