

CHAPTER 6: HISTORIC CONSERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN

Platted in 1911, the historic town of Eastlake is the oldest neighborhood in the City of Thornton. Eastlake reflects a heritage that is unique from more recent development in the City of Thornton. Characteristics such as a grid street pattern, small residential lots, garages set behind the primary structure, and zero set-backs in commercial areas create a historical neighborhood flavor in Eastlake that should be maintained and replicated. Although development in the Eastlake Neighborhood over time has altered some of the dominant features of the area, the Eastlake Subarea Plan is designed to conserve and enhance the original character of the Eastlake Neighborhood.

The City of Thornton consulted with Winter, Kramer & Jessup, LLC to develop urban design and architectural guidelines for the Eastlake Neighborhood, which will serve to conserve and complement key features of the neighborhood. As many infill development opportunities exist in the Eastlake Neighborhood and as the planned rail-based transit stop is expected to encourage new development, urban design and architectural guidelines are needed to provide a framework for development and redevelopment in the area. Even without transit, a framework will be needed to guide development and redevelopment over time. Many of the guidelines of the “Urban Design Framework Plan and Architectural Design Guidelines for Eastlake” created by Winter, Kramer & Jessup are implemented as goals and recommendations in this chapter of the Eastlake Subarea Plan, and as regulations through the revised Eastlake Preservation/Revitalization Zoning District.

Historic conservation and urban design goals for the Eastlake Neighborhood are:

- 6-A:** Conserve existing buildings that contribute to Eastlake’s historic character
- 6-B:** Encourage new development to re-create the transit-oriented density and small-town scale of the neighborhood;
- 6-C:** Implement design guidelines through revisions to the Eastlake Preservation/Revitalization Zoning District to ensure that new development retains the traditional character of Eastlake;

The urban design and architectural guidelines of the Eastlake Subarea Plan are intended to invigorate the neighborhood while building on historical traditions. Due to the complex nature of architectural and urban design guidelines, this chapter of the Eastlake Subarea Plan is organized differently than previous or following chapters. Within this chapter, policies and recommendations are made for historic conservation and for urban design as broad concepts. Following these policies and recommendations, design guidelines are presented by topic and by land use type. Together, the goals, policies, recommendations and design guidelines are intended to guide development in the Eastlake Neighborhood.

Master Plan Accomplishments

The Eastlake Master Plan included many recommendations intended to preserve and enhance the character of the historic town of Eastlake. However, few of the recommendations have been implemented, save the creation of the Eastlake Preservation/Revitalization zoning district. The urban design and architectural guidelines created by Winter, Kramer & Jessup included in this chapter of the Eastlake Subarea Plan build upon and strengthen the previous recommendations of the Eastlake Master Plan, given existing conditions and development pressures.

Existing Conditions

The historic town of Eastlake is a unique enclave surrounded by the typical suburban development of the City of Thornton. Established along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks to serve the surrounding agricultural community, the town of Eastlake is built in a more traditional neighborhood pattern, with a grid street pattern and a pedestrian scale to the streetscape. This historical development pattern helps to support transit-oriented development, as was evident in the early 1900's in Eastlake.

Residential Character

Most Eastlake homes have traditionally been one to two stories in height and modest in size. The majority have either no garages or freestanding garages in the side or rear yard. Eastlake was originally subdivided into lots 25' X 125" (3,125 square feet) in size. Today, most homes are built on two or more lots. Where Eastlake's alleys are improved, they provide secondary access to some of the properties. Few of the houses have attached garages. The mature trees and landscaping greatly enhance the physical appearance of the community.

There is not a particular architectural style found in all residential buildings within Eastlake. However, most residential structures in the neighborhood are similar in building form, displaying simple forms with gabled roofs. The traditional veneer of the residential buildings has been horizontal tongue and groove wood siding. Over time, however, some homeowners have covered the wood siding with aluminum lap siding, stucco exteriors and some are clad in brick. The Eastlake Subarea Plan seeks to encourage development that complements and maintains the most traditional building forms in the Eastlake Neighborhood.

Non-Residential and Mixed Use Character

While non-residential structures in the Eastlake Neighborhood have varied architectural styles, general themes emerge when the non-residential structures are examined on a block-by-block or building-by-building basis. Along Lake Avenue, the core commercial area of the Eastlake Neighborhood, the majority of buildings are built to the sidewalk, with little or no setback, have brick or lap siding facades and flat roofs. Most commercial buildings are one story tall with stepped parapets. The traditional massing and scale, in which no buildings dominate the block, helps to promote a pedestrian scale environment in Eastlake's commercial area. Along First Street, another non-residential subarea within Eastlake, structures are more residential in scale, often with pitched roof, set back at least 15 feet from the street. The policies

and recommendations of the Subarea Plan seek to conserve and complement those non-residential forms that are most historic in Eastlake.

Policies and Recommendations

The policies and recommendations for historic conservation and urban design are intended to identify broad actions to conserve and maintain the historic character of Eastlake. Following this section, topic specific design guidelines will be established for particular land use types in Eastlake.

Historic conservation policies and recommendations include:

- 6-1:** Pursue State Landmark Designation for the two eligible historic buildings in Eastlake;
- 6-2:** Create a local historic preservation ordinance. An ordinance of this type would allow historic structures to be deemed significant at the local level, even when State landmark designation is unavailable;
- 6-3:** Examine methods to encourage Eastlake property owners to preserve and maintain the historic character of the area. Possible methods include loans and/or grants for the maintenance and restoration of historic buildings and development incentives for structures that contribute to the character of Eastlake;

Urban design policies and recommendations for the Eastlake Neighborhood are:

- 6-4:** Require infill and new development to complement the historical character of Eastlake;
- 6-5:** Maintain historical set-backs, building orientation and architectural features such as mass, scale, form, and materials;

Design Guidelines

The following is a list of topic-specific design recommendations for preserving and enhancing the traditional character of the Eastlake Subarea.

Residential Urban Design Guidelines

1. Street Elements

- a. *Maintain the informal character of the right-of-way.*



Eastlake's residential streets have an informal character that should be maintained.

The established streetscape is one of the most important aspects of a neighborhood in terms of its overall character. Eastlake's residential streets are wide and without sidewalks, creating a quiet, rural quality. This tradition should continue.

- b. *Maintain the traditional character of alleys.*
Alleys accommodate service functions and provide pedestrian connections and secondary vehicle access. Alleys contribute to the character of the neighborhood, especially in the manner in which small buildings and fences define their boundaries. The traditional scale and width of alleys should be maintained.

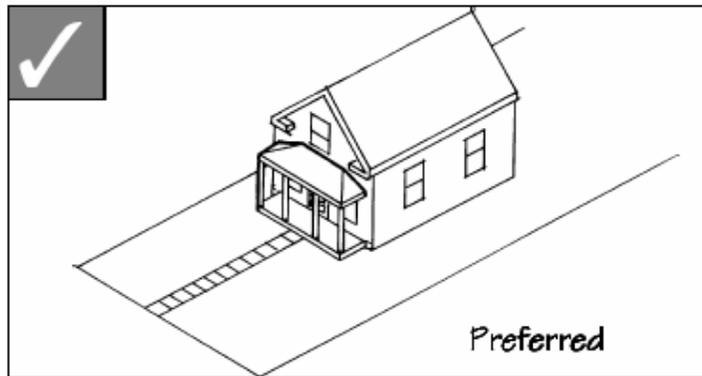
- c. *Provide access to parking from an alley, when feasible.*
In much of the neighborhood, parking traditionally was located in detached garages with access from alleys. This approach should be encouraged.



Access to private lots from alleys should be maintained and enhanced.

2. Site Planning

- a. *Maintain the traditional character of a front yard.*



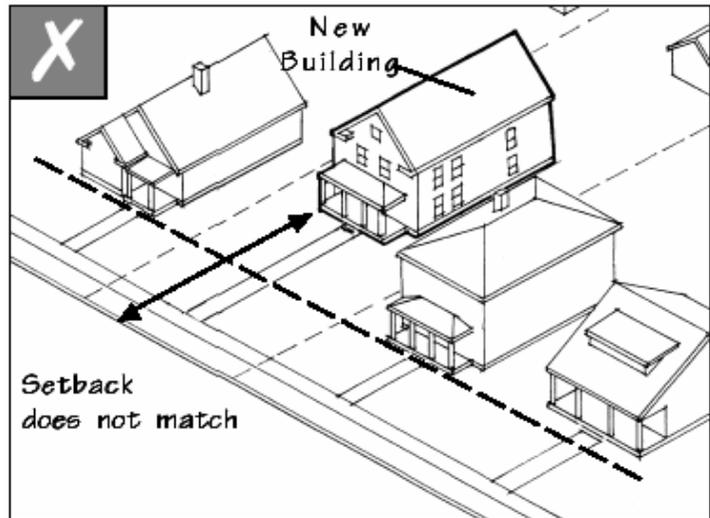
A front yard begins at the public sidewalk, continues to the semi-private porch and ends at the front door. This sequence enhances the pedestrian environment and contributes to the character of the neighborhood; it

should be maintained.

- b. *Orient the front of a building to the street.*
A typical house faces the street and is often sheltered by a one-story porch. This helps to establish a sense of scale and to "animate" the neighborhood. It is a feature that should be maintained.

- c. *Maintain the line of building fronts on the block.*

A front yard serves as a transitional space between the "public" sidewalk and the "private" building entry. In many blocks, front yards are similar in depth, which contributes to a sense of visual continuity. This is a key feature and, therefore, maintaining this line is important.



- d. *Minimize the visual appearance of parking areas through buffering, setbacks and other tools.*

The inappropriate design of parking areas can have a negative impact on the neighborhood. In order to enhance the pedestrian-orientation of the neighborhood, the visual impacts of cars should be minimized. The best ways are to set parking areas back from the front of a house or integrate them into its design. Note that there are a variety of methods used to provide parking in the neighborhood, none of which would be considered an important character-defining feature to a site. Therefore, the goal in creating on-site parking should be to devise a design solution that does not negatively impact the pedestrian quality of the neighborhood, for example by using screening techniques such as landscaping and berms.

- e. *A fence should be in character with those seen traditionally.*

Typically, where fences were seen, they were used to enclose side and rear yards. They were low and appeared semi-transparent. Wood pickets or thin metal members were typical. This pattern should continue.

3. Building Mass, Scale & Form

- a. *A building should reinforce a sense of human scale in the neighborhood.*

The mass and scale of buildings are important design issues in the neighborhood. The traditional scale of single family houses dominates the area, enhancing the pedestrian-friendly character of the streets. To the greatest extent possible, new construction should maintain this human scale. While new buildings are typically larger than many older structures, new construction should not be dramatically larger, causing the visual continuity of the neighborhood to be compromised.

- b. *Building forms should be similar to those seen traditionally.*

A similarity of building forms also contributes to a sense of visual continuity. In order to maintain this feature, a new building should have a basic form that is similar to that seen traditionally.



Simple rectangular building forms with sloping roofs are preferred.

- c. *Roofs should appear similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood.*

The character of the roof is a major feature of buildings in Eastlake. When repeated along the street, the repetition of similar forms contributes to the sense of visual continuity. This should be maintained.

4. Building Materials

- a. *Building materials should appear similar to those used traditionally in the neighborhood.*

Building materials of new structures and additions to existing structures should contribute to the visual continuity of the neighborhood. They should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity.

- b. *Roof materials should be similar to those used traditionally in the neighborhood.*

5. Architectural Character

- a. *A new building should be visually compatible with traditional structures without being a direct copy.*

Features such as one-story porch elements which define entries, columns, posts and brackets contribute to the sense of character of the street and add visual interest for pedestrians. The continued use of these elements with new construction is encouraged.

- b. *Porch elements should be similar to those seen traditionally.*



- c. *Window and door designs for new buildings should be similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood.*

The similarity of window and door size and location between buildings contributes to a sense of visual continuity along the street. In order to maintain this existing character, new buildings should incorporate typical window and door proportions and placements seen traditionally.

6. Secondary Structures

- a. *Locate a secondary structure to the rear of the lot, behind the primary structure.*

When they were used, sheds and garages were relatively simple. The tradition of detached secondary structures is encouraged because this reduces the overall perceived mass of building on the site.

- b. *Building forms should be similar to those seen traditionally.*

A similarity of building forms also contributes to a sense of visual continuity. In order to maintain this feature, a new secondary structure should have a basic form that is similar to that seen traditionally.

- c. *Roofs should appear similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood.*

The character of the roof is a major feature of buildings in Eastlake. When repeated along the street, the repetition of similar forms contributes to the sense of visual continuity. This should be maintained.

7. Additions

- a. *Design an addition to be compatible with the main house.*

When planning an addition, consider the effect the addition will have on the existing building. The addition should be recognized as a product of its own time and the loss of the building's traditional features should be minimized. A design for a new addition that would create an appearance inconsistent with the original character of the building should be discouraged.

- b. *A new addition should be compatible in mass, scale and form with the primary building.*

An addition to an existing structure can radically change its perceived scale and character if inappropriately designed. Keeping the size of the addition small, in relation to the main structure, will help minimize its visual impacts.

- c. *Use roof forms and roof pitches on additions that are compatible with the main house.*

- d. *A roof-top addition should not visually overpower the primary structure.*

Additional space can be created by adding dormers to an attic, "saddle" dormers or "camelbacks" to cottages or "monitors" on Bungalows. If these alterations are designed to be in proportion with the main structure,

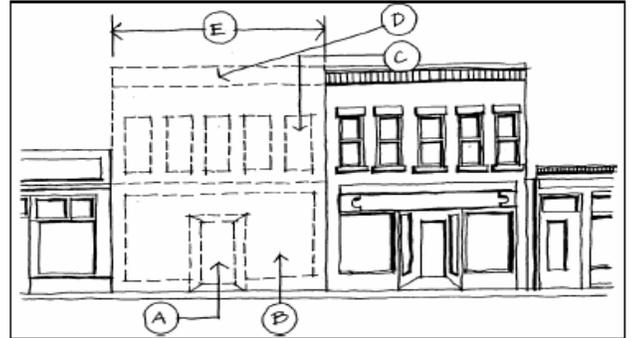
they may have a smaller design impact on the structure compared with other approaches.

Non-Residential & Mixed Use Urban Design Guidelines

1. Urban Design

- a. *A project should be designed for the pedestrian at a human scale and provide visual interest along the street.*

The Eastlake Neighborhood should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. Streets, sidewalks and pathways should encourage walking, sitting and other pedestrian activities; buildings should be visually interesting to invite exploration of the area by pedestrians. Existing pedestrian routes should be enhanced.



Use typical facade components in new designs to encourage pedestrian activity: A) provide a recessed entry, B) use large surfaces of glass on the first floor, C) consider smaller, vertical windows on upper floors, D) cap the building with a cornice or parapet, and E) express the typical building width and height found on the block.

- b. *New streetscape elements should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the neighborhood.*

Street furnishings, including bicycle racks, waste receptacles and light standards, are features that did not appear traditionally in the neighborhood. It is important that the character of these elements not impede one's ability to interpret the traditional character of the area. Street furniture should be simple in character. Street lights within the commercial areas should be compatible with the traditional character of Eastlake.

- c. *Maintain the traditional character of alleys.*

Alleys accommodate service functions and provide pedestrian connections and secondary vehicle access. Alleys contribute to the character of the neighborhood, especially in the manner in which buildings define their boundaries.

- d. *Provide access to parking from an alley, when feasible.*

In addition to providing service access to businesses in the Eastlake commercial area, alleys typically provided some parking. The alleys



parallel to First and Second Streets are shared between commercial and residential users. This arrangement should continue.

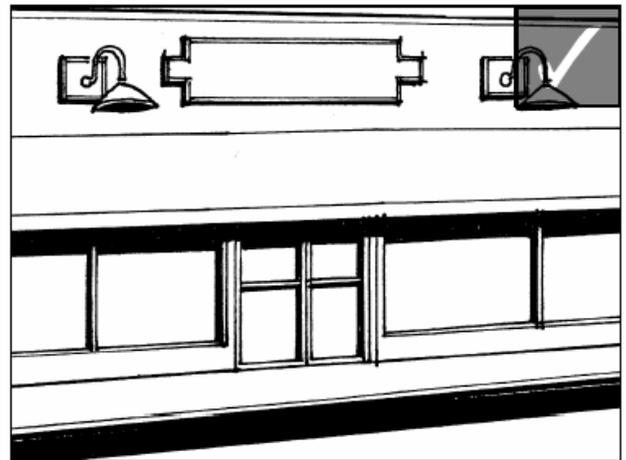
2. Site Design

- a. *Maintain the traditional siting pattern and alignment of buildings in the commercial area.*

Buildings in the Lake Avenue commercial area were traditionally aligned immediately at the inside walkway edge. Those along First Street were set back from the right-of-way to maintain consistency with adjacent residences. Traditionally, a building was oriented with its primary wall planes in line with the parcel's property lines. Since most buildings were rectangular in form, this siting pattern helped reinforce the image of the grid street pattern. These traditional patterns of building alignment and orientation should be maintained.

- b. *Maintain the traditional character of site and building lighting.*

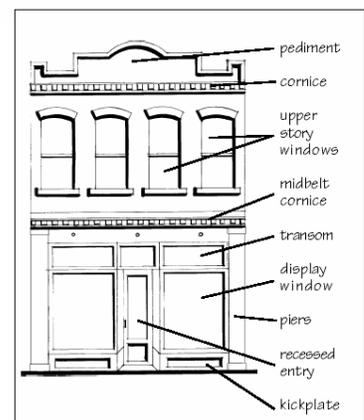
The character and level of lighting is a special concern, especially for security issues. It should, however, be a subordinate element. Traditionally, most exterior lights used incandescent lamps that were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shades. This overall effect should be continued.



Prevent glare onto adjacent properties by using shielded and focused light sources that direct light onto the ground.

- c. *The visual impacts of parking areas should be minimized.*

The automobile was not a part of the Eastlake commercial area's heritage, so room was not made for parking. The visual impact of new parking areas, therefore should be minimized through screening, berms, and other design techniques.



3. Mass, Form & Scale – Business and Transit-Oriented Zones

- a. *Building forms should be similar to those seen traditionally.*

One of the most prominent unifying elements of the commercial area is the similarity in building forms. Commercial buildings were simple rectangular solids, deeper than they were wide, typically one- to two-stories in height. This characteristic is important and should be continued in new projects. Commercial roof forms typically appeared flat and had parapets.

- b. *Buildings should appear similar in scale to buildings found traditionally in the area.*

Patterns are created along the street by the repetition of similarly-sized building elements. For example, uniform facade widths evenly spaced along the street create a rhythm that contributes to the visual continuity of the area. These features and similar patterns are some of the most important characteristics of the commercial area and should be respected in all projects.

4. Building Mass, Form & Scale – Office and Service Zones

- a. *Building forms should be similar to those seen traditionally in the residential area.*

The character of the Office Zone was traditionally residential. While office and small commercial uses now dominate this area, the residential character should be maintained. Traditionally, these buildings were simple rectangular solids, one- to two stories in height, with sloping roof forms.

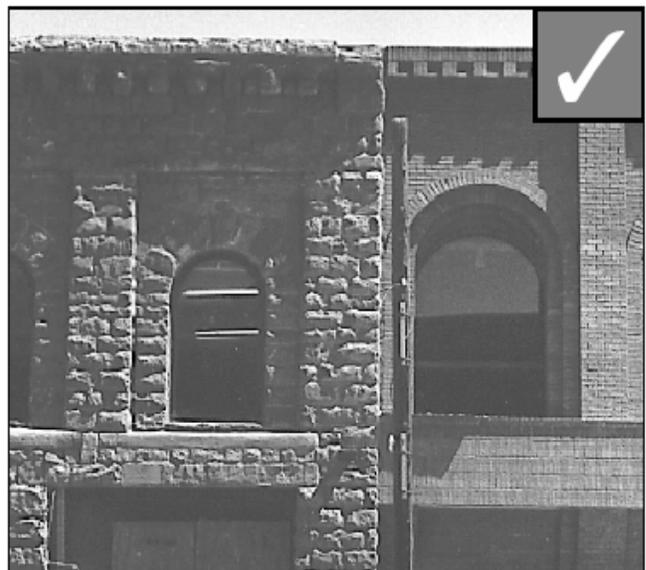
- b. *Buildings should appear similar in scale to buildings found traditionally in the residential area.*

The traditional scale of single family houses dominates the area, enhancing its pedestrian-friendly character and providing a transition from higher intensity commercial uses to lower intensity residential uses. New construction should not be dramatically larger than typical residential structures, causing the area to portray a more commercial character.

5. Building Materials

- a. *Building materials should be similar to those used traditionally in the area.*

Materials used in the area should appear similar to those used traditionally.



Materials should be similar to those used traditionally. Although not built with stone, the newer building (right) uses a similarly colored masonry material to the traditional building (left).

Brick is the most common material for traditional buildings in the commercial area; however, wood and stucco were also used. Buildings in the Office Zone were traditionally residential. New buildings in this area should use typically residential materials, such as wood lap or board and batten siding or stucco.

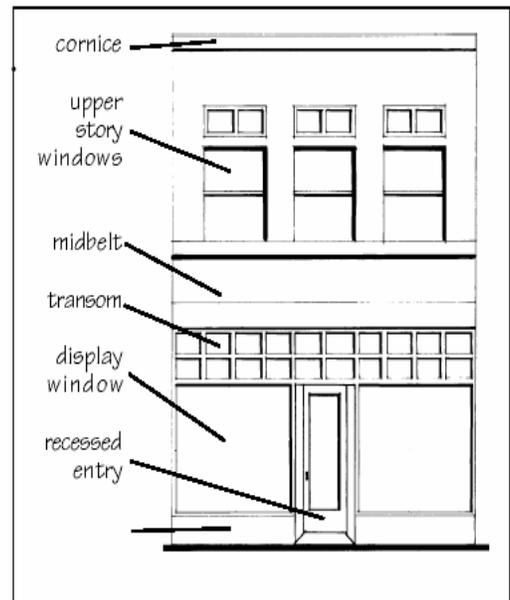
6. Architectural Features

- a. *Architectural features should be used with restraint.*

The diversity of facade elements greatly contributes to the character of the commercial streets in the Eastlake neighborhood. In particular, windows, details, ornaments and cornice moldings reoccur frequently. Architectural details on new buildings should be similar in scale and reflect the simple character of those seen traditionally.

- b. *Maintain the traditional character and diversity of storefront designs seen in the area.*

Traditionally, buildings in the commercial area were simple in character. Regardless of stylistic treatment, a new building should appear simple in form and detail, in keeping with the Eastlake tradition. Buildings should be visually compatible with older structures in the area without being direct copies of traditional buildings.



Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations

- c. *Building entrances should appear similar to those used traditionally.*

An entrance is an important character-defining feature of a commercial structure. It gives scale to a building and provides visual interest to the composition of a facade.

- d. *Windows, their openings, proportions and treatments should be similar to those seen traditionally.*

- e. *Mechanical equipment, service areas and security devices should be screened or otherwise visually minimized.*

New technologies in heating, ventilating and telecommunications have introduced mechanical equipment where they were not seen traditionally. Service areas, including loading areas and storage areas for trash and recycling containers, are also site functions not seen traditionally. Whenever feasible, the visual impacts of such systems should be minimized through screening or other design techniques so the traditional character of the area or building is not negatively affected.

7. Signs

- a. *Signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and the neighborhood in mind.*

A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, and second to convey information. If it is well designed, the building front alone can serve the attention- getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and the district in mind.



- b. *A sign should attract business but not detract from the visual appearance of the street.*

Implementation

These design guidelines contained in this chapter are to be used by City staff and developers in review and creation of plans for new buildings and renovations within the Eastlake Subarea. The guidelines should be used as a tool to create a dialogue between property owners and City staff to ensure that submitted proposals meet the intent of these design principles and that the traditional character of Eastlake is conserved and maintained in new development and redevelopment. Key land use and urban design concepts will become part of the Thornton Development Code through a revision of the Eastlake Preservation/Revitalization Zoning District.