

KING'S HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES



**City of Portland
Bureau of Planning**

Portland, Oregon

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View looking west on SW Park Place from SW King Avenue, circa 1900. This historic streetscape shows some of the district's defining characteristics, such as street trees and elevated lots. (Oregon Historical Society photo)

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

About This Project

Neighborhood interest in creating a historic district in King's Hill dates to the late 1970s, when the area was identified by neighborhood residents as a potential historic district. The King's Hill community of property owners, residents, volunteers, and historic preservation professionals collaborated to realize that potential. After a twenty-year effort and some funding support from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), their goal was realized with the local designation of the King's Hill Historic District in January 1991. Its listing in the National Register of Historic Places followed shortly after.

Like the effort to create a historic district, long-standing community interest in design issues in the King's Hill area generated this project to develop design guidelines tailored for the King's Hill Historic District. Soon after the district's listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the King's Hill community contacted the Bureau of Planning (BOP) to see if specialized design guidelines could be developed for the district. The BOP agreed that tailored guidelines would respond more sensitively and appropriately to design issues in the area than the general guidelines adapted from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which have been used as approval criteria since the adoption of the district. In May 2000, the BOP applied for and received a grant from the SHPO to develop such guidelines.

Work on the project began in September 2000. After conducting preliminary research, staff held the first two of four planned workshops for the project. The first two

workshops were held in December 2000 and January 2001. The third workshop followed in March 2001. Notices for each workshop were placed in the *Northwest Examiner*. Notice of the workshops was mailed to property owners in the King's Hill Historic District, SHPO staff, Portland Historic Landmarks Commissioners, Goose Hollow Foothills League board members, and other interested neighbors identified by the office of Neighbors West-NorthWest. These neighbors included representatives of the Multnomah Athletic Club, the Zion Lutheran Church, and the First United Methodist Church. Comments compiled from the workshops were incorporated into a first draft of this document. The document was refined following the last workshop, which was held on June 19, 2001.

The *King's Hill Historic District Guidelines* were adopted by Portland City Council on November 15, 2001, with an effective date of December 15, 2001. (See Appendix D.)



View of Vista Avenue Apartments and gardens in the King's Hill Historic District.

About This Document

The guidelines for the King's Hill Historic District are intended to guide exterior alterations of existing buildings (including additions) and new construction. The guidelines are designed to maintain and preserve those qualities that make the King's Hill Historic District a unique historic neighborhood. They promote the continued integrity and identity of the district in three broad areas, which are addressed under the following guideline headings:

- Area Character
- Pedestrian Emphasis
- Project Design

Design guidelines are mandatory approval criteria that must be met as part of historic design review. Developers of projects located within the boundaries of the district (see map, Appendix C) are required to explain, in their application, how their design meets each applicable guideline.

Modified guidelines based on the U.S. Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties have been the approval criteria in historic design review cases since the adoption of the King's Hill Historic District (see Appendix B). The guidelines in this document replace the modified guidelines. They also incorporate the intent of the U.S. Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (see page 8).

The King's Hill Historic District Design Guidelines have been prepared to assist in applying the standards to all project work. They are intended to lead or guide the developer and designer. They are not meant to give case-

specific advice, address exceptions or rare instances. It is recommended that the advice of qualified historic preservation professionals be obtained early in the planning stage of the project. Such professionals may include architects, architectural historians, historians, historical engineers, archeologists, and others who have experience in working with historic buildings.

Because some discretion is involved in interpreting the guidelines, it is recommended that those who are planning a project work with the Office of Planning and Development Review (OPDR) in designing the project.

Another important reference source for projects in the district is the National Register of Historic Places context statement. The context statement written for the King's Hill Historic District was used as a primary source of information for developing these design guidelines. The historic context statement not only describes the history and character of the King's Hill district; it is also referenced by design review staff in OPDR as part of the historic design review process for alterations and new construction. The context statement is appended at the back of this document (see Appendix A).

Design Review in Portland

In Portland, there are special areas and individual buildings that are important to the city's character. The King's Hill Historic District has been identified by the Portland City Council and the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission as an important historic resource. To ensure that new development and alterations contribute to the integrity of these areas, the city requires historic design review in the

King's Hill Historic District. Figure 1 on page 6 illustrates the historic design review process.

Design review provides an opportunity for public evaluation of new construction and exterior changes to buildings and sites. The design review process is used to evaluate architectural composition, compatibility, and the quality of new construction and exterior changes. Building materials, landscaping, and location of parking are also elements considered during design review.

Design review ensures that:

- Special historical, cultural, and architectural features of a site or area are protected and enhanced;
- New development and changes enhance the surrounding area; and
- New development enhances the environment for pedestrians.

Historic design review is an important tool in meeting Portland's Urban Design Goal, which is part of the *Comprehensive Plan*. It also may be used to implement goals of community, neighborhood, and area plans. In historic districts, historic design review can help ensure that development is compatible with and enhances the surrounding neighborhood.

How Design Review Works

The review process timeline varies relative to the scale of the proposal. Smaller proposals require minor reviews. They are reviewed initially without a hearing and the process typically takes about two months (Type II

procedure). Larger proposals require major reviews. They are reviewed at a public hearing, and the process typically takes three to four months (Type III procedure).

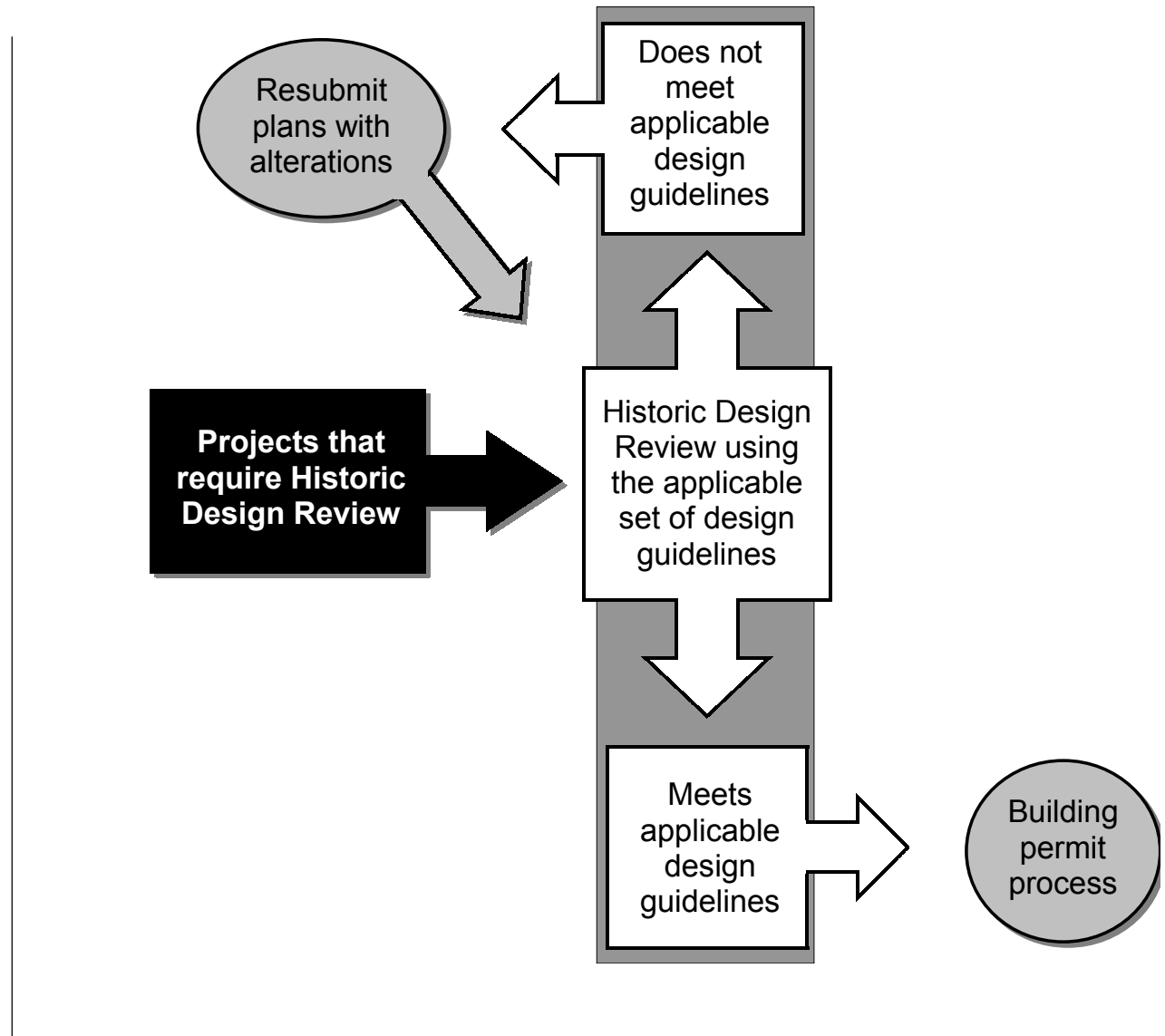
Generally, projects of a lower cost are considered minor, and those of high cost are considered major. The threshold for Type III, major design review, is a dollar value identified in the *Portland Zoning Code*. The sum of all construction costs, shown on all building permits associated with the project, is used to determine project value and review type.

The Type II procedure is an administrative review process with notice and the opportunity to appeal the decision to a hearings review body. Projects reviewed by a hearings review body in the King's Hill Historic District will be heard by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission. The Type III procedure requires a public hearing before the Historic Landmarks Commission. The Commission's decision may be appealed to the City Council. Projects reviewed through a Type III procedure are required to go through a pre-application conference. Projects reviewed through a Type II procedure may go through a pre-application conference but are not required to do so. There is a fee for pre-application conferences as well as for the design review procedure. The Type II and Type III procedures are described in the *Portland Zoning Code*, Chapter 33.846, Historic Reviews.

Planners within the Office of Planning and Development Review (OPDR) and the citizens appointed to the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission conduct the historic design review process. The Landmarks Commission is a volunteer board and includes members with expertise in historic preservation. The members of the commission are nominated by Portland's mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

Figure 1.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS



General Considerations for Historic Design Review and Historic Design Guidelines in the King's Hill Historic District

Design guidelines are mandatory approval criteria that must be met as part of design review. They also inform project designers, developers, and the community as to what issues will be addressed during the design review process. The guidelines state broader concepts than typical development standards in order to provide flexibility to designers, yet they are requirements. Applicants are responsible for explaining, in their application, how their design meets each applicable guideline.

The design review process is flexible; it is intended to encourage designs that are appropriate for their locations. For this reason, design guidelines are qualitative statements. Unlike objective design standards, which must be met in prescribed ways, there are typically many acceptable ways to meet each design guideline. It is not the City's intent to prescribe any specific design solution through the design guidelines.

During the design review process, the review body must find that the proposal meets each of the applicable design guidelines. Proposals that meet *all* applicable guidelines will be approved; proposals that do not meet *all* of the applicable guidelines will not be approved. If the review body approves the proposed design, they may add conditions to their approval if necessary to ensure the proposal's compliance with the guidelines. The review body would rather that applicants revise their designs to address deficiencies than have the City impose a solution through conditions. The review body may also address aspects of a project's design that are not explicitly covered

in the design guidelines. They may find that such action is necessary to better achieve the goals and objectives for design review as embodied in the design guidelines specific to the district.

In addition to meeting the applicable design guidelines, development projects are subject to the development standards contained in the Portland *Zoning Code*. The design review or historic design review processes may include the approval of proposed modifications to development standards. The applicant must show that the development proposal meets the modification approval criteria stated in the Portland *Zoning Code*. Some development standards are not eligible for the modification process. These standards use an adjustment review process and must meet the criteria for an adjustment review.

A design guideline may be waived in the design review process under certain conditions. In some cases, a design guideline may be waived by the design review "decision maker." For example, an applicable guideline may be waived as part of the design review process when the proposed design better relates to the scale and character of its setting or better enhances the character of the district than would a project that complied with the guideline. If a waiver is requested, the applicant(s) must explain, in their application, how the project would enhance its setting or context in a better way than would be possible if each guideline considered for waiver was followed. Allowing waiver of one or more guidelines during the design review process reflects the city's concern that the guidelines not become a rigid set of requirements that stifle innovation.

Areas that overlap with the Central City Plan District must also meet Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines. Some portions of the King's Hill Historic District are located within the Central City Plan District. The map in Appendix C identifies the areas of King's Hill that overlap with the Central City Plan District. In that area, the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* are mandatory approval criteria for design review, augmented by the King's Hill Historic District design guidelines. For example, a proposal in King's Hill that overlaps with the Central City Plan District would have to meet both the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and design guidelines adopted specifically for King's Hill.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are addressed in design guidelines for the district. To protect the character of King's Hill, exterior rehabilitation should conform to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* are a nationally recognized set of guidelines for historic buildings and buildings within historic districts. The guidelines in this document do not include the Secretary's *Standards* but incorporate their intent. The guidelines in this document also incorporate and replace the approval criteria for historic resources found in Section 33.846.140.C of the Portland *Zoning Code* (see Appendix B). Section 33.846.140.C has represented the approval criteria for historic design review cases since the adoption of the district in 1991.

Properties taking advantage of the Special Assessment Program, a financial incentive administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), are subject to review by the SHPO. For those projects, exterior and interior modifications are reviewed by the SHPO using the

Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* as criteria.

Changes to public right-of-ways are not ordinarily subject to design review. Maintenance, alterations, and changes in the public right-of-way that are consistent with City standards are allowed without design review.

Portland's Office of Transportation reviews the impact of developments and alterations on traffic, parking, and the public right-of-way. Office of Transportation staff identifies public improvements needed to support development projects and minimize potential negative impacts. Required improvements depend on the scale of the proposal and include, but are not limited to:

- new street construction;
- frontage improvements;
- sidewalks;
- street lights;
- traffic signals;
- signing; and
- pavement markings.

If development proposals seek to vary from the applicable City standards developed by Portland's Office of Transportation, projects in the right-of-way must first be approved by the Portland Office of Transportation and then by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission. When their review is required, the Landmarks Commission will apply guidelines contained in this document as part of their review. Examples of these kinds of projects might include proposals for non-standard lighting or parking improvements.

Standards and guidelines for trees in the public right-of-way are determined by the Urban Forestry Division of Portland Parks & Recreation. Tree requirements for new development (on-site trees) are described in the *Portland Zoning Code*, Chapter 33.248. A list of street trees that are appropriate for planting in the district has been developed in consultation with Urban Forestry and the neighborhood. (See Appendix E.)



Mature trees line a street in the King's Hill Historic District.

KING'S HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Background

The purpose of the design review process and of these guidelines is to ensure that new buildings, exterior alterations, and other improvements recognize and respond to the qualities that characterize the King's Hill Historic District. Throughout this document, the guidelines make reference to the area's character and/or require that the project be compatible. A key consideration facing those planning an alteration or development project is the nature of the area's character-defining features.

As mentioned previously, King's Hill was locally designated as a historic district then listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Historic context documentation prepared as a basis for the National Register nomination describes the district's characteristics and qualities and informs the design review process. The characteristics of the area that projects must respond to are incorporated in these guidelines and based on the district's context statement.

The following background information, derived from the historic context statement of the nomination, highlights important characteristics and features of the King's Hill Historic District. The context statement should be reviewed by those planning an alteration or development project. (See Appendix A.)

Setting and Boundaries

The King's Hill Historic District lies to the west of the downtown core of the Central City Plan area of Portland. It is an irregularly shaped, five-block by seven-block area of mixed residential and commercial use located in southwest Portland. Situated on a slope, the district is bounded by W. Burnside Street to the north, SW 21st and SW 20th Avenues to the east, SW Canyon Road and SW Jefferson Street to the south, and Washington Park to the west. To the east is downtown Portland. (See map in Appendix C.)

The historic district boundary is based on historical, visual, and physical factors. Historical factors include early



This undated photograph shows a portion of the Old Plank Road, now known as SW Canyon Road. The King's Hill Historic District is bounded by SW Canyon Road and SW Jefferson Street to the south. (Oregon Historical Society photo)

settlement patterns and building use. Visual factors include consistency in building styles, height, scale, materials, massing, and setback. The physical factors include the development pattern of major streets, plat lines, and topography.

Building Styles and Urban Character

King's Hill is one of Portland's oldest residential districts. The district was primarily developed in a 60-year span between 1882 and 1942, the historic development period described in the National Register nomination. The buildings constructed during the historic development period establish the basis of the architectural character of the neighborhood.

The quality of building design and materials used in their construction define the King's Hill Historic District's built environment and its urban character. The longevity of these buildings (many are over 100 years old) is a testament to the quality and flexibility of their designs, as well as the durability of their construction. Together, these buildings contribute to the district's atmosphere of quality and permanence; this tradition of design quality and permanent construction is the legacy of many of Portland's fine architects and craftsmen.

The King's Hill Historic District contains both commercial and residential uses. However, the majority of buildings within the district were designed as single- and multi-dwelling residences. Buildings were constructed in numerous styles between the 1880s and 1940s, including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Mediterranean styles. Although many different architectural styles and several building types are represented, there is a high degree of

consistency within the district in terms of building height, scale, and massing. (See Appendix A for the Historic Context statement.)

Late 19th and early 20th century residences are the predominant building type in the area. Although most of these are single-dwelling residences, the district is interspersed with numerous apartment structures, ranging from low- and medium-rise structures built during the historic period to modern-era high-rise structures. This wide diversity is in part due to developments that significantly altered the historic character of the district after the historic period (1882-1942). Between 1950 and 1970, several older, single-dwelling residences were demolished and replaced with apartment complexes, which were generally unsympathetic toward the existing historic buildings. These developments increased the urban density in the district, primarily in its center.

The district's urban density reflects a combination of elements and characteristics, both historic and more contemporary. While the district's primary significance is due to its concentration of historic buildings, the district also represents an urban environment with a character that has evolved since the area was first settled over one hundred years ago. This urban character is defined by a combination of elements, including a varied mix of building forms, styles, sizes, and materials. Other influences are the design, placement, and composition of architectural and landscape elements, streets, sidewalks and open spaces, and views of the surrounding environment. In a compact area like King's Hill, it is impossible to view one characteristic or feature of the district without seeing another, since they are likely to be adjacent to each other. Although the buildings that are considered significant and historic are the majority of structures in the district, they

coexist alongside more contemporary structures. Thus, the resources in the district must be seen as contextual and interrelated. Exterior alterations and new construction affect not only individual sites but the historic fabric of the King's Hill Historic District as a whole.

Vacant, developable property in the King's Hill Historic District is relatively scarce. Despite the small number of vacant parcels, new construction on infill sites may have an effect on the district's character in the foreseeable future. Over a longer period of time, it is important to consider the number of parcels that may be redeveloped and apply design standards that address the potential long-term impact on the district of multiple new developments. These guidelines encourage new construction that is compatible with the historic character and architecture of the district, but that does not attempt to mimic or imitate the older buildings.



Historic view looking north across W. Burnside Street from the Solomon Hirsch Gardens. The gardens were located immediately east of SW Vista Avenue, an area that is now occupied by apartment buildings. (Oregon Historical Society photo)

Significant People

The King's Hill Historic District is significant not only for its buildings and landscapes but also for its association with significant persons. The original claim-holders of the area engaged in real estate investment early in the history of the district, selling off parcels of land in the area and amassing wealth from the sales. In the late 1880s, as the area became more accessible with improved transportation access, notable Portland figures moved into the area. Architects were employed to design stately homes in the popular styles of the period. Today, King's Hill retains a significant legacy of buildings constructed for Portland's prominent citizens by the city's leading architects. For more information, see Appendix A.

Landscape

The landscape is a strong unifying element within the district. The district is situated on a slope, affording views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson, and Mt. St. Helens in the distance to the east and northeast. This attribute is reflected in the inclusion of part of the district within a designated View Corridor (see map in Appendix C).

The district's topography also creates opportunities for siting properties on elevated lots. Numerous properties in the district were constructed well above street level and incorporate walls constructed of rock, basalt, and brick, along with concrete steps, paths, and rock gardens. These landscape features add to the ambiance of the area and give the district a strong sense of cohesion.



View of landscaping and mature vegetation at the Vista Avenue Apartments at 800 SW Vista Avenue.

Mature vegetation characterizes the district's streetscapes, which are defined by historic trees, shrubbery, and formal gardens. High-canopy street trees form a visual border between the sidewalk and the street, as can be found on streets such as SW Park and SW St. Clair Avenues.

Although the King's Hill Historic District has experienced significant change over the past 50 years, many of the district's historic landscape features, such as the conifers along SW Vista Avenue and the street trees along SW Park Place, survive and help to maintain the district's character.

Zoning and Development

There are currently four zoning designations found in King's Hill, ranging from R5, a single-dwelling residential zone, to CX, a commercial zone. The R5 properties are found in the southern half of the district. There is also R1, medium-density residential zoning, in the northwest corner of the district. The relatively few CX-zoned properties are located on the southern border (near SW Canyon Road) or the northern edge (along W. Burnside St.). The balance of the district -- most of the north half and the eastern edge -- is zoned RH, a high-density, multi-dwelling residential zone (see map in Appendix C).

Zoning maps developed by the City of Portland show the King's Hill area had a mix of zones dating back to at least 1938. The earliest maps included low-density ("residential") and high-density ("apartment") zones along with a "business" zone. In 1946, 1950, and 1957, the residential and apartment zones were revised. The 1959 *Zoning Code* revisions allowed increases in the maximum height and number of stories allowed in the most intensive residential zone. The majority of apartment towers were built in the 1950s and 1960s under zoning requirements that differ from current development standards. During the 1950s and 1960s, variances to development standards were often granted.

There is some correlation between zoning and development patterns in King's Hill. Several distinct areas of the district share broad development characteristics. The north edge of the district is clearly defined by W. Burnside Street and the presence of commercial buildings aligning that street. A sharp rise in elevation defines the northwestern edge of the district, where a distinct area is defined by historic multi-dwelling structures. The eastern

edge of the district is defined by a clear change in building type, style, and a drop in elevation. The southern boundary is defined by a sharp drop in elevation, below which is SW Jefferson Street and SW Canyon Road. In general, single-dwelling residences dominate much of the southern half of the district. Multi-dwelling structures are more common towards the center and the north half of the district, where there is a cluster of high-density development. The western edge of the district is defined by a change in land use and building type, age, and style, such as apartment complexes that do not contribute to the historical or architectural character of the district. At the center of the district, a number of high-rise apartments and condominiums form a high-density residential area.



The Fordham Apartments at 742 SW Vista Avenue are located at the northwest edge of the district, which is defined by historic multi-dwelling development.

KING'S HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Framework of the Guidelines

The King's Hill Historic District Design Guidelines are grouped into three categories: Area Character, Pedestrian Emphasis, and Project Design.

- **Area Character** guidelines recognize the special characteristics of the area and encourage development that respects these characteristics.
- **Pedestrian Emphasis** guidelines address design issues and elements that contribute to visual interest along the streets.
- **Project Design** guidelines address specific site and building characteristics and their relationship to the district's historic character.

Using the Guidelines

Design guidelines are qualitative statements that address the desired character of development. Their qualitative nature provides flexibility for designers and developers of new projects and to suggest methods and solutions for preserving historic qualities of the King's Hill Historic District. This flexibility must not be construed as rendering the guidelines merely advisory or otherwise diminish their legal effect as mandatory approval criteria.

Each design guideline has a title, background statement, guideline language, and examples of projects that have successfully met the guideline or exhibit qualities that the guideline addresses. Only the guideline language is adopted by ordinance. The background statement and examples are provided in this document to provide a context for the guideline.

The title is in ALL CAPS and uses an alpha-numeric prefix that relates to the three-section framework described on this page. For example, guideline **A 4 GATEWAYS** is the fourth guideline of the **Area Character** set of guidelines.

The **Background** statement outlines reasons for the design guideline. The background statement also provides clarification among related or similar guidelines and supports guideline language. The background text is not adopted by ordinance and may be adjusted and/or updated as new design issues arise.

The guideline language is presented in bold type following the word "**Guideline.**" This language is adopted by ordinance and represents the approval criteria against which the design review staff make findings.

Examples are provided to illustrate each guideline. Each example is accompanied by text and a photograph that describe the way the guideline is, or could be, met. The examples should not be considered as the only possible design solutions. They are intended to stimulate new ideas and provide direction for designers and developers. The captions and examples are not adopted by ordinance and may be updated as new proposals are built.

Design Guideline Applicability

Not all proposals must meet all the guidelines. Development proposals vary in size, scale, and complexity. Large proposals, such as new buildings, face different design considerations than smaller proposals, such as exterior alterations or rehabilitation of a building façade. The set of applicable design guidelines is tailored to the size, scale, and complexity of the proposal.

The Design Guideline Applicability Chart on the following page identifies which guidelines apply to types of proposals.



This townhouse development at 2022-2038 SW Madison Street illustrates many design elements discussed in the King's Hill design guidelines, including a change in elevation, projecting and recessed elements, plantings, and parking.

Table 1. DESIGN GUIDELINE APPLICABILITY BASED ON PROJECT TYPE

DESIGN GUIDELINES	PROJECT TYPE	New Mixed Use and Alteration to Mixed Use	New Commercial and Alteration to Commercial	New Multi-Dwelling and Alteration to Multi-Dwelling	New Institutional and Alteration to Institutional	New Detached and Attached Dwelling [1]	Alteration to Single and Attached Dwelling [1]	Parking Lot Walls and Fences [2]	Signs and/or Awnings [2]
AREA CHARACTER									
A 1 Historic Character									
A 2 Architectural Styles									
A 3 Historic Material, Features, and Color									
A 5 Historic Change to Buildings									
PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIS									
P 1 Stopping and Viewing Places									
P 2 Embellish the Different Levels of Buildings									
P 3 Landscaping of Off-Street Parking Lots									
PROJECT DESIGN									
D 1 Exterior Alterations									
D 2 New Construction									
D 3 Differentiate New Construction									
D 4 Integrate Barrier-Free Design									
D 5 Building Context and Composition									
D 6 Site and Landscape Characteristics									
D 7 Elevated Lots, Fences and Retaining Walls									
D 8 Exterior Materials and Features									
D 9 Window Features									
D 10 Roof Features									
D 11 Main Entrances									
D 12 Parking Areas and Garages									
A 4 Gateways	Projects located near Gateways must also meet this guideline.								

Indicates applicable design guidelines

[1] If the project includes parking lot walls and/or fences, or signs and/or awnings, the guidelines identified for those project types must also be met.

[2] If the project includes only parking lot walls or fences, and/or or signs and/or awnings, only the guidelines identified for those projects must be met.