

March 30, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the PLUZ Committee
From: Aly Pennucci, Legislative Analyst
Subject: CB 119200 – Central Area Design Guidelines, Design Review Board and District

On April 4, 2018, the Planning, Land Use and Zoning (PLUZ) Committee will hold a public hearing, discuss amendments, and possibly vote on [Council Bill 119200](#). CB 119200 would adopt new Neighborhood Design Guidelines for the Central Area and establish a Central Area Design Review District and Design Review Board. The proposed guidelines, together with adopted citywide design guidelines, would serve as the basis for design review of multifamily residential and commercial development projects in the Central Area neighborhood. Projects in the Central Area subject to full design review would be reviewed by the proposed Central Area Design Review Board.

This memorandum describes technical amendments for the Committee's consideration.

Technical Amendment

The amendments described below would (1) correct the year of adoption in the Council Bill and updates the date listed for the attachment; and (2) update numbering and formatting and clarify language in the proposed design guidelines (see Attachment A to this memo for a revised version of the proposed guidelines with the amendments described below incorporated).

Proposed amendments:

1. Amend CB 119200 as follows:
 - *Page 9, Section 4: amend subsection 23.41.010.B.5:*
“Central Area Design Guidelines, ~~2017~~ 2018”;
 - *Page 11, Attachment list:*
Attachment 1 – Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines, ~~2017~~ 2018
2. Amend Attachment 1 to CB 119200 as follows:
 - *Cover page: amend date, replace “draft” with “adopted,”:*
~~DRAFT-Adopted~~ ~~January~~ 2018
 - *Page vii introduction, clarify the footnote section to the map.*
“Note: Design Review does not apply to all ~~zones~~ [sites or properties](#). See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details.”
 - *Guideline numbering:* Renumber content topics to change from Roman numerals (XVI.iii, etc.), to 1.a, 1.b, 2.a etc. This change is proposed to improve legibility and readability.
 - *Graphic improvements:* Update the font in the banners at top of each guideline section to improve legibility.

Attachments:

- A. Central Area Design Guidelines 2018 with proposed amendments incorporated

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director
Ketil Freeman, Supervising Analyst



Central Area

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES



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Acknowledgments

The effort for this document began in December of 2015, by a passionate group of Central Area residents who have all been active in the community for many years, dedicating their time as members in five different Central Area Organizations:

- 23rd Ave Action Community Team
- Central Area Land Use Review Committee
- Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District
- Central Area Collaborative
- African American Veterans Group of Washington

Together they formed the Central Area Design Guidelines Coalition (CADGC), and worked with Grace Kim and Margaret Knight of Schemata Workshop, and Donald King of Mimar Studio to build on the work that began in 1994, and develop a set of design guidelines for the Central Area.

The participation of the CADGC in this process was invaluable, and we are thankful for the many hours these community members and organizations have put into this effort.

We'd like to give a special thanks to CADGC members: Tyrone Brown, Amanda Bryan, Dennis Comer, Karen Estevenin, Jeff Floor, Preston Hampton, Sharon Khosla, Lois Martin, and Robert Stephens Jr. for their commitment to this process.

We would like to also acknowledge the dedicated and continued community support of several key Central Area groups and individuals, which set the stage by providing foundational documents from which this work sprung, including:

- Central Area Action Plan of 1994
- Central Area Neighborhood Plan of 1998
- Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines of 1998
- Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District Plan of 2015
- 23rd Ave Action Plan and Urban Design Framework of 2016
- Central Area Commercial Revitalization Plan of 2016

Introduction

What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines are the primary tool used in the review of proposed projects by Seattle DCI staff for administrative design review, or the Design Review Boards. 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:

- Citywide—applying to all areas of the city except for downtown; and
- Neighborhood-specific—applying to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a residential urban village or center.

Once a set of neighborhood-specific guidelines is adopted by City Council, they are used in tandem with citywide guidelines for the review of all projects within that neighborhood. Not all neighborhoods within the city have neighborhood-specific guidelines, but for those that do, applicants and Board members are required to consult both sets of guidelines—citywide and neighborhood-specific—with the neighborhood guidelines taking precedence over the citywide in the event of a conflict between the two. Neighborhood-specific guidelines offer additional guidance on the features and character of a particular neighborhood, and are very helpful to all involved in the design review process.

Neighborhood-specific design guidelines reveal the character of the neighborhood as known to its residents and business owners. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that neighborhood residents value most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood's guidelines, in conjunction with the citywide Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of responsive design and involvement in the design review process.

Reader's Guide

This document is organized around the themes and format of the city-wide Seattle Design Guidelines with additional topics and directives specific to the Central Area neighborhood. Guideline example photos and graphics are presented in addition to other text which explains intent or provides background information. The "Additional Guidance" section references locations specified on page 17 of this document, and provides another layer of information for defining character and culturally significant areas.

Context & Priority Issues: Central Area



MOHAI, Al Smith Collection

For much of its history, Seattle was a segregated city. As with many cities in America, people of color were excluded from most neighborhoods, schools, many stores, restaurants, hotels, and even hospitals. This historic pattern of discrimination established a structural foundation of inequity in our city, prioritizing homeownership and business opportunities for White residents. Because of this history, the City has made it a priority to evolve into a community of opportunity for all people, regardless of race or socio-economic status. This is noted in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, Seattle 2035, with one of its core values being:

Race and Social Equity - limited resources and opportunities must be shared; and the inclusion of under-represented communities in decision-making processes is necessary¹.



MOHAI, Al Smith Collection

This value greatly informs the Central Area Design Guidelines. It is, however, important to note that the language within this document often speaks specifically to the preservation of the African and Black American community in the Central Area. To understand the importance of this emphasis, we must look to history.

One of the first settlers of what we now know as the Central Area, William Grose, was an African American who arrived in Seattle in 1861 and soon became a successful businessman. He owned and operated a restaurant and a hotel in Downtown Seattle, while building a home on his 12-acres of land between what is now East Olive Street and East Madison Street at 24th Avenue. The area attracted other African Americans and became one of the first Black settlements in Seattle, with a settlement of single, Black transient workers around Jackson Street, and middle-class Black families near East Madison eventually merging to form what we currently call the Central Area.

By the early 1900s, a thriving Black-owned and operated business district had flourished near East Madison, and many predominately

¹ Seattle Comprehensive Plan

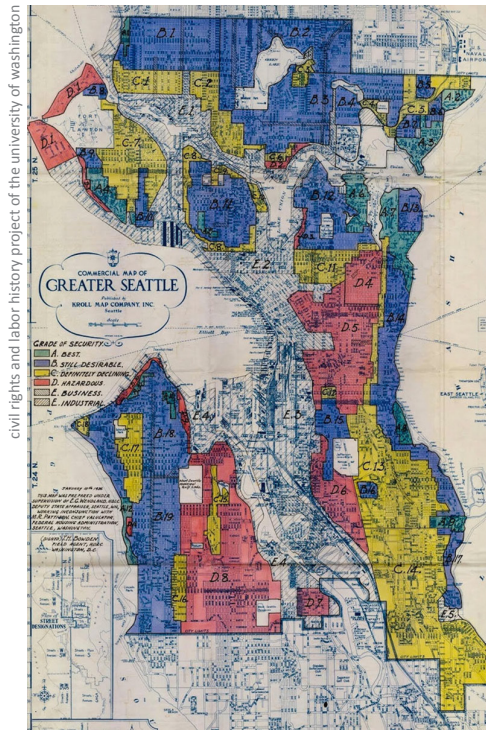


MOHAI, Al Smith Collection

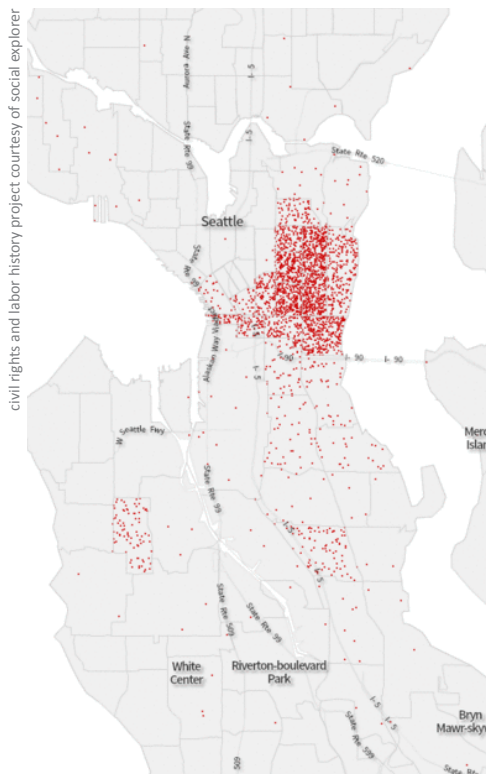
"The parties hereto signing and executing this instrument, and the several like instruments relating to their several properties, hereby mutually covenant, promise and agree each with the others that no part of lands owned by them shall ever be used or occupied by or sold, conveyed, leased, rented or given to Negroes or any person of Negro blood.

This covenant shall run with the land and bind the respective heirs and parties hereto for a period of 21 years."

Excerpt from a 1948 Capital Hill neighborhood agreement on a restrictive covenant. Intended expiration was 1969.



1936 redlining map with areas deemed "hazardous" in red.



Map showing where Black Americans resided in 1960. One dot represents 25 individuals.

Black churches had been founded, some of which are still community anchors today.

Other ethnic groups also settled in the Central Area, creating a vibrant and diverse community. However, after World War II housing discrimination and restrictive real estate covenants² in other areas of the city forced Seattle's growing Black population into the Central Area. This, along with the movement of the Central Area's Jewish, European American, and Japanese American residents to other parts of the city made the Central Area a primarily Black neighborhood. While many of the buildings left behind were repurposed by the community, the neighborhood suffered from neglect in the form of discriminatory investment practices and "redlining"³. These restrictions prevented most African Americans from buying, improving, and developing property for most of the nearly seventy years they remained majority occupants of the Central Area.

"As a consequence of redlining, neighborhoods that local banks deemed unfit for investment were left underdeveloped or in disrepair. Attempts to improve these neighborhoods with even relatively small-scale business ventures were commonly obstructed by financial institutions that continued to label the underwriting as too risky or simply rejected them outright. When existing businesses collapsed, new ones were not allowed to replace them, often leaving entire blocks empty and crumbling. Consequently, African Americans in those neighborhoods were frequently limited in their access to banking, healthcare, retail merchandise, and even groceries".⁴

Since World War II, Seattle has hosted numerous military installations. Many Black soldiers made Central Area their home after being discharged from military services. However, currently there are few places that provide services, housing and gathering opportunities for Black Veterans.

The inequalities endured by Seattle's Black residents during these times makes preserving African American culture and community a high priority in the Central Area, wherein much of this history, culture, and community are contained. These guidelines are both in response

² Racial deed restrictions became common after 1926 when the U.S. Supreme Court validated their use. The restrictions were an enforceable contract and an owner who violated them risked forfeiting the property. Many neighborhoods prohibited the sale or rental of property by Asian Americans and Jews as well as Blacks. - Civil Rights and Labor History Project of the University of Washington

³ The term "redlining" was coined in the late 1960s by John McKnight, a sociologist and community activist. It refers to the specific practice called "redlining", began with the National Housing Act of 1934 and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board practice of drawing a red line on a map to delineate an area where banks should not make loans; later the term was applied to discrimination against a particular group of people (usually on the basis of race or sex) irrespective of geography. - Wikipedia

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redlining#cite_note-19

MOHAI, Al Smith Collection



to this historic inequity and aligned with other Seattle programs⁵ which seek to facilitate public and private investments in neighborhoods that support those most in need.

The Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines recognize and encourage Seattle's goals of creating *Strong Communities and People*, as well as *Great Places with Equitable Access*. The document addresses this by applying one of Seattle's Equitable Development Framework's six Equity Drivers⁶ to these Guidelines to achieve equity objectives.

Build on local cultural assets: Respect local community character, cultural diversity, and values. Preserve and strengthen cultural communities and build the capacity of their leaders, organizations, and coalitions to have greater self-determination.

MOHAI, Al Smith Collection



The Central Area Design Guidelines build upon this goal by focusing on the physical design features and future development of the Central Area, and append three additional goals:

Reflect the unique historical character of the Central Area.

Retain the rich characteristics valued by the community's long term residents as well as its new and future residents.

Facilitate inclusive and equitable growth and development.

MOHAI, Al Smith Collection



Given the Central Area's history, it is the intent of this document to highlight guiding principles which support Seattle's Black community. Throughout the process of creating these guidelines, there was a struggle of how best to incorporate African American or Afrocentric design standards, acknowledging that there is no definitive source that comprehensively embodies Black design principles in a meaningful way.

Instead the document incorporates guidelines centered on community accessible open space, interactions between residents and shopkeepers with passersby, and transparency of street uses. While some of this guidance may feel universal, it is particularly important to the African American community, and was explicitly expressed by residents in the Central Area. These themes are at the heart of this document, and drive each of the guidelines outlined in the subsequent pages.


Architects and designers interested in designing a building that is reflective of the African-American community are required to reach out to community stakeholders and review the ideas, people, and resources available at www.seattle.gov/opcd/cadq-documents

⁵ <https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/ongoing-initiatives/equitable-development-initiative>

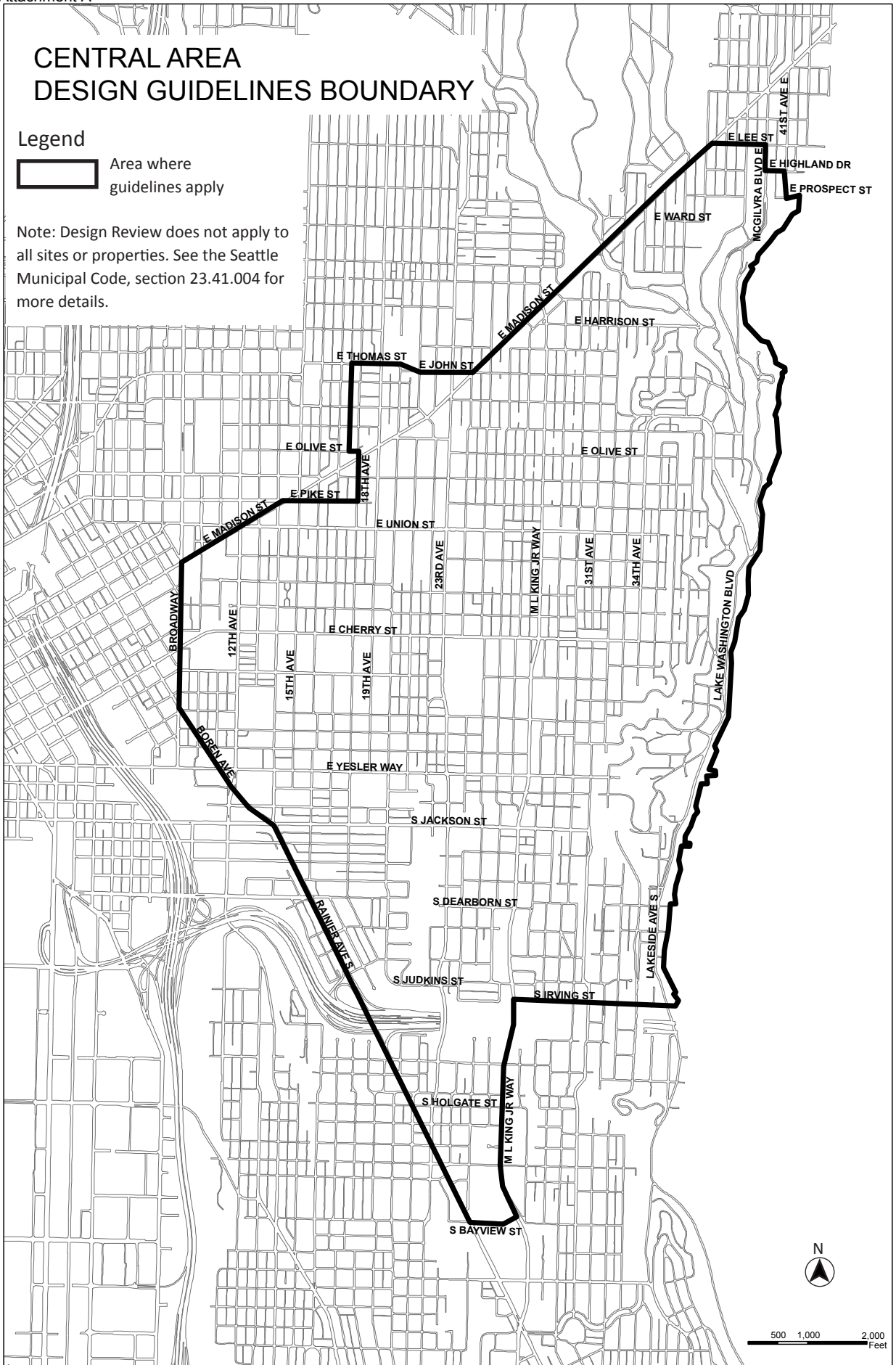
⁶ As part of Seattle's Equitable Development Implementation Plan, the Equity Drivers and Equity Outcomes function as an analytical tool to guide implementation to reduce disparities and achieve equitable outcomes for marginalized populations. The Equity Drivers build on the Puget Sound Regional Equity Network's Principles of Equitable Development.

CENTRAL AREA DESIGN GUIDELINES BOUNDARY

Legend

 Area where guidelines apply

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



Guidelines at a Glance

The Central Area Neighborhood Neighborhood Design Guidelines work together with the City Council adopted Seattle Design Guidelines (also called the Citywide Design Guidelines), which always remain applicable on all projects subject to Design Review. See SMC 23.41.004 for information on Design Review thresholds.

Below is a list of the Citywide Guidelines, and the column to the right indicates if these Neighborhood Design Guidelines provide supplemental guidance for that topic; a “yes” means both Citywide and Neighborhood Guidelines are applicable; a “no” means only Citywide Guidelines apply.

Citywide Design Guidelines

Neighborhood-specific Guidance

CONTEXT & SITE (CS)

CS1	Natural Systems and Site Features Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for design	YES
CS2	Urban Pattern and Form Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics and patterns of the surrounding area	YES
CS3	Architectural Context and Character Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood	YES

PUBLIC LIFE (PL)

PL1	Connectivity Complement, connect and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site	YES
PL2	Walkability Create a safe and comfortable walking environment, easy to navigate and well connected	NO
PL3	Street-Level Interaction Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level, including entries and edges	YES
PL4	Active Transportation Incorporate features that facilitate active transport such as walking, bicycling and transit use	NO

DESIGN CONCEPT (DC)

DC1	Project Uses and Activities Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site	NO
DC2	Architectural Concept Develop a unified, functional architectural concept that fits well on the site and its surroundings	YES
DC3	Open Space Concept Integrate building and open space design so that each complements the other	YES
DC4	Exterior Elements and Finishes Use appropriate and high-quality elements and finishes for the building and open spaces	YES

See the below link for a complete version of the Citywide Guidelines, and a complete list of all Neighborhood-specific Design Guidelines:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/designreview/designguidelines/default.htm>

CS1

CONTEXT & SITE

Natural Systems & Site Features

Citywide Guideline:

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



Lush planter strip shelters the sidewalk and ground floor residential units from car traffic along the street.



Vegetated buffer softens the retail edge while maintaining the streetscape's urban feel.

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Local Topography

- a. Respond to local topography with terraces, stoops, stepping facades, or similar approaches. Use appropriately scaled rockeries, stairs, and landscaping to transition between the sidewalk, building façade, and entrances in keeping with local topographic conditions, and existing neighboring approaches.
- b. If fencing or screening is included in the design, it should step along with the topography.

2. Connection to Nature

- a. Be sensitive to the project's impact on solar access to adjacent streets, sidewalks, and buildings. Where possible, consider setting taller buildings back at their upper floors, or pushing buildings back from the street and providing wider sidewalks so sunlight can reach pedestrian level spaces and neighboring properties. Ensure sunlight reaches building entrances whenever possible.
- b. Provide vegetated spaces throughout the project. Vertical green walls are encouraged in addition to landscape beds.
- c. Incorporate edible gardens and urban farming opportunities within the design, both at grade, and on the roof for larger buildings.
- d. Unify streets through street trees and landscaping.
 1. Consider tree species as a unifying feature to provide identifiable character to a street or project.
 2. Incorporate an irrigation plan for the trees and other landscaping proposed to ensure maintainability of the plants, or include low-maintenance, drought-resistant species.
- e. Create protected sidewalks by utilizing planter strips with lush landscaping, to help create a "room" between the street and the building.

CS2

CONTEXT & SITE

Urban Pattern & Form

Citywide Guideline:

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

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Transition and Delineation of Zones

- a. Where denser zones transition to lower density residential zones, provide privacy layering and scale for ground related entrances, porches, and stoops on façades facing the less dense residential zone.
- b. In addition to building height, use building massing and articulation to transition to single-family scaled fabric. Other acceptable methods include setbacks, building footprint size and placement on the site, building width, façade modulation, and roof line articulation.
- c. The use of appropriately scaled residential elements, such as bay windows and balconies, on larger buildings next to single-family zones are encouraged to better relate to the human scale. This is especially important for buildings four stories and lower.
- d. Along with smaller building massing, the use of breezeways, portals, and through-block connections help to lessen the mass of the overall building, and add to the existing network of pedestrian pathways.



Street fronting entrances with residential scaled detailing help transition to nearby single family homes.



Vertically articulated bays break down the facade scale.



Articulated building massing both horizontally and vertically breaks down the building's scale.

CS3

CONTEXT & SITE

Architectural Context & Character

Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

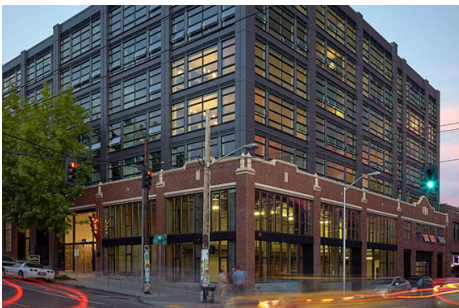
Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Neighborhood Context

- a. Retain and encourage the extension of existing positive attributes of the surrounding neighborhood character.
- b. Where appropriate, encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and/or addition to existing structures as a way to continue the existing neighborhood fabric.
- c. Include high ceilings in ground floor spaces of new structures consistent with older character structures in the vicinity. Floor to ceiling heights of at least 15 feet with clerestory windows are encouraged for commercial ground floors.



Smaller scaled row house bungalow with character defining front porch and detailing.



Contrasting character of the new architectural addition provides a backdrop for the preserved building facade.



Preservation of the ground floor facade, with a compatible addition above retains a portion of the neighborhood's history.



Ground floor retail space with high ceilings and clerestory windows.

Photo credit: Weber Thompson Architects

PL1

PUBLIC LIFE

Connectivity

Citywide Guideline:

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

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Accessible Open Space

- a. Provide safe and well connected open spaces. Utilize walkways and linkages to visually and physically connect pedestrian paths with neighboring projects, shared space and public spaces such as streets. Use linkages to create and contribute to an active and well-connected open space network.
- b. Larger projects around important neighborhood nodes should create generous recessed entries, corner plazas, and more usable open space adjoining the streets. Projects along dense business corridors should maintain a continuous street wall definition contributing to the area's urban feel (see Cultural Placemaker map on page 17 for node locations).
- c. Incorporate transparent and open indoor community meeting spaces at the ground level of larger projects. Avoid having any window coverings or window film that permanently obscure views into or out of the space.

2. Connection Back to the Community

- a. Provide cultural and place-specific open spaces that can be used for a variety of uses including social gathering, festivals, and other larger celebrations.
- b. When providing open gathering spaces for the community, include weather protection to ensure the space can remain active all year long.
- c. Enhance gathering places with lighting, art and features, so that the scale of the art and special features are commensurate with the scale of the new development.



Activated through-block connection provides safe and usable common spaces.



20 minutes magazine

Covered gathering space that can be used throughout the year.



Open space for social activities that can accommodate a variety of uses.



Urban rooftop used for agriculture to which residents and local establishments have access.

architect magazine



Activated courtyard space that is both visually and physically open.

archdaily



Safe play areas adjacent to residential units where families can congregate.

- d. Ensure exclusive rooftop, private, or gated open spaces are not the only form of open space provided for the project. Prioritize common, accessible, ground level open space at the building street fronts and/or with courtyards that are not restricted or hidden from street views.
- e. Not all open spaces need to be landscaped; hardscapes are encouraged when sized and designed to encourage active usage. At these locations, building edges should be inviting while creating well defined open spaces for common use. These spaces are especially important close to prominent intersections, streets, and Cultural Placemaker locations (shown on page 17). In areas where it is not feasible to be open to physical pedestrian access, visual openness should be provided.
- f. When providing vegetation at the roof level, consider urban agriculture instead of a passive green roof to provide residents access to fresh produce.

3. Livability for Families and Elderly

- a. Provide safe areas for children to play where they can be seen. Incorporate seating areas nearby for parents, guardians, and other community members to congregate.
- b. Consider utilizing building rooftops as an opportunity for family gathering and gardening.
- c. Where applicable, preserve alleys for pedestrian access and service use. Provide adequate lighting, transparency and entrances to ensure active usage.
- d. Provide multi-generational community gathering spaces for young and old to recreate and converse together.

PL3

PUBLIC LIFE

Street-Level Interaction

Citywide Guideline:

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

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Frontages

- a. Encourage color, material, and signage variation in storefront design.
- b. Design ground floor frontages in commercial and mixed-use areas that emulate or improve upon the surrounding pedestrian-oriented context, while acknowledging the pedestrian patterns that exist.
- c. Promote transparency and “eyes on the street.” No reflective or obscure glass should be used. Discourage retailers from putting display cases or window film up against windows to maintain transparency into commercial spaces.
- d. Avoid grade separations at retail. Storefronts should step along with the grade (ex: 30’ max length of any floor level on a sloping frontage) with a focus on accessibility.
- e. In pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, provide frequent entrances and expressed breaks along storefronts through columns or pilasters at regular intervals of 25 to 30 feet, to accommodate and encourage smaller retailers and community-oriented businesses.
- f. Live/work spaces should be designed to activate street frontage, maintain transparent windows, and arrange the interior to place work space at the streetwindows.
- g. At residential projects, provide coupled entries where possible to foster a sense of community and visual interest in building entryways. Provide generous porches at these entries to encourage sitting and watching the street.
- h. Provide exterior access to ground floor residential units. This interior/exterior connection should occur frequently with entrances placed at a regular interval.



Open and transparent restaurant frontage that engages with public realm.



Color and material variation in storefront design.



Coupled entrances helps foster a sense of community among residents.



Restaurant storefront that engages with the public sidewalk and street.



Pedestrian furniture and protected open space that is inviting for public use while also providing an outdoor area for businesses to utilize.



Planter zone that incorporates community gardening opportunities.

2. Streetscape Treatment

- a. Emphasize the relationship between buildings and their entrances to the street, pedestrians, and neighboring buildings both adjacent and across the street. Provide special treatment through paving or building materials to highlight each business's presence along the street.
- b. Provide recessed business entries to encourage a slower pedestrian pace where people have sheltered space to stop and gather.
- c. To protect pedestrians along the sidewalk, provide awnings or overhead weather protection at all non-residential frontages, neighborhood nodes, and on west-facing facades with a minimum depth of 6'. Larger commercial projects should have deeper coverage, with a minimum depth of 8' at all street frontages, especially street corners.
- d. Encourage a quality pedestrian environment that provides safe, comfortable routes for pedestrians that reflect the existing character of the building fabric.
- e. Encourage activation of the planter zone to include community gardens, as well as street trees and pedestrian furniture (with SDOT concurrence).
- f. Limit the placement of solid barriers or blank walls next to the sidewalk. Consider using landscape buffers instead.
- g. Provide voluntary space abutting the sidewalk right-of-way for businesses to utilize (ex: cafes, produce markets, street markets, fish vendors, buskers, pop-up shops, etc.).
- h. Encourage a safe, comfortable environment for pedestrians with components of complete streets (ex: wide planter zones, wide sidewalks, and/or building setbacks to allow for usable porches, stoops, and outdoor seating).



Raised entries that create a private stoop at residential entrances, with high transparency railings that facilitate street interaction.

- i. Porches and stoops are the life of the street. Encourage human activity by providing opportunities for neighbors to connect, walk, and talk together on the sidewalk.
- j. To facilitate usable stoops and patios, and to encourage pedestrian-to-resident interaction, buffer private outdoor spaces from the public sidewalk with low walls, planters and landscape layering that defines the private space yet allows for face to face conversations. Tall 'privacy walls' or fences are not acceptable.
- k. If floor levels and site grading allows, the private stoop at residential units should be raised above sidewalk grade, using 30" as an average height, with universal access to the unit included elsewhere.
- l. Residential patio levels recessed more than 18" below the adjacent sidewalk grades are discouraged and should be used discerningly, as they can hinder interaction, and may create safety and maintenance issues.



Frequent stoops accompanying ground floor entrances to residential units provide a place for social interactions.

DC2

DESIGN CONCEPT

Architectural Concept

Citywide Guideline:

Develop a unified, functional architectural concept that fits well on the site and its surroundings.

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Building Layout and Massing

- a. Project concepts should be intelligible and clear. Clarity makes knowledge of the design accessible, thus a larger portion of the community will be able to participate in the planning and design process.
- b. Building design should relate to the earth, using building forms and massing that engage the ground plane, rather than 'float above'. Ground level transparency should still occur on major pedestrian and commercial streets.
- c. Smaller and varied building forms are encouraged. Larger building forms should divide their mass up so that it does not appear as one, monolithic building. These breaks in massing and differentiation should take cues from the surrounding fabric. Vertical and horizontal datums and patterns can help provide a guide for how to articulate and break down the overall massing. Modulated façades for large buildings keep the building inviting and consistent with the finer-grain fabric found in the Central Area neighborhood. As such, projects should use 50' – 75' massing widths as a guide for modulation.
- d. Appropriately scale buildings so that they relate to the scale and form of the adjacent public realm (i.e. the width of the streets and/or affronting open spaces and adjacent smaller scale zones).
- e. Consider all sides of the building and the impacts each façade has on its immediate neighboring context. If building on a slope, consider the project's roofscape as well.
- f. Consider how each façade may respond to climate conditions such as solar shading and prevailing winds.



Regular breaks in the building lessen the perceived bulk from the street.



Upper floor setback creates a usable outdoor "community porch" space.



Broken-up building massing avoids a monolithic form.

urban land institute



Open space adjacent to ground related apartment units provides space for resident interaction.



Smaller scaled commercial façades and footprints are conducive to local businesses.



Smaller façades with transparent storefronts and detailed recessed entries create a slower paced pedestrian environment.

- g. Consider upper floor setbacks along secondary retail zones. In these less dense areas, tall does not always mean urban. Walkable urban places can be achieved at a smaller scale with buildings that have visual texture through their retail frontage, pedestrian scaled signage, tile details, and accented knee walls, as demonstrated by the businesses along Union St, west of 23rd Avenue.
- h. Where compatible with the surrounding streetscape, family sized, ground related apartment units (2 and 3 bedrooms) with usable adjacent open spaces are encouraged.
- i. Encourage clusters of small and local businesses together.
 1. Reduce the scale of commercial façades so that they are conducive to small business tenants.
 2. Include commercial spaces with smaller footprints to promote and accommodate local establishments at street level.
 3. Set the maximum length of street frontage for individual businesses to be consistent with the existing business character of the area.
 4. Where there is not a strong existing character for the area, follow guidance provided in frontage section (PL3-1).

DC3

DESIGN CONCEPT

Open Space Concept

Citywide Guideline:

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

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Common Open Spaces

- Where possible, provide common courtyards and yards that are publicly visible and accessible. These spaces should be activated and layered, so that there is a graduation from private outdoor space, to the fully shared realm.
- Encourage courtyard housing and bungalow courts which use landscaping as the delineation between shared and private spaces, instead of fencing.
- Provide generous common, open space, including shared courtyards and plazas that serve as extensions of the adjacent public realm.

capitol hill seattle blog



Shared residential courtyard

wikimedia commons



Retail courtyard in Madison Valley



Common courtyard in mixed-use building



Residential units provided with individual, private outdoor spaces, a shared walk with seating, and landscape buffer next to the public sidewalk (shown at right).

DC4

DESIGN CONCEPT

Exterior Elements & Finishes

Citywide Guideline:

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



Awnings, façade rhythm, modern bay windows, and a finer grain material texture provide human scale detailing.



Varied use of materials and shapes create an artful screening solution.

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

1. Screening

- a. When screening or fencing is used, it should be designed as an artistic opportunity.
- b. Design screening height, porosity, and materials to allow for views in and out of the site, and visual interaction with the public realm.

2. Building Materials

- a. Consider vibrant and bold uses of color, materials, texture, and light to reinforce local cultural references.
- b. Encourage variation in building materials and employ high quality materials.
- c. Salvage building materials from the site when possible. If reusable materials, such as brick, are removed from demolished buildings, use them in the new development as visible building components.

3. Building Details and Elements

- a. Provide operable windows in a way that promotes natural ventilation.
- b. Incorporate building materials and details that reflect human scale and the craftsmanship of the building process (ex: use of brick or wood for exterior cladding).
- c. Incorporate elements such as bay windows, columns, and deep awnings which add human scale and façade texture.
- d. Façades should exhibit a rhythm of fenestration, and transparency of the inside program out to the public realm.

A.1

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Character Areas

Citywide Guideline CS.B:

Contribute to architectural and placemaking character with local history and cultural references.

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance: Character Areas

The following additional guidance is for projects within the Influence Area and Character Areas as indicated on page 17.

1. History and Heritage

- a. Provide design features to express the African and Black American presence within the neighborhood. Create 'pockets of culture' to represent both the Black American identity within the Central Area, as well as other heritages that have had a large impact on the Central Area's past.
- b. Consider including visual arts as an integral part of the design concept along main street building façades, within highly trafficked pedestrian areas, and within open spaces.
- c. Use any resulting blank walls and surfaces for the visible expression of art that references the history, heritage, and culture of the community.
- d. Include interpretive opportunities (through visual art, signage, markers, etc.) that tell the story of the neighborhood's history in engaging ways.
- e. Encourage the building design to reflect the racial, economical, and multi-generational character of the community.
- f. Developments are encouraged to provide housing and/or amenities for the Black Veteran community.
- g. Provide amenities appropriate to the activities and interests of the local community, such as basketball hoops, chess boards, tot lots and other family oriented activities.
- h. Bicycle use and parking should be encouraged to promote a healthy and active neighborhood and to support local businesses. Bicycle racks should be plentiful, and either be from the Seattle Department of Transportation's bike parking program or be an approved rack of similar "inverted U" or "staple" style. The bicycle racks may also be an opportunity for placemaking, such as having a uniform color for bike racks within the Central District or having distinctive place-names designed into the racks.



Jazz and swing dancing tribute



Mural mosaic at 25th and Cherry



squire park community council

The People's Wall marking the Black Panther Community Center



Katy's Cafe



Garfield Community Center



Starbucks at 23rd and Jackson



Pratt Fine Arts Center

2. For 23rd and Union Character Area

- a. Community characteristics that are unique to this area include:
 1. A cohesive neighborhood grain with historic character that establishes the area as a destination for the surrounding community.
 2. An established, pedestrian-scaled neighborhood-commercial area, with a mix of both commercial and residential uses, grounded by locally-owned businesses and institutions.
 3. Hub of the African and Black American community.
 4. Diverse range of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and places of worship. Specific buildings to note are:
 - Central Cinema (1411 21st Ave)
 - Katy's Cafe (2000 E Union St)
- b. In this area it is especially important to provide additional accessible open space and community gathering opportunities, for example plazas adjacent to the public sidewalks.

3. For 23rd and Cherry Character Area

- a. Community characteristics that are unique to this area include:
 1. Smaller-scaled fabric with many culturally specific restaurants, as well as community and youth-centered resources.
 2. Specific places to note are;
 - Garfield High School (400 23rd Ave)
 - Garfield Community Center (2323 E Cherry St)
 - Quincy Jones Performing Arts Center (400 23rd Ave)
 - Medgar Evers Pool (500 23rd Ave)
 - Eritrean Community Center (2402 E Spruce St)

4. For 23rd and Jackson Character Area

- a. Community characteristics that are unique to this area include:
 1. Larger-scale, mixed-use commercial district with opportunities for startups, and both large and small scaled businesses.
 2. Both a local and regional destination due to its commercial developments, social services, community assets, and shops for daily household needs.
 3. Specific places to note are;
 - Pratt Fine Arts Center (1902 S Main St)
 - Wood Technology Center (2310 S Lane St)
 - Seattle Vocational Institute (2120 S Jackson St)
 - Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (104 17th Ave S)
 - Douglass Truth Library (2300 E Yesler Way)

A.2

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Cultural Placemakers

Citywide Guideline CS.B:

Contribute to architectural and placemaking character with local history and cultural references.

Central Area Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance: Cultural Placemakers

The following additional guidance applies to all projects with street frontage within 200 feet of the street corner, in any direction, at the designated Cultural Placemaker locations as identified on page 17.

1. Cultural Placemakers

- a. Emphasize Cultural Placemakers within the community. The Cultural Placemaker map identifies several key intersections in the Central Area that serve as cultural anchors for their surrounding areas. Projects at these corner locations should stimulate activities and create visual interest to enhance the Central Area's identity and a sense of arrival, such as:

1. Providing street furniture, public art, landscape elements, pedestrian lighting, mosaics, varied paving patterns, etc.
2. Creating façade enhancements at prominent building corners.
3. Creating a building layout and setbacks that provide opportunities for open space that expand the usable space beyond the width of the sidewalks.
4. Providing larger landscape buffers at placemakers along heavier trafficked streets.

capitol hill seattle blog



Garfield High School at 23rd Ave and Jefferson St



Fire Station 6, a historic landmark at 23rd Ave and Yesler Way

soul of america



Madison Temple at 23rd Ave and Madison St



Present day intersection at Cherry St and Martin Luther King Jr Way (right photo), where community anchor Catfish Corner was once located (left photo).

Central Area Character & Cultural Placemaker Map

All projects meeting the design review threshold and within the overall boundary will be subject to all the Central Area Supplemental guidelines described in this document.

- Projects located within the denoted Influence Area are also subject to the History and Heritage section A.1.I, under Additional Guidance.
- Projects within denoted Character Areas are subject to both A.1.I and the respective guidance under section A.1.II, or III or IV, under Additional Guidance.
- Projects meeting the locational criteria at denoted Cultural Placemaker locations are also subject to the guidance under section A.2.I.

