

## Historic Design Review Made Easy ?!

Brainstorm ideas from a discussion during the LCG workshop Oct. 19, 2010.

The discussion was set up in sections to provide a framework. These are ideas that may or may not work for your community, be sure you follow all laws and rules in the process. The ideas are not necessarily recommended by the State Historic Preservation Office. They are solely results of a group brainstorm.

### ***Advance information, design help & education:***

Design guidelines

Newsletters

Workshops

Website – All information online (Sect. Interior's Standards, design guidelines, applications, etc)

Pre-application opportunity – staff and/or commission, possibly a subcommittee with advisors, form so that it is fully disclosed.

Send the customers links rather than just directing them to search on the website

Have good meeting notification (letter, website, newspaper)

Have regular timeline for meetings and review – publish it so people know what to expect

Mail a complete packet to all property owners and tenants – applications, incentives, design guidelines, ordinance, summary page

Provide free design services – a specific number of hours with specific, willing, qualified people.

Send a regular newsletter – design review information, historic value, preservation tips, etc.

Discuss possible conditions or mitigation prior to meeting.

Provide more training to commissioners prior to review – building code, process training, by professionals

Incorporate 15 minutes of commissioner training in each meeting.

Hotline: Build it green

Find and educate local contractors

Give information to new buyers, realtors

Publicize lead paint rules

Site visit – notification, etc.

DAR – design advice request

Research green materials

Resource center at planning office and online

Historic preservation certificate at college

Show images on screen so everyone is looking at the same images

Define what constitutes reasonable repair, when it can be replaced

Offer grant funds for appropriate work

### ***Application:***

Site plan and elevation on the application

Lower fees or fees paid with CLG funds  
More staff review and approval for clear cases  
Streamline applications  
Form that follows the application through all of the city processes, so it is clear what must be approved and completed  
Have examples of good applications  
If they have used design services – no fee  
Have staff review be free to encourage them to follow the guidelines – if you do it this way staff can approve, if you do it this way you must go before the commission and pay the fee.  
Have separate form for historic review that includes the standards on the form.  
Include a checklist in the application for what additional materials are required (photos, historic photos, elevations, etc.)  
The staff and builder have the same form  
Require quality drawings with application

### ***Staff Reports***

Include survey info  
Which Secretary of the Interior's Standards apply  
Which points of the ordinance apply  
Application  
Drawings  
Current photos  
Historic photos  
Executive summary  
Staff recommendations  
Key points from nomination  
Summary of historic significance (individual and district)  
Sample motion  
Have a check off list  
Provide to applicant (customer) before hearing, be sure they understand it  
Staff reports to commissioners (summary) on staff level decisions so they are aware of work on historic buildings

Findings Report – criteria, standards, clear for appeal, stamp design review on all paperwork (permit, plan, inspector, etc), to protect from unapproved field changes.

### ***Review:***

Commissioners prepare and read material in advance of the meeting  
Commissioners stick to the topic to be reviewed  
Have a clear process for hearings, practice and follow it  
Chair needs to summarize, clarify, keeps things moving, refrain from too much involvement in the discussion.  
Site visits are helpful – if you do them as a group, be careful of public meeting laws  
Respond to evaluation criteria

Have everyone sit around the table – professional, but friendly  
Show drawings, photos, maps on screen so everyone will be talking about the same images  
Do not try to redesign, unless it is the design consultation and not the application review  
Do not judge the quality of material (historic or new)  
Do not just the aesthetic, but where it meets the criteria

***Incentives:***

Eliminate, reduce or subsidize fees with CLG funds  
Tax freeze  
Grants  
Free design services/advice  
Education – resource center, website, maintenance workshops  
Good information about new materials  
Historic Preservation certificate or award  
Set back reduction or height adjustment  
Zone – lot line lenience for detached garages  
Incentivize corner lots - they are double burdened with two facades  
Handouts and website to explain incentives  
Tips for improvements  
Bibliography at library  
Hotline – planning/sustainability, Building Green  
Encourage repair