



PREPARING A PROJECT FOR DESIGN REVIEW

Technical Paper No. 2

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Background

Any major restoration work or projects involving alterations to a significant feature of a Kenmore Landmark require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), which is obtained through an established design review process. This paper explains the purpose of design review and contains suggestions for planning a restoration or rehabilitation project. Contact Kenmore Development Services staff early in project planning, since they can help identify resources and provide technical information.

Purpose

A landmark must exhibit physical “integrity.” This means that the property retains physical features and design characteristics that contribute to and reflect its historic significance. These elements, called “features of significance”, are unique to each property and may include the overall scale and massing of the building, design elements such as front porches or windows, or even planting materials and open space on the building site. The purpose of design review is to ensure that any project involving a landmark property is carefully planned to maximize and protect the historic character of the property.

Design Guidelines

The Landmarks Commission uses *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and companion guidelines to guide the COA design review process. Because these *Standards* are used to review a project, it is best to consult them well before serious project planning begins. The *Standards* are available on the Internet or can be obtained from the City of Kenmore Development Services Department. Every project involving a landmark is unique, so the *Standards* distinguish between four basic approaches (preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction) and the accompanying guidelines provide further specific guidance. General guidance is summarized here:

1. Identify, Retain and Preserve

Identify historic building materials and design features that define the character of the property and which should be retained in the process of rehabilitation work. These features are identified in the Commission’s *Findings of Fact & Decision* (prepared following a landmark designation hearing) as “features of significance”.

2. Protect and Maintain

Extending the life of the historic building materials through timely and appropriate maintenance is a priority. Protecting the historic materials typically helps reduce the need for more extensive repairs in the future. It is important to consider the protection of all historic features during a maintenance project. For example, if the project involves

cleaning a roof, choose a gentle cleaning method that does not damage the historic roofing material or adjacent siding and roof details.

3. *Repair*

When features of significance are deteriorated, repair is the first option to consider. Repair also includes the limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts when there are surviving prototypes. For example, if shingles are missing from a roof, new shingles that match the originals should be installed to fill the gaps.

4. *Replacement*

When a feature of significance is too deteriorated or damaged to repair, "in-kind" replacement (using the same design and materials) is the preferred option. If replacement in-kind is not technically or economically feasible, use of a compatible substitute material may be considered. For example, a roof originally clad with large cedar shingles might be re-roofed with a product of similar appearance since high quality cedar products are no longer readily available.

5. *Design for Missing Historic Features*

When an important architectural feature is missing, reconstruction of the element (based on sound documentation of the original design) is preferred. However, if documentation is unavailable, a second option for the replacement feature is a new design, which is compatible with the remaining historic features of the property.

6. *Alterations/Additions to Landmarks*

Construction of an addition to a landmark building or within the boundaries of a landmark site should be undertaken only after carefully considering how best to accommodate the need for additional space. If an addition or new construction adjacent to a landmark building is required, it should be designed to minimize alterations and/or visual impacts to the primary elevations and features of significance.

Preparing a Project for Design Review

To prepare an application for design review, the applicant must clearly describe and explain the scope of the project, the present condition of the feature(s) involved, the original appearance of the feature(s), and the design standards and guidelines which apply to the project. The following section outlines questions the applicant should consider and information the applicant should gather when preparing a project for design review.

1. *Define the Scope of the Project*

What parts of the building or site does the project involve? How do those elements relate to the other parts of the landmark property? For example, will the project involve features of the landmark that are visible from the roadway? Current photographs or design drawings (including a site plan) are usually essential to illustrate the scope of most projects.

2. *Document the Present Condition*

What is the present condition of the part of the landmark that will be affected by the proposed project? Are the building features in good repair, deteriorated, or missing? Photographs of the features and/or inspection reports serve to clearly document the present condition.

3. *Describe the Historic Appearance*

What did the property (building and site) look like historically? What changes have been made? Use historic photographs or archival materials to understand the historic appearance of the property and any alterations that may have occurred over time.

The *Landmark Registration Form*, prepared prior to designation of the property, may describe the property's historic appearance. Also, the King County Historic Preservation Program may have historic photographs on file. Plans, maps, and interviews may also help document the original appearance.

Careful physical examination of the landmark can also yield useful information. Take a good look at other local buildings of a similar construction date, function, building materials or architectural style. They may provide clues about the original appearance of the landmark. Architectural style guides and/or historic architectural plan books may be another useful source of information.

4. *Evaluate Alternatives and Determine Most Appropriate Action*

Once the above steps are completed the information should be used to evaluate alternatives which adhere to the *Standards* noted above. For example, if the goal is to restore a porch that has been removed, the task will be to determine how to best replace a missing feature (see #5 above). The applicant will need to use a combination of sources (historic photographs, original plans - if available – and physical examination) to determine the original appearance of the porch and obtain sufficient information to design the replacement porch. If historic documentation is not available, the design of the new porch should not be based on conjecture but should be compatible with the historic character of the building.

Considerations in the Design Review Process

While retaining or restoring a landmark's historic appearance is always a priority, the design review process acknowledges that changes are often needed to extend the life of the property. In evaluating proposed alterations to historic properties, the Landmarks Commission also considers a number of factors including the:

- extent of impact to the landmark;
- reasonableness of the alteration in light of other alternatives available;
- extent alteration is necessary to meet the requirements of law; and
- extent alteration is necessary to achieve a reasonable economic return.

Gathering information that helps answer these questions will enable the applicant to work expeditiously with the Design Review Committee to develop a restoration or rehabilitation strategy which preserves the historic character of the landmark while allowing for its continued use.

For more information about preparing a project for design review or obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness, contact the Development Services Department at (425) 398-8900.