

Building Mass and Scale in Historic Districts West Palm Beach, Florida



Because traditional mass and scale varies greatly across West Palm Beach's fourteen historic districts, standards and guidelines need to be context sensitive.

Services:

- Mass and scale studies in the city's fourteen historic districts
- Community workshops
- Citizen, realtor and construction industry focus groups
- Context sensitive standards and guidelines for mass and scale in historic districts

Client:

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Department
City of West Palm Beach

Date: 2007-2010

The City of West Palm Beach is positioned between the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and the vast Everglades wilderness. Rapid growth has pushed the region to a turning point. Developable land is now scarce, greatly increasing the demand for infill development. As a result, redevelopment pressure is rising in many of West Palm Beach's fourteen residential historic districts.

A consultant team led by Winter & Company assisted the City of West Palm Beach with tools to protect the character of its historic districts. The City and consultant team developed context sensitive dimensional standards and improved guidelines to ensure that new infill and additions are compatible with the surrounding design character.



In the first phase of the project, Winter & Company modeled infill trends in different contexts throughout historic districts in West Palm Beach. The models help identify potential issues occurring with new development.

PLANNING SERVICES

Building Mass and Scale in Historic Districts West Palm Beach (continued)



Access to the Intracoastal Waterway is contributing to rising property values and development pressure in many of the city's historic districts.

The process included active public participation in a series of community workshops. In these workshops, participants identified the character-defining features of the city's historic districts and current building issues that impact the character. Solutions were explored that balance preservation objectives with the needs of individual homeowners. While discussing solutions, it was important to consider:

- Quality of life and sense of community currently enjoyed by residents
- The ability of residents and private builders to invest and expand
- Current trends in residential development
- The effectiveness of current regulations
- The simplicity and ease of use of any future regulations



The community participated in the planning process through a series of public workshops.

The project's initial assessment phase set the stage for a strategy to select the appropriate regulatory tools to address building scale and preliminary recommendations. After establishing the strategy, Winter & Company developed and presented tools to address mass and scale throughout historic districts in West Palm Beach.

The regulations were adopted in April 2010.



Winter & Company used interactive workshop exercises to encourage community involvement.



West Palm Beach is seeking to protect its unique architectural heritage.