A New Form In A Historic District

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Abstract

Historic preservation commissions are required to review proposals of new construction - infill - within historic districts. Often, this process is viewed as something that stifles an architect. What can an architect do to both comply with the preservation commission’s wishes and fulfill their clients’ desires to have an innovative new construction? An architect must look past the prescribed ways of satisfying preservation commissions and fully interpret the outcome the preservation commission is trying to produce.
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Introduction

This thesis was generated by an outcome and an idea. The outcome is a new construction within a historic district that more closely resembles the historic homes that surround it, rather than a new architectural form. This thesis sets out to explore the possibilities of infill, while recognizing the restrictions of historic preservation commissions. The idea is that by using historic preservation commissions’ restrictions as a generator, one can examine the many ways that such restrictions can be satisfied, while exploring a new house form. This thesis should serve as one example, in hopes that the ultimate goal of showing the evolution of a neighborhood can be fully obtained.
After starting with cubic volumes, I began to explore how openings would affect the quality of light on the interior. Rather than doors and windows, I realized these openings would bring in sufficient light, while also casting brilliant shadows. These drawings were made from studying a model in the sunlight.
Section Drawing
Floor Plans
Site Section A
Axonometric Drawings
Charcoal Drawing

Model Photographs
Model Photographs
Sketches and a painting of how the site plan could be broken into separate volumes and how that would read from the street.

Eventually, the apartment form was chosen to develop, while the rest of the site was terraced in a way that reflected the footprint of the other volumes.
Preliminary sketches of house forms—mainly exploring how the historic house form can be broken, while still retaining roof pitch and height.