

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

March 25, 2015

OA-15-01, Administrative Approvals in Downtown Historic District (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Board

Request: Amend *Article 1, Section 1.o.5. General Certification of Appropriateness* to better define administrative, staff level approvals as opposed to approvals given by the Historic Preservation Board in the *City of Sumter Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance*.

II. BACKGROUND

Article 1, Section 1.o.5. General Certification of Appropriateness of the *City of Sumter Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance* reads as follows:

1.o.5. General Certification of Appropriateness:

A general certification for appropriateness for specific kinds of alterations may be issued by the Zoning Administrator if he/she finds that a particular material, paint color, design, architectural feature or style is generally acceptable and appropriate within the district(s).

If the Zoning Administrator finds, upon examination of the application, that all aspects which would require Board approval are met through the general certificate of appropriateness process, he/she may proceed without referral to the Board. However, the authority to issue a general certification of appropriateness regarding particular materials, paint color etc., shall first be recommended by the Design Review Board and approved by the Mayor and City Council. Only then may a general certification of appropriateness become established covering a particular material, paint color, design architectural feature, etc., which the Zoning Administrator may unilaterally decide upon.

The following General Certifications have been approved by City Council:

- 1. Vinyl siding in Hampton Park Historic District – 1998*
- 2. Vinyl replacement windows in Hampton Park Historic District – 2007*
- 3. Paint Colors for residential structures in Hampton Park Historic District – 2010:*
 - a. Sherwin Williams –Classical / Colonial 1800's*
 - b. Sherwin Williams – Victorian 1900's*
 - c. Sherwin Williams – Suburban Modern 1950's*
 - d. Sherwin Williams – Arts & Crafts 1900's*

(Note: Paint may be purchased from supplier of choice – the paint color is only required to match the selected palette colors.)

4. Awnings for buildings in the Central Business District that conform to the Design Review Guidelines. In cases where there are possible conflicts with a proposed awning color, placement, scale, or design that is not approvable by Staff in accordance with what is stated in the Guidelines, the review shall be forwarded to the Historic Preservation Design Review Committee, who shall make a decision on the proposal.

III. DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE

The Historic Preservation Design Review Board designates planning staff for the review and approval of signs meeting recommended design guidelines.

The guidelines state that:

#19) SIGN COLORS SHOULD COMPLEMENT OVERALL BUILDING COLORS

Recommended

b. Dark backgrounds with light letters are historically appropriate for sign colors.

Dark colors since they complement the masonry in the downtown area. Light letters are also appropriate and complement the dark red colors of masonry in the downtown area.

#23) TRADITIONAL LETTERING IS RECOMMENDED

Recommended

b. Serif style letters are appropriate and their use should be encouraged.

Therefore, at this time the only administrative (also known as *staff-level*, or *in-house*) approvals for Certificates of Appropriateness in the downtown historic overlay district that are permitted are for:

- Awnings that meet the guideline requirements, namely original awnings should be preserved, and new metal awnings should not be installed. Canvas, vinyl-coated canvas and acrylic are the most appropriate for pre-1940 buildings.
- Signs with fonts that meet the requirements, namely in terms of font (serif) and coloring (Light lettering on a dark background).

What this means, in a real sense, is the following signs could be approved administratively, because they are serif fonts with lighter lettering on a darker background:

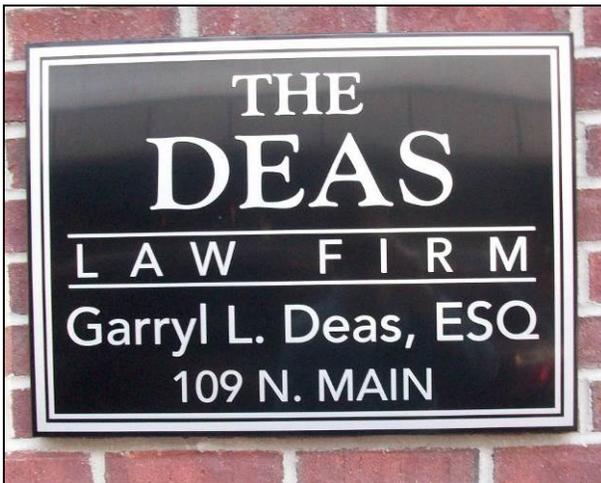
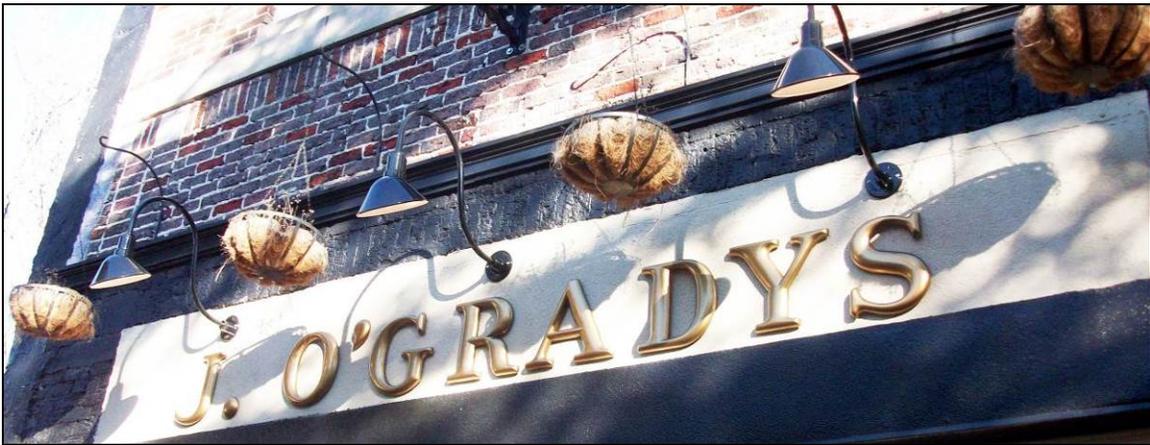




Meanwhile, the following signs cannot currently be approved in-house, because they are either sans serif fonts, or have dark lettering on a lighter background:







There are several typefaces, or font families, that are commonly used in signage. The types of fonts, briefly, to be discussed here are:

Serif – the serif is an embellishment or detail on each letter.

Examples include:

Garamond – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Times New Roman – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Baskerville – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Bodoni – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Sans Serif – More simple and modern, sans serif fonts do not have additional embellishment. Examples include:

Helvetica – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Eurostile – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Univers – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Arial – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Script – Imitate handwriting or calligraphy. Most shop frontages were historically custom designed by signpainters and engravers prior to commercial printing of signs, and now signage fonts often emulate hand-drawn scripts.

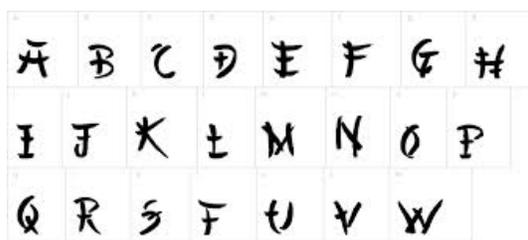
Examples include:

Bermuda Script – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Vladimir Script – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Mimicry – Lettering is made to look like another object or foreign script. For example, a Chinese Restaurant may choose lettering for its signage that resembles Chinese characters. Many logos and brands are designed with mimicry in mind.

Examples include:



FAUX HEBREW

Casual and Playful – There are several recent fonts that have been created with a playful, casual, childlike or humorous aspect.

Examples include:

Comic Sans – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Curlyz – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Giddyup – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Gigi – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Jokerman – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

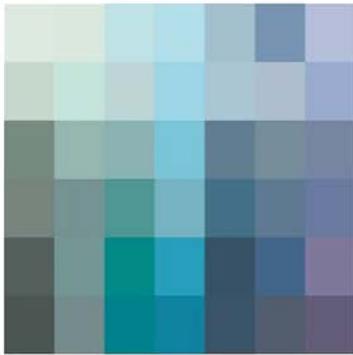
Snap – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

Ravie – The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.

IV. DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT PALETTE

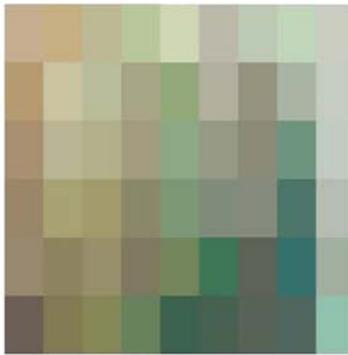
Currently, no paint colors can be approved at the administrative level. Staff recommends adopting a color palette for downtown, similar to that in place for Hampton Park. The following color palette, developed by Valspar in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is one option:

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION



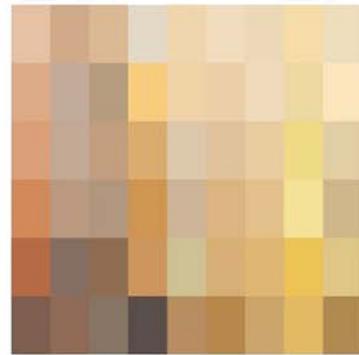
VELVET BLUES

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION



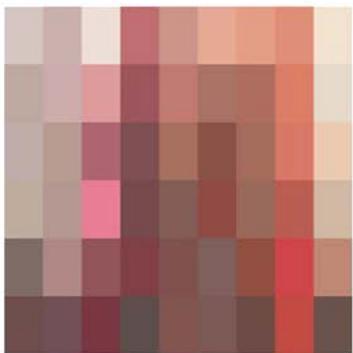
STATELY GREENS

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION



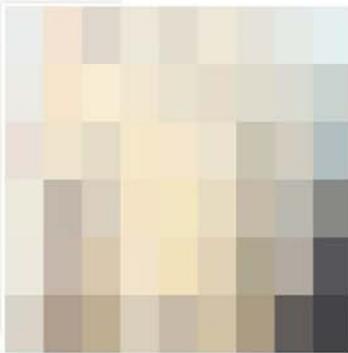
EARTHEN YELLOWS

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION



ANTIQUÉ REDS

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

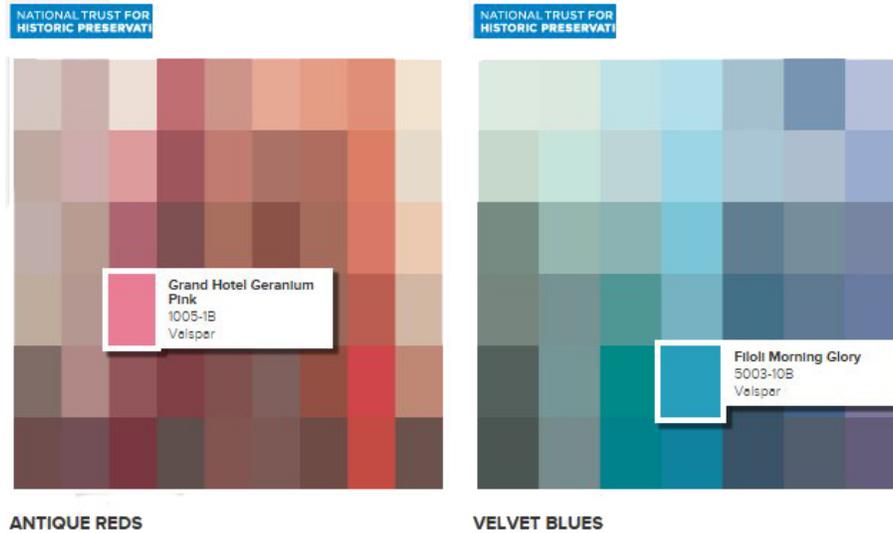


WHITES & NEUTRALS

However, some of the colors above may be too bright to be used on an entire building in Sumter. The following two colors are recommended as trim or signage colors only. They are:

Grand Hotel Geranium Pink 1005-1B
Filoli Morning Glory 5003-10B

See below:



V. RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the majority of fonts mentioned are acceptable for signage in the downtown. Furthermore, hand-painted signage is desirable and adds an authentic touch and historic feel to the downtown district. Casual, playful fonts may be acceptable in certain circumstances and for specific uses, such as a toy store for example. However, the intention is for the downtown to have sophisticated signage that adds value rather than too casual of an aura. Paint colors that are subdued and compatible with existing colors in the downtown should be approved at the administrative level.

Staff therefore recommends the following changes to the zoning ordinance:

- All fonts and typeface families mentioned above are permitted on signage in the downtown district and can be approved at the staff level, with the exception of those “mimicry” and “casual” font types mentioned, which will require board approval.
- Any colors and color combinations are permitted as in-house approvals for signage in the downtown that are either black, white, brown, wood-toned, or from the Valspar / National Trust color palette, except for Grand Hotel Geranium Pink 1005-1B and Filoli

Morning Glory 5003-10B, which will only be permitted as trim or signage colors, and are not appropriate for large exterior areas.

- Any exterior paint colors not on the historic palette will require board approval.
- That any proposal for painting directly on a building, whether as a sign, or as a mural or other decoration, shall require approval from the Historic Preservation Board.
- A continuation of the in-house approval for awnings, and that lighting, and other small-scale exterior elements shall be approved at the administrative level as well.
- Staff also recommends that in all cases if there is any question about whether an issue meets the criteria for staff level approval, the Zoning Administrator reserves the right to put the issue before the Historic Preservation Board for review.

VII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD – FEBRUARY 26, 2015

- On February 26, 2015, the Historic Preservation Design Review Board voted to recommend approval for the above proposal and forward to Planning Commission. They also recommended that the same color palette is adopted for Hampton Park Historic District that is being proposed for the downtown exterior.

VIII. PLANNING COMMISSION – MARCH 25, 2015

The Sumter City-County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, voted to recommend approval for this request.

IX. CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 21, 2015 – FIRST READING / PUBLIC HEARING