CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

HOUSTON HISTORIC DISTRICTS DESIGN GUIDELINES PROJECT STRATEGY REPORT



This appendix presents a series of posters that describe different Character Areas which appear in the historic districts. These are based on GIS data (shown in Appendix F) as well as field observations. They address distinguishing features that may be considered when identifying those aspects of a context area that are important for determining appropriateness of design proposals.

These Character Area posters provide descriptions of some of the key features that are found in various parts of the historic districts. They include some statistical data, such as the percentage of lot coverage, and range of house sizes, as well as some narrative about the degree of consistency or diversity that exists in terms of the percentage of contributing structures and size of buildings.

In a community workshop held in September of 2016, participants helped to edit these descriptions. (At that time, they were called Typologies, but are now named Character Areas.) APPENDIX





DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 1A has a high degree of consistency, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. It has streets with curb and gutter (whereas Character Area 1B does not).

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Street widths range from 25 ft. to 30 ft.
- Parallel on-street parking
- Narrow, rectangular-shaped lots
- No alleys

Distinguishing Site Features:

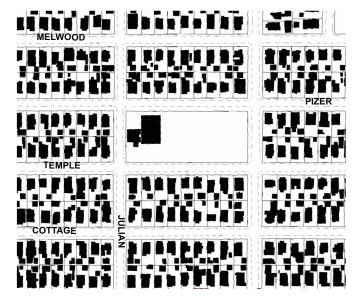
- Uniform front yard setbacks
- Front yards are open and inviting.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street.
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- The majority of houses are one story in height.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1,000 sf to 1,500 sf.
- New buildings and additions appear to be in scale with historic structures.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:

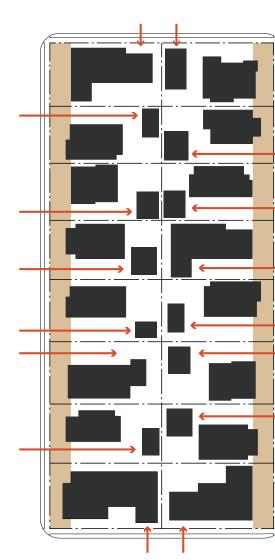




STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern STREET WIDTH: 25 ft.-30 ft. **PUBLIC REALM:** • Curb and Gutter • Tree lawn between Street and Sidewalk LANDSCAPING: Medium - Dense **CONSISTENCY**: Very Uniform

ALLEYWAY: No

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:



LOT ORIENTATION: Primarily North & South LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 105'x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-6,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% **BLOCK END CAP: 0%** SETBACKS: 10 ft.-15 ft. PARKING: Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage





KEY:

HIGHLY CONSISTENT SINGLE STORY MASSING **CURB & GUTTER**



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:





In general, homes in this character area have a consistent setback and streets include tree lawns and detached sidewalks with pathways leading to front doors.



Home size is consistent throughout this character area. One-story homes with uniform lot sizes, floor-area-ratios, and parking in the rear are common. However, materials and styles vary.



Tree coverage and landscaping have an effect on the privacy and visibility of design features.



Porch features define the character within the character area and provide a human scale to the structure.



BUILDING HEIGHT: 1-Story BUILDING SIZE: 1,000 sf.-1,500 sf. FLOOR AREA RATIO: Majority 0.20-0.29 **BUILDING AGE: 1920-1940** ROOF FORM: Primarily Gable and Hip PORCH / ENTRY: 1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk



HIGHLY CONSISTENT

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 1B has a high degree of consistency, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. It has streets with no curb and gutter (whereas Character Area 1A does). This results in a sense of a greater setback and in many cases larger lawns. In some areas, however, this area is used for parking.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Street widths range from 25 ft. to 30 ft.
- Informal on-street parking
- Narrow, rectangular-shaped lots
- No alleys

Distinguishing Site Features:

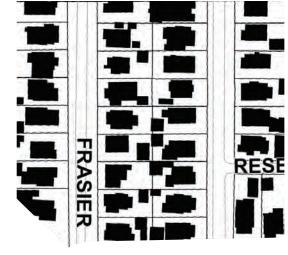
- Uniform front yard setbacks
- Front yards are open and inviting.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street.
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- The majority of houses are one story in height.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1.000 sf to 1.500 sf.
- New buildings and additions appear to be in scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:





STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern STREET WIDTH: 20 ft.

PUBLIC REALM: • NO Curb and Gutter

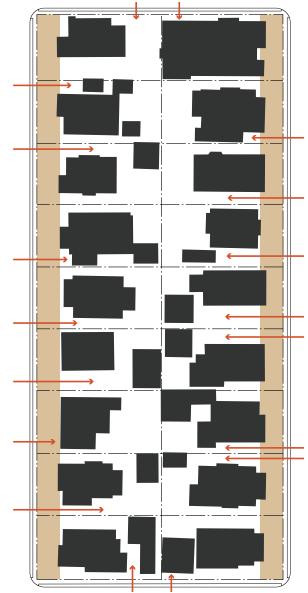
• Tree lawn between Street and Sidewalk

LANDSCAPING: Medium - Dense

CONSISTENCY: Very Uniform

ALLEYWAY NO

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:



LOT ORIENTATION: Primarily East & West LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 105'x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-6,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% **BLOCK END CAP: 0%** SETBACKS: 10 ft.-20 ft. **PARKING:** Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage









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SINGLE STORY MASSING NO CURB & GUTTER



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:



In general, homes in this character area have a consistent setback and streets include tree lawns and detached sidewalks. Curb and gutter are not present at the street edge in this character area.





Home size is consistent throughout this character area. One-story homes with uniform lot sizes, floor-area-ratios, and parking in the rear are common. However, the materials and styles vary.

Tree coverage and landscaping have an effect on the privacy and visibility of design features.

Building/Garage Driveway Access **Building Setback** Property Lines



Porch features define the character within the character area and provide a human scale to the structure.

JILDING HEIGHT:	1-Story
BUILDING SIZE:	1,000 sf1,500 sf.
OOR AREA RATIO:	Majority 0.20-0.29
BUILDING AGE:	1920-1940
ROOF FORM:	Primarily Gable and Hip
PORCH / ENTRY:	1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk



MODERATE VARIATION ONE & TWO-STORY MASSING TRADITIONAL PARKING LOCATION

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 2A has a moderate range of variation, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. The lots are oriented to the North/South like 2C (whereas Character Area 2B lots orient to the East/West).

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Moderate street widths
- Formal on-street parking
- Narrow, rectangular-shaped lots
- No alleys

Distinguishing Site Features:

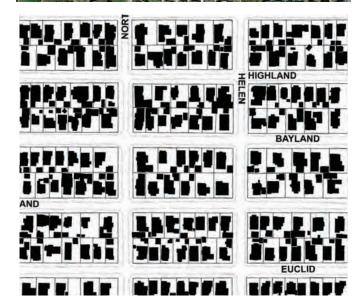
- Uniform front yard setbacks
- Front yards are open and inviting.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street.
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- Both 1 & 2-Story houses are common.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1,000 sf to 1,500 sf.
- New buildings and additions appear to be in scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:





STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern

STREET WIDTH: 25 ft.-30 ft.

PUBLIC REALM: • Curb and Gutter

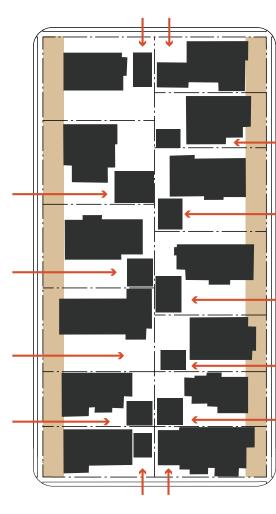
• Tree lawn between Street and Sidewalk

LANDSCAPING: Medium - Dense

CONSISTENCY: Narrow Range of Variation

ALLEYWAY: No

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:





KEY:



LOT ORIENTATION: Primarily North & South LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 100'x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-6,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% **BLOCK END CAP: 0%**

SETBACKS: 10 ft.-15 ft.

PARKING: Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage



TRADITIONAL LOT SIZE



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:





Homes in this character area have consistent setbacks and streets include narrow tree lawns, detached sidewalks and curb and gutter at the street edge.





Home size and style varies moderately throughout this character area. One and two-story homes with varied massing, materiality, lot size, floor-area-ratio, and parking in the rear are present.



The old-growth street tree canopy is dense throughout this character area area.



Building/Garage Driveway Access **Building Setback**



Porches and side drive access to rear garages are consistent features.

BUILDING HEIGHT:	1 & 2-Stories
BUILDING SIZE:	1,000 sf3,000 sf.
FLOOR AREA RATIO:	Majority 0.20-0.39 (with some higher)
BUILDING AGE:	1920-1940
ROOF FORM:	Primarily Gable and Hip
PORCH / ENTRY:	1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk



MODERATE VARIATION ONE & TWO-STORY MASSING TRADITIONAL PARKING LOCATION

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 2B has a moderate range of variation, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. The lots are predominantly oriented to the East/West (whereas the lots in Character Areas 2A and 2C orient to the North/ South). Many lots at the block ends face cross-streets, which create a significant amount of Block End Cap conditions. Lot sizes are larger than Character Area 2A and Character Area 2C, as are building sizes.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Moderate street widths
- Formal on-street parking
- Large & deep, rectangular-shaped lots
- No alleys

Distinguishing Site Features:

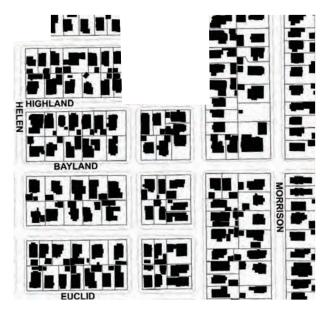
- Uniform front yard setbacks
- Front yards are open and inviting.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street.
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- Both 1 & 2-Story houses are common.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are moderate in scale. Most range from 2,000 sf to 3,500 sf.
- New buildings and additions appear to be in scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:





STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern

STREET WIDTH: 25 ft.-30 ft.

ALLEYWAY: No

PUBLIC REALM: • Curb and Gutter

LANDSCAPING: Medium - Dense

• Tree lawn between Street

and Sidewalk

CONSISTENCY: Narrow Range of Variation

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:



LOT ORIENTATION: Primarily East & West LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 130'x60' LOT SIZE: 6,000 sf.-10,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% **BLOCK END CAP: 78%** SETBACKS: 10 ft.-15 ft. **PARKING:** Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage







streets.



LARGE LOT SIZE



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:



In general, homes in this character area have consistent setbacks and streets include narrow tree lawns, detached sidewalks and curb and gutter at the street edge

Home size and style varies throughout this character area. One and two-story homes with varied massing, materiality, floorarea-ratio, and parking in the rear are present. Lot sizes are considerably larger than those in Character Area 2A.



Block end-caps are present on approximately half of the side



Well-maintained historic homes are present throughout this character area area.

•	Building/Garage Driveway Access
•	Building Setback
-	Property Lines

BUILDING HEIGHT: 1 & 2-Stories BUILDING SIZE: 2,000 sf.-3,500 sf. FLOOR AREA RATIO: Majority 0.20-0.39 (with some higher) **BUILDING AGE:** 1920-1940 **ROOF FORM:** Primarily Gable and Hip **PORCH / ENTRY:** 1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk



MODERATE VARIATION ONE & TWO-STORY MASSING MIX OF PARKING LOCATIONS

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 2C has a significant range of variation, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a moderate percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district (fewer than in Character Areas 2A and 2B). The lots are predominantly oriented to the North/South, similar to 2A (whereas the lots in 2B are oriented to the East/West). Its streets have a mix of those with curb & gutter and those without. This results in different parking patterns and garage locations.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Moderate street widths
- Narrow, rectangular-shaped lots
- No alleys

Distinguishing Site Features:

- Uniform front yard setbacks
- Front yards are open and inviting.
- Parking varies greatly. As a result, more parked cars can be noticed in front and side yards.
- Driveways are not always present. This results in less space between buildings.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- Both 1 & 2-Story houses are common.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1880s and into the 1920s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1,000 sf to 1,500 sf.
- A moderate percentage of new buildings and additions appear to be out of scale with historic buildings.
- One and two-story porches are present and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:





STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern

LANDSCAPING: Medium

ALLEYWAY: No

STREET WIDTH: 20 ft. (some 30 ft.)

PUBLIC REALM: • Mix of Curb and Gutter

CONSISTENCY: Significant Variation

and Sidewalk

and No Curb and Gutter

• Tree lawn between Street

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:









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LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-6,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50%

BLOCK END CAP: 32.5%

LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 100'x50'

LOT ORIENTATION: North & South

SETBACKS: 10 ft.-15 ft.

PARKING: Mix of Parking. Side Drive Leading to Rear; Front Garage; On-Street; etc...

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT MARCH 15, 2017





BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:



In general, homes in this character area have consistent setbacks and streets include wide tree lawns, detached sidewalks and a mix of curb and gutter, and no curb and gutter at the street edge.



Home sizes and styles vary throughout this character area. One and two-story homes with varied massing, materiality, lot size, floor-area-ratio, and parking in the front and rear are present. Landscape vegetation is less dense than previous typologies.



Second story porches are consistent throughout this character area area. Some porches connect directly to the sidewalk.

	Building/Garage
	Driveway Access Building Setback
-	Property Lines

JILDING HEIGHT:	1 & 2-Stories
BUILDING SIZE:	1,000 sf1,500 sf.
OOR AREA RATIO:	Majority 0.20-0.34 (with some higher)
BUILDING AGE:	1880s-1920
ROOF FORM:	Primarily Gable and Hip
PORCH / ENTRY:	1 & 2-Story Porches Connecting to Sidewalk



TRADITIONALLY CONSISTENT

TRADITIONAL PARKING LOCATION

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 3A has a high degree of consistency, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. The lots are predominantly oriented to the East/West. Streets have no curb & gutter. Lots are relatively large, with modest 1-story homes. This results in a lower FAR throughout this character area.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- A mix of moderate and narrow street widths
- Large & deep, rectangular-shaped lots
- Alleys are present throughout

Distinguishing Site Features:

- Uniform, deep front yard setbacks
- Front yards are occasionally fenced.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street (a few, more recent houses have front-facing garages).
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.
- Moderate amount of Block End Cap conditions.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- The majority of houses are one story in height.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1,000 sf to 2,000 sf.
- A low percentage of new buildings and additions appear to be out of scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:



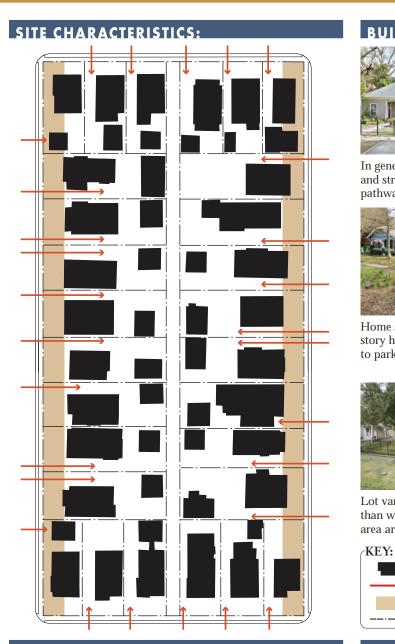
STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern STREET WIDTH: 20 ft. (E/W) & 35 ft. (N/S) PUBLIC REALM: • No Curb and Gutter

> • Tree lawn between Street and Sidewalk

LANDSCAPING: Medium

CONSISTENCY: Significant Variation

ALLEYWAY: Yes



LOT ORIENTATION: East & West (Few N/S) LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 135'x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-8,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% **BLOCK END CAP: 50%** SETBACKS: 20 sf.-25 ft. **PARKING:** Side Drive Leading to Rear Garage

SINGLE STORY MASSING TRADITIONAL LOT SIZE



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:





In general, homes in this character area have consistent setbacks and streets include tree lawns and detached sidewalks with pathways leading to a front door.





Home size is consistent and throughout this character area. Onestory homes with a large lot size, floor-area-ratio, and side access to parking in the rear are common.



Lot variation is much greater than with previous character area areas.



Narrow streets with wide tree lawns and no curb and gutter give front yards a larger appearance.



Building/Garage Driveway Access **Building Setback**

BUILDING HEIGHT: 1 Story BUILDING SIZE: 1,000 sf.-2,000 sf. FLOOR AREA RATIO: Majority 0.15-0.29 **BUILDING AGE: 1920-1940 ROOF FORM:** Primarily Gable and Hip **PORCH / ENTRY:** 1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk



TRADITIONALLY CONSISTENT **ONE & TWO-STORY MASSING**

TRADITIONAL PARKING LOCATION

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 3B has a moderate degree of consistency, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It retains a high percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district (but somewhat less than Character Area 3A). The lots are predominantly oriented to the East/West. Streets have no curb & gutter, creating the appearance of larger lawns. In some areas, however, this area is used for parking.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Narrow street widths
- Large & deep, rectangular-shaped lots
- Alleys are present throughout

Distinguishing Site Features:

- Slightly varied, deep front vard setbacks
- Front yards are occasionally fenced.
- Parking is typically in a detached garage, located in the rear of the lot. As a result, garages are visually subordinate to the street (a few, more recent houses have front-facing garages).
- Driveways create wider side yard setbacks on one side of each parcel. This results in a sense of a greater separation between buildings.
- Moderate amount of Block End Cap conditions.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- Both 1 & 2-Story houses are common.
- Most buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s.
- Homes are modest in scale. Most range from 1,000 sf to 2,000 sf.
- A low percentage of new buildings and additions appear to be out of scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:



STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern

LANDSCAPING: Medium

ALLEYWAY: Yes

PUBLIC REALM: • NO Curb and Gutter

CONSISTENCY: Significant Variation

and Sidewalk

• Tree lawn between Street

STREET WIDTH: 20 ft.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:



LOT ORIENTATION: East & West LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 135' (140')x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-8,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-50% BLOCK END CAP: 50% SETBACKS: 20 ft.-25 ft. Garage









BUILDING HEIGHT: 1 & 2-Stories BUILDING SIZE: 1,000 sf.-2,000 sf. FLOOR AREA RATIO: Majority 0.15-0.24 (with few higher) BUILDING AGE: 1920-1940 **ROOF FORM:** Primarily Gable and Hip **PORCH / ENTRY:** 1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk

PARKING: Side Drive Leading to Rear

TRADITIONAL LOT SIZE



BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:



Homes in this character area have a slightly varied setback and streets include tree lawns and detached sidewalks. Curb and gutter are not present at the street edge throughout this area.



Home size varies throughout this character area. One and twostory homes with a large lot size, varied floor-area-ratio, and parking in the rear are common. Materiality and architecture style of the buildings also varies.

Landscape vegetation is less abundant than other typologies. Some areas lack sidewalks



Block end-caps are present on the majority of the side streets in this character area.



SUBSTANTIAL VARIATION **ONE & TWO-STORY MASSING** MIX OF PARKING LOCATIONS HIGH MIX OF LOT SIZES

DESCRIPTION:

Character Area 3D has a significant range of variation, in terms of building age and traditional development patterns. It has a low percentage of buildings that "contribute" to a historic district. The lots are predominantly oriented to the East/West. Streets have curb & gutter throughout (unlike other Group 3 Character Areas). Building setbacks have a moderate degree of variance due to a shallower pattern from new development.

Distinguishing Neighborhood Features:

- Rectilinear street grid
- Narrow street widths
- Formal on-street parking
- Large & deep, rectangular-shaped lots
- Alleys are present throughout

Distinguishing Site Features:

- Front yards are occasionally fenced.
- Parking varies greatly. Garages are accessed from both front yards and alleys.
- Driveways are not always present. This results in less space between buildings.
- Moderate amount of Block End Cap scenarios.

Distinguishing Building Features:

- Both 1 & 2-Story houses are common.
- A low amount of buildings date from the period of historic significance, typically from the 1920s and into the 1940s. A significant amount of new buildings have been constructed since the 1980s.
- Homes size varies significantly. Most range from 1,000 sf to 3,500 sf.
- A significant percentage of new buildings and additions appear to be out of scale with historic buildings.
- One-story porches are typical and orient to the street.
- Primary entrances face the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:

STREET PATTERN: Grid Pattern STREET WIDTH: 20 ft. (E/W) & 35 ft. (N/S)

PUBLIC REALM: • Curb and Gutter

• Tree lawn between Street and Sidewalk

LANDSCAPING: Medium

CONSISTENCY: Significant Variation

ALLEYWAY: Yes

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:



LOT ORIENTATION: East & West (Few N/S) LOT DEPTH & WIDTH: 135'x50' LOT SIZE: 5,000 sf.-10,000 sf. LOT COVERAGE: 30%-60% **BLOCK END CAP: 50%** SETBACKS: 15 ft.-20 ft. **PARKING:** Mix of Parking. Side Drive Leading to Rear; Front Garage; On-Street; etc...





the alleys KEY:



BUILDING HEIGHT: 1 & 2-Stories BUILDING SIZE: 1,000 sf.-3,500 sf. FLOOR AREA RATIO: Majority 0.45-0.59 (with some lower) BUILDING AGE: 1920-1940 (and 1980+) **ROOF FORM:** Primarily Gable and Hip PORCH / ENTRY: 1-Story Porch Connecting to Sidewalk







Homes in this character area have shallow setbacks with greater variation than other areas. Streets include tree lawns and detached sidewalks. Curb & gutter is consistent at the street edge.





Home and lot sizes vary throughout this character area. Parking and access varies greatly based on new developments. Architectural styles of the buildings also varies due to the mix of new homes and modified lots.

New townhome developments provide rear garage access from



Subdivided lots have been redeveloped with a large mix of architectural styles in some areas.

	Building/Garage
•	Driveway Access
	Building Setback
	Property Lines