

Things You Need to Know

Proposed Changes to Design Review in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve



Public Hearing

The 2nd Public Hearing on the proposed design review changes will be held by the Town of Coupeville and the Island County Planning Commissions on:

**August 25th at 6:30 pm
Coupeville Rec Hall
Please participate!**

This is only a summary of the proposed improvements. For more details about the Design Review Program, go to: www.islandcounty.net/Planning/index.htm www.town.coupeville.wa.us/current.htm or call the Town Planning Department, the Island County Planning Department or the Trust Board office.

The Town of Coupeville is also proposing other code changes including a Tree Ordinance and changes to parking requirements. For information on these go to the Town website at www.town.coupeville.wa.us/current.htm.

Re-Investing in Our Community Heritage

Ebey's Reserve is America's first National Historical Reserve, and the only unit of the National Park Service to be managed by a Trust Board made up primarily of local citizens like you, representing Island County, the Town of Coupeville, Washington State Parks and the National Park Service. These partners work cooperatively to bring together public and private resources for the Reserve. All of us—residents, businesses, visitors and public agencies—share responsibility for maintaining its beauty and heritage for the enjoyment, education and

welfare of the local community and our national and international visitors for generations to come.

The Town of Coupeville and Island County are committed to protecting the Reserve and its buildings, scenic vistas and cultural heritage. Working closely with the Trust Board and the National Park Service, they have developed these design guidelines to protect this cultural landscape while fostering civic awareness and pride.

Go Explore *Your* Ebey's Reserve!

After reading this summary, we urge you to get out into *your* Reserve with your new design review glasses on! See for yourself how important design review is to protecting our community's identity and the Reserve's rural character.

What Are We Trying to Protect?

Ebey's Reserve was established in 1978 to protect the unique cultural landscape of Central Whidbey Island. The Reserve's 17,572 acres contain more than 400 nationally significant historic buildings, more than 40 archaeological sites, two state parks, miles of hiking and biking trails, long stretches of shoreline, Penn Cove, woodlands, native prairies and Coupeville, the second oldest town in Washington.

The cultural landscape is the natural environment as it has been shaped by human activity, with buildings, roads, farms and forts as well as natural features – fields, hills, trees and scenic vistas. Ebey's Reserve is especially significant because it depicts history so dramatically. Its agricultural and small town heritage has left marks on the land and has deeply shaped the way people view this place. This way of life has produced distinctive field and crop patterns, hedgerows, barns, granaries, farm houses, and orchards, along with the more intimate settings of Coupeville's historic downtown, homes, gardens, deep lots. It is not just the elegant house and the special barn that are historically significant. More commonplace outbuildings like carriage houses and sheds also help us understand our history and provide a context for the more impressive buildings.

Such a fragile resource can be easily lost through incremental changes over time. Each new house, each demolition, each new roadway can diminish the historic character. In the thirty years since the Reserve was established, 36 historically significant buildings have been lost and more than 1,000 new buildings have been constructed. Change cannot, and should not, be halted, but it can be managed so as to maintain the Reserve's unique cultural landscape. These standards and guidelines are the safety net to protect the historical significance of this place for future generations.

What is Design Review?

The primary objective of the design review process and the design standards is to preserve the unique historic character of the Reserve's cultural landscape. They look beyond the historic buildings themselves to surrounding buildings and the overall landscape. The process relies on local residents working together with the Reserve partners to maintain this rural character.

Design review has been an important tool for the Reserve over the last twenty years, and is used throughout the country by towns and historic districts striving to protect their community identity and heritage. It promotes sensitive rehabilitation and new construction by enforcing certain standards that respect past traditions and compatibility with the Reserve's character, thereby retaining strong property values for the entire community.

Design review will be conducted by the appointed Ebey's Reserve Historic Preservation Commission, as well as by selected County, Town and Reserve staff. Everyone involved in design review will receive training in historic preservation principles, design review and the history of the Reserve landscape and buildings. This ongoing training program will help assure that decisions are both informed and consistent. Annual reports of design review decisions will help assure accountability.

The process will be open, fair and consistent, with commission reviews conducted in public meetings with appropriate notice and opportunities for public comment before decisions are made. Staff will provide background information, take minutes and prepare meeting notices and agendas.

The New Process, Standards and Guidelines:

- Establish a predictable and transparent process for all residents and applicants.
- Create a more user-friendly approach to design review across the Reserve.
- Leverage partner resources by avoiding duplication of services.
- Increase incentives for property owners trying to do the right thing.
- Strengthen the protection of the Reserve's cultural landscape and our community's identity.
- Create a well-supported Historic Preservation Commission, trained and empowered to assist property owners, builders, architects and other applicants through the design review process.

What Are the Key Changes Proposed for Design Review?

- Establishes a more uniform approach to design review by creating one Historic Preservation Commission, replacing the individual Coupeville and Island County review bodies.

- Establishes a more streamlined approach with a tiered review system.
- Tailors design standards to the varied characters of different parts of the Reserve.
- Provides more design review support to residents and applicants in Reserve.
- Provides consistent and ongoing training to commission members and planning staff.
- Strengthens the demolition ordinance to protect historically significant buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Gives the new Historic Preservation Commission clear standards and guidelines, authority and staff support and training
- Expands incentive programs for applicants and property owners.

Won't the Historic Review Commission be a bunch of crazy preservationists?

No, they will be your neighbors, friends, peers, business owners, farmers, architects, teachers, and others with expertise or interest in local history and preservation. They will be folks like you, appointed by the partners—people committed to preserving the Reserve's rural character, and who understand the Reserve's complexity and fragility – and the importance of local stewardship in helping to preserve Ebey's Forever!

THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Although the entire Reserve will have design review, the standards and guidelines will differ, based on the historic significance.

- Historic buildings have the strictest standards, to preserve their character and integrity. These are the buildings listed as “contributing” in the 1995 National Park Service survey of Ebey's Reserve.
- Buildings adjacent to a historic building have standards that assure they are compatible with the nearby historic buildings.
- Other properties have standards that assure that they are generally compatible with and do not detract from the historic resources (buildings, landscapes and vistas).

Review Areas: The two types of Review Areas are shown on the attached maps.

Area 1 represents the majority of the Reserve, whether prairie, woodland, coastline or within Coupeville. Area 1 includes:

- All historic buildings, which have the highest review standards, to preserve their character and integrity.

- Properties adjoining or visible from historic buildings or landscapes. These also have high standards to assure that they are compatible and do not detract from the historic resources. These properties specifically include:
 - (a) The Coupeville Overlay Zone (shown on the attached map);
 - (b) All buildings visible across a prairie or water body or from a main road.

Area 2 includes buildings that are not visible from major roadways or historic areas: parts of Coupeville and portions of the Sierra subdivision not adjacent to West Beach Road and those portions of the Rolling Hills subdivision east of the ridgeline.

Levels of Design Review: There are three levels of review, to ensure that the Historic Preservation Commission is reviewing the more complex projects while staff can review the more simple projects. The types of projects listed here are only examples. For a more complete list, refer to the Design Manual.

For **Type I** projects, the Town or County Planning Director (or his or her designee) may either make an administrative decision or refer the project to the Historic Preservation Commission for review.

- Repairs using the same materials and design as the original (if they meet current design standards).
- Exterior painting with colors from the approved color palette for the area.
- Fences and retaining walls less than 6 feet high.
- Commercial and residential signs.

Type II projects are more complex and will be reviewed by the staff reserve committee, consisting of the Reserve Manager, the County Planner and the Town Planner. Both this committee and the applicant will have the option of referring decisions to the Historic Preservation Commission.

- New construction in Area 2.
- Accessory structures in Area 1.
- Demolition or relocation of non-historic buildings.

Type III projects are those reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. These are projects that can potentially have a significant long-term effect on the Reserve's historic character. The commission will also review, in an advisory role, major land use actions such as rezones and site-specific comprehensive plan amendments. The commission also hears appeals to Type 1 and 2 decisions.

- Construction of new single-family residences and multifamily, commercial, public and institutional buildings in Area 1.

- Exterior painting that is not within the approved color palette.
- Exterior alterations or additions to a contributing historic building or an adjacent
- Retaining walls and fences more than 6 feet high.
- Demolition or relocation of non-historic buildings.

How Does This Impact Me?

Scene 1: I want to repaint my house.

Say you want to repaint your 20-year-old house, located in Crockett Prairie or Ebey's Prairie or on Grasser's Hill – out in the open. Here's what would happen.

Step 1: You go online to the County, Town or Trust Board website or stop by one of the offices to see the color palettes.

Step 2: Is the color you want to use on the chart for your area? If so, paint away.

If not, talk with one of the certified town, county or Trust Board staff people to consider options. Other color choices can be presented to the commission for review.

Choosing the right colors for our homes is one of the most effective ways to protect our heritage landscape. The Ebey's Reserve color palettes are tailored for various areas.

For historic homes, recommended colors are those that are compatible with the style and period of the home—to highlight its architectural features.

The color palette for the Coupeville Overlay Zone has a range of colors—light and dark-- with the goal of being compatible with the surrounding buildings. Homes in Area 2 (parts of Coupeville, Sierra and Rolling Hills) have even broader color choices.

Color is most important for buildings on the prairies and in woodlands. The more visible a building is from public viewpoints, the more important color selection is. Colors that blend with dark tones in the landscape help buildings recede rather than stand out. Take a trip to the Prairie Wayside overlook to see how this works. Newer homes in darker colors blend into the landscape – they allow your eyes to focus on the historic houses, the heritage barns, the fields and the vistas. Bright colors, light colors and colors not found in the landscape increase a building's visibility. A bright pink house would totally alter that historic viewshed -- instead these newer buildings blend in nicely. Other good examples are the Mile Post 19 barn

on SR20, the dark brown houses on Sherman Road above Ebey's Prairie and the house on the hill above the historic Ferry House—all blend into the landscape. In most cases, the design standards call for dark earth tone colors found in the surrounding landscape on structures in Area 1

Scene 2: What if I'm building a new house?

Look at your Reserve map in your dog-eared Design Review manual (or on-line). Are you in Area 1 or 2? If it's Area 1 you will work with the Historic Preservation Commission for review and approval. If it is in Area 2, the Reserve Partners Committee will review your plans.

Scene 3: What if I'm building a new garage?

Look at your Ebey's Reserve map. If the structure will be in Area 2, no design review is needed. In Area 1, it would be reviewed by the Reserve Partners Committee.

Scene 4: What if I have a historic barn that I don't use anymore that is deteriorating?

Reserve staff will work with you to explore options for preserving the barn. An Ebey's Reserve building in the National Register cannot be demolished, except in cases of economic hardship. However, it could be used for new purposes or stabilized until other uses are feasible. Staff will help with technical assistance to help stabilize the structure, scheduling an appointment with a building conservator to assess the structure and possible techniques. Staff will also provide information on potential financial incentives and programs to rehabilitate the structure, such as the Washington Heritage Barn Program.

Thank you for your stewardship of Ebey's Reserve. See you on the 25th of August.