



To: Planning Commission

From: Sarah David, RHDC Chair
Don Davis, RHDC Vice-Chair

CC: Ken Bowers, Director, Department of City Planning
Travis Crane, Assistant Director, Department of City Planning
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Date: December 20, 2016

RE: **Revised Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic District and Landmarks**

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission (RHDC) has voted to adopt the attached language in the revised Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts and Landmarks, and the RHDC has also voted to recommend that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council to adopt this language for the Design Guidelines. The changes provide clarification in the language about both additions and new construction within historic districts, as well as adding a definition for the word *contemporary*. Please see the attached document for both the existing text and the changes approved by the RHDC.

The RHDC has been in the process of creating new Design Guidelines since 2010. The current Design Guidelines document dates to 2001, and is out of date. For example, the Design Guidelines don't address commercial buildings or cemeteries, but the Commission reviews COAs for both of those types of resources. Recognizing the issues, the Commission began a rigorous process of updating them, including inviting public comment and input and an extensive review by the City Attorney.

The design guidelines are a key tool to the management of the City's historic districts and landmarks program, especially for design review for historic districts and landmarks. Any property owner in a historic overlay district must get a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for changes to the exterior of their house or building; most changes can be handled with a Minor Work COA requiring staff approval. For Major Work projects, the Commission's COA Committee reviews the COA application and the Committee uses the Design Guidelines in their decision making. It is important to note that the Design Guidelines do not function as code, but rather are referenced in the ordinances related to historic districts and landmarks.

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3.2 Additions

Page 66, Paragraph 2 under Things to Consider As You Plan

Change from:

Although designed to be compatible with the original building, an addition should be discernible from it. For example, it can be differentiated from the original building through a break in roofline, cornice height, wall plane, materials, siding profile, or window type.

To:

To preserve a property's historic character, a new addition must be visually distinguishable from the historic building. This does not mean that the addition and the historic building should be glaringly different in terms of design, materials and other visual qualities. Instead, the new addition should take its design cues from, but not copy, the historic building. For example, it can be differentiated from the original building through a break in roofline, cornice height, wall plane, materials, siding profile, or window type.

3.3 New Construction of Primary Buildings

Page 68, Paragraph 2 under Things to Consider As You Plan

Change from:

The success of new construction within a historic district does not depend on direct duplication of existing building forms, features, materials, and stylistic details. Rather, it relies on understanding what the distinctive architectural character is of the district. New buildings must be compatible with that character. The Special Character Essays for each historic district are excellent references for understanding the relevant character and context. Contemporary design generated from such understanding can enrich the architectural continuity of a historic district.

To:

To preserve a district's historic character, new buildings must be visually distinguishable from historic buildings. This does not mean that new buildings and historic buildings should be glaringly different in terms of design, materials and other visual qualities. Instead, the new buildings should take design cues from, but not copy, historic buildings. The success of new construction within a historic district relies on understanding what the distinctive architectural character is of the district. New buildings must be compatible with that character. The Special Character Essays for each historic district are excellent references for understanding the relevant character and context.

Appendices: Glossary of Terms

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Add:

CONTEMPORARY – Associated with or belonging to the present time.