



Preserving Our Heritage:

A Guide to the Design Review Board

What is Design Review?

The process of Design Review was established by the City of New London to provide for a procedural review by the Historic District Commission of certain publicly assisted projects. A project that receives financial assistance from the City's federally-funded programs will be subject to review by the Historic District Commission/Design Review Board (HDC/DRB). The purpose of the Design Review Board is to:

1. Preserve the character and quality of New London's heritage by maintaining the integrity of properties that have a discernable character or are of special historic significance;
2. To protect certain investments in the area; and
3. To satisfy the Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act.

The board uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as a basis for making its decisions. The owner and/or developer of the project will be referred to the Design Review Board by the City department that has primary oversight over the project.

How does Design Review benefit New London?

Design Review is a tool that aids in the development and revitalization process. It also is used to protect the overall character of a community. It allows the City to consider the context of proposed development and how that development may either detract from or benefit the surrounding community. Design Review benefits the community and individual property owners in the following important ways:

Reinforce Community Identity

New London has a rich maritime history and unique character. Each neighborhood within the City also has a special identity. Together, the neighborhoods form the community identity of New London. Everyone agrees that it is important to improve our quality of life and make our city more attractive for investment. Design review helps protect New London's cultural assets for future generations while encouraging growth and development.

Enhance and Protect Property Values

Design Review helps assure property owners that their investment will be protected. Just as traditional zoning prevents landfills from locating in a residential neighborhood, Design Review helps to ensure that the character of the neighborhood is maintained. Improvements in the quality of design stabilize, and in some cases enhance, the value of private property. This in turn makes property more attractive for investment and benefits the overall character of the neighborhood and city.

Promote Economic Development

Design Review is an especially important tool for commercial districts where the goal is to increase private investment and maintain an image of vitality. Communities often rely on Design Review to protect and enhance public and private investments and to support and encourage new development.

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