VIRGINIA STREET CORRIDOR
URBAN RENEWAL PLAN
AMENDMENT
PHASE I AREA
FEBRUARY, 1997

The Virginia Street Urban Renewal Plan is amended as follows:

Section 1
PROJECT HISTORY & DESCRIPTION

The Virginia Street Corridor was originally approved for urban renewal activities March 21, 1989, C.C.P. No. 163. The Site Designation was approved November 15, 1988, C.C.P. No. 164.

It is the intent of the Department of Community Development to amend the existing urban renewal plan to promote the construction of new single family homes for low to moderate income families and to offer purchase and rehabilitation assistance through low interest loans for the existing homes. This two pronged approach will serve to create a predominately owner occupied neighborhood. Under the mantle of urban renewal, the strategy would be to incorporate the existing Virginia Street Corridor Urban Renewal Plan to stimulate new and rehabilitated housing. With this amendment, the plan will allow for additional commercial redevelopment along the Niagara Street corridor. This would serve the area with a new housing thrust buttressed by the urban renewal process. This will be an incremental approach to a broader urban renewal plan for the future. All properties within this area will be inspected for compliance with the New York State Building and Fire Codes, as well as the Property Rehabilitation Standards for the plan and incorporated herein.

The Virginia Street Corridor is a major east-west traffic route located in the City of Buffalo's lower west side area. It is a predominately residential neighborhood, which has suffered a long period of disinvestment and is adjacent to the West Village Historic District and part of the Allentown Historic District,. This disinvestment has produced a condition of physical deterioration and decline, which has resulted in vacant buildings and properties promoting further blight of the area.

The area is within walking distance of Buffalo's central business district and gives visual evidence of a wide variety of architectural styles, such as Victorian, Romanesque Revival, American and Italian Palazzo. The property tax base in this area has deteriorated continually since the early 1960's, due to a proposed State arterial connection linking the Niagara section of the New York State Thruway with the Kensingtou Expressway. This concept was dropped from the planning process with the only interest being in surface parking lots to meet the increasing demands from downtown redevelopment activities.

This trend has subsided with new emphasis being placed on housing by the Lower West Side Resources and Development Corporation and the Hispanics United of Buffalo and the designation of two adjacent areas and historic districts. It is the intention of this urban renewal plan to provide new housing while rehabilitating appropriate structures to eliminate the spread of blight and to strengthen the economy of the area.

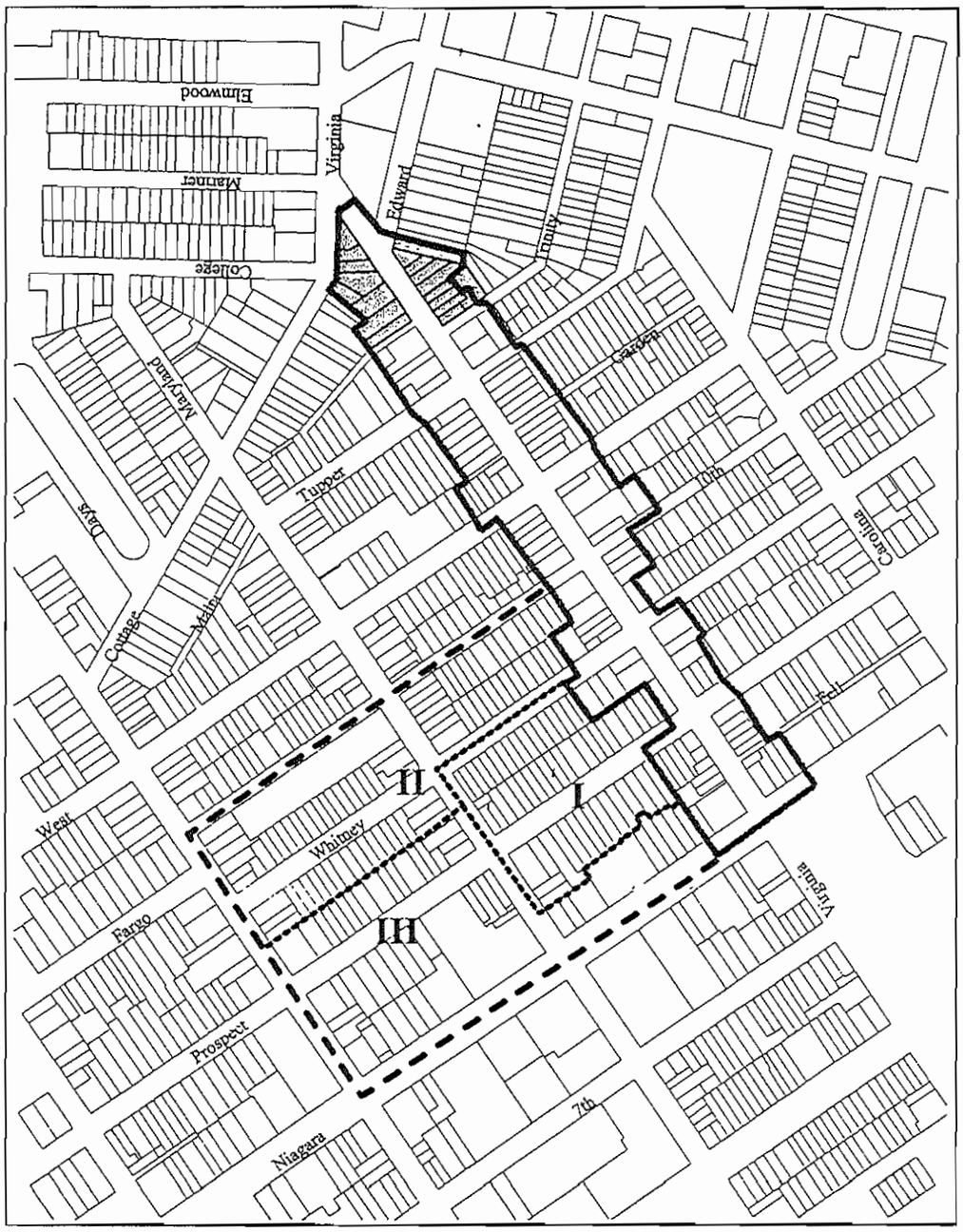
Section II
A. (No Change)
B. (NEW) PROJECT BOUNDARY- Exhibit 1
General Description
The boundaries of the project area are shown on the Project Boundary Map and are generally described as follows:

Parcels on both sides of Prospect Avenue and parcels on the west side of Whitney Place from Virginia Street on the south to Maryland Street on the north, known as Phase I; parcels on the west side of Tenth Street from Virginia Street on the south to Hudson Street on the north and parcels on the east side of Whitney Place from Virginia Street on the south to Hudson Street on the north and parcels on the west side of Whitney Place from Maryland Street on the south to Hudson Street on the north, known as Phase II; and parcels on the east side of Niagara Street from Virginia Street on the south to Hudson Street on the north and parcels on both sides of Prospect Avenue from Maryland Street on the south to Street on the north, known as Phase III
The total project area encompasses six city blocks and contains 1,084,800 square feet, 25.6 acres exclusive of street rights-of-way.
C. (No Change)

SECTION III
A1, A2 (No Change)
A3(a) (NEW) Amended Land Acquisition Map - Phase 1-Exhibit 2
B.(a)1 (NEW) Phase I Area Proposed Land Use-Exhibit 3
B. 1. (No Change)
B. (a)2 (NEW) Phase 1-New Construction Housing Review Guidelines-Exhibit 4
B. (a)2a(NEW) Phase 1-Rehabilitation-Same as Section B.2
B. 2. (No Change)
B. 3. (No Change)
B. 4. (No Change)
C. (No Change)
C. 1. (NEW) Phase 1-Development Opportunities
In the Phase 1 Area this project offers scattered sites in the neighborhood on which to construct single and double family new houses that are integrated by design into the existing, special character of the neighborhood as well as various forms of government subsidies to assist builders and home buyers. The goal of this effort is to maximize builders and general contractors involvement in providing affordable and attractive new housing lots on Maryland, Prospect, and Virginia Streets. The area proposed for disposition are indicated on the Land Disposition Map - Exhibit 5
D. 1.(a) (No Change)
D. 1.(a)1 (NEW) Phase 1 Area-Land Acquisition-Exhibit 2
D. 1.(b) (No Change)
D. 2. (No Change)
D. 3. (N0 Change)
E. (No Change)
F. (No Change)
G. (a)1 (NEW) Phase 1-New Construction Housing Review Guidelines-Exhibit 4
G. 1. (No Change)
G. 2. (No Change)
G. 3. (No Change)

EXHIBITS	Exhibit No.
Project Boundary Map - Amended	1
Land Acquisition Plan Map Amended - Phase 1	2
Proposed Land Use Map Amended - Phase 1	3
Phase 1 - New Construction Review Guidelines	4
Land Disposition Map Amended - Phase 1	5
Existing Zoning Map - Phase 1	6

Virginia St. Corridor Urban Renewal Plan
Project Location Map



Additional Site Designation 11/96
Phase I, Phase II, Phase III.

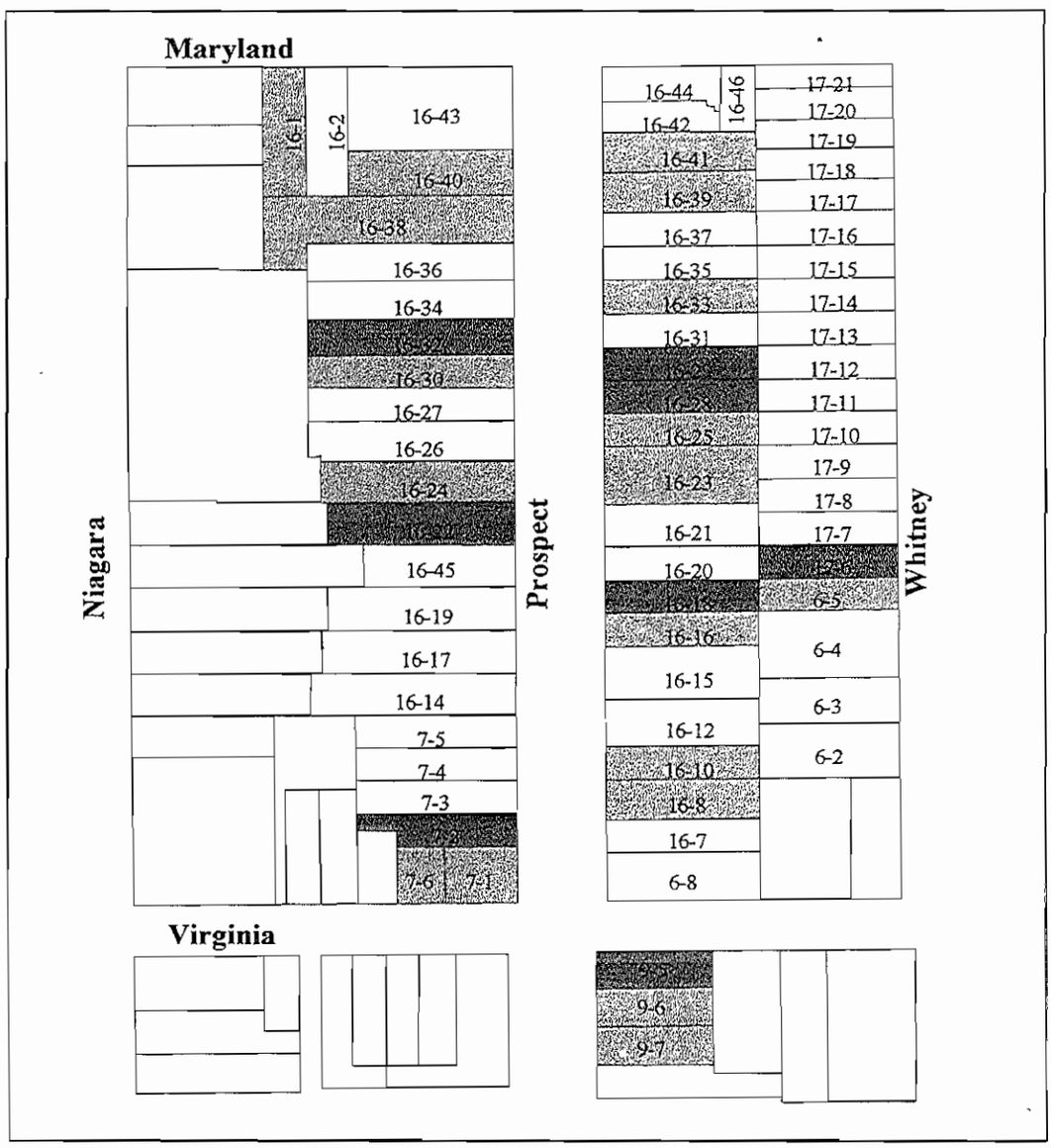
Original Boundaries

Properties Within the Allentown Preservation District

N

Exhibit 1

VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWNAL PLAN
AMENDEMENT - FEB. 1997
PHASE I AREA
LAND ACQUISITION PLAN MAP



City owned properties

Properties to be acquired

Properties to be rehabiliteated to NYS code

Exhibit 2

VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWAL PLAN AMENDMENT
PHASE 1 AREA
FEB. 1997

Property Class	Parcel Number	#	Street	Owner	Owner's Address	Front	Depth	Area	SBL Number	Assessed Value	Action	Land Use	DISPOSITION
210	6-2	158	Whitney Pl.	Judith Y. Crosby	155 Busti Avenue, #202, Buffalo	41	100	4100	1103600003018120	$53,000	CC	R	N/A
210	6-3	162	Whitney Pl.	Michael D. Hale	162 Whitney Place, Buffalo	34	100	3400	1103600003018110	$56,000	CC	R	N/A
220	6-4	166	Whitney Pl.	Martin & Santa Collado	168 Whitney Place, Buffalo	50	100	5000	1103600003016100	$29,000	CC	R	N/A
311	6-5	170	Whitney Pl.	Jennie Lascala	13199 Schutt Road, Chaffee	25	100	2500	1103600003015000	$3,800	A	R	D
210	6-8	189	Prospect	Brent & Anita Schultz	189 Prospect, Buffalo	36	100	3600	1103600003001000	$50,000	CC	R	N/A
311	7-1	192	Prospect	Urban Rehab. Group, Inc.	625 Waltham Avenue, Orlando, Florida	41	35	1435	1103600002033000	$3,700	A	R	D
311	7-2	194	Prospect	City of Buffalo URA	920 City Hall, Buffalo	25	71	1775	1103600002032000	$0	CC	R	D
220	7-3	198	Prospect	Zoraida Matos	198 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600002031000	$33,500	CC	R	N/A
220	7-4	200	Prospect	City of Buffalo	2501 City Hall, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600002030000	$0		R	D
311	7-5	202	Prospect	Antonio & Sylvia Melendez	202 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600002029000	$3,800	CC	R	N/A
311	7-6	190	Virginia St.	Urban Rehab. Group, Inc.	625 Waltham Avenue, Orlando, Florida	36	0		1103600002034000	$3,500	A	R/M/C	D
311	9-5	181	Prospect	B.U.R.A.	920 City Hall, Buffalo	29	73	2117	1103600006001000	$3,700		R/M/C	D
330	9-6	177	Prospect	Dennis P. Georgen	65 Downing St., Buffalo, NY	29	73	2117	1103600006044000	$3,700	A	R/M/C	D
411	9-7	175	Prospect	Northeastern Development Assoc.	242 Minnesota Ave., Buffalo, NY	29	73	2117	1103600006043000	$39,400	A,D,R	R/M/C	D
311	17-6	172	Whitney Pl.	City of Buffalo	2501 City Hall, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003014000	$0		R	D
220	17-7	174	Whitney Pl.	Walter M. Olszowy	69 Bielak Road, Orchard Park	25	100	2500	1103600003013100	$37,600	CC	R	N/A
280	17-8	178	Whitney Pl.	Walter M. Olszowy	69 Bielak Road, Orchard Park	25	100	2500	1103600003013200	$51,400	CC	R	N/A
210	17-9	180	Whitney Pl.	Joyce A. Swanka	180 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003012000	$11,550	CC	R	N/A
220	17-10	182	Whitney Pl.	Dom J. Alberico	182 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008024000	$20,250	CC	R	N/A
220	17-11	186	Whitney Pl.	Maria Hernandez	186 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008023000	$35,000	CC	R	N/A
210	17-12	188	Whitney Pl.	Marta Carrero	188 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008022000	$26,000	CC	R	N/A
220	17-13	190	Whitney Pl.	Frank Spagnuolo	190 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008021000	$1,800	CC	R	N/A
210	17-14	192	Whitney Pl.	Anna R. Genco	2374 Covington Creek Ct. W, Jacksonville, Fla.	25	100	2500	1102800008020000	$35,000	CC	R	N/A
220	17-15	196	Whitney Pl.	A.C. McAllister	25 Cave Street, Lockport	25	100	2500	1102800008019000	$33,800	CC	R	N/A
210	17-16	198	Whitney Pl.	Francesca Mesi	198 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1002800008018000	$12,500	CC	R	N/A
210	17-17	200	Whitney Pl.	Concetta Lamantia	200 Whitney Place, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008017000	$21,000	CC	R	N/A
220	17-18	202	Whitney Pl.	Jerome Rizzo	202 Whitney Place Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008016000	$14,650	CC	R	N/A
220	17-19	204	Whitney Pl.	Luis Lopez	204 Whitney Place, Buffalo	22	100	2200	1102800008015000	$24,900	CC	R	N/A
210	17-20	208	Whitney Pl.	Charmaine Lincoln	208 Whitney Place, Buffalo	24	100	2400	1102800008014000	$19,300	CC	R	N/A
220	17-21	210	Whitney Pl.	Anthony Patronaggio	775 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca	16	100	1600	1102800008013000	$27,000	CC	R	N/A
311	16-1	181	Maryland	Sobor Company	86 Prospect, Buffalo	32	96	3072	1103600002012000	$4,700	A	R/M/C	D
311	16-2	183	Maryland	B.N.R.C.	315 City Hall, Buffalo	32	96	3072	1103600002013000	$0		R/M/C	D
220	16-7	195	Prospect	Edward G. Mahaney	195 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003002000	$38,000	CC	R	N/A
411	16-8	197	Prospect	Terry Harding	504 Porter Avenue, Buffalo	30	100	3000	1103600003003000	$42,300	A,C,R	R	D
220	16-10	199	Prospect	Marlon Matos	199 Prospect Avenue, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003004000	$25,000	A,Rh	R	D
220	16-12	201	Prospect	Frank J. Marschiello	c/o 40 Fairchild Pl., E. Amherst	35	100	3500	1103600003005000	$34,800	CC	R	N/A

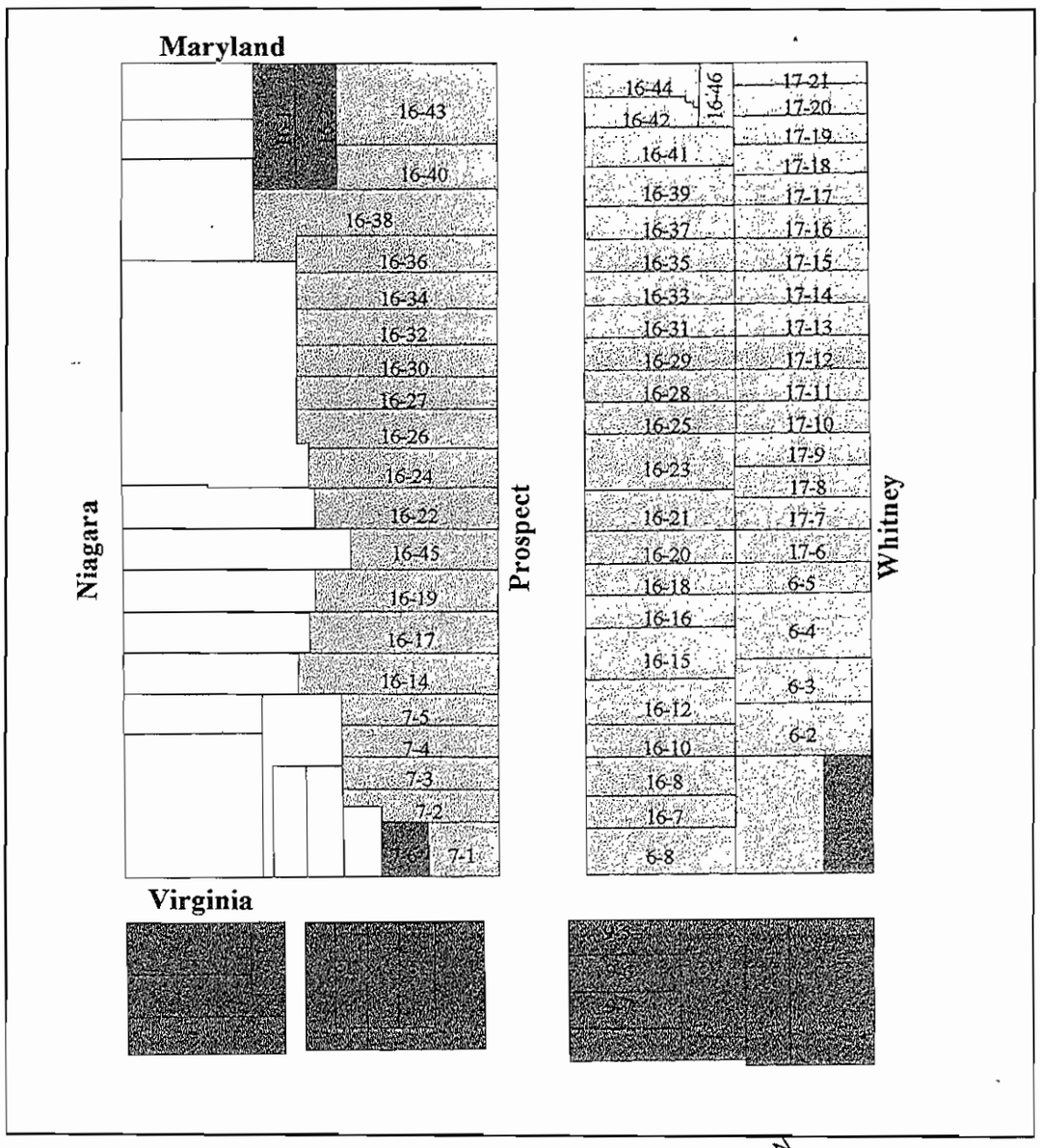
Exhibit 2a.

2/5/97

VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWAL PLAN AMENDMENT
PHASE 1 AREA
FEB. 1997

Property Class	Parcel Number	#	Street	Owner	Owner's Address	Front	Depth	Area	SBL Number	Assessed Value	Action	Land Use	DISPOSITION
210	16-14	206	Prospect	Antonio & Sylvia Melendez	202 Prospect, Buffalo	32	132	4224	1103600002028000	$31,000	CC	R	N/A
220	16-15	207	Prospect	Adeline Jamieson	207 Prospect, Buffalo	40	100	4000	1103600003006000	$29,000	CC	R	N/A
230	16-16	209	Prospect	Great Lakes Property	P.O.Box 1254, North Tonawanda	25	100	2500	1103600003007000	$34,300	A,C,R	R	D
220	16-17	210	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	32	132	4224	1103600002027000	$20,000	CC	R	N/A
311	16-18	211	Prospect	City of Buffalo	2501 City Hall, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003008000	$0		R	D
220	16-19	212	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	32	121	3872	1103600002026000	$12,000	CC	R	N/A
220	16-20	213	Prospect	Robert J. Beach	213 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1103600003009000	$33,000	CC	R	N/A
230	16-21	217	Prospect	Rose Yager	P.O. Box 301, Buffalo	32	100	3200	11036000030110000	$34,700	CC	R	N/A
311	16-22	218	Prospect	City of Buffalo	2501 City Hall, Buffalo	32	119	3808	1103600002024000	$0		R	D
311	16-23	219	Prospect	Solartherm Energy Systems	88 Coventry Road, Williamsville	41	100	4100	1103600003011000	$6,300	A	R	D
311	16-24	222	Prospect	Francis R. Randolph	191 Mackinaw Street, Buffalo	30	124	3720	1103600002023000	$5,000	A	R	D
220	16-25	223	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008001000	$10,000	A,C,R	R	H
411	16-26	224	Prospect	George Alejandro	6914 Schuyler Road, Derby	30	132	3960	1103600002022000	$54,000	CC	R	N/A
220	16-27	226	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	25	132	3300	1103600002021000	$33,300	CC	R	N/A
311	16-28	227	Prospect	B.N.R.C.	315 City Hall, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008002000	$0		R	D
311	16-29	229	Prospect	City of Buffalo	2501 City Hall, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008003000	$0		R	D
280	16-30	230	Prospect	Chase Home Mortgage Co.	4915 Independence Pkwy., Tampa, Florida	25	132	3300	1103600002020000	$49,300	A,C	R	D
220	16-31	231	Prospect	Ly Tam Minh & Kinh Thi Pham	231 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008004000	$34,800	CC	R	N/A
311	16-32	232	Prospect	B.N.R.C.	315 City Hall, Buffalo	27	132	3564	1103600002019000	$0		R	D
230	16-33	233	Prospect	Robert Marranto	1002 Forest Edge Drive, E. Amherst	25	100	2500	1102800008005000	$34,600	A,Rh	R	D
210	16-34	234	Prospect	Carol Palitano	200 West Tupper Street, Buffalo	28	132	3696	1103600002018000	$34,600	CC	R	N/A
311	16-35	237	Prospect	Patricia Muscarella	241 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	1102800008006000	$3,800	CC	R	N/A
418	16-36	238	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	28	132	3696	1103600002017000	$36,000	CC	R	N/A
220	16-37	241	Prospect	Patricia Muscarella	241 Prospect, Buffalo	25	100	2500	11028100008007000	$21,500	CC	R	N/A
311	16-38	242	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	35	132	4620	1103600002016000	$8,200	A	R	D
220	16-39	243	Prospect	Frank P. Bellanti	31 Ava Lane, Amherst	30	100	3000	1102800008008000	$31,000	A,C,R	R	D
311	16-40	244	Prospect	Estate of Scott J. Derrett	244 Prospect Avenue, Buffalo	35	100	3500	1003600002015000	$5,300	A	R	D
311	16-41	245	Prospect	Michele Murphy/Neil Epstein	80 Greengage Street, E. Amherst	30	100	3000	1102800008009000	$6,500	A	R	D
220	16-42	247	Prospect	Michele Murphy/Neil Epstein	80 Greengage Street, E. Amherst	24	0		1102800008010000	$36,200	CC	R	N/A
311	16-43	248	Prospect	B.N.R.C.	315 City Hall, Buffalo	61	100	6100	1103600002014000	$0		R	D
482	16-44	249	Prospect	Rose Caputo	209 Maryland, Buffalo	26	0		1102800008011000	$66,300	CC	R	N/A
230	16-45	216	Prospect	Thomas J. Kelley	286 Starin Avenue, Buffalo	32	93	2976	110362000025000	$39,000	CC	R	N/A
220	16-46	215	Maryland	Kathleen M. Caputo	209 Maryland, Buffalo	25	50	1250	11028000008012000	$21,500	CC	R	N/A
	Action Codes:			**Disposition Codes**	**Land Use Codes**								
	A = Acquire			D = Dispose	R = Residential								
	C = Demolition			H = Hold	M = Mixed Use								
	R = Relocation				C = Commercial								
	Rh = Rehabilitation												
	CC = Code Compliance												

VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWNAL PLAN
AMENDEMENT - FEB. 1997
PHASE I AREA
PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN MAP



Residential Area

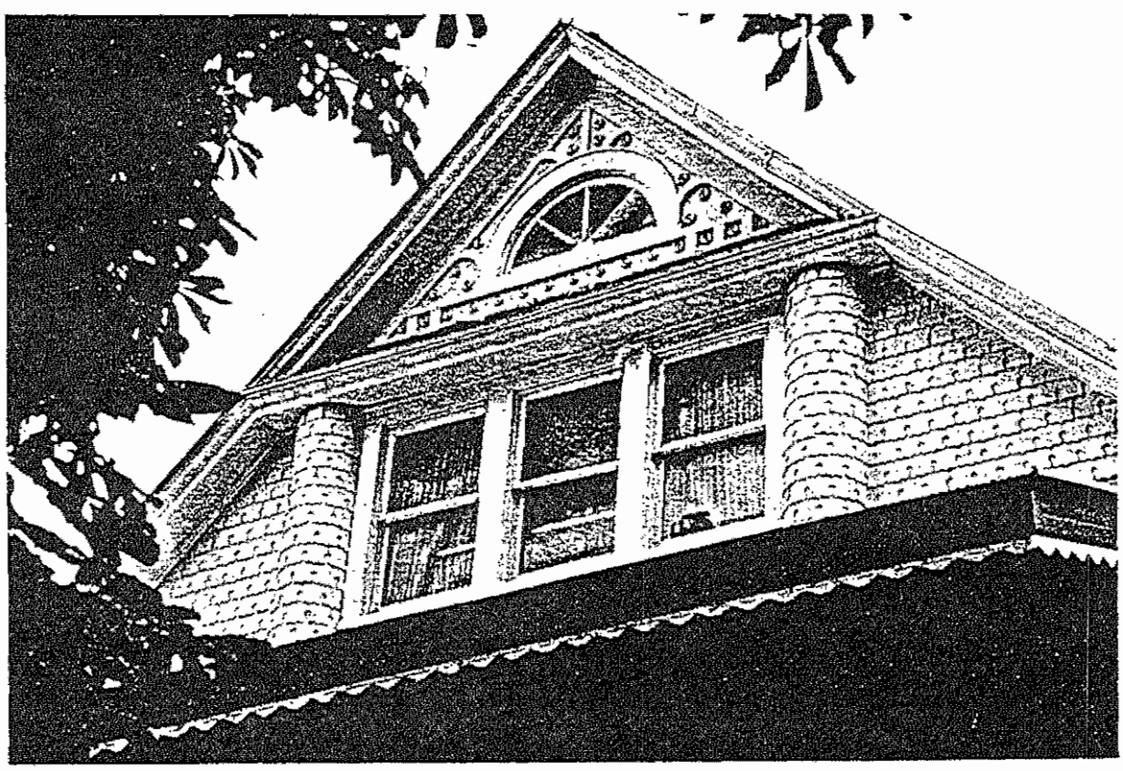
Residential /Mixed Use/ Commercial

N

Exhibit 3

The Lower West Side Neighborhood Stabilization Demonstration Project

Housing Design Review Guidelines



Mayor Anthony M. Masiello's
Housing Design Advisory Board

Exhibit 4

January 1997

The Lower West Side Neighborhood Stabilization Demonstration Project: Housing Design Review Guidelines is produced by The Urban Design Project, School of Architecture and Planning, at the State University of New York at Buffalo in cooperation with the City of Buffalo Housing Design Advisory Board and the Department of Community Development. It is part of the Urban Design Project's continuing "service learning" initiative with the City of Buffalo.

The Lower West Side Neighborhood
Stabilization Demonstration Project

Housing Design Review Guidelines

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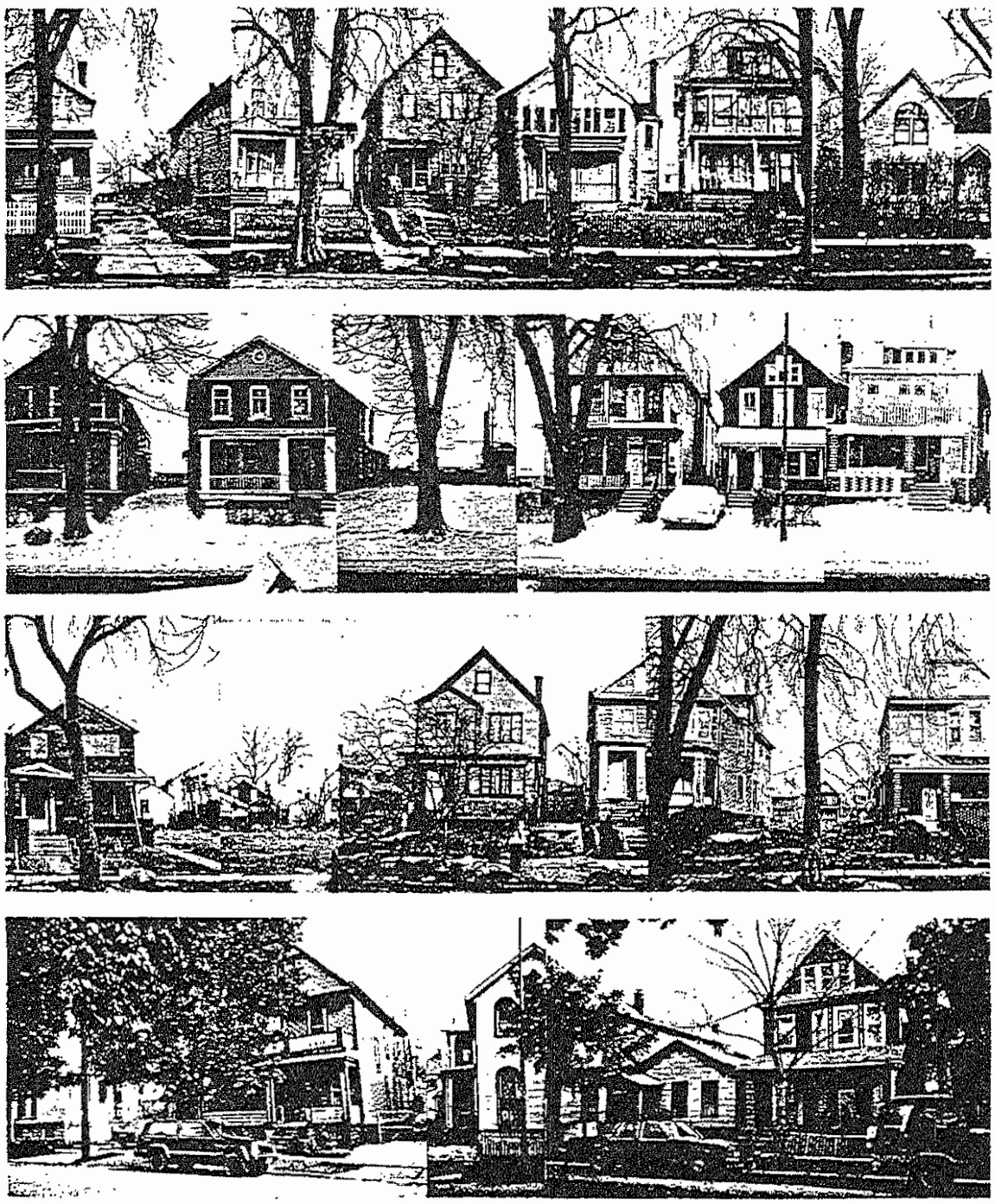


There is a good stock of housing in the Lower West Side with some problems that can be addressed by programs of rehabilitation, new infill housing, and improved landscape and street tree installations. In some areas in the community there is an uneven streetscape (some places with street trees and some without); irregular housing elevations with one, two, and two and one-half story heights; and most areas with no off-street parking provisions.

Introduction and Project Overview

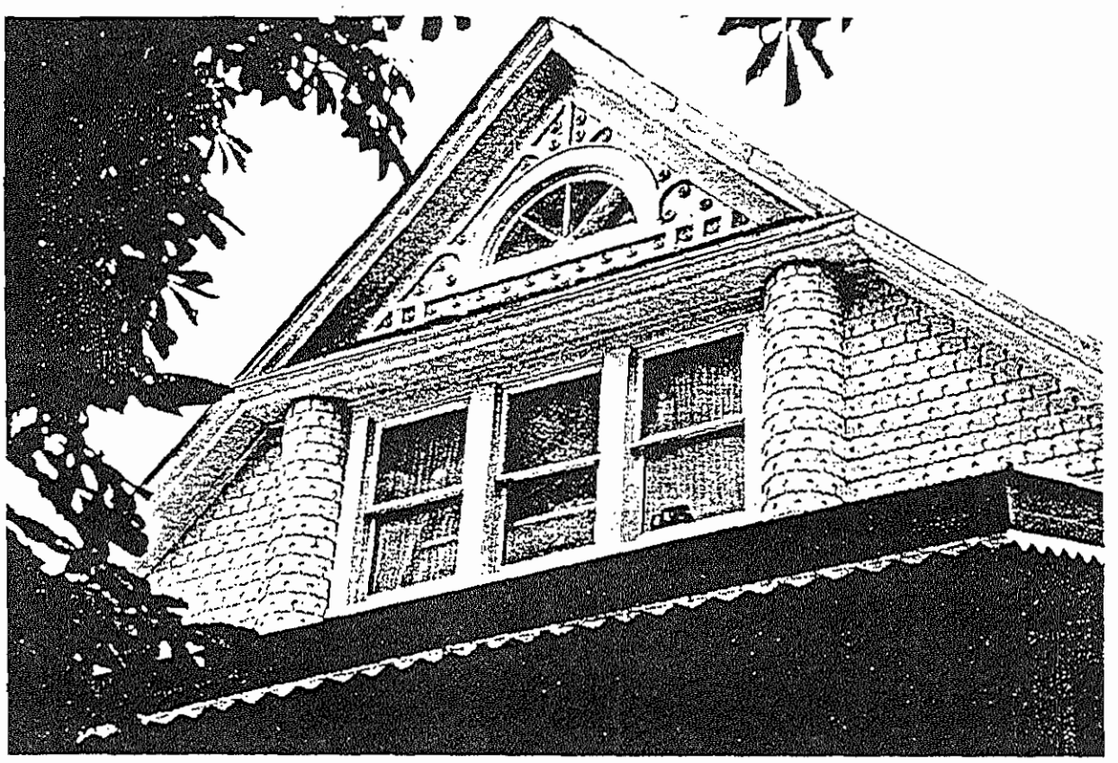
Making Good Neighborhoods

Making good neighborhoods is not a simple process, but is essential to good city living. The Lower West Side Neighborhood Stabilization Demonstration Project is intended to become an example of how to bring professional expertise and community values to the process of neighborhood improvement. In 1994 *The Lower West Side Strategies for Neighborhood and Community Development* was published as an initial step in this process. The strategy document was subsequently adopted by the City Planning Board and now serves as a guide for city and community action. It presents a community consensus around three broad goals for the Lower West Side: The establishment of the area as a gateway; the revitalization of Niagara Street as a commercial corridor; and the stabilization of the surrounding neighborhoods. The goals are about making the Lower West Side a really good place to live.

As part of the continuing process of making The Lower West Side and other neighborhoods in the city great places to live, Mayor Anthony Masiello has charged a newly created Housing Design Advisory Board with the development of new housing guidelines for Buffalo's urban neighborhoods and with the development of a process of professional and community review. Toward that end, the Board has been working with city staff, the Common Council, and community members on a demonstration project intended to develop a first draft of the standards in a manner consistent with the character of a specific neighborhood. They also plan to implement such standards as part of a larger strategy of neighborhood stabilization in the Lower West Side. As one member of the Board stated, "people buy neighborhoods -- they do not just buy houses."

> *The Lower West Side has the potential to be one of the healthiest and most diverse neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo. It is strategically located between the Peace Bridge, the foot of Main Street, and the downtown. It has a good stock of affordable housing and the potential for an even broader base of middle as well as upper income housing. It has a base of commercial retail service establishments on Niagara Street which could be more concentrated, delivering comprehensive neighborhood services in the area south of Porter Avenue, and more community wide commercial services north of the Virginia/ Carolina interchange of the Thruway. Finally, there are several strong block clubs, community service organizations, and concerned business establishments that form the nucleus of the community constituency. The Lower West Side is ready to be a great place to live and a great gateway to Buffalo.*
>
> From the preface to *The Lower West Side: Strategies for Community and Neighborhood Development*, 1994.

The text and diagrams to follow: 1) briefly describe the Lower West Side and specifically a demonstration site for housing stabilization on the 200 block of Prospect Avenue, 2) outline current activities intended to further establish the area as a good place to live, 3) define ten key design patterns for housing in the neighborhoods of the Lower West Side that are consistent with its good stock of existing housing, and 4) outline a process of review for both the design standards and responses to builder proposals to provide housing consistent with the guidelines.



Site Description

The Lower West Side

The Lower West Side has historically served as a gateway to the City of Buffalo. It was the initial destination for many Europeans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and currently functions as a primary point of entry for immigrants from Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Its main thoroughfare – Niagara Street – was part of Ellicott's original radial plan for the city, and has long been a portal to downtown Buffalo, as well as a vital link to the Peace Bridge and Canada.

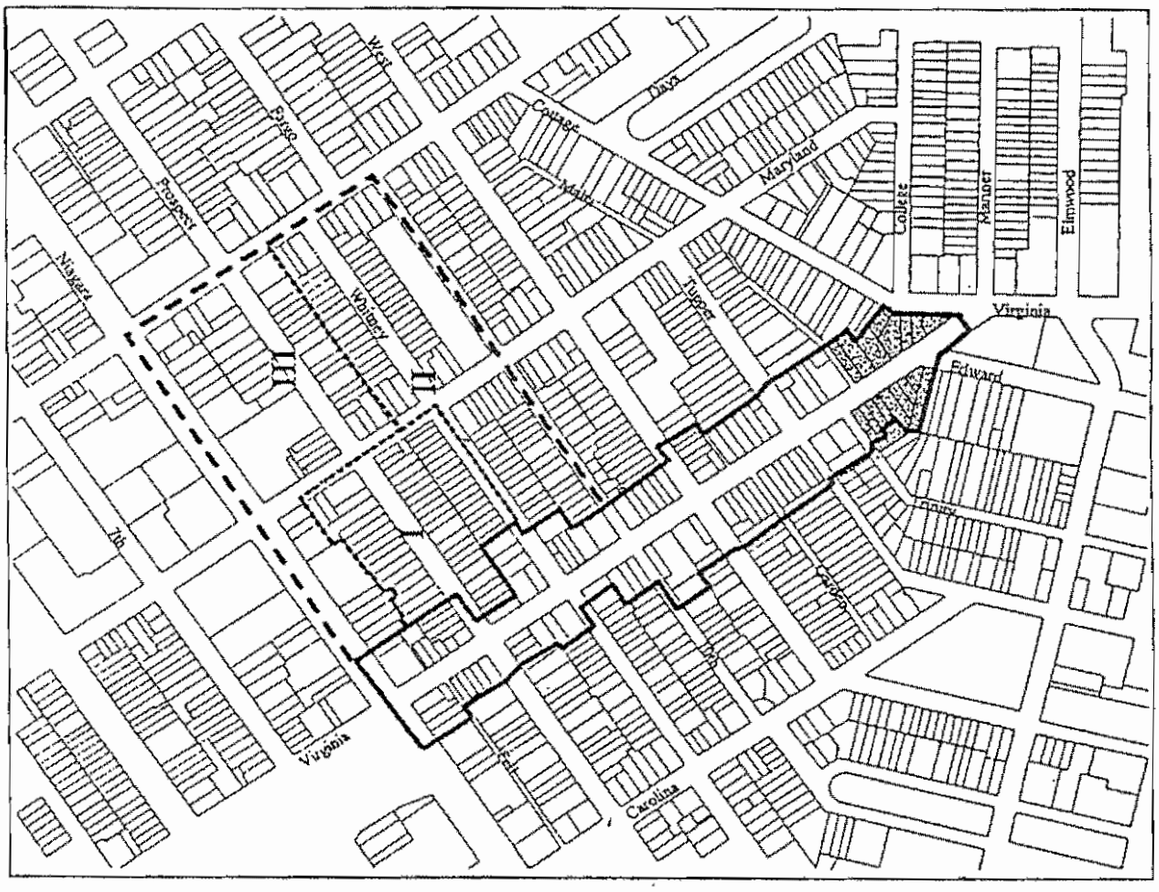
The increasing importance of the region's connection with Canada has given the Lower West Side and its role as an international gateway added significance. As plans for expansion at the Peace Bridge proceed, and the desire to create a vibrant downtown neighborhood gains momentum, it is clear that the city needs a healthy Lower West Side. And, as the poverty and distress on the Lower West Side deepens, it is clear that the neighborhood needs the support of the surrounding community.

Taken from *The Lower West Side: Strategies for Community and Neighborhood Development*

The Lower West Side

For purposes of these guidelines, the Lower West Side has been defined as the area south of Porter Avenue, bounded by Allentown, downtown, and the waterfront. According to the 1990 Census, 12,143 persons reside in this neighborhood, down more than fifty percent from its peak of 26,445 in 1940. Most of the population loss in the community can be attributed to two factors: a decline in household size, which went from four persons per household in 1940 to two and four-tenths in 1990; and a loss of housing, which decreased from 6,744 year-round units in 1940 to 6,024 in 1990.

The Urban Renewal Site Designation



Additional Site Designation 11/96
Phase I, Phase II, Phase III.

Original Boundaries

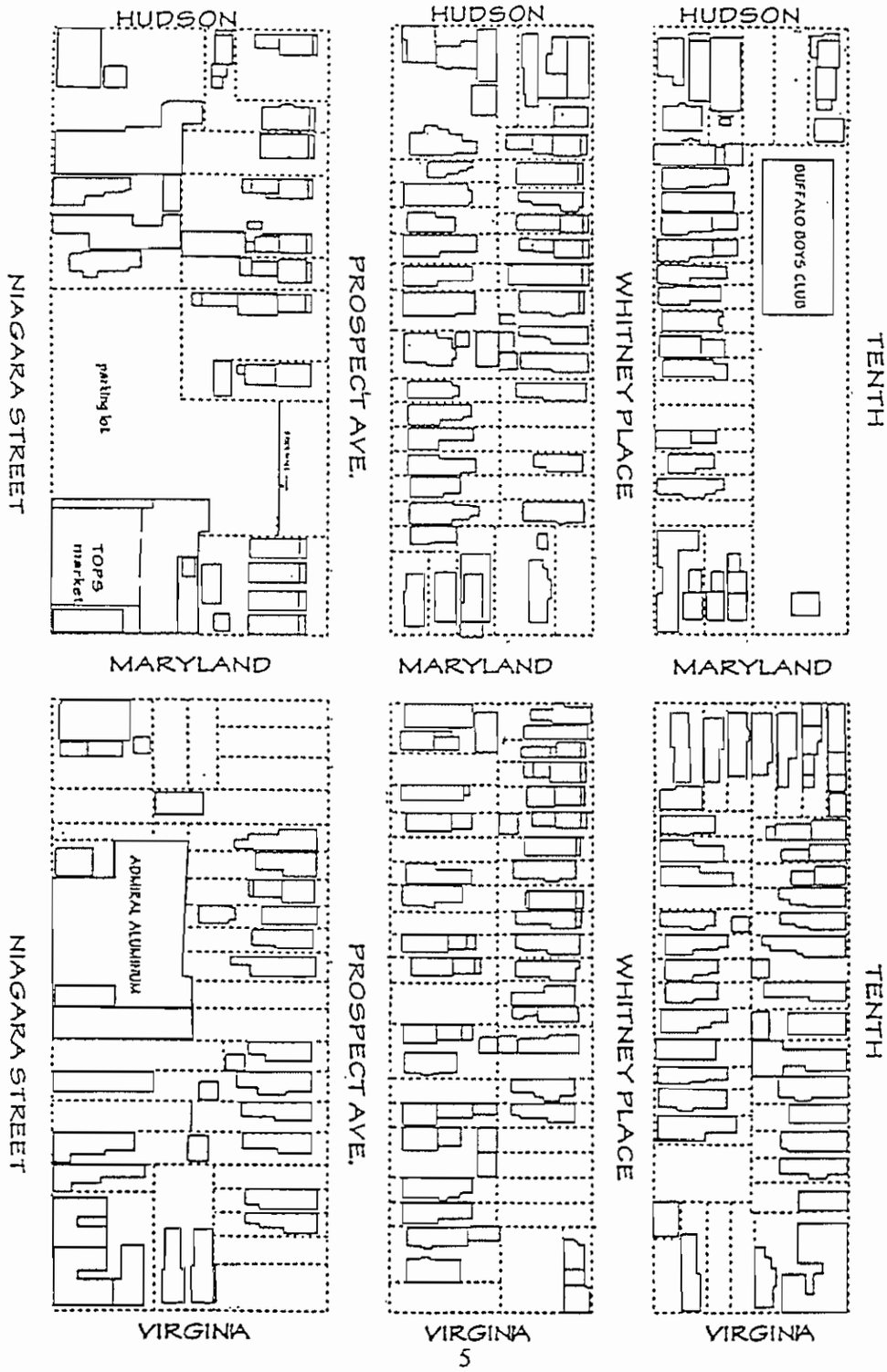
Properties Within the Allentown Preservation District

N

The proposed revision to the Urban Renewal Site Designation for the Virginia Street Urban Renewal Plan.

In preparing for a neighborhood stabilization demonstration project on Prospect Avenue, the community and city asked for and received approval from the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency to designate the above extension to the urban renewal plan for the Virginia Street Corridor.

The Urban Renewal Site Designation: Phase I Context

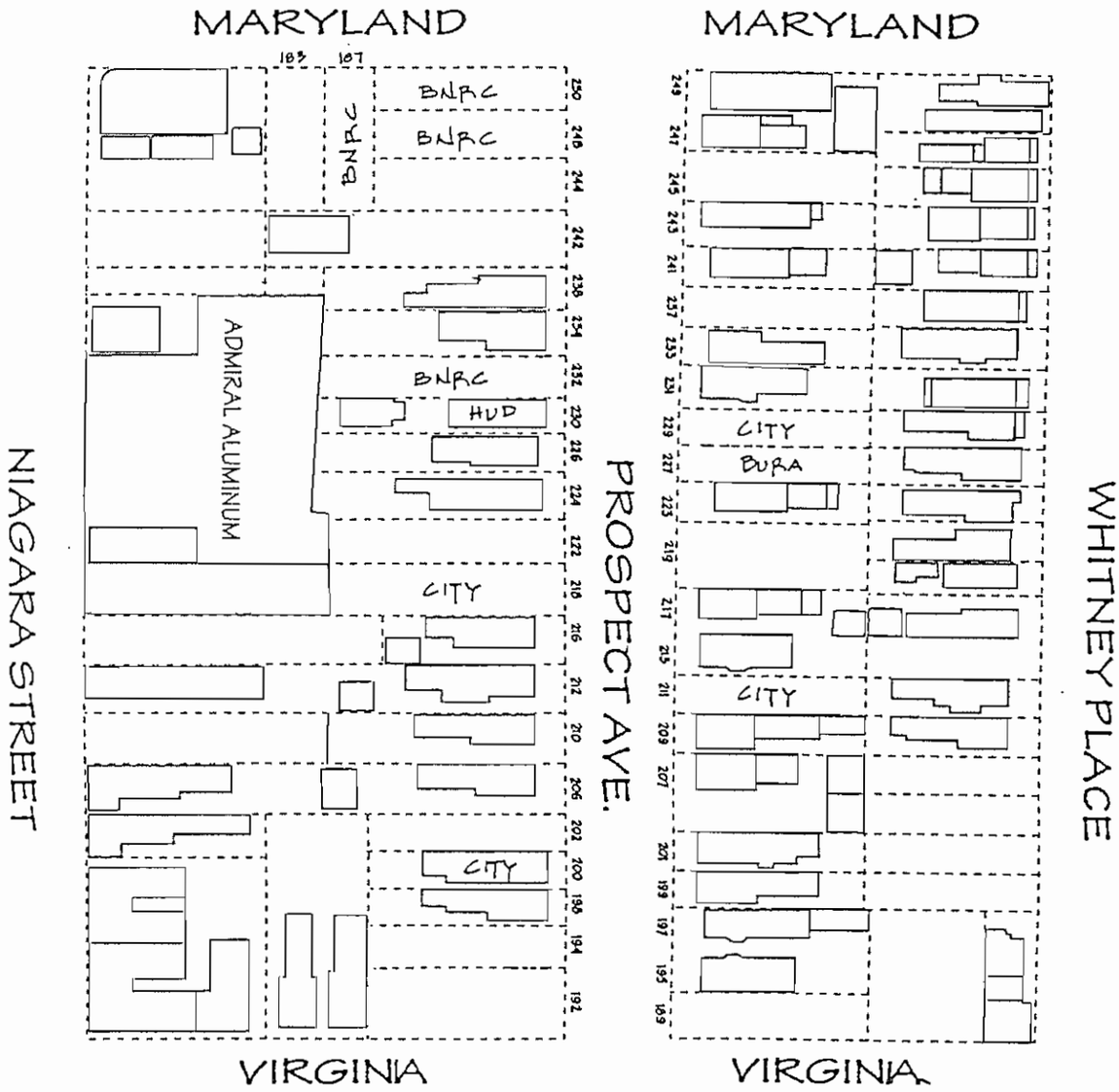


The 200 Block of Prospect

Current Site Control - 200 Block of Prospect				
Address West Side/ Prospect Avenue	**Site Condition**	**Ownership**	**Size**	**Notes**
194 Prospect	vacant lot	BURA	25x100	
200 Prospect	2 family	City	25x100	Rehab
218 Prospect	vacant lot	City	30x100	
230 Prospect	3 family	being assigned to HUD	25x132	Review for Rehab Potential
232 Prospect	vacant lot	BNRC	25x100	
248 Prospect	vacant lot	BNRC	35x80	
250 Prospect	vacant lot	BNRC	30x80	
187 Maryland	vacant lot	BNRC	30x90	
East Side/ Prospect Avenue				
211 Prospect	vacant lot	City	25x100	
227 Prospect	vacant lot	BURA	30x100	
229 Prospect	vacant lot	City	25x100	

Eleven parcels in the demonstration block are currently owned by the City, the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency, The Buffalo Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation, or the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. Four additional sites on the block are a full two years in arrears in their taxes with an anticipated "in rem" tax sale next year. Still further parcels are likely to be available in the area based on private ownership sales, and the availability of both City and HUD owned property.

There are 40 parcels in the existing layout of the 200 block of Prospect. The proposal is to reduce the density by approximately 25% combining lots where they are under 30 feet wide with neighboring lots making side yards, and shared drive access to off-street parking.



The two hundred block of Prospect Avenue between Maryland and Virginia.

General Attributes of Lower West Side Housing

1. Density - lot sizes/ street frontage variation. The majority of housing in the site area is two or two and one-half stories, with twenty-five to fifty foot frontage, and ten foot setbacks from the front property line.

2. Mixed new and old housing. Some new infill housing is in evidence in the Lower West Side.

3. Continuous sidewalks and streetscape amenities. Most of the Lower West Side has a six foot landscape median separating the street from the sidewalk. In some instances the sidewalks are in poor repair and the street trees are missing in the median.

4. Landscape. Many homes have one tree in the front yard as well as the street trees maintained by the city. Front yards are otherwise minimally landscaped with simple lawns and some foundation planting. Several homes have modest wood slat, chain link, or hedge fencing in front, usually not more than about three feet in height.

5. Porches. The majority of porches tend to cover the full front of the house and are useable. In two family houses porches are available in the front of the house on both stories

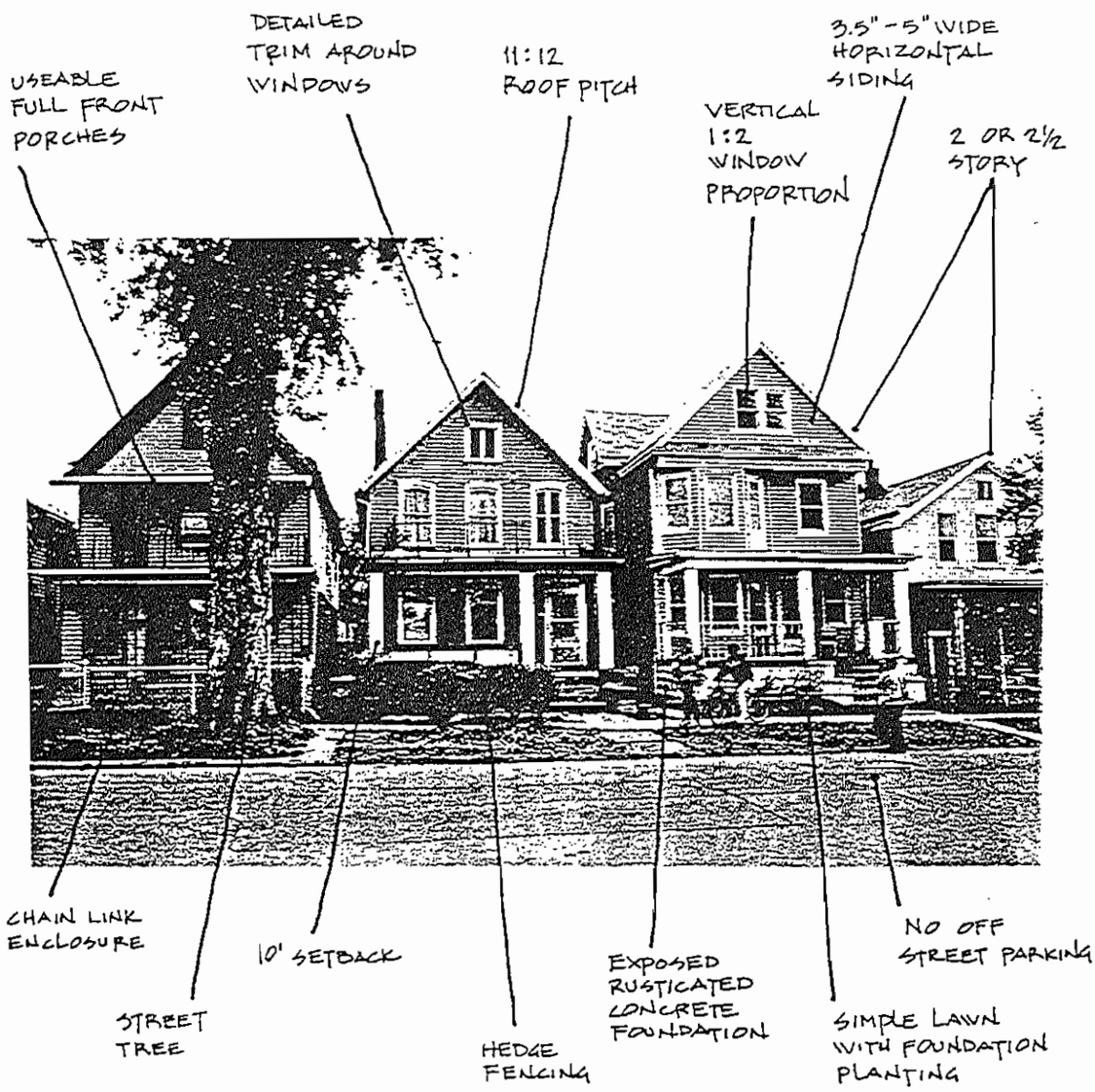
5. Materials. The majority of homes are wood frame construction, the rest are brick. Siding tends to be horizontal with typically 4" wide wood boards -- there is some vinyl siding.

6. Garages. The majority of homes do not have off-street parking and this is seen as a major disadvantage.

7. Roof pitches and elevation elements. Lower West Side housing has a roof slope range between 8:12 and 11:12 for two story homes and between 9:12 and 11:12 for two and one-half story homes. Hip roof homes tend to have roof pitches at a ratio of 7:12.

8. Window proportions. The majority of homes use vertical double hung windows with proportions of 1:2.

9. Details. Most housing in the area employ windows trim, use open porch enclosures, use decorative details on fascia board ends, have exposed and rusticated concrete foundations, and they use detailed column capitals and bases with columns sized in scale with porch and porch roof details.



Some of the general attributes of Lower West Side

A few of the more recent "new builds" in the Lower West Side were built without the benefit of simple guidelines. They do not provide full or useful front porches, some turn their entrances to side yards and not to the street, and still others adopt roof pitches and details that are inconsistent with the general character of the street.

This home demonstrates most of the characteristics of housing in the Lower West Side that may best suit the needs of future residents and be consistent with the neighborhood character. Note the full porch; details in the door, porch railing, and window treatment; the off street parking; the roof slope; and, the landscape treatments.

To Make A Good Neighborhood

Overview of Current Actions

A number of actions are being taken to implement the Lower West Side strategy document enclosed with this draft set of guidelines. For example, new neighborhood commercial services are being planned for the immediately adjacent blocks on Niagara Street including a new or renovated super market and related commercial offerings. The new country market is now open on Niagara, and there is a new Rite Aide at the corner of Virginia and Niagara. New facade improvement loans are available for merchants and businesses on Niagara, and the site designation as an Federal Empowerment Community has established some business incubation opportunities. Niagara Street has had a new overlay (road resurfacing) on the street and sidewalks have been recently repaired. Some new street trees are in.

A "safe streets" proposal is also under review by City staff, the Common Council, and the Lower West Side community. The work on safe streets here is modeled after work in Dayton, Ohio's Five Oaks community where a series of adjustments to street patterns and other crime prevention through environmental design activities reduced violent crime by fifty percent and non violent crime by twenty-four percent. Internal traffic was reduced by two-thirds, and accidents by forty percent. All of this helped to significantly increase property values.

Thus far in the development of a safe streets program for the Lower West Side there was a community workshop held in March 1996 followed by technical explorations of fire, police, street and sanitation access requirements in the community. The Mayor and Common Council Members will soon be sponsoring a community review of draft proposals to help develop a revised approach that will be responsive to community concerns.

There has also been a series of comprehensive code inspections in the residential areas in and around the site area with some properties being brought into compliance while others are made available for development through tax foreclosure "in-rem" sales, HUD foreclosures, demolitions, and City acquisition. Still other opportunities for home ownership or home improvement assistance are available through the work of Hispanics United for Buffalo and through the Lower West Side Resource and Development Corporation.

Draft Patterns

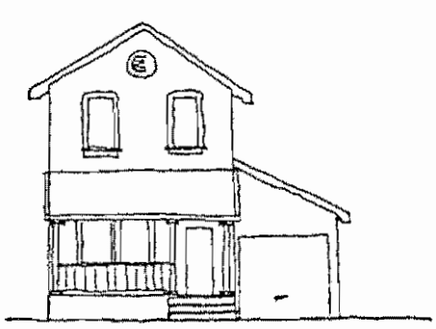
Making a good neighborhood also depends on establishing criteria for design development that will assure consistency and quality in neighborhood design. The draft patterns provided herein were based on work by the Housing Design Advisory Board and the Urban Design Project at the University at Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning. The work involved a review of: 1) twelve other cities that instituted housing design review procedures; 2) the planning and design literature on design review; and, 3) the current conditions of housing in the Lower West Side. There was a serious intent to provide simple and very specific guides which are related to conditions in the Lower West Side, and which are testable in design review. Simplicity is seen as critical to keep the request for proposal process manageable and to insure interest by the potential builder/ developer community.

It is anticipated that housing patterns need to be modified to fit the unique character of each neighborhood. As such, the patterns developed for this neighborhood would need to be modified for application in other areas of the city.

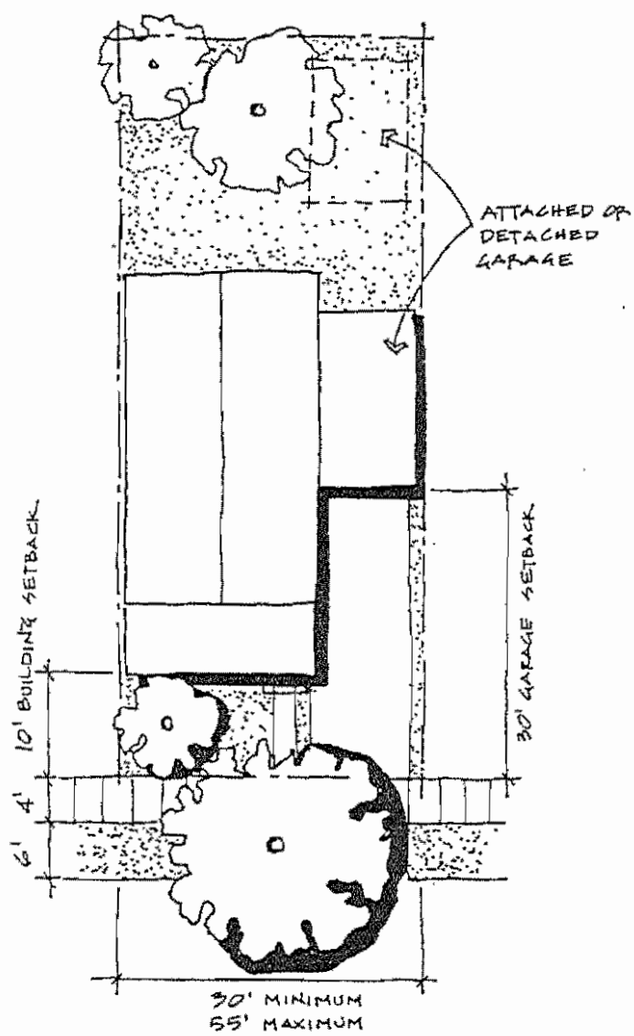
Ten Key Design Patterns
for the Neighborhoods in the Lower West Side

1. An Urban Density

Housing in the City should offer something not available in competitive suburban markets. Both density and pedestrian convenience are specifically part of the urban experience. Approaches to achieving more urban experiences can also allow for more generous lot sizes, enabling as much as a twenty five percent reduction in density on any given block. In this fashion, a twenty five foot lot can be used to provide side lots and off street parking to adjacent property or combined to allow for two lots with a minimum of thirty feet each. The resulting sub-division provides for a variety of lot sizes but still sustains a pattern consistent with the rest of the housing in the Lower West Side. This new pattern also enables more off-street parking, garages, and the occasional side yard. In the Lower West Side lot sizes vary from twenty five feet to over fifty feet of frontage. In design tests by the Housing Design Advisory Board it was determined that a marketable infill house could be built on a lot as narrow as thirty foot. Combining a twenty-five and a thirty foot lot establishes a maximum new build lot size of fifty-five feet.

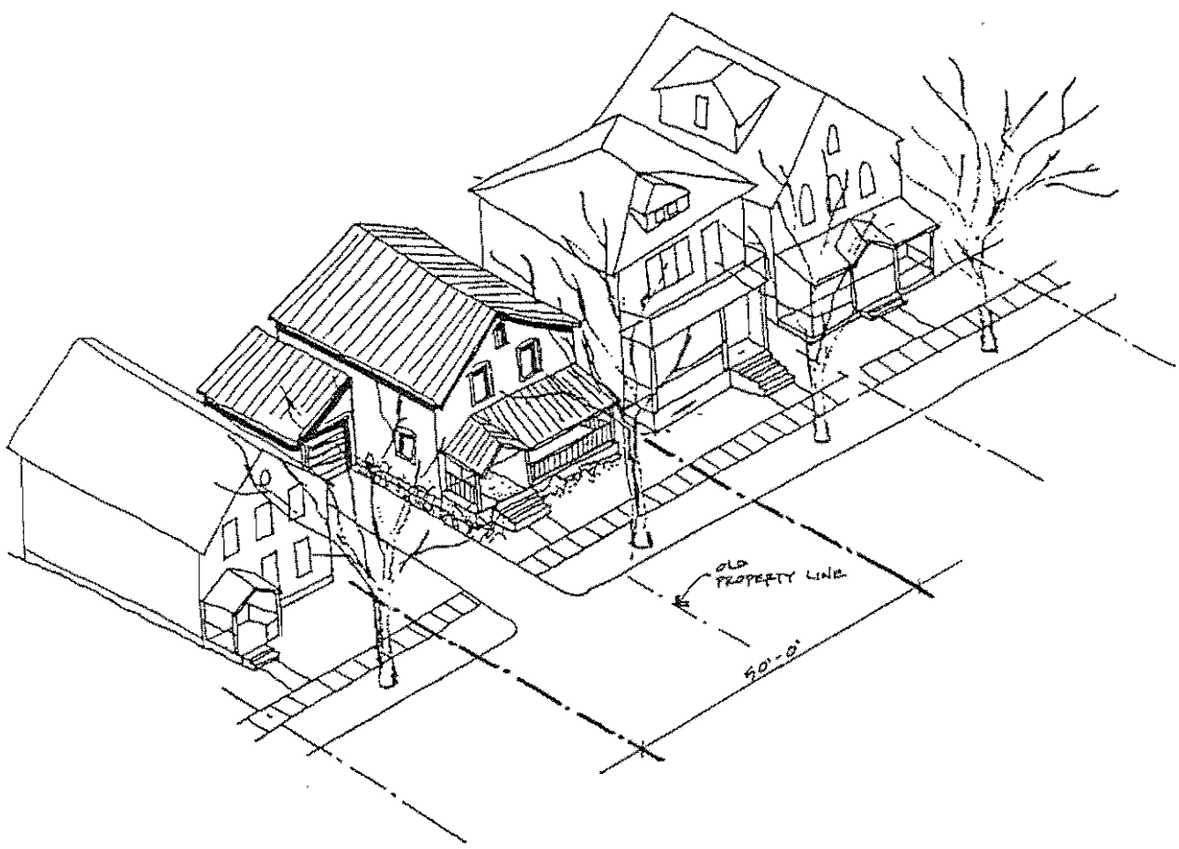


ELEVATION



SITE PLAN

Therefore, provide housing with a two story minimum height, a thirty foot minimum frontage, and the standard ten foot housing set back.



A reduction in the overall density of the neighborhood can be achieved while sustaining the urban pattern. When vacant twenty-five foot lots are isolated between two existing homes, they can be divided between them creating opportunities for off-street parking and garages as well as side yards. Two such lots together make a single building lot.

2. A Mix Of Rehabilitation and New Construction

The Lower West Side has a large stock of deteriorating buildings, many of which can and should be rehabilitated while still others need to be demolished. The opportunity in the demonstration project is to mix the rehabilitation effort with new infill construction on vacant lots. The challenge is to develop the mix in a manner that retains the character of the neighborhood, sustains an urban density, provides more off street parking, provides some new side yards on lots too small to support new infill housing, and concurrently, upgrades the physical condition of the entire community.

Therefore, mix rehabilitation opportunities and new construction whenever possible, sustaining the neighborhood's urban density and connecting the neighborhood to its past even while it looks forward.

The above photograph is an example of new infill and rehabilitation sites available in the Lower West Side.

The top elevation shows an infill site, the second strip show how inappropriate it is to infill with reduced building heights and changes in the orientation of the roof pitch. The bottom shows a new infill house which is both modern and fits with the character of existing homes.

3. Continuous Sidewalk / Streetscape Amenities

The sidewalk, street trees, street lamps, and cross walks help to establish the pedestrian quality needed to make a good urban neighborhood. In the Lower West Side neighborhoods, residents are walking distance from downtown and the commercial strip on Niagara Street. The car is simply less important if the neighborhood supports the pedestrian paths. Making good pedestrian experiences requires a pedestrian system with six key characteristics. The sidewalks need to be:

1. **Continuous** - where the sidewalk ends the community stops.

2. **Well defined** - the pedestrian zone must be a clearly defined and bounded pathway.

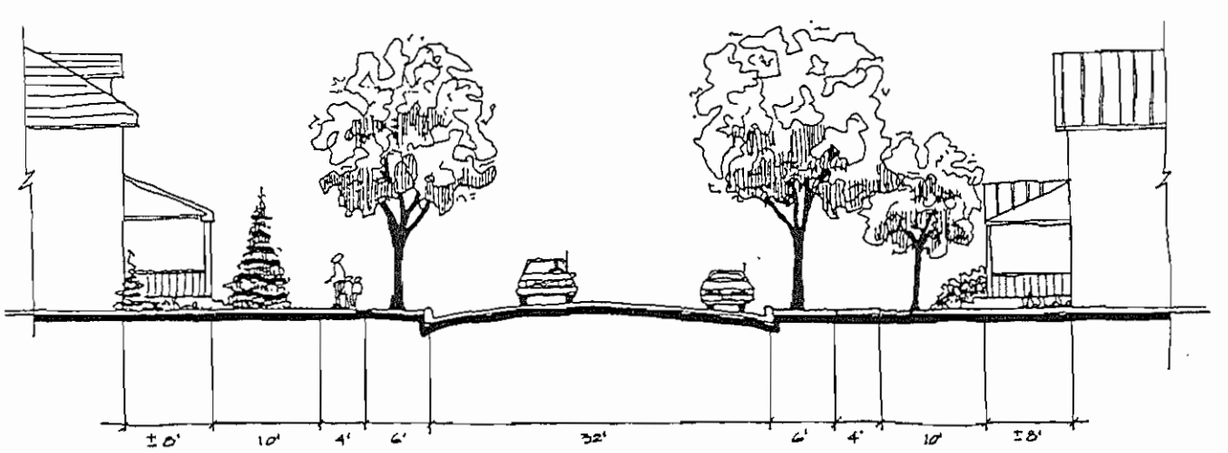
3. **Organized to be unobstructed** - public spaces must be able to accommodate many kinds of objects other than pedestrians: must be logical places for bus benches, light poles, traffic signs, etc.

4. **Safe from vehicular encroachment** - pedestrians should not feel threatened by passing traffic, either physically or psychologically; pedestrian path should be buffered from the street by distance and landscape.

5. **Rhythmic** - must relate to surrounding architectural features or landscaping: pathways are not static corridors but are dynamic rhythmic conveyors of pedestrians.

6. **Accessible** - giving efficient access to places; sidewalk to house, car to house, house to car and sidewalk, a walk to the store, a walk downtown, a walk to work.

Adapted from Mike Greenburg's
The Poetics of Cities: Designing Neighborhoods That Work



The section above suggests that the pedestrian environment would be further enhanced by planting in the front yards which create a pedestrian space in front of every house.

Therefore, pay close attention to the pedestrian environment. Make it a central part of why people choose to live in the City.

The photo above illustrates that there are many mature street trees in the Lower West Side to use as part of the development of a great pedestrian environment. Care should be taken during construction to preserve every tree possible on the block.

4. Usable Front Porches

Many of the doubles and singles in the Lower West Side have usable front porches. Porches encourage interaction between neighbors, put "eyes on the street," and introduce a distinctly urban and human scale to the community. A number of characteristics make the porch usable and consistent with the character of the Lower West Side neighborhoods:

1. Two family homes should have two porches, one for each level of living. Each porch should use similar materials and details where appropriate. For example, the roofing material of the house and the porch or porches should be comparable.

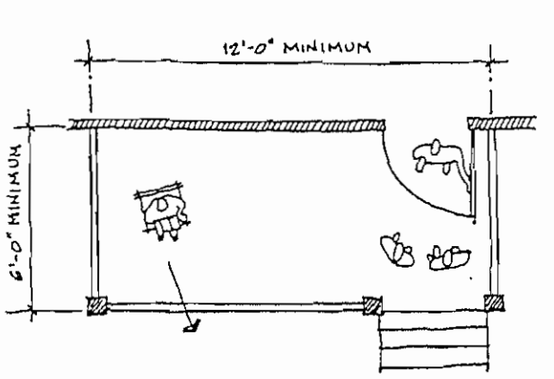
2. Porches throughout the Lower West Side tend to be full house width and tend to incorporate the entrance to the house.

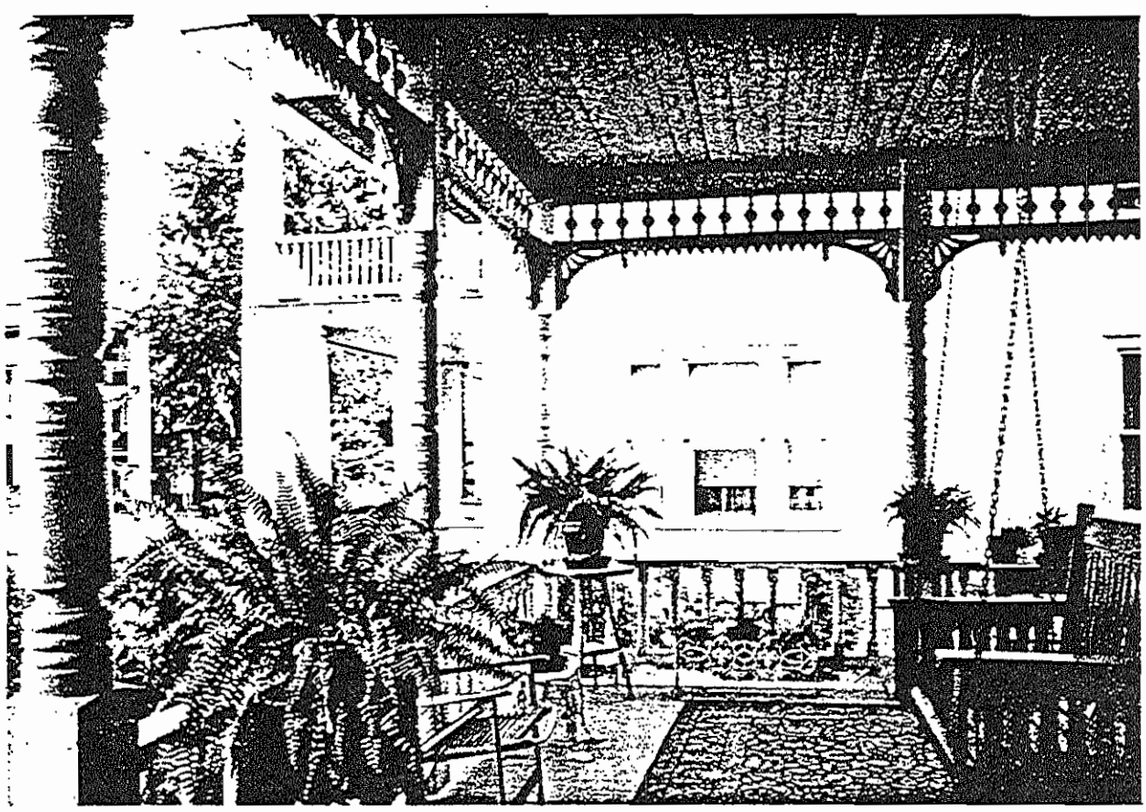
3. Porches tend to have enclosure systems that are relatively open and visible from the street, rather than enclosed and fortress like. They present a welcoming face to the house from the street and create the semi-private transition from the public street to the private home.

4. Column and hand rail details should be consistent with the mass of the house and the roofs. Thin columns supporting apparently massive roofs or massive columns supporting thin line porch roofs should be avoided.

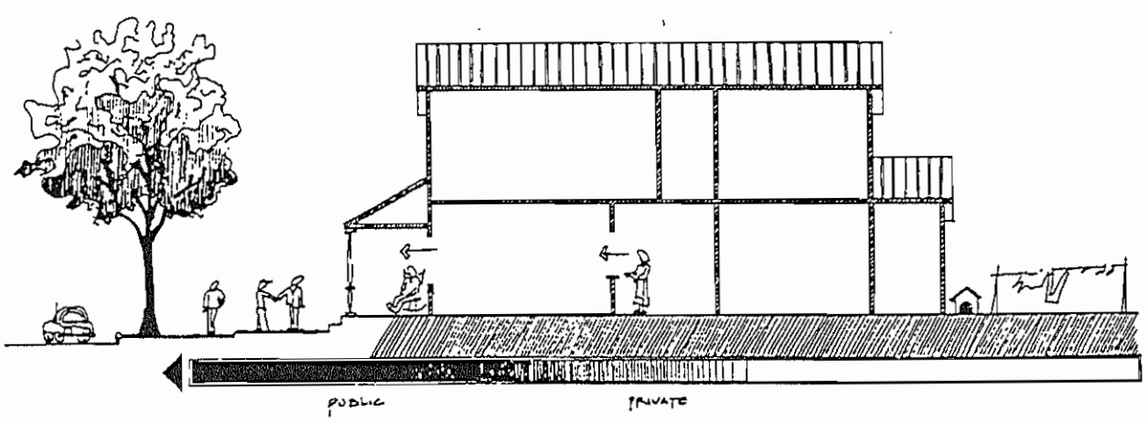
> The best way to make a house and neighborhood welcoming and to give people a comfortable place to sit outside is a porch. Porches should be nearer to the street than any other part of the house and deep enough for people to sit and still let someone walk by - about 6' minimum. A porch is a place which feels like being inside yet lets people share their block's outdoor space with their neighbors. It contributes greatly to the quality of life in the *Lower West Side* by helping people get to know each other and by letting them watch over each other's houses from the safety of their own dwelling. It is the most important part of a good *Lower West Side* house.
>
> Adapted from
> *The Ten Essentials*

Therefore, make a usable porch (at least six feet by twelve feet) for each family. Where possible, extend the porch across the full front of the house and incorporate the main entrance to the house. Keep the porches relatively transparent from the street with details consistent with the massing and materials of other houses on the street.





A full front porch spanning the width of the house is seen as the most usable. A minimum condition would provide at least six feet by twelve feet of outdoor porch area. (Photo from *Choices*)

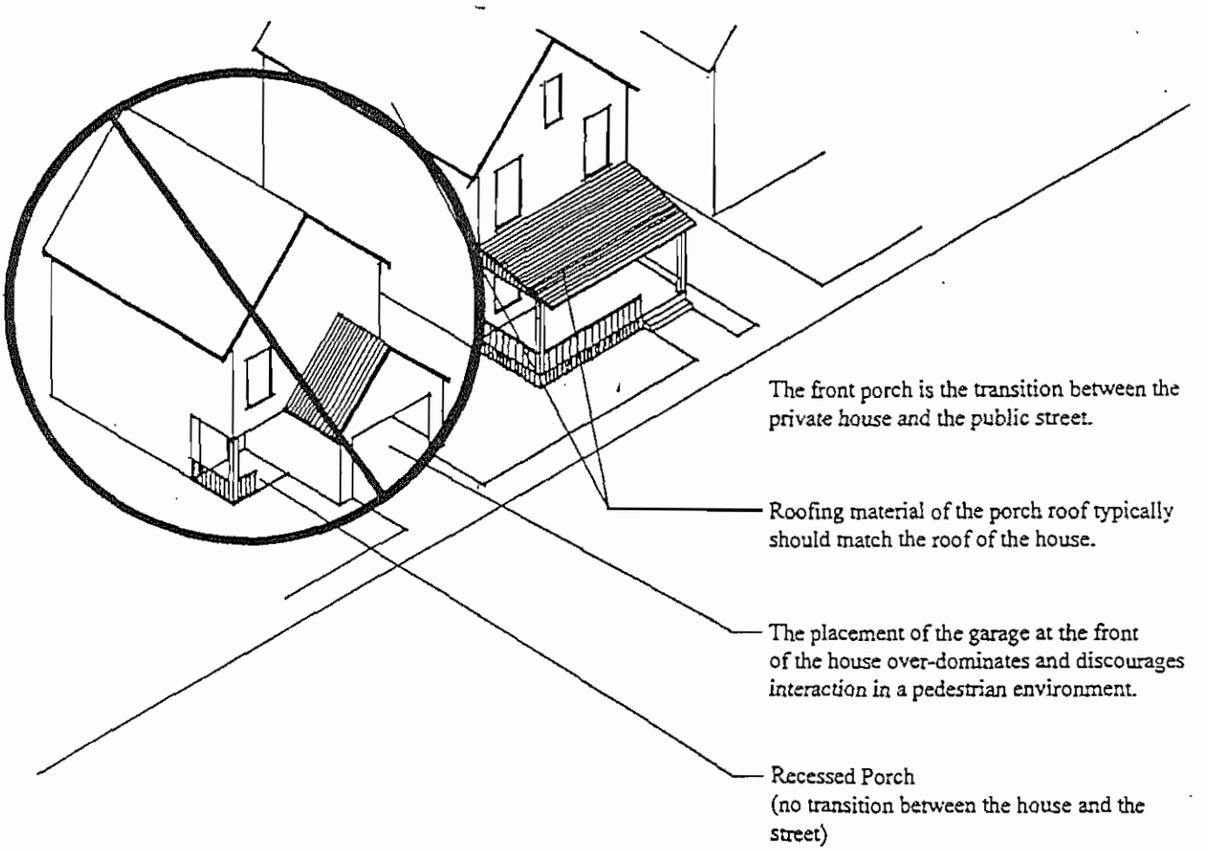


The above diagram shows the desired relationship between the porch, front yard, sidewalk, and street.

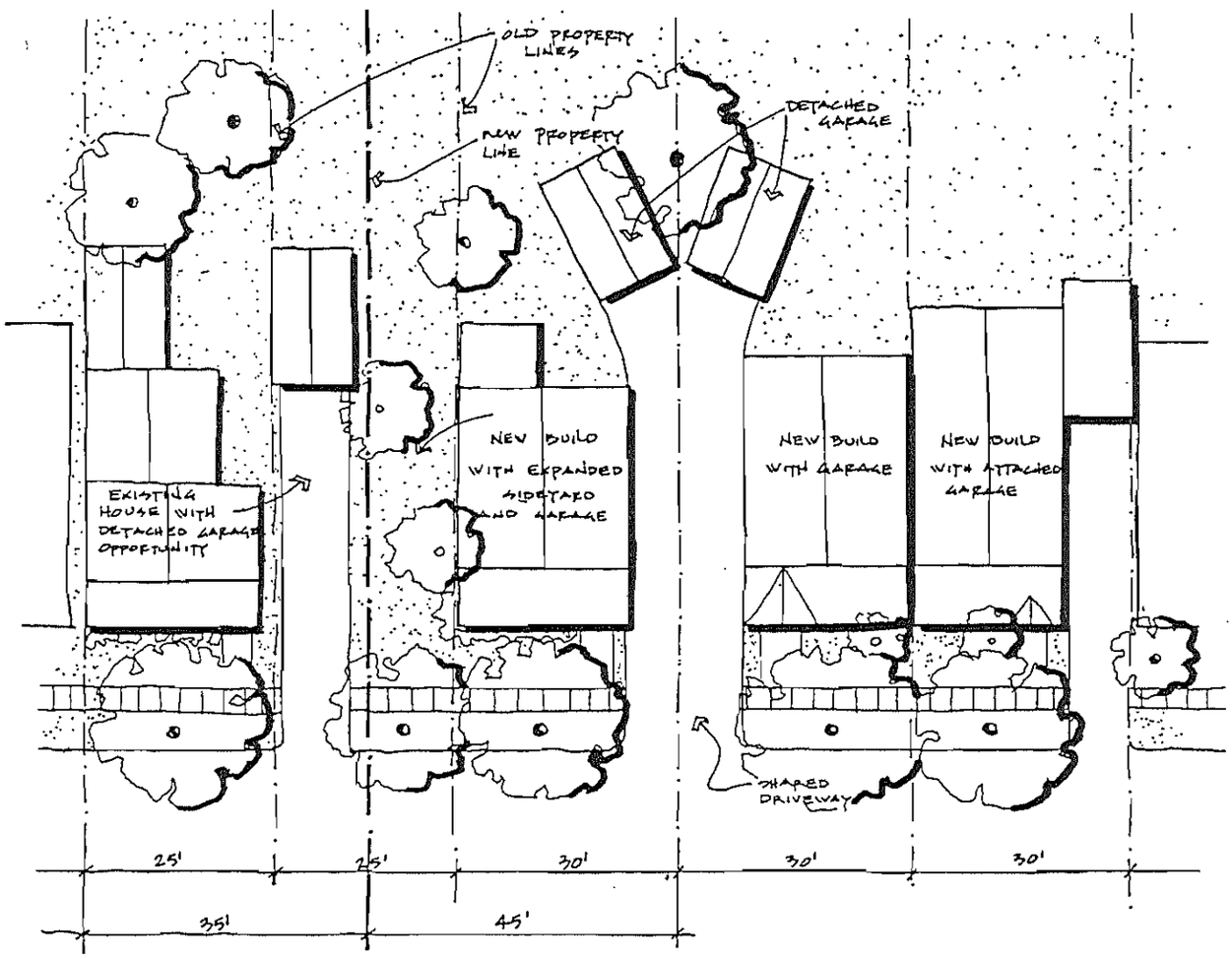
5. Provide Garages With a 30 Foot Minimum Set Back from the Sidewalk.

Relatively few houses in the Lower West Side enjoy a garage or off-street parking. In today's housing market, however, such features are seen as essential. But garages on the street front tend to dominate the landscape with blank garage door walls and hurt the pedestrian character of the street. Setting the garage back from the street at least thirty feet gives dominance to the line of porches and houses, improving the character of the area.

Therefore, where possible, provide garages or off street parking for each home and set the garages back a minimum of 30 feet from the front property line.



The diagram above illustrates what happens when the garage is allowed to dominate the pedestrian experience.



The parcels available for development on Prospect Avenue allow for several opportunities to create off street parking, providing garages for existing houses, new-builds with expanded side yards and detached garages, shared drive access to private detached garages, and new-builds with attached garages.

6. Wood and/ or Brick Construction

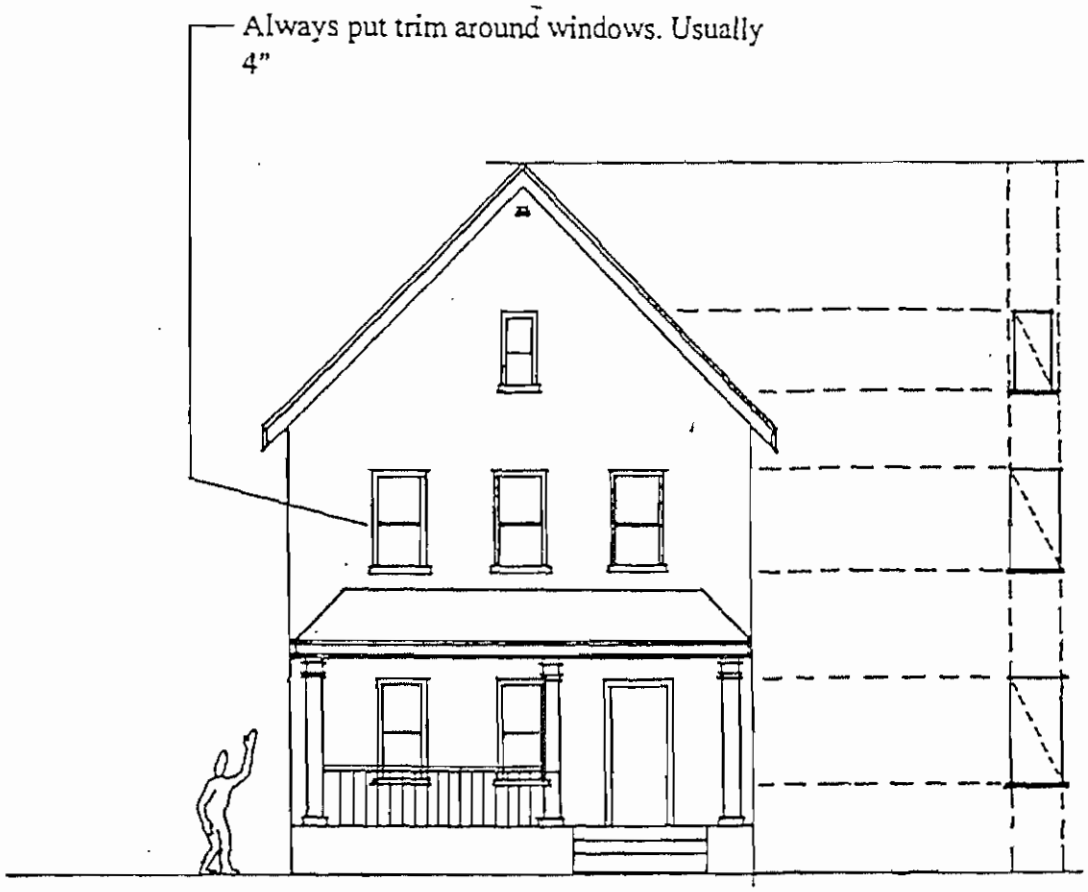
The majority of homes in the Lower West Side are brick or wood. Wood construction tends to involve wood siding with three and one-half to five inch boards laid horizontally. Consistency and quality home building requires a compatible choice. Brick or wood or combinations of brick and wood are the preferred material choices. Vinyl, if used at all, should be used on the back and sides of the house.

Therefore, build new in-fill homes out of brick and/or wood. Consider vinyl siding as a low cost alternative to wood and try to limit its use to the back and sides of the home.

7. Vertical Windows

Most houses in the neighborhood have vertical window placements which are aligned along the street face creating a consistent rhythm. The vertical proportion is 1:2 so, for example, a window 18 inches wide is thirty six inches tall. Alternative dimensions with comparable proportions can work, but horizontal orientations would break-up the rhythm on the street and be inconsistent with the general character of the neighborhood.

Therefore provide windows which are oriented vertically with approximately 1:2 proportions. Place the windows at an elevation consistent with the placement of windows elsewhere in the neighborhood.



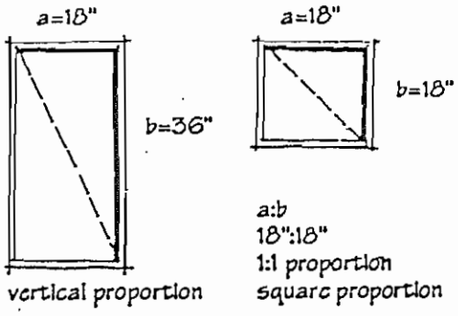
Floor level, window size, pattern, and location should relate from one level to the next. Similar proportioned windows should be used throughout the street.

What is proportion?

It is the ratio of the horizontal measurement (a) to the vertical measurement (b).

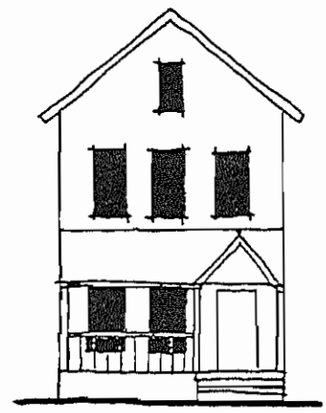
Example: a=18" b= 36"
proportion is 1:2
b is twice the distance of a

A comfortable and common proportion is 2:3



The human body proportion is vertical as well.

Repetitive vertically proportioned windows.



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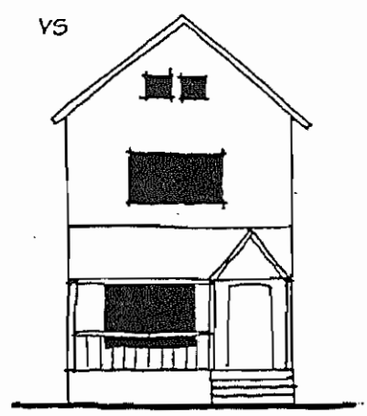
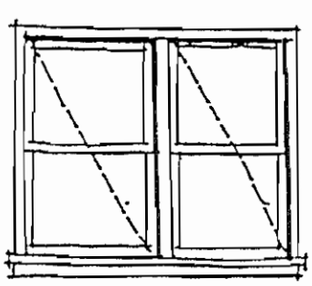


Broadly horizontally proportioned windows.



Grouping several vertical window together rather than installing a large "picture window" is the traditional pattern.

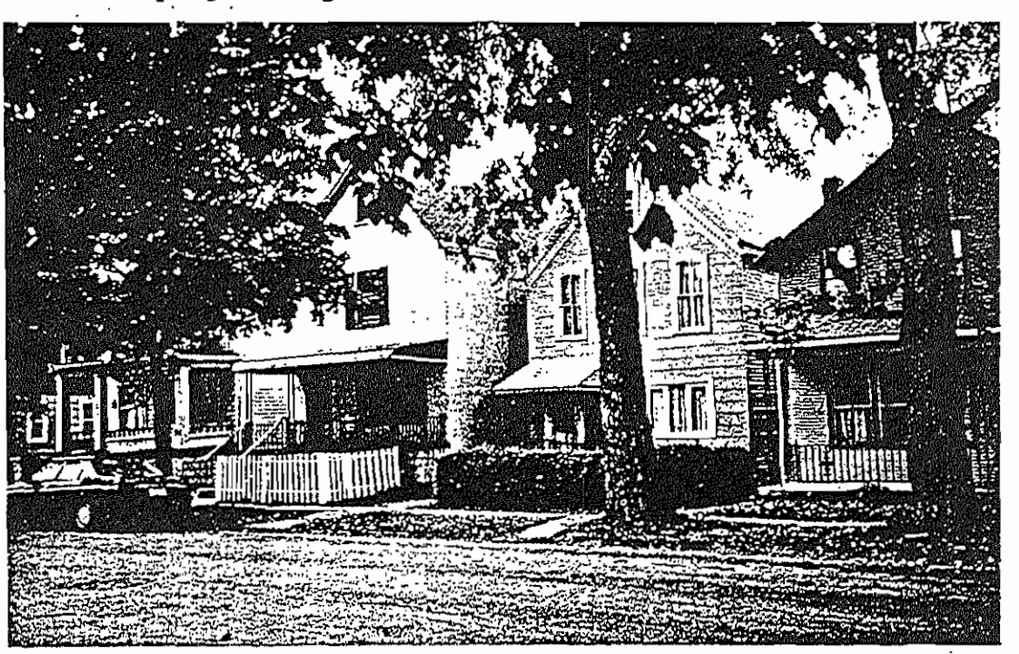
A description of window proportion criteria based on *The Ten Essentials*.

8. Landscape the Front

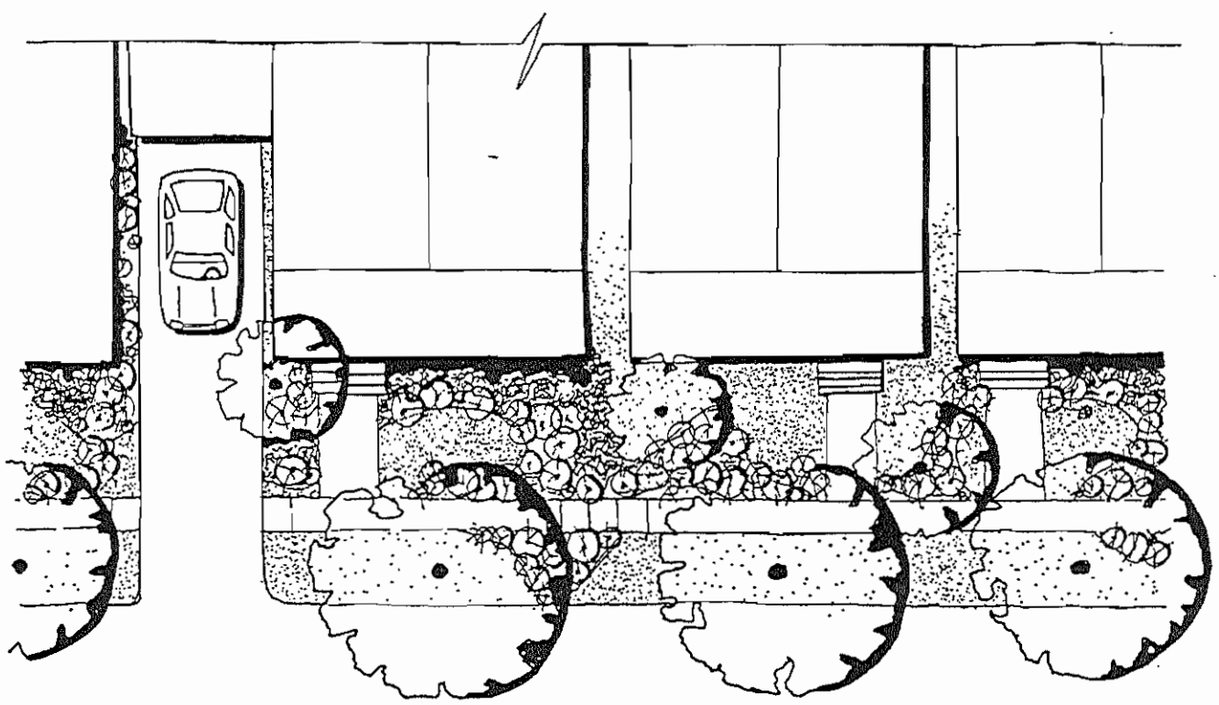
> Although the front yard may belong legally to the owner of a house, it exists above all as a part of the common space which makes up the center of the block or neighborhood. This "streetscape" still functions as a kind of shared living room in many of our neighborhoods just as it has in the most successful cities throughout history. It succeeds here because of the width of the streets and the closeness of the houses to the street and to each other. Opaque high fences or dense, high landscaping either parallel to the street or between lots tends to subdivide the block with losses to security, neighborhood character, and neighbors getting to know each other.
>
> From *The Ten Essentials*

The landscape, sidewalks, and front yards in the Lower West Side are essential not supplemental to the success of making a good neighborhood. Each front yard should have a tree in addition to the trees in the planting strip along the sidewalk which are maintained by the City. The front should be unfenced or modestly fenced with low transparent detailing. Tall fences and opaque materials should be avoided because they add to the feeling of unsafety, creating places to hide and denying the potential for eyes on the street. Low growing bushes, however, can be used to good effect defining the yard without creating places to hide. Planting will also help relate the house to the yard while it adds texture and variety to the experience of the pedestrian on the street and individuality to the residential environment.

Therefore, make landscaping a priority, especially in the front yard as its shapes the public streetscape of the neighborhood.



Fences, if employed at all, need to be not more than four feet high and should have a transparent detailing that defines the front yard without disguising it.

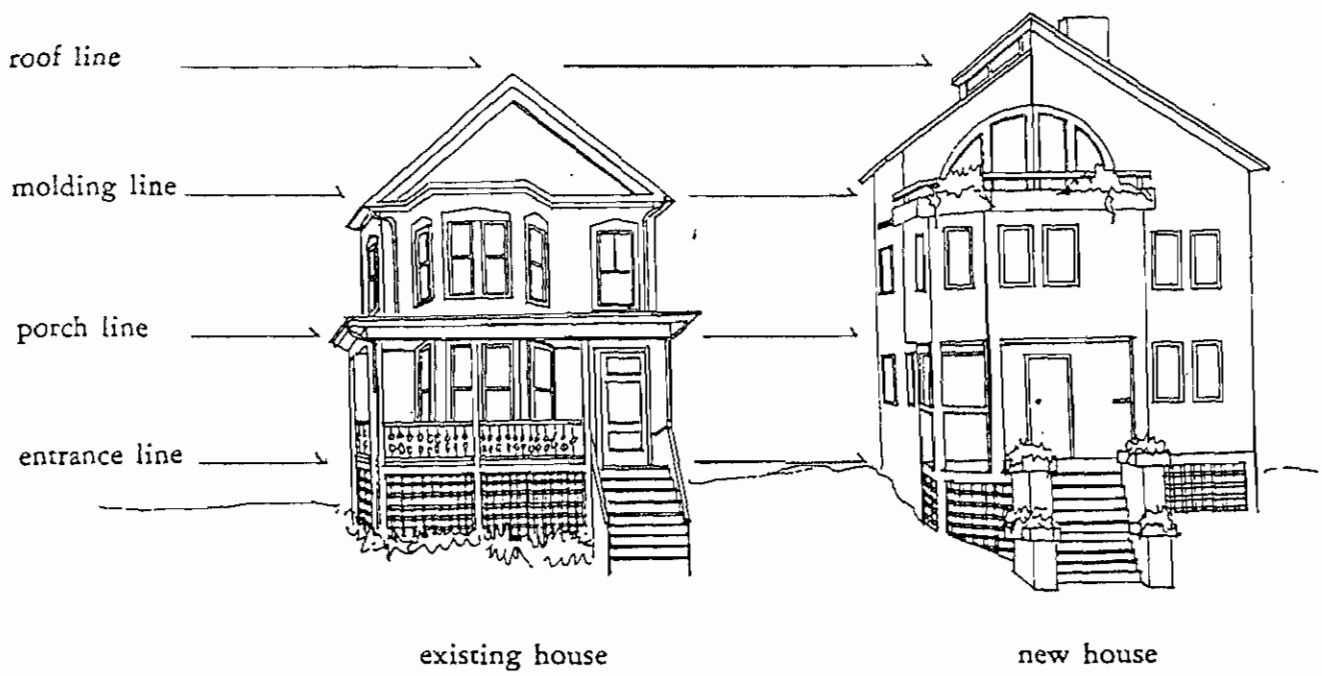


Landscape planning for the front of the home should strive to create an outdoor room between the sidewalk and the porch which is part of the rhythm of the street. The planting that makes this room should not be so dense as to make places to hide.

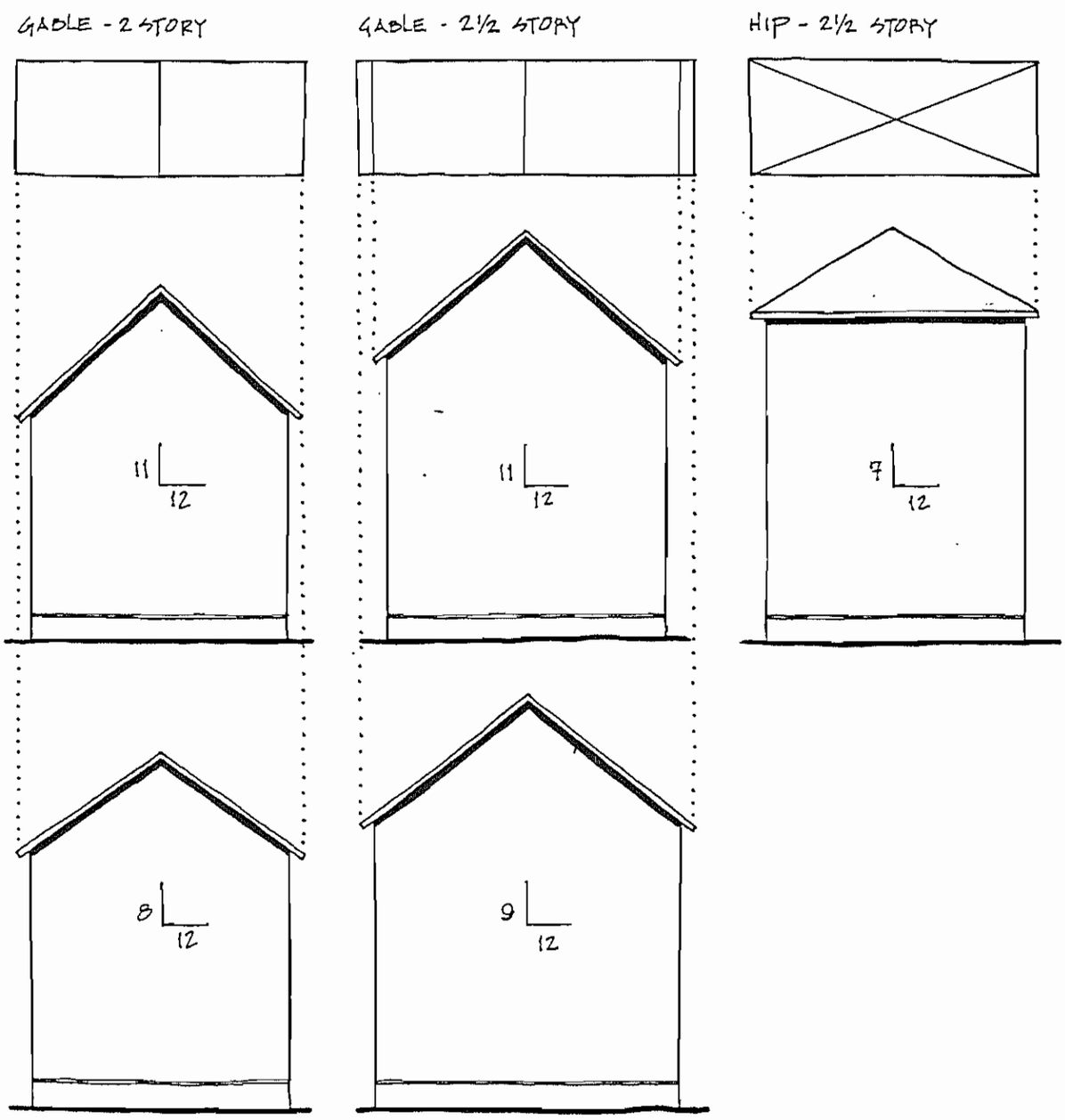
9. Consistent Roof Pitch and Elevation Element Locations

There is a relatively narrow range of roof slopes in the housing of the Lower West Side. Most of the stock of two story homes range from 8:12 to 11:12 and the two and one-half story homes range from 9:12 to 11:12. Hip roofs tend to be a ratio of 7:12. Any radical departure from these ranges in roof pitch in new infill housing would stick out from the norm and disrupt the continuity of the neighborhood. There is also a consistency of element locations including roof line, molding lines, porch lines, and first floor lines in the existing housing stock in the Lower West Side. It will be important to sustain consistency in these elevation element locations.

Therefore, consider providing roof pitches consistent with the range of slopes in the current stock of homes. Provide elevation elements consistent with surrounding housing allowing for similar treatment in roof and molding lines. Porch, window, and first floor elevations should all be aligned.



An analysis of elevations in the immediate neighborhood reveals standard patterns of roof line, molding line, porch line, and entrance lines. Window lines often also reveal a consistency useful in providing for a diversity of housing while sustaining a consistent neighborhood character. (Adapted from *Choices*)



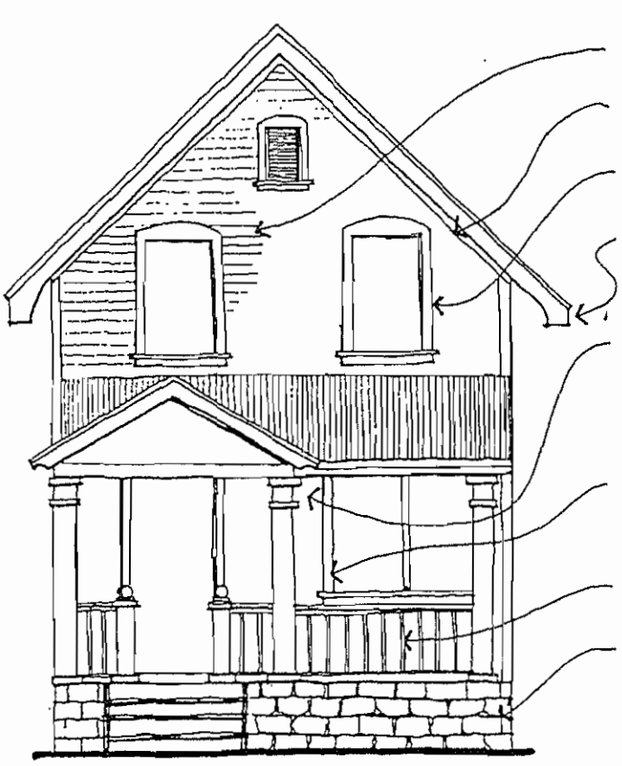
The roof slope analysis of housing in the area suggests there is a narrow range of slopes available from which to choose. New infill housing should work within the ranges that already dominate the area.

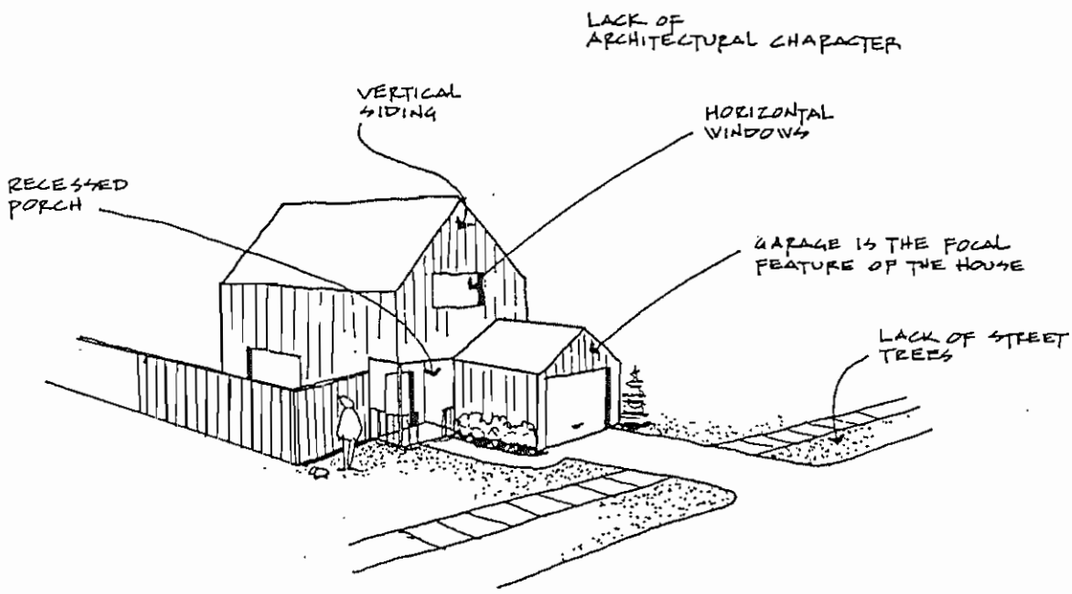
10. Attend To The Details

Details make the difference between just another house and the curb appeal needed to make the house an important part of an attractive neighborhood. Focus attention on places where vertical and horizontal elements meet, for example, the roof peaks, the ends of the fascia boards, column capital and base conditions, porch railings, and window trim. The facade should have depth, avoiding the flush appearance of many suburban dwellings.

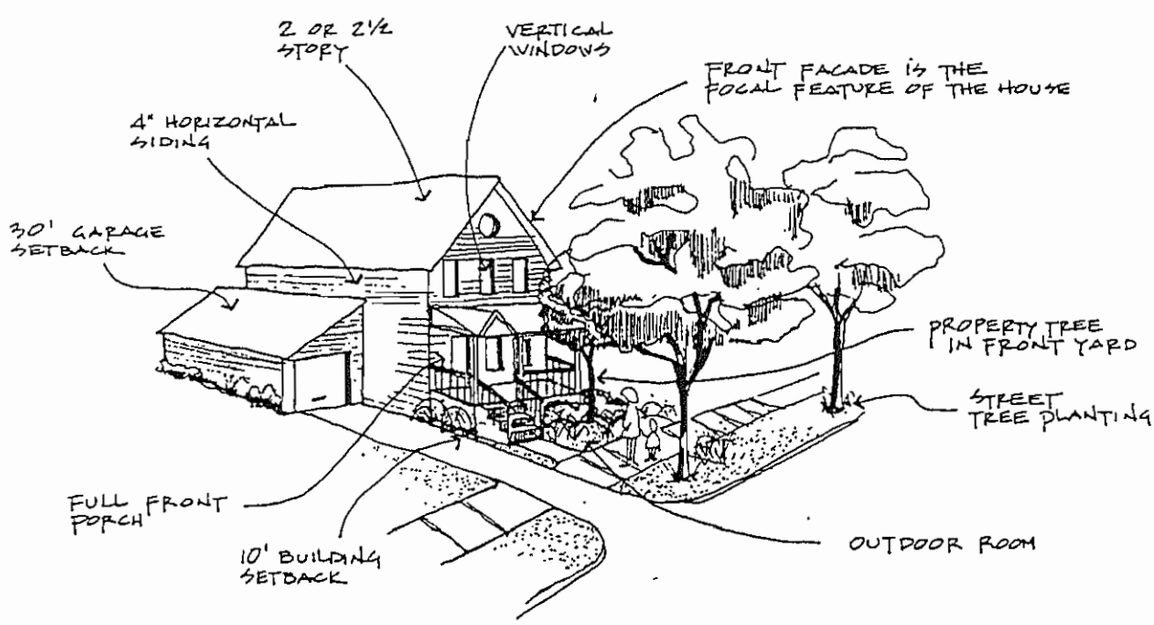
Therefore, find ways to celebrate the details of the house, demonstrating the affection neighbors feel for their homes and their community.

Illustration adapted from *The Ten Essentials*.





DISCOURAGED DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS



PREFERRED DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Design Review

All of the design guidelines could be for nought if there is not sufficient attention given to good design over and above these basic criteria. For the purposes of this document, good design is being defined by a consortium of architects, planners, home realtors, and home builders working through the Housing Design Advisory Board in collaboration with City staff, the Buffalo Common Council, community based organizations and residents in the Lower West Side. The process of achieving a consistent, and beautiful assembly of homes will require additional professional and community participation in two very specific ways. First, this initial draft of guidelines will be provided to all participants and interested community members with an invitation to comment on what is being asked of the builder/ developer community in a solicitation inviting their participation in the project. Second, after responses are in from the builders/ developers, a group representing all parties will review builder proposals and make design review recommendations to the Commissioner of Community Development.

The Buffalo Common Council is considering legislation requiring design review for new development throughout Buffalo's neighborhoods. The Lower West Side Neighborhood stabilization project is a test of the process of community as well as professional involvement in the review process.

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The Greater Buffalo Board of Realators
Charlene Zoratti

The Niagara Frontier Association of Home Builders, Joseph McIvor

The American Planning Association, Western New York Section, Michael Johnson

Buffalo Common Council, The Honorable Beverly Gray, Council Member at Large

The Department of Community Development, City of Buffalo

Alan DeLisle, Commissioner
Anthony Marconi, Deputy Commissioner
Kevin Greiner, Director of Planning
Bill Grillo
Fred Heinle
Kevin Horrigan
Frank Manuele
Jackie O'Niel
Keith Rathbun
David Sengbusch
Robert Sienkiewicz
James Speciale

Hispanics United For Buffalo
Bill DelValle

The Lower West Side Resource and Development Corporation & West Side Neighborhood Congress
John Cromwell; Mark Kubiniec

The Lower West Side Block Club
Jeff Lokken; Bruce Marzhann
Bob Guarino; Ron Cauley
Zorarida Matos

The University at Buffalo, State University of New York, School of Architecture and Planning, Urban Design Project

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Jennifer Steigler
Hector Garrido

With Graphic layout by
Jo-Anne Charron

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The Honorable James Pitts,
Council President

The Honorable Barbara A. Miller-Williams,
Ellicott District Council Member

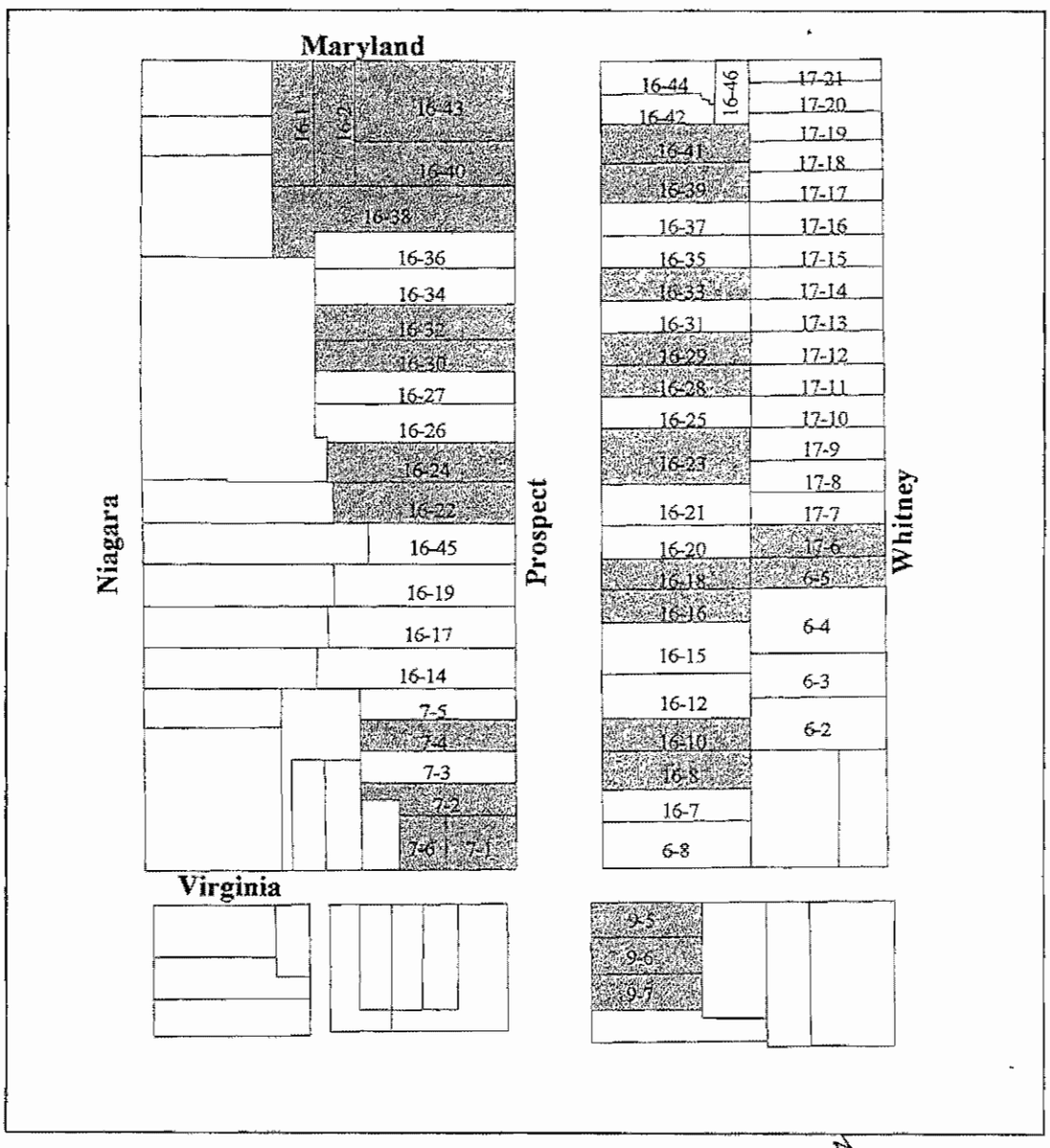
The Honorable Barbara Kavanaugh,
Council Member at Large

The Honorable David Franczyak,
Fillmore District Council Member

The Honorable Dale Zuchlewski,
North District Council Member

Photos throughout the document were provided by members of the Housing Design Advisory Board, the Lower West Side Resource and Development Corporation, The Urban Design Project, and the City's Department of Community Development.

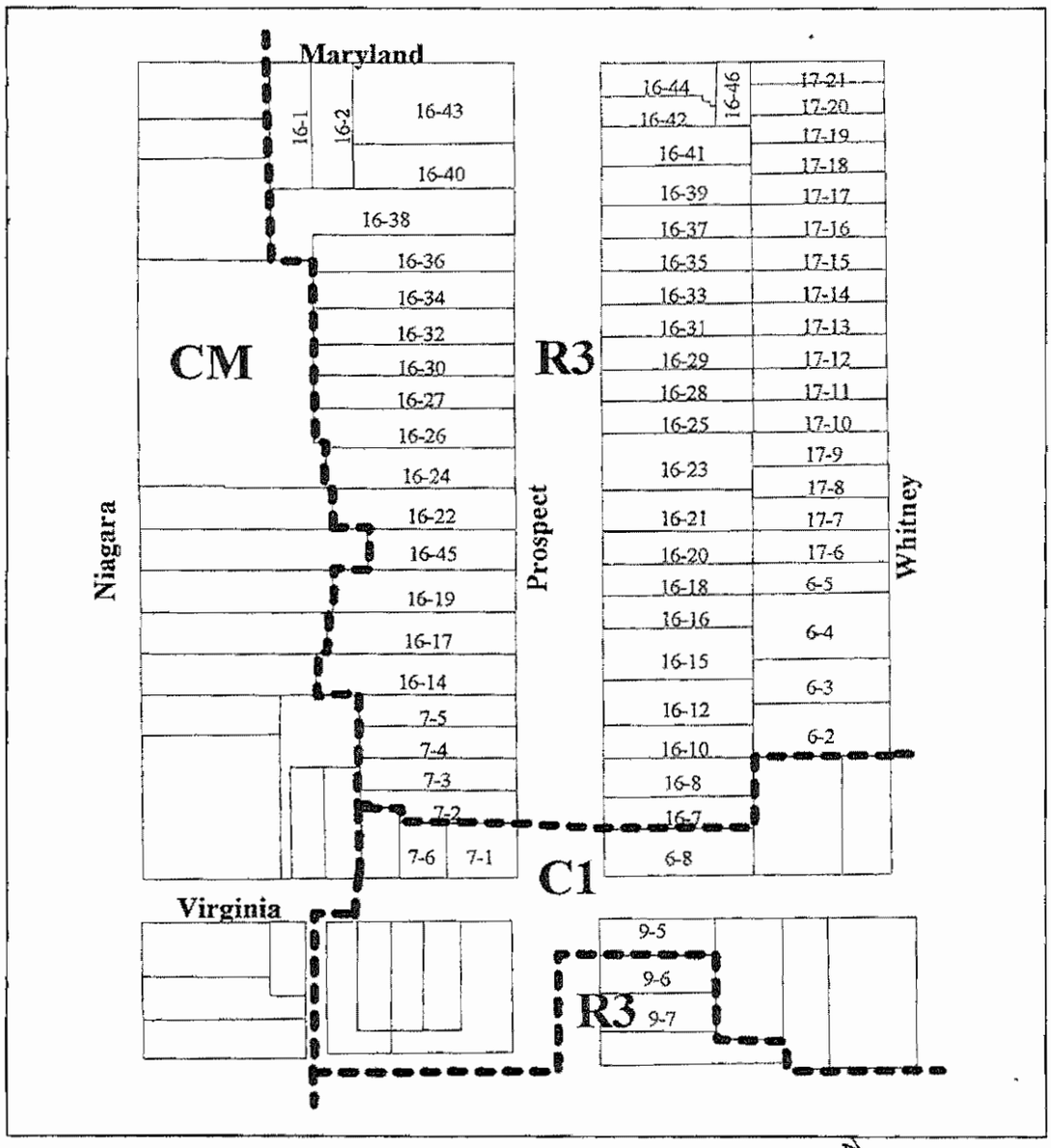
VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWNAL PLAN
AMENDEMENT - FEB. 1997
PHASE I AREA
LAND DISPOSITION PLAN MAP



Disposition parcel

Exhibit 5

VIRGINIA ST. URBAN RENEWNAL PLAN
AMENDEMENT - FEB. 1997
PHASE I AREA
EXISTING ZONING MAP



Zoing boundary

Exhibit 6