

Summit Avenue West District Guidelines (partial)

I. Intent and Purpose

The following Guidelines for Design Review will serve as the basis for the Heritage Preservation Commission's permit review decisions in the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District. The guidelines define the most important elements of the Summit Avenue West District's unique physical appearance and set forth standards for preserving and enhancing these elements in rehabilitation or new construction.

The City of Saint Paul, a Certified Local Government in the National Historic Preservation Program, has agreed to conduct its design review of locally designated heritage preservation sites and districts according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The following guidelines have been reviewed and approved by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer as containing criteria which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of significance to the district.

These guidelines are not hard and fast regulations. They are flexible criteria. Their purpose is to provide assurance to property owners that permit review will be based on clear standards rather than the taste of individual Commission members. The guidelines will be interpreted with flexibility depending of the particular merit of the building or area under review. Consideration will be given to the unavailability or expense of historical materials. When applying the guidelines the Commission will also be considerate of clearly defined cases of economic hardship or deprivation of the owner of reasonable use of the property.

II. Restoration and Rehabilitation

A. General Principles

1. All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided.
2. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design, color, texture and appearance. Duplication of original design based on physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural of "period" designs or using parts of other buildings.
3. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures or a period should be treated with sensitivity.
4. Buildings should be used for their originally intended purpose or compatible uses which require minimum alteration of the building and its site.
5. In general, buildings should be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings since their construction are sometimes significant because they reflect the history of the building and neighborhood. This significance should be respected, and restoration to an "original" appearance may not be desirable in some cases. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from an earlier era.
6. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future,

the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

B. Walls and Foundations

1. Deteriorated surface materials should be replaced with material used in original construction or with materials that resemble the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Imitative materials such as artificial stone and artificial brick veneer should not be used.

2. Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration and always with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft natural bristle brushes. Brick and stone surfaces should not be sandblasted. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Chemical cleaning products which could have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry material should not be used.

3. Original mortar joint size and profile should be retained, and replacement mortar should match the original mortar in color and texture. Materials and ingredient proportions similar to the original mortar should be used when repointing, with replacement mortar softer than the masonry units and not harder than the historic mortar. This will create a bond similar to the original and is necessary to prevent damage to the masonry units. Repointing with mortar of high Portland cement content of ten creates a bond stronger than is appropriate for the original building materials, possible resulting in cracking or other damage. Mortar joints should be carefully washed after set-up to retain the neatness of the joint lines and keep extraneous mortar off of masonry surfaces.

4. The original color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained. While unpainted masonry surfaces should not be painted, paint should not be indiscriminately removed from masonry surfaces because some brick surfaces were originally meant to be painted. Color is a significant design element, and paint colors should be appropriate to the period and style of the structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the Heritage Preservation Commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to Heritage Preservation Commission approval.

C. Roofs and Chimneys

1. Original roofing materials should be retained unless deteriorated. When partially reroofing, deteriorated roof coverings should be replaced with new materials that match the old in composition, size, shape and texture. When entirely reroofing, new materials which differ to such an extent from the old in composition, size, shape, color or texture that the appearance of the building is altered should not be used. The predominant roof materials on west Summit are tile and asphalt shingles. Tile roofs are either red or green, generally to complement rather than match the color of the house. When asphalt shingles began to be used in the 1890s and early twentieth century, the most common colors were solid, uniform, deep red and solid, uniform, dark green. Dark brown, dark gray, and a weathered-wood color may also be acceptable for new asphalt shingles, and black may be acceptable for Colonial

Revival houses built after the 1920s.

2. The original roof type, slope, and overhangs should be preserved. The shape of existing dormers should also be preserved. New dormers may be acceptable in some cases if compatible with the original design. Modern skylights are a simple way to alter a roof to admit light and air without disrupting its plane surface, are less noticeable than dormers, and may also be acceptable. Skylights should be flat and as close to the roof plane as possible. They should not be placed on the front roof plane.

3. Chimneys should be restored to their original condition. In the absence of historical documentation on the original design, chimney design should be in keeping with the period and style of the building.

D. Windows and Doors

1. Existing window and door openings should be retained. New window and door openings should not be introduced into principal elevations. Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done. The size of window panes or sash should not be altered. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.

2. Window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, doors, pediments, hoods, steps and all hardware should be retained. Discarding original doors and door hardware, when they can be repaired and reused in place, should be avoided.

3. The stylistic period(s) a building represents should be respected. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the material, design and hardware of the older window sash or door. Inappropriate new window and door features such as aluminum storm and screen window combinations, plastic or metal strip awnings, or fake shutters that disturb the character and appearance of the building should not be used. Combination storm windows should have wood frames or be painted to match trim colors.

E. Exterior Architectural Features

1. Porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development should be maintained or restored. Porches and steps removed from the building should be reconstructed to be compatible in design and detail with the period and style of the building. In general, front porches should not be enclosed, and precast steps should be avoided.

2. Decorative architectural features such as cornices, brackets, railings, and those around front doors and windows should be preserved. New material used to repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated architectural features of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile and brick should match the original as closely as possible.

3. Shutters should not be used on buildings not designed for them. If used, they should be large enough to cover the entire window area, should be functional and operable, and should not look as if they were flat-mounted on the wall. 4. Deck and firestair additions may be acceptable in some cases, but should be kept to the rear of buildings where they will be the most inconspicuous and detract the least from the historical context. The detailing of decks and exterior stairs should be compatible with the period and style of the building.

III. New Construction

A. General Principles

The basic principle for new construction in the Summit Avenue West District is to maintain the scale and quality of design of the district. The Summit Avenue West District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.

B. Massing and Scale

New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of existing surrounding structures. The scale of the spaces between buildings and the rhythm of buildings to open space should also be carefully considered. New houses should be at least 25 feet high and relate to the height of existing adjacent houses. New college buildings should relate to nearby contributing college buildings; new college buildings with a smaller setback from Summit should have a correspondingly lower height.

C. Materials and Details

1. Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used along Summit and by the way these materials are used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing, and glass. The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.

2. Most buildings on Summit are built of high-quality materials, often with brick or stucco walls and asphalt or tile roofs. Most brick is red and tile roofs are either red or green. Vinyl, metal or hardboard siding is acceptable only for accessory structures which are not visible from Summit. Imitative materials such as artificial stone and artificial brick veneer should not be used. Materials will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure.

3. The materials and details of new college buildings should relate to the materials and details of nearby contributing college buildings. The Macalester College campus has buildings predominantly of red brick with concrete or sandstone trim. The [University] of St. Thomas presents cream-colored Kasota stone buildings to the Summit Avenue streetscape.

4. The color of materials should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the Heritage Preservation Commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to Heritage Preservation Commission approval.

D. Building Elements

Individual elements of a building should be integrated into its composition for a balanced and complete design. These elements of new construction should compliment existing adjacent

structures as well.

1. Roofs

There is a great variety of roof treatment along Summit, but gable and hipped roofs are most common. The skyline or profile of new construction should relate to the predominant roof shape of existing nearby buildings.

The recommended roof pitch for gable roofs is 9:12 and in general the minimum appropriate pitch is 8:12. Highly visible secondary structure roofs should match the roof pitch of the main structure. A 6:12 pitch may be acceptable in some cases for secondary structures which are not visible from the street.

Roof hardware such as skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

2. Windows and Doors

The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and doors should be compatible with that of existing nearby buildings. Facade openings of the same general size as those in nearby buildings are encouraged. Sliding windows, awning windows, and horizontally oriented muntins are not common in the district and are generally unacceptable. Vertical muntins and muntin grids may be acceptable when compatible with the period and style of the building. Sliding glass doors should not be used where they would be visible from the street.

Although not usually improving the appearance of a building, the use of metal windows or doors need not necessarily ruin it. The important thing is that they should look like part of the building and not like raw metal appliances. Appropriately colored bronze-toned aluminum is acceptable. Mill finish (silver) aluminum should be avoided.

3. Porches and Decks

Front entrance ways should be articulated with a suitable design element to provide a transitional zone between the public outdoors and the private interior, and should be appropriate in detail to the size and style of the building. If front porches are constructed, they should generally not be enclosed.

Decks should be kept to the rear of the buildings, should be visually refined, and should be integrated into the overall building design. A raised deck protruding from a single wall usually appears disjointed from the total design and is generally unacceptable.

E. Site

1. Setback - Siting

New buildings should generally face Summit Avenue and be sited at a distance not more than 5% out-of-line from the front yard setback of existing adjacent buildings. Setbacks greater than those of adjacent buildings may be allowed in some cases.

2. Landscaping

The streetscape can be divided into three visual areas: public, semipublic, and private. Public space is provided by the publicly owned sidewalks, boulevards, streets, and medians. Semipublic space includes front yards and side yards on

corners. While privately owned, this space is open to view by passers-by. Private space is generally that which lies behind the front face of the building. Buildings, landscaping elements in front yards, and boulevard trees provide a "wall of enclosure" for the street "room." Generally, landscaping which respects the street as a public room is encouraged. Boulevard trees mark a separation between the automobile corridor and the rest of the streetscape, and should be maintained. Front yard enclosures such as hedges or walls are not common along west Summit. When they are used, they should permit visual penetration of the semipublic space. Low hedges or limestone retaining walls and visually open fences, such as wrought iron, are preferred. Chain link fences, while visually transparent, should not be used in front yards or in the front half of side yards. Privacy fences, timber retaining walls, and high hedges are also inappropriate in front yards.

3. Garages and Parking

Parking spaces should not be located in front yards. Residential parking spaces should be located in rear yards. If an alley is adjacent to a dwelling, any new garage should be located off the alley.

Institutional parking lots should ideally be located behind buildings where they would not be visible from Summit Avenue. When this is not possible, parking lots should be set back at least as far as the building facades and screened from view from Summit by landscaping such as hedges, brick walls, and changes of grade that sink the parking from view. Shade trees should be planted between parking lots and the street, and plant materials should relate to the traditional character of the district. The scale, level of light output, and design of parking lot lighting should be compatible with the 16 foot high lantern style lights along Summit Avenue.

F. Public Infrastructure

Summit Avenue itself, a wide parkway with well-landscaped boulevards running continuously in a 200 foot right-of-way for 2 ½ miles from Lexington parkway to the Mississippi River, represents an early city planning effort to create an exclusive residential area and is of utmost importance to the significance and integrity of the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District. The development of Summit Avenue as a wide parkway, along with the adoption in 1915 of an ordinance restricting Summit to one and two family residential, church, and school uses, helped to ensure the quality of development along the avenue. The pattern of Summit Avenue's boulevards and sidewalks should be maintained. Distinctive features of public spaces in the area, such as the early twentieth century lantern style street lights, should be preserved. New street furniture such as benches, sign standards, traffic signals and trash containers should be compatible with the character of the district. Electric, telephone and cable TV lines should be placed underground or along alleys, and meters should be placed where inconspicuous.

G. Signs

Signs should be compatible with the character of the district. Sign materials and design should complement the materials and design of the related building and/or adjacent buildings.

H. Moving of Structures

Proposals for moving structures out of the Summit Avenue West District are reviewed using the guidelines for demolition. Proposals for moving structures onto property located within the district are reviewed using the guidelines for new construction as well as guidelines for restoration and rehabilitation. Proposals for moving structures within the district are reviewed using guidelines for all of the above.

I. Demolition

Proposals for demolishing structures, while reviewed with special care by the Heritage Preservation Commission, are not necessarily in conflict with district guidelines. When reviewing proposals for demolition of structures within the district, the Heritage Preservation Commission refers to Section 73.06(1)(2) of the Saint Paul Legislative Code which states the following:

In the case of the proposed demolition of a building, prior to approval of said demolition, the commission shall make written findings on the following: the architectural and historical merit of the building, the effect of the demolition on surrounding buildings, the effect of any proposed new construction on the remainder of the building (in case of partial demolition) and on surrounding buildings, and the economic value or usefulness of the building as it now exists or if altered or modified in comparison with the value or usefulness of any proposed structures designated to replace the present building or buildings.