



Memorandum

Planning Division
Community & Economic Development Department

To: Historic Landmark Commission

From: Carl Leith, Senior Historic Preservation Planner

Date: September 1, 2011

Re: Residential Design Guidelines Revision - Issues, Objectives & Content

Purpose

The review, update and refinement of the Residential Design Guidelines is identified as a priority by Staff and City Council. It is also a priority in the Draft City Historic Preservation Plan (Goal 2.10).

At the commencement of the revision of the Residential Design Guidelines the purpose of this Memorandum is to highlight primary issues and objectives, briefly outlining in the process some of the content of the new guidelines, as currently envisioned by Staff. It provides an initial opportunity for the Commission to review, discuss, highlight and/or agree primary objectives and content of the forthcoming document. The discussions, of course, will be a continuum from this point through to the end of the review and revision process, with scope to review and refine the guidelines at various stages until December.

Concurrently, City Council is reviewing the range of urban character and preservation tools which are envisioned as part of the forthcoming Preservation Plan and program. The adoption of the series of design guidelines and provisions for conservation districts are regarded as key elements in this program.

Commissioners will recall the Memorandum presented during a work session on May 5, 2011 (see Attachment A). That Memo summarized the anticipated revision and approval process for the three sets of design guidelines, including the Commercial and Sign Guidelines, as well as the Residential, as key components of the range of design tools available to the Commission to implement the preservation program. The May Memo also introduced this review of the Residential Design Guidelines and briefly explained the proposed 'format of a design guideline' as a design reasoning and review tool, which will be revised in the three sets of design guidelines. As confirmed at the time,

the revised design guidelines will form part of a series, initially residential, commercial and signs, sharing common sections of resource information, such as glossary and procedural material.

Since the new Commercial and Sign guidelines have been largely agreed by the Commission with incremental and detailed review since 2009, the latter stages of the final review and approval of those design guidelines is anticipated being relatively straightforward. It is important however that they are revised and refined to reflect the new format and organization, since they had been drafted to reflect the character of the adopted Residential Design Guidelines.

This Memorandum identifies a series of primary objectives in the revision of the Residential Design Guidelines, highlights a number of the issues with the existing document, and summarizes the concentrated process timeline for these revisions. The Revisions program is summarized as Attachment B of this memo.

Issues and Objectives

The current Residential Design Guidelines provide a comprehensive foundation for advice and review within the historic districts and for the range of landmark buildings within the City. They, as with the Ordinance Standards, are based upon the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, and are designed to provide guidance and flexibility to suit the circumstances of each case. Some of the terminology used in the guidelines, however, promotes confusion with the more prescriptive language used in the ordinance standards; contrary to the inherent advantages of adaptability and flexibility which make design guidelines such a valuable resource in the stewardship of the city's historic and architectural character.

Since the adoption of the guidelines in 1999 the preservation program in the city has matured and success can be measured in the incremental enhancement and desirability of designated historic neighborhoods. During this period the city has added one local historic district and several national historic districts. Across the country, historic preservation philosophy, policy and practice has also become more sophisticated, and is increasingly accepted as integral to economic and cultural vitality, and city livability. It is also regarded as a key part of national and global policy on environmental sustainability. Emphasis therefore has changed in response to policy priorities, research, experience and refinement in approach; refinement echoed also in the form and organization of design guidelines.

There are consequently several areas of the current residential design guidelines which would benefit from revision and refinement to better serve as advice and review guidance for the community, the commission and the city. Commissioners will have additional thoughts on where further material and clarification might be important, based upon seasoned experience using the guidelines.

Information

A primary goal of the design guidelines is to provide information and advice. The majority of home owners seek guidance on what to do and how to approach a project, first and foremost. Information on procedures for approval, although essential, comes second. A key objective therefore in revising the residential design guidelines is to enhance the information and resources within the document and to expand the range of 'live' links to additional information available remotely. Anticipating that much use of the guidelines will be digital, accessed from the City preservation website or a

downloaded digital copy, major potential lies in creating design guidance which is both interactive & dynamic. The guidelines would be closely linked with the website which would be updated regularly, and would also be linked with the key sources of preservation information nationally.

Clarity

Improved clarity can be achieved in several areas, including the document, the page design, enhanced graphics, and the form of a design guideline.

The structure of the guidelines should provide ready access to the design guidelines sections placing these closer to the front of the document, supported by and cross referenced to information on neighborhood character and architectural style and type.

Page design and layout will also be enhanced. Using a two column design to improve the visual balance and relative weight of text and graphics, there should be sharper layout with greater use of 'white space' to enhance visual clarity and coherence, with specific focus on each design criterion and each guideline.

As covered briefly in the previous Memo, the form of the guideline will also be revised and clarified. The revised format will link the context or character analysis and description, and the associated design objective/s, with the numbered design guideline or guidelines themselves. They are both integral parts of a design guideline, although currently they are covered in different parts of each chapter; this presently gives rise to impressions of duplication, with the repetition of headings and text. The design guideline should provide a coherent design evaluation tool, which can both inform and suggest direction or solution, even where the precise nature of the proposal or issue may not exactly 'fit' the guideline text. A clear indication of appropriate direction should be provided by the hierarchy of reasoning between the general direction and the detailed advice provided. Attachment A of the Memorandum (5/5/11) provides an indicative definition and an example of the components of a design guideline, and how they are designed to interrelate.

The separate Policy wording, which presently opens each section, will form part of the introductory text, in the form of an 'over-arching' design goal. To improve navigation, each section or chapter will have its own 'table of contents', supplementing the primary Table of Contents, and listing the topic headings within each section.

Flexibility

The terminology used in the current residential guidelines interchanges the terms 'standard' with 'guideline'. Standard implies a defined threshold which must be met – a 'yes' or 'no', rather more rigid, requirement. A design guideline, however, provides advice and guidance and indicates a direction of action/s which would be appropriate in meeting the standards in the ordinance; the characteristic here is one of providing the flexibility necessary to address the unique combined circumstances of the property, the setting and the project. Presently, the interchangeability of the two terms in the residential design guidelines causes confusion with the design standards in the ordinance and implies a rigidity which is counter-productive to the effective flexibility of design guidelines and their application. The way this flexibility works, using the review hierarchy of a design guideline, is described in the paragraph above.

The guidelines will be re-crafted to remove all language referring to the guidelines as standards, and such terms as "shall" and "not allowed", which appear periodically in the present document.

Rationale & Benefits

Historic preservation needs to be defined at the outset – understanding the “WHAT”. It is essentially the stewardship of our cultural resources through the sensitive management of change. Consequently, it is about change, and the resulting evolution of urban form, building upon the richness of previous incremental changes, and retaining the best of that or those layers of character.

The rationale and philosophy underlying preservation is already addressed in the design guidelines, as are many of the spectrum of benefits associated with historic preservation. Focus and research in this area has evolved over the last 12 years, as has the primacy of environmental sustainability policy. Our understanding of what works and what works well is that much more mature, and there are correspondingly more examples of best preservation practice and associated success stories. The revision of the design guidelines should reflect where the policy and practice in preservation have moved over this period.

Preservation rationale and philosophy have been directly influenced by national, and in some cases international, thinking and research, in turn informed by many individual local pioneering initiatives. It is important that the guidelines effectively present the “WHY” before they explain the “HOW”. An understanding of this is critical to the context of advice provided by the guidelines. Rationale in the design guidelines can be enhanced with stronger background covering such areas as the role of community and city identity, the importance of safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of our historic resources, and the expression of time and maturity in our historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Identifying the range of benefits associated with preservation now has a much more significant body of research substantiating and supplementing preservation benefits identified in the later 1990s. This will change the weight of the reasoning, provide access to enhanced information and resources, and inform the thinking associated with the guidelines.

The stewardship of our traditional neighborhoods and our earlier building stock has such a key role to play in the reducing carbon emissions and re-teaching us many inherently energy efficient characteristics we appear to have forgotten over more recent decades. The present guidelines began to identify these strengths and advantages when initially drafted. Research and understanding has moved so much further in the interim, yet we still counter ill-informed pressure and initiatives to replace these resources with superficial and short term ‘expedients’. The revised guidelines will draw more extensively upon this information, and build in interactive links to keep in touch with new thinking and research.

Coverage

Sections of the current document have text covering certain topics but no accompanying design guidelines. Additional guidelines will be added to ensure coverage where this is needed. Text will be redrafted to dovetail character description, design objective and guideline points.

The Historic Landmark Commission's Policy Document, used as a working policy document for many years to record new or revised policy has several matters which need to be covered in the revised design guidelines. Other items are more appropriately ordinance material. The Policy Document will ‘go away’ after these inclusions are accommodated elsewhere. Additional guidance will be provided to cover several topics, including alternative materials and renewable energy.

The residential guidelines currently address the individual history and character of specific districts and include additional design guidelines to supplement the coverage and advice in the context of this character. In some cases there are guidelines within one district section which have pertinent application elsewhere, perhaps residing most effectively in the main body of the series. These will be reviewed and revised accordingly.

In 2010 Westmoreland Place was designated a new city local historic district, and subsequently designated as a national historic district. A new section of the residential design guidelines will be drafted to address the history and character of Westmoreland, with additional design guidelines as appropriate.

Architectural Style & Character

As time has moved on, and with it the 50 year threshold for buildings to be considered 'historic', there is a need to address some areas of architectural character where more recent construction, e.g. in the 1950s, became simpler, changing in construction methods and style, and experimenting with different materials. Design guideline coverage will be supplemented to accommodate these characteristics.

New Construction & Restoration

Currently the residential guidelines have an effective series of context design guidelines addressing the construction of new infill buildings in an established residential neighborhood. These are based on the basic ground rules for context sensitive design and establish essential maxims for height, scale, setbacks, profile, fenestration, etc. There may be supplementary guidance which can amplify advice in this section, supported by more extensive graphic coverage of recent successful infill design. Commissioners will have their own thoughts on where additional material would be beneficial.

There is an immediate distinction within the ordinance, and consequently the design guidelines, between a contributing and a non-contributing building within an historic district. This is based directly on the national rules (administered by the state) on methodology and criteria employed in building surveys. 'Non-contributing' status has two categories:

C – "Ineligible: built during the historic period but has had major alterations or additions; no longer retains integrity. The resource may still have local historic significance."

D – "Out-of-Period: constructed outside the historic period."

Designation as Non-Contributing adversely affects eligibility for tax credits, although the assumption is that if subsequent adverse alterations can be reversed and the building integrity reinstated then there is the potential to re-evaluate and re-categorize as 'contributing'. There are different ordinance standards that apply if a building is designated non-contributing, assuming that the loss of the building will not adversely affect the character of the district. These regulations do not take account of the degree of alteration, potential for restoration, local historic significance, or growing maturity. The design guidelines, in consequence, currently have little to say about non-contributing status.

Recognizing that today's "out-of-period" is likely to be tomorrow's historic resource, potential 'local historic significance' and the desire and scope for restoring the integrity and character of previous adverse alterations or additions, should be recognized and addressed. Additional design guidelines providing advice for this type of situation and project would be valuable.

Process and Procedure

The current guidelines include their own section on application and procedures. Inevitably, such information changes frequently and is rapidly out of date. The revised design guidelines will address this information in the form of an 'appendix' (common to the complete design guidelines series), which will include a range of live links to application and review procedures kept up to date on the City website.

Summary

Distilling the Issues and Objectives identified in this Memo, thoughts and discussion might focus around several overlapping questions.

- What are we missing?
- Where are the current design guidelines unclear?
- Where does the emphasis or the advice need to change?
- How can we make the design guidelines more informative and helpful?
- How can we improve the clarity yet retain the essential flexibility?
- Where do we need better graphics coverage?

Next Stages

1. Confirmation of the Residential Design Guidelines HLC Work Group
2. Public Open House Sept. 12, 2011 – Residential Design Guidelines
3. Public Hearing, Historic Landmark Commission October 6, 2011

This Memorandum has the following attachments:

Attachments

- A. **“Revision & Refinement of the Design Guidelines – Residential, Commercial & Signs”
Staff Memorandum to HLC May 5, 2011**
- B. **Preservation Tools Process Timeline (Aug. to Dec. 2011)**

Attachment A



Memorandum

Planning Division
Community & Economic Development Department

To: Historic Landmark Commission

From: Carl Leith, Senior Historic Preservation Planner

Date: May 5, 2011

Re: **Revision & Refinement of the Design Guidelines – Residential, Commercial & Signs**

Purpose

This Memorandum is to appraise the Commission of proposals to review, update and refine the design guidelines for residential and commercial structures, and for signs. In preparation for the adoption of the Salt Lake City Preservation Plan City Council is identifying priorities for the first year of implementation of the Plan. High on this priority list are the update, refinement and adoption of the series of design guidelines for historic districts and properties within the city.

Consequently, over the coming months staff will be working with the Commission to review, refine and update the design guidelines to reflect current and new issues and to improve the information and clarity they provide. A time schedule, yet to be finalized, will integrate the parallel programs for the three sets of design guidelines and to include review by the Commissioners in regular meetings and work sessions.

Commercial Design Guidelines

Over the last 18 months or so the Commission has reviewed a series of draft sections of the new Commercial Design Guidelines. Major investment in review and discussion time by the Commissioners and staff, working independently and with the consultant, has ensured that the recent draft of the guidelines reflects the majority of the commercial design criteria, organized in an increasingly coherent form. The latest draft did not include the design guidelines for signs, nor the glossary, from the earlier drafts. Both, staff concluded, needed more attention. Further comments on this latest draft were made by Commissioners at your meeting on March 2, 2011, and the document has since had the benefit of further staff review.

The brief for the consultant in this case was to develop a document which was compatible with, and consequently to reflect the organizational structure and graphic design approach of the Residential

Design Guidelines. The latest draft of the Commercial Design Guidelines closely reflects the structure, format and approach of residential guidelines.

Design guidelines for 'non-residential' properties are identified as a priority in the Draft City Historic Preservation Plan (Goal 2.10).

Sign Design Guidelines

Design guidelines for signs are identified as a priority in the Draft Historic Preservation Plan.

The current draft of the Sign Design Guidelines has been developed as a section of the emerging commercial guidelines. This section required more work and attention than the main body of the guidelines. It also makes sense to regard this section as a distinct set of design guidelines, since issues of signage generally raise their own review questions and are usually considered independently of other preservation matters focusing on rehabilitation, repair and construction. Sign approvals also refer to a distinct section of the City code, which in turn may require some updating and refinement.

Residential Design Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines have been in daily use by the commission, staff, applicants and property owners, since their adoption in 1999. They amplify, explain and provide guidance on the application of the historic design review standards in the Zoning Ordinance, which in turn are based upon the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. Addressing the complexity and multiplicity of individual circumstance which necessarily arise in the context of any single 'preservation' project, they are also detailed in their coverage, with the objective of providing guidance which is sufficiently flexible to be tailored to the individual circumstances of the case in hand. Coverage also addresses the individual character of each of the city's local historic districts to ensure that these characteristics are recognized and maintained in the design review of local proposals.

The residential guidelines are generally thorough in their coverage and reflect the preservation and stewardship goals and approach which were the 'state of the art' at the time of their adoption. In their clarity and organization however, and to an extent in their emphasis and coverage in certain areas, the guidelines would benefit from review and refinement to address these issues. Further, the emergence of new materials and recent research in aspects of preservation practice, including sustainability, prompt a review of coverage to ensure that the guidelines address current knowledge and practice.

A review, update and refinement of the Residential Design Guidelines is identified as a priority by staff and City Council. It is also identified as a priority in the Draft City Historic Preservation Plan (Goal 2.10).

Further design guidelines for multi-family development are also identified as a priority in the Draft City Historic Preservation Plan (Goal 2.10).

A Future Package of City Design Guidelines

It makes sense to ensure that all design guidelines follow a similar format and operate as complementary parts of a 'package' of city design guidelines. As such, they would share common resources, including the glossary, process and procedures and informational references and

weblinks. This would avoid duplication and provide the opportunity to update specific information in particular sections or appendices, without having to revise a major proportion of the document.

Alignment of the design guidelines is a priority of the Draft City Historic Preservation Plan (Goal 2.10).

The Format of a Design Guideline

The clarity and coherence of the format of each design guideline can be enhanced, in relation to current guidelines. Presently in the Residential Design Guidelines, and consequently in the latest drafts of the guidelines for commercial properties and signs, the character definition and design objectives material for all of the following design guidelines forms the first part of each section or chapter. The subsequent guidelines are thus separated from the design policy and reasoning upon which they and their application rely. This creates apparent duplication, and requires reference back to earlier material to understand the character and design objectives for each guideline. The character and design objective/s discussion should immediately precede the design guideline/s to which they relate, to enable direct reference between them.

The format of each design guideline can also be improved. Each guideline should address only one design criteria, with the following explanatory supporting text taking the form of specific guideline application points (in bullet point form), to support and enhance review clarity and reasoning. Accompanying illustration/s should also be a complementary and explanatory aid to the appropriate application of the guideline in relation to the individual circumstances of the proposal.

Each guideline should operate as a hierarchy of guidance and advice, working from the description of the importance of that topic area in defining the character to be retained, the resulting design objective/s to ensure the maintenance of that character criterion, specific design guidance in the form of the guideline itself, and supporting information points and illustrations which help to define the most appropriate review in the circumstances of the case in hand. Thus, where the specific design guideline and its supporting points may not seem to directly address the individual circumstances of that case, then the design objective and character definition should provide guidance direction. These complementary levels of review guidance provide a framework which is flexible and adaptable to a variety of circumstances and variables, recognizing that no two cases will be the same, and that each will require design review tailored to the individuality of the property and the proposal.

A sample design guideline format is attached to illustrate this reasoning and these points.

Schedule

Staff will be developing a related program of review of the three sets of guidelines, which will involve a series of phased discussion and review sessions with staff and the commission. There will be the opportunity to discuss this program in the near future.

Attachments

This Memorandum has the following attachment for illustrative purposes.

A. The Format of a Guideline - ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

The Format of a Guideline

The intent of this format and structure is to establish a hierarchical framework which provides detailed design advice and options where they relate to the circumstances of the site or building. Where the relationship is less obvious the design objective and character definition sections provide general direction on the design intent.

Each design guideline in the document typically will have five components:

- i. **Character Definition.** This describes the elements of the character of the building and/or its setting that it is important to retain. These provide the foundation for the design objective.
- ii. **Design Objective.** The design objective describes the desired state or condition of the design element or elements under discussion.
- iii. **Design Guideline.** The design guideline is typically performance-oriented, and describes a desired design treatment.
- iv. **Guideline Application Points.** Additional application points may provide expanded explanation of the guideline, suggestions on how to meet the objective, or additional applications to consider. This information is listed in bullet form.
- v. **Guideline Illustrations.** Illustration is provided to clarify the intent of the guideline.

11.0 Open Space

i. Character Definition

→ Open space has several roles, in the context of rural or semi-rural development. It defines the relationship between a building and its site boundaries or the public way, and often defines the relationship between a group of buildings.

ii. Design Objective

→ **Open space associated with the traditional settlement patterns should be respected and retained in a site planning or development project. It should also be considered as the focus of a new development building cluster, if this is located within the sphere of influence of a traditional building group.**


iii. Design Guideline

→ **11.1 Respect and retain traditional forms and areas of open space when considering a site planning project or an addition to an existing building.**

iv. Guideline Application Point(s)

→ • Avoid encroachment into traditional front garden or farmyard open space when planning an addition.

v. Guideline Illustration



The working yard, displayed here, is an integral part of the open space arrangement of the site and should be preserved.

Example design guideline format.

Attachment B

Preservation Tools Process Timelines

	TIMELINE IN WEEKS																		
	August			September			October			November			December						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Finalize the public draft of the design guidelines (ongoing until decision by HLC)																			
Finalize the public draft Fine Tuning of the Preservation Ordinances																			
Finalize the public draft Conservation District Ordinance																			
HLC Work Session of Residential Design Guidelines Identify principal issues and content					9/1														
Post final public drafts of tools on Planning Division website, etc for public input.						9/6													
Public Open House on 1. Design Guidelines (especially Residential) 2. Conservation District 3. Fine Tuning Preservation Ordinance							9/12												
HLC Work Session on Signs Guidelines																			
HLC Work Session on Commercial Guidelines																			
HLC Public Hearings on 1. Residential Design Guidelines 2. Conservation Districts 3. Fine Tuning Preservation Ordinance									10/6										
HLC Work Session on Residential Design Guidelines											10/20								
Planning Commission work session on Conservation Districts												10/26							
Planning Commission Public Hearing on 1. Fine Tuning Preservation ordinance												10/26							
HLC Public Hearing and final approval on Commercial Design Guidelines													11/3						
1. Commercial Design Guidelines 2. Sign Design Guidelines																			
Planning Commission Public Hearing on 1. Conservation Districts														11/9					
Transmit Fine Tuning Preservation Ordinance															11/14				
HLC Work Session on Residential Design Guidelines															11/17				
Transmit 1. Conservation Districts 2. Commercial Design Guidelines 3. Sign Design Guidelines																			
HLC Public Hearing and final decision on Residential Design Guidelines																11/28			
Transmit Residential Design Guidelines																	12/1		
																			12/21