



WEDGE NEIGHBORHOOD AND NORTH SLOPE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Guidelines for building design and streetscape improvement review.

Adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Commission pursuant to Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07 for design review within the Wedge Neighborhood Historic District, Wedge Conservation District, and the North Slope Historic District.

Intent.

These guidelines are intended to ensure a certainty of design quality within the North Slope and the Wedge Historic Special Review Districts and the Wedge Conservation District, protect the historic fabric of the districts, enhance the economic vitality of the districts through promotion of their architectural character, and provide a clear set of physical design parameters for property owners, developers, designers, and public agencies. These guidelines are hereby established as the design review guidelines for rehabilitation, new construction, and public amenities, including street furniture, streetlighting, paving and sidewalks, and street trees and planting strips.

Architectural integrity, as it relates to scale, proportion, texture, color, compatible materials, space, and composition in various periods of architecture, should be respected and, to the extent possible, maintained in contributing properties.

The following guidelines are also intended to provide a basic set of standards for architectural and physical design within the North Slope and the Wedge Historic Special Review Districts and the Wedge Conservation District. These guidelines will be used by the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission as a baseline for the design review process. These guidelines will also assist owners, developers, and designers involved in project planning by providing general design and technical recommendations. When applying the guidelines, the Commission will be considerate of clearly documented cases of economic hardship or deprivation of the owner's reasonable use of the property.

Administration.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission may adopt policies and administrative rules for the purpose of clarifying and assisting property owners in interpreting these guidelines. Any such rules or policies shall be adopted by quorum vote and, once adopted, shall be made available to the public in electronic and printed formats.

Public Projects.

For certain common types of City-managed projects and for certain projects within the City right-of-way, including streetlighting, sidewalk repair and similar alterations within the right-of-way, the City Public Works Department may propose "standard specifications" for programmatic review and adoption by the Commission, in lieu of case-by-case reviews. Any such standards, rules, or policies shall be adopted by quorum vote and, once adopted, shall be made available to the public in electronic and printed formats.

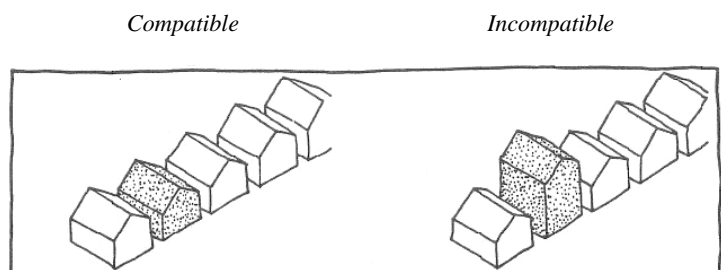
Exempt Projects.

Please see pages 7 and 8 for a list of projects exempt from design review.

Design Guidelines.

The following predominant building elements in the district shall be recognized as essential to the historic image of these neighborhoods and shall, along with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, be utilized as the basis for design review of proposals for rehabilitation and new construction within the districts.

1. **Height.** Goal: Balance the overall height of new construction with that of nearby structures. In the rehabilitation of existing buildings, the present height of the structure should remain intact. New buildings should step down to be comparable in height to adjacent structures.



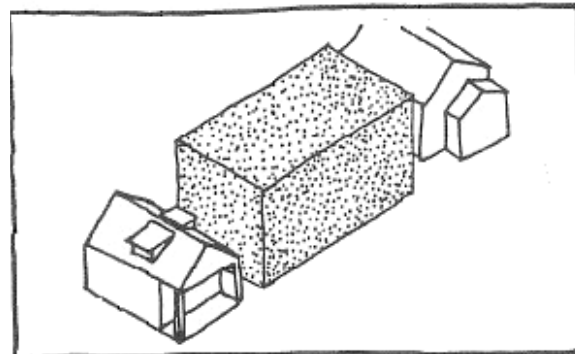
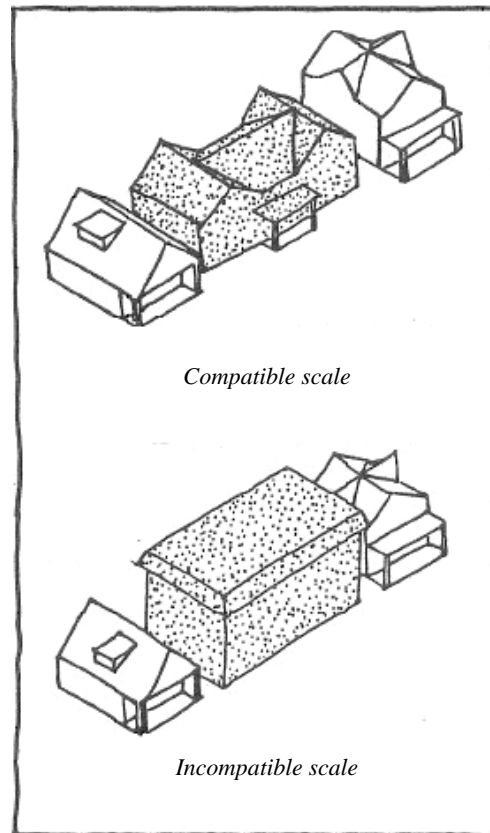
Height. In general, new structures should not be considerably taller or shorter than the surrounding historic buildings in the neighborhood.

2. **Scale.** Goal: Relate the size and proportion of new buildings to those of the neighborhood. Scale refers to a building's comparative relationship to neighboring structures and its fit within the district. Building facades should be of a scale compatible with surrounding buildings and maintain a comparable setback from the property line to adjacent buildings, as permitted by applicable zoning regulations.

Scale is also determined by the proportions of the architectural elements within the composition of the individual building facades. Window and door proportions (including the design of sash and frames), floor heights, floor shapes, roof shapes and pitches, and other elements of the building exterior should relate to the scale of the neighborhood.

3. **Massing.** Goal: Break up the facades of buildings into smaller varied masses comparable to those contributing buildings in the residential historic districts. Variety of forms is a distinguishing characteristic of the North Slope and Wedge residential communities. Smaller massing—the arrangement of facade details, such as projections and recesses—and porches all help to articulate the exterior of the structure and help the structure fit into the neighborhood.

4. **Sense of Entry.** Goal: Emphasize entrances to structures. Entrances should be located on the front facade of the building and highlighted with architectural details, such as raised platforms, porches, or porticos to draw attention to the entry. Entrances not located on the front facade should be easily recognizable from the street.



Massing: Single, monolithic forms are intrusive when placed on a street with varied massing and detailed facades.

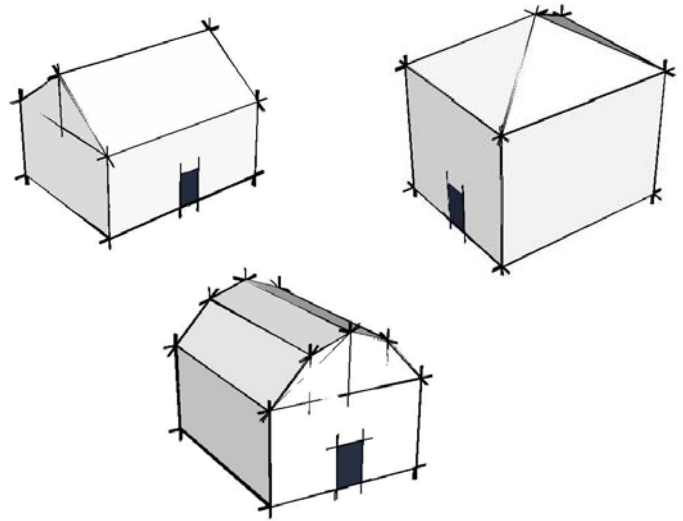
Below: Many people seek residential historic districts when house shopping, because most were true “front porch” communities. Large, welcoming porches are an important element not just of the homes in the North Slope but also of the district itself.



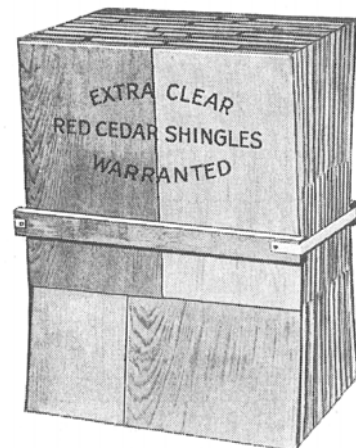
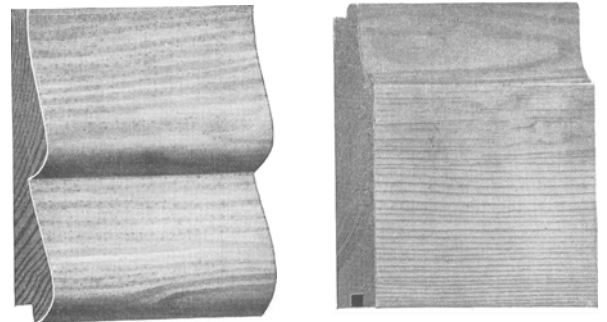
5. **Roof Shapes and Materials.** Goal: Utilize traditional roof shapes, pitches, and compatible finish materials on all new structures, porches, additions, and detached outbuildings wherever such elements are visible from the street. Maintain the present roof pitches of existing contributing buildings where such elements are visible from the street.

Typically, the existing historic buildings in the districts either have gable roofs with the slopes of the roofs between 5:12 to 12:12 or more and with the pitch oriented either parallel to or perpendicular to the public right-of-way or have hipped roofs with roof slopes somewhat lower. Most roofs also have architectural details, such as cross gables, dormers, and/or “widow’s walks” to break up the large sloped planes of the roof. Wide roof overhangs, decorative eaves or brackets, and cornices can be creatively used to enhance the appearance of the roof.

6. **Exterior Materials.** Goals: Use compatible materials that respect the visual appearance of the surrounding buildings. Buildings in the North Slope and Wedge Neighborhoods were sided with shingles or with lapped, horizontal wood siding of various widths. Subsequently, a few compatible brick or stucco-covered structures were constructed, although many later uses of these two materials do not fit the character of the neighborhood. Additions to existing buildings should be sided with a material to match, or be compatible with, the original or existing materials. New structures should utilize exterior materials similar to those typically found in the neighborhood.

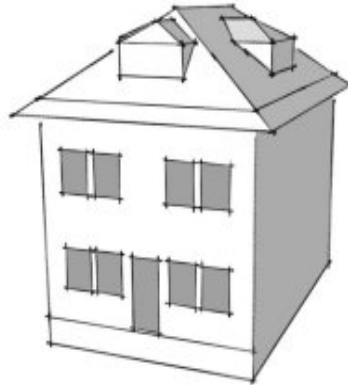


Some examples of traditional basic roof forms, from top left, clockwise: side gable, hipped, and gambrel (Dutch).

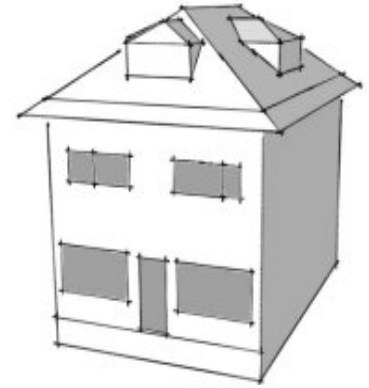


Examples of traditional siding materials. Note the example at top left, which was designed to look like traditional clapboard, but actually is a type of drop (rabbeted) tongue and groove siding. High quality cedar shingles were at one time widely available and typical for new residential construction. Today, such materials can be difficult to find and expensive – all the more reason to keep what you have if possible.

7. **Rhythm of Openings.** Goals: Respect the patterns and orientations of door and window openings, as represented in the neighboring buildings. Typically, older buildings have doors and transoms that matched the head height of the adjacent windows. Doors also tend to be paneled or contain glazed openings. Windows are vertically oriented. Large horizontal expanses of glass are created by ganging two or more windows into a series. Most windows are either single or double hung, with a few casement windows being incorporated into the designs. Many of the buildings had the upper sash articulated into smaller panels, either with muntin bars, leaded glazing, or arches. Most older windows were also surrounded with substantial trim pieces or window head trim.

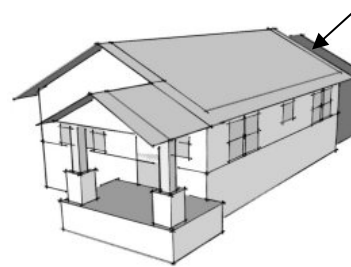


Proper window scale and configuration

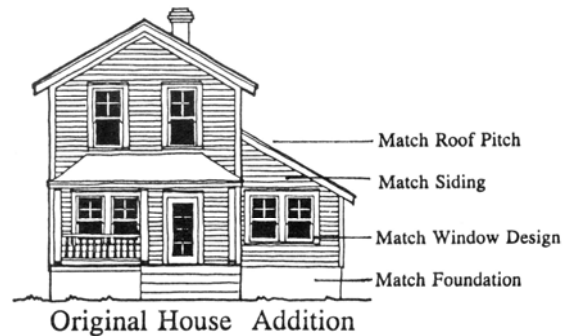
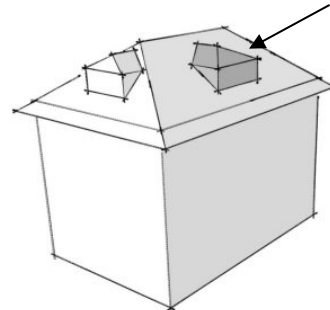


Improper window scale and configuration

8. **Additional Construction.** Goal: Sensitive locate additions, penthouses, buildings systems equipment, or roof-mounted structures to allow the architectural and historical qualities of the contributing building to be dominant. While additions to contributing buildings in historic districts are not discouraged, they should be located to conceal them from view from the public right-of-way. Some new additions, such as the reconstruction of missing porches or the addition of dormers in the roof, may need to be located on the front facade of the building. When an addition is proposed for the front of the building, appropriate and sensitive designs for such modifications should follow the guidelines for scale, massing, rhythm, and materials.

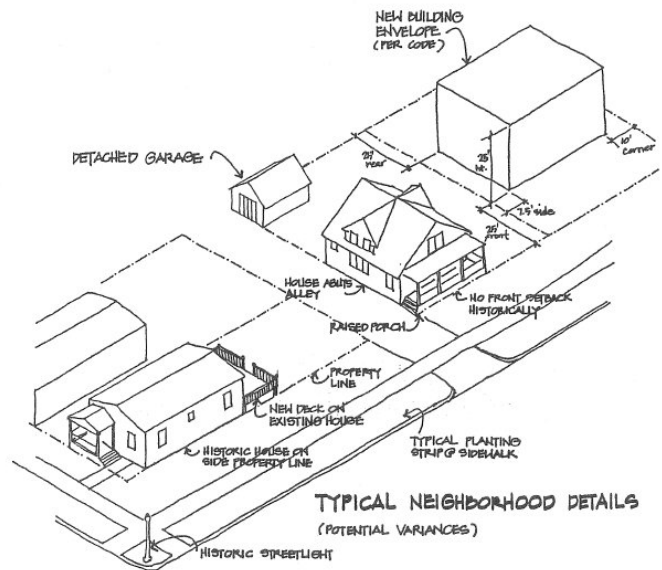


Examples of appropriate additions. On the left is a rear addition, scaled to reduce its visibility from the road. Below is a dormer, which is clearly visible from in front of the house, and therefore is designed to blend in with the scale and massing of the house.



Another example of blending in an addition with the original house, using the original scale, form, and architectural details as cues.

9. **Parking.** Goal: Minimize views of parking and garages from the public right-of-way. Most early houses provided space for storing various means of transportation, from horses and carriages to automobiles; however, these structures were nearly always entered from the alley rather than from the street. Parking lots and banks of garage doors along the front facade of a building do not conform to the character of the neighborhood. Off-street parking lots have no historic precedent in these neighborhoods and should be located behind the building and away from the street. Proposed residential driveway approaches requiring curb cuts from a street or arterial are generally prohibited, unless the applicant can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that because of special circumstances not generally applicable to other property or facilities, including size, shape, design, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of this standard prevents alley-accessed parking. If approved, such curb cuts and approaches shall be consistent with the standards approved for the historic districts and on file in the Public Works Department. Setting garages and carport structures back from the front of the building reduces their visual importance.



Traditionally, most neighborhood parking was alley accessed. Residential driveways and garages facing the street are typically only appropriate when there is no alley access, or other site constraints prevent alley accessed parking.

10. **Signage.** Goal: New signs for existing and new buildings shall complement the architecture and style of the residential neighborhoods. Signs should not dominate the building facades or obscure the structure's architectural features. Colors, materials, and lettering should be appropriate to the character of the surroundings and be compatible with the building's period and style. Care should be taken not to damage historic building materials in the installation process.

Commercial Buildings and Construction Within Wedge Conservation District.

Goal: Minimize visual impacts to the core district from commercial development that occurs on the periphery of the neighborhood. There are several areas within the Wedge Conservation District boundaries where commercial buildings will be constructed. Such construction projects should seek to minimize encroachment and visual impact by:

1. Site planning. Design new construction in such a manner that the primary massing of new buildings is directed away from the edges of the district, particularly where the height of the new construction will be substantially higher than the historic apartment buildings also on the edges of the residential area. Locate entrances and exits in such a manner to minimize impacts from vehicular activities on the Wedge Historic District. Maintain and improve historically compatible streetscape and pedestrian amenities. Design buffers and setbacks for new buildings to maintain integrity of siting and availability of light and air. Locate parking to the rear or alley sides of new construction and avoid new curb cuts where alley access is available.
2. Materials. Utilize an exterior materials palette that reflects the typical and traditional building materials of the region, including wood and stone, and utilize other durable materials on new buildings. Avoid faux treatments or overtly synthetic materials.
3. Scale and Massing. Individual elements on elevations and building units should be designed to break up large planar surfaces and avoid large, monolithic massing. Vertically oriented new construction, as opposed to low single-story commercial construction, is preferred.

Street Improvements.

The architectural character of the North Slope and Wedge Historic Districts is significantly enhanced by the complementary residential nature of existing street amenities, including brick and cobblestone street paving, historic streetlights, planting strips, sidewalks, historic scoring patterns in walks and driveways, healthy trees, and a restrained use of signage. These elements should be retained or enhanced. Installation, repair, or replacement of streetlights, curbs, alley approaches, sidewalks, and street surfaces shall be consistent with the standards approved for the historic districts and kept on file with the Public Works Department.

DISTRICT EXEMPTIONS

Wedge Neighborhood

The following actions are exempt from the requirements for Design Review:

- A. Any alterations to noncontributing properties within the Wedge Historic Special Review Districts, as defined by the District Inventory adopted by the Commission and kept on file at the Historic Preservation Office and any alterations to properties within the designated Conservation District, are exempt from the design review requirements; provided, that alterations to accessory structures within the Historic District and the demolition of any structures in the Historic District and Conservation District, including noncontributing and accessory structures or the construction of new buildings, are not exempt from the provisions of this chapter;
- B. Historically nonresidential and commercial use structures; provided, that the demolition of noncontributing or accessory structures are not exempt from the provisions of this chapter;
- C. Interior modifications to existing structures, unless those modifications affect the exterior appearance of the structure;
- D. Changes to the exteriors of contributing structures that are not visible from adjacent public rights-of-way may be granted an administrative Certificate of Approval by the Historic Preservation Officer, provided that staff is able to determine that the proposed project is consistent with the district design guidelines and applicable Secretary of the Interior's

Standards, all without prejudice to the right of the owner at any time to apply directly to the Commission for its consideration and action on such matters;

- E. Any alterations to private residential structures that are specifically exempted from permit requirements in the Residential Building Code as adopted by the City (such as painting and minor repairs such as caulking or weather-stripping);
- F. The installation, alteration, or repair of public and private plumbing, sewer, water, and gas piping systems, where no right-of-way restoration is required;
- G. The installation, alteration, or repair of public and private electrical, telephone, and cable television wiring systems; provided that the installation of solar panels, wind generators, and cellular antenna towers is not exempt;
- H. The landscaping of private residences;
- I. The maintenance of existing parking conditions and configurations, including curb cuts, driveways, alleys, and parking lots (new installations are subject to review by the Commission);
- J. Signs not exceeding the limitations for a home occupation permit and those installed by the City for directional and locational purposes;
- K. The following types of projects within the public rights-of-way: ADA accessibility ramps and installations, in-road work, traffic-signaling equipment, utility markers, and equipment required by the United States Postal Service.

North Slope Historic District

The following actions are exempt from the requirements for design review:

- A. Any alterations to non-contributing properties as defined by the District Inventory adopted by the Commission and kept on file at the Historic Preservation Office; provided, that modifications to accessory structures and the demolition of noncontributing or accessory structures are not exempt from the provisions of this chapter;
- B. Interior modifications to existing structures, unless those modifications affect the exterior appearance of the structure;
- C. Any alterations to private residential structures that are specifically exempted from permit requirements in the Residential Building Code as adopted by the City (such as painting and minor repairs such as caulking or weather-stripping);
- D. The installation, alteration, or repair of public and private plumbing, sewer, water, and gas piping systems, where no Right of Way restoration is required;
- E. The installation, alteration, or repair of public and private electrical, telephone, and cable television wiring systems, provided that the installation of solar panels, wind generators, and cellular antenna towers is not exempt;
- F. The landscaping of private residences;
- G. The maintenance of existing parking conditions and configurations, including curb cuts, driveways, alleys, and parking lots (new installations are subject to review by the Commission);
- H. Signs not exceeding the limitations for a home occupation permit and those installed by the City for directional and locational purposes.
- I. The following types of projects within the public rights of way: ADA accessibility ramps and installations, in-road work, traffic signaling equipment, utility markers, and equipment required by the United States Postal Service.