

# BROWNE'S ADDITION HD: DESIGN REVIEW OVERVIEW

Overview of District  
Design Review in general  
Standards for New Construction

# OVERVIEW

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# PROPOSED DISTRICT MAP

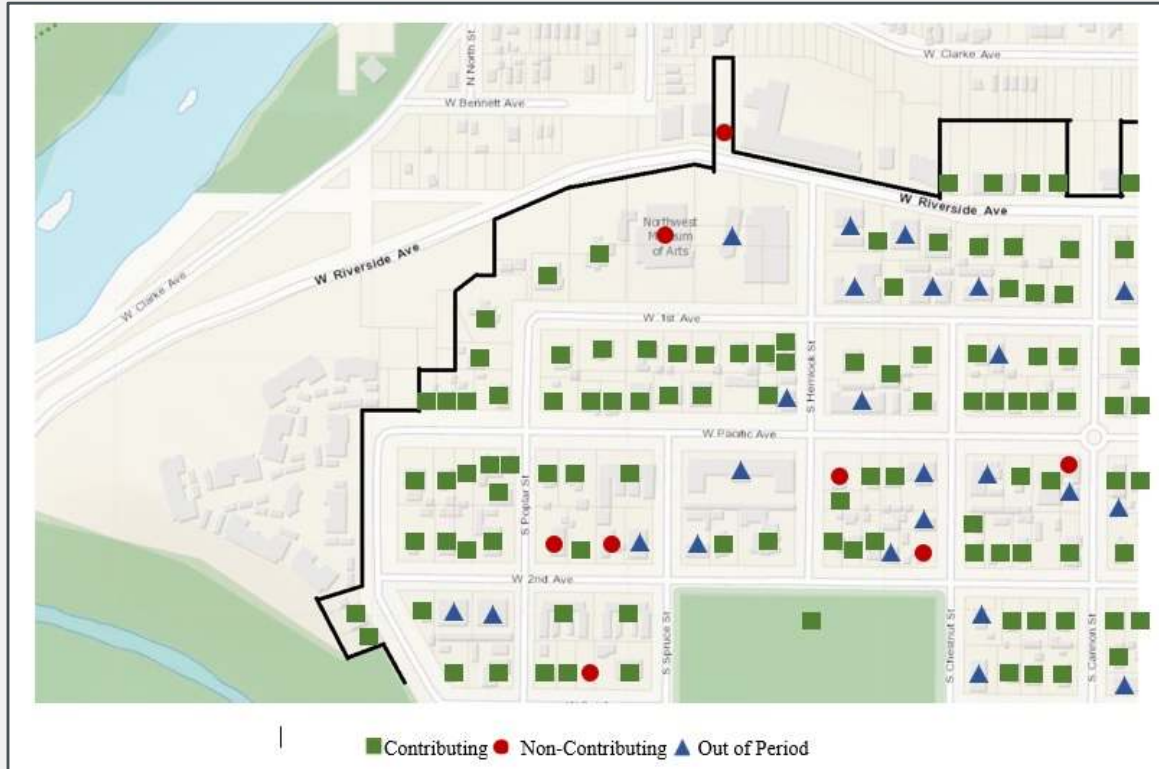


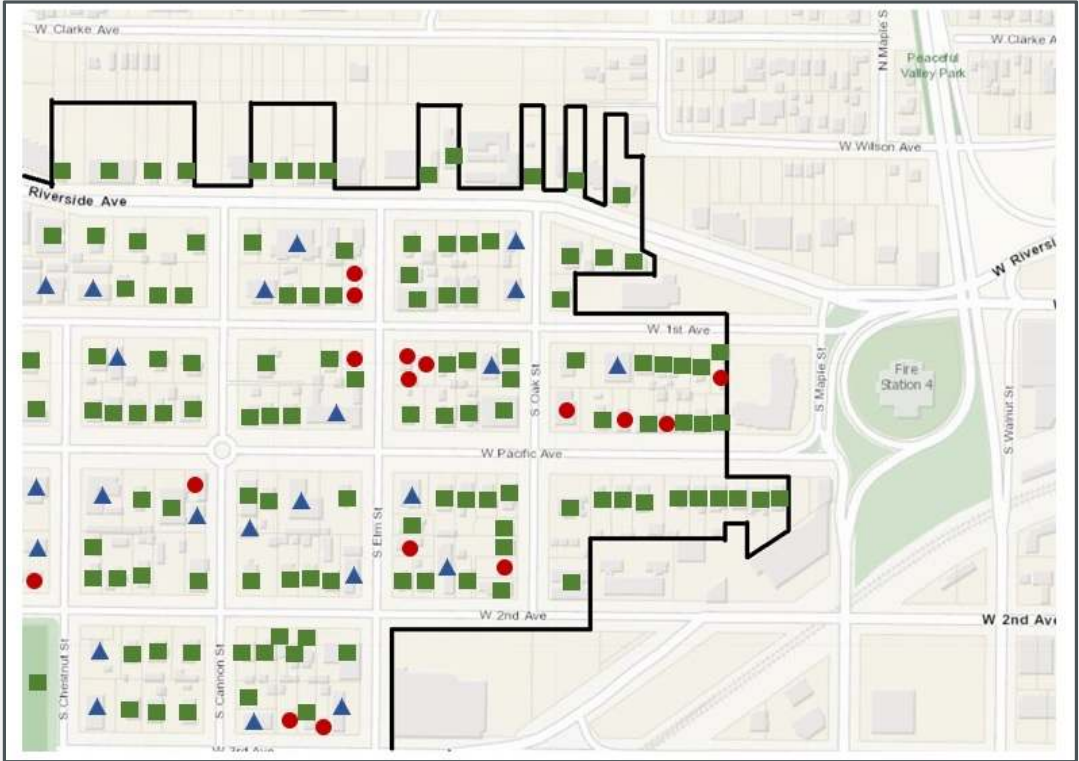
## HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

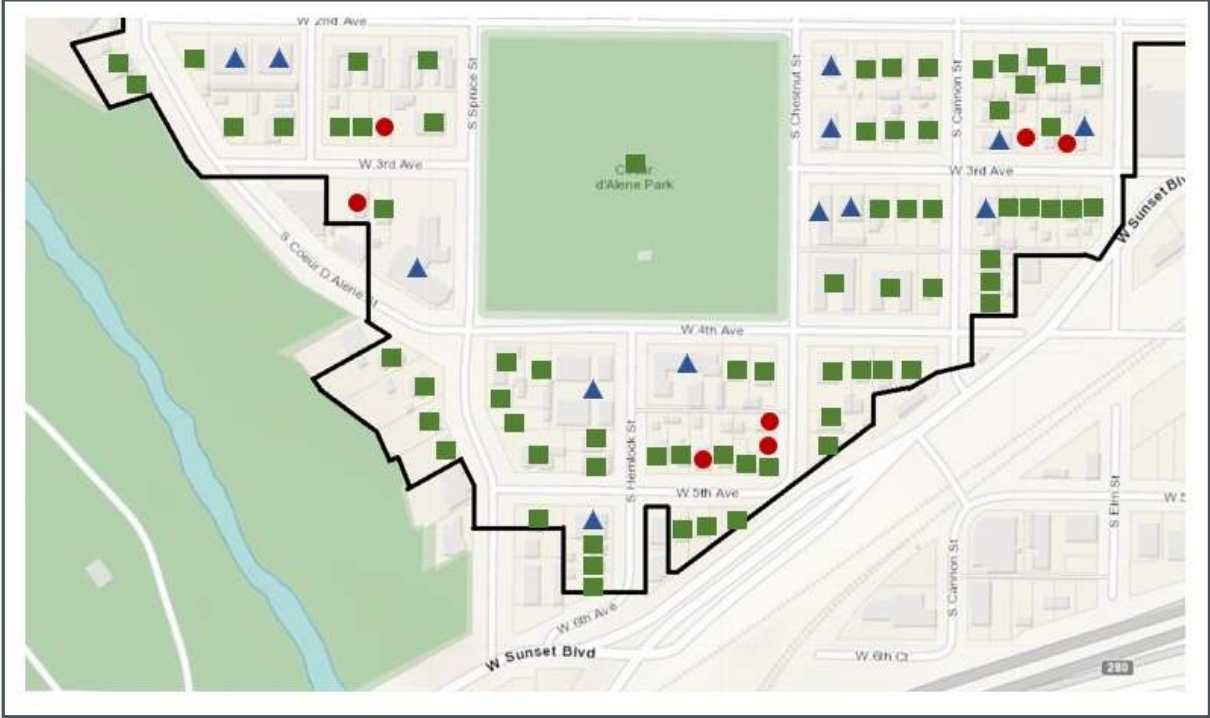
- Three main periods of development and change:
- 1881-1910: Living Well in Browne's
  - 63% of existing buildings constructed
- 1910-1950: Living Modestly in Browne's
  - 21% of existing buildings constructed – smaller houses and apartments
- 1951-1970: Living Densely in Browne's
  - 30 apartment buildings constructed, no single-family houses

## PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

- Period of Significance extends from 1881 to 1950
  - Establishes Contributing and Non-Contributing properties
- Post 1950 buildings and a few older ones: Non-Contributing
- Approx. 25% of properties non-contributing









# DESIGN REVIEW

Through Historic District Standards

# HISTORIC DISTRICT STANDARDS

Historic District Standards guide Design Review

- Purpose of Design Review is to maintain the historic character of the district and each contributing property in the district
- Design Review is done through the review and approval of changes proposed by the property owner to the exterior of the property.
- **Proposed by the property owner**
- **To the exterior of the property**
- Certificate of Appropriateness: issued by the City HPO in conjunction with a building permit

# THE STANDARDS DOCUMENT

Introduction and explanatory first sections

Section for buildings built as single-family buildings

- Exterior walls
- Roofs
- Porches and Entrances
- Windows

Section for apartment buildings – similar subsections



## STANDARDS USE A SERIES OF “COMMANDS”

- **Recognize** conveys approaches to understanding and keeping historic character.
- **Plan, Locate, Position, Design** mean use this guidance for work that is likely to be approved.
- **Keep, Retain,** and **Maintain** mean do not remove historic character features and materials.
- **Repair, Replicate** and **Replace** imply – if necessary – take such action.
- **Consider** and **Discuss** indicate that there is a range of solutions to give thought to and consult with the HPO.
- **Avoid** means that what is detailed is unlikely to be approved.

## VISIBILITY MATTERS

- Work proposed for **highly visible, public areas** of a property needs to maintain historic character most
- Other areas of the property are **visible** (sides of many buildings) and **minimally-visible** (further back on properties) and these areas are treated with more latitude
- There **private (minimally-visible and not visible)** areas of each property where most changes can be made

# DISTRICT WIDE STANDARDS

## Paint and coatings

- No review of paint color

## Site and landscape section

- Retain historic walls

## New elements – solar panels, etc.

## Additions

- Both living space and outdoor spaces

## Use of composite building materials – replica materials



## NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

Much lighter “touch” with this group of buildings

Intents: to avoid changes to these buildings in ways that decrease the historic character of the district

Strategies for post 1950 buildings:

- Avoid partial remodeling

Possibilities:

- Updating/remodeling of the entire building
- Updating a feature – say, the entrance

Possible strategy for altered pre-1950 buildings

- Return altered historic buildings to contributing state



## DEMOLITION REVIEW

Criteria for the SHLC to use spelled out in new ordinance

Added discussion of these criteria pertaining to the BAHD

2. The nature of the redevelopment which is planned for the property

This criteria notes that that nature needs to be in the “highly compatible” category. This means that there might be a trade-off between the loss of a contributing building and a highly-compatible new building – as other factors are also taken into consideration.



# COMPATIBLE NEW CONSTRUCTION

- This is the intent of the standards in Browne's Addition: context sensitive design
- More specifically: Compatible contemporary design
- Let's look at that concept in general and then get to what is proposed for Browne's Addition

TOO MODERN TO EXIST IN  
A HISTORIC DISTRICT?



## TOO MODERN FOR ST. LOUIS?



## THE CHALLENGE AND THE NEED

Contemporary design is one of the most contested aspects of historic district regulation

Compatibility in design is largely in the eye of the beholder

Brief and generic standards mean that approvals are highly discretionary; too prescriptive standards don't support high-quality design

Long held sense that scale and materials are critical but now we recognize are not enough



# CRITICAL TERMS

Compatible



Comparable



## WHAT COMPATIBLE DESIGN

### IS

Shares some of the qualities of other buildings but is “of its time”

Recognizes older design approaches and has some form of visual dialog with them

Visual, accessible to everyone

### IS NOT

Imitative, or meant to be indistinguishable from old

So generic it could be built anywhere

So generic it has no interest or personality

The result of design by committee

## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: SUPPORT FOR SOME COMPARABILITY

High degree of consensus in preferences for:

- Popular style houses over high-style ones
- Blocks with a high degree of consistency in scale and character
- Low to moderate discrepancies

Preferences based on the observer's knowledge structure for that kind of building and experience in the environment: the context

Façade design as important as scale for perception of consistency

## SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS

### Standard 9.

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

The new work will be **differentiated from the old** and will be **compatible** with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.



# STEVEN W SEMES' FOUR DESIGN STRATEGIES

1. Literal Replication
2. Invention within a Style/Type
3. Abstract Reference
4. ~~Intentional Opposition~~ Juxtaposition



# REPLICATION IN SAINT LOUIS, SAVANNAH



# INVENTION WITHIN THE BRICK HOUSE TYPE, STL



# ABSTRACT REFERENCE

FORM



MATERIAL



# JUXTAPOSITION



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHILADELPHIA

- If the district or area has a single, predominant environment and architecture, develop guidelines that provide minor variations consistent with this environment based on [replication] and invention within a style.
- If the district or area has great variety, abstract reference in addition to inventions within a style could be appropriate.

## DENVER'S 2006 INTENT STATEMENT

- New buildings should be subordinate to the existing historic context in many ways.
- Materials, including quality of materials, are an important consideration.
- At a minimum, an acceptable design is neutral.
- Respecting the urban form characteristic of the district is often more important than replicating its architectural form, and new construction that hinders this perception is unacceptable.

**BASICS FOR COMPATIBLE  
CONTEMPORARY DESIGN  
IN SPOKANE HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Browne's Addition in particular



## PROPOSED APPROACH

“Sustaining a historic context requires provisions for change that maintain an **appropriate balance between static and dynamic urban character**, a threshold that varies from one context to another.”

Caroline Alderson

## BROWNE'S ADDITION CHARACTER

- Considerable variety in urban character and building stock.
- Streetscapes often do have some consistency in building type, scale, and height
- Buildings have been erected over time and represent various degrees of investment and architectural presence
- Buildings also represent common building types, styles, and use of materials of the time built
- People moving through the district experience the streetscapes, vegetation providing shade, and uninterrupted views along sidewalks and streets

## STREETSCAPES IN BROWNE'S ADDITION

Variety throughout district

Individual streets have more consistency in scale and height.



## REINVENTION OF A FORM IN BROWNE'S ADDITION



## RECENT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN BROWNE'S ADDITION



# CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN BASICS

## THE DISTRICT IS THE RESOURCE.

The historic district is the resource that is more important than any of its individual components and new buildings will not detract from or be intrusive in the character of the district.

New buildings need not be neutral in presence as variety is encouraged, but should not be visually intrusive or out of scale.



## COMPATIBILITY IS A VISUAL CHARACTERISTIC.

It cannot be explained.

It cannot be based on programmatic aspects, comparable quality or theoretical concepts.

It must be visible to district residents.





## THE STREETScape IS EXPERIENCED CHARACTER, BASIS FOR COMPATIBILITY.



- Avenues have different characters than streets
- Avenues tend to have more consistent scale and heights in buildings
- Streets have more smaller houses, often next to taller Avenue-facing buildings.

## CHARACTER AND COMPATIBILITY ARE LOCAL AND VARIED.

The sense of what is compatible infill construction is local and therefore varies from place to place, street to street, lot to lot.

A project is site specific in visual compatibility.



## COMPATIBILITY REQUIRES SOME COMPARABILITY.

Compatible infill buildings are similar in scale and form, use of materials, and incorporate some common architectural elements; replication of scale, height and footprint are not necessary.



## COMPATIBLE DESIGN IS AN ACHIEVABLE DESIGN CHALLENGE.

Designing a compatible infill building is a particular design challenge that allows creativity and innovation within the parameters of some comparability and reflecting date of construction.



## USE AND COMBINATION OF MATERIALS MATTER.

Traditional use of materials is often limited to variation within a material – wood siding and shingles – or two colors of brick.

Variety for variety's sake is not contributing to the comparability of a building in a historic district.



# COLOR MATTERS.

Color can compensate for a different building material or can diminish compatibility.



## HEIGHT MATTERS - EVEN IN A DISTRICT WITH VARIED HEIGHTS.

Variance in height of one or two stories can still be within a compatible range.

Shorter story heights in new construction should be addressed so the building does not appear out of scale.



# TESTING OUR GAZES



TWO CHICAGO BUILDINGS DEMONSTRATE  
INTERESTING AND NEUTRAL



## A LITTLE JUXTAPOSITION



# TRADITIONAL OFFERINGS IN FORT COLLINS

TRADITIONAL



EVOKING THE PAST



Too suburban for Browne's? Scale might be good

# NEW IN DENVER HISTORIC DISTRICTS



Complex  
Contemporary  
Use of materials

## COMPATIBLE OR JUXTAPOSITION?



# APPROACH IN BROWNE'S ADDITION

Compatible New Construction : Context Sensitive Design

## ADAPTING THE STANDARD APPROACHES

Commonly addressed:

- Comparability and differentiation
- Context specific design
- Using scale and siting – but also design and materials in analysis

Less common approach:

- Providing a framework for evaluation on compatible design
- Not providing prescriptive standards

## INDIVIDUAL REVIEW NO STANDARD SOLUTIONS

The very nature of context-sensitive design means that a proposal approved for one location may well *not* be compatible and appropriate in another location.

Each proposal will be considered for its specific location only.

There should be no expectation that a proposal approved for one location will be approved for another.



## RELIANCE ON: INVENTION WITHIN A BUILDING TYPE OR STYLE

The approach of re-invention echoes a compatible yet differentiated, “traditional with a twist” approach to design.

It is coherent design, not a jumble of various elements from building types and styles.

It has recognizable forms and building elements, but does not attempt to replicate.

Saves abstract reference and juxtaposition as a component of the design, not the overall strategy.

## ARCHITECT-DRIVEN

The open-ended structure of this framework and scored, standard evaluation approach allows the architect to decide:

where to make strong references to the underlying type or style and were to include more contemporary expression.

The results of this approach will likely have the visual references necessary for compatibility, but avoid attempts to copy the past and the mixing of disparate elements.

## BA STANDARDS AND CITY-WIDE ONES

- New construction in Browne's Addition will be in the broad category of Infill Development.
- However, the Browne's Addition Historic District Design Standards **supersede any guidance in general standards.**
- If there are differences in guidance for setbacks and allowable height, for instance, **the guidance in these Standards supersedes that in the more generic and city-wide, as these Standards will be adopted as a Zoning Overlay.**
- The Browne's Addition Standards do not address use.

## USING PRECEDENTS AND PATTERNS

Browne's Addition has some of the most varied streetscapes found in areas protected as historic districts.

While this variety in the built environment allows for a somewhat wide range of compatible new construction, there are patterns in scale, siting, design, and use of materials that provide context for the design of new buildings.

This variety, though, does mean that several types of multi-family building types are appropriate for Browne's Addition.

## USING THE FRAMEWORK

- Presents sets of statements regarding designing for compatibility that will be used to assess the compatibility of the proposed design.
- The statements suggest ways that compatible, context-sensitive design can be achieved.
- The statements **are not** a checklist or prescriptive set of standards to be met with each project.
- The architect is free to choose from among the elements that will ensure compatibility while introducing some differentiation.

## FAÇADE DESIGN SECTION

- Using elements of similar scale as buildings in facing blockfronts context
- Using degree of articulation similar to buildings in facing blockfronts context
- Avoiding copying historic styles and mixing of disparate elements
- Using constructional logic in dimensions of elements
- Using fenestration logic based on interior and avoiding eccentricity
- Using traditional approach to entrance design by placing individual entrances in multi-family buildings oriented to the street and clearly evident as the main entrance to each unit
- Placing entrances into a building with multiple units oriented to the street and be clearly evident as the main entrance for residents and visitors
- Using design principles to keep entrances in scale with the human body and the building.

## FIRST SECTION: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Require a 3-stage examination

- Character area of the district (map provided)
- Facing blockfronts – both sides of the street as we experience the district in that way
- Adjacent buildings

Related areas on rating provide opportunity to assess the compatibility of what is proposed in its context



# URBAN FORM ANALYSIS

How well does what is proposed fit into the urban form of the district?

Assess:

- Streetscape: siting and setbacks
- Scale
- Massing
- Height
- Provision for vehicles



All of these aspects rated – can receive all or some of the points



## DESIGN COMPONENT

General: Orientation, Design Quality, Presence

Use of façade materials

Use of secondary façade materials

Use of color

Façade design

Recognizing the effort – “bonus” points a reviewer can add

- Response to context
- Comparability/Differentiation Ratio
- Would neighborhood residents find it compatible?
- Uses wood or metal windows and doors



## THREE CATEGORIES

### Highly Compatible

- Combined total of 80%

### Compatible

- 60-79%

### Incompatible

- Below 50%



## FRAMEWORK AND EVALUATION

- HPO Staff and SHLC members will evaluate proposals jointly and have a consensus evaluation of the project
- Others who wish to testify at Commission meetings about a proposal are expected to use the framework and discuss it in these terms
- The developer to decide how to increase a compatibility rating and we avoid design by committee

## SO HOW DOES THIS WORK?

Two sections of the evaluation framework emphasis context compatibility: height, setback, scale

There will be varying approaches to compatibility:

- One project may meet all the contextual and urban form means of achieving compatibility and incorporate some non-traditional materials or use of non-traditional color and rate compatible.
- Another project might meet all contextual and urban form expectations for compatibility and be a neo-traditional design that uses traditional materials and forms

Likely that some projects are in the compatible range and others in the highly compatible range

## RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD



## BROOKSHIRE COMMONS



Reinvention of a large Tudor-Revival

- Stairs in location of a front porch and mark the entrance
- Half-timbering – in non-traditional locations
- Massing, limited use of materials, other aspects could work in some locations in BA
- No points for using wood or metal windows

## KENDALL YARDS



More overtly contemporary

- Relies on varied rooflines for massing interest; otherwise flat
- Variety for the sake of variety: fenestration, entrance roof forms, mix of materials
- No traditional materials
- Interesting or too busy? We see it differently

## CAN YOU PICTURE THIS IN BA?

- More traditional than contemporary
- Massing traditional and uses central light court for access and light
- Traditional materials, colors
- Expected amenity - balconettes
- Ambiguous use of ground floor
- Would need to be set back further in most locations in BA





OR THIS ONE?

What do you see?



## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Neighbors like more traditional and comparable design.

Design professionals prefer reinvention, abstract, distinctive designs.

Our approach allows for both traditional and reinvention approaches.

Challenges to context-sensitive/compatible design will be in materials (quality and mixing) and color (non-traditional), given recent projects in Spokane.

## COMMENTS, QUESTIONS?

Send comments to:

Megan Duvall: [mduvall@spokanecity.org](mailto:mduvall@spokanecity.org)

Or post on [www.facebook.com/SpokaneHistoricLandmarks](https://www.facebook.com/SpokaneHistoricLandmarks)