

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) MEETING**

July 15, 2020

**Action Minutes**

**ROLL CALL**

*Present: Commissioner Saum and Raynsford*

**AGENDA**

**Meeting Goal:** Discuss preliminary project design and provide comments to staff and applicants.

**Proposed Projects for Review:**

- a. **Citywide Design Guidelines.** San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines” (Citywide DSG) has updated and consolidated residential, commercial, and industrial design guidelines as one document. The Citywide DSG will work in conjunction with other City documents and regulations to ensure that buildings throughout San José have high-quality design and are appropriate for their site, function, and neighborhood. Compliance with the Citywide DSG will be mandatory in the design review process for all applicable developments.

The new Citywide DSG will apply to the area within San José’s Urban Growth boundary, excluding:

- Single-family residences;
- Rehabilitation, modification, or adaptive reuse of historic buildings; and
- Downtown San José and the Diridon Station Area (these are subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards).

***PROJECT MANAGER, LEILA HAKIMIZADEH***

**Attachments:**

Historic Design Guidelines for Design Review Committee Review:

- 1.1.2 Applicability
- 1.3.2 How to Use This Document
- 2.1.1 Site Significance, G1

- 2.2.1 Relationship to Surroundings and Internal Site Circulation, G1
- 3.1.1 Massing Relationship to Context, G3
- 3.1.3 Historic Adjacency, entire page
- 3.3.7 Materials and Color, G6

*Leila Hakimizadeh, Project Manager, presented an overview of the Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines Update project. The update takes into account SB330 and Housing Accountability Act to facilitate compliance with the state laws. Community engagement began with a workshop on October 15, 2019 and will go through August 2020. The document is laid out in sections including Introduction, Site, Building, Pedestrian Level and Specific Development Types. The document includes both standards (objective and quantifiable requirements) and guidelines (best practice design guidance). Discussion with the Design Review Committee focused on Historic Design Guidelines Sections, including*

- 1.1.2 Applicability
- 1.3.2 How to Use This Document
- 2.1.1 Site Significance, G1
- 2.2.1 Relationship to Surroundings and Internal Site Circulation, G1
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*The presentation was concluded and comments were invited.*

*Chair Saum thanked staff for the efforts with the project which is needed in light of SB330 and Housing Accountability Act and its potential impacts on historic resources.*

*Commissioner Raynsford began the discussion by focusing on page 37, Historic Adjacency. He appreciated the degree of specificity in the document and wondered how the façade patterns and proportions wording would be interpreted when the guidelines are used for new buildings. What does similar mean? Sometimes interpreted in an abstract way. Looking at “Rationale” paragraph. Tim Rood pointed out the Rationale section is alike a preamble and the actual findings are found below. Chair Saum suggested emphasizing that the rationale is not to be used for justification of project details, but the standards and guidelines should be used for the project design. Tim Rood pointed out that Section 1.3.1 outlines the document structure and how the document should be used, and would be the appropriate place to address Chair Saum’s suggestion. Chair Saum suggested that Section 1.3.1 be reinforced, perhaps by referencing throughout the document as a reminder or add reference notes.*

*Commissioner Raynsford asked for clarification on Standard 4 regarding to what the list of materials is referring to and commented that 10% of the façade is not much. He suggested adding the words “substantially equivalent to” to strive for perceptual and material equivalence. Leila Hakimizadeh asked if commissioners were suggesting that the 10% should be increased. Commissioner Raynsford suggested 25% would be enough to affect the perception of the building. Leila Hakimizadeh commented that a building could be on a corner or all four facades could be viewed. She asked if the percentages be different according to the location of the*

*façade? Commissioner Raynsford commented that side facades are generally not as historically important (example, a plain brick party wall) unless it's a corner building. Should be a different standard for a corner building with two main facades. Chair Saum suggested that 25% could be applied to the primary public façade adjacent to the historic resource. Additional (secondary) public facing facades should have at least 10%.*

*Leila Hakimizadeh inquired whether commissioners thought there were any missing standards or guidelines that could be added. Commissioner Raynsford suggested language about “proportion and scale of façade elements” could be added. Leila Hakimizadeh pointed to Guideline G1 on page 35 as a concept. Commissioner Raynsford thought that scale of height and massing was different than the proportion and scale of façade elements. Chair Saum suggested the Historic Adjacency page include language saying building elements (like apertures and openings) and materials should be of a scale and proportion that reflects (or is similar to) those found on the historic resource. Leila Hakimizadeh inquired whether G2 on Page 37 reflected that idea. Commissioner Raynsford suggested rephrasing to “in compatible proportion and scale with”. Should that be a guideline or standard?*

*Leila Hakimizadeh inquired whether Section 3.3.7 G6 reflected the commissioner comments about color and materials. Commissioner Raynsford suggested that Section 3.3.7 be specifically added to the related subsections on Page 37 as cross reference. Commissioner Raynsford inquired whether Section 3.3.7 G6 should also talk about the “color” of materials. Maybe say material and color. Chair Saum suggested that proportionality be considered in relation to materials. Materials should be used in a scale and proportion compatible with the adjacent historic resource. Commissioner Raynsford emphasized “scale.” There is often a rhythm in facades. Add the word scale, rather than just in proportion to in G2 on Page 37. Commissioner Raynsford inquired whether the word “stringcourses” should be added in G2 on Page 37 because they can be prominent. Chair Saum mentioned that the intermediate horizontality of stringcourses can be as important as cornices.*

*Leila Hakimizadeh inquired whether the document clearly defines historic adjacency in Applicability in Section 3.1.1. Chair Saum and Commissioner Raynsford were concerned that the Historic Resources Inventory is incomplete. Chair Saum inquired whether a year threshold (like 45 years) should be included. Commissioner Raynsford stated the language in the guideline looks fine, but the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) itself needs to be updated. Leila Hakimizadeh suggested adding a note to the header of HRI list saying that it is not a comprehensive list and buildings 45 years or older may be eligible and require further study. Chair Saum agreed that this would be an important note on the Historic Resources Inventory document and webpage. Commissioner Raynsford suggested there might be a cross reference to the city’s other historic design guidelines. In addition, Commissioner Raynsford suggested to use compatibility to “Districts” specially for an area close to Hensley District.*

*In summary, Commissioner Raynsford emphasized the importance of cross-referencing in the document. Chair Saum suggested adding 2.1.1 to the related subsections list to strengthen the cross-referencing.*

*Leila Hakimizadeh stated that the document will be presented to the Historic Landmarks Commission for comment on August 5, 2020.*

*Chair Saum thanked staff for the diversity of community engagement involved in the project.*