



North Beacon Hill *neighborhood*

Design Guidelines

effective August 19, 2006



City of Seattle
Department of Planning
and Development



Seattle Design Review Program

Design Review:

North Beacon Hill Neighborhood 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 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 Citywide 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.

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.

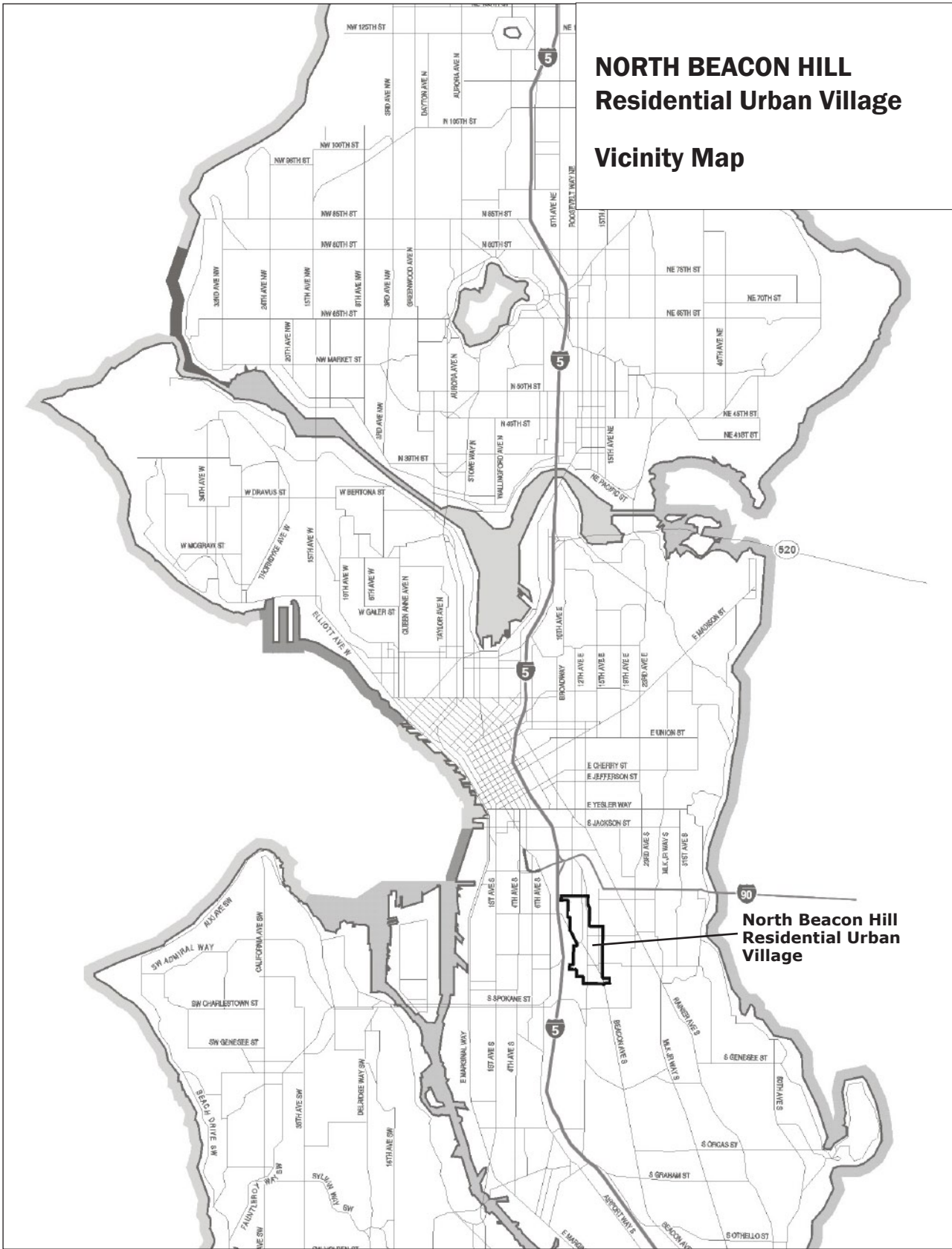
The North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines draw attention to preferred design and site planning, and highlight the qualities the neighborhood values most for new development. These guidelines, in conjunction with the Citywide Design Guidelines, strengthen the awareness of good design and inspired 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 drawing from both the Citywide Design Guidelines and the recommendations of the North Beacon Hill community. The Citywide Design Guidelines provide sufficient general direction for development scenarios in the neighborhood. Only those Citywide Design Guidelines that need more specificity, additional clarification, or site-specific examples unique to North Beacon Hill have been addressed in these neighborhood design guidelines.

In identifying neighborhood priorities to be addressed in the guidelines, the North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan '98 and the Design Review Program's guideline categories were reviewed. The following documents were also referenced:

- *North Beacon Hill Action Plan*, North Beacon Hill Action Plan Committee '94
- *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings*, City of Seattle - Oct. '93. Rev. Nov. '98
- *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 (see map on next page). 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 their neighborhood design guidelines. Opportunities for public comment were provided at each monthly meeting of the North Beacon Hill Council and the draft guidelines were presented for review and discussion at a public meeting of North Beacon Hill residents prior to submission to the City.



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. 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. Hillside 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



A glimpse of Seattle's skyline



Historic Fire Station 13



Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs



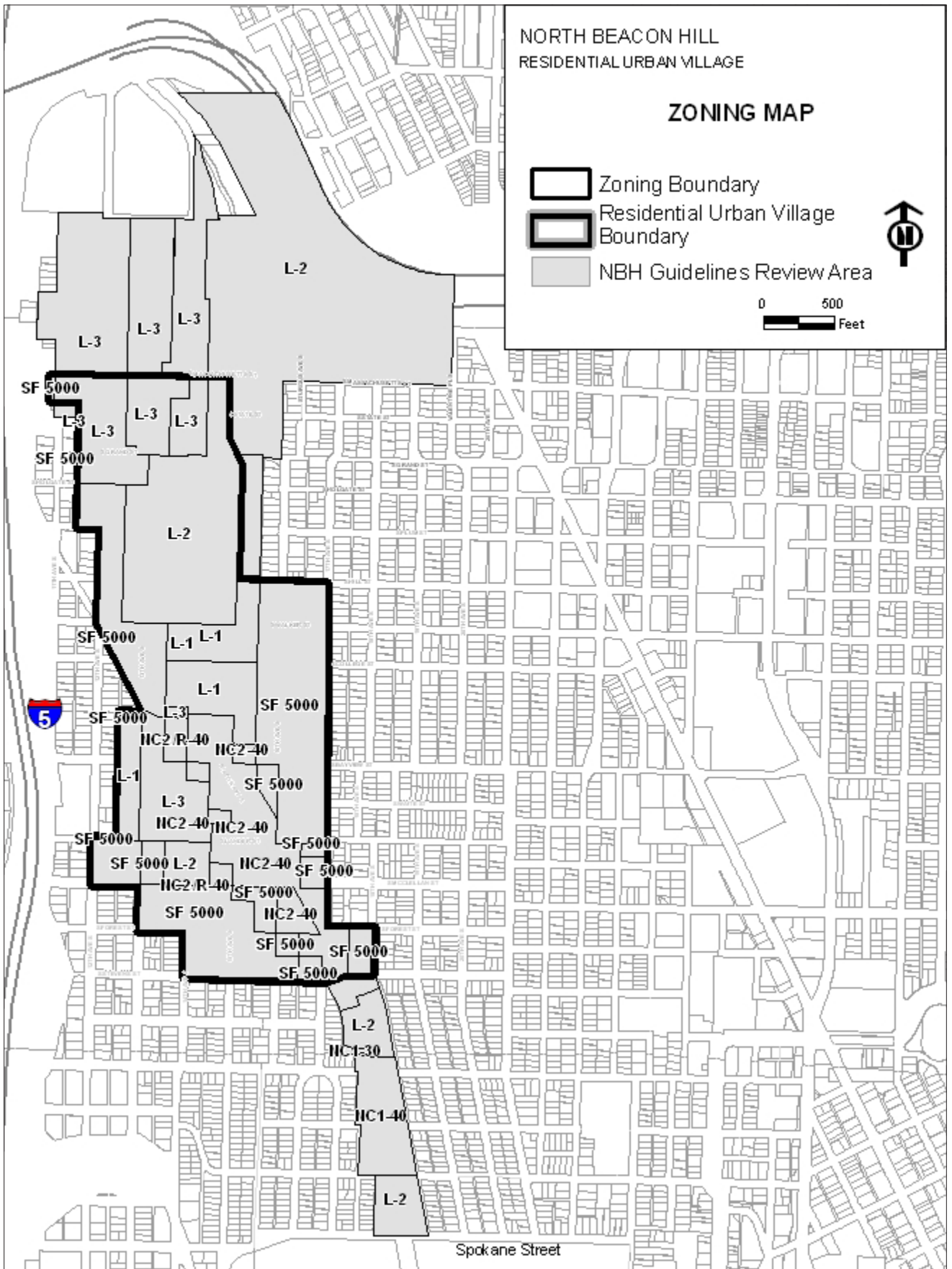
The historic U.S. Marine Hospital, now the Pacific Medical Center



The elevated nature of Beacon Hill



The new Beacon Hill Library



For general information purposes only, please consult the City of Seattle for most recent zoning information.

North Beacon Hill Supplemental Design Guidelines

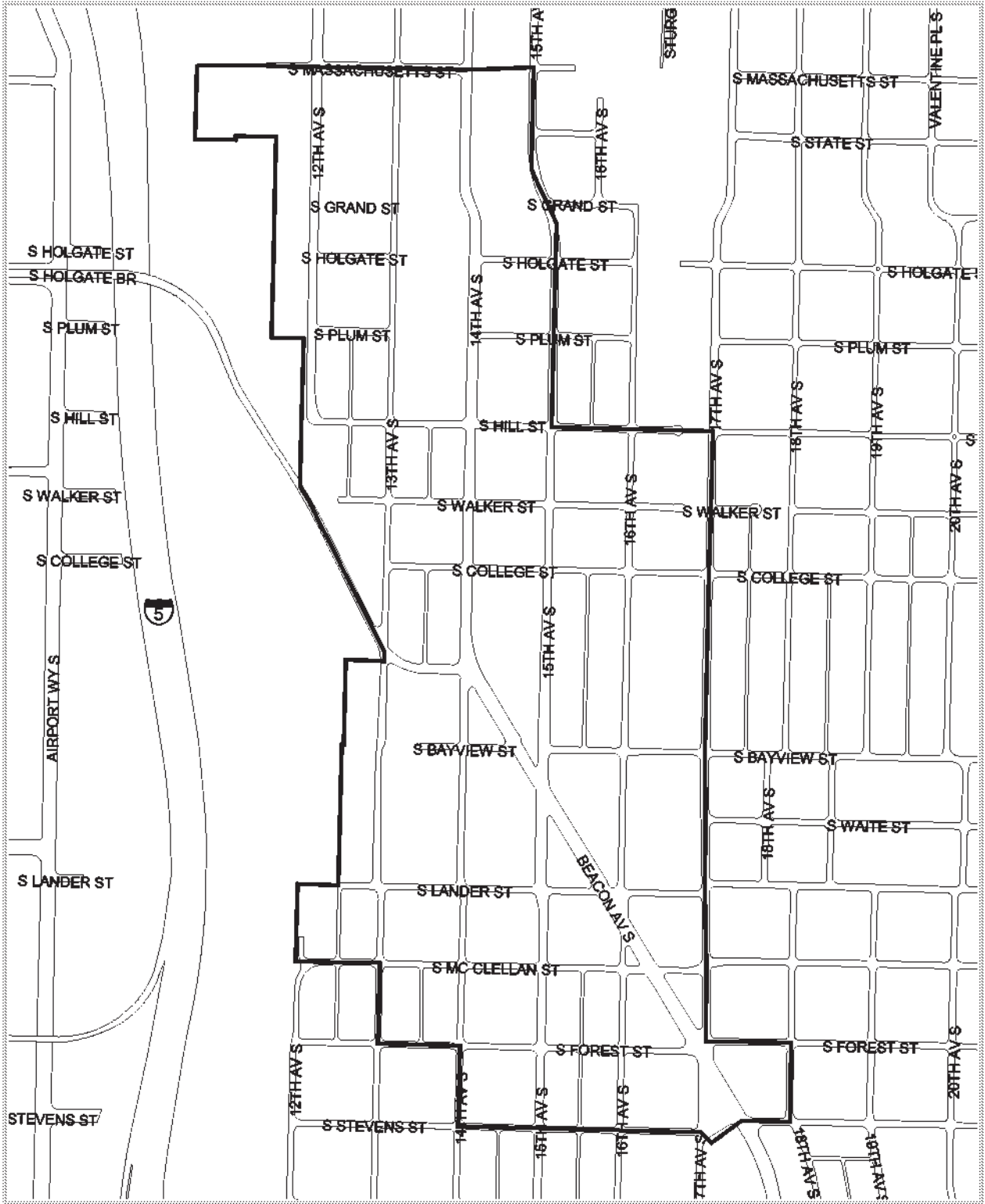
The chart below indicates what North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance is provided in these guidelines. Text and graphics showing preferred design characteristics can be found within each specific design guideline category.

	Supplemental Guidance Provided:
A. Site Planning	
A-2: Streetscape Compatibility	Yes
A-4: Human Activity	Yes
A-5: Respect for Adjacent Sites	Yes
A-7: Residential Open Space	Yes
A-8: Parking and Vehicle Access	Yes
A-10: Corner Lots	Yes
B. Height, Bulk and Scale	
B-1: Height, Bulk and Scale	Yes
C. Architectural Elements and Materials	
C-1: Architectural Context	Yes
C-2: Architectural Concept and Consistency	Yes
C-4: Exterior finish materials	Yes
D. Pedestrian Environment	
D-7: Pedestrian Safety and Security	Yes
E. Landscaping	
E-2: Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site	Yes

North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines



NORTH BEACON HILL Residential Urban Village



0 500 1000 Feet



— VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- - - EDGE OF PAVEMENT

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A. Site Planning

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

A strong relationship between the building and the street adds character and quality to the North Beacon business district and surrounding residential streets.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- b. Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- c. 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.
- d. Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.
- e. 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.
- f. Place planting strips smartly to incorporate a more pleasing environment for all modes of transportation and incorporate LID interventions in the same space.



A-2: At-grade street-level commercial uses promote an active business district.



A-2: Minor grade separations create residential privacy, and provide opportunities for front porches and stoops.

A-4 Human Activity

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

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.
- d. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.
- e. Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites

Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings. Specifically, several zoned edges between Commercial (C1) and Single Family-zoned land exist in the neighborhood. This could result in visual impacts, as well as traffic and noise conflicts between these properties.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. Redirect the number of windows and decks on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring residences.
- b. Step back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.
- c. 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.

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. Incorporate quasi-public open space into new residential development or redevelopment with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- b. Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- c. Set-back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors, particularly to mountains, water and skyline.
- d. Set back upper floors to allow solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- e. Protect existing, healthy street trees.
- f. Site outdoor spaces to take advantage of as much sunlight as possible.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. 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.
- b. Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- c. Incorporate bioretention cells into parking lot design in order to reduce 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:

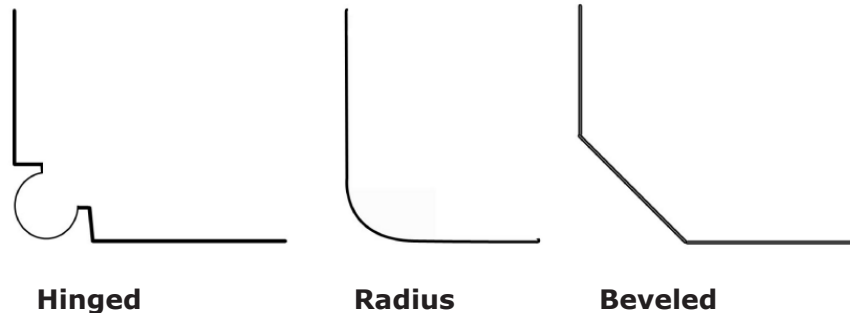
- www.epa.gov/owm/mtb/biortn.pdf
- www.ence.umd.edu/~apdavis/Bioret.htm
- www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/epa03/biospec.htm
- www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/cam/CAM515.pdf

A-10 Corner and Triangle Lots

Orientation of triangular shaped lots and corner lots should be towards both sides, the corner as well as public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from the corners.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines at the corner.
- b. Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.
- c. Typical corner developments should provide:
 - a main building entrance located at the corner;
 - an entrance set back to soften the corner and enhance pedestrian environment; and
 - 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.
- d. Given the angle of Beacon Avenue, there are several triangle lots located in North Beacon Hill. Typical triangle lots should provide:
 - main building entrance oriented toward the sidewalk;
 - additional landscape to soften angles; and
 - parking oriented away from sidewalks with a buffer between the sidewalk and parking lot.



B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

Projects on a zoning boundary 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. Projects should be compatible in scale to development anticipated by all applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area. The siting and design of a project should provide a sensitive transition to all nearby zones.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

Much of the North Beacon Hill business district is zoned for 40-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:

- Break larger (particularly longer) buildings into separate volumes to maintain a compatible scale with smaller commercial buildings nearby.
- 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.
- 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 right of ways.
- 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.
- Step back elevation at upper levels of large-scale development to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Employ architectural measures to reduce building scale such as: landscaping, trellises, complementary materials, detailing and accent trim.
- Soften commercial facades with dense landscaping, where appropriate.
- Repeat domestic architectural elements of surrounding buildings (roof lines, window styles, proportions).

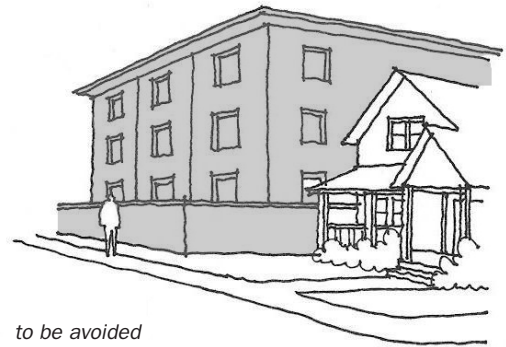
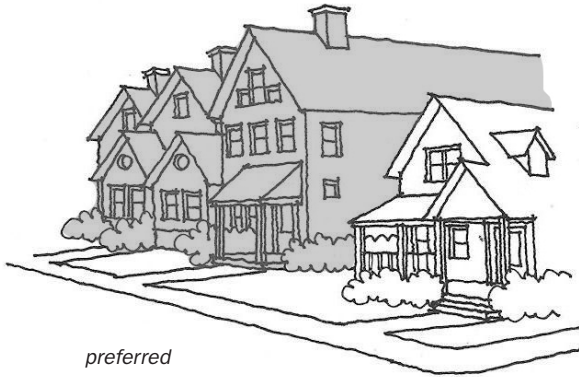


B-1: Domestic architectural styles common in North Beacon Hill.

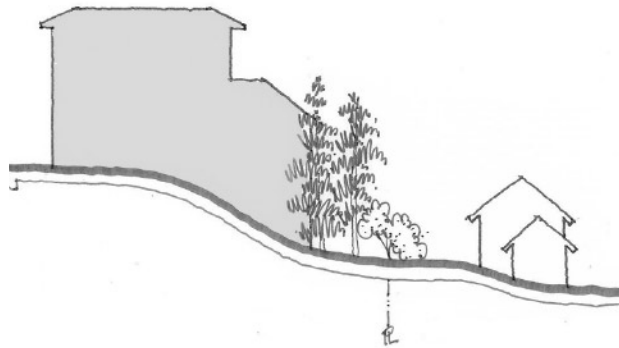
B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility cont'd

- Use architectural styles and details (such as roof lines or fenestration), color or materials derived from surrounding, less intensive structures.
- Locate features, such as required open space, on the zone edge to create further separation and buffering of lower intensive structures.

Sensitive Infill Development



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



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.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.



C-1: 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.



C-1 Architectural Context cont'd



C-1: 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.



C-1: 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.

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well proportioned, unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roof-line or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. New multi-story developments are encouraged to consider methods to integrate a building's upper and lower levels. This is especially important in NC-40'-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.
- b. 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:
 - Facade modulation and articulation
 - Windows and fenestration patterns
 - Trim and moldings
 - Grilles and railings
 - Lighting and signage

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 pattern, texture, or lend themselves to high quality of detailing are encouraged.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. Brick and Stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged. Below are some examples of bricks and stone used on Beacon Hill.



- b. 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.

The following sign types are encouraged:

- Pedestrian-oriented blade and window signs
- Marquee signs and signs on overhead weather protection
- Appropriately sized neon signs
- Multilingual signs that reflect the neighborhood's diverse population
- Sandwich board signs placed outside of pedestrian pathways



C-4: multilingual signs are strongly encouraged.

D. Pedestrian Environment

The project design should encourage and increase pedestrian activity on Beacon Hill. A safe, attractive, and accessible environment should be considered in all project designs. A vibrant streetscape with ample sidewalk space, pedestrian scale lighting and other activities is encouraged. The project design should reinforce feelings of security in the residents, workers, shoppers and visitors who enter the area.

D-7 Pedestrian Safety

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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

a. Defensible Space

- 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.
- Allow for clear lines of sight.
- Prevent spaces of entrapment.
- 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."
- Clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.

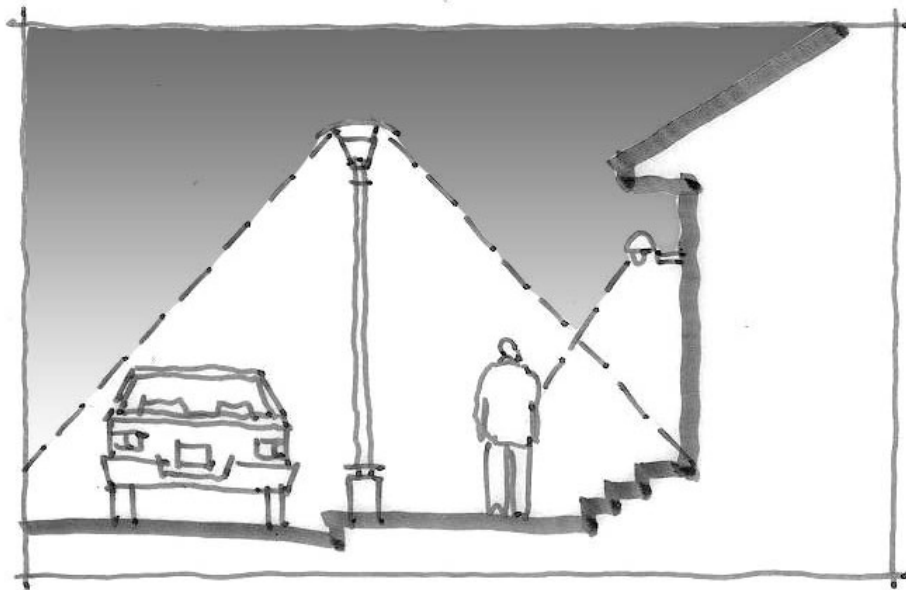
b. Access Control

- Providing safe routes with clearly visible spaces into and through entrances.
- Prevent hiding places and scaffolding that may be used to climb into structures.
- Prevent confusion between public and private pathways while reducing "maze-like" pathways.

D-7 Pedestrian Safety cont'd

c. 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.



D-7: 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

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

Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project. Use plants, furniture and lighting to shape, embellish, enliven and give purpose to outdoor space and habitat, act to delineate property lines, indicate and separate entrances and pedestrian areas, while enhancing the overall aesthetic of Beacon Hill.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- a. 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.
- b. Native plants to the Pacific Northwest are encouraged because of their proven ability to perform well in our climate and their regional cultural significance.
- c. Consider adding a focal element, for instance, an art piece to outdoor space.
- d. Retain significant trees whenever possible.

