

BLEND Guidelines

Minneapolis neighborhoods are characterized by their beautiful parks, greenery, and high-quality housing stock. These neighborhoods have evolved over time and circumstance and will continue to evolve and gradually change character. The continuous influx of new residents moving into Minneapolis is a sign of health and vitality, and long-time residents stay in Minneapolis because of their pride and sense of connection to these neighborhoods.



The BLEND Awards recognize individual building projects that enhance and strengthen our Minneapolis neighborhoods. “Blending” does not require a specified architectural style, as diversity and innovation in design adds character and flavor to a neighborhood. Rather, “blending” means that new developments respect the light, privacy, and scale of the neighborhood context where residents have chosen to live for so many years. As we look to the future, today’s buildings should live for generations and contribute to a neighborhood’s character even as our lifestyle patterns change.

Size and Massing

Building mass should be comparable to the majority of other buildings on the block and particularly be sympathetic to the scale of adjacent buildings. Designers should carefully consider the impact of new construction on the sense of space, light, and view of the immediate neighbors.

Building Exterior

Architectural elements such as windows, doors, and roofs should be designed with an emphasis on successful visual proportion. Monolithic wall or roof planes that do not complement the existing neighborhood context should be broken-up into proportional elements to achieve a human scale. The quality of exterior material and detail should extend around the sides of the home rather than stop at the front corners.

Accessory Structures

Garages, gazebos, fences, decks, and Accessory Dwelling Units should complement the Primary Structure. This can be accomplished through style, color, materials, roof slope, etc. Detached garages are highly encouraged to reduce the bulk of the primary residence. Garages should be accessed from an alley, if present.

Vegetation

Significant existing trees (6” trunk or wider) and shrubs (4’ or taller) should be preserved if at all possible, paying special attention to existing root systems. Long term damage to vegetation may be avoided by erecting perimeter construction fences with the diameter of the canopy to avoid compaction from vehicles or stored materials.

Rainwater Runoff

Projects should keep rainwater contained on the lot so as not to jeopardize neighboring buildings or nearby watersheds. Rain gardens, French drains, rain-barrels, and other types of catch-basins are encouraged.