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HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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**Heritage Advisory Committee**
**January 23, 2008**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

**DATE:** December 13, 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Case H00213: Substantial Alteration to Sacred Heart School**

## ORIGIN

Application by Lydon Lynch Architects, on behalf of Sacred Heart School, for approval of revised plans for an addition which was previously approved by Council on September 11, 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the revised plans for an addition to Sacred Heart School, 5820 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, as outlined in this report.**

## BACKGROUND

The addition to the Sacred Heart School approved by Council in September, 2007 is illustrated in Map 1 and Attachment A. In December 2007, the applicants advised that the approved addition cannot be built due to financial limitations and submitted revised plans (Map 2 and Attachment B).

The proposed addition will house a new private high school for boys to complement Sacred Heart's existing girls-only facilities as part of a new "family campus" program. A backdrop to this application is that Sacred Heart School is expecting to commence construction of this addition in February, 2008 and is currently fundraising.

This report compares the revised design with the earlier approved design and evaluates it under the HRM Heritage Building Conservation Standards. The staff recommendation is based on this comparative evaluation.

## DISCUSSION

### *Context: Heritage Value and Character-Defining Elements*

The Sacred Heart complex consists of the original structure built in 1851, an east wing built in 1876, two modern additions built in 1962, and a more recent addition built in 2002 (see Attachment C). The property was registered as a heritage property in 1982.

The 1962 and 2002 additions were both built on the rear part of the complex facing College Street, with one end of the 1962 addition visible from Spring Garden Road. The current proposed addition would be built out towards Spring Garden Road. It is therefore important to evaluate the design of the proposed addition in relation to the architecture of the older parts of the school, i.e., the front facade, as it appears from Spring Garden. It is also important for the new addition to relate well to the visible portion of the 1962 addition.

The principal character-defining elements of the older parts of the school are:

- 3½ storey brick facades with mansard roofs punctuated by a central tower on the original (1851) section and dormers on the 1876 east wing;
- symmetrical fenestration with tall, vertically proportioned windows;
- a prominent, white-stucco, portico defining the main entrance.

The 1962 addition is of international style "curtain wall" design with large areas of glazing and metal panels between structural brick elements.

### *Earlier Approved Design (Attachment A)*

The earlier proposal was for a two storey, flat roofed addition which included a basement gymnasium extending up into the ground floor level and two floors of classrooms and other rooms arranged

around an interior courtyard over the gymnasium roof. The earlier design made overt architectural references to the historic buildings through use of:

- brick cladding matching the brick on the historic building;
- "shouldice stone" at basement level, echoing the granite basement on the historic building;
- vertically proportioned windows similar to those on the historic building; and
- a well-defined entrance, centrally located in the west elevation and articulated with white stucco panels, echoing the centrally located, white stucco entrance on the 1851 building.

The design also included contemporary elements, including variations in exterior materials (on the west elevation facing Summer St.), a large area of glazing (second floor lunchroom windows facing Spring Garden), and a slightly raised metal roof over part of the structure (lunchroom roof).

***Revised Design (Attachment B)***

The revised design is different from the earlier design in the following ways:

- The gymnasium would be on the top floor, above the classrooms, under a metal roof with clerestory windows along the east and west sides and a large, open glazed area on the north end facing Spring Garden Road. The roof would be clad in metal siding, light grey in colour.
- The building would have a smaller footprint than the earlier design (119' x 59' vs 136' x 120') but greater height, due to the addition of the gymnasium roof.
- Window openings would be taller than in the earlier proposal and would be divided into a lower glazed area (real windows illuminating the second floor classrooms) and an upper solid area filled in with white aluminum panels (roughly corresponding with the gymnasium floor level on the interior).
- The entrance would be located at the south-western corner of the addition and emphasized by a metal panel above the entrance in the same grey metal siding as the gymnasium roof.
- The basement level would be rendered in concrete block, rather than "shouldice stone";
- The east side would have a mixture of materials (concrete block and grey metal siding) and a mixture of window types (long, horizontal windows at basement level and punched windows on the second floor).

***Evaluation of Revised Design under HRM Heritage Building Conservation Standards***

The proposal has been evaluated against the Building Conservation Standards (see Attachment D), and staff provide the following comments:

- The historic use as a school will continue with the new addition (Standard #1) and the character of the 1851 building and the 1876 east wing will not be altered (Standard #2).
- The addition will not create a false sense of historical development (Standard #3) and the elements that have acquired historical significance in their own right will not be altered (Standard #4).

- The distinctive finishes on the historic sections of the school will not be altered (Standard #5) and there will be no repair work done on them (Standard #6), nor any surface cleaning (Standard #7). Also, should any significant archaeological resources be disturbed, appropriate permits will be required under the *Special Places Protection Act.*
- The addition will be clearly distinguishable from the historic section of the school and will be broadly compatible with it in terms of massing, size, scale and architectural features (Standard #9). This is discussed in more detail in the next section. Finally, the addition could be removed in future without affecting the form and integrity of the historic sections of the school (Standard #10).

***Architectural Compatibility of Addition***

Like the earlier proposal, the revised design includes a number of overt references to the traditional architecture of the older, historic sections of the Sacred Heart, including:

- Use of concrete block to define the basement level, echoing the granite foundation on the historic sections.
- Brick cladding on the west and north elevations, reflecting the brick cladding on the historic sections.
- Vertically proportioned window openings, in triplets, similar to those on the historic sections.

At the same time, the addition includes contemporary elements that also echo some elements of the historic section, including:

- white panels above each window, echoing the white stucco portico on the 1851 building.
- a light coloured panel over the entrance, which provides clear definition of the entrance location, similar to the main entrance definition on the 1851 building.

In accordance with Standards 9 & 10 which call for additions to heritage properties to be distinguishable from yet compatible with the original building, the revised design responds to this issue in the following ways:

- The gymnasium roof does not mimic the mansard roofs on the historic sections yet has a similar quality to them in terms of its massing. The light grey metal roofing/siding also helps to place the new gym roof in a visually subordinate relationship to the darker, historic mansard roofs.

- On the east elevation, the combination of light grey metal siding, darker grey concrete block, and horizontal fenestration provides an appropriate contrast to the international style, curtain wall design of the existing 1962 addition.

Additionally, the new design retains more open space around the building than did the earlier proposal by leaving the much of the existing playground intact. The reduction of building footprint

also allows more of the historic east wing to be viewed from the street when approached from the east along Spring Garden Road.

*Conclusion*
For the above reasons, staff recommend that the revised plans be approved.

## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
There are no budget implications for this application.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

## ALTERNATIVES
Staff recommend the Heritage Advisory Committee provide a positive recommendation to Regional Council regarding the alterations to 5820 Spring Garden Road as outlined in this report. However, the Heritage Advisory Committee could choose to recommend only portions of the proposal, or provide a negative recommendation to Regional Council.

## ATTACHMENTS

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| Map 1 | Location Map showing footprint of previously approved design. |
| Map 2 | Location Map showing footprint of revised proposal. |
| Attachment A | Previously approved design, September 11, 2007. |
| Attachment B | Revised design. |
| Attachment C | Photos of existing building. |
| Attachment D | Building Conservation Standards for Heritage Buildings in HRM. |

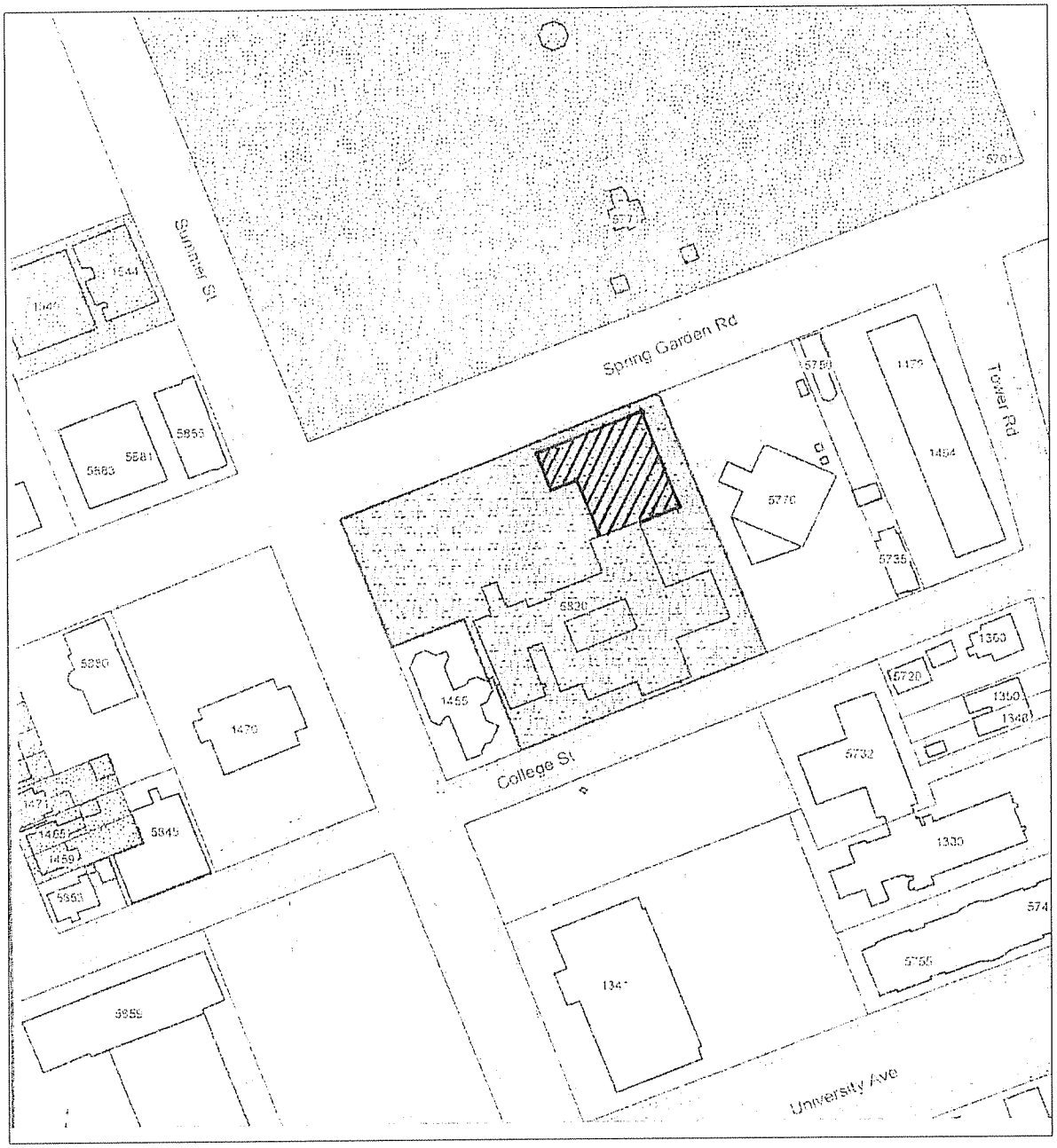
A copy of this report can be obtained online at http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by : Bill Plaskett & Maggie Holm, Heritage Planners: 490-4663 & 490-4419

Report Approved by: Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, 490-6717

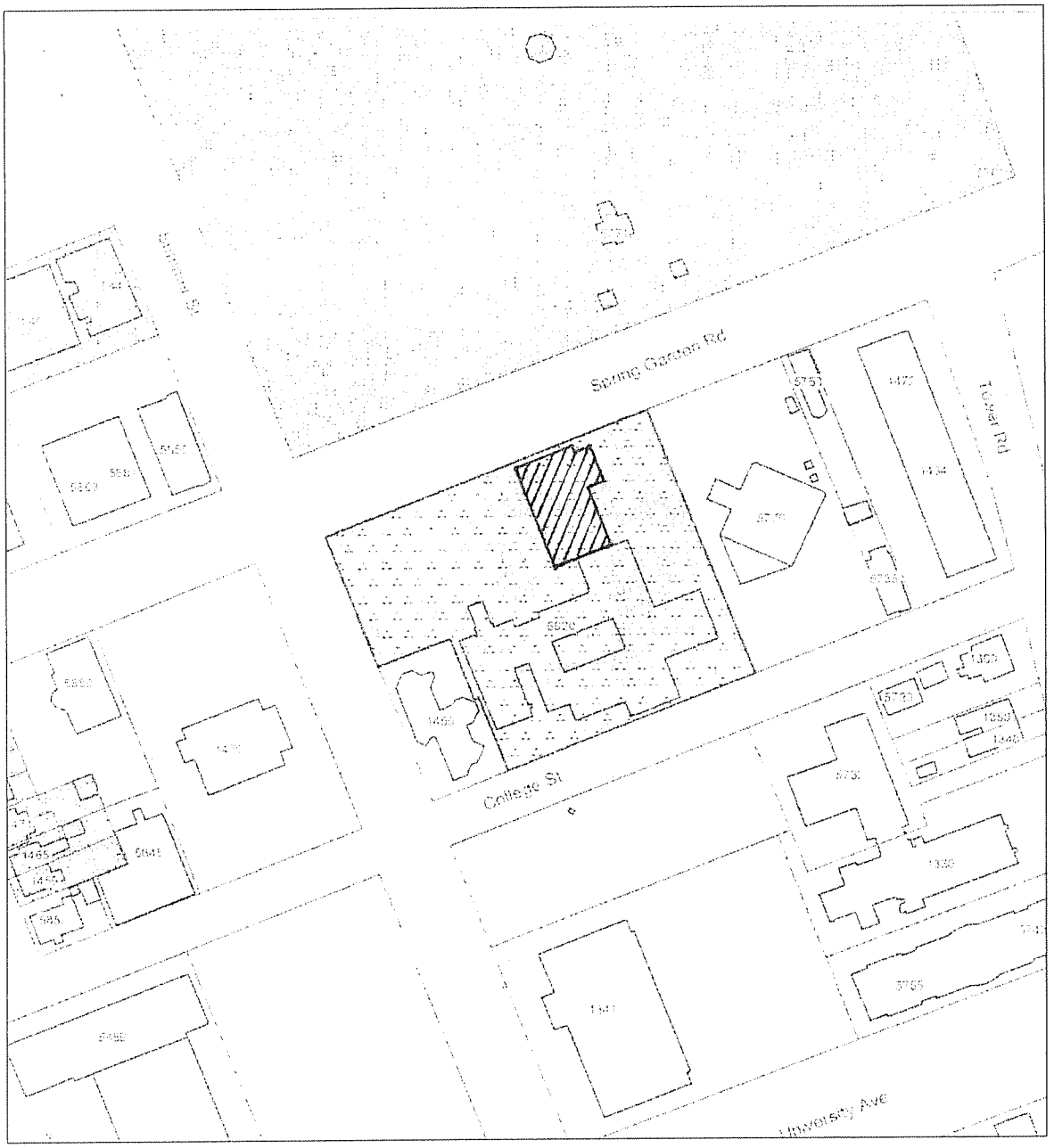
**MAP 1**
**Proposed Addition to Sacred Heart School, 5802 Spring Garden Road**

**Footprint of addition approved in September 2007**



**MAP 2**
**Proposed Addition to Sacred Heart School, 5802 Spring Garden Road**

**Footprint of Revised Proposal**



**ATTACHMENT A**

**Previously Approved Design, September, 2007**

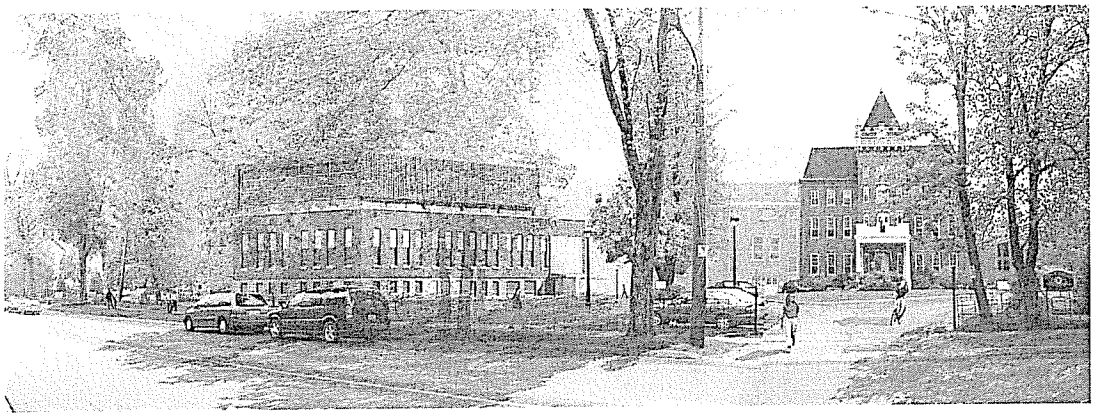
Perspective View

North Elevation

West Elevation

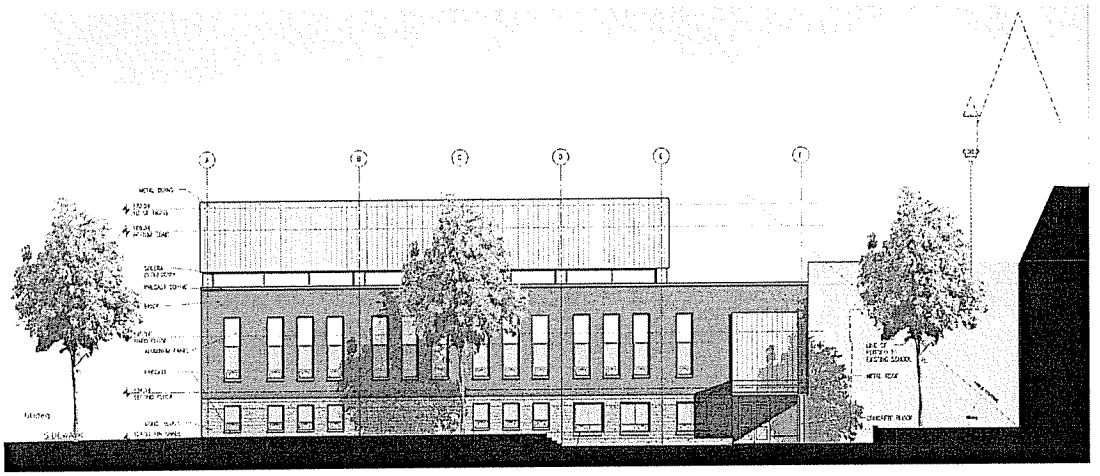
## ATTACHMENT B

## Revised Design, December 2007



Perspective View

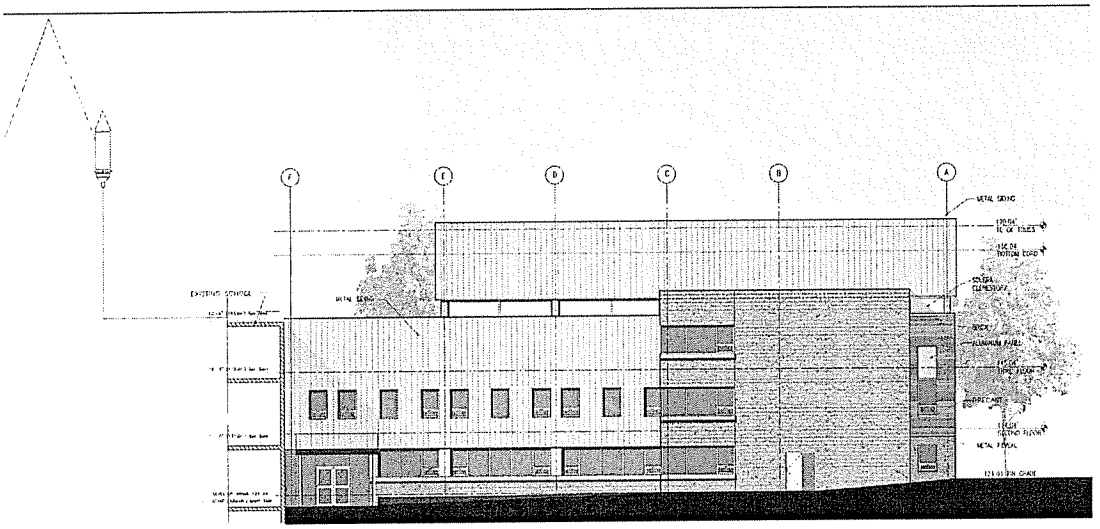
North Elevation



West Elevation

## ATTACHMENT B

## Revised Design, December 2007
## (continued)




East Elevation

## ATTACHMENT C

### Photos of Existing Building

Historic Elements: 1851 Main Building and 1876 East Wing

1962 Addition viewed from Spring Garden Road

# ATTACHMENT D

## Building Conservation Standards for Registered Heritage Properties

The historic character of a heritage property is based on the assumption that (a) the historic materials and features and their unique craftsmanship are of primary importance, and (b) in consequence, these materials and elements are to be retained and restored to the greatest extent possible, not removed or replaced with materials and features which appear to be historic, but which are in fact new.

1. The property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building, its site and environment.

2. The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved; the removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding hypothetical features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or craftsmanship that characterize the property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design in colour, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials, shall not be used.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by the project shall be protected and preserved. If resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The above noted standards are base on the Conservation Standards used by the United States Secretary of the Interior (36 CFR 67) (1991). They are generally in keeping with most Conservation principles, including the Venice Charter (1964).