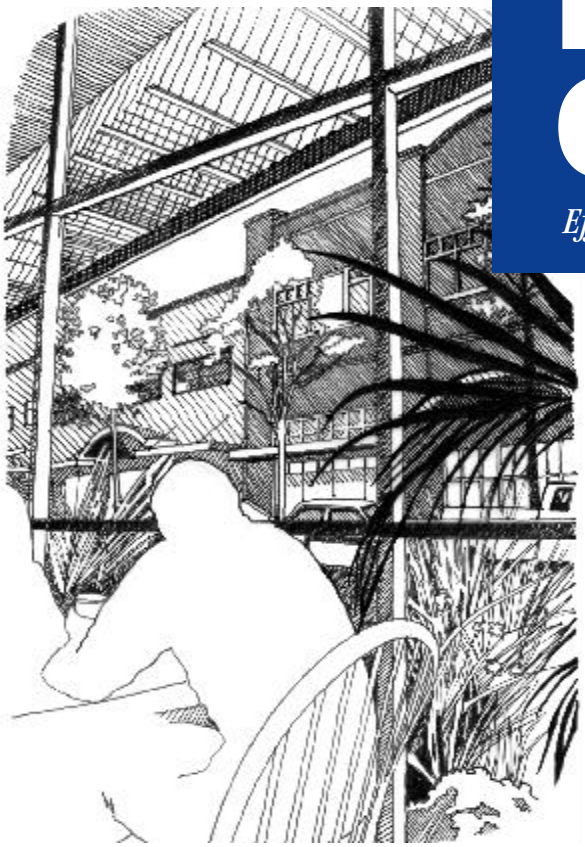
ROOSEVELT *urban village*

Design Guidelines

Effective October 15, 2000



City of Seattle
Department of Design,
Construction & Land Use

Design Review: *Roosevelt Urban Village Design Guidelines*

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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 affect how new development can contribute positively to Seattle's neighborhoods. Design guidelines offer a flexible tool—an alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements—which will allow new development to respond better to the distinctive character of its surroundings.

Design Review has three principal objectives:

1. to encourage better design and site planning to enhance the character of the city and ensure that new development sensitively fits 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 design and siting of new development.

Design Review is a component of a Master Use Permit (MUP) application, along with other components, such as environmental review (SEPA), variances, etc., administered by the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU). Like these other components, Design Review applications involve public notice and opportunity for comment. Unlike other components, projects subject to Design Review are brought before the Design Review Board for its recommendations or to staff through Administrative Design Review. The final decision on Design Review is made by the DCLU Director, together with the decisions on any other MUP components. This decision is appealable to the Hearing Examiner.

What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

Design Review uses both the 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 the Roosevelt Neighborhood augment the existing Citywide Design Guidelines.

The Roosevelt neighborhood design guidelines reveal the character of the Roosevelt district as known to its residents and business owners. 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, Client Assistance Memo #238, 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. Roosevelt Context and Priority Design Issues

The overriding objective of the Citywide design guidelines is to encourage new development to fit in with its surroundings. Neighborhood guidelines share this objective. Whereas Citywide guidelines are meant to apply throughout the City, neighborhood guidelines provide a more focused opportunity to recognize local concerns and design issues. They may give more specific direction as to the design character, site conditions or community objectives new development should respond to.

The Roosevelt neighborhood identified six design issues and related priorities based upon the Neighborhood Inventory and goals. These have been incorporated into Roosevelt Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

1. Pedestrian Environment

Neighborhood Priority:

Improve the safety, comfort and visual quality of the pedestrian environment in neighborhood commercial areas, especially in the Core Commercial Area (see Map 1).

The Neighborhood Vision Statement and Neighborhood Goals describe a community and Core Commercial Area that is more active, comfortable, and more pedestrian-oriented. This goal can be achieved by improving pedestrian safety and comfort along the principal pedestrian corridors.

Application of the Roosevelt Design Guidelines can help create a rich, active pedestrian environment and over time, help to alleviate elements that detract from the safety of the pedestrian in the Roosevelt Neighborhood. Current detractors include high-speed arterial traffic and the associated noise, dirt and exhaust along Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th Street. Both corridors are primary neighborhood pedestrian routes running the length and width of the neighborhood and through the center of its commercial areas. However, sidewalks along these streets are often narrow and are crossed by numerous driveways. These conditions create safety concerns for pedestrians and contribute to a sense of discomfort that may discourage pedestrian activity.

Narrow sidewalks bring traffic closer to pedestrians. They also create crowding and restrict sidewalk activity—as is now true in parts of the Core Commercial Area. Access driveways across sidewalks expose pedestrians to traffic leaving or entering the arterials—a condition that is most severe along blocks without alleys. The majority of such blocks occur at the north end of Roosevelt Way NE, in the North Commercial Corridor, and along 12th Ave. NE, and NE 65th Street.

2. Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

Neighborhood Design Priorities:

- **Improve the safety, comfort and visual quality of the pedestrian environment in neighborhood commercial areas, especially within the Core Commercial Area.**
- **Encourage the creation of public open spaces that function as informal gathering places and are focal points for the neighborhood.**

Inadequately screened or landscaped parking areas located next to public sidewalks visually blight neighborhood commercial areas. In addition to being unattractive, they break up the "street wall" which contributes to the sense of containment necessary in successful pedestrian environments. This negative condition is perhaps most evident along the northern portion of the Commercial Corridor.

Many neighborhood surface parking lots were installed before current City regulations were enacted. In most cases, these would now require parking lots to be screened and located to the side or rear of structures. Citywide design guidelines also address these issues, but current regulations and guidelines may not go far enough to make parking lots more harmonious visually with the neighborhood.

While parking lots are a fact of life, they also represent an underdeveloped resource in today's ever more crowded neighborhoods. Parking lots are an abundant and important source of urban open space. By incorporating landscaping, attractive paving or amenities such as seating, water fountains, or public art, parking lots could serve as urban plazas or play areas for children when not needed for parking. Or, they could simply serve as green (rather than black) visual open space areas if more densely planted with trees. Most parking lots vastly underuse the potential for accommodating trees and other plants—which can be done without significantly sacrificing parking spaces.

3. Human Activity and Pedestrian Environment

Neighborhood Design Priority:

Encourage the creation of publicly accessible open spaces that function as informal gathering places and are focal points for the neighborhood.

The Roosevelt Neighborhood, in its Vision Statement and Neighborhood Goals, has expressed a desire to see more pedestrian-oriented open spaces and outdoor places for activities such as eating, sitting, or resting in its commercial areas. This goal has expanded to one of creating a system of publicly accessible open spaces interconnected by a network of pedestrian pathways.

Part of this system would include development of courtyards off public sidewalks and alleys, development of parking areas into more park-like places or spaces that also function as public plazas, and curb extensions at corners to facilitate outdoor eating and vending areas. It would also involve creating a more intricate network of pedestrian pathways that link pedestrian-oriented spaces. In addition to public sidewalks, this pathway system would consist of mid-block pedestrian passageways and more attractive alleys that function as secondary pedestrian routes of travel.

4. Height, Bulk and Scale

Neighborhood Priorities:

- **Retain a pedestrian scale of development, as experienced from public streets and sidewalks, in commercial areas.**
- **Minimize the impact of commercial development on adjacent residential areas.**

The Roosevelt Neighborhood Design Guidelines go further than the Citywide Design Guidelines by identifying zone transition areas and ways to address height, bulk and scale impacts in commercial areas on adjacent residential areas.

Of principal concern is reducing contrasts in building scale and minimizing shadow impacts along commercial corridors.

There are related concerns about the impacts of height and bulk on the scale and character of the commercial core, as experienced from public streets, and the shadow impacts of taller buildings on public sidewalks.

Respecting the privacy of adjacent developments in less intensive zones should also be considered with new development.

5. Architectural Elements and Materials (Commercial development)

Neighborhood Priorities:

- **Encourage new development that is compatible with the scale and architectural character of existing commercial development.**
- **Encourage streetscape improvements that aesthetically enhance and provide a sense of unity to the neighborhood's commercial areas without stifling the interest and character derived from variety.**

Building scale and architectural character is relatively inconsistent throughout most of the neighborhood's commercial areas, especially in the North Commercial Corridor. This is more obvious within the Core Commercial Area, especially along NE 65th Street. However, in parts of the Core Commercial Area, there is a more consistent development scale and character.

The Core Commercial Area includes the neighborhood's oldest buildings, many of them dating back to the 1920's. These are located in the most pedestrian-oriented parts of the Core. Here, building setbacks are uniform, creating a strong street wall. Building façades tend to be narrow with traditional retail storefront features such as large display windows, recessed entries, and awnings that provide a level of architectural unity.

Elsewhere, development is more recent and more auto-oriented. Building setbacks and architectural styles vary significantly. There are many blank and unadorned walls providing little of interest or appeal to the pedestrian.

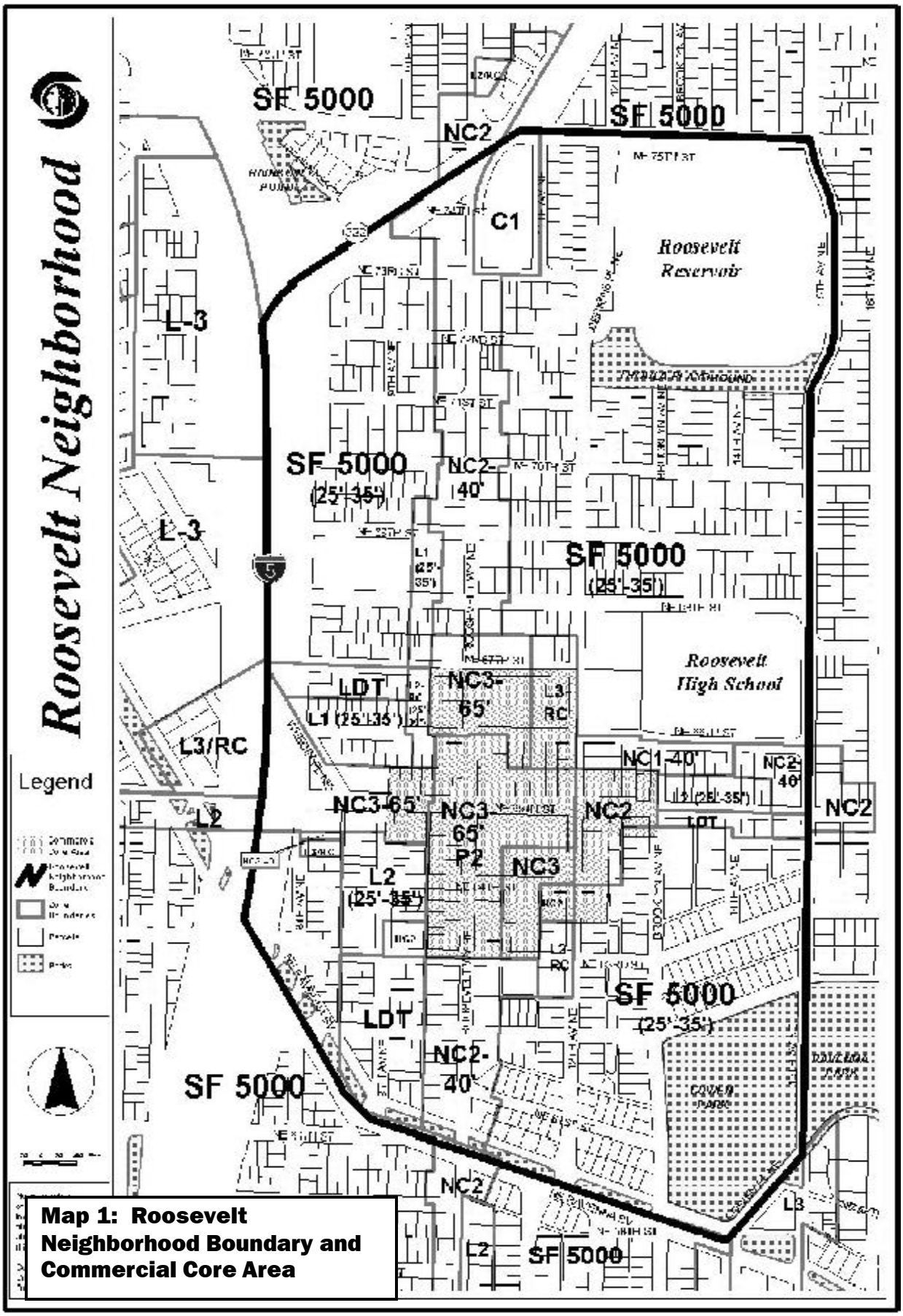
6. Architectural Elements and Materials (Multifamily development)

Neighborhood Priorities:

- **Encourage multifamily development that is compatible with a single family residential character where existing development is predominantly single family.**
- **Encourage a variety of housing types, especially in the LDT and L-1 zones.**

Most areas zoned for multifamily development in the Roosevelt neighborhood are located on the west side of Roosevelt Way on both the north and south sides of NE 65th Street. These areas are predominantly developed with single family homes. There are only a few multifamily developments in each area. These developments have not substantially altered the single-family character of the neighborhood.

Most homes have pitched roofs, extended eaves, divided windows, prominent front porches, and similar yard setbacks. Residential streets are pleasant with relatively wide sidewalk/parking strips and attractive, well-maintained front yards. Unless designed to fit in with these characteristic features, new multifamily development could dramatically change both subareas. There is also a desire to encourage a variety of multifamily housing types that can lend to creation of a diverse residential community.

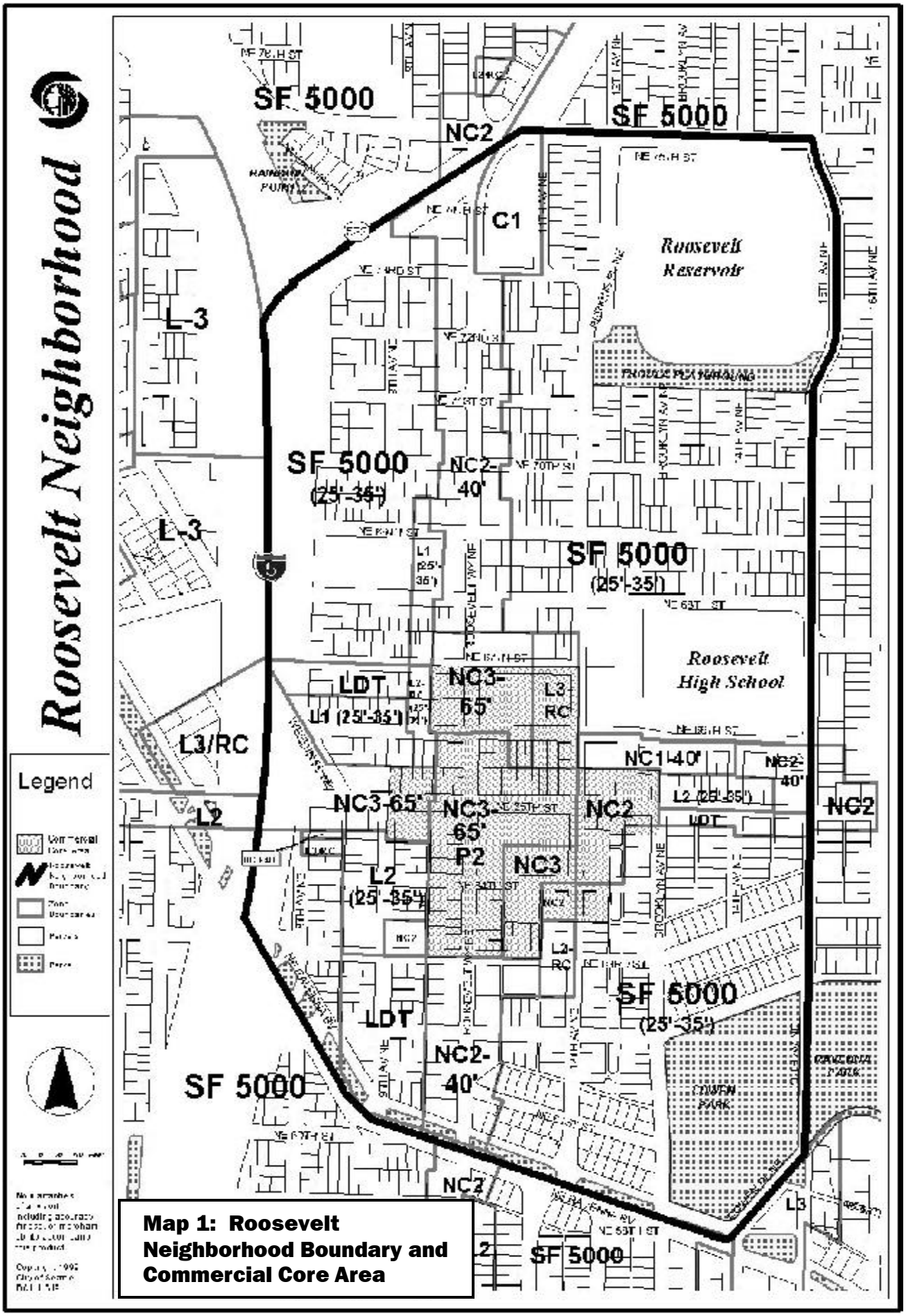


Map 1: Roosevelt Neighborhood Boundary and Commercial Core Area

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

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

Roosevelt Urban Village Design Guidelines



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Roosevelt Urban Village Design Guidelines

Projects requiring design review must comply with the neighborhood design guidelines in this handbook as well as the Citywide Design Guidelines.

Note: The guidelines are numbered to correspond to the Citywide Design Guidelines (A-1, A-2, etc). A gap in the numerical sequence means there are no neighborhood design guidelines for that particular Citywide Guideline.

A. SITE PLANNING

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

Solar Orientation

Minimizing shadow impacts along Roosevelt Way and NE 65th Street is especially important in the Roosevelt neighborhood.

The design of a structure and its massing on the site can enhance solar exposure for the project and minimize shadow impacts onto adjacent public areas between March 21st and September 21st.

In addition to solar orientation and building siting, two other methods that can help minimize shadow impacts on public sidewalks include:

- Upper level building setbacks
- Setbacks along the building base

Example:

For NC-65' zones, a departure allowing greater height with greater upper level setbacks may be considered, where appropriate. This departure shall be limited to three (3') additional feet in height.

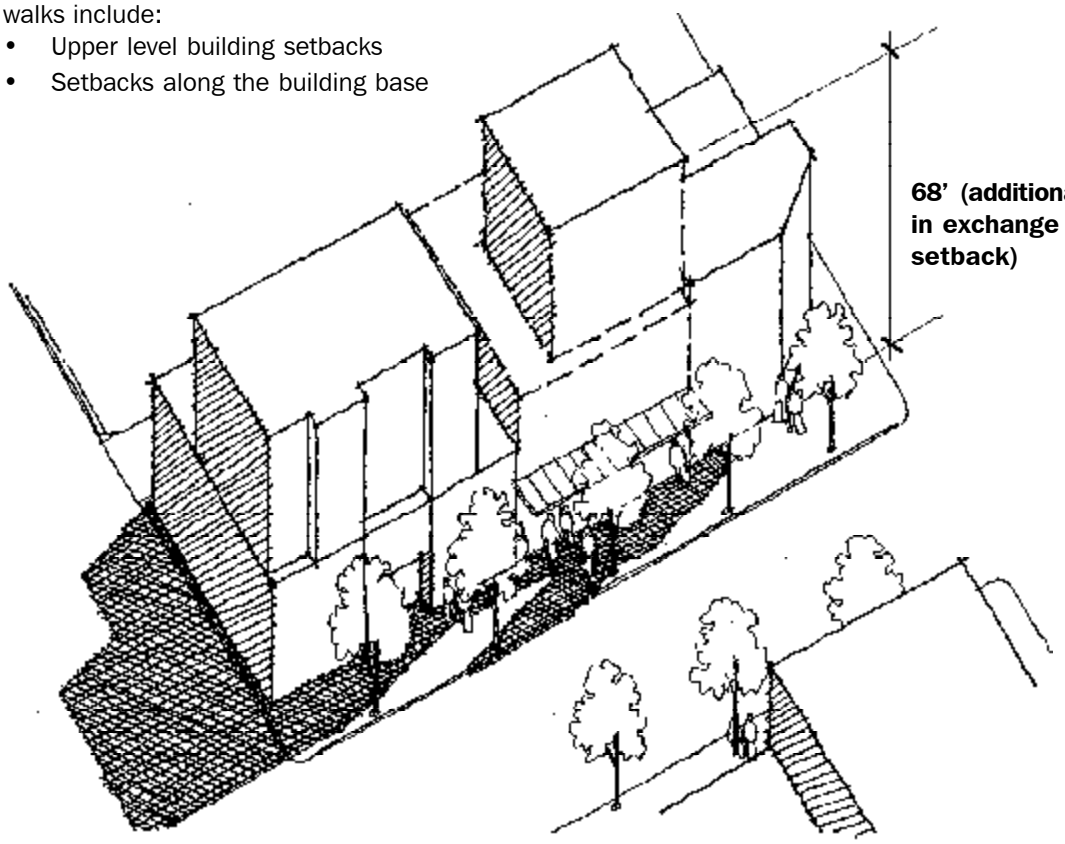


Figure 1

upper level setbacks and modulation help to minimize shadow impacts at the street level

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

A

Site Planning

streetscape compatibility

Commercial and Mixed-Use Developments: Continuity of the Street Wall Along Sidewalks

Where building setbacks vary along the street due to required street dedications, new developments are encouraged to introduce elements that can help preserve the continuity of adjacent street-facing building walls, especially within the Core Commercial Area. Any element within the public right-of-way such as awnings, planters, etc., will require SEATRAN (Seattle Transportation Department) approval.

The following design solutions could provide design continuity of the building wall at the pedestrian level where buildings are set back:

1. Visually reinforce the existing street wall by placing horizontal or vertical elements in a line corresponding with the setbacks of adjacent building fronts. These could include trees, columns, planters, benches, overhead weather protection features or other building features.
2. Visually reinforce the existing street wall by using paving materials that differentiate the setback area from the sidewalk.
3. Consider using decorative paving within the public right-of-way with SEATRAN approval.
4. Make use of the building setback to create a public space.

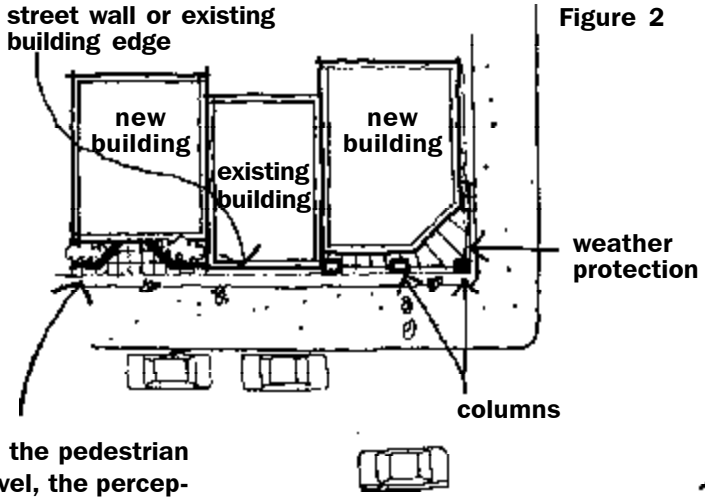


Figure 2

At the pedestrian level, the perception of the existing street wall can be visually reinforced in new buildings by placing features such as planters, decorative paving, overhead weather protection and columns in alignment with existing adjacent building façades.

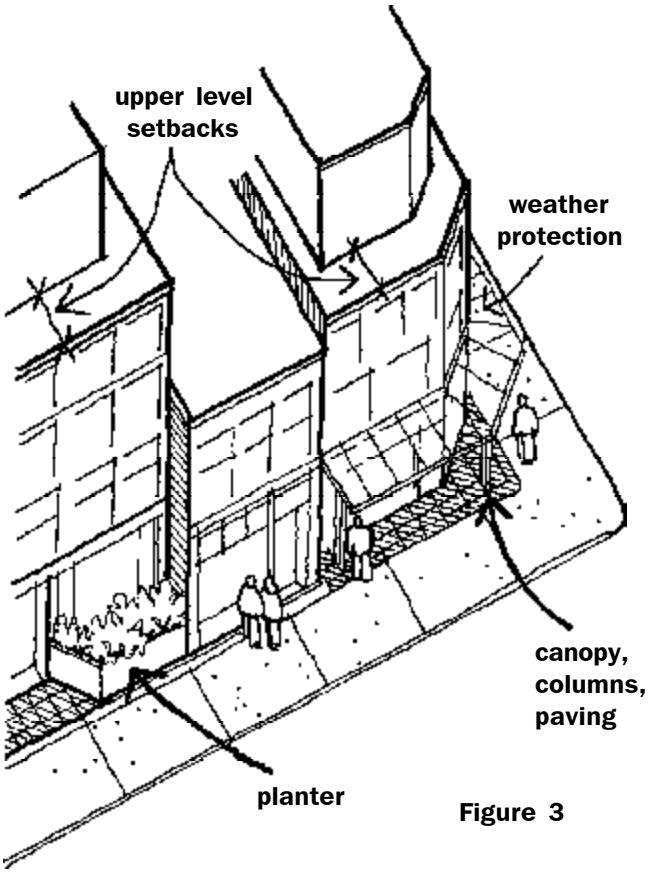
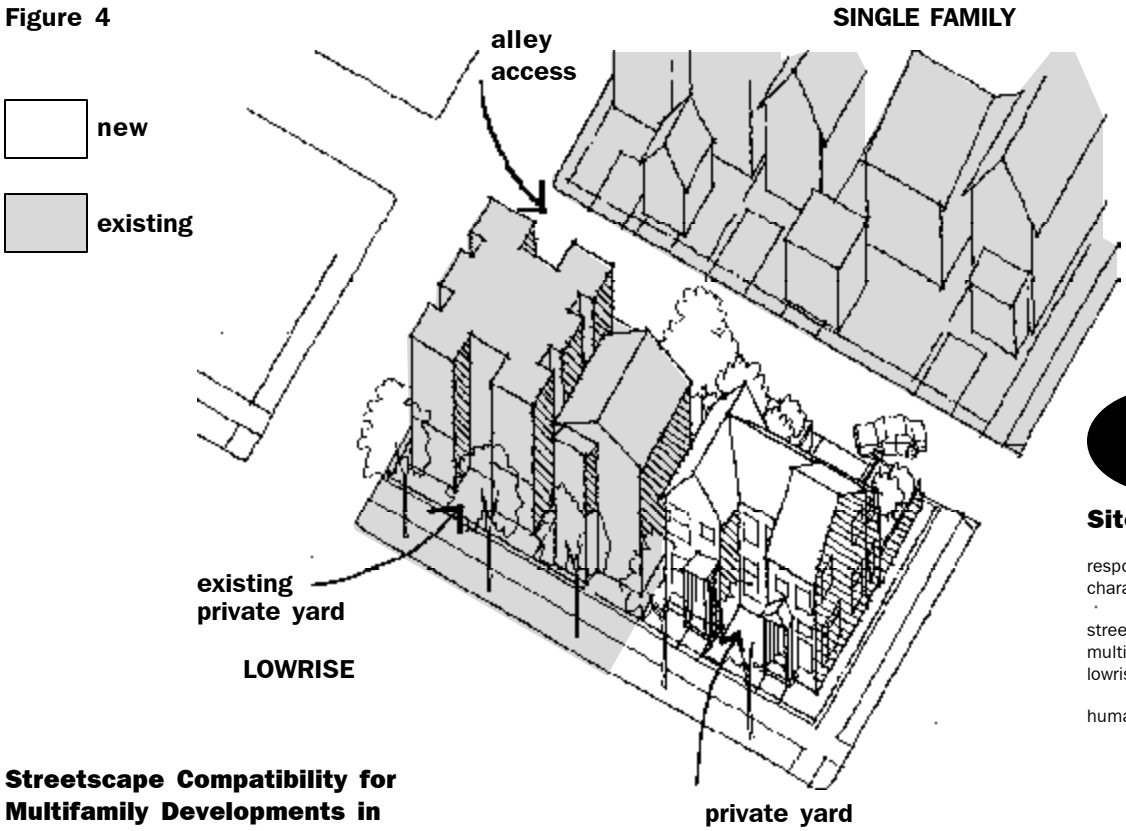


Figure 3

Figure 4



A

Site Planning

responding to site characteristics

street compatibility for multifamily developments in lowrise zones

human activity

Streetscape Compatibility for Multifamily Developments in Lowrise Zones

Ground-related entries and private yards are encouraged for multi-family developments within L2 zones. Features also encouraged include:

1. Private back yards
2. Parking behind structures
3. Landscaping and driveway access to create buffers between multifamily development and single-family structures in single family zones.

A–4 Human Activity

Roosevelt is looking for opportunities to encourage pedestrian activity along sidewalks within the Commercial Core. This is especially important because sidewalks along Roosevelt and 65th are considered too narrow. If not required with new development, applicants are encouraged to increase the ground level setback in order to accommodate pedestrian traffic and amenity features.

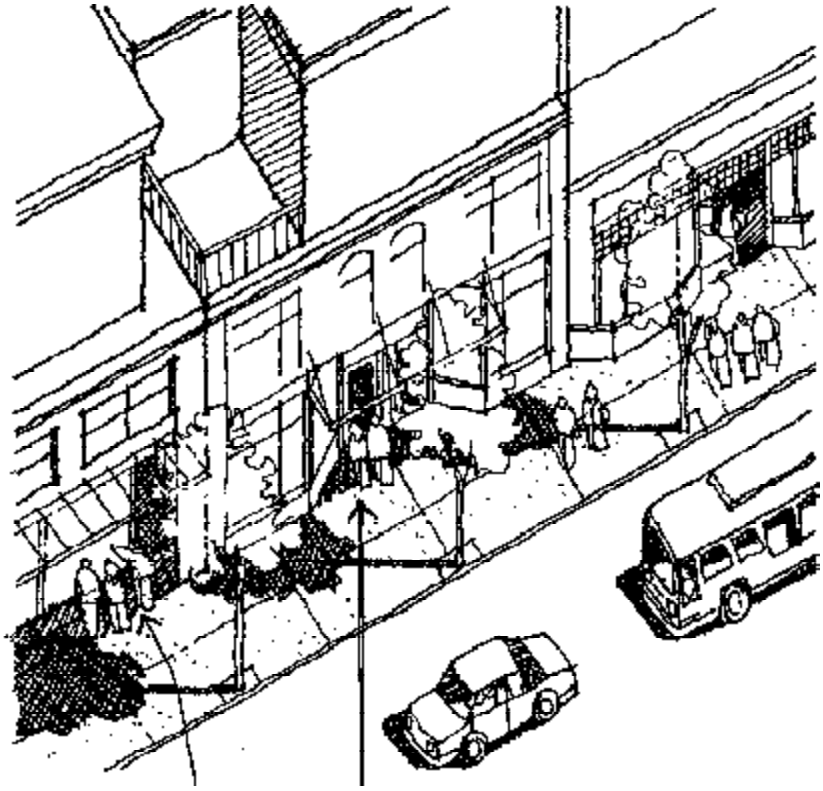


Figure 5

A

Site Planning

respect for adjacent sites

transition between residence and street

residential open space

A-6 Transition between Residence and Street

1. Encourage the incorporation of separate ground-related entrances and private open spaces between the residence, adjacent properties, and street, especially for multifamily developments west of Roosevelt Way.
2. Ground level landscaping can be used between the structure(s) and sidewalk.

A-7 Residential Open Space

The Roosevelt Neighborhood values places for residents to gather. For mixed use developments, provision of ground-related common open space areas in exchange for departures especially to the maximum residential coverage limit is encouraged, in addition to other allowable departures.

Open space areas can also be achieved in a variety of ways including:

1. Terraces on sloping land to create level yard space
2. Courtyards
3. Front and/or rear yards
4. Roof tops

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways and curb cuts along Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th Street by locating vehicle access onto alleys and/or side streets when feasible.

Locate surface parking at rear or side of lot. Where feasible, parking areas for properties that lie outside pedestrian overlay zones should be located to the rear of buildings that face Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th 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 Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th.
- Limit the frontage of surface parking areas which face Roosevelt Way NE or NE 65th.

Encourage creation of multi-purpose parking areas. These areas can provide for parking as well as public open space areas.

Examples of public open space uses for parking lots include:

- urban plazas or pocket parks
- outdoor eating or vending areas
- places for neighborhood functions (carnivals, markets, rummage sales)
- cultural events (outdoor theater, music)
- recreational activities (basketball, tennis, children's play areas).

Examples of elements for public open spaces include:

- Special surface treatments, art, fountains and seating
- Locations for removable bollards or other devices in order to restrict auto access to public spaces when not used for parking.
- Use lighting to create a safe environment while minimizing glare onto adjacent properties and sidewalks.
- Spaces should be sited to have minimal shadow impacts from surrounding buildings and/or dense vegetation.

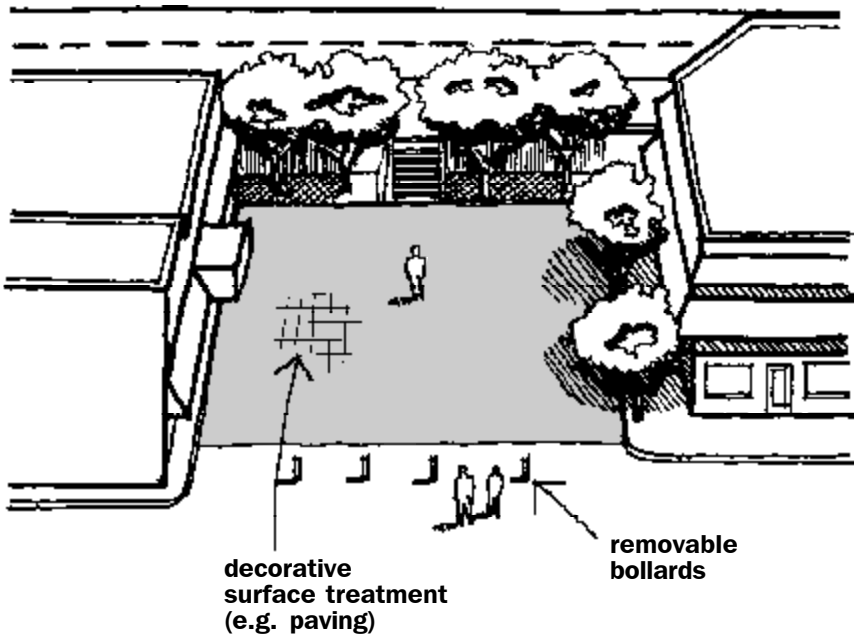


Figure 6

A-10 Corner Lots

A

Site Planning

corner lots

Gateways

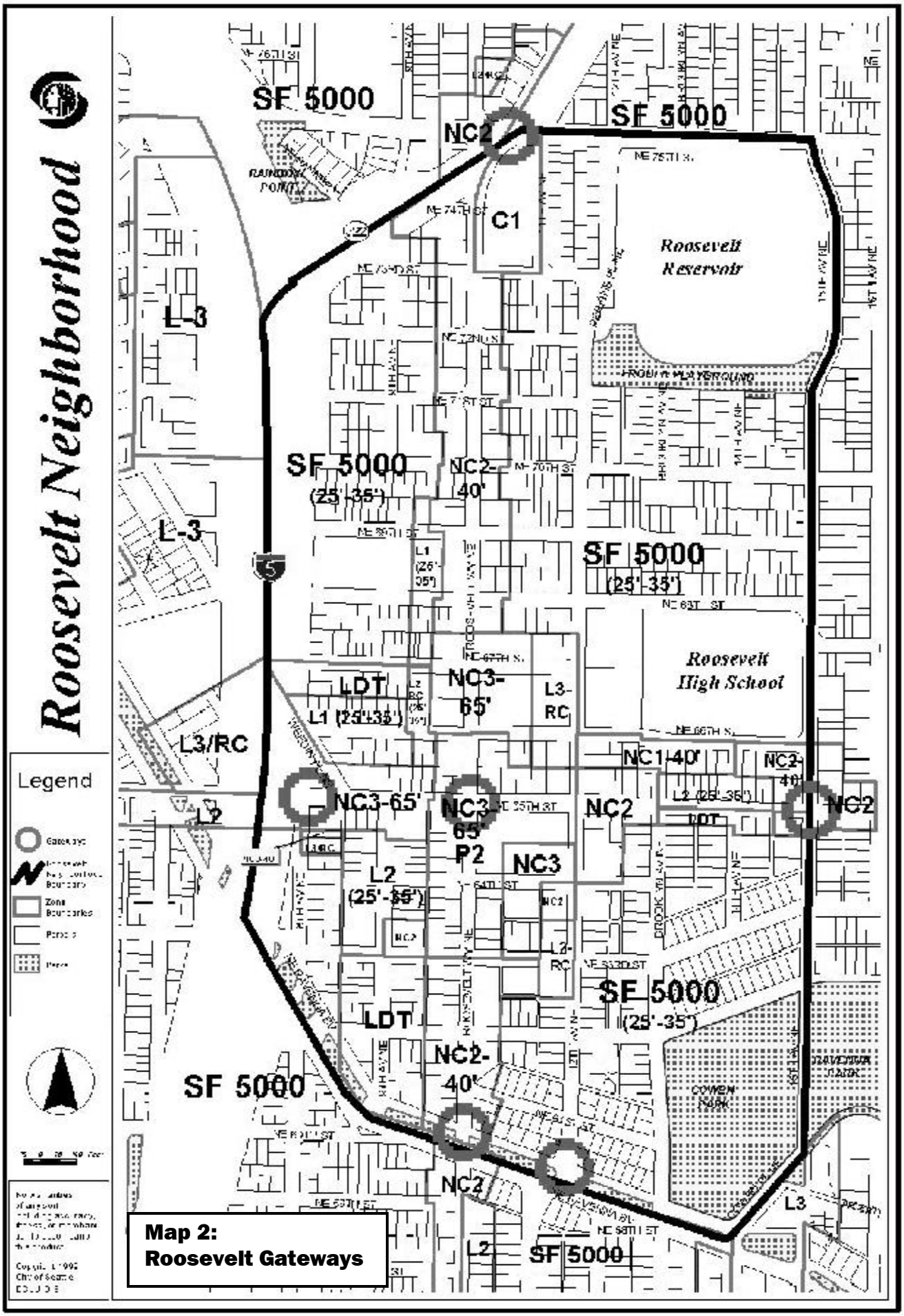
Gateway features could include a variety of design elements that enhance these prominent neighborhood intersections identified below.

The following design elements are encouraged:

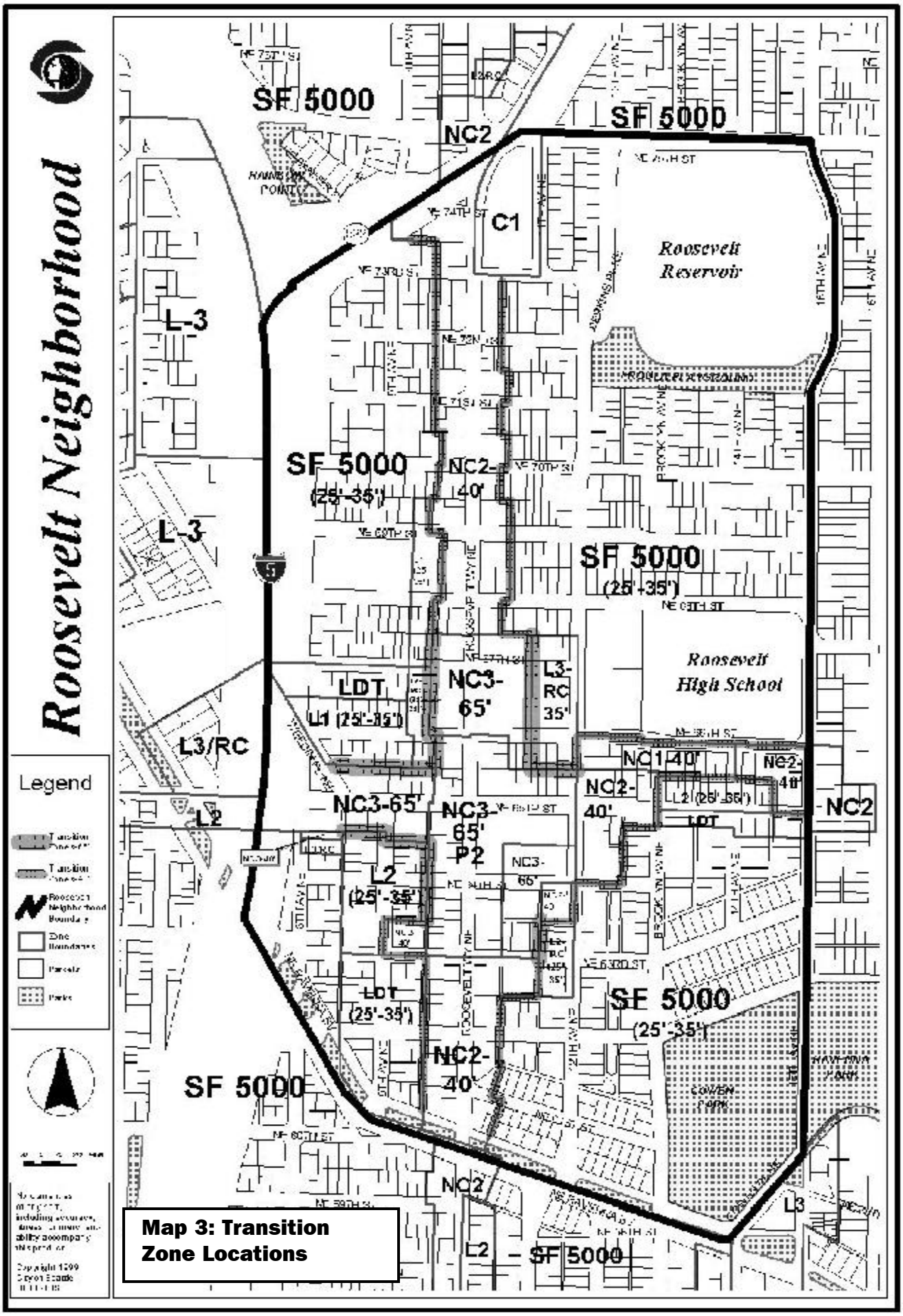
1. special paving or surface treatments;
2. art;
3. water features;
4. landscaping,;
5. seating;
6. kiosks, etc.

Five gateway locations have been identified (see Map 2, opposite page):

1. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE Ravenna Boulevard.
2. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 75th.
3. The area surrounding the intersection of NE 65th and 8th Avenue NE.
4. The area surrounding the intersection of NE 65th and 15th Avenue NE.
5. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th.



Map 2: Roosevelt Gateways



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B. HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

Commercial/Residential Zone Edges Map

Map 3 shows where zone edges occur in the Roosevelt neighborhood.

Careful siting, building design and building massing at the upper levels should be used to achieve a sensitive transition between multifamily and commercial zones as well as mitigating height, bulk and scale impacts. Some of the techniques already identified in the Citywide Design Guidelines are preferred in Roosevelt. These techniques include:

1. increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level;
2. reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors;
3. reducing the height of the structure;
4. use of landscaping or other screening (such as a 5-foot landscape buffer).

Departures to development standards are encouraged in Roosevelt in order to create a positive transition along zone edges.

If any of the 4 techniques listed above is employed, applicants and Board members are encouraged to consider specific departures to the development standards identified below in addition to those listed in the Citywide Design Guidelines.

a) 64% coverage limit for the residential portion of mixed use buildings;
b) building height for all or some portions of the building;
c) required open space.

Applying any of these or other departures allowed through Design Review is intended to help offset a significant loss of development opportunity within the Roosevelt neighborhood.

Two zone edge conditions may be encountered in Roosevelt when designing a project in the transition areas shown in Map 3. This section presents these conditions and states preferred design approaches to achieve a more successful transition for each condition.

Zone Edge Condition One: where a rear lot line of a commercially zoned lot (height limit of 30, 40 or 65 feet) abuts a side or rear of a residentially zoned lot (height limit of 25-35 feet).

Examples of recommended design methods follow in order of preference:

1. For commercial uses, place surface parking and access behind commercial buildings;
2. Increase building setbacks along zone edges;
3. Step back the upper floors or modify the roofline to reduce the overall building height.

Zone Edge Condition Two: where an alley separates a commercially zoned lot (height limit of 40 feet or 65 feet) from the side or rear property line of a residentially zone lot (height limit of 25-35 feet).

Examples of recommended design methods follow in order of preference:

1. Step back the upper floors or modify the roofline to reduce the overall building height;
2. Place commercial parking and access behind commercial buildings.

Map 3 - Transition Zone Locations

A zone edge condition is where a residentially zoned property abuts the side or rear lot of a commercially zoned property, or where a commercial and residential zone is separated by an alley. The thicker line separates residential zones from commercial zones with a 65' height limit. The thinner line separates residential zones from commercial zones with a 40' height limit. These are labeled as Transition Zones in the Map 3 legend.

C. ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

C-1 Architectural Context

C

Architectural Elements and Materials

architectural context

Streetwalls adjacent to sidewalks within the Roosevelt Commercial Core should be designed to incorporate traditional commercial façade components. This can be achieved by using narrow, traditional storefronts defined by vertical elements with multiple pedestrian entrances. This type of articulation is especially important for projects that occupy most or all of a blockface.

The following is encouraged:

1. Articulate the building façade and break down the mass of long façades into units or intervals through architectural design and detailing to reflect Roosevelt's historical building pattern.
2. Consider a variety of traditional methods to break up the mass of large buildings in order to provide for distinctly different architectural treatments at the ground or lower levels.
3. Incorporate design elements, architectural details, or materials in the building façade at the street level that are similar to those of adjacent buildings.

Architectural features preferred in Roosevelt include the following:

- Building base emphasizing materials and/or texture that is different from the material(s) and texture(s) of the main body of the building
- Kickplate
- Ground floor storefront transparent windows that allow pedestrians to see activity within the building
- Ground floor display windows (where product displays are changed frequently to create interest along the street)
- Recessed entries on the street level and building modulation on the upper levels
- Transom windows
- Upper level windows that are interrupted by solid façade area
- Parapet cap or cornice
- Beltcourse
- Marquee or awning: marquees or retractable awnings are generally preferred
- Arcades
- Change in materials
- Variety in color and/or texture
- Building overhangs (where upper levels are brought closer to a front property line)
- Courtyards

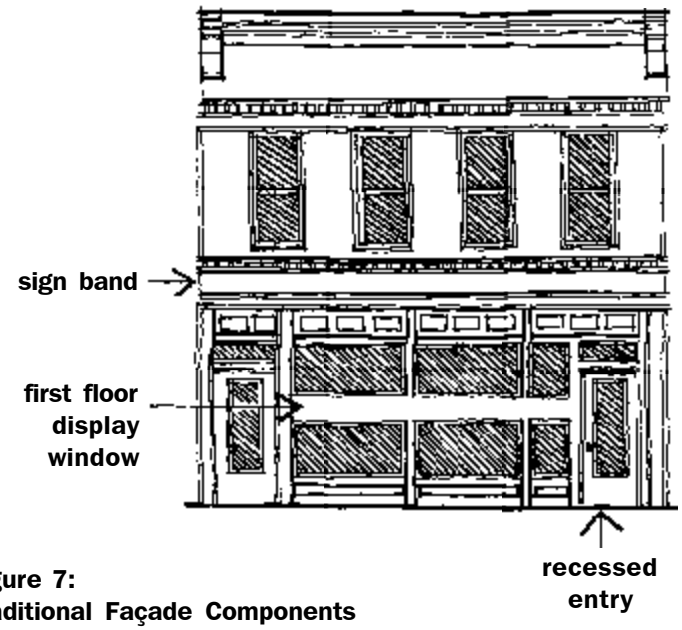
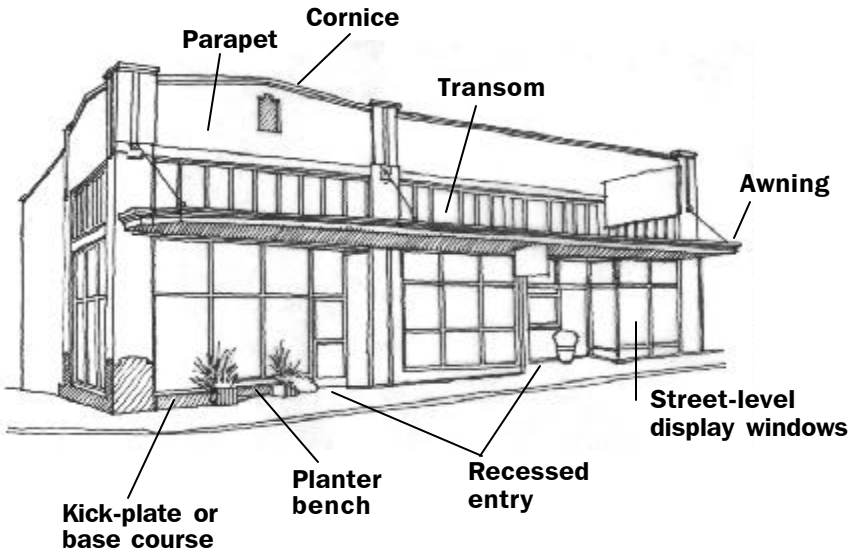


Figure 7: Traditional Façade Components

Figure 8



C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency

The architectural features below are especially important for new commercial and mixed use developments in Roosevelt's commercial core (see Figure 1):

- Multiple building entries
- Courtyards
- Building base
- Attractively designed alley-facing building façades including architectural treatments, fenestration, murals, etc.

For buildings that are both set back from and taller than adjacent buildings, the street level portion should be differentiated from the upper floors through architectural design or building materials, textures, and/or colors.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Signs

Developments should accommodate places for signage that are in keeping with the building's architecture and overall sign program.

Preferred sign types include:

1. Small signs incorporated into the building's architecture, along a sign band, on awnings or marquees, located in windows, or hung perpendicular to the building facade are preferred within the Commercial Core Area.
2. Neon signs are also encouraged, while large illuminated box signs are discouraged.
3. Blade signs hung from beneath awnings or marquees are especially favored in the Commercial Core Area.

Large box signs, large-scale super graphics and back-lit awnings or canopies are less desirable, especially within the Commercial Core. Where awnings are illuminated, the light source should be screened to minimize glare impacts to pedestrians and vehicles.

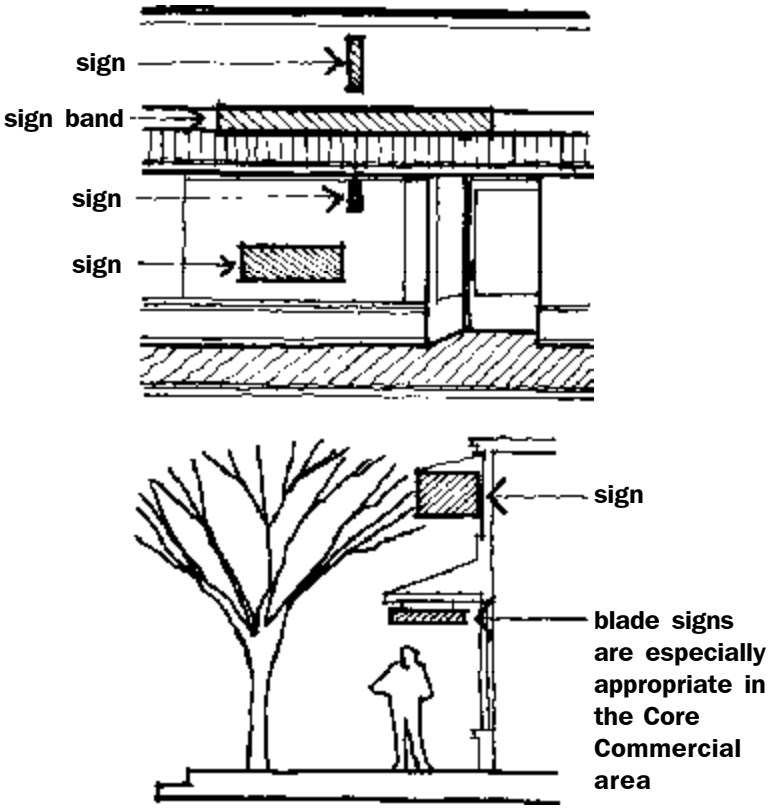


Figure 9: Small Pedestrian-Scaled Signs

D. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

D

Pedestrian Environment

pedestrian open spaces and entrances

Pedestrian amenities are encouraged where appropriate along sidewalks within the Core Commercial Area. Providing for sufficient pedestrian movement is necessary in order to provide pedestrian amenities. One way to accomplish this is by extending curbs to create opportunities for outdoor cafes and/or vending areas.

Amenities could also be placed within small and larger setbacks along commercial streets. Curb extensions and any amenity feature proposed within the public right-of-way should be explored with SEATRAN (Seattle Transportation) very early in the design process.

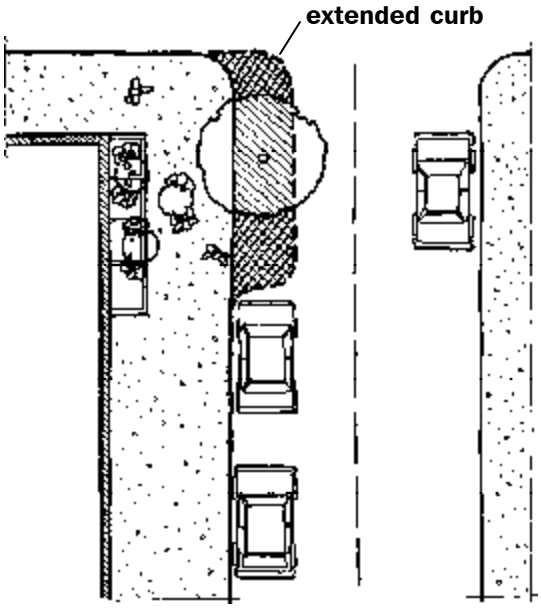


Figure 10

Examples of amenities include:

- seating
- vending
- drinking water fountains
- artwork
- special surface treatments
- plantings
- and/or pedestrian-scaled lighting
- courtyards
- Pedestrian-scaled signage should be incorporated into the building's architecture. Preferred styles and materials are identified in C-4.

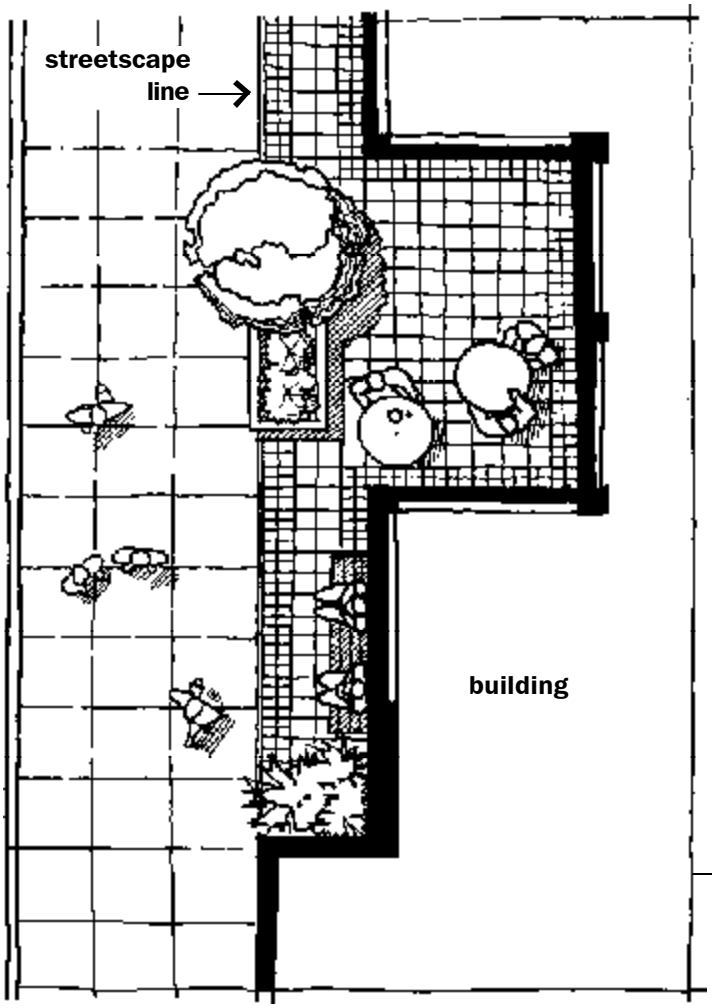


Figure 11

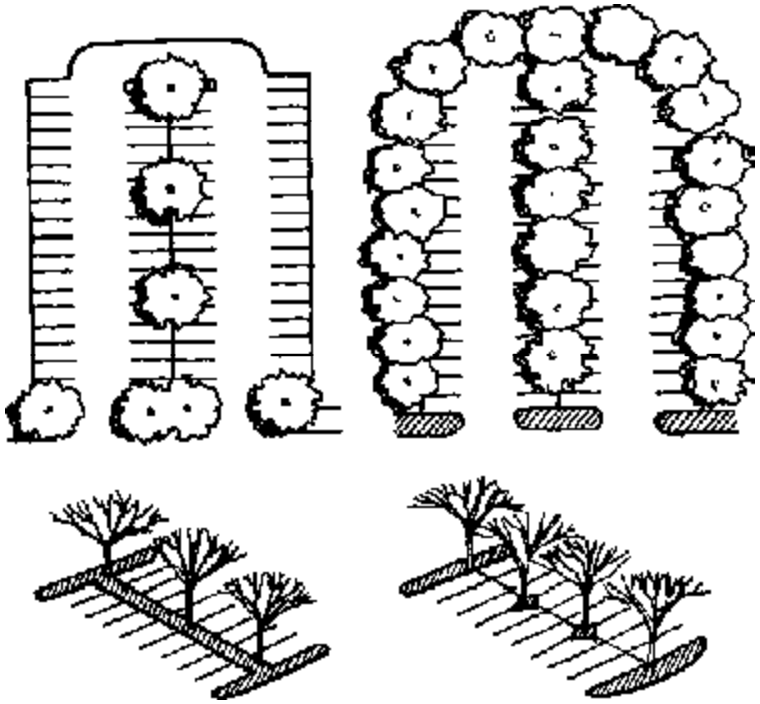
Pedestrian amenities include features such as outdoor eating areas, benches, covered waiting areas, landscaping, art, and drinking fountains.

D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

Interior landscaping, in addition to perimeter landscaping, should be installed to help soften the visual impact of surface parking. Examples of accomplishing this include:

1. Interior Landscaping. Use landscaping to break large areas into a series of smaller areas. Maximize use of leftover spaces in parking areas, including turning radii, for trees and shrubs.
2. Plant enough trees, which at maturity form a canopy over large portions of the parking area with trees interspersed between parking spaces.
3. Select trees that do not obscure signage, amenity features, or opportunities for surveillance.
4. Plant a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees for year-round greenery. Tree types should be selected that avoid impacting parked cars (such as sapless trees).

Figure 12



By narrowing drive lanes, a 3 to 4 foot wide planting strip can be added without losing parking spaces.

4 foot tree cutouts can be accommodated without losing parking spaces.