



PRESERVE IOWA SUMMIT

2024

Historic Design Guidelines Act 1:
An Introduction.

6.7.2024
3001.781.00

INTRODUCTIONS

MICHELLE

Michelle Cunliffe is an architect at RDG Planning & Design in Des Moines where she has spent nearly all her time in the past 19 years in the Restoration market. Michelle received her Bachelor of Architecture and a minor in History from Iowa State University.

She has been a part of more than eighteen downtown revitalization projects across the state of Iowa, funded in part by Community Development Block Grants. Other projects include rehabilitation work at the Iowa State Capitol, the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates and historic design guidelines for several communities.



INTRODUCTIONS

CHARLIE

Charlie Cowell is an urban planner for RDG. Charlie received a bachelor's degree in Economics with a minor in Finance from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Iowa.

Charlie works in community and regional planning across a variety of fields including housing, zoning ordinances, comprehensive planning, corridor planning, and active transportation. He currently serves as a board member for the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association. He is a certified with the American Institute of Certified Planners and a member of the American Planning Association.



INTRODUCTIONS

SCOTNEY

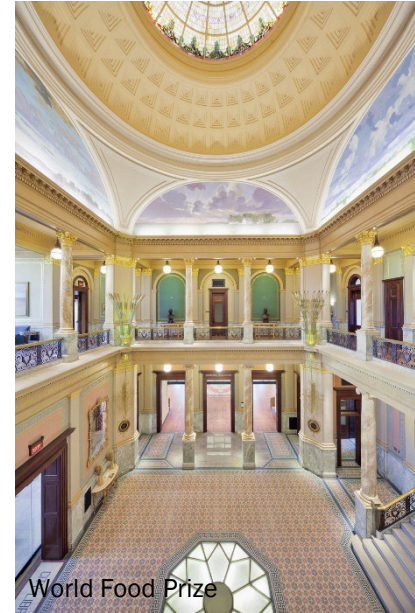
Scotney Fenton is an Architect with more than 25 years at RDG, culminating in his leadership of our Restoration market. Scotney has significant experience with new and existing buildings, additions, restorations, and rehabilitation projects. He has worked on restoring some of Iowa's most iconic buildings, including the Iowa State Capitol, the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, the Woodbury County Courthouse, and the Iowa Governor's residence at Terrace Hill.

He holds a Master of Architecture with an emphasis in Historic Preservation from Ball State University and a Bachelor of Architecture from Iowa State University.



INTRODUCTIONS

RDG



INTRODUCTIONS

RDG

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1. Have you ever attended a PI Summit before?



Yes

No

Con't
remember



2. Where are you from?



Iowa

Outside of Iowa



3. Are you a member of city staff, or serve on a historic preservation commission?



City staff

Historic
preservation
commission

Both

No

Yes, in the
past, but not
currently



4. What best describes your community?



Small
(Less than
5,000)

Medium
(5,000 –
15,000)

Large (15,
000 – 50,
000)

Extra
Large (50,
000+)



5. Does your community have design guidelines?



Yes

No

Not sure



6. Do you wish your community had design guidelines?



We
already
do!

Yes

No

No sure -
I'm here to
learn
more!



HISTORIC DESIGN GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

- Economic benefits of historic preservation.
- What are Historic Design Guidelines?
- Why do we need them?
- What is the process for developing guidelines?
- How are they applied or enforced?
- Questions.



QUESTIONS ...

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7. Would you ever consider living in an historic neighborhood?



Yes

No

Maybe

I currently live
in an historic
neighborhood.



8. Which of these is the largest factor when planning a vacation? (select all that apply)



Walkable communities/
ease of
sightseeing

Interesting
places to dine
or stay

History/culture
of the location

Other



9. Have you ever picked a restaurant or hotel based on its historic qualities (design, character, history of place)?



Yes

No

Unsure



BENEFITS

1.1

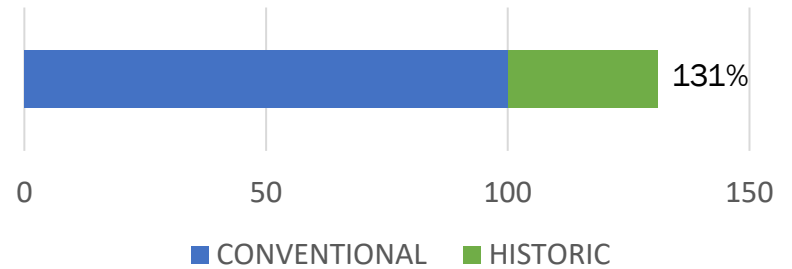
Local districts protect the investments of owners and residents of historic properties.

- Insensitive or poorly planned development can make an area less attractive to investors and homebuyers, and thus undermine property value. In contrast, historic district designation encourages people to buy and rehabilitate properties because they know their investment is protected over time.

Properties within local historic districts appreciate at rates greater than the local market overall as well as faster than similar, non-designated neighborhoods.

- Findings on this point are consistent across the country. Moreover, recent analysis shows that historic districts are also less vulnerable to market volatility from interest rate fluctuations and economic downturns.

HISTORIC DISTRICT SALES v
CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS



1.2

Local districts encourage better quality design.

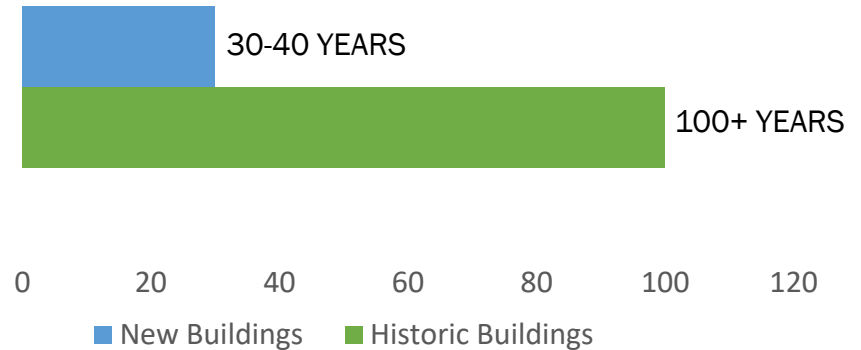
- In this case, better design equals a greater sense of cohesiveness, more innovative use of materials, and greater public appeal—all of which are shown to occur more often within designated districts than non-designated ones.

Local districts help the environment.

- Historic districts encourage communities to retain and use their existing resources in established neighborhoods. This reduces the need for cars, cuts back on pollution and congestion, and eliminates landfill waste.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

EXPECTED LIFESPAN



1.3

Local districts are energy-efficient.

- Many older buildings were designed with energy conservation in mind, taking advantage of natural light, cross-ventilation, and climate-appropriate materials. Preservation commissions are also increasingly improving their design guidelines to make it easier for historic building owners to use renewable-energy technologies.

Historic districts are a vehicle for education.

- They are a tangible link to the past and a way to bring meaning to history and to people's lives. They preserve the original character of buildings and streets, while welcoming growth and innovation within those spaces. They are a living, active record of communities and their residents.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS



1.4

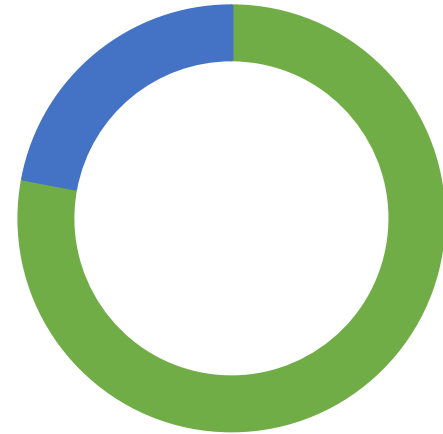
ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Historic districts can positively impact the local economy through tourism.

- An aesthetically cohesive and well-promoted district can be a community's most important attraction. According to a 2009 report, 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers are cultural and/or heritage travelers who spent, on average, \$994 on their most recent trips—compared to \$611 spent by non-cultural and heritage travelers.

Protecting local historic districts can enhance business recruitment potential.

- Vibrant commercial cores and charming neighborhoods with character attract new business and quality industry. Companies continually relocate to communities that offer their workers a higher quality of life, which successful preservation programs and stable districts enhance.



■ HERITAGE TRAVELERS ■ NON-HERITAGE TRAVELERS



1.5

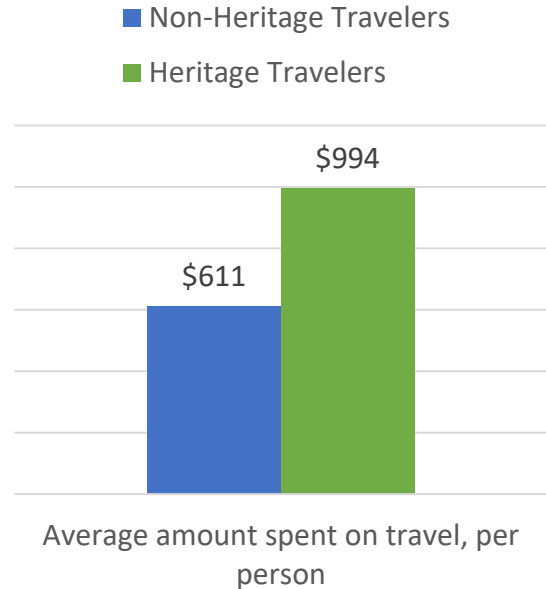
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1.6

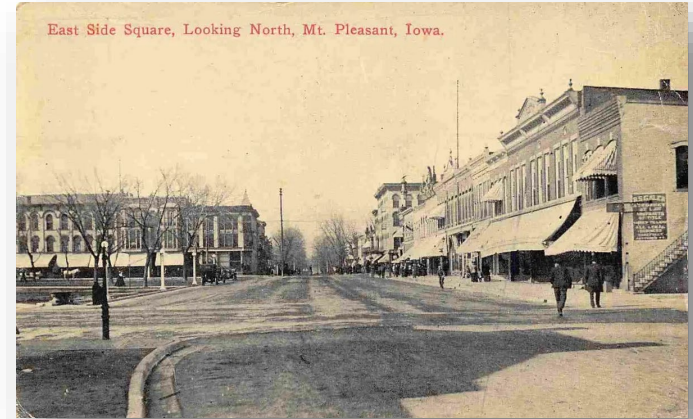
ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Local districts provide social and psychological benefits.

- People living in historic districts enjoy the comfort of a human-scale environment (a mix of aesthetics and functionality that fit the average person's dimensions and capabilities); the opportunity to live and work in attractive surroundings; a recognizable and walkable neighborhood; and the galvanizing effect of community-based group action.

Local districts give communities a voice in their future.

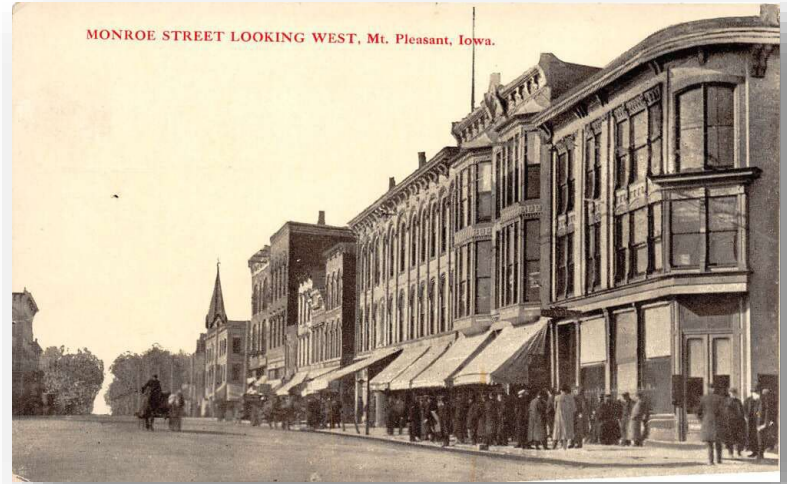
- By participating in the designation process, citizens can help direct their communities' path. Making these decisions together in a structured way—rather than behind closed doors or without public comment—gives everyone involved a sense of empowerment and confidence.



2.1

Historic Design Guidelines:

- are another type of building code
- maintain neighborhood value and integrity
- use mainstream preservation philosophies tailored to local community
- are clear, concise, educational, helpful
- are administered by local, volunteer citizens



2.2

- **State Historical Society of Iowa established (1857).**
- **Historic Sites Act passed by Congress (1935).**
 - Precursor to the National Historic Landmark program (1960).
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation founded (1949).**
- **Modern historic preservation movement began with the demolition of New York City's Penn Station (1963).**
- **National Historic Preservation Act passed by Congress (1966).**
 - Created the National Register of Historic Places.
 - Establish professional standards for the preservation of historic properties.
 - Created State Historic Preservation Officers.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (1977).**
- **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program (1977).**

HISTORY



2.3

Local Historic District established in Charleston, S.C. (1931).

- First preservation ordinance in the United States.
- Overseen by board of architectural review.

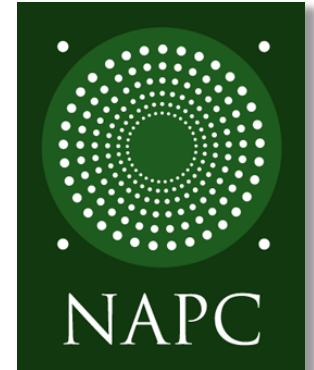
National Historic Preservation Act amended (1980).

- Created the CLG (Certified Local Government) program.
- Sparked interest in creating local preservation commissions.
- Jointly administered by NPS & SHPO.
- Over 90 CLGs in Iowa.

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions established (1983).

- NTHP identified 832 commissions across the U.S. in 1981.
- NAPC identified 1,803 commissions in 1992.
- NPS identified over 2,300 commissions in 2007.
- Note: Des Moines hosted the national Forum in 2018.

HISTORY



2.4

Local Design Guidelines are a part of a longstanding tradition of balancing the welfare of the public and the interests of individual property owners.

Local **preservation ordinances**, **zoning laws**, and **building codes** are other tools traditionally used to maintain this balance. They are not intended to prevent property owners from making changes to their property.

They are meant to ensure that those changes enhance the historic qualities that are enjoyed by all members of the community, and which make an area a special place in which to live and work. Depending on the powers outlined in the ordinance and the needs of the district, design guidelines can range from **recommended design** approaches to **compulsory standards**. Of course, there are many intermediate levels in between...

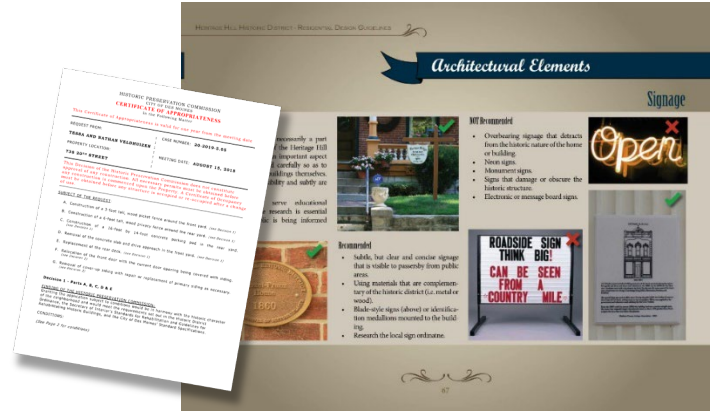


- ❖ Basis for making fair decisions.
- ❖ Consistency in design review.
- ❖ Incentives for investment.
- ❖ Property value enhancement.

2.5

Local review of work proposals.

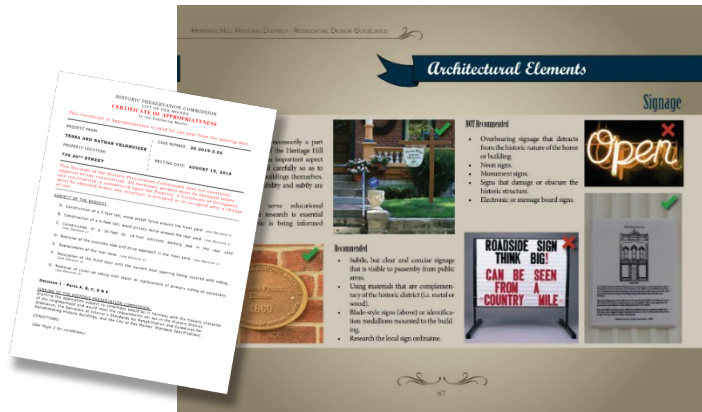
- In the design review process, owners of locally designated landmarks and districts must get approval from a locally appointed historic preservation commission or architectural review board for major exterior alterations, additions, and new construction.
- Commission approval is in the form of a "**certificate of appropriateness.**" To be approved, an application for must meet the design review criteria within the preservation ordinance that a community has adopted. Both the terminology and process may vary somewhat, depending upon the ordinance.



2.6

Clarifying the role of the guidelines.

- The topic of local design guidelines always needs to be understood within its relationship to the local preservation ordinance. The **ordinance is a law** and the **design review criteria** are part of the law.
- Design guidelines are not, in and of themselves, mandatory like the ordinance and should not be confused with the ordinance.
- In most cases, guidelines are just that—helpful, interpretive, explanatory recommendations. Consisting of written and graphic information in a printed, book format, they are **key support materials** for administering design review and may be used to advantage by commissions, boards, and applicants alike in the review process.



- ❖ Ordinance is the law.
- ❖ Design guidelines are recommendations for building owners.

2.7

GUIDELINES CAN...

- ✓ Explain, expand, and interpret general design criteria in the local preservation ordinance.
- ✓ Help reinforce the character of a historic area and protect its visual aspects.
- ✓ Protect the value of public and private investment, which might otherwise be threatened by the undesirable consequences of poorly managed growth.
- ✓ Indicate which approaches to design a community encourages, as well as which it discourages.
- ✓ Serve as a tool for designers and their clients to use in making preliminary design decisions.
- ✓ Increase public awareness of design issues and options.

GUIDELINES CANNOT...

- ✗ Serve the same legal purpose as the design review provisions of the ordinance. An ordinance is a law, but local design guidelines are typically not laws.
- ✗ Limit growth or regulate where growth takes place. Guidelines address only the visual impact of individual work projects on the character of a local historic district. Growth itself is a separate issue that must be separately addressed through zoning ordinances and preservation planning.
- ✗ Control how space within a building is used. They usually deal only with the exterior, publicly visible portions of buildings, not with how interior space is laid out or used.
- ✗ Guarantee that all new construction will be compatible with a historic area or guarantee the creativity that is essential to the best sorts of sensitive design.
- ✗ Guarantee "high quality" construction. Since materials are generally not specified in the design guidelines, the final visual results, again, cannot be guaranteed.



2.8

GETTING STARTED

Getting Started – Ask yourself what is the primary end goal

Education (guidelines)

- Give property owners the resources to do projects correctly. Be proactive in historic preservation practices to help, interpret, and explain recommendations.
- Possible Reasons:
 - An area is not yet a National Register District but with the potential
 - A National Register District with engaged property owners willing to comply without additional procedures
 - Newly formed historic preservation commission or advocate to elevate knowledge in the community
 - For tying to financial incentives to trigger enforcement



2.9

GETTING STARTED

Getting Started – Ask yourself what is the primary end goal

Enforcement (standards, ordinance)

- Require compliance with review and approval procedures
- Reasons:
 - A designated National Register District with a high record of poor compliance
 - The image and draw of the city partially because of the historic district
 - Large tourism draw
 - High community and property owner support
 - Directions from city leadership



2.10

GETTING STARTED

Begin through other planning efforts

- Ensure that historic preservation is woven into other efforts. Build the narrative over time.
- Is historic preservation a goal in the Comprehensive Plan?
- Do any other plans incorporate historic preservation goals such as downtown plans, housing plans, or economic development plans.
- Does the zoning code have historic zoning districts already?
- Does the zoning code have exceptions or additional requirements for historic properties (not National Register criteria)?
- Does or is the city willing to provide any funding to historic preservation projects? Like rehab or façade restoration.



2.11

GETTING STARTED

Authority and Enforcement Considerations - Most commissions do not have any authority to enforce.
Advisory to another approval body

- Is there high support for historic preservation in the community through other planning efforts?
- Does or can your Commission have the capacity to review applications?
- Will your Commission be willing to recommend no at times?
- Will the approval body give due consideration to historic preservation?
- Does staff have the expertise to administer?



3.1

Make a decision on how to use the design guidelines.

- Remember—the **ordinance** is a law and the **design review criteria** are part of the law.
- Design guidelines are not, in and of themselves, mandatory like the ordinance and should not be confused with the ordinance.
- Recognize that if you call it a "guideline," you should not deny a work proposal just for failing to meet the guideline.
- A **guideline is advisory**. If you wish to describe a basis for denying an application, call it a criterion, standard, or some other term that makes clear that it is a requirement and make it part of your ordinance.

DEVELOPMENT



- ❖ Ordinance is “shall do” or “shall not do.”
- ❖ Guideline is “should do” or “should not do.”

3.2

Analyze your district's character.

- It is essential to have a clear understanding of the history of the district and how that history is reflected by its physical characteristics, such as the architecture, landscape, and street plan. Ideally, the buildings, streetscapes, and setting should be identified in the district's nomination package.
- Has the district evolved over time, or does it represent one period in time? Decide exactly what it is that needs to be protected!

Identify historic preservation goals and district needs.

- Will buildings in the district be preserved, as is; or rehabilitated for new uses; or restored to an earlier appearance?
- Will different approaches to work be applied, depending upon the significance, use, and interpretation?
- In this section, identify the approach or approaches to work that will protect the historical value and significant features of the district, e.g., preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration. Include general Standards or principles for all treatments for which guidelines will be written.
- Guidelines, however, should be custom-tailored to the particular history and characteristics of the district. For example, if a town has six districts and they differ in appearance and the kinds of work needed to protect them, then each one should have a specific set of guidelines.

DEVELOPMENT



- ❖ Customize the guidelines to fit YOUR community!



3.3

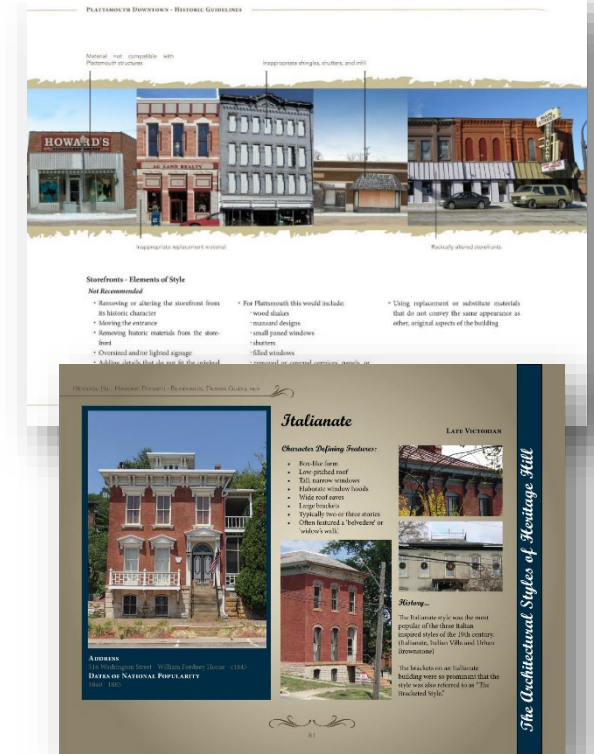
Review other district guidelines.

- See how other historic districts have developed design guidelines to prevent "reinventing the wheel." Choose basic elements that apply to your own historic district and adapt them to yours.
- Especially note successful methods of illustrating preservation concepts.

Write specific guidelines for your district.

- Design guidelines should address the special character of your district and the work needed to protect it. Draft an illustrated history that identifies significant characteristics and features of the district, such as buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes.
- The use of photos and drawings throughout to reinforce key points is strongly recommended.
- Information on materials maintenance, repair and replacement should be included, as well as guidance on new construction in the district. If restoration is a recommended treatment for the district, guidelines on those approaches should be included.
- Make guidance on the treatment of streetscape (including signage) and landscape features an integral part of the publication.

DEVELOPMENT



3.4

Review your design guidelines.

While in final draft, review the guidelines, asking a number of questions:

- Are they **consistent with** the provisions of the **local ordinance**?
- Do they **achieve** the original **goals**?
- Are there administrative problems?
- Do they conflict with the ordinance and other codes?
- If the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are used, do your guidelines **agree with** the principles in **the Standards**?
- Are they **consistent** with the particular needs of the district?
- Will the guidelines meet with **community support**?
- How do we want to use the guidelines?
- Are they truly advisory in nature or should we call them "standards" or "criteria" because we want to make them requirements?

DEVELOPMENT

Good design guidelines...

- Embraces generally accepted preservation principles with local application.
- Acknowledges local community character and history.
- Easy to understand by public and commissioners.
- Illustrated with examples of what is appropriate and what is not.
- Helpful and serves as a reference to property owners.



3.5

- Acknowledgements.
- Map indicating boundaries of jurisdiction.
- Introduction.
- Local architectural history.
- Introduction to the Guidelines and Project Planning.
- Resources available to building owners to help them follow the Guidelines.
- Definitions used in the Guidelines and the industry.
- Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Determining an Historic Building (contributing/non-contributing).
- Illustrated Glossary of Common Architectural terms & Building Elements.
- Design Guidelines & Building Maintenance (illustrated with recommended and not recommended / allowed and not allowed).
- Materials (references and use of historic or alternate materials)
- Financial Resources available to building owners.

CONTENTS

Historic Mill, Historic District - Rehabilitation Design Guidelines

Standards for Rehabilitation

1 < A 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 and its site and environment.

PRactical APPLICATION
To maintain its historic integrity, the best use of a building is to maintain its original use or, if that requires minimal change to the historic fabric, when it is not feasible or desired to continue using the building for its intended use, the ideal solution is to use the building in a manner that closely resembles the original use and minimize the need for alterations.

EXAMPLE
The Dan Moore County Heritage Center Museum in Burlington at the northeast corner of Fourth and Columbus is a good example of the proper reuse of a building. The original building, opened in 1890 as the Burlington Public Library, Book Store and in its new purpose a county museum. Major interior alterations were unnecessary and the exterior remains virtually the same. Additionally, both uses are for the direct good of the community.



HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS STANDARD
Any proposed reuse of a building that requires significant changes (especially to the exterior) should be avoided. The loss of historic fabric is irreversible and should be avoided if at all possible. Consider a sensitive addition to a secondary elevation rather than extensive removal or alteration to the building's facade if additional space is required.

Historic Mill, Historic District - Rehabilitation Design Guidelines


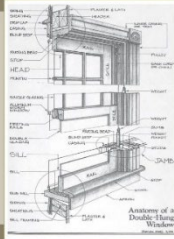
Architectural Elements

Windows

Why is this feature important?
Following major building fires and as a result of wars, windows are one of the most character defining features of a house. They are often one of the most abused features of any building over time, as windows are difficult to repair. The eak, stone, and iron details of the original windows reflect the original design and style of the house. Ignoring these details will have a negative impact on the house and thus the historic neighborhood. The best approach to windows should be to repair and restore rather than replace.

Fit it in the Detail, Don't Replace
• Older window sashes were made up of "one divided lites". This means the muntins were used to hold multiple, small individual panes of glass. Today's manufacturing process allows for much larger pieces of glass. However, this modern view appearance of a replacement window look for "one pane divided lites" (rather than replace muntins if a window sill has been successfully located).

Fit it in the Detail, Don't Replace
• Storm windows are a good way to improve the energy efficiency of an historic window. Be sure to determine what style of storm window would be appropriate for your window. Most storm windows will fit the entire opening and do not obstruct any window details or cause appearance. Originally storm windows were only used during cold winter months and were removed during warmer months.

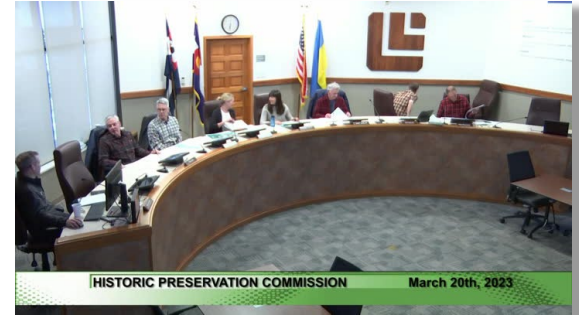


4.1

Commissions should always:

- Post proper meeting notices.
- Hold open and public meetings.
- Maintain accurate records.
- Notify all interested parties.
- Adhere to consistent standards.

REVIEW MEETINGS



4.2

REVIEW MEETINGS

Remember that the purpose of the meeting is to make a decision!

- Keep this objective paramount and decisions timely.
- Be willing to discuss, but always within the context of the design review criteria and standards or ordinance.

Focus on the big issues, not on personal biases or petty details.

- Reviewers must distinguish between a design concept that they may dislike personally, but that meets the design criteria and guidelines or standards, and a design that is objectively inappropriate because it clearly violates the design criteria and standards or ordinance.
- Remember that the commission's role is to **administer**, not to draft new guidelines at every meeting.



4.3

REVIEW MEETINGS

Listen to the presentation by the applicant and his or her representatives.

- This provides the applicant with the opportunity to describe the project objectives and to show the intended design.

Ask for clarity of presentation content.

- Withhold design criticisms. First determine that everyone understands what has been presented.
- Ask questions about what the drawings mean, if necessary. Don't be embarrassed if technical information is not clear.
- It is your responsibility to be certain that you understand what has been presented.



4.4

REVIEW MEETINGS

Check to see that documentation for the proposal is complete.

- If important drawings, models, or photographs are missing that are essential for the commission to make a determination, cut the review short before getting into design criticism.
- Reviewing an incomplete application is a waste of time for everyone. It may also be a disservice to an applicant if a proposal is denied, simply because it is misunderstood.

If the documentation is complete, critique the proposal following the design criteria and standards or ordinance.

- Use a checklist to see that you covered all the items and ask for public comments as well.
- You should allow open discussion among the commission, applicant, and public, but keep it on track and avoid tangential issues that may be emotionally charged, but do not have direct bearing on the appropriateness of the design in terms of the criteria and standards.



4.5

REVIEW MEETINGS

When the discussions seem to be over, ask these questions of yourselves.

- Have the criteria and standards or ordinance been sufficiently met to merit an approval?

You have two choices for an answer: "Yes" or "No"

- Which criteria and standards or ordinance give you the basis for making this decision?

An approval or disapproval should be based on specific criteria in the ordinance, and you should be able to identify the critical ones.

- If you can answer these questions, you are ready for a vote!



4.6

REVIEW MEETINGS

Once you have voted, summarize the outcome clearly.

- Remember, you are not finished until you have a summary! Do not let the applicant leave without understanding what you have decided-approval, denial, a conditional approval, re-submission of a new design, etc.

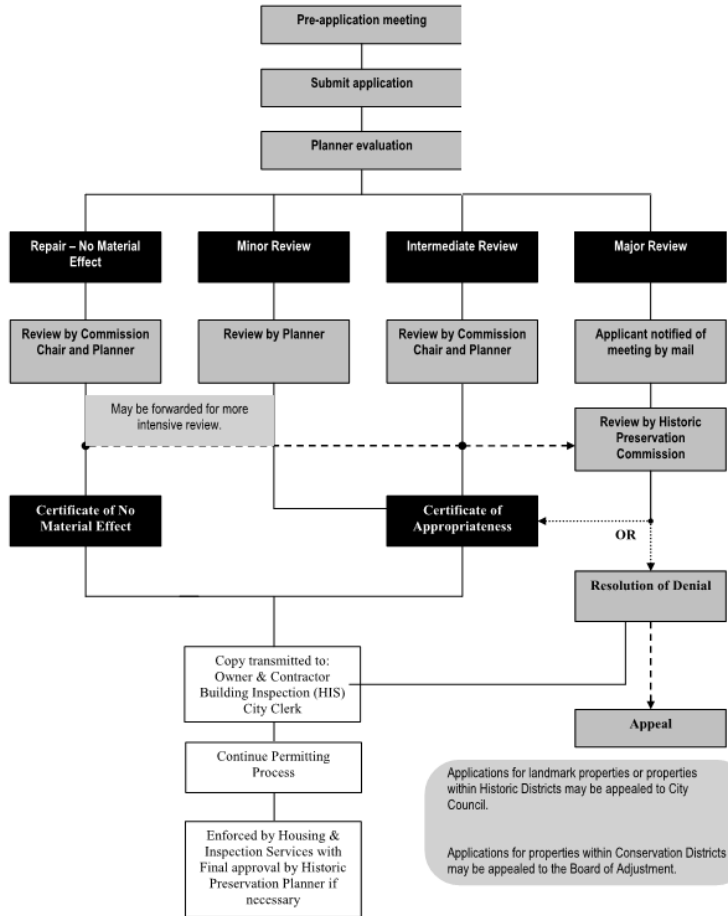
Finally, thank the applicant for participating in the process.

- A successful design review meeting means that you have treated the applicant fairly by basing your decision – either way – squarely on the ordinance's design criteria, and the design standards written and adopted by your community.
- Also – acknowledge that the applicant is typically the one making the bulk of the financial investment in the historic neighborhood – for all to enjoy!



4.7

REVIEW MEETINGS



Applications for landmark properties or properties within Historic Districts may be appealed to City Council.

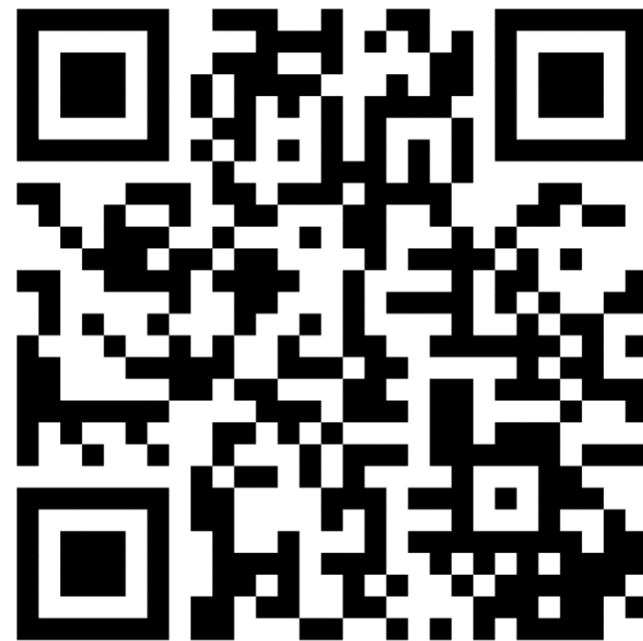
Applications for properties within Conservation Districts may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment.



SUMMING UP ...

RDG

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Use code: 3665 7321



10. Have you ever consulted a set of design guidelines?



Yes

No

Unsure



11. What do you think is the biggest hurdle for your community/why don't they have historic design guidelines. (select all that apply)



There is nothing in my community worth preserving.

Lack of interest from city staff.

Lack of interest from the community.

Lack of funding.

Lack of information on how to get started.

Other

Not sure

My community already has design guidelines.



12. Would you like to know more about how to implement design guidelines in your community?



Yes

No, this session covered the information I needed.

I think I already know what to do.





QUESTIONS?
ANSWERS!

THANK YOU!

Michelle Cunliffe, AIA, LEED AP

515.288.3141

mcunliffe@rdgusa.com

Charlie Cowell, AICP, APA

515.309.3265

ccowell@rdgusa.com

Scotney Fenton, AIA

515.309.3223

sfenton@rdgusa.com

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