

# BDS Fact Sheet: Design Review for Historic Properties

SMC 17D.040  
SCC Title1-1.48



*Administered by the City-County Office of  
Historic Preservation Since 1985*

The City and County of Spokane adopted separate ordinances that designate the City-County Historic Landmarks Commission as responsible for the stewardship of the historic and architecturally significant properties in the City of Spokane and unincorporated areas of the County. The ordinances require review by the Spokane City-County Landmarks Commission of any proposed changes to properties designated as historic landmarks or districts on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

## What is Design Review?

Owners of properties listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places agree to follow Management Standards outlined in the Management Agreement. This Agreement states that an owner must obtain a [Certificate of Appropriateness](#) for any action affecting use, exterior appearance, new construction or demolition of the designated historic structure.

### The Certificate

The [Certificate of Appropriateness](#) is an official notice of approval issued by the Landmarks Commission or its designee (Historic Preservation Officer), charged with the jurisdiction for permitting or denying the appropriateness of proposed changes or additions to historic structures.

### Basis for Review

In order to determine compatibility as objectively as possible, the Landmarks Commission refers to the Secretary of the Interiors [Standards for Rehabilitation](#) when conducting design review. These broad guidelines serve as the basis for rehabilitation design review.

#### **1. Change-of-Use Review**

Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property, which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment. The Landmarks Commission will consider the impact of the proposed use on the historic or architectural significance of the structure or historic district.

#### **2. New Structures or Alterations in Historic Districts**

Alterations to an historic landmark or building, or the construction of new structures in an historic district, should be architecturally compatible with the character of the landmark, building, or neighboring structures within the district. The Landmarks Commission shall determine the compatibility of proposals for alterations and new construction.

Design elements of contemporary proposals will be evaluated according to sensitivity to the surrounding structures regarding height, bulk, shape and configuration, as well as placement on the property in relation to patterns or spacing. Approval will be based upon review of plans and elevations of the new structure.

For new multi-family or non-residential structures, the Landmarks Commission will require site plans drawn to scale, showing the location of structures, drives, surface material of walks and parking area, and proposed landscaping.

#### **3. Signs, Lighting and Other Appurtenances**

Signs, exterior lighting and other appurtenances such as walls, fences, awnings and landscaping, shall be visually compatible with the traditional architectural character of the historic structure.

#### **4. Demolition Review**

For procedures regarding demolition of historic landmarks, or structures in historic districts, see [Section 17D.040.220](#) of the Ordinance.

## Type of Work to be Reviewed

Type of Work	No Review	Staff Review	Commission Review
<b>Exterior Renovation</b> If visible from the street			
Awning – change of color		X	
Awning – change of style		X	
Awning- new			X
Paint with Same Color	X		
Paint unpainted brick, stucco or stone			X
Paint with Non-historic color			X
Paint With New Historic Color		X	
Landscaping/Gardening	X		
Install Garden Structures	X		
Replace Windows			X
Replace Doors			X
Repair Porch	X		
Replace Porch			X
Repair old siding	X		
Install New Siding			X
Demolish historic Garage			X
Demolish non-historic Garage	X		
Install New Fence	X		
Install Sidewalk	X		
New Roofing with like material		X	
New Roofing with new material			X
Change Roofline			X
Install mechanical & Utility Equipment		X	
Minor Construction not easily seen from street		X	
Install shutters not original to the building		X	
Install exterior fire exits			X
Minor work not approved by Staff			X
<b>New Construction</b>			
Build New Addition			X
Build New Porch			X
Build New Deck			X
Move a Building			X

## The Process

A Certificate of Appropriateness application may be obtained through the Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

**Fees:** Commission Review: \$75 (waived for local historic districts); Staff review: \$25. Fees must be paid when the Certificate of Appropriateness is filed.

**Appeals:** Appeals are made to the Hearing Examiner. [SMC 17D.040.160](#).

**Non-Compliance:** If tax incentives have been utilized for the property, the incentives are in jeopardy, and fines and penalties may be assessed. If tax incentives have not been used, the Landmarks Commission may recommend that the property be removed from the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

**Benefits:** Design review ensures that the historic character and appearance of properties is preserved, and that the unique quality of Spokane's past continues to be represented in the community.

**Restrictions:** Work must occur exactly according to approved plans. **ANY** revisions, omissions, or additions to plans must be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission prior to execution, or a permit will not be issued for the proposed work.

**Note: Normal maintenance or repair does NOT require design review if no changes are made to the appearance of the building.**

### Other Informative Links

[The Rehab YES/NO Learning Program](#)  
[The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#)  
[The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#)

### Contact Information

#### **Spokane City-County Historic Preservation Office**

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