

# North Beacon Hill

## *Neighborhood Design Guidelines*



*Revised 2013*  
**Adopted 2006**

City of Seattle  
Department of Planning and Development



# Table of Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                                   | <b>i</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines at a Glance .....</b>                         | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>Context and Priority Issues: North Beacon Hill .....</b> | <b>iv</b>  |
| <b>Design Guidelines</b>                                    |            |
| <b>Context and Site .....</b>                               | <b>1</b>   |
| CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features .....                | 1          |
| CS2. Urban Pattern and Form .....                           | 2          |
| CS3. Architectural Context and Character .....              | 4          |
| <b>Public Life .....</b>                                    | <b>5</b>   |
| PL1. Open Space Connectivity .....                          | 5          |
| PL2. Walkability .....                                      | 6          |
| PL3. Street-Level Interaction .....                         | 8          |
| <b>Design Concept .....</b>                                 | <b>9</b>   |
| DC1. Project Uses and Activities .....                      | 9          |
| DC2. Architectural Concept .....                            | 10         |
| DC3. Open Space Concept .....                               | 11         |
| DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes .....                   | 12         |

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# Introduction

## ***What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines?***

Design guidelines are the primary tool used by Design Review Boards. The [North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines](#) apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the North Beacon Hill Urban Village as reflected in the Map on page vi. Guidelines define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and public space that make for successful projects and communities. There are two types of guidelines used in the Design Review Program:

- [Seattle Design Guidelines](#)—applying citywide except for downtown; and
- Neighborhood design guidelines—applying to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a neighborhood urban village or center.

Once a set of neighborhood guidelines is adopted by City Council, they are used in tandem with citywide guidelines for the review of all projects within that neighborhood that fall within the scope of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) section 23.41.004. Not all neighborhoods within the city have neighborhood-specific guidelines, but for those that do, both sets of guidelines—citywide and neighborhood—are consulted by the Boards, with the neighborhood guidelines superseding the citywide ones in the event of a conflict between the two. Neighborhood guidelines are very helpful to all involved in the design review process for the guidance they offer that is specific to the features and character of a specific neighborhood.

As of November 2013, there were nineteen sets of neighborhood design guidelines, each following the same organization and numbering system of the City's original citywide guidelines entitled [Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Development](#) that were adopted in 1993.

The [North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines](#) reveal the character of Beacon Hill as known to its residents and business owners. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that the 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 design priorities and encourage involvement in the design review process.

## ***Revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines***

The [North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines](#) were developed by community members and design consultants, and adopted in 2006. In 2013, the City adopted new, updated guidelines entitled [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) to replace the citywide guidelines that had been in effect since the inception of the Design Review Program in 1993.

Because the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) uses a different organizational and numbering system than the original guidelines, DPD has revised each set of neighborhood guidelines to match the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) in format, organization, and numbering system. The revised neighborhood design guidelines will help Board members, applicants, staff, and the public better correlate neighborhood guidelines with the updated [Seattle Design Guidelines](#).

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

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

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

In general, commercial, multifamily and mixed-use projects that exceed specific thresholds in most of Seattle's commercial and multifamily zones are subject to Design Review as a component of MUP review. The guidelines are developed in accordance with the Design Review program's format and the recommendations of the North Beacon Hill community.

In identifying neighborhood priorities to be addressed in the guidelines, the following documents were referenced:

- North Beacon Hill Action Plan, North Beacon Hill Action Plan Committee '94
- North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan, North Beacon Hill Community Council '98
- North Beacon Hill Approval and Adoption Matrix, North Beacon Hill Community Council '99

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

# Guidelines at a Glance

The North Beacon Hill design guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the North Beacon Hill Urban Village as reflected in the Map on page vi. The neighborhood guidelines augment the Seattle Design Guidelines adopted in 2013. The list below correlates the guidelines by subject matter and shows which Seattle Design Guidelines are augmented by North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines. A “yes” indicates supplemental guidance is provided; a “no” indicates that the citywide guideline is sufficient. Note that the numbering system of the Seattle Design Guidelines is different from the original numbering applied to the North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines in 2006.

## Context and Site

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features</b> .....   | <b>yes</b> |
| Residential Open Space (former A-7c to A-7f)          |            |
| <b>CS2. Urban Pattern and Form</b> .....              | <b>yes</b> |
| Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2c to A-2d)       |            |
| Corner Lots (former A-10)                             |            |
| Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility (former B-1)    |            |
| <b>CS3. Architectural Context and Character</b> ..... | <b>yes</b> |
| Architecture Context (former C-1)                     |            |

## Public Life

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>PL1. Connectivity</b> .....                  | <b>yes</b> |
| Residential Open Space (former A-7a to A-7b)    |            |
| <b>PL2. Walkability</b> .....                   | <b>yes</b> |
| Personal Safety and Security (former D-7)       |            |
| Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2a to A-2b) |            |
| <b>PL3. Street-Level Interaction</b> .....      | <b>yes</b> |
| Human Activity (former A-4)                     |            |
| Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2e)         |            |
| <b>PL4. Active Transportation</b> .....         | <b>no</b>  |

## Design Concept

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>DC1. Project Uses and Activities</b> .....                | <b>yes</b> |
| Parking and Vehicular Access (former A-8)                    |            |
| <b>DC2. Architectural Concept</b> .....                      | <b>yes</b> |
| Respect for Adjacent Sites (former A-5)                      |            |
| Architectural Concept and Consistency (former C-2)           |            |
| <b>DC3. Open Space Concept</b> .....                         | <b>yes</b> |
| Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site (former E-2) |            |
| Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2f)                      |            |
| <b>DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes</b> .....             | <b>yes</b> |
| Exterior Finish Materials (former C-4)                       |            |

# North Beacon Hill: Looking Toward the Future

The Mayor's plan for growth in neighborhoods near downtown, including North Beacon Hill, will result in the construction of numerous multifamily and mixed-use developments within and surrounding the city's urban villages. The North Beacon Hill urban village is shown on Map 1 and Map 2 (pages v - vi). With the completion of the new library and the construction of the new light rail station, the North Beacon Hill of 10 to 15 years from now will be quite different from the neighborhood we see today. These changes will stimulate new development and new economic activity. While new development brings excitement, it is important to the community that the historic and cultural significance of North Beacon Hill remains.

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

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

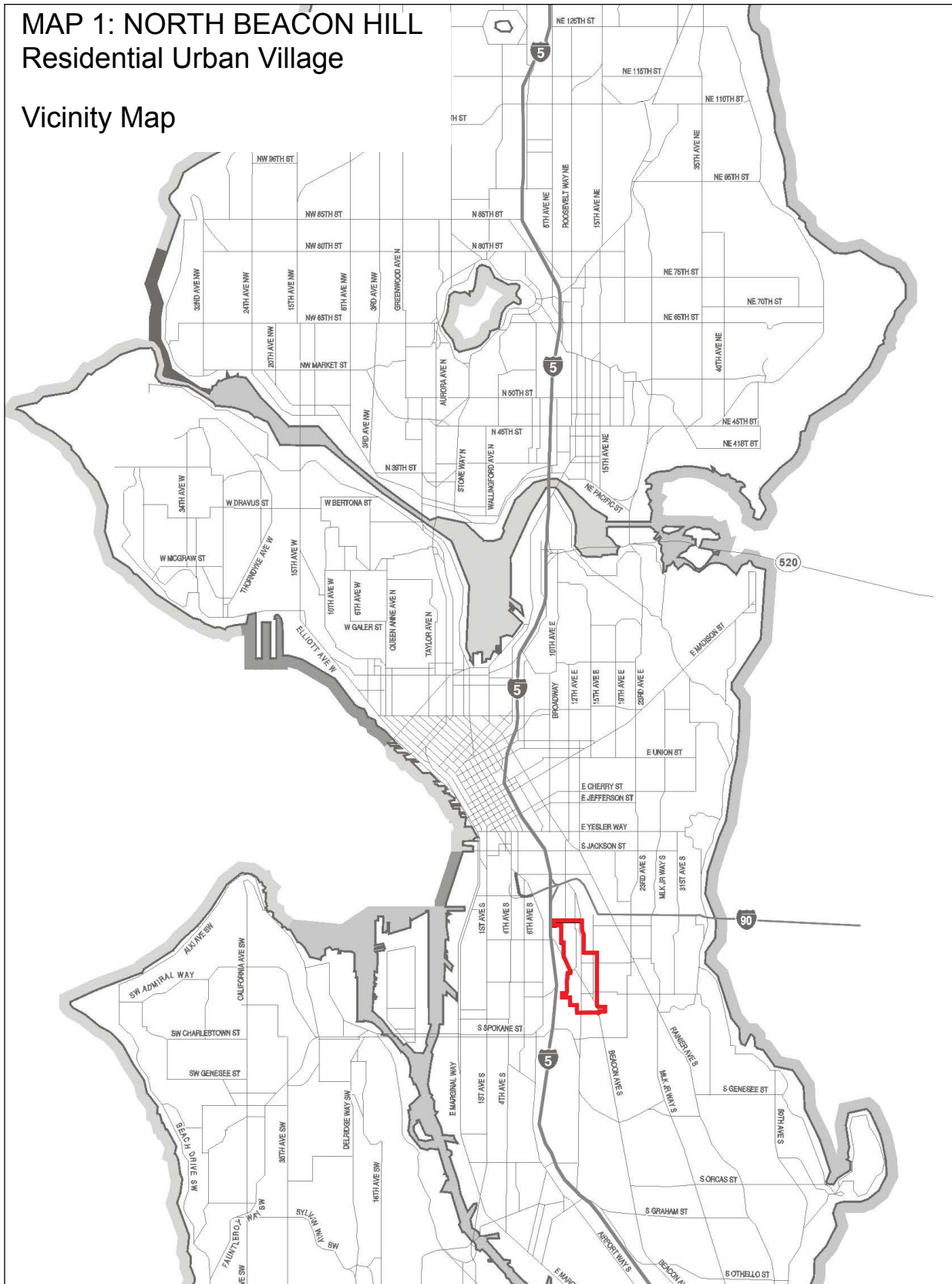
The neighborhood plan provides an over-arching framework for specific goals, policies and recommendations aimed at helping the area realize its full potential as a thriving social, educational, residential and business community. The plan recommends many planning and urban design concepts to be implemented,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

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

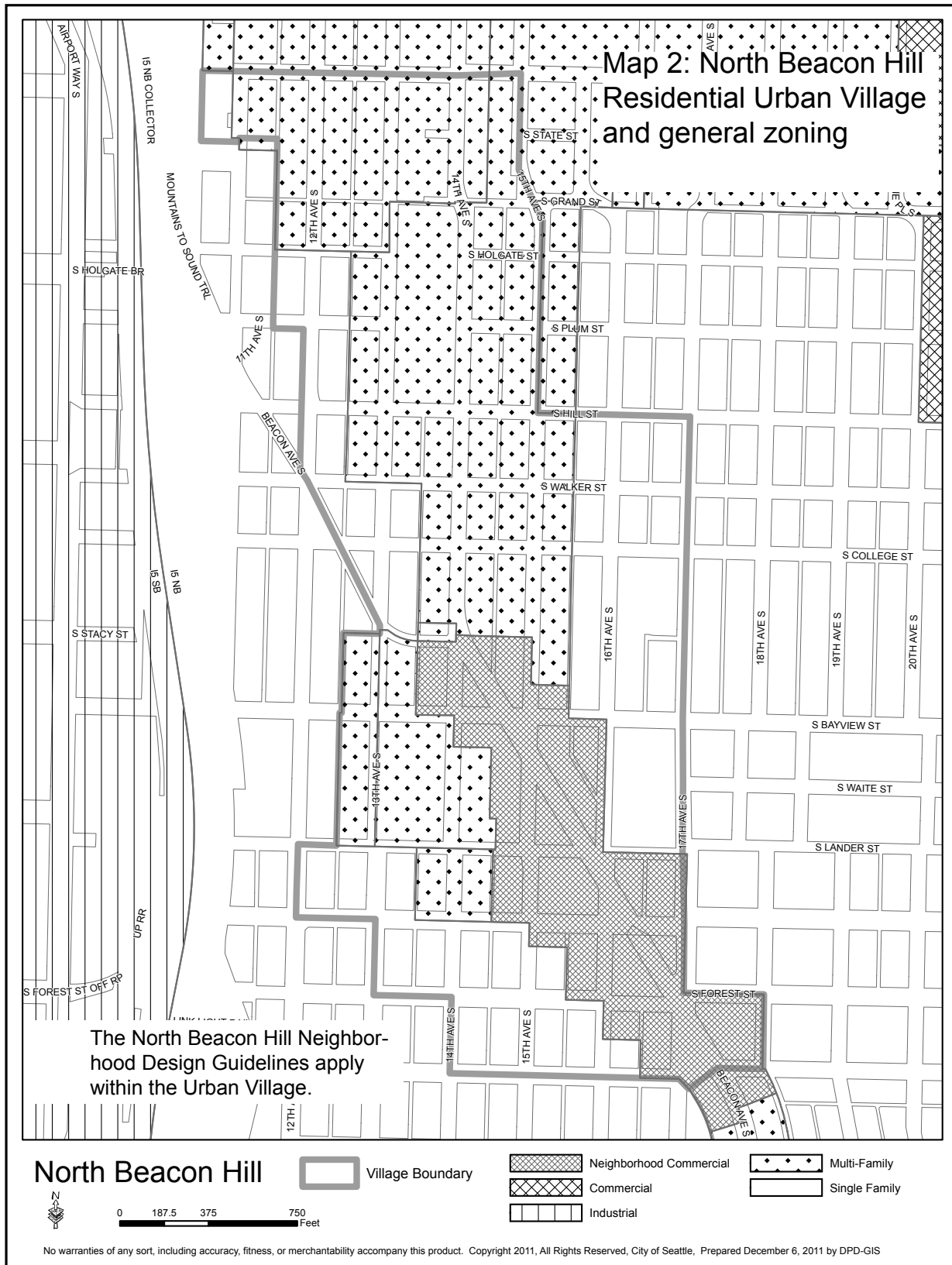


## MAP 1: NORTH BEACON HILL Residential Urban Village

### Vicinity Map



Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details.



Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details. Additionally, zoning areas shown on this map are for general reference only. For confirmation of a specific property's zoning, contact the Department of Planning and Development.

North Beacon Hill  
**Design Guidelines**  
2013

# CS1

## Natural Systems and Site Features

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Residential Open Space**

- i. Set back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors, particularly to mountains, water and skyline.
- ii. Set back upper floors to allow solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- iii. Protect existing, healthy street trees.
- iv. Site outdoor spaces to take advantage of as much sunlight as possible.

# CS2

## Urban Pattern and Form

### *Citywide Guideline:*

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

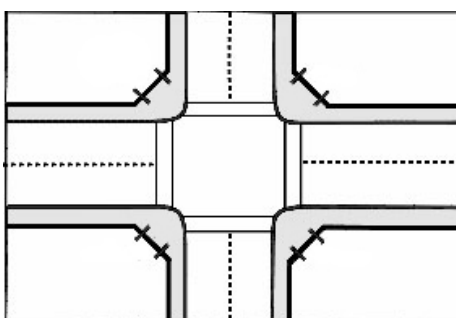
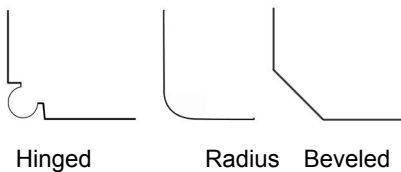
### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Streetscape Compatibility**

- i. For buildings that span a block and face two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning as well as architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character. This is especially important for through streets and triangular shaped lots.
- ii. Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.

#### **II. Corner Lots**

- i. Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines at the corner.
- ii. Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.
- iii. Typical corner developments should provide:
  - a. a main building entrance located at the corner;
  - b. an entrance set back to soften the corner and enhance pedestrian environment; and
  - c. use of a hinge, bevel, notch, open bay or setback in the massing to reflect the special nature of the corner and draw attention to it.
- iv. Given the angle of Beacon Avenue, there are several triangle lots located in North Beacon Hill. Typical triangle lots should provide:
  - a. main building entrance oriented toward the sidewalk;
  - b. additional landscape to soften angles; and
  - c. parking oriented away from sidewalks with a buffer between the sidewalk and parking lot.

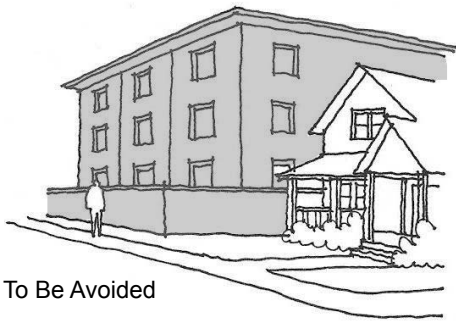


Corner building entries are encouraged.

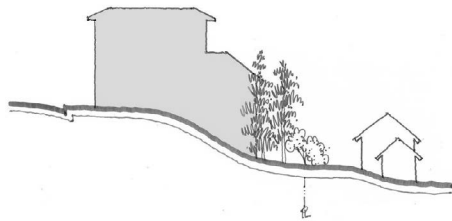
## Sensitive Infill Development



Preferred



To Be Avoided



Open space with abundant landscaping to buffer the larger structure from a lower intensive zone.

## III. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

Much of the North Beacon Hill business district is zoned for 65-foot tall mixed-use buildings. Most of the existing commercial structures in the area are one- and two-stories adjacent to single-family houses. Large, monolithic buildings are discouraged. Proper consideration of the scale, massing and detail of individual buildings will contribute to a project's compatibility with surrounding residential areas and a satisfying public environment.

Consider the following methods and techniques in the design of new developments:

- i. Break larger (particularly longer) buildings into separate volumes to maintain a compatible scale with smaller commercial buildings nearby.
- ii. Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.
- iii. Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, Puget Sound, Mt. Rainier, the Olympics and the Cascade Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that help to preserve or enhance those views from public rights of way.
- iv. Incorporate into the design of new buildings studies that document the shadows cast from proposed structures in order to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks and residences throughout the year.
- v. Step back elevation at upper levels of large-scale development to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level.
- vi. Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- vii. Employ architectural measures to reduce building scale such as: landscaping, trellises, complementary materials, detailing and accent trim.
- viii. Soften commercial facades with dense landscaping, where appropriate.
- ix. Repeat domestic architectural elements of surrounding buildings (roof lines, window styles, proportions).
- x. Use architectural styles and details (such as roof lines or fenestration), color or materials derived from surrounding, less intensive structures.
- xi. Locate features, such as required open space, on the zone edge to create further separation and buffering of lower intensive structures.

# CS3

## Architectural Context and Character

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.



A regular cadence of display windows and shop entrances enhances the pedestrian experience. Awnings, pilasters and brick facades add interest and give a human scale to the street-level facade.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Architectural Context**

New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods should be compatible with, or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings. New developments are encouraged to pay special attention to neighboring historic buildings, i.e. Pacific Medical Building and Fire Station 13. New developments can be more compatible with their neighbors by addressing the historic building's character through its details and/or architectural traits while remaining autonomous in stature.

- i. To make new, larger development compatible with the surrounding architectural context, facade articulation and architectural detail are important considerations in mixed-use and multifamily residential buildings. When larger buildings replace several small buildings, facade articulation should reflect the original platting pattern and reinforce the architectural rhythm established in the commercial core.
- ii. New development should respond to several architectural features common in the North Beacon Hill business district to preserve and enhance pedestrian orientation and maintain an acceptable level of consistency with the existing architecture. To create cohesiveness on Beacon Hill, identifiable and exemplary architectural patterns should be reinforced. New elements can be introduced but a strong design connection should accompany it.



An example of a large, mixed-use building broken down into smaller sub-volumes. Regulating lines and rhythms, including vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines and windows, can further aid in supporting scale compatibility with adjacent structures.

# PL1

## Connectivity

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Residential Open Space**

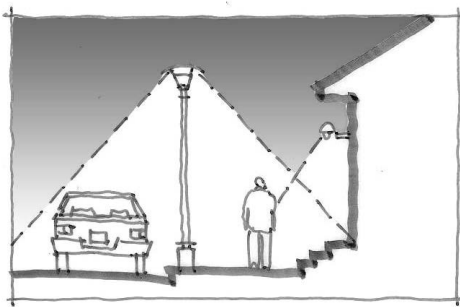
- i. Incorporate quasi-public open space into new residential development or redevelopment with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- ii. Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

# PL2

## Walkability

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.



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.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Personal Safety and Security**

The principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) are highly encouraged to be implemented into any design on North Beacon Hill. Good design is one of the most effective crime deterrents. Design can discourage criminal activity, enhance natural surveillance opportunities, and reduce fear. Design can influence an individual's feelings about his environment from an aesthetic as well as a safety standpoint.

- i. Defensible Space
  - a. A territorial definition is good to create awareness of the boundary between public and private space. Using low fences or landscaping can aid in making the delineation readily apparent while aesthetically transparent. Define property lines and distinguish private spaces from public spaces using landscape plantings, pavement designs and gateway treatments.
  - b. Allow for clear lines of sight.
  - c. Prevent spaces of entrapment.
  - d. Maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances with doors and windows that look out on to streets and parking areas; this encourages pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets while avoiding blank, windowless walls that attract graffiti and prevent "eyes on the street."
  - e. Clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.
- ii. Access Control
  - a. Providing safe routes with clearly visible spaces into and through entrances.
  - b. Prevent hiding places and scaffolding that may be used to climb into structures.
  - c. Prevent confusion between public and private pathways while reducing "mazelike" pathways.

- iii. Surveillance.

Provide lighting on buildings and in open spaces, paying particular attention to exterior lighting fixtures above entries, lighting in parking areas and open spaces, and pedestrian street lights near sidewalks. Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) handbook recommends 5 foot-candles for active building entrances, 3 foot-candles for pedestrian walkways in parks and 1-3 foot-candles for alleys.

## II. Streetscape Compatibility

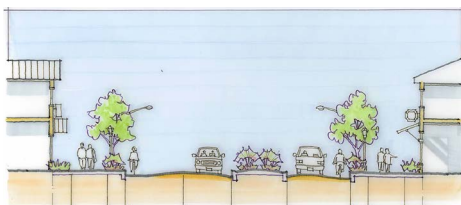
- i. Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ii. Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.

# PL3

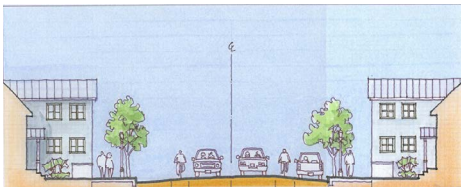
## Street-Level Interaction

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.



At-grade street-level commercial uses promote an active business district.



Minor grade separations create residential privacy, and provide opportunities for front porches and stoops.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Human Activity**

- i. Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and the display of goods on the sidewalks.
- ii. Provide for outdoor dining opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening of restaurant or cafe windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.
- iii. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.
- iv. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.
- v. Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create an inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.

#### **II. Streetscape Compatibility**

- i. Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation between the first floor and the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.

# DC1

## Project Uses and Activities

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Parking and Vehicular Access**

- i. Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally interrupted by vehicular access within a block.
- ii. Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- iii. Incorporate bioretention cells into parking lot design in order to enhance design while also reducing the quantity of runoff reaching water treatment facilities and increase the quality of runoff that returns to the water table, and nearby lakes and rivers. Incorporating bioretention cells as a buffer between sidewalks and parking lots provides a functional and aesthetically pleasing border. Some resources for bioretention cells:
  - a. [www.epa.gov/owm/mtb/biortn.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owm/mtb/biortn.pdf)
  - b. [www.ence.umd.edu/~apdavis/Bioret.htm](http://www.ence.umd.edu/~apdavis/Bioret.htm)
  - c. [www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/epa03/biospec.htm](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/epa03/biospec.htm)
  - d. [www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/cam/CAM515.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/cam/CAM515.pdf)

# DC2

## Architectural Concept

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.



Simple massing oriented to the street provides visual relief with a facade that exhibits pleasing proportions, recessed windows and entries created with modulation, fenestration pattern and shadow lines. A classic, well marked and articulated brick building oriented to public space on Beacon Hill.



Beacon Hill Library, a creative, contemporary architectural solution. Oftentimes, new buildings that mimic past architectural styles fall short of the quality and craftsmanship of true historic structures. The new branch library emphasizes the notion of expressing diversity within a coherent whole, reinforcing the unique and evolving historical and cultural character of the neighborhood.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Respect for Adjacent Sites**

- i. Redirect the number of windows and decks on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring residences.
- ii. Step back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.
- iii. Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows and minimize the impact of windows in living spaces that may infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents.

#### **II. Architectural Concept and Consistency**

- i. New multi-story developments are encouraged to consider methods to integrate a building's upper and lower levels. This is especially important in NC-65'-zoned areas. Mixed-use buildings are encouraged to create a building base that orients to the street and/or defines public space. This can be achieved by building the ground floor commercial level, and possibly one more level, out to the front property line.
- ii. Establish a building's overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions. A building should exhibit a sense of order. The use and repetition of architectural features and building materials, textures and colors can help create unity in a structure. Consider how the following can contribute to a building that exhibits a cohesive architectural concept:
  - a. Facade modulation and articulation
  - b. Windows and fenestration patterns
  - c. Trim and moldings
  - d. Grilles and railings
  - e. Lighting and signage

# DC3

## Open Space Concept

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.



### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site**

- i. Give purpose to plantings by incorporating multiple functions of the plantings, i.e., a planting can be a bioretention cell, provide shelter, shade and habitat while enhancing the overall aesthetic of Beacon Hill
- ii. Native plants to the Pacific Northwest are encouraged because of their proven ability to perform well in our climate and their regional cultural significance.
- iii. Consider adding a focal element, for instance, an art piece to outdoor space.
- iv. Retain significant trees whenever possible.

#### **II. Streetscape Compatibility**

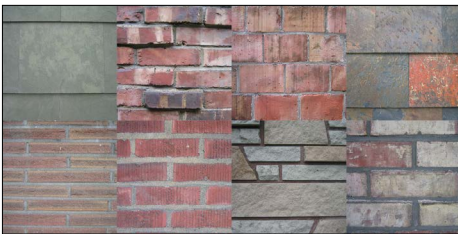
- i. Place planting strips smartly to incorporate a more pleasing environment for all modes of transportation and incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) interventions in the same space.

# DC4

## Exterior Elements and Finishes

### *Citywide Guideline:*

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.



### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance***

#### **I. Exterior Finish Materials**

- i. Brick and stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged. To the left are some examples of bricks and stone used on Beacon Hill.
- ii. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can unify the overall architectural concept of the building, or provide unique identity for a commercial space within a larger mixed-use structure. Design signage that is appropriate for the scale, character and use of the project and surrounding area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles on streets.
- iii. The following sign types are encouraged:
  - a. Pedestrian-oriented blade and window signs
  - b. Marquee signs and signs on overhead weather protection
  - c. Appropriately sized neon signs
  - d. Multilingual signs that reflect the neighborhood's diverse population
  - e. Sandwich board signs placed outside of pedestrian pathways



Multilingual signs are strongly encouraged.