
The comments of this pre-app are preliminary in nature and subject to change based upon the submittal of additional or different information. The Planning Commission or City Council are the final decision-making authority of the City, and are not bound by the comments made by the Staff as part of this pre-application.

**ASHLAND PLANNING DIVISION
PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE
COMMENT SHEET** February 11, 2026

SITE: 624 A Street
APPLICANT: Tyler Wauters for Kevin Casey
REQUEST: Site Design Review & Historic Design Standards for a window within an existing commercial structure.

PLANNING STAFF COMMENTS

This pre-application conference is intended to highlight significant issues before the applicant prepares and submits a formal application.

Staff is generally supportive of historically compatible alterations to commercial buildings intended to enhance the viability of the business environment. The key is incorporating the window in a way that is respectful to the existing historic building in light of the Historic District development standards. The main components here are addressing the Site Design Standards (i.e. windows, etc.) and Historic Commission review for compliance with the Historic District Development Standards.

-The site is within the Basic Site Review Zone, Detail Site Review Zone. The proposal to modify the ground floor entrance and windows of the façade of the building requires a Site Review approval for modifications to a Historic Contributing building (Ashland Depot Hotel, South Wing, Primary Contributing in the Downtown Historic District) per 18.5.2.020.A.

ID# 190.0 Survey #51²⁵

**ASHLAND DEPOT HOTEL, SOUTH WING
624 A STREET
Architect: Davis, T. J. (for Southern Pacific RR)**

**1887
391E09AB 4801
Builder: Southern Pacific Railroad
Primary/Contributing [NR-Listed]**

Originally built in 1887 as the south "kitchen" wing of the massive three-story Ashland Depot Hotel, by 1937 following the demolition of that structure, this one-story wood-frame volume was remodeled and served as Ashland's depot through the 1955 end of passenger service in the Rogue River Valley. Later used as the Ashland freight depot and railroad office, the building was left vacant with the end of all Southern Pacific presence in Ashland in 1985. Faced with demolition, in 1990 the depot was moved to this site, approximately 200 feet to the SW, across A Street, from its original location. Thoroughly renovated by local restoration contractor Jim Lewis, the Ashland Depot Hotel, South Wing remains a centerpiece of the Railroad District and is the oldest railroad-related structure in Jackson County. One of Ashland's most significant structures, the Ashland Depot Hotel, South Wing was listed independently on the NRHP in 1990.

Figure 1: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. Number 190.0, Ashland Depot Hotel, South Wing. Primary Contributing.

Historic District Design Standards & Comments

-AMC 18.4.2.050.B.7 Rhythm of Openings. Recommended: Pattern or rhythm of wall to

door/window openings on the primary façade or other visually prominent elevation is maintained. Maintain compatible width-to-height ratio of bays in the façade. Avoid: A pattern or rhythm of window/door opening that is inconsistent with adjacent historical buildings and/or the building itself.

The applicant may wish to look carefully at the rhythm of openings and window placement in terms of the façade patterns and consider the symmetrical placement of details as they prepare for discussions with the Historic Commission.

-AMC 18.4.2.050.b.11 Imitation of Historic Features. Recommended: Accurate restoration of original architectural features on historic buildings. New construction, including additions, that is clearly contemporary in design, which enhances but does not compete visually with adjacent historic buildings. Avoid: Replicating or imitating the styles, motifs, or details of historic buildings.



Figure 2: existing building exterior showing door & windows on site.

-The windows will need to be transparent. Per 18.4.2.060.A. 'Ground level elevations facing a street shall maintain a consistent proportion of transparency (i.e., windows) compatible with the pattern found in the downtown area'.

- Exterior building materials and paint colors shall be consistent with those described in the application materials and sample exterior building colors shall be provided with the building permit submittals for review and approval of the Staff Advisor. No very bright or neon paint

colors shall not be used in accordance with AMC 18.4.2.030.E.

-The final application would need to clearly identify proposed materials consistent with the railroad historic district and any changes to the marquee or signage proposed.

Historic Commission Review:

Site Design Review approvals rely heavily on the Historic Commission recommendations and upon compliance with the Historic District Design Standards. The applicants would be well-served in addressing any Historic Commission concerns prior to making a formal application, and prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are required to present their proposals to the full Historic Commission at a monthly meeting for informal review. To request time on the full Commission agenda, please call Regan at (541) 488-5305.

For each of these standards, the application will need to demonstrate through the plan drawings and detail through the written findings how compliance is achieved or request applicable Exceptions or Variances. Exceptions and Variances add a further level of discretion to the Planning Commission's review, and a Conditional Use Permit requiring multiple Variances to key design standards may encounter more difficulty in demonstrating the required architectural compatibility with the impact area.

It would be beneficial for the applicant to come before the review board or the full historical commission (HPAC), prior to submitting a final application, to discuss how once these potential complications are addressed, the proposal will retain the rhythm of openings for the building and be compatible with the existing symmetry.

In reviewing the pre-application materials at their February 2026 meeting, the HPAC Review Board recommended that the proposed new window be shifted to the left to be adjacent to the door for symmetry with the window on the opposite side of the door; that the window be a type to match the existing; and that trim board be adjusted to match the existing trim.

In addition to this, the Ashland Depot Hotel is an individually listed historic property and applicants may wish to contact the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to confirm any state requirements for exterior modifications to an individually-listed property.

SITE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

The approval criteria and standards in blue below are taken directly from the Municipal Code; staff comments are in black.

18.5.2.050 Approval Criteria

An application for Site Design Review shall be approved if the proposal meets the criteria in subsections A, B, C, and D below. The approval authority may, in approving the application, impose conditions of approval, consistent with the applicable criteria.

- A. Underlying Zone.** The proposal complies with all of the applicable provisions of the underlying zone (part [18.2](#)), including but not limited to: building and yard setbacks, lot area and dimensions, density and floor area, lot coverage, building height, building orientation, architecture, and other applicable standards.
- B. Overlay Zones.** The proposal complies with applicable overlay zone requirements (part [18.3](#)).
- **Detail Site Design Review:** A portion of the property is in detailed site design review overlay.
 - **Historic District:** The property is in the Railroad Historic District overlay. Any changes to the exterior of existing structures are subject to the Historic District Design Standards in AMC 18.4.2.050.
 - **Historic District Design Standards AMC 18.4.2.050:** Staff’s comments pertain to the applicable Historic District design standards. These standards are based on buildings within the Historic District.
- C. Site Development and Design Standards.** The proposal complies with the applicable Site Development and Design Standards of part [18.4](#), except as provided by subsection E, below.
- The application would need to address the relevant Historic District Development and Downtown design standards mentioned above. A number of the Site Development and Design standards won’t apply due to the limited scope of the proposal.
- D. City Facilities.** The proposal complies with the applicable standards in section 18.4.6 Public Facilities, and that adequate capacity of City facilities for water, sewer, electricity, urban storm drainage, paved access to and throughout the property, and adequate transportation can and will be provided to the subject property.
- E. Exception to the Site Development and Design Standards.** The approval authority may approve exceptions to the Site Development and Design Standards of part [18.4](#) if the circumstances in either subsection 1, 2, or 3, below, are found to exist.
1. There is a demonstrable difficulty meeting the specific requirements of the Site Development and Design Standards due to a unique or unusual aspect of an existing structure or the proposed use of a site; and approval of the exception will not substantially negatively impact adjacent properties; and approval of the exception is consistent with the stated purpose of the Site Development and Design; and the exception requested is the minimum which would alleviate the difficulty;
 2. There is no demonstrable difficulty in meeting the specific requirements, but granting the exception will result in a design that equally or better achieves the stated purpose of the Site Development and Design Standards; or
 3. There is no demonstrable difficulty in meeting the specific requirements for a cottage housing development, but granting the exception will result in a design that equally or better achieves the stated purpose of section [18.2.3.090](#). (Ord. 3147 § 9, amended, 11/21/2017)

- The application would need to address the Exception criteria above if any of the details of the proposal do not comply with the applicable design standards.

Signs: If proposed, signage would need to be considered as part of the overall impact of the proposal, and signage details including size, placement, color and materials would need to be provided with the application. Signage must comply with Chapter 18.4.7 of the Ashland Municipal Code, and signage will require a separate sign permit and inspection.

Building Code Requirements: Applicants will want to consult the Building Department prior to submitting the planning application to determine if there will be additional building code requirements.

An access analysis may be required as the building department will likely want to know how the café area will interface with the existing connected space as well as its ability to accommodate an employee wheelchair access as well as accessibility requirements for entrances. Building will likely need to see the floorplan for the rest of the space within the existing building and showing the entrance for employees.

Building Official Steven Matiaco can be reached at (541) 488-5305 or via e-mail to steven.matiaco@ashland.or.us.

Neighborhood Outreach: Staff always recommends applicants approach the affected neighbors to discuss proposals and try to address any concerns as early in the process as possible. Notices will be sent to owners of neighboring properties within a 200-foot radius, signs posted on the site and advertised in the local newspaper once an application is deemed complete. In many cases, it is better if neighbors hear of the proposal from the applicants rather than by a formal notice from the city.

Written Findings/Burden of Proof: Applicants should be aware that written findings addressing the ordinance and all applicable criteria are required, and are heavily depended on in the decision-making process for a planning action. In addition, the required plans are explained in writing below. The burden of proof is on the applicant(s) to ensure that all applicable criteria are addressed in writing and that all required plans, written findings, and other materials are submitted even if those items were not discussed in specific, itemized detail during this initial pre-application conference.

OTHER DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

FIRE DEPARTMENT: No comments provided. Please contact Fire Marshal Mark Shay of Ashland Fire & Rescue for Fire Code-related information at (541) 552-2217 or via e-mail to mark.shay@ashland.or.us.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT: No comments provided. Please contact the Building Official Steven Matiaco for Building Code-related information at 541-488-5305.

ENGINEERING: No comments provided. Please contact Karl Johnson at (541) 552-2415 or e-mail: karl.johnson@ashland.or.us for any Engineering-related questions (utilities, streets, storm drainage, etc.).

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE: No comments provided. Please contact Dean LeBret with water or sewer questions at [541-552-2326](tel:541-552-2326) or via e-mail to dean.lebret@ashland.or.us.

ELECTRIC SERVICE: No comments provided. Please contact Rick Barton in the Electric Department for service and meter location requirements and fee information at (541) 552-2082 if there will be any changes to existing services associated with the request. A preliminary electric service plan approved by the Electric Department is required with Site Design Review applications.

CONSERVATION: No comments provided. For information on available Conservation Programs, including potential rebates, tax credits, and financial or technical assistance with energy efficiency improvements, please contact the City of Ashland Conservation Division at 541-488-5305.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE: No comments provided. Please contact Dean LeBret with water or sewer questions at [541-552-2326](tel:541-552-2326) or via e-mail to dean.lebret@ashland.or.us.

HISTORIC COMMISSION: *Comments provided.* Prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are required to present their proposals to the full Historic Commission at a monthly meeting for informal review. To request time on the full Commission agenda, please call (541) 488-5305. The Historic Commission meets the Wednesday before the Planning Commission each month at 4:00 p.m.

PROCEDURE

Conditional use permits are subject to a “Type I” procedure which includes an administrative decision made following public notice and a public comment period. Type I decisions provide an opportunity for appeal to the Planning Commission.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Submittal Information

The application is required to include all of the following information.

- a. The information requested on the application form at [Microsoft Word - Zoning Permit Application](#).
- b. Plans and exhibits required for the specific approvals sought (see below).
- c. A written statement or letter explaining how the application satisfies each and all the relevant criteria and standards in sufficient detail (see below).
- d. Information demonstrating compliance with all prior decision(s) and conditions of

