

## **A Quick Guide for New Downtown Property & Business Owners**

### *Planning & Development*

*Before making changes to any building or property in Downtown Denison (Central Area District), you will need to contact the Historic Preservation Officer/Planning & Zoning Director, Faye Brockett. She will help determine what approval is needed to complete your project. Approval of your project by the Historic Preservation Commission is required to receive your Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). You should allow a minimum of 30 days for appropriate approvals and permits prior to beginning your project. Below are some common answers to questions that you may find helpful.*

#### **I want to put up a new business sign. Do I need to get approval for it?**

Yes. You are located within the Downtown Historic District, and approval is required prior to putting up your sign. You will need to make an application to the Historic Preservation Officer and appear before the Historic Preservation Board. Information appropriate for the application includes a letter of intent, a sketch or image of your proposed signage, photo or copy of your building showing placement of the sign(s), samples of materials used, and historic colors used in your sign. The Historic Preservation Officer will advise you of when you should appear and what you should expect. After you appear and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness, you will need to get your sign permit from the Building Official's Office. The Main Street Director is available to provide guidance and assistance.

#### **I want to make changes to the outside of my building. Does this need to be approved by anybody?**

Yes, you will need both Historic Preservation Board approval and permits from the Building Official's Office prior to commencing work. The Historic Preservation Officer will go over what materials will be needed for your application. Information appropriate for the application includes a letter of intent, a photo or copy of your building, a sketch of your building with descriptions of proposed work, samples of materials used, and samples of proposed historic colors you plan to use. The Historic Preservation Officer will advise you of when you appear for Historic Preservation Commission approval and who you need to talk with to obtain the proper building permits. The Main Street Director is available to provide guidance and assistance. You might also consider how the chosen colors will fit in with neighboring buildings.

#### **What colors are acceptable for building and signage in Downtown Denison?**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has worked extensively to develop an exclusive collection of historic colors documented from historic sites across the country. The resulting palette features over 250 historic colors. You can view the National Trust historic paint colors at the Historic Preservation Office, the Main Street Office, [Or click here for a complete listing of historic paint colors.](#) In determining your chosen color, look for chips labeled with National Trust for Historic Preservation logo. (There are two different logos depicting the National Trust. Many color samples have three colors per card; only the ones with the actual logo on the specific color are acceptable.) Ask the Historic Preservation Officer for specific details on how you can obtain your paint from local suppliers.

#### **I want to do some interior remodeling in my building. Do I need approval?**

Not always. Historic Preservation approval is not needed for interior work. However, building permits are required for things such as demolition, construction, plumbing, heating/air conditioning, and electrical work. If you construct permanent interior walls, construction permits are necessary. Contact the Building Official's Office to determine what permits are necessary for your project (if any). You will be informed of specific items necessary for obtaining a permit. These items could include a drawing of your proposed work. Contractors must be registered with the City Building Official's Office. You may serve as the contractor; however, you are still required to register as such. The Main Street Director is available to provide guidance and assistance.

#### **I want to do an infill (new construction) project. What all do I need to do?**

Infill projects usually require more time than other applications. You should begin with the Historic Preservation Officer. The Building Official will be the next step for the appropriate permits.

#### **Can I live in my building?**

Loft apartments are allowed in the Central Area District. Residential use on ground floor is prohibited in the Central Area District.

#### **What uses are allowed in the Central Area District/Downtown?**

See the City's website or zoning ordinance for specific details. View [Section 28.39: CA - Central Area District](#) and [Section 28.49: Use Regulations](#) for more information. Residential use on the ground floor is prohibited in the Central Area District as is storage.

## Permits & Inspections

*In addition to obtaining your Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Officer, you will need to contact the Building Official's Office. Projects that involve remodeling, demolition, electric, heating/air conditioning, plumbing or sign installation require specific permits before beginning work. An inspection will be required after completion for a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) which is required prior to moving into your building. This involves the Building Official's Office and the Fire Marshal. Below are answers to some common questions that you may find helpful*

### **How do I get my Certificate of Occupancy?**

As soon as you know that you are moving into a new building or that ownership is changing, visit the Building Official's Office. Both are available for visits to your location for assessment and guidance. You will be advised of required permits. If necessary, you may request permission for access to electricity during this process. During this time of determining if a C of O can be issued, staff from Fire and Building Inspections, as well as the Historic Preservation/Zoning Office, will review the business for compliance. The process will also determine if you are occupying the building for an acceptable purpose according to the City's zoning ordinances.

### **I want to make changes to my building. Who do I need to talk to first?**

Depending on the type of changes you are requesting, you may need to talk to multiple staff members. The Main Street Director is available to guide you through the process and is an appropriate place to begin your effort. For projects involving modifications to the *interior* of your building, contact the Building Official's Office. For projects involving modifications to the *exterior* of your building, contact the Historic Preservation Officer in the Planning & Zoning Office. Permits for exterior work require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Officer prior to being issued. These details will be explained by the Historic Preservation Officer.

### **Do I need to get a permit for my new business sign?**

Yes, in addition to Historic Preservation approval, a sign permit is required for all new signs being installed. You will need to contact the Historic Preservation Office for details on requirements for the sign permit.

### **Can I put up a banner?**

Yes, but only for a limited time. You will need to visit with the Planning & Zoning Office and fill out an application for a temporary banner. For review and possible approval, please come in with a copy of the rendering of the banner, its size, where it will be located and how it will be secured. A fee will be charged upon permit approval and your banner will be good for a limited time only. Please note that all banners are subject to review from the Historic Preservation Officer/Planning & Zoning Director.

## Incentives

*The Denison Main Street Program seeks to enhance downtown vibrancy and historic preservation by using the National Trust Main Street Center's Four-Point Approach of organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion. The following incentives are provided to help enhance the unique character of the downtown through historic preservation and to keep commercial storefronts aesthetically appealing to attract customers.*

**Main Street Facade Reimbursement Grant Program** – limited facade grants are available to property owners, and in some case tenants, for signage and exterior work on business storefronts on commercial buildings located in the Downtown Historic Preservation. The grants are available as long as funds remain as long as work has not begun prior to approval. Funding is normally available on a 50/50 matching basis with a cap of \$2,000 per grant.

**Texas Main Street Design Assistance** – limited design assistance, not used for regulatory approval, permit or construction, is provided for free to property owners or tenants of commercial buildings located in the Downtown Historic District. Services can include building investigation of historic materials, preservation consultation, preparation of conceptual facade renderings, business sign design and graphics, investment tax credit assistance and ADA accessibility on-site consultation.

**Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program** - a 20% tax credit is available for buildings rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural or rental residential purposes on projects that are *certified historic structures*. A 10% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of *nonhistoric, non-residential buildings* built before 1936.

**Downtown Incentive Program** - The Denison Downtown Incentive Program was established by the Denison Development Foundation using private funds to help recruit new retail businesses to the downtown area. Its objective is to give new businesses a little assistance while they get up and going during the first year of operation. This program will remain in existence until the grant has been used up at which time, the program will end. A business plan and regular hours are required for eligibility.

**Low Interest Loans** – Available through Denison Community Investment Corporation for equipment and property.

**Other economic incentives are available to eligible businesses on a case-by-case basis.**

**Map of Historic District (separate attachment)**