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MINOR PLANNING & DESIGN

PROJECT: La Grande Downtown Historic District
Standards Preservation Code Update

PROJECT NO.: 21-024

DATE: December 17, 2021

Based on the feedback our team received from both the La Grande survey and follow-up interviews, and based on our professional experience with other historic design standards, some first thoughts are outlined below on structuring the Historic District Standards and what content should be included.

Community Values

We have compiled a recap of what we heard from various community members in the online survey as well as in a series of individual interviews. While there were disparate opinions, there were some common themes. As much as possible, the revisions to the Historic District Standards and process will be informed by the values and ideas of the community.

<i>Type or area of work or process</i>	<i>Public comments or feedback</i>	<i>Notes/ observations from Kristen & Tricia</i>
General Historic review process	Process, documents, and terminology confusing. Often incomplete applications turned in; difficult for applicant and city. Standards need to balance economic impacts to owner and community (cost of renovation vs cost to community of vacant building). A few not convinced that there is a community benefit to Historic District.	Images, flowcharts, maps, and other graphics needed. Simple language. Explanation of benefits. Fuzzy line between Main St program and local review. Possibly create handouts at permit desk.
Tiers or hierarchy of regulation	Currently no difference between contributing, noncontributing, back or front- almost universally comments were that the standards needed some hierarchy	Looking at introducing not only a difference between noncontributing and contributing standards, but potentially different treatments for different areas of the historic district.
Achievable results	Ensure that there is a way to get the appropriate materials and the knowledge to do the work.	Consider finding a middle ground of minimally acceptable materials/methods that are more readily available in La Grande
Alleys (rear/side building elevations)	Want to retain the energy and usability/flexibility here. Mixed uses and redevelopment important.	Applicants looking for less strict adherence to historic design for these utilitarian spaces. View these spaces as economic development opportunities rather than preservation opportunities.
Signs	Clearer rationale needs to be offered to explain why some signage types are acceptable for some buildings but not for others.	Pedestrian-centric/way finding/signing and awnings. Possibly some types of signs and attachments could be exempt from review.
Storefronts and primary entries	Consistency important, whether contributing or not. Overall, storefronts were the most valued building feature providing historic character in the district.	Consider having stricter rules about the form of a storefront (i.e. a tripartite storefront with bulk head, window, and transom) but allowing non-contributing buildings more flexibility in material choices.
Awnings	Awnings create a cozy streetscape and provide relief from the elements in all seasons.	Potentially, awnings that support the form of a historic storefront (describe & show) could have a lesser review? (Snow load engineering requirements are significant.)

New infill/ new construction- scale & proportion	The new building should be about the same size & scale as the nearby buildings	Examples needed and what to take into consideration in various areas. There are taller buildings in the district.
Accessibility/ADA	Challenges of ADA access for into the building, within the building for upper floor improvements, and other zoning updates that prove to make improvements an issue	Determine what to prioritize, preservation or access. Look to NPS Briefs for guidance
Windows or doors	Upper windows and cornice at the front of historic buildings were another almost universally valued feature. However, many mentions of cost and difficulty of repairing old wood windows.	Need a solution that allows for modern glazing. Maybe clarifying preference for wood, acceptable for aluminum & fiberglass, and unacceptable for vinyl? Could also look at a “depth” approach to windows, ensuring they are set into the wall and not applied from the outside. Consider relaxing standards on sides/rear.
Rooftops	Almost no mention	Very little noticeable rooftop equipment has been installed. Potentially include some regulation about photovoltaics.
Landscaping/trees/ Hardscape; Fences, other structures	Almost no mention	Clarify which entity makes decisions about streetscape elements (ODOT for US30/Adams?, Main St org, City). Possible standards for some of the materials and elements of the pedestrian-oriented areas of the Historic District
Added floor area- scale & proportion	Almost no mention	Provide guidance for additions to existing buildings
Lighting	Almost no mention	Standards appear to be working relatively well
Material repair/replacement or new materials	Almost no mention	Consider some further workshops, partners, and grants to help owners. Standards should be relaxed for noncontributing buildings.

Other topics that also prompted some comments:

- **Parking** in the historic district;
- **Bicycle** parking and riding;
- Owners unclear if they could apply for Oregon **Special Assessment** (“tax freeze”) program or Federal **Historic Tax Credit** program, or other grants, benefits, or incentives;
- **Enforcement**; and
- Need for more **housing**

These and other issues may be part of a package of recommendations to City Council that are outside of - but related to - the work on the Historic District Standards project scope.

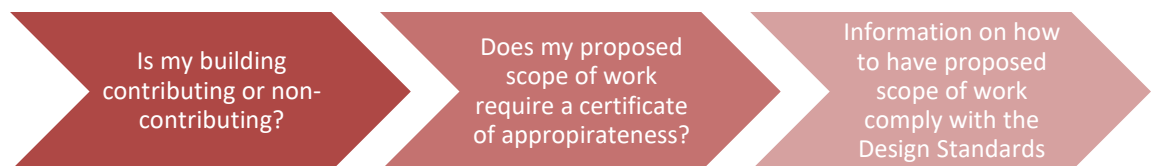
Concepts: Process

Existing Standards Outline

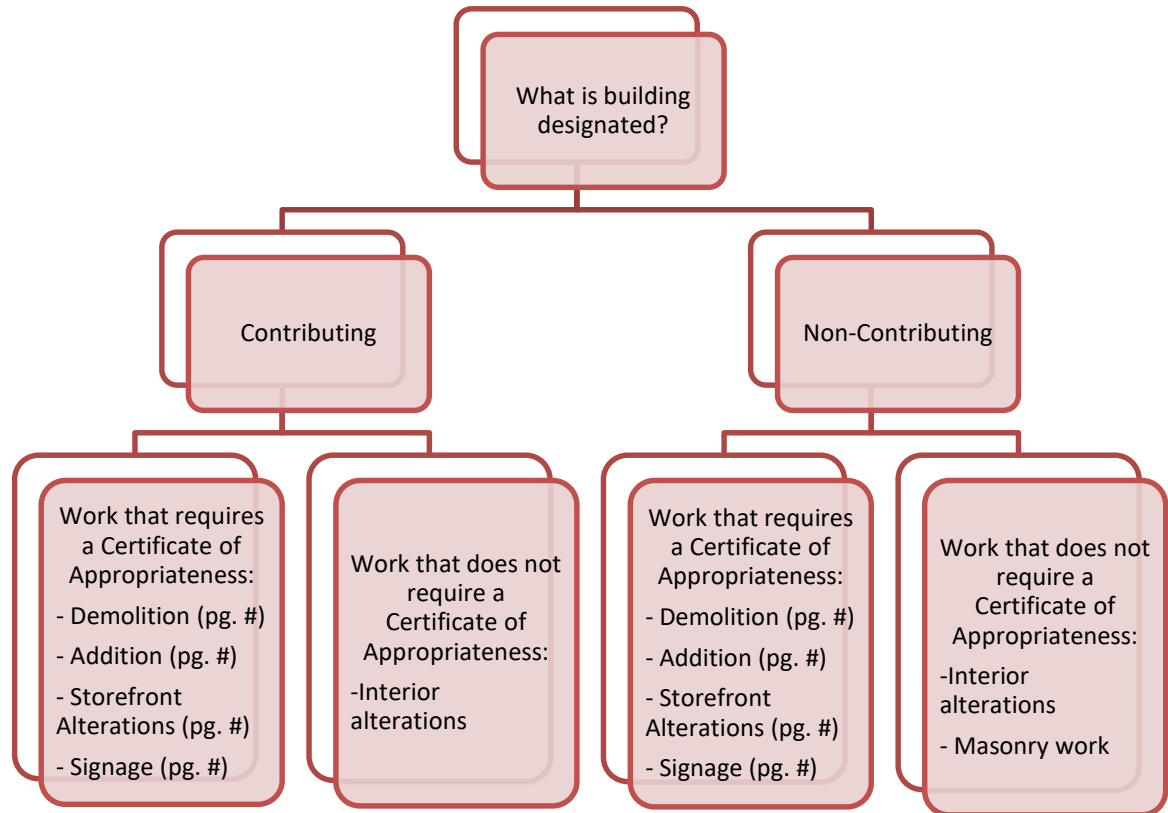
- Application Checklist
 - o Completed and signed Land Use Application
 - Project narrative
 - Historic background of the building and existing conditions that warrant the proposed alterations and improvements
 - Description of the proposed scope of work
 - Photos and/or historic documentation
 - Historic photo(s) pre-1946
 - Current photos
 - Construction Plans
 - Detailed plans prepared by architect or drafter/designer
 - Provide support information as needed to demonstrate conformance with City's Historic District Standards. Support information may include illustrations, product samples or copies of manufacture specifications for proposed materials.
 - o 10 Copies of submittal for review
 - o Filing fee
- Copy of Article 3.5 – Historic Buildings and Sites from the City of La Grande Code
- Standards and Guidelines Manual for Historic Retaliation and Preservation

Proposed Standards Outline

- Application form
 - o Provide box for application (and/or staff) to indicate if the building is contributing, non-contributing, or new construction
- Application check list consolidated onto one page
- Include a timeline for the review process
- Table of Contents
- How to use this document
 - o Remove superfluous information and allow applicants to quickly and easily find information relevant information for their project.



- Remove, but reference, Article 3.5 by creating user friendly tables and charts
 - o Include map and table of buildings in the district to clearly identify contributing and non-contributing buildings and different areas of the district
 - o Create a flow chart for 3.5.004.E.5 showing what work items require a certificate of appropriateness and reference which page of the standards provides additional information on how to appropriately complete the scope of work. *The chart below is not complete but gives an idea of how it would be structured.



- Provide definitions of building materials and architectural features, both written and in drawing/photographs
- Introduce the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, explain that these are the guiding principles for determining the District Standards.
- Like the existing standards, break out each work item that requires a certificate of appropriateness into its own section.
 - o Each section should include the following:
 - Definition of the architectural feature
 - List of appropriate methods/materials/finishes
 - Photos of appropriate methods/materials/finishes
 - List of inappropriate methods/materials/finishes
 - Photos of inappropriate methods/materials/finishes