

1. COMMERCIAL ALTERATIONS

Intent

Snohomish's Historic Business District differs from modern commercial corridors because of its historic buildings and pedestrian scale. This area is the heart of historic Snohomish, and reflects the unique character of the community. The vibrant and active streetscape is enhanced by its unique, historic structures, which are enjoyed by residents, businesses, and visitors. Preservation and restoration of these existing buildings is a priority of the City.

Economic development and ongoing investment of the Historic Business District is encouraged to maintain its importance as the historic and cultural heart of the city. Adaptive re-use of existing structures promotes sustainable preservation of historic assets. The City and Design Review Board make every effort to provide guidance to commercial building owners and tenants in order to attract new customers while promoting an appreciation of the historic architecture that makes this place such a destination.

Applicability

The design standards in this section apply to all alterations and additions to all existing buildings within the Historic Business District (refer to map on page i). For the purposes of this chapter, *alteration* is any modification to the exterior of a building requiring a building permit, and an *addition* is any change that results in an increase in building height or footprint.

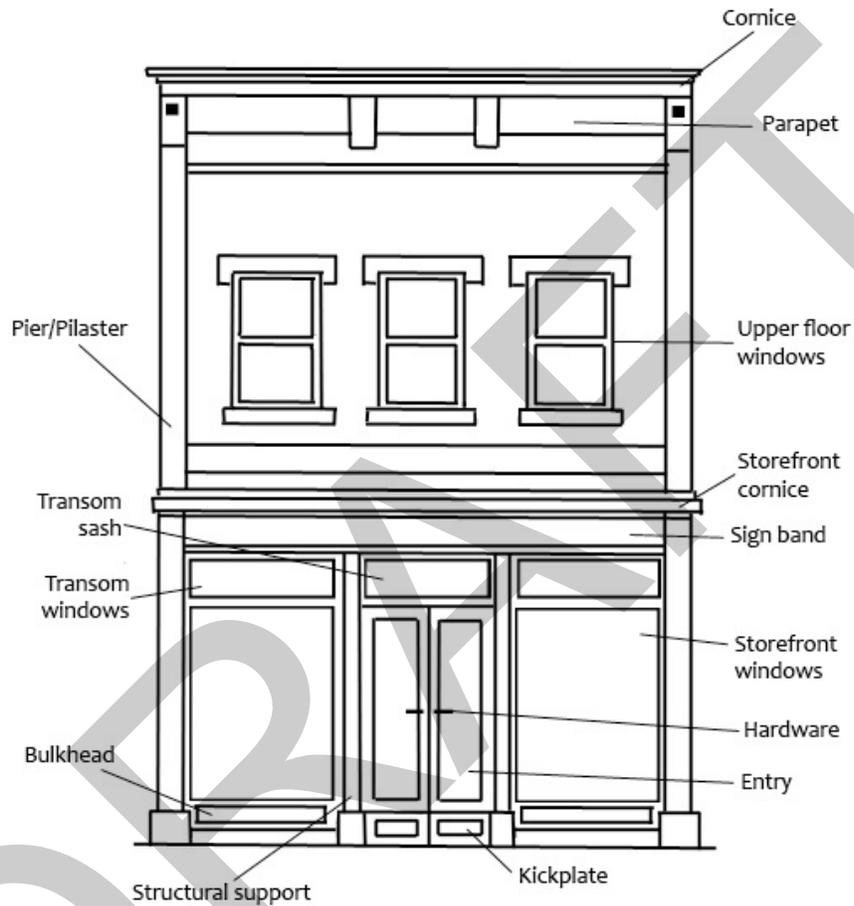
In addition to the standards contained in this section, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are applicable for additions and alterations to existing historic structures. A building is considered historic if its era of construction is a minimum of 50 years in the past. Standards for new commercial construction may be found in section III.2.

A. General Guidance

1. Building design should exhibit and incorporate elements that reflect the identity and visual character of the early decades of the Snohomish community. Justification of consistency of proposed elements, proportions, relationships, or materials with local context and the specific structure may be necessary if antecedents within the community are not clear.
2. Historic, character-defining architectural features and details should be preserved through continued maintenance or restored.
3. Modifications made to existing buildings should be sympathetic to the structure's original design, and should not significantly alter the historic appearance. Restoring original features that were previously obscured through past alterations is encouraged.

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4. Before beginning any restoration work, research available documents and perform a physical investigation of the building, in order to determine the historic appearance of the structure and establish the most appropriate restoration plan.
5. The traditional commercial building form in historic Snohomish typically included a large storefront, upper floors with vertically-oriented windows, and a substantial cornice.



B. Identifying Architectural Character

Every old building possesses its own unique character and identity. *Character* refers to all visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of a building (Secretary of the Interior). Elements that define a building's character include shape and massing, materials, elements of craftsmanship, decorative details, and aspects of its size and setting. In order to determine which architectural qualities should be preserved, first a building owner must understand those elements that give the building its distinctive character.

The Secretary of the Interior recommends a three step approach to identify the visual character of an historic building. Steps 1 and 2 pertain to the building exterior and are summarized below. Additional information can be accessed via the preservation briefs published by the Secretary of the Interior at www.nps.gov.

Overall Visual Aspects

These include the building's shape, openings, roof and related features, projections, trim, and setting. These distinguishing physical elements are typically viewed from a distance, without focusing on building details.

Visual Character at Close Range

These include the materials used for construction, and details of craftsmanship including texture, variety and arrangement of materials, and decorative details. These surface qualities are visible from an arm's length.

C. Building Design

1. General

The intent of these standards is to encourage preservation of historic structures and maintenance of the pedestrian scale and character of the built environment.

- a. Building design shall not serve to communicate or reflect a corporate identity or product marketed. Corporate identity shall be communicated through signage, rather than building architecture.
- b. Architectural styles and stylistic references shall be consistent throughout one building.
- c. The use of neon for building ornamentation is prohibited.
- d. Unpainted masonry shall not be painted.

2. Building Materials

Exterior surface materials shall be consistent with traditional architectural materials and shall contribute to the appearance of a 100-year functional building life. Appropriate materials include brick, stone, wood, stucco, cast iron, and metal panels, when reflective of historic industrial buildings. The scale and texture of these traditional materials contribute to the character of the Historic District. Although discouraged, cement fiber siding may be an appropriate alternative to traditional wood siding for building additions, or when there is no appropriate alternative. If used, smooth texture siding is preferred over false wood grain. Maintenance and re-use of original siding is encouraged in all cases.

New or alternative materials not otherwise prohibited may be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the longevity and appearance of the material. The material must have a demonstrated durability in the local climate, and shall be used in a manner that appears similar in character to historic materials. In all cases, building materials proposed for modifications to existing structures shall be compatible with existing materials. If a substitute material is proposed for a restoration project, its physical

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properties should be carefully considered and compared to the historic material to ensure a similar performance over time.

The following exterior surface materials are prohibited.

- a. Plain or smooth face concrete masonry unit
- b. Tilt-up concrete slab without decorative texture or treatment
- c. Corrugated metal
- d. Imitation or synthetic cladding materials such as vinyl, plastic, or aluminum
- e. T1-11 siding
- f. Mirrored glass
- g. Vinyl windows

3. Storefronts

The storefront is the most significant and visually prominent architectural component of an historic commercial building. The storefront is the ground level façade, constructed using large sections of glazing to display merchandise, with structural components that often have a decorative element. Most people experience a building at the ground floor level, and the appearance of the storefront can greatly influence the perception of a building and the business within. Large storefront windows are dominant characteristics of historic commercial buildings.

- a. When present and intact, historic character and character-defining elements of the storefront shall be preserved.
- b. Storefront windows shall be maintained in their original size. If original glass is intact, it shall be preserved. Non-retail uses located within buildings containing storefront windows may install interior blinds, curtains, or semi-transparent screening that may be opened and closed during the day to provide privacy while retaining historical integrity.
- c. Glazing shall be transparent. Highly reflective or darkly tinted glass shall not be used. Except for window signs, the use of applied films is prohibited.
- d. Transom windows shall not be obscured by exterior elements except awnings. Original dimensions shall not be altered.
- e. Alcoves and recessed entries shall be maintained in their original configuration. If the alcove includes a decorative ceiling and/or floor, those elements shall be preserved.
- f. Kickplates and bulkheads shall be retained and preserved as decorative panels. If an original bulkhead is missing, the replacement shall be sympathetic to the original design and consistent with the character of the building.

CONSISTENT



The original storefront design, orientation, and windows have been preserved and maintained.

INCONSISTENT



The storefront has been altered using contemporary materials.

4. Cornices

Many historic commercial buildings have cornices to cap the façades. Repetition of cornice lines along the streetscape provides a sense of visual continuity. The historic character of the cornice line and parapet should be preserved. If the cornice has been removed from a building, it should be reconstructed using historic evidence. If such evidence is not available, a simplified interpretation of the original may be appropriate.

- a. When present and intact, existing cornices shall be maintained and preserved.
- b. Replacement cornices shall be consistent with the character of the building.

5. Upper Floor Windows

Upper floor windows are typically vertically oriented, with a height that is generally a minimum of twice the dimension of the width. These windows are often smaller than the storefront windows, with larger areas of intervening building wall. When present and intact, existing windows should be maintained and preserved.

- a. Windows shall be set back, or shall appear to be set back from the plane of the exterior building wall to create dimensional relief.
- b. Mullions and muntins shall be vertically proportioned. False muntins, or simulated divided lites between window panes shall not be used.
- c. The original position, size, number, and arrangement of windows shall be retained in a building wall. Original window openings on a primary building façade shall not be enclosed.
- d. New and replacement windows shall be dimensional and finished with trim elements that are appropriate for the building. The use of vinyl windows is inappropriate where visible from offsite locations.

CONSISTENT



Vertically-oriented windows with true muntins have been maintained.

INCONSISTENT



Original windows have been bricked over.

6. Roofs

In addition to protecting the building from the weather, the material, size, and orientation of a roof also contribute to the overall building character.

- a. The original roof form and eave depth shall be preserved.
- b. Skylights shall be flat against and parallel with the plane of the roof. Other roof equipment shall not be visible from the street.
- c. Appropriate materials for pitched roofs include metal, clay tiles, slate, and wood shingles. Architectural composition roofing is an appropriate alternative to traditional roofing materials.
- d. Built-up and torch-down (modified bitumen) roofing are appropriate for flat roofs. Synthetic materials may be allowed if the roof is not visible from a street.

7. Building Lighting

Traditionally, exterior lights that were mounted to buildings were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances, and ground floor details. If building lights are proposed, special attention should be given to the character of fixtures and level of lighting. If used, building lighting should be used to accent building entrances, architectural details, and signs. If present, historic fixtures should be retained wherever possible, and adapted for modern use with new bulbs or fittings.

- a. Building light fixtures shall be shielded from the sky and adjacent properties to prevent glare.
- b. Uplighting shall only be allowed when the glare will be interrupted by building features, such as a cornice or sill.

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- c. New lighting fixtures shall be consistent with the character and scale of the building. Conduit and junction boxes shall be concealed. Recessed and canned lights are inappropriate when visible from the street.
- d. The use of neon, continuous or generally continuous LED tubing, and similar linear illumination for building ornamentation is prohibited.

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Exterior light fixtures that emphasize architectural elements.

INCONSISTENT



Tube lighting for building ornamentation.

8. Service Areas

Exterior equipment, storage, and service areas can detract from the appearance of a building and site, and can create noise impacts on adjacent public ways. These elements should be located away from streets and pedestrian areas, and screened from view. Wherever possible, service areas should be located within the building itself.

- a. The following shall be enclosed or obscured with screening materials: mechanical and electrical equipment (junction boxes, telecommunication devices, conduits, satellite dishes, HVAC equipment, meters, vault doors and covers, vents, and fans), garbage and recycling containers, utilities, outside storage areas.
- b. Large equipment such as window air-conditioning units or satellite dishes shall not be located on a primary building façade, or within view from the public sidewalk within one block.
- c. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall not be visible from adjacent sidewalks within one block. Rooftop equipment shall be set back from the outer building wall whenever possible and/or screened using an extended parapet wall or other roof forms, to a height that equals or exceeds the height of the equipment.
- d. Screening methods may include a wall, fence, or vegetation. Refuse screening shall be opaque, or mostly opaque. Walls and fences shall be consistent with the standards contained in section V.3.
- e. Screening design shall be in character with the building and site it serves.

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9. Doors and Hardware

- a. Wood is the preferred material for doors. Bronze, brass, and painted metal is acceptable. Bright finish stainless steel or aluminum, fiberglass and plastic shall not be used.
- b. All primary commercial doors shall have extensive glazing, with a minimum of one foot between the glass and the bottom of the door. Kickplates are encouraged below the glazing.
- c. Metal used for exterior hardware shall be dark and shall not have a bright or shiny finish, with the exception of copper and copper alloys (including brass and bronze). Bright finished aluminum shall not be used.
- d. Hardware shall be traditional and historic in character, to the extent allowed under the applicable building code.

CONSISTENT



Wood doors with extensive glazing, kick plates and bronze hardware.

INCONSISTENT



Aluminum-frame doors with minimal space below the glazing.

10. Additions

Additions of new floor area to existing buildings may be an acceptable alternative to reconfiguring existing interior space as businesses grow and expand. Building additions can enhance or detract from the appearance of an historic structure. An addition that is small in relation to the main structure will have minimal visual impacts compared to an overly large, visually dominating addition.

While some destruction of original materials may be expected to accommodate the addition, such loss should be minimized. Careful planning and thoughtful designs

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minimize the destruction of original character-defining features, and complement the original architecture.

- a. Additions shall be compatible with the main building in material, character, and scale.
- b. Additions shall not damage or obscure historically or architecturally important features.
- c. Additions shall be compatible with, but differentiated from, the historic building.
- d. Building additions may be allowed in the following areas under conditions:
 1. Rear or side of existing building.
 - The alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices, and upper floor windows on the main structure shall be maintained.
 - The addition shall be subordinate in appearance to the main structure.
 - Wherever possible, larger additions shall be physically set apart from the main structure with a small connecting element, or “hyphen”.
 2. Above roof of existing building.
 - The addition area shall be set back from the primary façade to preserve original building scale.
 - The addition shall be simple in character and subordinate in appearance to maintain the original structure as the primary focus.
 - Wherever possible, window and trim elements shall align with those on the existing structure.
 - Dormer additions shall be subordinate to the structure in scale, roof pitch, and general form.
- e. Deck and balcony additions shall be simple in design yet consistent with the character of the structure. The deck or balcony shall not obscure character-defining features. The solid-to-void ratios of balusters and rails shall be designed to appear mostly transparent. Glass and plexiglass are not appropriate on street-facing façades.
- f. Older additions that have achieved historic significance shall be preserved.

CONSISTENT



Addition to the rear of an historic building uses similar materials without creating false sense of history.

INCONSISTENT



Addition above roof of historic building becomes a focal point with inappropriate materials.

11. Restoration Guidelines

1. Before beginning any restoration work, research available documents and perform a physical investigation of the building, in order to determine the historic appearance of the structure and establish the most appropriate restoration plan.
2. Historic building materials should be preserved or restored. Original façade materials should not be covered or obscured.
3. If material replacement is necessary due to deterioration or significant damage, materials similar to those used historically should be used. Historic evidence may be helpful in determining the material that was originally used on the building.
4. Masonry should be protected from water deterioration.
5. Character-defining details should be restored to their original appearance. Elements or details that were not part of the original building should not be added.

C. Adaptive Re-Use

The best use for an historic building is that for which the building was designed, or a closely related use. However, often the original use is obsolete, or changes to the surrounding neighborhood make the original use no longer compatible. An example is a residential structure that is converted to a professional office. In such cases, older buildings can be repurposed to meet the marketplace's changing demands. Also referred to as a "change of use", adaptive reuse can often preserve the structure from demolition. When a structure is repurposed for a new use, every effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that will require minimal alteration in order to operate.

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- a. Changes of use shall retain character-defining features of the building while accommodating the new function.
 1. Existing storefront and transom windows shall not be obscured, but rather shaded from the inside if privacy is desired.
 2. Existing front porches shall be retained in their original form and configuration, including the size and shape, design, and open qualities. Deteriorated features such as columns, decking, rails, balusters, and finish details shall be repaired or replaced in kind.
- b. Front yards shall not be used for parking areas. Parking areas shall be located to the side or rear of the structure. Refer to Site Planning in section III.2.B for additional standards that may apply to adapting a property for a new use.
- c. Retention of historic signage is encouraged wherever possible.

The Secretary of the Interior is an excellent resource for guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, and maintaining historic structures. The online Presentation Briefs include 47 printed publications to help applicants and property owners:
<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>