

TEMESCAL CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Regulatory and Design Context

These design guidelines are a companion to the Temescal Corridor Zone Regulations (Chapter 17.xx.xx of the Zoning Ordinance). Conformance to these guidelines and the design review criteria contained in Section 17.136.070 of the Zoning Ordinance is required when directed by Section 17.xx.xx of the Zoning Ordinance.

As described in the zoning map, the Temescal Corridor Zone consists of Telegraph Avenue from 41st Street to the Berkeley border and “short Shattuck” (Shattuck Avenue from Telegraph Avenue to Interstate 24). Telegraph Avenue from 41st to 51st Street contains a concentration of ground level retail space in, generally, two to three story buildings (a new building at 48th and Telegraph is six stories in height). The core commercial district in this area is on Telegraph Avenue between 49th and 52nd Streets. This shopping district contains a concentration of historic buildings that are representative of the design of historic commercial buildings in the entire area. One building on that block, the “Brick House” built in the 1871-1972, is a City landmark.

Shattuck and the rest of Telegraph Avenue are characterized by a mix of historic and modern commercial buildings, apartments, and single family detached homes. As a result, the street lacks a coherent street facade appropriate for a major urban corridor. However, several historic buildings reflect the design characteristics of buildings in the core commercial district on Telegraph Avenue between 49th and 52nd Streets and other design characteristics of the area (Guidelines 2.3 and 2.4 provide a detailed description of these characteristics).

Objectives and Guidelines

The Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan (LUTE) calls for a development intensification of the City’s corridors such as Telegraph Avenue to promote transit and viable commercial activities in shopping districts. These guidelines intend to gracefully integrate this more intense new development into the context of the smaller scale buildings described above. In doing so, the Guidelines intend to create a distinct, vibrant, attractive, pedestrian oriented Temescal corridor neighborhood. This document identifies five objectives to which each project must conform to meet this intent:

- Objective 1: Provide spatial definition for Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues;*
- Objective 2: Provide a pedestrian oriented environment;*
- Objective 3: Develop an attractive and active streetscape;*
- Objective 4: Build upon historic contexts to further unify Temescal as a distinct district;*
- Objective 5: Provide a respectful transition from larger construction on Shattuck and Telegraph Avenues to adjacent properties in lower density zones.*

Each guideline in this document fulfills, in combination with other guidelines, one or more of the objectives described above. The bottom of each guideline lists those objectives that it fulfills. Guidelines provide methods to fulfill an associated objective; however, they are not intended to restrict innovation,

2/2/07

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imagination and variety in design. A method that achieves associated objectives to the same extent as a guideline may be considered in lieu of that guideline.

Organization

This manual is organized into six sections: Site Planning, Street Facades, Corner Buildings, Sidewalk Amenities, Transitions to Lower Intensity Zones, and Historic Building Preservation. Each of these sections contains a set of related guidelines. As mentioned, each guideline lists those objectives that the guideline fulfills.

Amendments to the Guidelines

Amendments to this manual may be proposed by any party and must be approved by the City of Oakland Planning Commission.

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SECTION 1: SITE PLANNING

Site planning refers to the placement and relationship of buildings, open spaces, parking, driveways and service areas on a site. Carefully locating these elements defines the public space, stimulates pedestrian activity, allows for an attractive façade, and enhances the functional efficiency of a site.

Guideline 1.1: Create a sense of urban enclosure through limited front yard setbacks.

Like a room defined by its walls, the Telegraph and Shattuck Avenue right of ways are defined by the buildings that enclose it. A consistent series of building facades built near the sidewalk creates this wall by clearly communicating the edges of a street, focusing the eyes on the public realm, and creating a visually comfortable space. In particular, ground level retail should be built near the sidewalks because this creates maximum visibility and a human scaled space for pedestrians to shop.

Plazas, small ground level inset bays for outdoor seating and dining, prominent entrances, and special corner features may be appropriate interruptions of the street wall. These features can enliven the street edge, create areas for neighbors to interact, and provide a transition between the public and private realms (see Guideline 4.1). Small setbacks for buildings with ground floor residential activities may also be appropriate to provide for landscaped areas and projecting front entrance features such as stoops (see Guideline 2.1).

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 1, 2, and 3)

Guideline 1.2: Site ground level businesses on the ground floor facing the street.

Developments should include ground floor shops, restaurants, and market spaces adjacent to Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues to attract neighborhood activity, provide services needed by residents, and increase safety through informal surveillance. This guideline is critical in subzones 1 and 4 (the two areas between 1) Berkeley border and 63rd Street and 2) 51st Street and 40th Street, respectively) because they are intended to become mixed use, pedestrian oriented retail nodes. However, providing ground level commercial spaces would provide street level vitality in all the subzones.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

Guideline 1.3: Place parking areas and parking podiums behind more active facilities.

Open parking and parking podiums (a parking podium is an enclosed street level parking area) reduce the vitality of streetscapes by creating a dead area for pedestrians and breaking up the street wall described in Guideline X. Therefore, a site plan should incorporate techniques to reduce the visibility of these features from Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues. Preferably, parking should be placed underground so active uses can be concentrated at the street level. Where a ground floor parking podium is necessary, it should be located

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2/2/07

DRAFT

behind other facilities such as a business or building lobby. A blank parking podium wall on Telegraph or Shattuck Avenues is not an acceptable site planning or design option. Outdoor parking should be placed behind buildings.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 1, 2, and 3)

Guideline 1.4: Locate driveways and curb cuts off side streets, not Telegraph or Shattuck Avenues.

Curb cuts off pedestrian and traffic corridors such as Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues create conflicts with pedestrians, traffic hazards, and street congestion. Therefore, whenever possible, automobile access points should be located on a side street.

(This guideline contributes to Objective 2)

Guideline: Locate service elements such as trash enclosures, loading docks, and mechanical equipment away from Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues.

Service elements such as trash enclosures, loading docks, and mechanical equipment diminish the appearance of the streetscape and create pedestrian hazards. Therefore, these features should be located away from the Avenues and screened from sight through the use of landscaping and decorative walls.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

Guideline 1.5: Integrate open space into the site plan.

Designers of buildings with living units should consider the location of open space a critical element to the design of a project. Well designed open space can be a central architectural feature of a development that promotes social interaction and enlivens the street.

Potential areas for private and group open space include:

- Common courtyards that organize architectural elements and provide a common green area and gathering space;
- In mixed use projects, adjacent to retail space to provide space for an outdoor café or restaurant seating;
- Spaces between roof forms; and
- Front upper story stepbacks;

Important features of residential group open space include:

- Entry enhancements such as landscaping along common pathways;
- Play areas for children;
- Access to sunlight;
- Benches and other seating opportunities; and
- Landscaping that encloses and buffers the area.

Usable open spaces should also be oriented towards living units, windows, retail spaces, and balconies to promote social activity and provide security.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

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SECTION 2: STREET FAÇADES

Proper site planning places facades with the most opportunity for architectural expression facing Temescal and Shattuck Avenues. These guidelines encourage creative architectural expression on these facades that also meet the objectives of the guidelines by creating active, pedestrian scaled, and contextual facades.

Guideline 2.1: Provide active street level facades.

An active street level façade provides a visual and physical connection between the sidewalk, the building, and activities within the building. This connection conveys sense of vitality, curiosity, and interest as one walks down the street. Consider the following techniques to create an active street level façade on Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues:

- Provide a generous amount of glazing;
- Place prominent and easily identifiable entrances onto Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues. Techniques to emphasize a front entrance include:
 - Providing extra-height lobby space;
 - Designing distinctive doorways;
 - Projecting or recessed entry bays;
 - Provide changes in building materials, colors, or paving material at entrance areas;
 - Provide wide and prominent stoops;
 - Providing elements such as public art, decorative lights, ornamental glazing, balustrades, seating, and/or water features.
- Locate nonresidential activities with large display windows at the ground level facing the street (see Guideline 2.4 for direction regarding the design of retail storefronts);
- Set portions the ground level of a building back slightly to create bays conducive to dining and café seating.

When sections of inactive walls are unavoidable at the ground level due to site constraints, several design methods can be employed to increase visual interest for the pedestrian, including:

- Providing grill or art work, benches, façade articulations, lighting, canopies, awnings, or other features;
- Installing a vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials;
- Providing a landscaped or raised planter bed in front of the wall, including plant materials that could grow to obscure the wall's surface;
- Providing special lighting, a canopy, or awning;
- Using varied colors and materials.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

Guideline 2.2: Create a human scaled façade.

The term “human scale” refers to the use of architectural elements to provide a building that is proportionate to people, particularly at the street level. A

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2/2/07

DRAFT

human scale at the ground level façade provides a comfortable space for pedestrians. Consider the following techniques to provide a human scale:

- Design a traditional storefront façade (see Guideline 2.4);
- Modulate the façade of wide buildings into 15 to 30 foot intervals;
- Project ground level facades;
- Provide canopies, cornice lines, façade recesses/projections, and/or transom windows to define a human scale between 12 and 17 feet;

High quality details at the street level that contrast with the upper stories also improves the pedestrian experience by defining a human scale and providing visual interest. For instance, exterior light fixtures, tiles, changes in materials, prominent entrances, ornamentation, large window space, and alternative colors and textures should all be considered at the street level.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

Guideline 2.3: Create facades that reflect and build upon the Temescal Corridor's historic design vocabulary.

To a large extent, the desirable architecture and design of Shattuck and Telegraph Avenues in the Temescal District are defined by the commercial and residential buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Contemporary designs should reference these buildings to further define Temescal as a distinct district.

Neighborhoods such as Temescal with a strong context have a "design vocabulary" (design elements that distinguish the buildings from other neighborhoods) such as window patterns, building scale and proportion, rhythm, articulation, massing, and building materials. Contemporary construction that references and builds upon an existing desirable design vocabulary will further unify Temescal as a distinct district and create interesting architectural variety.

The design of a new building need not mimic or imitate existing buildings to be complementary to Temescal's context. For instance, a modern style building can fit into the context of the district by choosing key aspects of its design vocabulary; this contrast in style can further distinguish the qualities of older buildings and expand the design vocabulary. Where a designer chooses to reflect qualities of older buildings, the exterior materials, detailing, and construction quality must be true to that of older buildings. Without this design attention, these developments tend to appear false and artificial.

A few aspects of Temescal's design vocabulary are particularly critical and should be considered for reference in new construction:

- Traditional storefront design (see Guideline 2.4);
- A significant architectural distinction such as a cornice at the top of buildings to create a visual termination;
- A higher and more prominent top floor relative to middle stories. Where the building has an upper story setback, the upper story should be treated as the top story before the setback.

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2/2/07

DRAFT

- Transparent windows with a regular pattern comprising at least 25 to 50 percent of upper facades facing the street;
- A clear distinction between ground floor retail and upper story residential/office spaces, particularly through a finer grain of detail at the ground level;
- A significant window depth with a detailed and thick trim and sill on all stories;
- High quality detailing and durable building materials, particularly on the ground floor; and
- Prominent entrances (see Guideline 2.1), especially walk up stairs that lead into lobbies of multi-family homes.

Also, new construction should consider breaking up large facades into forms and intervals consistent with traditional development along the Temescal Corridor. In general, traditional facades in the corridor are approximately 20 – 40 feet wide which are, in turn, broken up into smaller building forms. These building forms and intervals become smaller the closer they are to street level.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2, 3, and 4)

Guideline 2.4: Provide elements of traditional storefronts.

The traditional storefronts of Telegraph Avenue, particularly between 49th and 52nd Streets, create the strongest context of any architectural feature in Temescal. These storefronts define the neighborhood, enliven the street, create an intimate pedestrian scale, and form a strong visual base on a building. Therefore, developments should incorporate the following traditional storefront elements in new construction:

- A clear distinction between ground floor retail and upper residential/office spaces;
- High quality detailing;
- Construction up to the property line, with the exception of recessed front entrances and small areas for outdoor dining (see Guideline 1.1);
- Prominent, particularly recessed, entrances;
- A base at the ground floor underneath the storefront window made of durable and visually interesting materials;
- An approximately nine foot tall storefront window (including the low wall beneath the window);
- Storefront windows that cover nearly all of the width of a facade;
- Three to five foot tall (often operable) transom windows;
- An approximately one foot tall beltcourse between the transom and the storefront windows;
- A continuous beltcourse between the first and second stories; and
- Storefront facades organized into a series of 15-30 foot bays, with a regular cadence.

Other common storefront façade elements include a solid horizontal canopy above the transom windows and corner entrances facing the middle of intersections.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2, 3, and 4)

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Guideline 2.5: Provide visual transitions from existing buildings that reflect a desirable context.

Development should gracefully transition from adjacent buildings that are part of a desirable context in a neighborhood. Matching cornice lines, roof lines, beltcourses, and stepping back at the height of the neighboring building are all effective transitioning techniques. Buildings that reflect a desirable context may include newer buildings, “neighborhood defining historic buildings” as identified in Section 17.xx.xxx of the zoning ordinance, buildings that contain much of the design vocabulary discussed in Guidelines 2.3 and 2.4, and buildings that implement the intent of a particular site’s General Plan land use designation. A developer should work closely with the case planner to identify whether a building reflects a desirable context from which new construction should transition.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2, 3, and 4)

Guideline 2.6: Integrate the facades of upper story front setbacks into the rest of the façade.

New development should have a building scale consistent with the height context on Shattuck Avenue and the traditional storefront district between 49th and 51st Streets on Telegraph Avenue and a 45 foot scale in other areas where there is a weaker height context. Therefore, as required in the zoning regulations, construction above these heights should include a setback of at least ten feet from the base of the building. The following should be considered to integrate these setbacks into the design of the overall façade:

- Where applicable, create a visual termination such as a cornice at the top of the building before the setback, not just the top of the stepped back area;
- Use the ten foot area created by the setback to integrate open space into the design of the building; and
- Treat the stepped back area as an integral part of the building design, not an afterthought.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 1, 3, and 4)

Guideline 2.6: Integrate design elements to achieve a coherent façade composition.

The elements of a façade include, but are not limited to, exterior materials, colors, roofs, entrances, doors, signs, façade articulations, and building forms. These elements should be combined into a coherent design theme to create a successful façade composition. The resulting design elements should also be balanced to form a well-proportioned building. The following are some additional considerations in designing a façade:

- The new construction is encouraged to reference design themes from historic contexts in the Temescal Corridor (see Guideline 2.3);

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2/2/07

DRAFT

- Design themes should reflect the activities performed within a building. For instance, residential buildings should have themes commonly found in residential buildings;
- Too many design themes or variations in design elements detract from a coherent façade; and
- Break up large facades into smaller building forms to reduce the scale of a building.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 1, 3, and 4)

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2/2/07

DRAFT

SECTION 3: CORNER BUILDINGS

Guideline 3.1: Orient buildings on corner lots to the intersection and public street fronts.

Corner buildings play a strong urban design role because they set the character of a neighborhood, are visible from multiple streets, and anchor a block. Several historic buildings on the Temescal Corridor have recognized this prominent role by:

- Placing greater building height and scale near intersections;
- Treating both street facing facades with equal visual interest;
- Adding more architectural detailing than buildings on interior lots; and
- Designing a prominent architectural feature at the corner of the lot nearest the intersection such as a tower, projecting architectural element, public art, or other feature.

These elements should be considered for developments on corner lots.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 1, 3, and 4)

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2/2/07

DRAFT

SECTION 4: SIDEWALK AMENITIES

Ample width for pedestrians to walk is a key element of making a sidewalk successfully accommodate pedestrians. Fortunately, both Shattuck and Telegraph Avenues both already provide XX and XX of area for pedestrian passage, not including utility and street tree areas. However, several other amenities improve the sidewalk experience for pedestrians.

Guideline 4.1: Place plazas and provide small ground level setbacks adjacent to sidewalks and retail spaces (all subareas).

Plazas and small ground level setbacks to accommodate outdoor cafes adjacent to the sidewalk can improve the pedestrian experience by promoting civic interaction, providing a transition from the public to the private space, and creating an active street. Note, however, that too many plazas in a neighborhood can detract from the definition of a street and dilute the activity needed for a successful plaza. Therefore, they should only be located at major activity nodes and intersections. A designer should work closely with the City during the design review process to determine if a project's location is appropriate for a plaza and whether the size of the plaza is too large for the site.

Consider the following to design a successful plaza:

- Orient building elements such as main entries, lobbies, windows, and balconies to face a plaza;
- Place plazas at major intersections;
- Provide retail opportunities, particularly restaurants, adjacent to the plaza;
- Integrate water features, kiosks, and/or public art to enhance the plaza;
- Place buildings at the edge of plazas to promote a sense of enclosure;
- Provide benches and other seating opportunities;
- Provide landscaping that enhances the space and architecture;
- Provide areas of both sun and shade in the plaza;
- Protect plazas from the wind;
- Use alternative paving materials to differentiate the plaza from the sidewalk.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

Guideline 4.2: Provide a variety of pedestrian experiences and amenities at the sidewalk in front of a development.

A development should provide amenities and architectural elements on or near the sidewalk that enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a sense of place. Consider some of the following features:

- Public art;
- Street furniture such as seating, newspaper boxes, and information kiosks;
- Distinctive landscaping;
- Retail and information kiosks;

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2/2/07

DRAFT

- Public seating areas such as ledges, broad stairs, planters, and benches, outdoor cafes, sunny areas, and other places where people are likely to want to relax, read, or socialize.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 2 and 3)

DRAFT

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2/2/07

DRAFT

SECTION 5: TRANSITIONS TO LOWER DENSITY ZONES

Many of the parcels on Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues back up to lower density residential zones. This creates a potential for new development to create disruptions in scale and impacts to the sunlight and privacy on lower density streets. This section provides design direction to provide a graceful transition from higher to lower intensity zones.

Guideline 5.1: New construction on Telegraph Avenue should site and mass buildings to diminish the disruption of the privacy and light of adjacent properties in lower density residential zones.

Several methods can be used to ameliorate privacy, noise, and light impacts of new developments on adjacent properties that are in lower density residential zones, including:

- Setbacks and recreational space that leave open areas between a property line and a proposed building;
- Limited building height near the neighboring properties;
- Stepped back upper stories at the rear of buildings;
- Roofs that slope away from the neighboring property;
- Decreasing the number of windows facing the neighboring property;
- Staggering windows so that they do not align with windows on adjacent properties;
- Decks and balconies sited away from adjacent property lines;
- Rear yard walls and fences behind a significant landscaping buffer; and
- Buildings sited to preserve the access to sunlight of buildings in the lower density zone.

Note that new development on the Temescal corridor will affect the light and privacy of existing properties in lower density residential zones. The case review planner must carefully balance the intent of the General Plan to encourage more intense development along the City's corridors with possible impacts on neighboring properties. The same amount of light and privacy a neighboring property enjoyed prior to a development cannot be preserved after the development is constructed.

(This guideline contributes to Objective 5)

Guideline 5.2: New construction on corners lots on Telegraph or Shattuck Avenues should be composed to create a transition to the height, bulk, scale, and rhythm on less intense side streets.

Temescal has several intersections where Telegraph or Shattuck Avenues intersect with less intense residential streets. Corner buildings at these locations should be designed to have a harmonious transition between newer construction on an Avenue and the smaller scale side streets. This is accomplished through designing the facades of buildings that face the side street to have a scale, roof forms, articulation, rhythm, and massing that complement homes on rest of the side street.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 3 and 5)

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2/2/07

DRAFT

SECTION 6: HISTORIC BUILDING PRESERVATION

Section 17.xx.xxx of the Temescal Corridor Zone Regulations contains special regulations designed to encourage the preservation of "neighborhood defining historic buildings". These types of buildings are specifically identified in this section according to the following criteria:

- The building is in the Temescal Corridor Zone;
- The building has been rated "C" or greater in the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey;
- The building has architectural elements, scale, and/or rhythm that, along with other historic buildings in the neighborhood, contributes to a desirable neighborhood character and context;
- The building is, or can be feasibly incorporated into a development that is, consistent with the intent for development intensity contained in section 17.xx.xx, the associated General Plan land use designation, and other applicable portions of the General Plan;
- The building has distinctive and intact architectural detailing; and
- The building is not an immediate hazard to public safety as determined by the Building Official.

This section provides general guidance for preserving and restoring the facades of these historic buildings and incorporating them in new construction. Other important resources include:

- The Secretary of Interior standards for rehabilitating historic buildings (www.cr.nps.gov/hps/TPS/tax/rehabstandards.htm);
- The City of Oakland Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan; and
- The City of Oakland Office of Cultural Survey at (510)238-6879 or bmarvin@oaklandnet.com.

Guideline 6.1: Provide high quality and authentic rehabilitation of the facades of neighborhood defining historic buildings.

As much as possible, rehabilitated façades should be repaired and elements replaced to their original form. The designer should consult historic photographs to identify the original historic features of the building. Two resources for these pictures include The City of Oakland Office of Cultural Survey (510-238-6879/bmarvin@oaklandnet.com) or the Oakland History Room of the Oakland Public Library (510-238-3222). Other important principals include:

- When original elements have been removed and are unknown, replacements should be visually compatible with the rest of the façade;
- Alternations whose design or materials are both inconsistent with the original design and not historically significant in their own right should be removed; and
- Facade restorations should be done by contractors who are skilled and experienced in historic building restoration.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 3 and 4)

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2/2/07

DRAFT

Guideline 6.2: Preserve the visual integrity of the historic building.

When the preservation of a historic building or façade is part of a larger development, the historic building should be integrated as its own visually distinct structure, not subsumed by the new development.

Consider the following to preserve the visual integrity of the historic building:

- Step back any stories directly above the historic structure;
- Design distinct facades on both sides of the historic structure that reflect its rhythm, scale, and proportion;
- Use the transitioning techniques described in Guideline 2.5 to design the new facades; and
- Do not surround the structure with the façade of the new development.

(This guideline contributes to Objectives 3 and 4)

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