

Historic Preservation Commission Update on Draft Historic Design Guidelines

To: Historic Preservation Commission

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Meeting Date: July 21, 2026

RE: Update on Draft Historic Design Guidelines

The presentation at the July 21 HPC meeting is a big picture overview providing an update on the status of Historic Design Guidelines project in advance of the release of the draft.

The *Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial and Residential Districts and Properties (Guidelines)* were adopted in 2000 to serve as guidelines for the HPC and staff when reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness (CofAs). The *Guidelines* have not been updated since their adoption. The *Guidelines* are applicable to properties with H (Historic Overlay) zoning. Over time, the *Guidelines* have also come to be used as architectural design guidelines for building and development permit review for non-historic properties located in historically significant areas as specified in certain zoning districts.

In 2025, the City amended its downtown mixed-use zoning districts which include references to the *Guidelines* as architectural guidelines. As a result of these amendments, it became necessary to update the *Guidelines* to align with the new development standards.

Staff presented an early draft of the *Guidelines* to the HPC at the annual work session in September 2025. Over the course of the year, staff have developed a new draft of the *Guidelines* in response to feedback received from the HPC during the 2025 work session and additional research conducted by staff.

Staff are presenting an update on the draft *Guidelines* at the July HPC meeting in order to solicit feedback from the current Commission before new and re-appointments take effect in September 2026.

Overall, the updated *Guidelines*:

- Correct out-of-date information about city procedures including historic designation and the Certificate of Appropriateness process.
- Ensure that the guidelines are applicable for properties built between 1945 and 1975, which aged into eligibility for historic designation after the 2000 guidelines were adopted.
- Clarify standards for the treatment of designated historic properties as well as new construction in historic districts.

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- Ensure that the guidelines also function for architectural design review of certain non-historic properties located in historically significant areas as specified in city code.
- Emphasize the importance of understanding a property's particular history and historic significance before determining appropriate treatments and beginning any work.
- Include new sections for content that was previously spread across multiple areas of the guidelines or not addressed:
 - Descriptions of historic commercial and residential building forms by era in Round Rock's history
 - Standards for building adaptation for contemporary use including conversion from residential to commercial use
 - Maintenance standards
 - Guidance for streetscapes, the public realm, and cultural landscapes

Next steps in the review and adoption process for the draft *Guidelines* include:

- July 2026:
 - Staff present an update on the draft *Guidelines* to HPC at the July meeting.
- August/September 2026:
 - Staff finalize the draft *Guidelines* for review by the HPC and the public.
 - Public comment period begins including:
 - Draft *Guidelines* posted on the city website.
 - Property owners/occupants of historic properties notified of update process and informed of proposed revisions and opportunities to submit feedback.
 - Public office hours for staff to meet with the public to review the draft and answer questions prior to the commencement of the adoption process.
 - Anyone, including Commissioners, past Commissioners, property owners/occupants, and the public, can comment on the draft during the public comment period.
- September 2026:
 - Staff present draft *Guidelines* to HPC for discussion at 2026 work session.
 - Staff revise draft *Guidelines* based on feedback from HPC and the public.
- Fall 2026:
 - HPC considers the updated *Guidelines* at a public meeting and makes a recommendation for adoption by City Council.
 - City Council considers the HPC recommendation and updated *Guidelines* for adoption before the end of the year.

Well in advance of the September work session, current HPC members will receive a copy of the draft. The *Guidelines* are a lengthy document. There will be ample time to review the draft prior to the work session.