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RESOLUTION NO.

116909

NO

COUNCIL BILL NO.

109923

# The City of Seattle - Legislative Department

## REPORT ON ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use, zoning, and environmental protection; amending Sections 3.56.030, 23.60.154, 23.76.004, 23.76.006, 23.76.008, 23.76.012, 23.76.024 and 25.05.675, of the Seattle Municipal Code; repealing Section 23.40.010, Design Departure; adding a new Section 23.76.011; creating a new Chapter 23.41, in the Land Use Code, Title 23, SMC, to establish an Early Project Implementation and Design Review Process for new multifamily and commercial structures; adopting Citywide Design Guidelines; and setting the fee for Design Review.

Honorable President:

Your Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

to which was referred the within Council Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_ report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend:

10/13/93 Land Use Committee 3:00 PM

### CONTROLLER FILE NO.

Introduced: Oct 11 '93	By: DONALDSON
Referred: Oct 11 '93	To: LAND USE COMMITTEE
Assigned to:	To:
Subject:	To:
Assigned: Oct 19 '93	Second Reading: Oct 19 '93
Third Reading: Oct 19 '93	Signed: Oct 19 '93
Referred to Mayor:	Approved: Oct 21 '93
Returned to City Clerk:	Published:
Forwarded by Mayor:	Veto Published:
Passed over Veto:	Veto Sustained:

of

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Committee Chair

NO

*Law Department*

# The City of Seattle--Legislative Department

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Date Reported  
and Adopted

Honorable President:

Your Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

to which was referred the within Council Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_

report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend that the same:

10/13/93 Land Use Committee 3-0 Do Pass as amended



Committee Chair

and environmental  
23.60.154,  
23.76.012, 23.76.024  
Principal Code; repealing  
adding a new  
chapter 23.41, in the  
establish an Early  
Review Process for new  
plans; adopting Citywide  
fee for Design

DSON  
SC  
EE  
OCT 18 '93  
OCT 19 '93  
OCT 21 '93  
9

ORDINANCE 116909

1  
2 **AN ORDINANCE** relating to land use, zoning, and environmental  
3 protection; amending Sections 3.06.030, 23.60.154,  
4 23.76.004, 23.76.006, 23.76.008, 23.76.012, 23.76.024  
5 and 25.05.675, of the Seattle Municipal Code; repealing  
6 Section 23.40.010, Design Departure; adding a new  
7 Section 23.76.011; creating a new Chapter 23.41, in the  
8 Land Use Code, Title 23, SMC, to establish an Early  
9 Project Implementation and Design Review Process for new  
10 multifamily and commercial structures; adopting Citywide  
11 Design Guidelines; and setting the fee for Design  
12 Review.

13  
14  
15 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

16  
17 **Section 1.** Effective April 15, 1994, a new Chapter  
18 23.41 is hereby added to Title 23, of the Seattle Municipal  
19 Code (SMC), as follows:

20 **CHAPTER 23.41 EARLY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

21 **Part I DESIGN REVIEW**

22 **23.41.002 Purpose and Intent**

23 The purpose of this Chapter is to implement the policies  
24 contained in Council Resolution 28757, establishing Design  
25 Review as the first element of the Early Project  
26 Implementation Program. Design Review is intended to:

27 A. Encourage better design and site planning to help  
28 ensure that new development enhances the character of the  
city and sensitively fits into neighborhoods, while allowing  
for diversity and creativity; and

B. Provide flexibility in the application of  
development standards to better meet the intent of the Land  
Use Code as established by City Policy, to meet neighborhood  
objectives, and to provide for effective mitigation of a

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1 proposed project's impact and influence on a neighborhood;  
2 and

3 C. Improve communication and mutual understanding  
4 among developers, neighborhoods, and the City early and  
5 throughout the development review process.

6 **23.41.004 Applicability and Phasing**

7 A. Design Review Required

8 1. Design review shall be required for all new  
9 multifamily and commercial structures which exceed the  
10 thresholds for environmental review established in the State  
11 Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) as adopted by the City of  
12 Seattle and codified in Chapter 25.05, SMC, in all  
13 Neighborhood Commercial 1, 2, 3 (NC1,2,3) zones, Lowrise 3  
14 (L3), Lowrise 4 (L4), Midrise (MR) and Highrise (HR) zones,  
15 according to the schedule in subsection B.

16 2. Design Review shall also be required for all  
17 new multifamily and commercial structures which exceed SEPA  
18 thresholds in Commercial 1 and 2 (C1,C2) zones, when that  
19 development abuts or is directly across a street or alley  
20 from any lot zoned Single Family.

21 3. Design Review is optional for all new  
22 multifamily and commercial structures not otherwise subject  
23 to this Chapter, in all multifamily and commercial zones.

24 B. Phasing.

25 The following development shall be subject to the  
26 provisions of this Chapter:

27 1. On the effective date of this section - All  
28 new structures described in subsection A1-2, that abut or are  
directly across a street or alley from any lot zoned Single  
Family;

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1           2.   Beginning twelve months after the effective  
2 date of this section - All new structures described in  
3 subsection B1, and all new multifamily and commercial  
4 structures which are located in a Neighborhood Commercial  
5 zone (NC1, NC2, NC3) and exceed the thresholds for SEPA  
6 categorical exemption;

7           3.   Beginning eighteen months after the effective  
8 date of this section - All new structures as described in  
9 subsection A1-2.

10           C.   Exemptions

11           New structures located within Special Review  
12 Districts as regulated by Chapter 23.66, within Landmark  
13 Districts as regulated by SMC Title 25, Environmental  
14 Protection and Historic Preservation, or which are required  
15 to undergo Shoreline Design Review as regulated by Chapter  
16 23.60, shall be exempt from requirements for Design Review  
17 under this Chapter.

18           **23.41.006           Design Review Map**

19           For the purposes of Design Review, the city shall be  
20 divided into five (5) geographic areas, and further divided  
21 into twelve (12) subareas, as depicted on the Design Review  
22 Map, Exhibit 23.41.006A.

23           **23.41.008           Design Review Board**

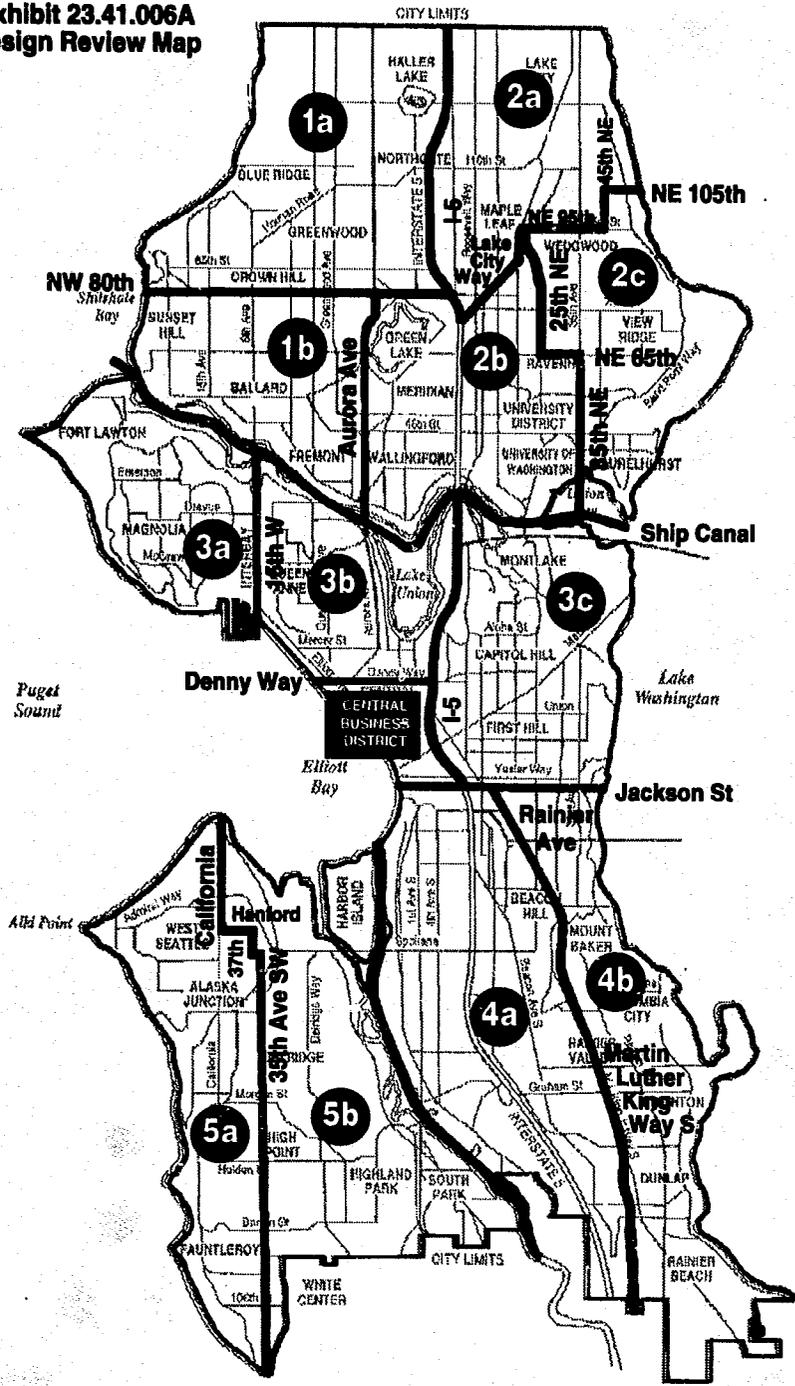
24           A.   Role of the Design Review Board

25           The Design Review Board shall be convened for the  
26 purpose of reviewing all development subject to Design  
27 Review. To accomplish this purpose, the Design Review Board  
28 shall:

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**Exhibit 23.41.006A  
Design Review Map**

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1           1. Synthesize community input on design concerns  
2 and provide pre-design guidance to the development team and  
3 community; and

4           2. Recommend to the Director specific conditions  
5 of approval which are consistent with the design guidelines  
6 applicable to the development; and

7           3. Ensure fair and consistent application of  
8 Citywide or Neighborhood-specific Design Guidelines.

9           B. Membership of the Design Review Board

10           1. Design Review Board Membership Criteria:

11           a. Members shall reside in Seattle; and

12           b. Members should possess experience in  
13 neighborhood land use issues and demonstrate, by their  
14 experience, sensitivity in understanding the effect of design  
15 decisions on neighborhoods and the development process; and

16           c. Members should possess a familiarity with  
17 land use processes and standards as applied in Seattle; and

18           d. Consistent with the City's Code of  
19 Ethics SMC 4.16.070, no member of the Design Review Board  
20 shall have a financial or other private interest, direct or  
21 indirect, personally or through a member of his or her  
22 immediate family, in a project under review by the Design  
23 Review Board on which that member sits.

24           2. Design Review Board Composition

25           a. The Design Review Board shall be composed  
26 of six (6) members representing development-related fields,  
27 six (6) members representing general residential community  
28 interests, and six (6) members representing the design  
professions, who shall be appointed by the Mayor and  
confirmed by City Council; and

          b. The Design Review Board shall also  
include one member representing local residential community

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1 interests and one member representing local business  
2 interests from each of the twelve (12) subareas shown on the  
3 Design Review Map, Exhibit 23.41.006A. These members shall  
4 be nominated by local community and business interest groups,  
5 respectively, of the subareas described in Section 23.41.006,  
6 and shall be jointly appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

6 C. Design Review Board Assignment

7 1. Projects subject to Design Review should be  
8 reviewed by five (5) Design Review Board members to be  
9 determined on the basis of the project's location, as  
10 follows:

11 a. At-large members representing  
12 development-related fields, general residential community  
13 interests, and the design professions, will each be assigned  
14 to one of the five (5) geographic areas, such that one member  
15 of each of the three (3) interest groups will review projects  
16 in each of the five (5) areas, and one member of each of the  
17 three (3) interest groups will remain unassigned; in  
18 addition,

19 b. Members representing local residential  
20 community interests and local business interests shall  
21 participate in review of projects subject to Design Review as  
22 they occur in their subarea, such that each project will be  
23 reviewed by one member representing local residential  
24 community interests and one member representing local  
25 business interests.

26 c. Three Design Review Board members shall  
27 be a quorum.

28 2. The five (5) Design Review Board members  
assigned to each project as described in Section C1 shall be  
known collectively as the Design Review Board. All members  
of the Design Review Board shall be voting members.

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3. In the event that, in one of the five (5) geographic areas, more projects are undergoing simultaneous Design Review than the Design Review Board members assigned to that area can review in a timely manner, the unassigned at-large Design Review Board members described in Section C1a may serve. If an individual at-large member is unable to serve, the Director may appoint a member of the unassigned at-large Design Review Board to serve in his or her absence, provided that each at-large interest group is represented by one member. In addition, a Design Review Board may review projects outside of its designated geographic subarea to expedite review, provided that the local community representative and local business representative shall review development only within their subarea.

4. In the event that a Design Review Board member is unable to serve, substitutions for the three at-large interest groups may be made as described in Section C3.

D. Meetings of the Design Review Board

1. Project-specific pre-design public meetings shall be held as required in Section 23.41.014B, at a location in the same general neighborhood as the proposed project. Mailed notice and placards for the pre-design public meeting shall be provided as described in Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

2. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Design Review Board shall be held in the evening in a location which is accessible and conveniently located in the area of the city to which the Board is assigned. Public notice for the regularly scheduled Design Review Board meetings shall be posted in the Department and published in the general mailed release.

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1           3. All meetings of the Design Review Board are  
2 open to the general public, and the actions of the Board are  
3 not quasi-judicial in nature.

4 **23.41.010 Design Review Guidelines**

5           The adopted Citywide Design Guidelines provide the basis  
6 for Design Review Board recommendations and City Design Review  
7 decisions. Neighborhoods may develop design guidelines  
8 specific to a neighborhood's individual character.

9 Neighborhood Design Guidelines may amend or supersede the  
10 Citywide Design Guidelines and provide the basis for Design  
11 Review decisions in that neighborhood, to the extent provided  
12 by the City Council in adopting the Neighborhood Design  
13 Guidelines.

14 **23.41.012 Development Standard Departures**

15           A. Departure from Land Use Code requirements may be  
16 permitted for new multifamily and commercial development as  
17 part of the Design Review process. Departures may be allowed  
18 if an applicant demonstrates that departures from Land Use  
19 Code standards would result in a development which better  
20 meets the intent of the adopted Design Guidelines.

21           B. The following development standard departures may be  
22 permitted through Design Review:

- 23           1. Structure width and depth limits
- 24           2. Setback requirements
- 25           3. Modulation requirements
- 26           4. Design, location and access to parking  
27           requirements
- 28           5. Open space requirements

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6. Lot coverage limits
7. Screening and landscaping requirements
8. Standards for the location and design of nonresidential uses in mixed-use buildings.

C. Other development standards may be added to the list of permitted development standard departures in subsection B, through neighborhood-specific design guidelines which are adopted by City Council.

**23.41.014 Design Review Process**

A. A pre-application conference is required for all projects subject to Design Review, unless waived by the Director, as described at Section 23.76.008.

B. Pre-design Public Meeting.

1. Following a pre-application conference, and site visits by Design Review Board members assigned to review a proposed project, a pre-design public meeting with the Design Review Board shall be held.

2. The purpose of the pre-design public meeting shall be to identify concerns about the site and the proposed development program, review the design guidelines applicable to the site, determine neighborhood priorities among the design guidelines, and explore design options.

3. At the pre-design public meeting, the project proponent shall present the following information:

a. An initial site analysis addressing site opportunities and constraints, the use of all adjacent buildings, and the zoning of the site and adjacent properties; and

b. A drawing of existing site conditions, indicating topography of the site and the location of

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1 structures and prominent landscape elements on or abutting  
2 the site; and

3 c. Photos showing the facades of adjacent  
4 development, general streetscape character and territorial or  
5 other views from the site, if any; and

6 d. A zoning envelope study which includes a  
7 perspective drawing; and

8 e. A description of the proponent's  
9 objectives with regard to site development.

10 5. The proponent is encouraged, but not required,  
11 to bring one or more development concepts or alternatives to  
12 indicate possible design options for the site.

13 C. Guideline Priorities

14 1. Based on the concerns expressed at the pre-  
15 design public meeting or in writing to the Design Review  
16 Board, the Board shall identify any guidelines which may not  
17 be applicable to the site and identify those guidelines of  
18 highest priority to the neighborhood. The Board shall  
19 incorporate any community consensus expressed at the meeting  
20 into its guideline priorities, to the extent the consensus is  
21 consistent with the Design Guidelines and reasonable in light  
22 of the facts of the proposed development.

23 2. The Director shall distribute a copy of the  
24 guideline priorities applicable to the development to all  
25 those who attended the pre-design public meeting, to those  
26 who sent in comments or otherwise requested notification, and  
27 to the project proponent.

28 3. The project proponent is encouraged to meet  
with the Board and the public for early resolution of design  
issues, and may hold additional optional meetings with the  
public or the Design Review Board prior to filing a Master  
Use Permit application.

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1 D. Application for Master Use Permit

2 1. Following the pre-design public meeting,  
3 distribution of the guideline priorities, and any additional  
4 optional meetings that the project proponent chooses to hold  
5 with the public and the Design Review Board, the proponent  
6 may apply for a Master Use Permit.

7 2. The Master Use Permit (MUP) application  
8 submittal shall include a supporting site analysis and an  
9 explanation of how the proposal addresses the applicable  
10 Design Guidelines, in addition to standard MUP submittal  
11 requirements as provided in Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits  
12 and Council Land Use Decisions.

13 3. Notice of application for a development  
14 subject to Design Review shall be provided according to  
15 Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use  
16 Decisions.

17 E. Design Review Board Recommendation

18 1. During a regularly scheduled evening meeting  
19 of the Design Review Board, the Board shall review the record  
20 of public comments on the project's design, the design's  
21 conformance to the guideline priorities applicable to the  
22 proposed project, and the staff's review of the project's  
23 design and its application of the Design Guidelines.

24 2. At the meeting of the Design Review Board, a  
25 determination shall be made by the Design Review Board that  
26 the proposed design submitted by the project proponent does  
27 or does not comply with applicable Design Guidelines. The  
28 Design Review Board shall recommend to the Director whether  
to approve or conditionally approve the proposed project  
based on the Design Guidelines.

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F. Director's Decision

1. A decision on an application for a permit subject to Design Review shall be made by the Director.

2. Projects subject to Design Review must meet all codes and regulatory requirements applicable to the subject site, except as provided in Section 23.41.012.

3. The Director's Design Review decision shall be made as part of the overall Master Use Permit decision for the project. The Director's decision shall consider the recommendation of the Design Review Board, provided that, if four members of the Design Review Board are in agreement in their recommendation to the Director, the Director shall issue a decision which incorporates the full substance of the recommendation of the Design Review Board, unless the Director concludes that the recommendation of the Design Review Board:

- a. Reflects inconsistent application of the Design Review Guidelines; or
- b. Exceeds the authority of the Design Review Board; or
- c. Conflicts with SEPA conditions or other regulatory requirements applicable to the site; or
- d. Conflicts with the requirements of state or federal law.

G. Notice of Decision

Notice of the Director's decision shall be as provided in Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

H. Appeals

Appeal procedures for Design Review decisions are as described in Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

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2           **Section 2.**       Section 3.06.030 of the Seattle Municipal  
3 Code is hereby amended as follows:

4           **3.06.030 Director - Powers and duties**

5                               \* \* \*

6           B.   Processing applications for construction permits,  
7 for grading permits, for use permits, for zoning exceptions,  
8 for subdivision and for other land use approvals, including  
9 those related to shorelines management, but excluding those  
10 related to ((design-review-and)) historic preservation;

11                              \* \* \*

12           G.   Discharging such other responsibilities as may be  
13 directed by ordinance.

14           1.   The Director shall consult on all matters of  
15 structural strength and design with an assistant who is a  
16 licensed structural engineer or architect with at least five  
17 (5) years' experience in the practice of his/her profession,  
18 unless the Director possesses such qualifications.

19           2.   The Director shall consult on all matters  
20 concerning compliance with design guidelines with a qualified  
21 architect or urban designer with at least five (5) years of  
22 experience in the practice of his/her profession, unless the  
23 Director possesses such qualifications.

24           **Section 3.**       Effective April 15, 1994, Section  
25 23.40.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, Design Departure, is  
26 hereby repealed.

27           **Section 4.**       Section 23.60.154 of the Seattle  
28 Municipal Code is hereby amended as follows:

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1 **23.60.154 Shoreline ((S)) design review**

2 The Director may require that any development by a  
3 public agency or on public property which has not been  
4 reviewed by the Design Commission be reviewed for visual  
5 design quality by appropriate experts selected by mutual  
6 agreement between the applicant and the Director prior to  
7 approval of the development. The shoreline design review may  
8 be conducted prior to an application for a substantial  
9 development permit at the request of the applicant. The  
10 costs of the shoreline design review shall be borne by the  
11 applicant.

12 **Section 5.** Effective April 15, 1994, Section  
13 23.76.004 of the Seattle Municipal Code is amended to add  
14 Design Review to Exhibit 23.76.004A as follows:

15 \* \* \*

16 **Exhibit 23.76.004A  
LAND USE DECISION FRAMEWORK**

17 **DIRECTOR'S DECISIONS REQUIRING MASTER USE PERMITS**

- | 18 <b>TYPE I</b><br>(Nonappealable)  | 19 <b>TYPE II</b><br>(Appealable to Hearing Examiner*)  | 20 <b>TYPE III</b><br>(Appealable to Council)   |
|--|---|---|
| 21 • Uses permitted outright   | • Temporary uses, more than three weeks   | • The decision to approve, condition or deny a project based on the SEPA Policies pursuant to SMC 25.05.660, <u>provided that for projects subject to Design Review, a decision to approve, condition or deny pursuant to the SEPA Height, Bulk and Scale policy shall be a Type II decision.</u> |
| 22 • Temporary uses, three weeks or less   | • Certain street uses   |   |
| 23 • Certain street uses   | • Variances   |   |
| 24 • Lot boundary adjustments  | • Administrative conditional uses   |   |
| 25 • Greenbelt preserve designations   | • Shoreline decisions (*Appealable to Shorelines Hearings Board along with all related environmental appeals)                                   |   |
| 26 • Modifications of features bonused under Title 24                                    | • Short subdivisions  |   |
| 27 • Declarations of significance (EIS required)   | • Special exceptions  |   |
| 28 • Temporary uses, twelve months or less, for relocation of police and fire protection | • <u>Design departure Review</u>  |   |
| • Exemptions from right-of-way improvement requirements                                  | • Northgate General Development Plan  |   |
|  | • The following environmental determinations:<br>1. Declaration of nonsignificance (EIS not required)<br>2. Determination of final EIS adequacy |   |

29 **COUNCIL LAND USE DECISIONS**

- | 30 <b>TYPE IV</b><br>(Quasi-Judicial)             | 31 <b>TYPE V</b><br>(Legislative)          |
|---|--|
| 32 • Subdivisions (Preliminary Plats)             | • Land Use and Zoning Code text amendments |
| 33 • Land use and zoning map amendments (Rezones) | • Rezones to implement new City policies   |
| 34 • Public project approvals                     | • Concept approval for City facilities     |
| 35 • Major institution master plans               | • Major institution designations           |
| 36 • Council conditional uses                     |  |
| 37 • Downtown planned community developments      |  |
| 38 • Planned Unit Developments                    |  |

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1           Section 6.       Effective April 15, 1994, Section  
2 23.76.006 of the Seattle Municipal Code is amended as  
3 follows:

4 **23.76.006 Master Use Permits required**

5                           \* \* \*

6           C.    The following are Type II decisions, which are  
7 subject to appeal to the Hearing Examiner (except shoreline  
8 decisions and related environmental determinations which are  
9 appealable to the Shorelines Hearing Board):

10           1.   Establishment or change of use for temporary  
11 uses more than three (3) weeks not otherwise permitted in the  
12 zone, except temporary relocation of police and fire stations  
13 for twelve (12) months or less;

14           2.   Short subdivisions;

15           3.   Variances, provided that variances sought as  
16 part of Type IV decision may be granted by the Council  
17 pursuant to Section 23.76.036;

18           4.   Special exceptions, provided that special  
19 exceptions sought as part of a Type IV decision may be  
20 granted by the Council pursuant to Section 23.76.036;

21           5.   ((Design-departures)) Design review;

22           6.   The following street use decisions:

23           a.   Sidewalk cafes,

24           b.   Structural Building Overhangs,

25           c.   Areaways;

26           7.   Administrative conditional uses, provided  
27 administrative conditional uses sought as part of a Type IV  
28 decision may be approved by the Council pursuant to Section  
23.76.036;

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1           8. The following shoreline decisions  
2 (supplemental procedures for shoreline decisions are  
3 established in SMC Sections 24.60.425 through 24.60.485):

4           a. Shoreline substantial development  
5 permits,

6           b. Shoreline variances,

7           c. Shoreline conditional uses;

8           9. The following environmental decisions for  
9 Master Use Permits and for building, demolition, grading and  
10 other construction permits (supplemental procedures for  
11 environmental review are established in SMC Chapter 25.05,  
12 SEPA Policies and Procedures):

13           a. Declarations of Nonsignificance (DNS's),  
14 including mitigated DNS's,

15           b. Determination that a final Environmental  
16 Impact Statement (EIS) is adequate.

17           10. Northgate General Development Plan.

18           D. The following is a Type III decision, which is  
19 subject to appeal to the Hearing Examiner and may be further  
20 appealed to Council: The decision to approve, condition or  
21 deny any Master Use Permit (other than for shoreline  
22 decisions) based on the City's SEPA policies pursuant to SMC  
23 Section 25.05.660 ((-)); provided, that for projects subject  
24 to Design Review a decision to approve, condition or deny  
25 pursuant to the SEPA Height, Bulk and Scale policy, SMC  
26 Section 25.05.675G, shall be a Type II decision.

27           Section 7. Section 23.76.008 of the Seattle  
28 Municipal Code is amended as follows:

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1       **23.76.008       Preapplication Conferences**

2           **A.**   Prior to official filing with the Director of an  
3 application for a Master Use Permit requiring a Type II or  
4 III decision, the Director may require a pre-application  
5 conference. The conference shall be held in a timely manner  
6 between a Department representative(s) and the applicant to  
7 determine the appropriate procedures and review criteria for  
8 the proposed project. Pre-application conferences may be  
9 subject to fees as established in SMC Chapter 22.900, Permit  
Fees, of the Seattle Municipal Code.

10           **B.**   Design Review

11           A pre-application conference between Department  
12 representative(s) and an applicant for a structure subject to  
13 Design Review, as provided in Chapter 23.41, shall be  
14 required. The Director may waive this pre-application  
15 conference requirement if an applicant demonstrates, to the  
16 Director's satisfaction, experience with Seattle's Design  
17 Review process which would render a pre-application  
18 conference unnecessary.

19           **Section 8.**   A new Section 23.76.011 is hereby added  
20 to Title 23, of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), as follows:

21       **23.76.011       Notice of Pre-design Public Meeting**

22           For projects subject to Design Review, the Director  
23 shall provide notice of the required pre-design public  
24 meeting by general mailed release. In addition, the Director  
25 shall post four (4) placards on or near the site, and shall  
26 provide mailed notice.

27           **Section 9.**   Section 23.76.012 of the Seattle  
28 Municipal Code is amended as follows:

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1  
2 **23.76.012 Notice of application**

3 A. Notice Required. When a Master Use Permit  
4 application requiring a Type II or III decision is submitted,  
5 the Director shall provide notice of application and an  
6 opportunity for public comment as described in this section.  
7 No notice or public comment period shall be required for  
8 I decisions.

9 B. Types of Notice Required

10 1. For projects subject to Design Review or  
11 environmental review, the applicant shall post a large sign  
12 on the site, unless an exemption or alternative posting as  
13 set forth in this subsection is applicable. The large sign  
14 shall be located so as to be clearly visible from the  
15 adjacent street or sidewalk, and shall remain posted until  
16 final City action on the application has been completed.

17 a. In the case of submerged land, the large  
18 sign shall be posted on adjacent dry land, if any, owned or  
19 controlled by the applicant. If there is no adjacent dry  
20 land owned or controlled by the applicant, notice shall be  
21 provided according to subsection B1c.

22 b. Projects limited to interior remodeling,  
23 or which are subject to environmental review only because of  
24 location over water or location in an environmentally  
25 sensitive area, are exempt from the large sign requirement.

26 c. As an alternative to the large sign  
27 requirement, the Director shall post ten (10) placards within  
28 three hundred feet (300') of the site and at the closest  
street intersections when one (1) or more of the following  
conditions exist:

i. The project site is over five (5)  
acres;

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1 ii. The applicant is not the property  
2 owner, and the property owner does not consent to the  
3 proposal;

4 iii. The site is subject to physical  
5 characteristics such as steep slopes or is located such that  
6 the large sign would not be highly visible to neighboring  
7 residents and property owners or interested citizens.

8 d. The Director may require both a large  
9 sign and the alternative posting measures described in  
10 subsection B1c, or may require that more than one (1) large  
11 sign be posted, when necessary to assure that notice is  
12 clearly visible to the public.

13 2. For project which are categorically exempt  
14 from environmental review, the Director shall post four (4)  
15 placards on or near the site.

16 3. For all projects requiring notice of  
17 application, the Director shall provide notice by general  
18 mailed release. For projects subject to the large sign  
19 requirement, notice in the general mailed release shall be  
20 published after certification is received by the department  
21 that the large sign has been posted.

22 4. In addition, for variances, administrative  
23 conditional uses, temporary uses for more than three (3)  
24 weeks, shoreline variances and shoreline conditional uses,  
25 the Director shall provide mailed notice.

26 5. Mailed notice of application for a project  
27 subject to Design Review shall be provided to all persons  
28 establishing themselves as parties of record by attending the  
pre-design public meeting for the project or by corresponding  
with the Department about the proposed project before the  
date of publication.

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1           2.    Issues raised concerning the sufficiency and  
2    the appropriateness of the mitigation imposed; and

3           3.    The appropriateness of denial of a project  
4    based on the substantive SEPA Policies.

5           ~~The Council's review shall be based on the record~~  
6    ~~from the Hearing Examiner's hearing; provided that the~~  
7    ~~Council may allow oral or written arguments and may permit~~  
8    ~~the record to be supplemented; and, provided further, that~~  
9    ~~members of the committee or of the full Council may make site~~  
10   ~~visits.~~

11           ((H))I.   Standard of Review for Type III Appeals.  
12    Findings of fact in the Hearing Examiner's decision and  
13    discretionary determinations regarding the sufficiency and  
14    appropriateness of mitigation or denial shall be accorded  
15    substantial weight and shall be accepted by the Council  
16    unless clearly erroneous. The burden of establishing the  
17    contrary shall be upon the appealing party.

18           ((I))J.   Council Action. The Council may affirm,  
19    modify or reverse the Hearing Examiner's decision, remand  
20    cases to the Hearing Examiner or the appropriate department  
21    with directions for further proceedings, or grant other  
22    appropriate relief. If the Council reverses or modifies the  
23    Hearing Examiner decision, the Council shall enter findings  
24    and/or conclusions into the record to support the decision.

25           ((J))K.   Judicial Review. A Type III decision by the  
26    Council shall be final and conclusive unless within fifteen  
27    (15) calendar days of the date of decision a party of record  
28    makes application to King County Superior Court for a writ of  
  review.

          ((K))L.   Notice of Decision. The written decision of  
  the Council shall be promptly transmitted to all parties of  
  record.

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((E))M. Interlocutory Review.

1. The Council shall accept review of Hearing Examiner interlocutory orders and decisions pending final resolution of an appeal when:

a. Appeal to the Council of the Hearing Examiner's final decision on the issue is permitted by ordinance; and

b. The Hearing Examiner certifies the issue for Council review.

2. The Hearing Examiner shall certify for interlocutory review only those issues which meet the following criteria:

a. Because of ambiguity in language, the meaning to be given a Council resolution or ordinance cannot readily be determined without knowing the intent of the Council when it adopted the resolution or ordinance; and

b. The issue results in disagreement between the Director and the Hearing Examiner as to interpretation of Council intent; and

c. The review involves an issue not previously decided by the Council; and

d. The issue to be reviewed is of general applicability and its resolution will affect a class of permit applicants; and

e. Early resolution of the issue will substantially reduce the expenditure of time or money by the City and/or other interested parties.

Section 11. Section 25.05.675 Specific Environmental Policies is hereby amended as follows:

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1 25.05.675 Specific environmental policies.

2 \* \* \*

3 G. Height, Bulk and Scale.

4 1. Policy Background.

5 a. The City's adopted Land Use Policies are  
6 intended to provide for smooth transition between industrial,  
7 commercial, and residential areas, to preserve the character  
8 of individual city neighborhoods and to reinforce natural  
9 topography. These Land Use Policies are: Single Fam  
10 Residential Areas Policies, Multifamily Residential Areas  
11 Policies, Major Institutions Policies, Land Use Policies for  
12 Neighborhood Commercial Areas, Land Use Policies for  
13 Downtown, Industrial Area Policies, Open Space Policies (once  
14 adopted), Shoreline Policies and Telecommunication Facilities  
15 Policy.

16 b. The Land Use Code (Title 23) which implements  
17 these policies controls height, bulk and scale but cannot  
18 anticipate or address all substantial adverse impacts  
19 resulting from incongruous height, bulk and scale. For  
20 example, unanticipated adverse impacts may occur when a  
21 project is located on a site with unusual topographic  
22 features or on a site which is substantially larger than the  
23 prevalent platting pattern in an area.

24 c. Whenever new land use policies are adopted,  
25 adverse impacts may result when height, bulk and scale  
26 permitted by previously adopted zoning conflicts with the new  
27 land use policies.

28 2. Policies.

a. It is the City's policy that the height, bulk  
and scale of development projects should be reasonably  
compatible with the general character of development  
anticipated by the adopted Land Use Policies listed in

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1 subsection G1a for the area in which they are located, and to  
2 provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less  
3 intensive zoning and more intensive zoning.

4 b. Subject to the Overview Policy set forth in  
5 SMC 25.05.665, the decisionmaker may condition or deny a  
6 project to mitigate the adverse impacts of substantially  
7 incompatible height, bulk and scale. Mitigating measures may  
8 include but are not limited to:

- 9 i. Limiting the height of the development;
- 10 ii. Modifying the bulk of the development;
- 11 iii. Modifying the development's facade  
12 including but not limited to color and finish material;
- 13 iv. Reducing the number or size of accessory  
14 structures or relocating accessory structures including but  
15 not limited to towers, railings, and antennae;
- 16 v. Repositioning the development on the  
17 site; and
- 18 vi. Modifying or requiring setbacks,  
19 screening, landscaping or other techniques to offset the  
20 appearance of incompatible height, bulk and scale.

21 c. The Citywide Design Guidelines (and any  
22 Council-approved, neighborhood design guidelines) are  
23 intended to mitigate the same adverse height, bulk and scale  
24 impacts addressed in these policies. A project that is  
25 approved pursuant to the Design Review process shall be  
26 presumed to comply with these Height, Bulk and Scale  
27 policies. This presumption may be rebutted only by clear and  
28 convincing evidence that height, bulk and scale impacts  
documented through environmental review have not been  
adequately mitigated. Any additional mitigation imposed by  
the decisionmaker pursuant to these Height, Bulk, and Scale

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1 policies on projects that have undergone Design Review shall  
2 comply with design guidelines applicable to the project.

3       **Section 12.**     Effective April 15, 1994, the Citywide  
4 Design Guidelines, attached hereto as Attachment A, are  
5 hereby adopted for use in the implementation of the Early  
6 Project Implementation Program, Design Review Element, for  
7 the City of Seattle.

8       **Section 13.**     The 1994 fee for Design Review shall be  
9 \$1,300 per application.  
10

11       **Section 14.**     This Ordinance shall take effect and be  
12 in force thirty days from and after its passage and approval  
13 by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect at the time it  
14 shall become law under the provisions of the City Charter.  
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PASSED by the City Council the 18 day of October,  
1993, and signed by me in open session in authentication of  
its passage this 18 day of October, 1993.

Geo. F. Benson President of the City Council

Approved by me this 21st day of October, 1993.

Norman B. Price Mayor

Filed by me this 22nd day of October, 1993

BY: Margaret Carter  
Deputy Clerk

(SEAL)

Published \_\_\_\_\_

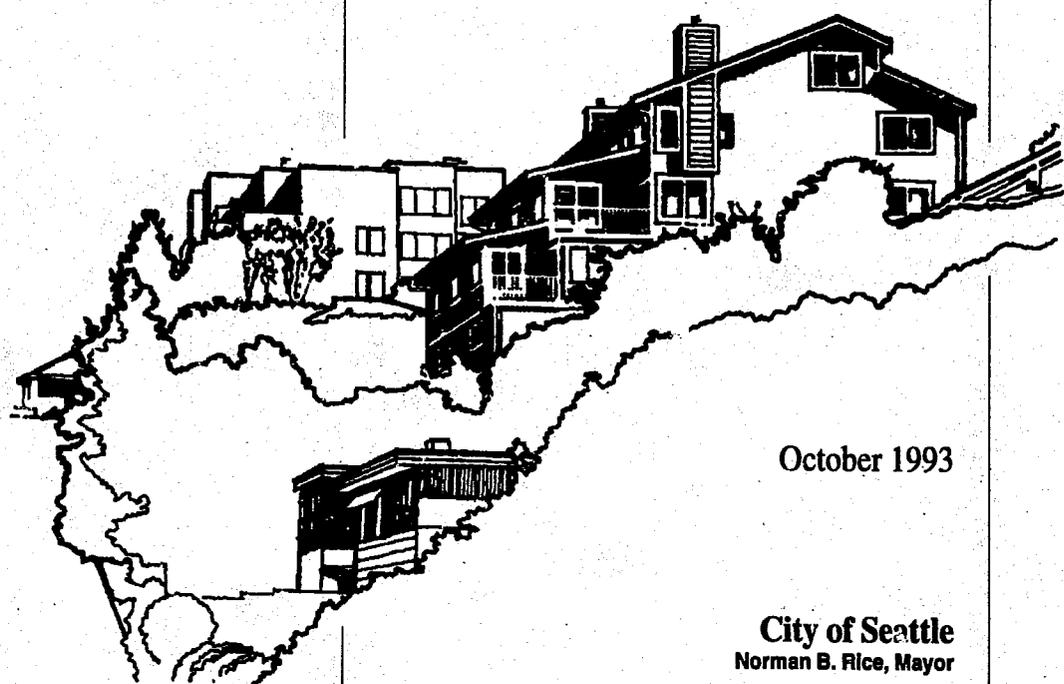
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# Design Review for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings

## Design Guidelines

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CITY OF SEATTLE  
93 OCT 22 PM 2:51  
CITY CLERK



October 1993

**City of Seattle**  
Norman B. Rice, Mayor

Department of Construction & Land Use  
**R. F. Krochalls**  
Director

Planning Department  
**J. Gary Lawrence**  
Director

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# Design Review for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings

## Design Guidelines

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See accompanying volumes for proposed Design Review Program (Volume 1) and Appendices (Volume 3).

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# I. Introduction

The purpose of the citywide design guidelines is to describe ways that new multifamily and commercial buildings can be compatible with their surroundings. In contrast to the City's Land Use Code, which contains very specific regulations, the guidelines show ways to think about a project's context and provide flexible examples that can help a new project better fit that context. The guidelines supplement the Land Use Code, providing a means to adapt Code requirements to the characteristics of individual building sites.

The guidelines can also:

- set criteria and examples for judging the compatibility of new buildings in the city;
- facilitate the understanding of the terminology and key aspects of building siting and design; and
- highlight the important features of our surroundings to enhance our appreciation of the natural and built environment.

## Who is Expected to Use These Guidelines?

Because these guidelines will be used in evaluating new development projects in the city, the most frequent users of this document will be the people concerned with the development of new commercial and multifamily buildings.

### Property Owners/Developers

The guidelines can acquaint property owners and developers with concerns that citizens have identified about building compatibility and give direction toward the need and means of identifying neighborhood context.

### Building Designers

The guidelines will help architects and others who design buildings to know what is expected of their products and what could make their designs more compatible with the neighborhoods where new projects are proposed.

### Project Neighbors

People who live near new development projects may benefit the most from these guidelines. Some of those people participated in workshops to help define which aspects of building design were most important. Their comments form the basis of these guide-

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lines. The guidelines may give neighbors a better vision of projects proposed near them and how those projects can enhance the neighborhood's character. Ultimately, the guidelines will be a tool that neighbors can use when they want to describe to developers or City staff what they consider appropriate design for their neighborhoods.

### **City Staff**

In issuing permits for new developments, City staff will rely on these guidelines to help define specific design conditions that will be required for project approval.

### **How To Use These Guidelines**

As reviewers apply the design guidelines to particular development projects, some important things to remember are:

1. Each project is unique and will pose unique design issues. Even two similar proposals on the same block may face different design considerations. With some projects, trying to follow all of the guidelines could produce irreconcilable conflicts in the design. With most projects, reviewers will find some guidelines more important than others, and the guidelines that are most important on one project might not be important at all on the next one. The design review process will help designers and reviewers to determine which guidelines are most important in the context of each project so that they may put the most effort into accomplishing the intent of those guidelines.
2. Projects must be reviewed in the context of their zoning and the zoning of their surroundings. The use of design guidelines is not intended to change the zoning designations of land where projects are proposed; it is intended to demonstrate methods of treating the appearance of new projects to help them fit their neighborhoods and to provide the Code flexibility necessary to accomplish that. Where the surrounding neighborhood exhibits a lower development intensity than its current zoning allows, the lower-intensity character should not force a proponent to significantly reduce the allowable size of the new building.
3. Many of the guidelines suggest using the existing context to determine appropriate solutions for the project under consideration. In some areas, the existing context is not well defined, or may be undesirable. In such cases, the new project should be recognized as a pioneer with the opportunity to establish a

pattern or identity from which future development can take its cues. In light of number 2 above, the site's zoning should be considered an indicator of the desired direction for the area and the project.

4. Each guideline includes examples and illustrations of ways in which that guideline can be achieved. The examples are just that — examples. They are not the only acceptable solutions. *Designers and reviewers should consider designs, styles and techniques not described in the examples but that fulfill the guideline.*
5. The checklist which follows the guidelines (see Section IV) is a tool for determining whether or not a particular guideline applies to a site, so that the guidelines may be more easily prioritized. The checklist is neither a regulatory device, nor a substitute for evaluating a site's conditions, or to summarize the language or examples found in the guidelines themselves.

### Viewing a Site

Seattle's Land Use Code sets specific, prescriptive rules that are applied uniformly for each land use zone throughout the city. There is little room in the Code's development standards to account for unique site conditions or neighborhood contexts. A project architect can read the Code requirements and theoretically design a building without ever visiting the site.

However, to produce good compatible design, it is critical that the project's design team examine the site and its surroundings, identify the key design features and determine how the proposed project can address the guidelines' objectives. Because they rely on the project's context to help shape the project, the guidelines encourage an active viewing of the site and its surroundings.

For a proposal located on a street with a consistent and distinctive architectural character, the architectural elements of the building may be key to helping the building fit the neighborhood. On other sites with few attractive neighboring buildings, the placement of open space and treatment of pedestrian areas may be the most important concerns. The applicant and the project reviewers should consider the following questions *and similar ones* related to context when looking at the site:

- What are the key aspects of the streetscape? (The street's layout and visual character)
- Are there opportunities to encourage human activity and neighborhood interaction, while promoting residents' privacy and physical security?

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- How can vehicle access have the least effect on the pedestrian environment and on the visual quality of the site?
- Are there any special site planning opportunities resulting from the site's configuration, natural features, topography etc.?
- What are the most important contextual concerns for pedestrians? How could the sidewalk environment be improved?
- Does the street have characteristic landscape features, plant materials, that could be incorporated into the design?
- Are there any special landscaping opportunities such as steep topography, significant trees, greenbelt, natural area, park or boulevard that should be addressed in the design?
- Do neighboring buildings have distinctive architectural style, site configuration, architectural concept, materials or other features that add to the neighborhood's visual identity or quality?
- Do nearby buildings have a characteristic scale, proportion, rhythm, or other patterns that add consistency to the streetscape?
- Is the site next to or across the street from a less intensive zone?
- Are there special conditions related to a zone edge which should be addressed in the project's design?
- Does the existing layout and visual character of the streetscape promote a general sense of personal safety and discourage crime? Can the proposed project preserve and enhance such elements?
- Are there any special opportunities for the design of the project to correct or reduce elements of the existing streetscape which have elevated fear levels or promoted crime?

### **Relationship of Design Guidelines to Land Use Code Development Standard Departures**

The design review process permits the development standards contained in the Land Use Code to be modified or waived if necessary to better meet the intent of the design guidelines. (Please see Volume I: Proposed Design Review Program)

## II. Overview of Design Guidelines

### The Role of Context

Seattle is a city of communities, whose citizens value their neighborhood's design character and physical setting. For "in-fill" projects, which constitute most new development in Seattle, good design cannot be judged in terms of the individual building on its site, but must be considered in the context of its surroundings. A new building should fit with the context of its immediate neighbors and the street on which it is located. Therefore, these design guidelines direct new development to enhance the existing character of its surroundings. Design review is about creating good streets and good communities, protecting important symbols and ensuring that new development fits in.

These guidelines are intended to direct designers and project reviewers to look closely at local conditions and produce new buildings that enhance rather than detract from their surroundings.

### Design Elements

The discussion below describes the design elements covered by these guidelines and explains the importance of each element in building stronger neighborhoods.

#### Site Planning

Site planning guidelines primarily address the organization of a project's components in two dimensions. They deal with the location of buildings and site features such as parking lots, open space and service areas. Good site planning can minimize a project's impacts on its neighbors (for example, by separating tall or bulky structures, retaining trees, enhancing views, or responding to steep slope conditions), increase the quality of the streetscape, continue existing patterns, or enhance the value of near-by land or improvements.

#### Height, Bulk and Scale

This guideline is intended to link State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) authority for mitigating height, bulk and scale impacts to design review. It addresses the compatibility of the scale between new development and its surroundings. Elements which contribute to the perceived scale of new construction are addressed in the context of specific site conditions, including the relationship of a project to any less-intensive zones nearby (e.g., multifamily or commercial zones on the edge of a single family zone).

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## **Architectural Elements**

Guidelines in this section deal with the exterior architectural elements of buildings — components which define the appearance of a building, such as roofs, windows, porches, modulation, entries, materials, balconies and details.

New buildings developed in an established neighborhood with an identifiable character will be viewed as undesirable intrusions unless they respond positively to the architectural characteristics of existing buildings. Therefore, guidelines for architectural elements encourage new development in established neighborhoods to complement neighboring buildings and consider how design gives a neighborhood its identity. This does not mean that new buildings should excessively mimic older ones. Rather, the guidelines suggest that new buildings use some traditional building concepts or elements. New structures can successfully relate to older buildings while still looking contemporary and responding to changing societal needs and design opportunities.

## **Pedestrian Environment**

People traveling on foot see their neighborhoods most intimately. Making the pedestrian environment attractive and comfortable is one way to encourage the street activity that provides both security and a sense of community.

The pedestrian environment guidelines are directed toward improving the pedestrian qualities of all neighborhood streets by avoiding or mitigating undesirable conditions. The guidelines specifically address issues related to street-level uses; blank walls near sidewalks; the appearance of parking lots in street fronts; buildings with ground floor parking; sidewalks and street landscaping; visibility of utility meters, dumpsters and service areas.

## **Landscaping**

Landscaping forms an integral part of the visual character of Seattle neighborhoods. The Land Use Code requires landscaping and requires the screening of certain features such as parking lots. The landscape guidelines encourage designers to consider creative ways to screen and buffer unsightly uses; separate incompatible uses; enhance a project's open space and buildings; reinforce the landscape character of the streetscape; or respond to special contextual conditions such as greenbelts, boulevards and steep slopes.

# III. Design Guidelines

## A. Site Planning

### A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

- *Explanation and Examples*

Site characteristics to consider in project design include, but are not limited to, the following:

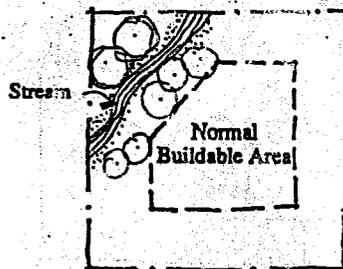
#### Topography

- Reflect, rather than obscure, natural topography. For instance, buildings should be designed to "step up" hillsides to accommodate significant changes in elevation.
- Where neighboring buildings have responded to similar topographic conditions on their sites in a consistent and positive way, consider similar treatment for the new structure.
- Designing the building in relation to topography may help to reduce the visibility of parking garages.

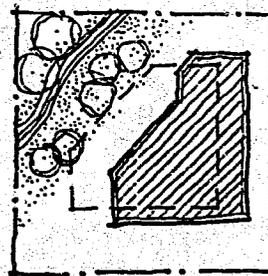
#### Environmental constraints

- Site buildings to avoid or lessen the impact of development on environmentally critical areas such as steep slopes, wetlands and stream corridors.

Site planning to protect and enhance a stream corridor.



Site Conditions



Alternate Building Configuration

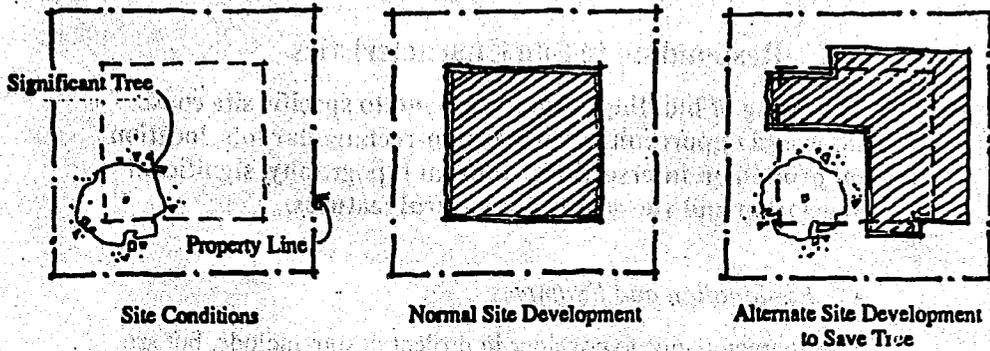
#### Solar orientation

- The design of a structure and its massing on the site can enhance solar exposure for the project and minimize shadow impacts on adjacent structures and public areas.

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### Existing vegetation

- Careful siting of buildings can enable significant or important trees or other vegetation to be preserved.



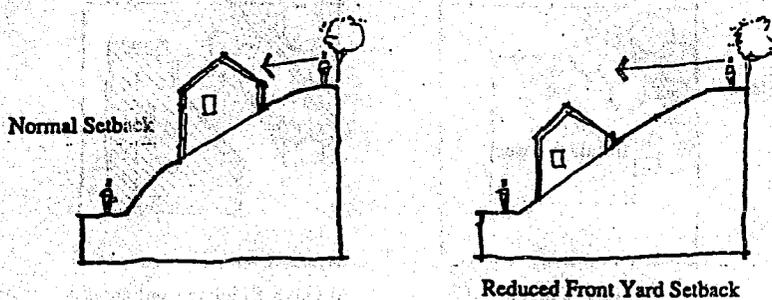
Slight modification of setbacks to save a significant tree.

### Existing structures on the site

- Where a new structure shares a site with an existing structure or is a major addition to an existing structure, designing the new structure to be compatible with the original structure will help it fit in.

### Views

- Adjustments to the siting or massing of a building may enable the preservation of public or private views which would otherwise be blocked by new development. The City's SEPA ordinance requires protection of designated public views. Protection of private views is not required under SEPA but could justify a code departure through design review provided that blockage of public views would not result and responsiveness to other design guidelines would not be compromised.



Buildings located down-slope to preserve views.

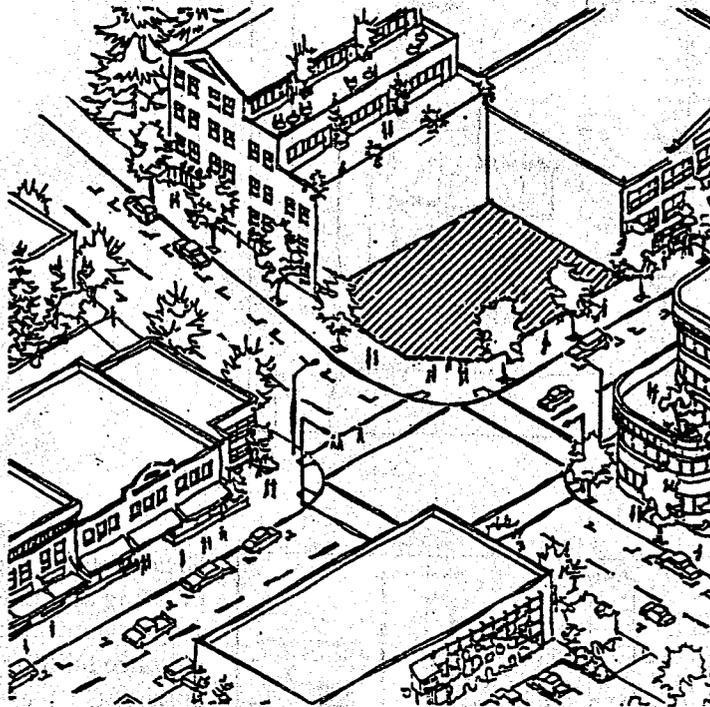
## A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

- *Explanation and Examples*

The character of a neighborhood is often defined by the experience of traveling along its streets. We often perceive streets within neighborhoods as individual spaces or "rooms." How buildings face and are set back from the street determine the character and proportion of this room.

The building to go up on this site should reinforce existing streetscape characteristics: pedestrian oriented businesses and shops at ground level, corner entries and consistent building edge abutting the sidewalk.



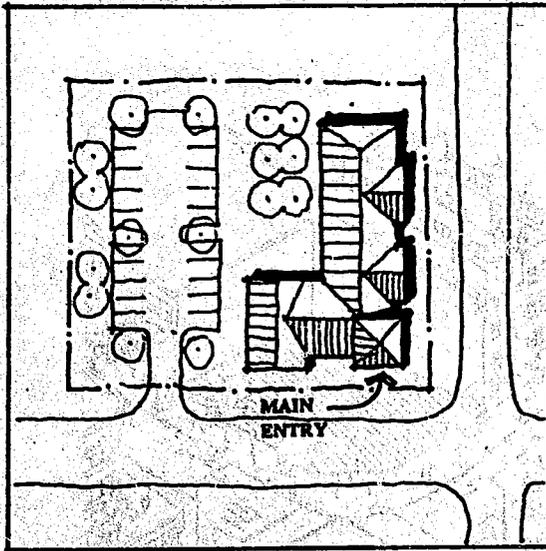
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### A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

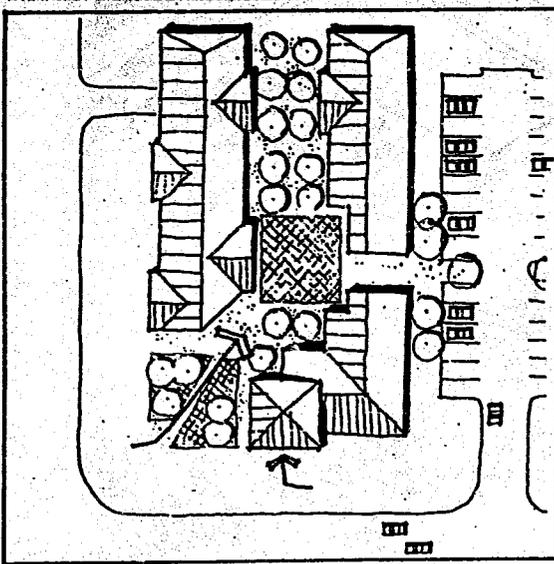
Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

- *Explanation and Examples*

Entries that are visible from the street make a project more approachable and create a sense of association among neighbors.



Provide clear entries off streets not just from parking lots.



Clear paths using building and landscape elements can enhance building entries which are not on the street. Here the corner entry serves as a gateway into the complex.

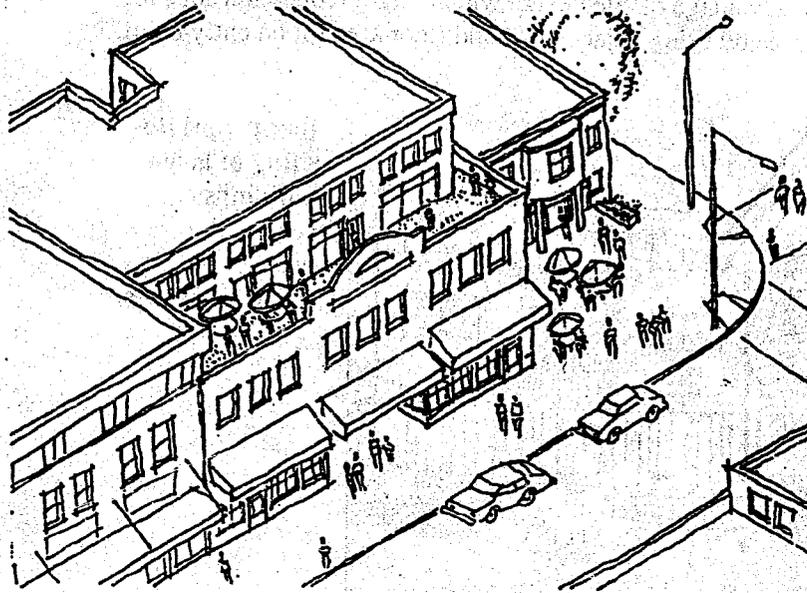
#### **A-4 Human Activity**

**New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

- ***Explanation and Examples***

**Livelier street edges make for safer streets. Ground floor shops and market spaces providing services needed by residents can attract activity to the street and increase safety through informal surveillance. Entrances, porches, balconies, decks, seating and other elements can promote use of the street front and provide places for neighborly interaction. Siting decisions should consider the importance of these features in a particular context and allow for their incorporation.**

**On commercial streets, elements can include shop front windows, plaza space with outdoor seating, rooftop decks, balconies, and canopies which protect pedestrians from the elements.**



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## A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites

Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

### • *Explanation and Examples*

One consideration is the views from upper stories of new buildings into adjacent houses or yards, especially in less intensive zones. This problem can be addressed in several ways.

- Reduce the number of windows and decks on the proposed building overlooking the neighbors.
- Step back the upper floors or increase the side or rear setback so that window areas are farther from the property line.
- Take advantage of site design which might reduce impacts, for example by using adjacent ground floor area for an entry court.

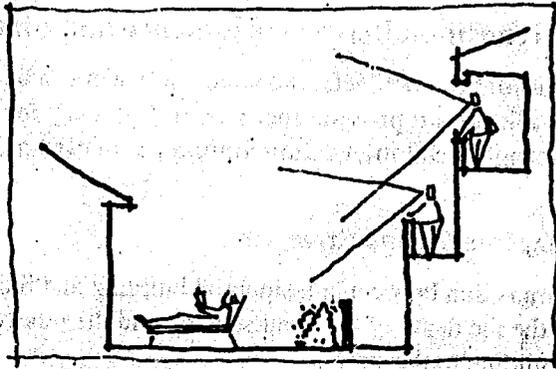


**Inappropriate siting of large buildings can reduce the privacy of adjacent homes.**

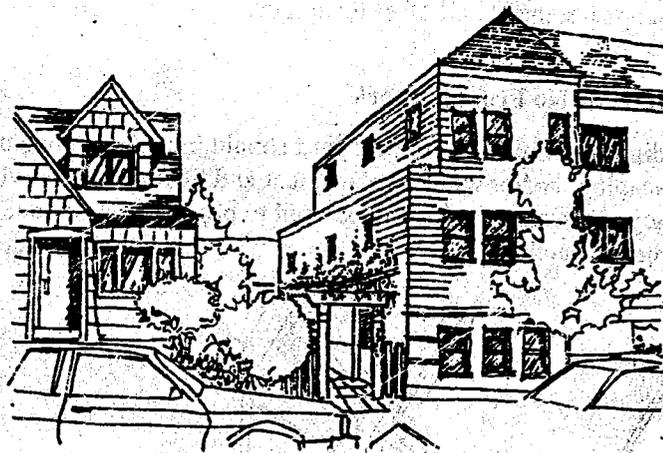
**AVOID THIS**

- Minimize windows to living spaces which might infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents, but consider comfort of residents in new building.
- Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows.

**Reducing windows and decks overlooking neighboring residential property or increasing side setbacks can increase privacy.**



**This apartment located the entry court adjacent to the neighboring residence and arranged interior spaces so the views into the neighboring properties were minimized.**



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## A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street

For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

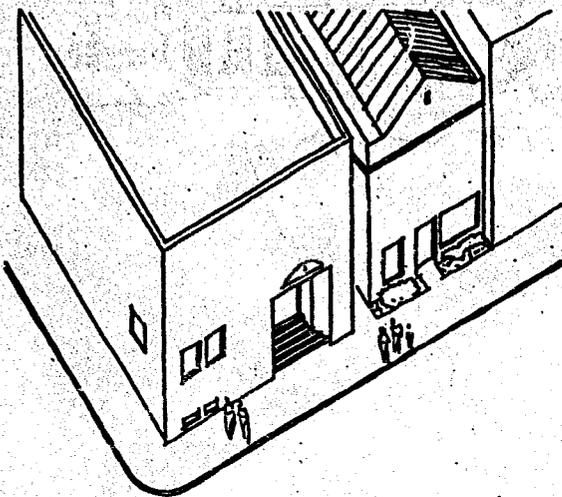
- *Explanation and Examples*

The transition between a residential building and the street varies with the depth of the front setback and the relative elevation of the building to the street.

The following examples illustrate these conditions and suggest how this guideline may be met through setbacks, entry design, landscape treatment and other techniques.

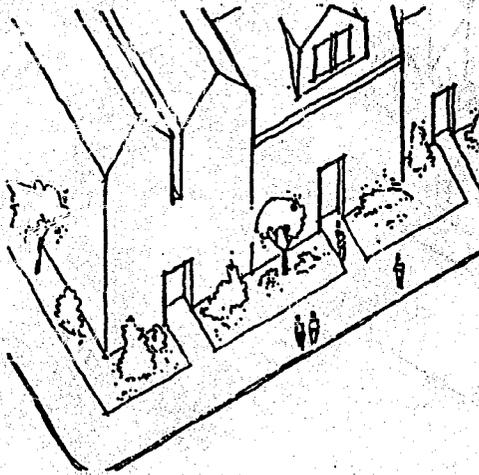
### Minimal or No Front Setback

Buildings with little or no front yard should include creative use of landscaping, and/or window placement and treatment to provide privacy. Recessed entries can be used to provide security and/or weather protection.



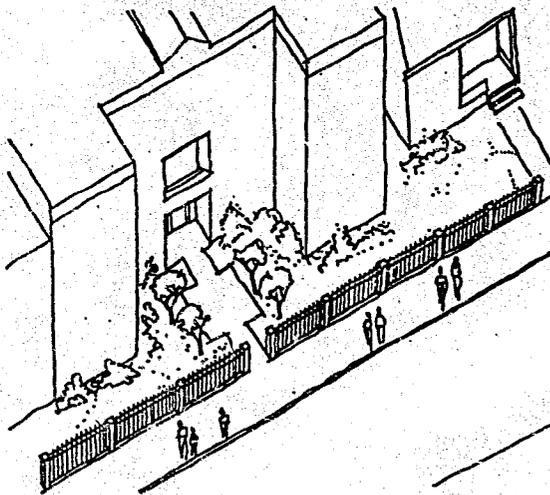
### **Shallow Residential Street Front**

Buildings set back a small amount from the sidewalk provide sufficient area to include such features as balconies or decks, which allow privacy while encouraging visual interaction with the street. Courtyards, arcades, recessed entries or other similar entry designs may be desirable to provide privacy to ground-floor residents.



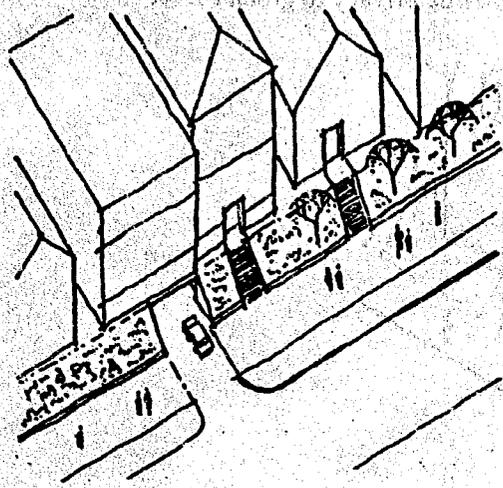
### **Deep Residential Setback**

Buildings with deep setbacks from the sidewalk provide sufficient privacy through spatial separation to permit more open porches, picture windows and garden space for ground-floor residential units. Fences may provide further separation from the sidewalk.



## High Bank Residential Street Front

Where the ground floor of a building is above pedestrian eye level, it is easier to achieve a sense of privacy and separation from street activity, and there is more opportunity for creating social spaces.



## A-7 Residential Open Space

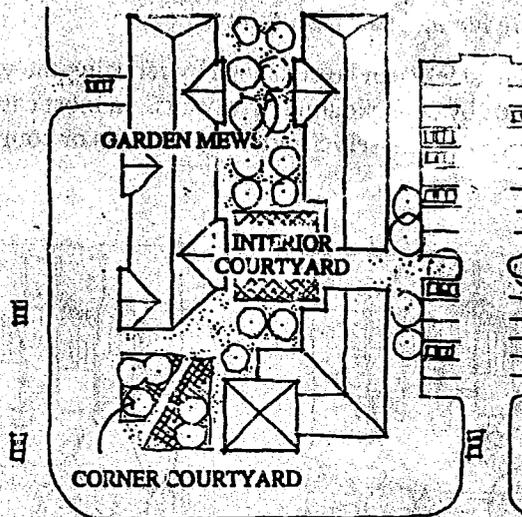
Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

### • *Examples*

Residential buildings are encouraged to consider these site planning elements.

- Courtyards which organize architectural elements, while providing a common garden or other uses.
- Entry enhancement such as landscaping along a common pathway.
- Location and design of decks, balconies and upper level terraces.
- Play areas for children.
- Individual gardens.
- Location of outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight.

Well-organized outdoor spaces created by the grouping and orientation of buildings and building elements.



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## A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

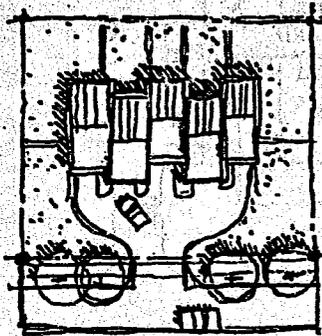
### • *Examples*

The following are some examples of techniques used to minimize the impacts of driveways and parking lots.

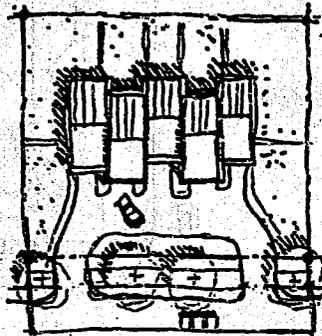
- Locate surface parking at rear or side of lot.
- Break large parking lots into smaller ones.
- Minimize number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- Share driveways with adjacent property owners.
- Locate parking in lower level or less visible portions of site.
- Locate driveways so they are visually less dominant.

Often driveways and garage entrances can be located to take advantage of topography and conform with the overall form of the building, while not placing the pedestrian entrance in a subordinate role, or reducing pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian safety can be enhanced by reducing the width of the curb cut or by consolidating driveways. In most cases, a single lane is sufficient to serve several apartments or commercial spaces.



PREFERRED



ACCEPTABLE

Driveway design  
to increase  
pedestrian safety.

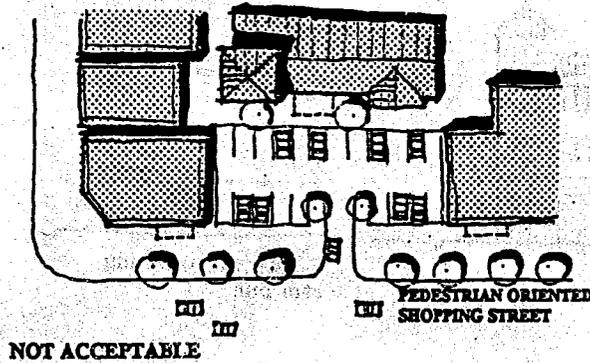
### A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts

Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

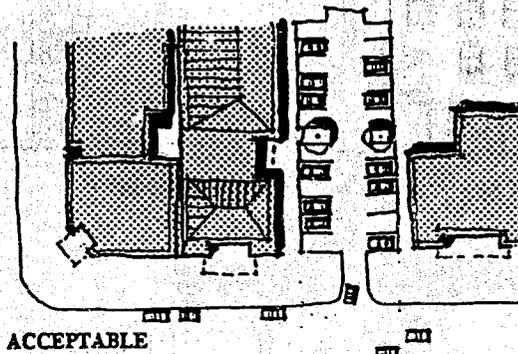
- *Explanation and Examples*

Parking located along a commercial street front where pedestrian traffic is desirable lessens the attractiveness of the area to pedestrians and compromises the safety of pedestrians along the street.

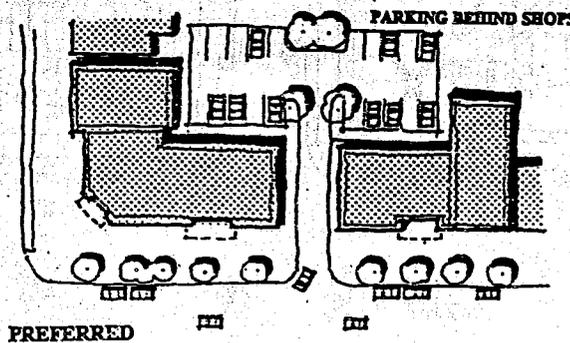
Parking lots along the full length of the streetfront are generally inappropriate.



In certain situations limited streetfront parking lots may be acceptable.



Parking lots located behind shops and offices are preferred.



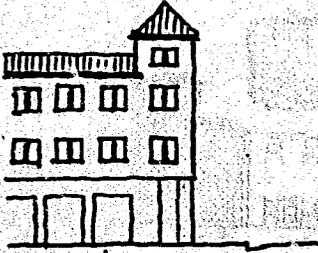
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## A-10 Corner Lots

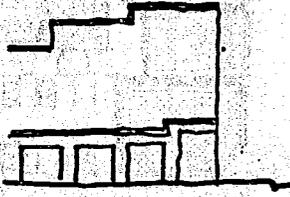
Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

### • Examples

Corner lots offer unique opportunities because of their visibility and access from two streets.

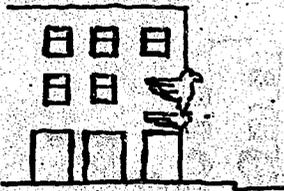


Turret

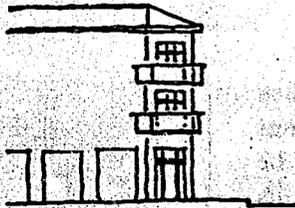


Corner accentuating roof line

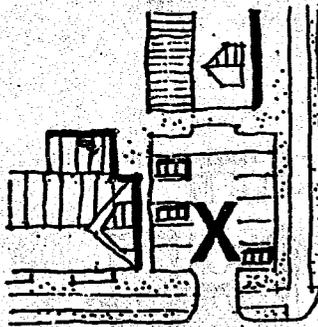
Corner entries and/or architectural features are encouraged.



Sculpture



Balconies



Parking lots should not be located on a street corner.

**A residential project on a corner lot that relates to both street fronts and provides visual and physical access to the project from the corner.**



## **B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

### **B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

#### **• Explanation and Examples**

**This guideline restates the City's SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) Policy on Height, Bulk and Scale. Development projects in multifamily and commercial zones may create substantial adverse impacts resulting from incongruous height, bulk and scale. For projects undergoing design review, the analysis and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts will be accomplished through the design review process. Careful siting and design treatment based on the techniques described in this and other design guidelines will help to mitigate some height, bulk and scale impacts; in other cases, actual reduction in the height, bulk and scale of a project may be necessary to adequately mitigate impacts. Design review should not result in significant reductions in a project's actual height, bulk and scale unless necessary to comply with this guideline.**

**Height, bulk and scale mitigation may be required in two general circumstances:**

- 1. Projects on or near the edge of a less intensive zone. A substantial incompatibility in scale may result from different development standards in the two zones and may be compounded by physical factors such as large development sites, slopes or lot orientation.**
- 2. Projects proposed on sites with unusual physical characteristics such as large lot size, or unusual shape, or topography where buildings may appear substantially greater in height, bulk and scale than that generally anticipated for the area.**

**Factors to consider in analyzing potential height, bulk and scale impacts include:**

- distance from the edge of a less intensive zone.**
- differences in development standards between abutting zones (allowable building height, width, lot coverage, etc.).**
- effect of site size and shape.**

- height, bulk and scale relationships resulting from lot orientation (e.g., back lot line to back lot line vs back lot line to side lot line).
- type and amount of separation between lots in the different zones (e.g. separation by only a property line, by an alley or street, or by other physical features such as grade changes).

In some cases, careful siting and design treatment may be sufficient to achieve reasonable transition and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts. Some techniques for achieving compatibility are as follows:

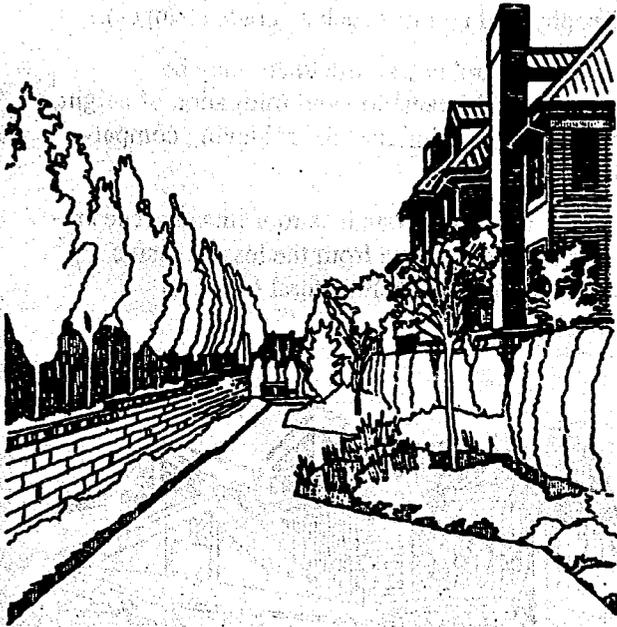
- use of architectural style, details (such as roof lines or fenestration), color or materials that derive from the less intensive zone. (See also Guideline C-1 Architectural Context)

**Use of similar roof forms helps this mixed-use building fit in better with the small single-family house in the single family zone next door.**



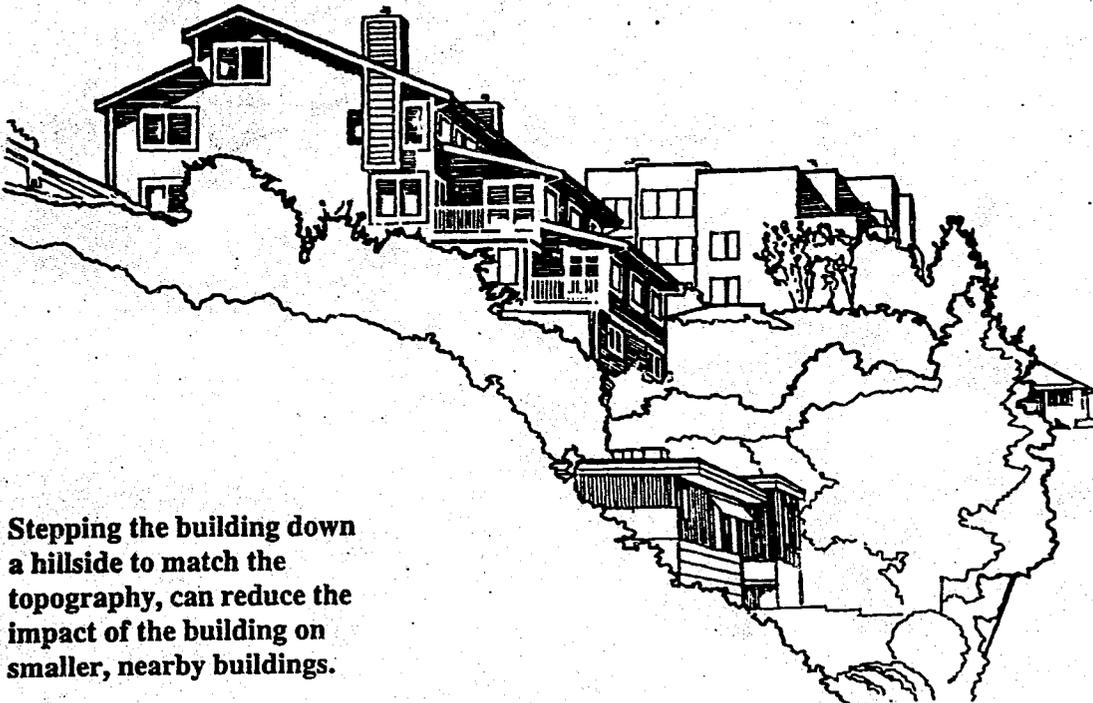
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- creative use of landscaping or other screening.
- location of features on-site to facilitate transition, such as locating required open space on the zone edge so the building is farther from the lower intensity zone.



The varied landscape treatment helps soften the transition to existing development.

- treating topographic conditions in ways that minimize impacts on neighboring development, such as by using a rockery rather than a retaining wall to give a more human scale to a project, or stepping a project down the hillside.

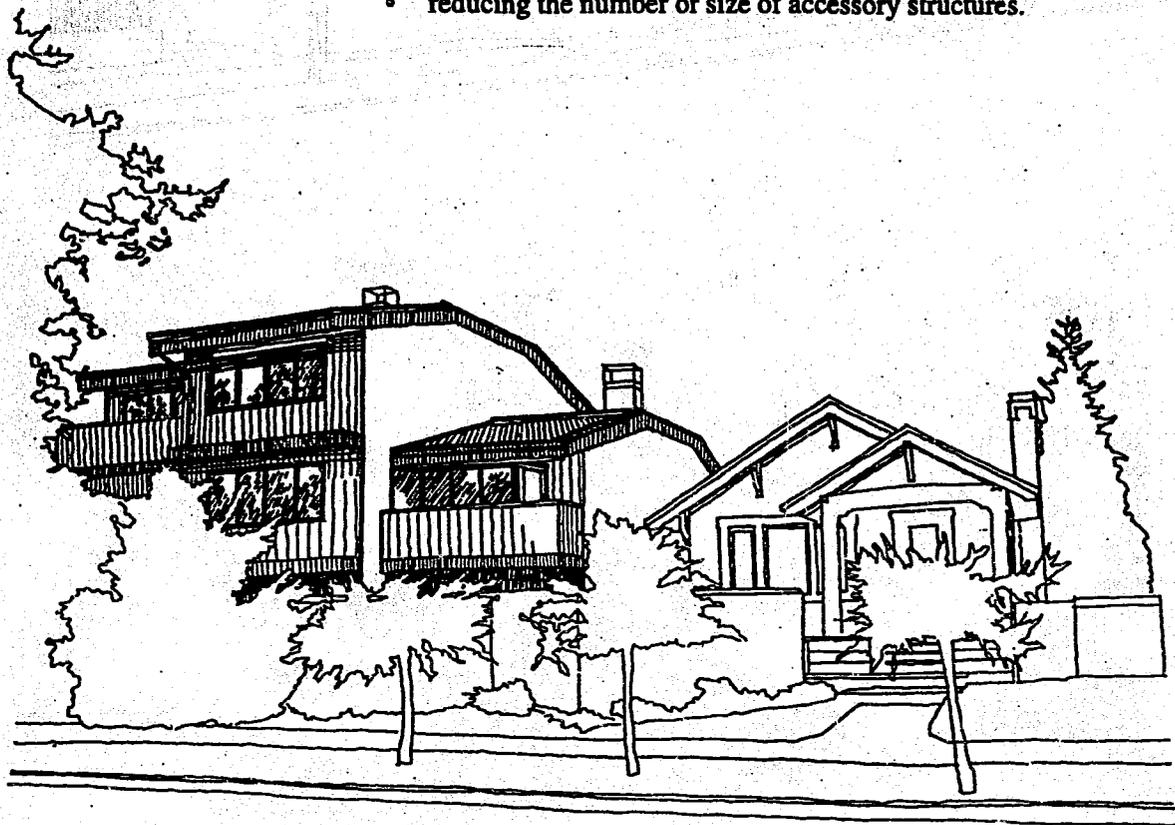


Stepping the building down a hillside to match the topography, can reduce the impact of the building on smaller, nearby buildings.

- in a mixed-use project, siting the more compatible use near the zone edge.

In some cases, reductions in the actual height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure may be necessary in order to mitigate adverse impacts and achieve an acceptable level of compatibility. Some techniques which can be used in these cases include:

- articulating the building's facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that conform to existing structures or platting pattern.
- increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level.
- reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors.
- limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying, facades.
- reducing the height of the structure.
- reducing the number or size of accessory structures.



The bulk of this project's upper story was reduced and significant landscaping was retained to better fit with the neighboring single family zone.

**Facade modulation and pitched roof help reduce the apparent bulk of this building.**



## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

### **C-1 Architectural Context**

**New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

#### **• *Explanation and Examples***

**Paying attention to architectural characteristics of surrounding buildings, especially historic buildings, can help new buildings be more compatible with their neighbors, especially if a consistent pattern is already established by:**

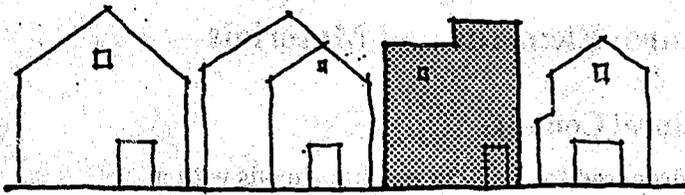
- Similar building articulation;**
- Similar building scale and proportions;**
- Similar or complementary architectural style;**
- Similar or complementary roof forms;**
- Similar building details and fenestration patterns; or**
- Similar or complementary materials**

**Even where there is no consistent architectural pattern, building design and massing can be used to complement certain physical conditions of existing development.**

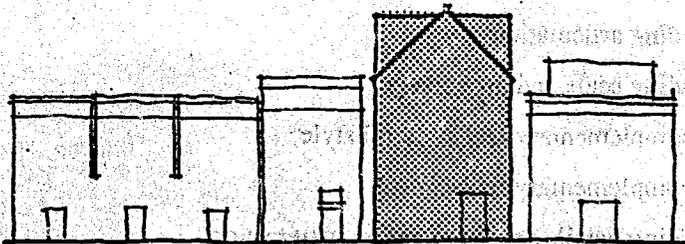
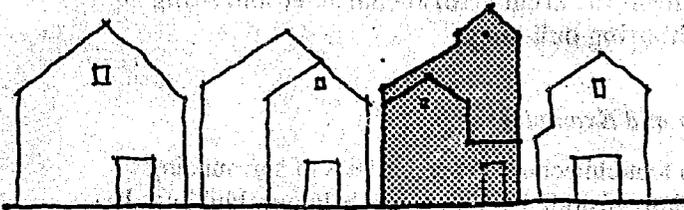
**In some cases the existing context is not well defined, or may be undesirable. In such cases, a well-designed, new project can become a pioneer with the opportunity to establish a pattern or identity from which future development can take its cues.**

#### **Architectural Features**

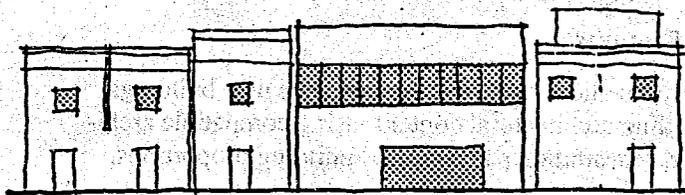
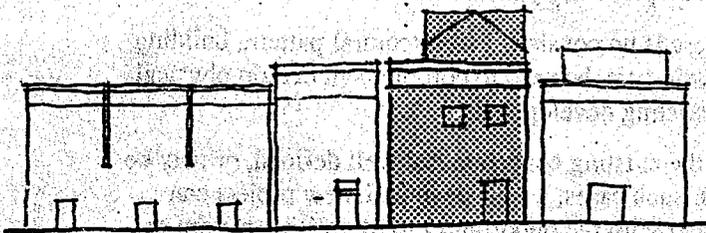
**Below are several methods that can help integrate new buildings into the surrounding architectural context, using compatible architectural features, fenestration patterns, and building proportions.**



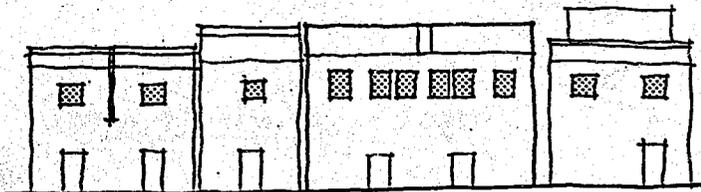
**Rooflines can reinforce the architectural character of a street.**



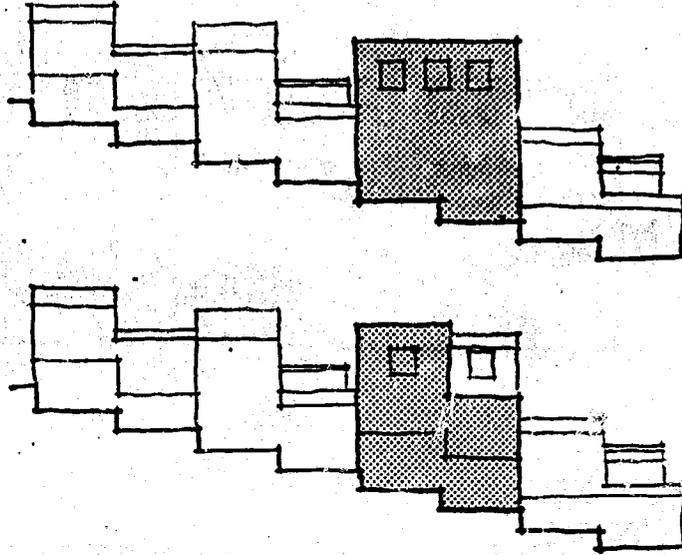
**Architectural features like cornices can relate to adjacent buildings, lowering the apparent, conflicting height of the building.**



**Sometimes an area has a number of buildings that feature a distinctive architectural concept or style. In these cases, referring to that organizational concept can achieve compatibility at a deeper level.**



The pattern and proportion of windows, doors and other glazed areas (fenestration) is important in determining the building's architectural character. Following the proportion and pattern of neighboring buildings will increase the consistency of the overall streetscape.

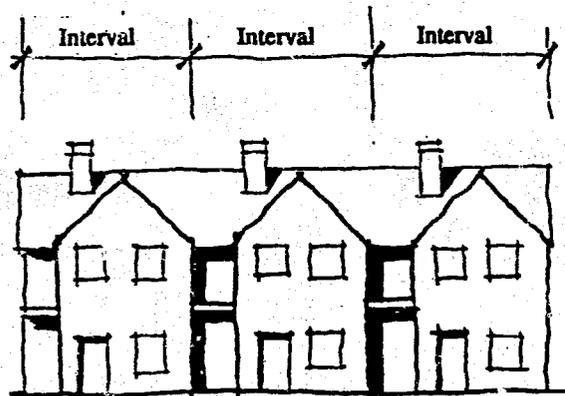


### Building Articulation

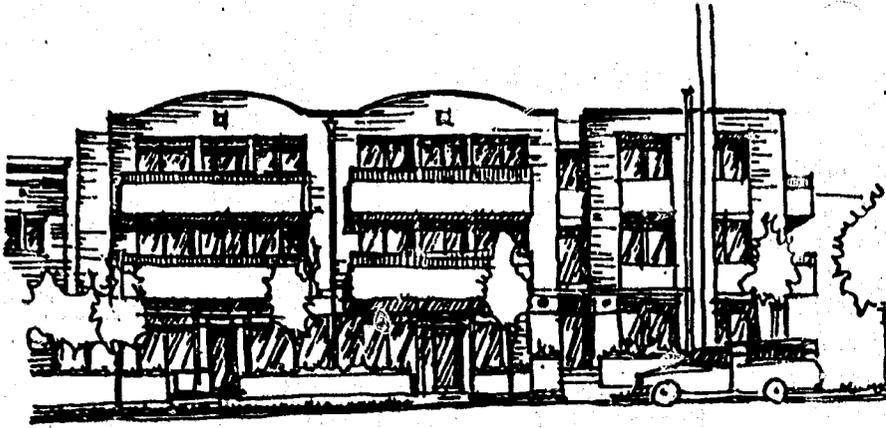
Below are several methods in which buildings may be articulated to create intervals which reflect and promote compatibility with their surroundings.

- Facade modulation - stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade.
- Repeating the window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
- Providing a porch, patio, deck, or covered entry for each interval.
- Providing a balcony or bay window for each interval.
- Changing the roofline by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval.
- Changing materials with the change in building plane.
- Providing a lighting fixture, trellis, tree or other landscape feature within each interval.

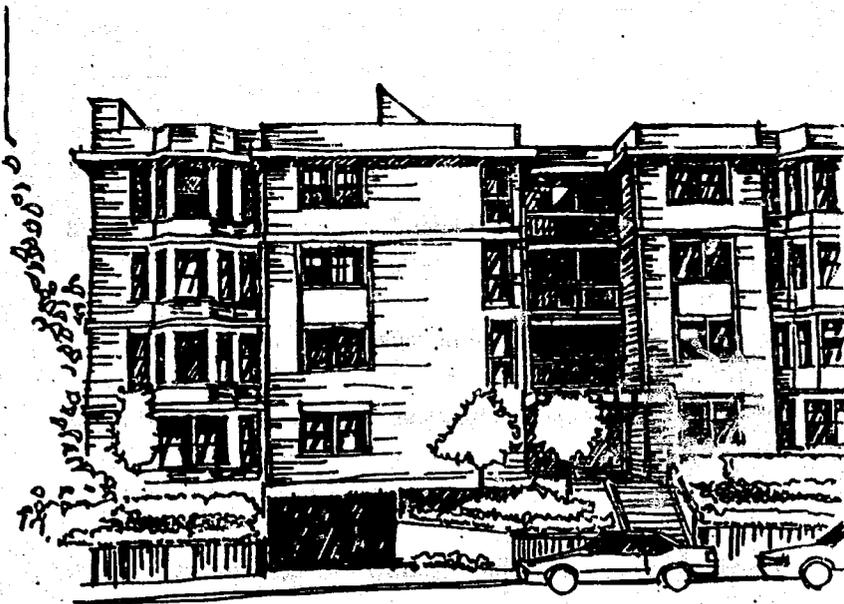
This building is articulated into intervals. Articulation methods include modulation, broken roof lines, building elements (chimneys, entries, etc.) and landscaping.



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**This mixed-use building also expresses intervals through modulation, a mix of roof forms, landscaping and other elements.**



**This apartment building incorporates architectural elements typical of nearby buildings such as bay windows, cornice lines, double hung windows, building modulation and horizontal banding. Also, the street front landscaping helps it to better fit in an established neighborhood.**

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**This project  
relates well to its  
neighbors by  
reflecting similar  
proportions,  
materials and  
architectural  
features.**



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## **C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency**

**Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.**

**Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.**

**In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguishable from its facade walls.**

### **• Explanation and Examples**

**This guideline focuses on the important design consideration of organizing the many architectural elements of a building into a unified whole, so that details and features can be seen to relate to the structure and not appear as add-ons.**

**The other objective of this guideline is to promote buildings whose form derives from their function. Buildings which present few or no clues through their design as to what purpose they serve are often awkward architectural neighbors. For example, use of expansive blank walls, extensive use of metal or glass siding, or extremely large or small windows in a residential project may create architectural confusion or disharmony with neighbors. Conversely, commercial buildings which overly mimic residential styles might be considered inappropriate in some commercial neighborhoods.**

**Architectural features may include any of the following.**

- Building modulation or articulation**
- Bay windows**
- A corner accent, such as a turret**
- Garden or courtyard elements (such as a fountain or gazebo)**
- Rooflines**
- Building entries**
- Building base.**

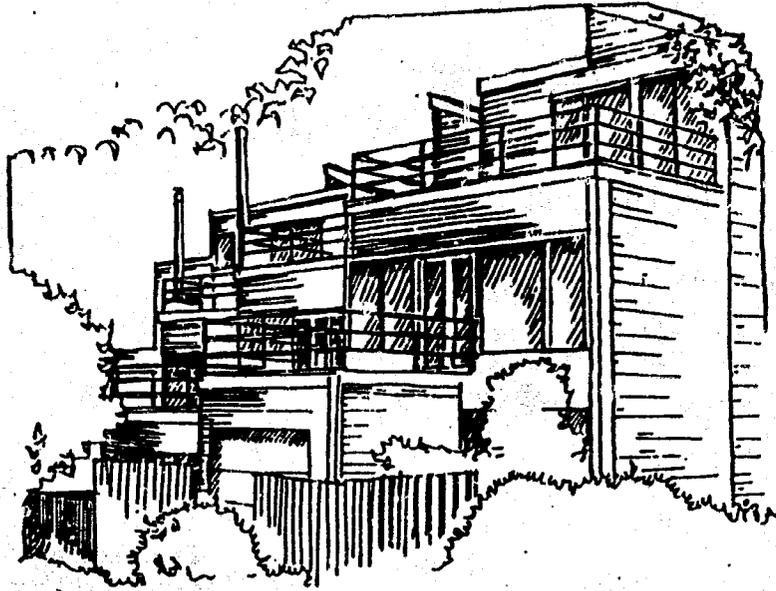
**Architectural details may include some of the following.**

- Treatment of masonry (such as ceramic tile inlay, paving stones, or alternating brick patterns)**
- Treatment of siding (such as wood siding combined with shingles to differentiate floors)**
- Articulation of columns**
- Sculpture or art work**

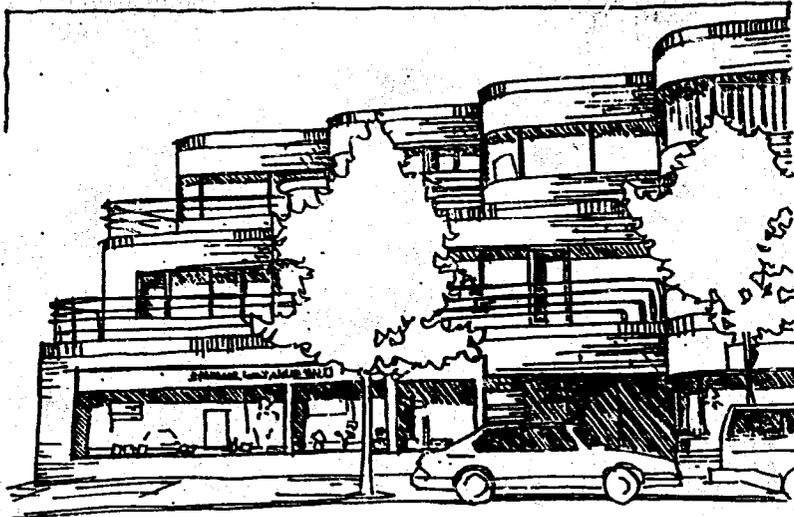
- Architectural lighting
- Detailed grilles and railings
- Special trim details and moldings
- A trellis or arbor.

Some illustrations of these features are presented on this and the following pages.

**A contemporary townhouse building that employs building articulation, broken roof lines, chimneys, multicolored trim and consistent detailing in a pleasing composition.**

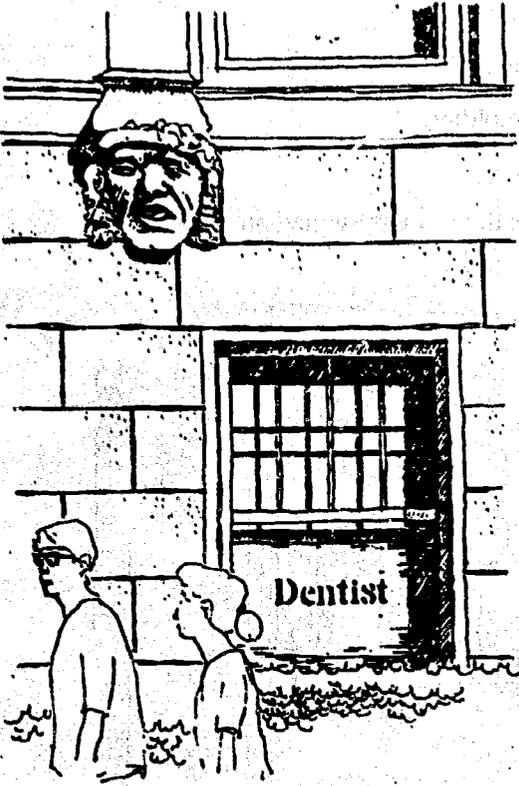


**This contemporary building employs decorative masonry, modulation of the building face, decks and railings, and a recessed entry to give it a distinctive architectural character.**

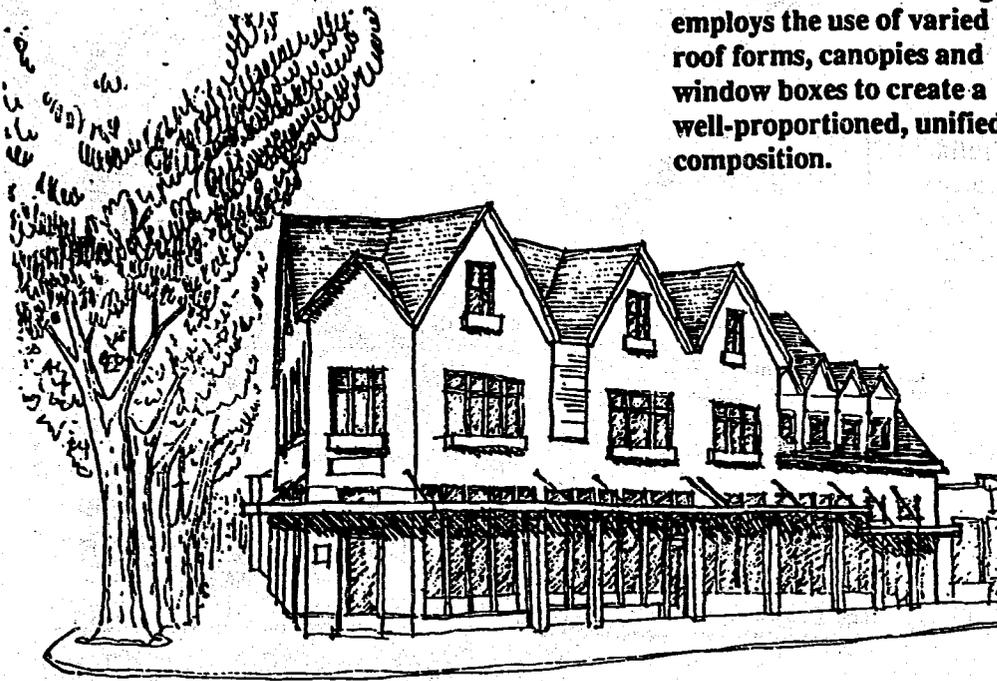


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**Clever use of ornament can highlight a building's uses.**

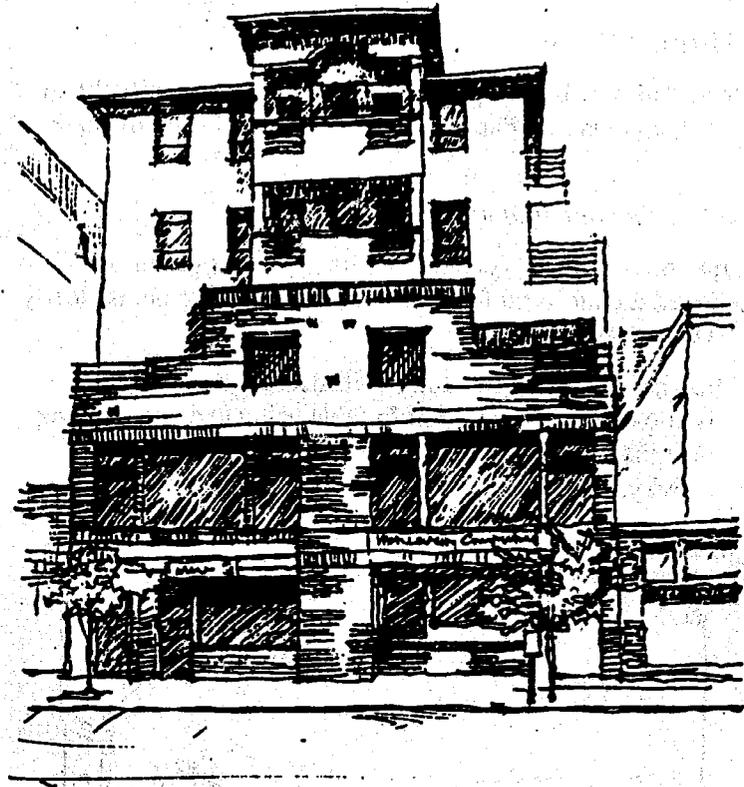


**This commercial building employs the use of varied roof forms, canopies and window boxes to create a well-proportioned, unified composition.**



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**This mixed-use building differentiates the residential uses from the commercial uses below, and clearly distinguishes a base, middle and top. It fits in better with its lower height neighbors by setting back the upper floors and changing finish materials.**



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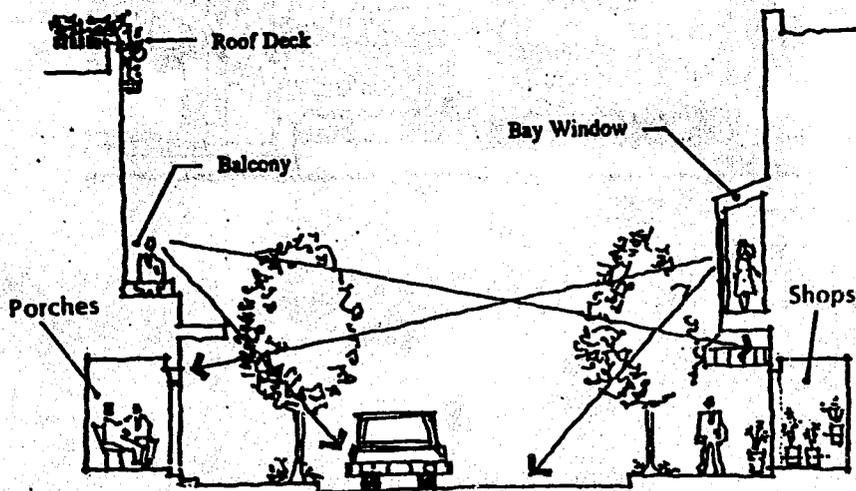
### C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

- *Explanation and Examples*

The term "human scale" generally refers to the use of human-proportioned architectural features and site design elements clearly oriented to human activity.

A building has a good human scale if its details, elements and materials allow people to feel comfortable using and approaching it. Features that give a building human scale also encourage human activity.

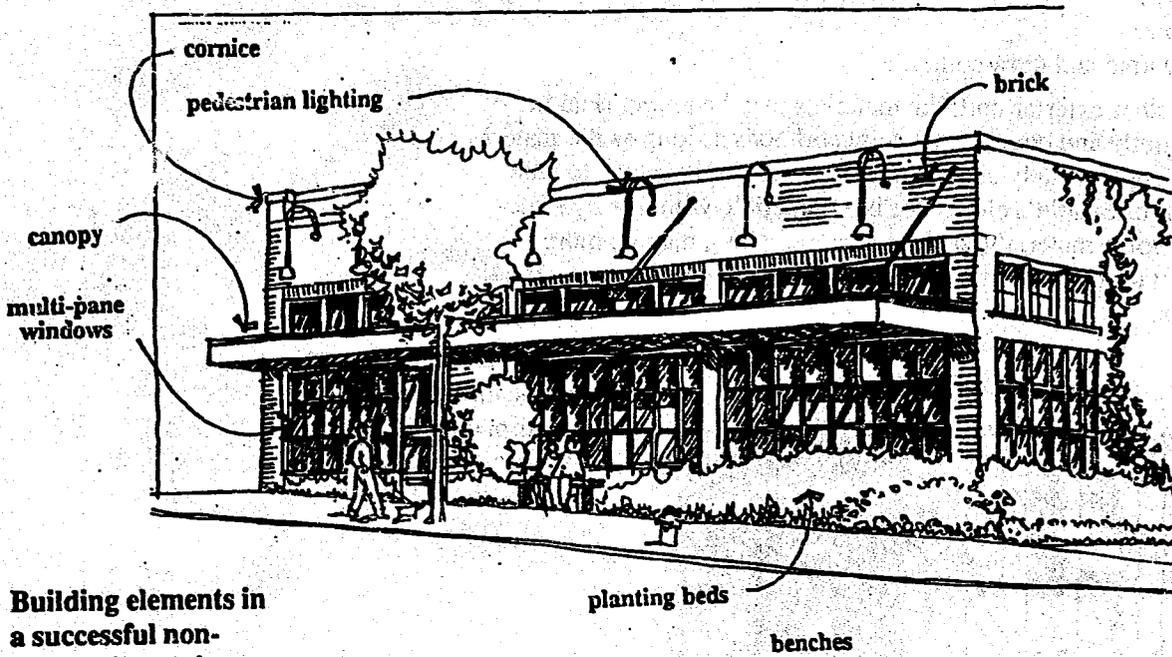


Elements along the streetfront which promote a human scale on the street.

The following are some of the building elements that may be used to achieve better human scale.

- Pedestrian-oriented open space such as a courtyard, garden, patio or other unified landscaped areas.
- Bay windows extending out from the building face that reflect an internal space such as a room or alcove.
- Individual windows in upper stories that:
  - are approximately the size and proportion of a traditional window.
  - include a trim or molding that appears substantial from the sidewalk.
  - are separated from adjacent windows by a vertical element.

- Windows grouped together to form larger areas of glazing can have a human scale if individual window units are separated by moldings or jambs.
- Windows with small multiple panes of glass.
- Window patterns, building articulation and other treatments that help to identify individual residential units in a multifamily building.
- Upper story setbacks.
- A porch or covered entry.
- Pedestrian weather protection in the form of canopies, awnings, arcades or other elements wide enough to protect at least one person.
- Visible chimneys



**Building elements in a successful non-residential project**

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## C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

### • *Explanation and Examples*

The selection and use of exterior materials is a key ingredient in determining how a building will look. Some materials, by their nature, can give a sense of permanence or can provide texture or scale that helps new buildings fit better in their surroundings.

Materials typical to Seattle include:

Clear or painted wood siding

Shingles

Brick

Stone

Ceramic and terra-cotta tile

Many other exterior building materials may be appropriate in multifamily and commercial neighborhoods as long as the materials are appropriately detailed and finished, for instance, to take account of Seattle's climate or be compatible with nearby structures. Some materials, such as mirrored glass, may be more difficult to integrate into residential or neighborhood commercial settings.

Simple building forms can be enlivened with the appropriate use of materials and the creative use of color.



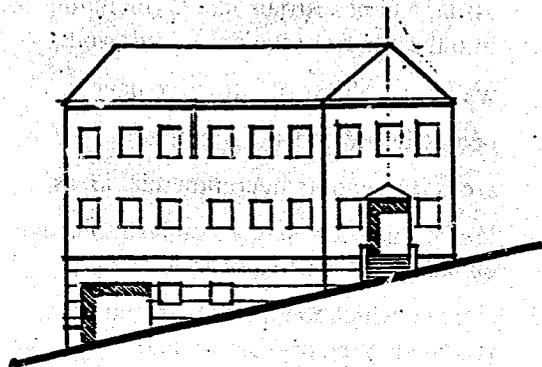
### C-5 Structured Parking Entrances

The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

- *Examples*
- Subordinate the garage entrance to the pedestrian entrance in terms of size, prominence on the streetscape, location and design emphasis. Sometimes the relative importance of the garage entrance can be reduced by enhancing the pedestrian entrance.
- Locate the entry on the side of the facade where it will draw less attention than if it is centered in the facade.
- Recess the portion of the facade where the entry is located to help conceal it.
- Extend portions of the structure over the garage entry to help conceal it.
- Emphasize other elements of the facade to reduce the visual prominence of the garage entry.
- Use screening and landscaping to soften the appearance of the garage entry from the street.
- Locate the garage entry where the topography of the site can help conceal it.



Garage entry subordinated by emphasizing the pedestrian entry.



Garage entry located where the topography of the site can help to minimize its dominance of the facade.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

### **D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

#### **• *Explanation and Examples***

**If a building is set back from the sidewalk, the space between the building and the public right-of-way may be conducive to pedestrian or resident activity. In business districts where pedestrian activity is desired, the primary function of any open space between commercial buildings and the sidewalk is to provide visual and physical access into the building and perhaps also to provide a space for additional outdoor activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining. Street fronts can also feature art work, street furniture and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building's setting.**

**Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk a sufficient distance, pedestrian enhancements should be considered in the resulting street front.**

**Examples of desirable features to include:**

- visual and pedestrian access (including barrier-free access) into the site from the public sidewalk;**
- walking surfaces of attractive pavers;**
- pedestrian-scaled site lighting;**
- areas for vendors in commercial areas;**
- landscaping that screens undesirable elements or that enhances the space and architecture;**
- signage which identifies uses and shops clearly but which is scaled to the pedestrian; and**
- site furniture, art work or amenities such as fountains, benches, pergolas, kiosks, etc.**

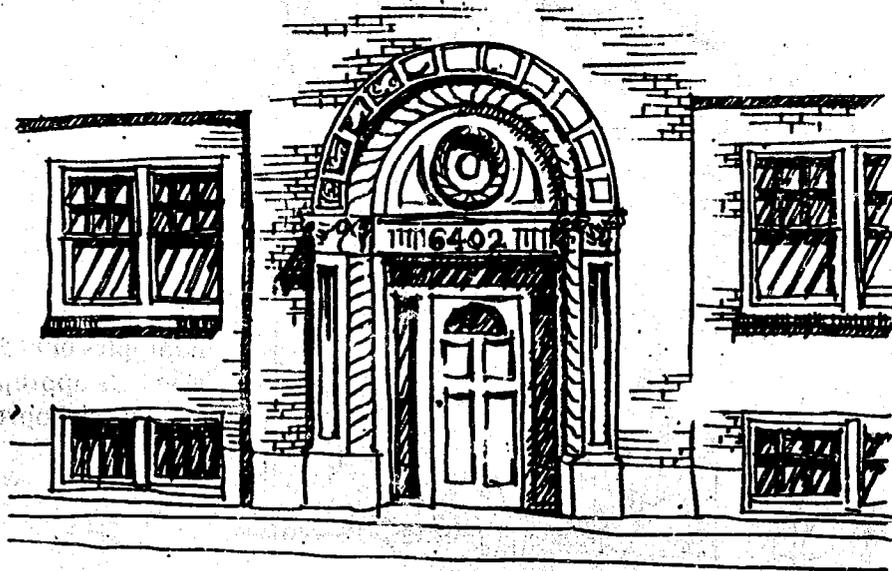
**Examples of features to avoid are:**

- asphalt or gravel pavement;**
- adjacent unscreened parking lots;**
- adjacent chain-link fences; and**
- adjacent blank walls without appropriate screening.**

The following treatment of entrances can provide emphasis and interest.

- Special detailing or architectural features such as ornamental glazing, railings and balustrades, awnings, canopies, decorative pavement, decorative lighting, seats, architectural molding, planter boxes, trellises, art work signs, or other elements near the doorway.
- Visible signage identifying building address.

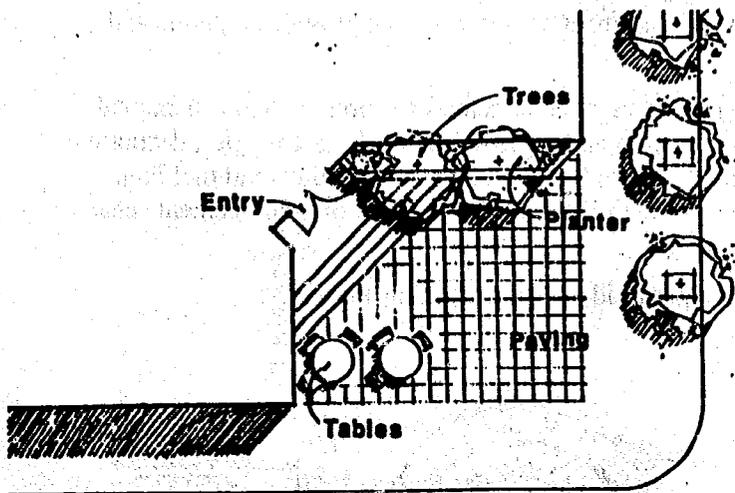
Traditional building entries were highlighted by strong forms and the creative use of materials.



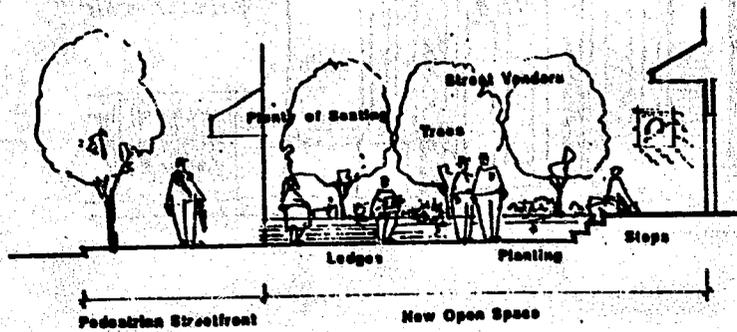
The entries along this street are accented by portals, grand staircases and balconies.



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**Pedestrian open space**



**Examples of pedestrian scaled elements appropriate to commercial open space.**

## D-2 Blank Walls

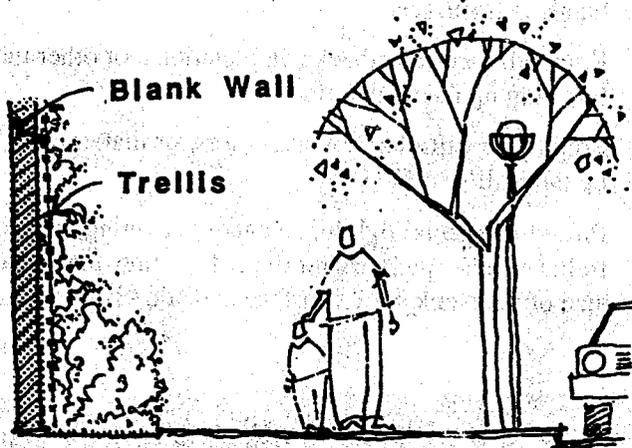
Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

- *Explanation and Examples*

A wall may be considered "large" if it has a blank surface substantially greater in size than similar walls of neighboring buildings. Blank walls provide opportunities for devacement with graffiti. The following examples are possible methods for treating blank walls.

- Installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials.

Positive example  
of treating a blank  
wall with trellis  
and art.



- Setting the wall back and providing a landscaped or raised planter bed in front of the wall, including plant materials that could grow to obscure or screen the wall's surface.

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**Positive example of treating a blank wall with a planter.**

Providing art (mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc.) over a substantial portion of the blank wall surface.

Employing small setbacks, indentations, or other means of breaking up the wall surface.

Employing different texture, colors, or materials to break up the wall's surface.

Providing special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis or other pedestrian oriented features that break up the size of the blank wall's surface and add visual interest.



**Alternative to solid, or blank-looking fence.**

### D-3 Retaining Walls

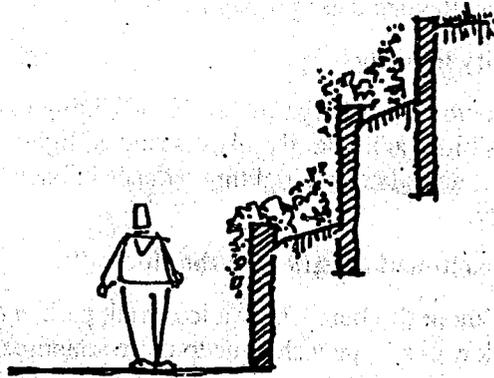
Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where high retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscape.

- **Explanation and Examples**

The following are examples of methods to treat retaining walls.

- Any of the techniques or features listed under blank walls above.
- Terracing and landscaping the retaining walls.

**Positive example  
of terracing.**



- Substituting a stone wall, rockery, modular masonry or special material.
- Locating hanging plant materials below or above the wall.

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## D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.

### • *Examples*

The following examples illustrate some considerations to address in highly visible parking lots.

#### Treatment of parking area perimeter

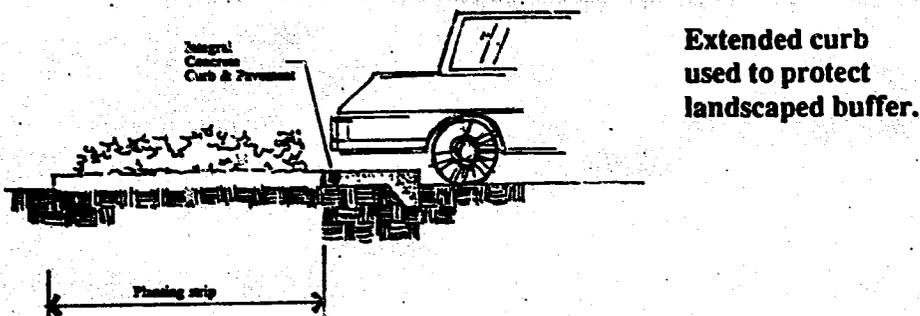
- The edges of parking lot pavement adjacent to landscaped areas and other pavement can be unsightly and difficult to maintain. Providing a curb at the perimeter of parking areas can alleviate these problems.

#### Security lighting

- Provide the appropriate levels of lighting to create adequate visibility at night. Evenly distributed lighting increases security, and glare-free lighting reduces impacts on near-by property.

#### Encroachment of cars onto the sidewalk:

- Without tire bumpers or a low wall, parked cars can hang over sidewalks. One technique to protect landscaped and pedestrian areas from encroachment by parked cars is to provide a wide wheel stop about two feet from the sidewalk. A preferable technique is to install an extended curb, which is more durable than wheel stops and does not catch debris.



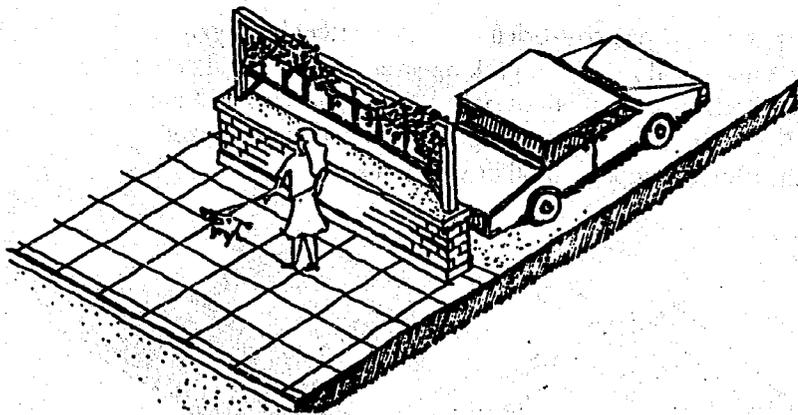
#### Signs and equipment

- Reduce sign clutter by painting markings on the pavement or by consolidating signs. Provide storage that is out of view from the sidewalk and adjacent properties for moveable or temporary equipment like sawhorses or barrels.

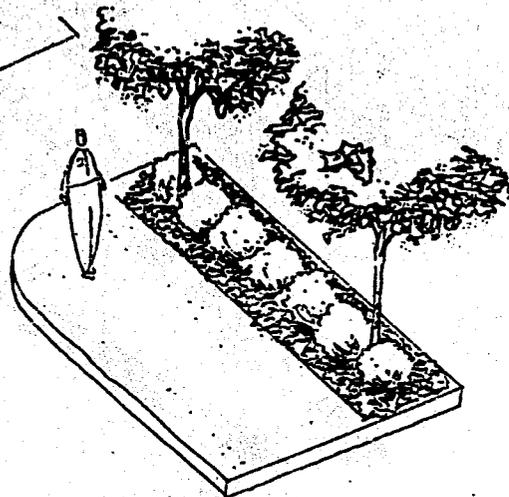
### Screening of Parking

- Screening of parking areas need not be uniform along the property frontage. Variety in the type and relative amount of screening may be appropriate.
- Screen walls constructed of durable, attractive materials need not extend above waist level. Screen walls across a street or adjacent to a residential zone could also include landscaping or a trellis or grillwork with climbing vines.
- Screening can be designed to provide clear visibility into parking areas to promote personal safety.

**Example of a screen wall with trellis.**



**Example of a landscape hedge with perimeter trees.**



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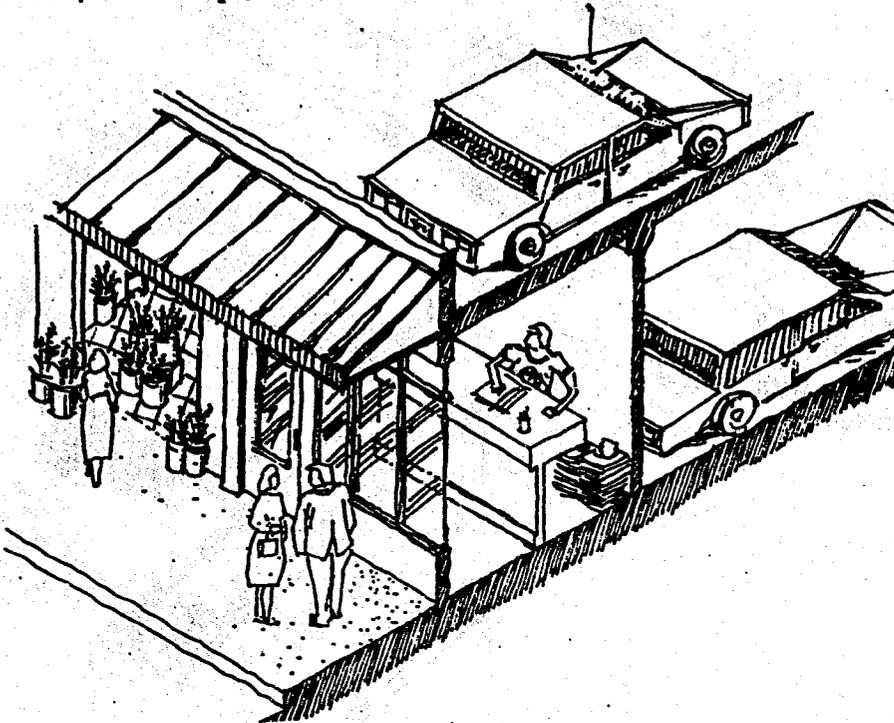
## D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

### • Examples

The following examples illustrate various methods of improving the appearance of at-grade parking structures.

- Incorporating pedestrian-oriented uses at street level can reduce the visual impact of parking structures in commercial areas. Sometimes a depth of only 10' along the front of the building is enough to provide space for newsstands, ticket booths, flower shops, and other viable uses.



Providing space for pedestrian oriented businesses along parking garage frontage.

- Setting the parking structure back from the sidewalk and installing dense landscaping.
- Incorporating any of the blank wall treatments listed in Guideline D2 above.
- Visually integrating the parking structure with adjacent buildings.
- Continuing a frieze, cornice, canopy, overhang, trellis or other devices at the top of the parking level.

- Incorporating into the parking structure a well-lit pedestrian walkway, stairway or ramp from the sidewalk to the upper level of the building.
- Setting back a portion of the parking structure to allow for the retention of an existing significant tree.
- Using a portion of the top of the parking level as an outdoor deck, patio or garden with a rail, bench or other guard device around the perimeter.

Parking lot at ground level screened by an artwork grille.



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## D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas

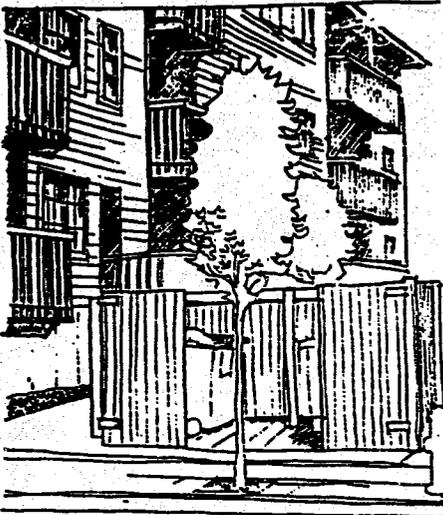
Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

### • *Explanation and Examples*

Unightly service elements can detract from the compatibility of new projects and create hazards for pedestrians and autos.

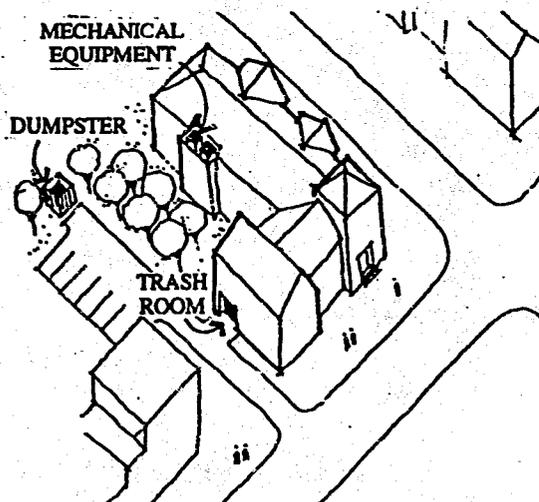
The following examples illustrate considerations to address in locating and screening service areas and utilities.

- Plan the feature in a less visible location on the site.
- Screen it to be less visible. (For example, a utility meter can be located behind a screen wall so that it is not visible from the building entrance.)
- Use durable materials that complement the building.
- Incorporate landscaping to make the screen more effective.
- Locate the opening to the area away from the sidewalk.



This dumpster screen opens onto the sidewalk making it less useful for residents and ineffective.

Service elements located away from the street edge and not generally visible from the sidewalk.



## **D-7 Personal Safety and Security**

**Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

- ***Explanation and Examples***

Project design should be reviewed for its contribution to enhancing the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security within the environment under review. To do this, the question needs to be answered: Do the design elements detract from or do they reinforce feelings of security in the residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors who enter the area?

Techniques that can help promote safety include the following:

- Providing adequate lighting.
- Retaining clear lines of sight.
- Use of semi-transparent security screening, rather than opaque walls, where appropriate.
- Avoiding blank, windowless walls that attract graffiti and that do not permit residents or workers to observe the street.
- Use of landscaping that maintains visibility, such as short shrubs and pruning trees so there are no branches below head height.
- Creative use of ornamental grille as fencing or over ground-floor windows in some locations.
- Absence of structures that provide hiding places for criminal activity.
- Design of parking areas to allow natural surveillance by maintaining clear lines of sight both for those who park there and for occupants of nearby buildings.
- Clear directional signage.
- Encouraging "eyes on the street" through the placement of windows, balconies and street-level uses.
- Ensuring natural surveillance of children's play areas.

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## **E. Landscaping**

### **E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites**

**Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

- **Examples**

**Several ways to reinforce the landscape design character of the local neighborhood are listed below:**

#### **Street trees**

**If a street has uniform planting of street trees, or a distinctive species, plant street trees that match the planting pattern or species.**

#### **Similar plant materials**

**When many lots on a block feature similar landscape materials, emphasis on these materials will help a new project fit into the local context.**

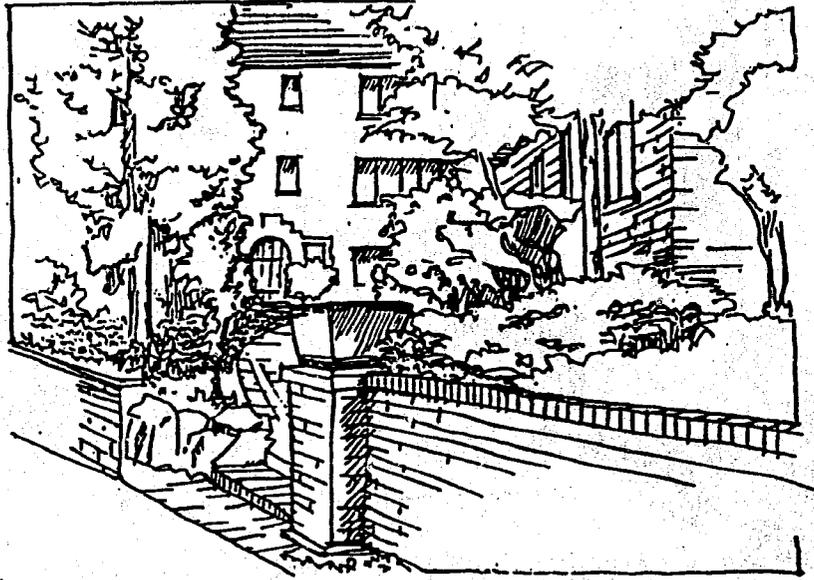
#### **Similar construction materials, textures, colors, or elements**

**Extending a low brick wall, using paving similar to a neighbor's or employing similar stairway construction are ways to achieve design continuity.**

## E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

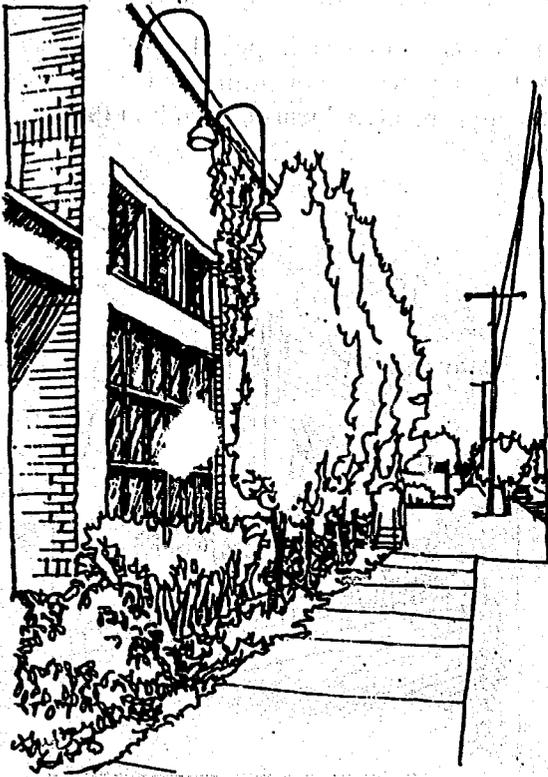
Creative landscaping and a well detailed, low wall help create a garden for the residents in the entry forecourt of this residential building.



### • *Examples*

Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below:

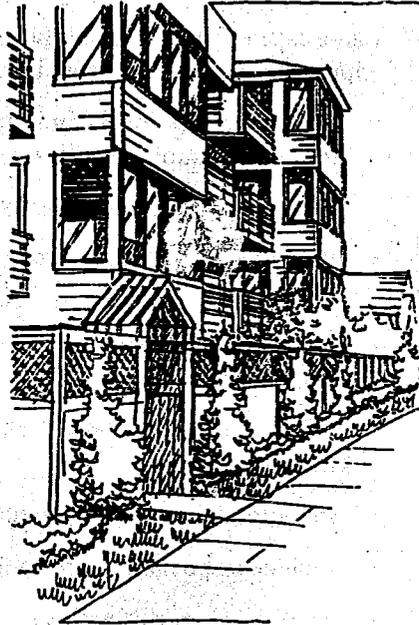
- Soften the form of the building by screening blank walls, terracing retaining walls, etc.
- Increase privacy and security through screening and/or shading.
- Provide a framework such as a trellis or arbor for plants to grow on.
- Incorporate a planter guard or low planter wall as part of the architecture.
- Distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation.
- Incorporate upper story planter boxes or roof planters.
- Include a special feature such as a courtyard, fountain or pool.
- Emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting.
- Screen a building from view by its neighbors, or an existing use from the new building.



Vines, hardy shrubs and columnar trees used to landscape a narrow planting bed.



Plain Wall



Improved condition with trellis and landscaping

Note how the lattice work and landscaping improve the pedestrian environment.

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### **E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

#### **• Explanation and Examples**

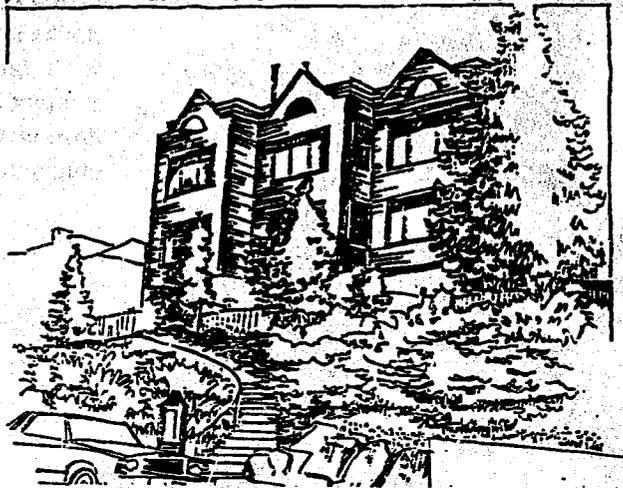
The following conditions may merit special attention. The examples suggest some ways to address the issue.

#### **High-bank front yard**

Where the building's ground floor is elevated above a sidewalk pedestrian's eye level, landscaping can help make the transition between grades. Several techniques are listed below.

- Rockeries with floral displays, live ground cover or shrubs.
- Terraces with floral displays, ground covers or shrubs.
- Low retaining walls with raised planting strips.
- Stone or brick masonry walls with vines or shrubs.

**Positive example of a high-bank front yard landscaped with evergreen ground cover.**

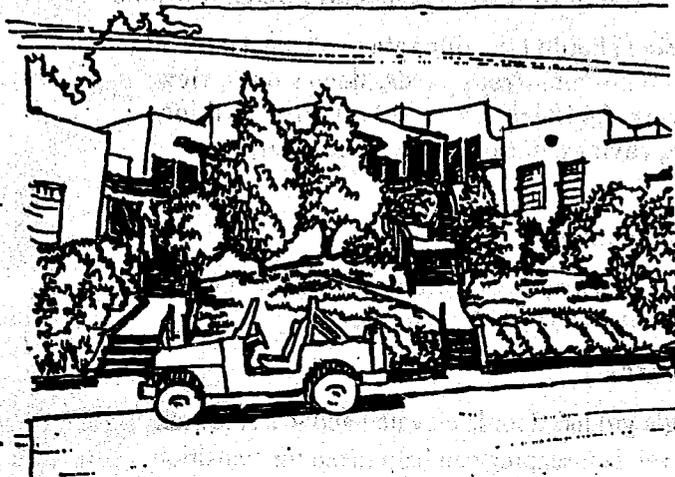


#### **Barrier-free access**

Where wheelchair ramps must be provided on a street front, the ramp structure might include a planting strip on the sidewalk side of the elevated portions of the ramp.

#### **Step topography**

Special plantings or erosion control measures may be necessary to prevent site destabilization or to enhance the visual qualities of the site in connection with a neighborhood improvement program.



**This residential project enhanced its steeply sloping site with generous landscape.**

### **Boulevards**

**Incorporate landscaping which reflects and reinforces the unique character of these streets.**



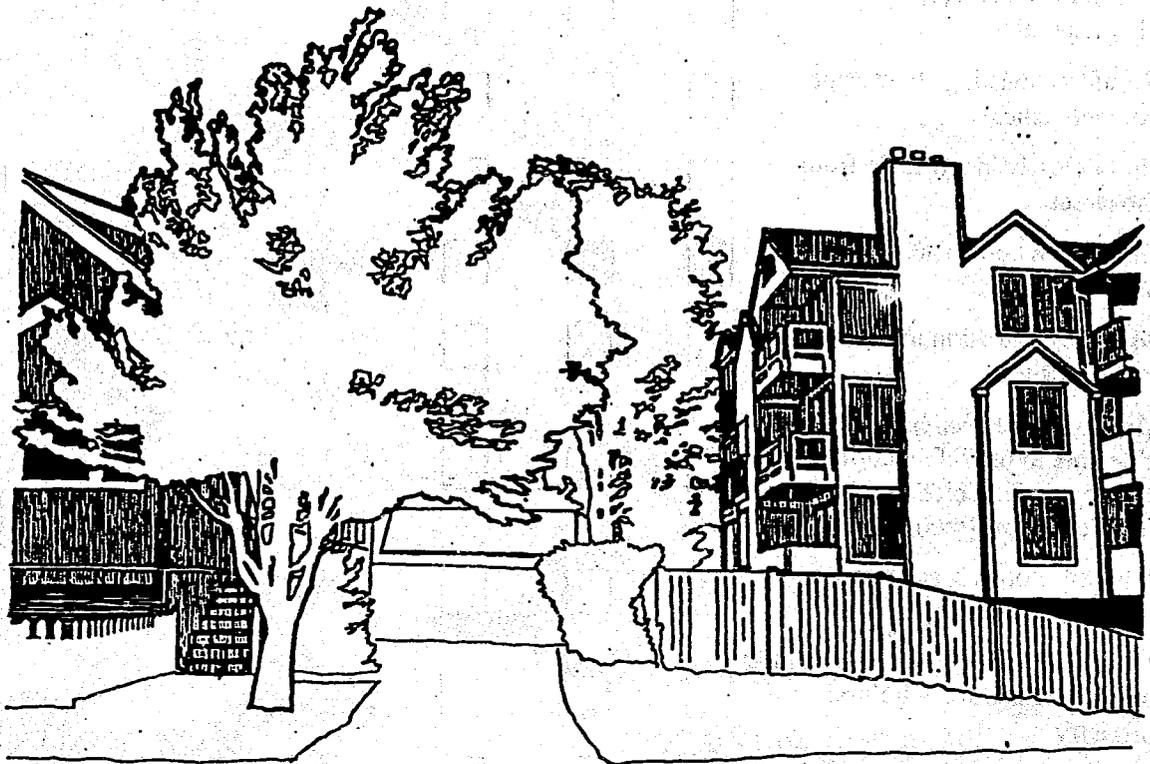
**Boulevards are important visual corridors linking parks and neighborhoods with bands of green. Project landscaping can emphasize their special character.**

### **Greenbelt or other natural setting**

- Minimize the removal of significant trees.
- Replace trees that were removed with new trees.
- Emphasize naturalizing or native landscape materials.
- Retain natural greenbelt vegetation that contributes to greenbelt preservation.
- Select colors that are more appropriate to the natural setting

### **On-site vegetation**

- Retain significant vegetation where possible.
- Use new plantings similar to vegetation removed during construction, when that vegetation was distinctive.



**Site planning that retains significant trees can make a new project seem more like an established part of its neighborhood.**

# IV. Design Guidelines Checklist

This checklist is intended as a summary of the issues addressed by the guidelines. It is not meant to be a regulatory device or a substitute for the language and examples found in the guidelines themselves. Rather, it is a tool for assisting the determination about which guidelines are most applicable on a particular site.

## A. Site Planning

	N/A	Lower Priority	Higher Priority
1. Reinforce existing site characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Reinforce existing streetscape characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Entry clearly identifiable from the street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Encourage human activity on street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Minimize intrusion into privacy on adjacent sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Use space between building and sidewalk to provide security, privacy and interaction (residential projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Maximize open space opportunity on site (residential projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Minimize parking and auto impacts on pedestrians and adjoining property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Discourage parking in street front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Orient building to corner and parking away from corner on public street fronts (corner lots)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## B. Height, Bulk and Scale

1. Provide sensitive transition to nearby, less-intensive zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

N/A      Lower Priority      Higher Priority

**C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Complement positive existing character                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Respond to nearby historic structures                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Follow architectural concept                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Use human scale and human activity                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Use durable, attractive and well-detailed finish materials | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Minimize garage entrances                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**D. Pedestrian Environment**

- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Provide convenient, attractive and protected pedestrian entry              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Avoid blank walls  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Minimize height of retaining walls   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Minimize visual and physical intrusion of parking lots on pedestrian areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Minimize visual impact of parking structures                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Screen dumpsters, utility and service areas                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Consider personal safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**E. Landscaping**

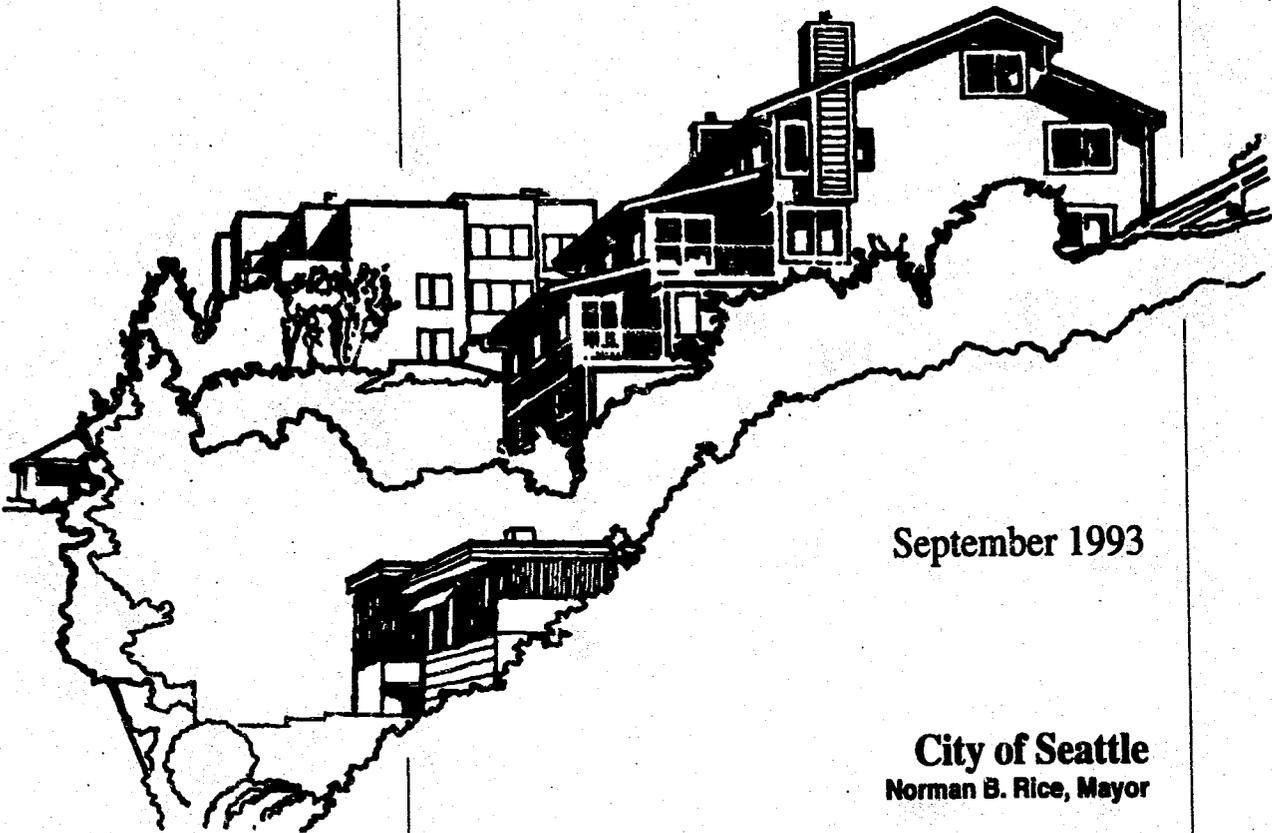
- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Reinforce existing landscape character of neighborhood | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Landscape to enhance the building or site              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Landscape to take advantage of special site conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Attachment A

# Design Review for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings

## Design Guidelines



September 1993

**City of Seattle**  
Norman B. Rice, Mayor

Department of Construction & Land Use  
**R. F. Krochalis**  
Director

Planning Department  
**J. Gary Lawrence**  
Director

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# Design Review for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings

## Design Guidelines

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(Volume 1) and Appendices (Volume 3).

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# I. Introduction

The purpose of the citywide design guidelines is to describe ways that new multifamily and commercial buildings can be compatible with their surroundings. In contrast to the City's Land Use Code, which contains very specific regulations, the guidelines show ways to think about a project's context and provide flexible examples that can help a new project better fit that context. The guidelines supplement the Land Use Code, providing a means to adapt Code requirements to the characteristics of individual building sites.

The guidelines can also:

- set criteria and examples for judging the compatibility of new buildings in the city;
- facilitate the understanding of the terminology and key aspects of building siting and design; and
- highlight the important features of our surroundings to enhance our appreciation of the natural and built environment.

## Who is Expected to Use These Guidelines?

Because these guidelines will be used in evaluating new development projects in the city, the most frequent users of this document will be the people concerned with the development of new commercial and multifamily buildings.

### Property Owners/Developers

The guidelines can acquaint property owners and developers with concerns that citizens have identified about building compatibility and give direction toward the need and means of identifying neighborhood context.

### Building Designers

The guidelines will help architects and others who design buildings to know what is expected of their products and what could make their designs more compatible with the neighborhoods where new projects are proposed.

### Project Neighbors

People who live near new development projects may benefit the most from these guidelines. Some of those people participated in workshops to help define which aspects of building design were most important. Their comments form the basis of these guide-

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lines. The guidelines may give neighbors a better vision of projects proposed near them and how those projects can enhance the neighborhood's character. Ultimately, the guidelines will be a tool that neighbors can use when they want to describe to developers or City staff what they consider appropriate design for their neighborhoods.

### **City Staff**

In issuing permits for new developments, City staff will rely on these guidelines to help define specific design conditions that will be required for project approval.

## **How To Use These Guidelines**

As reviewers apply the design guidelines to particular development projects, some important things to remember are:

1. Each project is unique and will pose unique design issues. Even two similar proposals on the same block may face different design considerations. With some projects, trying to follow all of the guidelines could produce irreconcilable conflicts in the design. With most projects, reviewers will find some guidelines more important than others, and the guidelines that are most important on one project might not be important at all on the next one. The design review process will help designers and reviewers to determine which guidelines are most important in the context of each project so that they may put the most effort into accomplishing the intent of those guidelines.
2. Projects must be reviewed in the context of their zoning and the zoning of their surroundings. The use of design guidelines is not intended to change the zoning designations of land where projects are proposed; it is intended to demonstrate methods of treating the appearance of new projects to help them fit their neighborhoods and to provide the Code flexibility necessary to accomplish that. Where the surrounding neighborhood exhibits a lower development intensity than its current zoning allows, the lower-intensity character should not force a proponent to significantly reduce the allowable size of the new building.
3. Many of the guidelines suggest using the existing context to determine appropriate solutions for the project under consideration. In some areas, the existing context is not well defined, or may be undesirable. In such cases, the new project should be recognized as a pioneer with the opportunity to establish a

pattern or identity from which future development can take its cues. In light of number 2 above, the site's zoning should be considered an indicator of the desired direction for the area and the project.

4. Each guideline includes examples and illustrations of ways in which that guideline can be achieved. The examples are just that — examples. They are not the only acceptable solutions. *Designers and reviewers should consider designs, styles and techniques not described in the examples but that fulfill the guideline.*
5. The checklist which follows the guidelines (see Section IV) is a tool for determining whether or not a particular guideline applies to a site, so that the guidelines may be more easily prioritized. The checklist is neither a regulatory device, nor a substitute for evaluating a site's conditions, or to summarize the language or examples found in the guidelines themselves.

### Viewing a Site

Seattle's Land Use Code sets specific, prescriptive rules that are applied uniformly for each land use zone throughout the city. There is little room in the Code's development standards to account for unique site conditions or neighborhood contexts. A project architect can read the Code requirements and theoretically design a building without ever visiting the site.

However, to produce good compatible design, it is critical that the project's design team examine the site and its surroundings, identify the key design features and determine how the proposed project can address the guidelines' objectives. Because they rely on the project's context to help shape the project, the guidelines encourage an active viewing of the site and its surroundings.

For a proposal located on a street with a consistent and distinctive architectural character, the architectural elements of the building may be key to helping the building fit the neighborhood. On other sites with few attractive neighboring buildings, the placement of open space and treatment of pedestrian areas may be the most important concerns. The applicant and the project reviewers should consider the following questions *and similar ones* related to context when looking at the site:

- What are the key aspects of the streetscape? (The street's layout and visual character)
- Are there opportunities to encourage human activity and neighborhood interaction, while promoting residents' privacy and physical security?

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- How can vehicle access have the least effect on the pedestrian environment and on the visual quality of the site?
- Are there any special site planning opportunities resulting from the site's configuration, natural features, topography etc.?
- What are the most important contextual concerns for pedestrians? How could the sidewalk environment be improved?
- Does the street have characteristic landscape features, plant materials, that could be incorporated into the design?
- Are there any special landscaping opportunities such as steep topography, significant trees, greenbelt, natural area, park or boulevard that should be addressed in the design?
- Do neighboring buildings have distinctive architectural style, site configuration, architectural concept, materials or other features that add to the neighborhood's visual identity or quality?
- Do nearby buildings have a characteristic scale, proportion, rhythm, or other patterns that add consistency to the streetscape?
- Is the site next to or across the street from a less intensive zone?
- Are there special conditions related to a zone edge which should be addressed in the project's design?
- Does the existing layout and visual character of the streetscape promote a general sense of personal safety and discourage crime? Can the proposed project preserve and enhance such elements?
- Are there any special opportunities for the design of the project to correct or reduce elements of the existing streetscape which have elevated fear levels or promoted crime?

### **Relationship of Design Guidelines to Land Use Code Development Standard Departures**

The design review process permits the development standards contained in the Land Use Code to be modified or waived if necessary to better meet the intent of the design guidelines. (Please see Volume I: Proposed Design Review Program)

## II. Overview of Design Guidelines

### The Role of Context

Seattle is a city of communities, whose citizens value their neighborhood's design character and physical setting. For "in-fill" projects, which constitute most new development in Seattle, good design cannot be judged in terms of the individual building on its site, but must be considered in the context of its surroundings. A new building should fit with the context of its immediate neighbors and the street on which it is located. Therefore, these design guidelines direct new development to enhance the existing character of its surroundings. Design review is about creating good streets and good communities, protecting important symbols and ensuring that new development fits in.

These guidelines are intended to direct designers and project reviewers to look closely at local conditions and produce new buildings that enhance rather than detract from their surroundings.

### Design Elements

The discussion below describes the design elements covered by these guidelines and explains the importance of each element in building stronger neighborhoods.

#### Site Planning

Site planning guidelines primarily address the organization of a project's components in two dimensions. They deal with the location of buildings and site features such as parking lots, open space and service areas. Good site planning can minimize a project's impacts on its neighbors (for example, by separating tall or bulky structures, retaining trees, enhancing views, or responding to steep slope conditions), increase the quality of the streetscape, continue existing patterns, or enhance the value of near-by land or improvements.

#### Height, Bulk and Scale

This guideline is intended to link State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) authority for mitigating height, bulk and scale impacts to design review. It addresses the compatibility of the scale between new development and its surroundings. Elements which contribute to the perceived scale of new construction are addressed in the context of specific site conditions, including the relationship of a project to any less-intensive zones nearby (e.g., multifamily or commercial zones on the edge of a single family zone).

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## **Architectural Elements**

Guidelines in this section deal with the exterior architectural elements of buildings — components which define the appearance of a building, such as roofs, windows, porches, modulation, entries, materials, balconies and details.

New buildings developed in an established neighborhood with an identifiable character will be viewed as undesirable intrusions unless they respond positively to the architectural characteristics of existing buildings. Therefore, guidelines for architectural elements encourage new development in established neighborhoods to complement neighboring buildings and consider how design gives a neighborhood its identity. This does not mean that new buildings should excessively mimic older ones. Rather, the guidelines suggest that new buildings use some traditional building concepts or elements. New structures can successfully relate to older buildings while still looking contemporary and responding to changing societal needs and design opportunities.

## **Pedestrian Environment**

People traveling on foot see their neighborhoods most intimately. Making the pedestrian environment attractive and comfortable is one way to encourage the street activity that provides both security and a sense of community.

The pedestrian environment guidelines are directed toward improving the pedestrian qualities of all neighborhood streets by avoiding or mitigating undesirable conditions. The guidelines specifically address issues related to street-level uses; blank walls near sidewalks; the appearance of parking lots in street fronts; buildings with ground floor parking; sidewalks and street landscaping; visibility of utility meters, dumpsters and service areas.

## **Landscaping**

Landscaping forms an integral part of the visual character of Seattle neighborhoods. The Land Use Code requires landscaping and requires the screening of certain features such as parking lots. The landscape guidelines encourage designers to consider creative ways to screen and buffer unsightly uses; separate incompatible uses; enhance a project's open space and buildings; reinforce the landscape character of the streetscape; or respond to special contextual conditions such as greenbelts, boulevards and steep slopes.

# III. Design Guidelines

## A. Site Planning

### A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

- *Explanation and Examples*

Site characteristics to consider in project design include, but are not limited to, the following:

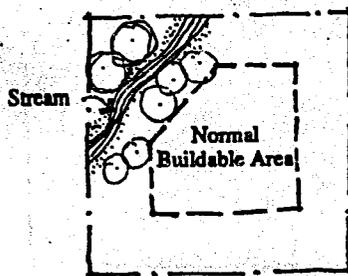
#### Topography

- Reflect, rather than obscure, natural topography. For instance, buildings should be designed to "step up" hillsides to accommodate significant changes in elevation.
- Where neighboring buildings have responded to similar topographic conditions on their sites in a consistent and positive way, consider similar treatment for the new structure.
- Designing the building in relation to topography may help to reduce the visibility of parking garages.

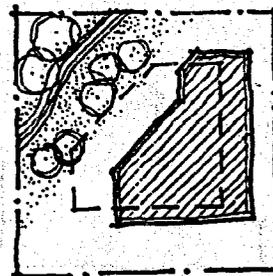
#### Environmental constraints

- Site buildings to avoid or lessen the impact of development on environmentally critical areas such as steep slopes, wetlands and stream corridors.

Site planning to protect and enhance a stream corridor.



Site Conditions



Alternate Building Configuration

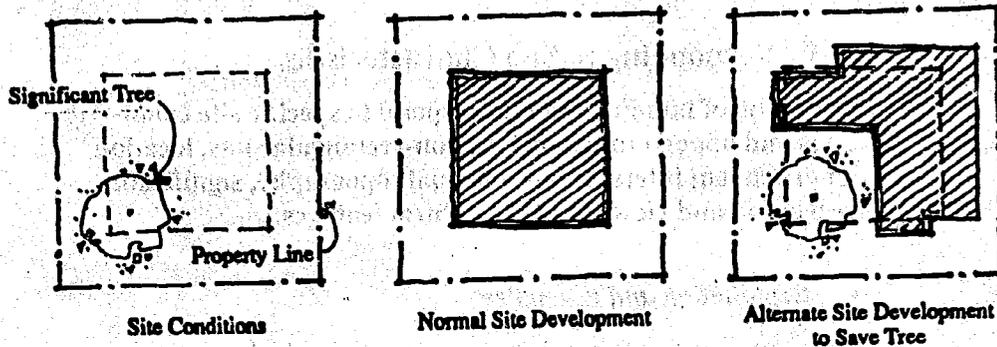
#### Solar orientation

- The design of a structure and its massing on the site can enhance solar exposure for the project and minimize shadow impacts on adjacent structures and public areas.

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### Existing vegetation

- Careful siting of buildings can enable significant or important trees or other vegetation to be preserved.



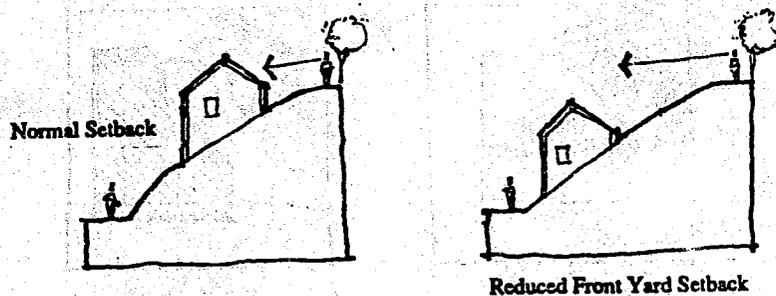
Slight modification of setbacks to save a significant tree.

### Existing structures on the site

- Where a new structure shares a site with an existing structure or is a major addition to an existing structure, designing the new structure to be compatible with the original structure will help it fit in.

### Views

- Adjustments to the siting or massing of a building may enable the preservation of public or private views which would otherwise be blocked by new development. The City's SEPA ordinance requires protection of designated public views. Protection of private views is not required under SEPA but could justify a code departure through design review provided that blockage of public views would not result and responsiveness to other design guidelines would not be compromised.



Buildings located down-slope to preserve views.

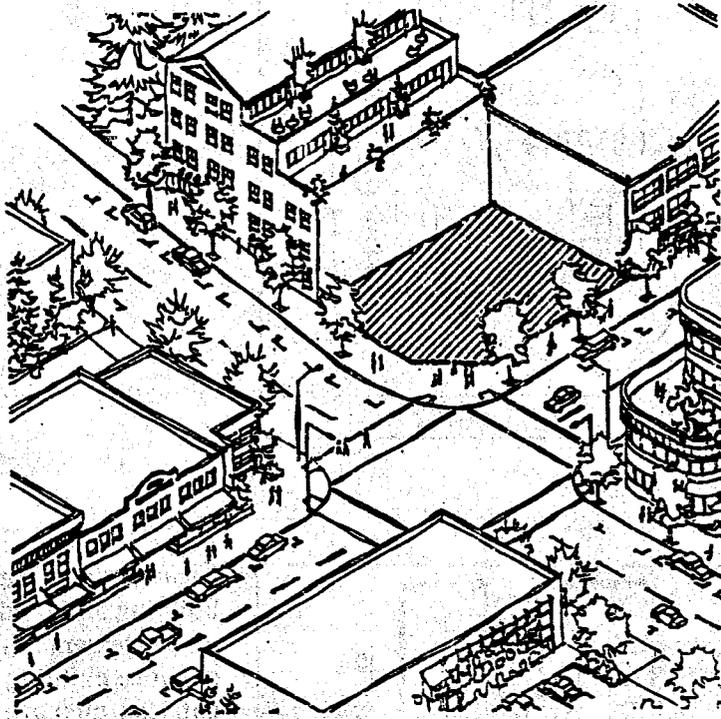
## A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

- *Explanation and Examples*

The character of a neighborhood is often defined by the experience of traveling along its streets. We often perceive streets within neighborhoods as individual spaces or "rooms." How buildings face and are set back from the street determine the character and proportion of this room.

The building to go up on this site should reinforce existing streetscape characteristics: pedestrian oriented businesses and shops at ground level, corner entries and consistent building edge abutting the sidewalk.



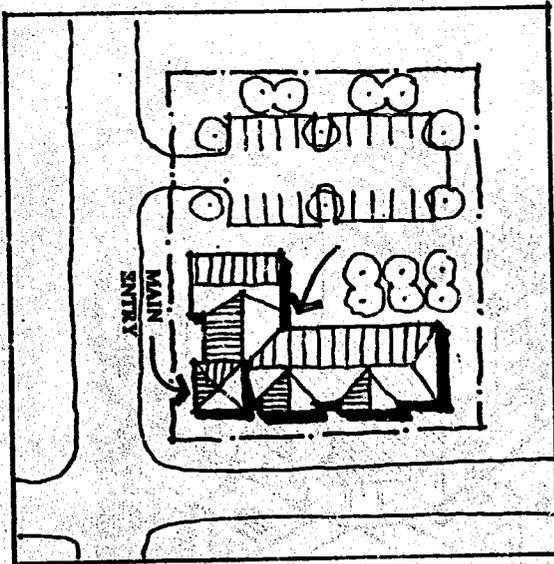
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### A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

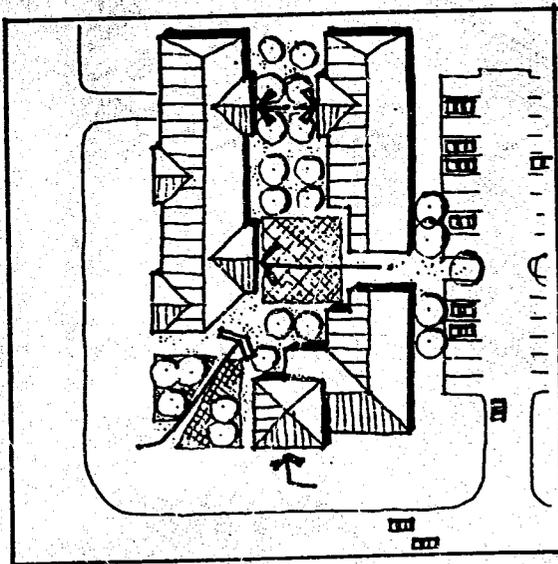
Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

- **Explanation and Examples**

Entries that are visible from the street make a project more approachable and create a sense of association among neighbors.



Provide clear entries off streets not just from parking lots.



Clear paths using building and landscape elements can enhance building entries which are not on the street. Here the corner entry serves as a gateway into the complex.

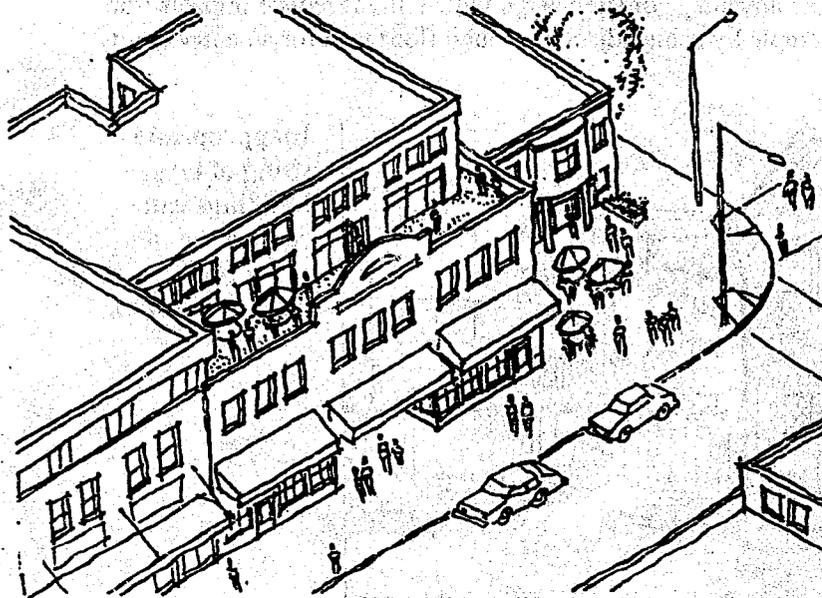
#### A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

- *Explanation and Examples*

Livelier street edges make for safer streets. Ground floor shops and market spaces providing services needed by residents can attract activity to the street and increase safety through informal surveillance. Entrances, porches, balconies, decks, seating and other elements can promote use of the street front and provide places for neighborly interaction. Siting decisions should consider the importance of these features in a particular context and allow for their incorporation.

On commercial streets, elements can include shop front windows, plaza space with outdoor seating, rooftop decks, balconies, and canopies which protect pedestrians from the elements.



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## A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites

Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

### • *Explanation and Examples*

One consideration is the views from upper stories of new buildings into adjacent houses or yards, especially in less intensive zones. This problem can be addressed in several ways.

- Reduce the number of windows and decks on the proposed building overlooking the neighbors.
- Step back the upper floors or increase the side or rear setback so that window areas are farther from the property line.
- Take advantage of site design which might reduce impacts, for example by using adjacent ground floor area for an entry court.

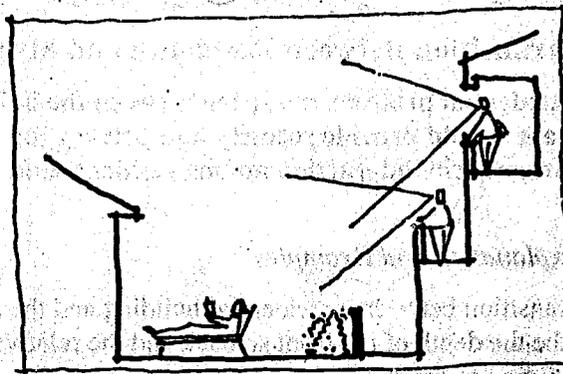


**Inappropriate siting of large buildings can reduce the privacy of adjacent homes.**

**AVOID THIS**

- Minimize windows to living spaces which might infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents, but consider comfort of residents in new building.
- Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows.

**Reducing windows and decks overlooking neighboring residential property or increasing side setbacks can increase privacy.**



**This apartment located the entry court adjacent to the neighboring residence and arranged interior spaces so the views into the neighboring properties were minimized.**



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## **A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street**

**For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.**

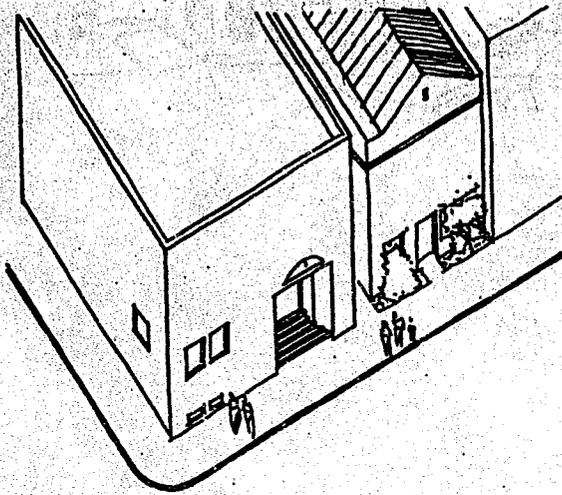
- ***Explanation and Examples***

The transition between a residential building and the street varies with the the depth of the front setback and the relative elevation of the building to the street.

The following examples illustrate these conditions and suggest how this guideline may be met through setbacks, entry design, landscape treatment and other techniques.

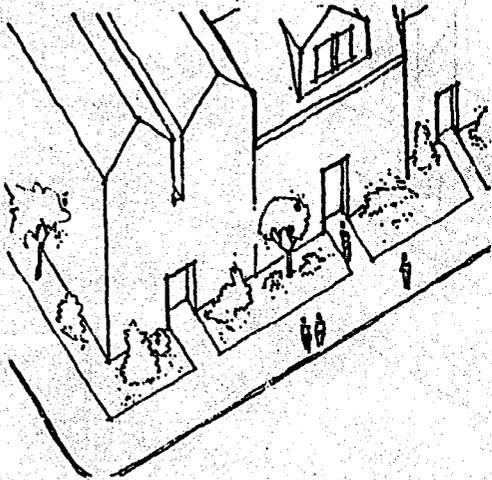
### **Minimal or No Front Setback**

Buildings with little or no front yard should include creative use of landscaping, and/or window placement and treatment to provide privacy. Recessed entries can be used to provide security and/or weather protection.



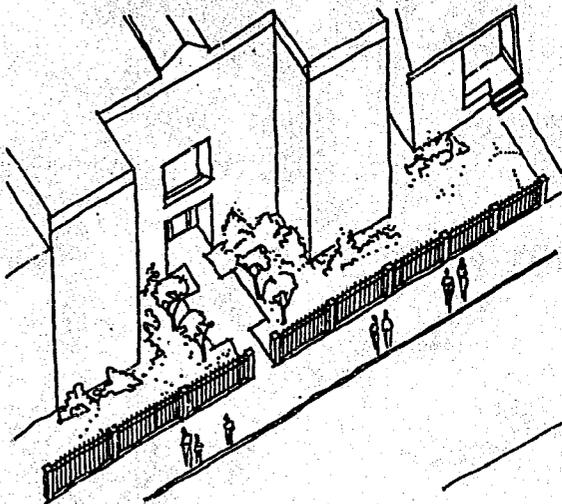
### Shallow Residential Street Front

Buildings set back a small amount from the sidewalk provide sufficient area to include such features as balconies or decks, which allow privacy while encouraging visual interaction with the street. Courtyards, arcades, recessed entries or other similar entry designs may be desirable to provide privacy to ground-floor residents.



### Deep Residential Setback

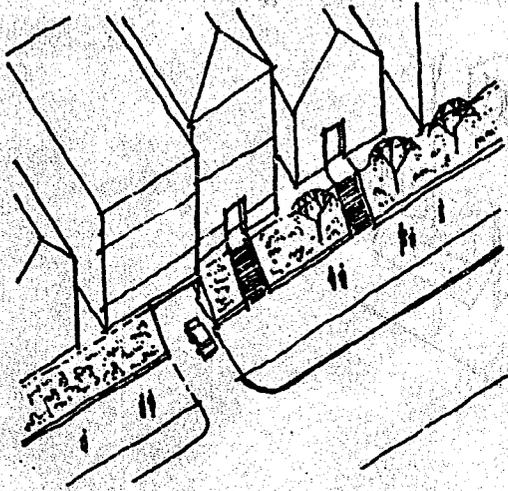
Buildings with deep setbacks from the sidewalk provide sufficient privacy through spatial separation to permit more open porches, picture windows and garden space for ground-floor residential units. Fences may provide further separation from the sidewalk.



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## High Bank Residential Street Front

Where the ground floor of a building is above pedestrian eye level, it is easier to achieve a sense of privacy and separation from street activity, and there is more opportunity for creating social spaces.



## A-7 Residential Open Space

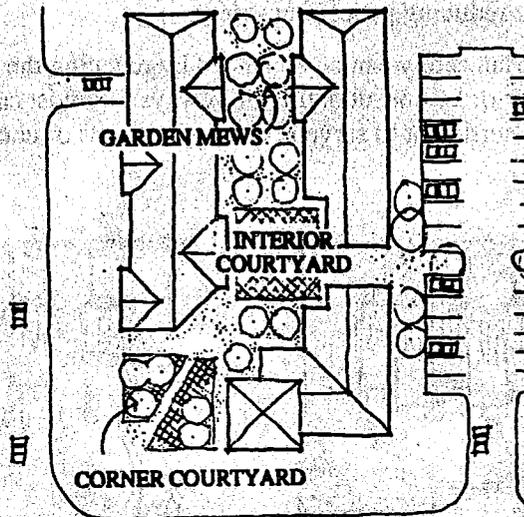
Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

- *Examples*

Residential buildings are encouraged to consider these site planning elements.

- Courtyards which organize architectural elements, while providing a common garden or other uses.
- Entry enhancement such as landscaping along a common pathway.
- Location and design of decks, balconies and upper level terraces.
- Play areas for children.
- Individual gardens.
- Location of outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight.

Well-organized outdoor spaces created by the grouping and orientation of buildings and building elements.



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## A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

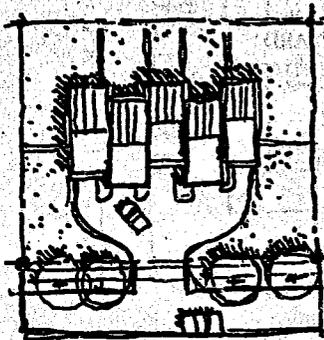
### • *Examples*

The following are some examples of techniques used to minimize the impacts of driveways and parking lots.

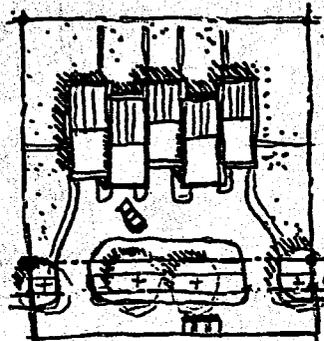
- Locate surface parking at rear or side of lot.
- Break large parking lots into smaller ones.
- Minimize number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- Share driveways with adjacent property owners.
- Locate parking in lower level or less visible portions of site.
- Locate driveways so they are visually less dominant.

Often driveways and garage entrances can be located to take advantage of topography and conform with the overall form of the building, while not placing the pedestrian entrance in a subordinate role, or reducing pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian safety can be enhanced by reducing the width of the curb cut or by consolidating driveways. In most cases, a single lane is sufficient to serve several apartments or commercial spaces.



PREFERRED



ACCEPTABLE

Driveway design  
to increase  
pedestrian safety.

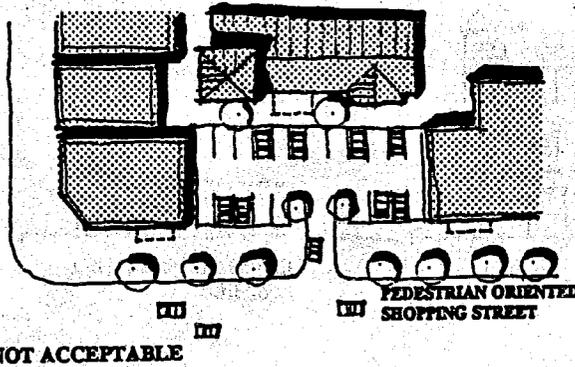
### A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts

Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

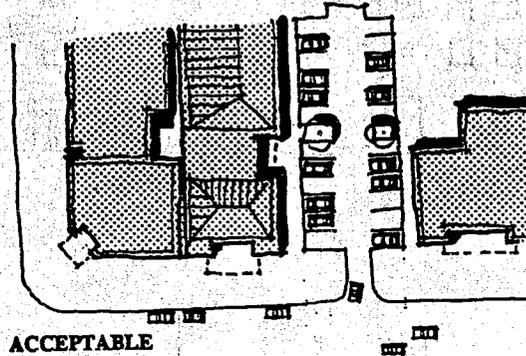
- *Explanation and Examples*

Parking located along a commercial street front where pedestrian traffic is desirable lessens the attractiveness of the area to pedestrians and compromises the safety of pedestrians along the street.

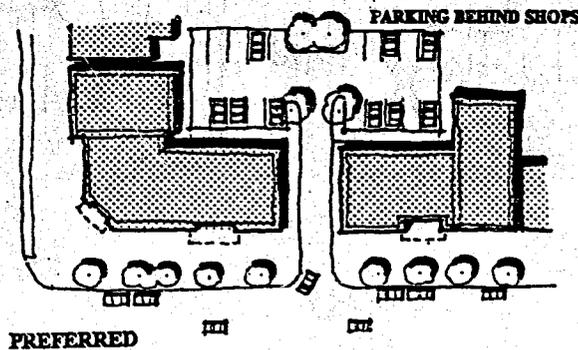
Parking lots along the full length of the streetfront are generally inappropriate.



In certain situations limited streetfront parking lots may be acceptable.



Parking lots located behind shops and offices are preferred.



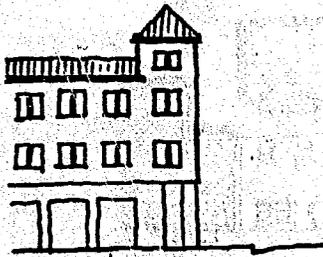
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## A-10 Corner Lots

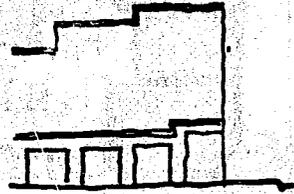
Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

- *Examples*

Corner lots offer unique opportunities because of their visibility and access from two streets.

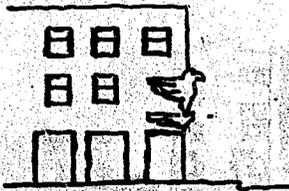


Turret

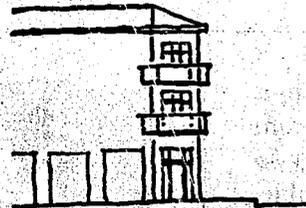


Corner accentuating roof line

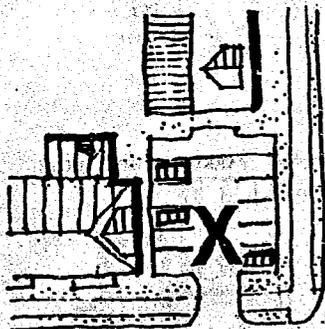
Corner entries and/or architectural features are encouraged.



Sculpture



Balconies



Parking lots should not be located on a street corner.

**A residential project on a corner lot that relates to both street fronts and provides visual and physical access to the project from the corner.**



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## **B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

### **B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

#### **• *Explanation and Examples***

**This guideline restates the City's SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) Policy on Height, Bulk and Scale. Development projects in multifamily and commercial zones may create substantial adverse impacts resulting from incongruous height, bulk and scale. For projects undergoing design review, the analysis and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts will be accomplished through the design review process. Careful siting and design treatment based on the techniques described in this and other design guidelines will help to mitigate some height, bulk and scale impacts; in other cases, actual reduction in the height, bulk and scale of a project may be necessary to adequately mitigate impacts. Design review should not result in significant reductions in a project's actual height, bulk and scale unless necessary to comply with this guideline.**

**Height, bulk and scale mitigation may be required in two general circumstances:**

- 1. Projects on or near the edge of a less intensive zone. A substantial incompatibility in scale may result from different development standards in the two zones and may be compounded by physical factors such as large development sites, slopes or lot orientation.**
- 2. Projects proposed on sites with unusual physical characteristics such as large lot size, or unusual shape, or topography where buildings may appear substantially greater in height, bulk and scale than that generally anticipated for the area.**

**Factors to consider in analyzing potential height, bulk and scale impacts include:**

- distance from the edge of a less intensive zone.**
- differences in development standards between abutting zones (allowable building height, width, lot coverage, etc.).**
- effect of site size and shape.**

- height, bulk and scale relationships resulting from lot orientation (e.g., back lot line to back lot line vs back lot line to side lot line).
- type and amount of separation between lots in the different zones (e.g. separation by only a property line, by an alley or street, or by other physical features such as grade changes).

In some cases, careful siting and design treatment may be sufficient to achieve reasonable transition and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts. Some techniques for achieving compatibility are as follows:

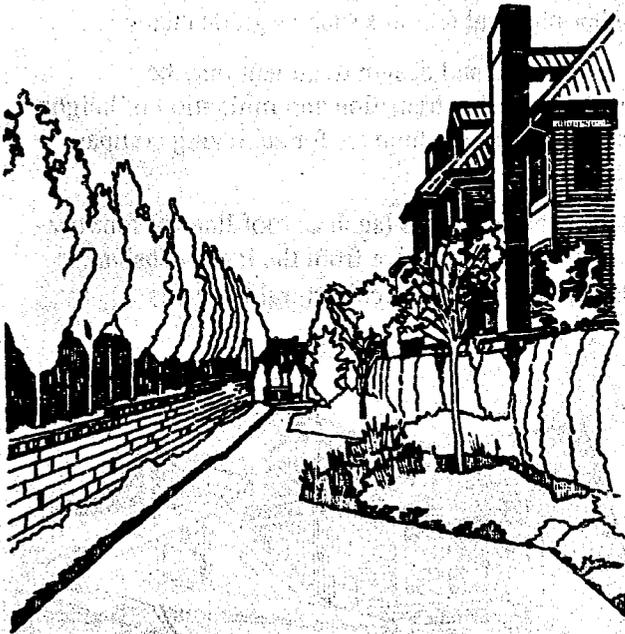
- use of architectural style, details (such as roof lines or fenestration), color or materials that derive from the less intensive zone. (See also Guideline C-1 Architectural Context)

Use of similar roof forms helps this mixed-use building fit in better with the small single-family house in the single family zone next door.



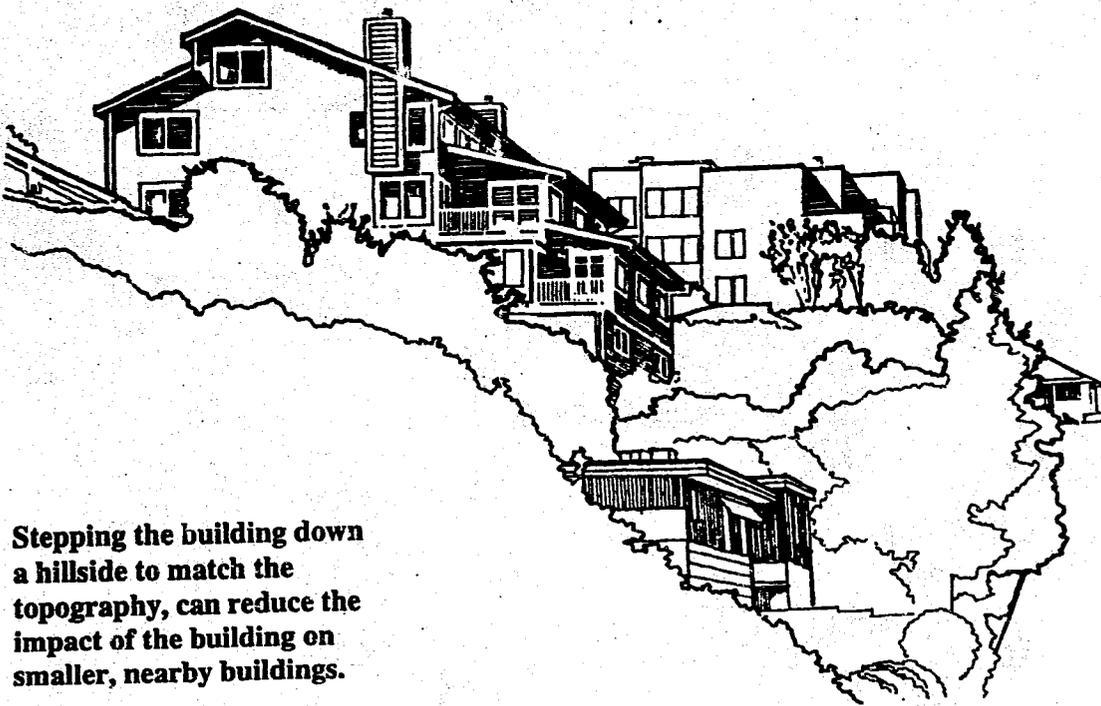
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- creative use of landscaping or other screening.
- location of features on-site to facilitate transition, such as locating required open space on the zone edge so the building is farther from the lower intensity zone.



**The varied landscape treatment helps soften the transition to existing development.**

- treating topographic conditions in ways that minimize impacts on neighboring development, such as by using a rockery rather than a retaining wall to give a more human scale to a project, or stepping a project down the hillside.



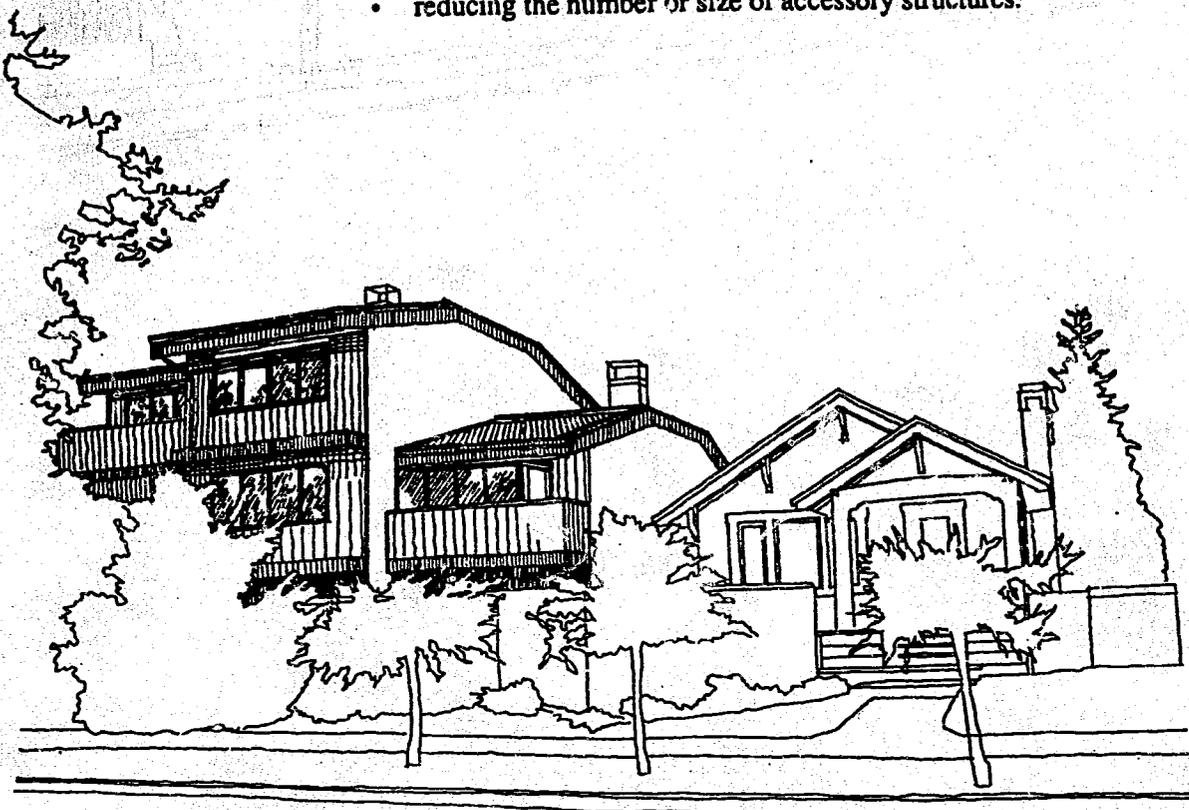
**Stepping the building down a hillside to match the topography, can reduce the impact of the building on smaller, nearby buildings.**

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- in a mixed-use project, siting the more compatible use near the zone edge.

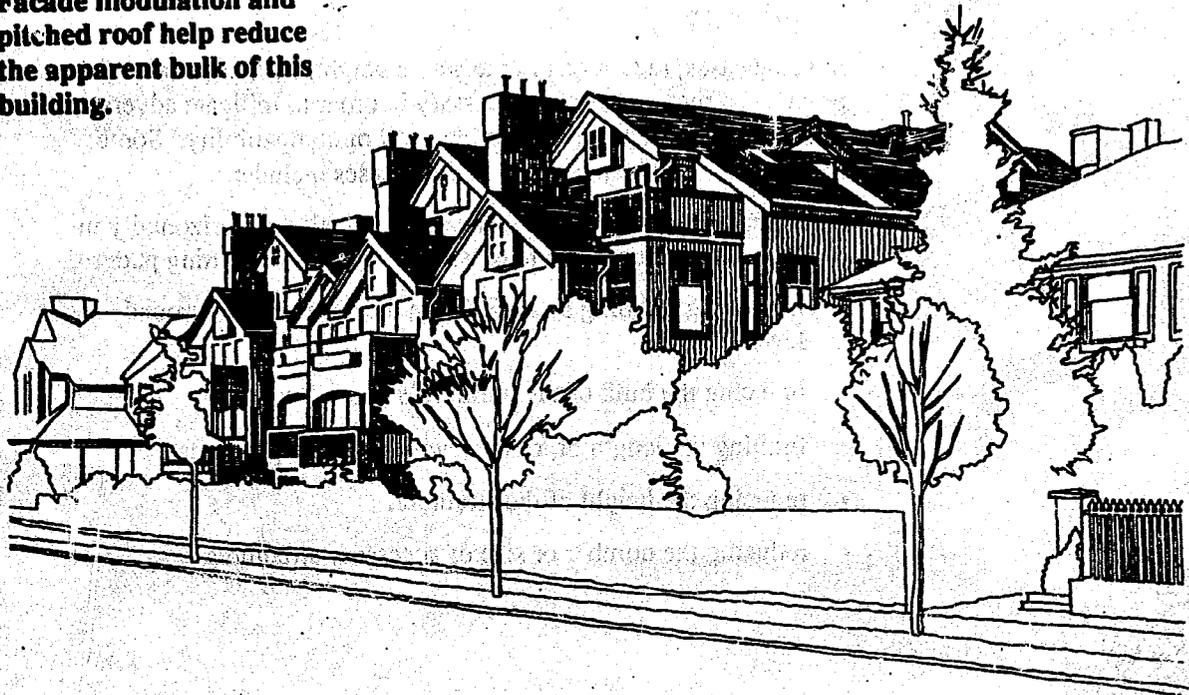
In some cases, reductions in the actual height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure may be necessary in order to mitigate adverse impacts and achieve an acceptable level of compatibility. Some techniques which can be used in these cases include:

- articulating the building's facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that conform to existing structures or platting pattern.
- increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level.
- reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors.
- limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying, facades.
- reducing the height of the structure.
- reducing the number or size of accessory structures.



**The bulk of this project's upper story was reduced and significant landscaping was retained or added to better fit with the neighboring single family zone.**

**Facade modulation and pitched roof help reduce the apparent bulk of this building.**



## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

### **C-1 Architectural Context**

**New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

- ***Explanation and Examples***

Paying attention to architectural characteristics of surrounding buildings, especially historic buildings, can help new buildings be more compatible with their neighbors, especially if a consistent pattern is already established by:

- Similar building articulation;
- Similar building scale and proportions;
- Similar or complementary architectural style;
- Similar or complementary roof forms;
- Similar building details and fenestration patterns; or
- Similar or complementary materials

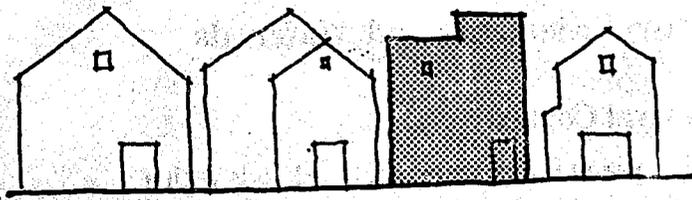
Even where there is no consistent architectural pattern, building design and massing can be used to complement certain physical conditions of existing development.

In some cases the existing context is not well defined, or may be undesirable. In such cases, a well-designed, new project can become a pioneer with the opportunity to establish a pattern or identity from which future development can take its cues.

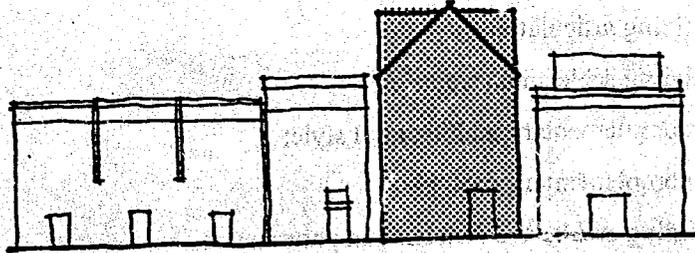
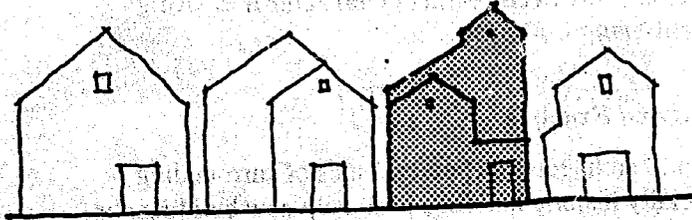
#### **Architectural Features**

Below are several methods that can help integrate new buildings into the surrounding architectural context, using compatible architectural features, fenestration patterns, and building proportions.

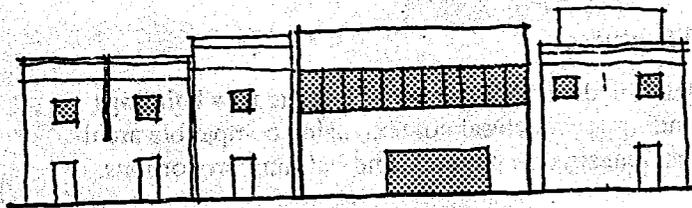
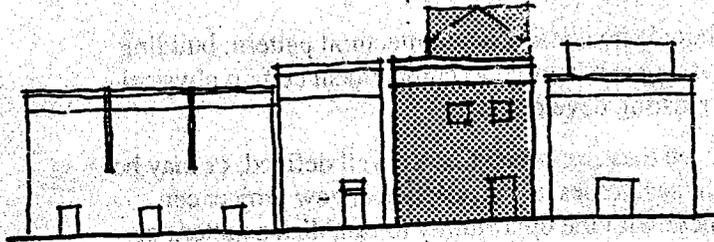
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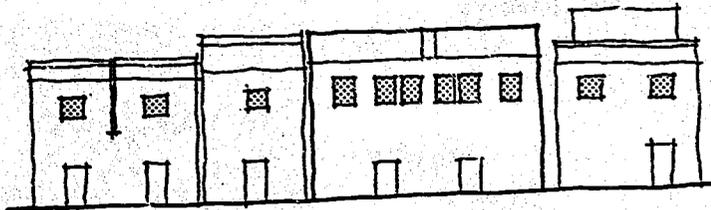
**Rooflines can reinforce the architectural character of a street.**



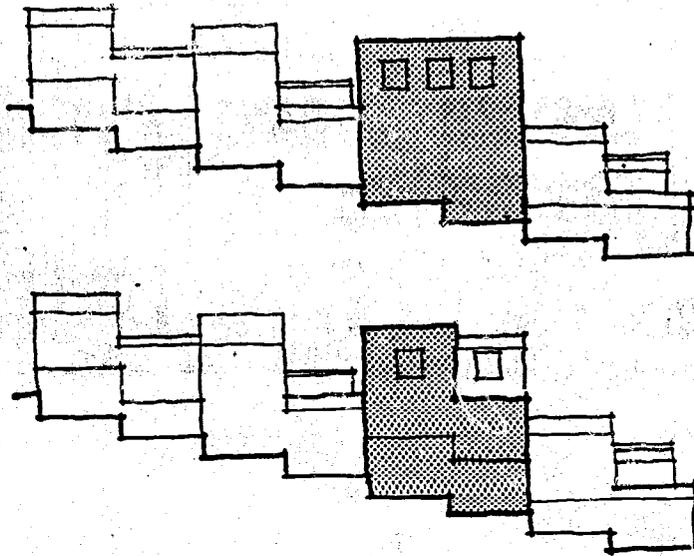
**Architectural features like cornices can relate to adjacent buildings, lowering the apparent, conflicting height of the building.**



**Sometimes an area has a number of buildings that feature a distinctive architectural concept or style. In these cases, referring to that organizational concept can achieve compatibility at a deeper level.**



The pattern and proportion of windows, doors and other glazed areas (fenestration) is important in determining the building's architectural character. Following the proportion and pattern of neighboring buildings will increase the consistency of the overall streetscape.

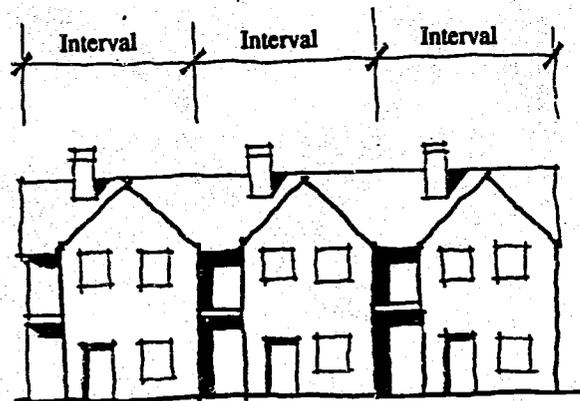


### Building Articulation

Below are several methods in which buildings may be articulated to create intervals which reflect and promote compatibility with their surroundings.

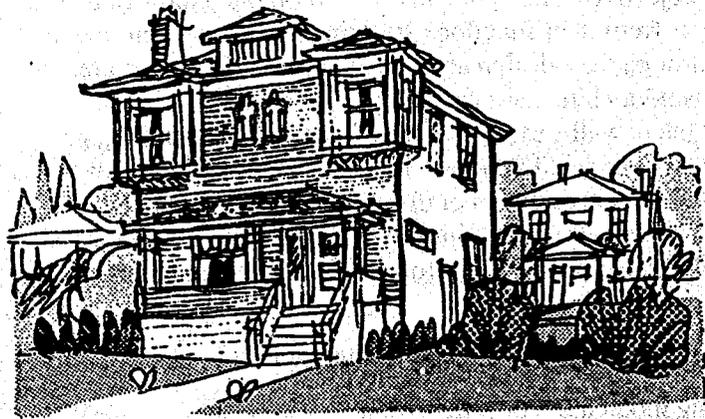
- Facade modulation - stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade.
- Repeating the window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
- Providing a porch, patio, deck, or covered entry for each interval.
- Providing a balcony or bay window for each interval.
- Changing the roofline by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval.
- Changing materials with the change in building plane.
- Providing a lighting fixture, trellis, tree or other landscape feature within each interval.

This building is articulated into intervals. Articulation methods include modulation, broken roof lines, building elements (chimneys, entries, etc.) and landscaping.





**This project  
relates well to its  
neighbors by  
reflecting similar  
proportions,  
materials and  
architectural  
features.**



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## **C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency**

**Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.**

**Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.**

**In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

### **• Explanation and Examples**

**This guideline focuses on the important design consideration of organizing the many architectural elements of a building into a unified whole, so that details and features can be seen to relate to the structure and not appear as add-ons.**

**The other objective of this guideline is to promote buildings whose form derives from their function. Buildings which present few or no clues through their design as to what purpose they serve are often awkward architectural neighbors. For example, use of expansive blank walls, extensive use of metal or glass siding, or extremely large or small windows in a residential project may create architectural confusion or disharmony with neighbors. Conversely, commercial buildings which overly mimic residential styles might be considered inappropriate in some commercial neighborhoods.**

**Architectural features may include any of the following.**

- Building modulation or articulation**
- Bay windows**
- A corner accent, such as a turret**
- Garden or courtyard elements (such as a fountain or gazebo)**
- Rooflines**
- Building entries**
- Building base.**

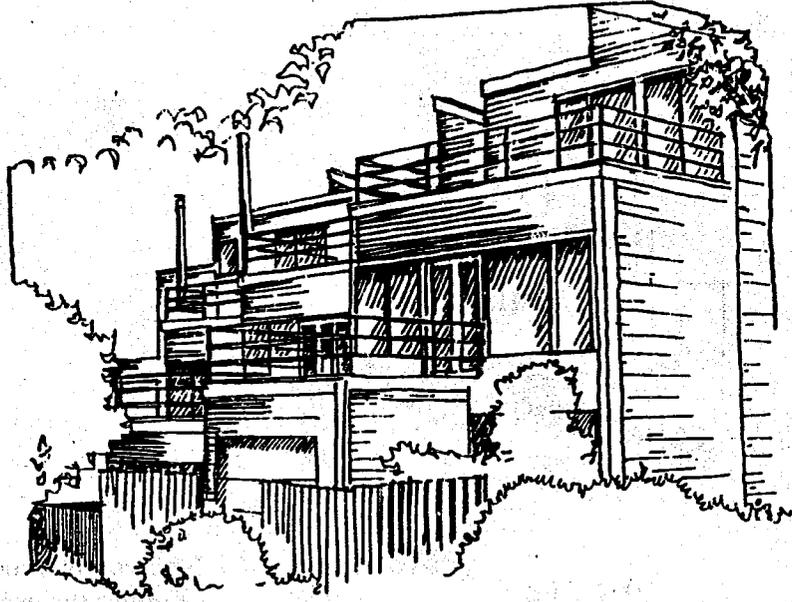
**Architectural details may include some of the following.**

- Treatment of masonry (such as ceramic tile inlay, paving stones, or alternating brick patterns)**
- Treatment of siding (such as wood siding combined with shingles to differentiate floors)**
- Articulation of columns**
- Sculpture or art work**

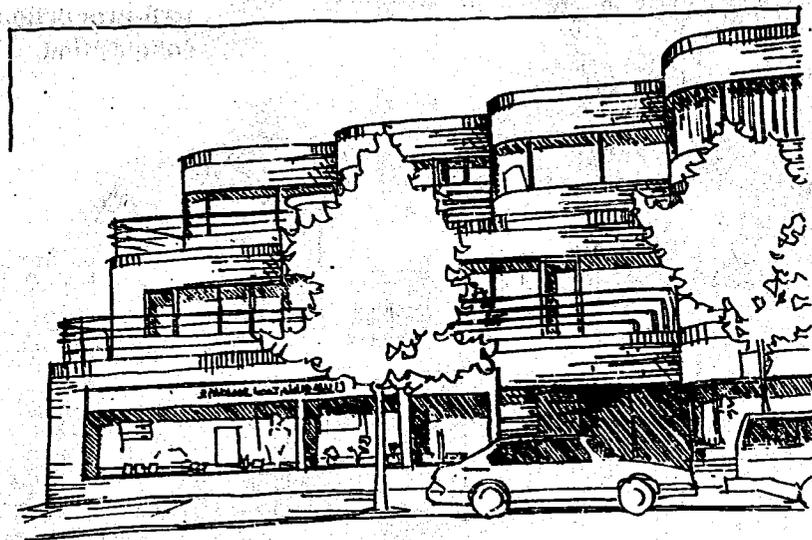
- Architectural lighting
- Detailed grilles and railings
- Special trim details and moldings
- A trellis or arbor.

Some illustrations of these features are presented on this and the following pages.

**A contemporary townhouse building that employs building articulation, broken roof lines, chimneys, multicolored trim and consistent detailing in a pleasing composition.**



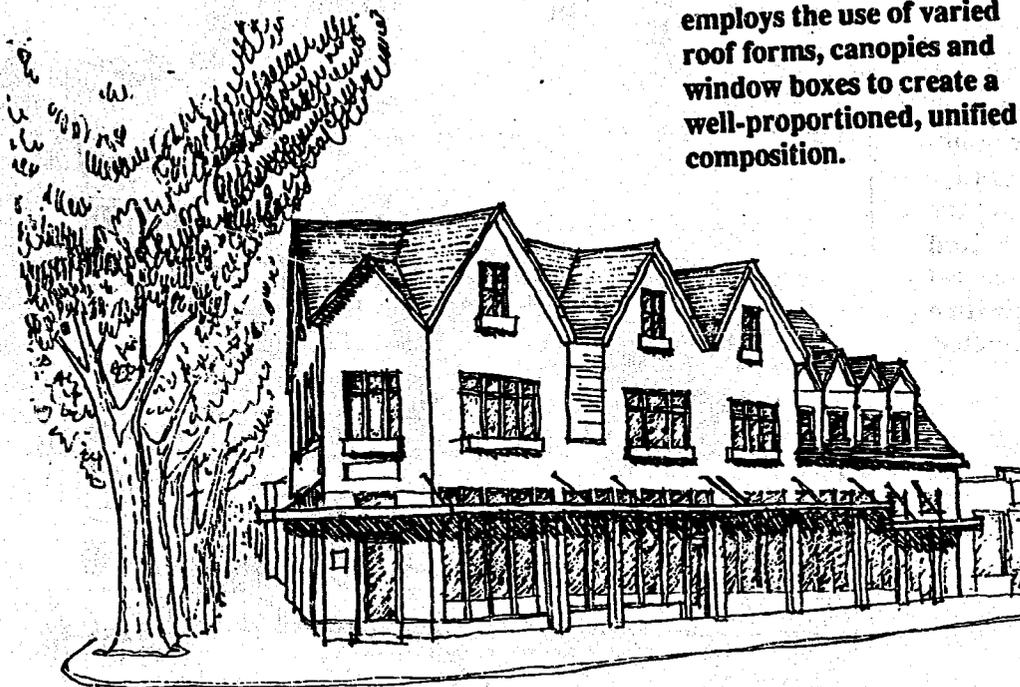
**This contemporary building employs decorative masonry, modulation of the building face, decks and railings, and a recessed entry to give it a distinctive architectural character.**



**Clever use of ornament can highlight a building's uses.**

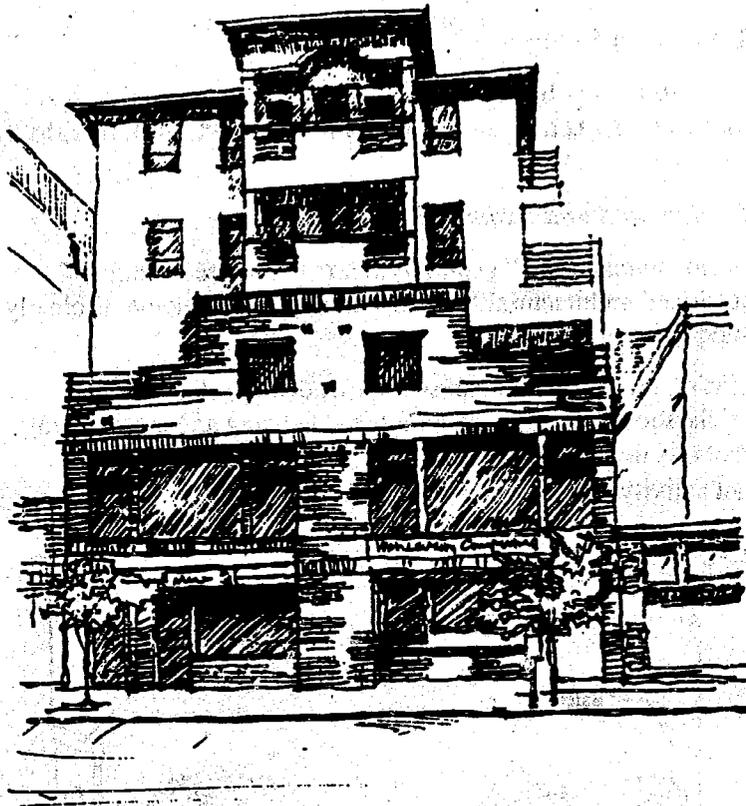


**This commercial building employs the use of varied roof forms, canopies and window boxes to create a well-proportioned, unified composition.**



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**This mixed-use building differentiates the residential uses from the commercial uses below, and clearly distinguishes the base, middle and top. It stands in better with its lower height neighbors by setting back the upper floors and changing finish materials.**



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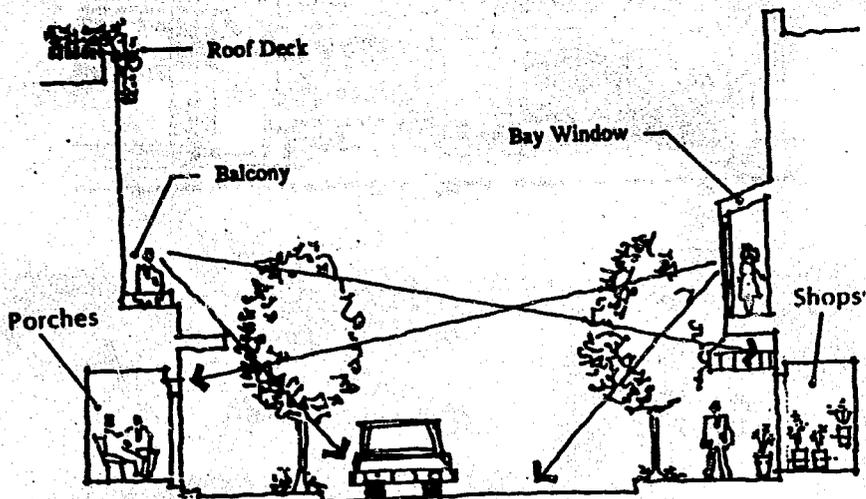
### C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

#### • *Explanation and Examples*

The term "human scale" generally refers to the use of human-proportioned architectural features and site design elements clearly oriented to human activity.

A building has a good human scale if its details, elements and materials allow people to feel comfortable using and approaching it. Features that give a building human scale also encourage human activity.

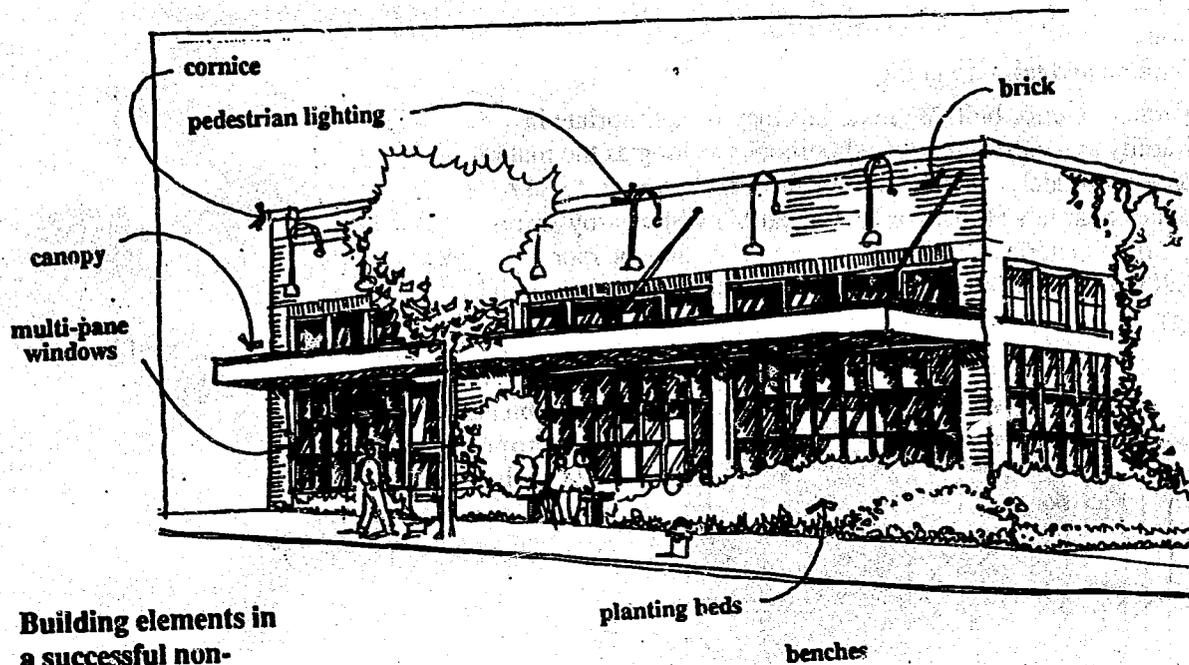


Elements along the streetfront which promote a human scale on the street.

The following are some of the building elements that may be used to achieve better human scale.

- Pedestrian-oriented open space such as a courtyard, garden, patio or other unified landscaped areas.
- Bay windows extending out from the building face that reflect an internal space such as a room or alcove.
- Individual windows in upper stories that:
  - are approximately the size and proportion of a traditional window.
  - include a trim or molding that appears substantial from the sidewalk.
  - are separated from adjacent windows by a vertical element.

- Windows grouped together to form larger areas of glazing can have a human scale if individual window units are separated by moldings or jambs.
- Windows with small multiple panes of glass.
- Window patterns, building articulation and other treatments that help to identify individual residential units in a multifamily building.
- Upper story setbacks.
- A porch or covered entry.
- Pedestrian weather protection in the form of canopies, awnings, arcades or other elements wide enough to protect at least one person.
- Visible chimneys



**Building elements in a successful non-residential project**

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## C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

### • *Explanation and Examples*

The selection and use of exterior materials is a key ingredient in determining how a building will look. Some materials, by their nature, can give a sense of permanence or can provide texture or scale that helps new buildings fit better in their surroundings.

Materials typical to Seattle include:

- Clear or painted wood siding
- Shingles
- Brick
- Stone
- Ceramic and terra-cotta tile

Many other exterior building materials may be appropriate in multifamily and commercial neighborhoods as long as the materials are appropriately detailed and finished, for instance, to take account of Seattle's climate or be compatible with nearby structures. Some materials, such as mirrored glass, may be more difficult to integrate into residential or neighborhood commercial settings.

Simple building forms can be enlivened with the appropriate use of materials and the creative use of color.



## C-5 Structured Parking Entrances

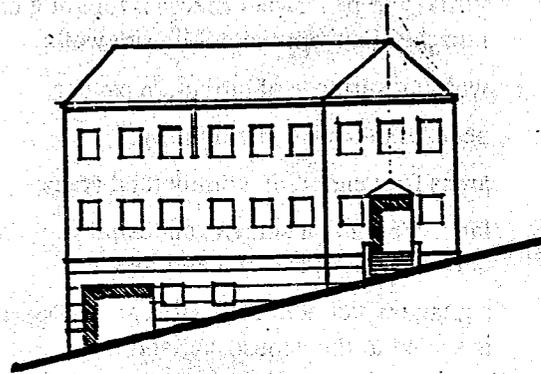
The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

### • *Examples*

- Subordinate the garage entrance to the pedestrian entrance in terms of size, prominence on the streetscape, location and design emphasis. Sometimes the relative importance of the garage entrance can be reduced by enhancing the pedestrian entrance.
- Locate the entry on the side of the facade where it will draw less attention than if it is centered in the facade.
- Recess the portion of the facade where the entry is located to help conceal it.
- Extend portions of the structure over the garage entry to help conceal it.
- Emphasize other elements of the facade to reduce the visual prominence of the garage entry.
- Use screening and landscaping to soften the appearance of the garage entry from the street.
- Locate the garage entry where the topography of the site can help conceal it.



Garage entry subordinated by emphasizing the pedestrian entry.



Garage entry located where the topography of the site can help to minimize its dominance of the facade.

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## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

### **D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

- ***Explanation and Examples***

**If a building is set back from the sidewalk, the space between the building and the public right-of-way may be conducive to pedestrian or resident activity. In business districts where pedestrian activity is desired, the primary function of any open space between commercial buildings and the sidewalk is to provide visual and physical access into the building and perhaps also to provide a space for additional outdoor activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining. Street fronts can also feature art work, street furniture and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building's setting.**

**Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk a sufficient distance, pedestrian enhancements should be considered in the resulting street front.**

**Examples of desirable features to include:**

- visual and pedestrian access (including barrier-free access) into the site from the public sidewalk;**
- walking surfaces of attractive pavers;**
- pedestrian-scaled site lighting;**
- areas for vendors in commercial areas;**
- landscaping that screens undesirable elements or that enhances the space and architecture;**
- signage which identifies uses and shops clearly but which is scaled to the pedestrian; and**
- site furniture, art work or amenities such as fountains, benches, pergolas, kiosks, etc.**

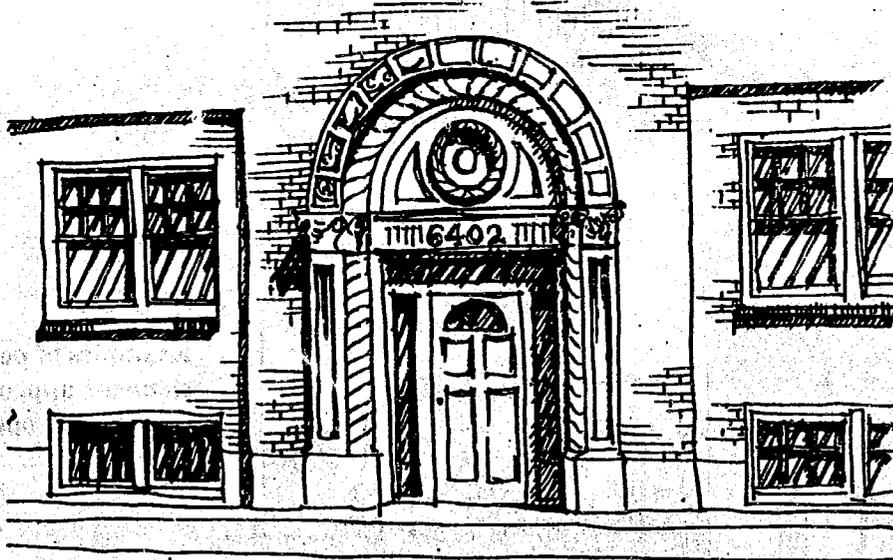
**Examples of features to avoid are:**

- asphalt or gravel pavement;**
- adjacent unscreened parking lots;**
- adjacent chain-link fences; and**
- adjacent blank walls without appropriate screening.**

The following treatment of entrances can provide emphasis and interest.

- Special detailing or architectural features such as ornamental glazing, railings and balustrades, awnings, canopies, decorative pavement, decorative lighting, seats, architectural molding, planter boxes, trellises, art work signs, or other elements near the doorway.
- Visible signage identifying building address.

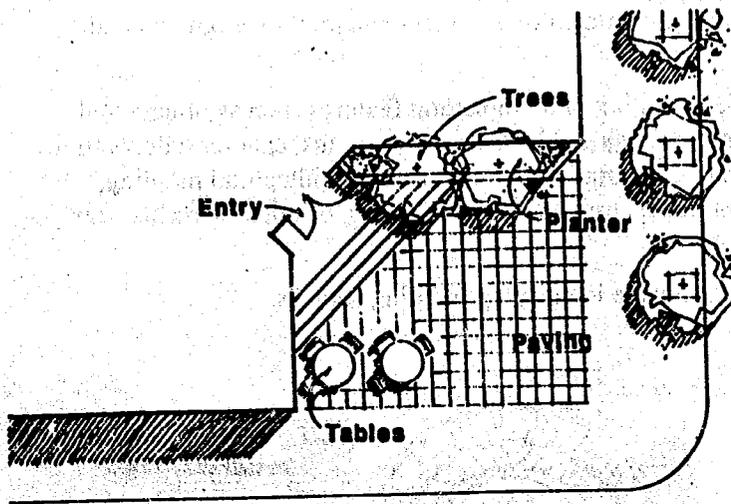
Traditional building entries were highlighted by strong forms and the creative use of materials.



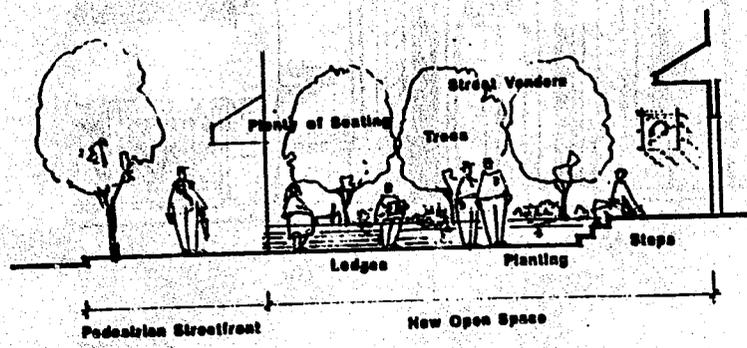
The entries along this street are accented by portals, grand staircases and balconies.



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**Pedestrian open space**



**Examples of pedestrian scaled elements appropriate to commercial open space.**

## D-2 Blank Walls

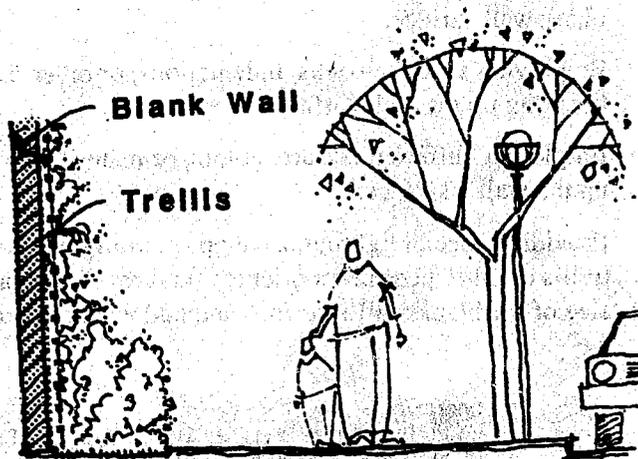
Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

- *Explanation and Examples*

A wall may be considered "large" if it has a blank surface substantially greater in size than similar walls of neighboring buildings. Blank walls provide opportunities for devacement with graffiti. The following examples are possible methods for treating blank walls.

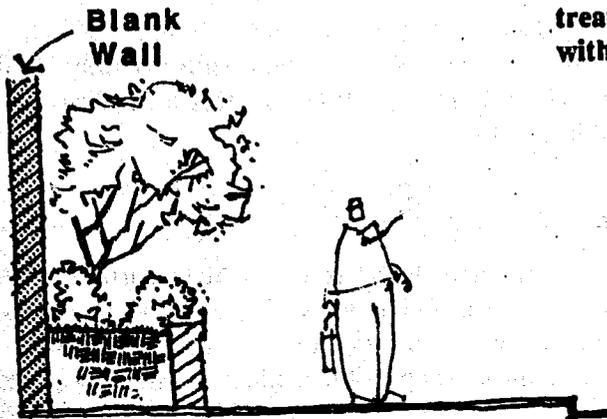
- Installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials.

Positive example of treating a blank wall with trellis and art.



- Setting the wall back and providing a landscaped or raised planter bed in front of the wall, including plant materials that could grow to obscure or screen the wall's surface.

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**Positive example of treating a blank wall with a planter.**

Providing art (mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc.) over a substantial portion of the blank wall surface.

Employing small setbacks, indentations, or other means of breaking up the wall surface.

Employing different texture, colors, or materials to break up the wall's surface.

Providing special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis or other pedestrian oriented features that break up the size of the blank wall's surface and add visual interest.



**Alternative to solid, or blank-looking fence.**

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### D-3 Retaining Walls

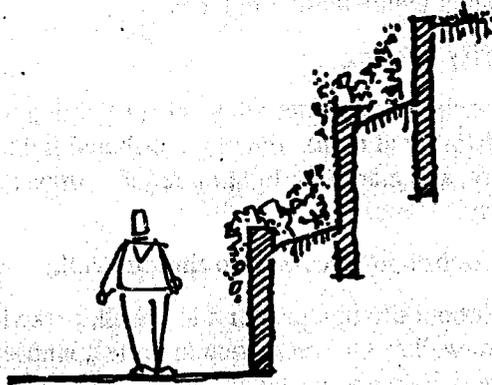
Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where high retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscape.

- **Explanation and Examples**

The following are examples of methods to treat retaining walls.

- Any of the techniques or features listed under blank walls above.
- Terracing and landscaping the retaining walls.

Positive example of terracing.



- Substituting a stone wall, rockery, modular masonry or special material.
- Locating hanging plant materials below or above the wall.

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## D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.

### • *Examples*

The following examples illustrate some considerations to address in highly visible parking lots.

#### Treatment of parking area perimeter

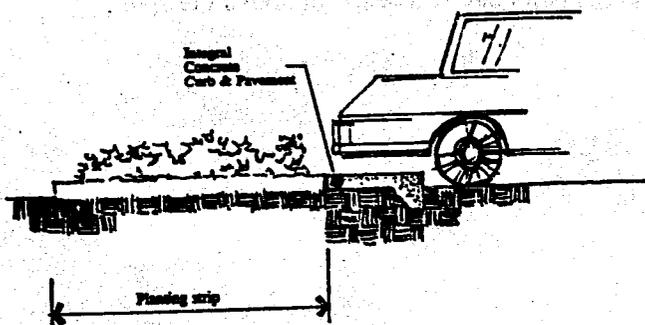
- The edges of parking lot pavement adjacent to landscaped areas and other pavement can be unsightly and difficult to maintain. Providing a curb at the perimeter of parking areas can alleviate these problems.

#### Security lighting

- Provide the appropriate levels of lighting to create adequate visibility at night. Evenly distributed lighting increases security, and glare-free lighting reduces impacts on near-by property.

#### Encroachment of cars onto the sidewalk:

- Without tire bumpers or a low wall, parked cars can hang over sidewalks. One technique to protect landscaped and pedestrian areas from encroachment by parked cars is to provide a wide wheel stop about two feet from the sidewalk. A preferable technique is to install an extended curb, which is more durable than wheel stops and does not catch debris.



Extended curb  
used to protect  
landscaped buffer.

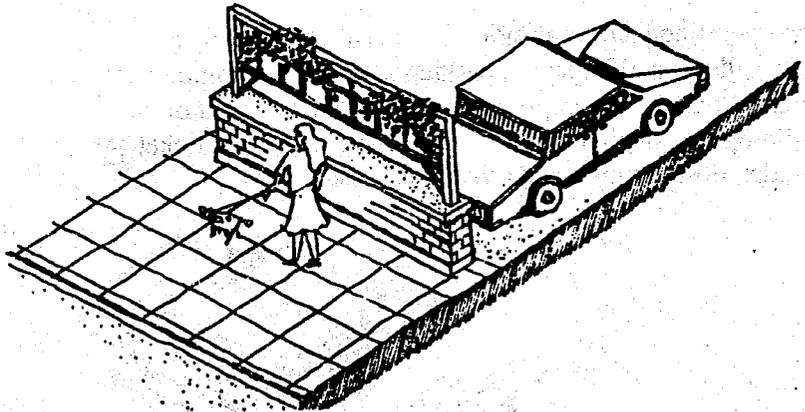
#### Signs and equipment

- Reduce sign clutter by painting markings on the pavement or by consolidating signs. Provide storage that is out of view from the sidewalk and adjacent properties for moveable or temporary equipment like sawhorses or barrels.

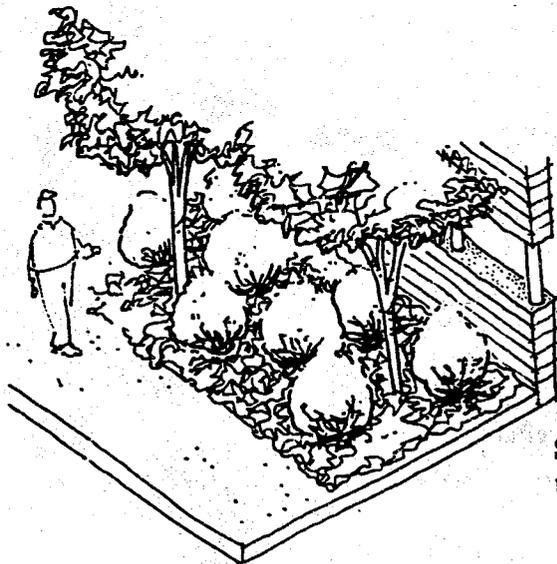
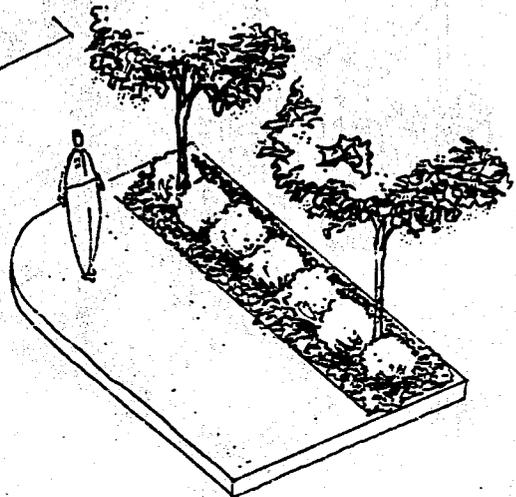
### Screening of Parking

- Screening of parking areas need not be uniform along the property frontage. Variety in the type and relative amount of screening may be appropriate.
- Screen walls constructed of durable, attractive materials need not extend above waist level. Screen walls across a street or adjacent to a residential zone could also include landscaping or a trellis or grillwork with climbing vines.
- Screening can be designed to provide clear visibility into parking areas to promote personal safety.

Example of a screen wall with trellis.



Example of a landscape hedge with perimeter trees.



Successful landscape treatment of a parking lot

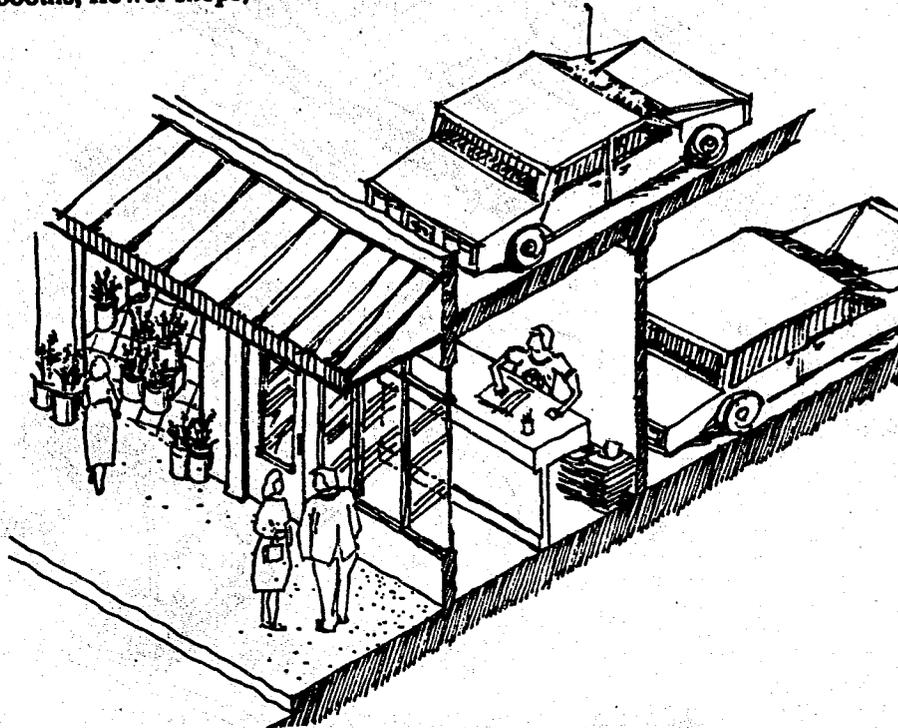
## D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

- **Examples**

The following examples illustrate various methods of improving the appearance of at-grade parking structures.

- Incorporating pedestrian-oriented uses at street level can reduce the visual impact of parking structures in commercial areas. Sometimes a depth of only 10' along the front of the building is enough to provide space for newsstands, ticket booths, flower shops, and other viable uses.



Providing space for pedestrian oriented businesses along parking garage frontage.

- Setting the parking structure back from the sidewalk and installing dense landscaping.
- Incorporating any of the blank wall treatments listed in Guideline D2 above.
- Visually integrating the parking structure with adjacent buildings.
- Continuing a frieze, cornice, canopy, overhang, trellis or other devices at the top of the parking level.

- Incorporating into the parking structure a well-lit pedestrian walkway, stairway or ramp from the sidewalk to the upper level of the building.
- Setting back a portion of the parking structure to allow for the retention of an existing significant tree.
- Using a portion of the top of the parking level as an outdoor deck, patio or garden with a rail, bench or other guard device around the perimeter.

**Parking lot at ground level screened by an artwork grille.**



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## D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas

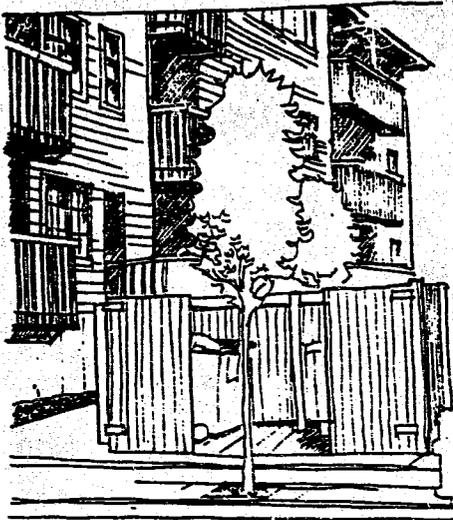
Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

### • Explanation and Examples

Unightly service elements can detract from the compatibility of new projects and create hazards for pedestrians and autos.

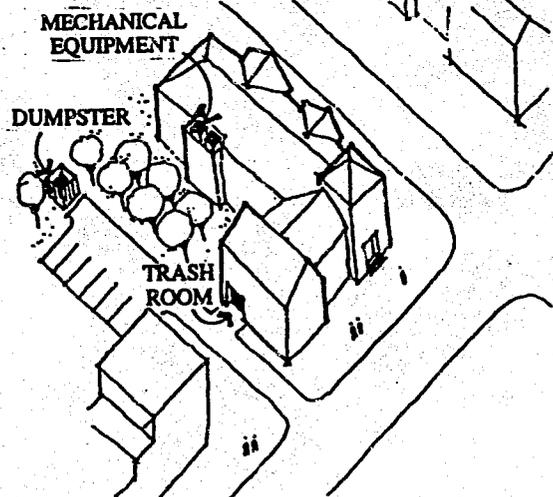
The following examples illustrate considerations to address in locating and screening service areas and utilities.

- Plan the feature in a less visible location on the site.
- Screen it to be less visible. (For example, a utility meter can be located behind a screen wall so that it is not visible from the building entrance.)
  - Use durable materials that complement the building.
  - Incorporate landscaping to make the screen more effective.
  - Locate the opening to the area away from the sidewalk.



This dumpster screen opens onto the sidewalk making it less useful for residents and ineffective.

Service elements located away from the street edge and not generally visible from the sidewalk.



## D-7 Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

- *Explanation and Examples*

Project design should be reviewed for its contribution to enhancing the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security within the environment under review. To do this, the question needs to be answered: Do the design elements detract from or do they reinforce feelings of security in the residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors who enter the area?

Techniques that can help promote safety include the following:

- Providing adequate lighting.
- Retaining clear lines of sight.
- Use of semi-transparent security screening, rather than opaque walls, where appropriate.
- Avoiding blank, windowless walls that attract graffiti and that do not permit residents or workers to observe the street.
- Use of landscaping that maintains visibility, such as short shrubs and pruning trees so there are no branches below head height.
- Creative use of ornamental grille as fencing or over ground-floor windows in some locations.
- Absence of structures that provide hiding places for criminal activity.
- Design of parking areas to allow natural surveillance by maintaining clear lines of sight both for those who park there and for occupants of nearby buildings.
- Clear directional signage.
- Encouraging "eyes on the street" through the placement of windows, balconies and street-level uses.

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## **E. Landscaping**

### **E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites**

**Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

- **Examples**

**Several ways to reinforce the landscape design character of the local neighborhood are listed below:**

**Street trees**

**If a street has uniform planting of street trees, or a distinctive species, plant street trees that match the planting pattern or species.**

**Similar plant materials**

**When many lots on a block feature similar landscape materials, emphasis on these materials will help a new project fit into the local context.**

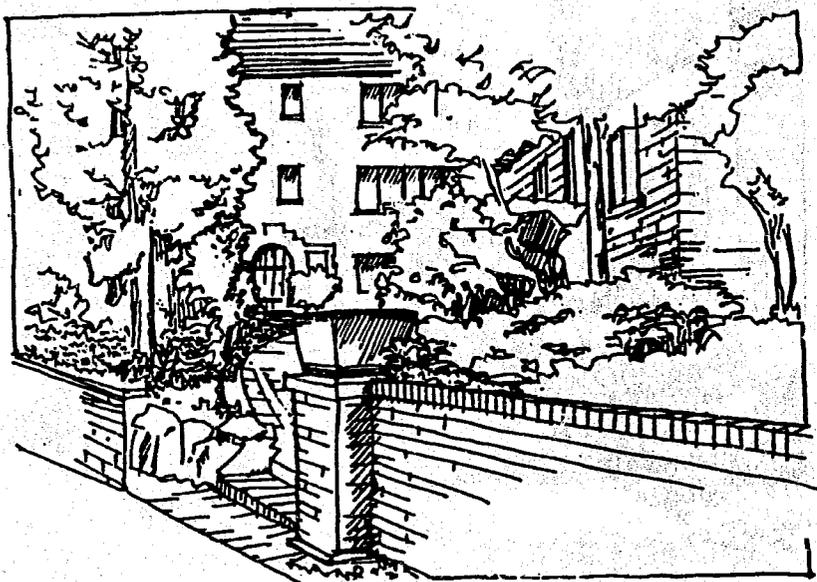
**Similar construction materials, textures, colors, or elements**

**Extending a low brick wall, using paving similar to a neighbor's or employing similar stairway construction are ways to achieve design continuity.**

## E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Creative landscaping and a well detailed, low wall help create a garden for the residents in the entry forecourt of this residential building.

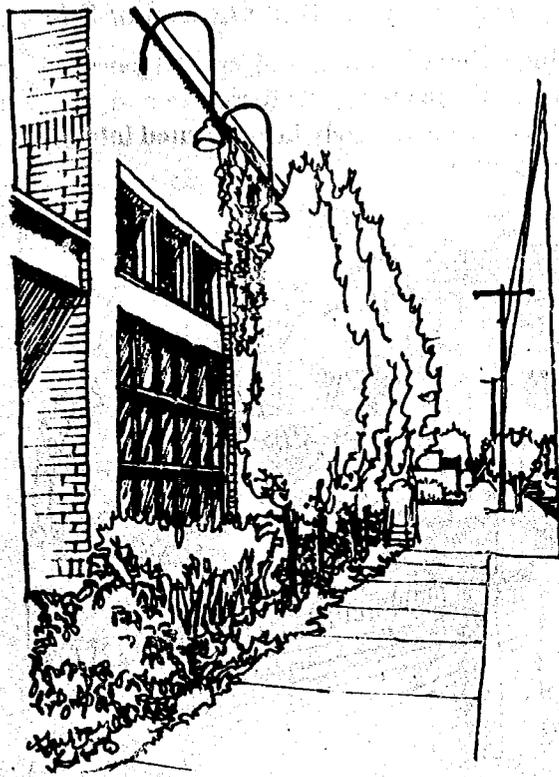


### • *Examples*

Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below:

- Soften the form of the building by screening blank walls, terracing retaining walls, etc.
- Increase privacy and security through screening and/or shading.
- Provide a framework such as a trellis or arbor for plants to grow on.
- Incorporate a planter guard or low planter wall as part of the architecture.
- Distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation.
- Incorporate upper story planter boxes or roof planters.
- Include a special feature such as a courtyard, fountain or pool.
- Emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting.
- Screen a building from view by its neighbors, or an existing use from the new building.

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Vines, hardy shrubs and columnar trees used to landscape a narrow planting bed.



Plain Wall



Improved condition with trellis and landscaping

Note how the lattice work and landscaping improve the pedestrian environment.

### **E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

#### **• Explanation and Examples**

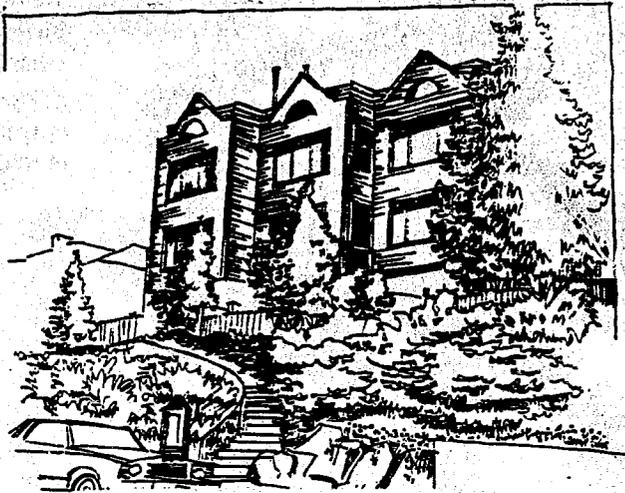
The following conditions may merit special attention. The examples suggest some ways to address the issue.

#### **High-bank front yard**

Where the building's ground floor is elevated above a sidewalk pedestrian's eye level, landscaping can help make the transition between grades. Several techniques are listed below.

- Rockeries with floral displays, live ground cover or shrubs.
- Terraces with floral displays, ground covers or shrubs.
- Low retaining walls with raised planting strips.
- Stone or brick masonry walls with vines or shrubs.

**Positive example of a high-bank front yard landscaped with evergreen ground cover.**



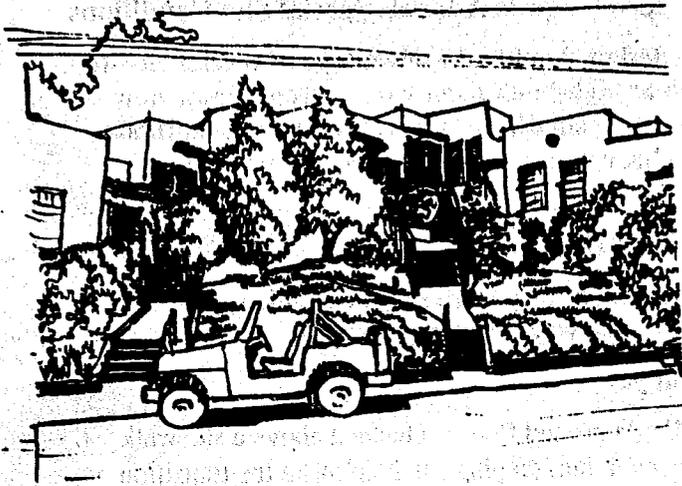
#### **Barrier-free access**

Where wheelchair ramps must be provided on a street front, the ramp structure might include a planting strip on the sidewalk side of the elevated portions of the ramp.

#### **Steep topography**

Special plantings or erosion control measures may be necessary to prevent site destabilization or to enhance the visual qualities of the site in connection with a neighborhood improvement program.

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**This residential project enhanced its steeply sloping site with generous landscape.**

### **Boulevards**

**Incorporate landscaping which reflects and reinforces the unique character of these streets.**



**Boulevards are important visual corridors linking parks and neighborhoods with bands of green. Project landscaping can emphasize their special character.**

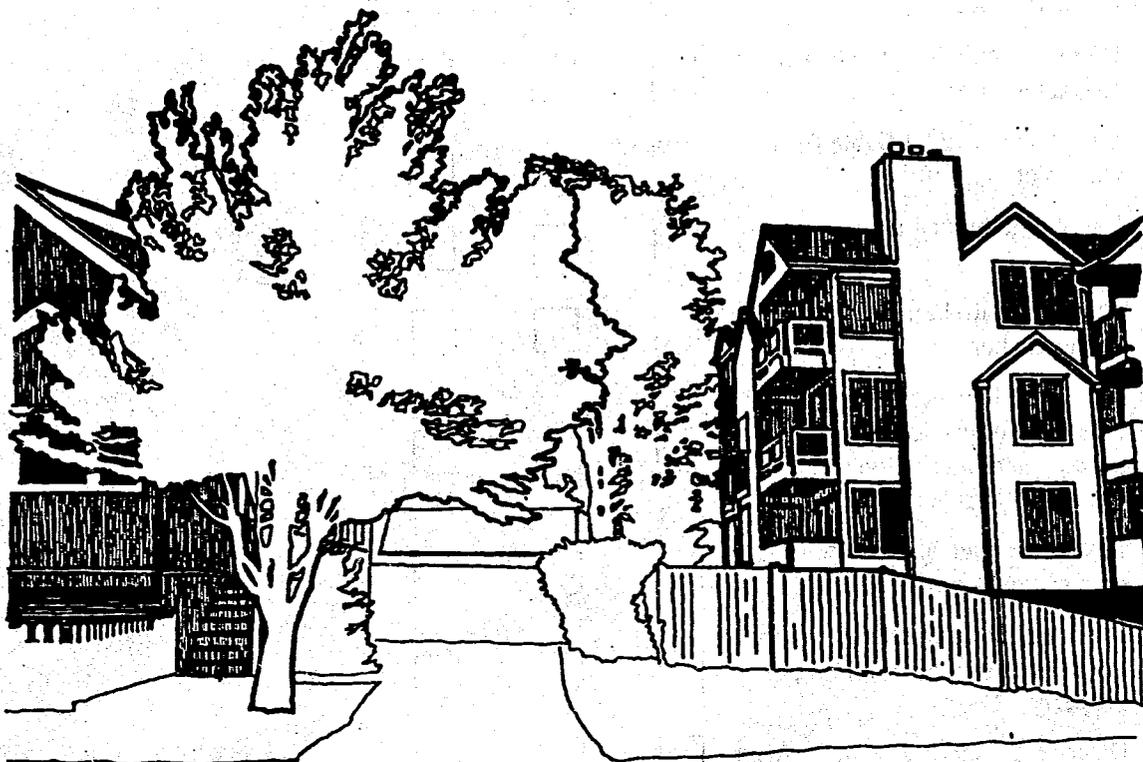
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### **Greenbelt or other natural setting**

- Minimize the removal of significant trees.
- Replace trees that were removed with new trees.
- Emphasize naturalizing or native landscape materials.
- Retain natural greenbelt vegetation that contributes to greenbelt preservation.
- Select colors that are more appropriate to the natural setting

### **On-site vegetation**

- Retain significant vegetation where possible.
- Use new plantings similar to vegetation removed during construction, when that vegetation was distinctive.



**Site planning that retains significant trees can make a new project seem more like an established part of its neighborhood.**

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# IV. Design Guidelines Checklist

This checklist is intended as a summary of the issues addressed by the guidelines. It is not meant to be a regulatory device or a substitute for the language and examples found in the guidelines themselves. Rather, it is a tool for assisting the determination about which guidelines are most applicable on a particular site.

## A. Site Planning

	N/A	Lower Priority	Higher Priority
1. Reinforce existing site characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Reinforce existing streetscape characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Entry clearly identifiable from the street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Encourage human activity on street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Minimize intrusion into privacy on adjacent sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Use space between building and sidewalk to provide security, privacy and interaction (residential projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Maximize open space opportunity on site (residential projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Minimize parking and auto impacts on pedestrians and adjoining property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Discourage parking in street front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Orient building to corner and parking away from corner on public street fronts (corner lots)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## B. Height, Bulk and Scale

1. Provide sensitive transition to nearby, less-intensive zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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N/A      Lower Priority      Higher Priority

**C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

- 1. Complement positive existing character
- 2. Respond to nearby historic structures
- 3. Follow architectural concept
- 4. Use human scale and human activity
- 5. Use durable, attractive and well-detailed finish materials
- 6. Minimize garage entrances

**D. Pedestrian Environment**

- 1. Provide convenient, attractive and protected pedestrian entry
- 2. Avoid blank walls
- 3. Minimize height of retaining walls
- 4. Minimize visual and physical intrusion of parking lots on pedestrian areas
- 5. Minimize visual impact of parking structures
- 6. Screen dumpsters, utility and service areas
- 7. Consider personal safety

**E. Landscaping**

- 1. Reinforce existing landscape character of neighborhood
- 2. Landscape to enhance the building or site
- 3. Landscape to take advantage of special site conditions

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SEP 30 1993



Seattle  
Department of Construction and Land Use

R. F. Krochalis, Director  
Norman B. Rice, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: George Benson, President, Seattle City Council  
via Diana Gale, Director, Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Rick Krochalis, Director *Rick Krochalis*

DATE: September 29, 1993

SUBJECT: Ordinance to Implement Design Review

We are very pleased to submit the attached ordinance, which implements the Design Review program recently adopted by the City Council, for your consideration. The ordinance amends the Land Use and Administrative codes, as well as the City's SEPA ordinance, to establish the program, and authorizes the hiring of a Senior Urban Design Planner and the fee for design review.

As you know, design review is intended to build trust and communication among developers, neighborhoods and the City. The Design Guidelines offer a flexible tool, an alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements, which will allow new development to respond better to the distinctive character of the neighborhood in which it is located.

Senior Urban Design Planner Position

We are proposing that the design review program be administered by a Senior Urban Design Planner. This person must have the skills to work directly with designers, but also be able to explain design concepts clearly to the public, and keep the broader policy goals of the City in mind as well as the design of an individual building. In order for the program to be successful, the designer must have credentials which make them credible to the design community and neighborhoods.

We are proposing that the City's Administrative Code be changed to recognize DCLU's new role in design review. The Administrative Code now requires that DCLU have on staff a licensed structural engineer who can advise the Director, unless the Director has such qualifications. The attached ordinance adds a requirement that the Department also have a qualified architect or urban designer to give advice on compliance with design guidelines. This establishes the importance of the new program and ensures that the Department will have the expertise to successfully administer design review.

Design Review Fees

The Mayor's proposal for design review was expected to cost about \$125,800 annually. The Mayor recommended that \$73,500 of the cost be paid by the General Fund, and that the remainder of the costs be covered by a permit fee of \$1,300 per application. In adopting the Design Review program, the Council made several changes. As we described in a memo sent to Councilmembers on August 13, 1993, two of these changes will directly affect the cost of the program.

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George Benson  
September 29, 1993  
Page 2

The first change is that the program will be phased in over a period of 18 months. Because fewer projects will be reviewed during the first year, the fixed costs of the program per project increase. The second change is the addition of more members to the Design Review Board. This raises costs because meetings will be longer, there will be more meetings, more clerical costs, and more time required to write decisions, select and train Board members, and provide project oversight. We also expect that projects may take 2 to 6 weeks longer to process as a result of this change.

Together, these changes will cost approximately \$10,700 in the first year, and \$9,400 in the second and future years. The attached ordinance therefore sets the fees for design review at \$1,800 per application. Of course, any additional General Fund support would lower this amount.

#### Summary

We believe that the attached ordinance carries out the intent of the Council Resolution adopting design review. If you have any questions or comments about the proposed legislation, please call Rebecca Herzfeld at 684-8874. We are looking forward to working with you on the adoption of the program so that we can encourage better design and improve understanding between developers, neighborhoods and the City.

#### Attachments

93-288

# City of Seattle

Executive Department—Office of Management and Budget

Diana Gale, Director  
Norman B. Rice, Mayor

COPY RECEIVED

SEATTLE CITY ATTORNEY



*Approved  
Pat Schneider  
10/5/93*

September 30, 1993

The Honorable Mark Sidran  
City Attorney  
City of Seattle

Attention: *Pat Schneider*  
Dear Mr. Sidran:

The Mayor is proposing to the City Council that the enclosed legislation be adopted.

**REQUESTING DEPARTMENT**

Construction and Land Use

**SUBJECT:**

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use, zoning, and environmental protection; amending Sections 3.06.030, 23.60.154, 23.76.004, 23.76.006, 23.76.008, 23.76.012, 23.76.024 and 25.05.675, of the Seattle Municipal Code; repealing Section 23.40.010, Design Departure; adding a new Section 23.76.011; creating a new Chapter 23.41, in the Land Use Code, Title 23, SMC, to establish an Early Project Implementation and Design Review Process for new multifamily and commercial structures; adopting Citywide Design Guidelines; setting the fee for Design Review; and authorizing reclassification of a position in the Department of Construction and Land Use to administer the Design Review process.

Pursuant to the City Council's S.O.P. 100-014, the Executive Department is forwarding this request for legislation to your office for review and drafting.

After reviewing this request and any necessary redrafting of the enclosed legislation, return the legislation to OMB. Any specific questions regarding the legislation can be directed to Daniel Becker at 684-8073.

Sincerely,

Norman B. Rice  
Mayor

by

*[Signature]*

DIANA GALE  
Budget Director

DG/db/rsb

Enclosure

cc: Director, DCLU

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1 policies on projects that have undergone Design Review shall  
2 comply with design guidelines applicable to the project.

3       Section 12.     Effective April 15, 1994, the Citywide  
4 Design Guidelines, attached hereto as Attachment A, are  
5 hereby adopted for use in the implementation of the Early  
6 Project Implementation Program, Design Review Element, for  
7 the City of Seattle.

8       Section 13.     The fee for Design Review shall be  
9 \$1,800 per application.

10       Section 14.     This Ordinance shall take effect and be  
11 in force thirty days from and after its passage and approval  
12 by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect at the time it  
13 shall become law under the provisions of the City Charter.  
14

15  
16 *amended by*

17 *LUC*

18 *10/13/93*

19 *B M*  
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3. In the event that, in one of the five (5) geographic areas, more projects are undergoing simultaneous Design Review than the Design Review Board members assigned to that area can review in a timely manner, the unassigned at-large Design Review Board members described in Section C1a may serve. If an individual at-large member is unable to serve, the Director may appoint a member of the unassigned at-large Design Review Board to serve in his or her absence, provided that each at-large interest group is represented by one member. In addition, a Design Review Board may review projects outside of its designated geographic subarea to expedite review, provided that the local community representative and local business representative shall review development only within their subarea.

4. ~~A Design Review Board member shall not engage in private communication with project proponents or members of the affected community regarding a proposal under review by the Board on which the member serves.~~

AMENDED BY LAND USE COMMITTEE 11/13/93 - BOARD MEETINGS  
NOT QUASI-JUDICIAL.

5. In the event that a Design Review Board member is unable to serve, substitutions for the three at-large interest groups may be made as described in Section C3.

D. Meetings of the Design Review Board

1. Project-specific pre-design public meetings shall be held as required in Section 23.41.014B, at a location in the same general neighborhood as the proposed project. Mailed notice and placards for the pre-design public meeting shall be provided as described in Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

2. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Design Review Board shall be held in the evening in a location which is accessible and conveniently located in the area of the city to which the Board is assigned. Public notice for the

Amended by LUK  
10/13/93 BOB M

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1 regularly scheduled Design Review Board meetings shall be  
2 posted in the Department and published in the general mailed  
3 release.

4 3. All meetings of the Design Review Board are  
5 open to the general public.

6 **23.41.010 Design Review Guidelines**

7 The adopted Citywide Design Guidelines provide the basis  
8 for Design Review Board recommendations and City Design  
9 Review decisions. Neighborhoods may develop design  
10 guidelines specific to a neighborhood's individual character.  
11 Neighborhood Design Guidelines may amend or supersede the  
12 Citywide Design Guidelines and provide the basis for Design  
13 Review decisions in that neighborhood, to the extent provided  
14 by the City Council in adopting the Neighborhood Design  
15 Guidelines.

16 **23.41.012 Development Standard Departures**

17 A. Departure from Land Use Code requirements may be  
18 permitted for new multifamily and commercial development as  
19 part of the Design Review process. Departures may be allowed  
20 if an applicant demonstrates that departures from Land Use  
21 Code standards would result in a development which better  
22 meets the intent of the adopted Design Guidelines.

23 B. The following development standard departures may  
24 be permitted through Design Review:

- 25 1. Structure width and depth limits
- 26 2. Setback requirements
- 27 3. Modulation requirements
- 28 4. Design, location and access to parking requirements
5. Open space requirements

*Amended By  
LUC  
10/03/93 BDM*

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**SPONSORSHIP**

THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT IS SPONSORED FOR FILING WITH THE CITY COUNCIL BY THE MEMBER(S) OF THE CITY COUNCIL WHOSE SIGNATURE(S) ARE SHOWN BELOW:

_____	_____
_____	_____
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\_\_\_\_\_  
*Bus Amador*

**FOR CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT USE ONLY**

COMMITTEE(S) REFERRED TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE

C.S. 20.28

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STATE OF WASHINGTON - KING COUNTY

36329  
City of Seattle

-ss.

No. IN FULL

**Affidavit of Publication**

The undersigned, on oath states that he is an authorized representative of The Daily Journal of Commerce, a daily newspaper, which newspaper is a legal newspaper of general circulation and it is now and has been for more than six months prior to the date of publication hereinafter referred to, published in the English language continuously as a daily newspaper in Seattle, King County, Washington, and it is now and during all of said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of this newspaper. The Daily Journal of Commerce was on the 12th day of June, 1941, approved as a legal newspaper by the Superior Court of King County.

The notice in the exact form annexed, was published in regular issues of The Daily Journal of Commerce, which was regularly distributed to its subscribers during the below stated period. The annexed notice, a

ORD: 116909

was published on  
11/01/93

The amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ which amount has been paid in full.

11/01/93

Subscribed and sworn to before me on

*S. Swift*  
Notary Public for the State of Washington,  
residing in Seattle

Affidavit of Publication

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