Special District Design Guidelines

PUNCHBOWL

Department of Planning and Permitting
City and County of Honolulu
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Index

Introduction ............................................... 2
District Objectives ....................................... 3
Aerial Photo ............................................... 4
District Map ............................................... 5
Site Planning .............................................. 6
Heights ...................................................... 9
Architectural Character .................................. 10
   Building bulk and Facade Treatment .......... 10
   Facade Treatment .................................. 11
Lighting ................................................... 12
   Materials and Color ................................ 12
Landscaping .............................................. 13
Parking and Mechanical Equipment .......... 15

Inscription in the chapel vestibule of the Punchbowl Memorial

Entrance into Crater

Monument at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific
Introduction

Punchbowl or Puowaina, the “hill of sacrifices” and its National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, is one of Hawaii’s most important landmarks, and natural features. Through the 1970’s, land development threatened views of its slopes and diminished its serenity as a National Monument. Punchbowl and its surrounding major viewing area was designated as a Special District for its protection and enhancement. The District regulations contain various building height and front yard setback requirements, for protective measures. Special design review is required for the designated Core Area around Punchbowl itself.

Resting place of Ernie Pyle.

Resting place of Ellison S. Onizuka.
District Objectives

In order to protect and enhance the character of the Punchbowl Special District, the following objectives are stated in the City and County's zoning code, the Land Use Ordinance (LUO):

A. Preserve and enhance Punchbowl's form and character as a significant landmark.

B. Preserve and enhance the park-like character of the immediate slopes of Punchbowl and its major streets.

C. Preserve and enhance significant public views to and from Punchbowl, especially those from the Punchbowl lookouts and long-range views of Punchbowl, by modifying construction projects that would diminish those views.

D. Provide landscaping and open space which will enhance views and the general character of the Punchbowl area.

E. Preserve, enhance and restore to the extent possible, the serene and scenic qualities within the National Cemetery.

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The serene grounds of the Crater interior.
Aerial photo of the Punchbowl Special District from above Honolulu Harbor.
Site Planning

Diminishing of the Craters profile by past development started erosion of the sanctity and dignity of the National Monument.

The prime objective of the District is to protect the Punchbowl Monument as a dominant physical form, and to enhance its setting.

Structures should be oriented to minimize intrusion into mauka/makai views to and from Punchbowl. Greater front yard setbacks, as delineated on the District Map, are required along major streets to expand view channels and provide opportunities for landscaping.

Views of parking, service areas and driveways, mechanical equipment and other obtrusive uses and structures should be minimized or screened to preserve the parklike mauka/makai views.

*Parking and service areas screened from public views.*

*Orientation of buildings should preserve mauka/makai views.*
Preserve and enhance views of Punchbowl

Toward Diamond Head

Toward Diamond Head

Toward the Airport
Preserve and enhance views of Punchbowl

From the Capitol District

From Makiki. Blockage of views of Punchbowl permitted by zoning height limits prior to Height Precincts.
Heights

The limitation of building heights in the District is the primary means of preserving views of Punchbowl from major streets and other public areas.

The District boundaries, height limits and setbacks, as designated in the LUO, are the result of view plane studies that determined the potential impact of new buildings on views to and from Punchbowl and its surrounding environs.

Building height limits of "0" to 250 feet have been established within the District to avoid reoccurrence of blockage as shown in above photos.

Example of view plane analysis, examining a crosssection from the HI Freeway to Punchbowl.
Architectural Character

Building bulk and Facade Treatment

Building bulk and facades should not visually detract from views of Punchbowl. Large, plain or smooth surface walls perpendicular to views to and from Punchbowl are inappropriate.

Building facades should be articulated to break up building mass and reduce visual impact. The use of recessed windows, lanais, projecting eyebrows, and offsets in wall planes are some ways to achieve desired articulation.

Structures shall be designed to blend with Punchbowl's olive and earth tone fluted slopes. Rear elevations and roof treatment are critical to the reverse view of buildings, Imposing masses, unarticulated or exotic forms, or designs which would otherwise detract from or block views are inappropriate.

The photos illustrate the imposing effect of large building bulk on Punchbowl views.
Facade Treatment

Appropriate architectural character involves balance of variety and restraint. Offset wall planes, recessed and/or projected windows, eyebrows and lanais can provide necessary shade, shadow and architectural scale.

Appropriate: Simple, efficient "block" type structure with minimum facade depth using form and shadow to emphasize scale.

Appropriate: Wood tones, undulating wall planes and protective overhangs.

Restrained elegance, pleasing lines, complementing elements.
Lighting

Materials and Color

Buildings should be of subdued earth or olive tones to blend with the crater slopes.

Finishes can be dominating. Garish, iridescent colors or highly reflective materials such as roofing, reflective glass films and polished metals that are exposed to public view are not acceptable because they are distracting, cause reflections and glare and undermine views to and from Punchbowl.

Lighting should be generally subdued and shielded so as not to detract from the ambiance of the District. Incandescent light fixtures are recommended. High intensity light sources, such as sodium and fluorescent lamps, detract from the park-like setting and are discouraged.

Lighting in parking garages should be concealed or shielded to minimize glare and spillage onto passing vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Acceptable shielded parking lot light fixture.
Landscaping

Landscaping is required and encouraged in the District to soften and blend man-made elements with the natural backdrop of Punchbowl.

In order to enhance the appearance of the District, all yards are required to be landscaped, and street trees are required along all streets. Existing trees over 6-inch caliper shall be retained unless there are no possible development alternatives. The planting of large, canopy-form trees, such as Monkey-pod and Formosan Koa, is encouraged.

Landscaping is required in accordance with specific guidelines and regulations in the zoning code. All fences and walls exceeding 36-inches in height shall be set back a minimum of 18-inches along all streets identified as major streets on the District map, and landscaped with vine or hedge planting.

Street trees softens visual impact of roadways.

Planting along front of fence.

Retention of large existing tree.
Trellis mitigates visual impact from the Punchbowl lookout.

Trees screen views of parked cars from above.

Trees enhance parking lots.

Landscaping Features soften rigid Architectural Features.
Parking and Mechanical Equipment

Parking and service areas screened from public view.

The prime objective of the District is to protect the Punchbowl Monument as a dominant physical form, and to enhance its setting in park-like environment.

Structures should be oriented to minimize intrusion into mauka/makai views to and from Punchbowl. Greater front yard setbacks as delineated on the District map are required along major streets, to enhance views and/or contribute to the park-like setting of the District.

Views of Parking, service areas and driveways, mechanical equipment and other obtrusive uses and structures, should be minimized or screened to preserve the park-like environment.

Planters along parking deck edges to conceal parked cars.
Ground level mechanical equipment must be shielded from pedestrian views.

Walls effectively screen mechanical equipment from side views.