

# South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines

November 2, 2022





# Proposal

- Repeal the 1980 Lair Hill Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines.
- Adopt new South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines.



*A historic house in South Portland*

# Process Overview

- Staff developed the proposal with input from a nine-member community advisory group.
- Historic Landmarks Commission held a hearing and voted to recommend adoption of the design guidelines.

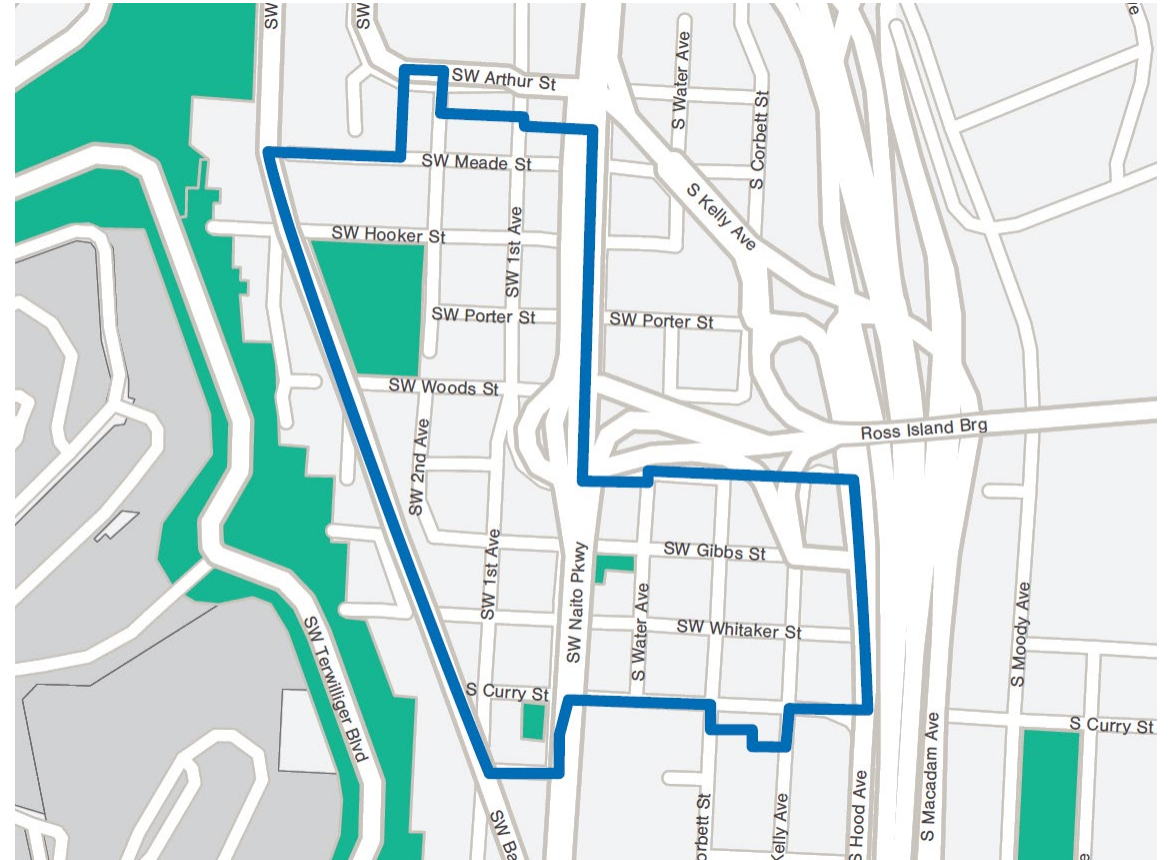


*A historic plex in South Portland*



# About the South Portland Historic District

- Listed as a Conservation District in 1977.
- Elevated to Historic District status in 1998.
- Architectural, social, and cultural history.
- Home to Eastern European, Russian, and Italian immigrants during late 1800s and early 1900s.
- Home to African American, Japanese, Turkish, and white residents in mid-1900s.
- Urban renewal, highway building, and racist lending practices resulted in significant demolition and displacement during the 1920-1970 period.



*Boundary of South Portland Historic District*

# Purpose of Design Guidelines

- Some development proposals in Historic Districts are subject to a land use review called Historic Resource Review.
- Design guidelines are district-specific approval criteria that must be met, but provide flexibility.
- Applicants, Bureau of Development Services staff, and Historic Landmarks Commission use design guidelines.



*A historic plex in South Portland*



# Why Update South Portland's Guidelines?

## Existing guidelines:

- Don't address multi-ethnic social and cultural history.
- Don't represent modern best practices.
- Lack flexibility for applicants.
- Result in implementation challenges.
- Restrict new development on sites where zoning allows for new plexes, mixed-use, and institutional buildings.



*A historic institutional building in South Portland*

# South Portland Guidelines Specifics

- Document includes background section detailing the area's social and cultural history.
- Twelve (12) guidelines.
- Guidelines are style-neutral and encourage a range of building types.
- Guidelines address topics such as the public realm, tall new buildings, and natural, cultural, and social history.

## SOUTH PORTLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Recommended Draft - September 2022



ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE NO. TBD  
EFFECTIVE TBD



THE BUREAU OF  
PLANNING &  
SUSTAINABILITY

*Cover of the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines document*



# Today's Hearing

## Summary of proposal:

- Repeal the existing Lair Hill Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines.
- Adopt new South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines.



*A 1910 groundbreaking ceremony in South Portland*





# Context Guidelines

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**1.1 Building Typology** - Alterations to contributing buildings should retain the building's historic typology. New buildings larger than 800 square feet should be a coherent expression of a building typology found in the district during the period of significance.

**1.2 District Patterns** - The siting and design of new buildings and additions to existing buildings should relate to development patterns historically found within the district.

**1.3 Natural, Cultural, and Social History** - The natural, cultural, and/or social history of South Portland should be integrated into the design or programming of new buildings greater than 10,000 square feet in floor area and into infrastructure projects.



# Public Realm Guidelines

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**2.1 Site Planning** - New buildings, building additions, and building relocations should maintain a contextual relationship of front setbacks by relating either to an adjacent contributing resource or to the setbacks typical of the building's typology.

**2.2 Porches and Entries** - The height of the primary entry and the prominence of porches and entries should correspond to both the patterns present on the blockface and the characteristics typical of the building's typology.

**2.3 Building Massing and Rhythm** - The proportions and articulation of street-facing facades should respond to both the patterns present on the blockface and the characteristics typical of the building's typology.

**2.4 Parking and Loading** - New vehicular parking and loading, if proposed, must prioritize the pedestrian experience and be deferential to the characteristics typical of the building's typology.

# Quality and Coherency Guidelines

## **3.1 Alterations to Buildings Built During the Period of Significance** -

For buildings built during the period of significance, street-facing character-defining features and materials should be repaired or, if repair is not feasible, be replaced in-kind. Non-street-facing features and materials should be repaired or, if repair is not feasible, be replaced in-kind or be replaced with materials that have similar texture, depth, and proportions to the historic elements.

## **3.2 Additions to Buildings Built During the Period of Significance** -

For buildings built during the period of significance, additions should defer to the massing and proportions of the existing building, complement the historic architectural style, and emphasize preservation of the resource as seen from the adjacent public realm.

## **3.3 Additions and Alterations to Buildings Built Outside of the Period of Significance** -

For buildings built outside of the period of significance, additions of floor area that are equal to or greater than the floor area of the existing building should meet Guideline 3.4—Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings. For buildings built outside of the period of significance, additions of floor area that are less than the floor area of the existing building and other alterations should either 1) relate to the design, proportions, and materials of the existing building as originally built, or 2) meet Guideline 3.4—Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings.

## **3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings** -

New buildings should exhibit fine-grained texture and depth in cladding, doors, windows, and architectural features. New buildings expressing a house, plex, or mixed-use typology should predominately be clad in wood siding or siding with the appearance, texture, and dimension of wood. New buildings expressing an institutional building typology should predominately be clad in brick, stucco, or wood siding or siding with the appearance, texture, and dimension of wood. Windows, doors, and storefront systems in new buildings should be recessed from the exterior cladding and be made of wood or a material with the appearance, texture, profile, and durability of wood.

## **3.5 Tall New Buildings** -

New buildings greater than three stories in height should be coherent expressions of the mixed-use or institutional building typology and employ design features that minimize the appearance of height and respond to any immediately adjacent contributing resources.