

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR OUTER SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORHOODS

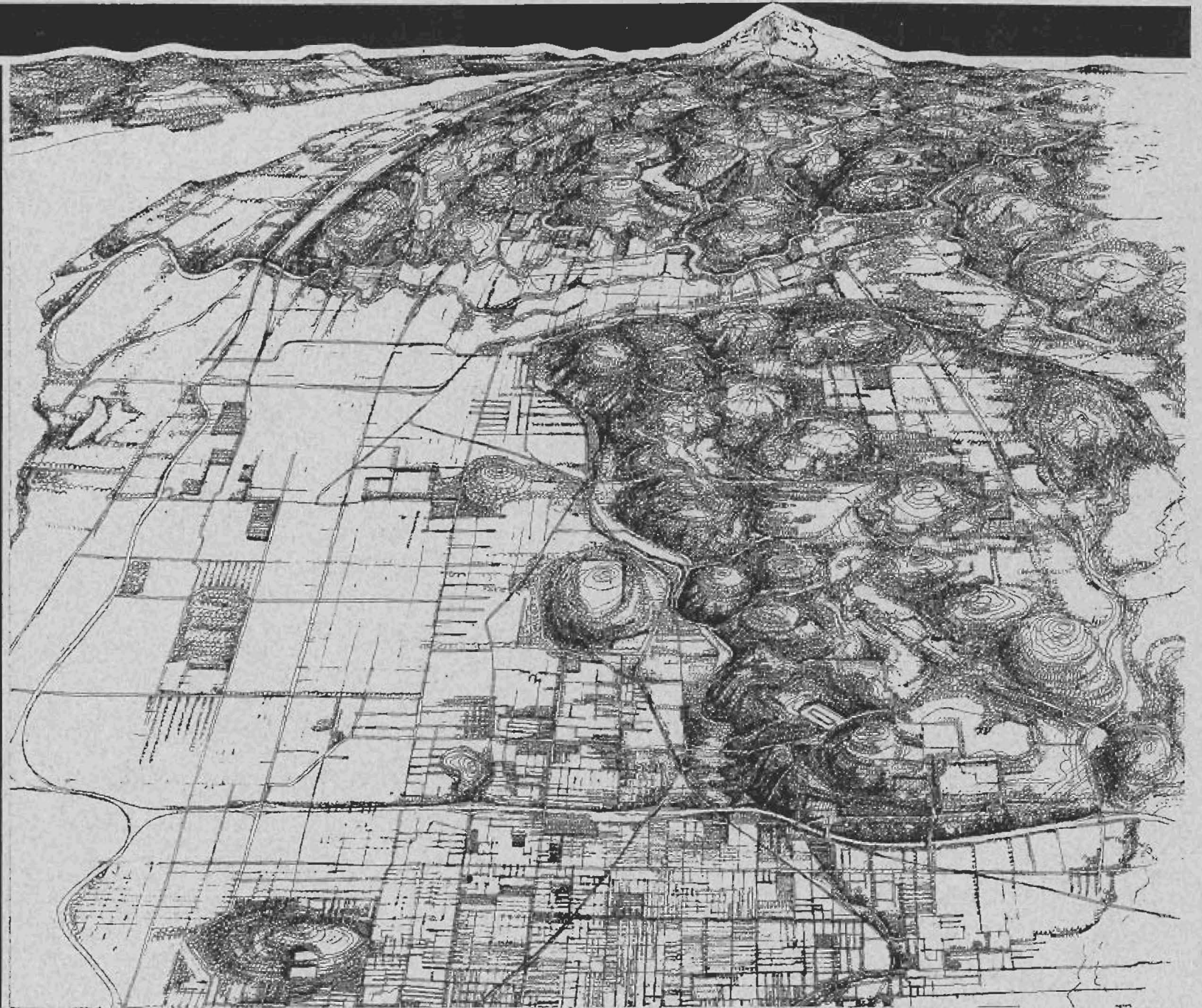
Neighborhood
Design Guidelines
for Residents and Developers

by: *Portland Community Design*

Prepared in Cooperation
with the
City of Portland Bureau of Planning



March 1996



BUILDING BLOCKS for OUTER SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood Design Recommendations for Residents and Project Developers

by

PORTLAND COMMUNITY DESIGN

For the Benefit of Outer Southeast Portland Residents, Present and Future

R. Peter Wilcox, AIA

Project Director

Emily E. Gabler

Intern Architect

Terry Griffiths

Intern Planner

Nancy Hiss, AIA

Graphics

Hilda Cohen

Student Intern

Cover Perspective by Jim Pettinari

Volunteer Neighborhood Advisory Group

Jim Barrett, Foster-Powell, ROSE CDC

Mary Davis, Brentwood-Darlington

Jenny Peckinpaugh, Mt. Scott-Arleta, ROSE CDC

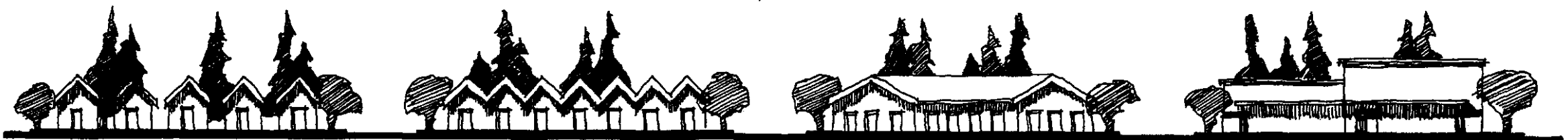
Nick Sauvie, Lents, ROSE CDC

Jean Edmundson, Mt. Scott-Arleta

Maude Daniels, Mt. Scott-Arleta

Gail Trump, Brentwood-Darlington

Chuck Amato, Mt. Scott-Arleta



This Project Made Possible by a Grant from Portland General Electric

Deane Funk, Economic Development Project Manager/Kathy Wyatt, Manager of Community Resources

Printing Provided by Portland Bureau of Planning, Michael Harrison, District Planning Manager

©Copyright PORTLAND COMMUNITY DESIGN

Printing and Distribution rights granted to the PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING

First Printing
MARCH, 1996

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

•SINGLE & ATTACHED DWELLINGS DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

a• Streetscape

b• Interest & Compatibility

c• Front Entry

d• Security

e• Parking

f• Outdoor Rooms

g• Sense of Place

•MULTI-UNIT DWELLINGS DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

a• Streetscape

b• Interest & Compatibility

c• Front Entry

d• Security

e• Parking

f• Outdoor Rooms

g• Sense of Place

•MIXED-USE & COMMERCIAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

a• Streetscape

b• Interest & Compatibility

c• Front Entry

d• Security

e• Parking

f• Outdoor Rooms

g• Sense of Place

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Page

6

7

8

9

10-13

14-17

18-19

20-21

22-23

24-25

26-27

29

30-31

32-33

34-35

36-37

38-39

40-41

42-43

45

46-47

48-49

50-51

52-53

54-55

56-57

58-59

60-61

Acknowledgments

This book could not have been undertaken without the generous funding provided by **Portland General Electric**. PGE has taken an active interest in the Outer Southeast Plan, doing its part to help this portion of the company's service area develop into increasingly vital and livable communities. **Deane Funk**, of PGE's Economic Development Department, was our contact person and helped us conceive of the project. He provided timely advice on the project's scope and accompanied us on a bicycle tour of the ROSE neighborhoods in May. **Ms. Kathy Wyatt** was also instrumental...

We are very grateful to the neighborhood citizen volunteers who provided ideas and feedback during three workshops in the spring of 1995; their input was so important to the project that their names have

been listed among the authors on the title page. Special thanks to workshop participants **Nick Sauvie** of ROSE Community Development Corporation, **Mary Davis** of the Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood and **Nina Canfield** of the Foster-Powell Neighborhoods for providing feedback on our parallel proposals to the Portland Planning Commission.

Space for holding the workshops was provided by the Portland Parks Department at the Mt. Scott Community Center.

Michael Harrison, Chief Planner for Community Planning, and **Jerry Brock**, Senior Planner, both of the Portland Planning Bureau, made helpful comments on an early draft of this document and helped us thoroughly understand the opportunities and constraints of new zoning designations, particularly for the R2.5a-overlay zone.

Hilda Cohen, a graduate student in the joint Portland State University-University of Oregon Urban Design Architecture Program, worked with us in the early stages of the project to analyze alternative scenarios for multi-dwelling development. In outer southeast, her internship was made possible by a grant provided from the **Oregon Community Foundation**.

We want to thank other current and former Portland Community Design staff who contributed to these ideas. These include **Ken Moholt-Siebert** and **Virginia Hodgdon**.

Finally, we want to thank the Portland Bureau of Planning, **Michael Harrison**, District Planning Manager, for printing and distributing this booklet to Outer Southeast residents.

Introduction

This booklet addresses the characteristics which make liveable neighborhoods and add to the sense of community. It is intended to be useful as a guide for neighbors who want to understand how development can improve neighborhood livability. It is also for developers who would like to create buildings which attract strong neighborhood support. Some of the attributes presented are specific to Outer Southeast Portland (“OSE”), especially the sections regarding “Sense of Place,” but many of these design principles will apply throughout cities and towns in the Portland metropolitan region, and beyond.

The **Neighborhood Building Blocks** is organized into three major divisions that correspond to the typical building and zoning contexts of an urban neighborhood. These are:

- Single-family & duplex residential
- Multi-family residential
- Commercial/mixed use

Within each division are seven parallel “building blocks” that describe characteristics to be addressed within each zoning context. These building blocks include:

- Streetscape
- Interest & Compatibility
- Front Entry
- Security
- Parking
- Outdoor Rooms
- Sense of Place

Each building block sub-section starts with an overview and photographs of good, mostly local examples – followed by simple, clear recommendations illustrated with line drawings.

The **Neighborhood Building Blocks** took more than a year to produce. The process began with listening to the ideas and concerns of neighbors, through a series of workshops at a local community center. PCD analyzed

alternative design possibilities for specific sites using both current and proposed zoning. A number of excursions through the neighborhoods – and conversations with residents – on foot and bicycle contributed to the ideas. To target areas that fit most closely with PCD’s mission of serving low-income people and distressed neighborhoods as well as to make the scope of the project more manageable, the four neighborhoods served by ROSE Community Development Corporation were used as a focus for the creation of these guidelines. These include Brentwood-Darlington, Foster-Powell, Lents, and Mt. Scott-Arleta.

These **Neighborhood Building Blocks** emphasize the importance of the “streetscape.” Streetscape is the shared public realm of the street with its two adjacent rights-of-way. Streetscape quality is almost certainly the key factor in neighborhood livability and the reinforcement of a sense of community.

Design Recommendations

These guidelines presume a traditional street grid, like that in the ROSE neighborhoods. A grid of streets subdivides neighborhoods into relatively small and well-connected blocks that are less prone to traffic congestion and readily orient residents and visitors alike.

The recommendations for commercial development are aimed at existing neighborhood commercial districts, with the goal of creating business districts that will have a strong orientation to pedestrians. Such districts can provide local goods and services as well as contribute to the community welfare.

Since Outer Southeast has a significant number of block with alleys, the booklet includes a few recommendations for alleys. Alleys are at times controversial because of the perception that they may foster crime. Nonetheless, alleys offer potential for moderate increases in housing density with little

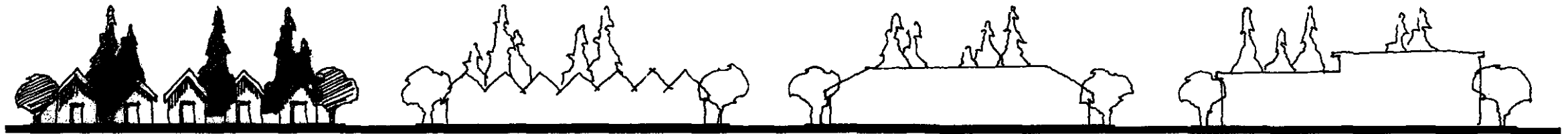
impact on neighborhood streets. Full utilization of existing alleys will eliminate the need for driveways and curb cuts which interrupt the street edge, hinder pedestrian safety (especially for children), and increase the amount of environmental damage caused by storm runoff. Accessory dwellings (in-law apartments) located off alleys have been suggested as a way to provide additional security ("eyes-on-the-alley") while increasing the availability of affordable housing units within safe and livable neighborhoods. This was a commonplace pattern in many parts of the country in an earlier era. This has advantages over larger scale low-income housing projects.

These guidelines were created by Portland Community Design. PCD is a non-profit design and planning office located at 2014 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Portland 97212. "PCD's" mission is to "improve the homes and neighborhoods of members of our community with limited financial resources," through affordable housing design and other community

benefit projects, participatory neighborhood planning, demonstration infill developments, and community education.

PCD's executive director and the principal for this project, R. Peter Wilcox, AIA, was also the project director and principal author of **The 10 Essentials for North/Northeast Portland**, a booklet of residential design guidelines written in conjunction with the Albina Community Plan. **The 10 Essentials** has successfully guided community development corporations and other developers in the design of housing that is compatible with the established "fabric" of buildings in northeast neighborhoods for some time. Most of the Ten Essentials' precepts were adopted into the Albina Community Plan by the City of Portland – which printed and distributed the booklet as they do with this one. That booklet's wide use and acceptance prompted Portland General Electric to suggest that PCD develop a similar set of guidelines to complement the Outer Southeast Plan. These guidelines are the result.

Single & Attached Dwellings



STREETSCAPE

A great neighborhood street has many "layers" working together.

An inviting "streetscape" of visible entries, houses with ample windows, attractive yards, sidewalks & street trees encourages neighborly interaction and promotes safety.

The largest public open space in any neighborhood, is its network of streets! The impression made by the fronts of houses, and their yards, as they line up along the street, gives the neighborhood its character and "curb appeal."

The streetscape, or visual realm of the street, can have many "layers" - the planting strip, sidewalk, front yard and the front of the house itself. Fences or landscape borders are additional layers often used to separate public space and private yards.



Tree lined street w/ wide planting strip



Front Porches as a layer



Line-up of house fronts



Pedestrian Corridor



Attention to property edge

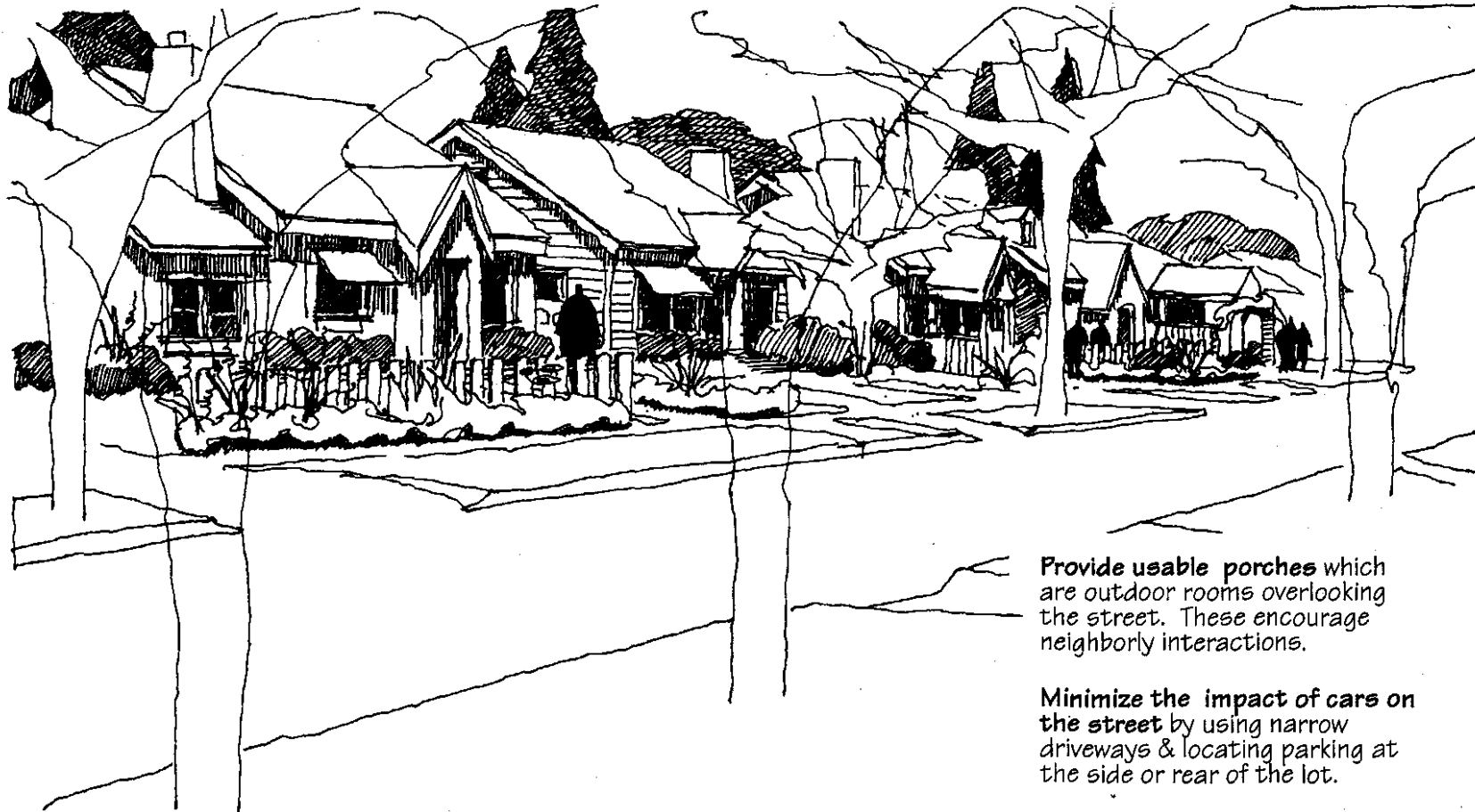


"Layered" Streetscape: Including planting strip with trees, sidewalk, terrace slope, yard with trees, foundation plantings, porch and front facade of house.

A great neighborhood street has many "layers" working together.

STREETSCAPE: Neighborhood character is created by the qualities of streets, house fronts, porches, front yards, and the fences and planting along the sidewalks.

Create places for people at the front of houses, rather than places primarily for cars.

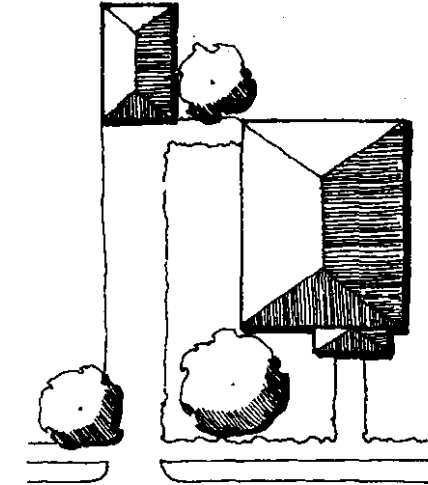


Provide usable porches which are outdoor rooms overlooking the street. These encourage neighborly interactions.

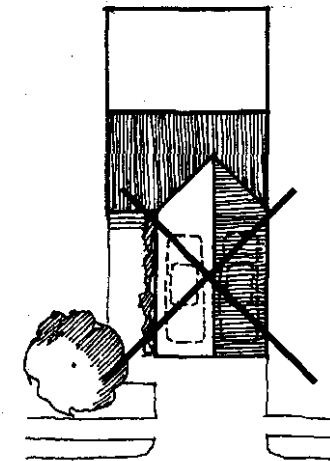
Minimize the impact of cars on the street by using narrow driveways & locating parking at the side or rear of the lot.

Place landscaping "layers" in front yards to create a friendly, green environment and establish the character of the whole block.

STREETSCAPE



Use single curb cuts - 9' preferable whenever possible to keep the sidewalk walkable and safe.



Avoid large garages in the front- Blank garage doors and wide areas of paving are unattractive and hurt the neighborhood's security.

STREETSCAPE

A great neighborhood street has many "layers" working together.

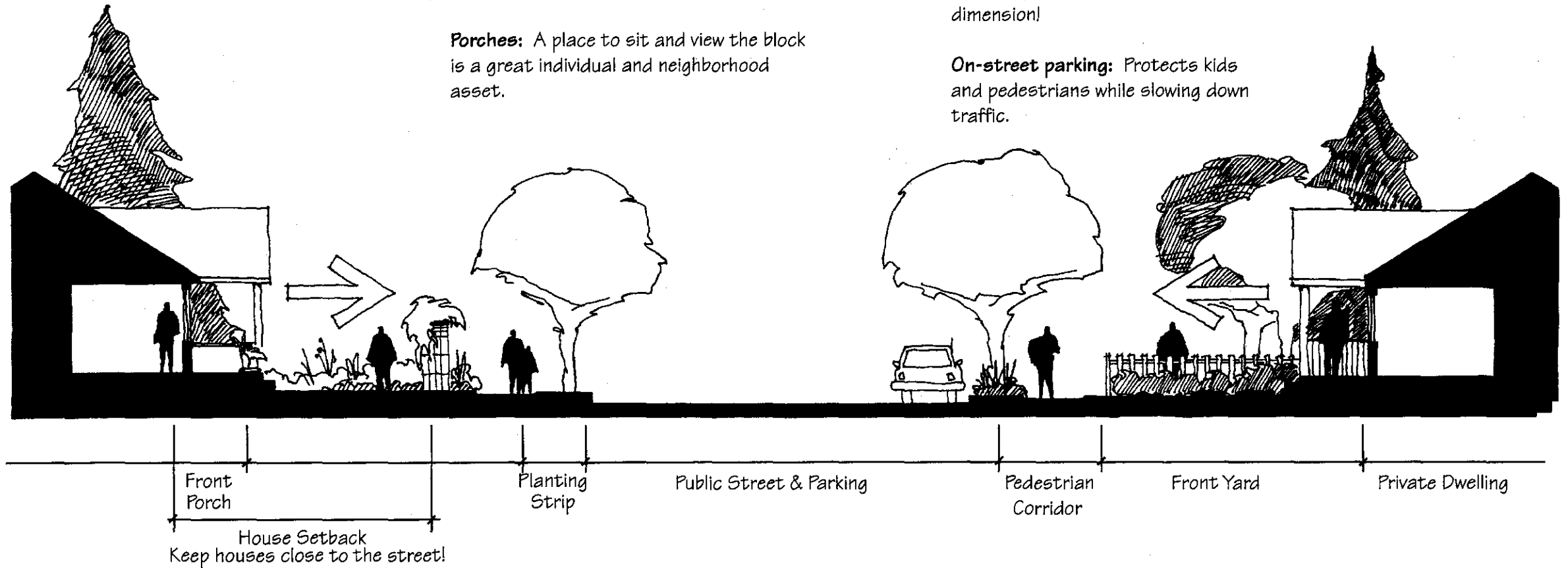
NEIGHBORHOOD STREET LAYERS:

Front fence: A low transparent one with a prominent gate or arbor at the sidewalk is a hallmark of OSE houses.

Porches: A place to sit and view the block is a great individual and neighborhood asset.

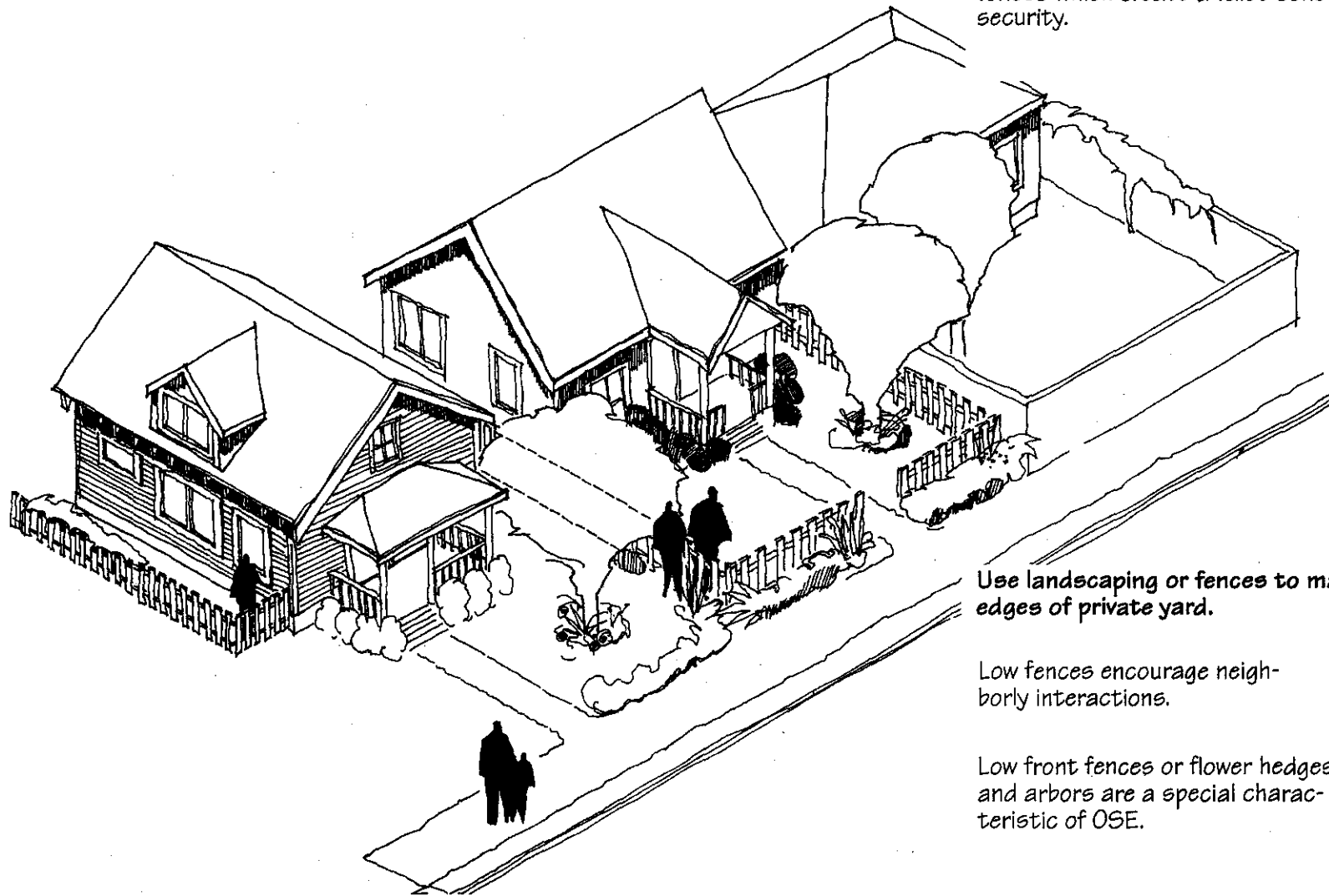
Street and yard trees: Filter views, provide shade and help define space. Flowering or fruit trees add another dimension!

On-street parking: Protects kids and pedestrians while slowing down traffic.



A great neighborhood street has many "layers" working together.

The careful design of adjacent front yards allows people to relate to each other and to the street.



Avoid tall or opaque (unfriendly) fences which create a false sense of security.

Use landscaping or fences to mark edges of private yard.

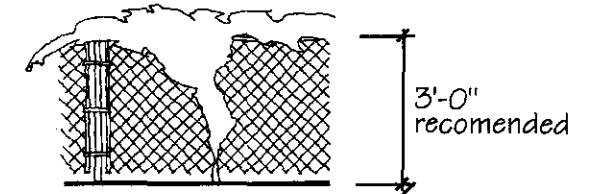
Low fences encourage neighborly interactions.

Low front fences or flower hedges and arbors are a special characteristic of OSE.

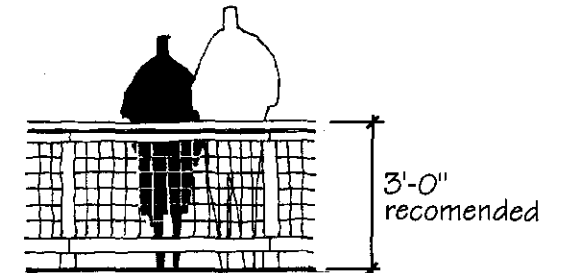
STREETSCAPE

"Good fences make good neighbors".

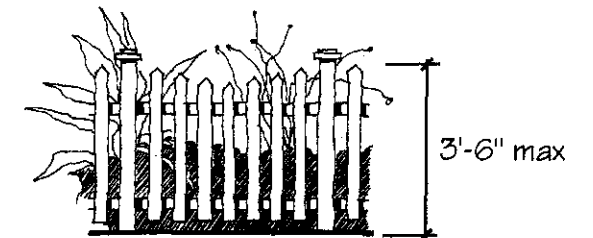
- Robert Frost



Typical chain link fence softened & enlivened with climbing vines and/or flowers.



Wood on wood posts with metal fabric fence cap - Has more visual interest than plain metal.



Traditional picket fence - minimum 50% transparent. A great neighborhood enhancer even if left unpainted.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

The traditional neighborhoods of Outer Southeast have a mixture of housing styles. These include farm houses, bungalows and other houses built prior to World War II, to more recent ranch-style infill housing. Most of these homes are modest in size making it important to think about scale when adding new structures.

Character and interest are enhanced through the use of architectural details such as special siding treatments and eaves, wide trim boards, small pane windows, exposed-truss porches, and dormers on the roof.

Color, accentuating architectural detail, is a wonderful and inexpensive way to enliven a structure and enhance a neighborhood.

Use appropriate scale and detail.



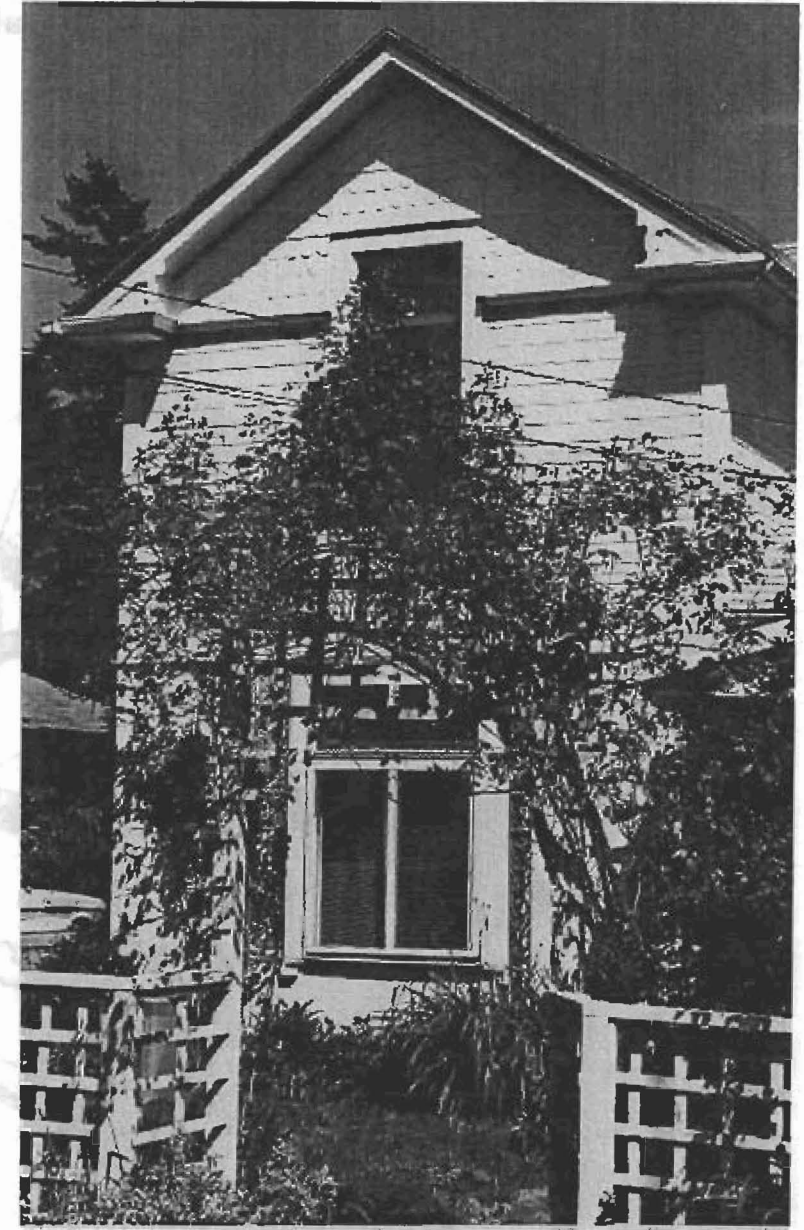
Traditional OSE house



Trim Details



Porch Details

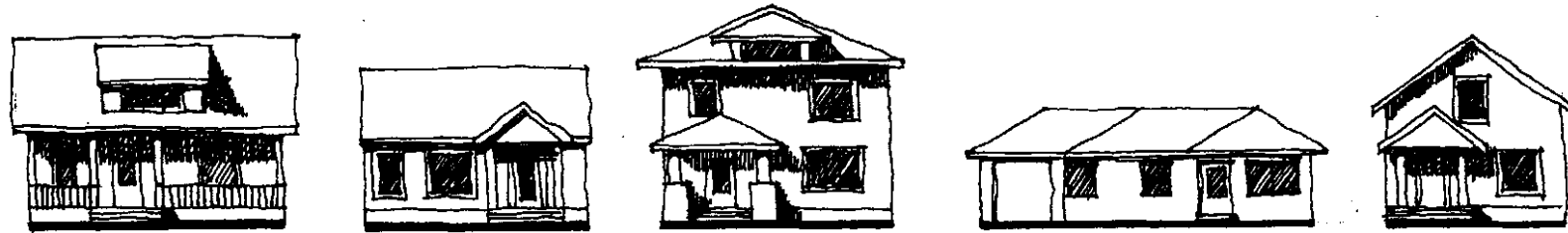


Rose arbor adds interest

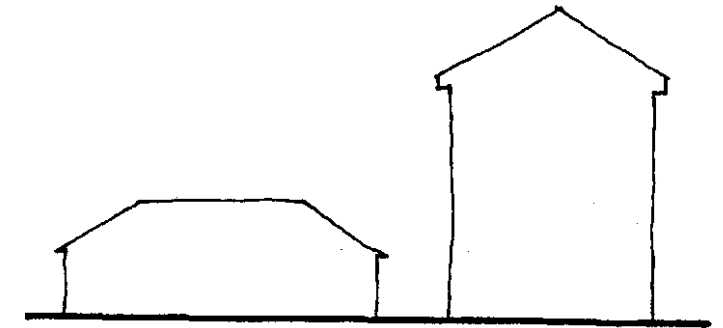
Use appropriate scale and detail.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

DESIGNING FOR SCALE DIFFERENCES:



A VARIETY OF EXISTING STYLES: a characteristic of outer Southeast.



Different sizes and shapes create a compatibility conflict.

OSE's tall trees and abundant landscaping help to unify the variety of styles and scales that are prevalent in the area.



STRONG UNIFYING ELEMENTS: trees and landscaping. Also: fences, porches, dormers, and trim.

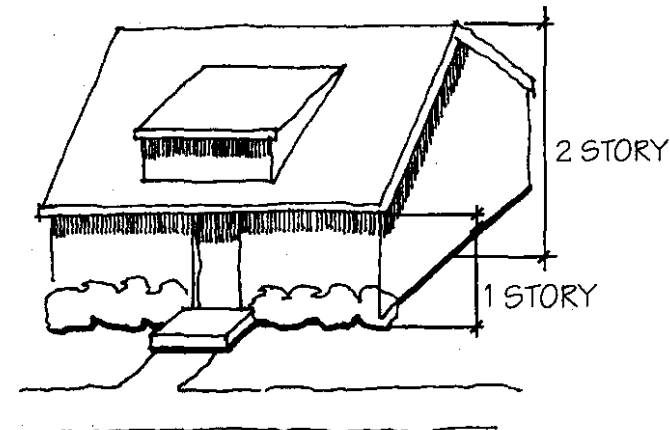


Design elements which break down the scale differences.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

ROOF ORIENTATION:

The alignment of the roof ridge parallel to the street is a predominant form in OSE and has the effect of decreasing the apparent height.



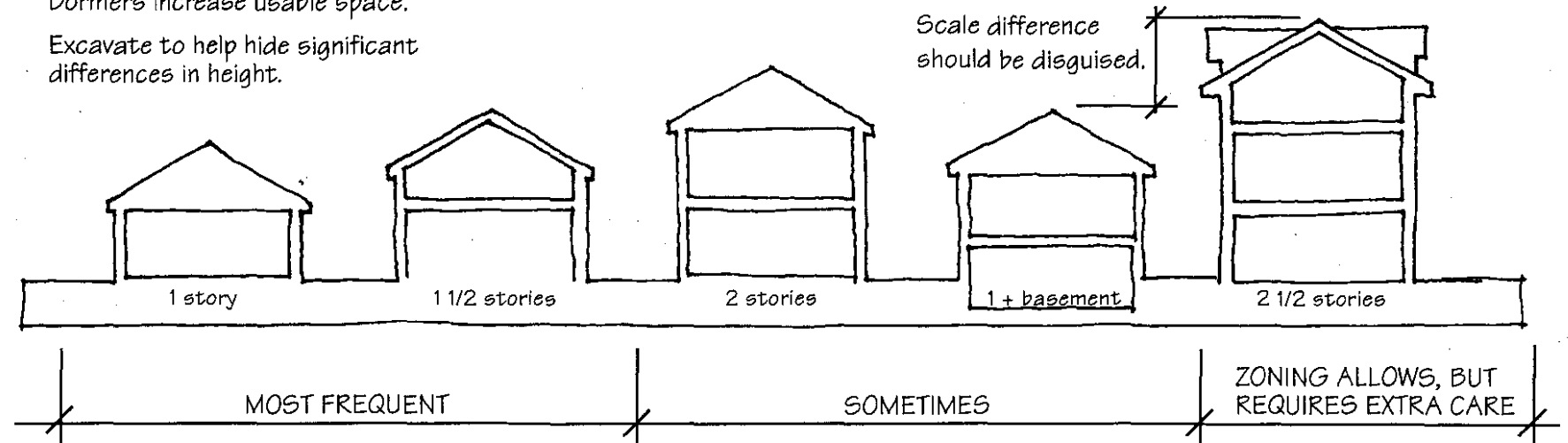
Use appropriate scale and detail.

COMPATIBILITY OF SCALE (HEIGHT):

Hide the building's height within the roof.

Dormers increase usable space.

Excavate to help hide significant differences in height.



USE BUILDING FEATURES TO ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS OF SCALE:



Variety in texture can reduce the visual mass of a building



Repetitive small scale elements such as windows



Porches with exposed rafters & interesting columns break down apparent size



Large overhangs & dormers make taller buildings seem shorter

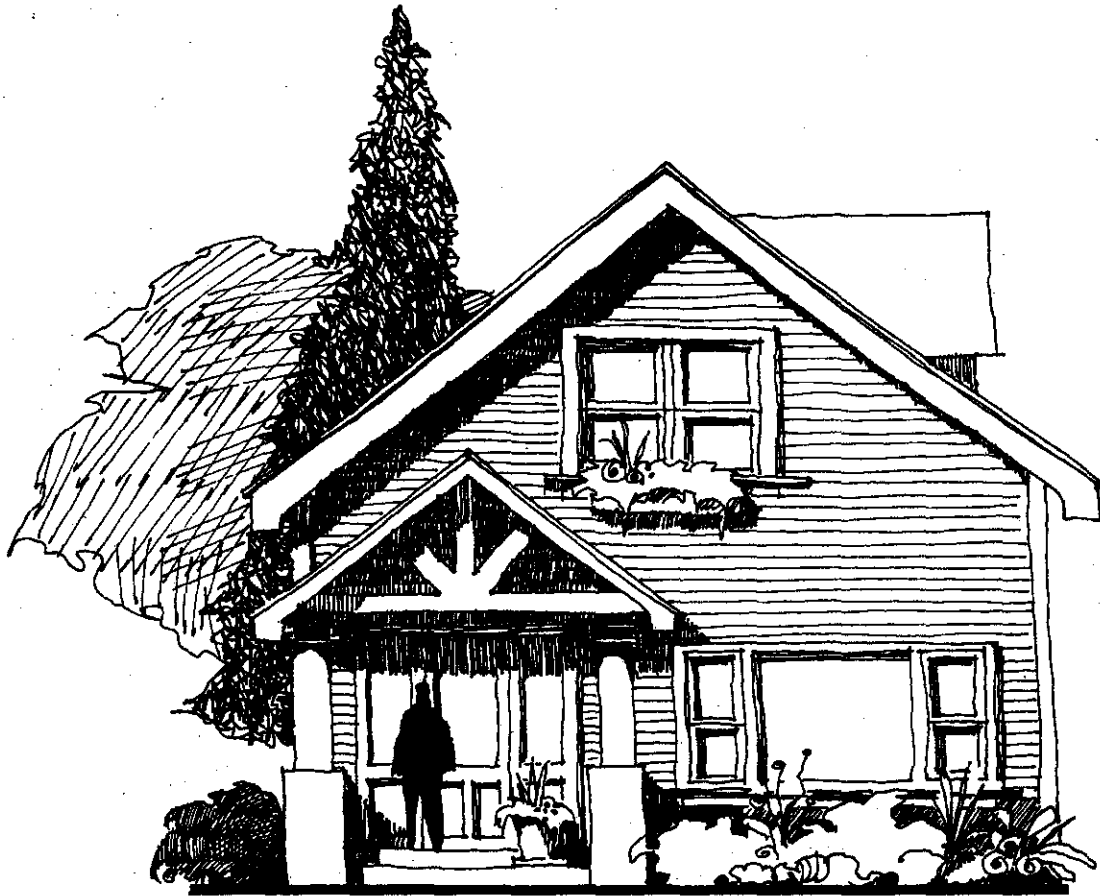


Variety in form & texture help reduce the apparent size

Use appropriate scale and detail.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

ADD CHARACTER WITH TRIM, DETAILS & COLOR:



Dormers not only add interest but also add usable living space while keeping a taller building from seeming out of scale with its shorter neighbors.

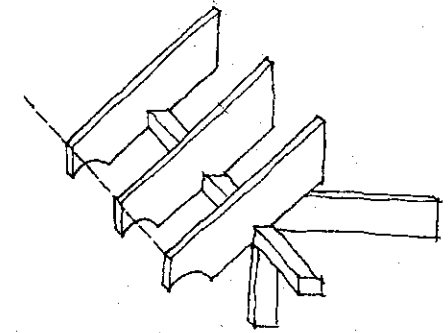
The ends of fascia boards and rafters can be special details that provide character.

Always put trim around windows, especially those with aluminum frames; 6" is typical in O.S.E. Avoid trim under 3 1/2"

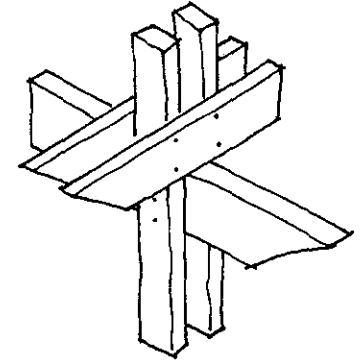
Porches and Front Entries are good places to put special details.

Details & Trim are most natural where a vertical and horizontal surface meet - as where the wall meets the roof, or where two planes turn a corner.

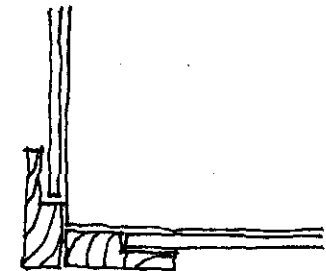
When remodeling match details with the original details closely.



Exposed rafter ends add interest.



Spaced columns & rafters add interest.



Use pocketed wood trim made from 2x6's when using vinyl lap siding leaving room for expansion. Vinyl trim extrusions are too narrow and look cheap!

FRONT ENTRY

The front door should be a visible and inviting focal point at the front of a house. The front entry can be accentuated through the use of architectural detail, color and landscaping.

In the northwest's wet climate, the entry should be sheltered. Protection can be provided by a special overhang or, better, by a usable front porch.

The shadows created by porches add interest to the entry and help eyes adjust between inside and outside light levels.

Low plantings or trellises can be used to frame the entry. Landscaping or flower borders along the pathway welcome the visitor to the front door.

Make the front door prominent and interesting.



Garden at the Entry



Landscaping the Path



Use of a Special Door



Porch and Path



Framed Entry Sequence: sidewalk, front walk, steps, porch, and entry.

Make the front door prominent and interesting.

PROVIDE A USABLE FRONT PORCH:



A porch is an ideal entry:

Transition between the public street and the private house.

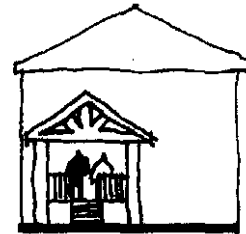
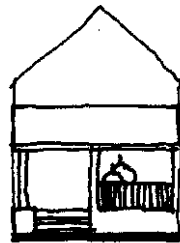
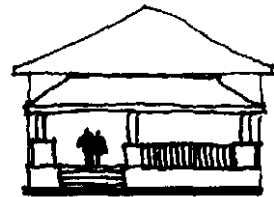
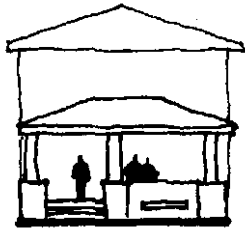
Shelters people at the front doorway.

Columns and railings frame the front door.

Acts as an outdoor room.

Heightens the sense of security.

Interesting details, light and shadow focus our attention at the front entry.



VARIETY OF PORCH TYPES:

FRONT ENTRY

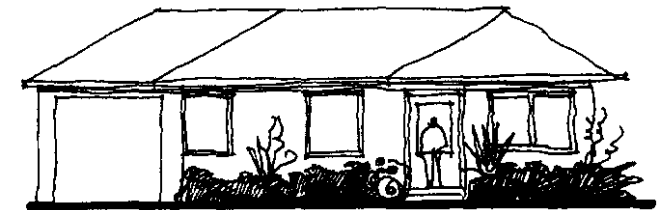
SPECIAL ENTRIES: If your house can't or doesn't have a front porch, you can...



Use a special frontdoor and frame to create a welcoming entry.



Create a gateway with an arbor, or with a special pedestrian gate.



Frame the entry with plantings.

SECURITY

Houses lined up along a street, and facing each other on opposite sides of a street, provide a perfect opportunity for neighbors to keep an eye on each other. This mutual security system can be enhanced by forming or joining a Neighborhood Block Watch.

Streets and front yards that are alive with neighborhood activity send a clear signal to criminals to go elsewhere.

Design ideas that contribute to security include:

- Eliminate barriers to visibility such as high or opaque fences, hedges/ and protruding garages.
- Provide generous windows in the front of a house to help with casual surveillance.
- Install energy efficient porch and backyard lights that can be left on overnight.
- Plant rose bushes in front of windows on the house's sunny side.

Each house should provide "eyes on the street".



Low transparent fences delineate public-private spaces, &

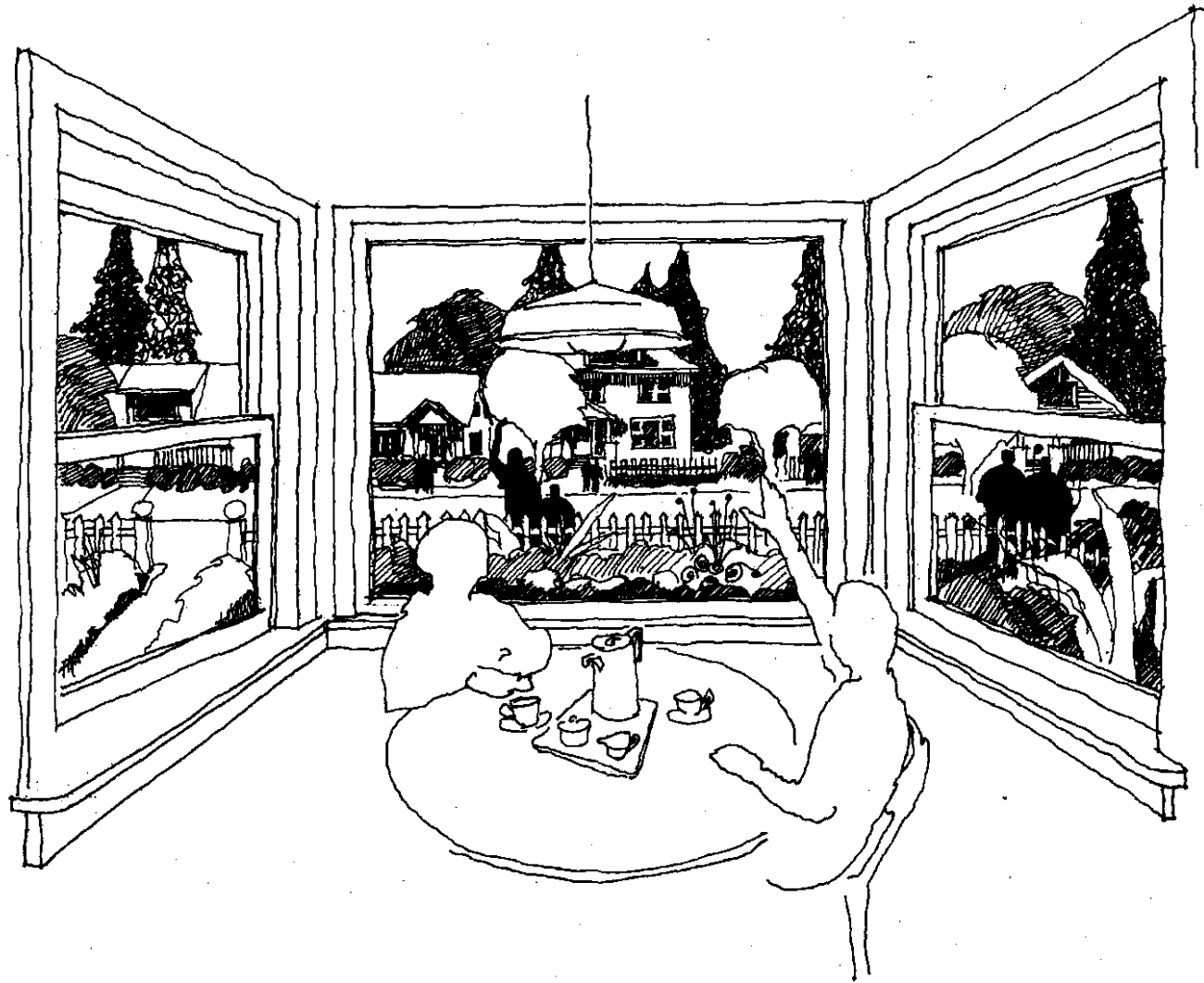


Encourage neighborly interactions.



Casual street surveillance.

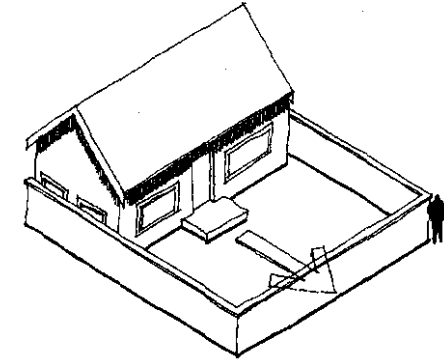
Each house should provide "eyes on the street".



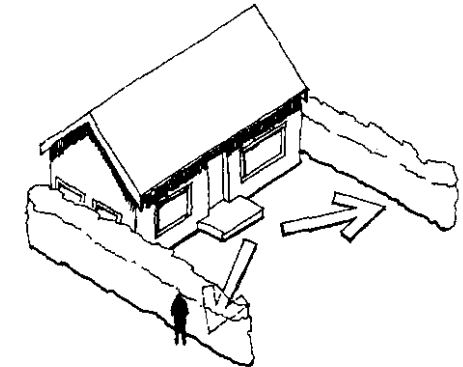
Provide generous windows in active rooms at the front of the house and allow those in the house to see their neighbors.

SECURITY

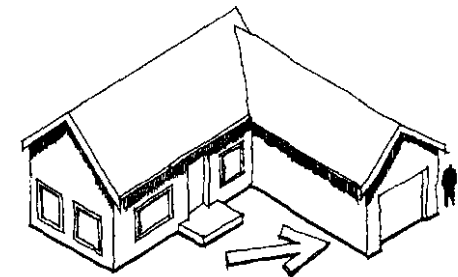
VISUAL BARRIERS:



HIGH FENCE: Opaque - NO, Transparent - OK.



TALL HEDGES: NO - Blocks views up & down street.



GARAGE IN FRONT: Blocks views & dominates house.

PARKING

The location and size of garages and driveways have an enormous impact on the appearance of a house and on the neighborhood.

Garages that jut out in front of a house present blank walls of garage doors to the street and block views to & from the house. Locating the garage toward the rear of the lot, or at least setting it back behind the front wall of the house, allows a more interesting and active part of the house to be dominant.

Single and double car garages can be built on side and rear lot lines, increasing the useable yard area and avoiding unuseable side setbacks.

Converting an existing garage at the front of a house into a family or other active room enlivens the street and increases security.

Accessing parking from an existing alley is ideal: It eliminates the need for a driveway and for a street-facing garage.

Garages and driveways should not dominate the streetscape.

GOOD SOLUTIONS:



Tire tread drives, rather than a fully-paved driveway, minimize interruption of the streetscape & decrease run-off.



Minimized curb cut with Accessory Unit above garage is a street friendly solution for this garage.

BAD SOLUTIONS:



Excessive paving is unattractive, expensive, & environmentally unsound.



Garage dominates the streetfront / excessive paving.

Garages and driveways should not dominate the streetscape.

PARKING

Locate parking access on the narrow end of a corner site to allow maximum, accessible outdoor space.

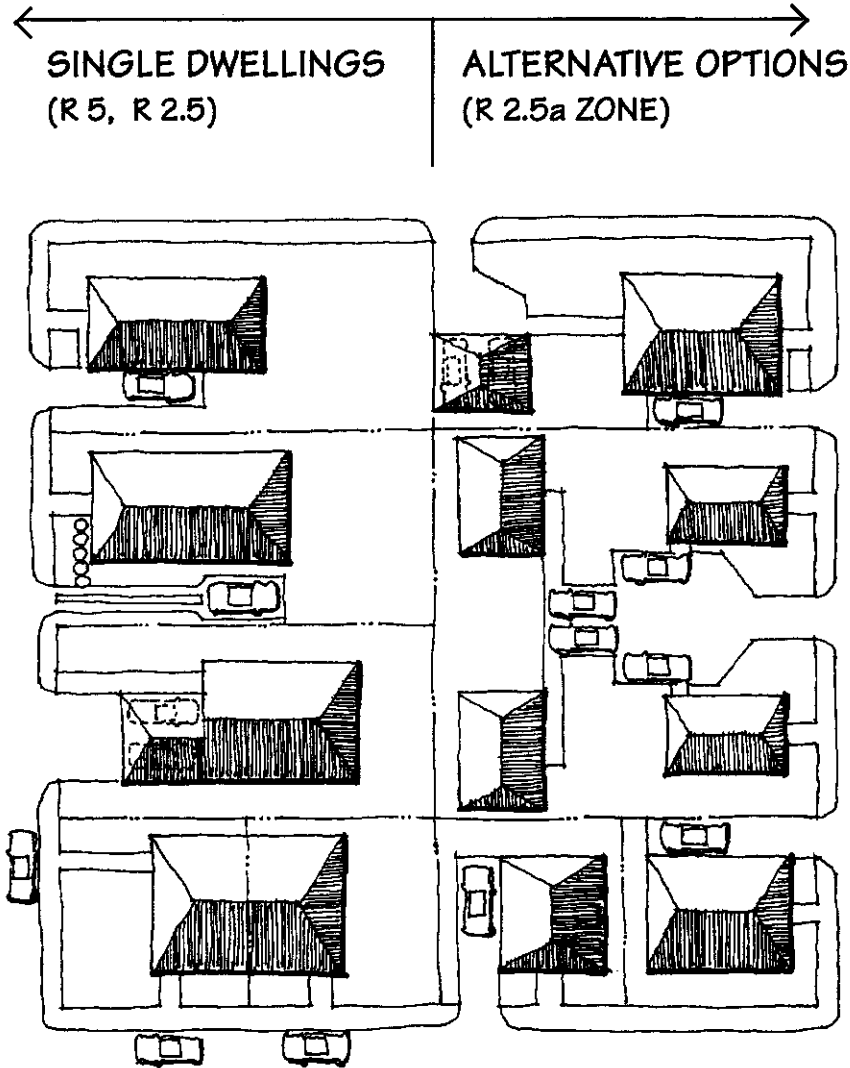
Place driveway and garage on lot line to maximize useable outdoor space.

Use tire tread driveways to help minimize the impact of parking on the streetscape.

NO!!! Entry Hidden, Less Security.

Hide the garage- avoid garage doors being the dominant element facing the street.

Encourage on-street parking to allow more usable outdoor space.



THIS BLOCK PLAN ILLUSTRATES A VARIETY OF WAYS TO ACCOMODATE GARAGES AND PARKING. THE PLAN ALSO ILLUSTRATES SOME DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS IN SINGLE FAMILY ZONES.

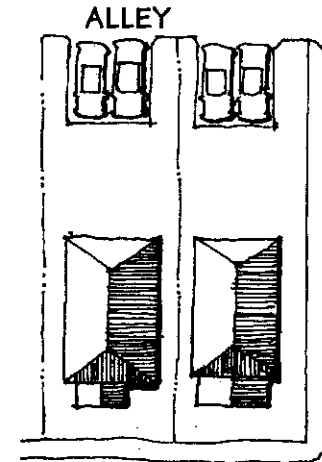
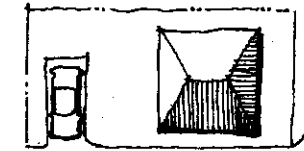
Minimize the amount of paving
-Use single curb cuts at the street edge.

3 Units:
-Duplex with studio apartment above garage. (One unit must be owner occupied)

Double lots provide opportunities for shared driveways.

4 Clustered Units:
-Shared driveway with special paving doubles as "courtyard".
-Possibility of separate ownership

Corner Duplex:
(Subdivided 50 x 100 lot)
-Keep driveways away from corners.



UTILIZE ALLEYS FOR PARKING ACCESS
-increases security too.



GARAGES CAN HAVE ACCESSORY UNITS IN R 3, R2.5a, R2 & R1 ZONES. This can improve security and provide needed housing.

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Careful placement of housing units and garages, or outdoor parking spaces, on a building's site can maximize the amount of useable outdoor space. Trees, shrubs and planting beds can be positioned within yard areas to establish boundaries and define space, creating "outdoor rooms."

Skinny, leftover spaces such as narrow setbacks between buildings do not work well as outdoor rooms - these are good places for walkways, vegetable gardens, flowers, or storage areas.

Front and backyard outdoor rooms should be visible and easily accessible from inside the house. Windows and a convenient doorway can make the outdoor room an extension of the house. A pleasing outdoor view will make the inside of a home seem more attractive.

Create "outdoor rooms" with buildings and landscaping.



Generous back "rooms" make great play space for children.



"Room" created by canopy of trees and porch.



Front yard "room" created by fences & plantings.



Porch "room."

Create "outdoor rooms" with buildings and landscaping.

Place buildings carefully on a lot to create sizable, useable outdoor areas.

Outdoor rooms can also be created by the grouping of trees and other plantings.

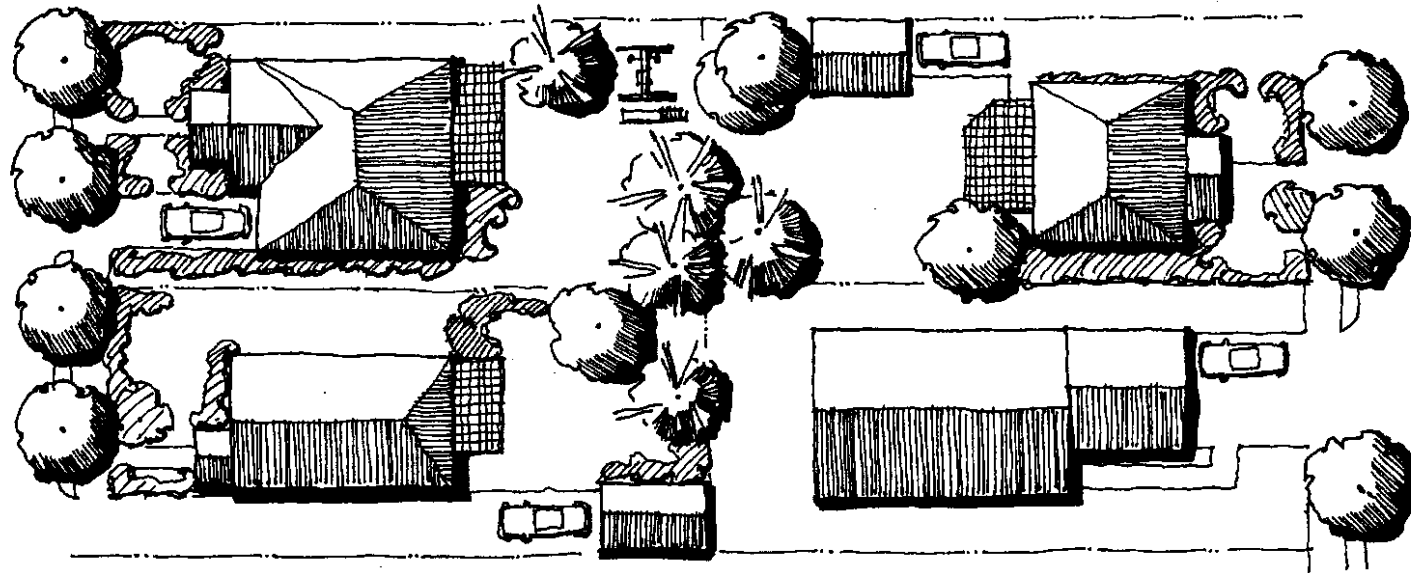
Side yards can be used for paths & edible plants such as fruit trees or berry bushes.

Make the front yard the house's contribution to the street.

Streetscapes can act like a big outdoor room for the community if everyone works together toward that goal.

Front yard with a low hedge has enclosed space, but still allows for neighborly interactions.

"Room" in back shared by more than one neighbor



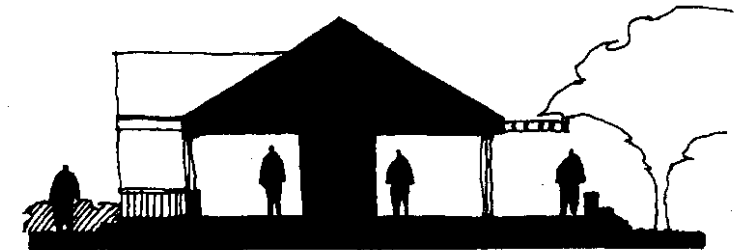
A garage built on the lot line helps to enclose back yard space.

A house setback to allow for a garage in front reduces the backyard to "leftover space" and the wide drive makes the front "outdoor room" unusable.

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Porch/
Frontyard

Patio/
Backyard



Extend living spaces into the outdoors with porches, trelliswork, arbors, windows, windowed doors and decks.



Outdoor space should be visible and accessible from the inside of the dwelling.

SENSE OF PLACE

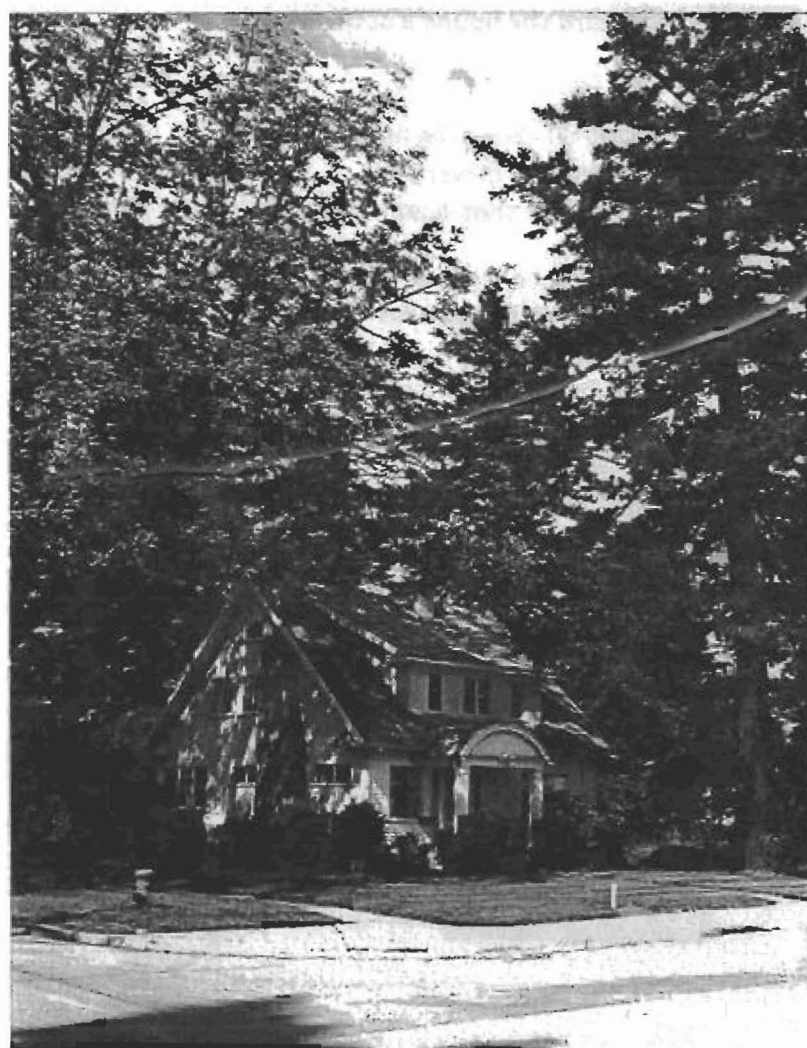
Nestled against the buttes and a backdrop of tall firs, Outer Southeast neighborhoods have a special "sense of place." Groupings of douglas firs, and other conifers and tall trees, help preserve the memory of the forest.

As Outer Southeast continues to grow, trees and natural areas should be preserved and enhanced whenever possible. Proper maintenance of large firs means they will remain healthy, live longer, and fit better into a neighborhood. Firs and other trees should never be "topped" because removing the tops of trees makes them susceptible to disease and destroys their characteristic shape.

Proper pruning of the lower branches of fir trees allows sunlight to enter underneath and makes them less vulnerable to high winds.

Adding trees on planting strips through street tree plantings enhances the streetscape. The City Forester should be consulted before planting or pruning trees in the planting strip!

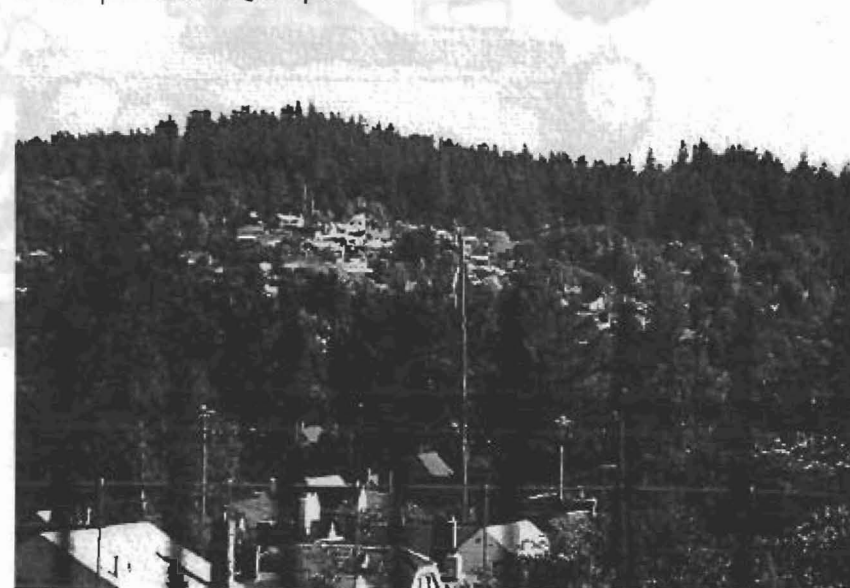
Plant firs and tall trees to enhance OSE's special character.



Mt Scott-Arleta home nestled under tall trees.

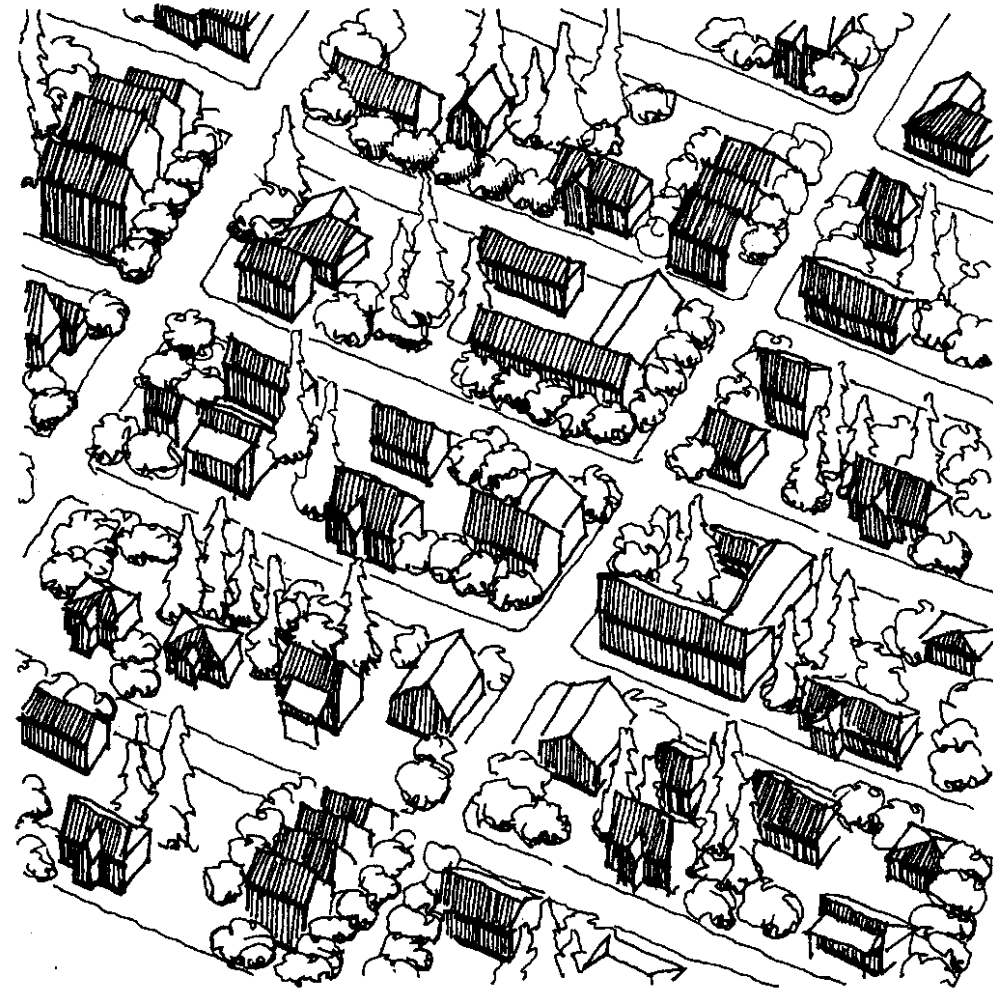


Front yard fir – fir trees withstand high winds better when planted in groups.



The view of a butte.

Plant firs and tall trees to enhance OSE's special character.



- Plant trees between the sidewalk & street to enhance the neighborhood.

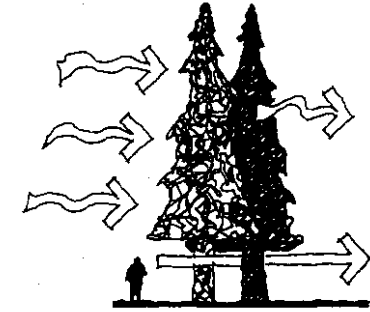
- Preserve groupings of tall trees.

- Plant trees to enhance yards and gardens. Consider flowering trees and create groves and outdoor rooms.

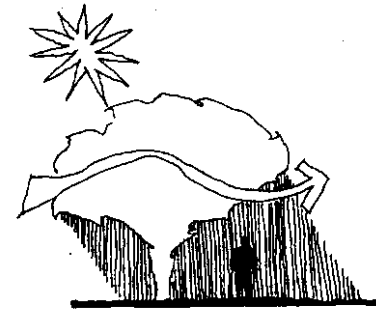
- Provide proper tree maintenance: Proper pruning / No topping!

SENSE OF PLACE

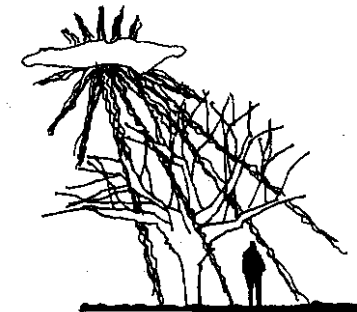
SOME MERITS OF TREES:



- Break the wind.
- Help unify buildings of different styles & sizes.



- Define and organize space.
- Create a sense of enclosure and privacy.
- Provide shade and cooling.



- Evolve with the seasons.
- Beautify the streetscape.
- Allow winter light through.

Multi-Dwelling



STREETSCAPE

Like houses, multi-unit dwellings create a streetscape of buildings and other elements. The "layers" of this streetscape are the same as in less dense residential areas. The large scale and the more compact nature of multi-unit dwellings means that each of the layers that contribute to the streetscape requires careful attention.

Generous, well-maintained landscaping – sometimes lacking around multi-unit buildings – adds an important layer of softness to the building facade and streetscape.

Individual unit entries opening onto the street also help activate the streetscape and dignify apartments.

The windows of frequently used rooms – such as living rooms, dining rooms, and kitchens – should be numerous and look out over the sidewalk and street.

Multi-unit buildings especially should contribute to the street.



Porches, individual entries & plantings make these row houses friendly.



A special place by the sidewalk.



Benches & low walls enhance the streetscape.



Multiple layers: porches, balconies, landscaping & street trees.

Multi-unit buildings especially should contribute to the street.

Provide an interesting building wall facing the street.

Plant street trees & planting strips.

Plant more generous landscaping in setbacks than required
-Use a variety of landscaping materials, including flowering plants.

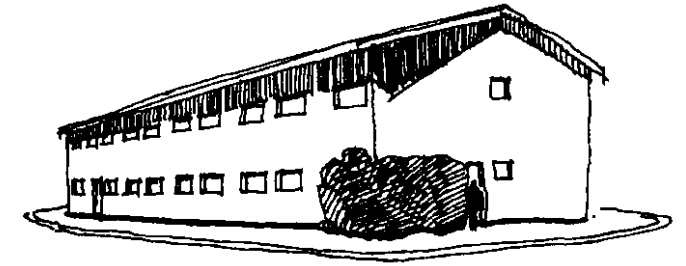


An active building edge with windows, entries and balconies contributes to this streetscape.

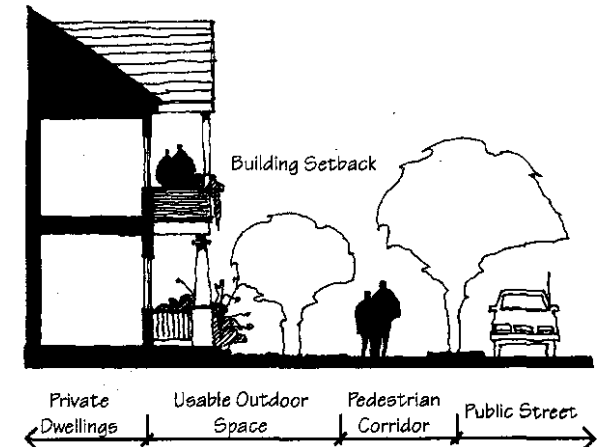
The wider the planting strip, the larger the type of tree that will thrive and the better the streetscape.

The use of a fence or a change in level can be combined with landscaping to help distinguish between public and private space. (Not shown)

STREETSCAPE



NO LAYERS, NO INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES



LAYERS, PRIVATE OUTDOOR SPACES: Porches & balconies provide transition between the street's public life and private interiors.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

Scale is the relationship of the sizes of adjacent buildings. If size differences appear too great, smaller buildings such as single and two family residences look overwhelmed. Breaking the building's wall into distinct separate areas with balconies, dormers, or by setting back parts of the facade help a large building appear less massive.

Detail refers to building elements such as trim, edges, and accents that add interest to a building.

Building forms and materials should be similar to those used in nearby smaller residences. Lower density multi-unit dwellings can fit comfortably and naturally into a neighborhood of single unit dwellings.

Use appropriate scale and detail.



Residential forms and repetition of detail in this multi-dwelling project help it fit into its neighborhood with a human scale.



House forms & character give human scale to this multi-dwelling.



A facade of patios and balconies successfully breaks up a large wall – but the wall itself is lost!

Use appropriate scale and detail.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

Use building forms and materials similar to nearby single-family house forms.

Add character and interest with the use of porches, dormers, gables, trim, color and horizontal siding.

Vary the size and forms of dormers, porches, roof lines, etc.



This example shows how to break down large facades horizontally and vertically into smaller units through the use of:

- Recessed or projected entries & porches.
- Mixing roof gables and eaves facing the street.
- Windows and their placement.
- Dormers to break up roof expanses.
- Balconies.
- Setbacks of parts of the facade one or more feet.

FRONT ENTRY

In multi-unit dwellings, the shared entry or entries help define the semi-private space that the residents share. The shared common entry establishes a sense of ownership that is important for the security of the building complex and the neighborhood.

In addition, each unit should have a sheltered individual entrance, at the ground level whenever possible.

Access to individual entrances should provide for the privacy of each unit. Each ground level entry should be provided with a separate, private front path.

To provide necessary privacy, and to avoid people walking in front of the living spaces of others when accessing their own front door, there should be no more than two entrances off each exterior stairway.

Both common and individual entries should be prominent.



Establishing one's own turf with potted plants



Shared Stair/ Individual Entries



Gateway entry to courtyard



Common Entry to Court

Both common and individual entries should be prominent.

FRONT ENTRY

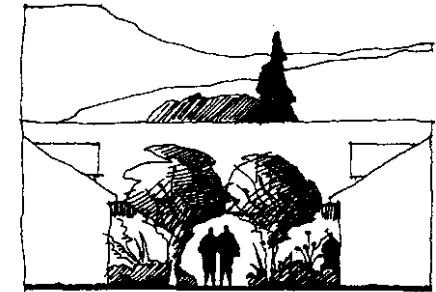
SHARED ENTRY FEATURE:



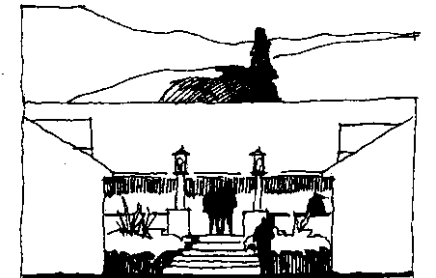
- Establishes an identity for the whole location,
- Encourages neighborly interactions, &
- Separates the shared space of the complex from the public street.



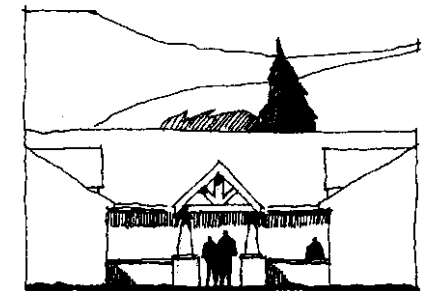
Variations on a theme: entry stoops.



Entry through landscaping or a gate.



Entry up stairs.



Entry under a portico.

SECURITY

Multi-unit dwellings can provide "eyes on the street" for security.

Multi-unit buildings should have ample window areas overlooking adjacent public space and shared common spaces. This gives residents the opportunity for informal surveillance of their surroundings.

Multi-unit buildings should be oriented so that some or all of their entrances face onto public streets or so that windows of frequently used rooms have a good view of street activity.

Low level outdoor lighting of pedestrian walkways, parking areas, and entry ways to individual units and common rooms is very important for security. All exterior lighting should be gentle, that is lighting should be designed so as to not shine directly into residential units or neighboring buildings. Harsh, over-bright lighting is not necessary for security.



Generous windows & balconies: "eyes on the street" are possible with these balconies.



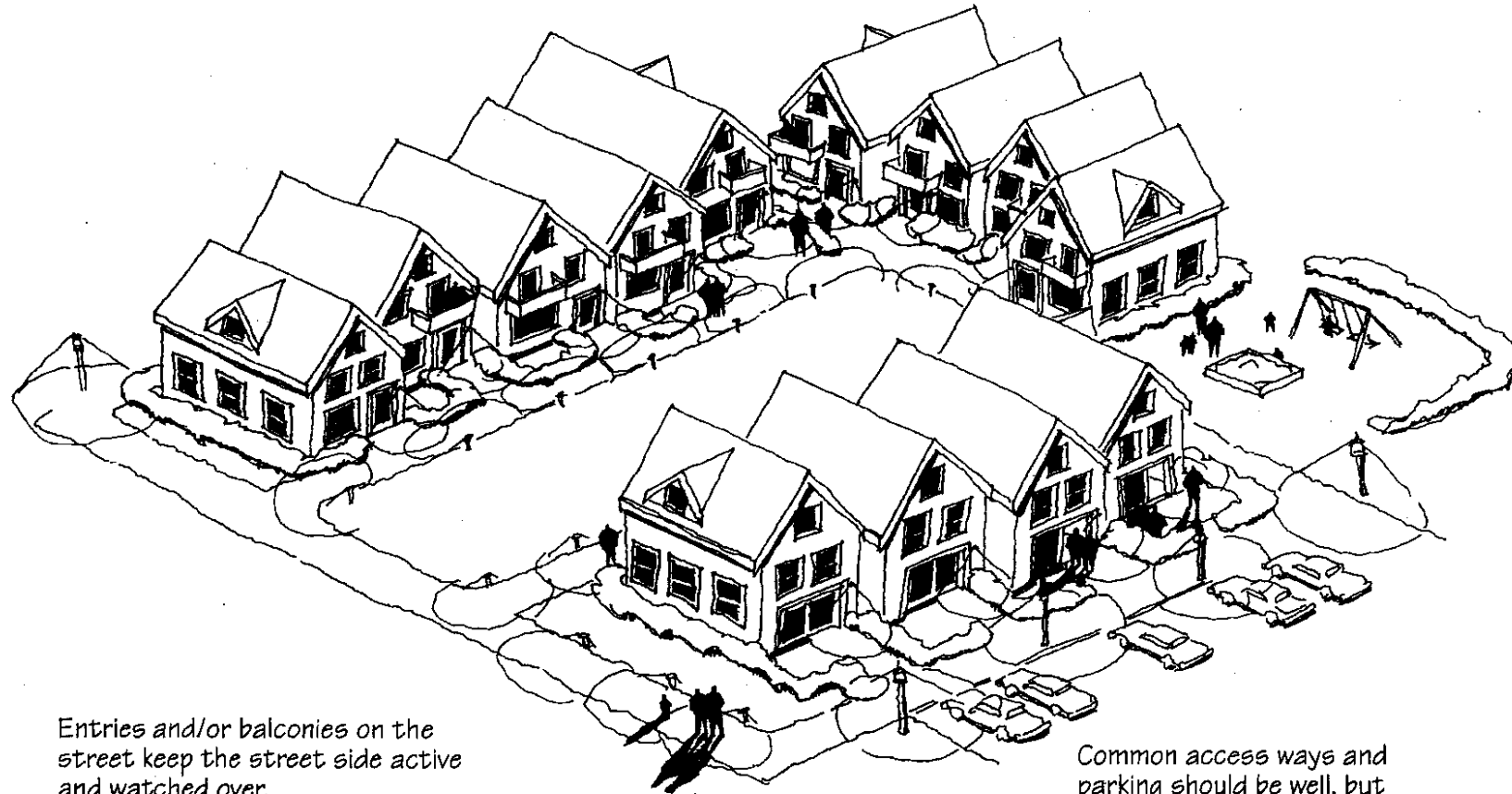
Courtyard Space: Many opportunities for surveillance are available.



Clear definition of multi-dwelling territory increases security.

Multi-unit dwellings can provide "eyes on the street" for security.

Design buildings with "eyes on the street" and clearly bounded shared open space.



Entries and/or balconies on the street keep the street side active and watched over.

Windows of frequently used rooms should overlook the street or shared open spaces.

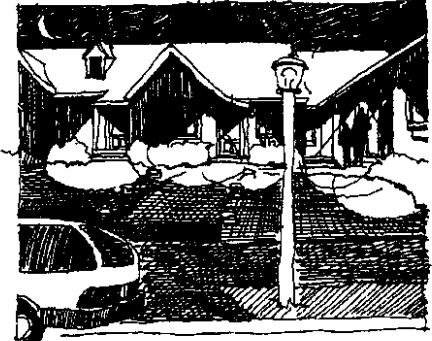
Provide adequate lighting for security – lighting should be scaled for pedestrians.

Common access ways and parking should be well, but gently, lit.

Avoid high dense landscaping which hides side yards, unless the yard is completely inaccessible.

SECURITY

GOOD PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING:



Lights at building face.



Lighting on pathways, i.e. foot-lights.



Street lighting.

PARKING

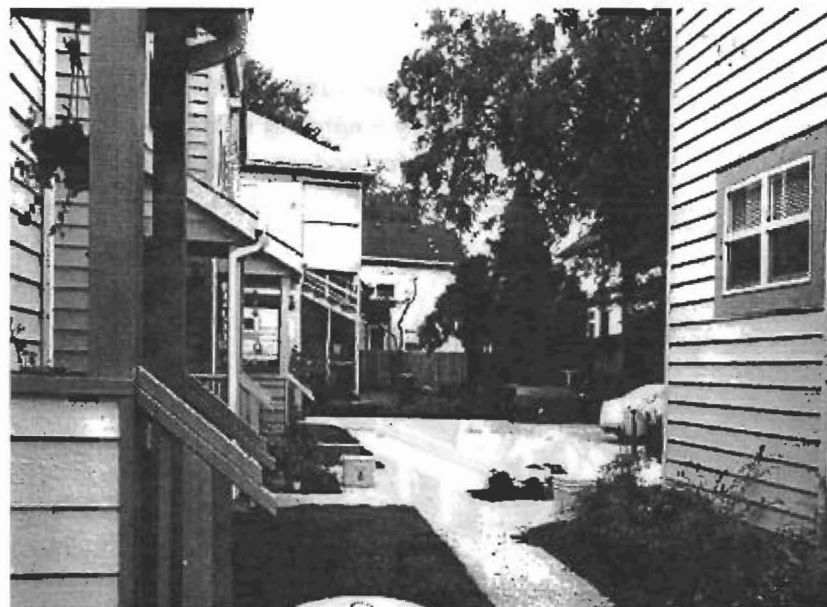
Although safe storage for cars is important, vehicle access and parking should not be the dominant element in a multi-dwelling development.

Parking should be located at the rear or side of the site. Parking needs to be within reasonable proximity of dwellings and placed where it is visible from a number of dwellings to allow for informal surveillance by residents.

Separate parking areas from common landscaped areas. Residents should be able to reach common outdoor recreation areas without crossing driveways or parking lots.

When covered parking or garages are provided, they should be at the rear or side of the building complex. Parking lots at the front, and especially at the corner, should always be avoided.

Parking lots and garages should not dominate the streetscape.



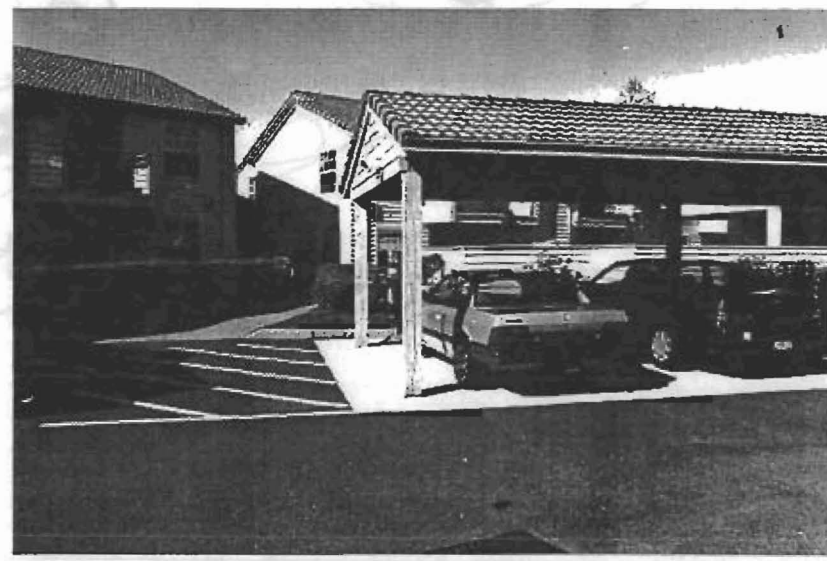
Seven rear parking spaces from just one driveway.



Townhouses with partially excavated parking help to retain neighborhood scale and maintain the human connection to the street.



Excavated parking allows courtyard above.

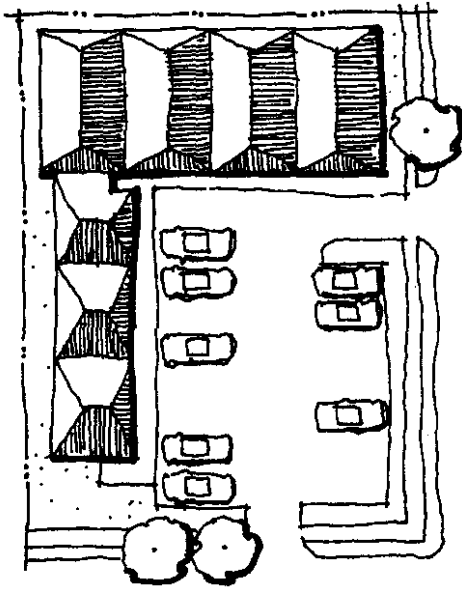


Covered parking at the rear of an apartment complex.

Parking lots and garages should not dominate the streetscape.

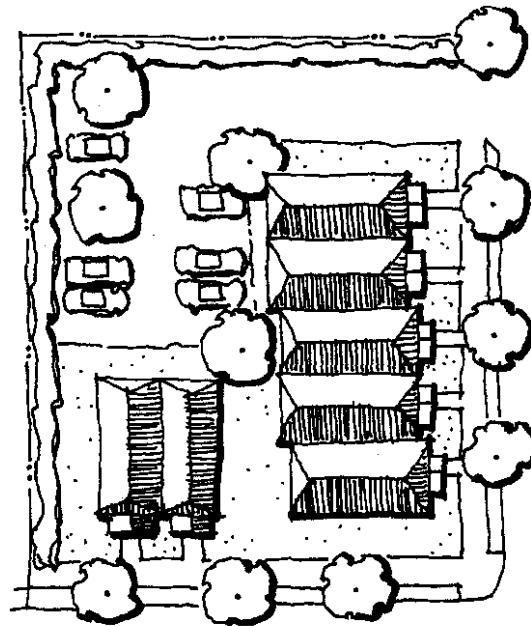
PARKING

- A narrow curb cut makes less of a visual impact on the street.
- Integrating landscaping into the parking area softens the effect of the expanse of paving.
- Group buildings around shared open space with a common access path to the parking in the back.
- Taller buildings, as opposed to bigger "footprints," preserve open space and allow more room for parking.



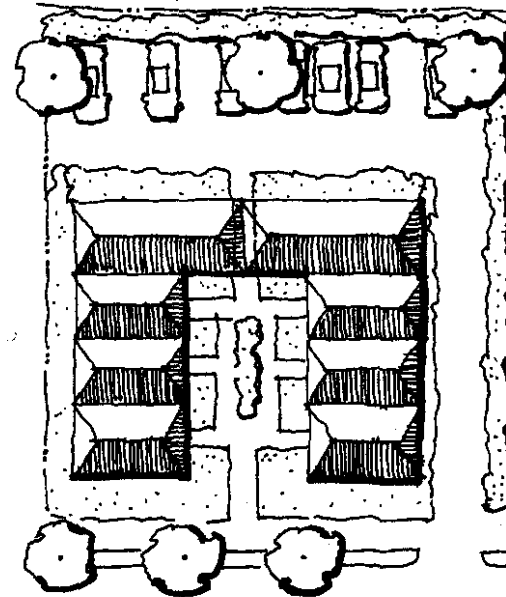
BAD

Avoid locating parking between the building and the street, especially at intersections.



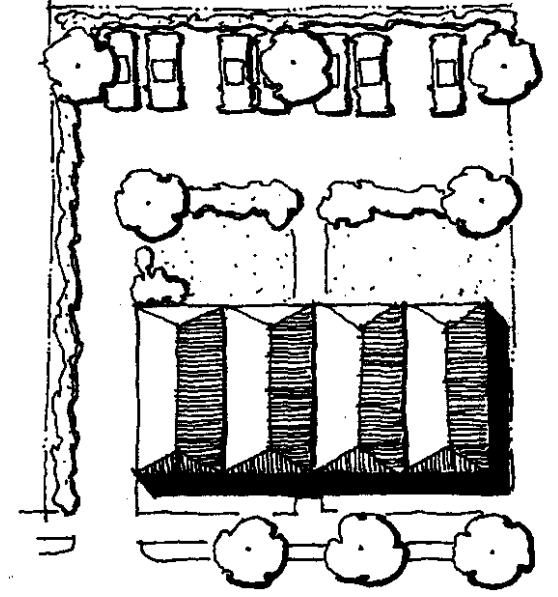
MUCH BETTER

Locate parking so that it isn't the dominant visual element: Buildings at the street edges.



EXCELLENT

Parking area should be visible from some dwelling units for casual surveillance.



EXCELLENT

Stacked units accommodate both parking and useable outdoor space on the site.

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Common open space is space that is shared by residents of a group of dwellings. Well-designed and landscaped open space gives residents a sense of place, as well as more living area and contact with nature.

Ideally, common open space should be enclosed or semi-enclosed by the dwellings it serves. It should be clearly visible from those same dwellings to provide surveillance and security.

Private open space can improve mental and physical health. This space can take the form of a small yard, garden patio or useable balcony. Private open space offers opportunities for personalization with plants, small gardens, seating, etc.

Screening, such as fences or trellises with climbing vines, should separate private open space from shared open space.

Create private and common "outdoor rooms."



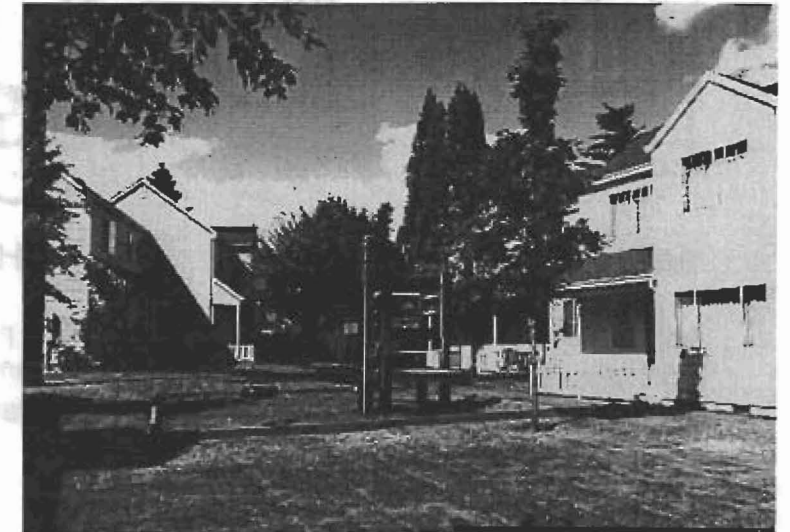
Entry courtyard opening onto the street.



Private balconies; shared courtyard.



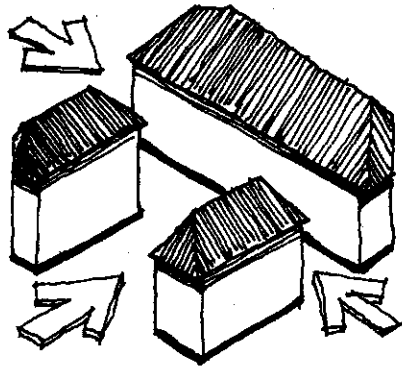
A shared courtyard.



Centrally located childrens' play area.

Create private and common "outdoor rooms."

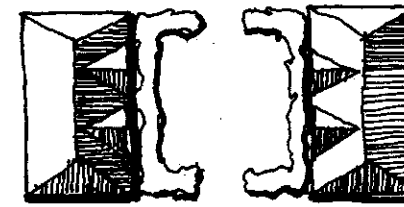
OUTDOOR ROOMS



Common outdoor space should be easily reached but still have a sense of enclosure.



Reinforce physical & visual connections between each private dwelling and common outdoor space.



Shared open space needs a "positive" shape to be usable. Avoid creating narrow, linear "leftover spaces."

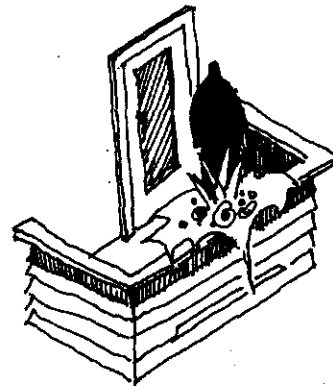


20' min.

Spacing between buildings should be at least 20 feet for a one story building or the enclosed space will feel too narrow. Taller buildings require wider spacing.



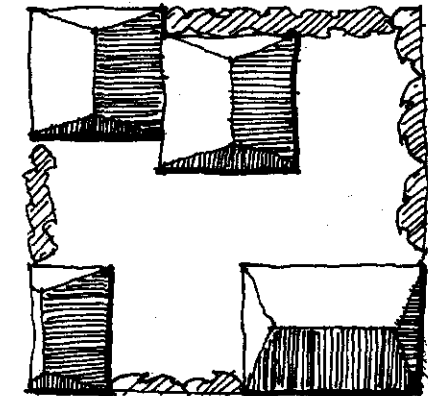
Use landscaping in common areas to increase privacy.



Minimum balcony & patio space should be at least 6' by 10'.



IMPORTANT! Provide every unit with its own special private outdoor space.



Buildings with 4 or more units should incorporate at least 1,000 sq. ft. of shared, positive open space: think "rooms" rather than "hallways."

SENSE OF PLACE

Multi-unit dwellings should take advantage of the unique features of their site, such as the presence of tall trees; a view towards a mountain; sloping land or proximity to a butte, creek or pond.

The nearby built environment is also part of the site's context. To reinforce the "sense of place," buildings should be designed with sensitivity to the scale and form of the other buildings around them.

Multi-unit dwellings have an opportunity to create their own sense of place by creating attractive common areas and by installing & maintaining beautiful landscaping.

Finally, alleys are a special feature; they should be used for parking access, trash removal, children's play, and more.

Let every building celebrate its own, specific site.



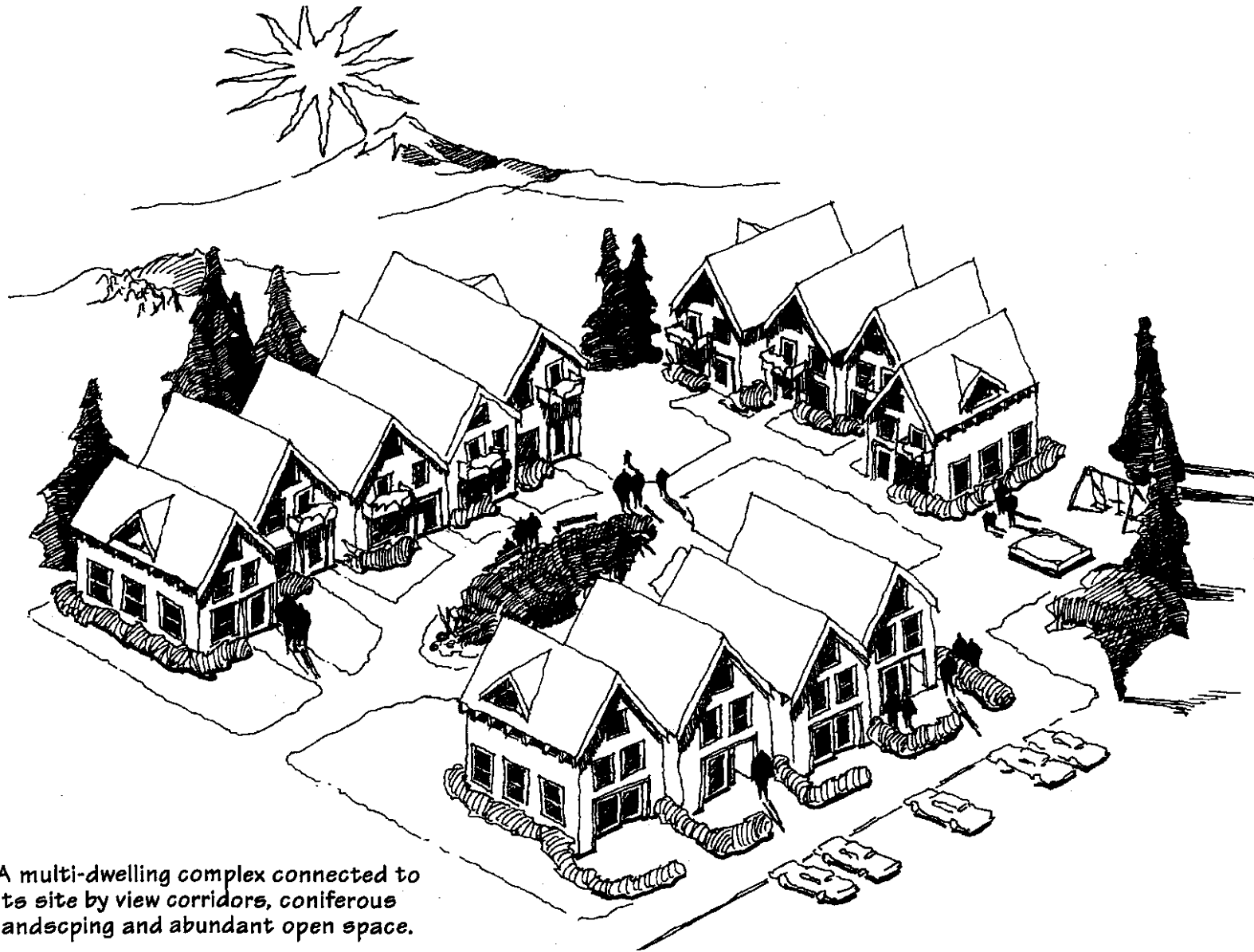
Portland row house complex design makes a reference to nearby steeple.



Family-sized units next to park with a playground.

Let every building celebrate its own, specific site.

SENSE OF PLACE



A multi-dwelling complex connected to its site by view corridors, coniferous landscaping and abundant open space.

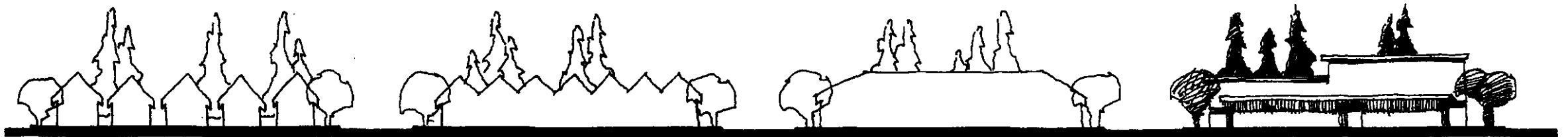
Take advantage of the site's location on the block:

- Corner lot provides opportunities for bay windows. It also allows side access parking.
- Provide mid-block lots with a visually-interesting front facade & entry, with parking at the side or rear.
- Use alleys for rear auto access.

Create or accentuate landmarks and view corridors:

- Allow the natural landscape to become a unique asset for each development.
- Preserve existing trees – think of the cost of replacing them!
- Step down sloping sites for view and natural light.

Mixed-Use & Commercial



STREETSCAPE

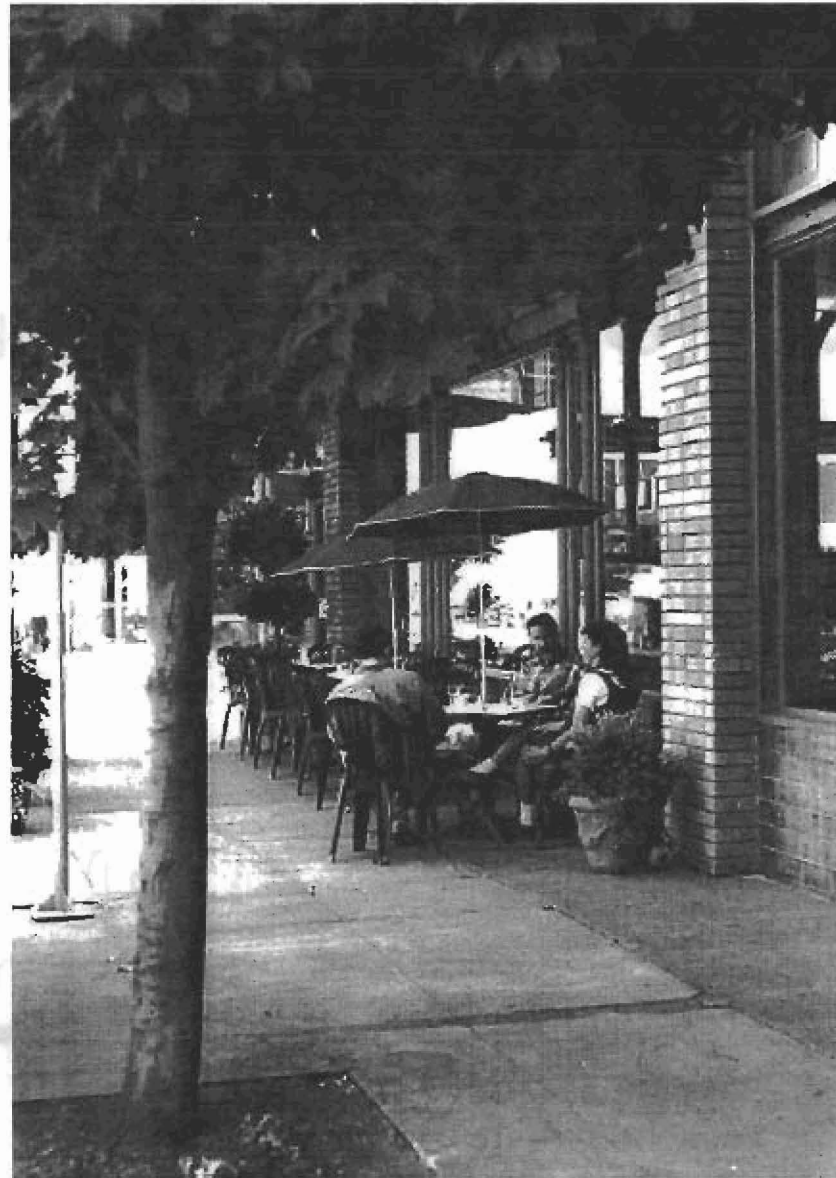
Layers help make commercial streets appealing.

In commercial and mixed use areas, the fronts of the buildings should contribute to making a lively harmonious and communicative edge to the street.

Transparent windows and doorways add interest by allowing a view of the building's interior. Awnings, fixed overhangs, arcades, and recessed entries add color and dimension and provide sheltered transition spaces between the sidewalk and building.

On-street parking and regularly spaced street trees are "layers" that separate the pedestrian on the sidewalk from moving traffic. The tree trunk "columns" and leafy canopies of street trees combine with the fronts of buildings near the sidewalk to create a well-defined pedestrian corridor.

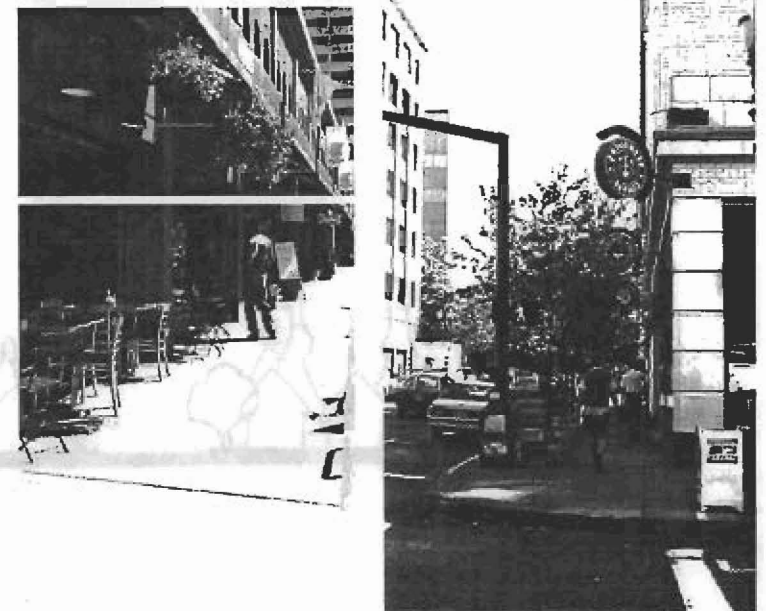
When commercial zoning is adjacent to a residential street, measures should be taken to create a safe and visually interesting streetscape.



Sidewalk seating between street trees and the transparent building edge make the sidewalk friendly and interesting.



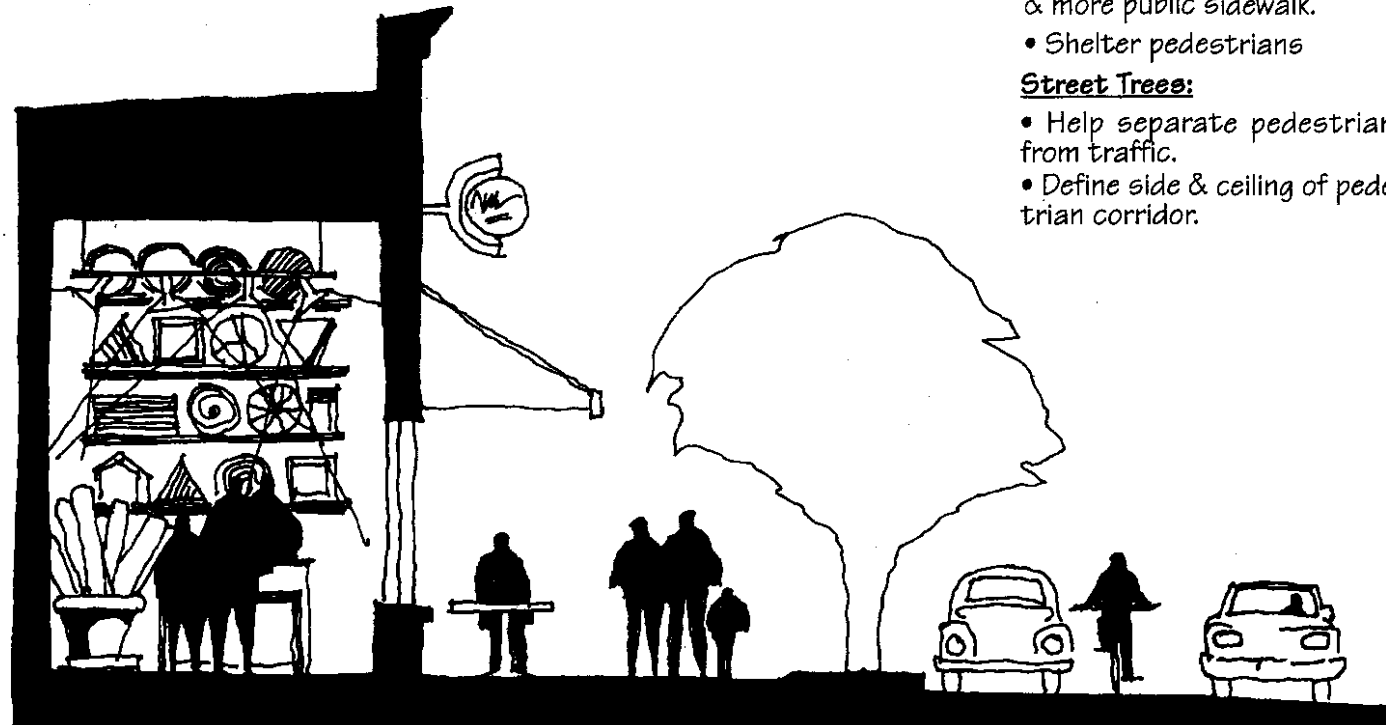
Buffer Zone with lighting & some variety and interest.



Arcade layers provide shade & make a pleasant space. Pedestrian layer needs street "furnishings" such as trees, lights and signs.

Layers help make commercial streets appealing.

Use "layers" to make a commercial sidewalk a nice place to be.



Awnings / Overhangs:

- Transition space between shop & more public sidewalk.
- Shelter pedestrians

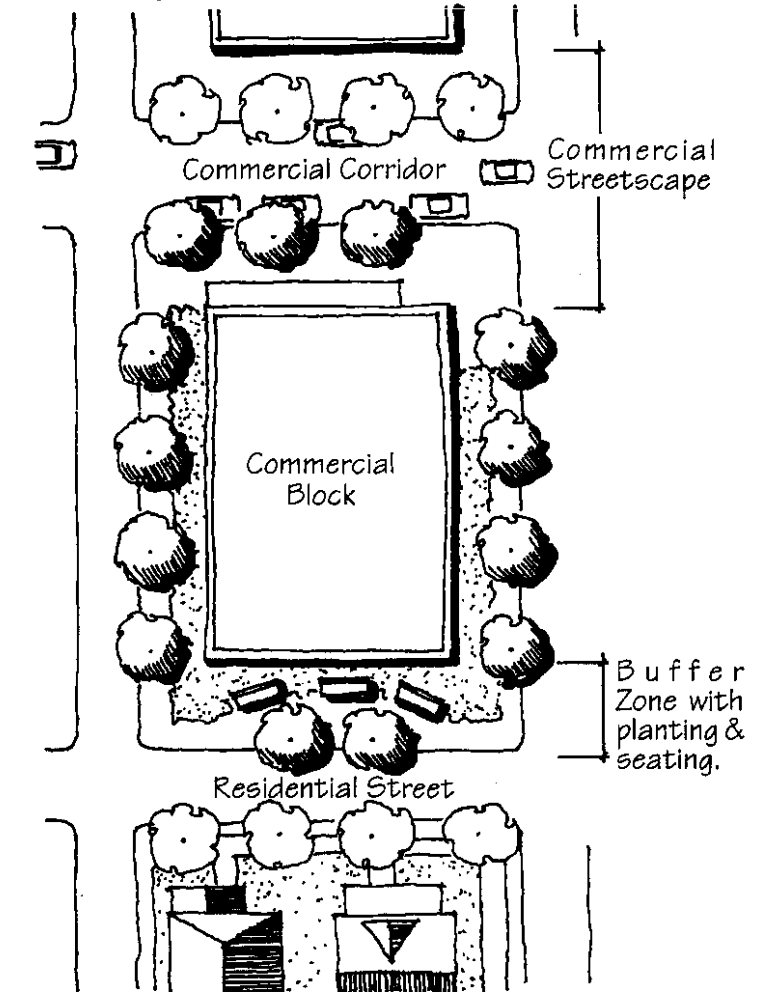
Street Trees:

- Help separate pedestrians from traffic.
- Define side & ceiling of pedestrian corridor.

Layer 1	Layers 2-4	Layers 5-6
Transparent Building Front	Pedestrian Corridor	On-Street Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great display areas. • Allows casual surveillance of street. • Adds interest & dimension to the street edge. • Use generous windows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be a pleasant public space. • Interesting signage. • Natural elements. • Seating. • Awnings. • Bicycle parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient for shoppers. • Buffers pedestrians from traffic. • Slows down traffic for better business and safer streets.

STREETSCAPE

Commercial Buffer Zone (CB): The Commercial Buffer (CB) Zone is applied when commercial uses are directly adjacent to a residential zone.



It is essential that the Commercial Buffer Zone add to the visual appeal & safety of the adjacent residential neighborhood by using layers, transparency, lighting, and other details.

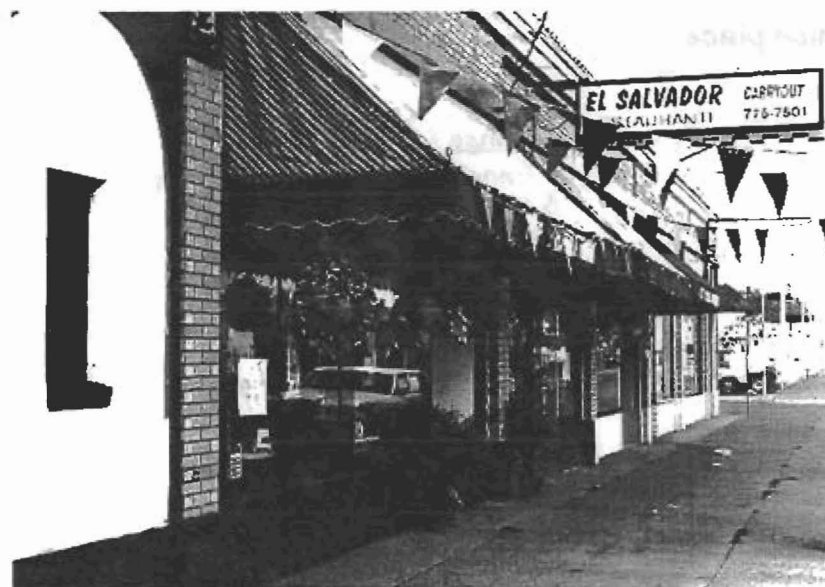
INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

Because shops and services are usually located along heavily traveled streets, the physical appearance of a neighborhood's commercial center can play a key role in creating the identity of the surrounding neighborhood area.

Buildings in neighborhood commercial centers should establish visual relationships with one another rather than simply compete for attention. Use of similar architectural elements such as generous storefront windows and trim, attention to relationships of scale, and coordinated signage help commercial buildings work together, and improve business!

In multi-story buildings, a clear visual separation should be made between the pedestrian oriented ground floor and the upper stories. An ample cornice above the ground level, a change of building materials, a row of clerestory windows, or an arcade or overhang are all proven methods of helping to create an inviting street level facade and decrease the apparent height of the building.

Use appropriate scale and detail.



Awnings, transparent windows, sidewalk landscaping.



Identical Storefronts: Color used on left to accent trim detail.



A clear distinction between ground floor & upper stories.

Use appropriate scale and detail.

INTEREST & COMPATIBILITY

Establish relationships of scale to help individual buildings relate to each other.

Keep prominent horizontal lines at similar levels along the street front.

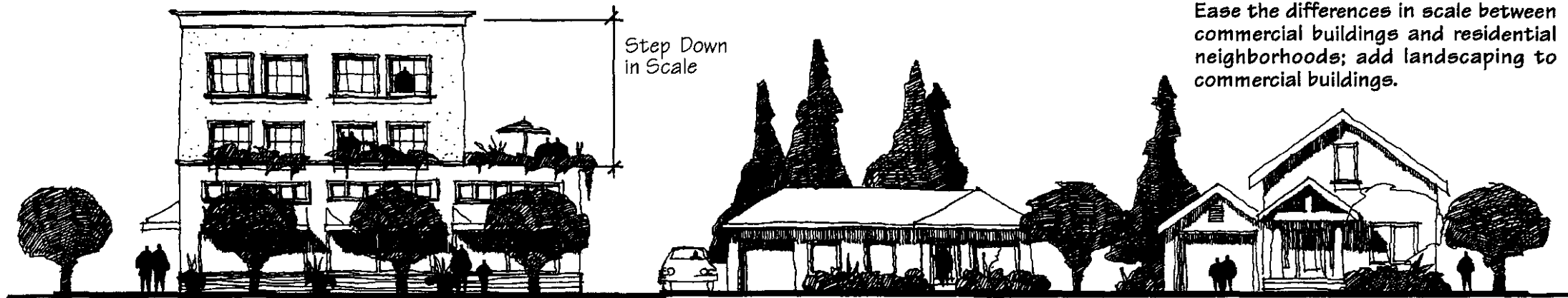
Use grouping and placement of windows to break a large facade into smaller areas.



Commercial Street Front

Create a clear, visual separation between ground floor commercial and upper level residential.

Ease the differences in scale between commercial buildings and residential neighborhoods; add landscaping to commercial buildings.



Transition from Commercial to Residential

Buffer with landscape.

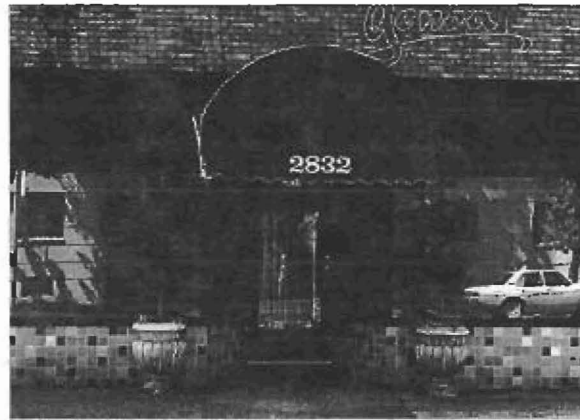
FRONT ENTRY

For a pedestrian-friendly environment, the ideal location for the front entry is directly off the street sidewalk. When parking must separate the building from the sidewalk, a well-defined pedestrian walkway should connect the building's main entry to the sidewalk at the street edge.

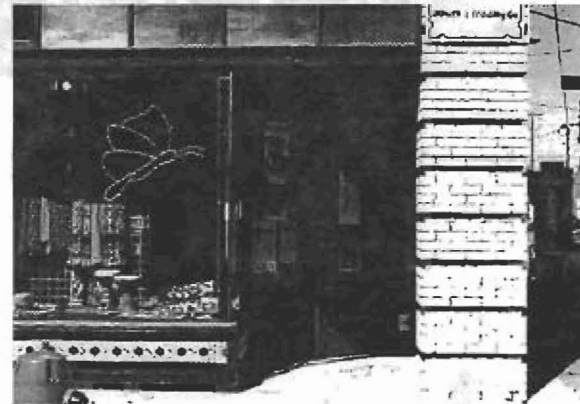
Slightly recessed entries add dimension and interest to a building and are often characteristic of historic storefronts. Buildings on corner lots have the opportunity to face both streets by locating the main entry on the angle of the corner. This is a proven method for accentuating an intersection's natural pedestrian-orientation.

Canopies or overhangs can be used to shelter and emphasize the entry. Plantings placed on either side of an entry also help to make the entrance friendly and noticeable.

Create a special entry at the sidewalk.



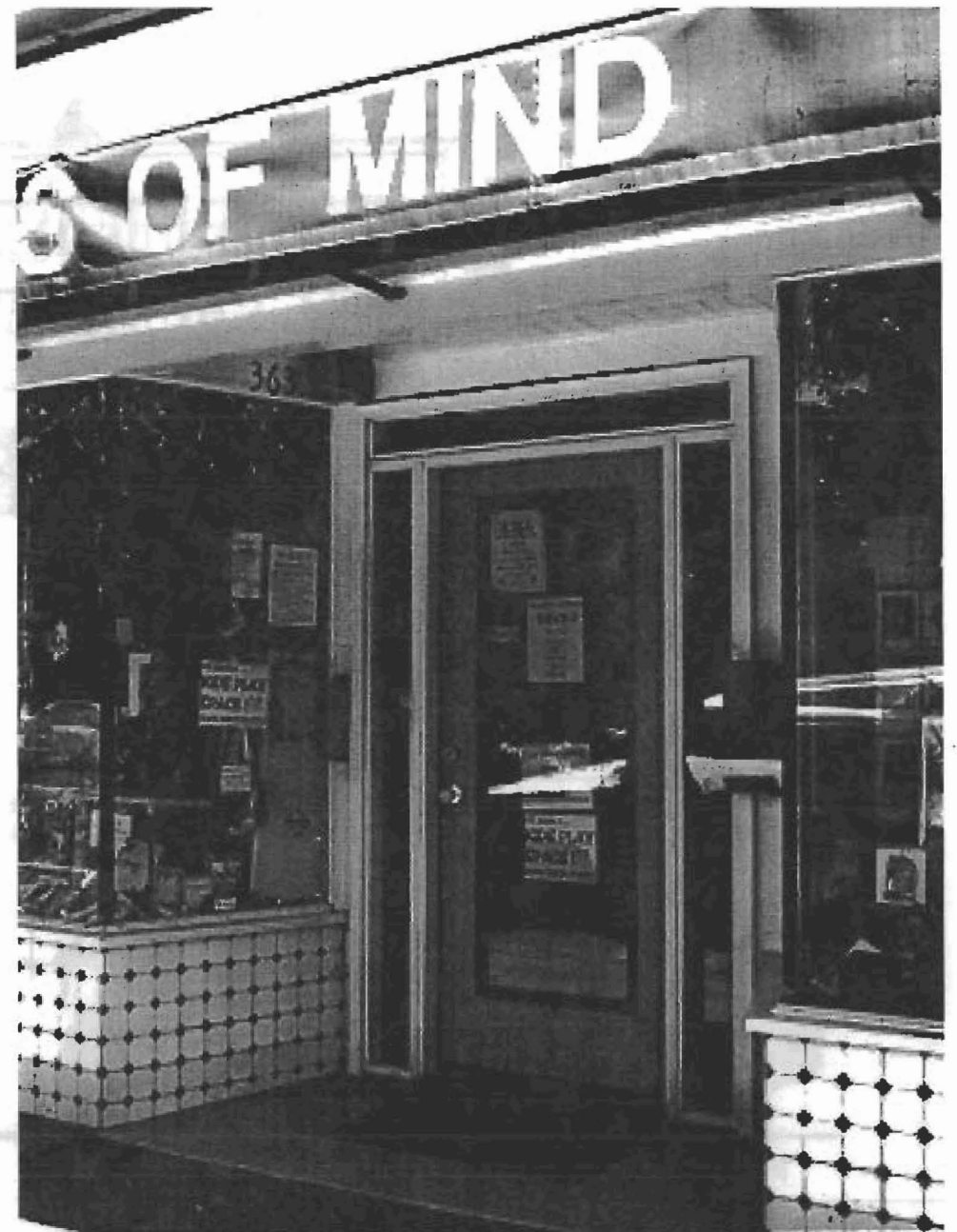
Sheltering front entry.



Corner entry

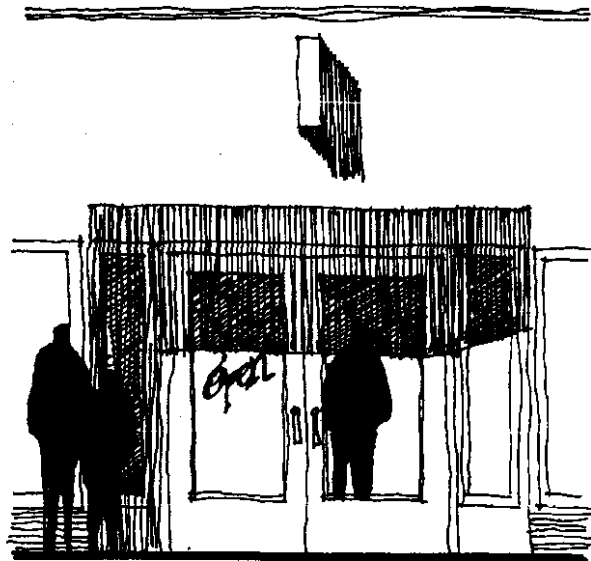


Sidewalk connection through parking.

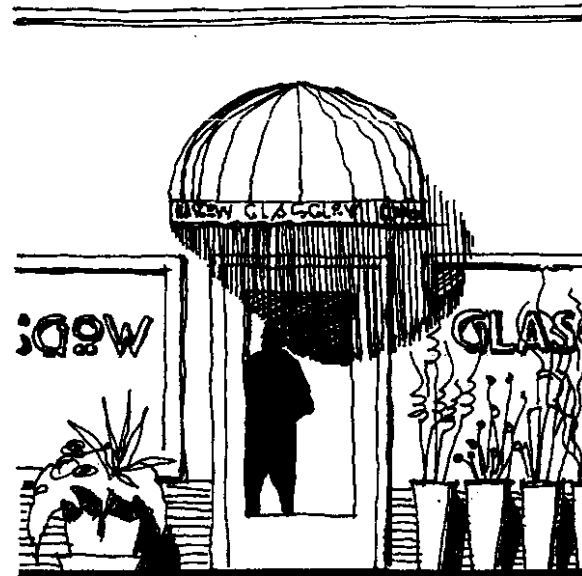


Welcoming front entry.

Create a special entry at the sidewalk.



Recessed Entry: Provides a sheltered transition space and an opportunity for additional display.

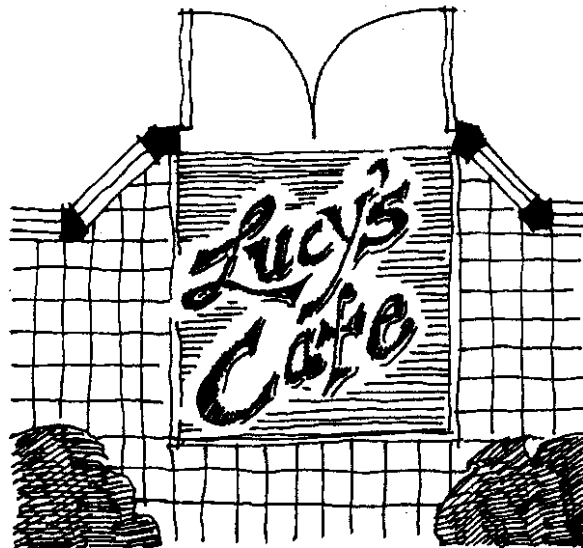


Landscape / Canopy Accents: Add interest to the streetscape and help to highlight the entry.

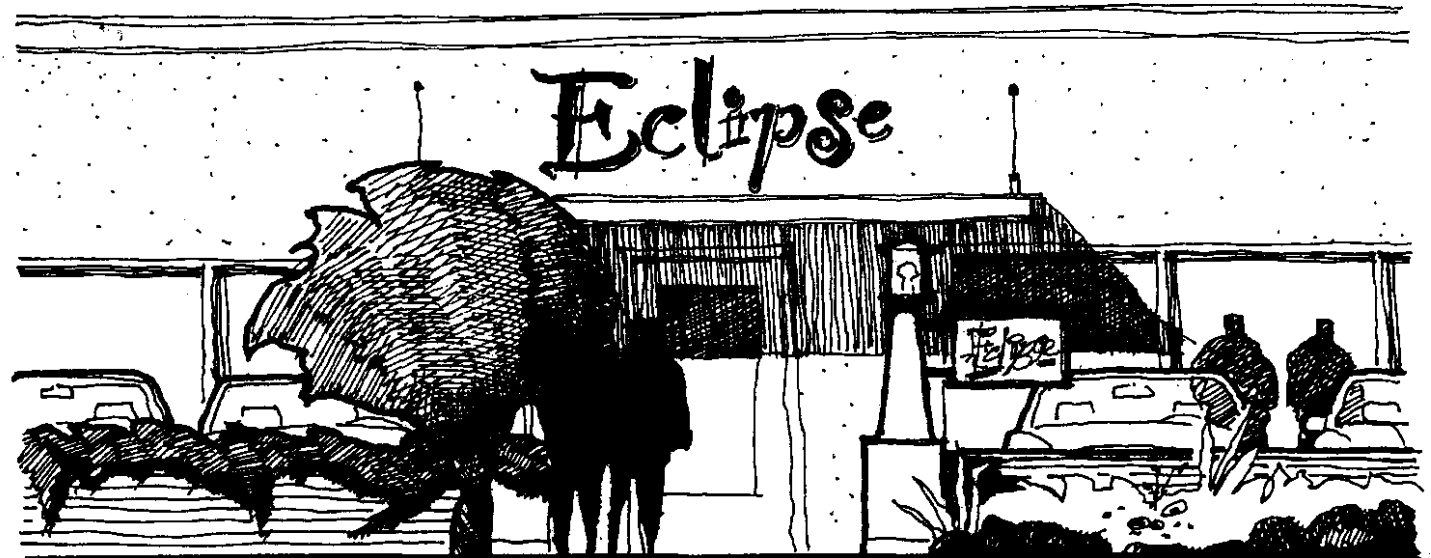
FRONT ENTRY



Corner Entry: Provide accessibility to both streets of the intersection and create a sheltering entry.



Recessed Tile Doormat: Advertises business while enriching the sidewalk.



Try to Avoid Parking in Front: when parking is located in front, provide a clear path for pedestrians between the entry and the sidewalk.

SECURITY

Transparent windows and doors near the sidewalk allow people inside commercial buildings to keep a casual eye on pedestrians and cars along the street.

Apartments above ground floor commercial uses give business districts a human presence on the premises around the clock - as well as a built-in market!

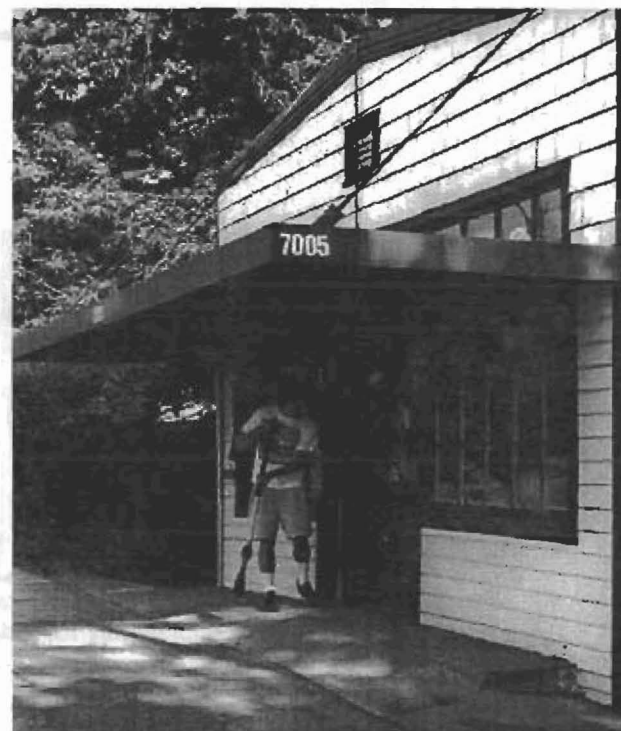
When full block commercial zoning results in a landscape buffer being required between commercial uses and adjacent residents, measures should be taken to ensure that the back side of the commercial space contributes both to the security and to the attractiveness of the residential area.

Landscaped areas in buffer zones should have plant materials which enhance the neighboring residential zone without providing hiding places. Provide adequate low level lighting to keep the backs of commercial buildings safe.

Mixed-use buildings & storefronts provide "eyes" for security.



Residential units above commercial streetfront.



Home / Office Storefront



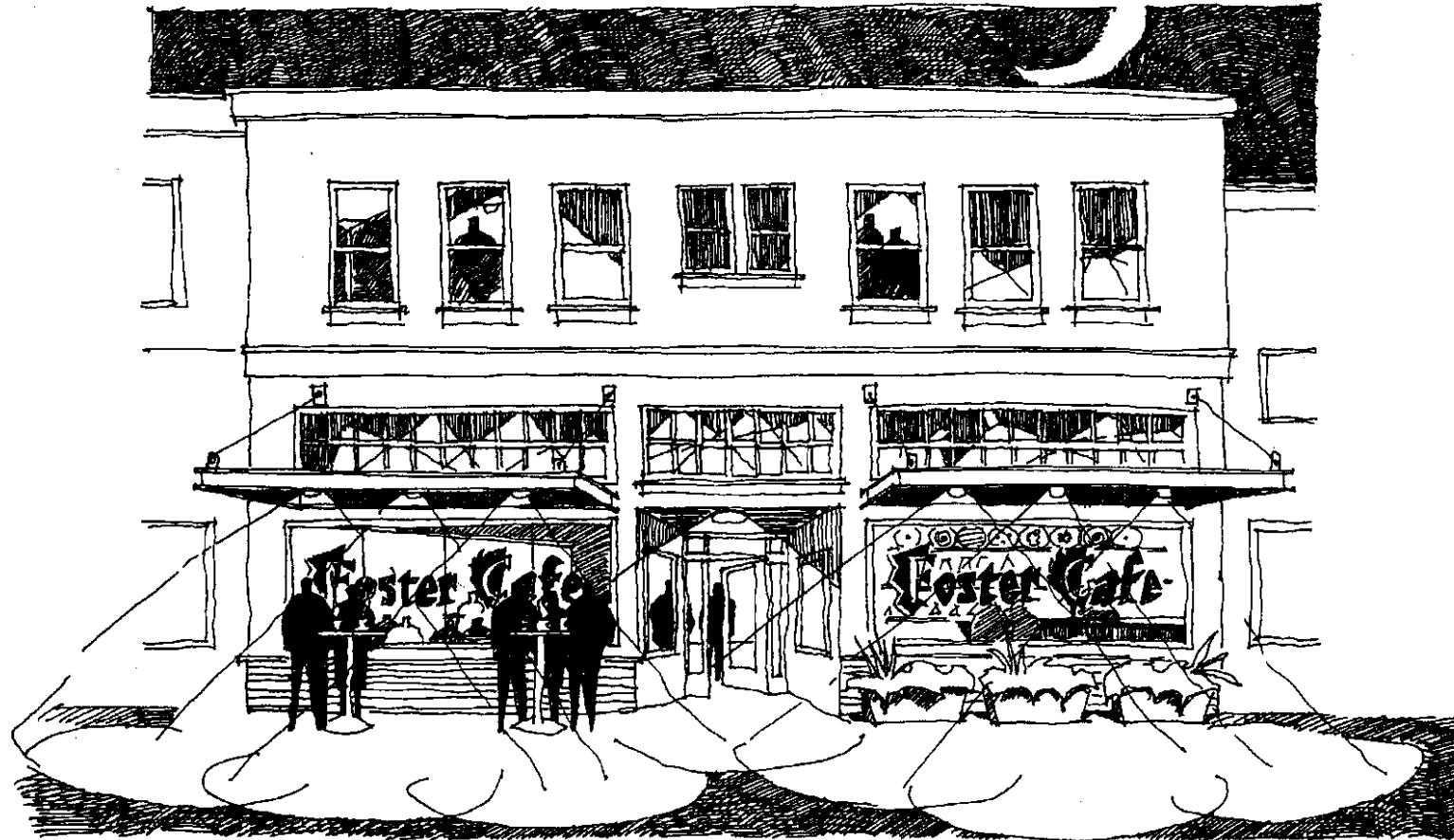
Active and transparent building edge in the Buffer Zone - but window proportions are poor, railings are minimal, and wall texture is not residential style.



Lighting in the Buffer Zone - but better if pedestrian rather than industrial style & bigger.

Mixed-use buildings & storefronts provide "eyes" for security.

Use generous amounts of windows to allow casual surveillance of the sidewalk pedestrians and cars.

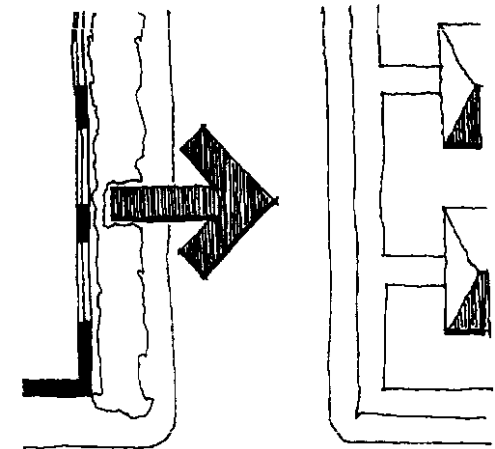


Cafes & Restaurants increase nighttime activities & security.

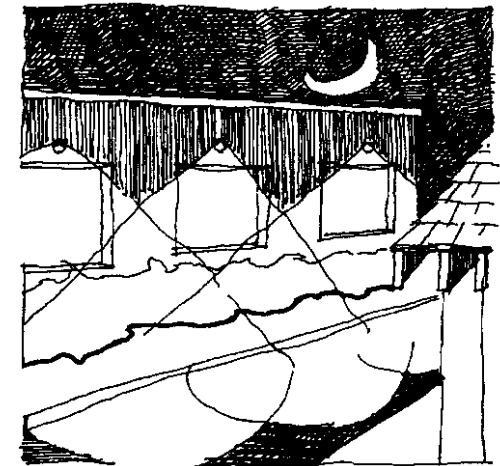
Residential units above commercial spaces add an around-the-clock presence to the street and the neighborhood.

SECURITY

Commercial Buffer Zone:



Locate active windows at the back of commercial buildings so they too can increase security for the neighborhood.



Add low-level lighting to the Buffer Zone to increase nighttime security in residential neighborhoods.

PARKING

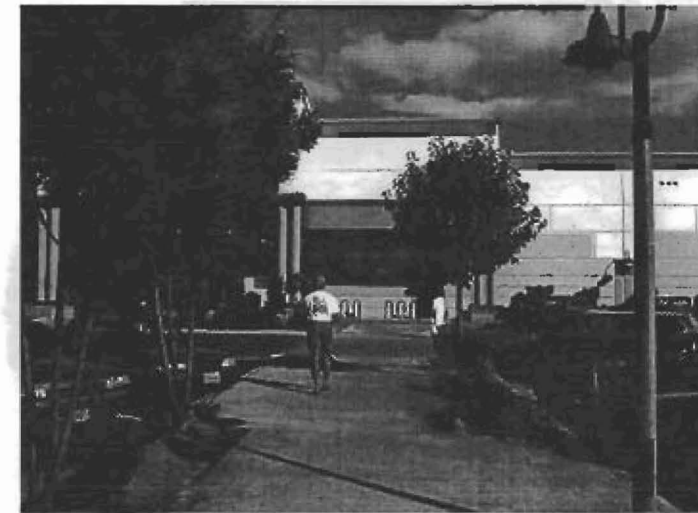
Whenever possible, parking lots should be located to the rear of neighborhood commercial space in order to allow a solid "wall" of buildings along the principal street frontage. If rear parking is not possible, parking on the side of the building is less disruptive of the storefront streetedge than parking located in front, between the building and the street. Corner sites are particularly prominent pedestrian-oriented locations; parking lots on corners should be avoided as much as possible.

A landscape "wall" should be used to screen parking areas from streets and other adjacent uses. Use landscape "islands" to break up large areas of parking into smaller, less bleak spaces. Trees provide shade and soften the visual impact of parking areas. They can even be used as a substitute for painted parking stall lines if a pervious paving material is used.

Off-street commercial parking should be in the rear or on the side.



Parking in back.



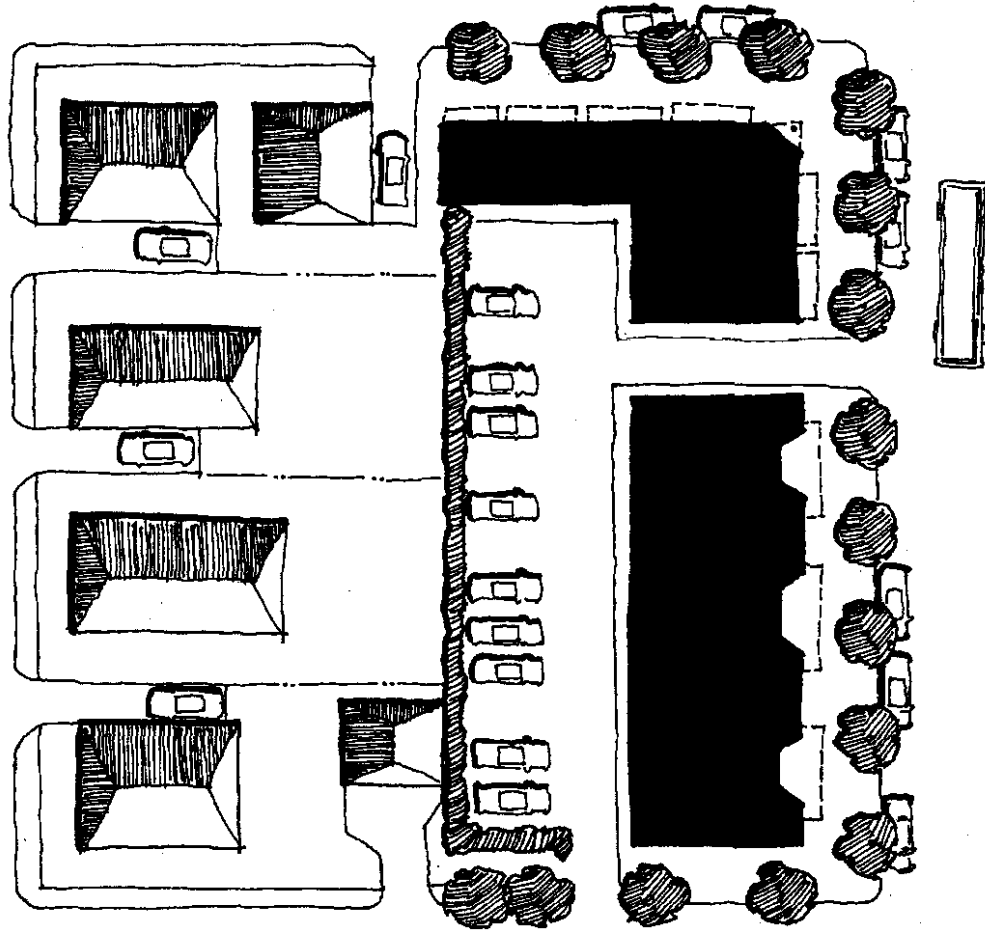
Pedestrian path through parking.



Creative on-street parking design - Doubles as extra commercial sidewalk space when needed.

Neighborhood commercial parking should be in the rear or on the side.

Avoid locating off-street parking within the commercial streetfront zone:



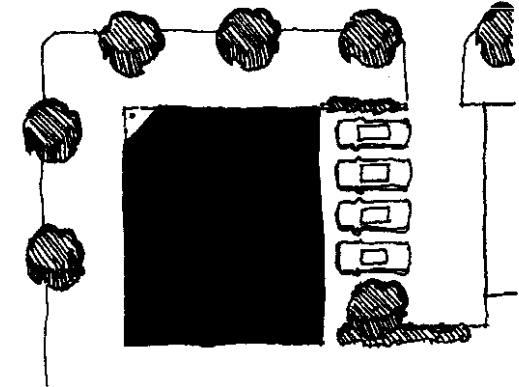
Large areas of parking interrupt the flow of the commercial streetscape.

Parking in the back preserves the street wall of storefronts at the sidewalk.

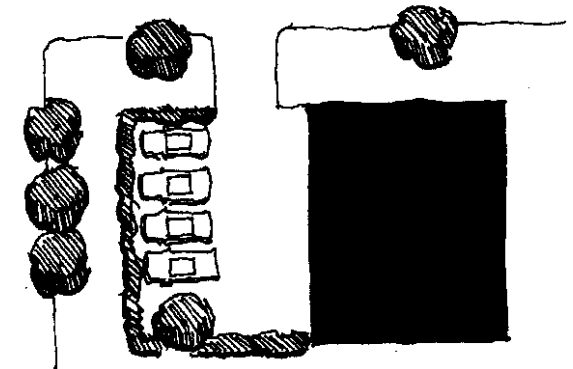
Entries to parking areas should be clearly marked using signage carefully integrated into the design of the streetscape.

PARKING

Off-Street Parking:



Accessing rear parking from a side street preserves the building "wall" of a commercial street.



Old parking lots between the sidewalk and building should be buffered well with plantings, low walls or berms. A much better solution is to build on the lot and provide parking at the rear.

OUTDOOR ROOMS

A commercial street is a corridor for transit, motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. But, more than that, it is a public "room." The character of this room is largely determined by the height, location, and visual interest of the front walls of the buildings that form its edges and by other features which make pedestrian environments pleasant or unpleasant.

Street trees, pedestrian-scale street lamps, on-street parking, and other layered features all contribute to a sense of enclosure and attractiveness.

The mix of shops is a critical factor in determining the character and viability of a commercial corridor. Restaurants, coffee shops and ice cream parlors, for example, attract people to a commercial area and enliven the street. Where sidewalks are wide enough, outdoor cafe seating or benches "furnish" the outdoor room.

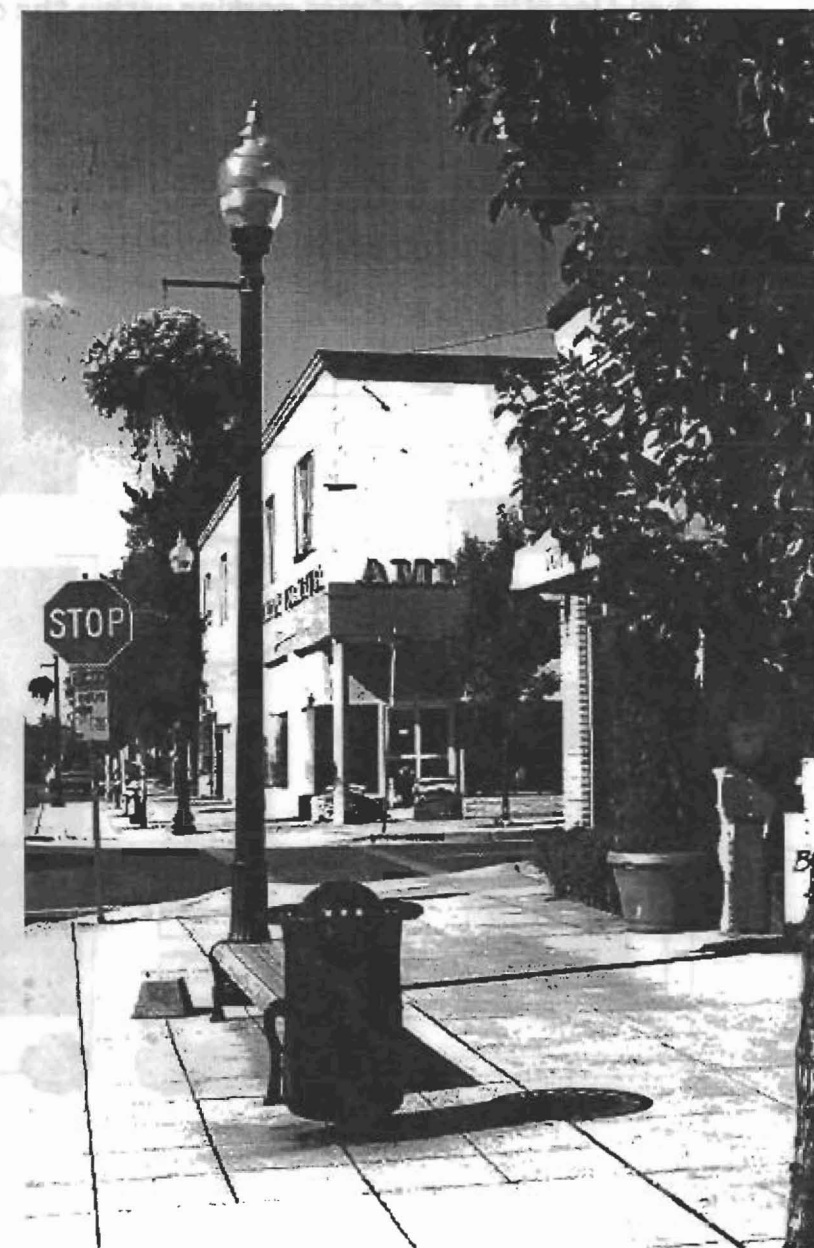
Use commercial buildings to create comfortable "outdoor rooms".



A set of tables with umbrellas & planters together make a room.

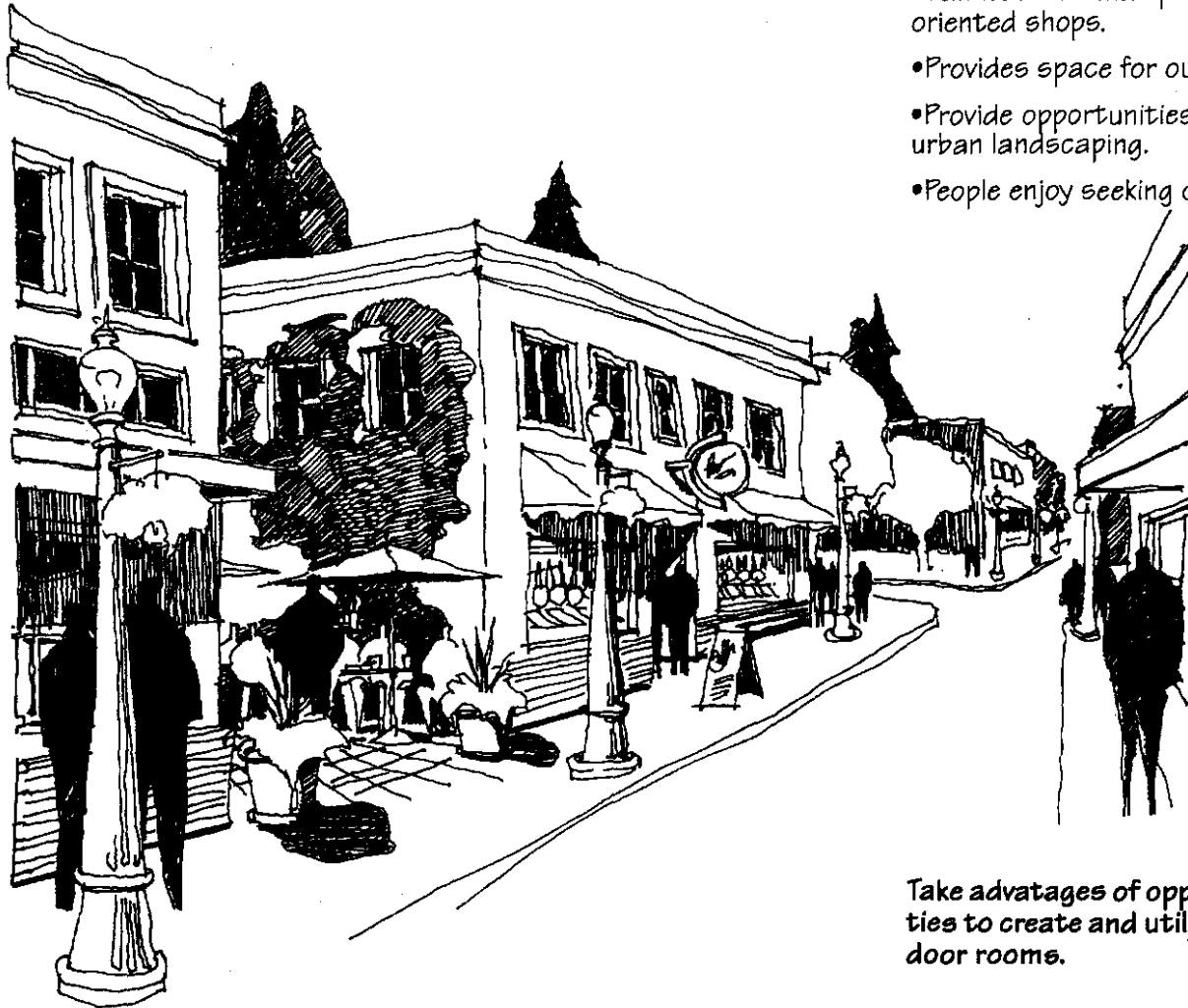


Outdoor Room – created by tables, planter boxes, trees & pavers.



Street furniture enlivens the street and invites neighborhood shoppers to come and visit – like a community living room.

Use commercial buildings to create comfortable "outdoor rooms".



Spaces between buildings:

- Can lead to small pedestrian-oriented shops.
- Provides space for outdoor dining.
- Provide opportunities for needed urban landscaping.
- People enjoy seeking out unique shops.

Take advantages of opportunities to create and utilize outdoor rooms.

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Elements that define outdoor rooms:



Building Facades



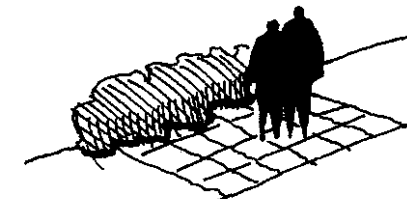
Awnings / Overhangs



Street Furniture



Tree Canopies



Special Paving

SENSE OF PLACE

Preservation and reuse of historic buildings helps strengthen a neighborhood's "sense of place." Using local historic building styles as models is another way to design new commercial buildings that fit into a neighborhood while creating a sense of character and continuity.

Local history should be kept alive. Utilize historic names as business or street names. Use plaques to mark historic sites. Exhibit historic photographs in prominent business locations.

Commercial districts should take advantage of existing view corridors and of nearby natural resources. This can be done by preserving the view corridors, placing windows and doors to face views, and enhancing pedestrian connections to nearby green areas and bodies of water.

As in residential areas, the tall firs and other trees that provide a backdrop for some commercial districts in Outer Southeast should be preserved and augmented.

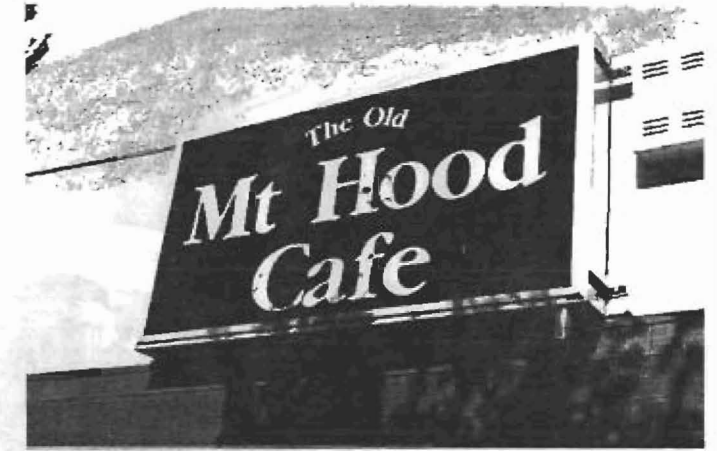
Incorporate local history and OSE's natural features.



Then



Now



Local Names



Plaque

Incorporate local history and OSE's natural features.

SENSE OF PLACE

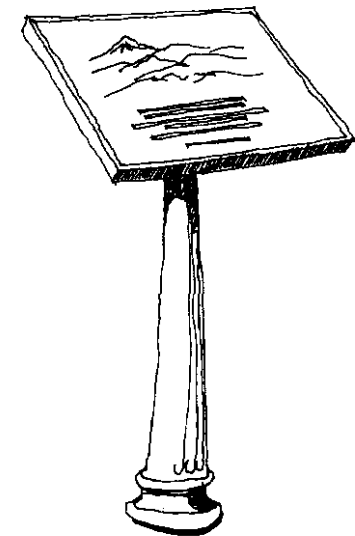
Refurbish and reuse historic buildings whenever possible to create or reinforce an area's character and identity.



Establish corridors & Visual links to nearby natural features.



Neighborhood's signs & street names help to establish a "sense of place."



Plaques explaining natural features or commemorating historic events.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Streetscape

Great Streets. Allan B. Jacobs, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 1993). An ambitious study of the qualities that help urban streets "encourage socialization and participation of people in the community."

Oregon Main Street, A Rephotographic Survey. James Norman, (Oregon Historical Society Press, 1994).

The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream, Peter Calthorpe, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ: 1993).

Towns and Town-Making Principles, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zybeck with Bill Lennertz, (Rizzoli Press, New York: 1991).

City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, David Sucher, (City Comforts Press, Seattle, WA: 1995).

A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb, Philip Langdon, (HarperCollins, New York: 1994).

The Death and Life of the American City, Jane Jacobs.

Infill Housing, Medium Density and Alternative Housing

Books:

The 10 Essentials for North/Northeast Portland Housing: Guidelines for Renovations and New Construction. R. Peter Wilcox, AIA, Project Director, Housing Committee of the Portland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, (Portland Bureau of Planning: 1991).

Housing as if People Mattered, Clare Cooper Marcus and Wendy Sarkissan, (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA: 1986).

Site Planning and Community Design for Great Neighborhoods. Frederick D. Jarvis, (Home Builder Press, Washington, DC: 1993).

Accessory Rental Units in the Portland Area: A Guide for Design, Development and Management, Ethan Selzer and Theodis Perry Jr., (Institute of Metropolitan Studies, Portland State University; Portland, OR: 1995).

Blending Housing into our Neighborhoods. Housing Committee of the Portland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, (City of Portland, Portland, OR: 1994).

New House Designs for North/Northeast Portland , R. Peter Wilcox, AIA, Project Director, Housing Committee of the Portland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, (Portland Bureau of Planning: 1991).

Trees and Landscaping

Organizations:

- Friends of Trees, 2730 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd (503) 282-8846
Non-profit organization helps organize neighborhood tree plantings.
- City of Portland, Forestry Division. 10910 N. Denver, Portland, OR 97217, Bureau of Parks and Recreation (503) 823-4489. Can answer questions about planting street trees. Issues permits for planting, pruning and removal of trees in the City right-of-way. Contact for people interested in getting Heritage Trees designated and for the City's tree cutting ordinance.
- OSU Agricultural Extension Service Master Gardener Program (503) 725-2033. Trained volunteer master gardeners can answer questions about home gardening.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Naturescaping Program (503) 229-5410 EXT. 409. Volunteer program offering classes and speakers on the subject of landscaping with wildlife in mind. Classes offered in the spring and fall.

Books:

Trees: A Guide to Selecting Street Trees, Available from the Portland General Electric Forestry Department (503) 590-1454 or 590-1455 (or, from outside the area, 1-800-544-1794). A full-color guide to the selection and planting of urban street trees.

The Garden Primer , Barbara Damrosch, (Workman Publishing, New York, NY: 1988)

Sunset Western Garden Book : 40th Anniversary Edition , (Sunset Publishing Corporation, Menlo Park, CA: 1995)

Naturescaping: A Place for Wildlife, Available from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (503) 229-5410 Ext. 409, (printed by Portland General Electric; 1993). A guide to landscaping with wildlife in mind.