



# Downtown Design Review

October 2025

Project Name: Carnegie Whisky Library  
Project File Number: 255042  
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## Downtown Design Criteria ([Chapter 18.120 OMC](#)) Design Review Application Narrative

*This form is for applicants to describe how the proposed project has been designed to meet the Downtown Design Criteria. Information provided will be used to assist staff and the Design Review Board in its review. Links to code sections are provided. It is anticipated that applicants will review the code and applicable requirements to address those issues in their responses.*

### SECTION A – PROJECT INFORMATION

**Downtown Design Sub-District:** See [Figure 18.120.130.A.1](#) for designation. Note: Where two or more Sub-Districts are indicated, the applicant selects which Sub-District will apply. All regulations for that Sub-District will then apply. See 18.120.130(B) for sub-district descriptions.

- |  |  |                                     |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art/Tech          | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment     | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfront |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Corridor | <input type="checkbox"/> North Capitol Way |                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Core   | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential       |                                     |

**Street Type(s):** See [Figure 18.120.140.A.1](#) for designation. Check all that apply. See 18.120.140 for descriptions of the various street types.

- |                                 |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type A | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Type C | <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Entry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type B | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfront        |   |

Per [Figure 18.120.140.A.1](#), is this property designated as a High Visibility Street Corner?

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|--|

### SECTION B – SITE PLANNING

#### Street Fronts ([18.120.220](#))

*For lots with multiple street fronts, please address each street front separately. Street front standards address things like façade details, ground floor uses, ground floor setbacks, street wall definition, driveways, upper story setbacks, sidewalk access, outdoor display areas, and the location of surface parking areas. Describe how the proposed project meets the Street Fronts requirements applicable to the proposal (based on adjacent street designation types such as A, B, C, Waterfront, Entry):*

This project is a rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the original Olympia Public Library, built in 1914 and designed by architectural firm Blackwell and Baker in association with Joseph Wohleb. In 1960, a 2,000 sf one-story annex structure was added to the north of the 1914 library and was constructed mostly of CMU. The extent of the project is designed to stay within the existing building footprint. The annex will be remodeled as a contemporary addition; this portion of the project is designed to be differentiated from the original 1914 architecture while remaining respectful in scale, proportion, and exterior finish colors. New elements will primarily be located on the north side of the building, within the 1960 annex addition, including accessible restrooms, an elevator, and an interior exit stair with a commercial kitchen and outdoor terrace above. A rooftop deck shall be added and located in the northeast quadrant of the original 1914 structure and set back from the existing roof parapet to afford the use of existing structural roof elements and minimize visual impact. Existing on-site parking and covered waste enclosure are located at the back side of the building in the Eastern area of the site, adjacent to the neighboring parking lot. The design intends to maintain and repair the original materials and character of the 1914 structure while adding the majority of the modern adaptations to the 1960 annex.

The new business intends to add signage that identifies the “Carnegie Whisky Library” and is visible from the corner of Franklin St and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. According to the OMC 18.43, a monument sign is not permitted and all signage must be attached to the building. Our design features signage attached to the face of the building that would be illuminated with existing fixtures on the West and South facades. However, the Heritage Commission had concerns for preserving the building’s brick façade and would prefer that no signage is attached to the face of the library building. We have since added a monument sign feature to our design that uses the original brick colors and references the historical character of the library building to represent our proposed alternative to attached signage. The sign would be set back at the corner of Franklin St and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, providing optimal pedestrian visibility without impacting traffic. If a code compliance path can be found, we would prefer using a monument sign for this project.

**Pedestrian Circulation ([18.120.230](#))**

Describe the measures taken to ensure the project meets the pedestrian circulation requirements: Existing pathways shall be well-lit and provide convenient access to public entrances. An existing public transit bus stop is located conveniently on Franklin Street on the same block near the West entry. Existing landscape areas shall receive new plantings, and the existing lawn area shall be maintained along with benches and other pedestrian amenities to provide an inviting pedestrian environment.

**Ground Related Residential Uses ([18.120.240](#))**

Ground-related residential uses are not allowed on Type A Pedestrian Oriented Streets or in the Waterfront Sub-District. Are any ground related residential uses proposed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Multiple Buildings and Multi-Block Sites ([18.120.250](#))**

In all downtown design subdistricts, a development that includes two or more buildings must be based on a unified site plan. Are two or more buildings proposed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Solid waste facilities, service areas, and mechanical equipment ([18.120.260](#))**

Service areas, mechanical equipment areas, and solid waste facilities must be carefully addressed. Describe how the project was designed to address the requirements for location and screening:

A new waste enclosure shall be located next to the parking and service areas at the back side of the existing building. The existing rooftop mechanical units will be screened with a 42-inch-tall railing at the roof deck.

#### **Multifamily Open Space ([18.120.270](#))**

All new multifamily buildings with five or more residential units must provide open space. Does the proposed project provide five or more new residential units: ☐ Yes ☒ No

#### **Security ([18.120.280](#))**

Designing projects to consider security is required. This includes avoiding entrapment areas, increasing visibility of certain areas, preventing visual obstructions, enhancing motorist's views, providing for passive surveillance, controlling access, providing for territorial definition, and addressing maintainability and use of vandal-resistant materials. Describe the measures proposed to address security:

Along the North façade, the remodeled addition will include wall-mounted and under-canopy light fixtures to provide a well-lit alleyway, improving the security of the current alley condition. Terrace dining and rooftop deck provide additional passive surveillance from above the street level. Existing overgrown vegetation will be pruned and replaced with new plantings to avoid creating areas for individuals to conceal themselves on the site. The stairwell on the East side of the building will be chained off and marked as "employees only" to avoid loitering in the lower vestibule. The waste enclosure is designed to be fully enclosed and accessed by employees only. The new monument sign feature is designed to be set back from the street corner to avoid any visual obstruction. Benches will include armrests to segment seating areas to facilitate their intended use.

### **SECTION C – SITE ELEMENTS AND DESIGN**

#### **Parking Areas ([18.120.320](#))**

Describe how this proposal provides for adequate walkways through parking areas: The existing walkway between the building and the existing parking spaces is to remain and be restored as needed. This walkway connects to the East entrance and the sidewalk along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, providing a path from the parking to both the main entry and the secondary, accessible entry.

When angled or perpendicular parking stalls abut walkways a paved area must be provided to prevent the bumper overhang from reducing the walkway width. Describe how this project meets the requirement:

The clear walkway width accounts for vehicle overhang with wheel stops and additional paving along the Eastern walkway.

#### **Pedestrian Oriented Open Space ([18.120.330](#))**

When provided, Pedestrian Oriented Open Space must meet certain requirements regarding location, surfacing, seating, landscaping, screening, fencing, blank wall treatments, and exclusion of vehicles. Is this type of open space proposed in this project? ☐ YES ☒ NO

#### **Landscaping ([18.120.340](#))**

Landscaping requirements are specific to the Design Sub-District the project is located within. Provide a narrative explaining how this proposal meets each of the landscaping requirements for the applicable Design Sub-District, noting if there were any conflicts with the landscaping chapter requirements, and if there were identify how the conflict was addressed:

The proposed landscaping meets the requirements for general character and intent, plant materials, pavements, and site furnishings. The landscape plan has been designed by a local landscape architect with sensitivity to preserving the existing character of the site and the downtown core sub-district. Proper irrigation has been incorporated in the design to preserve the grass and deciduous plantings. Hardy ground coverings have been included in the higher traffic areas, while the grass at the street front is preserved to soften the site. New pavement has been designed with break lines in a grid pattern at the West, Southwest, and East entries. The monument sign adjacent to the Southwest entry features a bench at the backside for patrons, the West entry also includes a bench and a waste receptacle. A new built-in bench feature at the existing landscaped area to the Northeast will serve as seating for a variety of uses. New lighting has been selected to resemble features of the historic building and historic fixtures are intended to be restored.

Perimeter landscaping requirements for parking lots is required in all Design Sub-Districts. How does this proposal satisfy the requirements:

This project intends to improve the existing on-site parking with regrading and the designation of van accessible parking. The existing landscaping is intended to be preserved adjacent to the on-site parking. However, no additional perimeter landscaping is intended to be added, as it would reduce the number of parking stalls.

#### **Walkways and Circulation Elements (18.120.350)**

There are standards for internal walkways for widths, safety, enhancements, for when building facades face parking areas, and to provide for separation for ground related residential uses. Describe how does the proposed project meets the requirements:

New walkways have been designed to meet the minimum width requirements and all existing walkways are intended to be restored to meet the necessary requirements. All walkways are clearly visible from the street and adjacent parking area for safety and proper wayfinding. The walkway connecting the sidewalk to the East entry facing the parking is designed to be well-lit and clearly visible from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

#### **Lighting (18.120.360)**

Lighting is an important component of safety and design. Describe how each of the following are addressed in this proposal: site lighting levels; light quality, height, and shielding; architectural lighting; and the character of the light fixtures and mounting:

Historic lighting features at the main entry will be restored to their original state, and additional contemporary lighting will be provided to complement the existing features in order to provide proper lighting levels. All features included are intended to downlight, avoiding excess light pollution from the site. Architectural lighting on the addition has been selected to resemble the existing brick quoin accent features of the historic building with a contemporary style and fixtures are provided at multiple levels to illuminate the façade.

#### **Other Site Features (18.120.370)**

Other site features include improvements such as fences, walls, poles and vertical elements, and alcoves. Describe how this proposal addresses other site features: NOT APPLICABLE.

### **SECTION D – BUILDING DESIGN**

#### **Building Character (18.120.420)**

Some building character provisions apply to all projects in all Design Sub-Districts. Provide a narrative about how the proposal meets the Design Character of Building Elements and Details requirements:

The design intends to restore the original character of the 1914 structure with minimal impact to the existing building, while the remodel of the 1960 annex is designed to differentiate the addition from the original 1914 architecture, remaining respectful in scale, proportion, and the selected finish colors. The character of the addition reflects the historic qualities of the Library building while clearly distinguishing the two design styles.

Provide a narrative about how the proposal meets the Compatibility with Architectural Character of Design Sub-District requirements:

The project lies within the core sub-district in the Downtown Historic District and reinforces the historic character of the area with its classical features and early 20th-century design. The 1914 Library building will be preserved and restored to its original state by cleaning the brick and terra cotta features, replacing windows with contemporary replicas if needed, and recovering the historic light features that have been removed. The remodel of the 1960s annex is intended to improve the condition of the existing addition and complement the design of the main Library building's features through color, texture, scale, and increased durability.

Remaining requirements are specific to the Design Sub-District. Describe how the proposed project meets those requirements by identifying each of the menu options that were selected for the proposal: The historic building uses traditional materials, including brick and terra cotta, that will be preserved to retain the historic character of the building. The footprint of the building and the existing pattern of windows will remain, while the storefront entries at the East and West provide a clear separation between the historic building and the addition through modulation and a distinct material change. The windows at the addition are designed to resemble existing windows of the historic building with a contemporary style, replicating the pattern and shape of the windows on the historic building.

**Registered Historic District and Sites (18.120.430)**

Is the property located in a Historic District: ☒ YES ☐ NO

Is the property a designated historic site: ☒ YES ☐ NO

As defined in this code section, is a substantial alteration proposed?: ☒ YES ☐ NO

As defined in this code section, is a minor alteration proposed?: ☐ YES ☒ NO

**RESPONSES ADDED PER REQUEST - PAULA SMITH, ASOCIATE PLANNER, CITY OF OLYMPIA:**

Support the provisions of OMC chapter 18.12 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The historic 1914 Carnegie Library building is intended be preserved and restored to its original condition, therefore strengthening the economic vitality of the City by reviving the formerly loved public space. The building has degraded due to lack of maintenance and vacancy, the new owners aim to maintain what is still viable and restore elements that require improvements. Preserving the historic building ultimately conserves energy and valuable materials through restoration, maintenance, and continued use while maintaining the character of the downtown core. This project is expected to attract visitors and tourists interested in the subject, thereby stimulating the local economy.

Reinforce the historic character and pedestrian orientation of the Core Sub-District.

The design reinforces the historic character and pedestrian orientation of the downtown core by restoring the condition of the historic Library building, reviving the landscaping, enhancing building lighting and returning original light post fixtures to their historic location. Pedestrian amenities including

benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, and accessible parking spaces will be added to the site to further enhance the pedestrian experience. The Northeast corner of the site has been used as an informal gathering space and live music venue by neighboring businesses, the landscape design intends to enhance this space with a hardy ground covering and additional seating to foster the continuation of this use.

Maintain the Downtown Historic District as the “heart” of the community.

This project will aid in maintaining the Downtown Historic District by preserving and improving the iconic Library building with a rich history. The building holds a nostalgic place in the “heart” of the community with its long history of public and private uses, this project aims to bring community members back to the library site once again.

Allow new development with a contemporary design character provided new buildings do not detract from the overall historic character of the Downtown.

The design aims to restore the original character of the 1914 structure with minimal impact to the library building, while the remodel of the 1960 annex addition is designed to be differentiated from the original 1914 architecture, remaining respectful in scale, proportion, and the selected finish colors. The contemporary materials selected for the remodel portion of the project allow for the design aesthetic of the addition to contrast with the Library building and not detract from its historical character.

Honor the historic scale and massing of downtown buildings, new construction should follow original parcel size and dimensions within the historic district.

The overall goal of the project is to honor the historic massing of the existing building by setting all structural additions back from the main building face to preserve and massing and dimensions of the street-facing facades. All improvements will remain within the original footprint of the 1914 Library and the 1960 annex addition. All substantial alterations will be made to the annex addition portion of the project while the massing and character of the Library building are preserved.

#### **Architectural Composition, Massing, and Articulation ([18.120.440](#))**

The requirements of this section are intended to reduce the perceived scale of large buildings and add visual interest, encourage development of a compatible architectural scale, create a skyline that is visually interesting, create clear and welcoming building entries, add visual interest to buildings, protect designated landmark views, and to maintain light and air circulation. Describe how the proposal addresses the code requirements for:

Façade articulation (commercial and mixed-use buildings): **NOT APPLICABLE**

Façade articulation (residential buildings, residential portion of mixed-use): **NOT APPLICABLE**

Maximum façade width: **NOT APPLICABLE**

Roofline modulation:

The existing roof form of the historic building is intended to be preserved and rehabilitated close to its original condition with its brick parapet and low-pitched hip roof, while the addition will retain the same language as the existing flat roof. A rooftop deck shall be added and located in the northeast quadrant of the original 1914 structure and set back about ten feet from the existing roof

parapet to afford the use of existing structural roof elements and minimize visual impact.

New buildings in Residential Sub-District: **NOT APPLICABLE**

Modulation to enhance views: **NOT APPLICABLE**

**Building Siding (multiple sides visible to public):**

The primary facades of the (1914 Library) at the West and South facing the corner of Franklin and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue are intended to be restored to their original condition, retaining their character with minor improvements including lighting and landscaping. The East façade, visible from the adjacent properties, is also intended to be restored to the original condition including reversing some of the changes made throughout the life of the historic building and restoring the façade to its original condition.

The proposed material for the Annex remodel/addition is a metal siding with a sculptural box profile, selected to complement the distinct horizontal lines and clean edges of the adjacent historic brick finish. To preserve the existing library structure, we are separating the two buildings with a seismic joint that allows them to move independently. The metal siding was chosen not only for its sculptural qualities (noted above) but also for its flexibility and durability. The Kynar 500 finish system includes a 30-year commercial paint warranty.

#### **Human Scale Building Elements and Details ([18.120.450](#))**

These requirements are intended to enhance the human scale of buildings by providing attractive and welcoming façades and pedestrian environments, enhancing the quality of building façades, and adding interest to the building and streetscape. Describe how the proposed project has been designed to address:

**Human Scaled Elements:**

The terrace has been designed at an appropriate scale to create a strong relationship between the building occupants and pedestrians at the street level. Windows along the South and West facades are amply sized at the lower and main levels of the building. The covered entry at the corner of Franklin and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is designed at an appropriate scale and will be equipped with lighting to create an inviting pedestrian experience.

**Building Entries:**

The main entry of the building faces the corner of Franklin and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue with a grand stair and courtyard that create a welcoming gesture at the existing grand stair at the human scale. A canopy, similar to the original canopy that has since been removed, will be added back to the main entry at an appropriate scale with integrated lighting. Additional canopies are provided at each entry with a similar language to the main entry canopy to create continuity throughout the building entries. The historic “public library” engraving and “Carnegie’s” foil window signage at the main entry are to remain.

**Façade Details:**

The facade of the Library building is intended to be restored and retain its original characteristics, while the design of the addition contrasts the historic building with its contemporary design. The East and West entries are intended to create a clear separation between the addition and the historic building, with storefront glazing artfully bridging the two building styles. Decorative light



fixtures on the contemporary addition were selected to resemble the shape of the brick quoin accents on the historic building. Horizontal reveals have been designed to continue the lines of the brick on the historic building, along with the material color change intended to resemble the darker brick base of the Library. The metal siding proposed for recladding the annex was chosen for its design flexibility and overall durability.

**Window Design:**

The windows on the historic building that have been damaged or degraded over time are intended to be replaced with windows designed to resemble their original design. Windows at the addition have been added to the stair tower to create visual interest on the North façade.

High Visibility Street Corners: NOT APPLICABLE

**Pedestrian Oriented Façades and Weather Protection (18.120.460)**

For projects located on Type A or B Pedestrian Oriented Streets and for buildings on sites directly fronting on the waterfront, certain provisions are required to provide a better pedestrian environment. Describe how the proposal satisfies requirements for the following:

Transparent window areas/window displays: NOT APPLICABLE

Building entry location and orientation: NOT APPLICABLE

Weather protection: NOT APPLICABLE

Ground floor height: NOT APPLICABLE

**Materials and Colors (18.120.470)**

These requirements are intended to encourage the use of durable, high quality, and urban building materials, promote the use of a distinctive mix of materials, and to place the highest priority for the quality and detailing of materials on the first two to three stories of the building. Describe how the proposed projects addresses the following:

**Quality building materials:**

The primary facades of the Library building will be restored and preserved to maintain the character of the Library building, while the existing annex addition will be remodeled from its current state to a more refined condition. The 1960 addition currently features painted CMU that has degraded over time and does not complement the character of the Library building. The new materials at the addition will include a high-quality, durable metal siding (see Building Siding and Façade Details above) with a sculptural horizontal box-rib texture, a series of horizontal reveals, and contemporary storefront windows and entries.

Flood proofing: NOT APPLICABLE

**Specific material limitations:**

Metal siding has been selected for the remodel of the 1960s annex remodel/addition in this design. The siding will be elevated above the ground, with the underlying cement foundation exposed below. The selected metal siding has a matte finish with a 30-year commercial paint warranty and provides a sculptural quality through horizontal box-rib texture and a series of horizontal reveals,



helping to reflect the field brick and accent brick of the adjacent historic building. The proposed manufacturer boasts a very long product lifetime, built to withstand harsh conditions while requiring minimal maintenance.

Sub-District specific materials:

Historic brick will remain the primary material of the building, covering the majority of the façade. Metal siding is used as a secondary material for the 1960s annex addition, covering the existing CMU. The constraints of the existing CMU make metal siding an ideal choice for remodeling this portion of the building. The design of the addition seeks to complement the historic 1914 brick by introducing a contemporary material that distinguishes the addition from the historic portion while relating to its shape, size, scale, and architectural features. Using metal siding as a secondary material preserves the historic integrity by harmonizing with the brick's texture, scale, and distinct horizontal elements.

#### **Blank Wall Treatments ([18.120.480](#))**

Limiting blank walls and requiring blank wall treatments will ensure large expanses of walls visible from a public street or public park do not detract from the Downtown environment and add interest to local streetscapes. New blank walls facing a public street, pedestrian oriented space, common open space areas, or pedestrian pathways are prohibited, unless treated. Blank walls are defined as *"Any wall or portion of a wall that has a surface area of 400 square feet of vertical surface without a window, door, or building modulation or other architectural feature or any ground level wall surface or section of a wall over 4 feet in height at ground level that is longer than 15 feet as measured horizontally without having a ground level window or door lying wholly or in part within that 15-foot section."*

What design elements (e.g. use of display windows, use of a trellis with climbing vegetation, building details, use of artwork) have been provided to address blank walls: [NOT APPLICABLE](#)

#### **Above-Grade Structured Parking ([18.120.490](#))**

These requirements are intended to minimize negative visual impacts of parking garages or above grade structured parking in buildings. Describe how the proposed project has been designed to address the following:

Obscure the view from the ground of parked cars: [NOT APPLICABLE](#)

Provide pedestrian environment enhancements (within 10 feet of sidewalk): [NOT APPLICABLE](#)

Provide articulation treatments: [NOT APPLICABLE](#)

Use of light shielding from street level/sidewalk: [NOT APPLICABLE](#)