

VISTA FIELD
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An Evolving Document

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Port of Kennewick, Washington

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Design Controls at Vista Field

Vista Field is a unique new district that must have its own unique architectural character. A cohesive approach to architectural form, as a framework for more fine-grained variations of expression, will best promote the appeal and value of the district for all. As a result of extensive workshops, meetings, charrettes and other community planning processes, an architectural character has emerged with the following strong features:

1. ***Traditional and pedestrian-scaled architecture.*** This district is not meant to have overwhelming “statement buildings”, large-scale institutional facades or aggressively contemporary structures. Instead a premium is placed on fine-grained details, plantings and support structures, spatial enclosures, and simple but well-appointed volumes (trim, details, rafter tails, corbels etc).
2. ***Eclectic architecture.*** At the same time, the district needs to have variety and even quirkiness. Structures that are made from surprising materials, offbeat forms, and creative mixtures of materials at a fine-grained scale, are encouraged.
3. ***Climate-appropriate architecture.*** The district strongly encourages light-colored masonry forms, shading structures, courtyards with verandas, and structures that integrate water features.
4. ***A sense of local context and history.*** Forms that reflect the culture of the region and the aviation history of the site are strongly encouraged.

To accomplish the goal of a cohesive yet varied architecture, the Port of Kennewick has developed several guidance documents for all designers, contractors and property developers. These documents include:

1. ***Pattern Language.*** This document was produced in the November 2014 community charrette and it includes a number of large-scale features of the district.
2. ***Design Precedents Library.*** This document was developed later by the Port of Kennewick and it includes examples of design practices that are strongly favored and strongly discouraged.
3. ***Character Areas.*** This document outlines the differences of character within the Vista Field district, as the architecture transitions from primarily commercial to residential areas, from civic to private, and from more intensely urban and active areas to less active areas.

Further City requirements. In addition, the City of Kennewick requires conformance with a Design Standards document for the area, functioning as a “form-based code”. This document governs how buildings address the street, how parking is handled (generally at the rear of buildings), where entrances are located, and other basic planning and layout considerations.

The City of Kennewick has also established a zoning code for the district, specifying allowable uses and their requirements.

The Port of Kennewick has provided the Pattern Language, Design Precedents Library and Character Areas to help to guide developers, designers and contractors to secure ready approvals from the Port. All designs are subject to design review but the guides are intended to “put everyone on the same page” and help this process to go smoothly for all parties.

The City of Kennewick will also review and approve all designs subject to the Zoning Code and Design Standards. The Port of Kennewick can advise applicants on the requirements at an early stage of planning, so that the process is efficient for all concerned.

URBAN TYPES

GATEWAY ARCH SIGN AND ARCADED SIDEWALKS



Description: When roadways pass around the outer edges of neighborhood, drivers often pass by without realizing there is a vibrant community within. By announcing the entrance to the neighborhood with gateway buildings and well designed signs, way finding can draw the public into the community. Announcing the entrance into a new district or town's main street has often been done traditionally with tall arcades integrated into the buildings. In addition, an arching sign can span the street for extra emphasis.

Arcades over the sidewalks have been a patterns in both rainy climates as well as sunny and hot semi-arid climates. Cafe-goers can benefit from outdoor covered shading during Kennewick's hot dry summers. In the cooler winter months, cafe seating can continue with the use of overhead space heaters, and partial temporary enclosures (e.g. translucent tarpaulins).

MULTI-USE CIVIC OPEN SPACE IN THE CENTER



Description: When neighborhoods lack sufficient civic gathering places to assemble in large groups, the community misses the opportunities for local celebrations that forms the bonds of true community.

A properly sized public park or plaza that is not too large to dissipate the sense of gathering, but large enough for a public gathering, is best situated roughly every 1/2 mile apart. Taller buildings that mix retail shops and residences can help enclose the park or plaza, forming an “outdoor room.”

It is important to border the park or plaza with streets that are drivable but also similar to the paving of the plaza, to slow moving vehicle circulation, and to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian ambiance.

MARKET AND RESTAURANT STREET



A market street in a Turkish village. The buildings are simple and inexpensive, but they have an attractive solid character that is enriched with vegetation, awnings, canvas street shades, an informal street pattern, and the activities and wares of the shops.

Description: Delightful human-scale outdoor places can be created with simple, handsomely proportioned buildings and small-scale details, like canvas awnings or street shades. The buildings themselves should form a complex of interesting, human-scaled “outdoor rooms,” connected along street paths, as in the photo above. Parking is provided at the rear.



The buildings at Granville Island in Vancouver BC are quite simple and industrial, but they form a delightful series of human-scaled places.

COLONNADED MARKET SQUARE



Description: Local farmers and craftspeople often lack the opportunity to sell their wares without needing to depend on a middle man or larger centralized distribution system. An age old solution through most cultures has always been the peoples public market square or market building where they can set up a small booth at relatively little cost. When they are held on the same day each week, customers get to know particular sellers and seek out their wares on a repeat basis. Food carts are a more recent transformation of the old public market.

Public markets can be established in a formal market square, open shed pavilion or merely a weekend street fair. It is important however that the space is well defined and attractively articulated down to human scales.

MARKET KIOSKS



Attractive matching kiosks at Roche Harboe, Washington

Description: Market areas can be enlivened with small, attractive kiosks that are inexpensive to build and operate, and easy to close up after hours of operation. Goods can be put out in larger areas with umbrella tables, all of which can be stored in the kiosks. It is important to coordinate the design of the kiosks.



Market kiosks at Perspicacity Market, Seaside FL

FOOD CART POD



“Tidbit” Food Cart Pod in Portland, OR

Description: Food carts have become a popular source of varied cuisine and a “step on the ladder” for promising cooks who want to open restaurants. But they can become chaotic and visually disordered. So-called “food cart pods” can bring them together into coordinated spaces that are comfortable and attractive, while still preserving personality and individual character. This is one of their key sources of appeal.

PARKING CAP KIOSK



Description: For small parking lots where it is not feasible to extend liner buildings, or the buildings may not come until later, a small retail kiosk may be appropriate. The example is a simple movable structure with an adjacent seating area, with a framework to allow protection from sun, wind and precipitation. The structure is personalized with many interesting details at pedestrian scale – lights, brackets, signage etc.

Note that the majority of parking enclosure should be done with liner buildings. However, in some limited cases, the parking cap kiosk may be appropriate.

PASSAGES THROUGH BUILDINGS TO INNER PUBLIC COURTYARDS



Description: One of the most delightful ways of maximizing pedestrian-friendly connections is to penetrate larger building volumes with building passages. This can also compensate for conditions where blocks are too large, forcing people to walk a long distance around the block. These pedestrian passages through the blocks help to activate the “capillary” pedestrian network. (See also the pattern “Capillary Courtyards.”)

Walking passages can occur between buildings leading into mid-block courtyards, and they can also pass through archways or other public passageways under the upper stories of buildings.

COTTAGE COURTYARD



Description: People need a level of separation and privacy from their neighbors, and yet sometimes this quest for privacy turns into isolation and even loneliness. At the same time, many others prefer and even thrive on living in closer groupings of neighbor with shared common space.

Groupings of smaller homes in clusters of roughly one or two dozen are especially desirable for young families starting off, singles and couples, and senior citizens, all of whom may be interested in a more social and shared lifestyle.

WIDE SIDEWALKS FOR STREET CAFES



Description: Sidewalks in front of retail shops on main streets can be lackluster and uninviting places, if not carefully designed to attract customers.

Public space on the main street can be enlivened with retail sidewalks that include a zone for cafe seating and shop displays in front of the entry display window. Entry doors can be recessed into niches, leaving bay windows for display, and providing sheltered areas for customers to stand out of the weather as they prepare to enter. The walking path and tree planting zone then transitions out to the on-street parking zone. The “display zone” can be about 4-8’ deep with a “walking zone” of 4-6’ and a “planting zone” of 4-6’ for a total sidewalk width of about 12-16’.

INTEGRATED PAVILION



Photo courtesy Google Maps

Description: Pavilions are an important building type that can be used to enclose urban space and create attractive spatial sequences. They can be designed in a compatible character to adjoining buildings and streetscapes, as shown in the example above. Pavilions can also include trellises or plantings, which can help to further enclose outdoor spaces and shield objectionable views behind them (see below).

Pavilions can be actively used as bus stops, gathering areas for small events, or interim vending areas.



Pavilion with plantings that help to screen the view

BUILDING TYPES

SIMPLE VOLUMES WITH ARTICULATED DETAILS



Espanola Way in Miami: very simple volumes with very carefully articulated details

Description: The character of Vista Field is not intended to include flamboyant architectural forms (swoops, staggers, folds, cantilevers, etc). Rare exceptions will be considered, but will require persuasive arguments from the proposers. Instead, the beauty and character of the buildings should emerge from their careful detailing, on top of relatively simple forms, handsomely proportioned.

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL COMPOSITION: BASE, MIDDLE, TOP (CORNICE)



Description: Row houses and small apartment buildings are popular housing types that provide high concentrations of residences, as well as gracious and spacious interiors. But save for a few historic coastal cities, this kind of dwelling became unavailable in many housing markets as Americans in the mid-20th C. moved out to single family suburbs, often leaving the inner cities behind.

Now a resurgence is happening in many cities, bringing a compact, vibrant, youthful urban life. With this trend, the townhouse and small apartment types are seeing a comeback. These buildings can be designed no more than about 3-4 stories along with another story in the roof in order not to loom over the street. Small balconies, integrated into horizontal ornamental bands above the first floor, provide a little outdoor space for a potted herb garden and chair or two to sit and watch over the neighborhood.

TRADITIONAL NORTHWEST CHARACTER



An example of traditional character and detailing in a Mountain Northwest Vernacular, in Lake Oswego, Oregon

Description: The cohesive character of buildings is an important contributor to the quality of the public realm. While the Vista Field plan includes distinct “character areas,” it is important to establish an overall character that is then differentiated in different areas. A “Northwest Vernacular Character” is strongly encouraged, including the following elements:

1. Interesting pedestrian-scaled details, including brackets, rafter tails, trellises, etc.
2. Dormers with steep roof pitches.
3. Balconies with railings and open truss structures.
4. Materials that are rugged and attractive, including stone, heavy stucco, heavy timber, etc.
5. Adjacent landscaping that includes conifers.
6. Adjacent outdoor areas with strong patterns of trees, fountains, etc.
7. Simple main building masses (see also “Simple Volumes with Articulated Details”)

COURTYARD HOUSES ON STREETS AND ALLEYS



Alys Beach, Florida

Description: An appropriate form of attached home that provides private outdoor space is the courtyard rowhouse type, seen here at the very successful Alys Beach, Florida. This home type is a popular seller among empty-nesters and young professionals, because it offers the advantages of a rowhouse type (low maintenance, more efficient building layout) combined with the advantages of usable private outdoor space. The type shown at Alys Beach is alley-loaded, and facing onto a pedestrian-oriented shared street.



Courtyard houses in a variety of styles and colors. A palette of sand and sage is likely to be more appropriate to the Tri-Cities region.

ONE-STORY RETAIL



A new retail building that reflects the historic character of its city, in Portland, OR.

Description: In some areas where an enclosure with the “street wall” is not needed, one-story retail is appropriate. The architectural character should follow the Character Areas guide, but generally will echo the patterns of a “Great American Main Street”, with details that are pedestrian-scale, attractive, and combining industrial with artistic and human crafts elements.

The above building shows how one-story need not be uniformly flat, but can have projecting elements that give the structure a strong presence on the street.

STOREFRONT FACADE AND PORCH ON LIVE/WORK



Description: The segregation of retail shops and residential homes based on Euclidean land-use zoning started in the early-20th Century. The results have negatively impacted communities and people's ability to live and work under one roof and one mortgage.

In a real sense, live/work structures have existed since early humans began creating shelter and trading food and goods with one another from their shelters. It is only in recent times, when "industrial" activities were considered unhealthy for residents, that the idea of fundamentally segregating living and working became prevalent. But in many cases this is no longer necessary, and it can add significantly to cost and daily commute time, especially for small businesses.

Transforming a simple house into a retail shop saves the cost and difficulty of maintaining a separate home and business. By adding a few simple architectural elements such as a false facade and a hand painted sign, a house can transform into a shop with a residence above. Since it is scaled to a residential building and has many elements of houses, such a live/work home can be compatible with a predominantly residential neighborhood. Parking and other requirements need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, but are often quite manageable for small family businesses in residential areas.

LANDSCAPE TYPES

OUTDOOR LIGHT ENCLOSURES



Lights create enclosures in the DPZ project of West Palm Beach, FL. Rope lights, uplights, fountain lights all help to define space.

Description: One of the most important ways to define outdoor space is through outdoor lighting in the evening hours. Lights on tree trunks, uplights on buildings, fountain lights, and overhead light strings are all important ways of defining the spaces and creating a sense of enclosure of “outdoor rooms.” LED lights are inexpensive to operate and long-lasting. (Care should be taken to control light spillover to residences and to preserve dark skies.)



Overhead light gateway at Espanola Way, Miami Beach

WADING STREAM



Bourton-on-the-Water, England - about 20 feet wide and only 1 foot deep, with 1-foot banks

Description: In a hot climate, a cool stream is a welcome sight, offering a delightful opportunity to dip one's toes in the water. The stream bed can be quite shallow, providing safety as well as reducing the volume of water required.

TRELLIS WALL



In the case above the example is tube steel, but a durable wood or wood composite material is preferred. Note also the planter below the trellis, supporting the planting material.

Description: In some areas, particularly interim or “Lean” development areas, it may be appropriate to create enclosures with trellis structures. This is particularly important for enclosing outdoor urban spaces or “rooms,” and for defining smaller and more intimate spaces within larger areas, particularly when an objectionable view might be otherwise present.



Trellises in the shape of “outdoor windows” help to shield parking in White Salmon, WA

GARDEN WALLS AND GATEWAYS



Description: When public and private spaces blur into one another without clear demarcation and definition, a breakdown occurs in the coherence of urban place-making. This lack of definition in between public rights-of-way and private blocks and lots occurs often in suburban contexts (e.g. commercial parking lots facing arterial streets).

What is needed is a strong definition of edges with garden walls, hedges, and fences, along with beautifully designed gateways, from public ways into more private interior courts and passages. These structures are not necessarily meant to keep people out, but more importantly, they help to define and celebrate the entrance into realms of different characters.

POP-UP FOUNTAINS



Pop-up fountains can delight young and old

Description: Plazas can be enlivened by fountains that actually pop up from the plaza pavement. These can create a delightful experience and help to cool adjacent spaces in hot dry weather. These fountains, together with their pumps and timed controllers, are readily available from fountain supply companies.

TREE BOSQUE



An example of a tree bosque in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Note the decomposed granite surface.

Description: The Vista Field site is very open and windy, and hot during the summer. A canopy of trees, planted early, will be important to establish shade, wind screens, and appealing vegetation. The traditional bosque pattern of trees, arranged in a grid, provides a usable space beneath them. Decomposed granite is preferable to grass, which generally will not grow well in a bosque pattern.

Plant as early as possible along streets, in usable outdoor areas, and in other places where shade, wind breaks and appealing vegetation are important.

In some cases, it may be desirable to plant the trees well before construction, and then protect them with fencing. Grades must be well established to assure that the trees will be at the correct finished grade.

GROUPED ALCOVE SEATING IN PUBLIC PLACES



Description: Small public spaces, parks and plazas can remain underutilized and even empty if there are inadequate numbers and types of places to sit and rest.

Park benches properly placed are one way to provide seating for people to rest a while in groups of two or more, or for individuals. Park benches provide places for eating lunch, feeding bread to the pigeons, chatting with a friend, reading a book, or simply resting during a long walk.

Grouping park benches in an alcove of benches facing each other offers an additional opportunity for strangers to perhaps strike up a conversation, or a group to gather for discussion in the park. At the same time, the benches can be just far enough apart to allow separate groupings of people to be separate but within the same place.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

GOOD MATERIALS



Description: Vista Field is intended to be an eclectic district, with an interesting range of architectural expression and materials. At the same time, because of the pedestrian nature of the community, the materials need to meet several fundamental criteria:

- 1) They must be pleasant to look at up close, at pedestrian scales.
- 2) At these close-up scales, they must not try and fail to look like something they are not (e.g. fake stone, fake wood, etc).
- 3) They must accommodate simple but attractive detailing, such as borders, trim, shingling, etc.
- 4) They must harmonize with the surrounding streetscape.

We are providing a framework to achieve these goals with a list of recommended materials. Other materials will be considered for approval on a one-off basis, but (unless there are unusual circumstances) these materials are available without further review.

Good Materials for Vista Field:

- Genuine wood siding
- Corrugated metal siding
- Authentic stucco
- Brick with corbel patterns
- Hardi-plank and Hardi-panel, without wood grain
- Composition shingle roofs, light in color
- Standing seam or corrugated metal roofs
- Wood, fiberglass or clad metal windows
- Tumbled concrete pavers
- Buff-colored concrete with decorative scoring

Bad Materials for Vista Field:

- T-111 Siding
- Synthetic stucco
- Simulated (“cultured”) stone or brick
- Hardi-plank with simulated wood grain
- Other simulated wood products (without careful review)
- Vinyl windows (without careful review)
- “Pop-in” muntins, other simulated “fancy” window and door light types (ovals, “Palladian” forms, etc)
- Concrete tile roofs
- Simulated stone flatwork (e.g. “Bomanite”)

GOOD WINDOWS



An example of a good window – well-proportioned and detailed.

Description: Windows are often the most important visual elements on a building, and badly detailed windows can spoil an otherwise successful building design. Unfortunately, commonly available “builder” windows often do not measure up. It is critical to select carefully for windows that are well-proportioned, with suitably deep reveals (with the glass recessed, not flush) and with a matching color to the building scheme. (For example, standard white windows can clash unattractively with non-white buildings.)



Things to avoid in windows: shallow reveals, plastic clip-in muntins, and windows that are too wide in relation to height.

TALL PROPORTIONED WINDOWS AND DOORS,
VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY ALIGNED



Description: In an effort to be innovative, eye catching or fashionable, designers often compose building elevations with a variety of building shapes and sizes, and often in ways that intentionally contrast with surrounding buildings. While this approach can produce a temporarily popular and marketable result, it can also result in a discordant and visually chaotic streetscape, lowering the long-term value of the properties and businesses.

By using relatively similar tall and slender window shapes, building fronts can be well proportioned, compatible, and calming to the eye. The tall and narrow window is an age-old shape that fits the proportions of a person standing, helps to avoid interior glare (when placed near a side wall) and supports low-cost structural stiffening. Tall windows and doors vertically and horizontally aligned help to form a consistent 'form language' of punctuated openings that can vary a little, but express a commonality of form.

PROPERLY PROPORTIONED TRIM



Trim with proper proportioning – 4" for windows, 6" for corners. Crown mould has been put on one of the windows.

Description: Few things lower the appeal and value of a building as much as improperly proportioned trim.

In general, exterior trim around windows and at corners needs to be at least 4 inches wide, and sometimes better if it is as much as 6 inches wide. (This is particularly true for corners.) Trim should also project properly from the plane of the building. Depending on the construction, this may be done with a thicker board (more than $\frac{3}{4}$ "), or with a spacer board.

Trim should generally be smooth, and a durable wood or cement board (e.g. HardiPlank). Note the reveals in the windows

GOOD ROOF VENTS



Good roof venting in Seabrook, Washington, supports a beautiful roofscape.

Description: Nothing mars a building more than an ugly protrusion of roof vents. Mushroom air vents should be avoided at all costs. (Use ridge, soffit and/or gable venting instead, where applicable.) Plumbing and mechanical vents should be consolidated as much as possible, and collected into back side and hidden locations, where their appearance is not objectionable.



Roof vents – the wrong way!

GOOD DOWNSPOUT LOCATIONS



Good downspout locations in Seabrook, Washington include corners and natural breaks in the elevation. Downspouts are straight and clean in all cases..

Description: Misplaced downspouts are the bane of lower-quality housing projects. Unfortunately, they happen all too easily, as plumbing and gutter subcontractors come at the last minute and improvise their locations with poor planning and coordination. Instead, a plan should be carefully agreed with the subcontractors to locate in appropriate locations, such as corners and breaks in the elevation, and to plan for simple, direct paths downward – not wild step-outs and sloppy angles.



Downspouts – the wrong way! Note also the improperly located utility feeds.

SCORED CONCRETE SIDEWALKS WITH SOFT COLORING



Description: In many places, expensive pavers are not necessary; a simple scored pattern can be very effective. In the example above, the pattern is an approximately 1' x 36" "running bond" pattern, with side areas of 12" x 12". The concrete is also given a subtle color (an admixture of pigment into the mix) and side areas can be given an accent color.

Note that this pattern does not preclude use of accent materials, such as granite cobbles. But they are not necessarily required.

Note also that stamped artificial pavers and other textures (e.g. :Bomanite") are discouraged. These spall over time and ruin the effect, which is not very strong to begin with. In addition they can be quite expensive.

VEGETATION POCKET SIDING



*A vegetation pocket wall on an old industrial building made into a New Seasons grocery in Portland, OR.
(See also "Rusted Metal Siding")*

Description: An otherwise plain wall can be given a stunning makeover with a framework of vegetation pockets. The system is mounted to the wall and typically has drip irrigation installed, operated by a timer (see photo below).



A system of vegetation pockets at a hotel in New York. Small pots are held on a meshwork. The drip irrigation system is visible at right (black tubes).

RUSTED METAL SIDING



These rusted metal shingles in Langley, WA were treated with acid to get their characteristic patina

Description: Rusted metal sheets can be remarkably attractive as well as durable siding materials, if handled carefully. Mixed in with other siding materials, they can provide interesting features and attractive contrast.