RESIDENTIAL TYPOLOGIES | **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Houston's preservation ordinance (2015-967) established the concept of considering the context of an improvement project in determining appropriateness. It specifically defines a "context area" as…

> "Context area means the blockface and the opposing blockface within the district where the proposed activity is located. Context area may include a different geographic area if the commission finds that unusual and compelling circumstances exist or that context area is described differently in design guidelines."

While there may be some unique characteristics to each blockface, other features also may be shared with similar blockfaces within the district. Those similar contexts are considered to be a "Typology." A "typology" is a way to classify an area -- which may be all or just a part of a historic district -- based on how consistent or varied the area is, in terms of its design, character, and pattern of development. Some of the variables that help to define a typology include the pattern of streets and alleys, lot size, location and type of parking, building age and size, and some building features.

This document describes how the "Typologies" were developed.

Data Collection Process:

How were the typologies developed? Data assembled from the city's Geographic Information System (GIS) provides the basis for many of the variables that are considered in this draft of the typologies. Other observations from aerial and street photography yielded additional information. This data is grouped into variables associated with the "public realm," and those associated with the "private realm."

Public Realm Analysis

At the street-level, visual surveys were performed in order to understand the public realm characteristics of each Historic District. These were supplemented using a combination of aerial imagery from the city's GIS and Google Earth. The block-by-block survey provides information on street width, sidewalks, tree lawns, curb & gutter, open water conveyance and landscape vegetation. Although many features were consistent across all seven (7) Historic Districts, variations emerged. This information was mapped, documented and tabulated to inform the individual Typology descriptions.

Private Realm Analysis

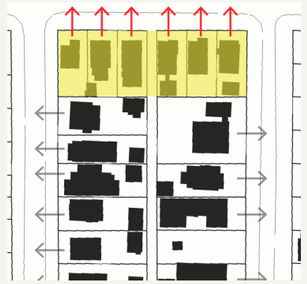
Private lots were surveyed through a combination of aerial imagery and data from the City's GIS and Google Earth. This information was used to compare setbacks, age, size, Floor-Area-Ratio and parking variables among the lots and buildings throughout the Historic Districts. Although many consistencies were noted across all seven (7) Historic Districts, variations also emerged. Significant variations between building setbacks, building size, lot coverage, parking, and Floor Area Ratios were noted in those areas that have experienced a greater level of development in recent years. This information was diagrammed, documented and tabulated to inform the individual Typology descriptions.

Analysis Example

In analyzing the GIS data, predominant concentrations of specific statistical variables were identified. For example, the variable, "building age" was grouped into different sets spanning one or two decades. The predominant building age span was then identified.

DEFINITIONS:

Block End Cap: is where the buildings along the short edge of a city block orient toward the street along that edge.



Setbacks: is the distance from the property line to the front, side and rear walls, porches, and exterior features.

Floor Area Ratio: is the total square feet of all buildings divided by the total square feet of the lot the building is located on.

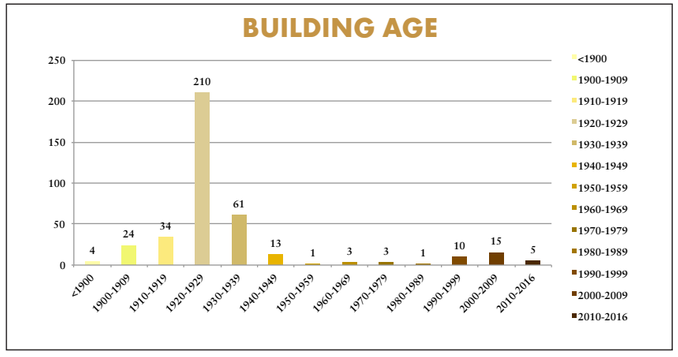
Lot Coverage: is the total square feet of building footprint divided by the total square feet of the lot the building is located on.

Lot: is contiguous land under common ownership that is used or developed as a unit for residential or nonresidential uses.

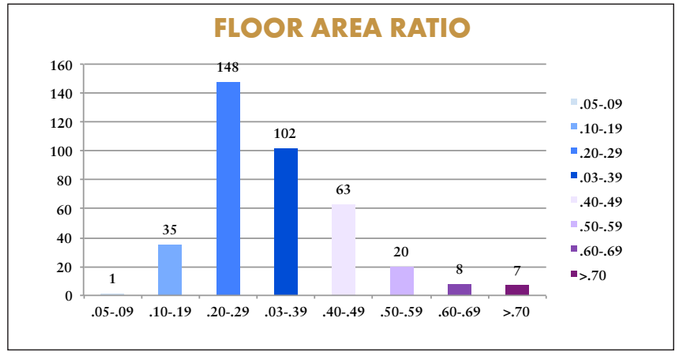
Mass: is the overall composition of the exterior of the major volumes of a building, especially when the structure has major and minor elements.

Scale: are proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials and style of buildings. The proportions of the elements of a building to one another and the whole, and to adjacent buildings.

Grid Pattern: is a type of city layout in which streets run at right angles to each other, forming a grid.



The distribution of building age for one potential typology is illustrated here. The predominant building ages lie within the 1920 to 1940 range.



The distribution of floor area ratios (the percentage of building area to lot size) for one potential typology is illustrated here. The predominant FAR lies within the .20 to .39 range.