Greenwood/Phinney Design Guidelines 2013

Introduction

What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines are the primary tool used by Design Review Boards. The Greenwood/Phinney 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 Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Urban Village as reflected in Map 2 (page v). 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 Greenwood/Phinney Design Guidelines reveal the character of Greenwood/Phinney 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 Greenwood/Phinney Design Guidelines were developed by community members and design consultants, and adopted in 2006. 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.

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Guidelines at a Glance

The Greenwood/Phinney design guidelines apply o development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Urban Village as reflected in Map 2 (page v). The neighborhood 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 Greenwod/Phinney 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 Greenwod/Phinney Design Guidelines in 2006.

Context and Site

CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features ..... yes
Responding To Site Characteristics (former A-1)

CS2.Urban Pattern and Form .....yes
Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2)
Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility (former B-1)
Mid-Block Connections, Street Pattern, Structure Orientation, Mass and Scale, Architectural Context/Building Entrances (former Town Center guidelines)

CS3. Architectural Context and Character .....yes
Architectural Concept and Consistency (former C2)
Compatibility (former Town Center guideline)

Public Life

PL1. Connectivity .....yes
Open Space (former Town Center guideline)
Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (former D-1a)

PL2. Walkability .....yes
Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (former D-1b)
Pedestrian Lighting, Street Elements (former Town Center guidelines)

PL3. Street-Level Interaction.....no

PL4. Active Transportation .....no

Design Concept

DC1. Project Uses and Activities .....yes
Parking and Vehicular Circulation (former Town Center guideline)
Blank Walls (former D-2)

DC2. Architectural Concept .....yes
Architectural Context (former C-1b)
Human Scale (former C-3)
Mass and Scale (former Town Center guideline)

DC3. Open Space Concept .....no

DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes .....yes
Architectural Context (former C-1a)
Exterior Finish Materials (former C-4)
Landscaping, (former Town Center guideline)

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Context and Priority Issues: Greenwood Core

The first "Key Integrated Strategy" of the 1999 Greenwood/Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Plan is "The creation of a vital Greenwood that supports an economically viable main street along Greenwood Avenue North and a redeveloped town center." This strategy envisions:

- The creation of vital pedestrian streetscapes;
- a pedestrian-friendly walkway from Greenwood Avenue North west into the business core, and improved sidewalks;
- traffic calming; and
- lighting, landscaping and a parking and transportation management program to enhance the main street and town center.

As part of the implementation of the neighborhood plan, the 2001 Greenwood/Phinney Main Street Design Report identified actions to pursue this strategy. The design report identifies key pedestrian links and street improvements to upgrade circulation, visual character, pedestrian conditions and ultimately the economic development of the Greenwood Business Core.

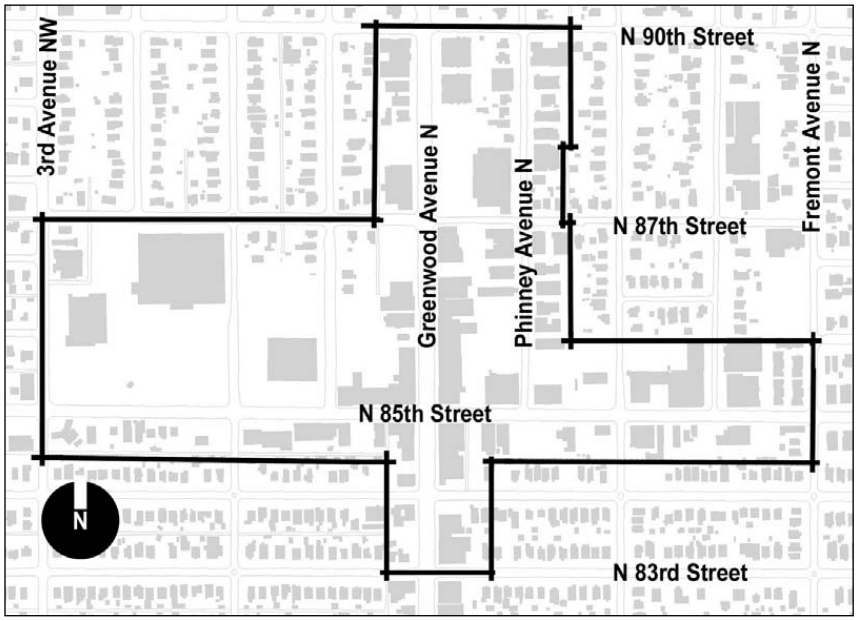
The Greenwood/Phinney Design Guidelines are another part of implementing the urban design objectives in the plan and the design report. Guidelines under the **Town Center Specific Guidelines**, also directly address these objectives.

It is especially important that development projects in the Greenwood Business Core, particularly those projects on sites over ¼ acre and those on corner lots, implement objectives of the neighborhood plan and the design report by addressing the following:

- Locating the building adjacent to the public sidewalk or orienting the building to a plaza or publicly accessible open space that is located adjacent to the sidewalk. A continuous "street wall" of commercial development is particularly important along Greenwood Avenue North between North 84th and North 87th Streets and along North 85th Street between Palatine Avenue North and Phinney Avenue North.
- Providing sidewalks along the street rights-of-way that are at least 12 feet wide. Include street trees and other plantings between the street and the main walkway to provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic.
- Providing pedestrian-oriented facades and entrances along public rights-of-way and designated pedestrian pathways (including proposed east-west pedestrian walkways in the design report). "Pedestrian-oriented facades" generally feature window areas or window displays, artwork or other amenities along the majority of the ground floor, and substantial weather protection.
- Providing a mid-block, east-west pedestrian walkway as identified in the design report.
- Providing landscaping where possible, particularly along the proposed midblock pedestrian walkways.
- Minimizing paved surfaces devoted to vehicle circulation and parking, excepting that circulation improvements may be needed in areas where the street grid is incomplete. Below-grade or in-structure parking is strongly recommended.
- Minimizing the impact of driveways on pedestrian travel.
- Ensuring that public open spaces and pedestrian travel routes have sidewalks or other walkways, are safe and well lit, and respond to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Employ facade modulation and articulation to provide appropriate human and architectural scale.

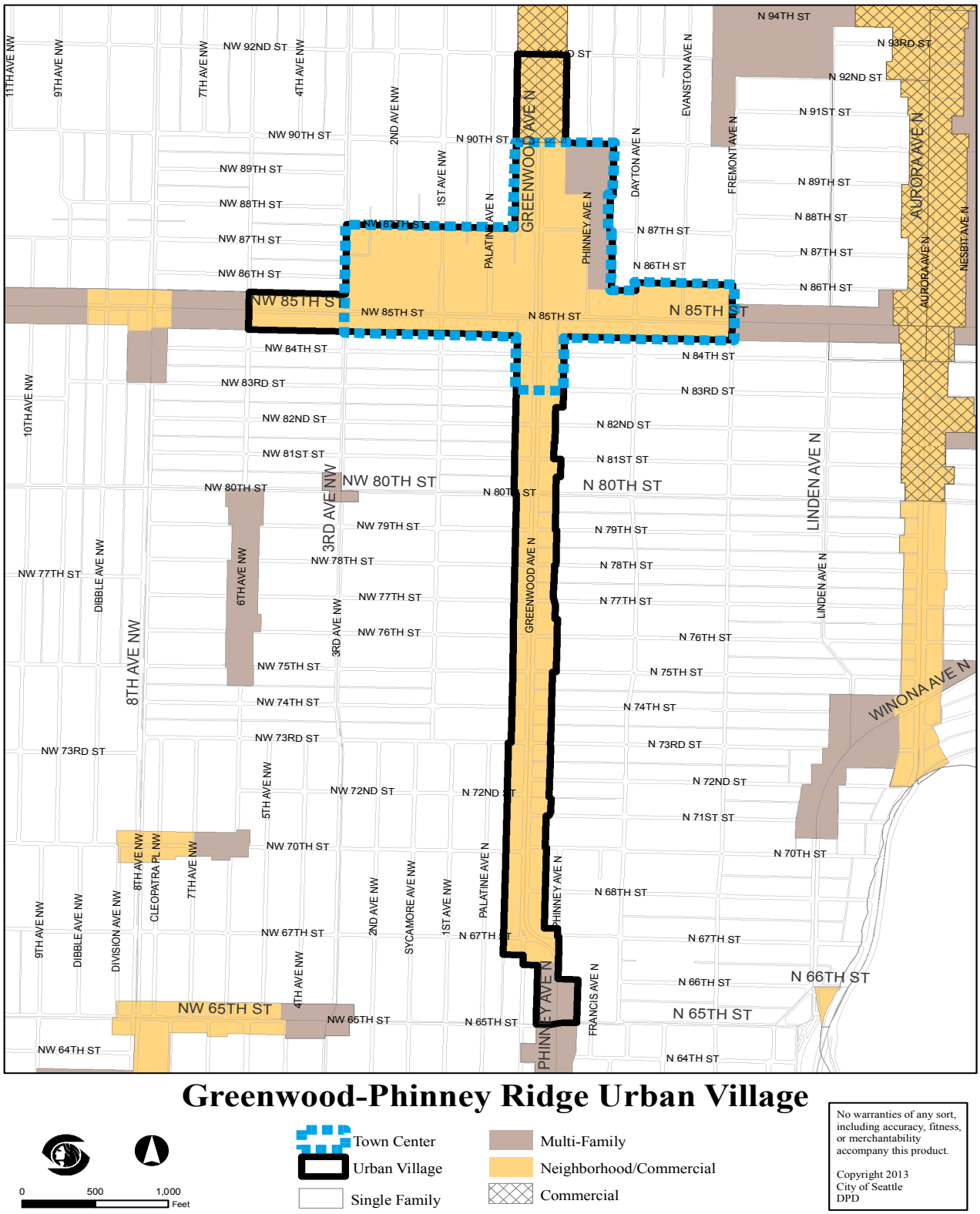
Town Center Specific Guidelines

The Town Center Specific Design Guidelines were developed from the urban design recommendations contained in the 2002 Greenwood Town Center Plan. The Town Center Plan provides significant additional detail regarding each of the urban design concepts discussed. The plan also contains recommendations that address other redevelopment concepts including the potential use of contract rezones, traffic improvements and streetscape improvements. For a copy of the Town Center Plan, contact the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods at (206) 615-0950 or www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods.The town center is identified in Map 1 below.



Map 1: Town Center

Map 2: Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Urban Village



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.

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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.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Responding to Site Characteristics

Numerous east-west streets offer excellent views of Green Lake, Puget Sound and the Olympic and Cascade Mountains from Greenwood Avenue North. Where possible, buildings should be located to take advantage of these views and to enhance views from the public right-of-way. Examples of methods to do this include setbacks from view corridors, landscape elements and street trees to frame views rather than block them, and pedestrian spaces with views of the water and mountains.

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November 22, 2013
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CS2 Urban Pattern and Form

Citywide Guideline:

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

The small, heavily landscaped setback of this residential building on Greenwood Avenue North and North 76th Street enhances the residential environment.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Streetscape Compatibility

i. **Reinforcement of Commercial and Residential Development Patterns:** Commercial development in the Greenwood/Phinney corridor has historically been oriented toward the street, with buildings up against the sidewalks. Most residential developments have modest landscaped setbacks and first floors are built slightly above grade to allow for privacy and a sense of transition from the street. Continuing this pattern will reinforce the character of both the business districts and residential areas. Consider:

a. Build commercial development up to the sidewalk where possible. Along North/Northwest 85th Street, new commercial buildings should be set back sufficiently to provide 12-foot minimum sidewalks (including street trees and other plantings). Commercial buildings may be setback off the street if pedestrian-oriented space is provided that is enhanced with humanizing components such as trees and other plants, site furnishings and high-quality, well-detailed pavements between the sidewalk and the building.

b. Residential buildings (on Greenwood Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street) should be setback where possible five to 15 feet from the sidewalk to provide extensive landscaping in the front yard. When possible, first floor residential units facing Greenwood Avenue North or North/Northwest 85th Street should be located at least three feet above the sidewalk level to provide a sense of privacy and surveillance over the street.

ii. **Treatment of Side Streets:** Some treatment of side-streets off of Greenwood Avenue North and 85th Street is important to create an effective transition to residential neighborhoods. Some options to consider include:

a. setbacks with view-framing landscaping (see CS1);

b. arbors with hanging plants; and

c. small outdoor spaces with trees and landscaping.

II. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

i. Impact of New Buildings on the Street: Consider the setback of upper stories of new mixed-use development on Greenwood Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street to reduce the dominance of new buildings on the street.

Also, new commercial development should respect the small-scale historical pattern of storefronts on Greenwood Avenue North. Typically, the older storefronts are about 50 feet in width and feature brick, stone or other masonry units. Some also feature architectural details that provide interest and a human scale to the buildings.

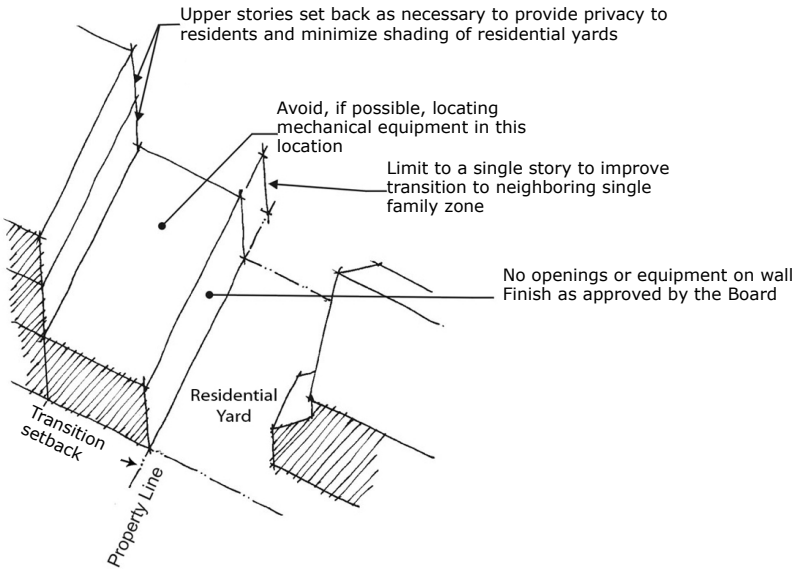
Zone Edges: Careful siting, building design and massing are important to achieve a sensitive transition between more intensive and less intensive zones. Consider design techniques including:

a. increasing the building setback from the zone edge at the ground level;

b. reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors nearest to the less intensive zone;

c. reducing the overall height of the structure; and

d. using extensive landscaping or decorative screening.



This zone edge option may be desirable in instances where there is no alley between the residential and non-residential uses.

ii. Design departures: If alternative techniques are used to successfully achieve a sensitive transition between these zones, the following departures, as set forth at SMC 23.41.012, are suggested for consideration in the Design Review process, to offset the loss of any development opportunity within the Greenwood/Phinney neighborhood:

a. relax the minimum size limit for nonresidential uses—allow up to a 15 percent reduction in the required commercial area; and

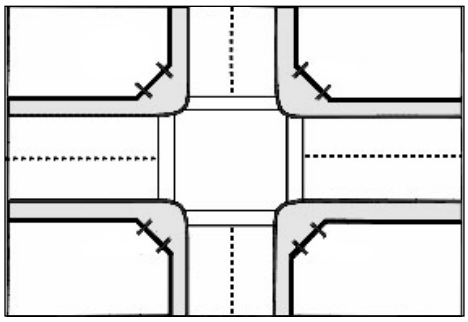
b. relax the residential amenity or setback requirements.

This provision is not meant to preclude the granting of departures as allowed in section 23.41 of the Seattle Land Use Code.

An additional zone edge design option may be desirable in areas where an alley does not exist:

c. Allow for a building's ground floor to be built to the property line of the less intensive zone as long as the building wall is less than a single story, contains no windows and upper floors are stepped back appropriately.

iii. **Surrounding Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces. Evaluate adjacent sites, streetscapes and open spaces for how they function as the walls and floor of outdoor spaces or "rooms" for public use to determine how best to support those spaces through project siting and design.



Corner building entries are encouraged.

III. Architectural Context/Building Entrances

Almost all of the existing buildings located at corners along the Greenwood Avenue North/Phinney Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street corridors have entrances at the corner. Even when the principal off-street parking areas are located on the side of the building, a primary building entrance should be located at the corner. This concept is consistent with traditional neighborhood commercial designs and important in facilitating pedestrian activity at the street corners

Town Center Specific Guidelines

This mid-block connection offers a pedestrian corridor activated by entrances onto the space and movable seating.

IV. Mid-Block Connections

Where relevant, consider incorporating and enhancing the mid-block connection concept. Mid-block connections should be visually open and activated by pedestrian lighting, landscaping and human scaled, pedestrian-oriented architectural features and details. Inclusion of public art and neighborhood signage is encouraged. These connections should align with the mid-block crosswalk and may vary in width.

V. Street Pattern

New development should respond to the existing street pattern to create pedestrian and visual continuity.

VI. Structure Orientation

Buildings should generally be built to the edge of sidewalks without setbacks so that ground floor uses are visible and accessible from the pedestrian circulation system. The impacts of new structures on solar exposure should be considered. Buildings located on corners should be oriented to the corner and include entries, windows, canopies or other special architectural treatment. Automobile access, circulation or parking should not be located at the intersections of public streets. Blank walls should be avoided where possible and mitigated with architectural treatment where they are unavoidable. Mitigation might include small setbacks with planters and other landscaping, wall-hung trellises, indentations and modulation, and integration of art pieces.

Cobblestone Used Furniture (Greenwood Avenue North between North 84th and North 85th Streets). Again, a modest scale and traditional storefront features make this a good example. The decorative tile use, inset entry, and display windows add interest. Although the sign is large, its detailing and execution make it appropriate in its context.

VII. Mass and Scale

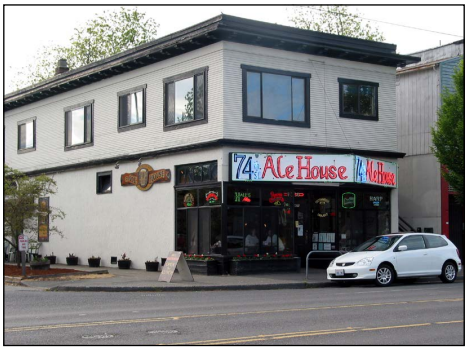
Consider reducing the impact or perceived mass and scale of large structures by modulating upper floors; varying roof forms and cornice lines; varying materials, colors and textures; and providing vertical articulation of building facades in proportions that are similar to surrounding plat patterns.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character

Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Victoria Townhouses (Comstock Street, Queen Anne). The use of traditional pitched roofs, gables, and bays achieves a scale and character consistent with the neighborhood.



74th Street Ale House (Greenwood Avenue North and North 74th Street). This building's modest scale, traditional storefront features, and surrounding landscaping treatments make it a positive feature of the neighborhood.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Concept and Consistency

Architectural Styles: The Greenwood Avenue North/Phinney Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street corridors are characterized by their utilitarian, non-flamboyant, traditional architectural styles (except for churches). Some important points to consider in making new development consistent and compatible with existing development include:

i. small-scale architectural details at the ground level, including color, texture/patterns, materials, window treatment, sculptural elements, etc;

ii. landscaping is an important component of the overall character, particularly for residential development; and

iii. personalization of individual businesses is a key feature of both corridors.

Town Center Specific Guidelines

II. Compatibility

Consider using the human-scale historical pattern of storefronts on Greenwood Avenue North as a guide in developing new structures abutting Town Center streets. New development should respond to Greenwood's existing context by matching window and opening proportions, entryway patterns, scale and location of building cornices, proportion and degree of trim work and other decorative details, and employing a variety of appropriate finish materials.

PL1 Connectivity

Citywide Guideline:

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

With its extensive landscaping, this plaza feels like a protected, relaxing park. Movable seating creates small gathering spaces, but can be removed for special public gatherings.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

Pedestrian Open Spaces: Small, usable open spaces are an important design objective. Open spaces incorporating the following features are encouraged with new commercial and mixed-use development:

i. Good sun exposure during most of the year

ii. Located in areas with significant pedestrian traffic

iii. Storefront and/or residential windows face onto open space, at or above the ground level

iv. There are a variety of places to sit

v. Pedestrians have something to look at, whether it is a view of the street, landscaping, a mural, etc.

Town Center Specific Guidelines

II. Open Space

Encourage a publicly accessible urban plaza, potentially incorporated into one of the north-south streets and any proposed mid-block connection. This adjoining street could be temporarily closed to traffic for special public gatherings. The plaza could include seasonal landscaping and year-round green, seating walls, benches or other street furniture, and public art.

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.

Small signs that hang over the sidewalk create a pedestrian-friendly shopping atmosphere.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

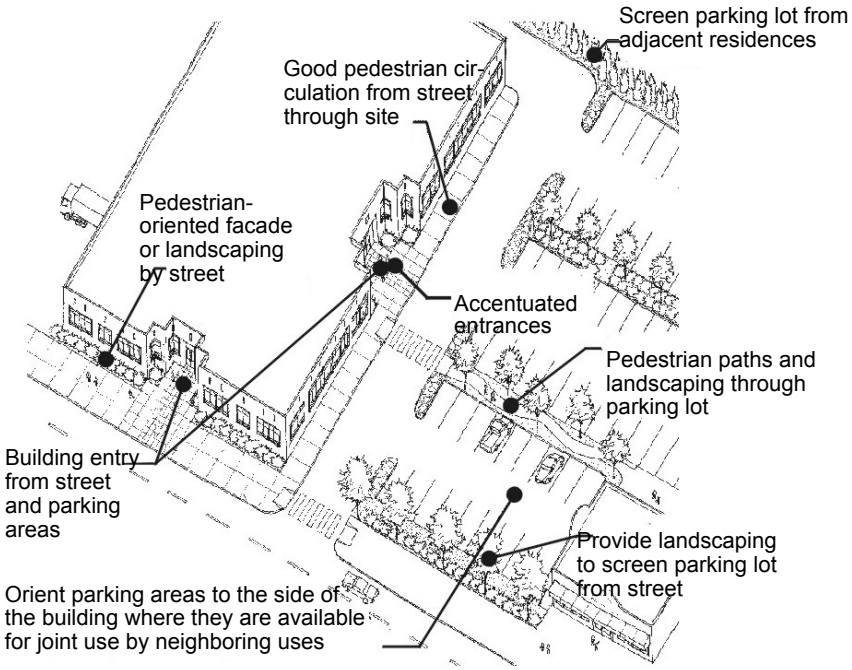
i. **North/Northwest 85th Street Corridor and Greenwood Avenue North Corridor, North of North 87th Street:** New development should enhance the pedestrian environment and encourage pedestrian activity along the North/Northwest 85th Street corridor and the Greenwood Avenue North corridor, north of North 87th Street. The following measures should be encouraged:

a. Building entries facing the street

b. Pedestrian-oriented facades

c. Weather protection

d. Below-grade parking, when possible



A good site design example for North/Northwest 85th Street.

Carmelita's (Greenwood Avenue North between North 70th and North 75th Streets). Streetfront windows highlighted with awnings and planter boxes make this simple building attractive from the sidewalk and street.

ii. **Pedestrian Amenities:** When possible, new development should integrate pedestrian amenities including but not limited to street trees, pedestrian lighting, benches, newspaper racks, public art and bike racks to maintain and strengthen pedestrian activity.

Town Center Specific Guidelines

II. Pedestrian Lighting

Provide lighting that enhances pedestrian safety and comfort. Pedestrian street lights should conform to the existing Greenwood lighting design plan (Lumec Z-14 Green finish GN8TX). New buildings are encouraged to incorporate custom lighting fixtures along sidewalks and public pathways. Special care should be made to not over-illuminate.

III. Street Elements

Integrate public art into buildings and landscaping. Small signs—especially blade signs that hang over sidewalks—should be incorporated. Signage for way-finding, especially parking, is encouraged. Coordinate signage plans with the Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Plan.

DC1 Project Uses and Activities

Citywide Guideline:

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Blank Walls

Storefronts are encouraged to be located at the sidewalk edge, particularly in neighborhood commercial districts, and should be continuous, minimizing blank walls. Where unavoidable consider treating blank walls with one or more of the methods suggested in the Seattle Design Guidelines, including:

i. installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant material;

ii. employing small setbacks;

iii. employing different texture, colors, or materials;

iv. providing art or murals.

Note: Successful murals typically require a clear vision, a strong theme (historical, cultural, etc.), some flair or whimsy, and exemplary execution.

Town Center Specific Guidelines

II. Parking and Vehicular Circulation

Where it is necessary to include parking adjacent to a public street, consider mitigating the visual impacts with street trees, landscaping or other design features.

i. Curb cuts along North/Northwest 85th Street should be consolidated where feasible.

ii. Entrances to parking could include special paving and other sidewalk treatments and amenities, such as additional landscaping, signage or art.

iii. Access to off-street parking around Palatine Avenue North, First Avenue North and Third Avenue North should be consolidated where feasible.

iv. Access at Second Avenue Northwest's alignment is also acceptable to reinforce the grid pattern.

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.

Apartment building (Greenwood Avenue North and North 76th Street). Streetfront setbacks, landscaping, and building modulation make this one of the better multifamily buidling examples in the neighborhood.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

Façade Articulation and Modulation: Façade articulation and modulation in the Greenwood/Phinney Ridge Planning Area are most critical in multi-family residential buildings. Use of façade articulation and architectural elements is encouraged to make new construction compatible with the surrounding architectural context. Architectural features such as those listed below can add further interest to a building, and lend buildings a human scale:

i. Pitched roof

ii. Covered front porch

iii. Vertically proportioned windows

iv. Window trim and eave boards

Façade modulation and articulation are less critical in commercial or mixed-use structures as long as appropriate levels of detail are present to break up the façade. Many of these structures are simple boxes that are well-fenestrated and contain a number of details that add interest at the ground level and lend buildings a human scale. Modulation of commercial and mixed-use structures at the street level is discouraged unless the space or spaces created by the modulation are large enough to be usable by pedestrians.

Pig and Whistle (Greenwood Avenue North near North 85th Street). Another popular site, this building features attractive facade details, storefront windows, traditional building materials, weather protection and a unique and appropriately-scaled sign.

Starbucks/Red Mill Burger site (North 67th Street and Phinney Avenue North). This building's human scale, storefront windows, traditional materials, weather protection, wide sidewalks, and seating areas, in addition to its unique location and views, make it one of the most popular sites in the neighborhood.

II. Human Scale

New multi-story developments should consider methods to coordinate a building's upper and lower stories. The parts should function as a composition—not necessarily requiring the top and bottom to be the same or similar.

III. Mass and Scale

Consider reducing the impact or perceived mass and scale of large structures by modulating upper floors; varying roof forms and cornice lines; varying materials, colors and textures; and providing vertical articulation of building facades in proportions that are similar to surrounding plat patterns.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes

Citywide Guideline:

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

Personalization of businesses is a key feature along Phinney/Greenwood Avenue North and North 85th Street.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

Signage: The design and placement of signs plays an important role in the visual character and identity of the community. Key aspects of this effort are to ensure that the signs are at an appropriate scale and fit in with the building's architecture and the local district. Small signs are encouraged in the building's architecture, along a sign band, on awnings or marquees, located in windows or hung perpendicular to the building façade.

The following signs are generally discouraged:

i. Large illuminated box (back-lit "can") signs, unless they are treated or designed to be compatible with the character of surrounding development. Back-lit awnings should be limited to one horizontal-mounted lighting tube. Small neon signs are an alternative as long as they are unintrusive to adjacent residences.

ii. Pole-mounted signs. Small monument signs are encouraged as part of low walls screening parking and abutting pedestrian-oriented space. Design should not present a visibility problem to a driver, pedestrian or bicyclist.

Greenwood Avenue North and North 73rd Street. Human scale elements, traditional materials and a pedestrian-oriented facade make this building one of the neighborhood's favorites. The decorative tile and facade details add interest from the sidewalk and the street.

Plantings enhance the street's vitality while maintaining visibility of business signage.

II. Exterior Finish Materials

New buildings should feature durable, attractive and well-detailed finish materials.

i. **Building Materials in the Greenwood Avenue North/Phinney Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street Corridors**: Again, buildings within these corridors are characterized by their utilitarian, nonflamboyant, traditional architectural styles. Brick is the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and should be encouraged. Plastic awnings should be strongly discouraged. As an alternative, architectural canopies are encouraged to provide weather protection and a place for business signage.

Town Center Specific Guidelines

III. Landscaping

Use of plants that are native to the Pacific Northwest is encouraged. In parking areas consider using architectural raised planters, earth berms, terraced planters and trellises. New development should include streetscape improvements to the public street and private internal drives where possible. Coordinate landscaping and tree location to maintain visibility of business signage.