



# Oak Park

## Historic District Plan

## Physical Description & Boundaries

The Oak Park Historic District is located to the southeast of Sacramento's original 1848 city limits and consists primarily of a commercial corridor and a few perimeter single-family houses that are situated on the blocks immediately surrounding Broadway between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> streets. The district is bounded on the west by 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> streets and on the northeast by a zig-zagging line that weaves along Broadway at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> avenues before turning northwest along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and up 34<sup>th</sup> Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.



Figure 229. Bank building at the corner of Broadway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. To the right, narrow medians, planted with rows of palms, run down the center of Broadway.



Figure 230. A variety of one-story commercial buildings, mostly brick, line Broadway.



Figure 231. A One-Part Commercial Block building with a Mission-style parapet sits next to an infill housing development.



Figure 232. Commercial development on Broadway gives way to single- and multi-family residences on the perimeter of the district.

## Brief Historic Context

The Oak Park Historic District was originally part of the 230-acre William Doyle ranch, located outside and to the southeast of Sacramento's 1848 city core. In 1887, real estate developer, Edwin K. Alsip, subdivided the ranch and renamed it "Oak Park" after an eight-acre grove of oak trees that grew in its center. Alsip, who also owned the Central Street Railway Company, extended the streetcar line from 2<sup>nd</sup> and H streets downtown to Oak Park – where it terminated at a public park, also known as Oak Park (now McClatchy Park) – thus creating Sacramento's first streetcar suburb.

Development was slow in the beginning. The first parcels were purchased by real estate speculators, who held onto the land with the intention of reselling it at a higher price, and because Oak Park was not part of the City of Sacramento, it did not have access to the city's sewer and water systems. Low-income residents moved in first, attracted by the low price of land and the lure of "no city taxes."<sup>1</sup> Hoping to lure more residents to the area, the investors of the Central Street Railway Company built an amusement park at the streetcar line's terminus at Oak Park in 1894. Known as Joyland, the park included a dance floor, concert pavilion, concession stand, and later an outdoor theater, roller-skating rink, and other attractions.<sup>2</sup>

In 1906, the California State Fair relocated from downtown to a new fairground on Stockton Boulevard, east of Oak Park. This, along with the addition of another streetcar line operated by the Central

California Traction Co., and the general improvement of economic conditions after 1900 brought more people to the area. In 1911, with the population expanding and pressures growing to address water and sewage issues, Oak Park was finally annexed into the City of Sacramento along with several other outlying neighborhoods. It was the first expansion of the city since it was platted in 1848.<sup>3</sup>

Oak Park developed into a middle-class residential suburb with its own commercial district centered around Sacramento Avenue (now Broadway) from 31<sup>st</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup> streets. Brick shopfronts, theaters, and other cultural and institutional buildings sprang up along the streetcar line that traversed the 100-foot-wide main artery, replacing older, fire-prone wooden buildings. Local residents found employment nearby at the California State Fair Grounds, Libby, McNeil & Libby cannery on Alhambra and Stockton Boulevard, and the California Highway Commission at 34<sup>th</sup> and R streets.<sup>4</sup> After the Depression and World War II, many of Oak Park's middle-class families and businesses relocated to automobile suburbs farther from the city center. The migration of middle-class residents opened the door to African American residents, who were being pushed out of their previous homes in the West End by redevelopment projects and prohibited from settling in other neighborhoods by discriminatory housing covenants. As a result, Oak Park developed a new cultural identity as an African American neighborhood. The Shiloh Baptist Church relocated from downtown to Oak Park in 1957, and in 1958 George Seabron, who worked for fair

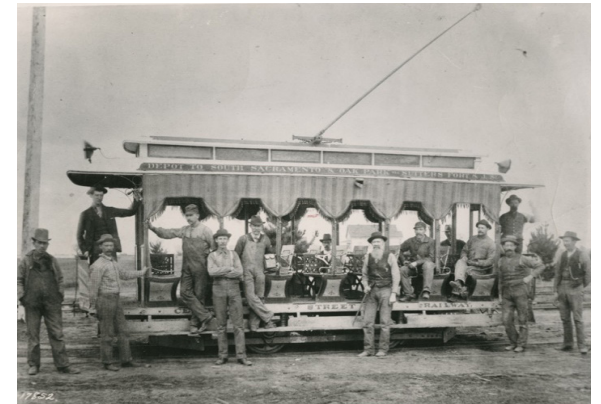


Figure 233. Central Street Railway streetcar to Oak Park (ca. 1890). Source: California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.



Figure 234. Streetcar tracks leading to the entrance to Oak Park (1910). Source: California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

1 William Burg, "A Brief History of Oak Park," *Midtown Monthly*, February 1, 2010, <http://www.midtownmonthly.net/life/a-brief-history-of-oak-park/>.

2 Niki Kangas, "Joyland," *Midtown Monthly*, 1 February 2010, <http://www.midtownmonthly.net/life/joyland/>.

3 Burg.

4 "Oak Park Historic District," (Ordinance #2007-094 and #2008-11, Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources, 2014), 2.



Figure 235. The Bank of America building at the corner of Broadway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (1944). Source: California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

housing with the NAACP and Urban League and on the campaigns of Governor Edmund “Pat” Brown and Hubert Humphrey, began selling real estate in Oak Park to Sacramento’s African American community. Other social organizations and cultural institutions followed, such as the Sacramento Observer, a weekly African American newspaper; Women’s Civic Improvement Club; and Sacramento Black Panther Party.

The end of streetcar service in 1946, combined with the construction of U.S. Highway 50 and U.S. Highway 99 in the 1950s and 1960s, cut Oak Park off from the rest of the city and exacerbated growing social issues caused by increasing levels of poverty. In 1968, the State Fair relocated to its current location at CalExpo, removing another major economic driver from the area. Social tensions erupted in confrontations between local residents and the police, first in the 1969 Oak Park Riots and again in 1970 after the shooting of a police officer resulted in the arrest of four Black Panther Party members.<sup>5</sup> After the riots, several of Oak Park’s long-standing businesses, including Steen’s Bar and Clarence Azevedo’s clothing store, closed down and never reopened. Meanwhile, urban renewal projects led to the demolition of most of Oak Park’s historic business district along 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

More recently, Oak Park has experienced a period of urban revitalization. An influx of Latino and Asian residents and an increase in white collar jobs, especially at the nearby U.C. Davis Medical Center, have shifted the neighborhood’s demographics and brought new residents and businesses to the area. The City has adopted a master plan for McClatchy Park, and redevelopment projects, such as the restoration of the Guild Theater and Lewis Building, now focus on historic preservation and infill development with the goal of creating a socially and ethnically diverse community.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Burg.

<sup>6</sup> Robin Dattel, “Central Oak Park Walking Tour, Sacramento, California,” (brochure, California State University Sacramento, Department of Geography), 5.

## Significance

The Oak Park Historic District was designated for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources by the City Preservation Commission in 2007 in Ordinance #2007-084 and revised in 2008 in Ordinance #2008-011. At the time of its designation, the district was determined to meet all three of the requirements and both of the factors for listing as defined by Sacramento City Code.

The following table provides a current evaluation of significance under the requirements and considers the factors based on the above historic district context and the 2018 historic district survey. Additionally, this historic district relates to the Railroad Context Statement of the city’s General Plan Technical Background Report.

<b>(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts</b>	
<b>(1) Requirements</b>	
<b>(a)</b>	The Oak Park Historic District meets requirement (a) for listing on the Sacramento Register, because it is a geographically definable area.
<b>(b)(i)</b>	<p>The Oak Park Historic District meets requirement (b)(i) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area that possesses “a significant concentration or continuity of buildings unified by: (A) past events or (B) aesthetically by plan or physical development.”</p> <p>The district contains a concentration of buildings that are unified by their association with Oak Park’s development as a streetcar suburb that became a uniquely self-sustaining community outside of Sacramento’s 1848 core. Oak Park was first subdivided in 1887, but the majority of development did not take place until after the neighborhood was annexed into the city of Sacramento in 1911. Commercial, civic, and cultural buildings were concentrated along the Central Street Railway streetcar line, which connected residents to downtown Sacramento. The line operated through Oak Park along Sacramento Avenue (Broadway) and turned down 35<sup>th</sup> Street to its terminus at the Joyland amusement park. These buildings, most of them constructed in brick during the 1910s and 1920s, replaced earlier wooden buildings and represented many of Oak Park’s most important businesses and institutions. The concentration of important businesses along a busy, central artery formed a second downtown with a main street like those in many California towns in the early twentieth century. The Oak Park Historic District contains the remnants of this once vital commercial and recreational corridor, as well some of the residences that were built in the neighborhood during its development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.</p>

## Period of Significance: 1887-1969

The period of significance for the Oak Park Historic District begins with the neighborhood’s subdivision in 1887 and concludes with the Oak Park Riots in 1969, after which many long-standing businesses closed and never reopened.

## Property Types from the Period of Significance

- Commercial
- Institutional/Civic
- Residential
- Recreational

## Architectural Styles from the Period of Significance

- Stick/Eastlake
- Queen Anne
- Romanesque Revival
- Colonial Revival
- Classic Box
- Neoclassical
- Italian Renaissance
- Mission
- Mediterranean Revival
- Prairie
- Craftsman
- Airplane Bungalows
- Minimal Traditional
- Commercial Styles:
  - One-Part Commercial Block
  - Two-Part Commercial Block
  - Enframed Window Wall
  - Temple Front
  - Arcaded Block

<b>(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts</b>	
<b>(1) Requirements</b>	
<b>(b)(ii)</b>	<p>The Oak Park Historic District meets requirement (b)(ii) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area “associated with an event, person, or period significant or important to city history.”</p> <p>The district is associated with the development of streetcar suburbs on previously rural, agricultural land of outlying areas outside of Sacramento’s original street grid. Oak Park became Sacramento’s first streetcar suburb when Edwin K. Alsip subdivided the land that had previously been part of William Doyle’s farm and extended the Central Street Railway streetcar line to it in 1887. The neighborhood’s first residents were attracted by the availability of affordable and plentiful land, lack of city taxes, and access to streetcar service that could transport them to their places of work downtown. By 1911, Oak Park and several other residential neighborhoods outside Sacramento had grown enough that they were formally annexed into the city. The incorporation of these new neighborhoods into Sacramento was the first formal expansion of the city’s boundaries since it was first laid out in 1848 and represented the beginning of a trend that continued throughout the rest of the century as the growing city continued to annex additional, surrounding suburbs and subdivisions.</p> <p>Additionally, Oak Park is significant for its association with the 1969 Oak Park Riots during which Sacramento police engaged in a shootout with the Sacramento chapter of the Black Panther Party. The event led to the closure of many longstanding businesses in the neighborhood and departure of residents from the area.</p>
<b>(c)</b>	<p>The Oak Park Historic District meets requirement (c) for listing on the Sacramento Register as it aligns with the goals and purposes of historic preservation in Sacramento, as well as the city’s other goals and policies. Per the Sacramento City Code, the preservation of the district enhances the “city’s economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity and its livability, marketability, and urban character.”</p>

<b>(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts</b>	
<b>(2) Factors to be considered</b>	
<b>(a)</b>	Factor (2)(a) states that “a historic district should have integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association.” The Oak Park Historic District retains sufficient integrity to meet this factor for consideration as a historic district.
<b>(b)</b>	Factor (2)(b) states that “the collective historic value of the buildings and structures in a historic district taken together may be greater than the historic value of each individual building or structure.” The Oak Park Historic District meets this factor because its buildings and structures represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose collective historic value is greater when taken as a whole.

## Character-Defining Features

The following table is based on the list of character-defining features in Ordinance #2007-094 and revised based on the 2018 historic district survey.

Element	Character of Historic District
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominately late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commercial buildings mixed with a few residential, institutional, civic, and recreational buildings</li> <li>• Residential buildings primarily located on streets radiating off Broadway to the north and south</li> </ul>
Mass & Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One- and two-story commercial, recreational, and residential buildings</li> <li>• Commercial buildings typically have storefronts on first story and residential units above</li> </ul>
Cladding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exteriors of commercial, civic/institutional, and recreational buildings predominately brick, sometimes in decorative patterns or covered in stucco</li> <li>• Exteriors of residential buildings predominately clad in wood siding, typically two- or three-lap siding or shingles</li> </ul>
Roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominately flat roofs, often with square or Mission-style parapets; few side-gabled roofs</li> <li>• Houses with prominent front-facing gables</li> <li>• Some red clay tile roofs</li> </ul>
Entries & Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recessed, central entrances facing Broadway</li> <li>• Corner or flatiron-style entries facing the intersection of cross streets</li> </ul>
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood or metal-framed storefront windows, many with multi-lite transoms</li> <li>• Punched, double-hung wood windows on upper floors</li> </ul>

Element	Character of Historic District
Ornamentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neoclassical details on some commercial buildings, including Corinthian columns, rusticated first stories, and dentils along cornice</li> <li>• Prairie details on some commercial buildings, including wide overhanging eaves and geometrical motifs</li> <li>• Queen Anne and Stick/Eastlake details on some residential buildings, including incised brackets under roof eaves; slender, turned porch posts and balusters; patterned shingles on gabled ends, and turrets</li> <li>• Craftsman details on some residential buildings, such as exposed rafter tails, wood braces, tapered square columns, and low shed dormers</li> </ul>
Property Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal or no property landscaping</li> </ul>
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angled cut of Broadway through grid, creating the opportunity for “Flatiron” style corner buildings</li> <li>• Rows of mature, evenly spaced, California fan palms planted in narrow medians down the center of Broadway</li> <li>• Rows of mature, evenly spaced, deciduous street trees planted in parking strips along north-south residential streets</li> </ul>



## Boundaries & Location

The following map shows the boundaries and location of the Oak Park Historic District.

To view the statuses of individual properties as contributing or non-contributing resources to the historic district, refer to the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources.

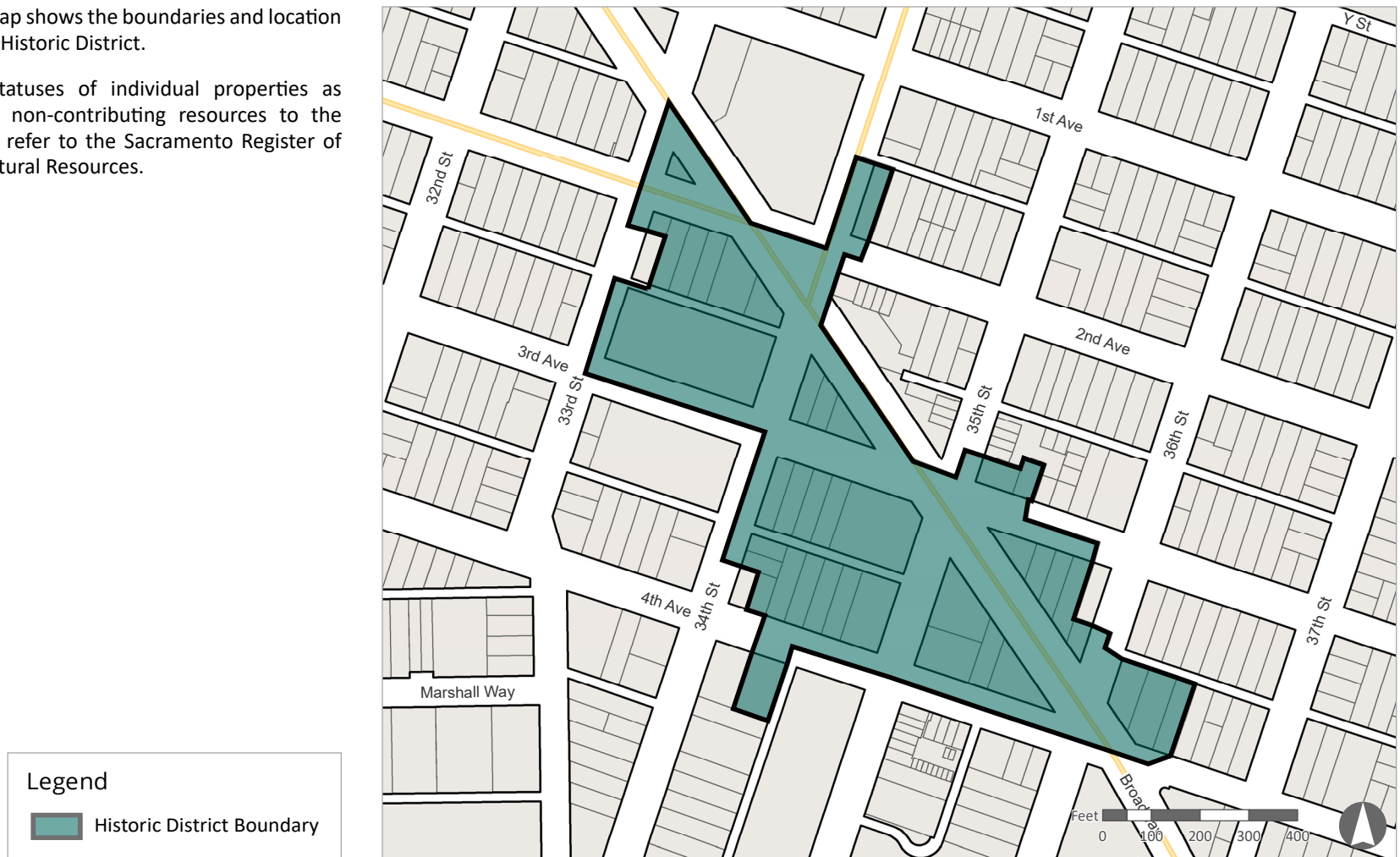


Figure 236. Map of the Oak Park Historic District. Source: City of Sacramento and Page & Turnbull, 2019.

## District-Specific Standards & Criteria

### Design Principle

*Preserve and maintain the historic character of the Oak Park Historic District as the core of Sacramento's earliest streetcar suburb outside the Central City, while encouraging compatible new development that enhances this character.*

### Rationale

The Oak Park Historic District preserves the historic commercial core and several adjacent residential properties of the Oak Park neighborhood, a streetcar suburb that developed outside Sacramento's original street grid in the late nineteenth century. The contributing buildings in the district are well-preserved and many have been continuously adapted and re-used, forming a vibrant cultural and commercial center for the surrounding neighborhood. The district has experienced an increase in recent development and reinvestment, which, along with the strong stock of historic buildings and number of vacant parcels and parking lots, present the opportunities that are likely to continue to attract new development to the area.

In addition to the Standards & Criteria Common to Sacramento's Historic Districts in Section 1, the following district-specific standards and criteria apply when planning a project in the Oak Park Historic District.

### 1. Rehabilitation of Contributing Resources

- 1.1 Make every effort to preserve, repair, and maintain any surviving metal or wood frame windows, which significantly contribute to the commercial character of the district.
  - Re-instate multi-lite metal or wood frame windows, where they have been removed, if there is adequate documentation and if feasible.
- 1.2 Avoid filling in or obstructing historic window or door openings.
- 1.3 Re-open historic window and door openings that have been filled in.
  - Use compatible new windows and door materials, types, and forms.
- 1.4 Avoid painting or applying new finishes on historically unpainted exterior masonry, particularly where historic painted signs (ghost signs) are present.
  - Consider removing paint or finishes from historically unpainted exterior masonry, using the gentlest methods possible, during exterior repairs or renovations.
  - Maintain paint on exterior masonry where likely to be the historic condition.

### 2. Additions & Accessory Structures for Contributing Resources

- 2.1 Design additions with proportions that are compatible with the primarily horizontal or box-like massing of contributing buildings in the district.
  - Place additions on secondary rear and side elevations, when possible.
  - Where rooftop additions are desired, use step backs in order to maintain the existing street façade height.
- 2.2 Use durable, high-quality materials that are compatible with the materials of adjacent contributing buildings in the district such as stone or brick.

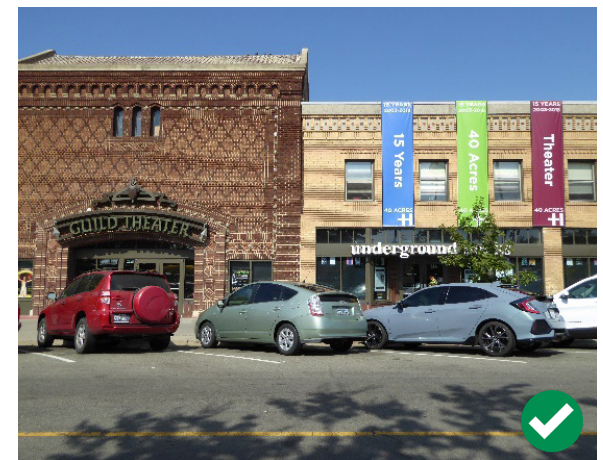


Figure 237. Commercial buildings with brick cladding are characteristic of the district.

### 3. New (Infill) Construction & Alterations to Non-Contributing Resources

- 3.1 Provide a building setback that generally aligns with and is reflective of the existing pattern of setbacks in front of contributing commercial and residential buildings in the district.
- 3.2 Design new commercial construction to be as compatible with the scale, height, massing, orientation, materials, architectural character, and pedestrian-oriented landscaping of the historic district as possible.
  - Where buildings taller than the surrounding contributing buildings are proposed, consider using step backs to maintain the existing street facade height of adjacent contributing buildings.
  - Taller heights and larger masses may be appropriate for buildings sited at street corners along Broadway.
- 3.3 Draw inspiration for the design of new commercial and mixed-use properties from contributing commercial and mixed-use properties in the district.

- 3.4 Consider corner entries that face the primary street frontages for the primary entrance of a new building that is sited at an intersection of two streets or abuts a public plaza.

### 4. Site Features, Streetscape, & Landscaping

- 4.1 Preserve, maintain, and where necessary, repair or replant historic features and plantings in the landscaped medians on Broadway.
  - If it becomes necessary to replace mature palm street trees, replace them in kind with the same species or a compatible species that will grow to a similar height, size, and form.
- 4.2 Maintain, preserve, and, where necessary, repair and restore historic lighting and signage features.



Figure 238. These new buildings reference the height, scale, materials, and flatiron form of contributing historic buildings in the district.

- 4.3 Use signage methods, materials, and proportions that are reflective of those of historic signage used on contributing properties within the district.
- 4.4 Encourage a streetscape palette, including lighting, street furniture and street tree planting pattern, that is compatible with the materials, scale, and architectural character of the district.
- 4.5 Preserve and maintain historic horse rings in their historic locations.
- 4.6 Avoid creating new curb cuts along Broadway.
  - Locate parking and service access along side streets and alleys, and use landscaping features to screen from the public right-of-way wherever possible.
- 4.7 Consider dedicating recaptured right-of-way space for plaza use, similar to 3rd Avenue and Broadway.



Figure 239. This new signage is compatible with the scale, materials, and pedestrian-orientation of the district.



Figure 240. The regular rows of palms in the medians and diagonal alignment of Broadway are a character-defining features of the district.