



Interpreting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Subject: Changes to Shotgun Interior Plan

- Applicable Standards:
2. Retention of Historic Character
 5. Preservation of Distinctive Features, Finishes, and Craftsmanship

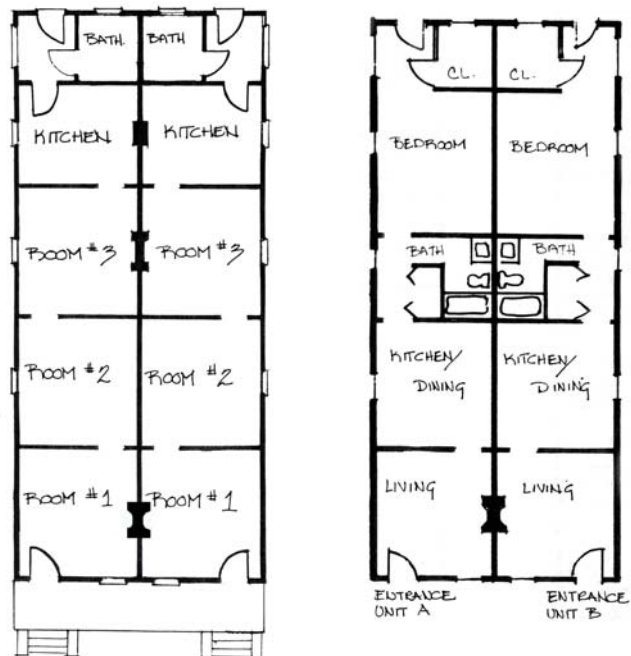
Issue: Floor plans are often of prime importance in defining the character of historic buildings. Sometimes the floor plan defines the building type. This is the case with shotgun cottages, marked by the linear arrangement of rooms that gives the form its name. Although the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation can accommodate some alterations to a shotgun plan, the basic interior layouts of these modest structures must be respected, particularly when they have survived intact.

The following applications feature two double shotgun cottages dating from c. 1900 and c. 1890, respectively. Despite some deterioration in features and finishes, both cottages' characteristic room arrangements remained intact. Each building had a dividing party wall down the middle with four rooms arranged in linear fashion on each side. Sheds containing bathrooms had been added onto the rear of both buildings. Both cottages were rehabilitated for continued use as two family residences.

Application 1 (Compatible treatment): In the first example, the shotgun plan was generally retained in the rehabilitation with some modifications. Kitchens were inserted into the second room of each half of the duplex; a bathroom and laundry were inserted into the third room. The fourth room on each side of the building was enlarged by moving the partition forward a few feet. Despite these alterations, the historic division of the cottage into two equal units was respected in the rehabilitation. The linear arrangement of small rooms, one behind the other, was also maintained on each side. Thus, on both the exterior and interior, the building has the same appearance as it did historically, as a modest double shotgun cottage. This plan, which largely determines its historic character, remains following the rehabilitation. The project meets the Standards for Rehabilitation.



Circa 1900 double shotgun cottage prior to rehabilitation.

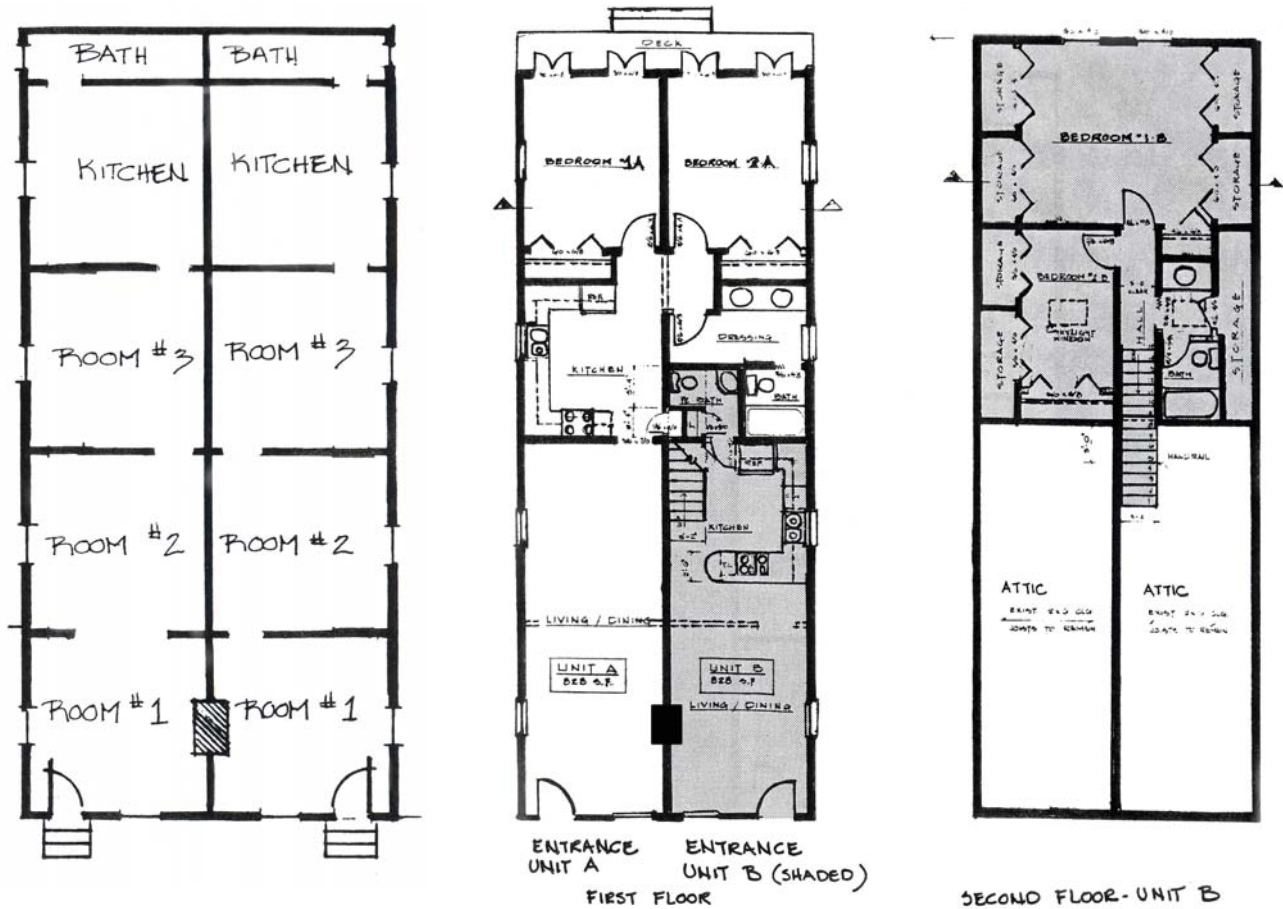


Left: Shotgun plan prior to rehabilitation. Right: Shotgun plan post rehabilitation with acceptable changes.

Application 2 (*Incompatible treatment*): In the second example, radical changes made during the rehabilitation obliterated the characteristic shotgun plan. The wall between Room #1 and Room #2 in both units was removed to create one large room in each unit. Almost the entire rear half of the unit on the right side was incorporated into Unit A on the left side. This effectively destroyed most of the wall separating the two units that defined the shotgun plan. In addition, greatly truncating the length of Unit B further impacted the plan by eliminating the progression of rooms so typical of shotgun interiors. To make up for the space lost from Unit B on the right side a staircase was added to access two bedrooms that were created in the attic. Converting Unit B from a one-story unit into a two-story unit further altered the historic character of the house. The units no longer convey a sense of the original shotgun plan as a result of these changes. Accordingly, the project fails to meet the Standards for Rehabilitation.



Circa 1890 shotgun cottage prior to rehabilitation.



Left: Shotgun plan prior to rehabilitation. Center and Right: After rehabilitation, extensive changes made to shotgun plan resulted in denial of project.

Adapted by Liz Creveling, Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service

These bulletins are issued to explain preservation project decisions made by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The resulting determinations, based on the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#), are not necessarily applicable beyond the unique facts and circumstances of each particular case.