

XV.D. MOSS BAY NEIGHBORHOOD

3. DOWNTOWN PLAN

improvements, such as physical barriers to restrict traffic flow in these areas, may be considered. The architectural massing of projects in this area should be modulated both horizontally and vertically to reduce their visual bulk and to reflect the topography which presently exists.

C. URBAN DESIGN

The urban design of Downtown Kirkland consists of many disparate elements which, together, define its identity and “sense of place.” This document provides policy guidelines for the design of private development and a master plan for the development of the public framework of streets, pedestrian pathways, public facilities, parks, public buildings, and other public improvements (see Figure C-4).

The following discussion is organized into three sections:

- A. Downtown Design Guidelines and Design Review;
- B. Building Height and Design Districts; and
- C. The Image of the City: Urban Design Assets.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES AND DESIGN REVIEW

Mechanics of Design Review are described.

The booklet entitled “Design Guidelines,” which is adopted in Chapter 3.30 of the Kirkland Municipal Code, contains policy guidelines and concepts for private development in Downtown Kirkland. The booklet includes an explanation of the mechanics of the Design Review process to be used for all new development and major renovations in the Downtown area. Discretion to deny or condition a design proposal is based on specific Design Guidelines adopted by the City Council and administered by the Design Review Board and

Planning Department. Design Review enables the City to apply the Guidelines in a consistent, predictable, and effective manner.

The Guidelines are intended to balance the desired diversity of project architecture with the equally desired overall coherence of the Downtown’s visual and historic character. This is to be achieved by injecting into each project’s creative design process a recognition and respect of design principles and methods which incorporate new development into Downtown’s overall pattern. The Guidelines would be applied to any specific site in conjunction with the policy guidance provided by the Downtown Master Plan and the following text regarding Design Districts.

The Design Review Process enables the City to require new development to implement the policy guidance contained in the Guidelines, the Master Plan for Downtown, and to protect and enhance the area’s urban design assets. A more complete description of how Design Review should operate is found in the Zoning Code.

BUILDING HEIGHT AND DESIGN DISTRICTS

Figure C-5 identifies eight height and design districts within Downtown Kirkland. The boundaries of these districts are determined primarily by the topographical characteristics of the land and the area’s proximity to other noncommercial uses.

Design District 1

Maximum building height in Design District 1 is between two and five stories, depending on location and use.

This district is bordered by Lake Street, Central Way, 3rd Street, and generally 1st Avenue South. When combined with District 2, this area corresponds to the core area as shown in Figure C-3.

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The maximum building height in this area should be between two and five stories with no minimum setback from property lines. Stories above the second story should be set back from the street. To preserve the existing human scale of this area, development over two stories requires review and approval by the Design Review Board based on the priorities set forth in this plan.

Buildings should be limited to two stories along all of Lake Street South to reflect the scale of development in Design District 2. Along Park Lane west of Main Street, Third Street, and along Kirkland Avenue, a maximum height of two stories along street frontages will protect the existing human scale and pedestrian orientation. Buildings up to three stories in height may be appropriate along Central Way to reflect the scale of development in Design District 8 and as an intermediate height where adequately set back from the street. A continuous three-story street wall should be avoided by incorporating vertical and horizontal modulations into the design of buildings.

The portions of Design District 1 designated as 1A in Figure C-5 should be limited to a maximum height of three stories. As an incentive to encourage residential use of upper floors and to strengthen the retail fabric of the Core Area, a fourth story of height may be allowed. This additional story may be considered by the Design Review Board for projects where at least two of the upper stories are residential, the total height is not more than four feet taller than the height that would result from an office project with two stories of office over ground floor retail, stories above the second story are set back significantly from the street and the building form is stepped back at the third and fourth stories to mitigate the additional building mass, and the project provides superior retail space at the street level. Rooftop appurtenances and related screening should not exceed the total allowed height, and should be integrated into the height and design of any peaked roofs or parapets.

The portions of Design District 1 designated as 1B in Figure C-5 provide the best opportunities for new development that could contribute to the pedestrian fabric of the Downtown. Much of the existing development in these areas consists of older auto-

oriented uses defined by surface parking lots and poor pedestrian orientation. To provide incentive for redevelopment and because these larger sites have more flexibility to accommodate additional height, a mix of two to four stories in height is appropriate. East of Main Street, development should combine modulations in building heights with modulations of facade widths to break large buildings into the appearance of multiple smaller buildings. South of Kirkland Avenue, building forms should step up from the north and west with the tallest portions at the base of the hillside to help moderate the mass of large buildings on top of the bluff. Buildings over two stories in height should generally reduce the building mass above the second story.

As with Design District 1A, an additional story of height may be appropriate in 1B to encourage residential use of the upper floors and to strengthen the retail fabric in the Core Area. This additional story may be considered by the Design Review Board for projects where at least three of the upper stories are residential, the total height is not more than one foot taller than the height that would result from an office project with three stories of office over ground floor retail, stories above the second story are set back significantly from the street and the building form is stepped back at the third, fourth, and fifth stories to mitigate the additional building mass, and the project provides superior retail space at the street level. Rooftop appurtenances and related screening should not exceed the total allowed height, and should be integrated into the height and design of any peaked roofs or parapets.

Design considerations of particular importance in this area are those related to pedestrian scale and orientation. Building design at the street wall should contribute to a lively, attractive, and safe pedestrian streetscape. This should be achieved by the judicious placement of windows, multiple entrances, canopies, awnings, courtyards, arcades, and other pedestrian amenities. Service areas, surface parking, and blank facades should be located away from the street frontage.