

Dinkytown Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines
Community Engagement Meeting #2 – Dec. 14, 2023
6 pm on Zoom via Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association

15 participants, including 3 City staff

*Note: meeting chat was disabled so Marcy-Holmes staff will help distribute some links and information after the meeting

Staff gave brief presentation about past meeting, agenda for the evening, explained that we'll be going over the guidelines page by page, overview of how design guidelines work, a plain language translation of the 10 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Green highlighted items on the slides reflect topics that were raised by comments through the online comment form

Pages 1-2:

- these are introduction pages
- there are two types of applications when you want to make changes to a designated property
- history of the district
- period of significance (1899-1929) is explained

Pages 3-4

- explanation of **historic** (built between 1899-1929) vs. **non-historic** (built/added after 1929) **materials**
- explanation of **contributing** (built between 1899-1929) vs. **non-contributing** (built/substantially altered after 1929) **resources**
- Staff received a question about whether or not it's necessary to explain **primary** vs. **non-primary** elevations, it is common to use this phrasing in the zoning code and administration of the zoning code
- emphasis that each project is evaluated on a case-by-case basis
- brief section on ADA accessibility – we encourage you to contact staff about this if this is something you need to address in your property
- full text of the 10 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Text highlighted yellow on the slides are key points that staff would like to address

Page 7: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Roofs, and Walls, Stucco

- explanation of 1.1, 1.3, and 1.7

Page 8: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Masonry

- explanation of 1.9, 1.10, and 1.12

Staff acknowledges that these guidelines are really technical, may be overwhelming, this is intended to give guidance when individual situations come up. Projects may only need to consider a handful of guidelines and not necessarily the full list.

Page 8: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Ghost signs, Fenestration

- explanation of 1.14 and 1.16
- Staff had received a comment about whether or not we need to use the word Fenestration because it's a very technical word. This is the term that covers windows and doors, is commonly used in preservation, but staff will look at how to better explain this word.
- Staff acknowledge that a lot of storefronts have been altered. This is common in historic commercial areas. There is some flexibility with changes to storefronts that have been changed if property owners want to make some changes.

Page 9: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Windows

- Explanation of 1.19a and 1.20e
- There are few historic windows left in the district, but they should be repaired if at all possible
- Staff had received a comment about 1.20b, wondering if it's possible to expand an opening and that might be a benefit. Generally, we want to keep the same size openings as there are now.

Pages 9-10: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Replacement Windows

- Explanation of 1.21a, 1.21c, and 1.21e
- Wood, steel, aluminum, and fiberglass are allowed
- If a vinyl window is already present, staff may allow replacement with a vinyl window.

Page 10: Guidelines for Existing Buildings: Doors

- Explanation of 1.24 and 1.27
- Lots of doors in the district already meet 1.24
- Under 1.27, we try to avoid creating new entryways, especially if that involves punching into historic materials

Page 10-11: Guidelines for Additions

- These don't happen as often

Page 13: Guidelines for New Construction

- This is not a green light to make new construction, but we need to have guidelines to be able to address this if it comes up.
- Since this district was designated, staff have not heard requests for demolition of buildings in the district to date.

Questions and staff answers are below. Answers may be paraphrased.

1. Some people only received notice of the meeting today. Did not receive notice of the meeting before today. Only saw the link to the website today. May not be well publicized. Have not had much time to review the guidelines. Hope there will be more opportunity to review in the future.

- a. For the first meeting, staff sent public notices to the properties that fall within the Dinkytown Commercial Historic District boundaries. We also worked with some stakeholders to identify email addresses to send information about the meeting. There is still opportunity to provide comments.
2. Who do you consider to be the community? Referenced division of Marcy-Holmes and the different areas.
 - a. We consider the community to be all Minneapolitans, anyone who has interest in this district.
3. How to find the notes
 - a. City staff will work with Marcy-Holmes staff to share links to website, comment form, and guidelines after the meeting since the chat function is disabled for this meeting.
4. Question about determining contributing vs. non-contributing and historic vs. non-historic, it sounds like you have metric measures for what is inside or outside the boundary. Who determines these metrics?
 - a. We can only look at what is formally designated through a City Council resolution. City Council chose to designate this era between 1899 and 1929. So that determines what is contributing vs. non-contributing, historic vs. non-historic.
5. There is no reference to reason we preserve historic areas because they matter to the people who live there and the community who shaped the area, more than just what the building looks like. It's unfortunate that we divorce the two in these documents. Are there other avenues for addressing social aspect of the historic district?
 - a. For social history and interpretive methods, that is not something that is looked at through design guidelines. Guidelines address the physical aspects. They aren't the place to look at the social traditions. They could be addressed in a different project? The guidelines don't typically accommodate that type of story.
6. Question about painting over murals that people have created or the ghost signs?
 - a. Addressed by Guideline 1.9
7. Suggestion that the City could be more effective in communication to offer a glossary to help folks navigate things like that. Would be nice to not feel so overwhelmed, that might help community feel more supported as they review these documents.
8. To what degree do staff assist or take the lead in doing some of the research of these different things for a building you are reviewing or do you expect a property owner to do all of that?
 - a. Staff are part of a team of preservation professionals (backgrounds in architectural history, history, or public history). If members of the public reach out to us with questions about the history of a building, staff can assist with this. Staff have information that might help. It helps to be proactive with projects. If you are thinking of doing something in a year, reach out at any point and we can tell what reviews might be needed. We try to help if there is enough lead time. We understand that different people come to the table with different skillsets.
9. One of the ghost signs does remain, the Simm's Hardware sign on 14th Ave. Because the buildings next to it are non-contributing because they were cut down, that sign would appear to be at greater risk. That may be the only one that remains from what the speaker remembers. With non-contributing buildings next door, how do you balance those things, especially if someone would want to build a large building next door?

- a. If someone is proposing demolition or new construction, that has to go through two processes. Demolition would first be evaluated. Demolition would have to be approved before new construction would be evaluated. Staff would look at the impact on the surrounding district.
 - b. Follow-up question, given the drive to increase density and push for more housing for students and push for affordable housing, concern that the politics of building might carry more weight/visibility that things like ghost signs may not be considered very important. Wanted to share this on the record.
10. Are you going to have any additional meetings with wider distribution and more notice? It would be nice to have other opportunities? When are you planning to have these final?
- a. Summary of notice to date: staff noticed the property owners in the district, also tried to notice to the direct addresses to reach business owners who may not own the property, we did send info via email to folks who had engaged in the past, reached out to Marcy-Holmes and Council Member offices, we tried to reach people who are directly affected by the guidelines. At this point, we don't know if we will be having any more meetings. We encourage you to go the website and fill out the comment form.
 - b. Derek from Marcy-Holmes added that Rob also attended a Land Use meeting last month. Commented that this looks pretty standard based on experience working with masonry contractors. Emphasizes that staff have been easy to work with and take this seriously.
11. Appreciated the method of highlighting in the presentation and addressing the comments. For the things that we ran out of time, do you anticipate summarizing some themes of what was heard and changes that are made?
- a. We'll summarize comments and how we addressed this when this goes before the Heritage Preservation Commission. There are some that we might not be able to address because we have to make sure the guidelines fit within the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. We encourage folks to email Rob Skalecki with any comments as well.
12. Looking for education from historic part of the city about adaptive reuse, there are concerns about vacancy in commercial areas, maintain vibrancy, don't want to have too many barriers to occupancy, is that a case-by-case thing? Cites some good reuse over at Raymond and University, look the same from the outside but new on the inside. This might help solve some problems for vacant buildings. Dinkytown buildings may be too small for it to be affordable.
- a. Not likely for buildings in Dinkytown to be expanded with more floors. But we are only reviewing the exterior for changes. Interior changes are not addressed in this district, so adaptive reuse is possible.
13. Derek from Marcy-Holmes asked about options to nominate Varsity Theater for National Register or something else as its own site.
- a. Local designation would offer more protections for this building than National Register. Building has to be nominated by one of the following: Mayor, City Council member, Heritage Preservation Commissioner, Planning Director, or person with a legal or equitable interest in the property. Feel free to set up a meeting to talk about this further.
14. Will we know when the HPC will discuss the guidelines so we can listen?

- a. Staff can notify any interested parties when the meeting will be held. We'll also post on the website and can communicate through City Council newsletter. We are currently communicating with Ward 2 and 3, but as of January 1, 2024 the district will fall in Ward 2 only. You can also sign up to receive HPC updates on our website

Next steps

Marcy-Holmes will work with City staff to facilitate some messages and links out to attendees.

From staff:

- Guidelines will go to Heritage Preservation Commission at some point. This is for discussion and not adoption. No specific date is set.
- Guidelines will go to Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment.
- Comments will be received and changes may be made.
- At some point, guidelines will be noticed for a public hearing and the HPC would vote to adopt the guidelines or note. No specific date is set.
- Members of the public can continue to submit comments via online form and email to Rob.

Thanks to all for attending and Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association for hosting the Zoom!