

# PART I

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## INTRODUCTION





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**Project Overview**

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) was contracted by the City of South Pasadena (City) to prepare a set of design guidelines that would provide direction for a wide variety of design projects in the City. These guidelines are intended to update the City's existing design guidelines to provide clear and explicit guidance to all review agencies and City departments to facilitate reasonable, efficient, and fair review of proposed projects.

The City of South Pasadena adopted an updated General Plan in 1998. A revised Zoning Code was subsequently adopted in 2002. Community and neighborhood character is important to the residents of South Pasadena. Commercial buildings range from early 20th Century to the 1980s, with a few newer projects constructed in the past decade.

The Mission Street Specific Plan was adopted in 1996 and contains zoning regulations and design guidelines for that important commercial area. Outside of the Mission Street district, however, only rudimentary design guidelines are in place for commercial areas and those pre-date the adoption of the General Plan.

A Cultural Heritage Inventory, consisting of almost 2,500 properties, was adopted in 1994 and is undergoing update through intensive-level surveys using Certified Local Government (CLG) grants. This inventory identified the character defining features common to South Pasadena's vernacular architecture, and the inventory forms should be referenced when proposed projects involve commercial buildings included in the inventory.

The Planning Commission, Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Commission all have specific responsibilities for reviewing new development or alterations to existing structures.

Many of the documents noted above and information on project review processes can be found on the City's website at [www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/planning](http://www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us/planning).



*Photo credit: © Kim Ziel*

Information can be obtained first-hand at the Planning & Building Department in City Hall, at 1424 Mission Street in South Pasadena.



**PURPOSE**



*Photo credit: © The Kutzer Company*

The Fair Hope Building, built in 1911 was carefully renovated in 2006 with sensitivity to its heritage and design that enhances the visibility of its modern commercial tenants. This building was awarded the Golden Storefront Award by the Chamber of Commerce in 2007.



*Photo credit: © The Kutzer Company*

The Fair Hope Building before renovation

**Purpose**

Design guidelines are one of many urban planning tools communities can use to encourage high-quality design and construction. This approach has been adopted and implemented in many Southern California communities.

Design guidelines increase the awareness of building owners and designers to the architectural, historic, and site planning features that are traditional to South Pasadena and emphasize the importance of preserving and maintaining those features when making alterations or designing new construction. Design guidelines assist in determining acceptable alterations, repairs, and additions to existing buildings and appropriate design criteria for new buildings.

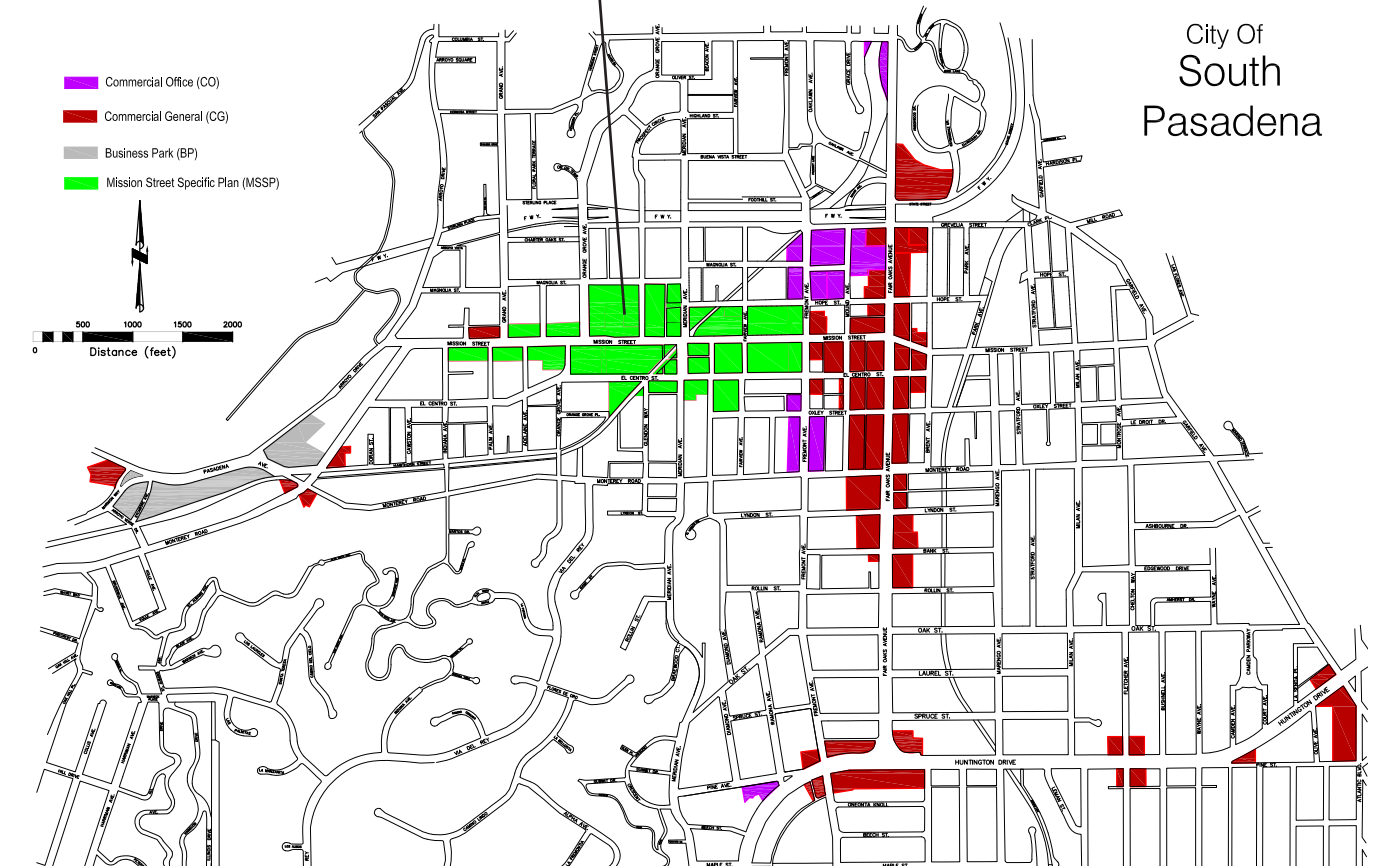
However, these guidelines are not meant to dictate specific design solutions or stifle creative design. The guidelines do not substitute for case-specific analysis and thoughtful input from designers, project sponsors, City employees and volunteer design review participants.

**Applicability and How to Use this Document**

**The guidelines supplement, but do not override, those found in the City's Zoning Code and will serve as the basis for decisions by the Design Review Boards and by City staff.** In addition, the guidelines for historic residences will assist the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) in making the required findings under the City's Cultural Heritage Ordinance and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Design Guidelines for Commercial Areas apply to all construction located within commercially zoned districts of the City. These guidelines do not apply to any buildings located within commercial Specific Plan areas.

**Not Applicable in Mission Street Specific Plan**  
See separate Design Guidelines.



*Photo credit: © City of South Pasadena*

The booklet only pertains to the commercial areas shown on this zoning map, and excludes parcels inside Specific Plan Areas. For Design Guidelines in Specific Plan Areas, call the Planning and Building Department. This map shows only general zoning classifications. Call the Planning and Building Department for the zoning classification of a specific property.