



**Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**  
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.



**New Chinatown/Japantown Design Guidelines  
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #3**

Tuesday, April 26, 2016  
Portland Development Commission  
Commission Room: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
3:00 – 5:00 PM

Meeting Summary

Members in attendance: Hillary Adam, Joren Bass, Herman Colas, Brian Kimura, Neil Lee, Peggy Moretti, Will Naito, Jackie Peterson Loomis, Matthew Roman, Daniel Kaven (Sub for Katherine Schultz)

Consultant team in attendance: Adrienne DeDona (JLA), Karen Lange (Waterleaf), Peter Meijer (PMA), Brandon Grilc (PMA)

City Staff in attendance: Anne Crispino-Taylor (PDC), Sarah Harpole (PDC), Mark Raggett (BPS), Brandon Spencer-Hartle (BPS), Nicholas Starin (BPS)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Design Guidelines – Guiding Principles
- Concept Report
- Resource Guide
- Design Guidelines Fact Sheet
- Open House Invitation

**1. Welcome**

*Adrienne DeDona*

**2. Revised Guiding Principles**

*Adrienne DeDona*

Adrienne explained how the Guiding Principles were revised based on feedback at the previous meeting and asked if the document reflected those concerns. She was asked to clarify the meaning of “cultural misappropriation” in Principle #4. She explained that it essentially means to be respectful and authentic. In Principle #5 it was suggested to take out the statement “acknowledging the existing allowances on a site,” as this seemed to pull the standards into the guidelines. The intent of the statement was to acknowledge that the height and bulk issues will not be regulated in these guidelines. With respect to Principle #3 there was concern that certain buildings that may not be architecturally significant, but are culturally significant, will be overlooked. It was suggested to identify which buildings those were. A concern about heights was raised and it was asked what dictated the heights during the time the historic buildings were constructed. It was speculated

*This summary is PDC staff’s interpretation of the main points of discussion, including statements attributed directly to committee members, staff and the public, and is not intended to be a word-for-work transcription of the meeting.*

that those were the traditional heights that were reflected through the economics and construction methods at that time. It was asked why, if we have the technology to construct taller buildings, we would restrict heights today. It was felt that the point of creating design guidelines for a national historic district should be to protect the area and existing buildings as they were constructed. The group was reminded that the guidelines will not set height restrictions; the Central City 2035 planning process will set the bar for the entire city.

### **3. Discussion: Strategic Direction**

*Peter Meijer*

Peter encouraged the group to focus on three concepts: compatibility, differentiation and authenticity. Compatibility and differentiation should be viewed as the philosophical spectrum for improvements within the district, and authenticity should bring what is culturally authentic into the guidelines. The design strategy closest to Compatibility on one end of the scale would be a historical reconstruction. The strategy closest to Differentiation on the other end of the scale would be juxtaposition. A question was raised about authenticity and how to define culturally authentic. Peter explained it as supporting what was here before. Photographs can be used to help determine “authenticity” and to demonstrate the architectural and cultural characteristics of the time. He also explained the importance of acknowledging the diverse number of styles within the district. Some believed compatibility was more important than differentiation, and that infill should support and be harmonious with what exists today. It was acknowledged that the area doesn’t function the same today and to recognize uses have developed and businesses have changed – they are compatible but different. However, it was also asked whether the contributing buildings that were built in an era that doesn’t function today contribute to the health of the neighborhood. Also asked was whether design decisions needed to be bound by what was prescribed by the historic district nomination.

Concerns were raised about the overlap area with the adjacent Skidmore/Old Town District and if there is a primary district that should guide decisions. Peter reminded the group to be specific about what these guidelines are and to not blend the two; be clear and direct about what will guide the overlap area. Within the overlap area there are periods of distinction – these guidelines should recognize those: suggest using the existing architecture as a guide. A question was raised as to whether the Landmark District status of Skidmore/Old Town should trump the status of New Chinatown/Japantown. Resolution of this topic was tabled for discussion later.

### **4. Discussion: Draft Guidelines Concepts**

*Brandon Grilc*

Copies of the [Skidmore / Old Town Historic District Design Guidelines](#) were distributed to members for use as a model for developing the first draft of the New Chinatown / Japantown Design Guidelines. Members then formed three groups and discussed the Concept Report handout and provided feedback. The following is a summary input provided by SAC members during and subsequent to the meeting:

#### **A. Alterations**

- A1. More clearly define “significant features”; How to address uncovered/previously unknown features? Is this limited to period of significance? Nomination lacks detail re: significant features. Balance of flexibility and clarity needed.
- A2. Not a good photo example.
- A2. Provide clarity; What should be included, and how is this same/different from A 1?
- A3. What do you mean about achieved historic significance.
- A3. Intent unclear; need more/different photos. Design with intent to be harmonious with existing building.

- A4-6: ok; Assumption is seismic bracing should be unobtrusive, but it is still possible that they may be visible via window to exterior.
- How to determine when alterations have happened?
- Do they apply to Contributing buildings only?
- State clearly who is affected by guidelines.

#### B. Additions

- B1. Too much ambiguity; need to clarify. Change last sentence: Compatibility should also be based on Contributing resources in the overall district. (Nearby is too vague). Focus should be on desired character of the overall district. Seems like a “backdoor” attempt to limit height.
- B2. Is Mercy Corps a successful example? Would this guideline prohibit the Grove addition? Define addition. Should this guideline be deleted and addressed in B3 & 4 instead?
- B3 & 4. Should not detract from Resource; Don’t overshadow in prominence. Should vertical addition mimic building below or be treated as a more modern but compatible addition? (Example: Town Storage Building)
- Add New Construction B10 to Additions – quality of materials; Cultural and material authenticity.
- What defines an addition? See Skidmore/Old Town guidelines.

#### C. New Construction

- C1. State clearly, both are important.
- C2. Work Addition B2 into New Construction C1.
- C1 & 2. How do you reconcile these two? Need good examples for new construction. Should C 2 be moved to the General section?
- C2. Don’t like. Needs to be Portland.
- C3. “Blocky”?
- C3. Change “Blocky” to traditional; Combine with C1. Maintain street frontages. There are examples of pitched roofs within district (Fish Block, Overland Warehouse); focus should instead be on parapets and/or cornice lines.
- C4. 100x100? Is this a fact? Be careful of stating facts.
- C5. Define “relate” and “nearby”. Height is addressed by zoning. Focus on exterior expression of street façade vs height of building. Need a good photo.
- C5. Need to flush out height as a broader district topic; Needs to be clearly defined.
- C8. Remove the word “structural” – this could be taken too literally.
- C11. Add “contributing” before the word “buildings”.
- C12. For consideration, add the word “texture” after “quality” and remove the last sentence; the last sentence is prescriptive and sort of gets to what we mean by texture but doesn’t go far enough. “Texture” will get us there.
- C12. Image is too specific.
- C13. keep
- C13. Is not really necessary (C1 is probably enough)
- Entrance alcoves entice homeless.

- We should celebrate new design.
- New construction to “embody” or reflect the story of what was there before.

#### D. General

- D3. For consideration, perhaps add “unless reestablishing a historic painted wall sign” after “discouraged”. This could be tricky as most of the faded painted wall signs which add to the historic character most likely exceed current sign allowances; however, adding this to the guideline would help toward approving Modifications to increase maximum sign area.
- D3 Liked signage.
- D6. Add “Vehicle areas at the street edge should be minimized”.
- D7. Perhaps “Improvements in the right-of-way should reflect the desired character of the district”.
- D8. I seem to remember some discussion about removing this one. I say keep this as it will give the City more teeth to require that an applicant go through the proper procedures for archaeological discovery. It is my sense that people don’t always do this and it would be nice to have this highlighted early.
- D8. Archaeology may not be needed.
- D10. For consideration, add “Where appropriate, provide opportunities to tell the story of the district and individual sites through imagery, text, and date cornerstones”.
- D10. Liked plaques, work out placement.

#### 5. Next Steps / Closing Comments

*Sarah Harpole*

- Open house: May 3, 2016 – 5:00-7:00, 315 NW Davis Street (CCBA Building, Sire Theater)
- Provide comments to Sarah for the Concept Report to Sarah by May 6, 2016
- Next meeting: May 24, 2016 – 3:30-5:00

*Meeting notes prepared by Anne Crispino-Taylor, PDC Senior Administrative Coordinator, Central City*