



## Community Development Department Planning Division

### DESIGN REVIEW OF HISTORIC SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES IN THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

**PURPOSE:** In the Downtown Historic Conservation District, the design review process ensures that changes to existing historic homes will be compatible with the historic character of both the buildings themselves and the surrounding neighborhood. This purpose is contained in the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan.

**WHEN REQUIRED:** All projects that involve additions or other exterior alterations to a historic single-family home require design approval by the Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC). "Historic" homes are those which are designated as historic in the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan (Figures 1 and 2, pages 7 and 8). As part of the design review process, the HPRC reviews the architecture, landscaping, materials, and site plan for the changes being proposed. If all or part of the exterior of a historic home is proposed for demolition, then the demolition permit must be approved by the Planning Commission, following review and recommendation by the HPRC.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES:** The Downtown Historic Conservation Plan includes design guidelines which provide specific standards for the design of exterior changes to historic buildings. There are special guidelines for residential structures. Those guidelines will be utilized by the HPRC in reviewing the project's compatibility with the existing structure. The design of specific building elements, such as roof pitch, window treatments, materials, and building proportion, are addressed by the guidelines. The guidelines should be used in designing any changes you plan to make to a historic building.

**APPLICATION:** The submittal requirements for design review are listed on a separate document entitled "Design Review Application Checklist." Also refer to the "Submittal Standards" sheet for detailed content information. Please talk to a staff planner to discuss the application requirements for your specific project. Once submitted, the plans will be reviewed for completeness. You will be contacted if additional information is required. After staff has determined that the plans are complete, additional full sets of plans will be needed for review by the Historic Preservation Review Commission.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that certain design review applications undergo environmental review. You will be informed if such review is required for your application. A separate "Environmental Review" handout contains additional submittal requirements.

**SCHEDULING:** Once an application is determined to be complete, it is formally accepted. Copies of the application are sent to review agencies and departments. The application is then scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Review Commission. The Historic Preservation Review Commission meets once a month, usually on the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month at 6:30 p.m. The HPRC meeting is a public meeting, and notices are sent out to the owners of property located within 300 feet of your property, and are also posted in the vicinity of your property.

**ACTION:** During the HPRC meeting, you will be given time to present your project to the Commissioners, and to answer any questions that they may have. Planning Division staff is also given time to give the Commissioners its comments. Any member of the public attending the meeting may also offer comments. If you are working with an architect or other designer, they may speak on your behalf, or present separate comments.

At the conclusion of the comments, the Historic Preservation Review Commission will take action to approve, conditionally approve, deny, or continue the application for more information. The Commission bases its decision on: criteria contained in the Zoning Ordinance; Planning staff's recommendations; and testimony received at the meeting. A copy of the Commission's action is mailed to the applicant following the meeting.

The Historic Preservation Review Commission's decisions are final unless appealed within 10 business days of the date of action. Historic Preservation Review Commission decisions may be appealed to the Planning Commission. Information on appeals can be found in a separate information sheet. An approved project may not commence construction until the close of the appeal period and until all applicable permit approvals have been secured.

**RELATED FORMS AND INFORMATION:**

- Downtown Historic Conservation Plan
- Commission-Level Design Review
- Referral list for Historical Resources Consultants (by California Historical Resources Information System)
  
- Design Review Application Checklist
- Planning Application Form
- Project Summary Sheet
- Submittal Standards
- Mailing Notice Requirements
- Environmental Review
- Environmental Checklist
- Fee Schedule