

Appendix D: Design Guidelines for Mixed-Income Housing and Mixed Use Development

The following design guidelines focus on how mixed-income housing and mixed-use building – both large-scale redevelopment projects and smaller lot-by-lot infill – can be designed to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Design is an essential element in achieving neighborhood acceptance and creating places of high quality and lasting value.

Block and Building Design

Variety. Provide a variety of housing types on each block or block face to the degree possible. Variety creates a more interesting streetscape and allows for the combination of a variety of income levels. Use similar setbacks, spacing, and other design features to unify the different housing types.

Compatibility. New buildings should be compatible with surrounding buildings. This means that buildings should maintain similar setbacks, scale and massing, width to height ratio, and patterns of windows and openings.

Integration. Intersperse assisted housing with market rate to the degree possible. Income level or tenure shouldn't be discernible from the street – one HOPE VI project even faced the assisted units (which were slightly smaller) in brick and the market-rate ones with conventional siding, as a way of equalizing their appearance.

Orientation. In general, all buildings should be oriented to a public street, with the main entrance on the façade that faces the street. Placement of parking within rear yards or interior courts ensures that buildings address the street in the same way that typical single-family homes do, and that the street remains welcoming to pedestrians.

Front yard setback. New buildings should be placed to respect the setback line created by existing buildings on the block. The setback for a new building should fall within 10 feet of the setback of the nearest single-family building.

Buildings longer than wide. In keeping with existing development patterns in most older neighborhoods, the narrow end of the building should typically face the street. On large lots, an L-shaped design may be appropriate. On corner lots, the façade should be oriented consistent with the prevailing pattern on the block.



Mixed-income single- and two-family housing in Saint Paul is oriented to the street and compatible with surrounding neighborhood



Single-family characteristics. Attached and multifamily housing should emulate single-family housing in its basic architectural elements – pitched roofs, articulated facades, visible entrances, porches or balconies. Taller buildings should step down to provide a height transition to existing

Level of formality. Design the front and back facades with appropriate levels of formality. The front, as the more public side of the house, will receive the more formal treatment, with the main entrance, porch or steps and landscaping, while trash/recycling storage, play equipment and outdoor storage should be located in the back.

Site Design



Semi-private transitional space. Adding a porch or decorative fence or elevating the front yard slightly above sidewalk grade and providing adequate landscaping all provide a sense of privacy for residents while allowing them to keep “eyes on the street.” Provide opportunities for surveillance of shared outdoor areas such as streets, sidewalks and play areas from within the home.



Parking to the rear. Parking spaces and garages should be located to the rear of the lot or interior of the block. When garages cannot be located to the rear or on the interior of the block, they should be recessed some distance behind the main façade of the house.

Outdoor space. Provide each housing unit with clearly defined private or semi-private outdoor space such as a yard, patio, porch or balcony, with direct access from inside the unit.



Define all outdoor spaces, distinguishing between those reserved for residents and those open to the public. Provide visual indications of the boundaries between private space, public space and shared space. Enclose the shared outdoor space with buildings, low fences or hedges, and paths. Provide convenient access to shared outdoor areas, amenities such as play equipment, seating and tables to encourage their use, and vegetation for seasonal shade.

Paths. On larger sites, where common open space or parking are provided separate from housing units, provide a clear internal walkway system that connects each housing unit to destinations within the site and the surrounding neighborhood. Paths should be logical and predictable in their routes and should connect to the public sidewalk system.

Guidelines for Mixed-Use Commercial/Office/Residential Buildings

Because mixed-use buildings function as commercial buildings at sidewalk level, their placement and design differs from that of solely residential buildings. These buildings will generally be located at prominent intersections and along major streets. These are also the locations where zoning allows commercial buildings. Guidelines should ensure compatibility between existing buildings and new, taller structures.

Sidewalk placement: Buildings should be placed at or close to the edge of the sidewalk to form a consistent “street wall.” Portions of the façade may be recessed to provide outdoor seating areas, but the façade should generally meet the sidewalk for at least 75 percent of its length.

Building height: Buildings in neighborhood commercial districts should generally not exceed three to four stories, but taller buildings may be appropriate at prominent intersections. Buildings should “step down” to provide a transition to existing residential buildings.



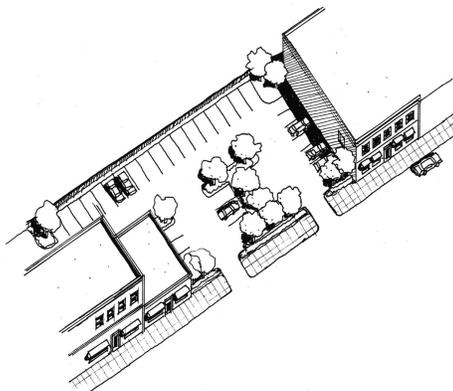
New mixed-use building in downtown Hopkins, MN, exemplifies principles of storefront design and sidewalk placement.



Storefront design: Mixed-use buildings should include elements of storefront design at ground level. Storefront design includes the following elements:

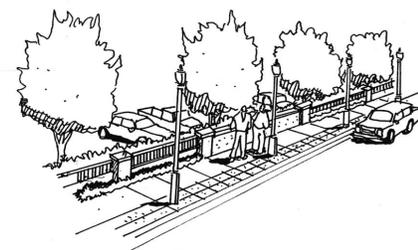
- The ground floor includes large display windows (at least , and is visually separated from the upper stories, through the use an intermediate cornice line, an awning, arcade or portico, or similar techniques.
- Roofs may be flat, consistent with traditional storefront commercial design, or pitched. If flat roofs are used, building tops should be articulated with detailed cornices or parapets.

- Windows above the ground floor should be placed at regular intervals, have a consistent shape, and be vertically oriented (taller than wide).
- Long building facades should be divided into smaller increments to create visual interest, through divisions or breaks in materials, separate entrances and entry treatments, window bays, or similar techniques.



Parking to the rear or side. As with residential buildings, parking and loading areas should be placed at the rear of the lot, or if that is not feasible, to the side of the building. On-street parking may also be used where available.

Screen surface parking. Parking areas adjacent to public streets or sidewalks should be screened with a combination of landscape material and decorative fencing or walls sufficient to screen parked cars on a year-round basis while providing adequate visibility for pedestrians.



Additional Sources and Examples

Many good examples of mixed-income design come from the HOPE VI program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Affordable Housing Design Advisor: www.designadvisor.org

This web site, developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and several nonprofit partner organizations, explores the role of good design in creating affordable and mixed-income housing that is an asset, rather than a liability, to its host communities. Good design is measured according to four basic criteria: Meets User Needs, Understands and Responds to its Context, Enhances its Neighborhood and is Built to Last.

Examples from this site pictured in this report include:

West Town II, Chicago, Illinois: The development consists of 113 three- and four-bedroom, single-family townhouses on 30 scattered, vacant sites. Floor plans were varied to take advantage of different site conditions such as standard infill lots, corner lots, and combined lots with buildings facing a common on the interior of the lot.



- Development Type: New construction and rehab. scattered-site rental townhouses.
- Resident Profile: Very-low income families, Section 8 eligible.
- Density: 17 units per acre (avg.)
- Construction Type: Two-story woodframe, some with basements, brick walls, comp. shingle roofs.



Crawford Square, Pittsburgh, PA: A mixed-income development on 17.5 acres in the lower Hill district near Downtown, Crawford Square includes over 300 rental and for-sale townhouses and single-family detached houses. Design firm UDA developed design guidelines to establish the vocabulary of the site plan and architectural elements. Narrower street widths, front porches, bay windows, and dormers, create interesting and useable spaces for residents and project an image of quality and stability to the neighborhood.



- Development Type: New construction rental attached townhouses; for-sale detached and attached single-family homes.
- Resident Profile: Low-income and market-rate singles, couples, and families.
- Density: 16.2 units per acre
- Construction Type: Two- and three-story woodframe, brick veneer and vinyl siding, comp. shingle roofs.

Other projects of interest include:

Heritage Park, Minneapolis: The Heritage Park redevelopment on Minneapolis' near North side is transforming a 145-acre vacant site that formerly contained three deteriorated public housing developments into a stable, affordable and sustainable urban neighborhood on the western doorstep of Minneapolis' downtown area.





This new 900-housing-unit development - 440 rental, 360 for sale and 100 public housing units for the elderly - is based upon the best Minneapolis housing design traditions. Housing types include single-family homes, duplexes, garden apartments, townhouses and carriage houses. The total estimated cost of the project, approximately \$225 million (roughly divided between \$75 million in public infrastructure costs and \$150 million for housing development), is supported by numerous public and private funding sources including federal, state, county and regional housing funds, as well as funding from the City of Minneapolis and its public housing authority.



- Total Development Cost: \$225 million
- Number of Units: 440 family rental units, 360 for-sale homes, 100 units of public housing for elderly
- Construction began: September 2000
- Expected Completion Date: December 2009

See www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/CPED/heritage_park.asp for details.



Laurel Homes, Cincinnati: Seeded with a HUD HOPE VI grant, the revitalization replaces over 1,000, mostly one bedroom, public housing apartments on a 21-acre site with a neighborhood of rowhouses and duplexes for families of various incomes. The site plan subdivides the former disconnected "superblock" layout into a gridded pattern of regular blocks that connect to adjacent revitalization activities, the City's greater West End, and Downtown Cincinnati. When complete, the site will include 835 new mixed-income rental units, 250 new for-sale homes, new retail activity, community facilities, streetscapes, and open spaces

Sources: *Torti Gallas and Partners*,
www.tortigallaschk.com/project

The Community Builders:

www.communitybuilders.org/what_we_do/projects/fp_lincolnaurel.htm



Brewery Breakthrough Townhouses, Saint Paul, MN: The redevelopment of this three-block area located near the Minnesota Landmark Brewing Company resulted in a neighborhood renaissance that brought residents back to this historic neighborhood after years of decline and neglect. The West 7th/Fort Road Federation worked with the City of St. Paul, several partners and many funding sources through a neighborhood planning process that resulted in the creation of 44 units of various housing types at a range of prices. The

project included the renovation of two historic buildings, new townhomes and single family homes, Habitat for Humanity homes, the rehabilitation of older homes, and the creation of a park overlooking the river bluff with walking trails. The project's success resulted in \$500,000 of profit from sales, which were returned to the city of St. Paul. This community-driven project won a 2003 Smart Growth Design Award.

New Bridge Housing, Saint Paul, MN: This project offers a simple and elegant solution to the problem of how to achieve context-sensitive neighborhood infill while yielding a reasonable return on investment. A vacant, tax-forfeit parcel backing onto a ravine was developed as a single street lined with 35 single-family and two-family houses on narrow lots (32 feet). A connected system of alleys avoids the need for a cul-de-sac on what is essentially a dead-end street. Small yards with shared rear-wall garages allow open space to be concentrated in a playground that serves the neighborhood.

Modular and panelized construction methods were used to keep costs down, and affordable units are integrated seamlessly with market-rate units. The City provided assistance by creating a tax-increment financing district for the parcel and providing a low-interest loan for site preparation.



Source for St. Paul projects: *1000 Friends of Minnesota*, www.1000fom.org/sgda_info.htm#2004%20winners

Other sources for further reading include:

Creating Great Neighborhoods: Density in Your Community. Produced by Local Government Commission in Cooperation with U.S. EPA, September 2003. Published by National Association of Realtors.

Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing. By Michael Jones, William Pettus and Michael Pyatok. McGraw Hill, 1996.

