

BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS

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Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.**Title 1. Design Review Board****SECTION 4-101. Establishment and Purpose.**

A. The Mount Rainier Design Review Board ("DRB") is established to advise and assist the Council on design-related issues including, but not limited to, fences, retaining walls, public plantings, construction proposals, building alterations, and regulations of design issues.

B. The DRB shall review projects in the City which require a variance, special exception, or departure from regulations. The DRB shall provide written recommendations to the Council regarding the project.

C. The DRB may critique designs, develop designs, recommend guidelines, and propose legislation related to the existing and proposed environmental and construction projects in order to enhance public safety and welfare or the physical appearance of the community.

Section 4-102. Composition and Structure of the Design Review Board.

A. *Membership.* The DRB shall consist of up to five City residents who are appointed by the Council. At least one member of the DRB should be an architect.

B. *Term.* Members of the DRB shall serve 2-year terms. The terms shall begin on November 1st and end on October 31st. Midterm vacancies shall be filled to serve the balance of the unexpired term.

C. *Structure.* The DRB shall elect from its members a chairperson, secretary, and such other officers as it shall deem necessary. The chairperson shall convene and preside over meetings of the DRB. The secretary shall keep minutes of DRB business. The DRB shall not meet unless a majority of its members are present. The DRB shall meet quarterly or as often as required to fulfill its responsibilities.

D. *Open meetings.* All meetings of the DRB are open to the public and are

subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Meeting notices shall be prepared and posted in advance of any DRB meeting, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act requirements. Written records of DRB proceedings shall be maintained. A report on the activities of the DRB shall be submitted to the Council once a year.

Section 4-103. Powers and Procedures of the Design Review Board.

A. *Variances, special exceptions, departures from regulations.* The DRB shall only review projects that require a variance, special exception, or departure from regulations unless the City Manager or the Council requests that the DRB provide advice or review of other projects.

B. *Issuance of City building permit.* In most cases, where Prince George's County has issued a building permit and the project complies with applicable zoning and building code standards, the City Manager or designee will issue a City building permit without the DRB review of the project. Exceptions may occur when the City Manager or designee has concerns about the applicant's or the project's compliance with applicable standards, or suspects that an error may have been made by the County in issuing the County building or other permit or approval.

C. *Requests for DRB review.* After an application for a City building permit is filed with the City, the City Manager or designee shall notify the DRB if there is a need for a review of the proposed project. The DRB has 14 days from notification by the City Manager of the need for a review, but no more than 21 days from filing of the City building permit request, to complete its review and provide written recommendations to the Council. If the DRB is unable to review the project within the time allotted, the project will be forwarded to the Council for review without a DRB recommendation.

D. *Planning Board requests.* In cases where the Prince George's County Planning Board or other agency has requested input regarding a proposed project in the City from the Council, the DRB may be requested to review the project and to provide written recommendations to the Council.

E. *Input from applicant.* The DRB shall make reasonable efforts to meet with the applicant to discuss the proposed project before the DRB makes its recommendations to the Council.

F. *Limited review of projects in the MUTC zone.* The DRB shall not review projects in the Mixed Use Town Center ("MUTC") zone of the City (designated as the Town Center in the Gateway Arts District Plan), unless the Council makes a specific request to the DRB to perform a review.

Section 4-104. Variance Evaluations.

A. The DRB shall take into account the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section in its review of a project which requires a variance, special exception, or other

departure from regulations. DRB's findings on these criteria shall be included in the DRB's written recommendations to the Council. The Council also shall consider the factors listed in subsection B of this section in making a decision on the merits of a project that requires a variance, special exception, or other departure from regulations.

B. *Criteria for project evaluation.* The project, and the requested variance, special exception, or other departure from regulations:

1. Will not adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare or interest, or the reasonable use of adjoining properties;
2. Can be granted without substantial impairment of the purpose and intent of the City building regulations and revitalization efforts;
3. Will respect the historic integrity of the street facing façade (e.g., enclosure of open porches on the street facing facade is not acceptable; architecture is similar to other homes; height and massing is compatible with other nearby homes);
4. Will not unduly impede the enforcement of any other applicable law;
5. If on a property that is a contributing resource to the Mount Rainier National Register Historic District, the project should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (these standards are set forth below for informational purposes only); and
6. If in a residential neighborhood, the project will not exceed the parking capacity of the street or create an unreasonable increase in traffic to the block.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

[For informational purposes only.]

Standard 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

Choosing an acceptable use for a historic building is the first important step toward its preservation. Of course, continuing to use a building for its historic purpose tends to minimize the need for change, so is preferred. But many times that is not possible, so Standard 1 allows for a change of use, such as using a historic residential building for a commercial purpose. It is important to keep in mind, however, that a new use that requires extensive changes to historic materials, features, finishes, and spaces will likely violate Standard 1.

Standard 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Each historic building and its site has special visual qualities that should be preserved. Removing, altering, or covering over distinctive materials, features, and

spaces is inappropriate. Some specific actions to avoid include making major changes to the front of a building or other significant elevations; altering a distinctive interior plan; or destroying historic landscape features, such as a cast iron fence or major plantings. On the other hand, making changes to a non-significant rear elevation may be acceptable if the alterations are in keeping with the overall appearance of the building – as may non-significant landscape features – and a project can meet Standard 2.

Standard 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

A historic building is an important record of its past, reflecting its original construction as well as its various uses and changes over time. To make a building appear as if it were older than it actually is, for example, by applying an earlier architectural style or decorative details, will falsify its history and, as a result, not meet Standard 3.

Standard 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Buildings evolve over time as the people who live and work in them decide to make changes. This may include alterations and additions (such as new storefronts, porches, windows, rooms, and even entire floors). Sometimes these changes have acquired significance in their own right because they provide evidence of the historical evolution of the building or are important examples of an architectural style, material, or method of construction. To meet Standard 4, significant later changes need to be retained during rehabilitation; on the other hand, non-significant later changes may be removed.

Standard 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Architectural and landscape features play a major role in defining the unique historic appearance of a building and its site. Removing or drastically altering distinctive features, such as a porch, bay, chimney, decorative detailing, walkways, or trees can result in the loss of that special character and violate Standard 5. Other visual changes, such as painting historically unpainted brick or stone walls are also inappropriate.

Standard 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Since a building's historic character is really the sum of its parts, it is always best to retain and repair distinctive historic features. But when a feature is too deteriorated to repair, then it has to be replaced. The replacement feature should match the historic one, based on physical, pictorial, or documentary evidence – never on conjecture! It is always preferable to use the same material too; for example, replacing a badly deteriorated wood bracket with a new wood bracket will meet Standard 6.

Standard 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Buildings are often cleaned to remove harmful pollutants or chemicals from surfaces. Sometimes buildings are cleaned to make them more attractive. Whatever the reason, it is important that destructive methods be avoided and gentle methods used. Sandblasting, for example, will destroy the surface of brick and stone, pit most metals, and raise the grain on wood. Using chemicals incorrectly will also damage historic materials. Similarly, the incorrect use of water or steam to clean a building may damage historic materials and not meet Standard 7.

Standard 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

When an archeological discovery is made during rehabilitation (for instance, when excavating for a foundation or an addition or grading for a new parking lot), a trained archeologist should be called in to evaluate the findings. Significant archeological resources should be protected and preserved in place. If this is not possible, the archeological material should be documented and recovered according to accepted practices. If human remains are uncovered, stop work immediately and consult with appropriate state and local officials – it's law in every state.

Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

When extra space is needed for a new use, historic building owners may consider construction an addition. A new addition needs to be designed with sensitivity to protect distinctive historic materials and features from damage or destruction. The new work also needs to be compatible with the historic building's character. Compatibility between old and new is achieved through the thoughtful application of basic architectural principles (massing, size, scale, setback, rhythm, and proportion), as well as the selection of appropriate materials and color. A compatible new addition will meet Standard 9. However, creating a new addition that so closely resembles the historic building that the old and new are indistinguishable will fail to meet Standard 9.

Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

A new addition should be constructed in a manner that – if removed at a later date – the historic building's distinctive form and materials would be kept intact to the greatest extent possible. Standard 10 is often called the “principle of reversibility.” Generally, placing an addition on a nonsignificant side or rear elevation can help achieve this goal, as well as being mindful of the addition's size and scale.

For more information on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/>