

# GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION IN THE NEZ

New construction in the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) should be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the surrounding homes. New construction in the NEZ should not attempt to recreate or replicate a past architectural style in its entirety but should take cues from the architectural and design elements of surrounding historic structures. No specific architectural style shall be required for new construction in the NEZ.

The following aspects of new construction in the NEZ should be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which the new construction is related. These include but are not limited to: height, proportion between width and height of façade, proportion and relationship between doors and windows, rhythm of solids and voids created by openings in the façade, materials, textures, colors, patterns, trims, and design of the roof. New construction in the NEZ should also preserve the existing rhythm created by existing building masses in the neighborhood.

**Height:** All new construction in the NEZ should take into consideration the general height of the buildings in the neighborhood and shall also comply with the regulating zoning district.

**Proportion of the buildings front façade:** The relationship of the width to height of a building creates a proportion that should be taken into consideration (such as tall and narrow, low and squat, or square). This proportional relationship should reflect the dominant character of the neighborhood.

**Proportion of openings within the façade:** This is a relationship of the width to height of windows and doors. For example, a window may be one unit wide and three units high, thus creating a proportional relationship of 1:3. If the majority of the buildings within a neighborhood have this 1:3 relationship, then new design should reflect this proportion as well. Large picture windows or horizontal bands of windows should be avoided. Modern interpretations of historic windows are acceptable if they retain the historic size ratios and pattern of placement on the façade. Doors should also be compatible in proportion. (See *Illustration 1*)

**Illustration 1**

**Window Proportion:**

The proportional relationship of the width to the height of the windows combined with the high pitch of the roof creates a tall elevated feeling.



**Rhythm of solids to voids:** Rhythm is an ordered recurrent alternation of wall to openings as well as spacing between buildings. This rhythm creates a feel as one moves past a building or group of buildings. The design of a new structure in the NEZ should respect the rhythm of the surrounding neighborhood in terms of its size, distance between buildings on either side, and the spacing of windows and doors. (See *Illustration 2*)

**Illustration 2**



**Relationship of materials:** New designs in the NEZ should use materials that are compatible with the neighborhood and should seek to reflect the predominant materials found in the neighborhood. If the majority of existing buildings are brick, then the proposed building should be brick. If the predominant material is lap siding, then the proposed material should be lap siding. The texture and color of the materials should be considered as well and be compatible with the surrounding buildings.

**Relationship to roof shapes:** Roof shape includes the type and pitch of the roof (such as hip, gable, mansard, or shed). The treatment of the eaves, rafter tails, soffits, bargeboards, and fascia are important considerations when designing any new construction in the NEZ. For example, if the majority of the existing houses in a neighborhood have a gabled roof, then the proposed new construction should have a gabled roof. Additionally, if the existing buildings in a neighborhood have boxed eaves, then the new construction should seek to either incorporate the same or similar design element.

**Relationships to architectural details:** Architectural details include features such as cornices, brackets, columns, lintels, arches, roof crests, quoins, balustrades, doors, windows, and chimneys. New construction in the NEZ should be compatible with the predominant architectural details on surrounding buildings. These details do not need to be copied in the new construction, but they should be reflected in some manner. For example, if the majority of houses

in the neighborhood have pediments above the windows, then the new construction should reflect pediment-like features above the windows as well. Additionally, chimneys that are not constructed of historical materials (brick or stone) should be located to the rear of the building in order to reduce the visibility of the modern chimney covering from the public-right-of-way.

**Scale:** Scale is created by the architectural detailing that relates to the size of a human and by the building mass as it relates to open space. A large building on a small lot has a different appearance when compared to a large building on a large lot. This relationship should be considered when designing for a particular neighborhood. New construction in the NEZ should observe the scale of surrounding and nearby structures. The window and door lines should be similar to neighboring structures. The detailing should be consistent with the size of the building. For example, a small house should not have massive or oversized details and decorations.

**Massing:** The term massing refers to how the basic shapes of the building are fit together. Massing can be very simple, such as a single rectangular shape, be more complex with an L-shape, or have a combination of shapes. Additional massing elements are also found among the different architectural styles. For example, in Victorian architecture, elements such as bays, towers, and turrets add to the basic massing of the house. Massing patterns of the neighborhood structures should be considered and reflected in the design of new construction in the NEZ. New construction in the NEZ shall also comply with the floor-area-ratios dictated by the regulating zoning district.

**Directional expression of the front elevation:** The use of architectural details and the proportion of the width to height ratio create structural shape. The structural shape will be expressed either vertically or horizontally. A building with a ratio of 1:5 will have a vertical appearance while a ratio of 5:1 would have a horizontal appearance. Tall narrow windows give a vertical appearance while wide windows tend to create a horizontal feel. New construction in the NEZ should observe the predominant feel of the surrounding area.

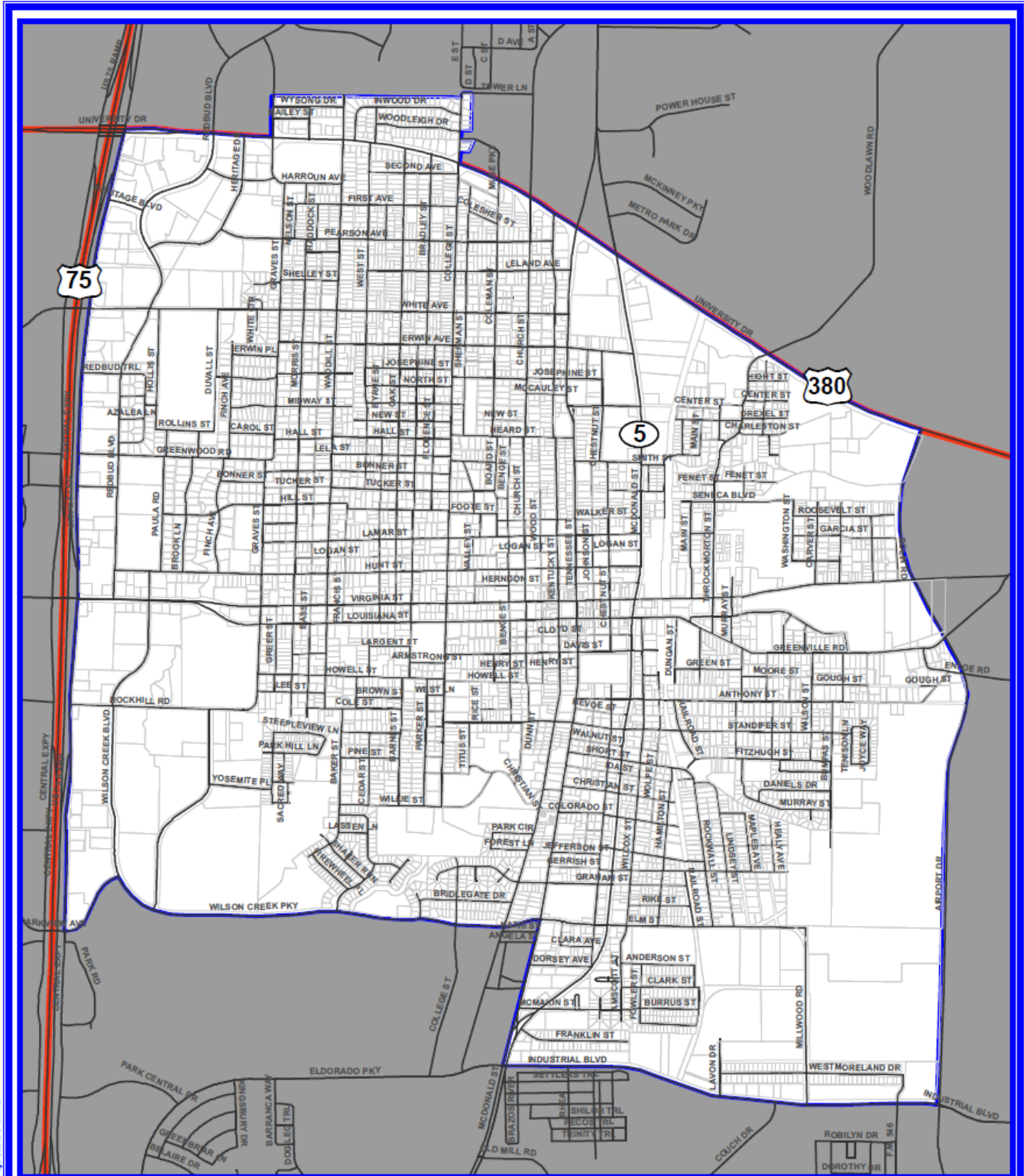
**Rhythm of spacing and setbacks:** It is important that new construction in the NEZ be consistent with adjacent structures in spacing and setback, which sets a rhythm for the block and neighborhood and is a part of the historic character. The setback of new construction in the NEZ should generally be within 10 percent of the setback lines of the adjacent structures. Setbacks for new construction in the NEZ should maintain the existing pattern of setbacks in the block if at all possible. New construction in the NEZ shall also comply with the setbacks dictated by the regulating zoning district. (*See Illustration 3*)

### Illustration 3

Aligned Setbacks and Rhythm of Spacing



**Variation of styles:** If groupings of two or more new homes are being built in the same area, then the new construction should reflect a variation in the styles of homes. It is not appropriate to build the same home or simply change the position of the front porch or the type of window or front door to comply with these criteria.



**HNIZ and NEZ Boundary Map**  
**HNIZ and NEZ**  
**(Historic Neighborhood Improvement Zone)**  
**and (Neighborhood Empowerment Zone)**



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