

## MINUTES

Historic Preservation Code Review: Citizen Advisory Committee  
August 2, 2017

Members Attending: , Brian Cooke, Dave Dixon, Steve Schroyer, Chris Aronson, Leslie Williams, Per Hogestad, Sherry Albertson-Clark, Anita Rehner, Meg Dunn,  
Staff: Karen McWilliams, Maren Bzdek, Cassie Bumgarner, Anna Simpkins, Tom Leeson, Clark Mapes, Ted Shepard

### I. Compatibility 101: Defining Compatibility

City Planner Clark Mapes introduced definitions of several terms used (and sometimes misused) in describing buildings, and provided a PowerPoint of images for discussion. CAC Members noted many components that affect our perception of compatibility:

#### Height:

- Definition seems obvious, but isn't – the highest point is often not what people see or perceive, i.e., spire versus block of same height; up front vs. set far back.
- What constitutes a story? Up to 25 feet. LUC references both stories and height, e.g., 5-6 stories or 85 ft. +/- . Sometimes, the grade has been built up, so the height is already increased. Has been a problem - height is measured from the grade at the property line to help mitigate this.
- Downtown District contains the vast majority of historic buildings, but also allows the tallest buildings, up to 12 stories or 150 ft +/- . The Historic Core is the only zone with a set height, which is 56 ft.
- Allowable height may or may not be achievable on any given site, depending upon if project can comply with all of the other requirements in the LUC. Height maps and stated limits give developers a false expectation.
- LUC 3.4.7 and 3.5.1 try to address contextual compatibility.

#### Size: Includes Mass, Bulk, Volume, Scale, Proportion

- **Mass and Bulk:** 3-D form of the building. How mass is placed and arranged has a very big impact on pedestrian experience/perception of compatibility.
- **Volume:** Actual measurement of the building's mass. No CAC or staff members are aware of any communities whose codes measure volume – very difficult to calculate.
- **Scale:** A function of both the overall building mass and its individual components. Ranges from shock scale, monumental scale, human/intimate scale, reduced scale. Pedestrian scale is the street level experience, including when looking up. Humans perceive buildings in relationship to the average human.
- Does Scale only apply to the front? No, applies wherever it is relevant. LUC requirements emphasize streets, adjacent buildings; alleys not addressed very much.
- Context is critical.
- Scale of components affects our perception of overall scale.
- **Proportion:** The relative size of the building's components, to each other and to its context.

#### Setbacks and Stepbacks:

- Alignment with historic setbacks or with newer codes, i.e., sidewalk edges? Good example of importance of context.
- Size relative to amount of development – how big is the lot?

### **Public Spaces/Public Realm**

- Streetscape: Everything between two facing buildings, including the face of the buildings.
- Landscaping
- Space between houses, even if privately owned, has a public value
- Gathering spaces, no matter how large or small
- Compatibility

### **Context:**

- Additions and new construction near homes and near historic buildings - should they be imitative, similar but differentiated, or highly differentiated from neighboring buildings? No desire by anyone for faux buildings, but sense by all who commented that they should be more similar rather than more differentiated. Noted that on spectrum of differentiation vs replication, most people resonate with replication, most architects resonate with differentiation.
- Context provides the Sense of Place people desire. Important to ask, “What’s compatible for Fort Collins?”
- Materials an important part of context. Very important link between interaction of historic and new.
- “Brick covers up a multitude of sins.”
- Evolutionary aspect, rather than skipping ahead (i.e, building a 3 story next to 1-story, instead of a 5 or 6 story). As the context changes over time, taller buildings will be built. People accept incremental change, fight marked change.
- Differentiating between style vs typology, i.e., typology of use: if building commercial next to a craftsman residence – should the commercial pick up elements of Craftsmen or elements of residential buildings (such as porch) in order to be more compatible, or should it be built as a larger or taller commercial building? Where is line?
- Always a case by case basis.
- As a developer, most difficult to achieve compatibility is Multi-Family adjacent to Single-Family.

### **Flexibility rather than Metrics:**

- City chose flexibility to encourage higher standards, better product, rather than developers just building to the required standard.
- Can take City’s codes and still build an incredibly ugly building, still meeting every code.
- Qualitative rather than exact – allows for creativity & flexibility, but introduces false expectations from developers. Staff “taking away” programming/profit during development/building review.

## **II. Next Meeting: September 6, 2017. Topic: Landmark Designation White Paper**