

Questions for the Board to Consider

June 16, 2022

Additions (additional stories and penthouses)

Commenters at the May 17 meeting argued for more flexibility to additions and penthouses. Here are some of their thoughts re new language based on June 1 Board discussion:

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Additional stories to existing buildings are discouraged because a new addition to a historic building has the potential to change its historic character as well as to damage and destroy significant historic materials and features including and its **size, scale, and massing**. The design of a new addition should also visually distinguish the new building portions from the existing so that the public can recognize what part of the building is original.

Penthouse pavilion" means a covered and posted but otherwise open structure, or an arbor, affixed to the roof of a building and intended to be used as a common amenity area. (SMC 23.84A.030P)



I suggest a new definition: "Penthouse" (not penthouse pavilion) means a one-story structure located on top of a multi-story building and occupying only part of the larger building's footprint.

For more information regarding additions see *Preservation Brief 14 New Additions to Historic Building: Preservation Concerns*. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/14-exterior-additions.htm> and the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Reconstruction*: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-reconstruction.htm>.

Guidelines



i. Criteria for replacing missing stories.

For all buildings which have had stories removed, the missing stories may be rebuilt upon approval by the Board. When original stories are replaced, the addition may not exceed the original height of the building. The preferred option is that the construction of new stories in a compatible but different design (so that the new addition is distinguishable from the existing) may be acceptable if approved by the Board. A second option is to rebuild new stories as a compatible addition as outlined in the Secretary of Interior (SOI) Preservation Brief 14. Where an accurate information regarding the original building's design an exact replication of the missing stories using the Secretary of Interior Standards for Reconstruction is also acceptable.

TEXT BOX SUMMARIZING BRIEF 14

ii. Criteria for penthouses on Contributing Buildings

Single story penthouses permitted per SMC23.66.140 may be permitted as rooftop additions on contributing buildings. Compatible penthouse additions and rear or secondary façade additions which comply with Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are outlined in the Preservation Brief 14. Penthouses must be set back from the street facing edge of the building so as not to be visible or to be minimally visible (as determined by the Board) from a public street or open space within 300 feet of the building. They must not adversely detract from the views of the blockfront from the adjacent street. **The proposed penthouse must comply with SMC 23.66.140.C.3.f unless the Board determines that a modification to the setbacks is allowable per SMC23.66.140C.3.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide materials to the Board demonstrating the requirements of this subsection are met.

iii. Criteria for added stories and penthouses on Non-Contributing Buildings

Additions permitted in SMC23.66.140 C. f and I for penthouses may be permitted. Other additions may be allowed based on compatibility with the building and the District as outlined in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Preservation Brief 14. However, such additions will only be allowed if the Board determines that the proposal is height compatible with the building itself and surrounding buildings. The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed building addition meets the following requirements:

- Additions must not detract from the views of the blockfront or views of the District from outside the District, including Elliott Bay.
- Additions must comply with Guideline (c) Building Height and Massing (Bulk) in Section 3 Guidelines for New Structures.
- New additions must be compatible with the existing structure and the District in terms of basic configuration and materials. (See 3 Guidelines for New Structures, Section a. General Information).
- The Board may require the setback of new stories from the front of the building façade if the new addition detracts from views of the blockfront.

iv. Criteria for added stories to Contributing Buildings

Added stories that do not meet the criteria of subsection (ii) above to existing contributing buildings are generally discouraged but may be approved if the Board finds that all of the following conditions are met:

- Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as outlined in the Preservation Brief 14.
- Additions must set back from the street facing edge(s) of the building so as not to be visible from a person standing on a sidewalk directly across the street from the building,
- Additions must not lower the status of the building from Contributing to Non-Contributing
- Additions must comply with Guideline (c) Building Height and Massing (Bulk) in Section 3 Guidelines for New Structures.

- Additions must not result in the substantial demolition of a contributing building's interior, as determined by the Board. Recognizing that new additions will require some interior modifications for structural and circulation needs, the intent of this provision is to prevent changes that retain only the exterior skin of the original building.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide materials to the Board demonstrating the requirements of this subsection are met.

- v. The Board will apply the guidance below in determining whether a new addition is appropriate and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:
- A new addition should be simple and unobtrusive in design and should be distinguished from the historic building—a recessed connector can help to differentiate the new from the old.
 - A new addition should not be highly visible from the public right of way; a rear or other secondary elevation is usually the best location for a new addition.
 - The construction materials and the color of the new addition should be harmonious with the historic building materials.
 - The new addition should be smaller than the historic building—it should be subordinate in both size and design to the historic building.
 - The same guidance will be consulted when reviewing applications for roof-top additions:
 - A rooftop addition is generally not appropriate for a one, two or three-story building (except to replace in kind stories that have been previously demolished)—and often is not appropriate for taller buildings.
 - A rooftop addition should be minimally visible.
 - Generally, a rooftop addition must be set back at least one full bay from the primary elevation of the building, as well as from the other elevations if the building is freestanding or highly visible.
 - Generally, a rooftop addition should not be more than one story in height.
 - Generally, a rooftop addition is more likely to be compatible on a building that is adjacent to similarly sized or taller buildings.

Height of new structures.

23.66.140.D says:

New Structures. When new structures are proposed in the District, the Preservation Board shall review the proposed height of the structure and make recommendations to the Department of Neighborhoods Director who may require design changes to assure reasonable protection of views from Kobe Terrace Park.

Here is what we have so far – followed up with examples of the types of submittals that the Board may require to determine the allowable height.

Guidelines

- i. The Board will establish a new building’s appropriate height based on its visual impact to its local surroundings and the District’s profile as seen from outside Pioneer Square. To accomplish this, the Board will consider the following:
 - a. Perspectives of the proposed building from street fronts, as seen from locations on the adjacent block, looking down streets within the District and looking in from the outskirts of the District, including from Kobe Terrace and from Elliot Bay. The proposed building, although it may be visible from such locations, must not dominate or detract from the visual fabric of the District.
 - b. Graphic comparisons of height of existing buildings. The application must demonstrate that the proposed building is compatible buildings within one block surrounding the site. (See 3 Guidelines for New Structures, Section a. General Information for a discussion of compatibility)
 - c. Blockage of sunlight access on public spaces for a significant portion of the day. The intent is to avoid shading of important public spaces such as Occidental Park and 1st Avenue.
 - d) The extent that the height and mass of the building is mitigated by architectural characteristics to provide a more compatible human scale typical of street facades of near-by contributing and supporting buildings. Such characteristics are further discussed in Section 2 (Guidelines for Modifications to or Demolition of Existing Buildings).
 - e) Other as identified by the Board.

Ground Floor Uses Proposed new language for

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

d. Uses

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Ground floor uses are important for generating pedestrian and commercial activity in the District. The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that ground floor spaces in the district are occupied by uses that contribute to the overall pedestrian, retail and commercial activities.

Guidelines

- i. *Uses at street level in the area designated on Map B for [23.66.130](#) require the approval of the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board.*
- ii. *Preferred uses at street level must be highly visible and pedestrian oriented. Preferred street-level uses either display merchandise in a manner that contributes to the character and activity of the area, and/or promote residential uses, including but not limited to the following uses:*

Definition of Contributing Structures and Buildings

Here is what SMC 23.84A.006 says with the deletion of language related to the ID and with the addition of the presumption of a building being contributing unless designated otherwise.

"Contributing structure or building" means a structure that the Director of Neighborhoods has determined contributes and will contribute to the architectural and/or historic character of the Pioneer Square Preservation District pursuant to [Section 23.66.032](#), and for which any conditions to a final determination to that effect have been satisfied. A structure or building in the District is considered to be contributing unless otherwise specifically designated.

QUESTION: Do we capitalize contributing in the text?

New Language in 3 New Structures to address character and compatibility

3. Guidelines for New Structures

Proposed revisions 5-27-2022 (General Information)

While historic districts convey a sense of time and place which is retained through the preservation of historic buildings and the general character of the district, these areas continue to be dynamic, evolving settings. Careful thought and planning in the design and development of new structures can enhance the character of the district while providing for new and expanded activities and a vibrant community.

These guidelines are intended to promote new buildings that are sensitive to their historic context and complementary to their surroundings. The guidelines provide a basic framework to create an environment that respects the special setting of Pioneer Square, maintains a cohesive neighborhood identity and is pedestrian oriented. All new buildings within the districts should be compatible with both the visual qualities of the immediate area in which the property is located, as well as the overall context of the district as to retain its historic character.

New structures should be "compatible" with the District's "historic character". For the purposes of these guidelines, "historic character" is defined as the physical characteristics of the District's contributing buildings along with historically relevant appurtenances such as signs, and their surroundings, including features in the public realm. The characteristics of the District's structures, signs, and public realm features are described in the "Rationale,

Context and Intent” statements at the front of the individual guideline section. “Compatible/compatibility” means that the new structure or improvement does not detract from the structure’s, blockfront’s or District’s historic character.

When determining a new building’s “compatibility” and “consistency” with other historic features in the District and with the character of the District as a whole, the Board will consider a structure’s height and bulk, materials, window patterns, top-middle-base configuration, storefront/ground floor design, color, scale, details, and other considerations described in these guidelines.

It is not intended that new buildings necessarily employ the same architectural styles as the contributing and historic buildings, as this practice leads to a false or imitation historicism. Instead, new buildings and structures should feature some of the fundamental design characteristics of historic buildings noted in the guidelines below in order to complement existing buildings rather than produce a stridently contrasting element along an otherwise architecturally consistent block front. Adherence to these guidelines is intended to produce new construction that is differentiated from the old, while respecting and complementing the qualities and vocabulary of the historic district.

Blade signs with Awnings

Proposed changes to the last draft are in editorial tracking

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Blade signs are signs that project out perpendicularly from a building façade and are supported by or hung from horizontal brackets. Usually, they identify a business, organization, or activity. They are often prominent features on contributing and supporting buildings.

Signs made of fabric or flexible material and hung perpendicularly from the building as in a rigid blade sign are also considered blade signs.



Figure xxx. A traditional blade sign on the left and contemporary blade signs with neon

Guidelines

- i. Location. Blade signs shall be installed below the top of the second floor of the building, and in such a manner that they do not hide, damage, or obscure the architectural elements of the building. If the storefront also includes an awning or canopy, ensure that the proposed sign will be visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk by avoiding visual conflict with the awning or canopy. This may be done through retractable awnings or breaks in the awning's or canopy's or coverage at a pilaster or column (See Figure XXX, below).



Figure xxx. An example of a blade sign that is visible to a pedestrian with an awning through two measures. First, the awnings are retractable. Second, the awnings are not continuous over the storefront but are separated to cover individual window areas between the storefront columns.

- ii. Dimensions Blade signs are limited to eight (8) square feet.
- iii. Illumination. Blade signs incorporating neon or similar tube-oriented lighting shall be permitted provided all the following conditions are met:
 - The neon blade sign is sought as part of an overall sign plan for the business.
 - Electrical connection from exterior walls to the blade sign shall be made using rigid, paintable electrical tubing painted to match the building facade and all bends shall closely follow the support structure.
 - The wiring and connections shall be internal to the sign and not be visible
 - All neon elements shall be supported by a rigid, opaque backing and framework. (See Figure ___ of a contemporary blade sign for a positive example.):
 - LED lights may be approved provided they produce the same visual character of lights common before 1940.
- iv. Lettering. Letter size in blade signs shall be consistent with the scale of the architectural elements of the building (as per SMC 23.66.160) but shall not exceed a maximum height of 10

inches unless an exception is approved by the Board. Logos and other graphic devices may be larger. Exceptions to the 10-inch height limitation will be considered for individual letters in the business name (subject to a limit of no more than three letters) only if the Board finds that the sign fit within the building's architectural details

- v. Color and Materials. Blade signs on Contributing and Historic buildings shall be made of materials that were available before 1940s such as wood, glass, and metal. Painted opaque, panel materials such as rigid polymer panels may also be acceptable if the finishes visually resemble the materials noted above and are approved by the Board.
- vi. Signs made of fabric or flexible material and hung perpendicularly from the building are permitted provided that the material is durable, and the colors are not subject to rapid fading. Such signs must be supported top and bottom with a rigid mounting.
- vii. All signage supports shall be fastened to the exterior wall using metal anchors at existing grout joints only; and the sign taken as a whole is consistent with the scale and character of the building and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160.

