

Green Lake Design Guidelines 2013

Introduction

What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines are the primary tool used by Design Review Boards. The Green Lake Design Guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Green Lake Residential Urban Village (planning area) as reflected in Map 1 (page 5). Guidelines define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and public space that make for successful projects and communities. There are two types of guidelines used in the Design Review Program:

- Seattle Design Guidelines—applying citywide except for downtown; and
- Neighborhood design guidelines—applying to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a neighborhood urban village or center.

Once a set of neighborhood guidelines is adopted by City Council, they are used in tandem with citywide guidelines for the review of all projects within that neighborhood that fall within the scope of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) section 23.41.004. Not all neighborhoods within the city have neighborhood-specific guidelines, but for those that do, both sets of guidelines—citywide and neighborhood—are consulted by the Boards, with the neighborhood guidelines superseding the citywide ones in the event of a conflict between the two. Neighborhood guidelines are very helpful to all involved in the design review process for the guidance they offer that is specific to the features and character of a specific neighborhood.

As of November 2013, there were nineteen sets of neighborhood design guidelines, each following the same organization and numbering system of the City's original citywide guidelines entitled Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Development that were adopted in 1993.

The Green Lake Design Guidelines reveal the character of Green Lake as known to its residents and business owners. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that the neighborhood values most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood's guidelines, in conjunction with the Seattle Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of design priorities and encourage involvement in the design review process.

Revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The Green Lake Design Guidelines were developed by community members and design consultants, and adopted in 2001. In 2013, the City adopted new, updated guidelines entitled Seattle Design Guidelines to replace the citywide guidelines that had been in effect since the inception of the Design Review Program in 1993.

Because the Seattle Design Guidelines uses a different organizational and numbering system than the original guidelines, DPD has revised each set of neighborhood guidelines to match the Seattle Design Guidelines in format, organization, and numbering system. The revised neighborhood design guidelines will help Board members, applicants, staff, and the public better correlate neighborhood guidelines with the updated Seattle Design Guidelines.

Guidelines at a Glance

The Green Lake design guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Green Lake Residential Urban Village (planning area) as reflected in Map 1 (page 5). These guidelines augment the Seattle Design Guidelines adopted in 2013. The list below correlates the guidelines by subject matter and shows which Seattle Design Guidelines are augmented by the Green Lake design guidelines. A “yes” indicates supplemental guidance is provided; a “no” indicates that the citywide guideline is sufficient. Note that the numbering system of the Seattle Design Guidelines is different from the original numbering applied to the Green Lake guidelines in 2001.

Context and Site

- CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features.....yes**
 Responding To Site Characteristics (former A-1, Lakefront & Views of the Lake)
- CS2. Urban Pattern and Formyes**
 Responding To Site Characteristics (former A-1), Curved & continuous streets)
 Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2)
 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility (former B-1)
- CS3. Architectural Context and Characteryes**
 Architectural Context (former C-1, Aurora, Residential Urban Village & Tangletown)

Public Life

- PL1. Connectivityyes**
 Residential Open Space (former A-7)
- PL2. Walkabilityyes**
 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (former D-1)
- PL3. Street-Level Interaction.....yes**
 Human Activity (former A-4)
 Transition Between Residence and Street (former A-6)
- PL4. Active Transportationno**

Design Concept

- DC1. Project Uses and Activitiesno**
- DC2. Architectural Conceptyes**
 Architectural Context (former C-1, Neighborhood commercial structures)
- DC3. Open Space Conceptyes**
 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions (former E-3)
- DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishesyes**
 Architectural Context (former C-1, Signage)
 Exterior Finish Materials (former C-4)

Green Lake Context and Priority Design Issues

The Green Lake Neighborhood is an urban neighborhood of primarily single-family homes built in the early 1900's. Its most significant features are Green Lake and the surrounding parks, which give the neighborhood its form and identity. These parks and park-like areas extend into the neighborhood and are some of Seattle's most visible and accessible features of the famous Olmsted brothers' design.

In addition to the lake and parks, other characteristics make Green Lake a unique and desirable place to live. Small neighborhood commercial areas, an impressive stock of Craftsman-style houses, and abundant pedestrian accommodations give the area a friendly and local flavor. It is these qualities and others which the Green Lake Design Guidelines seek to define and preserve in the face of new development.

The guiding vision for the neighborhood's future was established by the Green Lake 2020 Neighborhood Plan (January, 1999). These guidelines help implement that plan and apply to projects subject to design review within the Green Lake Neighborhood Planning Boundary (see Map 1, page 5).

In general, the following guidelines promote development that strengthens the community's pedestrian-friendly environment, respects the scale and character of the existing built environment, and addresses special, site specific conditions where appropriate.

CS1

Natural Systems and Site Features

Citywide Guideline:

Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Responding to Site Characteristics

i. Lakefront Orientation

In areas adjacent to Green Lake Park the building should be sited to acknowledge and orient to the lake and park.

ii. Views of Lake

Numerous streets offer views of, and pedestrian access to, the lake. Consider siting the building to take advantage of these views and to enhance views from the public right-of-way. Methods to accomplish this include setting the building back from lake views, placing landscape elements and street trees to frame views rather than block them, and providing pedestrian spaces with views of the lake.

CS2

Urban Pattern and Form

Citywide Guideline:

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Responding to Site Characteristics

i. Curved and Discontinuous Streets

The community's street pattern responds to the lake by breaking with the city's standard north-south and east-west grid pattern. This creates numerous discontinuous streets, street offsets, and curved streets, which are an aspect of the community character. New development can take advantage of such street patterns by providing special features that complement these unique spaces. (See Seattle Design Guidelines regarding height, bulk, and scale; and relationship to adjacent sites.)

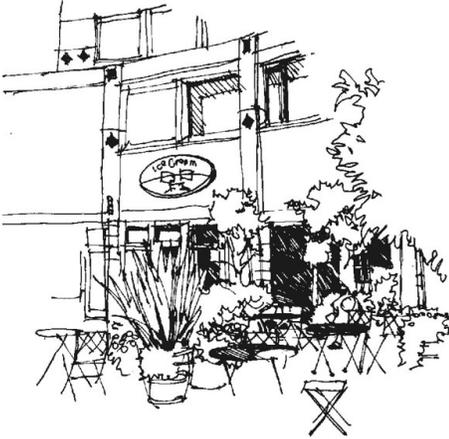
ii. Entry Locations

Within the Green Lake Planning Area, certain locations serve as entry points into neighborhood and commercial areas. Development of properties at these "Entry Locations" should include elements suggesting an entry or gateway. Examples include a clock tower, turret or other architectural features, kiosks, benches, signage, landscaping, public art or other features that contribute to the demarcation of the area. The Entry Locations, identified by the community based on traffic flow, general visibility and development potential, are (see Map 1 on page 5):

- NE 71st St at 6th Ave NE—freeway access and link between Green Lake and Roosevelt
- NE Ravenna Blvd at NE 65th St—freeway access and link between Green Lake and Roosevelt
- Latona Ave NE at NE 50th St
- W Green Lake Way at E Green Lake Way N (golf course)
- Green Lake Dr. N at Aurora Ave. N
- Aurora Ave. N at N 49th St (south of Woodland Park Zoo)

In addition, two special locations within the planning area represent entry into the Residential Urban Village and should be developed accordingly:

- Woodlawn Ave NE at 1st Ave. NE--south entry



A good example of how a building and project-related amenities respond to a "Heart Location" on East Green Lake Drive

- Woodlawn Ave NE at NE Maple Leaf Place--north entry

iii. Heart Locations

Several important intersections have been identified as "Heart Locations." Heart Locations differ from Entry Locations in that they are intersections that serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity. Development at Heart Locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. In addition to promoting pedestrian activity, these sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A building's primary entry and facade should face the intersection. Other amenities to consider are: special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. Developers should review programmed public improvements listed in the Green Lake 20/20 Plan. The community-identified "Heart Locations" are (see Map 1 on page 5):

- E Green Lake Dr at NE 72nd St
- Woodlawn Ave NE at NE 72nd St
- NE Ravenna Blvd at E Green Lake Dr N and NE 71st St (4-way intersection)
- E Green Lake Dr between Wallingford Ave N and Densmore Ave N (Northshore Plaza)
- NE 65th St at Latona Ave NE
- Winona Ave N at Linden Ave N (west of Aurora)
- NE 50th St at 1st Ave NE
- N 55th St at Keystone Pl N (Tangletown)
- NE Ravenna Blvd at Woodlawn Ave NE

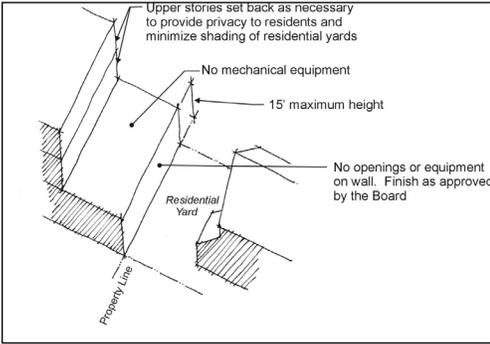
II. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

Zone Edges

Refer to the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) for design techniques to achieve a sensitive transition between Neighborhood Commercial (NC) or Commercial (C) and smaller-scale residential zones. Map 2 (on page 6) illustrates zone edges that warrant special consideration.

Some properties adjacent to Green Lake's Neighborhood Commercial areas are zoned single-family, but have a small portion zoned Neighborhood Commercial. In general, these properties can only be developed with single-family houses. In such cases where a property with more-intensive zoning is adjacent to a property that contains such split zoning, the following design techniques are encouraged to improve the transition to the split-zoned lot:

- i. Building setbacks similar to those specified in the Land Use Code for zone edges where a proposed development project within a more intensive zone abuts a lower intensive zone.
- ii. Techniques specified in the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) regarding height, bulk, and scale; and relationship to adjacent sites.
- iii. Along a zone edge without an alley, consider additional methods that help reduce the potential 'looming' effect of a much larger structure in proximity to smaller, existing buildings.



This zone edge option may be desirable in locations where there is no alley between the higher and lower intensity zones.



Streetscape continuity on Linden Avenue N. emphasizes modest setbacks and relatively consistent landscaping.

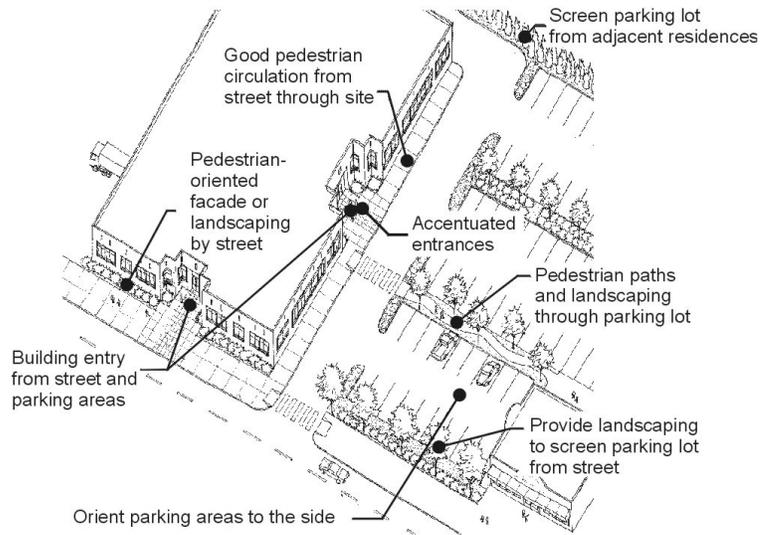
- iv. One possibility is allowing the proposed structure's ground floor to be built to the property line and significantly stepping back the upper levels from the adjacent building (see sketch in the left column). The building wall at the property line should be designed in a manner sympathetic to the existing structure(s), particularly regarding privacy and aesthetic issues.

III. Streetscape Compatibility

A continuous street wall is an important design consideration within Green Lake's commercial and mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented areas.

i. Aurora Avenue North

A continuous street wall is less of a consideration on Aurora Avenue N, where numerous parking lots punctuate the streetscape. In this area, a more pleasant and consistent streetscape can be achieved by reinforcing the rhythm of alternating buildings and well-landscaped vehicle access areas. Parking lots should be placed at the rear and to the sides of buildings, and the buildings should be located near the street. Parking lot landscaping and screening are particularly important in improving the appearance of the Aurora Avenue North corridor.

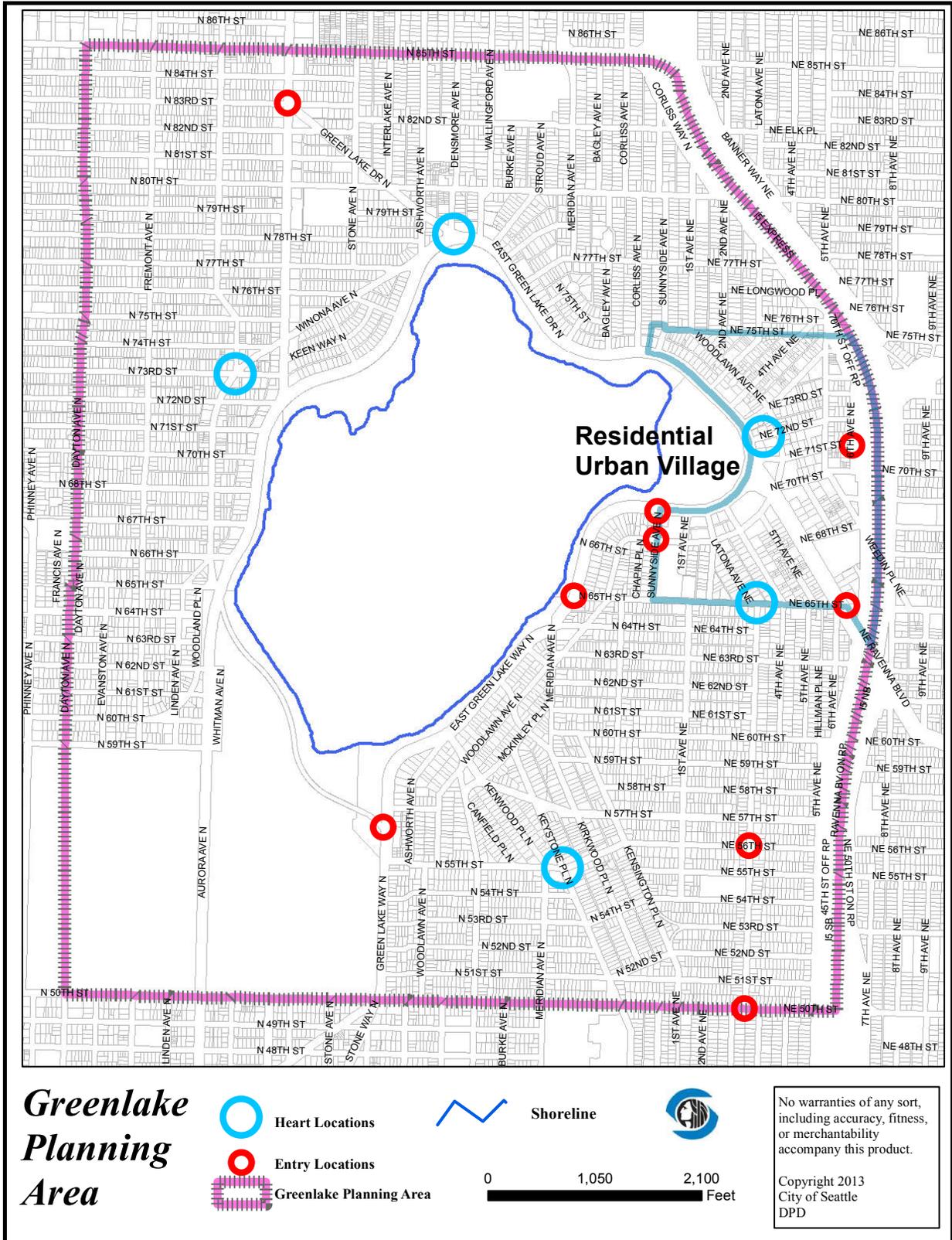


A good site design example for Aurora Ave N.

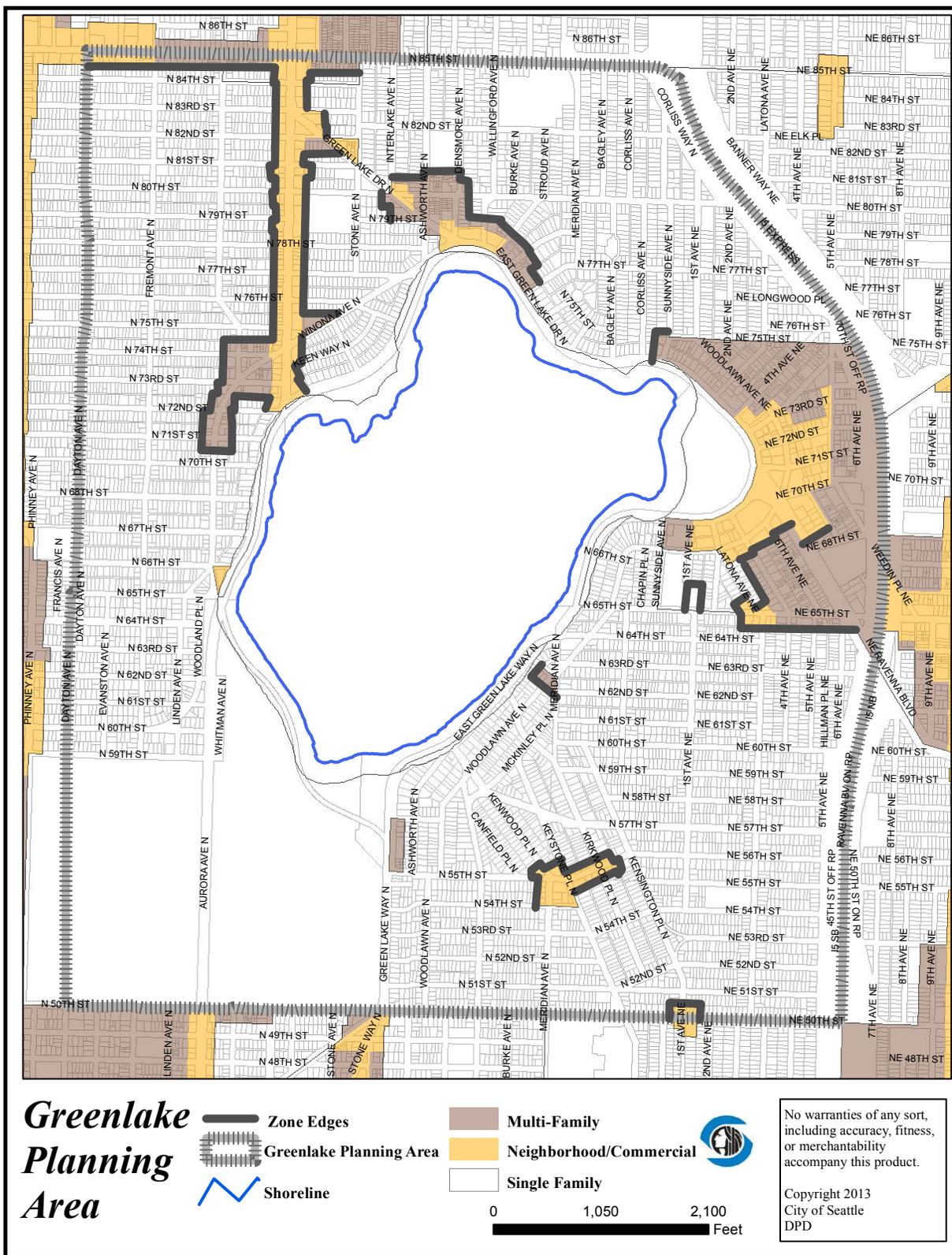
ii. Multifamily Residential Areas

Landscaping in the required front setbacks of new multifamily development is an important siting and design consideration to help reinforce desirable streetscape continuity.

Map 1: Green Lake Neighborhood Planning Area and Heart and Entry Locations



Map 2: Green Lake Zone Edges



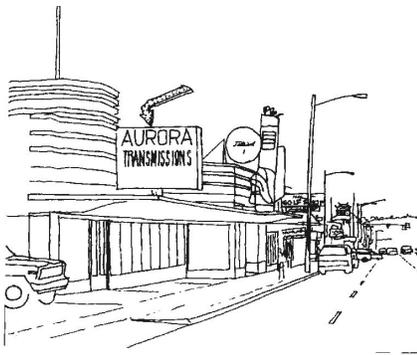
Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details. Additionally, zoning areas shown on this map are for general reference only. For confirmation of a specific property's zoning, contact the Department of Planning and Development.

CS3

Architectural Context and Character

Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.



Aurora's mid-20th Century commercial character



The Green Lake Branch Library is a good example of some of the classical architectural styles found in the Residential Urban Village.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

i. Distinct Architectural Themes and Styles

Green Lake contains several commercial areas (see Map 2 on page 6 for the location of these areas). Encourage the following design features in these areas:

ii. Aurora Avenue North Corridor:

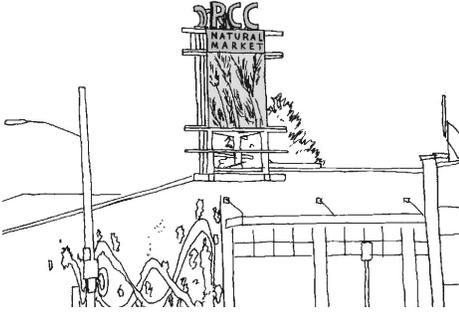
Recognize Aurora's 1920-1950 commercial character while making the area more friendly to the pedestrian. Specific architectural cues include creative and playful signage, simple post-WW II architecture and flamboyant architecture (e.g., the now demolished Twin Teepees, elephant).

iii. Residential Urban Village:

Build on the core's classical architectural styles (e.g., community center, library, Marshall School, VFW building). Also, many of the existing buildings are simple "boxes," with human scale details and features (i.e., building at the NE corner of E. Green Lake Dr. and NE 72nd Street). Brick and detailed stucco are appropriate materials.

iv. Tangletown (55th/56th Street corridor and Meridian) and 65th/Latona:

Build on both commercial areas' human scale elements, particularly the traditional storefront details and proportions of early 1900s vernacular commercial buildings. A mix of traditional and contemporary forms and materials is appropriate provided there is attention to human scale detailing in elements such as doors, windows, signs, and lights.



Older and newer sign examples appropriate for Aurora Avenue North



Similar roof, window treatment, proportional massing and setbacks provide a level of continuity between these structures despite the difference in size.

v. Facade Articulation

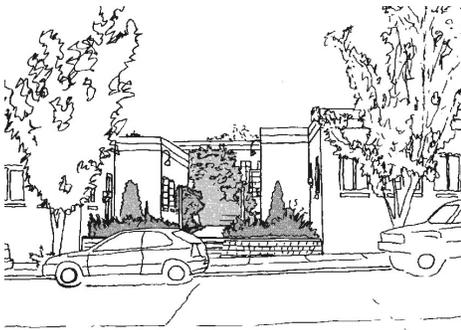
Multi-family residential structures: The façade articulation of new multifamily residential buildings (notably in Lowrise zones) should be compatible with the surrounding single-family architectural context. Architectural details similar to those found on single-family homes in Green Lake from the early 1900's can add further interest to a building, and lend buildings a human scale. Consider the following features:

- a. Pitched roof
- b. Covered front porch
- c. Vertically proportioned windows
- d. Window trim and eave boards
- e. Elements typical of neighborhood house forms

PL1 Connectivity

Citywide Guideline:

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.



A good example of residential open space that is visually accessible from the street.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Residential Open Space

The amount of open space required by the Land Use Code may be reduced through the Design Review process, as set forth at SMC 23.41.012, if the project substantially contributes to the objectives of the guideline by:

- i. Creating a substantial courtyard-style open space (see sketch to the left) that is visually accessible to the public and that extends to the public realm.
- ii. Setting back development to improve a view corridor.
- iii. Setting upper stories of buildings back to provide solar access and/or to reduce impacts on neighboring single-family residences.
- iv. Providing open space within the streetscape or other public rights-of-way contiguous with the site. Such public spaces should be large enough to include streetscape amenities that encourage gathering. For example, a curb bulb with outdoor seating adjacent to active retail would be acceptable.

PL2

Walkability

Citywide Guideline:

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

i. Make Aurora More Pedestrian Friendly

Although Aurora Avenue North is likely to retain its automobile-oriented character, new development should make the entire Aurora corridor more friendly to pedestrians by encouraging:

- a. Street-fronting entries.
- b. Pedestrian-oriented facades and spaces.
- c. Overhead weather protection.

ii. Streetscape Amenities

New developments are encouraged to work through the Design Review process and with interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm. Code departures, as set forth at SMC 23.41.012, will be considered for projects that propose enhancements to the public realm. The project proponent should provide an acceptable plan for, but not limited to, features such as:

- a. Curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces
- b. Pedestrian-oriented street lighting

PL3

Street-Level Interaction

Citywide Guideline:

Encourage human activity and interaction at street level.

c. Street furniture

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Human Activity

Pedestrian activity is a high priority in the Green Lake business areas. It is recognized, however, that within commercial zones, the appropriateness of traditional storefronts may depend upon location, adjacent properties and the type of street on which the development fronts. In the case of a mixed-use building, for example, at the intersection of an arterial and a residential street, it might be more appropriate to place non-storefront commercial facades on the quieter residential street. In such cases, the following can contribute to a commercial facade that exhibits a character and presence that achieves a sensitive transition from commercial to residential uses:

- i. slightly less transparency than a standard storefront window;
- ii. recessed entries;
- iii. landscaping along the building base and entry; and
- iv. minimized glare from exterior lighting.

II. Transition Between Residence and Street

i. Residential Buildings

Residences on the ground floor should be raised for residents' privacy, if allowed by site conditions. Well landscaped, shallow front yard setbacks are also typical and appropriate. (See guideline CS2).

ii. Mixed-Use Buildings

For mixed-use buildings with residential units over commercial ground floor-uses, consider locating the primary residential entry on the side street rather than in the main commercial area. This maintains a continuous commercial storefront while increasing privacy for the residential units.

DC2 Architectural Concept

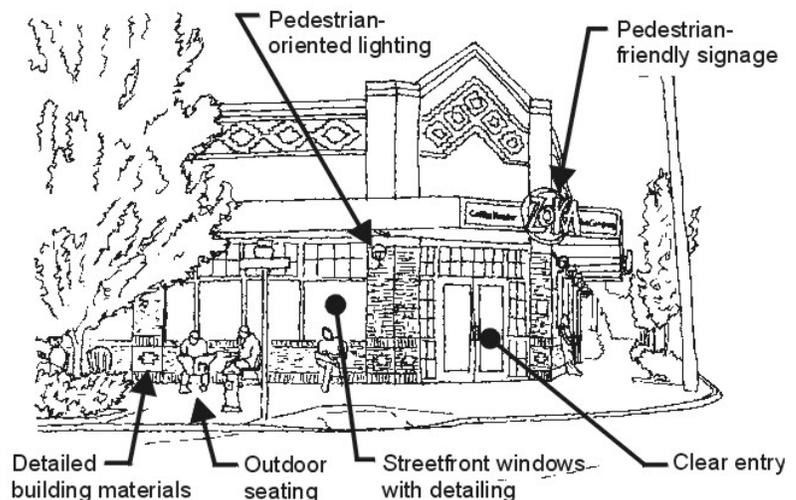
Citywide Guideline:

Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

Neighborhood commercial structures: Modulation in the street-fronting façade of a mixed-use structure is less important when an appropriate level of details is present to break up the facade. Many existing structures are simple boxes that are well-fenestrated and possess a number of details that add interest and lend buildings a human scale. However, particularly large buildings, usually resulting from the aggregation of many properties, may need more modulation to mitigate the impacts of bulk and scale. Substantial modulation of neighborhood commercial structures at the street level is discouraged unless the space or spaces created by the modulation are large enough for pedestrians to use.



Human scale details at the ground level are more important than overall facade articulation in neighborhood commercial buildings.

DC3

Open Space Concept

Citywide Guideline:

Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

Celebrate the Olmsted heritage

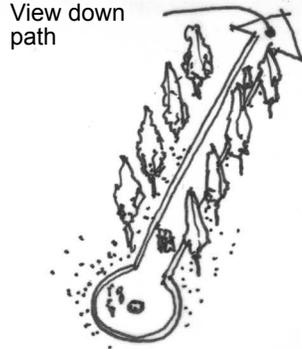
Green Lake Park, Ravenna Boulevard and Lower Woodland Park are visible and accessible examples of the Olmsted brothers' design. New development should build on this character by employing informal groupings of large and small trees and shrubs. A mix of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental plant materials is appropriate. Continuous rows of street trees contrasting with the informal, asymmetric landscaping of open spaces are also typical (see the following page for examples).

Typical Olmsted Park Boulevard Features

Non-Park Application of Olmsted Principles

Formal Axis

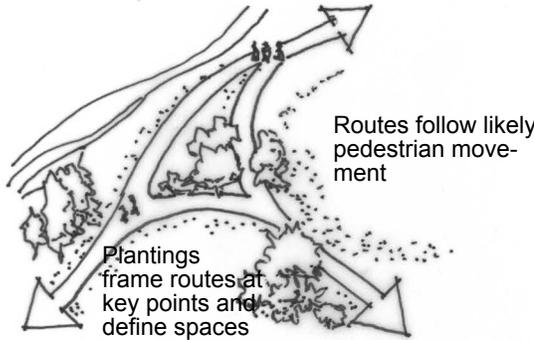
Formal plantings on a straight roadway



Street trees or architecture that frames views of lake or prominent landmark

Informal Paths

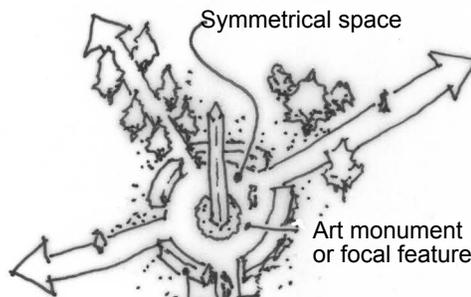
Curvilinear paths following topography and land forms



Informal walking paths can be effective for multi-family complexes

Focal Points at Crossroads

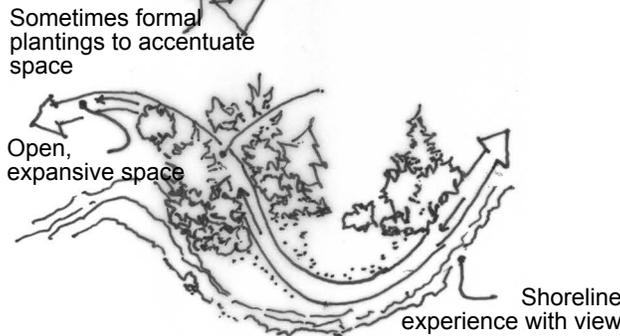
Celebration of intersecting paths



Signage can accentuate a crossroads

Sequential Experience

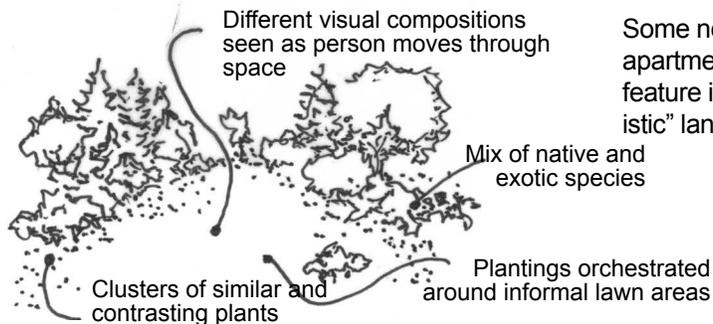
Path offers variety of spatial and visual experiences as pedestrian moves along it



Some residents have planted trees to accentuate the curvilinear remnant of the Olmsted boulevard system

Naturalistic Landscape

Plantings imitate idealized natural plant communities



Some neighborhood apartment complexes feature informal "naturalistic" landscape

Principles of Olmsted brother's design

DC4

Exterior Elements and Finishes

Citywide Guideline:

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

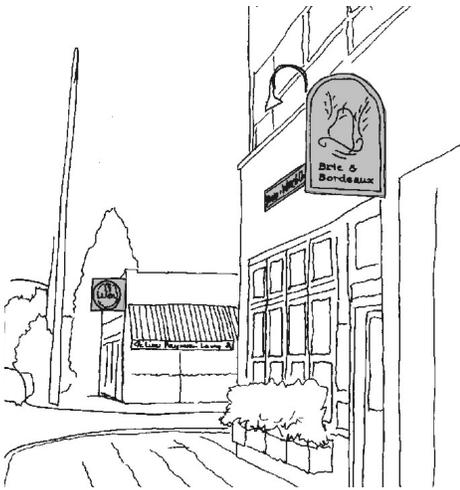
Green Lake Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

i. Signage

The design and placement of signs plays an important role in the visual character and identity of the community. While regulatory sign review is not in the purview of Design Review, integration with the overall architectural expression of a building and appropriate scale and orientation are important design considerations. Franchises should not be given exceptions to these guidelines. Except within the Aurora Avenue North corridor, signage should be oriented to pedestrians. Specifically (excluding Aurora Ave. N.):

- a. Building signs should reinforce the character of the building and surrounding context.
- b. Small signs incorporated in the building's architecture are preferred: along a sign band, on awnings or marquees, located in windows, or hung perpendicular to the building façade.
- c. Neon signs are appropriate.
- d. Large illuminated box signs (backlit "can" signs) are discouraged, unless they are designed to be compatible with the character of surrounding development.
- e. Post-mounted signs are discouraged since they are more appropriate in suburban or automobile-oriented settings.
- f. **Aurora Avenue North Corridor:** New signs should acknowledge Aurora's 1920-1950 commercial character. Sign designs, including those for corporate franchises, are encouraged to be playful, interesting, and colorful in order to respond to desirable elements of the corridor's commercial strip heritage.



Good examples of neighborhood commercial signs.

II. Exterior Finish Materials

New buildings should feature durable, attractive, and well-detailed finish materials in responding to the vernacular of the surrounding area, where desirable. Innovative use of materials is encouraged, provided they meet this criterion.

i. Building Materials in Green Lake's Individual Districts

Encourage the use of common building materials found in Green Lake's commercial areas:

- a. Green Lake Residential Urban Village: Surface treatments are primarily brick (painted or unpainted) or stucco. Some additional variations exist south of Ravenna Boulevard.
- b. Tangletown (55th/56th Corridor and Meridian): A consistent treatment of brick at the ground level and wood siding on the upper residential levels.
- c. 65th at Latona: A consistent treatment of brick at the ground level and wood siding on the upper (residential) levels.

ii. Special material requirements and recommendations

Allow the materials listed below providing they complement a building's architectural character and surrounding architectural context. When using these materials, consider the following recommendations:

- a. Metal siding: If metal siding covers more than 25 percent of a building's facade, it should not have a glossy finish. In addition, windows and doors should be trimmed.
- b. Masonry units: If concrete blocks (concrete masonry units or "cinder blocks") are used for walls that are visible from a public street or park, then the concrete block construction should be architecturally treated in one or more of following ways:
 - Textured blocks with surfaces such as split face or grooved
 - Colored mortar
 - Other masonry types such as brick, glass block or tile used in conjunction with concrete blocks
- c. Wood siding and shingles: Wood siding and shingles are appropriate on upper stories or on single-use residential projects.

iii. Discouraged Materials

The following materials are discouraged:

- a. Mirrored glass: This is especially inappropriate when glare could be a problem.
- b. Sprayed-on finish: Sprayed-on finish with large aggregate is strongly discouraged.