

§ 134-7. Criteria for approval of certificate of appropriateness or special permit in HDLO.

- A. Historic districts are living entities that have typically grown and accommodated change through multiple time periods. HDLO buildings are recognized as models for how to design high-quality, enduring structures that have gained in public appreciation over time, thereby serving as excellent examples for sustainable development. In reviewing an HDLO application and plans, the City Council or Planning Board shall give consideration to:
- (1) The historic or architectural value or significance of the structure and its relation to the historic character of the surrounding area.
 - (2) The relationship of the exterior architectural features of such structure to the rest of the structure and to the surrounding area.
 - (3) The compatibility of exterior design in terms of scale, arrangement, texture and materials proposed, roof and cornice forms, spacing and proportion of windows and doors, exterior architectural details, signs, and street-front fixtures.
- B. In applying the principle of compatibility, the City Council or Planning Board shall use the following standards for new structures, additions, or alterations in the HDLO. Standards using the verb "shall" are required; "should" is used when the standard is to be applied unless the Planning Board or City Council finds a strong justification for an alternative solution in an unusual and specific circumstance; and "may" means that the standard is an optional guideline that is encouraged but not required.
- (1) The design, character, and appropriateness to the property of the proposed alteration or new construction.
 - (a) Construction shall build on the historic context with applications required to demonstrate aspects of inspiration or similarities to adjacent HDLO structures or historic buildings in the surrounding area.
 - (b) Compatibility does not imply historic reproduction, but new architecture shall also not arbitrarily impose contrasting materials, scales, colors, or design features.
 - (c) The intent is to reinforce and extend the traditional patterns of the HDLO district, but new structures may still be distinguishable in up-to-date technologies and

details, most evident in window construction and interiors.

- (d) Exterior accessory elements, such as signs, lighting fixtures, and landscaping, shall emphasize continuity with adjacent HDLO properties and the historic characteristics of the sidewalk and streetscape.
 - (e) Where possible, parking shall be placed towards the rear of the property in an unobtrusive location with adequate screening from public views, unless another location provides better screening.
- (2) The scale and height of the proposed alteration or new construction in relation to the property itself, surrounding properties, and the neighborhood.
- (a) Where possible, an addition to an historic structure should be placed towards the rear, or at least recessed, so that the historic structure remains more prominent than the subsidiary addition.
 - (b) Any alteration or addition to an historic structure shall not damage or obscure the character-defining features of the architecture or site to the maximum extent possible.
 - (c) The height of any new building facades in the HDLO shall not conflict with the heights of adjacent historic structures on adjoining HDLO parcels.
 - (d) Larger buildings or additions should incorporate significant breaks in the facades and rooflines, generally at intervals of no more than 35 feet.
- (3) Architectural and site elements and their relation to similar features of other properties in the HDLO.
- (a) It is not appropriate to disrupt the relationship between an historic building and its front yard or landscape, including screening historic properties from traditional street views by high walls or hedges.
 - (b) Historic storefronts, porches, cornices, window and door surrounds, or similar architectural features should not be enclosed, obscured, or removed so that the character of the structure is substantially changed.
 - (c) Deteriorated building features should be repaired rather than being replaced and, if not repairable, should be

replicated in design, materials, and other historic qualities.

- (d) New buildings in the HDLO should have a top-floor cornice feature and first-floor architectural articulation, such as an architecturally emphasized entrance doorway or porch, to accent the central body of the building.
- (e) Architectural features and windows shall be continued on all sides that are clearly visible from a street or public parking area, avoiding any blank walls, except in cases of existing walls or potential common property walls.
- (f) New HDLO buildings shall have a front entrance door facing the primary street and connected to the sidewalk.
- (g) Primary individual window proportions shall be greater in height than width, but the approving body may allow exceptions for storefront, transom, and specialty windows. Mirrored, reflective, or tinted glass and all-glass walls, except greenhouses, shall not be permitted. Any shutters shall match the size of the window opening and appear functional.
- (h) Finish building materials should be wood, brick, traditional cement-based stucco, stone, smooth cast stone, smooth-finished fiber-cement siding, or other materials deemed acceptable by the approving body. Vinyl, aluminum or sheet metal siding or sheet trim, exposed concrete blocks or concrete walls, plywood or other similar prefabricated panels, unpainted or unstained lumber, synthetic rough-cut stone, synthetic brick, synthetic stucco, exterior insulation and finishing system (EIFS), direct-applied finish system (DAFS), and chain link, plastic, or vinyl fencing shall not be permitted.
- (i) Materials and colors should complement historic buildings on the block. Fluorescent, neon, metallic, or other intentionally garish colors, as well as stripes, dots, or other incompatible patterns, shall be prohibited.
- (j) Mechanical equipment and refuse containers shall be concealed from public view by approved architectural or landscaping elements and shall be located to the rear of the site. Window or projecting air conditioners shall not be permitted on the front facade of new buildings or additions.