

2203 DESIGN REVIEW OVERLAY (DRO) DISTRICT

2203.A **Purpose.** The Design Review Overlay District is intended to ensure that any exterior modifications to existing structures and new construction will be compatible with and maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding built environment by establishing more rigorous design standards and a higher level of review for proposed development in those areas of Dorset recognized as having particular historic, architectural and/or cultural value. It is the purpose of this section to:

- (1) Preserve the distinctive qualities of historic structures;
- (2) Maintain uniformity within historic districts;
- (3) Protect the integrity of the traditional built form by ensuring appropriate treatment of historic structures and districts; and
- (4) Assist property owners by providing guidance on the appropriate treatment of historic structures and development practices within historic districts.

2203.B **Applicability.** A landowner must obtain a zoning permit for all exterior modifications to structures located within this overlay district not exempted in Subsection 2203.C, including but not limited to buildings, fences, signs, driveways and walkways.

2203.C **Exemptions.** The following development is exempt from the provisions of this section (a zoning permit or development approval may still be required under other provisions of these regulations):

- (1) **Emergency repairs and stabilization of damaged structures** in accordance with Section 1101;
- (2) **Normal maintenance and repair** of existing structures that meets the standards of Subsection 2203.E;
- (3) **Demolition** of a structure or portion of a structure provided that the structure is not listed individually or as a contributing structure within a listed district in the federal or state registers of historic places;
- (4) **Subdivision of land**;
- (5) **Agricultural and silvicultural practices** exempted under Section 1103; and
- (6) Development subject to a **Certificate of Public Good** from the Vermont Public Utilities Commission.

2203.D **Allowed Uses.** The uses allowed within this overlay district will be as allowed in the underlying zoning district.

2203.E **Maintenance and Repair.** Exterior modifications to structures that meet the standards below will be exempt from review under this section and will not require a zoning permit in accordance with Paragraph 1101. To qualify for the exemption, property owners must obtain a determination from the Zoning Administrator that the planned exterior modifications meet the standards below.

- (1) In-kind replacement of deteriorated or damaged materials or features that match the original in design, size, shape, dimension, pattern, texture, color and detail. In-kind replacement may be of a different material type provided it mimics the original material as specified above.
- (2) Re-painting of previously painted surfaces with matching colors provided that the surface will not be prepared for painting by techniques such as sandblasting or high-pressure power washing that can damage historic materials.
- (3) Replacement or removal of historically inappropriate or incompatible materials or features that have been incorporated into the structure within the past 50 years with materials or features that are appropriate or compatible with the original structure.

2203.F **Code Compliance.** The standards of this section may be waived or modified when necessary to meet contemporary accessibility, fire safety, energy or similar building codes or other regulations.

2203.G **Alterations to Existing Structures.** Preservation of existing historic features is strongly recommended versus replacement when considering alterations. Exterior modifications to existing structures must conform to the following:

- (1) **Roof-mounted appurtenances** must be installed in a manner and location that:
 - (a) Is on a secondary or non-character defining roof whenever practicable;
 - (b) Is not visible from the street;
 - (c) Does not damage historic roof materials; and
 - (d) Does not diminish the original character of the historic structure.
- (2) **Wall- or ground-mounted appurtenances** must be installed in a manner and location that:
 - (a) Is on a non-character defining elevation;
 - (b) Is not visible from the street, or if such a location is not practicable then the appurtenance must be camouflaged or screened;
 - (c) Does not damage historic building materials;
 - (d) Does not damage or obscure historic architectural features; and
 - (e) Does not diminish the original character of the historic structure.
- (3) **Door and window openings** must not be removed, added or resized unless required for an accurate restoration or to meet contemporary code requirements. New or enlarged openings to meet code requirements must not diminish the original character of the historic structure and must be located on a non-character defining elevation whenever practicable.
- (4) **Storm doors and windows** may be added or replaced provided that:

- (a) They are slim profile;
 - (b) They are made of wood or aluminum;
 - (c) They are painted or clad the same color of the surrounding frame; and
 - (d) If protecting a double-hung window, the storm window muntins align with those of the window it covers.
- (5) **Exterior wall cladding** to be added or replaced due to an alteration of the structure must be wood clapboard siding unless another material is required for an accurate restoration.
- (6) **Fabric awnings** that are compatible with the building in color and style may be installed over windows, entrances or porch openings in a manner that does not damage or obscure historic building materials or architectural features.
- (7) **Porches** or other historically appropriate entrance features be added or replaced provided that:
- (a) Any loss of historic building materials is minimized;
 - (b) The original character of the historic structure is not diminished; and
 - (c) There is no change in the location or size of the associated door opening.
- (8) **Decks** or other entrance features that are not historically appropriate may be added only on non-character defining elevations. Existing entrance features to be replaced on character defining elevations that are not historically appropriate must be replaced with an entrance feature that is appropriate whenever practicable.
- (9) **Construction component** standards ([Paragraph 2203.L](#)) also apply.

2203.H **Additions to Existing Structures.** Additions to existing structures must:

- (1) Be on a non-character defining elevation;
- (2) Not visually overpower the historic structure;
- (3) Not diminish, conceal or detract from the character of the historic structure;
- (4) Be consistent with the historic structure in massing, height, form, scale, proportion, roof shape, roof pitch, and relationship of walls, doors and windows along exterior elevations; and
- (5) Use window and door designs that are consistent in size, scale, placement, spacing, proportion, orientation, material and color to those on the historic building.
- (6) Comply with the construction component standards ([Paragraph 2203.L](#)).

2203.I **New or Replacement Structures.** New or replacement structures must:

- (1) Be compatible with the character of the district with regard to style, scale, rhythm, height, mass, roof shape, roof pitch and detailing;

- (2) Be sited and designed to not diminish, conceal or detract from the historic structures in the district;
- (3) Be sited and designed to be harmonious with surrounding structures;
- (4) Meet the setback requirements of the applicable zoning district and be consistent with the setbacks of adjacent structures;
- (5) Have a front elevation that is parallel to the street with a front entrance that opens to the street (structures on corner lots must be oriented to the major street) if a principal building;
- (6) Have a front elevation that is set behind the frontline of the principal building if an accessory building;
- (7) Not upstage the principal building in size or mass if an accessory building;
- (8) Be in character with the principal building if an accessory building;
- (9) Be designed so that garage doors do not face the street unless the accessory building is located fully behind the principal building in the rear yard; and
- (10) Comply with the construction component standards ([Paragraph 2203.L](#)).

2203.J **Signs.** The following will apply to signs within the district:

- (1) Signs must complement the overall design and character of building and site.
- (2) Signs must be proportional and sized to the scale of the building.
- (3) Signs must not conceal architectural detail and must be compatible with the windows, doors and other building openings.
- (4) Signs must not clutter the building's image or district from the unity of the facade.

2203.K **ATMs and vending machines** must not be located outside a building within this district.

2203.L **Construction Components.** All modifications to existing structures and new construction, including replacements, must conform to the following:

- (1) **Materials.** Original building materials must be retained to the maximum extent feasible in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Materials must be consistent with the character of the district as follows:
 - (a) All structures must be sided with painted horizontal wood or fiber cement clapboards or shingles, used with appropriate corner and sill boards, cornices and crown moldings.
 - (b) Use of modern or imitative materials other than smooth fiber cement as siding is prohibited. Modern or imitative building materials may be used for purposes other than siding if they successfully mimic historic materials and if they offer superior maintenance or safety performance.

- (2) **Color.** Exterior siding and trim must be painted white unless the applicant provides evidence that the structure was a color other than white during its period of historic significance. Shutters must be Essex (dark) green or black. Doors may be stained or painted in a contrasting color.
- (3) **Windows, Shutters and Awnings.** The rhythm, design and detail of windows must be compatible with the character of the district as follows:
 - (a) Double-hung, casement and awning are acceptable window types.
 - (b) Palladian, arched, bay or storefront windows may be approved if consistent with the architectural style of the building.
 - (c) Solar walls and large expanses of glass are prohibited on elevations visible from the street.
 - (d) Mirrored or tinted glass is prohibited.
 - (e) Windows, including replacements, must be wood or high-quality vinyl or metal clad.
 - (f) Double-hung windows, including replacements, must have permanent muntins.
 - (g) The frames and muntins of storm windows must align with the windows they protect.
 - (h) Screens must be light colored or copper.
 - (i) Shutters, if used, must be:
 - (i) Painted wood;
 - (ii) Sized to cover window if closed;
 - (iii) Hinged and operable.
 - (j) Replacement windows must be historically accurate, replicate the pane arrangement and geometry of original windows, and not alter the original glass size by more than 5% in any dimension.
 - (k) Awnings must be made of canvas if visible from the street.
 - (l) The color, shape and size of awnings must be in harmony with the building.
 - (m) Awnings must be no wider than the window.
 - (n) Historic building materials must not be removed when attaching an awning.
 - (o) Awnings must be attached in a manner that will allow for future removal with no or minor (repairable) damage to historic building materials.
- (4) **Doors and Entrances.** Exterior doors and related architectural details must be appropriate to the period of the structure and harmonious with the facade as follows:

- (a) The main entrance must be clearly denoted and identifiable as the formal entrance to the building.
 - (b) Front entrances must incorporate significant design elements appropriate to the character of the district.
 - (c) Original details must be preserved where possible.
 - (d) Original doors on character defining elevations must not be covered by a vestibule.
 - (e) Appropriate door styles are shown in Figure *.
 - (f) Metal doors are prohibited on character defining elevations.
 - (g) Prefabricated metal garage doors are prohibited. Garage doors that face the street must be wooden and compatible in design with the architectural character of the building.
 - (h) Storm doors must be mainly glass to expose as much as possible of the main door.
 - (i) Storm doors must be constructed of wood or metal and painted or anodized to match the trim color.
- (5) **Porches and Decks.** The size, design and detail of porches and decks must be consistent with the building and compatible with the character of the district as follows:
- (a) Decks must not be located on character defining elevations or where visible from the street.
 - (b) Exposed concrete support piers are prohibited on character defining elevations.
 - (c) Exposed pressure treated wood is prohibited on character defining elevations.
 - (d) Posts, columns and balustrades must be consistent with the style of the building. Industrial type rails are prohibited.
 - (e) Posts, columns and balustrades may be made of imitative materials if they successfully mimic historic materials and if they offer superior maintenance or safety performance.
 - (f) Pre-fabricated diagonal lattice panels are prohibited on character defining elevations. Traditional latticework is allowed.
- (6) **Roofs and Dormers.** Roof design and detail must be appropriate to the period of the structure and compatible with the character of the district as follows:
- (a) The main roof must have a pitch of 5/12 or greater.
 - (b) Shed and flat roofs, not including porch roofs, must not be visible from the street.

- (c) The roof must not overhang the exterior elevation by more than 2 feet.
 - (d) Soffits and fascia must be finished so that the roof rafters are not visible unless the rafters constitute an architectural detail original or appropriate to the building.
 - (e) Acceptable roofing materials are slate or dark-colored asphalt or cedar shingles or low-gloss seamed metal roofing. Slate is strongly preferred. Composite materials that successfully mimic slate shingles may be considered where there are building-specific structural or maintenance issues that justify an alternative to natural slate. Rolled roofing may only be used on roof surfaces that are not visible from the street.
 - (f) Dormers must be in proportion to the building and windows.
 - (g) Dormer overhangs must be proportionally smaller than the main roof overhang.
 - (h) Dormer sidewalls and roofing materials must be of the same materials as the main building.
 - (i) Skylights must not be visible from the street.
- (7) **Chimneys and foundations** must be appropriate to the period of the structure in scale, detail and materials as follows:
- (a) All visible chimney surfaces must be of stone or brick.
 - (b) Small metal flues, plumbing vents and attic exhaust vents required to meet contemporary building codes must be located and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible.
 - (c) Foundations visible from the street must be of natural stone or stucco, or must be screened with traditional latticework or plantings.
- (8) **Fences, walls and hedges** must be compatible with the character of the district as follows:
- (a) Wood picket fences and stone walls must be preserved where possible.
 - (b) On Church Street between Route 30 and Cheney Road, fences, walls and hedges are prohibited between the frontline of the principal building and the street.
 - (c) Fences, walls and hedges must not exceed 6 feet in height.
 - (d) Rough cedar, unpainted wood (not including natural split rail), concrete block, synthetic or plastic fencing materials are prohibited.
 - (e) Chain link fencing must be fully screened by vegetation.
 - (f) Wood fences must be painted or stained.
 - (g) Retaining walls must be constructed of natural stone.

- (9) **Driveways** must be designed to minimize their visual prominence from the street and must be surfaced with traditional materials such as gravel, crushed stone, macadam/tar-and-chip, brick or cobblestones.
- (10) **Original marble sidewalks and walkways** must be retained, but slabs may be reset to meet current grades, provide a safe walking surface and meet accessibility requirements. Removal will only be approved upon the applicant demonstrating that the condition of the stone has deteriorated to the point where it cannot reasonably be restored to meet minimum requirements for safety and accessibility.
- (11) **Outdoor lighting** must conform to the standards of [Section 3102](#). Fixtures that will be visible from the street must be appropriate to the era and architectural style of the associated building. Outdoor lighting must only be provided where and at the minimum level necessary for safety and security.

2203.M

Demolition. Significant structures must be preserved to the greatest extent feasible. Demolition of significant structures, or a portion of a significant structure will only be allowed in conformance with the following:

- (1) The applicant must provide a professionally prepared structural assessment of the structure or portion of a structure proposed for demolition.
- (2) The applicant must provide a professionally prepared plan for either replacement of the structure or for landscaping and maintenance of the site.
- (3) A structure's significance will be determined relative to the following:
 - (a) Cultural, scenic, aesthetic or architectural value;
 - (b) Importance to the character of the district;
 - (c) Difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a structure because of its unique design features and/or materials;
 - (d) Whether the structure is the last remaining example of its kind in the district;
 - (e) The reason for the demolition;
 - (f) The condition of the structure and its probable life expectancy;
 - (g) Whether feasible alternatives to demolition exist, including relocation of the structure; and
 - (h) The public necessity of the demolition and interest in protecting the structure.