



Morgan Junction *neighborhood*

Design Guidelines

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City of Seattle
Department of Planning
and Development



Seattle Design Review Program

Design Review:

Morgan Junction Neighborhood Design Guidelines

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Design Review in Seattle's Neighborhoods

What is Design Review?

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

Design Review has three principal objectives:

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

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

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

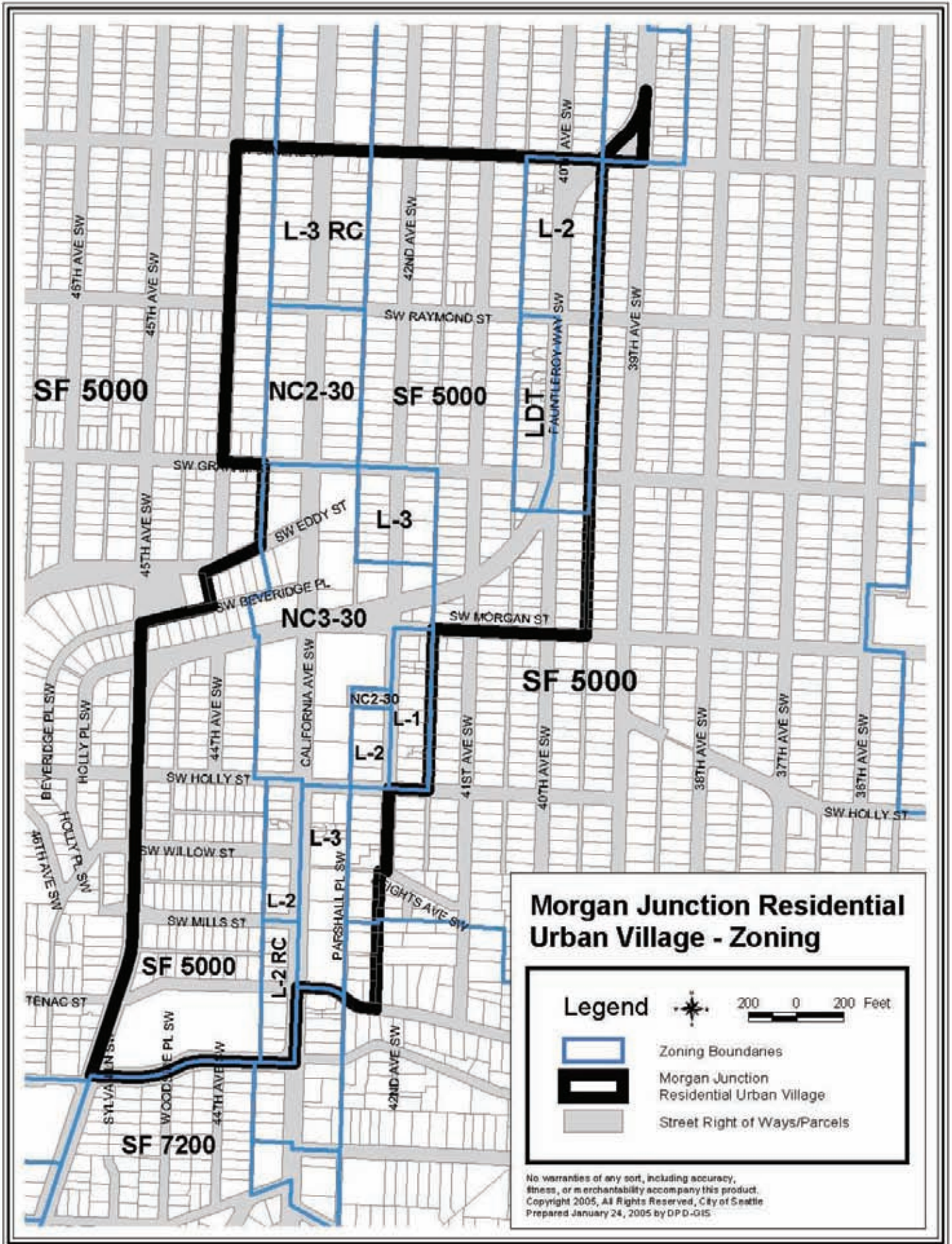
More about Design Review:

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

What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

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

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



Morgan Junction Context and Priority Issues

MOCA Neighborhood Focus

To provide a blueprint toward building the Morgan Street Junction into the following:

- Maintain the Junction's "small-town" feel that currently characterizes its business district.
- An attractive neighborhood junction where the buildings, streets and sidewalks form a comfortable human-scale setting for daily activities, where views and community character are protected, and where greenery integrates well with business.
- A local meeting place that encourages walking and biking traffic.
- A community with strong single-family neighborhoods and affordable multifamily buildings.
- An appealing place with attractive landscaping, pleasant parks and gathering places.
- A vital commercial district that provides restaurants, stores and services to meet the needs of local residents; with a special focus on encouraging the growth of local businesses.
- A safe community with active local neighborhood organizations who care about the local quality of life.
- A community that celebrates its unique relationship with Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean.
- The closest one can get to living on an island without having to take a ferry.



Morgan Junction Guidelines Augment Citywide Guidelines

The Morgan Junction Neighborhood Design Guidelines apply to projects within the Morgan Junction Design Review Area (depicted in the map on page IV) and augment the 1998 “Citywide Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings.” The chart below indicates the citywide guidelines for which Morgan-specific supplemental guidance has been written, which can be found on the following pages.

Citywide Design Guidelines at a Glance

Morgan Junction-specific supplemental guidance needed?

A	Site Planning	
	A-1 Respond to Site Characteristics	No
	A-2 Streetscape Compatibility	Yes
	A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street	No
	A-4 Human Activity	Yes
	A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites	Yes
	A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street	Yes
	A-7 Residential Open Space	No
	A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access	No
	A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts	No
A-10 Corner Lots	Yes	
B	Height, Bulk and Scale	
B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility	Yes	
C	Architectural Elements and Materials	
	C-1 Architectural Context	No
	C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency	No
	C-3 Human Scale	No
	C-4 Exterior Finish Materials	Yes
C-5 Structured Parking Entrances	No	
D	Pedestrian Environment	
	D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances	Yes
	D-2 Blank Walls	No
	D-3 Retaining Walls	No
	D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks	No
	D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures	No
	D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas	No
D-7 Personal Safety and Security	Yes	
E	Landscaping	
	E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites	No
	E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site	No
	E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions	No

Morgan Junction Neighborhood Design Guidelines



A. Site Planning

Neighborhood Priority: Maintain and enhance an attractive community where the buildings, streets and sidewalks form a comfortable human-scale setting for daily activities and where views and community character are protected.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- It is recommended to build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.
- Consider retaining or increasing the width of sidewalks. Wider sidewalks make for more interesting and active streets, while still allowing for adequate pedestrian movement.
- Provide street trees in tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light and year-round visual interest.
- Consider pedestrian-scale street lighting to promote a unified and attractive business district streetscape.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.



Dimension sidewalks to encourage activity. Wider sidewalks allow for streetscape elements (street trees, lights, etc.), pedestrian movement and outdoor seating areas.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility (cont'd)



Street lamps, landscaping and curb extensions in the Junction help lend a pedestrian orientation and character to the streetscape.



Morgan precedent: recessed entries welcome without interrupting retail continuity.

Residential development guidance:

Shallow setbacks and minor grade separations between the first floor and sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor can promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.



Minor grade separations enhance the transition from residence to street.

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- Promote active, pedestrian-oriented uses with a high degree of transparency along the street; uses should be readily discernible to the passer-by.
- Outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk should be encouraged by orienting the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.
- Overhead cover along the sidewalk can provide for pedestrian comfort.



An example of overhead cover integrated into the overall building design



A-10 Corner Lots

Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from the corners.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

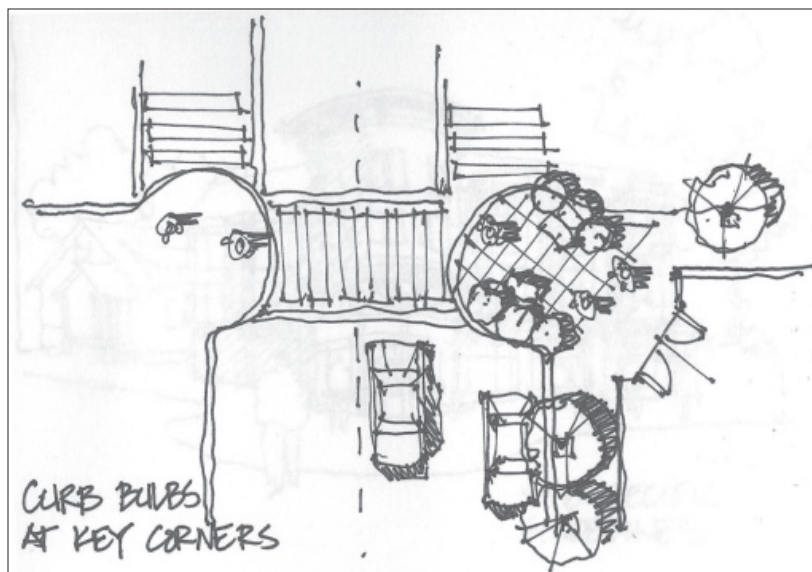
- Prominent corner massing can function as a visual anchor for a block.
- Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.
- Consider curb bulbs on key corner locations and pedestrian amenities. Consider a fountain or art as a focal point.



A corner building form that demarcates an important gateway/street corner



Prominent retail corner entry: By setting back at the corner, public space is extended from the sidewalk. The scale of the recessed entry, combined with building features at the corner, welcome without interrupting retail continuity along the streetscape. This idea places a strong visual emphasis on the street while supporting active public space.



B. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

Neighborhood Priority: Ensure that the design of new multifamily, commercial and mixed-use buildings is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

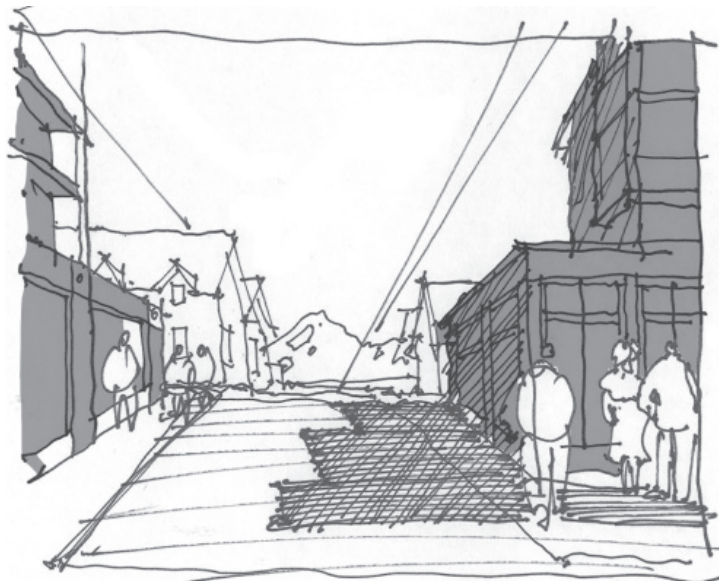
Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable land use policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to nearby, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- For commercial and mixed-use developments, consider breaking up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern in the business district.
- Consider existing views to Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- Respond to adjacent residential uses with a sensitive transition in scale and massing; for instance, stepping back building height and/or breaking up building mass.
- Consider shadows cast from proposed structures, in order to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.



A good example of a larger, mixed-use building stepping back away from a neighboring single family area. The ground floor is further softened with generous, lush landscaping.



Consider stepping back the building on east-west streets to take advantage of scenic views.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

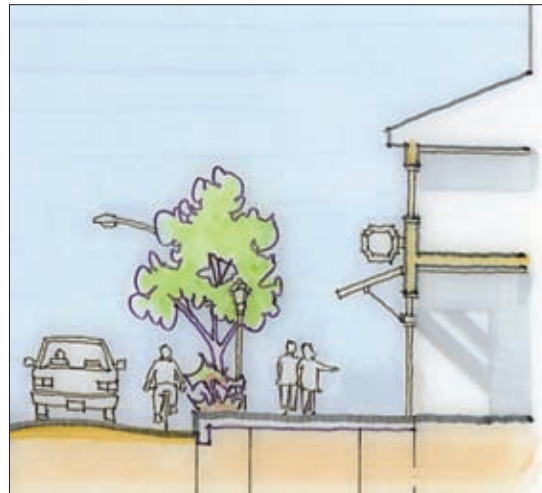
Neighborhood Priority: Use design guidelines to develop consistent building types and characteristics.

C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- Establish a rhythm of vertical elements along the street-level façade to create a pattern of display windows and shop entrances consistent in scale with existing commercial buildings in the business district.
- Design elements such as multiple storefronts, shop entrances, exterior light fixtures, awnings and overhangs can add interest and give a human dimension to street-level building façades.
- Show creativity and individual expression in the design of storefronts; for instance, unique signs and tile work can add artistry and craft to the streetscape.
- Exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings should be sized to the scale of the building and sidewalk.



Size exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings to the scale of the building and sidewalk.



A regular cadence of display windows and shop entrances enhances the pedestrian experience.



Design elements such as landscaping and creative signs add interest and give a human dimension to street-level building façades.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the “small town” urban village setting.
- Materials, colors and details can unify a building’s appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.
- Consider employing durable and high-quality materials, encouraging those materials that show permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building. Examples of appropriate building materials include: brick, terra-cotta or tile, masonry, and various types of wood, or hardi-board. Durable and quality materials at the street level, including metal and transparent glass, are encouraged for commercial spaces.



Brick, large storefront windows and masonry kick boards exhibit a sense of permanence at the street.



An example of high-quality and variegated use of residential exterior materials in new multifamily construction



A well-built, unified facade composition

D. Pedestrian Environment

Neighborhood Priority: A community that is conveniently accessible by transit and automobile, but where walking and bicycling are easy and enjoyable.

The pedestrian environment (sidewalks, pathways, crossings, entries and the like) should be safe and accessible. The pedestrian environment should connect people to places they want to go, and should provide good spaces to be used for many things. New development should reflect these principles by enhancing commercial district streetscapes that make street-level pedestrian activity a priority.

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided to ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted, and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open spaces should be considered.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

- Entryways can link the building to the surrounding landscape.
- Consider creating open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk. Provide "outdoor rooms" such as plazas, fore-courts, interior courtyards and passages.
- Building entrances should emphasize pedestrians over vehicles.



A well-defined courtyard with both a visual and physical connection to the street

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (cont'd)

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

To support the neighborhood's pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, the use of street furniture, landscaping, on-site lighting and site details that support the design intentions of the building architecture are encouraged.



Exterior lighting and street furniture creates a welcoming "outdoor room."

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas

Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

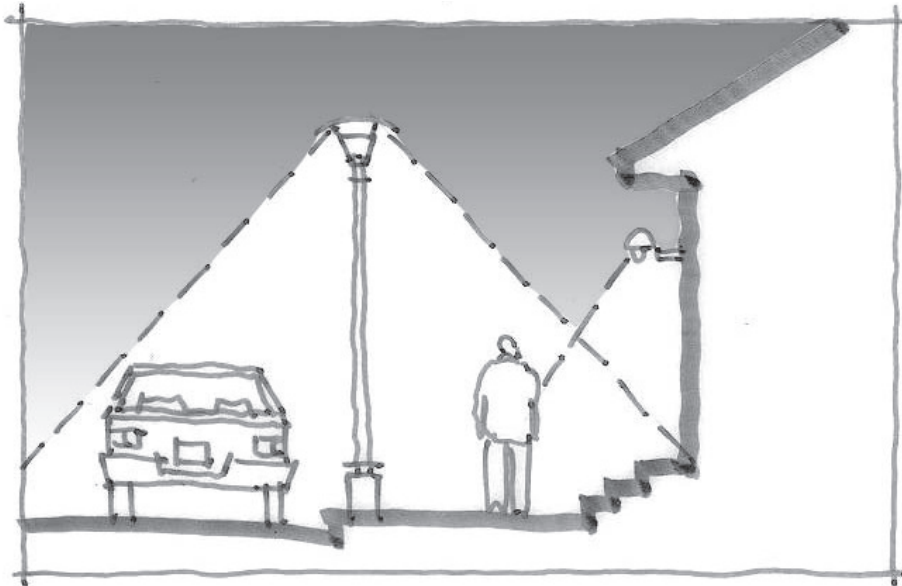
- Consider service facilities as an integral part of the site plan; avoid siting service areas and mechanical equipment as an afterthought.
- Service, loading and storage areas should be located away from facing public streets, residential neighborhoods or other important civic spaces; where possible, take service access along an alley.
- Adjacent sensitive land uses can be buffered from the undesirable impacts of service facilities with landscaping or cohesive architectural treatments.
- Consider locating screened, roof-mounted mechanical equipment away from the street edge.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

New developments are encouraged to provide lighting on buildings and in open spaces. This includes: exterior lighting fixtures above entries; lighting in parking areas and open spaces; and pedestrian street lights near sidewalks. To the degree possible, a constant level of light providing reasonably good visibility should be maintained at night. Bright spots and shadows should be avoided. Highly vulnerable areas and those that could conceal a potential attacker should be illuminated more brightly than areas designed for normal activity.



Exterior lighting fixtures and street lamps are sized to the scale of the building and sidewalk, directing light to the sidewalk and building entrance, thus increasing personal safety.

E. Landscaping

Neighborhood Priority: An appealing place with attractive landscaping and pleasant parks and gathering places.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping, including plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Morgan-specific supplemental guidance:

Supplement and complement the existing mature street trees. Choose street tree species in the business district with a canopy above the first floor commercial level to minimize view obstruction along the street businesses.

- Landscaped open spaces as part of new commercial or mixed-use developments should be visible from the street.
- Providing landscaping on upper levels of neighborhood commercial buildings, where feasible, is encouraged.



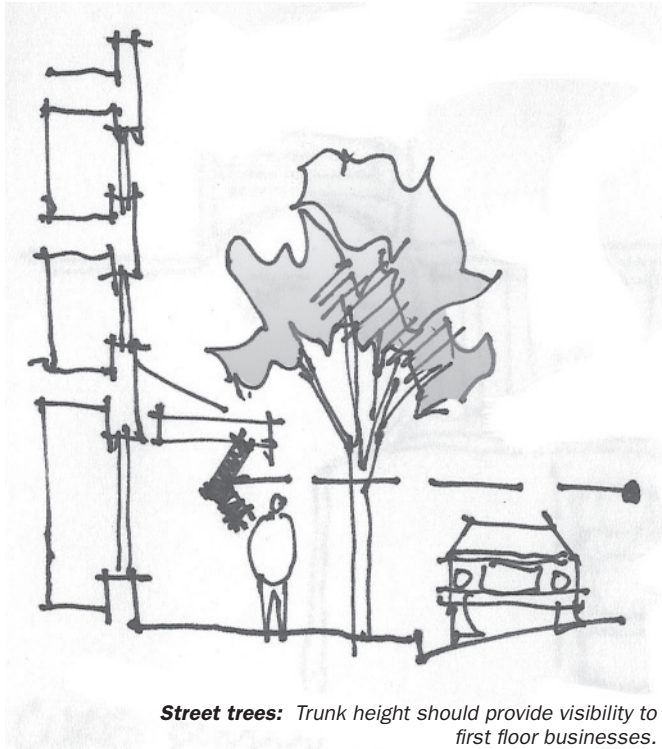
A landscaped entry area physically and visually accessible from the street



Landscaping softens the setback from the ground level retail to residential levels above.

E-3 Landscape Design Address Special Site Conditions

Street tree species should be selected to ensure visibility of first floor businesses from the street.



Site-Specific Design Guidelines

Northwest Corner of California Avenue Southwest and Fautleroy Avenue Southwest

This is a particularly prominent corner site that could serve as a community gateway and anchor for the block. Consider the following:

- Orient massing to the corner with a strong building and rooftop form.
- Step building down to the west toward single family area.
- Articulate California Avenue Southwest façade into distinct intervals consistent in scale with surrounding commercial structures. Create welcoming forecourts between building modulations at street level.



Site-Specific Design Guidelines (cont'd)

“Blue Sky Scenario”: Thriftway Mixed-Use Redevelopment

- Consider adding upper-level housing to the existing structure, pedestrian-oriented retail along California Avenue Southwest, and accommodate parking in a structure with ground-level retail on California Avenue Southwest.
- Housing is encouraged above large commercial structures, e.g., Thriftway (see image below).

