



Updated Design Guidelines

Historic Review Commission

Briefing

November 2026

Project Overview

- Update existing outdated guidelines for Historic Districts
- Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties but customized to local context.
- Easy-to-follow guides (including graphics and photographs) informed by public input
- Partially funded through a Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant
- Serves as a practical tool kit for property owners, contractors, city staff, and the Historic Review Commission (HRC).

Scope of Guidelines

- **What triggers review?**
 - Exterior modifications on properties within the local historic district boundaries that are visible from a public right-of-way.
- **Key project categories covered:**
 - Windows and Doors
 - Roofs
 - Painting
 - New Construction and Demolition
 - Site Improvements
 - Building Signage

Streamlined Document Structure

Two documents:

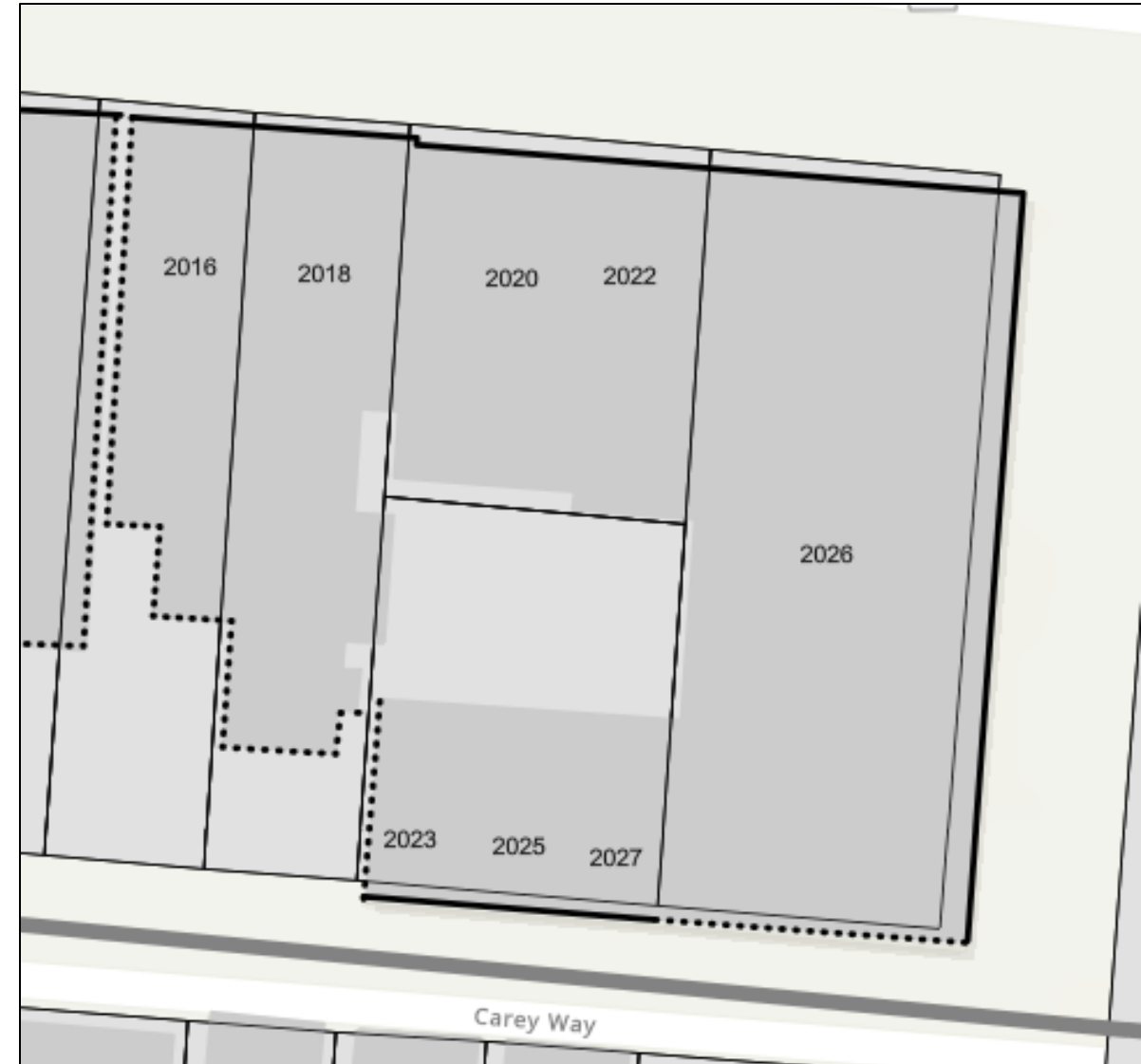
- General Design Guidelines - Contains shared best practices, district-wide rules, definitions, and the consolidated glossary.
- District-Specific Design Guidelines - Tailored rules, architectural context, and specific requirements unique to Manchester and the Mexican War Streets.

Community Engagement

- Need for more cost-effective material options and affordability considerations.
- Strong desire for equitable and consistent enforcement.
- Requests for guidance on modifications for accessibility and sustainability.
- Need to streamline the HRC review process to increase predictability for homeowners.
- Agreement that rear yards and hidden facades should be treated differently than front facades.

Hierarchy of Facades

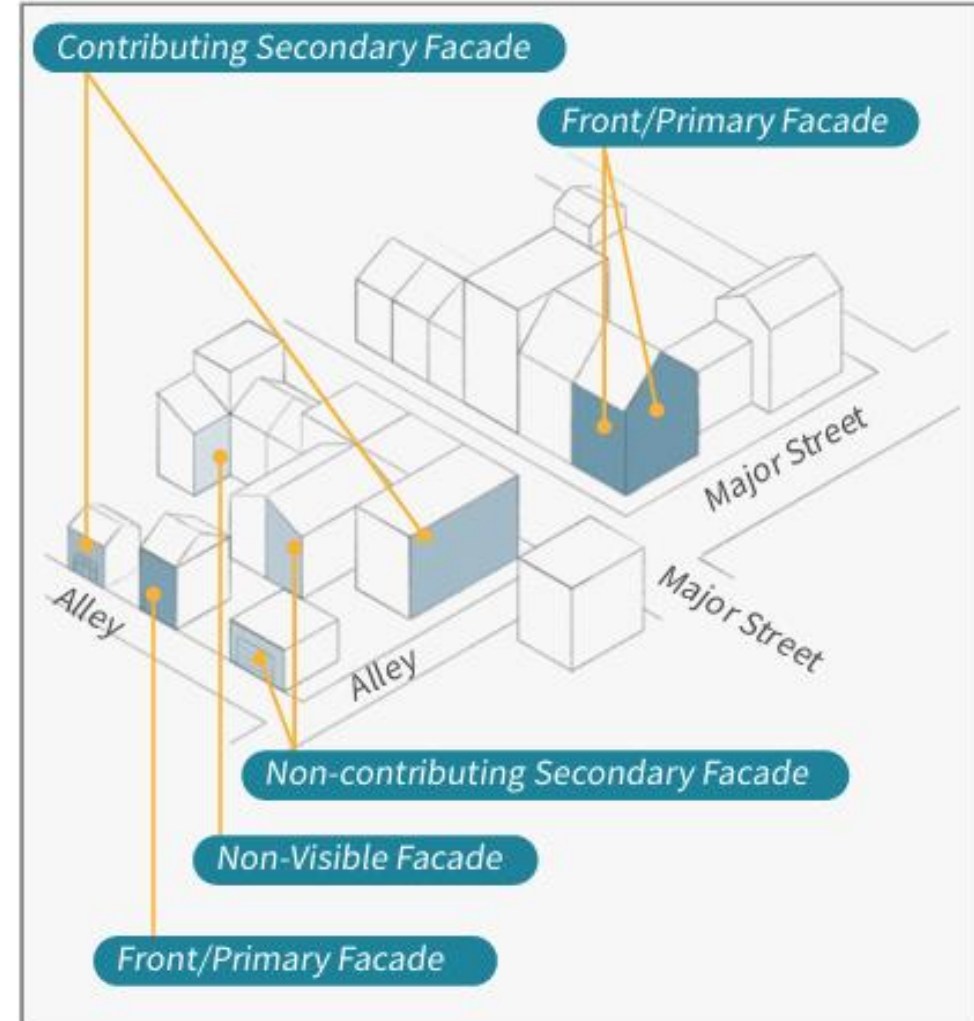
Buildings have multiple faces, some of which are visible from the public street and some of which are not. These Design Guidelines primarily focus on alterations, additions, and new construction that can be seen from the street or sidewalk, as those changes to the historic district have the most impact on the historic district's character.



Primary Facades

A front/primary façade is the building face most visible from and facing a public street. It contains the main entrance to the building and typically has the most character-defining architectural features. Primary facades include sides of corner buildings that do not contain the main entrance but are visible from a major public street. The HRC reviews new construction, exterior alterations, and alternative materials on primary facades.

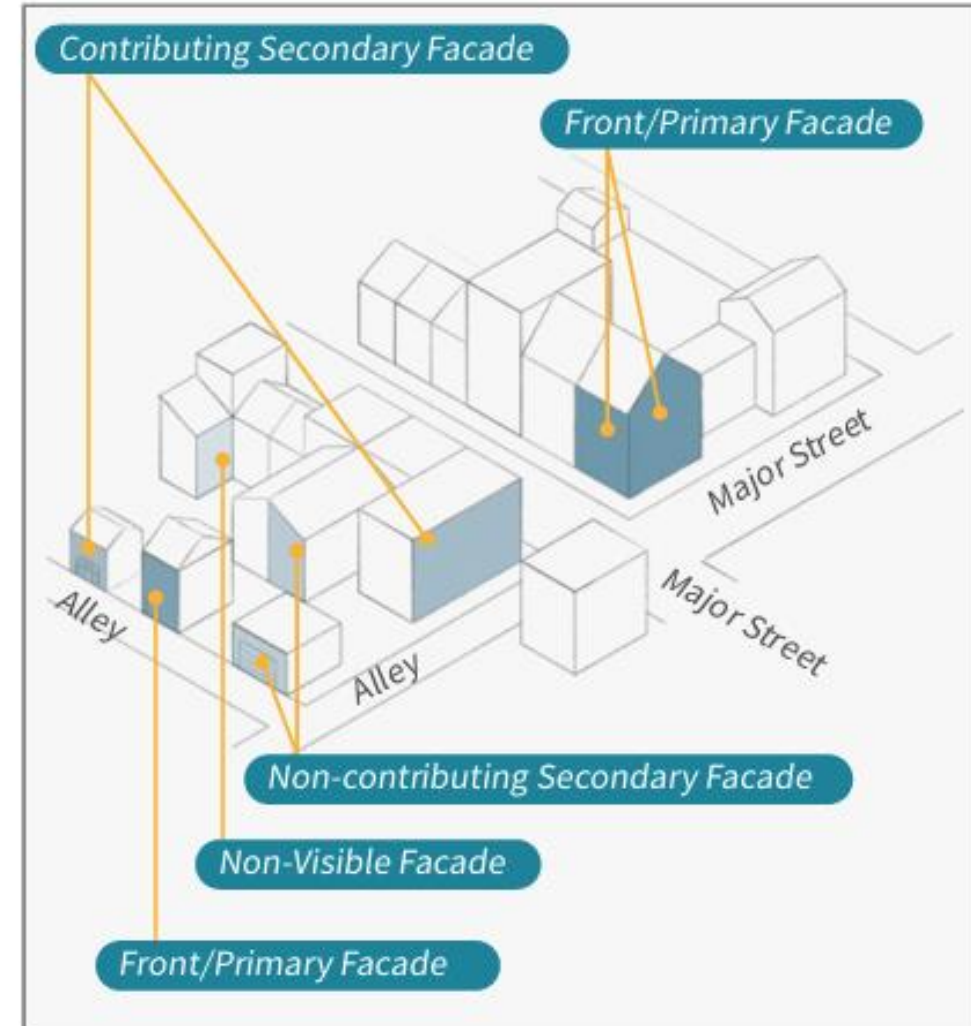
HIERARCHY OF FACADES



Contributing Secondary Facades

Contributing secondary façades are those that are visible from the public street but are not on the front of the building. This can include the sides of detached buildings, provided that those side walls are visible from the public street, and the street-facing facade of contributing accessory structures such as carriage houses and historic-era garages. Contributing secondary façades often contain character-defining architectural features. The HRC reviews new construction, exterior alterations, and alternative materials on contributing secondary façades.

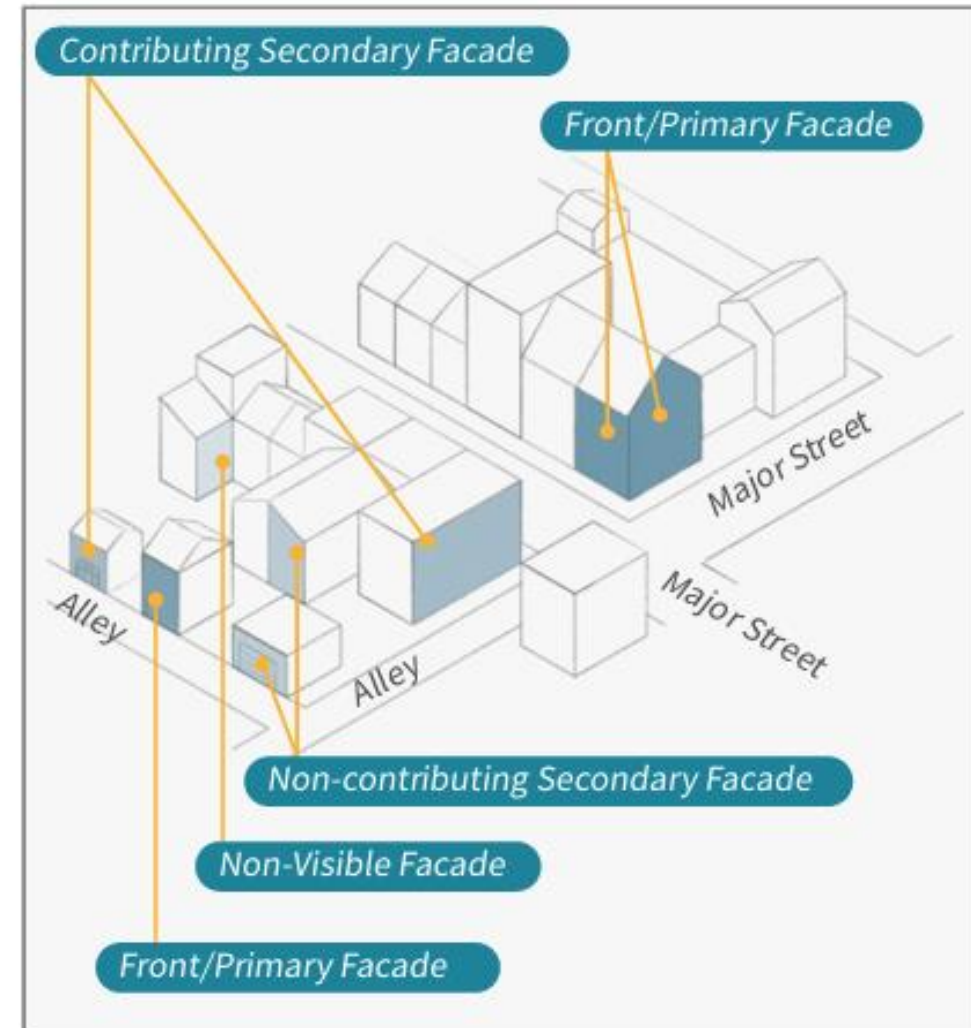
HIERARCHY OF FACADES



Non-Contributing Secondary Facades

Non-contributing secondary façades are those that are in the rear of a building, visible only from an alley, or on the side of the building, only partially visible from a public right-of-way. The HRC reviews new construction on noncontributing secondary façades. Exterior alterations and alternative materials are reviewed administratively.

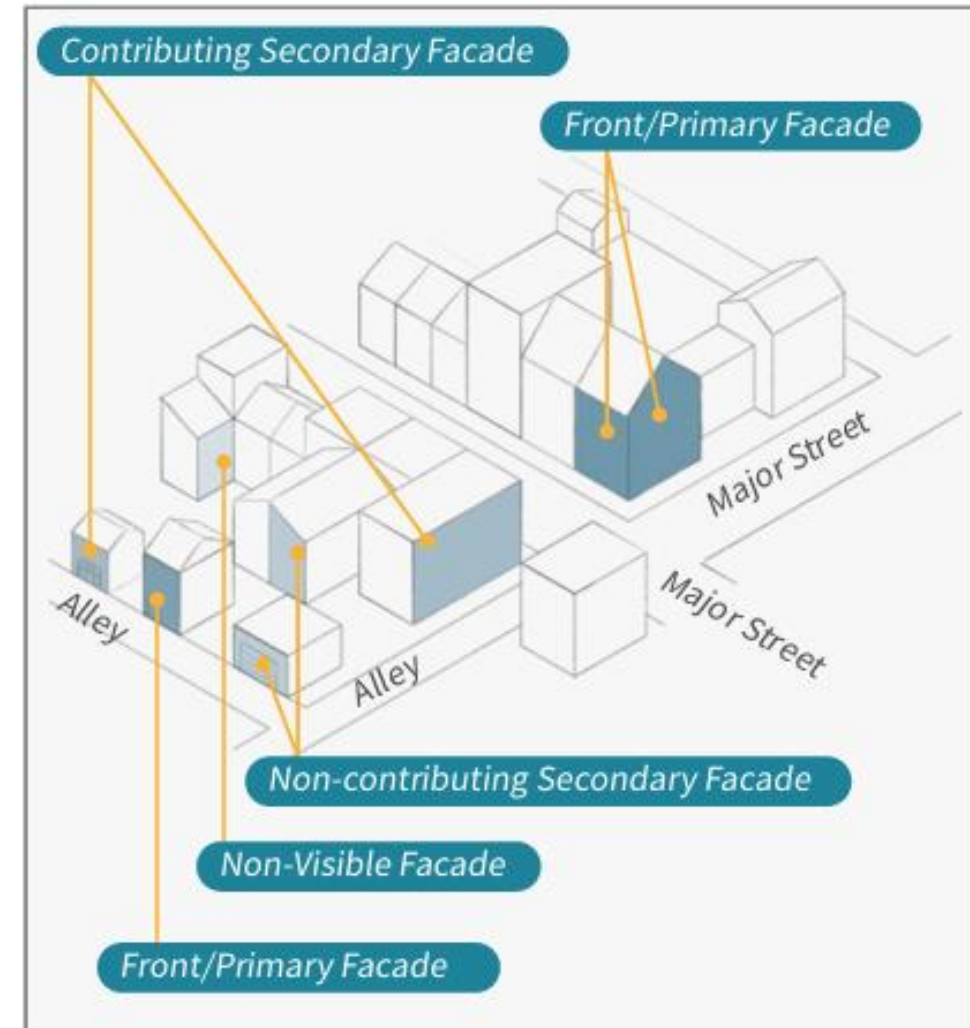
HIERARCHY OF FACADES



Non-Visible Facades

A non-visible façade is one that cannot be seen from the public right-of-way and is not reviewed by the HRC. New construction, exterior alterations, and alternative materials are reviewed administratively.

HIERARCHY OF FACADES



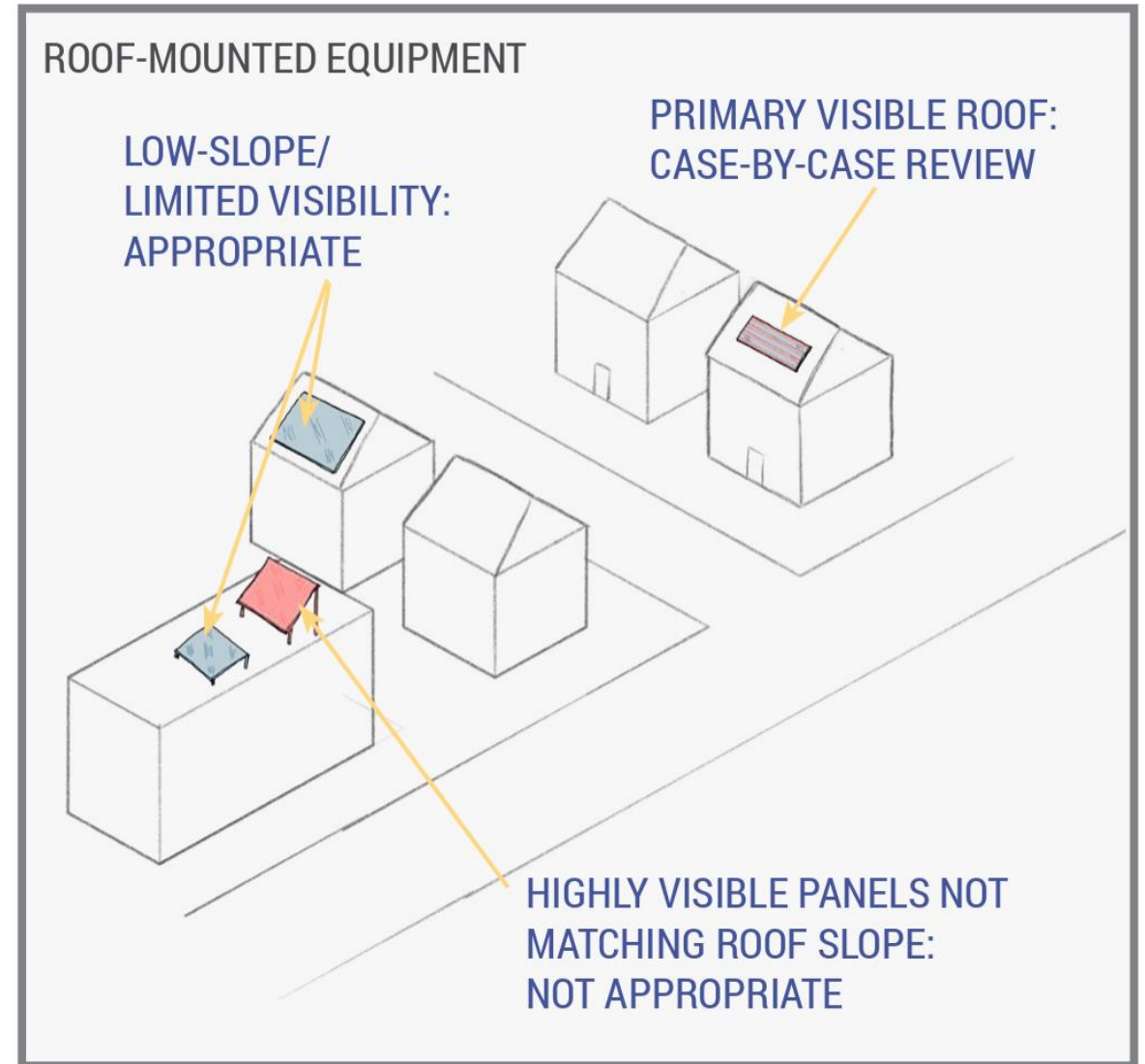
Alternate Materials

Current	Proposed
Degraded details must be replaced with original materials.	Durable modern substitutes that have a similar appearance are permissible. Smooth fiber cement, composite wood, cellular PVC. Focus on the appearance and strength, not on original material.

Solar Panels

- Check the roof material
- Keep them flat
- Make it reversible
- Keep the layout neat
- Hide them when possible

3.6.7 Typically, solar devices are appropriate on **non-visible or non-contributing** roof slopes that are minimally visible from the public right-of-way. The HRC will review all proposals for solar devices on front-facing roof slopes.



New Construction

- "Compatible but distinct"
- New construction should fit the general "mass and scale" of the block. It should be roughly the same height, width, and distance from the sidewalk as the houses next to it.
- Durable contemporary materials are permissible alongside traditional brick.
- Instead of copying ornate trim and details, new homes should use clean, simplified versions of traditional features.

MWS vs. MWS Expansion

- MWS Expansion guidelines were completed with last round of design guidelines
- Will be implemented when MWS is implemented
- Community feedback gathered on differences between the two districts
- Changes that were made in MWS that were not present in MWS Expansion will be added and approved by HRC so that the guidelines are the same

Using the New Guidelines

- Consult the Hierarchy of Facades to determine level of review needed
- Explore the Design Guidelines for the type of work you will be doing
- When possible, consider repairing before replacing
- Talk to City Planning Staff. They are there to help!



Questions and Comments?

Thank You!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME