

Historic WalkerLake

AREA DESIGN GUIDELINES



Purpose

The purpose of the Historic Walker Lake Area Design Guidelines is to provide property owners and developers additional guidance regarding redevelopment, infill, and new development within the Historic Walker Lake Area in central St. Louis Park.

- These guidelines are meant to be used alongside the standards established in **Article IV MU-12 Mixed Use district** and **Article VI, Division 3, Historic Walker Lake Overlay district** of the city code.
- They also further implement the guidance established within the *Historic Walker Lake District Revitalization Plan (2019)*.
- Finally, these guidelines are established to ensure infill, redevelopment, and enhancements complement the area's existing unique character while promoting a stronger sense of place and increased investment.

Architecture and Design

1. Historic buildings should be replicated in form, but not necessarily in design. This means building form, such as height and setbacks, should be similar, but design, such as materials or window shapes, can be different and modern; the architectural style is open.
 - » Infill buildings should replicate the form and size of adjacent buildings, but can use updated building design.
 - » Facades should replicate form features such as spacing of entrances and transparency, but design can be different.
 - » New buildings should not have “historic” detailing just to match adjacent buildings.
2. Lighting and design should highlight the historic features of older buildings while introducing updated materials and uses.
3. Architecture and design should be used to create street frontages that are visually interesting, especially at a pedestrian scale.





Entrances

1. The primary entrance should be visually distinct from the rest of the façade. This could be accomplished through:
 - » Utilizing different materials or cap/canopy.
 - » Installing sidelight and transom windows around entrances.
 - » Extending the articulation of the entrance to the second floor.
 - » Recessing entrances to achieve articulation and visual interest.
2. In order to design to a pedestrian scale, entrances along primary frontages should be repeated at least every 65 feet.
3. A majority of entrances on the primary frontage should be close to the same elevation of the sidewalk to provide ease of access to pedestrians.





Street Façade Articulation

1. Horizontal articulation of new buildings is encouraged. This can be accomplished through the use of:
 - » Cornice » Molding
 - » Belt course » Other continuous horizontal ornamentation
2. Vertical divisions are encouraged, especially on the ground floor, to create visual interest. This can be accomplished through the use of:
 - » Column » Other continuous vertical ornamentation
 - » Pilaster
3. Façade variety along primary and secondary frontages is encouraged. Variety can be accomplished through:
 - » Change in façade materials or colors
 - » Inclusion of courtyards along the façade
 - » Vertical recess or projection of walls
4. Design Elements to add further interest:
 - » Awnings on the façade of the ground floor.
 - These elements provide shelter and shade for pedestrians.
 - Should have a clearance of at least ten feet over any walkway.
 - » Balconies on upper floor façade.
 - These elements provide outdoor space and upper story activation.
 - Should be at least four feet in depth.
 - » Shutters, when used, should complement the windows they surround in scale, materials, and placement.



Awnings/Canopy

1. If awnings are used or installed, they should project over individual window and door openings but should not extend between window and door openings.
2. Awnings should be mounted on the frame of a window or door opening rather than the wall surrounding the opening.
3. Retractable, open-ended shed awnings, with no side panels, are the preferred style. Shed awnings are more traditional in appearance than closed/box awnings and domed awnings, which are usually not appropriate. Shed awnings are more transparent, allow increased views into storefront windows, don't obscure building architectural features, and are visually lighter and simpler in appearance.
4. Awnings with a front valance or skirt, which hangs down from the awning's front edge, are the preferred style. Awning signs should usually be located on the front valance, so that the signage is visible whether the awning is extended out or retracted against the building's façade.
5. Canvas, canvas blend, and acrylics that resemble canvas are appropriate materials for awnings and canopies; vinyl, metal, glass and shiny materials are generally not appropriate.
6. Awnings/canopies should have a minimum clearance height of eight (8) feet above the ground.





Materials

1. Architectural innovation is encouraged through the use of both contemporary and traditional materials.
2. Dominant façade should consist of high quality, durable, finish materials. The following are encouraged dominant facade materials:
 - » Stone
 - » Cement-based stucco
 - » Brick
 - » Architectural metal panels
 - » Glass
3. The color of materials should generally fit within historic palettes from any major paint manufacturer. Other colors may be utilized for details and accents.
4. In addition to the dominant façade materials, the following can be used as facade accents:
 - » Fiber cement trim pieces.
 - » Metal for beams, lintels, trim, and ornamentation.
 - » Burnished, glazed, or honed concrete masonry units (CMU) or block for trim and details, but not surfaces.
 - » Split-face, honed, or glazed concrete masonry units with minimal height for surfaces less than 10 percent of the facade.
 - » Cast stone concrete elements.





Signs

1. A projecting sign is the preferred style; wall signs are also appropriate but should be oriented to pedestrians in scale and design.
2. Projecting and wall signs should be placed and sized so that they do not obscure building architectural features and fit the scale of the building facade.
3. The style, colors, and materials of projecting and wall signs should be complementary with the character of the building and other signage.
4. Where feasible, projecting and wall signs should be placed to align with other signs on that building and other buildings on the same block face.
5. Projecting signs should usually be mounted near the storefront entrance, just above the door, or just to the side of it.
6. Projecting signs should generally be oriented to visibility by pedestrians and placed so that they do not obscure other signs, both projecting and wall signs.
7. Projecting signs intended for visibility by automobile traffic should be mounted higher on the building façade or positioned at the building corner.
8. If a storefront has awnings, the projecting sign should be placed above the awnings.
9. Projecting signs should have a minimum clearance height of eight (8) feet above the ground.



Lighting

1. Accent lighting should be limited to indirect lighting of specific signage, architectural and landscape features only; lighting should not exhibit or advertise the building itself.
2. Signs, including wall, projecting, awning and window, should not be internally illuminated.
3. Signage lighting should be provided by an external light source that is directed at the sign.
4. Signage lighting fixtures should be relatively simple and unobtrusive in appearance and size and should not obscure visibility of the sign.
5. External lighting sources should be shielded so that the light source is not visible by pedestrians.





Open Space & Access

1. Yards and open spaces should provide an opportunity for outdoor “active” areas.
2. Seating, shade, art, and events are encouraged within open spaces, especially along the street frontage.
3. Cafe seating and open transitions from indoor uses are also encouraged.
4. Site design should prioritize pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists and creating pleasant open spaces for those users to gather and move through.
5. Non-conventional gathering spots, such as former loading areas and unused alleyways are encouraged to be activated as open spaces.
6. These areas are also encouraged for temporary activation, such as food-truck festivals or other local events



Landscaping

Because of limitations of existing sites, it may be difficult to meet city's traditional landscaping standards. Alternative elements to improve the landscaping/public realm may include:

1. Rain gardens, creative stormwater retention, and landscaping islands
2. Raised Planters
3. Sidewalk activities
 - » Temporary Seating (café seating)
 - » Temporary Signs
4. Street furniture (perhaps through a sponsorship)
 - » Benches
 - » Bike racks
 - » Waste and recycle bins
5. Public art
6. Creative lighting integrated into landscaping/public art



For more information, contact the City of St. Louis Park
Community Development Department

Phone: 952.924.2575

<https://www.stlouispark.org/government/departments-divisions/community-development>