

# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES FOR PROPERTIES IN THE BIRMINGHAM GREEN PROJECT AREA

## Article 1. Rehabilitation of Existing Properties

The following standards shall be applied to all existing structures whether occupied or vacant in the Birmingham Green Project Area.

### A. Store Fronts and Show Windows

A store front shall include the building face, porches and any entrance areas leading to the door, sidelights, transoms, display platform devices, including lighting and signage designed to be viewed from the public right-of-way or parking lots and shall be kept in good repair.

### B. Windows

- (1) Windows shall be kept in good repair. Any repairs or replacements are to match the original as closely as possible. Any window repairs or replacements that are not simply duplication of an original material must be approved by the Design Review Committee.
- (2) Window openings in upper floors of the front of the building shall not be boarded up and shall not be filled without prior approval by the design Review Committee. Window panes shall not be painted.

### C. Fronts, Sides and Rears of Buildings Abutting Streets, Public Parking Lots or Public Areas

All structural and decorative elements of buildings are to be repaired or replaced to match as closely as possible the original materials and construction of said buildings.

### D. Signs

- (1) Buildings with multiple tenants requesting signage shall first prepare a master sign plan to be approved and adopted by the Design Review Committee. This plan should address location, treatment, materials, and size for any and all parapet mounted signs, ground level tenant signs and major tenant signs. Proposed signage shall also be in compliance with the following standards.
- (2) Signs shall be limited to those identifying the property and the use conducted therein. Advertising of material, product or service, by manufacturer or supplier, shall not be permitted other than the primary use of the property. Barber poles shall be permitted. To the extent possible, all lighting elements such as wires, conduits, junction boxes, transformers, ballasts, switches and panel boxes shall be concealed from view.

- (3) Signs and displays for advertising or promotion, pole or "lollipop" signs, and roof top signs shall not be permitted.
- (4) Projecting signs may be permitted with approval of the Design Review Committee and in accordance with the following criteria:
  - (a) A projecting sign of historic character which contributes to the nature of an historic building may be permitted. An historic building shall be deemed to be a building listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the U.S. Department of Interior (National Register), a contributing building to a district registered on the National Register, or a building certified in writing by the Alabama Historical Commission as being eligible for registration, either individually or as a part of such a district. A sign shall be deemed to be of historic character if it is original to the building in substantially its present form, subject to repair and refurbishment occasioned by normal wear and tear, is at least 50 years old and adds a desirable design element harmonious and compatible with the overall historic character of the building. In the case of an historic building which is renovated as a certified rehabilitation project in accordance with standards promulgated by the U.S. Department of Interior, a sign which is not original to the building or 50 years old may be considered if such sign adds a desirable design element which is harmonious and compatible with the historic character of the building and is in accordance with the certified rehabilitation project.
  - (b) Such projecting sign is of a size and character so as not to detract from or obstruct the view of, or pose a visual impedance to adjacent buildings and businesses; and
  - (c) Such sign adds a desirable design element harmonious and compatible with the overall design character of the Birmingham Green Project Area.
- (5) Flat signs shall be placed parallel to the building face, shall not project more than twelve (12) inches from the surface of the building, shall not exceed three (3) feet in height, and shall not exceed in area two times the width in feet of the frontage of the building except as approved by the Design Review Committee. With the exception of those existing signs identifying the primary use of a building which are approved by the Design Review Committee, flat signs shall be placed no higher than sixteen (16) feet above grade level or below the finished elevation of the second floor. Lettering applied to ground floor show windows or entrance doors shall not exceed six (6) inches in height, and the text shall be limited to identification of the primary business therein.
- (6) Businesses may display temporary signs and/or posters providing they are arranged in an orderly fashion and occupy no more than a total of 12 square feet per every 25 linear feet of store-front glass. Event signs may only be placed in two designated locations on the building's store-front glass and must be removed immediately after the scheduled event. Signs for events with no scheduled date may be displayed for 30 days. Adhesives and tape must be removed with the

signage as part of the signage maintenance.

- (5) Signs in upper floor windows are not permitted.
- (6) All signs, regardless of size, age, design or placement must be in good condition, of suitable materials, harmonious color schemes, and compatible in size, scale, character, and color with the facade to which they are attached and to the adjacent building facades and materials.

#### E. Awnings

If compatible and harmonious with the scale and character of the structure, and adjoining structures, soft, flameproof awnings are permitted over first floor doors and windows and on upper floors above windows only. Awnings shall not project more than seven (7) feet from the building front, shall not be lower than eight (8) feet above grade and shall terminate against the building at a height not to exceed the lesser of approximately fourteen (14) feet above the pavement or the bottom of second floor window sills. Awnings may contain only the business name or logo and address, painted or sewn, as approved by the Design Review Committee.

#### F. Building Walls Visible from Public Ways

- (1) If the side or rear of a building, is exposed to view from a public way or public parking lot, the face of the building so exposed shall be improved in a manner consistent with these architectural guidelines.
- (2) Applied facing materials shall be treated as follows:

If original, they shall be painted and/or repaired as necessary according to the minimum standards set forth in these architectural guidelines; if not original and in need of significant repair, or not in harmony with the character of the building, they are to be removed to reveal the original exterior material which shall be repaired as necessary or removed and replaced by new facing materials, according to the minimum standards set forth in these architectural guidelines, as approved by the Design Review Committee.

#### G. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

- (1) Individual room air-conditioning units shall not be installed in front or side wall windows, which would be visible from streets or public improvements
- (2) Subject to approval by the Design Review Committee through wall air conditioning units may be installed, but only on non-primary facades, and where visible from streets or public improvements the units do not project beyond any adjacent exterior face of the building and are properly screened and ventilated and do not detract from the building character and appearance.

- (3) Where through wall air-conditioning units cannot be flush mounted awnings may be used in order to make the units as unobtrusive as possible. In such a case, they must be compatible with the scale and character of the building and must be approved in advance by the Design Review Committee.

- (4) Subject to the approval of the Design Review Committee and where unavoidable and necessary for the function of the building grilles, louvers, vents and other mechanical and electrical items including utility service facilities may be installed in or on exterior walls. Such facilities may be installed only on non-prima facades. Where visible from streets or public improvements, such facilities shall be treated or otherwise made as unobtrusive as possible so as not to unnecessarily detract from the building character and appearance.

H. Roofs

Roofs shall be kept in good repair, clean and free of debris.

I. Rear and Side Yards and Parking Areas

When a rear or side yard exists or is created through demolition, the owner may utilize the space for storage, loading or parking provided the area is appropriately landscaped and screened from all adjacent streets, alleys, and public improvement areas. Subject to prior approval of the Design Review Committee, a sign not exceeding six (6) square feet in area may be used to identify and control parking and loading.

J. Vacant Lots

When a vacant lot exists or is created through demolition, the owner shall properly landscape and screen the property from adjacent streets, alleys and public improvement areas; cover all areas not actively used for storage with grass or other ground cover approved for the property by the Design Review Committee; and keep all the property free of trash and debris.

K. Demolition

No structures shall be demolished without prior approval by the Design Review Committee. In general, no request for approval of a demolition will be considered without detailed plans for the proposed use of the site after demolition.

L. Other

An initial inspection of all affected properties shall be conducted by the appropriate City department and a determining the conformance of all buildings to the standards included therein. All building repairs determined during the initial inspection as being necessary to safeguard the health and safety of building occupants, shall be made in accordance with applicable sections of the City Building code, and will be approved by the Design Review Committee.

**Article II. Development and Redevelopment of Properties**

The following standards shall be applied to all new structures or additions to existing structures in the Birmingham Green Plan Project Area.

A. Building Design

- (1) Each building, unit shall be designed as an integral element of the Project Area and shall reflect and be compatible with and complement the character of the surrounding area.
- (2) Building facades shall be complementary to those adjacent in terms of amenity and appearance, and shall be compatible in scale, materials, fenestration, height, setback, and orientation on the site.

B. Parking Design

- (1) As an integral part of the total site design, off-street parking, areas shall be designed with careful regard to orderly arrangement, landscaping and ease of access. Except at entrance ways, shall be screened from streets by appropriate landscaping or screening structures of at least three (3) feet in height as well as other appropriate trees and landscaping.
- (2) Vehicular access to parking areas shall be direct and not in conflict with general vehicular movement serving the various uses within the site. Ingress and egress points shall be well distanced from intersection to avoid congestion and interference with traffic.

C. Loading and Service Area Design

To the maximum extent possible, loading and service space shall be provided in convenient off-street facilities to serve business uses in the proposed development.

D. Street, Pedestrian Walkways and Open Space Design

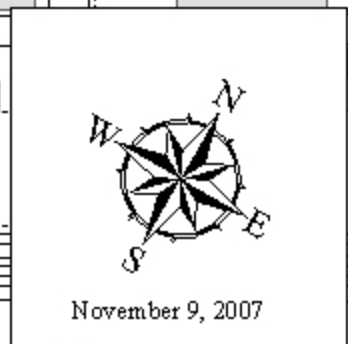
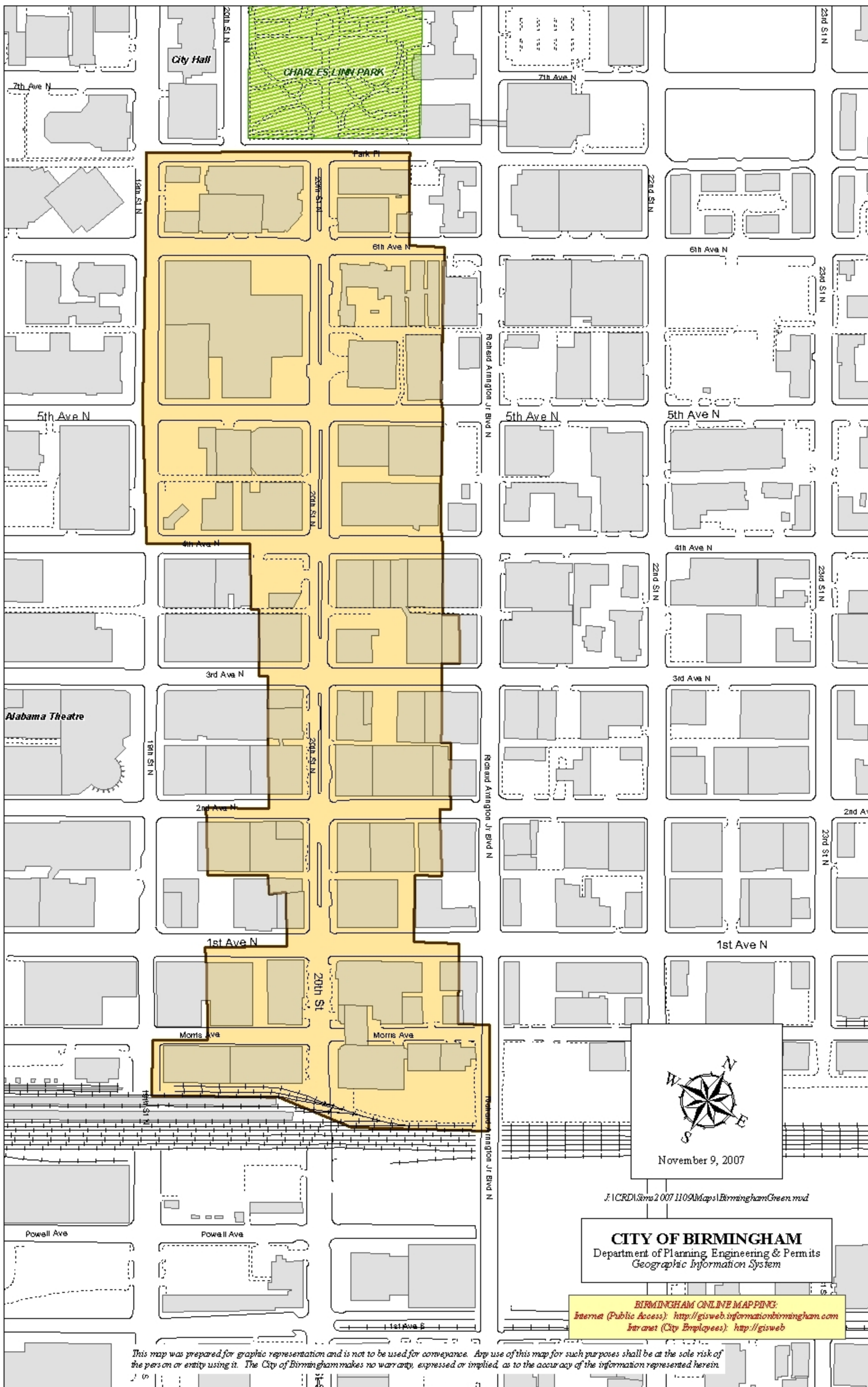
Proposed development shall consider the provision of appropriate open space in combination with the proper sighting of buildings. Streets, pedestrian walkways and open spaces, including street furniture and signs, shall be designed as an integral part of the overall plan and shall be properly related to adjacent existing and proposed buildings.

E. Landscape Design

A coordinated landscape program for the proposed development shall be incorporated for the entire proposed site, including landscape treatment for open space, streets and parking areas. Landscaping shall include trees, shrubbery and planting in combination with related paving and surface treatments.

F. Signs

All signs for new structures and additions to existing structures shall conform to the requirements set forth in Article 1, Section D, "Signs".



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 Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits  
 Geographic Information System

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