

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Joint Review Committee
Olympia Design Review Board and Heritage Commission

DETAILED DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
January 8, 2026

Case Number/Name:	25-6687 Carnegie Whisky Library
Applicant/Rep.:	Wade Stein/ Thomas Architecture Studios
Site Address:	620 Franklin Street SE
Project Description:	Second story addition on the northeast corner of the annex portion of the building of the historic Carnegie Library building and remodel of interior for a new use as a restaurant and bar.
Zoning District:	Downtown Business
Design Review Criteria:	18.120 Downtown Design Criteria- Core Sub-District, 18.12.90 Historic Register- Alteration and Construction.
Comprehensive Plan:	Central Business District/High Density Neighborhood
Notification:	Notice of the Joint Design Review Board Meeting was sent to the applicable recognized neighborhood associations on December 18, 2025
Board Responsibility:	The Joint Review Committee (JRC) will make a recommendation to the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) Director regarding the adequacy of the projects design. The application requires review of the applicable design criteria within the Olympia Municipal Code. In situations where explicit compliance is not feasible, the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as these design solutions are equal to, or better than, the guidelines listed in the requirement sections.
Land Use Review:	Land Use Review was waived for the second story addition and therefore the application is for detail design review.
Project Overview:	Narrative provided on page 3 of the DRB packet.

Review of Design Criteria:

This project is required to comply with the Core subdistrict design criteria of Downtown and the historic design criteria for additions or remodels to historic buildings. The general objective of the Downtown Core sub-district states the following:

Core: General objectives: Enhance and complement historic architecture. The existing historic architectural styles and influences are varied, including Neoclassical, Art Moderne, Chicago Style, Romanesque, Victorian, Mission Revival, and Art Deco. Activate streetscapes with storefront building design and wider pedestrian pathways. Within the historic retail core, design elements should complement the surrounding historic architecture with sensitivity to neighboring buildings' proportions and rhythms; "classic main street" furnishings, finishes and styling; and materials drawing inspiration

from surrounding historic materials like sandstone, brick, terracotta and granite. New buildings may exhibit contemporary styled architecture but must not detract from the overall historic character of the Sub-District. New buildings should complement the Sub-District's character through design features and qualities such as materials, scale, façade composition and proportion, but not try to replicate historical styles.

The general objective of the historic design criteria for additions or remodels to historic buildings states the following:

REQUIREMENT: Protect and preserve buildings of special historic significance and merit in accordance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (as amended). Historic features are those which have been identified by the Heritage Commission on the Olympia Heritage Register, Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

General Review: In review of the design review criteria of the Core sub-district, along with the applicant's Design Review Packet (Attachment 3) and the Applicant Narrative (Attachment 2) that provides responses to the downtown design criteria, staff found that most of the design criteria within OMC 18.120 did not apply as this is an existing developed site, except for some of the criteria listed below. Additionally, the applicant has contacted the Olympia Heritage Commission regarding an appropriate course of action with respect to the historic design criteria. A subcommittee met on September 29, 2025, to provide preliminary design guidance, and a memorandum detailing this visit is included as Attachment 4.

18.120.260 Solid waste facilities, service areas, and mechanical equipment. In summary of the design criteria of this section, service areas are to be located along an alley if possible and be screened to the extent possible if those areas or equipment is visible from a street, sidewalk, or adjacent property and be a structural enclosure constructed of masonry, heavy-gauge metal, or decay-resistant composite wood.

Staff Analysis: *Page A 105 of the Design Review Packet shows the solid waste enclosure which will be located and accessed by the existing alley way. The proposed construction shown on the plans will comply.*

18.120.370 Other site features

This section has criteria for other site features such as walls, fences and other vertical elements outside the right of way.

Staff Analysis: *It should be noted that the monument sign shown on the illustrations of the design review plans is not a permitted sign type in the downtown district. Signs for this development will need to be flush mounted signs attached to the building.*

Registered historic districts and sites. OMC 18.120.430 along with OMC 18.12.090 and 18.105 for Secretary of Interior Standards provide guidance for historic buildings and districts. The proposed project is considered a substantial alteration subject to review by the JRC as it has a second story addition that adds new rooms, structures or spaces to an existing building that are visible from the public street.

18.12.090 and 18.105 & References to Secretary of Interior's Standards

This section has guidelines for restoring, retaining and preserving significant historic features with an emphasis on the significant features that have been identified by the Heritage Commission. The specific recommendations for how to restore, retain and preserve elements of the property are detailed in the Secretary of Interior's (SOI) Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with guidance on how to appropriately handle each of the building elements, materials and design choices.

Staff Analysis: *The proposed work does not detrimentally alter, destroy, or adversely affect the exterior features of the structure that are related to the designation of the property to the Heritage Register. The new improvements to the site and the addition to the annex building include architectural detailing and reference to the original structure and as such they are compatible with the external appearance of the original library building while being clearly distinct and separately identifiable as a new addition. The design features, along with the care and treatment of the existing building, align with the SOI Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Attachment 5 is the checklist that the applicant provided with responses to each standard.*

18.120.470 Materials and colors

This code section provides guidance as to what exterior materials are allowed based on the sub-district in which the project is located.

Staff Analysis: *The project is located within the Core sub-district of downtown, and brick stone and masonry along with ceramic tiles are the types of exterior materials that are allowed. Metal siding is proposed for the addition, which is not listed as a permitted material in this district. The design code does allow the City to consider any material that is prohibited if it can be demonstrated to the City's satisfaction that the material is durable and appropriate for the proposed purpose. The applicant recognized that the material was non-permitted in the sub-district but has noted that this material was chosen due to the constraints of the existing CMU that make the metal siding an ideal choice. The applicant also documented the durability of the material which has a 30-year paint durability. Unless the JRC believes that this choice of material should be changed, staff finds that this is acceptable material based on the information provided.*

Staff Recommendation:

That the Design Review Board provide a recommendation to approve the Detail Design proposal as follows:

- A. **Site Plan and Landscape Plans:** Approve as proposed
- B. **Building Design:** Approve as proposed
- C. **Detail Design Elements (Materials/colors):** Approve as proposed.

Submitted By: Paula Smith, Associate Planner and Brittany Gillia, Historic Preservation Officer

- **Attachment 1 - Staff Report**
- **Attachment 2 - Design Review Checklist – The Applicants Narrative**
- **Attachment 3 - Design Review Packet**
- **Attachment 4 – Heritage Commission Design Guidance Memo**
- **Attachment 5 – Secretary of Interior Standards Checklist**