



HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN REVIEW FAQ

For more information, refer to Snohomish Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 14.225](#)

WHAT IS THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD?

The Design Review Board (DRB) is the advisory committee that reviews and makes recommendations to City staff on proposals for development within the Historic District. Recommendations pertain to the proposal's conformance with design and historic preservation, as set forth in the Snohomish Historic District Design Standards.

The board was established by City Council on July 3, 1973, under Ord 1185. The primary purpose of the DRB is to preserve and protect the unique historic structures and design features of Snohomish. The board consists of five members, each appointed by the City Council. DRB meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month in the Snohomish Carnegie, 105 Cedar Avenue.

WHAT TYPES OF PROPOSALS DOES THE DRB REVIEW?

- Modification to the exterior of existing structures
- Construction activities that require a building permit, including signs or fences
- Mobile vendor structures or trailers doing business in the Historic District for more than 30 days
- Building Demolitions
- Special tax valuations
- Requests for additions to the list of officially designated historic structures, with the final decision being made by the City Council

WHAT STANDARDS ARE USED?

The DRB and the City Planner review applications for projects located within the Historic District using the following standards:

- Snohomish Historic District Design Standards, updated 2017
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, 1995

HOW DO I BEGIN?

A conceptual Pre-Application Review (PAR) to share your ideas with staff prior to formal submittal is encouraged. PAR requests are offered free of charge through the Permit Portal and are a great opportunity to get early guidance from City staff on policies, regulations, and code compliance.

It is recommended that the pre-application with an initial design review submittal occur early in the design process. However, conceptual reviews do not relieve the applicant of formal review by the DRB.

CAN I RECEIVE EARLY FEEDBACK FROM THE DRB ON A PRELIMINARY DESIGN?

Design review is typically conducted concurrent with a permit; however, an option is available through the Permit Portal for those projects needing design approval outside of the standard permit process. The application fee is \$150 (plus 5% tech fee).

Modification beyond what is proposed under the stand-alone Design Review application may require additional design review at the time of permit submittal.

WHAT DO THE CITY AND DRB NEED TO REVIEW MY APPLICATION?

Design Review application requirements vary depending on the nature of the project. For example, buildings will require substantially more information than a sign or fence. All submittals will require current color photos of the site, as well as any necessary documents for your specific proposal. Scaled drawings are always required.

Please note that incomplete or undetailed drawings may not be sufficient for the Board to evaluate the proposal and make a recommendation, which will result in delays. For specific submittal requirements, refer to the Application Requirements checklist items for your project type.

Design Review forms are available on the City's website: <https://snohomishwa.gov/661/Permitting>.

WHAT IS THE DRB MEETING PROCESS?

Following submittal of a complete Design Review or permit application, the following procedures apply:

1. City staff prepares a report to the DRB.
2. DRB holds its meeting, with an opportunity for input from the applicant and interested citizens. The sequence is as follows:
 - Staff presentation reviewing the application and conformance with adopted standards
 - Presentation by applicant
 - Comments from any members of the public
 - DRB deliberation and recommendation to the City Planner on conformance with Design Standards. Recommendations may include conditions to achieve conformance.
 - If necessary, the DRB may visit the applicant's site to gather additional information, as part of its meeting.
3. After the DRB review, the City Planner issues a written determination on the proposal's conformance. Determinations may include conditions to achieve conformance.
4. The City Planner's determination may be appealed to the Hearing Examiner. Appeals must be filed within 10 days of the decision and must conform to the provisions of Chapter 14.20 SMC.

WHAT IF MY PROJECT WILL NOT RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS?

If an application is determined to result in only minor changes to a property or building, the City Planner may request review by one member of the DRB outside the normal meeting schedule. The individual member will make a recommendation to the City Planner or may refer the application to the full DRB.

IS THERE A SUBMITTAL DEADLINE FOR DRB-APPLICABLE PROPOSALS?

Yes. The deadline for submitting materials for DRB review is the **20th of each month, or the Friday preceding the 20th should it fall on a weekend**, for the meeting occurring the following month.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY DESIGN AFTER IT HAS BEEN APPROVED?

Final building plans must conform to the approved design, including dimensions, materials, and features, as well as any conditions of approval. If the applicant proposes changes to the approved design, a request to modify the design must be submitted in writing to the City Planner.

Minor changes may be approved by City staff. Changes deemed by the City Planner to be significant will be returned to the DRB for a recommendation.

NOTE: This information should not be used as a substitute for City codes and regulations.