

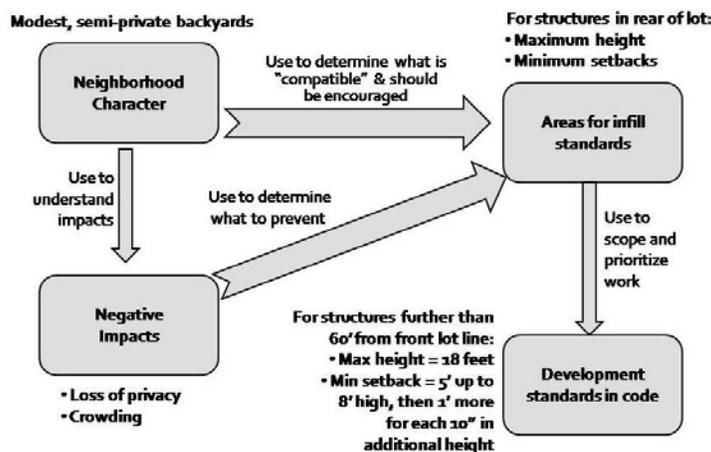


IV. UNDERSTANDING “NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER” IN THE S-JW AREA

Over many years, numerous JWN members have been actively involved in trying to protect the Jefferson and Westside neighborhoods against incompatible infill, while encouraging well-designed, properly-sited new development that will help Eugene to grow compactly and contribute in a positive way to our neighborhoods.

The foundation for ICS and OS

The descriptions of neighborhood character and negative infill impacts in the JWN report lay the foundation for identifying appropriate infill compatibility standards, as well as site selection and project approval criteria under the Opportunity Siting process.



A clear description of the essential, positive elements of neighborhood character provides the basis for those development features and qualities that infill standards and OS incentives should encourage, while a clear identification of significant negative impacts from incompatible development provides the basis for what both infill standards and OS project

approval criteria should prevent.

Because these descriptions are primarily meant to be used in the ICS and OS projects, they have specific geographical and subject scopes. The descriptions generally cover the R-2 zoned areas of the JWN, although the character description of this area also applies fairly well to the older, mostly R-1 zoned area of Jefferson neighborhood, just east of the fairgrounds.

Some or all of the items described as part of the neighborhood character are also relevant to many other residential areas in JWN. Nevertheless, when you review these drafts, keep in mind the neighborhood area to which they specifically apply. The subject scope includes primarily those elements that have a direct or indirect bearing on land use and development standards and criteria, specifically the types of issues that are addressed by the ICS and OS projects. The descriptions would also be useful for transportation-related issues (e.g., the potential route for an EmX line to west Eugene), but may not fully cover important elements of neighborhood character that are relevant to other issues.

The area encompassed by the proposed S-JW special area zone includes most of the lots zoned R-2 within the Jefferson Westside Neighborhood (JWN) boundaries and east of Polk Street. ([See map on JWN Web site.](#))

Incompatible infill has become a serious threat to this area’s livability and stability, primarily because the R-2 zoning standards have been changed to allow roughly *triple* the

Westside Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhood character

“The Westside Neighborhood is one of Eugene’s oldest neighborhoods that still retains its character from an earlier day. ... The houses have a strong orientation to the street, with front porches that encourage interaction with pedestrians passing by.

...

To those who view the Westside as a place to live rather than a speculative investment, this area with its predominantly single-family nature, older homes, tree-lined streets, and mature vegetation is a place deserving to be fostered and protected as a unique asset to the community.” (p. 6-1)

number of dwellings that were allowed by the R-2 zone when this area was originally built out with single-dwelling houses, modest duplexes, and small accessory dwelling units (ADUs; e.g., “granny cottages”).

Two other factors have contributed to the problem of incompatible infill: R-2 development standards allow much larger structures and reduced setbacks, and the applicable refinement plan policies to maintain the neighborhood character have been rendered essentially moot by Planning Director and Hearings Officials’ decisions on land use applications.

The character of this area has been the subject of numerous public discussions by residents and has also been assessed by several City planning projects. The following two governing refinement plans and accompanying findings adopted by City Council provide a foundation:

- [Westside Neighborhood Plan](#) and [Appendix](#) (1985-1987)
- [Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan](#) and [Appendix](#) (1980-1982)

In addition there has been extensive community participation in the following projects and processes closely related to infill compatibility issues:

- [Downtown Area Housing Policy Analysis](#) (2001-2005)
- [Chambers Reconsidered project](#) (2004-2005)
- [Jefferson neighborhood “Area 15” redesignation](#) (2005-2006)
- [Minor Code Amendments Process](#) (MiCAP, 2006-2008)
- [Infill Compatibility Standards \(ICS\) process](#) (2007-present)
- [Opportunity Siting \(OS\) process](#) (2007-present)

Most recently, JWN members participated in two planning events, an Opportunity Siting (OS) project workshop in June and July 2008, and two JWN “PlanJam” workshops in November 2008 and January 2009, held as part of the neighborhood community process to develop infill compatibility standards. At all four workshops and through a follow-up survey, JWN members contributed to development of a description of the S-JW area’s character.

The most detailed and helpful analysis was the product of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) grant-funded study known as the “Chambers Reconsidered” project. City staff, consultants, university faculty, and residents produced several reports on the character of an R-2 zoned section of Westside neighborhood that is highly similar to the S-JW area. This “Chambers Reconsidered” study area, which was called the “East Traditional Neighborhood”¹ (ETN), is roughly between W. 8th and W. 13th Avenues and

¹ The name was used because it was in the east half of the Chambers Reconsidered study area. The ETN is actually the *westernmost* part of the Westside neighborhood.

Downtown Area Housing Policy Analysis

Jefferson Neighborhood

“[This part] of the study area is generally characterized by single family houses situated along quiet residential streets. ...

The single family houses are generally set back fifteen to twenty feet from the sidewalk, and create a pedestrian friendly environment. Many of these houses have garages positioned on the rear of the lot. ...

The street tree canopy is a historic feature of the area, and includes a variety of species such as maple, fir, catalpa, birch, walnut, ash, cedar, locust, pine and redwood. ...

West 15th Avenue is a major bike path through the neighborhood, connecting readily to the much larger Amazon bike path. The Lane County Fairgrounds provides expansive open space to the area, in addition to Charnel Mulligan Park.” (pp. 42-44)

“Pride of ownership and a high level of maintenance are evident throughout the Jefferson study area. Many older houses exist in the Jefferson/Far West Study area, some designated as historic landmarks, others simply older homes of historic interest. These properties represent character defining elements of the neighborhood.” (p. 52)

between Polk and Fillmore Streets. The ETN area matches much of the S-JW area very closely in development history, neighborhood character, and problems arising from incompatible infill. The full description of this project is documented in three reports available on the JWN Web site:

[*Chambers Reconsidered – Promoting Compatible Development in a Mature Neighborhood*](#)²

[*Chambers Reconsidered – A Citizens Guide to Potential Design Guidelines for a Mature Neighborhood*](#)³.

[*Chambers Revisited Neighbors’ Report \(November 1, 2005\)*](#)⁴

The descriptions of the S-JW area draw upon the wealth of prior work as well as the two governing refinement plans and accompanying findings adopted by City Council (also available on the JWN Web site):

[*Westside Neighborhood Plan \(1985-1987\) and Appendix Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan \(1980-1982\) and Appendix*](#)

Information on the workshops and other resources can be found on the JWN Web site at: jwneugene.org/infillstds .

JWN R-2 Areas

Within the JWN, there are several residential subareas with a range of characteristics. These are identified and described in the two applicable refinement plans. The S-JW area comprises most of the “Central Residential Area” in the Westside neighborhood and the “East Medium-Density Residential Area” in the Jefferson neighborhood.

Although these two areas have some differences, overall, they’re very similar, historically single-dwelling/duplex areas; and they face similar threats due to their R-2 zoning. Thus, a common set of infill compatibility standards is appropriate.

Despite being zoned (or, some might say mis-zoned) mostly as R-2, overall this area still retains its unmistakable character as a “traditional,” compact, single-dwelling neighborhood originally built up during the 1920s through 1940s.

² Authored by: Allen Lowe, Greg Brokaw, and John Rowell, See previous footnote for their affiliations.

³ Authored by: Allen Lowe, Project Manager, City of Eugene Planning Division; Greg Brokaw AIA, John Rowell AIA, Howard Davis, Chad Kirkpatrick, Martha Bohm from Rowell Brokaw Architects; and Ronald Kellett, Professor of Landscape Architecture at University of British Columbia.

⁴ Authored by JWN residents who were members of an *ad hoc* group known as Chambers Area Families for Healthy Neighborhoods (CAFHN).

Most houses are one- to one-and-a-half⁵ story structures, with a few full, two-story houses. Most pre-war houses have a Craftsman-influenced design, while houses built after the war are generally more modest and have a simple, design based on a Cape Cod style. Almost all houses have a strong orientation towards the street, including porches in front and garages set back on the side of the house or completely behind the house. A number of blocks have alleys that provide access to the rear of properties and, more recently, to residential infill along the alleys.

The houses are generally close to one another on a side-by-side dimension, and share a fairly consistent setback and depth. Many houses also have moderate-sized back yards adjacent to one another, typically separated by hedges or fences three to six feet high. This siting pattern provides outdoor areas that are relatively private and yet open (i.e., not walled-in by adjacent buildings), even within the relatively compact layout of the neighborhood.

The S-JW area has almost no internal or adjacent commercial property. The area is almost completely built out, with few vacant lots remaining. Because the area is mostly zoned R-2, it has been subject to a significant number of infill projects, including duplexes and multi-unit apartments built on the back of lots behind an existing house.

In the “Identifying the S-JW character” section, below, we provide a more detailed description of the elements and patterns that define the area’s character.

Adjoining or transecting these single-dwelling areas are local collector or through streets – including W. 8th, 11th and 13th Avenues and Polk Street. These streets are developed with a combination of single-dwelling homes, duplexes and multi-unit apartments built more recently.

In contrast to some other areas in the JWN (e.g., in the Westside from Jefferson Street towards downtown), most of the S-JW area has little immediate threat from commercial or very high-density development under current zoning and availability of vacant land. This area has, however, already experienced significant medium- to high-density multi-unit infill and has the potential for more. Much of the current infill is viewed by residents as having degraded adjacent properties and eroded the character of the area as a whole. With continuing pressure to add more infill, residents in this area are keenly focused on residential infill standards.

The next section provides a more detailed look at this area’s character.

⁵ In a typical S-JW “one-and-a-half story” house, the second story is encompassed by a sloped roof. Small dormers are commonly found on these houses, as well. By contrast a full two-story house has all or most of the roof above the ceiling of the second story.

Mature Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Older neighborhoods' character

“The East Traditional Neighborhood (ETN) in the Chambers area is an example of [a] neighborhood that emerged and matured before cul-de-sacs, driveways, garages and car-dominated suburbs became the norm.

Most of the houses were built within recognizable stylistic traditions, from a limited set of period pattern books, and by builders who had a good grasp of proportion and detail. ...

There is consistency, but also subtle variety, that is often lacking in newer housing developments. What is most distinctive about ... older neighborhoods is not the historic character of any particular house but the overall pattern of streets and alleys, the architectural coherence of housing stock, and the way that houses and streets work together to create a unique sense of community. ...

Anyone looking at housing in Eugene recognizes the value of these older neighborhoods. Although not everyone's ideal, they offer a desirable housing option for many people, and for some they represent the most livable neighborhoods in the city. These neighborhoods are not necessarily historic but they are part of our city's history and are important to its identity. ...

As a matter of civic responsibility the city and its citizens should recognize the most coherent of these neighborhoods as cultural and physical artifacts and promote the understanding and preservation of them.

This Citizens Guide ... is intended to give citizens and officials the tools to understand what makes these neighborhoods unique and to identify specific ways future development in this neighborhood can fit in and contribute to a strong tradition.”
(pp. 1-2)

Identifying the S-JW Area's Character

Residents of this area frequently cite the “neighborhood character” as the most important reason they choose to live here. Preventing the erosion of the S-JW area's neighborhood character is a high priority for neighbors and has been part of official Eugene City land use policy since the *Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan* (1982) and *Westside Neighborhood Plan* (1987) were approved by City Council.

A number of Metro Plan policies (see the “Residential Neighborhood Land Use Goals and Policies” section, [*to be added*]), also support protection of neighborhood character against incompatible development. For example, Metro Plan policy A.25 specifically states:

“... increase the stability and quality of older residential neighborhoods...”

But what *is* the S-JW area neighborhood “character”? The most important thing to observe is that the neighborhood character of this area is a *dynamic*, living environment that includes:

- Residents and visitors
- Houses and other structures
- Streets, alleys, and sidewalks
- Cars and bicycles
- Trees, gardens, lawns, and other plants
- Domestic and wild animals
- Open space, both on the ground and above it.

The neighborhood character cannot be fully described, or well-understood, by just describing the structures. And preserving particular architectural elements, such as gabled roofs and porches, is far from sufficient to maintain stability and prevent erosion of the S-JW area neighborhood character.

There's also a synergy between various individual elements that creates a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. Diminishing or degrading one

**Downtown Area
Housing Policy
Analysis**

“Smart growth”

“Eugene’s older neighborhoods, with their historic houses and tree-lined streets help to trace Eugene’s built history and define the character of our city. Many of our historic neighborhoods represent exactly the sort of development that cities across the nation are now trying to promote as ‘smart growth.’

The New Urbanism approach to urban design takes as its model the pattern of development found in our historic neighborhoods. Promoting this compact, pedestrian-friendly development is part of Eugene’s growth management goals.”

(p. 1)

element of a neighborhood’s character can weaken other elements that depend on it.

When residents discuss why they’re attracted to this area, they frequently mention one or more of the following elements or qualities (listed in no particular order).

“Friendly neighbors; many long-term residents”	“Walkable” (sidewalk network, planted parking strip, few curb cuts, etc.)	“Safe and hospitable” (activity, “eyes on the street”, proactive neighbors)
“Lots of resident presence in front yards, walking, bicycling, in the parks”	“Balance of home owners and renters”	“Backyard privacy and ambience”
“Tree-lined streets”	“Close to downtown”	“Lots of gardens”
“Many attractive, older, single-family homes”	“Porches and front yards engage the street”	“Variety of houses (yet consistent style) and diversity of people”
“Not car-oriented” (low traffic on side streets, setback garages, narrow drives, street parking)	“Small houses relatively affordable to own or rent”	“Neighborhood restaurants, shops and businesses”
“Granny cottage infill”	“Bicycle-friendly”	“Good environment for children”
“Quiet”	“Neighborhood parks”	“Human-scale of most buildings.”
“Nice balance of houses being close, but not too close”	“Healthy greenscape; large trees and bushes”	“Open space along Amazon by Fairgrounds”

More concretely, residents of this area have identified the elements and patterns listed in the next section as essential aspects of the S-JW area “neighborhood character.”

Mature Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Key patterns in “traditional,” close-in neighborhoods

“Both the physical structure and the relationships and understandings among neighbors are key to the health of a traditional neighborhood. Typically, older neighborhoods have consistent physical characteristics summarized as follows:

- Gridded streets
- De-emphasized parking
- Houses oriented to the street
- Front yards as important semi-public space
- Alleys for services, storage, limited housing, and pedestrian traffic
- Significant street trees and mature urban landscape
- Walkable distances to downtown commercial areas and open spaces

Traditional neighborhoods also rely on respectful decision making among residents and a willingness to let the neighborhood evolve over time. [One] of the wonderful qualities of older living neighborhoods is that nothing repeats exactly yet there is overall continuity.

General patterns and trends grow and evolve over time; and it is the enduring patterns, not so much the individual structures, that give the neighborhood its traditional character.” (p. 3)

Positive patterns: Defining the S-JW area neighborhood character

• Residents

- The character of the S-JW area is largely driven by residents with a sense of enjoyment of, and commitment to, their neighbors and the “homeyness” of S-JW area’s typical dwellings and yards.

- Many S-JW area residents have lived in the area for a long time, and many of the long-term and more recent residents have a sense of being settled in for an extended period.

The area has a balance of about 50 percent of the lots with owner-occupied homes and 50 percent with only rental units. The significant percentage of owner-occupied lots provides a large core of residents with a significant financial investment, as well as personal, investment in the continued health and stability of the neighborhood.

- It’s important to understand that despite the dramatic changes that have been made to the R-2 zoning standards since this neighborhood was built out, the JWN R-2 area’s character does not reflect an intensely “metro” lifestyle where apartments and condos predominate and residents are more transient and minimally engaged with one another.

The physical characteristics of the S-JW area, which are described next, support and reflect residents’ attitudes and way of life.

• Streets, alleys, blocks, and sidewalks

- Streets and alleys are laid out in a grid pattern on level ground.
- The S-JW area encompasses approximately 30 blocks in the Westside neighborhood and 5 blocks in the Jefferson neighborhood.
- Block sizes are fairly small (roughly 300’x350’) with 15-20 lots per block.
- Most streets have a parking strip with the sidewalk between the parking strip and lot.

Downtown Area Housing Policy Analysis

Westside Neighborhood Character

“The extensive shade provided by the old trees creates a welcome character to the sidewalk and pedestrian right-of-way. Tree species include cedar, maple, ash, chestnut and redwood.

Numerous private gathering places were observed in the form of courtyards, gardens between buildings, and shared green spaces. As well, fruit trees, shrubs and perennial gardens reinforce the distinctly residential character of the area. ...

Westside is a pedestrian neighborhood, and bicycle friendly, with W. 12th Avenue heavily used for bike traffic to and from the University of Oregon.

With its predominantly single family nature, older houses, tree lined streets, and mature vegetation, this is an area that deserves to be appreciated and protected as a unique asset to the city.” (p. 30)

- There are heavily-used, City-designated bike routes through this area, including the following streets: W. Broadway, W. 12th Ave., W. 15th Ave., Monroe. Lincoln, Charnelton, and Olive Streets. The minimal automobile traffic and limited traffic emerging from alleys and driveways on these routes create a safe and pleasant environment that encourages bicycling to and from downtown and a large residential area to the west and south of, as well as within, the S-JW area.
- There is a generally continuous sidewalk network that’s actively used by residents walking about the neighborhood and to and from nearby services (e.g., at Blair Island, Midtown (on Willamette St.), Downtown, W. 18th Ave. & Chambers Street.)
- Sidewalks are also actively used by “walkers” and “runners” from downtown businesses or other locations who find the area an attractive and convenient place to get fresh air and exercise.
- There are a moderate number (5-7 per side of the street on each block) of driveway curb cuts, typically 10’-15’ wide at the curb, narrowing to 8’-10’ at the sidewalk.
- Alleys are generally have a right-of-way of approximately 14 feet wide and are unsurfaced. Many are in poor condition with large potholes. Most alleys are used mainly for occasional utilitarian access to the rear of mid-block lots.
- Typical alleys produce very little traffic across sidewalks where the alley intersects the street, thus having little impact on pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The original (and still characteristic) build-out was about 8-9 dwellings per net acre (du/na). Due to the more recent multi-unit infill, the current density is over 10 du/na.
- **Lot shapes and sizes**
 - There are about 585 tax lots in the S-JW area. Of these, 549 lots have one or more dwellings; 12 lots are vacant and buildable; and 24 lots are either in some use other than residential (e.g., churches) or are unbuildable.⁶

⁶ For reference, there are approximately 3,730 lots designated for Medium Density Residential in the Metro Plan.

- Of the 561 lots that have dwellings or are developable, there are three main categories of lot sizes and shapes⁷:
 - 2,250 to 4,499 square feet. Many of these are roughly square lots, from about 50'x50' to about 60'x60'. (Approximately 28%.)
 - 4,500 to 9,000 square feet. Mostly rectangular lots, from about 50'x100' to about 60'x150'. (Approximately 52%.)
 - 10,000 to 11,000 square feet. Mostly rectangular lots, roughly 65'x165'. (Approximately 12%.)

Together, these three categories include over 92% of the lots.

- **Dwellings**

There are approximately 820 existing dwellings. Dwellings are predominantly single-dwelling structures, with the following characteristics:

- One primary dwelling per lot. Some lots have a “granny cottage” secondary dwelling.
- There are a number of small duplexes, many of which are a single story.
- Over 91% of developed lots have either a single dwelling (74%) or two dwellings (17%).
- Placement on lot:
 - The main front plane of house is typically within about 15' to 30' feet of the sidewalk.
 - On rectangular lots, the width (i.e., lesser dimension) of the lot is the “front.”
- There are three main categories of single-dwelling dwelling style and size:
 - Pre-war, modest 1- or 1½-story “bungalows” with Craftsman influences. The 1½-story houses have the second floor space mostly contained within the roof slope.
 - Pre-war, larger 2-story Craftsman houses. These have second floor living space that is mostly full height and below the roof, although the second floor often has a smaller footprint than the first floor.
 - Post-war, smaller 1-story “cottages.” These are generally more basic architecturally than the pre-war “bungalows” and often have some Cape Code features.
- Primary dwelling height: Mostly one or 1½ stories, with a number of two-story houses. Heights (from grade to top of roof) are generally less than the following:
 - One story houses – less than 17' high.
 - 1½ story houses – less than 23' high (includes 2- to 3-foot foundation above grade)
 - Two story houses – less than 30' high (typical two-story houses with foundation and sloped roof are 28-30 feet high.)

⁷ Note JWN is conducting a complete inventory and analysis of lot shapes, sizes, and street/alley access for parcels within the S-JW area, which will be made available on request.”

- Architectural style:
 - Many houses have elements of (mid-scale) Craftsman, bungalow, or cottage style.
 - Roofs: Gabled or hipped roofs, frequently with dormers (especially on 1½ and 2-story houses). Many houses have small wings or porches with lower roofs than the main part of the dwelling, forming a roof “cascade”.
 - Clearly-defined entrances, commonly with front porches of various sizes, with a strong orientation to the street
 - Most two story and 1½ story houses, and many 1 story dwellings, have eaves and significant other protrusions, articulation, and trim.
 - Painted clapboard siding is common.
 - Double-hung windows are common; many older houses have divided lights in the upper sash.
- **Secondary structures (e.g., garages and cottages) and driveways**
 - Height: Generally less than 15’ (from grade to ridgeline). A large garage with a steep-pitched, gabled roof containing a storage loft is about 15’ high.
 - Shed or gabled roofs. Shed roofs are most commonly found on small, older, one-car garages under 10’ high.
 - Narrow driveways running on the side of the lot, and small to medium sized garages with a front plane that’s behind the main front plane of the house. Most garages are accessed from the street, rather than the alley.
- **Most houses and lots reflect the following interrelationships:**
 - Many houses are close beside one another, often separated only by a narrow driveway or less. House designs (e.g., facing gabled roofs) and living patterns acknowledge this compact pattern and respect the importance of adjacent neighbors’ privacy along this interface. Most houses have a “front-to-rear” orientation that uses windows on the front and rear facades to provide most of the light and view access from within the house.

A very important element of the regular, rectangular lot pattern is that residents of adjacent, smaller “square” lots enjoy viewscape and solar access afforded by adjacent backyards of larger rectangular lots, even though the smaller, square lots themselves may have very tiny or no rear yards.

 - Small front yards are semi-public spaces where residents of a house may observe or interact with pedestrians or adjacent neighbors. These areas provide a graceful transition between street life and life inside the house.
 - Most rectangular lots have private backyards with lawns, gardens, or landscaping. In this area, a house’s residents have a general sense of spatial openness, relative insulation from immediate street noise, and a fair degree of privacy from other neighbors viewing backyard activities.

- **Gardens, vegetation, and wildlife**

There are two small, neighborhood parks within or adjacent to the R-2 area. (Monroe Park in Westside and Charnel Mulligan in Jefferson.)

Cumulatively, arable open space on lots provides extensive amount of natural vegetation and wildlife. Many of the lots have vegetable and flower gardens and/or extensive landscaping (generally fairly informal). Living in most areas of the S-JW area gives a sense of being in touch with Nature.

- Many of the lots have vegetable and flower gardens and/or extensive landscaping (generally fairly informal).
- There are numerous very large “heritage” trees throughout the neighborhood, as well as many medium-sized trees along the streets and sidewalks and in backyards. Collectively, the large trees on the street and in the interior create a substantial urban forest “canopy.” That is one of the most significant elements of this neighborhood’s appeal.
- There is extensive wild birdlife, including many songbirds and occasional raptors (including hawks and owls). Herons from the Amazon slough area periodically appear roosting or feeding in the upper branches of heritage trees. There are both year-round residents (such as purple finches and chickadees) and migratory birds (such as cedar waxwings and grosbeaks)
- Squirrels and raccoons are a common sight in neighbors’ yards, and bats (and occasional resident owls) are regular visitors in summer evenings.

The elements briefly described above interrelate in important, sometimes subtle, ways to create the neighborhood’s special character. The people, the spatial elements of the neighborhood, the moderate intensity of development, the housing types and scale, the implicit interrelationships among adjacent properties, and the natural elements are the most important determinants of this character. The description of the positive elements of the neighborhood character can help guide how infill standards and development incentives direct future development to be harmonious with a neighborhood community that has stood the test of time.

ADDENDUM

Additional descriptions of the neighborhood character excerpted from *Mature Neighborhood Design Guideline*

Street organization

The ETN streets are organized in a grid. Traffic is distributed through the neighborhood more evenly than in a typical suburban development. Though traffic is more dispersed there is still a variety of street types and traffic levels in the neighborhood. This is partly due to local discontinuities such as intersections and to variations in street widths, parking arrangements, and destinations. ...

One consequence of the existing street organization common to older neighborhoods is seen in the development history of W. 11th Ave. east of Chambers St. W. 11th Ave. has evolved over time to become a fast moving high volume avenue, but the pattern of development retains characteristics of the quieter interior streets found between W. 7th and W. 11th Ave. Houses are similar in size and type though on average slightly larger, they front the street in similar ways, and the public realm of sidewalk plantings and front yard is organized in the same way as low volume streets. (p. 13)

Block configuration

Blocks range in size from approximately 2.12 to 3 acres with an average of 15 to 20 lots. These block sizes are small for older traditional neighborhoods, but give the ETN and other Eugene neighborhoods an important part of their character. The pattern of block size and gridded streets is a scale-defining element of the neighborhood and is also a fixed element unlikely to change or evolve like other characteristics

Blocks with alleys have a stronger block-unit identity; neighbors tend to know each other because they share an alley. In blocks without alleys, it is the street that typically forms the coherent unit. These distinctions can be subtle but are important to how the neighborhood is perceived by those who live in it. The social function of the alleys is an important consideration in the development of new infill projects. (p. 14)

Alley character

Alleys in the ETN accommodate residential service functions as well as providing housing options and pedestrian access. Alleys in the ETN are typically but not always unpaved.

The alleys in this neighborhood support a mix of residential uses that include back yards, small dwellings, parking garages, trash collection, utility connections, and in some cases shared open space. Alleys are eclectic in their uses and their visual character; their development being driven by a wide range of individual choices about how the alley can serve each owner's needs. In general buildings built on alleys are smaller than houses that front the streets. The best of these help to create a cottage like environment.

Many alleys have lots with yards that provide private open space to the residents. The collective impact of the private open space is an important part of the overall “green” character appreciated by residents in the neighborhood. Some alleys are more developed and serve as small lanes for houses garages and accessory buildings. Many of these more developed alleys, especially the ones with dwellings which respect the small scale context, are seen as positive contributions to the ETN character, enriching the neighborhood while providing a wider range of housing options. (p. 15)

Lot size and shape

Lot size and shape is a primary characteristic of the neighborhood scale. For instance lot width is a key attribute because it creates the general rhythm along the street and perceived scale of the neighborhood. Lot width also indirectly controls dwelling size shape and character as houses are designed for the relatively narrow lots and often with a driveway along one property line. ...

The dimensional range of lots is one of the defining characteristics of a neighborhood. ...

The size and consistency of block dimensions in the ETN give the neighborhood its distinctive lot dimensions. (pp. 16-17)

Streetscape

The streetscape is made up of all the elements from the street itself to the facades and front doors of the individual houses. These elements make up a gradient of spaces that transition from the public street to the private house. Front yards are a key element of this transition. Some front yards are functional for the homeowner in that they have productive gardens or usable outdoor spaces, but these characteristics are auxiliary to the basic roles of providing a semi-public realm for arrival and departure and a buffer from the public sidewalk and street.

The shared space of the streetscape is what gives the ETN much of its character and makes older traditional neighborhoods such a pleasure for the pedestrian. The typical layering of spaces includes a street edge that encourages neighborhood parallel parking, a wide planting strip with street trees generally wider than those of most new developments, a sidewalk, and a planted front yard. Last, forming the backdrop for the activities of the public room of the street, are the front porch and house façade, often with windows and a door for occupants to connect to the street from within the private realm. These layers promote neighborliness and a more cohesive neighborhood by creating a street as a well defined shared outdoor room. (p. 18)

Alleyscape

In contrast to streetscapes alleyscapes are highly informal. Though there is housing along alleys, it is small in scale informal in layout, and the relationship to the alley and to the main house on the street is varied and informal.

Alley houses tend to be small and cottage like often occurring in lieu of a garage. ...

Alley open space

As the amount of housing along alleys has increased over the years, the character of some alleys has changed from primarily back yards with the occasional garage or garden shed to small scale residential lanes. Central to this balanced vision for alleys is the need for open space. (p. 20)

Density

As density levels rise, housing types change in order to fit more units on a given piece of land. In the ETN the dominant housing type is the detached dwelling. This is an essential characteristic of the neighborhood. If density levels are to rise in the ETN because of metro land use policies, they should rise only so far as to retain the prevailing housing type and character of the neighborhood.

This limit for neighborhood density could be termed “carrying capacity,” the maximum density that the neighborhood can absorb without losing the single family detached housing character.

The ETN was zoned for duplexes in the 30’s and has since had many modifications to the zoning regulations, all of which permitted higher densities than one house per lot. The actual built character, however, has always been one main house per lot. Successful duplex developments in the area are modest in size and do not emphasize the dual aspect. Later duplexes broke with the tradition of single unit appearance and stand out in the neighborhood as less compatible.

Generally there is one primary dwelling on each lot, and in some cases there are small houses cottages or granny flats in the rear yard, especially on lots with alleys. (p. 22)

Dwelling forms

The variety of, house styles in the ETN – Craftsman, Cape Cod, Queen Anne – are essential to the feel of the neighborhood. The Craftsman bungalows built in the early 1900s tend to be the highest quality houses, while the Cape Cod influenced homes built during the post war era tend to be of lower quality construction. Most houses built more recently have weak stylistic associations and have little distinctive character. What is most important is that new houses have character; they should in fact be charming in their overall form and in their details. The surest way to achieve this is to work within recognizable styles that are found in the ETN neighborhood. ...

The Craftsman bungalows are among the finest older houses in the neighborhood. Despite the buildings fairly large footprint, the perceived size of the large two story structure is smaller because the second floor is usually partially or wholly within the roof volume. A large number of very small Cape Cod houses were built during the post war building booms. These houses do not have the higher quality detailing and were typically smaller than some of the older homes.

Relationship of house to lot, street and yard

Among the most important characteristics of a house are its position on the property and the way it interacts with the street the side yard and the backyard. Houses in the ETN contribute to the character of the streets by being located toward the front of the lot and by having entrances and well proportioned view windows facing the street. There is a consistent front-to-back orientation in the neighborhood. Side yards are for access and light not for views.

Front facing windows allow residents to keep eyes on the street. Residents can observe the goings on in the neighborhood and help preserve neighborhood security. A house's facade is the face that the house presents to the neighborhood, and its expression determines the mood it creates in its environs. A facade with windows and a clear entrance engages or welcomes passers-by. An austere façade, a hidden entrance, or a blank street wall turns a cold shoulder to the pedestrian and stands out from the traditional buildings in the neighborhood. (p. 26)

Front building setback

The location of the main dwelling relative to the street side property line is a defining characteristic of traditional neighborhoods. Generally larger streets and larger and more expensive neighborhoods will have deeper setback. In the ETN, the houses are generally set back between 10 and 25 feet, with most around 20 feet. When building or altering a dwelling in the ETN, it is important to look at the nearby context and determine how a new or modified building should relate to its neighbors and to the street. On W. 11th Ave., for example, a 10 foot setback may be too close to the street, and along Filmore St., a 25 foot setback may seem too far back on the property. (pp. 26-27)

Front to back configuration

The ETN, like many older traditional neighborhoods, has a strong front and back pattern with limited focus on the sides of the dwellings. The front is usually dominated by an entry and often a large covered porch. The entry and the porch typically face the street directly.

Front parking is usually a narrow drive tight to a side yard property line. The garage typically has one door and is set back from the facade of the house.

Large windows face the front and back yards. The larger rooms of the dwelling unit also orient themselves to the front or back yard. The side walls of houses have windows but they tend to be small allowing some daylight but limiting views to neighbors. The composition of facades is also much more formal on the front and to some extent the rear while the sidewalls are usually the result of window placement favoring function over design composition. (p. 27)

Mass and scale

Houses in the ETN come in many shapes and sizes, but all of them appear modest from the street. The most common examples are small one- or one-and-a-half story houses. Even the largest ETN houses disguise their size by having second floors within the roof volume and by using dormers for windows and to extend the usable area of the second floor. ...

The width of buildings in the ETN falls into a narrow and consistent range. The width is a function of lot size and shape and sometimes a one car width driveway to one side. On a 55 foot wide lot with a driveway, a 5 foot setback on one side, and a 20 foot setback on the other, this would allow a 30 foot wide house. (p. 28)

Privacy between houses and adjacent backyards

One of the characteristics most enjoyed by the current residents of the ETN is the relatively undeveloped nature of backyards. (p. 30)

Parking and garages

The traditional pattern in the neighborhood is to minimize automobile related structures such as garages and driveways in favor of landscaped areas or pedestrian circulation routes. Garages take a secondary role in the massing of the primary residences. The quality of ETN streets, landscaping, and houses give the neighborhood a texture that is scaled more to pedestrians than automobiles. ...

Driveways

Driveways in the ETN are diminutive in character. They are typically small usually one car width and placed to the side of lots. (p. 32)

Windows

Older style wood windows have depth and detail. (p. 36)

Exterior materials

The general character of the exterior of ETN dwellings is wood siding of a variety of types but mostly horizontal clapboard lap siding. ...

The ubiquitous horizontal siding is sometimes used in conjunction with other building materials, including wood shakes and shingles, vertical siding, and the occasional brick chimney. (p. 37)

Entrances and porches

Key features of traditional houses in the ETN are their strong, often centrally placed, porches and clearly visible entries. This characteristic is an important part of the front-to-back pattern discussed previously. The various types of houses built in the ETN treat porches very differently. The craftsman bungalow's layered and gracious entries serve as a model to emulate in forming the sequence of spaces leading into a home.

A porch functions as an extended threshold for comings and goings and socializing.

(p. 38)

Roof character

Roofs in the ETN are generally gabled with dormers providing windows to second floors. Larger homes use a cascade of roofs to break down the perceived mass of the dwelling. The positive mass and scale found in the neighborhood is in part due to the simple main roof forms and the prevalence of dormers and bay windows. (p. 40)

Landscaping

Lush green vegetation is a distinguishing characteristic of the ETN and a wide variety of plants and trees are found throughout the neighborhood. Changes to the neighborhood should be seen as opportunities to enhance this green character. (p. 41)