International Special Review District Design Guidelines

Consultant note: This document is a work in progress. The following pages are a snapshot of where the consultant team is in the process, and are based on several planning documents previously conducted throughout the Chinatown International District, as well as a series of recent workshops with the International Special Review District (ISRD) Work Group (which began in 2017). Any comments received on this draft are much appreciated, and will be reviewed by the consultant team for incorporation into the next draft.



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Hing Hay Park



Artwork located in Little Saigon, created through the Pavement to Parks program



Street crossing at 12th and Jackson

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Introduction



What are the ISRD Design Guidelines?

The International Special Review District (ISRD) is one of eight historic districts in the City of Seattle, however, it is the only cultural district designated. It was established in 1973 to promote and preserve the cultural, economic, and historical features of the neighborhood, particularly those features derived from its Asian American heritage. The ISRD Design Guidelines are a set of design goals for the District that contains suggested approaches and strategies for development in the District.

Who is expected to use the ISRD Design Guidelines?

The primary purpose of the ISRD Design Guidelines is to serve as a tool for the community to advocate for high quality design that contributes to the cultural character of the neighborhood. It is intended to be used by a variety of people including business owners, property owners, community members, design professionals, ISRD Board members, and City of Seattle staff.

When are the ISRD Design Guidelines used?

Changes to buildings and properties located within the boundaries of the ISRD require that a Certificate of Approval be issued by the ISRD Board and the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods. The ISRD Board uses the ISRD Design Guidelines in tandem with the Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.66 – Special Review Districts for evaluating proposed changes and new development. In some instances, such as for Contributing Buildings, the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are also used by the ISRD Board.





How are the ISRD Design Guidelines used?

Applicants for a Certificate of Approval must demonstrate that all guidelines applicable to their proposed project have been met. Refer to the Reader's Guide on page _____ for an overview of each section. Not all of the guidelines will be relevant to every project. The guidance is not prescriptive - the language used intentionally includes "consider", "prioritize" and "respond to" as opposed to "should", "must", and "required" because design is very contextual and should respond to the buildings at the time of the development, and in some cases, the existing context does not reflect the future vision of the community. The ISRD Design Guidelines are different than the other neighborhood-specific Design Guidelines in that the ISRD was established to preserve the culture of the District. Design is not a proxy for culture so Architects and Developers working in the District should pay careful attention to the input from long-time Residents, Property Owners, and Business Owners - because their input is essential to the preservation of the cultures of the District.

What is the process for applying for a Certificate of Approval?

Processes for obtaining Certificates of Approval vary. The following are recommended steps:

- Step 1: Contact the ISRD Board Coordinator to discuss ideas for proposed changes and associated application materials. (206) 684-0226
- Step 2: Prepare and submit application materials. The list of required application materials is based on the type of change proposed. Some items may require input from a design professional.
- Step 3: After an application is determined to be complete, it will be placed on the agenda for the next public meeting of the ISRD Board. This is an opportunity to present the proposed change and answer questions from the ISRD Board, as well as an opportunity for the general public to make comments to the ISRD Board regarding any proposed changes.
- Step 4: The ISRD Board will recommend to the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. The Director of the Department of Neighborhoods makes the final decision. Either a Certificate of Approval or a Letter of Denial will be issued.
- Step 5: A Certificate of Approval is not a permit. Relevant permits from City Departments such as Seattle Transportation and Department of Planning and Development are issued after the Certificate of Approval.





What types of changes require a Certificate of Approval (CofA)?

The following changes require a Certificate of Approval to be issued by the Board and the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods before the City of Seattle will issue any permits:

- Change of Use A CofA is required when the principal use of a building or commercial space changes. For example: restaurant to retail, or residential to office. The ISRD Design Guidelines do not include guidance for uses. Refer to Seattle Municipal Code Sections 23.66.320 through 23.66.328.
- Colors A CofA is required for new exterior paint colors.
- Facade Alteration A CofA is required for exterior alterations to a storefront or building that are visible from the street or public right-of-way, including but not limited to:
 - window treatments
 - awnings or canopies
 - security systems
 - doors and windows
 - fire escapes
 - masonry cleaning
 - rehabilitation
 - installation of rooftop mechanical equipment
- Signs A CofA is required prior to installing a new sign or changing the face of an existing sign.
- New Construction A CofA is required for any new construction and major building additions. For larger projects, two CofAs may be required.
 - Preliminary Design Approval bulk, massing and scale
 - Final Design Approval construction documents, materials, colors, finishes, right-of-way improvements and landscaping
- Demolition A CofA is required to demolish any building or structure. The ISRD Design Guidelines do not include guidance for demolition. Refer to Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.66.318 – Demolition approval.
- Street Use Permit A CofA is required for changes to the parking configuration or alterations within the public right of way, including merchandise displays, sidewalk cafes, and street furniture.





What is the role of the ISRD Board?

The ISRD Board was created to preserve, protect and enhance the cultural, economic, and historical quality of the ISRD, and advise the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods. The Board consists of seven volunteer members: five that are elected by the community in annual elections and two that are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. Two of the five elected Board members own property or a business in the District or who are employed in the District, two of the elected members reside in the District or have demonstrated an interest in the District, and one member is elected at large. ISRD Board members' terms are for two years, and members may serve up to two consecutive terms.

The ISRD Board has an obligation to uphold the provisions of the Seattle Municipal Code 23.66, and uses the ISRD Design Guidelines to evaluate applications and proposals. The ISRD Board meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month to review applications for Certificates of Approval for change of use, exterior colors, facade alteration, signs, new construction, demolition, and street use. All ISRD Board meetings are open to the public. The meetings are a forum for anyone in the community to observe the decision-making process, and to provide input on proposed changes.

To ensure that questions and answers between the ISRD Board and applicant occur in a public forum, please do not communicate with ISRD Board members about open applications outside of ISRD Board meetings. Please direct all questions and comments about applications to the ISRD Board Coordinator.

What is the role of the ISRD Board Coordinator?

The ISRD Board Coordinator is a City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods staff member who stewards the Certificate of Approval application process. They are a resource to the community, and are available to clarify guidelines, application requirements and procedures, review proposed plans, and provide guidance about how to determine whether or not a building is contributing or non-contributing. Contact the ISRD Board Coordinator to schedule an informal meeting to discuss your project or informational project briefing before the ISRD Board. To contact the Board Coordinator, please call 206.684.0226.

Reader's Guide

Document Overview

The ISRD Design Guidelines document contains five sections: Introduction, History and Background, Guidance for Entire District, Location Specific Guidance, and Document Resources.

Design Guidelines are located in two sections: Guidance for Entire District, and Location Specific Guidance. Applicants for a Certificate of Approval must demonstrate that all guidelines from both sections applicable to their proposed project have been met. Since projects vary in size, scope, location, and complexity, not all guidelines apply to all proposals.

The Introduction, History and Background, and Document Resources sections provide additional information to support applicants in the Certificate of Approval process. *Italicized and bold* words are defined in the Glossary of Terms found in the Document Resources section. Seattle Municipal Code sections that correspond to portions of this document are noted in *italicized* text.

The paragraphs below provide an overview of the sections that follow:

"History and Background" Overview

This section provides background information on the history, people, and importance of Seattle's International Special Review District. This sets the framework for the overall goals of the District and helps build a solid foundation for the guidelines which follow. It is important to note that this section is not a comprehensive history of the area. There are many more people, organizations, and events that have contributed to the architecture and cultural heritage of the District.



"Guidance for Entire District" Overview

Guidance provided in this section applies to all properties within the boundaries of the International Special Review District. The design guidelines are organized around three themes:

- Context and Site This theme focuses on how projects interact with their surrounding neighborhood blocks.
- Public Life This theme focuses on how projects interact with their immediate surroundings.
- Building Design This theme focuses on the design of the building itself and is organized by the type of building that is being modified or proposed.

Guidelines within each theme are grouped by category. For example, the guidelines in Public Life are organized into six categories: Open Space, Storefront Design, Signage, Awning and Canopies, Safety and Security, and Lighting.



"Location Specific Guidance" Overview

Guidance provided in this section is meant to be applied in addition to Guidance for Entire District. Each applicant must first respond to guidance provided for all of the ISRD, and then seek out location specific guidance associated with their project address, either East of 1-5 or West of 1-5. The design guidelines are organized by the same themes as in Guidance for Entire District. There are no categories.



"Document Resources" Overview

The Glossary of Terms includes words and phrases that have been identified with text that is italicized and bold.



The Resources list includes organizations to contact, or documents to reference for additional information regarding, Seattle land use, historic preservation, and the history and culture of the ISRD.

ISRD Boundary Map

There are three different land use zones as well as several subareas within the boundaries of the International Special Review District. Identifying the building/property location within the ISRD will help readers navigate the ISRD Design Guideline as well as the Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.66.

Within the bounds of the ISRD exists another overlay provided by the *National Register of Historic Places*; the *Seattle Chinatown Historic District*.



Legend

International Special Review District Boundary SMC 23.66		International District Mixed Zone SMC 23.66.304
SMC 23.66.310	_	International District Residential Zone SMC 23.66.306
Asian Design Character District SMC 23.66.336B	_	Downtown Mixed Commercial Zone SMC 23.34.108
		Seattle Chinatown Historic District

Guidance for Entire District ISRD Design Guidelines

Guidance provided in the following section is meant to be applied to any project requiring recommendation by the International Special Review District Board for *Certificate of Approval.*





Guiding Principles



The guiding principles of the International Special Review District (ISRD) are to promote, preserve, and continue the cultural, social, economic, *historical*, and otherwise beneficial qualities of the area - particularly qualities and features derived from its Asian, Asian American, Asian immigrant and refugee, and Asian Pacific Islander heritage - by:

- Preserving a mixed use, mixed-income residential and business community, consisting of a variety of buildings ranging from *historic* to contemporary, which contribute to an active urban environment;
- Encouraging the use of street-level spaces for pedestrian-oriented, locally-owned businesses;
- Encouraging the rehabilitation of existing structures that contribute to the *character* of the district;
- Promoting *culturally responsive design* that reflects the *community's visions*;
- 5. Ensuring accessibility for visitors, residents, tourists, and workers through a variety of mobility options;
- Encouraging continuity in urban design and wayfinding through preservation and creation of new open spaces, alleys and *rights-ofway*;
- Promoting public safety by adopting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles and other crime prevention strategies;
- 8. Supporting environmental *sustainability* and green building principles.

See Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section: 23.66.302 for additional information regarding goals for the ISRD.

1. Context & Site

This section of the document focuses on how projects interact with their surrounding neighborhood blocks.





Engaging storefront responding to alley space.



Open spaces are activated by plantings and clear paths for circulation



'Pavement to Parks' community space

A. Response to *Context*

- 1. Consider the neighborhood *context*, characteristics of the site, adjacent buildings plus open space, streets, alleys and proposed uses of the building.
- 2. Respond to *datum* lines, *street-edge* relationships and proportions created by existing buildings.
- 3. Incorporate and preserve architectural elements that exist within the neighborhood already such as recesses, balconies, and canopies.
- 4. Demonstrate how the project advances the community vision.

B. Public Realm

- 1. Activate sidewalks and open spaces with pedestrianoriented features that encourage walking, sitting and other activities. Consider activation strategies for various times of day and year.
- Provide opportunities for street activation beyond 2. just landscaping and transparency. Focus on the relationship between storefront design and pedestrian interaction with the streetscape. Important items to consider:
 - a. Location of the building in relation to the property line
 - b. Location of parking access
 - Location of landscaping C.
 - d Street trees
 - Street lights e.
- 3. Public gathering spaces should encourage use by multiple generations.
- 4. Lighting, crosswalks, and materials in the public *right*of-way should be consistent throughout the District in order to serve as *placemaking* features or *cultural* markers. Variations considered on a case by case basis.



Flowering trees attract visitors



Public art piece



Cultural placemaking through crosswalks



King Broadmore fixture

- Provide artistic pavement treatments within key intersections. Crosswalks should be consistent at an intersection.
- 6. A variety of plantings that are responsive to existing landscaping and are drought resistant / lowmaintenance is preferred. Common species include flowering trees or bushes, such as the cherry trees along Jackson Street.
- 7. Public art that is informed by community input and reflects the culture and the history of the neighborhood is preferred. Artwork should be placed with attention to the method and stability of installation, be *scaled* and *compatible* with the *character* of the District, and should not block or damage architectural or *character*-defining building features. Consider incorporating public art into the design of elements in the public realm, such as seating, weather protection, light fixtures and transit stops.
- Provide ample bike parking and easy access to public transit lines. Bike parking should be sited and scaled in such a way that is *compatible* with the *character* of the District, and should not block or damage architectural or *character*-defining building features.
- Activate typically inaccessible and underutilized alleys by omitting fences, dumpsters and trash enclosures where possible.
- Pedestrian lighting fixtures, when installed within the public *right-of-way*, should be uniform in style, color and placement to serve as a *placemaking* feature. Preference is given to the "King Broadmore" or similar style fixture.

C. Building Orientation

- Buildings and primary entrances shall be oriented toward the street and vehicular access should be located off an alley or side-street, wherever possible.
- 2. Visible access to the building's entry should be provided.
- 3. Activate vestibule and *recessed* entries to promote public safety. Examples of activation include lighting, plantings, artwork and seating.



Parking located off an alley



Underground parking



Parking lots activated for community space

D. Parking and Support Services

- Locate parking on less visible portions of the site, such as underground, behind, or to the side of buildings.
- 2. Reduce the visual impact of parking and service uses with landscaping or architecturally *compatible* screening.
- 3. Locate trash enclosures, loading docks and other service entries along alleys or non-primary *facades* wherever possible.

See *SMC* 23.66.342 – *Parking and access* for additional information.

2. Public Life

This section of the document focuses on how projects interact with their *immediate surroundings.*



/.T.Pho



Outdoor seating invites users and "street room" engagement





Hing Hay park provides flexible open space for various community uses



Space provided for sidewalk vendors



Retail **bays** designed for small or "**anchor" businesses**

A. Open Space

- Opportunities for creating vibrant, pedestrianoriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be prioritized. Consider including spaces that cater to the multigenerational population of the community.
- 2. Design public open space to be informal and able to support multiple community uses such as performances, festivals, markets, kiosks, community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.
- 3. Offer opportunities for street vendors to occupy streetlevel space by providing access to utilities.
- Include pedestrian amenities such as seating, and other site furniture, lighting, year-round landscaping in addition to seasonal plantings, pedestrian-*scale* signage, art work, awnings, large storefront windows, and engaging retail displays.
- Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and/or quality of project-related open space available for public life.
- 6. Provide seating for groups and individuals to facilitate gatherings.
- Promote public safety with *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) Principles.

B. Storefront Design

- Design retail *bays* that are appropriately *scaled* to support small and/or "*anchor*" *businesses*.
- 2. Desirable storefront design features include large transparent storefront windows, entrances onto the street, pedestrian-level signs, architectural detailing, and pedestrian lighting to engage passerby.
- Provide space for sidewalk vending and allow for private space to spill out into the public realm to promote opportunities for community engagement.

Nakano Associates, CHA



Alleys offer opportunities for informal extensions of public space





Outdoor seating indicates usage and invites pedestrians



Space provided for vending and pedestrian circulation



Hartford Glass Co. ghost sign

- Maintain transparency at the *ground-floor level*. Bay windows, *transom* areas, and entryways shall not be overly obscured by *window treatments*, posters, signage, mechanical equipment, security systems or interior furniture and equipment.
- 5. Maximize visibility into the building interior and visual interest of merchandise displays.
- Activate storefronts through lighted displays or prominent decorative light fixtures placed in street level windows to contribute to pedestrianscale illumination and neighborhood sense of place.
- 7. Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend. Storefronts with large overhangs and seating provide passive shading and cooling for the building while simultaneously serving pedestrians.

C. Signage

- 1. Multi-lingual signage is encouraged.
- 2. The ISRD Board considers a sign's size, shape, location, material, color, method of attachment, and lighting in relation to the use of the building, the design of the building where the sign is proposed, and the location of other signs in the District. Ensure that signs:
 - a. Relate physically and visually to their location;
 - b. Reflect the *character* and unique nature of the building uses;
 - c. Do not hide, damage, or obstruct any significant architectural elements of the building;
 - d. Promote a pedestrian environment while considering visibility for other traffic such as personal vehicles, buses, and bicycles.
- 3. Prominent, creative and colorful illuminated signage is recommended. Encourage a variety of signs with unique *character* to signify the business district.
- 4. Neon-lit signs and the restoration of *historic* signage are encouraged to enhance the visual experience along the retail corridors.
- 5. Encourage preservation of existing "ghost" signs.

VPr Pare



Signage and lighting working in conjunction to highlight programming



Multilingual signs in Chinatown



Neon-lit sign enhancing the visual experience of retail corridor at night

- Encourage signs which relate physically and visually to their location and reflect the *character* and unique nature of the building use. Signage should be *compatible* in *character*, *scale*, and location while still allowing businesses to present a unique identity.
- 7. Buildings with three or more tenants must develop a signage plan within the *context* of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with *facade* design, lighting, location, and other project features to complement the project as a whole.
- 8. To minimize driver distraction, the following signage types are not permitted in the District:
 - a. Free-standing signs (except for those in parks and those authorized for surface parking lots)
 - b. Portable signs
 - c. Roof signs
 - d. Off-premises advertising
 - e. Signs that flash, change-images, incorporate video display methods, or have text that appears in motion

See Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section: 23.66.338 - Signs for additional information regarding signage for the ISRD.



Common sign types are illustrated above Blade signs are a type of projecting sign Sign bands are a type of non-projecting sign





Example of fabric awning, also clear signs and storefront transparency allows passersby to interact with the building's interior



Canopies provide shelter over walking paths



Vending supported by temporary cover

D. Awnings and Canopies

- 1. Provide practical coverings, such as fabric awnings or metal canopies, for weather protection and screening from the sun.
- 2. Use awnings and canopies as decorative visual elements for a *facade* or storefront.
- 3. Design awnings and canopies to fit within their respective openings and be secured to structural elements of the building.
- 4. Avoid covering, masking or damaging existing architectural building features.
- 5. Awnings that project over the sidewalk should extend a minimum of five feet (5'). *(Refer to SMC.23.66.336 B5)*
- 6. Canvas is the preferred awning material. A matte finish is preferred when a material other than canvas is proposed.
- Include illumination to minimize dark areas. Light fixtures placed within awnings should be encased or screened from view from below.
- Where signage is proposed for the surface of the awning, graphics should be limited to the business name and/or logo and coordinated with other storefront signage.



Fence with planters and seating for pedestrians



Prohibited bars installed on the building facade



Screening with lighting for security without compromising visuals



Seating in open spaces encourages gatherings

E. Safety and Security

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a set of design principles used to create an environment to deter criminal activity. Employ CPTED principles by encouraging more "eyes on the street":
 - a. Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance through strategic placement of doors, windows, balconies, landscaping, and street-level uses.
 - b. Provide lighting at sufficient *lumen* intensities and *scales*, including pathway illumination, and pedestrian and entry lighting.
 - c. Where appropriate, ensure transparency of street-level uses, by opening views into spaces beyond walls, plantings, corners, or narrow passageways.
 - If using fencing or screening elements, choose semi-transparent rather than opaque materials.
 When opaque materials are desired, ensure there is sufficient visual porosity.
 - e. Added security measures, when necessary, shall have minimal visual impact and shall not obscure storefront visibility. When possible, the need for potential security measures should be considered from the outset in order to integrate security into design, and prevent the need for additional external security systems.
 - f. Where added security measures are deemed necessary, ornamental gates are preferred for street front entrances. Permanent bars installed on the building *facade* are prohibited.

segar





Alley activation aided by pedestrian lighting

Illuminating elaborate and **historic** architectural features and details on building.

Chophouse R

Anagram Architects

Cavin Teo

F. Lighting

- Select light fixtures that complement the architecture and design of the building. For older buildings, it may be appropriate to select fixtures that draw inspiration from *historic* building photos.
- 2. Selectively illuminating elaborate and *historic* architectural features and details on buildings is encouraged. Directing light toward building *facades*, walls and roof lines, or integrated lighting within such elements provides valuable vertical surface illumination, which helps the surroundings to appear brighter and more welcoming.
- 3. Where appropriate, incorporate exterior light fixtures onto buildings at the pedestrian level (between the ground and 16 feet up) to help pedestrians see more clearly.
- Provide even lighting levels that do not create a contrast of overly-bright and overly-dark spaces. While lighting is an important component of safe spaces, excessive lighting can cause *glare* at night.
- Glare is difficulty seeing in the presence of bright light and can be distracting and sometimes debilitating and should be avoided. Strategies to reduce glare from light fixtures and signage lighting include:
 - a. Use light fixtures that shield direct view of the light bulb or light source
 - b. Use light fixtures with shades or lenses that are translucent
 - c. Reduce the brightness of the light source

Lighting highlighting building programing





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3. Building Design

This section of the document focuses on the design of the building itself.



This section of the document focuses on the design of the building itself and is organized by the type of building that is being modified or proposed.

- Contributing Buildings This section provides guidance for modifications to buildings within the boundaries of the International Special Review District that contribute to the cultural or architectural significance of the District. The ISRD board coordinator is available to assist property owners and Certificate of Approval applicants with determining if their building is contributing.
- Non-Contributing Buildings This section provides guidance for modifications to buildings within the boundaries of the International Special Review District that are not identified as contributing. The ISRD Board Coordinator is available to assist property owners and Certificate of Approval applicants with determining if their building is noncontributing.
- Tall Buildings This section provides additional guidance for any new construction of buildings 85 feet in height or taller.



Defining Contributing and Non-Contributing

For more information regarding *contributing/non-contributing* status, please see *Seattle Municipal Code* 23.66.032 - *Contributing structures; determination of architectural or historic significance.*

Another resource is the **Seattle Chinatown Historic District** National Register Nomination – this is a subarea of the larger International Special Review District. The National Register Nomination identifies the classification of buildings within the area of the **Seattle Chinatown Historic District** – buildings are identified in this document as either **contributing** (primary and secondary) or **non-contributing.** The nomination is available electronically on the ISRD website. The ISRD Board coordinator is available to assist property owners and applicants regarding the status of a building.

Existing building in the ISRD



Contributing building at King and Maynard



Contributing building at 6th and Jackson



Example of recessed balcony



Historic building provides local apartments

A. Contributing Buildings

The Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties addresses different approaches to the preservation of *contributing buildings*. Relevant to the ISRD are the Standards and Guidelines for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation, in contrast to restoration or new construction, allows for alterations and even new additions if necessary, for the continued use or new uses of a *historic* building. These guidelines recognize that usefulness is key to preservation of buildings and to the economic vitality of a community.

Rehabilitation guidance is included below:

- Historic elements that are character-defining include 1. but are not limited to:
 - Tall storefronts with transoms and large a. bays
 - **Display windows** b.
 - Wide doorways at the first floor along the C. sidewalk or alley
 - d. Upper floors have rectangular shaped wood windows with two glazed sash elements, which slide vertically to open.
 - Projecting trim bands and e. cornices
 - Recessed balconies
 - Flat roofs q.

Flat roof with parapet and cornice
 Simple form less than ten stories
Masonry facade with decorative brickwork Rectangular double-hung windows
Canopy over entry
and door transoms Display windows High ground floor storefront bays with recessed entries and wide doors

Diagram of character defining elements



Low-rise commercial buildings on Jackson





Affordable work-force housing near public transit



505 Union Station responds directly to the adjacent transit center.

- Knowledge of the *historic district* and its resources 2. at the outset is key to begin to identify the architectural forms, details, materials, and the features that define a building's historic character.
- In order of importance, priority should be given to the 3. (1) preservation and maintenance of *historic* building materials, (2) repairs, and (3) the replacement of deteriorated *historic* features.
- 4. While all buildings are different and distinct, there are consistent *historic* materials and features exhibited throughout the District. Such materials include those that make up the structure, such as heavy timber and wood or steel framing and brick masonry, along with stone, terra cotta and wood windows.
- Characteristic building siting includes a strong *street* 5. *edge*, with buildings placed directly along the property line, rather than with setbacks. Any modifications to *contributing buildings* should keep these key components in mind.
- Seismic retrofits should respect the *historic* character 6. and materials of the building; and regardless of whether the seismic retrofit work is exposed or hidden, it should be visually unobtrusive and compatible in design with the building.

B. Non-Contributing Buildings

- When modifying existing non-contributing buildings, 1. features from the *context* of nearby *contributing* buildings can serve as design clues. Overall patterns, based on the repetition of building elements from *contributing buildings*, are useful to assure a new design will fit into the district. Such patterns include:
 - a. The placement of buildings in relationship to the street or alley and sidewalk
 - b. Areas for exterior retail displays, and space for pedestrian access to storefronts
 - c. Building heights at the first floor storefronts
 - The rhythm of windows and door openings and d. patterns of window sash divisions
 - Horizontal trim bands and *cornice* and roof e. lines



Use of balconies to provide depth, color and interest to building **facade**



Human **scaled** elements along building face activate the public realm



Seating and operational glazed openings invite pedestrian interaction

C. New Buildings and Additions

- Where appropriate, make connections to neighboring buildings by using similar materials, proportions, modulation, articulation, *fenestration*, color, landscaping, detailing, texture and relief.
- When designing the *massing* (height, bulk, *scale*) of the building, consider the *massing* of adjacent buildings, characteristics of the site and nearby open spaces.
- Break up large expanses of blank *facade* with design elements such as green walls, art, material modulation, and ornamental screening. Avoid blank walls on street facing *facades*.
- Include architectural elements such as balconies, awnings, canopies, decorative lighting, and patterning of materials to add depth, and texture.
- Building exteriors should be constructed of durable, high-quality and environmentally-*sustainable* materials that are *compatible* in color, texture and proportion with buildings in the *immediate* area.
- Incorporate welcoming and human-scaled design elements, especially at the lower stories, to engage pedestrians and create a vibrant street frontage.



Diagram of common elements



Floor groupings provide buildings with multi-story intermediate *scale* elements



Roof garden provides integrated rooftop design as a transition to the skyline



Terraces and landscaping provide functional **facade** modulation and a compelling "6th" elevation design

- 7. Where appropriate, design the exterior of the building to reflect interior use.
- Identify opportunities for the building and site to include outdoor and semi-outdoor spaces that activate the pedestrian experience and public realm, including alleyways.
- Where appropriate, consider operational, *glazed* openings that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for storefront displays.
- Design new buildings and additions to reflect contemporary architectural practices. Avoid materials and designs that create a false sense of history.
- 11. Consider visibility of the building from multiple key perspectives in the District.

See SMC 23.66.332 – Height and Rooftop Features and SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes for additional information

D. Tall Buildings

The following guidance applies to new construction buildings that are 85' in height or taller:

- Integrate and transition to differing heights and existing visual *datum* of the surrounding building context.
- 2. Locate tall form geometries to:
 - Reduce adverse shadow or reflected light impacts on parks, plazas, and open spaces;
 - b. Consider *facade* placement in relationship to adjacent structures;
 - c. Ensure light and open space to the public realm.
- Consider the relationship of the tower *massing* to the neighboring buildings in proportion, *scale*, and texture. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Incorporate multi-story, intermediate *scale* elements (i.e. floor groupings, gaskets, offsets, projections, terraces, etc.)
 - b. Facade plane changes, depth, shadow, texture

The building base should complement the

neighborhood character



Carved form responding to context



Balconies break up the **facade** and provide human **scale**



Employ local high-quality materials and human *scaled* elements

to provide a finer *scale* and break up large expanses of material

- c. Carved, angled, or shifting forms to modulate building *massing*
- d. A podium base to clearly demarcate the transition of tower to street level and mark the portion of the building experienced by pedestrians
- 4. Intentionally consider all sides of tall buildings, because tall forms are visible from many vantage points in the area, including those on Interstate-5.
- 5. Design the upper portions of taller buildings to contribute visual interest and variety to the skyline.
- Clearly identify primary pedestrian entrances. Provide multiple entries where appropriate, and consider activating adjacent streets and alleyways where possible.
- Carefully detail elements that are readily seen by pedestrians at street level. Examples may include *soffits*, balconies, and exterior ceilings.
- Integrate all rooftop elements and uses into the overall design (i.e. mechanical screens, maintenance equipment, amenity spaces, lighting, etc.).
- 9. Avoid opaque, colored, or tinted glass on large expanses of building *facades*.
- 10. Employ sensitive *massing* strategies that relate the scale of the building to the width of the street that the building fronts. A corner lot may require a different approach for each street fronting *facade*.
- 11. Where possible, pursue a smaller building footprint while taking advantage of the allowable height. Smaller floor plates may help facilitate a viable green building strategy by allowing for daylighting, natural ventilation, on-site water management, and other passive design opportunities.
- 12. Ensure that the first three floors of the building above street level complements the architectural and *cultural character* of surrounding buildings.

Location Specific Guidance ISRD Design Guidelines

Guidance provided in the following sections is meant to be applied in addition to guidelines outlined in previous sections. Each applicant must first respond to guidance provided for all of the ISRD, and then seek out location specific guidance associated with their project address, either East of 1-5 or West of 1-5.



4. Additional Guidance East of I-5

Overview of Area

Little Saigon is located East of I-5, and is home to Seattle's Vietnamese and Vietnamese American community. Along with other Asian businesses, Vietnamese business owners moved into the neighborhood in the 1980s, and the result of the community they established still defines this area of the District today. One of the biggest *character*-defining elements of Little Saigon is the prevalence of warehouse and low-rise commercial buildings which house markets, grocery stores, specialty stores and more. These warehouses are integral to many of the nearby businesses throughout the District. The markets and stores serve as an invaluable resource for Seattle's local residents, and have also made Little Saigon a destination neighborhood for those coming from afar. As each phase of development continues to reshape the *scale* of this built environment, it is critical for these businesses to remain at the heart and soul of the neighborhood.



A. Goals for Development East of I-5

- 1. Promote a vibrant Asian American community by supporting and providing space for *cultural assets*.
- Preserve and enhance the *cultural and neighborhood assets* that are already thriving in the area (i.e. successful restaurants, markets, non-profit organizations, and specialty stores).
- 3. Increase the area's Vietnamese cultural identity and sense of place.
- 4. Promote a pedestrian-friendly community with open public spaces.
- 5. Provide spaces to support economic pathways to job opportunities and micro enterprises.
- 6. Promote and support the development of all forms of housing.





Vending supported by mid-block crosswalk with permanent cover





Street activation in Little Saigon



Public art entering into Seattle's Little Saigon



Pho Bac has been in operation since 1982 and is the city's first pho restaurant

B. Context & Site

 Consider mid-block crosswalks to increase pedestrian circulation and safety. Through-block passages in larger developments provide important pedestrian circulation that activates the site, while adding a welcoming character to the block.

C. Public Life

- 1. Throughout the public realm, ensure businesses have space to engage with passerby while still allowing clear sidewalks for pedestrian circulation.
- Provide a sufficient planting buffer between street traffic and the sidewalk in order to achieve a welcoming pedestrian environment and soften urban edges
- 3. Use alleys and mid-block passageways as activation opportunities to provide usable and inviting open space for community uses. Ensure that these corridors are well lit and engage the public realm in order to keep these elements active and safe throughout the day and year.
- 4. Incorporate green space and landscaping where possible.
- 5. The clarity and visibility of signage is important in order to best serve pedestrians as well as the large number of patrons who travel to Little Saigon's businesses by car.

D. Building Design

- 1. Provide bilingual signage to represent the culture of the community.
- 2. The use of color is important as a *cultural defining element* for this area of the neighborhood.
- Minimize the visual presence of service areas by locating access to trash storage and loading docks away from primary building *facades* and entries.

5. Additional Guidance West of I-5

Overview of Area

The West side of the International Special Review District includes two primary cultural nodes: Chinatown and Japantown. Chinatown is south of Jackson St and centered on South King Street. Japantown is north of Jackson St, centered on South Main Street and has a steep topography. The zones West of I-5 include the International District Residential Zone (IDR), the International District Mixed (IDM) Zone, Union Station Corridor, and Retail Core/Asian Design Character District. *Refer to the Seattle Municipal Code sections* 23.66.304, 23.66.306 and 23.66.310 for individual zone goals and objectives.



Seating outside storefront





Vibrant storefronts attract pedestrians



Under-utilized alley

The area West of I-5 also includes the *Seattle Chinatown Historic District*, nominated to the *National Register of Historic Places Inventory* in 1986.

The area West of I-5 is characterized largely by three- to six- story brick or stucco buildings built during the late 1800s and early 1900s and many served as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels. These buildings are similar in material and style to the buildings constructed elsewhere in the country at the time with identifiable features such as flat roofs, masonry wall surfaces, punched openings, decorative cornices and ground floor storefronts. They are built right up to the property line and create a very strong urban street fronts. The Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants who constructed, owned, rented, and occupied these buildings adapted them over time to reflect their cultural heritage by incorporating architectural features such as upper story recessed balconies, awnings, tile work, decorative ironwork, banners, ornamentation and signage. For example, the upper story recessed balconies built by family associations follow a Southern Chinese tradition of providing cool and pleasant outdoor living space overlooking street activity. These cultural elements have come to characterize the West side of the ISRD and are also reflected in some of the one- and twostory commercial buildings in the area.

A building typology common in this part of the ISRD features small *scale ground-level* retail with residential units on the upper stories. In Japantown, the steep slope of the streets has allowed for a mezzanine level of shops, offices and meeting rooms.

Another *character* defining element of the area West of I-5 are alleys, such as Canton Alley. Storefronts and residences opened onto the alley, which created a public space for local residents to gather and socialize.

The mixed use *character* of the neighborhood combined with parks and open space create a lively pedestrian-oriented streetscape.



Community garden in Japantown



Typical facade articulation in Chinatown



Retail bays in Chinatown



Street vending in Chinatown

A. Goals for Development West of I-5

- 1. Preserve the *cultural character* and history of the neighborhood by encouraging the rehabilitation of existing *character contributing buildings*.
- Assure new development is *compatible* in *scale* and *character* with existing buildings and positively contribute to the District's sense of place.
- 3. Support the multi-generational community that lives, works, and visits the neighborhood.
- Ensure the area thrives economically and environmentally for local residents and businesses, and develops further as a destination for community members and visitors alike.
- 5. Ensure the public realm is developed in such a way that benefits and enhances the existing neighborhood character.



B. Context and Site

 Use existing design features, materials and landscaping to create a consistent streetscape experience. Examples of character defining streetscape elements include but are not limited to the King Broadmoor pedestrian light fixtures, and glass sidewalk prism lights.





Hing Hay Park





Japantown street art



Wing Luke Museum, opened in 1967

C. Public Life

- Consider the neighborhood's *historic* and *cultural heritage* and include meaningful, authentic and culturally relevant art, signage, or ornamentation.
- 2. Activate alleys with pedestrian-*scaled* retail and residential uses.
- 3. Screen and separate garbage/waste storage spaces from retail and residential uses.

D. Building Design

- Consider existing design features, materials, and landscaping to create a consistent streetscape experience. Examples of character defining streetscape elements include, but are not limited to the King Broadmoor pedestrian light fixtures, brick paving patterns, and glass sidewalk prism lights.
- 2. Incorporate *cuturally-appropriate* design elements and architectural concepts consistent with the District's character. Character defining elements may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Upper story *recessed* balconies
 - b. Signage in Asian languages and characters
 - c. Tilework at entryways
 - d. Decorative ironwork
 - e. *Recessed* entries with a high level of detail
 - f. Inspiration drawn from the history of the site
- Modulate and *scale* street-level storefronts to be *compatible* with storefronts in adjacent *contributing buildings*.
- Use durable, high-quality materials and finishes that are *compatible* with adjacent *contributing buildings*. Whenever possible, use brick to create texture, pattern and detail.
- Design windows and window openings to respond to the depth, alignment, details and proportions of windows from nearby *contributing buildings*. Consider using similar materials such as wood, or materials with similar frame profiles, depth, and relationships to the exterior *cladding*.

Document Resources ISRD Design Guidelines

The following pages provide definitions, both written and visual, to many of the terms used throughout the design guidelines document.



Glossary of Terms



Bays



Historic Cladding



Contemporary Cladding



Cornice

Anchor Business: Businesses or organizations that are rooted in the community by relationships to customers/clients, and resources they provides to the community. These prominent businesses draw people to the community.

Architectural Character: The visual aspects and physical features that making a building or other structure notable or identifiable. Characterdefining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, and various aspects of its site and environment.

Asian Design Character: Asian design character describes how heritage and culture of the community is expressed through the built environment. Asian design elements include, but are not limited to: recessed balconies, storefront mezzanines, decorative ironwork, tilework, and colors currently found in many older buildings in the District.

Bays: the space between structure, architectural elements, or a recess or compartment.

Certificate of Approval: The approval granted by the Dept. of Neighborhoods, following a recommendation from the International Special Review District Board, allowing use or design of a space in the District.

Cladding: The external covering or materials (sometimes referred to as "skin") applied to a structure for decorative or protective purposes.

Community Vision: Visioning is the process of developing consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. Work in the ISRD should be informed by community input and reflects the culture and the history of the neighborhood.

Cornice: The projecting decorative element at the top of the wall surface, such as a roofline, balcony or canopy.

Contributing / Non-Contributing Building: The District's National Register listing identifies contributing and non-contributing buildings located within the boundaries of the National Register District. The contributing or non-contributing status for buildings located outside of the National Register District is determined by the Board's consideration of a historic property report, prepared by a qualified preservation consultant or specialist.





Datum

Curtis Croni



Fenestration



Ghost Sign



Glare

Contributing Building: A building, site, structure, or object that was present during the period in which the District attained its significance, has an identifiable architectural or historic significance to either the development of the neighborhood or the City of Seattle, and reflects its historic integrity or has the ability to convey its significance.

Contextual / Compatible: When an architectural project is designed to exist symbiotically with its environment.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design Specifically altering the physical design of the communities in which humans reside and congregate in order to deter criminal activity is the main goal of CPTED.

Cultural Heritage / Assets / Markers / Character / Defining Element: Relating to the set of customs, traditions, and values of a community.

Culturally Appropriate / Responsive Design: placeholder

Datum: a visual marker which ties together or anchors all other elements of the design. It can be a line, like a road with houses arranged along its length, a flat plane, or even a 3D space. Many buildings all share a plane which acts as a clear datum— it's the ground on which they are built.

Facade: The front or primary face of a building or any visible side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

Fenestration: The pattern, alignment and rhythm of windows in a building. See examples provided in "Image A".

Frontage: The length of the building which directly faces a road, or the main face of a business.

Ghost Sign: An old advertisement or faded mural that had previously been painted on to the side of a building and is retained or re-introduced.

Glare: Reflected light causing disruption in view.

Glazing: The glass portion of a building's facade.

Ground Level / Floor: the floor of a building at ground level.

Historic (Context): An organizing structure for interpreting history that groups information about historic properties that share common physical characteristics, common geographic area and a common time period.

Immediate Surroundings: Area around a building or property. It may include buildings, sidewalks, streets, alleys, and open spaces.

BDM1

Cody Bay – Seattle Magazii

Cody Bay – Seattle Magaz

Muntin

momo

££

Individually Listed National Register Properties: Formal recognition of a property's historical or architectural significance based on national preservation standards. The nomination process for these buildings is separate from a Nationally Registered Historic District nomination, however it is possible for an individually listed property to be located within a Nationally Registered Historic District

Integrity: The authenticity of physical characteristics from which properties obtain their significance.

Light Color: A specification of the color appearance of the light emitted by a lamp, relating its color to the color of light from a reference source when heated to a particular temperature, measured in degrees Kelvin (K).

Light Quality: A measure of a light source's ability to show object colors "realistically" or "naturally" compared to a familiar reference source, either incandescent light or daylight.

Lumen: A unit of measurement for the total quantity of visible light emitted by a source.

Massing: a term which refers to the perception of the general shape and form as well as size of a building.

Mullion: A support member between adjacent windows.

Muntin: A slender division bar between two panes of glass in a window.

National Register of Historic Places: "is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community state, or the nation." (nps.gov)

Nationally Registered Historic District: A district that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and which "possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development."(nps.gov)

Non-Contributing Building: A non-contributing building, site, structure or object either was not present during the period during which the District attained it significance, or due to alterations, additions, or other changes, no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its architectural or historic character.

Placemaking: a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces which capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being.

Recess: A small space created by building part of a wall further back





Recesses





Scale

eattle Chinatown International Distr



The View from Right Here



Transom

from the rest.

Right-of Way: Sidewalks, streets, planting strips, medians, and alleyways open to vehicular or pedestrian traffic that can be used by all members of public.

Scale: Refers to the relationship between the dimensions of a building, street, adjacent buildings, streetscape, and/or outdoor space.

Seattle Chinatown Historic District: The Seattle Chinatown Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and sits within the larger International Special Review District, one of eight historic districts established by the city of Seattle. Today, the two districts are commonly referred to as the Seattle Chinatown International District." (nps.gov)

Soffit: the underside of an architectural structure such as an arch, a balcony, or overhanging eaves.

Street-Edge Relationships: The interface between public or private places and a street. In an urban situation this would typically be a building overlooking the street.

Sustainability: Building methods and materials that promote environmental quality, economic vitality, and social benefit through the design, construction, operation, maintenance, and deconstruction of the built environment without compromising the success of future generations.

Transom: A strengthening crossbar, in particular one set above a window or door.

Wayfinding: a consistent use and organization of definite sensory cues from the external environment or any architectural strategy employed to aid orientation.

Window Treatments: interior decoration for a window or window frame.