

# Neighborhood Character Diagram Guidelines Version 3.9

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline minimum requirements for completing an attachment to a land use application, while allowing for flexibility and professional judgment. The Neighborhood Character Diagram is an application component required of many land use applications for Special Permits, Authorizations and Certifications detailed in the New York City Zoning Resolution. The drawing depicts the massing of proposed building(s) that would be facilitated by proposed land use actions, on a development site and in relation to neighboring structures.

## When to Use

The Neighborhood Character Diagram is required for specific Special Permit, Authorization and Certification actions listed in the New York City Zoning Resolution. Applicants for specific land use actions will be informed of all required drawings for their particular application at the Interdivisional Meeting.

## Exceptions & Modifications

These guidelines provide general guidance only. Depending on the specifics of the project, the DCP Project Team may require drawings and information in addition to or different from those described in the guidelines. At the Interdivisional Meeting, the DCP Project Team will discuss whether and to what extent preparation of the application requires exceptions to or modifications of these guidelines, in order to take into account site or project features.

This drawing is similar to drawings that may be required within the Urban Design section of the CEQR analysis, depending on your specific project. Applicants should discuss with EARD and TRD how to use the diagram for both the land use application and CEQR application when applicable.

A similar diagram required for applications filed with the Landmarks Preservation Commission may be able to be substituted for this application requirement, in lieu of these guidelines, which should be discussed and confirmed with DCP staff at the Interdivisional Meeting.

## Overview

The Neighborhood Character Diagram is an elevation drawing depicting the context of proposed structures to structures neighboring the development site. The diagram should clearly illustrate the relationship between these existing neighboring buildings, and the proposed structure that would be facilitated by the requested land use actions. It should also communicate how the applicant's proposed building would differ from what is allowed under the existing zoning. Neighborhood Character Diagrams should always include: the development site shown in context with appropriate labeling as described below. There may also be specific site conditions that need further description, which the DCP team will provide guidance on at the Interdivisional Meeting. Be cognizant that these drawings will be viewed by both technical experts and the general public, so clarity and accuracy in proportion and scale are important. Dimensions may be shown as (a) feet and percent of feet, otherwise known as decimal feet or (b) feet and inches. For example, a dimension may be either 5' 3" or 5.25".

## Neighborhood Character Diagram Details

**Table A. Format Requirements**

Number	Format Requirements
1	<p><b>Scale &amp; Dimensions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale should be appropriate to the size of the development site and the extent of the drawing.</li> <li>• Sheet size determines scale on large development proposals.</li> <li>• Dimensions may be shown as (a) feet and percent of feet, otherwise known as decimal feet or (b) feet and inches. For example, a dimension may be either 5' 3" or 5.25". You may choose to show dimensions either way, but your choice should be consistent across all documents.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Page Size</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 11" x 17" – Maximum 36" x 48".</li> <li>• Drawing size should be consistent with all the other large format drawings in the set.</li> <li>• Space should also be left on the drawing for the approval label (4" x 3.25").</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Shading, Color and Hatching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCP will accept drawings and documents in color, so long as the drawing remains legible (Note: D.O.B.'s BSCAN requires documents and diagrams to be legible and in B/W when scanned).</li> <li>• Applicants may use color, patterns and/or line types as long as each is clearly defined.</li> </ul>

Number	Format Requirements
4	<p><b>Scale and Title Block</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Arrow.</li> <li>• Graphic Scale.</li> <li>• Legend (if symbols are used).</li> <li>• Title block with the following content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location Information (Borough, Block, Lot ).</li> <li>○ Primary firm preparing the drawing clearly identified.</li> <li>○ Room for sign &amp; seal (should not block other relevant information).</li> <li>○ Drawing name (should be specific and reference purpose/focus of drawing).</li> <li>○ Drawing sheet number.</li> <li>○ Drawing created date.</li> <li>○ Last revised date (and clearly marked as such).</li> <li>○ Project name/identifier (address, project name, ULURP #, etc).</li> <li>○ If applying for multiple land use actions, clearly distinguish among each application and note content related to each action.</li> <li>○ Drawing notes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Drawing Extent/Surrounding Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the entire extent of the development site and the zoning lot.</li> <li>• Extend the view in the diagram 600’ in either direction from the development site OR the total length of the block frontage plus 30’, across the public right-of-way, whichever is longer.</li> <li>• If the site is adjacent to or within 100’ of a major physical (natural or man-made) barrier that prevents access to the site, then the site should be shown to one side of the drawing, in order to pick up more of the connected neighborhood fabric.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Drawing Certification Note</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following notes should be included OUTSIDE of the title block: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Applicant’s stamp and seal corresponds to the information regarding the development site, zoning lot, and related curb cuts. Information regarding the surrounding properties is for illustrative purposes only.”</li> <li>○ The following note may be included on the drawing, based on the conditions of approval for the specific land use action: “This drawing is for illustrative purposes only.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Number	Format Requirements
7	<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing should be a 2D elevation of frontages facing public streets.</li> <li>• 3D modeling (Revit, SketchUp, AutoCAD, etc.) is permissible as long as the resulting drawing or series of drawings is exported as a 2D elevation.</li> <li>• General principles of consistent and accurate scale, clarity, and quality are expected regardless of methodology.</li> <li>• The limitation of a particular method of creating this diagram is not an acceptable reason to forgo those quality principles.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Views and Scale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The drawings should depict the development site from views that could be seen from public streets and open spaces.</li> <li>• Not all views are required.</li> <li>• The frontages that require an elevation should be discussed at the Interdivisional Meeting, and must be clearly spelled out by DCP staff.</li> <li>• Potential views requested by DCP may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Frontage(s) of the development site on public streets.</li> <li>○ Across the street from the development site.</li> <li>○ Frontages of nearby cross streets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sides of the building facing publicly inaccessible areas such as private yards or freight rail beds are generally not needed.</li> <li>• If there are multiple views of the site, the same scale should be utilized for all (the north view of the site should be shown at the same scale as the east view, etc.).</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Layout, Titles and Key Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple views/elevations may be contained on the same drawing sheet or on separate drawing sheets.</li> <li>• Maximum number of drawings per sheet: 4.</li> <li>• Clearly label each Neighborhood Character Diagram with the direction of view. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: <i>Neighborhood Character diagram of north side of West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Include a key plan for reference that shows where the elevation is taken, and label: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Streets.</li> <li>○ Zoning lot boundary(ies).</li> <li>○ Label public space(s).</li> <li>○ Sheet cut lines.</li> <li>○ Buildings.</li> <li>○ Open space.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table B. Content Requirements**

Number	Content Requirements
1	<p><b>Development Site Boundary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show development site boundaries with a vertical dotted line.</li> <li>• If the development site includes multiple zoning lots, each should be shown with a similar boundary.</li> <li>• Where development site boundaries differ from the zoning lot lines, there should be a clear graphic differentiation between site boundaries and zoning lot.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Silhouettes of all Buildings within the Drawing Extent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show silhouettes of all buildings (existing and proposed) along the street wall shared with the development site and viewable from the pedestrian realm.</li> <li>• Show silhouette of all structures on the development site (existing and proposed) and differentiate between the two.</li> <li>• For buildings other than the development site, you may use simple boxes in place of exact silhouettes and estimated building heights.</li> <li>• Label building height and numbers of stories (i.e., “3 story 30’ ”).</li> <li>• Bulkheads need not be shown unless the applicant is requesting a land use action that would allow for a larger bulkhead than zoning allows.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate street widths using a vertical dashed line.</li> <li>• Other infrastructure within the drawing extent must be depicted and labeled. May use a simplified drawing to depict.</li> <li>• Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Elevated train tracks.</li> <li>○ Overpasses.</li> <li>○ Billboards.</li> <li>○ Bridges.</li> <li>○ Major natural features.</li> <li>○ Open spaces (label only).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

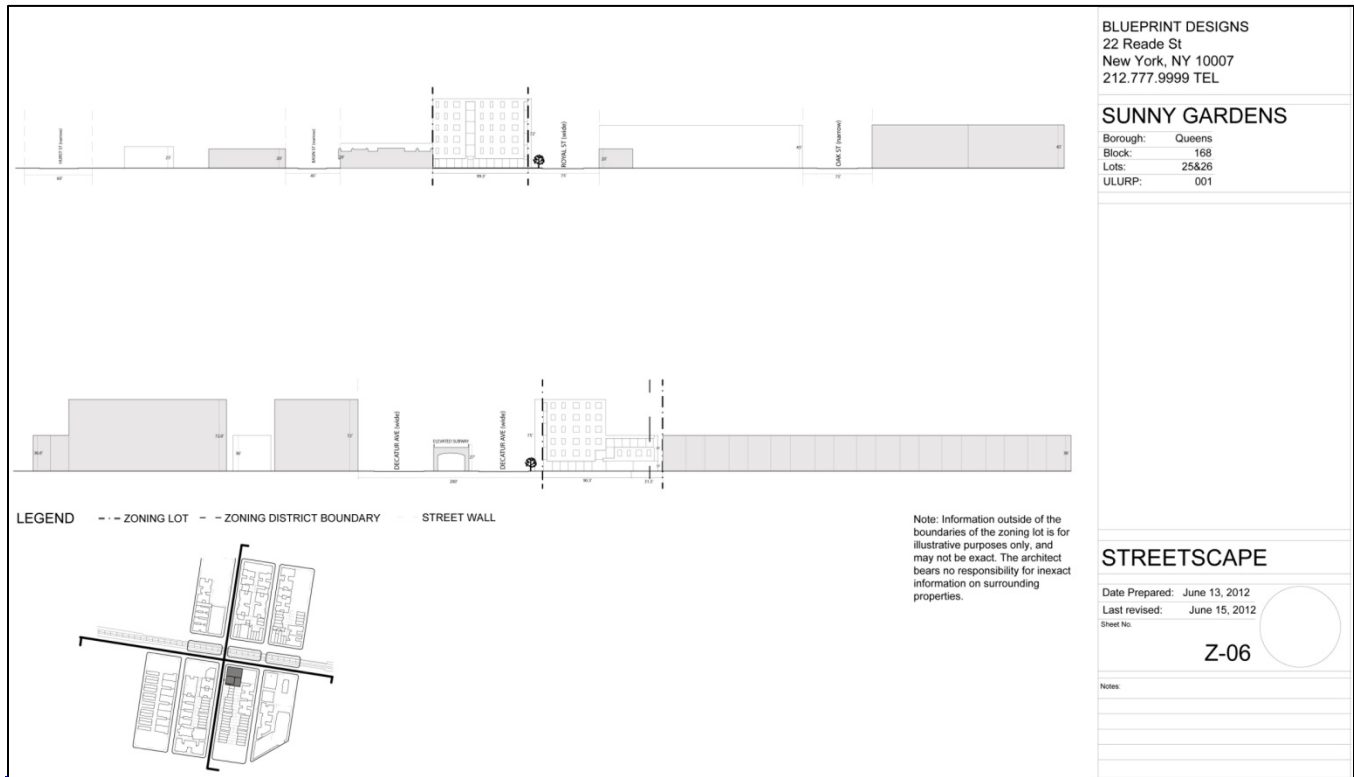
Number	Content Requirements
4	<p><b>Measurements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development site building heights must be measured from ground to roof, unless the bulkhead is larger than is allowed by zoning and requires a land use action, in which case, the applicant should measure to the bulkhead.</li> <li>• Surrounding context structures' estimated heights may be labeled in feet and percent of feet or decimal feet, or in number of stories (including neighboring buildings' bulkheads is optional).</li> <li>• Surrounding context structures' dimensions can be approximate.</li> <li>• Note method of measuring heights, or note data source for approximate heights and elevation.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Zoning Envelope Details</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included an outline of the as-of-right building envelope.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Labels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Label streets, highways, waterways, and railroads.</li> <li>• Use official names (ie. E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street). Generally known abbreviations are acceptable (Ave, St, etc.).</li> <li>• Indicate traffic direction.</li> <li>• Indicate base plane, ground level, or curb level (whichever are applicable).</li> </ul>

**Table C. Typical Additional Requirements**

Additional items may be requested depending on a variety of factors such as the findings of a particular action, or development site-specific concerns.

Number	Typical Additional Content
1	<p><b>Adjacent Streetscape and Neighboring Buildings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lot widths.</li> <li>• Street widths.</li> </ul>

## Neighborhood Character Diagram Sample



### For More Information

Please contact your Lead Planner for additional information.

### Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
3/12/12	1.0	First Draft	Aline Fader
3/15/12	1.1	Comments	Barak Wrobel
3/15/12	1.2	Revisions based on pedestrian pov	Aline Fader
3/20/12	1.3	Revised Draft	Basha Estroff
3/21/12	1.4	Draft for External	Aline Fader
3/26/12	2.0	Revised Draft for External	Aline Fader
3/28/12	2.1	Revisions based on 3/27 meeting	Aline Fader
3/28/12	2.2	Revisions based on Basha's comments	Aline Fader
4/6/12	3.0	Revisions based on Brendan & David's comments	Aline Fader
4/11/12	3.1	Revisions	David Parish
4/12/12	3.2	Revisions	Aline Fader
5/01/12	3.3	Consistency check between guidelines w/ B. Pillar	B. Estroff
6/04/12	3.4	Edits and updates	B. Estroff
8/08/12	3.5	Edits following Standards Forum	D. Parish
11/8/12	3.6	Edits following Standards Forum	D. Parish
06/04/13	3.7	Revisions following meeting with Technical Review	B. Budelman
08/16/2013	3.8	Final version for internal review	B. Budelman
7/1/14	3.9	Final edits	C. Whitcomb