

STAFF REPORT

This document is the staff's comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission's deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

LPC Meeting: February 17, 2026
Staff: Landmark Design Review Staff
Public Hearing: Updated *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts*

Summary:

The Landmark Preservation Commission conducts design review under authority granted by the Landmark Preservation ordinance, Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code. The ordinance requires the Commission to adopt the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as well as policies and guidelines to assist in its review of permit applications. The current *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts* were developed through a public process from 2012-2014 and were updated in 2016 and 2022. The design guidelines help owners and building professionals plan appropriate improvements to properties that will protect historic, architectural, or cultural features, and they serve as the primary tool that Landmark Preservation staff and the LPC use to evaluate proposals that are submitted for review.

Beginning in fall 2021, Landmark staff began working with the community and LPC to update the guidelines to address evolving needs and the desire for greater flexibility on certain topics. This work is being carried out through a comprehensive four-phase update. Phase 1 was completed in November 2022, and Phase 2a kicked off in Fall of 2023. Each phase includes community meetings, online surveys, public review of draft updates, and a public hearing at the point of adoption of amendments being considered by LPC.

The Phase 2a update includes:

- Chapter 1: reorganization of the chapter and clarifications to content
- Chapter 2: updates to the design guidelines for window and door replacement on historic buildings, for alterations to window openings, and for the installation of egress windows. These updates are specifically found in Section 2.4
- Overall layout of the design guidelines: updates to modernize the document's appearance, to make it easier to navigate, and to provide greater accessibility.

Chapter 1 provides important background on Denver's Landmark Preservation program, related regulations, and other information that puts the review process in context. The revisions are intended to remove any outdated information and to add clarity where possible.

The new layout for the entire guidelines document is a significant improvement that staff is very proud of, particularly new illustrations and a more engaging and inspiring presentation of the goals for historic preservation in Denver.

The proposed window and door replacement guidelines in Chapter 2, specifically Section 2.4, will provide greater flexibility while ensuring the preservation of character-defining features. Under the proposed guidelines, most historic windows and doors may be replaced provided they are not character windows or a character front facade door. This

concept, that windows and doors which can be successfully replicated and are readily available in the current marketplace can be replaced with less strict review than has been required in the past is a significant philosophical shift for Denver's preservation program, responsive to public input. To ensure that appropriate limits are set for preservation of features that are not so easily reproduced, the draft guidelines include the newly defined terms "character windows" and "character front facade doors," vs. "common windows and doors," also defined. Character windows and character front facade doors are special historic fabric that contribute to the architectural identity of a structure, or that represent a specific architectural style or type. They date to the period of significance for the historic district or individual landmark, are distinctive, are integral to the building's overall design, and should be repaired rather than replaced.

The following is a summary of activities that have led to the guidelines currently presented for adoption by the LPC.

Phase 2a Timeline

- **September 6, 2023** – Windows Guideline Kickoff meeting hosted via zoom, [watch the Zoom recording](#)
- **Tuesday September 12, 2023** – In-person windows guideline kickoff meeting
- **November 6, 2023** – Virtual follow-up windows guideline meeting, [watch the Zoom recording](#)
- **June 4, 2025 to July 14, 2025** – Revised draft of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, window and door guidelines, posted for public review and comment
- **September 2, 2025** – LPC Discussion Item about public comments and draft window and door guidelines, [review the presentation slides](#)
- **October 21, 2025** – LPC Discussion Item about the draft Chapter 1 and draft window and door guidelines, [watch the Zoom recording](#), discussion starts at 1:16:46 into the meeting
- **December 2, 2025** – LPC Discussion Item about the document reformat. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, this Commission meeting was not recorded.
- **January 26, 2026** – Notice of public hearing published in the *Denver Post* and proposed guidelines filed with the Denver Clerk and Recorder
- **January 28, 2026** – Proposed guidelines posted on Landmark Preservation website, along with general information about the February 17th LPC meeting
- **January 26, 2026 to February 9, 2026** – On-going staff work on minor corrections, and incorporation of City Attorney's Office comments, all of which are noted on the "Track Changes" document that accompanies this memorandum
- **February 10, 2026** – Updated proposed guidelines re-filed with the Denver Clerk and Recorder, consistent with the City and County of Denver's rule-making process. Updated proposed guidelines posted on Landmark Preservation website. Online meeting packet distributed to the Landmark Preservation Commission.

As mentioned above, adoption of the proposed design guidelines must follow a very specific rule-making process outlined in the Denver Revised Municipal Code. For this process, it is important to know that:

- Public comment shall be taken, and may be provided in accordance with the LPC Public Comment Policy
- Additional changes to the text of the proposed rule (in this case meaning the design guidelines) may be made during, or as a result of the hearing, at the discretion of the adopting authority (LPC) without further notice or hearing.
- Once the hearing has begun, it may be continued to a date certain by the adopting authority (LPC) without further publication or notice.
- Final adoption is dependent upon dating and signing by chair of the adopting authority (LPC), and approval for legality by the City Attorney.
- Within 7 business days after adoption of the rules, the adopting authority (Landmark Preservation) shall file a copy of the rules with the Denver Clerk and Recorder and official notice must be given
- The rules shall become effective upon the signature of the chair of the adopting authority (LPC) or at such later date as stated in the notice.

RECOMMENDATION: Landmark staff recommends LPC adopt the updated *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts* reviewable at the link below. Staff is aware of a short list of typographical and formatting errors

that still require correction. We intend to accomplish those, and any other edits that the Commission may direct. After that time, the Chair of the Commission will be asked to sign the document. Pending a final review for legality, Senior Assistant City Attorneys, Adam Hernandez and Nate Lucero will forward the document for signature to City Attorney Michiko (Miko) Ando Brown, after which the new guidelines will go into effect.

Suggested Motion: I move to ADOPT the updated *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts* per presented testimony, submitted documentation, and information provided in the staff report.

Exhibits:

[Link to proposed *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts*](#)

Exhibit A: Public Review Draft Comments

Exhibit B: Track Changes, noting substantive amendments outside of Section 2.4

END