Determining Compatibility for New Structures in a Historic District

fresh is important…

Why?

- Growing development in existing neighborhoods.
- Needs, tastes, and desires of modern homeowners are often different than previous generations.
- Market pressure to "max out" the building lot.

New buildings can drastically change a neighborhood – for better or worse.

fresh is

- **F**ootprint
- **R**oof Shape
- **E**nvelope
- **S**kin
- **H**oles

fresh!

The FOOTPRINT of the new structure should be similar to the footprints surrounding it.

fresh!

Footprints are often very similar in historic neighborhoods.

footprint

fresh!

FRESH infill projects have footprints which are compatible to surrounding buildings.

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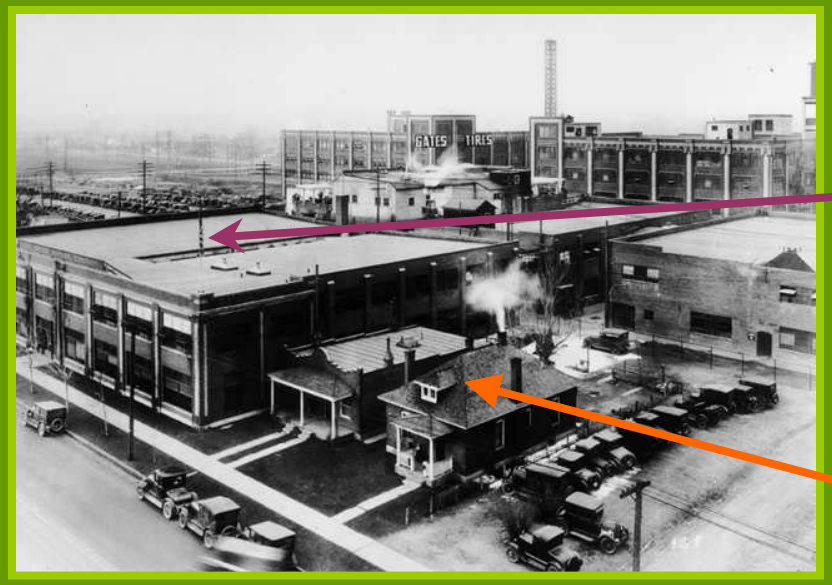

Incompatible footprints can create unpleasant living conditions.

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They can also create unusual or awkward relationships between buildings.

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On the other hand. . .
creative footprints can
protect nearby buildings
from demolition.

footprint

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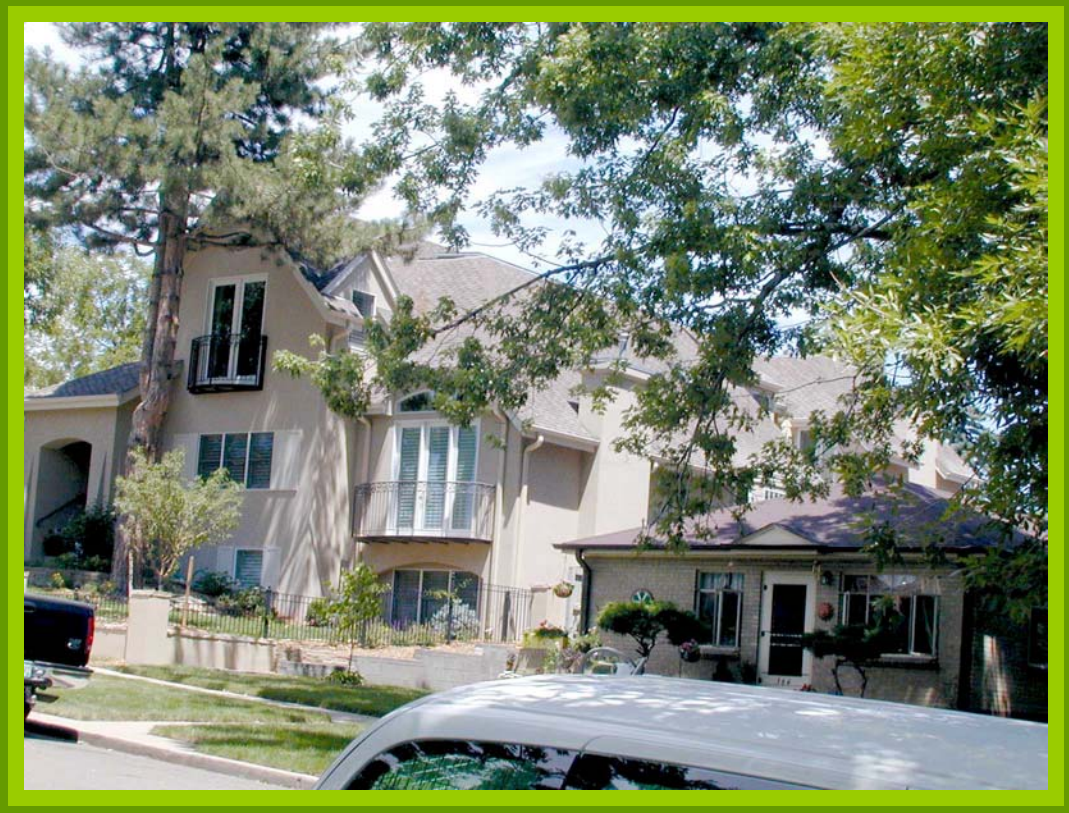

Giant footprints easily dwarf nearby buildings, by taking up multiple lots or overshadowing their neighbors.

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The new ROOF should match existing roofs in pitch, complexity, and orientation.

fresh!

Roofs come in many shapes and sizes.

Gabled, hipped, and flat roofs are among the most common roof forms.

Changing the roof shape can make a big difference.

roof shape

fresh!

In many historic neighborhoods, the rooflines are fairly uniform.

fresh!

Combine the different footprint and the different roof shape, and you've got a house that just doesn't fit in...

roof shape

fresh!

New!

New buildings with compatible roofs blend easily into existing neighborhoods.

roof shape

fresh!

Downtown commercial areas are mostly made up of flat-roofed buildings.

roof shape

fresh!

Thus, in many cases a flat-roofed design is the best solution when constructing a new building in a downtown commercial district.

fresh!

"Pop-Tops" remove the original roof and add new floors to a building.

The original roof style is often changed during a "pop-top" renovation.

roof shape

fresh!

Large "pop-tops" can affect the entire neighborhood.

Smaller houses are overwhelmed by their newly-taller neighbors.

fresh!

The ENVELOPE of the new structure should match the existing in projections, bulk, height-to-width ratio, etc.

fresh!

The “envelope” is the outside shape of the building.

envelope

fresh!

If you shrink-wrapped a building and then removed everything but the shrink-wrap, you'd have the "envelope."

envelope

fresh!

old


new

New buildings can fit in by having similar envelopes to nearby historic buildings.

envelope

fresh!

If the envelope is too large, the infill building becomes the “monster truck” of the neighborhood.

envelope

fresh!

On the other hand, a modest-sized infill building fits right in.

fresh!

New structures should be clad in a visually and physically similar materials, or SKIN.

fresh!

What is the envelope clad in?

What is the surface material, and its characteristics?

FRESH buildings can be unique while remaining visually compatible with the rest of the neighborhood.

skin

fresh!

Building materials often played a critical role in 19th- and 20th-century architectural design.

They represent place, technology and ingenuity.

skin

fresh!

Materials can vary widely in style...

skin

fresh!

Inappropriate "skin" can make a big difference even when other FRESH elements are reasonably similar.

skin

fresh!

HOLES – doors, windows, and other openings – should mimic the style and pattern of openings used on surrounding structures.

fresh!

Doors and windows make "holes" in the structure.

Historic textile mill

holes

fresh!

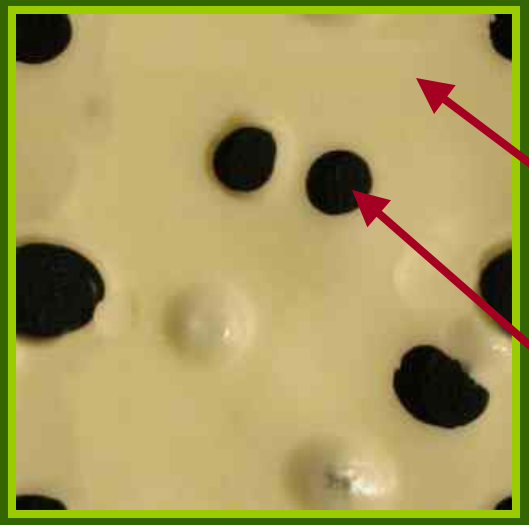
FRESH buildings
put the holes
where they belong!

New parking deck

holes

fresh!

HOLES should follow the historic pattern of SOLID-TO-VOID RATIO:



The ratio between a building's WALLS (the "solid")
&
OPENINGS (the "void").

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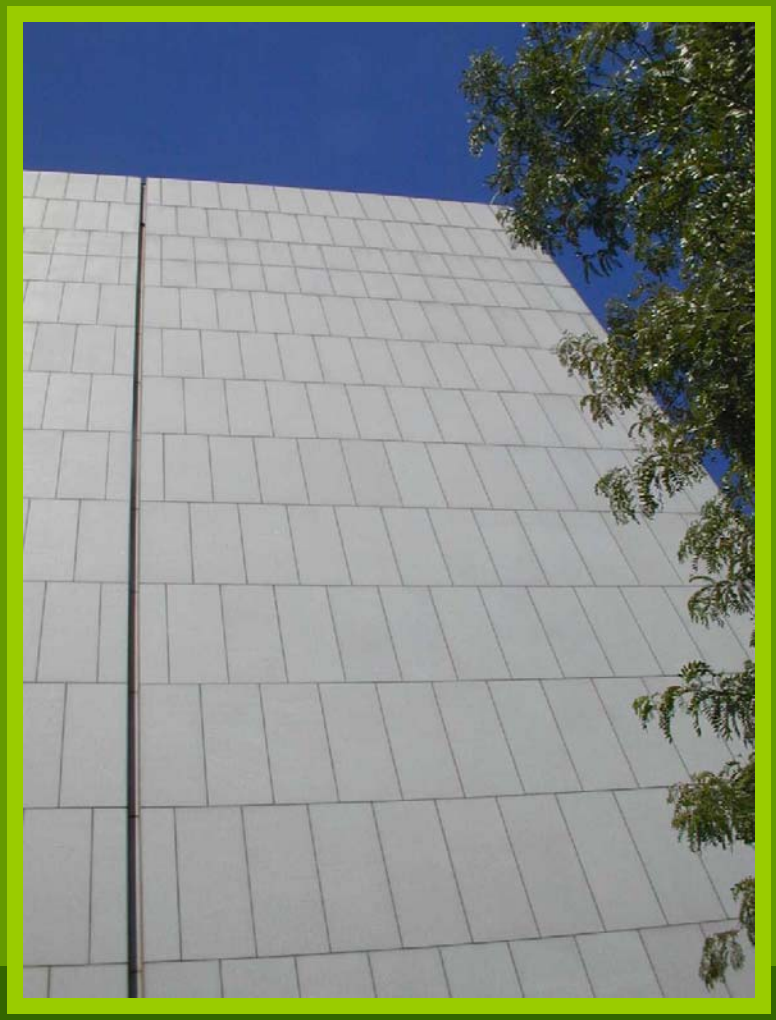
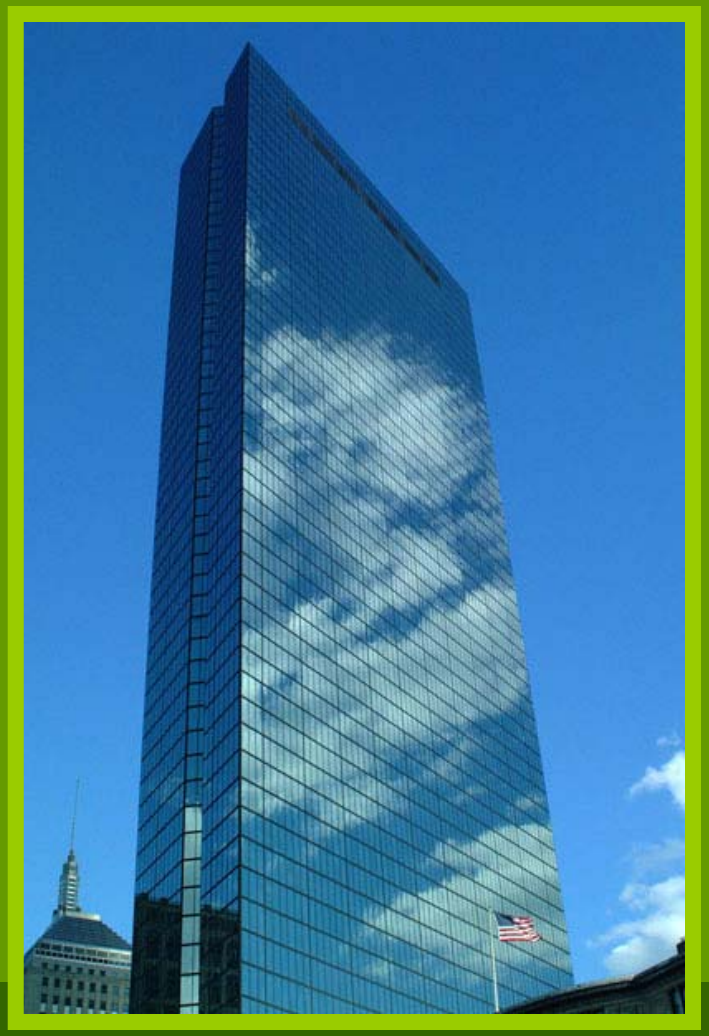
Buildings can be 100% "solid", or...



holes

fresh!



…they can be 100% "void."

holes

fresh!

In most cases, however, the ratio is somewhere in between.

holes

fresh!

Doesn't this block look active and exciting?

A bad ratio can "kill" an otherwise healthy area.

holes

fresh!

In a FRESH building, the solid-void ratio is similar to the surrounding buildings.

But as we see here, it doesn't mean that the windows have to match exactly.

fresh is…

- A way to remember the key components of good building design.
- A guide to creating compatible buildings for downtowns and neighborhoods.
- A means of encouraging new design while protecting historic resources.

enjoy!