Designing for Change

many thanks to:

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What fits in Coupeville?

- A wide range of architectural styles, but with
- Common building and site characteristics
- Some of these are referred to in the Historic Preservation Goals and Policies, adopted in 1999.
Historic Preservation Goals and Policies, 1999

Goal 5: Historic preservation should be considered as an active part of the review process in all parts of Town, with standards appropriate to each district.

C. Review zoning and building requirements to encouraging new construction and major remodels to be compatible with (but not mimicking) nearby older homes in terms of size, massing and general appearance.

D. Develop broad and specific design guidelines for new construction and major remodels for each identified neighborhood, emphasizing that which is visible from major streets and entryways.
characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings

simple house form
proportions

characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings
characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings

windows
characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings

porches
characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings

no front parking / garage doors
characteristics of historic Coupeville buildings
What is allowed in Coupeville?

- The Preservation Goals and Policies are still goals.

- Outside the Historic District, there are no specific zoning requirements or design review beyond the normal zone requirements.

- More detailed proposals are in the draft Design Guidelines, from 2003.
Design Guidelines

Designers should not mimic old buildings but, in designing a new building, should consider the proportions and relationships of older buildings and their components, such as windows, doors and rooflines. It is also important that building orientation, height and scale be compatible with the site and with adjoining buildings....

Design Standards:

1. Construct new structures to be similar to, but not mimic, existing nearby structures, particularly those that are considered historically significant. Take cues from architectural styles and materials representative of the overall neighborhood, not just a single nearby structure.

2. Continue the pattern of massing, height, bulk and setbacks established by the existing structures. New buildings should not be identical to neighboring structures, but should be generally similar to them....
Settlement pattern

• Change focus a bit, from the buildings to the overall context

• The spaces between the buildings (streets, rights-of-way, yards, setbacks) and the quality of those spaces.

• The pattern of buildings and open spaces.

• Buildings as the means, not the ends.
Assumptions

• Coupeville is unique.
  - It is the oldest extant town fabric in the Northwest
• It should look more like itself, and less like other places
• It is not the building design that matters as much as the pattern of the town - the ways the buildings relate to each other and the surrounding open space.
  - People respond to individual buildings, but even more to the overall character of the place.
• New development shouldn't copy old buildings, but should reinforce the historic pattern -
  • because the pattern is historic, not just the buildings.
  • because it makes better neighborhoods than post-war patterns (New Urbanism)
Research and studio, 2007 to present

Approach

• Look at and document the historical context
  - mainly, the Cranney plat of the Coupe claim
  - present town form, but also prior stages of historic town form.

• Analyze this data to find the relevant patterns
  - lot sizes
  - setbacks and building location
  - building size, proportion and height
  - yards and parking

• Base design guidelines on these discernable patterns
Research and studio, 2007 to present

Research to date

• Photographing all structures in the historic town
  - a snapshot in time
  - useful for any future research

• Archival research
  - Island County Historical Society
  - University of Washington Special Collections - photographs
  - Island County - plat and lot information

• Goal - pull together and organize all the information available on the physical form of Coupeville throughout its history
Research and studio, 2007 to present

Research products

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Research and studio, 2007 to present

Research products

Plans - through time

- based on plat maps, aerial photos, other photos, Sanborn maps
- drawn in CAD program (can be easily modified)
- differentiate accurate physical location from a dot on a map
- need accurate spatial information to draw useful conclusions about shaping the town
Research and studio, 2007 to present

Research products

Google Earth / Sketch Up model

- 3D model of the historic center of Coupeville
- rather than looking at plans of buildings and proposals, can walk down streets and experience how it will look and feel
- eventually will be all of town center
- throughout history, as buildings come and go
- will be available on the web to everyone
Research and studio, 2007 to present
Research and studio,  2007 to present

Design Studio, Fall 2008

Goals - for the students

• learn how to design buildings that are primarily driven by the need to reinforce the existing qualities of the town, rather than buildings that are driven mainly by the client’s program.

• learn how ordinances, regulations and guidelines affect design

• see that their work can contribute something concrete to the world, rather than remaining purely “academic”
Research and studio, 2007 to present

Design Studio, Fall 2008

Goals - for the Town

- test the existing zoning ordinance and other requirements
- test the proposed historic preservation design guidelines
- arrive at some possible clarifications or amendments to the proposed guidelines
- create a 3D model of the town which can be used in the review process anytime in the future.
Studio process

- each student selects one site in Coupeville or on the prairie
- for that site, there will be at least five design studies
  - the best design, under the existing zoning
  - the worst design under the existing zoning
  - the best design under the proposed guidelines
  - the worst design under the proposed guidelines
  - a revised design which helps to generate revised guidelines
What’s next

• Studio projects completed early December

• Will post on web, along with models of Coupeville

• Continue analysis in winter
  - building form, proportion, scale, etc.
  - building and site relationships - setbacks, side yards, parking

• Goal: seeing if more definite criteria can be added to the draft design guidelines
Design Guidelines

Designers should not mimic old buildings but, in designing a new building, should consider the proportions and relationships of older buildings and their components, such as windows, doors and rooflines. It is also important that building orientation, height and scale be compatible with the site and with adjoining buildings....

Design Standards:

1. Construct new structures to be similar to, but not mimic, existing nearby structures, particularly those that are considered historically significant. Take cues from architectural styles and materials representative of the overall neighborhood, not just a single nearby structure.

2. Continue the pattern of massing, height, bulk and setbacks established by the existing structures. New buildings should not be identical to neighboring structures, but should be generally similar to them....
Preliminary observations

• Even within the historic center of Coupeville, different approaches to guidelines might be useful
  - Front St. and Main St. - a form-based code?
  - The rest of the district - a set of standards?

• The pattern of setbacks
zoning - uniform setbacks

large front yards with driveways / wall of wide houses / long and narrow backyards with high fences
zoning - uniform setbacks

large front yards with driveways / wall of wide houses / long and narrow backyards with high fences
pre-zoning - variety of setbacks

smaller front yards / parking to sides / more useful backyards
pre-zoning - variety of setbacks
information, student designs, and Google Earth models of Coupeville buildings will be available at:

http://uoregon.edu/~pkeyes