



# CITY OF PULLMAN

## Public Works and Planning Departments

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Pullman Planning Commission

FROM: Pete Dickinson, Planning Director PD

FOR: Meeting of February 26, 2014

SUBJECT: College Hill Core Design Review Concepts

DATE: February 21, 2014

In November of last year, planning staff provided to the Commission a set of draft design review concepts pertaining to the College Hill Core neighborhood. At your November and December meetings, you entertained public input on the matter. At your January 15 meeting, you conducted a workshop to review the draft concepts in detail. You concluded your discussion that evening at the end of the "Site Design" section, and agreed to continue the conversation on February 26 starting with the "Building Design" section on page 5. A copy of the draft concepts is included herein as an attachment.

Following your January 15 meeting, the planning department received an email message, dated January 16, 2014, from Jamie Peters regarding this topic. This email message is also attached.

The action requested of the Commission at your upcoming meeting is to provide feedback on the draft design review concepts.

Attachments

1 DRAFT CONCEPTS FOR COLLEGE HILL CORE DESIGN REVIEW  
2 (11/6/13 DRAFT)  
3

4 The following draft concepts have been prepared by planning staff to continue the  
5 community dialogue regarding design review standards for the College Hill Core. These  
6 concepts have been formulated in partial fulfillment of College Hill Core Neighborhood  
7 Plan Implementation Strategy No. 2A, which reads as follows:  
8

9 Adopt and implement architectural design standards for new construction in the  
10 College Hill Core to improve compatibility between existing and new structures  
11 and to enhance the appearance of the built environment.  
12

13 The Planning Commission conducted discussions regarding this matter at meetings on  
14 July 28 and September 22, 2010. At those sessions, the Commission entertained  
15 public input and provided guidance as to the parameters of design review for the  
16 College Hill Core. On September 16, 2011, planning staff assembled the first set of  
17 draft design review concepts. College Hill Core stakeholders (including property  
18 owners, real estate developers, College Hill Association members, Whitman County  
19 Landlord/Tenant Association members, WSU Administration and Capital Planning  
20 representatives, and WSU students) reviewed and commented upon the September  
21 2011 draft material. Planning staff used this input to refine the concepts as presented in  
22 this document. The Commission will eventually hold public meetings on the standards,  
23 and then forward them to the City Council for action.  
24

25 The concepts presented in this document address residential uses only. Draft  
26 standards for commercial and institutional uses will be produced at a later time.  
27

28 Please note that this is a work in progress and the concepts identified herein are not  
29 meant to serve as an all-inclusive list. Instead, they are provided to advance the  
30 discussion about an appropriate set of standards for the College Hill Core  
31 neighborhood.  
32

33 PURPOSES  
34

35 The basic purposes of the College Hill Core design review standards are to:  
36

- 37 1) improve land use compatibility;
- 38 2) improve the appearance of the area;
- 39 3) preserve the integrity of this historic neighborhood;
- 40 4) enhance property values;
- 41 5) promote public health, safety, and general welfare.  
42

43 APPLICATION  
44

45 The standards would apply to new construction related to all residential uses (single  
46 family houses, multi-family housing [structures containing two or more dwellings], and

1 fraternities and sororities), churches, businesses, and institutional uses located within  
2 the College Hill Core. (As noted above, design review options for non-residential uses  
3 will be prepared in the future.) The College Hill Core is generally defined as that portion  
4 of the city bordered by Grand Avenue, Main Street, and Stadium Way, excluding the  
5 WSU campus. It is anticipated that a special overlay zoning classification would be  
6 assigned for those districts within the College Hill Core.

7 “New construction” is defined as original construction of new land use developments, a  
8 remodel or addition that would demand a building permit (excluding plumbing and  
9 mechanical permits), or construction of any improvements identified in these design  
10 review standards (e.g., fences or signs).

## 11 12 PROCESS

13  
14 As currently envisioned, planning department staff would administer a set of basic  
15 standards (outlined in the bullet points listed below). In those cases where a property  
16 owner wishes to vary from the basic standards, a design review board would review and  
17 take action on the development proposal using established criteria (building upon the  
18 “objectives” listed below).

## 19 20 DESIGN REVIEW CONCEPTS

### 21 22 A. Site Design

23  
24 Objective 1: Design new developments to fit comfortably within the existing  
25 neighborhood fabric

26  
27 • new developments shall create a streetscape consistent with other properties in  
28 the immediate area (including curbs, planting strips, street trees, and sidewalk)

29  
30 • buildings should be set back from the street a distance similar to other buildings  
31 on the same block, with setback variations allowed to meet Objectives A.3 and  
A.4 below

32  
33 • review the city's existing transition area standards for potential enhancement  
34 (these transition area standards, contained in Zoning Code Subsection  
35 17.75.080(10), prescribe special regulations for developments located near the  
36 boundary between a high density residential zone and a low density residential  
zone)

37 Objective 2: Provide functional pedestrian and vehicular connections to the existing  
38 neighborhood

39  
40 • establish a clearly defined walkway between each building entrance and the  
41 public right of way; said walkway should be a minimum of 4½ feet wide for any  
42 development requiring site plan review (in accordance with Zoning Code

1 Subsection 17.35.035) and a minimum of three feet wide for other developments;  
2 said walkways should not extend through any off-street parking area

3 • limit vehicular curb cuts to one per 200 feet of lot frontage (a second cut may be  
4 allowed within the 200-foot dimension if access routes are one-way)

5 • limit curb cut width to 24 feet for two-lane driveways, and 15 feet for one-way  
6 driveways

7 • when installing new sidewalks in the public right of way, ensure that they match  
8 the character of existing sidewalks in the area (e.g., sidewalk width and location  
9 relative to the street and/or planting strip)

10 Objective 3: Minimize the visual impact of parking facilities through optimal design  
11 and location

12  
13 • attempt to locate off-street parking areas to rear or side of lots to minimize their  
14 visual impact; allow for an administrative variance regarding setbacks to facilitate  
15 this purpose

16 • allow for no more than 50 percent of the yard adjacent to a street to be  
17 consumed by off-street parking area; the “yard adjacent to a street” is defined as  
18 that part of a lot between the façade of a building (extended) and the public right  
19 of way for a street

20 • if off-street parking areas are located on the front or side of a lot adjacent to a  
21 public street, they shall be fully screened at the outset of the project with sight-  
22 obscuring wood fencing and/or sight-obscuring landscaping [NOTE: the current  
23 standard is that plantings in a sight-obscuring landscape strip be placed to grow  
24 together within three years of the time of their planting]

25 • off-street parking areas shall be screened from adjacent developments with wood  
26 fencing and/or a Type I landscape strip [see Zoning Code Subsection  
27 17.45.080(1)]

28 • prohibit off-street parking in front of building entrances

29 • allow no more than six off-street parking spaces in a row without a planting area  
30 containing a tree, shrubs, or ground cover

31 • allow for a reduction in the number of required off-street parking spaces if the  
32 proposed development meets certain criteria regarding location of the property,  
33 type of development, ability to share parking facilities with nearby land uses, etc.

34  
35

- 1 Objective 4: Respect the natural topography of a site and preserve its significant  
2 natural features  
3
- 4 • balance cut and fill when grading a site
  - 5 • limit retaining walls to six feet in height
  - 6 • attempt to use a stable slope of less than 2 horizontal to 1 vertical instead of a  
7 retaining wall
  - 8 • retain significant trees to the greatest extent practical—development plans  
9 should identify each significant tree and the developer’s intentions to retain it or  
10 compensate for its removal
  - 11 • allow for an administrative variance regarding setbacks to retain significant trees  
12 or other significant natural features on a property
- 13 Objective 5: Provide attractive lighting that is adequate for function without creating  
14 excessive glare for adjacent properties  
15
- 16 • light sources (e.g., light bulbs) shall not be visible except on approved decorator  
17 lights
  - 18 • use downward directional illumination
  - 19 • attempt to limit the height of light fixtures to a maximum of 20 feet in parking  
20 areas and 10 feet in pedestrian walkway areas
  - 21 • permanent lights mounted on buildings should not extend above the top of the  
22 wall
- 23 Objective 6: Design trash/recycling facilities and service facilities/equipment to be  
24 unobtrusive aspects of the development  
25
- 26 • screen Dumpsters from view or place them in locations not visible from the street
  - 27 • generally orient areas devoted to the service of a building (e.g., loading areas) to  
28 places not visible from a street
  - 29 • locate utility meters and/or service panels on side or rear building walls
- 30 Objective 7: Provide landscaping, fences, and walls that enhance the appearance  
31 and functionality of the development  
32
- 33 • install landscaping in open spaces and within parking areas pursuant to the  
34 provisions of Zoning Code Chapter 17.45

- 1 • use low-water-use landscaping whenever possible
- 2 • when fences or walls are placed between a public street and a building, attempt
- 3 to employ indentations, stepped fence/wall heights, or other means of breaking
- 4 up the fence/wall surface
- 5 • for screening, use wood fencing (except for plywood or composition sheeting),
- 6 wrought iron fencing, brick, or stone; avoid chain link or vinyl fencing
- 7 Objective 8: Install signage that complements the overall design of the development
- 8
- 9 • permit signage only for fraternities, sororities, and developments that involve four
- 10 or more dwellings
- 11 • design signage that echoes the materials used in the development's architectural
- 12 features
- 13 • comply with the standards of Zoning Code Chapter 17.50 that limit the size and
- 14 height of signs for residential uses

15  
16 B. Building Design

- 17 Objective 1: Reflect the architectural character and scale of existing buildings in the
- 18 vicinity with the design of the new project
- 19
- 20 • the design of new structures should have similar proportions and roof forms,
- 21 similar architectural style and materials, and a similar entry configuration relative
- 22 to structures on the same block
- 23 • except for minor cantilevers such as bay windows or balconies, avoid
- 24 cantilevered buildings or portions of buildings; also, avoid buildings supported in
- 25 any part by posts
- 26 • limit building height to the average building height of structures on the same
- 27 block, or 35 feet, whichever is less
- 28 Objective 2: Clearly define the main entrance of a building when viewed from the
- 29 street
- 30
- 31 • provide a prominent entrance to the building(s)—this entrance should consist of a
- 32 front door or front porch facing the public street, or a courtyard or landscaped
- 33 open space that has a visible connection to the public street and that leads to
- 34 dwelling entrances
- 35 • the building entry shall be accessed from the public street by a well-defined
- 36 walkway

- 1 Objective 3: Use architectural features that break up blank walls and roofs and give  
2 the building a welcoming appearance  
3
- 4 • a prominent façade (one that is clearly visible from a public right of way) should  
5 be varied at least every 25 horizontal feet through such means as the following:
    - 6 ○ step the building wall back or forward at least four feet and change the  
7 roof shape or step the ridge line to correspond to the wall change
    - 8 ○ change several of the architectural elements for the width of the module,  
9 such as primary siding material, decks, windows, and entry designs
    - 10 ○ break up the roof line and wall heights by use of dormers, gables, or  
11 similar features
  - 12 • no prominent façade wall plane should exceed a height of 25 feet above any  
13 point of finished grade; additional wall plane above that height should only be  
14 allowed if it is stepped back a minimum of eight feet from the lower wall plane
  - 15 • use pitched roofs only, with a minimum roof pitch of 4:12
  - 16 • maintain proper window/door to wall space ratio; windows and doors should  
17 constitute at least 30 percent of prominent façade wall planes
- 18 Objective 4: Use exterior finish materials that provide visual detail and that  
19 complement those used elsewhere in the neighborhood  
20
- 21 • use siding materials that match neighborhood character, such as wood or  
22 cement-like materials; shingles made of cedar or cement-like materials; brick; or  
23 stone; avoid vinyl or plywood siding
  - 24 • use roofing materials that are non-reflective; acceptable materials are cedar  
25 shingles, architectural grade asphalt shingles, tile, and slate; avoid metal  
26 materials
- 27 Objective 5: Design the building foundation to blend visually with the site  
28
- 29 • step the foundation up or down to follow site contours
  - 30 • minimize the visibility of the foundation walls either by limiting the height of the  
31 exposed unfinished foundation to a maximum of two feet from grade, or by using  
32 a solid landscape screen to obscure the walls such that no more than two vertical  
33 feet of unfinished foundation is exposed to view
- 34

- 1 Objective 6: Ensure that building additions are incorporated into a project in a way  
2 that preserves the integrity of the original development and contributes  
3 to a desirable neighborhood character  
4
- 5 • limit the height of the addition to no more than 150 percent of the height of the  
6 original structure, or 35 feet, whichever is less
  
  - 7 • relative to the original building, an addition must have similar window/door  
8 treatments and similar roof forms
  
  - 9 • building additions must meet all other relevant design review standards  
10 contained herein (including those pertaining to siding and roofing materials)
- 11 Objective 7: Design garages, carports, and other accessory buildings in a manner  
12 that enhances the appearance of the development  
13
- 14 • secondary (accessory) structures must be linked to the principal structure(s)  
15 through the use of similar siding, trim, and roofing materials
  
  - 16 • all garages and carports must comply with the existing garage design standards  
17 contained in Zoning Code Subsection 17.75.080(8)



## Dickinson, Pete

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**From:** City of Pullman Webmaster [webmaster@pullman-wa.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 16, 2014 8:42 AM  
**To:** Dickinson, Pete  
**Subject:** City of Pullman: Support for Design Standards

This is an enquiry email via <http://www.pullman-wa.gov/> from:  
Jamie Peters <[jamiebpeters@hotmail.com](mailto:jamiebpeters@hotmail.com)>

Dear Mr. Pete Dickinson,

I attended the Design Standards review meeting last night and was surprised at how little official public support there was for the importance of these standards to our neighborhood (only one letter and no public statements from what I could gather).

I have lived on College Hill with my family for almost four years now and know that all permanent residents i have spoken with and many students on College Hill are very supportive of design standards. If you are still taking public input I would greatly appreciate having our letter of support of design standards on record (see below) .

Sincerely,

Jamie Peters, resident of College Hill  
1120 NE Indiana Street  
Pullman, WA

Dear Pullman Planning Commission,

As residents of College Hill we would like to voice our strong support of design standards for the College Hill core. We chose to live on College Hill for its energy, historic beauty, and proximity to campus and downtown. We also have children and so safety is very important for the comfort of our family. We moved to Pullman from a large city that was extremely careful with design within its urban growth boundary. Living in a beautiful historic city greatly influenced our desire to live on college hill.

In the four years since we moved to Pullman we have seen numerous construction projects and the movement of permanent residents off of college hill, resulting in increasing population density and decreasing long term residents living in our neighborhood. We have also been surprised and concerned at the amount of violence, litter, and vandalism that we have seen on College Hill. With all the activity that happens here we have been disappointed in the seeming lack of interest that the city of Pullman has in College Hill, specifically in preserving it as an historic neighborhood.

We are very interested in staying in our home on College Hill but also want to see a neighborhood that is more inviting to long term residents and families with the idea that this would encourage investment in keeping the neighborhood safe and beautiful. Standards for design to protect the historic integrity and character of the area are an imperative start to making this happen. More long term residents on college hill would improve the safety and integrity of the neighborhood for everyone who lives there.

Additionally, students who are renting don't have much control over how their property is managed, which accounts for the majority of the property on college hill. All of the students

with whom I have spoken would greatly appreciate a cleaner, safer, more beautiful place to live. I would want this for my children when they move away from home for the first time.

Thank you for seriously considering these standards as an important sign that Pullman still cares about College Hill as an historic and residential area.

Sincerely

Jamie & Jim Peters, permanent residents of College Hill Core