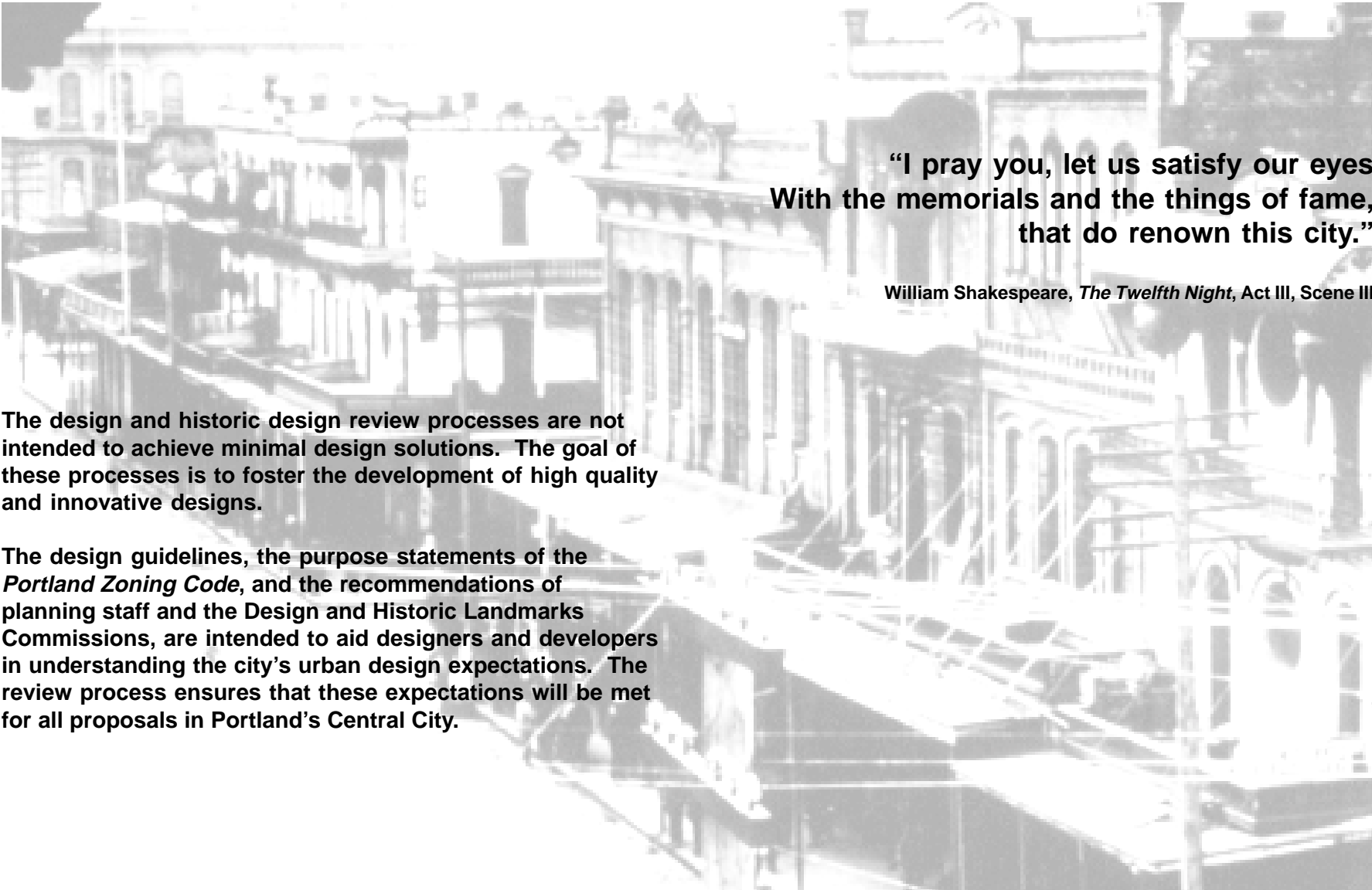


Part I INTRODUCTION



**“I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame,
that do renown this city.”**

William Shakespeare, *The Twelfth Night*, Act III, Scene III

The design and historic design review processes are not intended to achieve minimal design solutions. The goal of these processes is to foster the development of high quality and innovative designs.

The design guidelines, the purpose statements of the *Portland Zoning Code*, and the recommendations of planning staff and the Design and Historic Landmarks Commissions, are intended to aid designers and developers in understanding the city’s urban design expectations. The review process ensures that these expectations will be met for all proposals in Portland’s Central City.

Part I INTRODUCTION



View looking north from Marquam Hill

URBAN DESIGN IN PORTLAND

Portland's collective needs and aspirations shape its urban design efforts. Urban design then shapes the city's physical form, giving it personality and enhancing its character. The urban design vision for Portland's Central City emphasizes a livable, walkable, urban community that focuses on the Willamette River. The *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* implement this urban design vision by providing a framework for how Central City development should look, function, and feel.

DESIGN AND HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW IN THE CENTRAL CITY

The design and historic design review processes are important tools in the implementation of the city's urban design goals. Portland requires design and historic design review for areas and individual buildings that are important to the city's character. Design and historic design review evaluate proposals against the design guidelines applicable to the area and type of proposal.

The planners within the Office of Planning & Development Review (OPDR) and the citizens appointed to serve on the Portland Design Commission and the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission conduct the design and historic design review processes. Both commissions are volunteer boards, and include members with expertise in design and development. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission also includes members with extensive experience in historic preservation. Members of the commissions are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

Design and historic design review consider many aspects of a given proposal; building siting, landscaping, exterior materials, and the location of parking are some of the elements considered. Remodeling of a historic landmark's significant interior rooms may also be subject to historic design review.

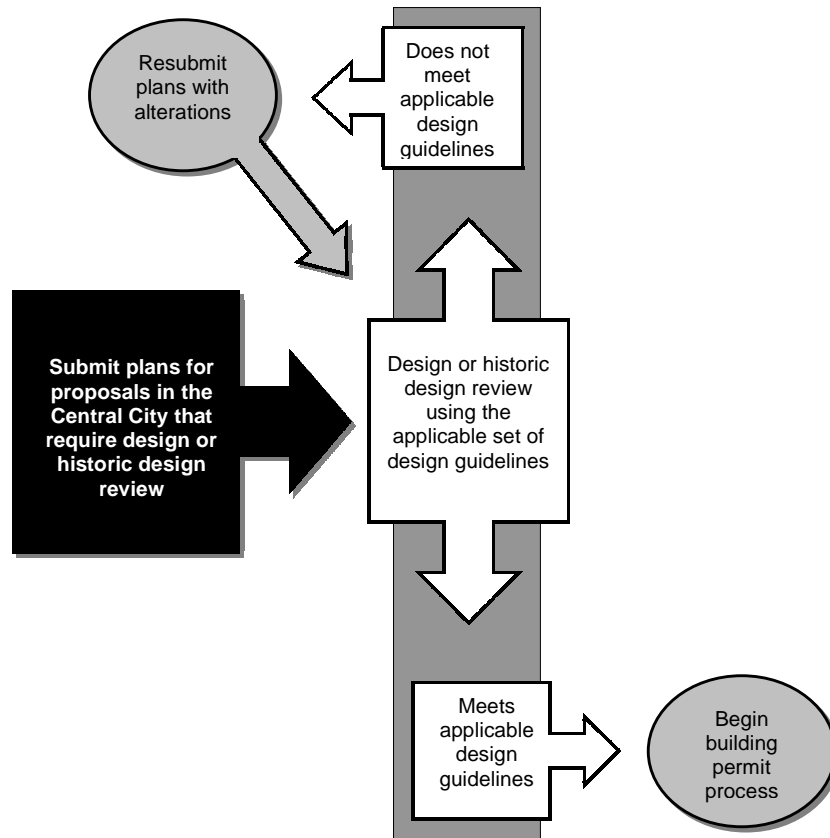
Design and historic design review ensure that new development and alterations to existing buildings maintain the integrity and enhance the quality of the Central City. These reviews give designers flexibility, while ensuring the compatibility of new development with the desired character of the area.

Design and historic design review provide opportunities for the public evaluation of new construction as well as other changes to buildings and sites. During the design and historic design review processes, a proposal is evaluated against the applicable set of design guidelines and those development regulations being proposed for modification or adjustment.

The review process varies with the type, size, and location of the proposal. Smaller proposals are initially reviewed by staff and the process generally takes two to three months. Larger proposals are reviewed at a public hearing with a process of about three to four months. Owners of nearby property are notified and testimony from individuals, organizations, and neighborhood associations is encouraged.

Areas subject to Central City design review are identified on zoning maps by the lower case letter "d". The Central City Overlay Zones map in the Appendix identifies these areas with a grey shade. Proposals subject to historic design review are located in areas identified as "historic districts" by the chart on page 9. Additional information on the type of review process for each proposal is available from the city's **Development Services Center** located at 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 1500, Portland Oregon, 97201, or by calling 503-823-7526.

Figure 2. DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS FOR PROPOSALS IN THE CENTRAL CITY



GOALS FOR CENTRAL CITY DESIGN REVIEW

The goals for design review are intended to preserve the Central City’s heritage, enhance its livability, and maintain its design quality. These goals were first presented in the *Downtown Design Guidelines* of 1980; they were updated and augmented with the *Central City Plan Fundamental Design Guidelines* of 1990. The goals are:

1. Encourage urban design excellence;
2. Integrate urban design and preservation of our heritage into the development process;
3. Enhance the character of the Central City’s districts;
4. Promote the development of diversity and areas of special character within the Central City;
5. Establish an urban design relationship between the Central City’s districts and the Central City as a whole;
6. Provide for a pleasant, rich and diverse experience for pedestrians;
7. Provide for the humanization of the Central City through promotion of the arts;
8. Assist in creating a 24-hour Central City which is safe, humane and prosperous; and
9. Ensure that new development is at a human scale and that it relates to the scale and desired character of its setting and the Central City as a whole.

THE DESIGN GUIDELINE SYSTEM OF THE CENTRAL CITY

The design guideline system of Portland's Central City is built of multiple layers of design guidelines. The *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* make up the fundamental set of design guidelines upon which this system is based. **The design guidelines contained in this document also serve as the subdistrict design guidelines for the Downtown and University subdistricts of the Central City.** These fundamental guidelines are augmented by additional sets of design guidelines specific to Central City subdistricts, historic districts, and unique parts of the city such as the Willamette River Greenway.

Each set of design guidelines has been drafted to avoid conflicting requirements. However, should a conflict arise, the more local or area-specific set of design guidelines takes precedence. For example, subdistrict design guidelines or historic district design guidelines take precedence over conflicting *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*.

Map 1 and Table 1 on pages 8 and 9 identify the sets of design guidelines that apply to proposals based on their locations. Table 2 on page 17 identifies which of the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* apply to different types of proposals.



View of the downtown skyline from the Steel Bridge

DESIGN GUIDELINE LAYERS

The *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are mandatory approval criteria for design review in all design zones of the Central City. They serve as the base layer of design guidelines. In areas with location-specific design guidelines, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are used in conjunction with the location-specific design guidelines, which are also mandatory approval criteria. Location-specific design guidelines serve as a second layer of design guidelines, and are described in the following paragraphs.

In Central City subdistricts, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are augmented by subdistrict design guidelines. For example, a proposal in Goose Hollow would have to meet both the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and the *Goose Hollow District Design Guidelines*.

There are four special areas in the Central City. They are the Park Blocks, the South Waterfront Area, the Broadway Unique Sign District, and the New China / Japantown Unique Sign District. The map on page 141 identifies the boundaries of these parts of the Central City. In the special areas, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* contained in Sections A, B, and C, are augmented by the special area design guidelines located in Section D. The special area design guidelines apply only within the identified special areas and augment both the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and subdistrict design guidelines. For example, a proposal at the intersection of Burnside and NW Fifth Avenue would have to meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*, the *River District Design Guidelines*, and design guideline D3 Broadway Unique Sign District.

Most, but not all, Central City historic districts have their own design guidelines. Where such guidelines exist, they augment the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*. Historic district design guidelines address specific design concerns. In the Central City, historic district design guidelines are the second layer on top of the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*. Subdistrict design guidelines do not apply within historic districts that have their own design guidelines. For example, a proposal in the NW 13th Avenue Historic District is subject to the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and the *NW 13th Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines*. The *River District Design Guidelines* do not apply to proposals in the NW 13th Avenue Historic District.

In contrast, proposals located in Central City historic districts that lack design guidelines must meet the approval criteria for historic resources found in Section 33.846.140 (C) of the *Portland Zoning Code*. These criteria augment subdistrict design guidelines and the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*. The zoning code criteria take precedence over conflicting subdistrict or fundamental design guidelines.

DESIGN GUIDELINE LAYERS, continued

In the greenway overlay zone, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are augmented by subdistrict design guidelines, the *Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines* (contained in the *Willamette Greenway Plan*) and any special area design guidelines. Proposals that are wholly or partially within the greenway overlay zone are also subject to the greenway review process. For example, a proposal in North Macadam within the greenway overlay zone is subject to the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*, the *Special Design Guidelines for the North Macadam District of the Central City Plan*, and the *Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines*.

In the Russell Street Conservation District, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* do not apply. Proposals in the Russell Street Conservation District are subject to the *Community Design Guidelines*, available from the city's **Development Services Center**, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 1500, Portland, Oregon, 97201; phone 503-823-7526.



Ira Keller Fountain

Central City proposals that involve historic landmarks or conservation landmarks are reviewed similarly to proposals in historic districts. Proposals involving landmarks located in historic districts that have their own design guidelines must meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*, the historic district design guidelines, and the approval criteria for historic resources found in Section 33.846.140 (C) of the *Portland Zoning Code*. Proposals involving landmarks located in other parts of the Central City, or in historic districts that do not have their own design guidelines, must meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*, the subdistrict design guidelines, and the approval criteria for historic resources found in Section 33.846.140 (C) of the *Portland Zoning Code*. The zoning code criteria take precedence over conflicting historic district, subdistrict or fundamental design guidelines.

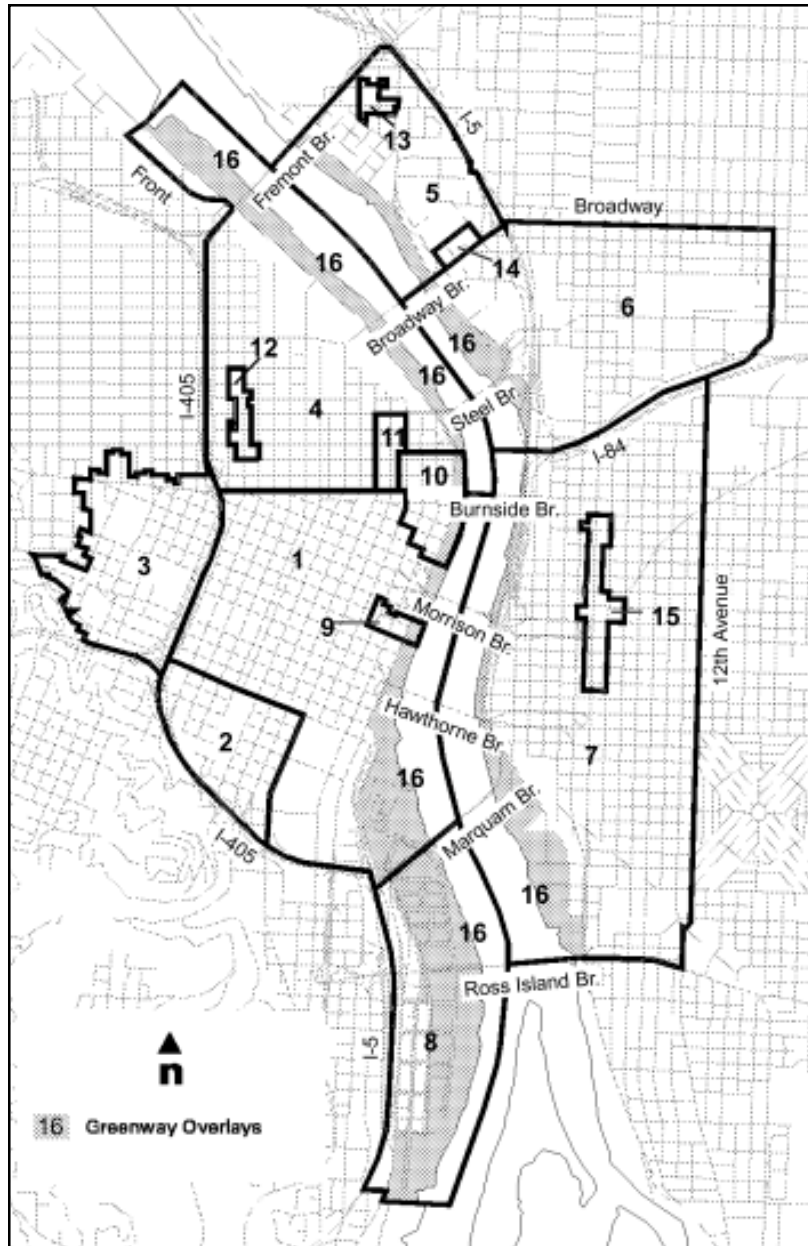


Vintage Trolley in the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District

Some portions of the Alphabet Historic District and the King's Hill Historic District are in the Central City. The maps on pages 164 and 165 identify these areas. Proposals in the Alphabet Historic District must meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and the *Historic Alphabet District: Community Design Guidelines Addendum*. Proposals in the King's Hill Historic District that overlap with the Central City Plan District must meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*, the *Goose Hollow District Design Guidelines*, and the approval criteria for historic resources found in Section 33.846.140 (C) of the *Portland Zoning Code*.

Proposals on blocks that front Broadway between N Interstate and N Wheeler Streets are in the Lower Albina subdistrict. However, proposals in the areas zoned as Central City Commercial (CXd) and within 300 feet of Broadway use the *Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Lloyd District of the Central City Plan* in addition to the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*.

Map 1. / Table 1. DESIGN GUIDELINE APPLICABILITY BASED ON PROPOSAL LOCATION





The applicable sets of design guidelines in addition to the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are listed below. Special areas of the Central City are identified by the map on page 141.

1. None
2. None
3. *Goose Hollow District Design Guidelines*
4. *River District Design Guidelines*
5. None
6. *Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Lloyd District of the Central City Plan*
7. *Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Central Eastside District of the Central City Plan*
8. *Special Design Guidelines for the North Macadam District of the Central City Plan*
9. *Design Guidelines for the Yamhill Historic District*
10. *Design Guidelines for the Skidmore / Old Town Historic District*
11. *River District Design Guidelines*, and the design criteria stated in Section 33.846.140 (C) of the *Portland Zoning Code*
12. *NW 13th Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines*
13. *Community Design Guidelines only* *
14. *Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Lloyd District of the Central City Plan*
15. *Design Guidelines for the East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic Design Zone*
16. *Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines*, (also indicated by a grey shade)

* The *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are **not** applicable approval criteria in the Russell Street Conservation District.

PROPOSAL LOCATION	1. Downtown	2. University	3. Goose Hollow	4. River District	5. Lower Albina	6. Lloyd District	7. Central Eastside	8. North Macadam	9. Yamhill Historic District	10. Skidmore / Old Town Historic District	11. New China / Japantown Historic District	12. NW 13th Avenue Historic District	13. Russell Street Conservation District	14. Specific sites along Notheast Broadway Boulevard	15. East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic District
Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines															
Goose Hollow District Design Guidelines															
River District Design Guidelines															
Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Lloyd District of the Central City Plan															
Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Central Eastside District of the Central City Plan															
Special Design Guidelines for the North Macadam District of the Central City Plan															
Design Guidelines for the Yamhill Historic District															
Design Guidelines for the Skidmore / Old Town Historic District															
Design criteria stated in Section 33.846.140 of the Portland Zoning Code															
NW 13th Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines															
Design Guidelines for the East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic Design Zone															
Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*					
Community Design Guidelines															

 Indicates applicable design guidelines

 * Indicates that applicable *Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines* are approval criteria for proposals on sites that are wholly or partially within the greenway overlay zone (shown with a grey tone on the map on the facing page)

USING DESIGN GUIDELINES IN THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

The layering system of design guidelines is intended to create a consistent and dependable Central City design review process. All projects within the Central City's design zones must meet the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and the applicable design guidelines as designated by the subdistrict, historic district, or zoning code.

Design guidelines are mandatory approval criteria that must be met as part of design review and historic design review. They inform developers and the community as to what issues will be addressed during the design review process. The guidelines state broader concepts than typical development standards in order to provide flexibility to designers, yet they are requirements. Applicants are responsible for explaining, in their application, how their design meets each applicable guideline.

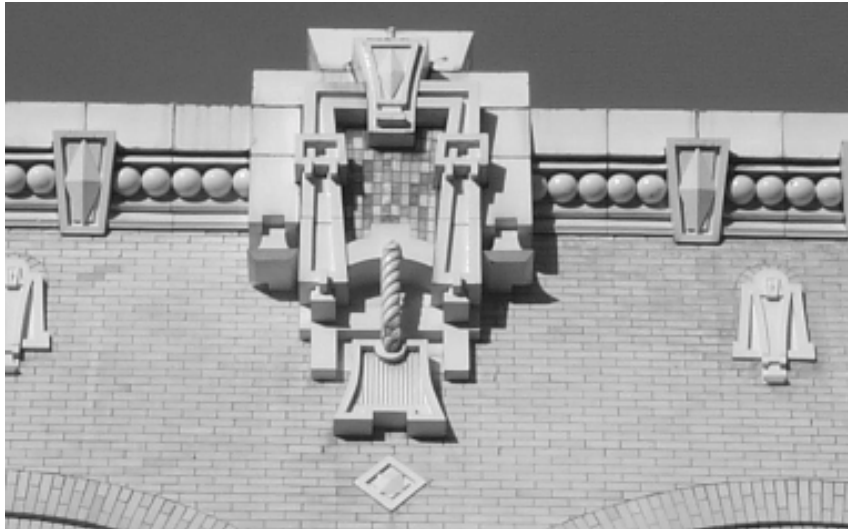
The design review process is flexible. It is intended to encourage designs that are innovative and appropriate for their locations. For this reason design guidelines are qualitative statements. Unlike objective design standards, there are typically many acceptable ways to meet each design guideline. It is not the City's intent to prescribe any specific design solution through the design guidelines.



View looking east over Tom McCall Waterfront Park during the Blues Festival

During the design review process, the review body must find that the proposal meets each of the applicable design guidelines. Proposals that meet **all** applicable guidelines will be approved; proposals that do not meet **all** of the applicable guidelines will not be approved.

If the review body approves the proposed design, they may add conditions to their approval to ensure the proposal's compliance with the guidelines. If the review body does not approve the proposed design, they would prefer that the applicants revise the design to address deficiencies rather than have the city impose a specific solution through conditions. The review body may also address aspects of a project's design that are not covered in the design guidelines. They may find that such action is necessary to better achieve the goals and objectives for design review in the Central City.



Cornice decoration at the Governor Hotel

All development projects are subject to the development standards contained in the *Portland Zoning Code*. The design review process may include the approval of proposed modifications to some development standards. The applicant must show that the development proposal meets the approval criteria stated in the *Portland Zoning Code*.

However, some development standards may not be modified. Standards that can not be modified may be eligible for an adjustment review process and must meet the criteria for an adjustment review.

WAIVER OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

In some cases, a design guideline may be waived during the design review process. An applicable guideline may be waived as part of the design review process when the proposed design better meets the goals of design review than would a project that had complied with the guideline. If a waiver is requested, the applicants must explain, in their application, how the goals of design review are better met in the proposed design than would be possible if each guideline being considered for waiver was followed. Allowing the waiver of one or more guidelines during the design review process reflects the City's concern that the design guidelines not become a rigid set of requirements that stifle innovation.