

# 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-

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?

- 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?

## 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).

## **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.

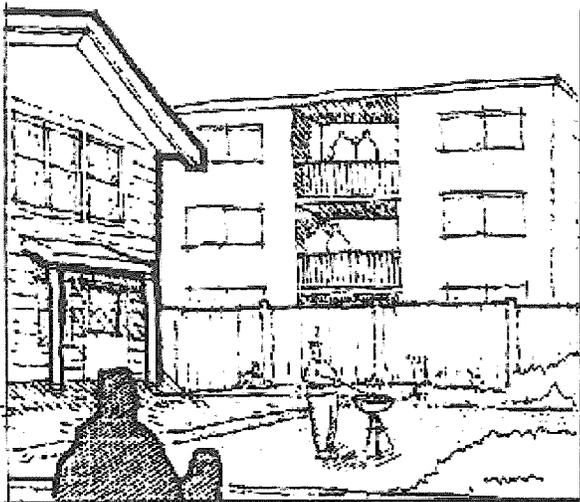
## A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites

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.

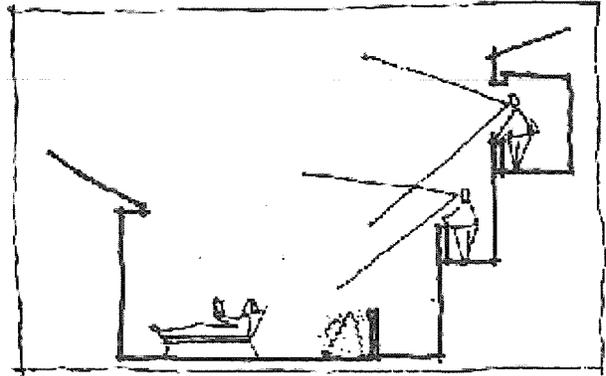


**Inappropriate siting of large buildings can reduce the privacy of adjacent homes.**

**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.**





# CS2

## Urban Pattern and Form

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

### *Design Approaches and Strategies to Consider:*

#### A. LOCATION IN THE CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD

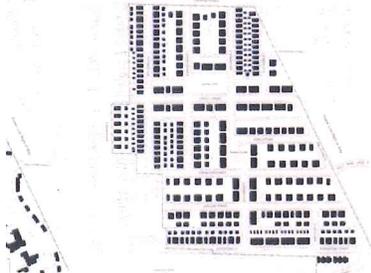
1. **Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give Seattle, the neighborhood, and/or the site its distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established. Examples include patterns of streets or blocks; slopes; sites with prominent visibility, relationships to bodies of water or significant trees, natural areas, open spaces, iconic buildings or transportation junctions; and land seen as a gateway to the community.
2. **Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly. A site may lend itself to a “high-profile” design with significant presence and individual identity, or may be better suited to a simple but quality design that contributes to the block as a whole. Buildings that contribute to a strong street edge, especially at the first three floors, are particularly important to the creation of a quality public realm that invites social and economic interaction.

#### B. ADJACENT SITES, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACES

1. **Site Characteristics:** Reinforce interesting characteristics of sites, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add drama or distinction to the building massing.
2. **Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and carefully consider how the building will define the perimeter of the public realm. Consider the qualities and character of the streetscape—its physical features (sidewalk, parking, landscape strip, street trees, travel lanes, and other amenities) and its function (major retail street or quieter residential street)—in siting and designing the building.



See also DC3.C1 Character of Open Space for related guidance.



*Originally designed with long curving streets and few intersections, this development reinstated the street grid to better reflect and connect to neighboring properties.*



For information about Seattle street improvements and standards, consult the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual (ROWIM) published by the Seattle Department of Transportation at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation> under the “Resources” link.



See also PL1.A1 Enhancing Open Space for related guidance.



*This drawing appropriately shows the proposed project within a broader context in order to assess height, bulk, and scale compatibility with surrounding buildings.*



*Under the City's SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) policy, multi-family and/or commercial projects with substantial height, bulk, and scale impacts will be analyzed through the design review process. Siting and design based on the principles of these guidelines will help to mitigate some of those impacts, while others may require a reduction in the height, bulk, and scale of the project. Consult SMC 23.41 for additional information.*



*Slightly unconventional, yet still familiar, the skewed gable roof forms help reduce the mass of this townhouse project and allow it to blend into a neighborhood that includes single-family houses.*



*See also DC2.A Massing for related guidance.*

- Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces. Evaluate adjacent sites, streetscapes, trees and vegetation, and open spaces for how they function as the walls and floor of outdoor spaces or "rooms" for public use in order to determine how best to support those spaces through project siting and design (e.g. using mature trees to frame views of architecture or other prominent features).

## C. RELATIONSHIP TO THE BLOCK

- Corner Sites:** Use a corner site to greatest advantage. Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances. Consider using a corner to provide extra space for pedestrians and a generous entry, or build out to the corner to provide a strong urban edge to the block.
- Mid-Block Sites:** Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. If the corners of the block are already occupied by buildings with strong presence, consider a simpler design that doesn't compete with them. If street geometries are such that the mid-block site is the termination of another street view, consider a design with enough presence and detail to make the view worthwhile. Continue a strong street-edge where it is already present, and respond to datum lines created by adjacent buildings at the first three floors. Where adjacent properties are undeveloped or underdeveloped, design the party walls to provide visual interest through materials, color, texture, or other means.
- Full Block Sites:** Design long facades of full-block buildings so as to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design. Consider providing through-block access and/or designing the project as an assemblage of buildings and spaces within the block.

## D. HEIGHT, BULK, AND SCALE

- Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition. Note that existing buildings may or may not reflect the density allowed by zoning or anticipated by applicable policies.
- Existing Site Features:** Use changes in topography, site shape, and existing vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties; for example siting the greatest mass of the building on the lower part of the site or using an existing stand of trees to buffer building height from a smaller neighboring building.

3. **Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Factors to consider:
  - a. Distance to the edge of a less (or more) intensive zone;
  - b. Differences in development standards between abutting zones;
  - c. The type of separation from adjacent properties (e.g. separation by property line only, by an alley or street or open space, or by physical features such as grade change);
  - d. Adjacencies to different neighborhoods or districts; adjacencies to parks, open spaces, significant buildings or view corridors; and
  - e. Shading to or from neighboring properties.
4. **Massing Choices:** Where a project site abuts a less intensive zone, making a successful transition is especially important. In some areas, the best approach may be to lower the building height, break up the mass of the building, and/or match the scale of adjacent properties in building detailing. In other areas, approaches to massing that differ from existing buildings but preserve natural systems or existing features, enable better solar exposure or site orientation, and/or make for interesting urban form may also be appropriate.

## 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:

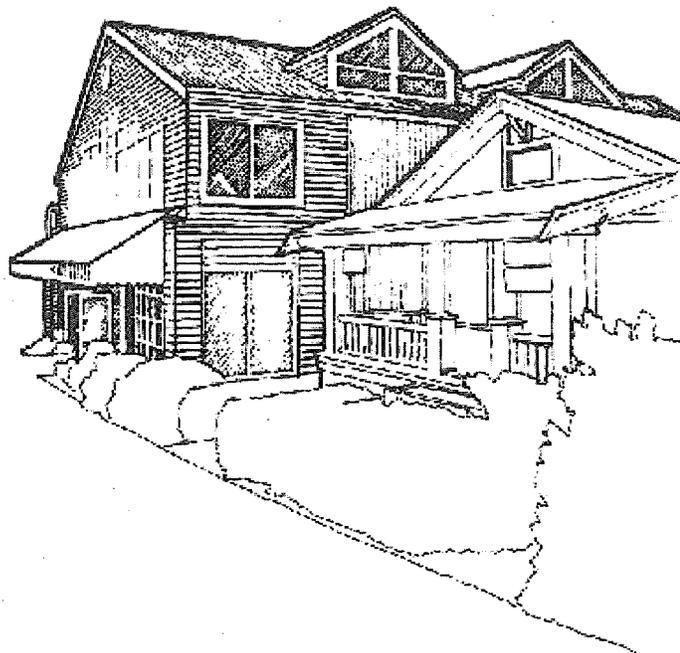
- distance from the edge of a less intensive zone.
- differences in development standards between abutting zones (allowable building height, width, lot coverage, etc.).
- effect of site size and shape.

- 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).

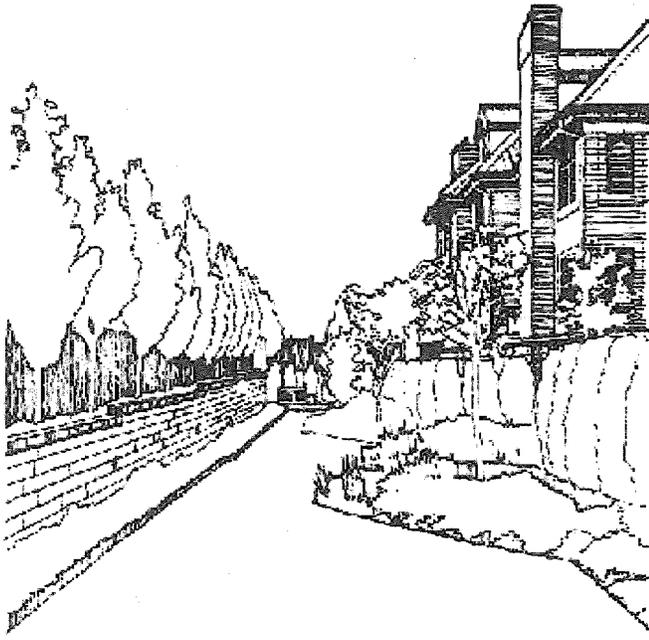
In some cases, careful siting and design treatment may be sufficient to achieve reasonable transition and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts. Some techniques for achieving compatibility are as follows:

- 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.**

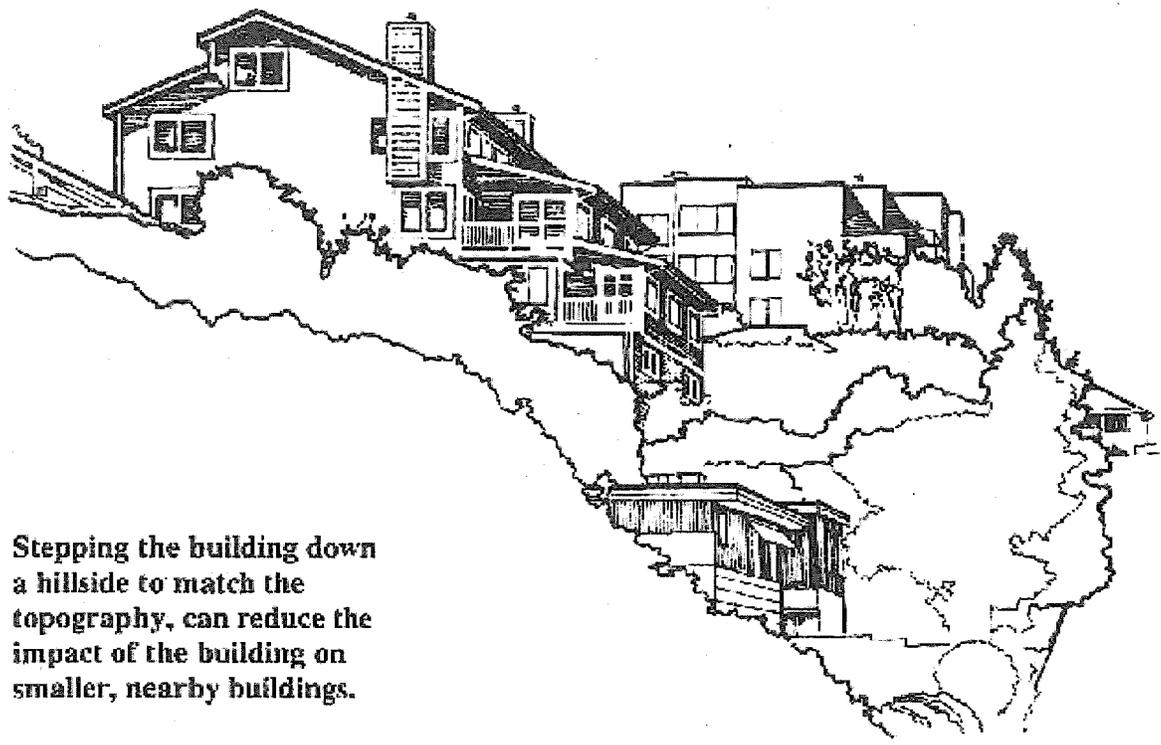


- creative use of landscaping or other screening.
- location of features on-site to facilitate transition, such as locating required open space on the zone edge so the building is farther from the lower intensity zone.



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.

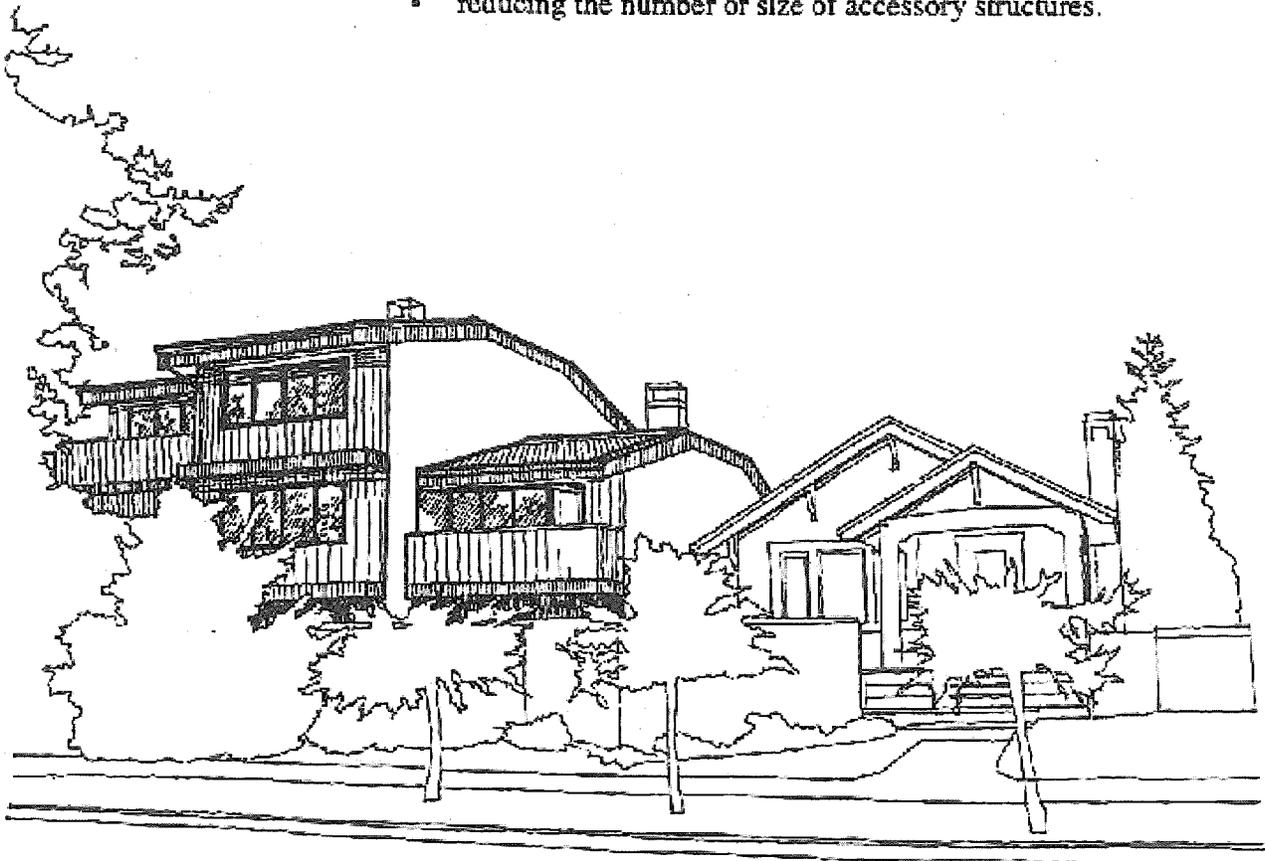


Stepping the building down a hillside to match the topography, can reduce the impact of the building on smaller, nearby buildings.

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

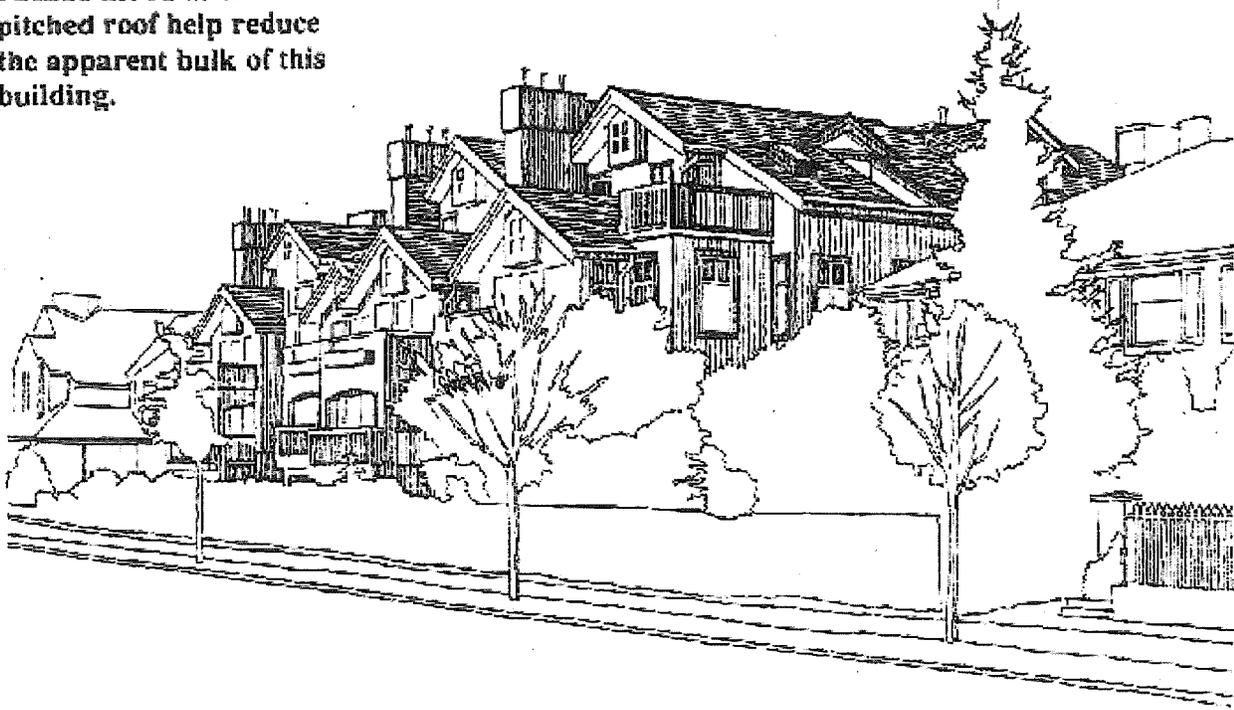
In some cases, reductions in the actual height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure may be necessary in order to mitigate adverse impacts and achieve an acceptable level of compatibility. Some techniques which can be used in these cases include:

- 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.**





*This drawing appropriately shows the proposed project within a broader context in order to assess height, bulk, and scale compatibility with surrounding buildings.*



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*Slightly unconventional, yet still familiar, the skewed gable roof forms help reduce the mass of this townhouse project and allow it to blend into a neighborhood that includes single-family houses.*



*See also DC2.A Massing for related guidance.*

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4. **Massing Choices:** Where a project site abuts a less intensive zone, making a successful transition is especially important. In some areas, the best approach may be to lower the building height, break up the mass of the building, and/or match the scale of adjacent properties in building detailing. In other areas, approaches to massing that differ from existing buildings but preserve natural systems or existing features, enable better solar exposure or site orientation, and/or make for interesting urban form may also be appropriate.

## **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:

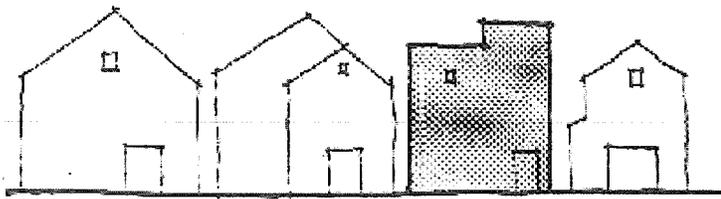
- Similar building articulation;
- Similar building scale and proportions;
- Similar or complementary architectural style;
- Similar or complementary roof forms;
- Similar building details and fenestration patterns; or
- Similar or complementary materials

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

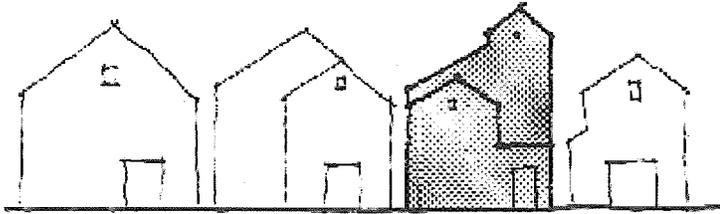
In some cases the existing context is not well defined, or may be undesirable. In such cases, a well-designed, new project can become a pioneer with the opportunity to establish a pattern or identity from which future development can take its cues.

#### **Architectural Features**

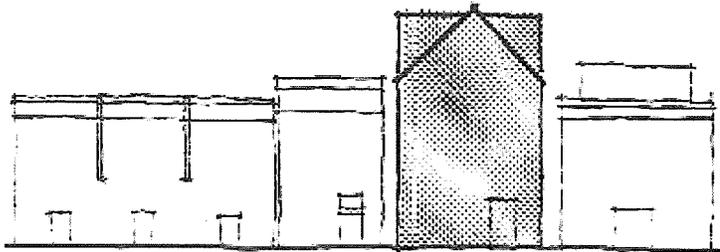
Below are several methods that can help integrate new buildings into the surrounding architectural context, using compatible architectural features, fenestration patterns, and building proportions.



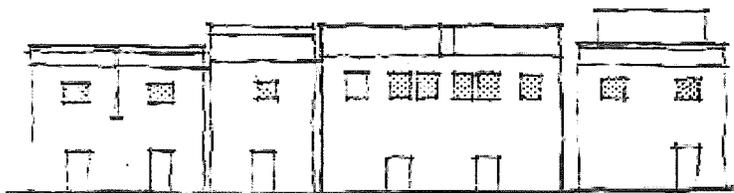
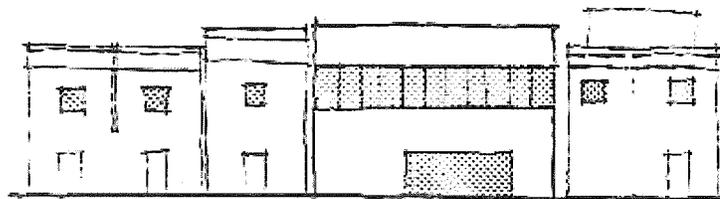
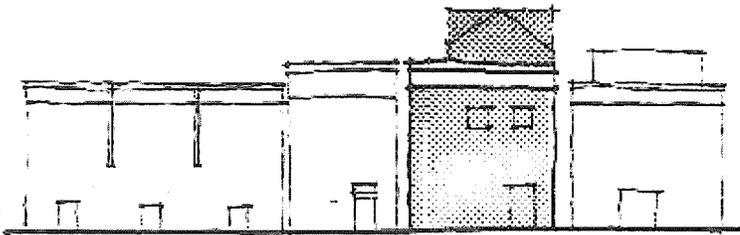
**Rooflines can reinforce the architectural character of a street.**



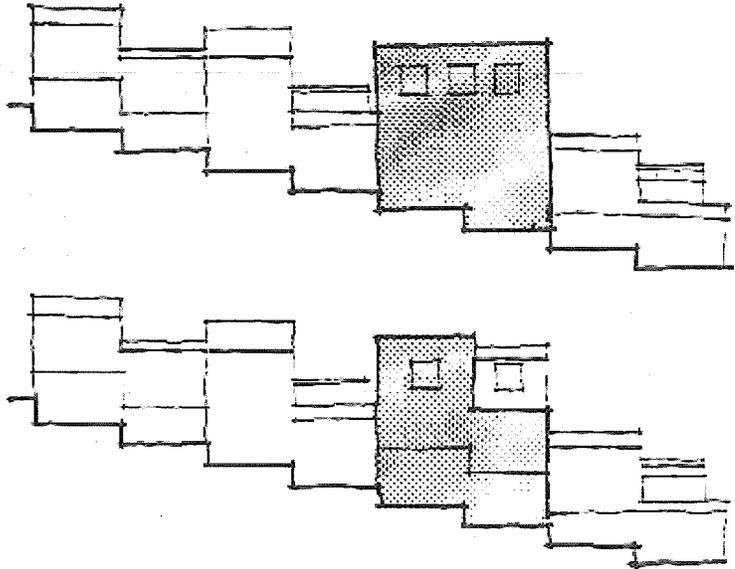
**Architectural features like cornices can relate to adjacent buildings, lowering the apparent, conflicting height of the building.**



**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.

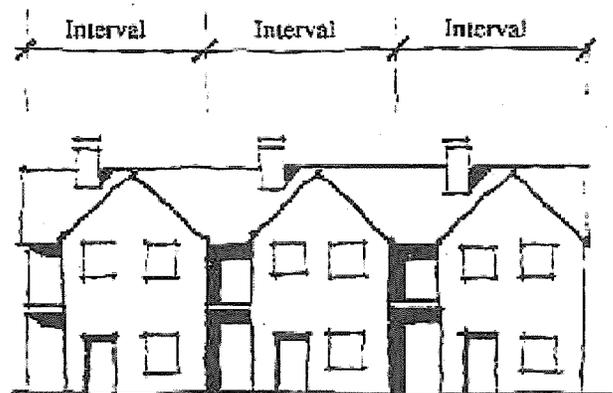


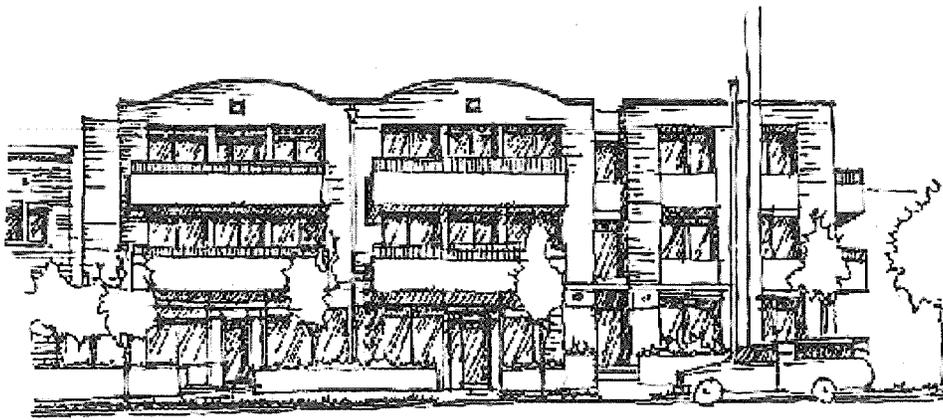
### Building Articulation

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

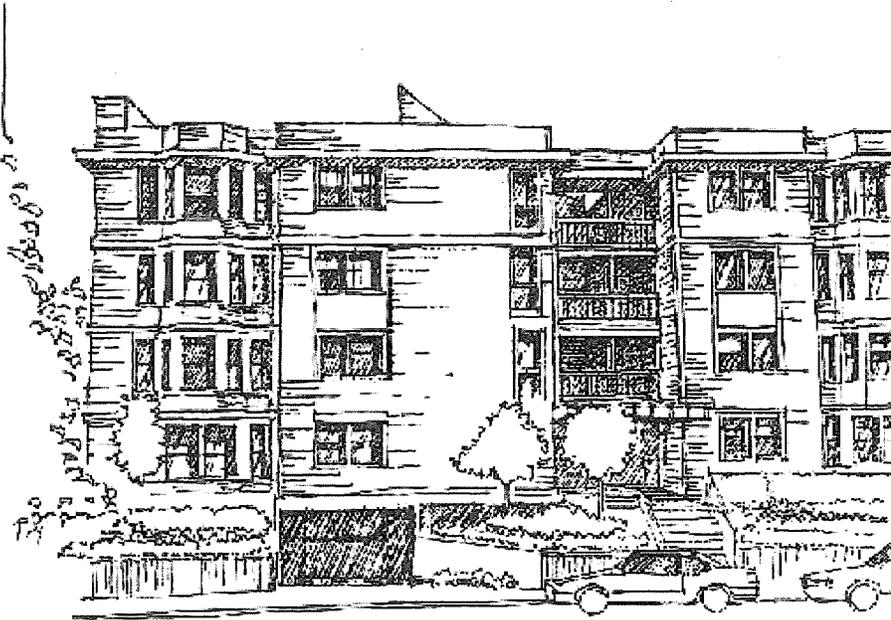
- Facade modulation - stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade.
- Repeating the window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
- Providing a porch, patio, deck, or covered entry for each interval.
- Providing a balcony or bay window for each interval.
- Changing the 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.





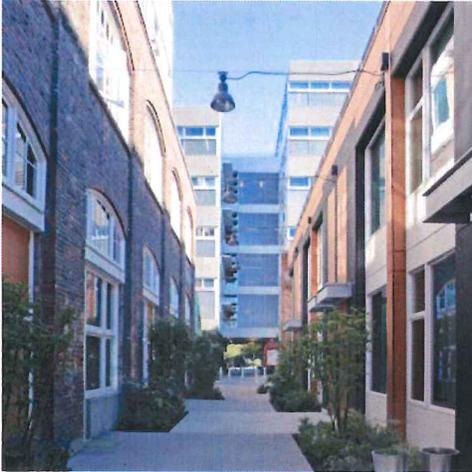
**This mixed-use building also expresses intervals through modulation, a mix of roof forms, landscaping and other elements.**



**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.**

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





# CS3

## Architectural Context and Character

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

### Design Approaches and Strategies to Consider:

#### A. EMPHASIZING POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRIBUTES

1. **Fitting Old and New Together:** Create a good fit between old and new projects, and historic and modern designs through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing and fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.
2. **Contemporary Design:** Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles and/or demonstrate ways to incorporate sustainability into the project through design, as expressed through use of new materials or other means.
3. **Established Neighborhoods:** In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.
4. **Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

#### B. LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

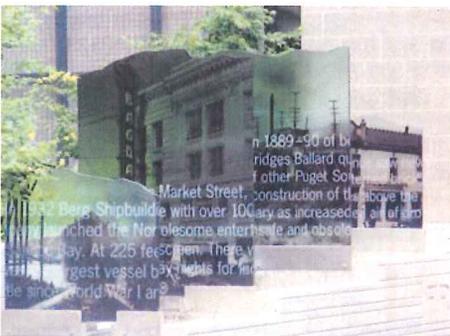
1. **Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.
2. **Historical/Cultural References:** Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.



See also DC2.C3 Fit with Neighboring Buildings for related guidance.



*Maintaining the scale and architectural character of this 1910 building was an important element in reflecting its prior occupancy and cultural associations while updating the building for contemporary uses and opening another chapter in its history.*



*Artwork referencing local history at the public plaza level of this project provides a link to the past in this rapidly changing neighborhood.*



# North Beacon Hill *neighborhood*

# Design Guidelines

*effective August 19, 2006*



**City of Seattle**  
Department of Planning  
and Development



Seattle Design Review Program



# **Design Review:**

# *North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*

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### **Urban design consultant:**

Michael Kimelberg

### **North Beacon Hill Council Design Guidelines Committee:**

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Dan Collins            | Judith Edwards        |
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| Harry Harris           | Rita Harris           |
| Jay Hollingsworth      | Megan Hoyt            |
| Curtis LaPierre, Chair | Brennan O'Reilly      |
| Amie Patao             | Roger Pence           |
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| Jodie Vice             | Betty Jean Williamson |
| Warren Yee             |                       |

### **Special Recognition:**

Laurie Rasmussen, Beacon Hill Chamber of Commerce  
Craig Thompson, Beacon Alliance of Neighbors  
Estela Ortega, El Centro de la Raza



# I. Design Review in Seattle's Neighborhoods

## What is Design Review?

Design Review provides a forum for citizens and developers to work toward achieving a better urban environment through attention given to fundamental design principles. Design Review is intended to shape how new development can contribute positively to Seattle's neighborhoods. Design guidelines are a flexible tool to be used as a supplement to prescriptive zoning requirements that will allow new development to respond better to the distinctive character of the surrounding environment.

Design Review has three principal objectives:

1. to encourage better building design and site planning to enhance the character of the city and ensure that new development fits sensitively into neighborhoods;
2. to provide flexibility in the application of development standards; and
3. to improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the City early in the siting and design of new development.

Design Review is a component of a Master Use Permit (MUP) application and, along with other components such as environmental review (SEPA) and variances, is administered by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Like these other components, Design Review applications involve public notice and opportunity for public comment.

Unlike other components, projects subject to Design Review are brought before one of the city's several Design Review Boards for recommendations or to DPD staff for Administrative Design Review. The final decision on Design Review is made by the DPD Director together with decisions on any other MUP components. Any appeals of these decisions are made to the Hearing Examiner.

## More about Design Review:

More information about Design Review can be found in the Seattle Municipal Code, SMC 23.41 (<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm>), and Citywide Design Guidelines ([www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/Design\\_Review\\_Guidelines](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/Design_Review_Guidelines)), or by contacting the Design Review Program manager ([www.seattle.gov/dpd/CityDesign/ProjectReview/DRP](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/CityDesign/ProjectReview/DRP)). Another important way the public can influence new development is by serving on one of the City's seven Design Review Boards.

## What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

Design Review uses both the Citywide Design Guidelines and guidelines that are specific to individual neighborhoods, and together these documents provide the basis for project review. The Citywide Design Guidelines are applicable to private development projects and have a legal basis in the Land Use Code.

Neighborhood-specific design guidelines are intended to augment the Citywide Design Guidelines by providing recommendations on issues unique to a particular neighborhood, and after adoption by the City Council, become part of the Land Use Code. The option to create neighborhood design guidelines was extended to Urban Center and Urban Village neighborhoods following Seattle's Neighborhood Planning process (which concluded in 1999), in response to the large number of neighborhood plans that included urban design objectives.

## What are the North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

In 1994, the City of Seattle designated the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village. The 171-acre area is bounded roughly by South Judkins Street to the north, I-5 to the west, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues to the east, and South Stevens Street to the south.

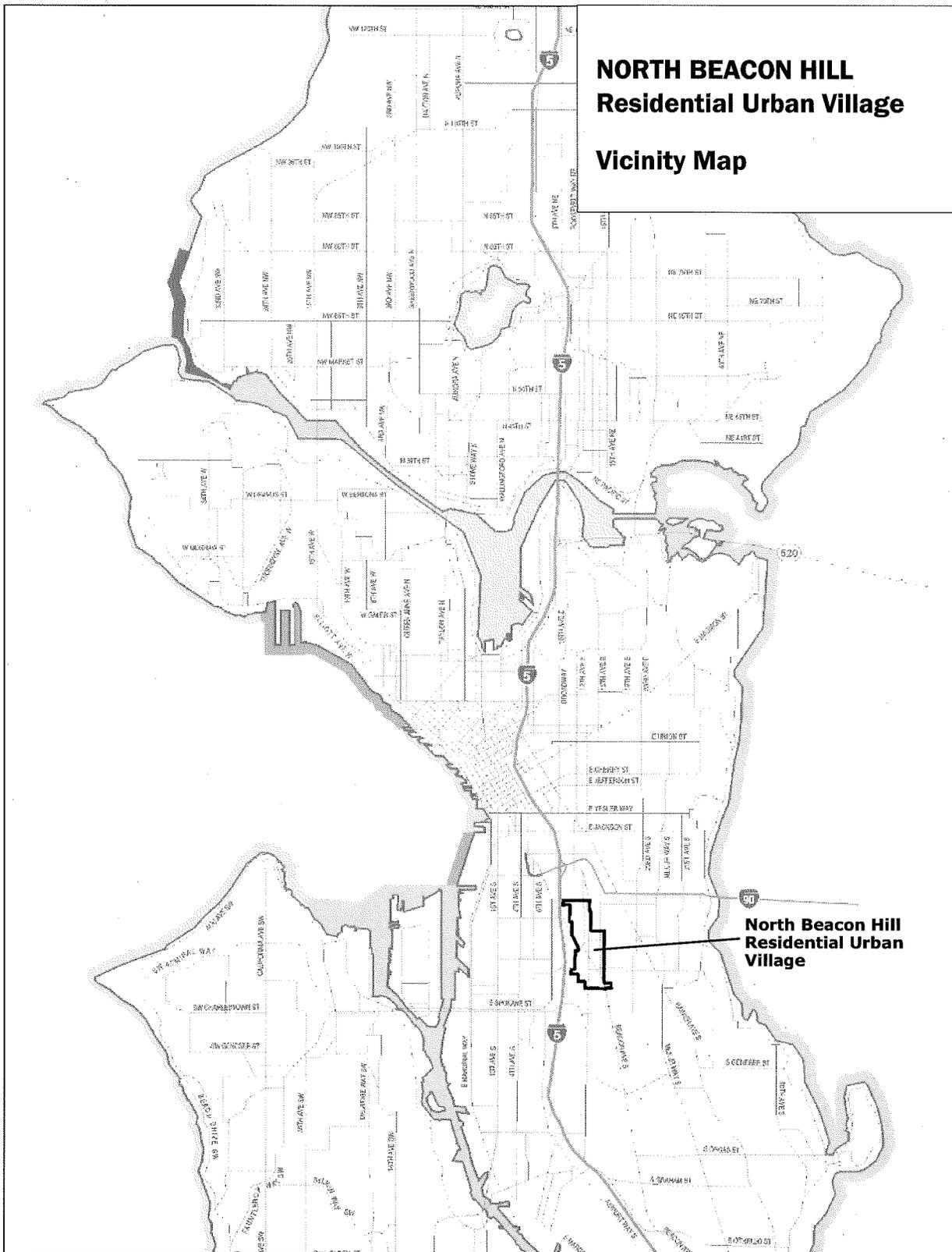
The North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines draw attention to preferred design and site planning, and highlight the qualities the neighborhood values most for new development. These guidelines, in conjunction with the Citywide Design Guidelines, strengthen the awareness of good design and inspired use of the Design Review process.

In general, commercial, multifamily and mixed-use projects that exceed specific thresholds in most of Seattle's commercial and multifamily zones are subject to Design Review as a component of MUP review. The guidelines are developed in accordance with the Design Review program's format drawing from both the Citywide Design Guidelines and the recommendations of the North Beacon Hill community. The Citywide Design Guidelines provide sufficient general direction for development scenarios in the neighborhood. Only those Citywide Design Guidelines that need more specificity, additional clarification, or site-specific examples unique to North Beacon Hill have been addressed in these neighborhood design guidelines.

In identifying neighborhood priorities to be addressed in the guidelines, the North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan '98 and the Design Review Program's guideline categories were reviewed. The following documents were also referenced:

- *North Beacon Hill Action Plan*, North Beacon Hill Action Plan Committee '94
- *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings*, City of Seattle - Oct. '93. Rev. Nov. '98
- *North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan*, North Beacon Hill Community Council '98
- *North Beacon Hill Approval and Adoption Matrix*, North Beacon Hill Community Council '99

In the summer of 2003, the North Beacon Hill Community Council established a Design Guidelines Committee to develop neighborhood-specific guidelines for the area bounded by the Urban Village Boundary (see map on next page). Members of the committee included Beacon Hill residents, business people, Chamber of Commerce members and community activists. Local residents were polled at the annual Beacon Hill Festival as to their priorities for their neighborhood design guidelines. Opportunities for public comment were provided at each monthly meeting of the North Beacon Hill Council and the draft guidelines were presented for review and discussion at a public meeting of North Beacon Hill residents prior to submission to the City.



## North Beacon Hill: Looking Toward the Future

The Mayor's plan for growth in neighborhoods near downtown, including North Beacon Hill, will result in the construction of numerous multifamily and mixed-use developments within and surrounding the city's urban villages. With the completion of the new library and the construction of the new light rail station, the North Beacon Hill of 10 to 15 years from now will be quite different from the neighborhood we see today. These changes will stimulate new development and new economic activity. While new development brings excitement, it is important to the community that the historic and cultural significance of North Beacon Hill remains.

A vital, highly diverse community, North Beacon Hill is bounded by the historic U.S. Marine Hospital, now known as the Pacific Medical Center, to the north and the recently declared historic Fire Station 13 to the south. El Centro del la Raza anchors the middle of North Beacon Avenue, housed in the old Beacon Hill School. Nearby is the Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs, also known as the Jefferson Park Ladies Improvement Club. The Jefferson Park Ladies Improvement Club is located in the oldest house on Beacon Hill, built in 1893.

Like many Seattle neighborhoods, North Beacon Hill is resplendent with natural beauty. Hillside rising from the east and west to the commercial core on Beacon Avenue are crowned with trees. A Blue Atlas Cedar, *Cedrus atlantica* var. *glauca*, graces the lawn of the Garden Club House. The eastern skyline features views of Mt. Rainier and the Cascade Range, while to the west, territorial views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains reign. Easy access to the Olmstead-designed Jefferson Park and Cheasty Boulevard Trail make Beacon Hill a walker's delight. On the northwest side of North Beacon Avenue, a proposed extension of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail will create bicycle and pedestrian trails through an inner-city forested area. On the southeast side of North Beacon Hill, the Chief Sealth Trail will be the first off-street, multi-use trail in southeast Seattle. The trail will provide a fully separated surface and appeal to a broad range of users.

The neighborhood plan provides an over-arching framework for specific goals, policies and recommendations aimed at helping the area realize its full potential as a thriving social, educational, residential and business community. The plan recommends many planning and urban design concepts to be implemented, in which new development clearly plays a significant role. These concepts have the following goals:

1. Preserving and enhancing the existing scale and character of North Beacon Hill
2. Maintaining the unique features of our mixed use housing and commercial neighborhood
3. Improving the pedestrian environment
4. Providing the opportunity for community involvement in the design process



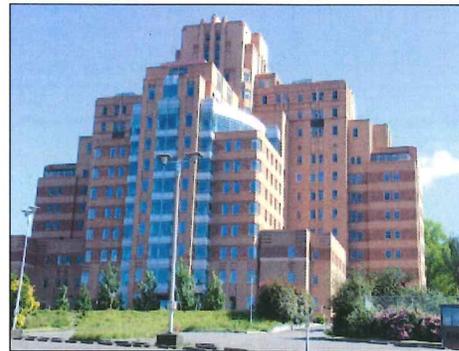
*A glimpse of Seattle's skyline*



*Historic Fire Station 13*



*Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs*



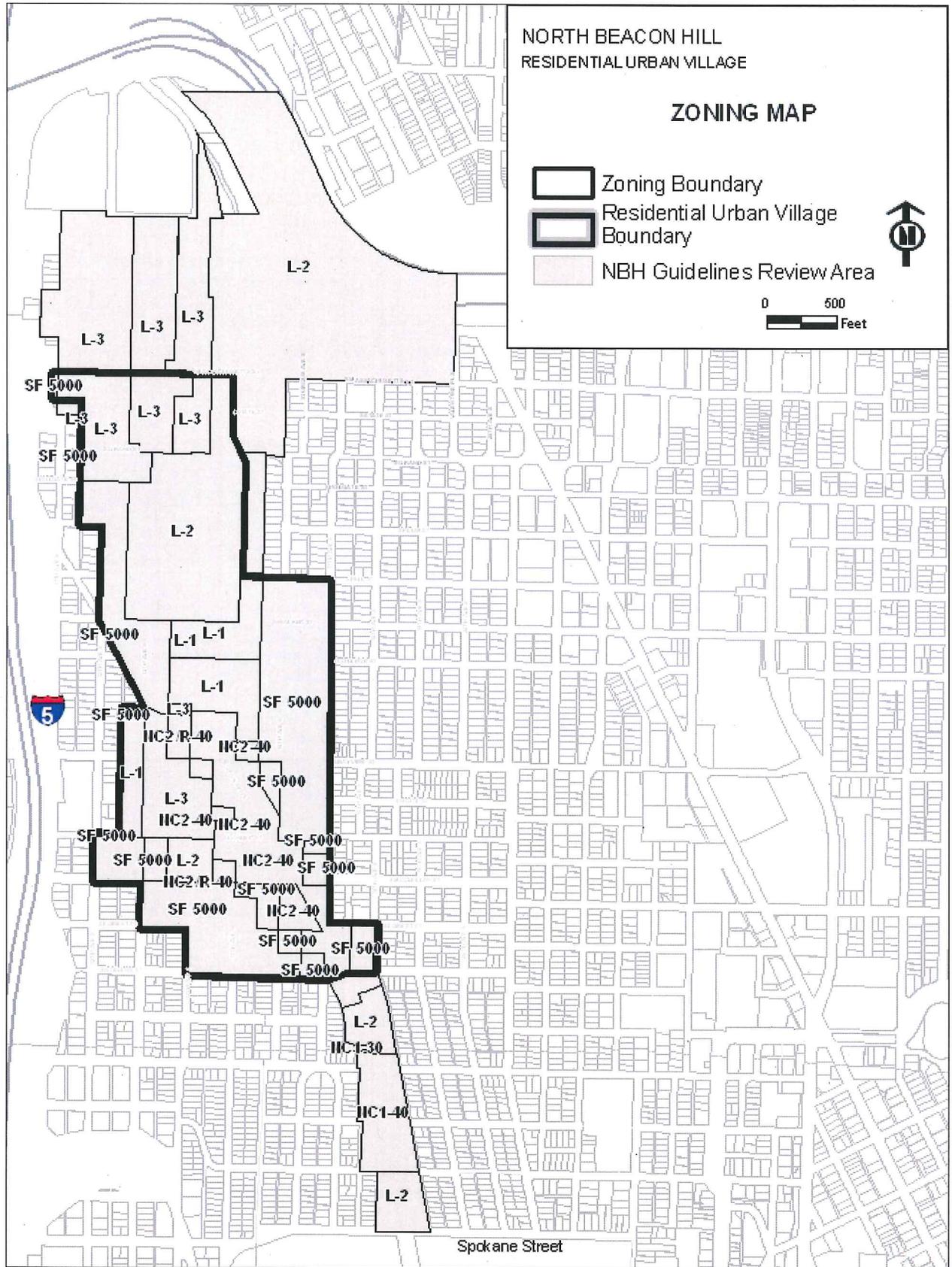
*The historic U.S. Marine Hospital, now the Pacific Medical Center*



*The elevated nature of Beacon Hill*



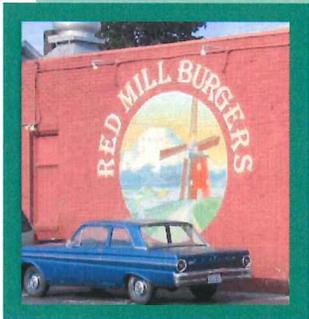
*The new Beacon Hill Library*



*For general information purposes only, please consult the City of Seattle for most recent zoning information.*



# GREENWOOD/PHINNEY *neighborhood*



# Design Guidelines

*effective April 7, 2006*



**City of Seattle**  
Department of Planning  
and Development



Seattle Design Review Program



**Design Review:** *Greenwood/Phinney  
Neighborhood  
Design Guidelines*

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## **Acknowledgments**

### **Greenwood/Phinney Design Guidelines Committee:**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Matt Anderson | Michael McGinn |
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| Rob Fellows   | Irene Wall     |



# Design Review in Seattle's Neighborhoods

## What is Design Review?

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## What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

Design Review uses both the 26 Citywide Guidelines and guidelines that are specific to individual neighborhoods. Once adopted by the City Council, neighborhood-specific design guidelines augment the Citywide Guidelines. Together they are the basis for project review within the neighborhood.

### **The guidelines for Greenwood/Phinney augment the existing Citywide Design Guidelines**

The Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Design Guidelines reveal the character of the neighborhood as known to its residents and businesses. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that a neighborhood values most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood's guidelines, in conjunction with the Citywide Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of good design and involvement in the design review process.

### **More About Design Review**

More information about Design Review can be found in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.41—online at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/LandUse/RelatedCodesRules.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LandUse/RelatedCodesRules.asp)) and in the Citywide Design Guidelines (online at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/Design\\_Review\\_Guidelines](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/Design_Review_Guidelines)), or by contacting the Design Review Program manager (online at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/CityDesign/ProjectReview/DRP](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/CityDesign/ProjectReview/DRP)). Another important way the public can influence new development is by serving on one of the City's seven Design Review Boards.

## 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
- 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 Neighborhood Specific Design Guidelines are another part of implementing the urban design objectives in the plan and the design report.

Guidelines under a final section, **Town Center Center Specific Guidelines**, 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:

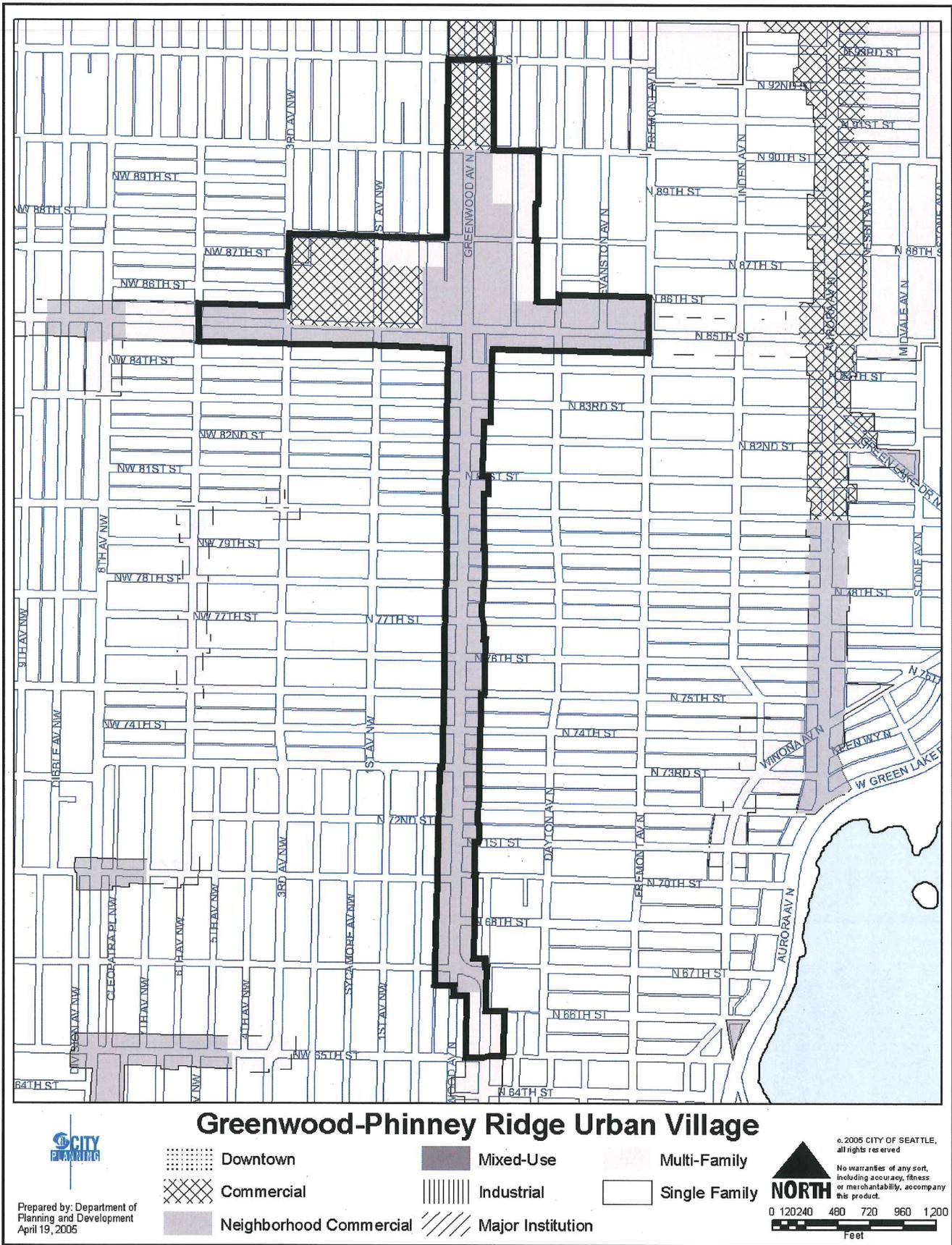
- Locating the building adjacent to the public sidewalk or orienting the building to a plaza or publicly accessible open space that is located adjacent to the sidewalk. A continuous "street

wall" of commercial development is particularly important along Greenwood Avenue North between North 84<sup>th</sup> and North 87<sup>th</sup> Streets and along North 85<sup>th</sup> Street between Palatine Avenue North and Phinney Avenue North.

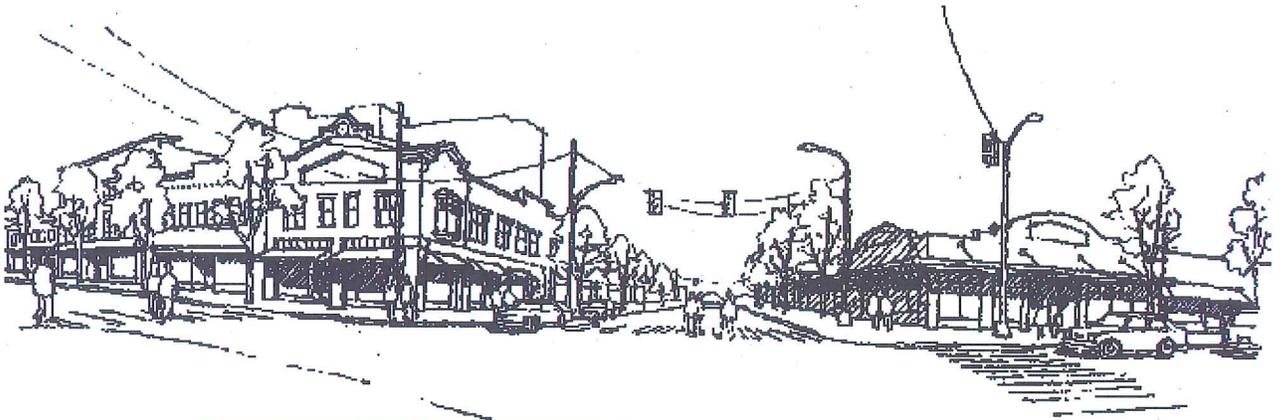
- Providing sidewalks along the street rights-of-way that are at least 12 feet wide. Include street trees and other plantings between the street and the main walkway to provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic.
- Providing pedestrian-oriented facades and entrances along public rights-of-way 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 mid-block 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 façade modulation and articulation to provide appropriate human and architectural scale.

# Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Design Guidelines





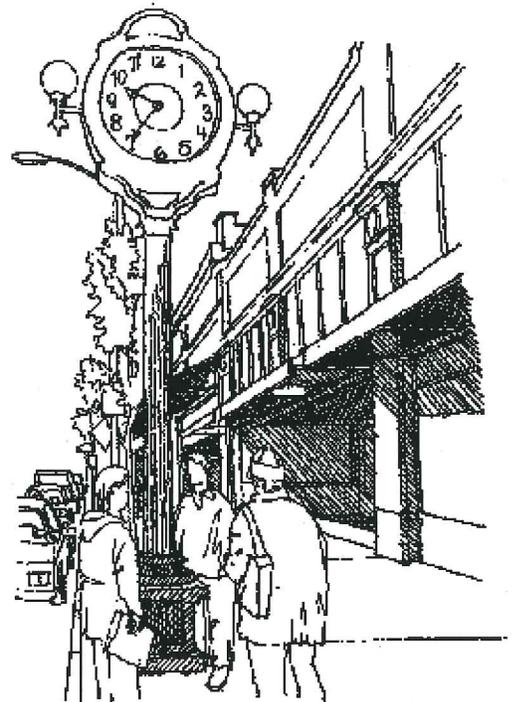
Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See Citywide Guidelines for details. Additionally, zoning areas on this map are for general reference only. For confirmation of a specific property's zoning, contact the Department of Planning and Development.



WEST SEATTLE JUNCTION  
*urban village*

**Design  
Guidelines**

*Effective August 26, 2001*



**City of Seattle**  
Department of Design,  
Construction & Land Use

# **Design Review:** *West Seattle Junction Design Guidelines*

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| Michael Kimelberg |                 |

Friends of the Junction  
Seattle Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU)  
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

# I. Design Review in Seattle's Neighborhoods

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### **The guidelines for the West Seattle Junction Urban Village augment the existing Citywide Design Guidelines.**

The West Seattle Junction Urban Village neighborhood design guidelines reveal the character of the Junction as known to its residents and businesses. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that a neighborhood values most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood's guidelines, in conjunction with the Citywide Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of good design and involvement in the design review process.

## More About Design Review

More information about Design Review can be found in the Citywide Design Guidelines and in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.41). Information includes:

- Projects Subject to Design Review
- How Design Guidelines are Applied
- Who Serves on the Design Review Board
- Development Standards Departures

## **II. West Seattle Junction Context and Priority Design Issues**

The overriding objective of the Citywide design guidelines is to ensure that new development fits in well with its surroundings. The following West Seattle Junction design guidelines share this objective, and with an emphasis on siting and design conditions and priorities supported by the community, aim to guide the design of new development in a manner that strengthens the Junction's mixed-use commercial core.

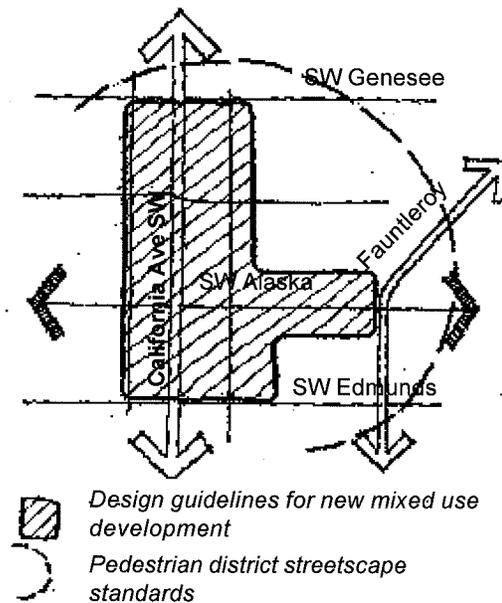
Through the neighborhood planning process, the community clearly stated its desire to maintain the small town atmosphere and qualities that have historically characterized the West Seattle Junction. However, it was also recognized that new development provides the opportunity for a broader mix of businesses and services, residential units and employment. As the Junction prepared its neighborhood plan, the Citywide Design Guidelines were evaluated to determine whether the guidelines adequately supported the community's vision.

The Neighborhood Plan (1999) recommended the development of design guidelines to ensure that new development creates a compact, mixed-use commercial core that is pedestrian oriented in scale, character and function. A neighborhood design guidelines committee comprised of residential and business representatives was formed to address the Neighborhood Plan urban design-related recommendations. Several design issues and related priorities were identified and have been incorporated into the West Seattle Junction Design Guidelines.

## 1. Pedestrian Environment

**In general, the pedestrian environment (sidewalks, pathways, entries and crossings) should be safe, accessible to all, connect to places people want to go, and provide good places to be used for many things. New development should reflect these principles by enhancing commercial district streetscapes with development that makes pedestrian activity at the street level a priority.**

The overall goal of these guidelines is to aid in creating a district in which new development supports a mix of uses and engages the public realm (i.e. sidewalk) in a pedestrian-oriented manner. The commercial core is considered to include California Avenue SW from SW Edmunds Street to SW Genesee Street, SW Alaska from 44th Avenue SW to 39th Avenue SW, and SW Genesee, Oregon and Edmunds Streets from 44th Avenue SW to 42nd Avenue SW. California Avenue SW is recognized as the area's current pedestrian-oriented business district, however the neighborhood envisions SW Alaska Street from California Avenue SW to Fauntleroy Way SW to become an extension of this mixed use district with a continuous pedestrian scale and high level of comfort at the street level.



The neighborhood recognizes that a successful pedestrian environment is really a pedestrian "network", extending beyond sidewalks to include paths, crossings and building entries. Mid-block pedestrian connections are encouraged to be incorporated into larger new development to link parking and surrounding streets to the commercial core.

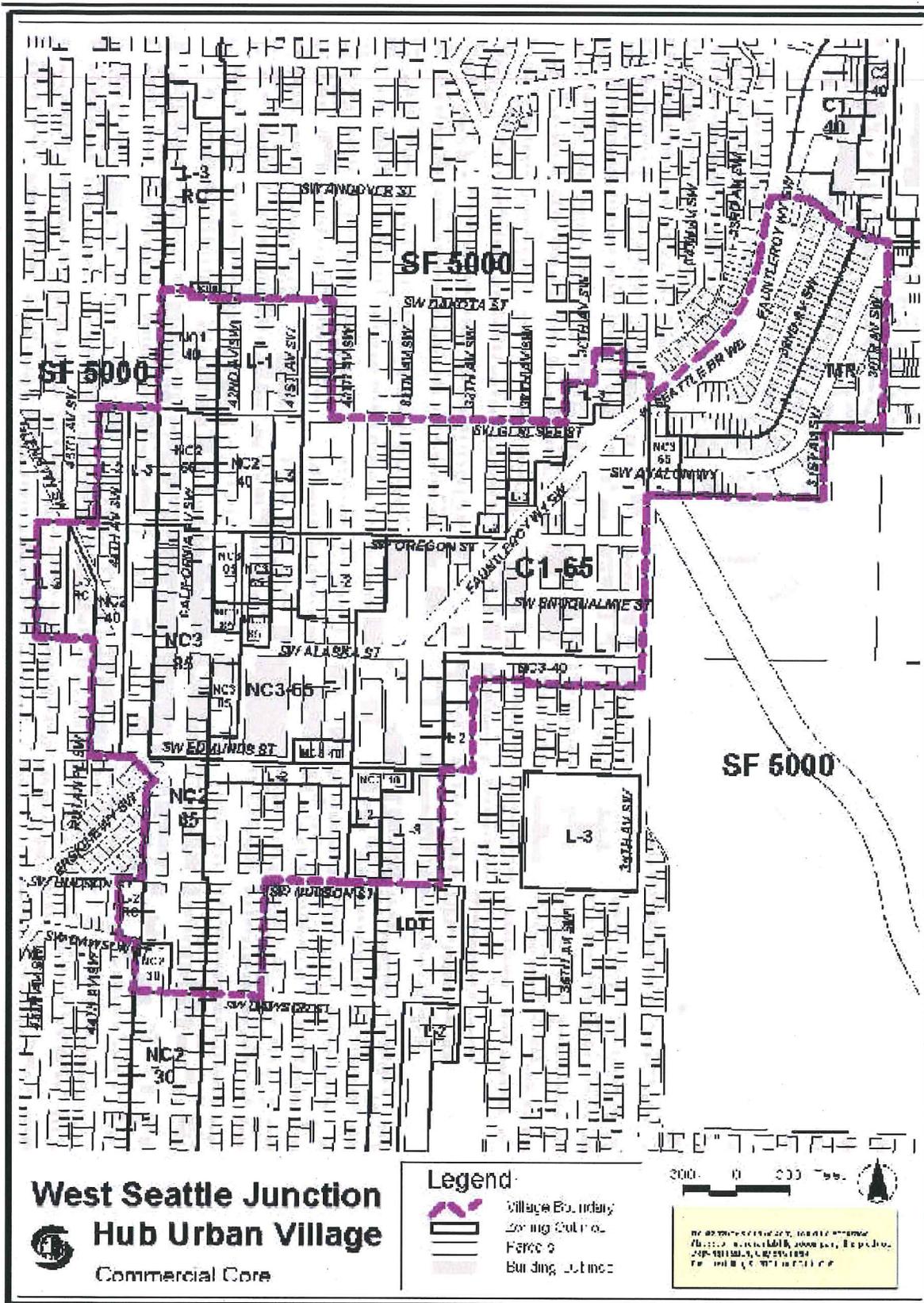
## **2. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

A pervading quality of the Junction's small town "feel" is expressed in the existing architecture. One way to preserve and continue the small town quality in new development is through the siting, massing and design of new buildings. However, Neighborhood Commercial zones with 85- and 65-foot height limits (NC-85' and NC-65') are the predominant zoning designations in the commercial core on California Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street, causing potential conflicts in height, bulk and scale compatibility between new development and existing one- to two-story commercial buildings occupying small parcels of land. Furthermore, current zoning in the Junction has created abrupt edges between NC-65' and 85' zones and less intensive, multifamily development.

The City of Seattle's Land Use Code prescribes setback requirements for new development on zone edges between higher and lesser intensive zones. New development in the Junction must carry this treatment further as more refined transitions in height, bulk and scale - in terms of the relationship to surrounding context and within the proposed structure itself - must be considered.

## **3. Architectural Character**

Elements and materials that respect and strengthen the commercial core are encouraged in new building design. The quality of the Junction's built environment can be characterized as mixed - good buildings mixed with more mundane construction - and therefore a selective approach to contextual design is warranted. New development should respond to the Junction's context by providing enough visual linkages between the existing stock of good buildings and the proposed structure so as to create a cohesive overall effect. Appropriate visual linkages are simple, basic features such as window proportions, entryway placements, decorative elements and materials. For example, many of the area's most successful commercial buildings exhibit human scale window proportions and bold cornices. Repeating such elements in new development would continue an appropriate pattern.

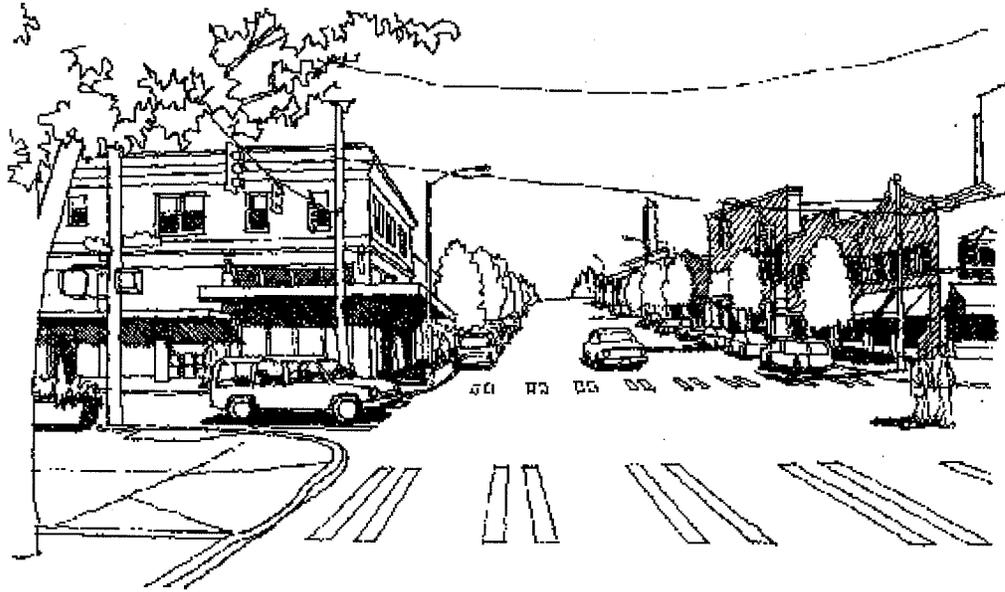


**Map 1: West Seattle Junction Commercial Core**

**Zone Designations:**  
**SF 5000** (Single Family), **LDT** (Lowrise, Duplex, Triplex), **L1, L2, L3** (Lowrise 1, 2 and 3), **MR** (Midrise), **RC** (Residential Commercial), **NC2, NC3** (Neighborhood Commercial 2, 3), **C1** (Commercial 1), **MIO** (Major Institution Overlay), **P2** (Pedestrian Overlay)

*For the most up-to-date zoning designations, please refer to the official City of Seattle zoning map.*

# West Seattle Junction Urban Village Design Guidelines



# DC1

## Project Uses and Activities

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

### **North District/Lake City Supplemental Guidance**

#### **Parking and Vehicle Access**

##### **Entire Planning Area:**

“Cut through” traffic—coming from outside the neighborhood and driving on residential streets to reach a destination outside the neighborhood—is a significant concern to residents. Consider the following:

- Vehicular traffic of the new development should ingress and egress toward the more intensive zoned area and not the lesser zoned area.

#### **Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts**

##### **Civic Core:**

Consider placing parking underground for all new development within the Civic Core. Where this is not feasible, parking lots should be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block. Large parking lots should be visually and functionally segmented into smaller areas with planted medians, walkways, lighting, etc.

#### **Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks**

##### **Entire Planning Area:**

In addition to the citywide guidance for the screening of highly visible parking lots the following supplemental guidance should be considered to carry the theme of landscaping used as screening around the sensitive perimeters of a parking lot throughout the lot.

- As sites with large surface parking areas, such as auto dealerships, are redeveloped, consider locating parking under, beside or behind new structures. If surface parking lots are located between structures and the sidewalk, vegetated areas should be provided along the sidewalk to provide pedestrians a buffer from the parking lot. Vegetation should be of a height that pedestrians can still see above it and/or spaced so they have visibility around it for safety.
- Vegetated islands that include trees and safe, well-defined pedestrian pathways should be considered at locations throughout large parking lots to enhance pedestrian activity, minimize storm runoff, and reduce the heat island effect of large parking lots.
- Pervious pavements should be considered to assist groundwater recharge and removal of pollutants.
- Green spaces at regular intervals can provide attractive surface parking areas and reduce drainage runoff in large parking lots.



*Screening of pedestrian areas*

## 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 signs and equipment.

### Examples

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

### Signs and equipment

- Reduce sign clutter by painting markings on the pavement or by consolidating signs.
- Any on-site storage should be out of view or appropriately screened from the sidewalk and adjacent properties.

### 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 adjacent properties.

### Screening of parking

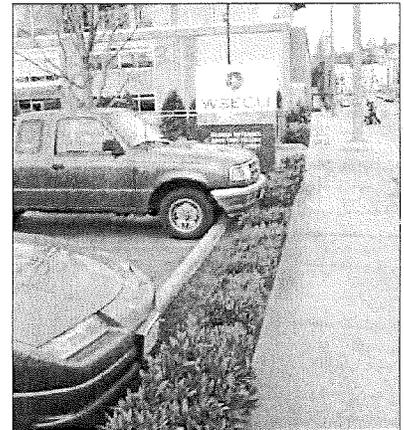
- Screening of parking areas need not be uniform along the property frontage. Variety in the type and relative amount of screening may be appropriate.
- Screen walls constructed of durable, attractive materials need not extend above waist level. Screen walls adjacent to residential zones could also include landscaping or a trellis or grillwork with climbing vines.
- Screening can be designed to allow clear visibility into parking areas to promote personal safety.
- Screening that incorporates pedestrian amenities such as seating is preferred.

### Parking area containment

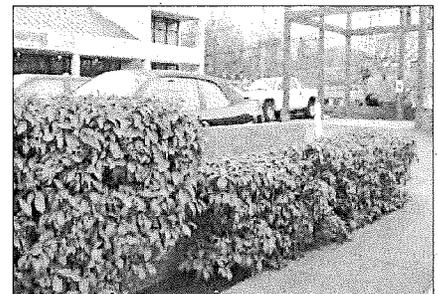
- Provide a “wheel stop” at the perimeter of parking areas between parking lot pavement and adjacent landscaping or other pavement to alleviate unsightly edge conditions.
- Tire bumpers, a low wall, or an extended curb prevent parked cars from encroaching on landscaped or pedestrian areas. Extended curbs are preferable because they are more durable and do not catch debris.



Tire bumpers keep cars from encroaching onto sidewalk.



Provide a “wheel stop” at the perimeter of parking areas.



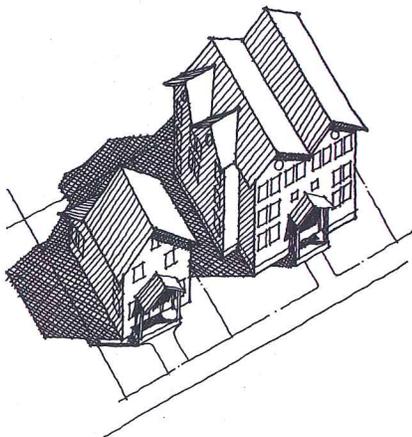
Screen walls may be softened by incorporating landscaping.



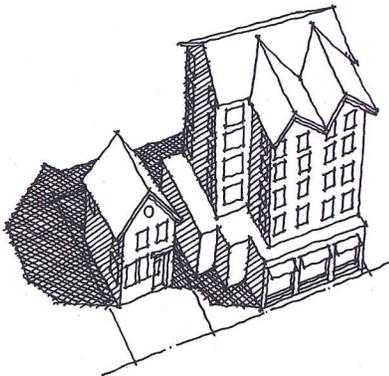
Screen walls no higher than waist-level allow visibility into and out of parking area and can provide seating ledges for pedestrians.



*Example of a building stepping back away from smaller adjacent structures in the Northgate area.*



*Zone Edge Between Higher and Less Intensive Residential Zones showing a generous separation between structures and similar setbacks.*



*Zone Edge Between Mixed Use and Residential Zones where the structure depth is reduced along the zone edge and a domestic roof style is added to improve scale compatibility. Note also that the commercial level steps back to match the front setback line of the abutting property.*

## Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

There are several important zone edges within the Northgate Overlay District that warrant special consideration in creating sensitive transitions in height, bulk and scale. Consistent with the 1993 Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan, the following are methods to establish compatible relationships between different scales of development. These methods are intended to augment 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 less intensive zone; and techniques specified in Citywide Design Guidelines.

### Lowrise 3, Midrise, or Highrise development abutting a Single-family or Lowrise 1 or 2 zone:

- Multifamily developments should maintain the established front setback pattern of the subject block.
- Pay particular attention to structure depth on the abutting lot lines. Orient the massing of the structure away from less intensive zones to the greatest extent possible.

### NC2-40', NC3-40', and higher abutting Single-family, Lowrise 1 or 2:

- Step back the ground-level commercial space to match the established front setback pattern on the subject block.
- Pay particular attention to the depth of the commercial level and upper residential levels along the abutting lot line. Orient the massing away from the lot line of an abutting less intensive zone to the greatest extent possible.
- Soften the commercial facade on the abutting lot line with elements such as dense landscaping.
- Repeat residential architectural elements of surrounding buildings on portions of the commercial facade adjacent to such buildings. Examples include roof lines and window styles and proportions.

Along a zone edge without an alley, consider additional setbacks, softening elements, and architectural compatibility to help reduce the potential 'looming effect' of a much larger structure in proximity to smaller existing buildings.

## 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).

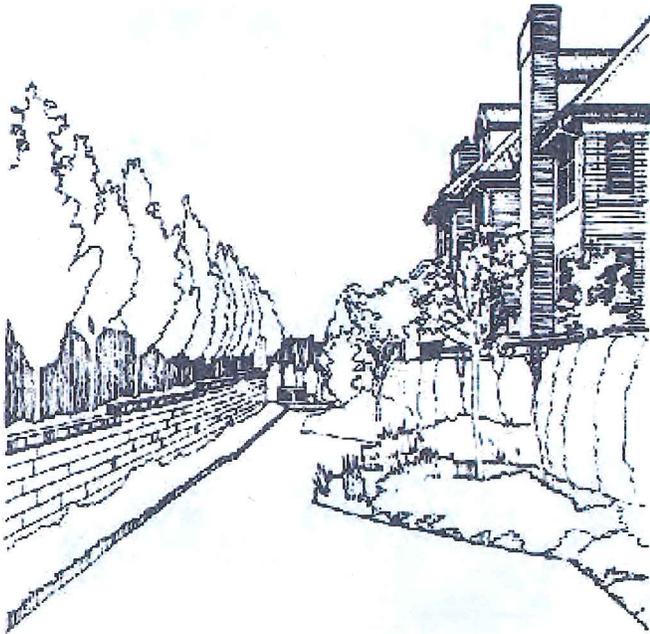
In some cases, careful siting and design treatment may be sufficient to achieve reasonable transition and mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts. Some techniques for achieving compatibility are as follows:

- 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.**

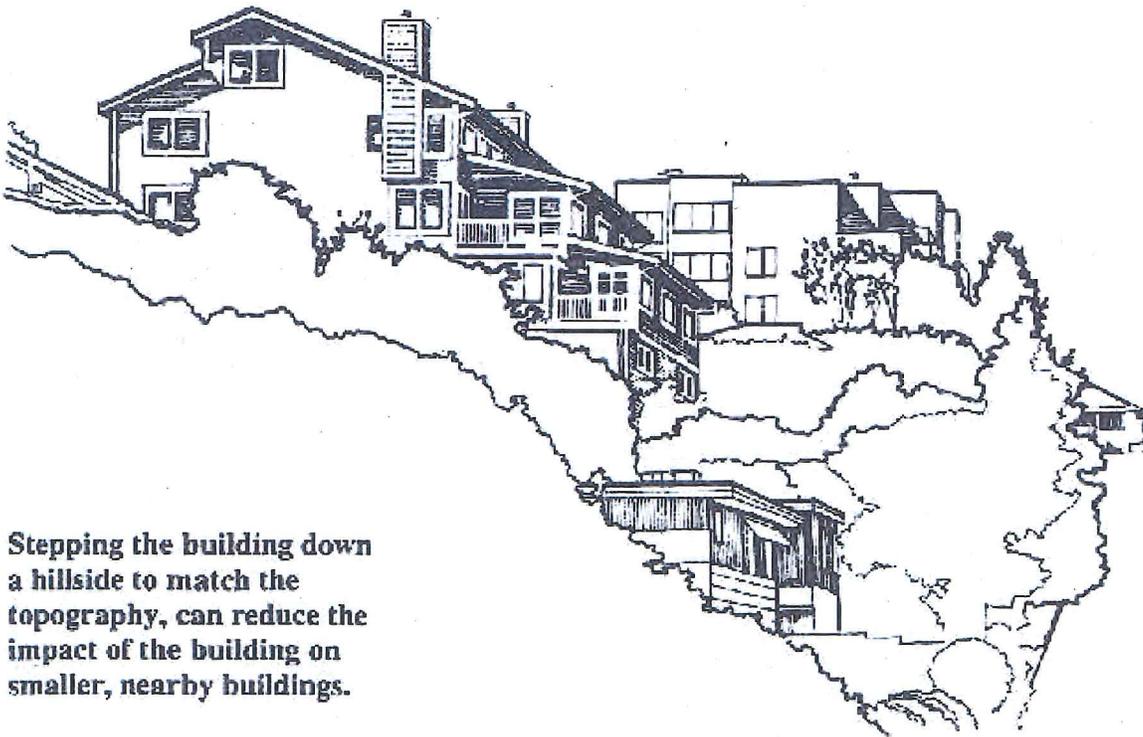


- creative use of landscaping or other screening.
- location of features on-site to facilitate transition, such as locating required open space on the zone edge so the building is farther from the lower intensity zone.



**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.

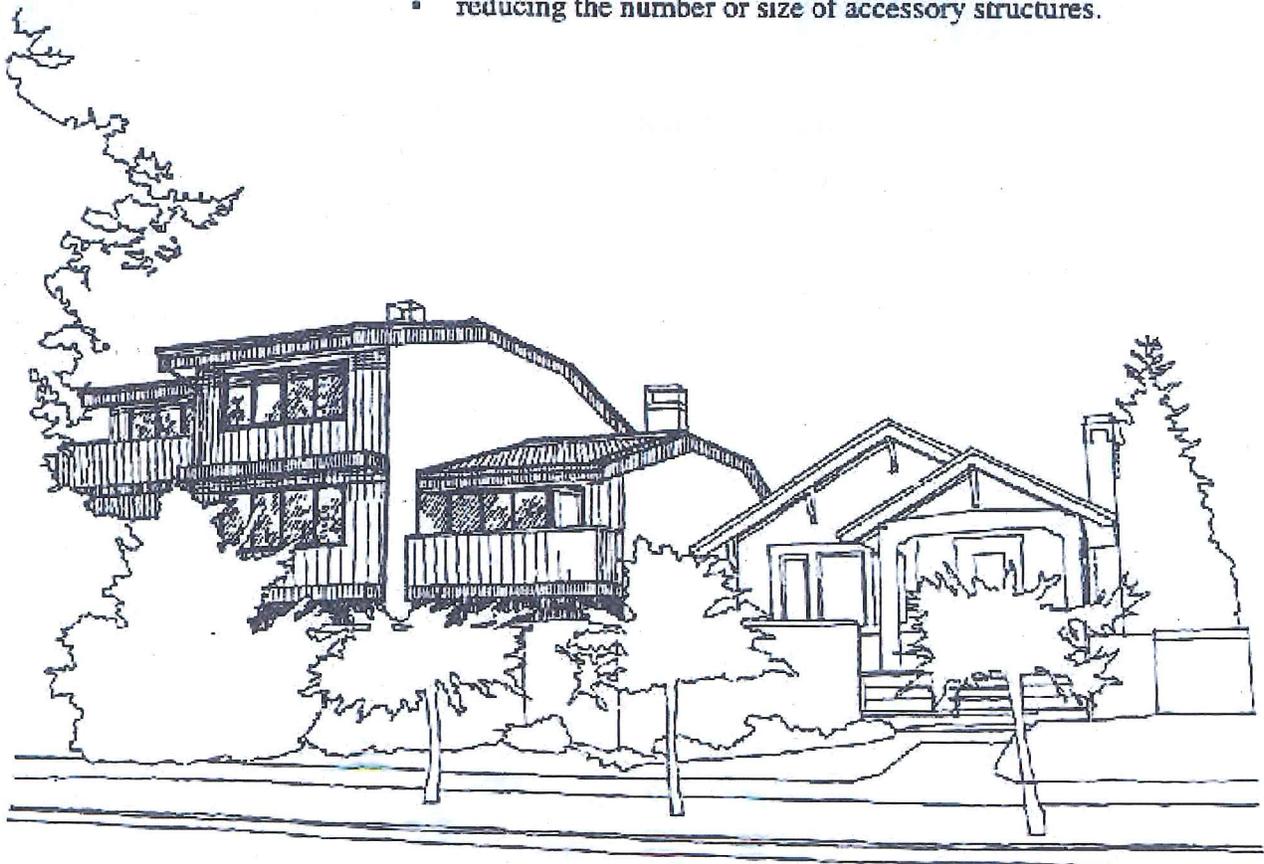


**Stepping the building down a hillside to match the topography, can reduce the impact of the building on smaller, nearby buildings.**

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

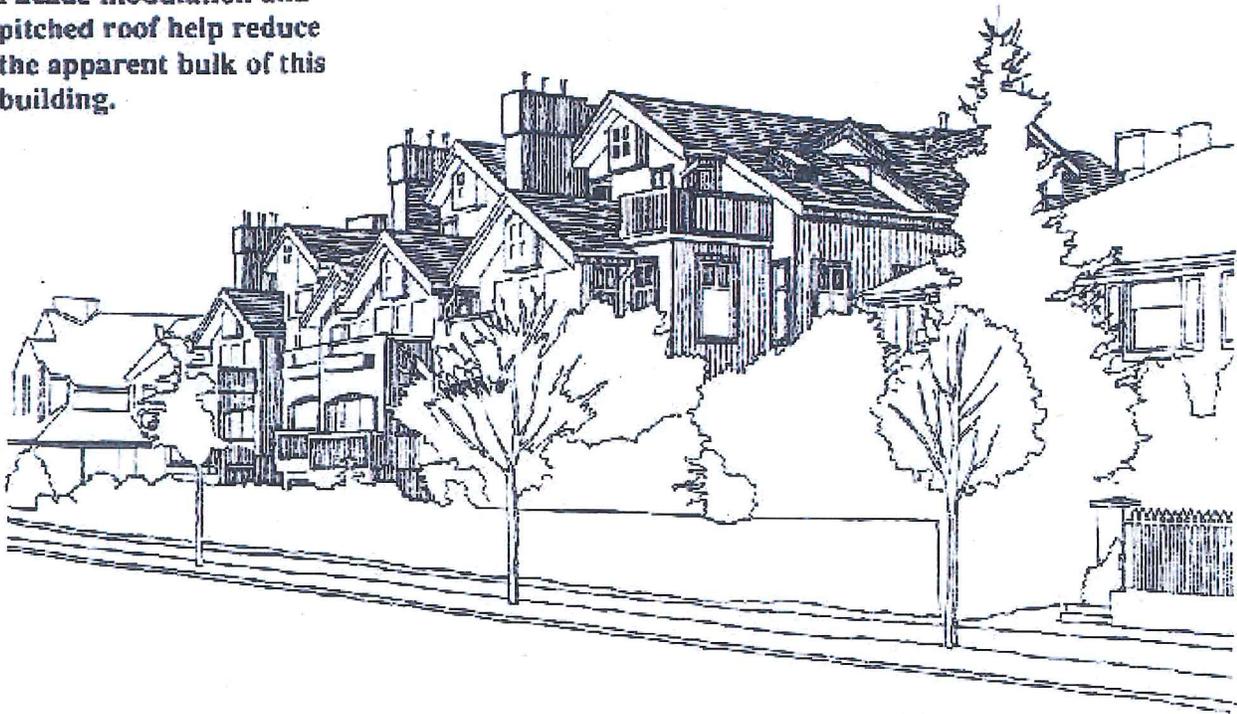
In some cases, reductions in the actual height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure may be necessary in order to mitigate adverse impacts and achieve an acceptable level of compatibility. Some techniques which can be used in these cases include:

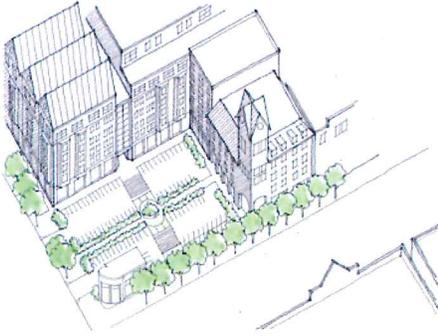
- articulating the building's facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that conform to existing structures or platting pattern.
- increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level.
- reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors.
- limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying,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



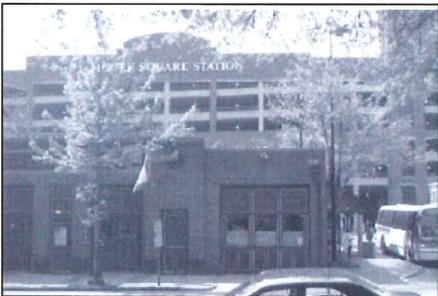
**The bulk of this project's upper story was reduced and significant landscaping was retained to better fit with the neighboring single family zone.**

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





*Thoughtful design provides attractive walkways and connects to sidewalks at street edges.*



*An example of retail fronting the street with a parking setback.*

## Large Scale, “Super Block” Development

Surface parking areas should be seen as a resource for the creation of public space. There are many site planning techniques and elements that can help create pedestrian-oriented space.

- The parking area should be laid out as an urban block, at a scale that promotes walking within.
- A network of clearly defined pedestrian walkways should serve as a “grid,” connecting these walkways to uses within the site and to the larger street network in a safe and comfortable manner. The necessary elements—lighting, pavement and plantings—should be placed to support those pedestrian objectives.
- The space should be defined by buildings, and secondary structures such as shelters and small retail spaces (placed at corners) should further define the scale.

## Parking Structures

Parking structures merit the same quality materials and finishes as the principal buildings in a development.

- Site parking structures away from Major Pedestrian Streets.
- Design a well-proportioned and unified parking structure. Consider techniques specified in citywide design guidelines – those relating to height, bulk and scale compatibility; architectural concept and consistency; and fostering a human scale – to achieve good scale and architectural design quality.
- Consider placing retail at the ground level of a parking structure along the primary facade, where appropriate.
- Parking structure facades should be treated with high quality materials and given vertical articulation and emphasis similar to the principal structure. The façade should be designed to visually screen cars.
- Pedestrian entries should be clearly visible and architecturally expressed on the exterior of the building.

## Parking and Vehicle Access

**Minimize Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflicts:** Site and design driveways to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. This is especially important along Northgate Way, 1st Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street, NE 103rd Street, and NE 125th Street. Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways and curb cuts along these streets.

**Locate Parking to the Rear:** Where feasible, parking areas should be located to the rear of buildings that face NE Northgate Way, 1st Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street and NE 103rd Street. Where surface parking must be located to the side of structures, the following is recommended:

- Place surface parking away from the corners of blocks fronting on NE Northgate Way, 5th Avenue NE, 8th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street, NE 103rd Street and NE 125th Street.

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

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

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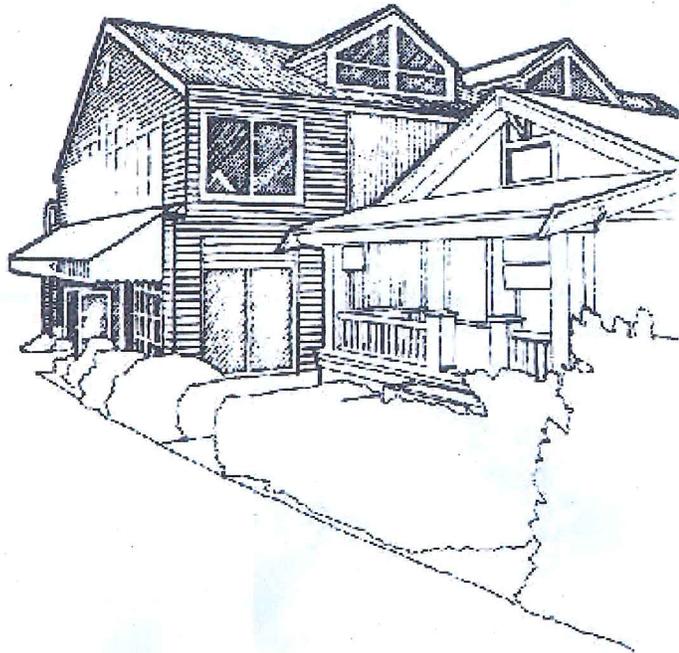
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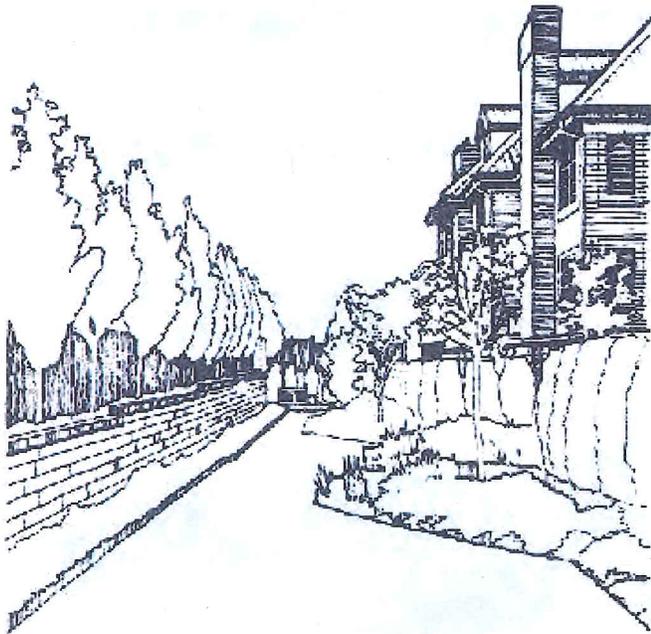
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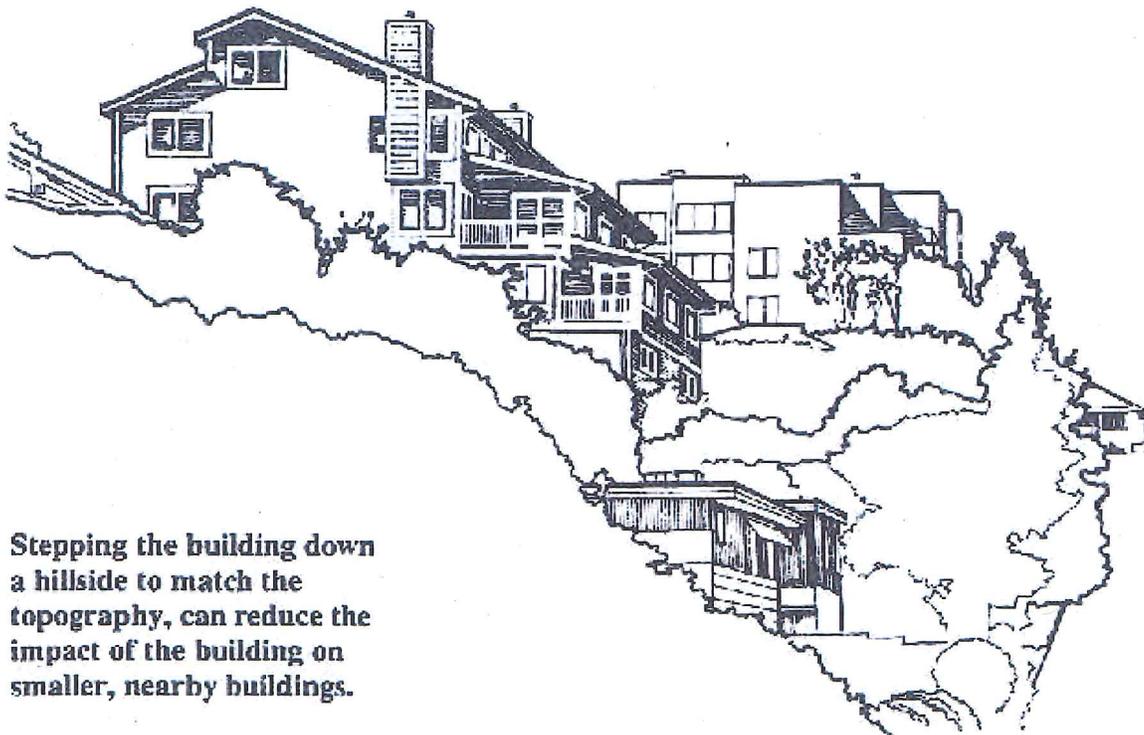


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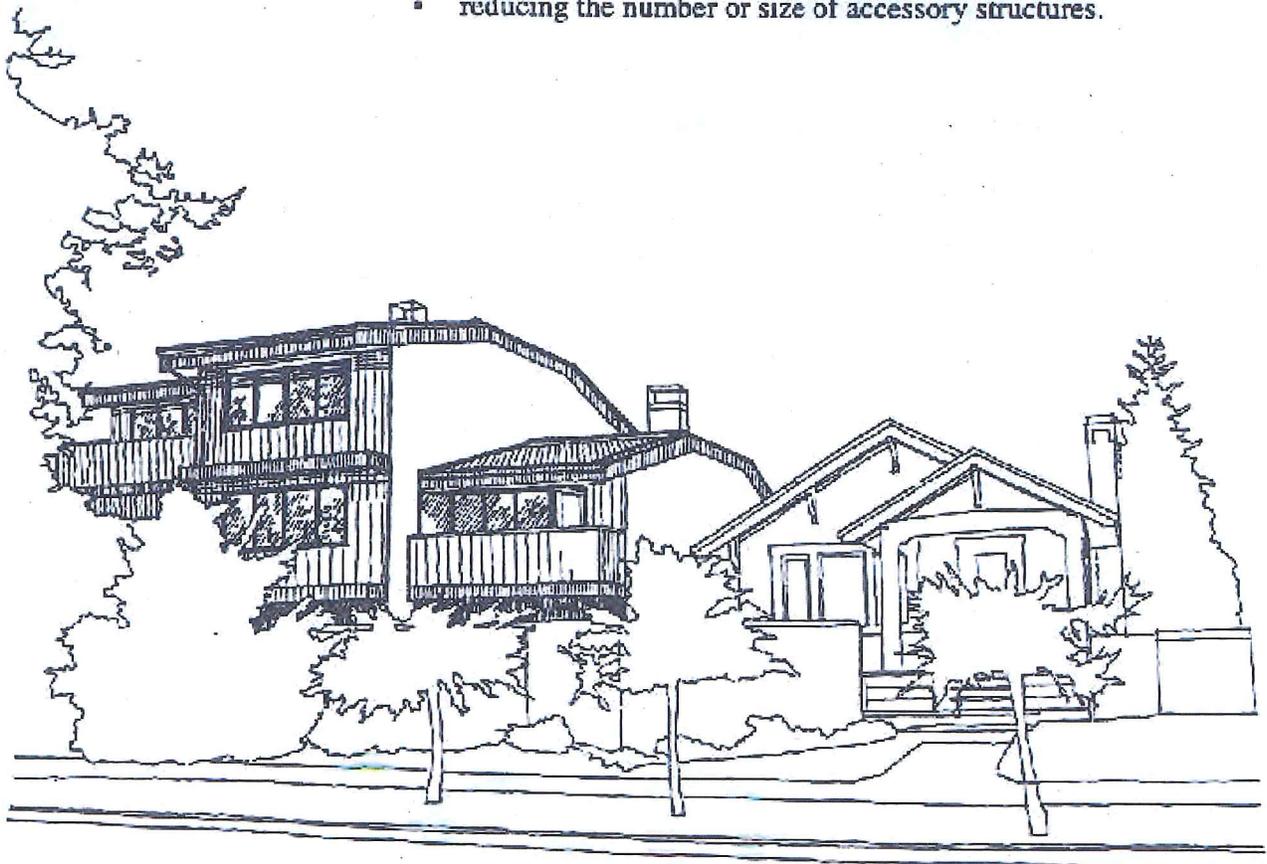


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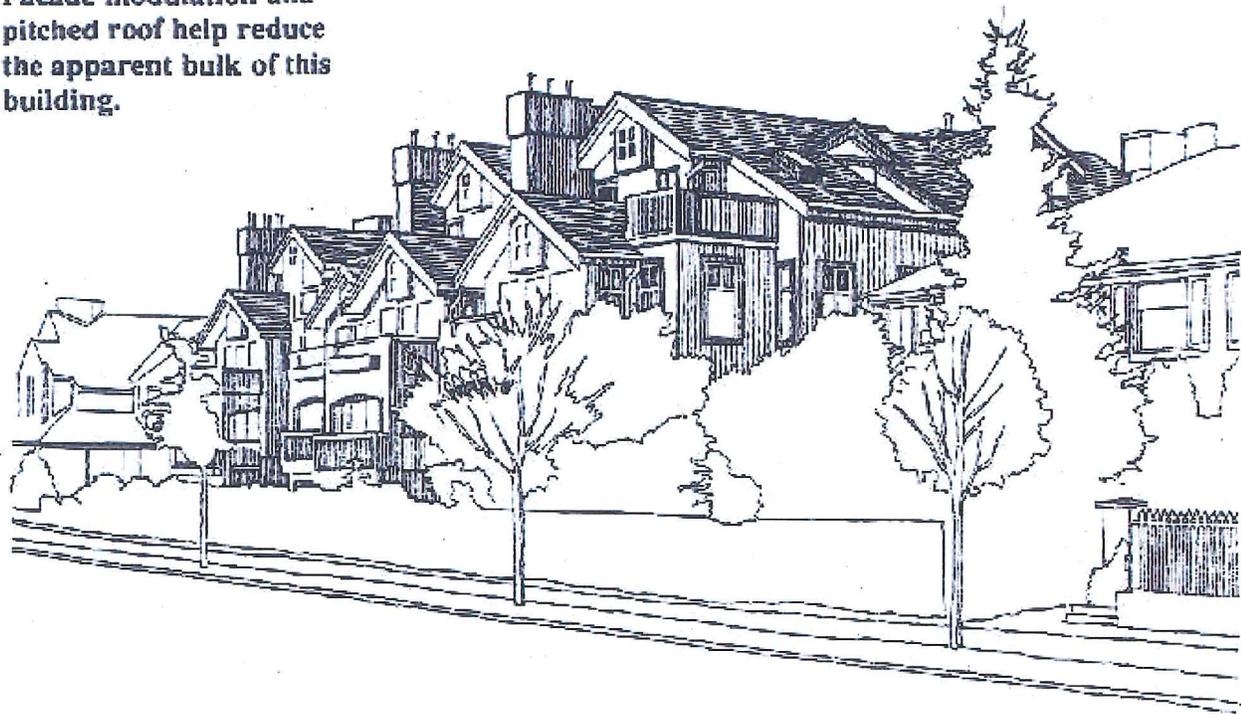
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- reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors.
- limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying, facades.
- reducing the height of the structure.
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**The bulk of this project's upper story was 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-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.

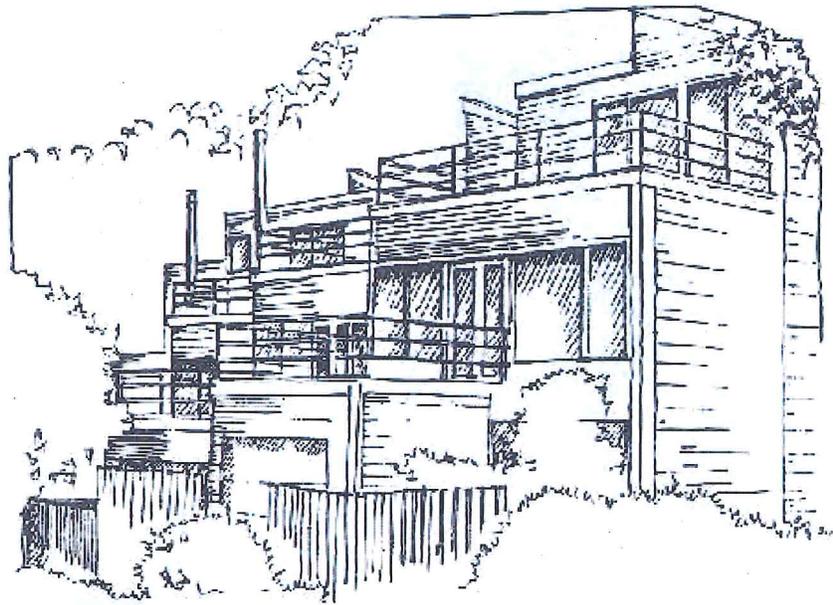
Architectural details may include some of the following.

- 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

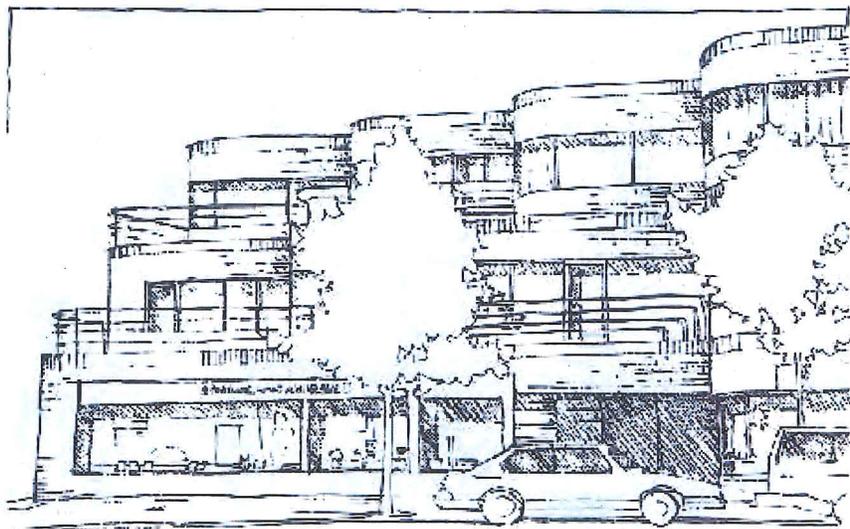
- Architectural lighting
- Detailed grilles and railings
- Special trim details and moldings
- A trellis or arbor.

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

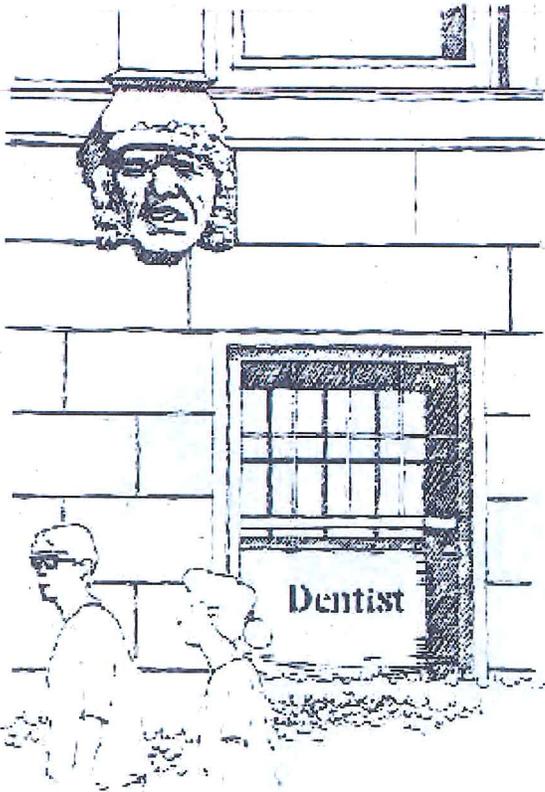
**A contemporary townhouse building that employs building articulation, broken roof lines, chimneys, multicolored trim and consistent detailing in a pleasing composition.**



**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.**



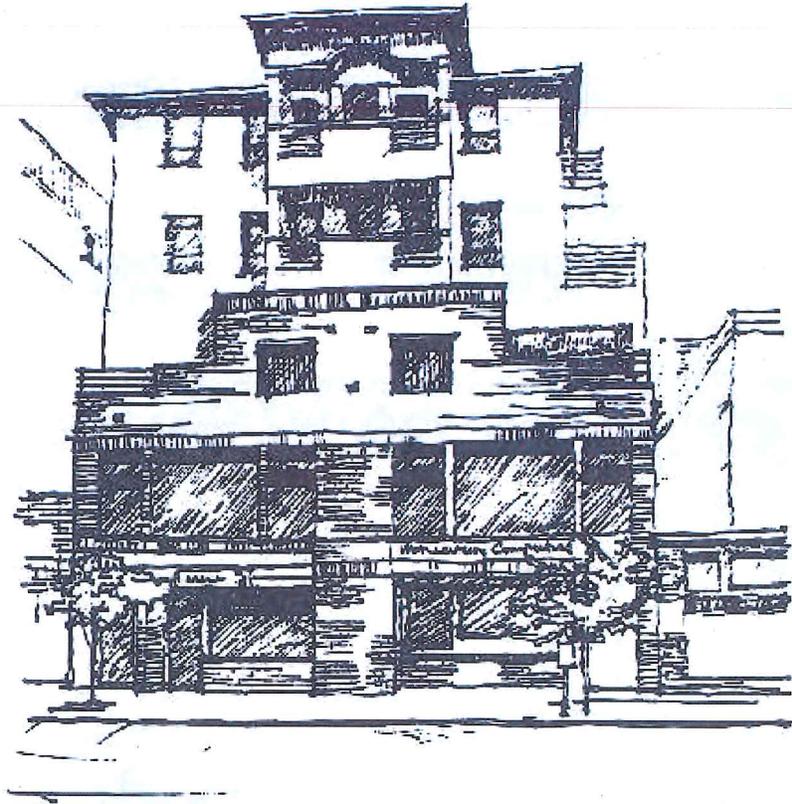
**Clever use of ornament can highlight a building's uses.**



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



**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.**



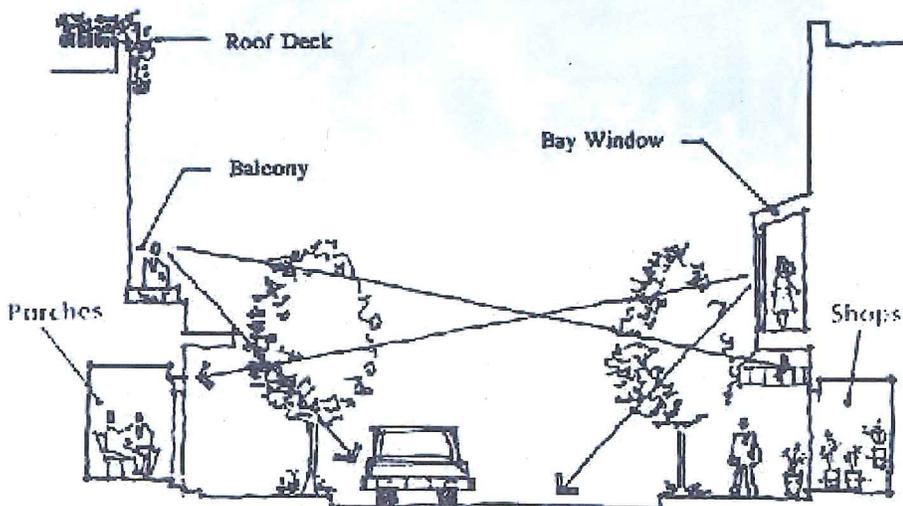
### C-3 Human Scale

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.