

THE CITY OF KEY WEST
PLANNING BOARD
Staff Report



To: Chairman Holland and Planning Board Members

Through: Katie P. Halloran, Planning Director

From: Daniela Salume, MFA
Historic Architectural Preservationist

Meeting Date: February 20, 2025

Agenda Item: **Text amendments to the Historic Architectural Guidelines** - A Resolution of the City of Key West Planning Board recommending an Ordinance to the City Commission to amend the Historic Architectural Review Commission Design Guidelines for Foundations & Lattice Infill, as referenced in section 90-142 of the City of Key West Land Development Regulations; Providing for severability; Providing for repeal of inconsistent provisions; Providing for an effective date.

Request: Approval of proposed text amendments to the Historic Architectural Review Commission Design Guidelines for Foundations & Lattice Infill.

Applicant: Historic Architectural Review Commission, City of Key West

Background:

On November 18, 2024, the Historic Architectural Review Commission (HARC) reviewed the Foundations & Lattice Infill guidelines as a discussion item. The discussion focused on the increasing number of requests for building elevation, highlighting the need for clear, historically appropriate guidelines for foundation pier materials, design, and lattice infill to ensure compatibility with the architectural character of Key West’s Historic District.

During the December 17, 2024, meeting, HARC approved the proposed amendments to the Historic Architectural Guidelines for Foundations & Lattice Infill. These amendments establish clear, historically appropriate standards for foundation materials, pier design, and lattice infill, ensuring that any modifications—particularly for elevated buildings—respect and preserve the historic character of structures while maintaining the district’s traditional streetscape.

Key West’s Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, includes over 3,000 historic buildings and represents a significant portion of the island’s architectural heritage. Traditionally, these structures were elevated on masonry piers of limestone, brick, or concrete, with wood lattice or vertical strip infill enclosing the crawlspace. These features are critical to the district’s architectural character. The Historic Architectural Guidelines provide the framework for reviewing all projects within the district. These amendments reinforce HARC’s commitment to

preservation, ensuring that foundation and lattice treatments remain architecturally appropriate while supporting the integrity of Key West's built heritage.

Requested/ Proposed Amendment:

The Historic Architectural Review Commission respectfully recommends to the Planning Board and City Commission the following text amendment to the Historic Architectural Guidelines, specifically Foundations & Lattice Infill.

FOUNDATIONS & LATTICE INFILL

Traditional Key West ~~houses~~ frame buildings were built off-grade ~~on a foundation~~ raised on piers, which were usually constructed of limestone, brick or concrete. Wood lattice or vertical strip infill was used to screen the crawlspace beneath the flooring and between the piers at the perimeter of the structure.

1. Infill between piers shall be of *standard diagonal or box wood lattice or of vertical wood strip design. Lath width of the wood lattice shall not exceed 2" and square openings shall not be less than 1.6" or greater than 2 ¼". The lattice must be fully supported and secured to a frame and fastened to piers.*

2. ~~Typically~~ Only one type of wood lattice infill per site is ~~appropriate~~ allowed.

3. Solid infill is ~~not historically appropriate for most historic structures~~ allowed on historic buildings or new construction.

4. New construction and any addition or renovation project shall ~~also~~ incorporate wood lattice or vertical wood strip infill between piers.

5. ~~Foundations~~ Exposed piers should be *repaired or replaced to match original ~~foundation~~ piers in size and appearance to the greatest extent possible in projects not requiring elevation of a building.*

6. Requests that include elevation of a building shall be submitted for Commission review. If existing piers are limestone, the new piers can be concrete. Request for buildings to be elevated that currently have brick piers shall use the same material and match to the greatest extent possible in accordance with engineering requirements.

*Coding: Added language is **underlined**; deleted language is **~~struck through~~** at first reading.

7. Requests for buildings to be elevated that have specific pier forms, and for which such form will be altered in proportions due to new height or width requirements shall use same pier form found in adjacent historic buildings.

8. Acceptable pier materials are concrete, stone and brick. Unacceptable materials or pier finishes include, but are not limited to veneer of any type, stamped concrete, tinted concrete and exposed aggregate.

Historic Architectural Guidelines and Land Development Regulations Text Amendment Process:

HARC Approval	December 17, 2024
Planning Board Meeting:	February 20, 2025
City Commission (1 st Reading/ Transmittal):	March 4, 2025
Local Appeal Period:	30 days
DOC Review (1 st Reading):	Up to 60 days
City Commission (2 nd Reading/Adoption):	April 1, 2025
Local Appeal Period	Up to 30 days
DOC Review (2 nd Reading):	Up to 45 days
DOC Notice of Intent (NOI):	Effective when NOI posted to DOC site
State Historic Preservation Office	Up to 45 days

Analysis:

The proposed amendments, drafted as ordinance, are attached as part of this report. The amendments under review were presented and approved as an action item to the Historic Architectural Review Commission on December 17, 2024.

The Historic Architectural Guidelines are adopted by ordinance under Sec. 90-142. Amendments to the guidelines must follow the same procedural requirements as amendments to the Land Development Regulations. The purpose of Chapter 90, Article VI, Division 2 of the Land Development Regulations (the “LDRs”) of the Code of Ordinances (the “Code”) of the City of Key West, Florida (the “City”) is to provide a means for changing the text of the Land Development Regulations. It is not intended to relieve hardships nor to confer special privileges or rights to any person, but only to make necessary adjustments considering changed conditions. In determining whether to grant a requested amendment, the Planning Board and the City Commission shall consider the consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to Code Section 90-552, the Planning Board shall hold a public hearing thereon with due public notice. The Planning Board shall consider recommendations of the City Planner, City Attorney, Building Official and other information submitted at the scheduled public hearing. The Planning Board shall transmit a written report and recommendation concerning the proposed change in the LDRs to the City Commission for official action.

The Code provides criteria by which LDR amendments must be evaluated:

Section 90-520 (6) Justification. The need and justification for the proposed change shall be stated. The evaluation shall address but shall not be limited to the following issues:

a. Comprehensive Plan consistency. Identifying impacts of the proposed change in zoning on the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The amendments to the Historic Architectural Guidelines for Foundations & Lattice Infill have been proposed by the Historic Architectural Review Commission. The Historic Preservation Element under Future Land Use in the City of Key West Comprehensive Plan states the importance of maintaining the unique architectural heritage of buildings and structures and the implementation of HARC Guidelines and federal Standards when reviewing new development.

The proposed text amendment for Foundations & Lattice Infill will have no impact in zoning on the Comprehensive Plan. Moreover, policy 1A-1.2.1; HARC Guidelines, under the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes that the City and HARC shall continue to protect all historically significant structures and historic districts by periodically updating the HARC Guidelines. Additionally, policy 3-1.1.5, addresses the need to adapt to changing environmental conditions while preserving historic resources.

The City's [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#) emphasizes the importance of streamlining the home elevation process by updating ordinances and Land Development Regulations. It is essential for our citizens to have access to fair and easy to understand regulations. The Historic Architectural Review Commission is chartered to preserve the character and appearance of the Key West Historic District through review and regulation of proposed changes in the district. The proposed amendments will assist HARC and their staff in their responsibilities.

b. Impact on surrounding properties and infrastructure. The effect of the change, if any, on the particular property and all surrounding properties. Identify potential land use incompatibility and impacts on infrastructure.

There will be no impact on surrounding properties or infrastructure or a particular property. The amendments only regulate materials, design, and treatments for lattice infill and foundation piers, ensuring they remain historically appropriate. There are no changes to height regulations, density, land use, or infrastructure that would affect surrounding properties.

c. Avoidance of special treatment. The proposed change shall not constitute a spot zone change. Spot zoning occurs when:

1. *A small parcel of land is singled out for special and privileged treatment:*

The proposed amendments to the LDRs will not affect the zoning of any specific parcel in the City.

2. *The singling out is not in the public interest but only for the benefit of the landowner.*

The proposed text amendment does not affect the City's official zoning map nor the City's future land use map.

3. *The action is not consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan.*

The proposed amendment is consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan and will ensure consistency between the LDRs and the comprehensive plan. The text amendment will protect the historic character of the district.

d. *Undeveloped land with similar comprehensive plan future land use map designation. The amount of undeveloped land in the general area and in the city having the same zoning classification as that requested shall be stated.*

This proposed amendment is not associated with a particular comprehensive plan for future land use designation or specific zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Department and the Historic Architectural Review Commission, based on the criteria established by the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations, respectfully recommends to the Planning Board that the request to amend the Historic Architectural Guidelines, specifically, guidelines for Foundations & Lattice Infill be **APPROVED**.