Central Area *Neighborhood* Design Guidelines

Appendix

This Appendix to the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines includes expanded documentation of the neighborhood's history, previous community planning efforts and culturally respectful design principles.

Neighborhood History

Early Development

During the mid-1800s the area was logged off, creating an ideal location for residential development because of its proximity to the Central Business District. Logs were slid directly down "skid road" to Henry Yesler's sawmill. This road was later named Mill Street and eventually became Yesler Way.

In 1870, a large block was platted by N. B. Knight and George and Rhoda Edes, which encompassed roughly 40 blocks from 10th to 20th avenues between Cherry and Union streets. With the cleared land and the arrival of the cable cars around 1888 to tackle the steep hills, old and new settlers began to build homes and to establish culturally-rich communities in the area.

A potpourri of colors and cultures flowed in and out of this four-square-mile area during its more-than-a-century-old history. There were the European Americans, the Japanese, the Jews, and the African Americans. All left a distinct imprint.

At the turn of the century, parts of the Central Area were still held in farms and nurseries. John Leitha Nursery is an example. His greenhouse operation encompassed a couple of blocks at about 14th Avenue, Yesler Way, and Fir Street. A "Market Garden" consumed several more blocks just west of the green houses.
From 1890 until World War I, the Central Area was a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. The German Jews were hardware and grocery merchants who reached Seattle in the 1850s, settling eventually in the Central Area and on Capitol Hill. They built the Temple De Hirsch Sinai on 15th Avenue and Union Street in 1907, and offered monetary and social assistance to the Jews from Poland and the Mediterranean who arrived later. The Polish Yiddish speaking Jews were the next wave of immigrants and they built kosher markets, Hebrew schools, and orthodox synagogues near and on Yesler Way. The last wave were the Spanish speaking Jews from Turkey and Rhodes. They added coffee shops and Mediterranean grocery stores to the area as well as their own orthodox synagogues.

A legacy of the Scandinavian presence is the St. Johannes Dansk Evangelisk Lutherske Kirke on 24th and East Spruce (in 2001, the Eritrean Community Center and Church). The first Danish community was established in 1890. In 1914, 40 Danes met at the Danish Brotherhood Hall (Washington Hall) at 14th Avenue and East Fir Street for the purpose of formerly organizing the congregation. The church was dedicated in 1926.

The Japanese who came to Seattle in the late 1880s, settled in the International District. There was sharp growth in this population from 1890 until 1920 and gradually their community spread east and into the Central Area. They operated grocery stores, barbershops, gas stations, a dry-cleaning shop, a beer parlor, and a shoe repair shop along Yesler

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Way. The blocks between 14th and 18th avenues and Yesler Way and Jackson Street still retain a strong Japanese presence -- the Buddhist Church, Seattle Koyasan Church, Konko, Wisteria Park, Japanese Congregational Church, Keiro Nursing Home, and the Kawabe Memorial House.

African American William Grose arrived in Seattle in 1861, and soon became a successful businessman, owning and operating a restaurant and a hotel. In 1890, he built a home on his 12 acres of land between what is now East Olive Street and East Madison Street at 24th Avenue. This property was purchased in 1882 from Henry Yesler for a reported $1,000 in gold coin. The area attracted other African Americans and became one of the first black settlements in Seattle. A settlement of single black transient workers developed around Jackson Street, and middle-class black families settled near East Madison. Eventually, these two communities merged.

Black-owned and -operated businesses that flourished along East Madison during the early 1900s included barber shops and restaurants, a fuel yard, a drug store, a hotel, and a theater. Churches (First African Methodist Episcopal, Mount Zion Baptist Church) and cultural organizations were also established on and near the East Madison district.

After World War II, the Central Area became home to most of Seattle's growing black population because of housing discrimination and restrictive covenants. The Jewish population began to move to Seward Park and to the Eastside, leaving their synagogues to black Christians and to city institutions. The Japanese and European American population in the area decreased as well.

The African American Presence and Black Pioneers in Seattle

The history of the Central Area has always included a significant population of African Americans and for decades it has been the largest enclave of African Americans in the Pacific Northwest. The roots to Seattle’s Black community link back to the mid-nineteenth century. The following early pioneers represent a sampling of African Americans who contributed to the growth of Seattle in business and property development.

Manuel Lopes was the first African American to arrive in Seattle in 1858, just seven years after the historic Denny Party landed on Alki Beach. Lopes was a cook and barber. He operated a barbershop equipped with the first barber chair to be brought around Cape Horn.

Manuel Lopes was born in Africa about 1812 and went to New England, first to Maine and then to the New Bedford area of Massachusetts. It has been written that he was either enslaved or kidnapped and brought to America. He worked as a sailor there, most likely on a whaling ship, as many black men did during the 1830s and 1840s.

Neighborhood History

William Grose

When he came to Seattle he opened the barbershop and a restaurant on Commercial Street (renamed First Avenue S), both in the same building where he lived. His customers were mostly loggers, mill hands, sailors, and miners, and he was known to provide meals whether they had the money to pay or not[1].

William Grose, the second African American to migrate to Seattle was also a businessman, arriving in 1860. He acquired one of the largest land holdings in the city and was among those paying the most taxes. Grose (often spelled Gross) was 15 when he left his home in Washington, D. C. to join the U.S. Navy. During his naval career, he made expeditions to the Arctic and Japan. His adventures were just beginning. He then left the Navy for the gold mines of California, working in the Montezuma, Columbia, and Sonora Districts and in several California mining camps.

Grose helped form an underground railroad to aid slaves in escaping -- even going to Panama to persuade officials not to send escaped slaves back to the South. Back in California he assisted in making arrangements for the settlement of black people in Victoria and on the Fraser River in British Columbia, Canada.

He was the first black person to buy property in East Madison. In 1882, he purchased a 12-acre tract from Henry Yesler for $1,000 in gold. His home, with slight alterations, still stands at 1733 24th Avenue.

William Grose was a Mason, a trustee of First African Methodist Episcopal Church and a member of the Washington Pioneer Association. He died on July 27, 1898 in Seattle and is buried in Lake View Cemetery on Capitol Hill[2].

George Putnam Riley

George Putnam Riley, a native of Boston, participated in both the California and Canadian Northwest Territory Gold Rushes. In 1869, Riley along with 14 other Portland, Oregon residents, 11 African American men, two African American women, and one white man, formed the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association (WJSA). The members pooled funds to purchase real estate that was divided proportionately. George P. Riley, WJSA president, was dispatched to Washington Territory to search for property. In August, the Association purchased the eastern half of the 20-acre Hanford Donation Claim in Seattle, Washington for $2,000 in gold coin. The tract was legally given the name, "Riley's Addition to South Seattle." The original purchase, in the present-day Beacon Hill neighborhood, presently embraces the four blocks bordered by South Forest and South Lander, between 19th and 21st Avenues South.

The origins of Tacoma, Washington's African American population can also be traced to the arrival of George P. Riley in 1869. Riley and his associates purchased 67 acres of land in Tacoma, legally called the

1 HistoryLink.org, Esther Hall Mumford, Seattle's Black Victorians 1852-1901 (Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980), 66, 67; James R. Warren, King County and its Queen City: Seattle (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1981), 51,52

2 HistoryLink.org, Mary T. Henry, Tribute: Seattle Public Places Named for Black People (Seattle: Statice Press, 1997), 70, 71.

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Powell S. Barnett

Alliance Addition but pejoratively labeled the “Nigger Tract.” Interestingly, none of the WJSA members, except Riley, ever actually set foot in Tacoma. However, the Alliance Addition would become the spatial basis for Tacoma’s African American community--the Hilltop neighborhood as it is presently known. George Putnam Riley died in Tacoma in 1905 at the age of 72[3].

Powell S. Barnett, musician, baseball player, and community leader, was born in Brazil, Indiana, on August 2, 1883, and moved to Roslyn, Washington, in 1889. His father, an ex-slave, was one of many black miners recruited to work in the coal mines of Washington state. As a teenager, Powell also worked in the Roslyn coal mines and played in the "colored" band.

Powell Barnett came to Seattle in 1906, because he thought the city offered greater opportunities. He began working for Barary Asphalt Paving Company as sub-foreman putting in new streetcar lines. Later he worked for the General Engineering Construction Company, which built the Waldorf Hotel at 7th Avenue and Pike Street and the Perry Hotel on 9th Avenue and Madison Street. He served as a clerk for State Senator Frank Connor and retired at 71 as a maintenance man at the King County Courthouse.

A man of many interests and great energy, much of which was directed toward improving race relations and civic unity, Powell Barnett became a leader in the community. He organized the Leschi Improvement Council and became its first president in 1967, led in organizing the East Madison YMCA, served as chairman of its board, and chaired a committee that revised the Seattle Urban League, thus saving its membership in the Community Chest.

For his outstanding civic contributions, Powell Barnett received awards from the King County Council on Aging, Jackson Street Community Council, Seattle Urban League, the Mayor and City Council, and others. In 1969, the 4.4-acre park on Martin Luther King Jr. Way between East Jefferson and East Alder Streets was named for Powell Barnett. He died on March 16, 1971, having lived most of his life in the Leschi Community. He is buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery[4].

Civil Rights

A natural outcome of segregated housing was de-facto segregated schools and by the late 1950s, six elementary schools in and adjoining the Central Area were more than 60 percent black. Civil rights leaders began a fight to integrate the Seattle Public Schools. They called for the closure of Horace Mann school, won support by the school board

[3] BlackPast.org, Tacoma Daily Ledger, June 22, 1889, October 2, 1905. Laurie McKay, “The Nigger Tract” 1869-1905: George Putnam Riley and the Alliance Addition of Tacoma” Unpublished Paper, Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, April 2001. pp.1, 6. Esther Hall Mumford, Seattle’s Black Victorians, 1852-1901 (Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980), 105-107.

[4] HistoryLink.org, Mary T. Henry, Tribute: Seattle Public Places Named for Black People. (Seattle: Statis Press, 1997), 58-59.

Neighborhood History

to begin a voluntary racial transfer program in 1963, and successfully waged a boycott of the schools on two days in the spring of 1966. These and other efforts to integrate the schools finally resulted in mandatory busing in 1978.

Housing and job discrimination created severe unrest in the black community. As the civil rights struggle was being played out across the country during the 1960s, Seattle's Central Area became the stage for marches, riots, and civil disobedience. Stokely Carmichael's speech at Garfield High School in 1967 ignited the call for black power. The Black Panther Party formed and located their activities in the area the same year. During those years it was not uncommon to find demonstrations interrupted by tear gas, and squadrons of police cars parked in readiness for action. Passage of the open housing law by the Seattle City Council in 1968 and the widening of job opportunities for African Americans began to ease tensions.

War on Poverty

The War on Poverty made inroads in improvement of living conditions for residents of the Central Area in the late 1960s. The Central Area Motivation Project was the first totally new, community-inspired program in the country to receive funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity and it remains as one of the few surviving community organizations that got its start in those early years. The Central Area Motivation Project assisted in the planning of the Model Cities Program, which led Seattle to become the first city in the nation to get its program operational. A multitude of social, health, recreational, and educational services were offered

Community Resources

Garfield High School has served the area since 1923. Providence Hospital, built in 1911, stands proudly on the hill at 17th and East Cherry wearing a tower visible from miles around. The Odessa Brown Children's Clinic on Yesler Way is a legacy of the Model Cities Days. The Douglass Truth Public Library has sat serenely on the corner of 23rd and Yesler Way since 1914. Formerly known as the Yesler Branch Library, the name was changed in 1975, to reflect the dramatically changed population it served. It houses the largest African American collection in the Seattle Public Library system.

The Medgar Evers Swimming Pool at 23rd and Jefferson was the first of seven pools to be built with Forward Thrust funds in 1970. It was named for the slain Mississippi civil rights leader. The largest park in the Central Area is the Powell Barnett Park between Cherry and Alder streets on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Named for a black community leader, it was developed in 1967 by Central Area Motivation Project. Other parks in the area are the Edwin T. Pratt Park on 20th and Yesler, named for the the Urban League Director killed by an unknown assailant and the Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park near 20th Avenue and Jackson Street named in honor of the first medical director of the Odessa Children's Clinic.

Neighborhood History

Gentrification

The 1990s have seen a gradual change in the color and economic status of the area's residents. Many of the African American residents have moved south along the Rainier Avenue corridor into Renton and Skyway. Gentrification is on the rise and numbers of white couples with children are moving in. In 1990, the highest level of family income was between $35,148 and $37,232 but a few years later there were six digit incomes of predominantly white people who were new hires at Boeing, Microsoft and Amazon. New, for profit mixed-use buildings are being built near 23rd Avenue and Union and 23rd and Jackson Street and older apartment buildings are being remodeled.

Interest in the area was first demonstrated by the construction of the Casey Family Foundation building at 23rd Avenue and East Union Street, located a block from where UPS founder Jim Casey grew up, and the slender new Planned Parenthood building at 21st Avenue and East Madison Street. Concern for the elderly is exhibited in the Samuel E. McKinney Home on East Madison Street, named for the former pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church and in plans for the John Cannon House assisted living residence on 23rd Avenue.

There are still black families living in the area and there are still black elderly people in full control of their homes and who can manage their property taxes. Dedicated to preserving the area's unique cultural heritage, the Africatown Seattle and the Africatown Community Land Trust, a community-based non-profit corporation, is setting out to provide affordable housing and develop strong business partnerships[5].

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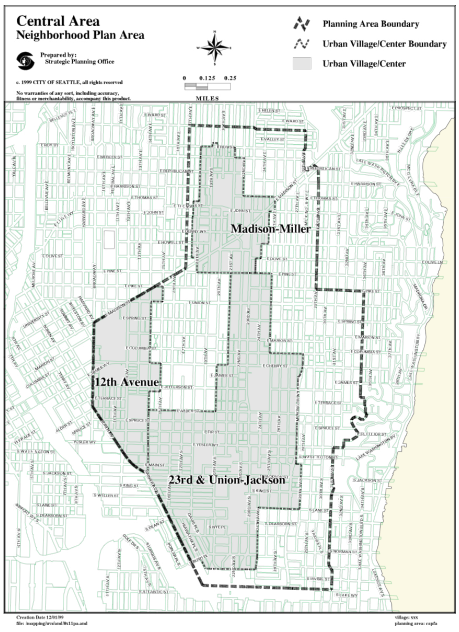
[5] HistoryLink.org, Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, Central District Historic and Cultural Resources (Seattle: Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, n.d.); City of Seattle, Office of Urban Conservation, "Survey Report: Central and South Park 1991, Certified Local Government Planning Grant," typescript dated 1991, in possession of Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, Seattle, Washington; Esther Hall Mumford, Seattle's Black Victorians, 1851-1901 (Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980); Jacqueline E.A. Lawson, Let's Take a Walk: A Tour of Seattle's Central Area, As it was Then, 1920-1930 (Seattle: Jacqueline Lawson, 1999}; Jane A. Avner and Meta Buttnick, Historic Jewish Seattle: A Tour Guide (Seattle: Washington State Jewish Historical Society, 1995); Mary T. Henry, Tribute: Seattle Public Places Named for Black People (Seattle: Statis Press, 1997); Quintard Taylor, The Forging of a Black Community; Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994); St. John's Lutheran Church, "Capsule History of St. John's Lutheran Congregation," typescript, no date, in possession of St. John's Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington; Tiffany Gord, Douglas Fierro, Barbara Hall, and Mari Tome, "Gentrification: The Current Trend of Tract #77," Typescript dated July 21, 1997, in vertical file, Douglass-Truth Library, Seattle, Washington.

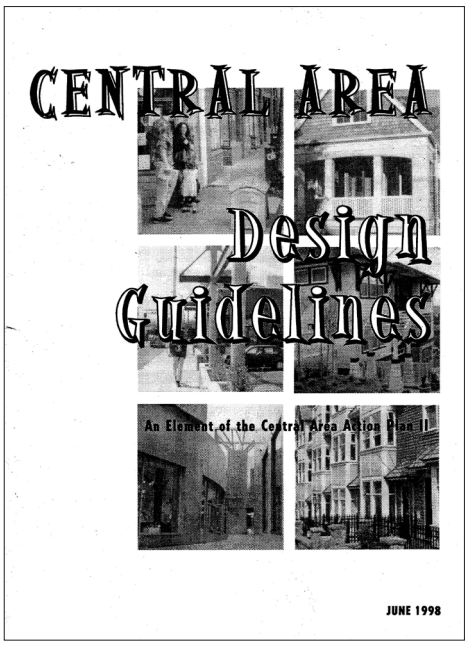
Community Planning Efforts



Map based on CAAP II planning document

Central Area Action Plan II (CAAP II) 1998

- This second plan was adopted to improve on the Central Area Action Plan of 1992 and explicitly stated: “That as the economic tides rise, existing residents should not be left behind”
- It proposes to create special, sustainable places for people to gather;
- It is an ambitious social development plan for economic development, housing and human services;
- It encourages celebration of the history, heritage and diversity of the neighborhood;
- It recommends a strong transportation link along 23rd Avenue;
- Recommended the establishment of an Implementation Advisory Committee and a Stewardship Committee. (Public funding for these formal Committees was limited and eventually cut from the City budget. Stewardship responsibilities is shared by several quasi-public groups).



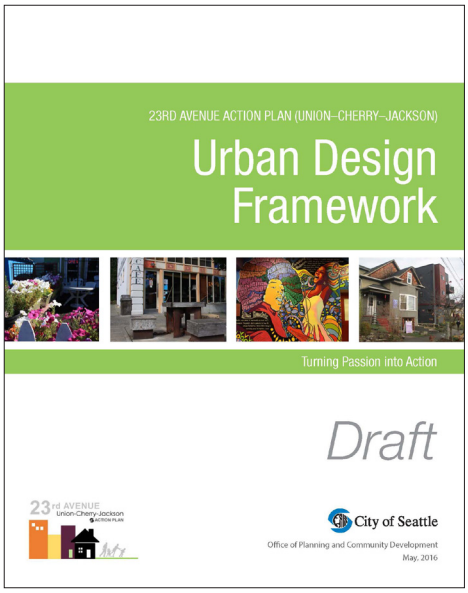
Cover from Central Area Design Guidelines 1998 document

Central Area Design Guidelines 1998*

- This is an element of the Central Area Action Plan of 1998;
- Prioritized preservation of African American heritage;
- Supports retention of neighborhood character;
- Promotes a vision of “neighborliness” and high density development at neighborhood cores;
- Recommendations for “meaningful” open space;
- States that new developments should complement existing street fronts;
- And, recommends establishing a “Mini Design Review” process

* These guidelines were not adopted into ordinance by the Seattle City Council

Community Planning Efforts



Cover from UDF planning document

Urban Design Framework

- This plan builds on the shared vision and goals of previous plans and updates the CAAP II of 1998 for a more limited approach to the CAAP II broad community development goals;
- It envisions a multicultural community, proud of its African American heritage and other cultural groups;
- The Action Plan sets 5 people-oriented priorities for: cultural heritage, building a business environment, livable streets gathering places and a healthy living framework;
- The Urban Design Framework documents the existing character of the three neighborhood/commercial nodes and recommendations for zoning modifications;
- And, it represents a shift from city-administered planning to a community-based planning and implementation effort.

Culturally Responsive Design

Cultural Design Principles

The Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines project consultants have been charged with the task to “incorporate African and African American identity into design guidelines”. We have integrated culturally respectful and responsive design guideline planning features to include:

- Outdoor gathering;
- Community accessible open space;
- Interactions between residents and shopkeepers with passersby;
- And, visibility and transparency of street-related uses.

While some of the guidelines may be culturally universal, they are particularly important to the African-American community and were explicitly expressed by participants of our various community meetings.

For those designers who are particularly interested in designing a building that is reflective of the African-American community, we encourage reaching out to those community stakeholders and researching the ideas, people, and resources in this appendix. It's important to remember that to design successfully for the African-American community, you must engage them. A common mantra you will hear from communities of color is "not for us, without us."

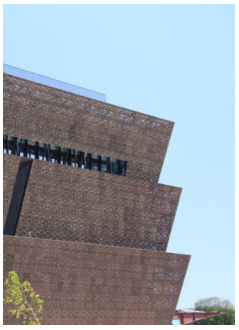
Project applicants should be cautious in applying any design feature that can be interpreted as an architectural “style” of cultural appropriation without the requisite understanding that a specific cultural group or individual architects can provide from their personal experiences.

Resources

As we are in an exploratory era of Afrocentric design philosophy and application, there are several co-aligning principles propositioned by architects in contemporary practice that are also inherent in many non-European cultures.

As a start in the exploration, we have assembled principles from the following contemporary practitioners on the following pages.

Culturally Responsive Design



African forms

Form for function

Grounded form and massing

Shelter in roof lines

Michael Ford Assoc AIA
Designer, Artist, Educator and Author

Hip-hop is a voice for the voiceless;

Hip-hop architecture is not a style, since “– isms” got communities of color in trouble before, so hip-hop architecture won't be classified as 'modernism;

It's more of a new mindset: getting communities engaged who don't have a voice in the process;

And, lyrics to "The Message," a Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five song, served as his entrance to music, because it speaks to the sociological impacts that designers, architects, and planners have on people's lives. "Do not build communities that inspire the lyrics you have to ignore when you listen to hip-hop," he said. "If you want to change hip-hop, change the architecture that inspires those lyrics."

David Hughes FAIA
Architect, Educator and Author

A distinctive manifestation of form, imagery and space in the modern built environment which is derived from the culture, environmental and historical origins of the continent of Africa;

Distinctive use of form for function;

And, abstract use of traditional form and materials.

Donald King FAIA
Architect, Community Planner and Educator

Features public gathering spaces;

Relates to the earth in grounded form and massing;

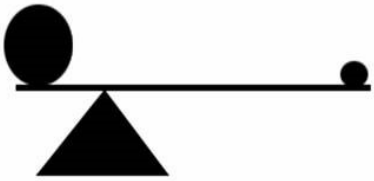
Strong indoor/outdoor relationships;

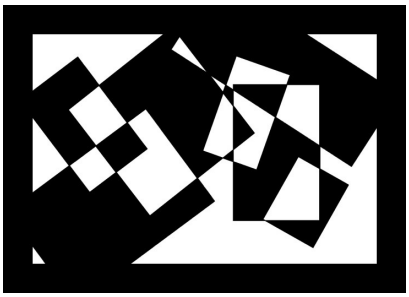
Evidence of human intervention in construction versus machine-made;

Balanced asymmetry;

Strong expressions of shelter in roof lines;

Culturally Responsive Design





Balanced asymmetry

Duality

Intense color, patterning and texture

A rhythm of fenestration and an appearance of the inside program out; References to African and African American textiles, not just in surface treatment, but in tectonics that are integral with the building materials;

And, a use of warm colors, less black and cool grays.

Dr. Sharon Sutton FAIA
Educator, Architect, Artist, Musician, Social Scientist and Author

Is inclusive in its authorship and in the people, it serves;
Is a unified collective expression;
Is a melting pot of improvisation;
Offers the freedom to express individual stories;
Is instructive of life;
Has a balanced asymmetry;
Exhibits a continuous back and forth rhythm. Is grounded on the earth;
Connects earth and sky; recycles for innovation;
Brings artists together in non-hierarchical, selfless collaboration;
And, blurs the boundary between audience and artist.

Jack Travis FAIA
Architect, Educator and Author

Simplicity makes knowledge of the design accessible, thus a larger portion of the community will be able to participate in the planning and design;

Duality or irony of the condition of members of the African diaspora's attempts to co-exist within a dominant culture that, by nature, is in direct conflict with it ongoing theme in their lives and in the make-up of their communities;

Legacy/identity includes information, symbolism, and physical memory of past legacy and achievement of peoples, events, places and dates that act as reminders of what has gone before and are therefore critical to making a cultural;

And, visual/tactile/materiality/skin is essential in expressing the spatial/ formal content that elevates the aesthetic quality of black lives, the intensity of incorporating color, pattern, and texture in intensities that rival if not surpass all other cultures.

Culturally Responsive Design

Cultural Color Methodology

Emotional and spiritual associations with color have been a part of non-Western societies for centuries. Color is considered representative of good fortune or ill will. Color can influence behavior and emotions. However, it is important to remember that these effects differ between cultures. Below is a summary of notes from the color selection process for Washington State University's Elson Floyd Cultural Center as an example:

We have selected and applied colors for the interior and exterior of the building that have positive associations across many non-Western cultures. Favorable colors of yellow, green, red and orange are used to represent our four primary cultures.

Nature inspires the pallet of our selection of color. We begin with the neutral warm tan hues of the Palouse, at the end of summer, as a background color for use in the roof and exterior wood siding.

Splash accents of cultural color are derived from leaves. The natural showing of color in the trees with the change of seasons is a process analogous to the change in the WSU campus environment as students return and new students begin their journey of higher education.

The contributions of chlorophyll create the green color present in leaves during the summer, but the chemical compound of carotenoids is present in leaves the whole year round and show yellow and orange in the fall. The red leaf colors of fall are due to a fascinating group of natural chemical compounds called anthocyanin. It's anthocyanins we see in action each fall as the leaves on deciduous trees change color before dropping.

The natural formation of these colors are representative of the contributions of our multicultural student body and application of each selection of the four colors that honor the traditional cultural meanings of wisdom, happiness, courage and sacredness.