



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Jason Rogers, Senior Planner
Date: October 17, 2022

Subject: Update to Procedural Requirements for Historic Design Review

The Planning Commission will begin reviewing proposed amendments to procedural requirements for historic design review. Under the City's code, the Planning Commission currently sits as the Historic Design Review Board, pursuant to SMC 17.35.055. As such, the Planning Commission performs historic design review on projects that require Board review within the historic districts (Downtown and Meadowbrook).

Staff has identified several issues with the current procedures for historic design review, as well as some code provisions that have never been fully implemented. The purpose of proposed amendments to the code is to address these areas of concern. Staff is preparing an amendment package to address the following:

1. Minor adjustments to code provisions governing how the Board operates (SMC 17.35.050).
2. Adjustments to what kinds of projects are subject to Board review and what kinds would be subject to administrative review (SMC 17.35.120).
3. Clarification of how the various types of historic design review fit with the City's general permit categories in SMC 14.30.020.
4. Removal of the requirement to inform King County for Type II and III projects (SMC 17.35.120(B)).
5. Removal of the Landmarks and Heritage Commission from conducting historic design review for Type III projects, or acting as an appeal body for appeals of Type II projects within the Landmark District (SMC 17.35.120(D) and (E), and SMC 17.35.170).
6. Clarification of appeal procedures to bring them into alignment with the general permit appeal procedures in Chapter 14.40 SMC and the Hearing Examiner procedures in Chapter 2.14 SMC (SMC 17.35.170).
7. Clarifying the deadline for filing appeals (SMC 14.40.010).

Overall, the goal of these amendments is to align the procedures for historic design review with actual practice, streamline the historic design review process by shifting some reviews to the Historic Preservation Officer (Community Development Director), and ensuring consistency across the City's development codes.

Staff proposes to adjust what types of projects require Board review and decision. Today, SMC 17.35.120 specifies what types of projects require Board review. To streamline the permit process and reduce Board workload, staff will propose shifting routine maintenance and repair activities, additions to non-contributing buildings, and permanent signage to Type I, with review and decision by the Historic Preservation Officer (Community Development Director). Type II would add demolition of non-contributing buildings and additions to any contributing building. Type III would not change but would be rewritten for clarity.

Staff also proposes to adjust the appeal procedures to bring them more in line with the procedures for other permits the City issues. In particular, appeals of Type I projects would go to the City Hearing Examiner instead of the Historic Design Review Board, in line with the City's permit procedures in Chapter 14.30 SMC. In addition, staff proposes to make the City Council the sole appeal body for appeal of Type II and III projects. Currently, appeals of projects in the Landmark District are to the Snoqualmie Landmarks and Heritage Commission, however this body is primarily a King County body (specifically, it is the King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission plus a special Snoqualmie member appointed by the Mayor with City Council confirmation) that has little direct understanding of Snoqualmie's permit process and is difficult to schedule.

Staff is prepared to discuss the proposed amendments. Proposed amendment language is also included in the agenda packet for the Planning Commission's October 17, 2022, meeting. As a code amendment, these amendments would require a public hearing and Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council.

Please contact Jason Rogers with any questions.

Next Steps

The Planning Commission should review the proposed amendments. The Planning Commission should schedule a public hearing on these amendments, with an aim to make a recommendation to the City Council prior to the end of the year.