DIAMOND HEAD SPECIAL DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

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http://honoluludpp.org/
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction
- Intent of Guidelines 1
- Overview & General Purpose 1
- District Objectives & Vision 2
- Historic, Cultural & Scenic Structures & Significant Sites 2
- Public Vantage Points & Viewing Sites 3
- Diamond Head Special District Boundaries Map 4
- Aerial View of Diamond Head Special District 5

## Site Planning
- Heights 7
- Landscaping 8
- Parking 9

## Architectural Character
- Roof Design 10
- Building Bulk & Facade Treatment 10
- Materials & Color 10
- Lighting 11

## Accessory Elements
- Rooftop Mechanical Equipment 12
- Green Roofs 12

## Streetscape & Public Life
- Street Trees 13
- Street Furniture & Hardscaping Elements 14
- General Streetscape 14
INTENT OF GUIDELINES

The intent of the Guidelines is to provide consistent design principles for residential, commercial and other structures that can contribute to the creation of neighborhoods with a strong, cohesive sense of place that are attractive, safe, and inviting areas to live and visit.

The Guidelines serve as a resource for project applicants, residents, developers, design professionals, City and County of Honolulu planning staff, design review boards, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Special District regulations under the Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Chapter 21, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu. They are intended to facilitate the design review process by helping applicants and City planning staff identify major design issues and formulate solutions early in the application process. The Special District Design Guidelines are intended to encourage consistent design while allowing for diversity and innovation. Specific regulations pertaining to the Special Districts can be found in Article 9 of the LUO.

OVERVIEW & GENERAL PURPOSE

Diamond Head, or Le‘ahi in Hawaiian, is a volcanic crater and one of Hawaii’s most famous landmarks. It has been declared a State and National Monument as its natural appearance, prominent public views, and cultural and historical significance are of notable local, state, national, and international import.

Through the early 1970’s, land development threatened views of its slopes and diminished its park-like setting. Diamond Head and its surrounding major viewing area were designated as a Special District for protection and enhancement. The District regulations call for specific building height, front yard setback, landscaping, and architectural...
INTRODUCTION

Design requirements. Design review is prioritized for projects within the Core Area around Diamond Head and for areas visible from public vantage points.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES & VISION

The principle goal of the Diamond Head Special District is view corridor protection and maintenance of open space qualities of key places. In order to protect and enhance the character of the Diamond Head Special District, the following objectives have been adopted:

a. To preserve existing prominent public views and the natural appearance of Diamond Head by modifying construction projects that would diminish these resources.

b. To preserve and enhance the park-like character of the immediate slopes of the Diamond Head Monument, which includes Kapiolani Park.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL & SCENIC STRUCTURES & SIGNIFICANT SITES

Historically and culturally significant structures and sites include, but are not limited to:

a. Diamond Head State Monument and the slopes of Diamond Head.
b. Diamond Head Beach Park.
c. U.S. Coast Guard Diamond Head Lighthouse.
d. Waikiki Natatorium War Memorial and Sans Souci State Recreation Area.
e. Doris Duke’s Shangri La.
f. Waikiki Bandstand.
g. Kapiolani Park.
h. Diamond Head Circle.
i. La Pietra Hawaii School for Girls.
j. Fort Ruger Historical District.
k. Honolulu Zoo Entrance.

This above list is not comprehensive. When reviewing projects involving historically significant structures and sites, DPP staff will take guidance from the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. SHPD regularly updates the Hawaii Register of Historic Places, which is an official list of properties that have been recognized for their significance to the history, architecture, archaeology, or culture of Hawaii communities. (Buildings, structures, sites, district, and objects over 50 years old are eligible for nomination to the Hawaii Register.)

Waikiki Natatorium War Memorial and nearby Sans Souci State Recreation Area are historically and culturally important landmarks in the Diamond Head District.

The Waikiki Bandstand, a beautiful Victorian-style structure, is located in Kapiolani Park.
PUBLIC VANTAGE POINTS & VIEWING SITES

The maps below indicate streets and sites with prominent views of Diamond Head (highlighted in orange).

Public streets with prominent public vantage points:
- Ala Wai Boulevard from McCully Street to Kapahulu Avenue.
- Paki Avenue from Kapahulu Avenue to Diamond Head Road.
- Diamond Head Road.
- Date Street from the Manoa-Palolo Drainage Canal to Kapahulu Avenue.
- Campbell Avenue from Kapahulu Avenue to Monsarrat Avenue.
- Kalakaua Avenue from Kapahulu Avenue to Coconut Avenue.
- Kapahulu Avenue in the vicinity of the intersection of Date Street and Campbell Avenue.
- Monsarrat Avenue.
- 12th Avenue from Maunaloa Avenue to Alohea Avenue.
- 18th Avenue from Kilauea Avenue to Diamond Head Road.
- Kilauea Avenue from Elepaio Street to 12th Avenue.

Public viewing sites:
1. Ala Moana Beach, including Magic Island.
2. The beaches extending from the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor to Sans Souci Beach.
4. Honolulu Zoo.
5. Ala Wai Golf Course.
6. Ala Wai Park.
8. Fort Ruger Park (Kahala Triangle Park).
14. H-1 Freeway near the Kapahulu Avenue overpass.
15. Punchbowl lookouts.
16. Puu Ualakaa State Park lookout.
INTRODUCTION

Diamond Head Special District Boundaries Map.

The Core Area within the Special District has greater landscaping and design controls than parts of the District outside of the Core Area. When referring to the Land Use Ordinance for guidance on Special District regulations, applicants should first check whether the subject property is within the Core Area.

DIAMOND HEAD SPECIAL DISTRICT Boundaries Map.
INTRODUCTION

AERIAL VIEW OF DIAMOND HEAD SPECIAL DISTRICT

As one can see from the above image, the areas surrounding Diamond Head and Kapiolani Park have been mostly developed. It is all the more important that, as we continue to develop and re-develop, we do so thoughtfully in a way that is in harmony with our natural landmarks and resources.
The prime objective of the District is to protect views of the Diamond Head Monument and allow it to remain the dominant physical form in the area. It is equally important to protect the park-like setting of its periphery.

Structures should be oriented to minimize disruption of views to Diamond Head. Large buildings in the Core Area should be well screened or massed in a way to reduce building bulk and visual impact.

Views of parking, service areas, driveways, mechanical equipment, and other conspicuous uses and structures, should be screened to preserve the park-like setting of the District.
HEIGTS

The limitation of building heights in the District is the primary means of preserving views of Diamond Head from major streets and other public viewing areas (refer to previous maps of Public Vantage Points and Viewing Sites). The District boundaries, and height limits as designated in the LUO, are the result of view plane studies and analysis to determine the impact of building heights on views of Diamond Head from its surrounding environs. The City and County of Honolulu’s Primary Urban Center Development Plan (2004) also emphasizes the importance of view corridors of natural landmarks, like Diamond Head, to be protected.

Within the Core Area, on slopes exceeding 20 percent, structures should be terraced or split-level in design. This is to minimize the adverse visual effects of building height and bulk, grading construction of retaining walls, and excessive removal of natural vegetation.

Examples below illustrate appropriate design solutions.
LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is required in the District in order to soften and blend man-made elements with the natural backdrop of Diamond Head.

In order to enhance the appearance of the District, all yards are required to be landscaped. Retention of existing trees over a six-inch caliper is encouraged when there are development alternatives. If a tree over six inches in caliper is to be removed, then it must be replaced with a two-inch-minimum-caliper tree. Applicants can apply for a Special District Minor Permit for tree removal and replacement. Replacement trees do not have to be the same type as the original trees, but their canopies should be similar in size if space allows. Planting of large, canopy-form trees, such as Monkeypod and Formosan Koa, or planting trees in groupings, are encouraged if there is sufficient space. Acceptable tree species include Coconut, Paperbark, and Eucalyptus.

For new development or significant redevelopment, owners are required to install street trees. (A list of preferred street tree types is included towards the end of this Guideline in the Streetscape & Public Life chapter.) In the event that there are no feasible locations for street trees within the sidewalk area or in the required front yard, substitute landscaping may be permitted upon approval of the DPP director.

Within the Core Area, the downhill side of structures should be landscaped with tall, vertical or canopy-form trees. The underside of elevated structures should be screened with landscaping. Vertical form trees with a minimum of two-inch caliper must be planted for every 20 feet of linear building length.

All fences and walls exceeding 36 inches in height within the Core Area and along Diamond Head Road, Monsarrat Avenue and Kalakaua Avenue must be set back a minimum of 18 inches from the property line along street frontages, and landscaped with vine or hedge plantings to provide a more attractive streetscape appearance for people walking, bicycling, or driving by (see figure below). These landscaping requirements help ensure that neighborhoods in the District have a cohesive, natural, and lush appearance.
PARKING

Parking and loading areas should be located within the interior of lots, whenever possible, and must always be screened from street view with hedges at least 42 inches high.

Where parking structures are necessary, they should be screened from view by canopy form and tall, vertical-form trees. Planters with climbing or cascading vines and flowering shrubs should also be used along the exterior edges of parking decks, to soften the appearance of the parking structure. Trellises and planting material should be used to help mitigate the visual impact of rooftop parking.

All required yards within the Diamond Head Special District must be landscaped and maintained. In order to soften the harsh appearance of large surface parking lots, landscaping on grade is required in all zoning districts in accordance with specific guidelines and regulations of the zoning code.

The parking structure at the Outrigger Yacht Club off of Kalakaua Avenue is screened with tall trees and hedges to reduce negative visual impact. The site's landscaping elements provide visual relief and promote a sense of tranquility due to ample greenery. The green elements create a more harmonious relationship between the buildings and the natural environment.
ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

ROOF DESIGN

Within the Core Area along the base and slopes of Diamond Head, large flat and single-shaped roofs should not be used. Roofs should be faceted and sloped parallel with the topography to minimize their visual impact.

BUILDING BULK & FACADE TREATMENT

Building facades should be articulated to break up building bulk, and not visually detract from the views of Diamond Head. Large, smooth surface walls perpendicular to views of Diamond Head when seen from public parks and major streets are inappropriate.

The use of lanais, deep overhangs, recessed windows, and offsets in wall planes are some ways to achieve desired scale and articulation.

MATERIALS & COLOR

Building materials and finishes, especially those located on buildings on the slopes of Diamond Head, should complement rather than contrast with the natural earth-tone colors and park-like setting. The use of shiny metal or highly reflective surfaces should be avoided. On non-residential structures, large blank walls should be textured or patterned to subdue their visual appearance. Reflective or opaque glass films on store-front windows are discouraged, as they cause reflections and glare, which detract from views to and from Diamond Head.
Exterior facades of residential and commercial structures should be designed to have architectural scale, materials, colors and exterior finishes and features that relate in a compatible manner to nearby existing structures, particularly small-scale development.

Warm, earth-tone colors should be selected to reduce building contrast and enhance the serene quality of the District. Reflective and iridescent colors should not be used. Bright white is discouraged as it is extremely noticeable against the Diamond Head natural setting. Off-white is acceptable for trims. Orange-reddish colors should be muted and not bright. Color samples or swatches may be sent to the DPP Land Use Permits Division, Urban Design Branch for review and comment before a building permit application is submitted.

**LIGHTING**

Lighting should be subdued and shielded so as not to detract from the nature-oriented ambiance of the District. Incandescent light fixtures and low bollard-type fixtures are recommended. High intensity light sources, such as exposed sodium and fluorescent lamps, are discouraged. Lighting in parking garages should be concealed or shielded to minimize glare and spillage onto vehicular and pedestrian rights-of-way.

Examples of textured material, subdued lighting, and wooden embellishments that positively contribute to architectural character.
Mechanical and communications equipment, such as ducts, chillers, cooling towers, and dish antennae must be screened so that they are not visible from public areas within the District.

To effectively screen rooftop equipment, options include installing trellises and landscaping in planter boxes, painting the equipment to match the color of the building, or constructing an enclosure and painting that enclosure to match the appearance of the building.

To the greatest extent possible, solar panels should be hidden from street view, preferably behind a parapet. Solar panels should also be assembled in small groups instead of large batches to reduce visual impact.

Green space on roofs beautify the building and the surrounding area, and positively contribute to Diamond Head's park-like setting. Besides providing aesthetic benefits, green roofs can help manage stormwater retention and runoff and help prevent flooding, remove air pollutants, insulate sound, and lower surface and air temperatures which reduce energy demand and ameliorate the urban heat island effect.
The design of the streetscape addresses the relationship between buildings and the public realm. Amenities such as street trees, street furniture, shade devices, landscaping, paving, and appropriate massing and setbacks can serve to contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages public social interaction (e.g., strolling, gathering, and other types of contact among residents and neighbors) as well as outdoor commercial activity (e.g., outdoor dining, vending, etc.).

A thriving streetscape benefits retail, small businesses, and neighborhood-based economic development. It fosters a sense of place and feelings of community pride and ownership. Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes in residential neighborhoods encourage residents and visitors to explore those neighborhoods by foot, prompting healthy physical activity and opportunities for people to acquaint themselves with the neighborhood on a more intimate level.

STREET TREES

For new developments or significant improvements to existing structures, street trees (at a minimum two-inch caliper) are required as part of landscaping. Species and spacing shall be chosen from an approved tree list on file with DPP and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Property owners adjacent to the street trees are responsible for planting and maintaining (irrigating) the trees.

Appropriate small trees, for example, include Alibangbang (Butterfly), African Mimusops, Carob Tree, Crepe Myrtle, Lignum Vitae, Ohia Lehua, Palmer’s Tecoma, Silver Trumpet Tree, and Southern Magnolia.
Appropriate medium trees, for example, include Giant Crepe Myrtle, Golden Buttercup, Golden Trumpet Tree, Manele, Milo, Pak Lan, Pink Tecoma, Silver Buttonwood, True Kou, Tulipwood, and Tuckeroo.

Appropriate large trees, for example, include Cabbage Tree, Gold Tree, Jacaranda, Mahogany, Moreton Bay Fig, and Rainbow Shower Tree.

The choice between sizes of trees depends on available sidewalk and planter space. A minimum of four-foot by six-foot tree grates is recommended. Trees with canopies offer pedestrians shade and relief from the sun.

**STREET FURNITURE & HARDSCAPING ELEMENTS**

Street furnishings are encouraged because they add vitality to the pedestrian experience and recognize the importance of people on foot to the fabric of a vibrant urban environment. They make walking, bicycling, and public transit more inviting, improve the economy, and create a place for social interaction. For more information, refer to the *Honolulu Complete Streets Design Manual (2016)*.

To minimize disruption to the streetscape, new utilities must be placed underground within any special district.

**GENERAL STREETSCAPE**

Owners can contribute to attractive streetscapes by limiting curb cuts, placing parking in the rear of the building instead of in front, respecting the existing streetscape environment to maintain continuity, placing usable entry doors and windows at street level, etc. The front yard especially presents an opportunity to blend public and private space. These strategies create buildings that help people turn their “eyes on the street” and are aligned with the *Primary Urban Center Development Plan (2004)*, which encourages use of these tools for enhancing the livability of communities.

Streets that are appropriate and reflective of the Diamond Head Special District include Monsarrat Avenue, Campbell Avenue, Kapahulu Avenue, and Diamond Head Road.

Campbell Avenue has excellent open views of Diamond Head Crater. Low development and tree lined sidewalks keep the view of Diamond Head unobstructed and consistent with the park-like character of the District.

Concentrating commercial activity to certain streets help to preserve other areas for nature. Parts of Monsarrat and Kapahulu Avenues are reminiscent of a “Main Street” small town commercial block, being walkable and built at a human scale for high-volume pedestrian activity. For new developments or major improvements to existing developments on Kapahulu Avenue, south of Mooheau Avenue, new or improved structures should be consistent with existing buildings which are built close to the sidewalk.
Diamond Head Road is an important street in the District that wraps around the crater, offering users scenic views of the ocean on the makai side. The mauka side of Diamond Head Road is characterized by well-landscaped single-family dwellings that beautify the area.

Diamond Head Road is also characterized by recreational use – bicycle lanes, sharrows, and a 1.3-mile shared-use path, the Fort Ruger Pathway, located on the exterior backside of Diamond Head Crater along Diamond Head Road. Recreational activities give life to the district and usable parks offer opportunities for social activity and respite better than landscaped buffers.

Major proposals for redevelopment may require property owners to contribute to improved streetscapes or enhanced connectivity, synchronizing or improving upon what is already there, and complementing the community's vision and sense of place.

These dwellings on the mauka side of Diamond Head Road have landscaped front yards. All required yards within the District must be landscaped and maintained.

The Fort Ruger Pathway adjacent to Diamond Head Road offers public outdoor fitness equipment and a multi-use, tree-lined path for residents and visitors. The public outdoor fitness equipment at Kapiolani Park is popular and well used. A bicycle lane on Diamond Head Road encourages recreational bicycling and automobile drivers to share the road. These attractive amenities encourage development, but at the same time set a standard for the community's design expectations.
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP 4

The Transit-Oriented Development Plan is moving ahead!

At the first three Workshops, issues and opportunities concerning the Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands and Pearlridge station areas were identified, Draft Station Area Alternatives were studied, and Preferred Station Area Plans were developed based on community input.

Workshop 4 will present the Public Review Draft Plan and will include illustrations showing proposed land uses, development opportunities, parks and open spaces. The presentation will also include zoning recommendations and phasing strategies for each of the stations.

Community involvement - the sharing of your ideas and perspectives - is key to the success of the Plan. Please join us!

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2010
6:30 - 9:00 PM
Pearl Ridge Elementary School

Need more info?
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