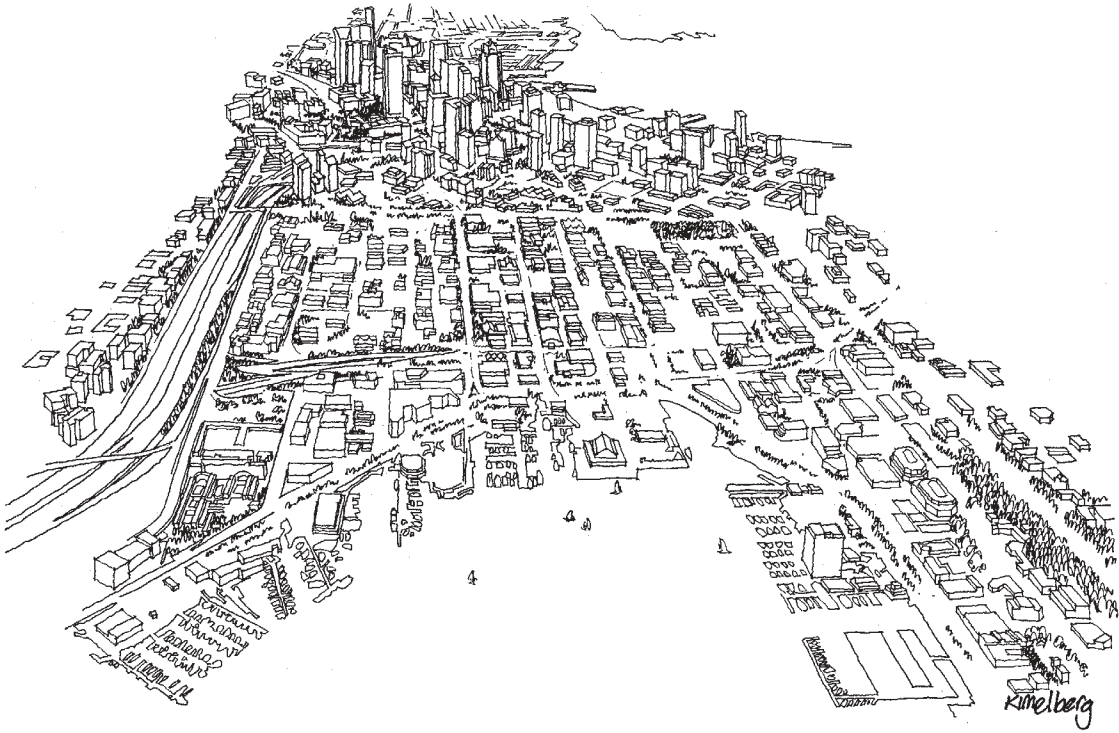


# South Lake Union Design Guidelines



These four areas have common and unique attributes. Together they could create connections from Downtown to South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, Seattle Center and the Denny Triangle neighborhood. The potential for weaving South Lake Union into the City with effective pedestrian and transportation corridors will enhance the neighborhood, fostering a diversity of live, work and play opportunities. Situated in a valley, this neighborhood has many opportunities for views of the lake, surrounding neighborhoods and the heart of Seattle, the downtown retail core.



*South Lake Union subareas as identified by the neighborhood plan and confirmed in recent workshops.*

The chart below indicates the citywide guidelines for which SLU-specific supplemental guidance has been written, which can be found on the following pages.

*SLU-specific supplemental guidance needed?*

**A. Site Planning**

*A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics*

**Yes**

*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.*

*A-2 Streetscape Compatibility*

**Yes**

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

*A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street*

**No**

*Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.*

*A-4 Human Activity*

**Yes**

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

*A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites*

**No**

*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.*

*A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street*

**Yes**

*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.*

*A-7 Residential Open Space*

**No**

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

*A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access*

**No**

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

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

**No**

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

*A-10 Corner Lots*

**No**

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



## Site Planning

responding to site characteristics

### 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.*

#### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Where possible, provide “outlooks and overlooks” for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include: public plazas or siting of open space and building form modulation to enhance opportunities for views of the lake and city.
- Minimize shadow impacts to Cascade Park where possible.
- Where possible, take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design\* (LEED) manual which provides additional information. Examples include:
  - Solar orientation
  - Storm water run-off, detention and filtration systems
  - Sustainable landscaping
  - Versatile building design for entire building life cycle

#### Gateways

Reinforce community gateways through the use of architectural elements, streetscape features, landscaping and/or signage. Gateways can be defined through landscaping, artwork, and references to the history of the location that create a sense of place.

Gateways are transition locations, places that mark entry or departure points to a neighborhood for automobiles and pedestrians. They are sites that create opportunities for identification, a physical marker for the community to notice they are entering a special place. Methods to establish gateways should consider the site’s characteristics such as topography, views or surrounding building patterns. Elements could include building out to meet the corner where appropriate, or tools such as:

- setbacks to allow for pedestrian friendly spaces;
- signage;
- landscaping;
- artwork;
- facade treatments.

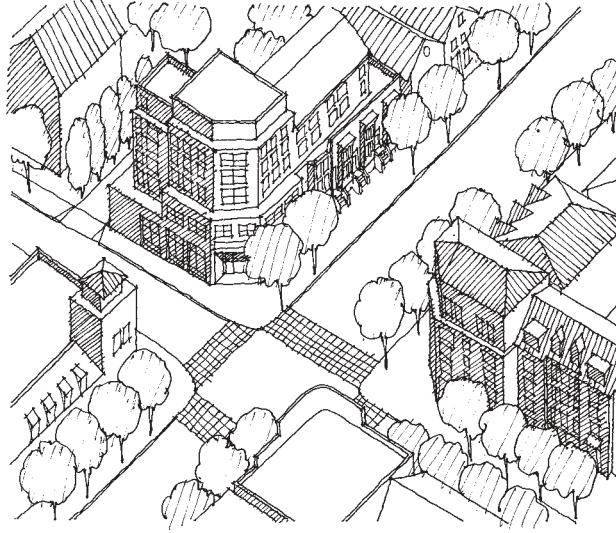
The following locations, at this time, are places that have been identified as gateways for South Lake Union due to the level of traffic flow, general visibility

---

*\*The LEED Green Building Rating System™ is a priority program of the US Green Building Council. It is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven building rating system based on existing proven technology. It evaluates environmental performance from a “whole building” perspective over a building’s life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a “green building.” Visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for more information.*

and/or development potential. The following locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements:

- Westlake & Denny
- Westlake & 9th
- Dexter & Mercer
- Fairview & Valley
- Fairview & Denny
- Fairview & Mercer

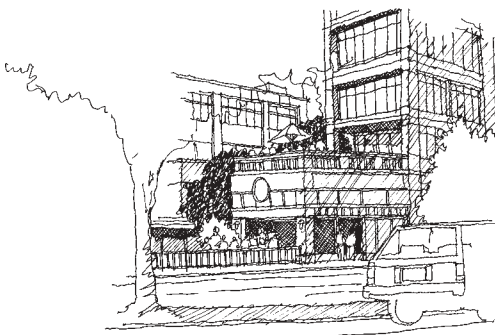


Building form and facade details



**Site Planning**

responding to site characteristics



Setbacks for activity



Public art



Map of gateway locations

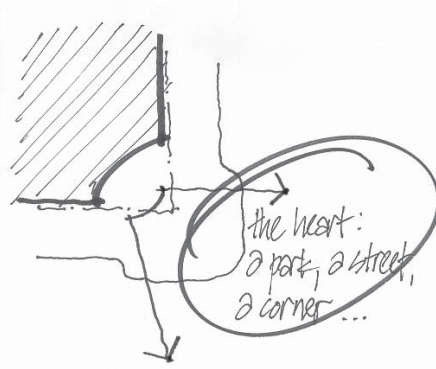


## Site Planning

responding to site characteristics

### Heart locations

Several areas have been identified as “heart locations.” Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building’s primary entry and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. This is an opportunity to cross reference streetscape guidelines, such as for Terry Avenue.



*An example of a curb bulb.*



*A plaza surrounded by people-generating activity such as retail*



*An example of how the orientation of buildings and the uses contained within can support an active pedestrian street*



*Public space through a site*

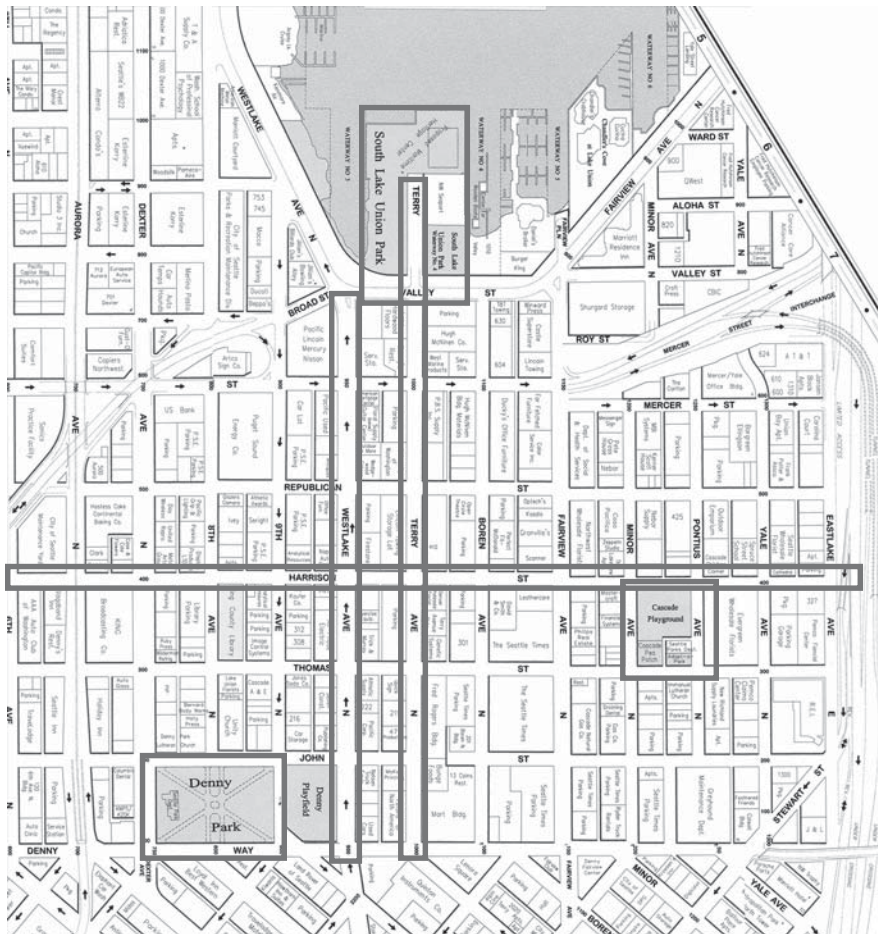
The following locations have been identified as heart locations within South Lake Union:

- Cascade Park
- South Lake Union Park
- Denny Park
- Harrison Street
- Terry Avenue North
- Westlake Avenue North



**Site Planning**

responding to site characteristics



Map of heart locations

## A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

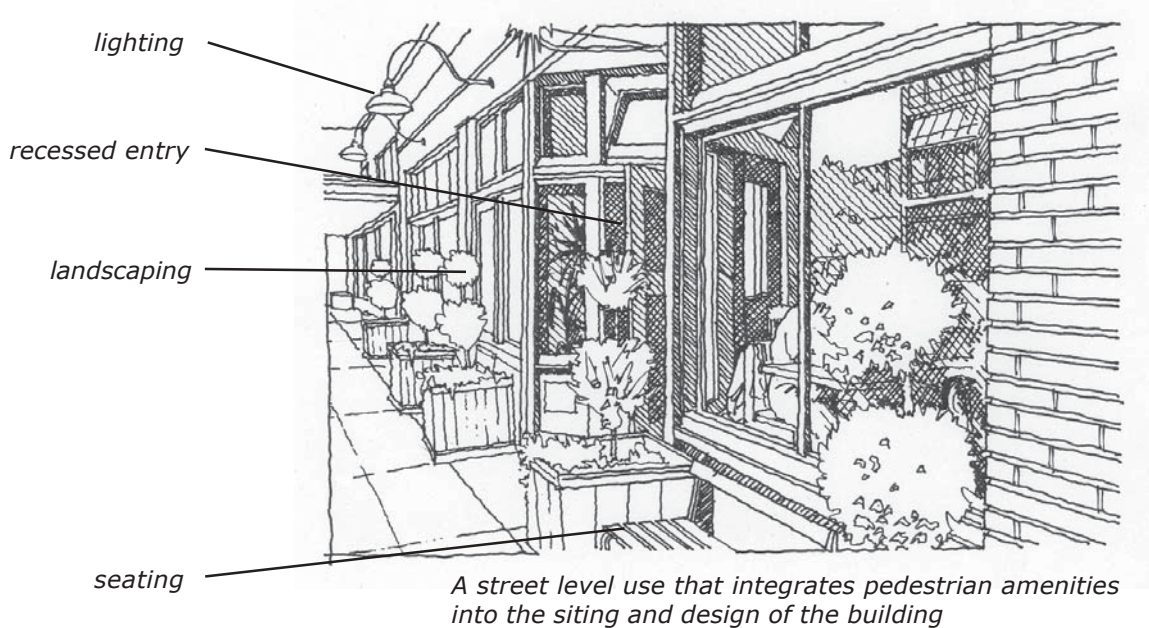
The vision for street level uses in South Lake Union is a completed network of sidewalks that successfully accommodate pedestrians. Streetscape compatibility is a high priority of the neighborhood with redevelopment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming and open to the general public.

- Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, such as:
  - tree grates;
  - benches;
  - lighting.
- Seek opportunities for public/private partnerships to implement streetscape guidelines. (Developers in pursuit of departures may consider implementation of streetscape design elements.)
- Where possible provide spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Where appropriate, consider a reduction in the required amount of commercial and retail space at the ground level, such as in transition zones between commercial and residential areas. Place retail in areas that are conducive to the use and will be successful.
- Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).



### Site Planning

streetscape  
compatibility

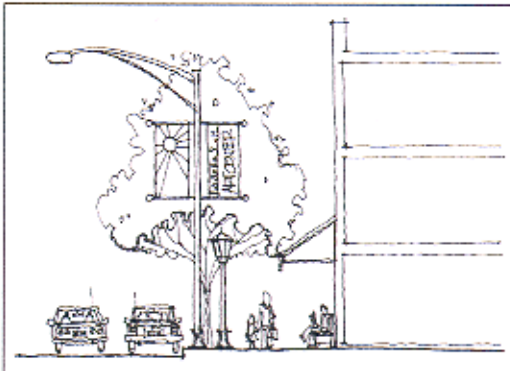




# A

## Site Planning

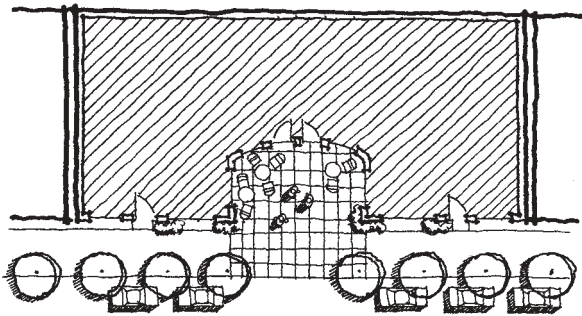
streetscape  
compatibility



*A lighting program should consist of street lighting, pedestrian lighting, and internal illumination from storefronts.*



*Sidewalks as open space: a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.*



*Take the "indoors" outdoors by spilling interior space onto plazas, walkways and sidewalks, where appropriate.*

## A-4 Human Activity

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

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.
- Keep neighborhood connections open, avoid closed campuses where possible.
- Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.
- Reinforce pedestrian connections both within the neighborhood and to other adjacent neighborhoods. Transportation infrastructure should be designed with adjacent sidewalks, as development occurs to enhance pedestrian connectivity.
- Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Create businesses and community activity clusters through co-location of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.
- Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.



### Site Planning

human activity



*Concentrations of retail activity are enhanced with comfortable spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.*



*New developments should design for safe, well-lit pedestrian connections through sites that connect to surrounding areas.*



## A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street

*For residential projects, the building design and relationship to the sidewalk should consider security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.*

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape with the possible use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing. Below are a drawing and photos showing examples of this:



### Site Planning

transition between residence and street



## 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 nearby, 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.*



#### Height, Bulk and Scale

height, bulk and scale compatibility

#### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

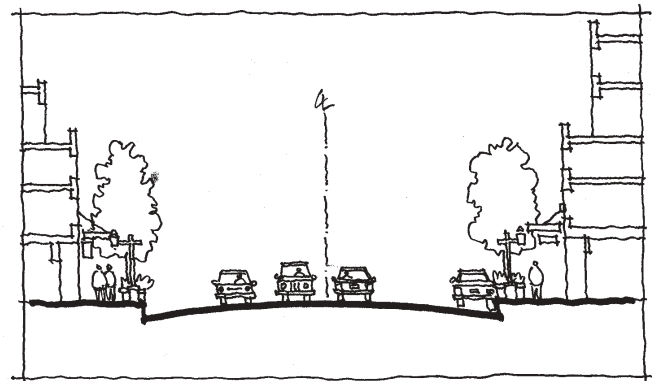
- Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.
- Where possible, consider stepping back an elevation at upper levels for large-scale development to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. For certain building uses and in certain sub-areas of SLU, stepping back upper floors may not be practical or appropriate and other design considerations may be used.
- Where possible, relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as:
  - landscaping;
  - trellis;
  - complementary materials;
  - detailing;
  - accent trim.



*The roofline of this large development adds to the structure's residential identity and reduces its apparent bulk.*



*Where possible, break larger buildings down into separate volumes.*



*Consider stepping back elevations at upper levels for large-scale development and relate proportions of buildings to width and scale of the street.*

The chart below indicates the citywide guidelines for which SLU-specific supplemental guidance has been written, which can be found on the following pages.

*SLU-specific  
supplemental  
guidance needed?*

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

### *C-1 Architectural Context*

**Yes**

*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.*

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

**Yes**

*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 roof line or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.*

### *C-3 Human Scale*

**No**

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

### *C-4 Exterior finish materials*

**No**

*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.*

### *C-5 Structured Parking Entrances*

**No**

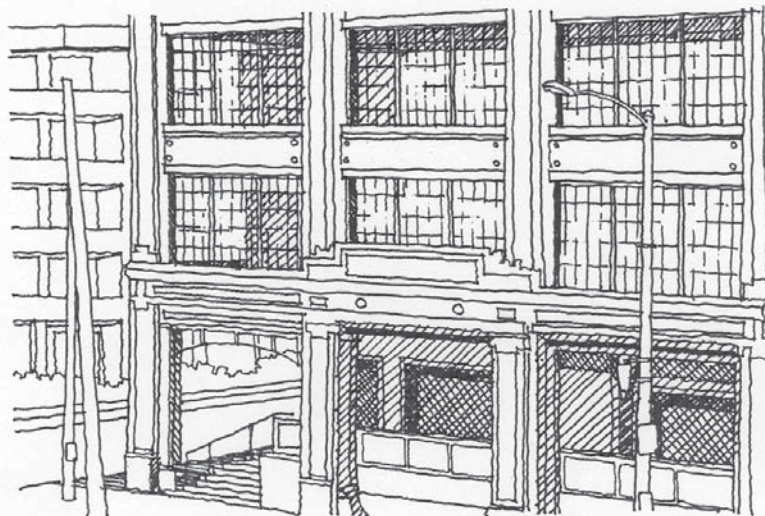
*The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.*

## C-1 Architectural Context

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

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Support the existing fine-grained character of the neighborhood with a mix of building styles.
- Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.
- Signage — expose historic signs and vintage advertising on buildings where possible.
- Respond to the history and character in the adjacent vicinity — in terms of patterns, style, and scale. Where possible, reveal and reclaim history — use community artifacts, forms and textures.
- Respond to the working class, maritime, commercial and industrial character of the Waterfront and Westlake areas. Examples of elements to consider include:
  - window detail patterns;
  - open bay doors;
  - sloped roofs.
- Respond to the unique, grass roots, sustainable character of the Cascade neighborhood. Examples of elements to consider include:
  - community artwork;
  - edible gardens;
  - water filtration systems that serve as pedestrian amenities;
  - gutters that support greenery.



*Context - light industrial building design; pilasters, large casement windows, brick and terra-cotta cladding*



### Architectural Elements and Materials

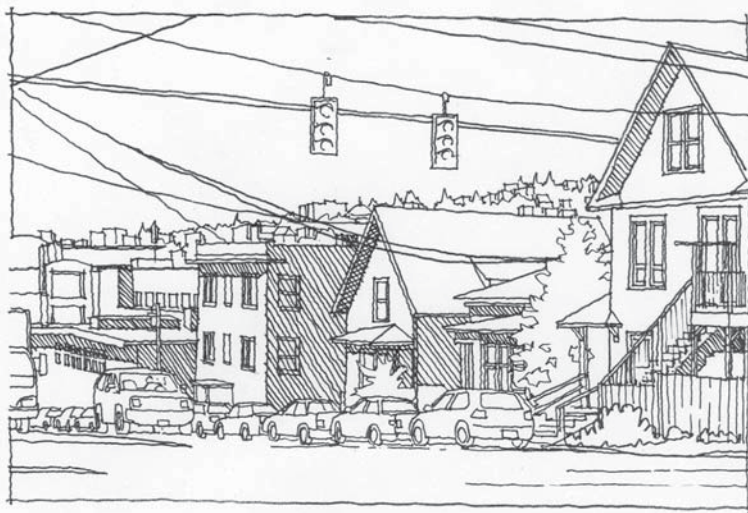
architectural context



*Context - window detailing*



*Adaptive Reuse - light industrial-style large windows, parapet, building facade broken up by vertical elements to reduce the scale*



*Context - neighborhood residential buildings*



*Context - creative, contemporary architecture with variegated forms and details*



*Context - maritime character*

# C

## Architectural Elements and Materials

architectural context

## 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 roof line or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.*

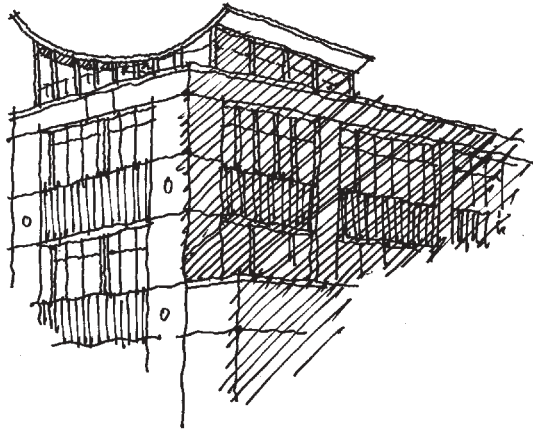


### Architectural Elements and Materials

architectural concept and consistency

#### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered. Where possible, organize roof-top elements to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.





The chart below indicates the citywide guidelines for which SLU-specific supplemental guidance has been written, which can be found on the following pages.

SLU-specific  
supplemental  
guidance needed?

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

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

**Yes**

*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.*

### **D-2 Blank Walls**

**No**

*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.*

### **D-3 Retaining Walls**

**No**

*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.*

### **D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks**

**Yes**

*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.*

### **D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures**

**No**

*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.*

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

**No**

*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.*

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

**Yes**

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

## 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.*

# D

## Pedestrian Environment

pedestrian open spaces and entrances

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as:
  - curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow;
  - pedestrian-oriented street lighting;
  - street furniture.



curb bulb



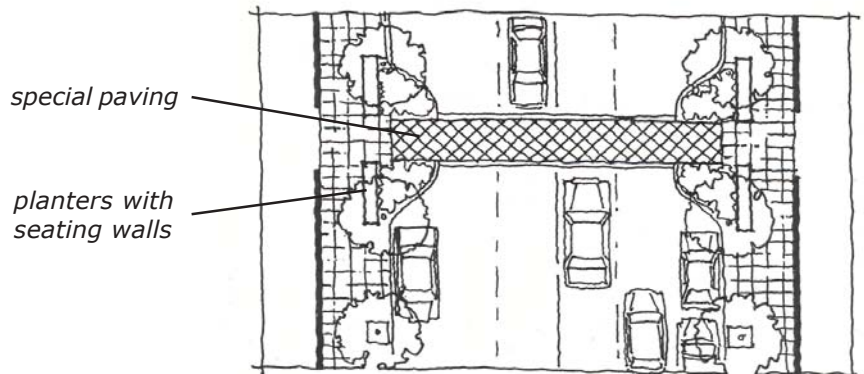
special paving



benches



lighting



*Streetscape amenities help buildings connect to and enhance centers of commercial and social activity.*

#### **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.*

##### **SLU-specific supplemental guidance**

Provide parking below grade where possible.

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

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

##### **SLU-specific supplemental guidance**

- Enhance public safety throughout the neighborhood to foster 18-hour public activity. Methods to consider are:
  - enhanced pedestrian and street lighting;
  - well-designed public spaces that are defensively designed with clear sight lines and opportunities for eyes on the street;
  - police horse tie-up locations for routine patrols and larger event assistance.



#### **Pedestrian Environment**

design of parking lots near sidewalks

personal safety and security

The chart below indicates the citywide guidelines for which SLU-specific supplemental guidance has been written, which can be found on the following pages.

*SLU-specific  
supplemental  
guidance needed?*

## **E. Landscaping**

### *E-1 Reinforce Existing Landscape Character of Neighborhood*

**Yes**

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

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

**Yes**

*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.*

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

**Yes**

*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.*

## E-1 Reinforce existing landscape character of neighborhood

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

### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Support the creation of a hierarchy of passive and active open space within South Lake Union. This may include pooling open space requirements on-site to create larger spaces.
- Where appropriate, design landscaping to meet LEED criteria. This is a priority in the Cascade neighborhood.
- Where appropriate, install indigenous trees and plants to improve aesthetics, capture water and create habitat.
- Retain existing, non-intrusive mature trees or replace with large caliper trees.
- Water features are encouraged including natural marsh-like installations.
- Reference the City of Seattle Right Tree Book and the City Light Streetscape Light Standards Manual for appropriate landscaping and lighting options for the area.



### Landscaping

reinforce existing landscape character of the neighborhood



## 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.*

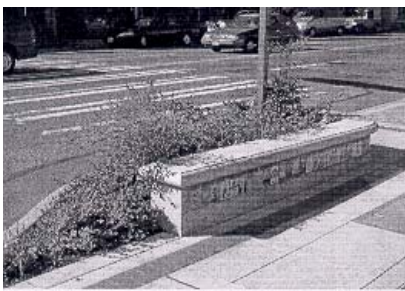
### SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.



### Landscaping

landscaping to enhance the building and/or site



### **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.*

#### **SLU-specific supplemental guidance**

- Where possible, take advantage of views to waterfront and downtown Seattle.
- Recommend that projects comply with established landscape concepts for South Lake Union streets.



#### **Landscaping**

landscape design to  
address special site  
conditions