

**NORTHFIELD
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

**Thursday, March 18, 2010 --- 4:30 p.m.
Northfield City Hall – Council Chambers**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – February 18, 2010
3. Project Review - None
4. Sign Review
 - a. Approval of two signs at 319 Division Street South
5. Other
 - a. Select HPC member for monthly City Council report
 - b. Update on meeting with Park and Recreation Advisory Board for proposed Way Park designation
 - c. Training on Department of Interior standards for new construction – Steve Edwins
 - d. Discuss Board/Commission training on March 23, 2010
6. Adjournment

****Please call Dan Olson at 645-3056 if you cannot attend****

**The next meeting will be April 15, 2010, at
4:30 p.m. in the
City Hall Council Chambers
ALL PACKET INFORMATION IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE CITY'S
WEBSITE: WWW.CI.NORTHFIELD.MN.US**

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Members Present: Chair Bob Will, Judy Swanson, Susan deMalignon, Peter Carlson, Mary Titus, Cliff Clark, Maggie Lee, Steve Edwins, Steve Wilmot

Also Present: City Planner Dan Olson, Councilmember Betsey Buckheit, City Engineer Katy Gehler, Brian Hilgardner – Bolton & Menk, Recording Secretary Barb Neitzel

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Will called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with a quorum present. A request was made to add a discussion related to proposed streetscape changes to the 4th Street infrastructure.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by J. Swanson and seconded by S. deMalignon to approve the January 21, 2010 minutes as amended to change “complied” to “compiled” in the second paragraph of Item 5d. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion on 4th Street Infrastructure Planter Designs

City Engineer K. Gehler updated the commission on the planters/pavement design proposed for 4th Street E between Washington and Division by the Northfield Downtown Streetscape Task Force. Because this block is partially within the Historic District, HPC approval is necessary for significant streetscape changes. She presented to the HPC drawings of the street, identifying the location of the proposed planters and the brick paving inlays that would create visual bump-outs on which the planters could be placed during warmer months. These planters would be very large, sufficient to hold a small tree with ornamental under planting. They would provide an alternative to actual trees, which have not fared well on this block because of bedrock and shading. The City Engineer also provided images of possible planters in varying sizes and styles. She also reported the suggestion that each year, before winter when street plowing occurs, the planters could be moved by forklift to Bridge Square.

After extensive discussion, the HPC determined as a whole they were opposed this streetscape proposal. Foremost among reasons for this opposition were the following: such large scale planters have no historical precedents; they are oversized for such a location, and pose potential traffic hazards; they would appear only in this block of the downtown, and hence are more anomalous than integral to streetscape design; their annual relocation to Bridge Square would give the Square an awkward appearance each winter and would likely damage its topsoil each spring.

A motion was made by M. Titus and seconded by C. Clark stating the HPC does not support large scale planters or inlaid bump-outs along 4th Street between Washington and Division; however, they do support small scale planters placed along the sidewalk and displayed only during the summer months. All in favor. Motion carried.

Although HPC opposed this particular proposal for the downtown historic district streetscape, members of the commission repeatedly expressed their support for smaller planters, and for the presence of flowers and greenery throughout the downtown.

3. Project Review:

- a. Painting for window trim at 508 Division Street South
HPC members B. Will and P. Carlson had previously approved the replacement windows up for upper story of 508 Division Street. The HPC was asked to review paint samples for the brick mold, sash and wood panel and also approve a panel molding.

A motion was made by S. Edwins and seconded by J. Swanson to accept the proposed molding which should be painted “colonial red” and approve the “burnished slate” color for the sash and wood panel. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Sign Review: None

5. Other

- a. Training on Department of Interior Standards for new construction – Steve Edwins
This discussion was postponed to the March meeting.
- b. Select HPC member for monthly City Council report
M. Titus offered to prepare a summary of the meeting for the City Council.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by C. Clark and seconded by S. Wilmot to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

Submitted by:

Barb Neitzel
Recording Secretary

ITEM: Sign Permit Approval for Two Signs at 319 Division Street South

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is being asked to review a sign permit for two new signs at 319 Division Street South. The first sign is a projecting sign for Goodbye Blue Monday coffee house, and the second is a wall sign for Leota Goodney, Accountant. The building at 319 Division Street, constructed around 1986, is a “non-contributing” building in the historic district.

RELATED INFORMATION:

Mr. Jim Bohnhoff, representing both the property owner, Leota Goodney, and the existing tenant of the building, “Goodbye Blue Monday” coffee house is proposing two new signs at this location:

- The first sign is a two-sided projecting sign advertising the coffee house that is approximately 1.5’ in height x 1.5’ in width, for a total area of 2.25 square feet per side.
- The second sign is a wall sign advertising the other businesses at 319 Division Street, “Leota Goodney, Accountant” that is 1.5’ in height x 2.5’ in width for a total square footage of 3.75 square feet.

There are four signs currently on the property (see Attachment #1)

- Two wall signs for the coffee house
- One awning sign for the coffee house
- One wall sign for Leota Goodney, Accountant. This sign is proposed to be removed.

The following is a summary of the proposed sign specifics:

- **Historic Research:** The building is not a “contributing building” in the historic district.
- **Placement:** The signs will be located above the storefront windows
- **Shape:** The projecting sign is oval in shape, and the wall sign is rectangular in shape
- **Color:** The wall sign has brown lettering on a beige background; the projecting sign has a white lettering on a blue background
- **Material:** The projecting sign will be made of MDO board fastened to stainless steel. The wall sign will be made of MDO.

- **Message:** The message of the signs are legible and relate to the use of the property
- **Lettering:** The lettering for the signs will be brown and green
- **Illumination:** The projecting sign will be lit, but the wall sign will not be lit

The applicable sections of the Downtown Historic District regulations in the sign ordinance include the following (Staff response is shown in **bold**):

1. **Historic Research:** Whenever possible, sign review shall be guided by the use of historic photographs or visual records of the building or site.

Staff response: The building, constructed about 1986, is not a “contributing” building in the historic district.

2. **Placement:** Signs shall be positioned so they are an integral design feature of the building; signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. They shall be placed so that they do not destroy architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the certificate of appropriateness by the Commission, signs may be placed only as follows:

- a. At or above the horizontal lintel, cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
- b. Projecting from the building;
- c. Applied to or painted on canvas awnings;
- d. In areas where signs were historically attached.

Staff response: The signs meet placement requirements. The signs will be located above the storefront windows. The signs will not destroy any architectural details of the building and will complement the building. The projecting sign will project 1.5’ from the building, and the wall sign will project 1.5’ from the building. These signs meet the City’s sign code requirement of a 36” projection from the building. Both signs will be located more than 8’ above the sidewalk, which meets the requirement of the City’s sign code.

3. **Sign Shape:** Signs shall be designed to match the historical time period elements and regional location of the City, which primarily exclude such features as cut corners and non-rectangular shapes. In most cases, the edges of signs shall include a raised border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Individual raised letters set onto the sign area surface are also preferred.

Staff response: The signs meet shape requirements. The projecting sign will be oval in shape, while the wall sign will be rectangular in shape. The wall sign will have raised letters. Neither sign will have a raised border.

- 4. Colors:** Sign colors shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached and shall be compatible with the property's use. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades are encouraged in order to reflect the historical time period. No more than two colors shall be used for the sign letters.

Staff response: The signs meet color requirements. The projecting sign, with a blue background and white lettering, is compatible with the red color of the brick building. For the wall sign, the beige color of the sign background, and the black lettering, is also compatible with the building.

- 5. Material:** Signs and sign letters should be made of wood or metal that is in keeping with the corresponding historical time period of the building. Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal and shall be secured at the top of the sign and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry.

Staff response: The signs meet the material requirements. The projecting sign is made of MDO board fastened to stainless steel, while the wall sign will be made of MDO board. The projecting sign will have a metal bracket attaching it to the building.

- 6. Message:** The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos.

Staff response: The signs meet message requirements. The signs are legible and relate to the business.

- 7. Lettering:** Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering shall preferably include serif rather than strictly block type styles. Each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall occupy no more than approximately 60% of the total sign area.

Staff response: The signs meet lettering requirements. The projecting sign will use the logo of the coffee shop. The wall sign has serif style lettering, which is the preferred lettering style. The total sign area occupied by these signs meets the requirement of approximately 60% of the total sign area.

- 8. Illumination:** External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent or fluorescent light, but shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows of the interior of the building. The use of internally lit signs, such as but not limited to backlit plastic, is not permitted. Exceptions to this guideline shall be allowed for public service, time/temperature and theater signs.

Staff's response: The signs meet illumination requirements. The projecting sign will be lit by a lighting fixture above the sign, while the wall sign will not be lit.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC approve the Sign Permit for 319 Division Street South.

REQUESTED BY: Jim Bohnhoff, representing 319 Division Street South

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Photo showing existing building signage
2. Drawings showing details of both signs (2 sheets)



Existing Building Signage
319 Division Street South



Goodbye Blue Monday Coffee House - 319 Division Street - Projection Sign
Signage proposal by Bohnhoff Design 03-05-10



Refurbished light fixture from Ideal Cafe.



Goodbye Blue Monday Coffee House - Projection Sign - February 2010



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ITEM: Update on Meeting with Park and Recreation Advisory Board for
Proposed Way Park designation

SUMMARY:

As directed at the December 17, 2009, Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting, members of the HPC (Cliff Clark and Mary Titus) met with the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) on February 22, 2010, to discuss the proposed designation of Way Park as a heritage preservation site. The following is further information about this agenda item:

- By a vote of 3-2, the PRAB recommended that the City Council consider the designation of Way Park as a heritage preservation site (Attachment #1). Members of the Board expressed some reluctance in having another entity involved in approval of construction in the parks that it oversees. However, if the City Council directs both the HPC and PRAB to work together on the designation of Way Park, the PRAB stated that they would be willing to see if an agreement could be reached with the HPC on a concept plan that would guide future development review in Way Park.
- The next step in the designation process is for the HPC to forward both the HPC and PRAB recommendations to the City Council for their direction. If the City Council directs both entities to begin working on the designation, a subcommittee composed of members of both entities could be formed to work on the designation. If the City Council directs that the designation process should not continue, no further action would be taken on the designation by the HPC and PRAB.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC send a recommendation from the HPC and PRAB to the City Council to designate Way Park as a heritage preservation site.

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner

ATTACHMENT:

1. Park and Recreation Advisory Board minutes from February 22, 2010

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February 22,
Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
7:00PM
Council Chambers
City Hall

Members Present: Rick Vanasek, Grace Clark, Dennis Easley, Nathan Knutson, Erik Hong

Also Present: Jim Pokorney – City Council Liaison, Jon Dennison – City Council Member, Jason Eisold – Liaison to PRAB, Dan Olson – City Planner, Barb Thompson-Administrative Assistant, HPC Members Mary Titus and Cliff Clark, Friends of Way Park, Members of Northfield East Side Neighborhood Association.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with quorum present.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2009

A Motion was made to approve the Minutes from December 8, 2009. Motion was made by G. Clark and seconded by D. Easley.

All in favor.

Motion carried.

4. PRAB Member Terms and Officer Selection

Tabled until appointments have been made to the PRAB

5. Discussion on Designating Way Park as Heritage Preservation Site

The PRAB is being asked to make a recommendation to City Council as to whether or not Way Park should be designated as a heritage preservation site. A Sample Application for Historic Site Designation was presented to the PRAB for review.

Various reasons were presented for designating as a Historic Preservation Site including but not limited to;

- Way Park played a central role in the development of the west side of Northfield
- Highlight the park as an asset not only as a neighborhood amenity
- Historic status will aid in fundraising efforts

Reasons for not designating as a Heritage Preservation Site were also presented including but not limited to;

- Slow the process down for development of the park
- The “wall” is the only historic part of the park
- Use the Historic Designation as a way to prevent future activities in the park
- Lose the flexibility and opportunities for future park uses

A Motion was made to go forward in designating Way Park as a Historic Preservation Site. If the City Council directs that the designation process should proceed, the process will begin with forming a task force with members from both the HPC and PRAB. This group will investigate the possibility of creating policies to designate Way Park as a Historic Preservation Site.

Yes – Clark, Knutson, Vanasek

No – Easley, Hong

This information will be brought to the HPC at their March meeting.

6. Northfield Code – Chapter 54

Since City Council changed their normal meeting days to Tuesday from Monday, there was a conflict with the PRAB regular meetings. At the December meeting a change of day discussion was held where the PRAB

decided to meet on the second Monday of the month. The PRAB was asked to review the existing Chapter 54 (Park Board) and Draft Ordinance No. 907- Amending Sections 54-30/54-31. There were no changes made.

7. Discussion on Dog Park

Tabled until next meeting.

8. Other Items

a) Lashbrook Park Eagle Scout Project

No discussion

b) PRAB Meeting Schedule

The PRAB will continue to meet on the second Monday of the month at City Hall in the second floor training room.

c) Friends of Old Memorial

A letter was distributed to PRAB members from NESNA (Northfield East Side Neighborhood Association) This letter was three-fold, to express thanks for working to improve Old Memorial Field, to offer assistance to the PRAB in completing trail system and landscaping, and to ask advice on the time table for Memorial Field development and the landscaping plans for the park. NESNA has a meeting scheduled on March 14, and will poll their members as to their priorities in the park and have the results available for the PRAB members. The PRAB would like to begin the process of hiring a landscape architect so that a Request for Bid can be developed for the trails in Memorial Field. The money available for park improvements was discussed and due to the previous budget cuts and the 2010 budget reductions, the funding issues will have to be discussed further prior to hiring and planning for park improvements.

d) Letter from Lashbrook Park

The concerns of trees planted not in accordance to the plans will be addressed this spring and rectified at that time

e) Johnson Control Projects

The PRAB would like to see the data on the cost savings from the Johnson Control projects both from the outdoor pool and the ice arena.

f) Carleton College

The college received a grant for work to be done in Central Park area.

g) Committee Assignments

Chair Vanasek presented his committee assignments for the 2010 year

Trails – Easley, Knutson

Park Abatement – Hvistendahl, Clark

Pool Amenities – Clark, Hvistendahl

Turf and Park Amenities – Easley

Hauberg Woods – Hong

Solar Panels – Knutson, Hong

h) Communications

The PRAB is looking for ways of communicating with all the “Friends of..” for the different parks in Northfield.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm. A motion was made by N Knutson to adjourn and seconded by E. Hong. All voted in favor. Motion carried

ITEM: Training on Department of Interior Standards for New Construction –
Steve Edwins

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is being asked to receive training from HPC member Steve Edwins on the Department of the Interior's Standards for new construction in historic districts. Attached is information on the standards for the HPC to review prior to the regular meeting on March 18, 2010.

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Information on the Department of Interior Standards
2. Memorandum from Steve Edwins dated February 18, 2010

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Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

Technical Preservation Services



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation** are ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs.

The Standards (**36 CFR Part 67**) apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes. They apply to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction.

Rehabilitation projects must meet the following Standards, as interpreted by the National Park Service, to qualify as "certified rehabilitations" eligible for the 20% rehabilitation tax credit.

The Standards are applied to projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

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.
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.
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.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
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.

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Guide to Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program for Income-Producing Properties

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[Program Regulations
36 CFR 67](#)
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[IRS Connection](#)
[Standards for Rehabilitation](#)
[Illustrated Rehabilitation Guidelines](#)
[Interpreting the Standards Bulletins](#)
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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.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
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.
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 the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

More information about the treatment standards, including illustrated guidelines can be found on the [Standards and Guidelines page](#).



STANDARDS FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND GUIDELINES FOR RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

RECONSTRUCTION the approach



-GUIDELINES-

The Approach

Research + Documentation

Building Exterior

Building Interior

Site

Setting

Special Requirements

Energy Efficiency

Accessibility

Health + Safety

THE STANDARDS

When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the re-creation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, Reconstruction may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Reconstruction should be developed.

Choosing Reconstruction as a Treatment

Whereas the treatment Restoration provides guidance on restoring--or re-creating--building features, the **Standards for Reconstruction and Guidelines for Reconstructing Historic Buildings** address those aspects of treatment necessary to re-create an entire non-surviving building with new material. Much like restoration, the goal is to make the building appear as it did at a particular--and most significant--time in its history. The difference is, in **Reconstruction**, there is far less extant historic material prior to treatment and, in some cases, nothing visible. Because of the potential for historical error in the absence of sound physical evidence, this treatment can be justified only rarely and, thus, is the least frequently undertaken. Documentation requirements prior to and following work are very stringent. Measures should be taken to preserve extant historic surface and subsurface material. Finally, the reconstructed building must be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.



In the 1930s reconstruction of the 18th century Governor's Palace at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, the earliest archeological remains of the brick foundation were carefully preserved in situ, and serve as a base for the reconstructed walls. Photo: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

top

Research and Document Historical Significance

Guidance for the treatment Reconstruction begins with **researching and documenting** the building's historical significance to ascertain that its re-creation is essential to the public understanding of the property. Often, another

extant historic building on the site or in a setting can adequately explain the property, together with other interpretive aids. Justifying a reconstruction requires detailed physical and documentary evidence to minimize or eliminate conjecture and ensure that the reconstruction is as accurate as possible. Only one period of significance is generally identified; a building, as it evolved, is rarely re-created. During this important fact-finding stage, if research does not provide adequate documentation for an accurate reconstruction, other interpretive methods should be considered, such as an explanatory marker.

top

Investigate Archeological Resources

Investigating archeological resources is the next area of guidance in the treatment **Reconstruction**. The goal of physical research is to identify features of the building and site which are essential to an accurate re-creation and must be reconstructed, while leaving those archeological resources that are not essential, undisturbed. Information that is not relevant to the project should be preserved in place for future research. The archeological findings, together with archival documentation, are then used to replicate the plan of the building, together with the relationship and size of rooms, corridors, and other spaces, and spatial relationships.

top

Identify, Protect and Preserve Extant Historic Features

Closely aligned with archeological research, recommendations are given for **identifying, protecting, and preserving** extant features of the historic building. It is never appropriate to base a **Reconstruction** upon conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other buildings. Thus, any remaining historic materials and features, such as remnants of a foundation or chimney and site features such as a walkway or path, should be retained, when practicable, and incorporated into the reconstruction. The historic as well as new material should be carefully documented to guide future research and treatment.

top

Reconstruct Non-Surviving Building and Site

After the research and documentation phases, guidance is given for Reconstruction work itself. Exterior and interior features are addressed in general, always emphasizing the need for an *accurate depiction*, i.e., careful duplication of the appearance of historic interior paints, and finishes such as stencilling, marbling, and graining. In the absence of extant historic materials, the objective in reconstruction is to re-create the appearance of the historic building for interpretive purposes. Thus, while the use of traditional materials and finishes is always preferred, in some instances, substitute materials may be used if they are able to convey the same visual appearance. Where non-visible features of the building are concerned--such as interior structural systems or mechanical systems--it is expected that contemporary materials and technology will be employed. Re-creating the building site should be an integral aspect of project work. The initial archeological inventory of subsurface and aboveground remains is used as documentation to reconstruct landscape features such as walks and roads, fences, benches, and fountains.

top

Energy Efficiency/Accessibility/Health and Safety Code Considerations

Code requirements must also be met in **Reconstruction** projects. For code purposes, a reconstructed building may be considered as essentially new construction. Guidance for these sections is thus abbreviated, and focuses on achieving design solutions that do not destroy extant historic features and materials or obscure reconstructed features.



standards for reconstruction



-GUIDELINES-

The Approach

Research + Documentation

Building Exterior

Building Interior

Site

Setting

Special Requirements

Energy Efficiency

Accessibility

Health + Safety

THE STANDARDS

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

[Guidelines for Reconstruction-->](#)

[HISTORICAL OVERVIEW](#) - [PRESERVING](#) - [REHABILITATING](#) - [RESTORING](#)- [reconstructing](#)

[main](#) - [credits](#) - [email](#)

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MEMORANDUM

to HPC Members
subject REVIEW OF SECR. OF THE INTERIOR / NPS / HISTORIC STRUCTURE STANDARDS
project HPC Project Review Processes
location Northfield, MN

from Steve Edwins
date 18 February 2010

A. Purposes of this Review:

- + Understanding relationship of Guidelines to the Standards
- + Understanding the “Approach to Treatment” approach for reviewing projects
 - = Preservation / Preserving (on hold, stabilization, not changed)
 - = Rehabilitation Rehabilitating (includes Preservation with needed changes)
 - = Restoration / Restoring (Preservation plus focus on period of significance)
 - = Reconstruction / Reconstructing (new construction that replicates what was lost)
- ++ **Understanding the review of New Construction (not an ‘approach/treatment’ category)**
 - = What are Compatibility, Similarity, and Appropriateness?
- + Working toward refining Northfield’s review processes, for:
 - = Historic buildings being extensively changed or removed, and
 - = New Construction within or adjacent to the Downtown Historic District

B. Basic Review Questions:

What rules govern and guidelines interpret the Sec of Interior Standards for:

- 1 For extensive property change or removal, and
- 2 For New Construction in the Downtown Historic District?

And behind these questions, what are the physical characteristics of the existing District?

1. Extensive Change or Removal:

The Sec of Interior Standards (36CFR Part 67) of 1977, (slightly edited c. 1994)

See Northfield Guidelines Appendix II.

NOTE: the use of directives ‘shall’ or ‘shall not’.

No. 2: *“The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved.*

The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.”

COMMENT 1. This is unequivocal about a **property**, its **historic features**, and **spaces**.

2. New Construction:

The Standards did not fully anticipate this review role, and thus there is no single set of Standards for Guidelines that govern, except as the Standards are interpreted.

The Standards have strongly advocated new work being a product of its own time, which is reinforced as follows:

No. 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 features from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.”

COMMENT 2 : both sentences have been applied to guidelines for new work, particularly that new work should not ‘copy-cat’ existing, and suggesting that new work should become ‘a physical record of its NEW time, in the historic place, just as historic buildings were build over generations and thus achieved variety (within limits) and various historic ‘styles’.

No. 9: *“New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.”*

This can be interpreted to apply to the impact of the new on its neighbors and district.

“The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and the environment.”

COMMENT 3: Phrase 2 is the basis for new work guidelines, with ‘architectural features’ expanded. Guidelines in use by cities based on No. 9 and Brief 43 usually include a combination of the following criteria, usually cited to be ‘**compatible**’ with adjacent buildings and the district, or otherwise ‘**appropriate**’:

- setback, and or orientation with neighbors (NDG)
- massing
- height and width and proportions (NDG)
- scale
- verticality versus horizontality
- rhythm and/or composition (NDG)
- proportions of the openings (NDG)
- openings compared to solid walls (void to solid ratio) (NDG)
- materials (NDG)
- color (NDG)
- roof shape
- details and ornamentation
- landscape features (more for residential)

NOTE: criteria marked (NDG) are included in the Northfield Downtown Design Guidelines.

It would be useful to review each of these Criteria, and examples, at another session.

Northfield’s Guidelines rely on the directive to be “similar to” adjacent or district buildings, which is more specific than being ‘compatible’, but may tend to bias new designs toward looking old.

[Example: District of Columbia Guide – Criteria]

COMMENT 4. Regarding New Construction in Historic Districts there is national discussion about what is meant by “compatibility” and “appropriateness” the terms most frequently used in guidelines and ordinances. Guidelines usually use examples, and brief definitions to explain the CRITERIA, but there is a vacuum of useful material about ‘compatibility’.

Most relevant: compatibility is relative to local context – understanding what exists and knowing about design approaches to ‘relate’ appropriately.

[Example: District of Columbia Guide – Introduction]

COMMENT 5. One example of being more definitive is recent research for Philadelphia. This is based on a paper at a 2007 national preservation conference presented by Steven W. Semes, entitled:

“DIFFERENTIATED” AND “COMPATIBLE”: FOUR STRATEGIES FOR ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC SETTINGS.

The four strategies are these:

- 1 **literal replication,**
- 2 **invention within the same or a related style,**
- 3 **abstract reference, and**
- 4 **intentional opposition**

[Example: **PHILA: Sense of Place** – Strategies and illustrations]

The tone of this somewhat controversial presentation by Stephen Semes is a shift from being just ‘**time sensitive**’ to also being ‘**place sensitive**’. That a new building is a product of its own time, yes, but has a responsibility to its context.

[More on this at another session?]

COMMENT 6: The Philadelphia guidelines that follow have the usual room for human judgment true of other guidelines, but echo the need to be very context sensitive.

However, in reading the report, when examples of new work were evaluated by both professionals and citizens, the two extremes seemed NOT as ‘appropriate’ as the Strategies 2 and 3, namely: **2. invention within the same or related style**, and **3. Abstract reference**.

These two strategies might be the most productive for careful consideration by Northfield in re-evaluating the NDDG document’s section on “New Downtown Construction”.

*From the Philadelphia – **Sense of Place** report:*

“Compatibility requires more than similarities of massing or abstract references; it must be a primary objective of the designer and an integral part of the design process for projects in historic settings. What makes buildings from different eras and styles compatible is that they share the same underlying principles of space, structure, elements, composition, proportion, ornament, and character. If these principles are consistent among the buildings along a street or around a square, they will be compatible, regardless of style. Compatibility is not uniformity; however, if the principles embodied by neighboring buildings are antithetical, no alignment of cornices or adjustments of massing will be sufficient to maintain a relationship of civility among them.”

END for now

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