# Observational Validation of Urban Design Measures for New York City

## Field Manual

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**Prepared for:**

**Observational Validation of Urban Design Measures for New York City**


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Note: Our project extends research conducted by Reid Ewing and colleagues in their RWJF ALR-funded project, "Identifying and Measuring Urban Design Qualities Related to Walkability," and as a result draws on materials generated by this project. For more information, see http://www.activelivingresearch.org/index.php/Urban_Design_Quantities_Related_to_Walkability/357.

## What to bring with you

- The field manual
- Copies of scoring sheets
- Map of the area(s) and blocks you are visiting
- A clipboard, note paper and pen
- City and subway and/or bus map
- Metro card
- Digital camera
- Water, sunscreen, sunglasses, umbrella, and comfortable walking shoes

## Where to observe

- Once you find your block, **go to the block face marked number 1**. Stand at the end of the block with the buildings or lots on your right.

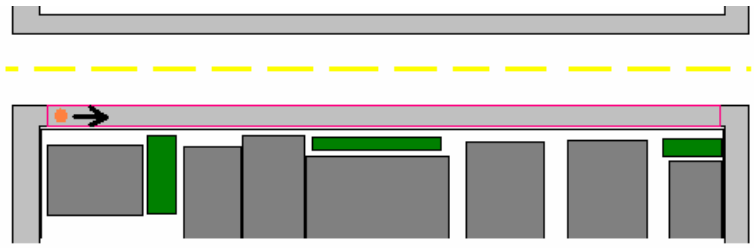
- **If you cannot walk along** the sidewalk or pathway marked number 1, go to the block marked number 2, and so on.

- Similarly, if block face number 1 is **shorter than ~200** ft. (will be identified on the map), move on to the block face numbered 2 and so on.

- The instructions will ask you to assess physical features **within** and **beyond your study area** and **on your side** and the **opposite side** of the street.

- **Study Area**. Your study area is one side of a New York block (generally a 200 x 800 ft. rectangle).
    - Determine your **study area** by standing at the end of the block with the buildings or lots on your right.

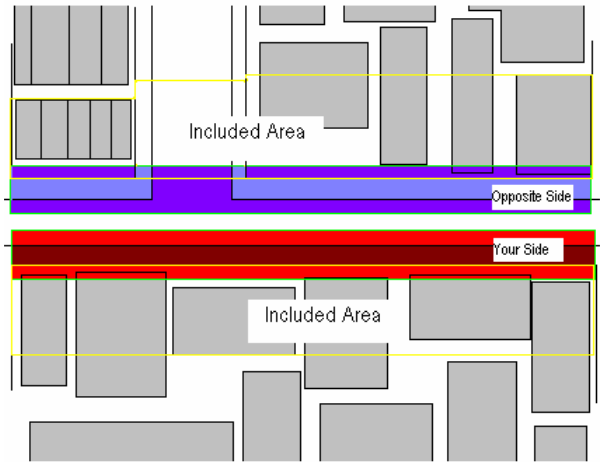
    - If your block segment is **longer than ~800 ft**. (this will be identified on the map), only assess the section highlighted on the map.



- **Beyond Study Area**. This instruction will only be used with three different measurements. When given, the instruction refers to measurements of qualities that lie beyond the block face you are rating.

- **Your side**. The block begins after a cross street & ends before the next cross street. The block consists of the visible elements of *lots* to your right. Lots must be set back no more than 10 ft from the sidewalk/path edge.

- **Opposite side**. The block across the street begins after & ends before the cross streets (same as "your side"). The block consists of visible elements of *lots* to your left that are set back no more than 10 ft from the opposite sidewalk/path edge.
    - There may be instances where there is no sidewalk/path or buildings across the street; measure the specified features as if there were and code some items as "0" if necessary.
    - There will be instances where there are cross streets on the block opposite yours that do not intersect "your side". This is ok.




## General definitions

- **Fronting the sidewalk**. Includes lots that are set back no more than 10 ft from the sidewalk/path.

- **Street level.** The first floor (pedestrian level); visible and directly accessible from the street. Extends from the sidewalk or ground-level to a height of about 10 ft.

- **Proportion**. For measurements that call for the proportion, calculate the percentage that element represents of the entire block length.
    Example: Proportion historic buildings (brown) = .60

# Urban Design Qualities Definitions

## Imageability

The quality of a place that makes it distinct, recognizable, and memorable.

**What it looks like**: When specific physical elements and their arrangement complement each other, capture attention, evoke feelings, and create a lasting impression. “Architecture that suggests importance, presence of historical buildings, and landmarks” are the qualities of a place with high imageability.

## Enclosure

The degree to which streets and other public spaces are visually defined by buildings, walls, trees, and other vertical elements.

**What it looks like**: The space has a room-like quality. The height of vertical elements is proportionally related to the width of the space between them. The buildings become the “walls” of the outdoor room. The street and sidewalk becomes the “floor”.

## Human Scale

Human scale refers to a size, texture, and articulation of physical elements that match the size and proportions of humans and correspond to the speed at which humans walk.

**What it looks like**: Buildings that include structural or architectural components of sizes and proportions that relate to the human form. Structural or architectural components that exhibit the human functions contained within.

## Transparency

Defined as the degree to which people can see or perceive human activity or what lies beyond the edge of a street or other public space.

**What it looks like**: The passerby has the ability to see human activity, or signs thereof, beyond the street edge.

## Complexity

The visual richness of a place that depends on the variety of the physical environment, including: the numbers and kinds of buildings, architectural diversity and ornamentation, street furniture, and human activity.

**What it looks like**: Complex spaces have varied building shapes, sizes, materials, colors, architecture, ornamentation, and set-backs; many windows and doors; varied lighting; and are highly populated.

# General Information

## Measuring design qualities scoring sheet

Directions:

**Auditor**: record your name.

**Street**: record the street on which your block is located.

**From**: record the starting cross street of your study area (with the lots on your right).

**To**: record the ending cross street of your study area (with the lots on your right).

**Block ID / block face num.:** Referencing the block ID on your block map, record the block ID and the number of the face you ended up rating.

**Weather/temp**: record any extreme conditions (heat, cold, rain, wind, etc.); if the weather is fine, note “normal”.

**Date & time**: record the date and the start time of your block measurements.

Proceed to the specific measurements.

# Imageability

Quality of a place that makes it distinct, recognizable, and memorable.

## 1. Count courtyards, plazas, and parks — both sides, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- As you walk count instances of (not elements or sections of) courtyards, plazas, and parks on both sides.
- Record the number of courtyards, plazas, or parks you encountered within the study area.

Definitions**:**

**Courtyard**: a permanent space in which people are intended and able to enter
**Plaza**: large, enterable open space (bigger than 15 $ft^2$), often with art, plants, or associated with building(s)
**Park**: place intended for human use/recreation; often with greenery, a playground, etc.
**Garden**: enterable and larger than 10 $ft^2$
**Note**: all features are accessible.

Examples:

NO. The lawn is surrounded by a fence and is not intended for entrance.

YES. This is a recreational park.

YES. This is a large, enterable, private garden.

YES. This is a memorial, enterable public plaza.

Questions:

**Q.** Do manicured median strips count?
**A.** No. Median strips, even those with seating, do not count.

## 2. Count major landscape features — both sides, beyond study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Looking at both sides of the street and in the distance (only **visible** and prominent features ahead); count instances of individual/distinct natural landscape elements.
- Record the number of distinct landscape elements you encountered on either side of the street or in the distance (prominent distant features only).

Definitions:

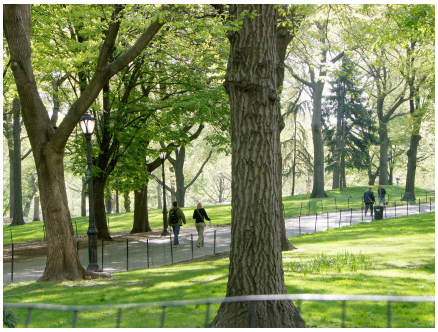
**Major landscape features**: prominent natural landscape views like bodies of water, mountain ranges, or man-made features that incorporate the natural environment; serve as natural landmarks for orientation or reference. Parks do not count as major landscape features.

Examples:

YES. This is both a park (on the right) and a major landscape feature (the harbor).

NO. Washington Sq. Park is a park and does not qualify.

NO. This does not incorporate any major landscape features.



NO. Central Park is also a park and, therefore, not to be considered a major landscape feature.

Questions:

**Q.** Does a skyline count? (see examples)
**A.** Simply a skyline is not enough to qualify, there needs to be other natural elements.
**Q.** If you know the feature is there but do not see it, does it still count?
**A.** No. If the feature is not visible walking in the designated direction on the specified block, there are no major landscape features.

| **3. Estimate proportion historic buildings** | **both sides, within study area** |
|---|---|

Directions:

- Walk the entire length of the block, looking at both sides.
- Estimate the proportion of historic buildings visible at street level (out of total block length excluding cross streets).
- Record the estimate as a decimal using increments of tenths (.10).

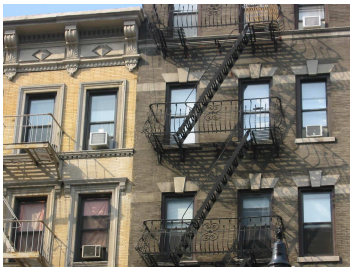
Definitions:

**Historic**: clearly determined to be pre-WWII: high detailing, dumbbell shape, iron fire escape, etc; post-WWII buildings are usually geometrically and architecturally simple (though they may be impressive), have lots of glass surface area, and little detailing.

Examples:

YES. These brownstones are typically pre-WWII.

NO. These simple buildings are typically post-WWII.



YES. The iron fire escapes and high level of detail usually signify a pre-WWII building.

NO. These glass skyscrapers are almost all post-WWII.

Questions:

**Q.** What if the building has more than one construction date?

**A.** We are primarily concerned with street level. If there is more than one construction date for the street level section of the building and the historic elements are still apparent, consider the building historic.

**Q.** What if I can't tell if the building is historic?

**A.** If there is no clear indicator that the building is historic then you cannot count it as such.

## 4. Count buildings with identifiers — both sides, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the **buildings** on both sides with identifiers that are visible from the sidewalk/path.
- Record the number of buildings with identifying features within the study area.

Definitions:

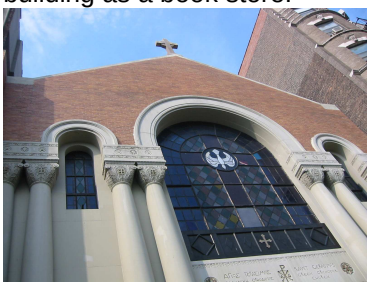
**Identifiers**: clear signs or universal symbols that reveal a building's street-level use. A steeple can identify a church, gas pump a gas station, tables and chairs – restaurants, mannequins – clothing store, etc. Words can also identify a lot/building: "high school," "restaurant," "pharmacy," "shoe store," "café," and brand or franchise names. A name such as "Joe's" would not work, while "Joe's Pub" would identify the building.
**Note**: If a single building has multiple street-level occupants, it is identifiable only if the majority of occupants are identifiable.

Examples:


NO. There is no outdoor seating, menus, or words identifying this restaurant.


YES. The window display clearly identifies this building as a book store.

NO. Even though these probably are residential buildings, there are no clear identifiers.



YES. The steeple makes this building identifiable.

Questions:

**Q.** Are residential buildings identifiable? (see examples)
**A.** Unless there is a visible sign or symbol that clearly identifies the residence (doormen do not signify residences), the building is unidentifiable. (Apartments, manor, condos, flats, tenements, co-ops, etc. are all words that if present on a sign on the building signify residential use.)
**Note**: Many buildings have been converted and appearance is not reliable.
**Q.** What if the building has a clear sign but it obviously no longer serves the advertised purpose or is vacant?
**A.** If you know *beyond a reasonable doubt* that the building is either vacant or does not serve its specified use, the building is not identifiable. Faded signs, boards, and/or paper covering windows are indicators a storefront, or building, is vacant.
**Q.** Does a for rent sign count?
**A.** If the building exists (all walls up) and there is a sign that says "…for rent," "…coming soon," or "…space for lease" where the function (land use) is specified, it is identifiable.

## 5. Count buildings with non-rectangular shapes — both sides, within study area

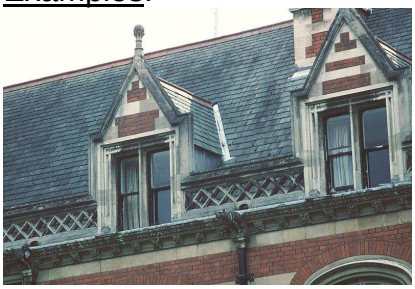
Directions:

- Walk the length of the street.
- Count buildings with non-rectangular shapes on both sides.
- Record the number of buildings with non-rectangular shapes you counted within the study area. If the building is ambiguous, take a picture.

Definitions:

**Buildings with non-rectangular shapes**: those that do not have simple rectangular profiles from at least one angle, as seen by the passing pedestrian. Visible pitched roofs, bay windows in the roof or foundation lines, dormers, etc. qualify buildings as non-rectangular. Signs, awnings, entrances, and porches are not considered in the shape of the building.

Examples:



YES. The windows are examples of dormers and the roof is pitched.

YES. The bay windows interrupt the straight roof line.

NO. The stairs and detailed trim are not enough to significantly affect the shape of the brownstones.

YES. Multiple rectangles make up this one building and make it non-rectangular.

Questions:

**Q.** What if the building is made up of multiple rectangles? (see examples)
**A.** If you can see more than one rectangle, the building is not rectangular from at least one angle: count the building as non-rectangular.
**Q.** What if the building has a water tower on top of it?
**A.** If there are any structures incorporated into the building that give it a non-rectangular shape, consider the building non-rectangular. Take a picture if you are completely unsure.

| **6. Record outdoor dining** | **your side, within study area** |
|---|---|

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Note the presence (1) or absence (0) of commercial or public outdoor dining on your side.
- Record a 1 if outdoor dining is present and a 0 if it is not.

Definitions:

**Outdoor dining**: dining tables and seating located mostly or completely outside. Even if there are no patrons, there is outdoor dining as long as the tables and chairs are present.

Examples:


YES. There is outdoor dining; the dining in the "greenhouse," however, is not.

Questions:

**Q.** What if the outdoor dining is closed?

**A.** If it looks like the dining could be in operation at some point during the day, count the presence of outdoor dining.

## 7. Count people — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Walk down the block at a reasonable pace.
- Count only visible people **within the study area** coming towards you, passing you, and those you pass. Also, count those that are walking no more than 10 ft ahead of you on the block. At the end of the block, count people on the cross street that are within 10 ft of you. Make sure not to count anyone twice.
- Walk the block (back and forth) a total of **4 times**.
- Record the number of people you counted on each walk through.
- You may compute the average number of people when you return to the office.

**Note**: do not count people who are seated at outdoor dining areas.

Definitions:

**Visible people**: includes people walking, running, biking, standing, or sitting—everyone (except at outdoor dining)

Examples:


Count everyone in line.

Do not count dolls.

Questions:

**Q.** Do you count children and babies in strollers or “backpacks”?
**A.** Yes, do count every person.

## 8. Estimate noise level — both sides, within study area

Directions:

- Walk down the block at a reasonable pace.
- Evaluate the level of noise (1=very quiet, 2=quiet, 3=normal, 4=loud, 5=very loud).
- Record your noise level rating.

Definitions:

**Noise**: Cars, trucks, sirens, people, music, construction, etc will all add to noise level.

Questions:

**Q.** Should we recalibrate our idea of noise level for New York City?
**A.** No. Use your “natural” sense of noise level to evaluate the blocks. You will evaluate blocks throughout the City that are less dense and more quiet.

# Enclosure

The degree to which streets and other public spaces are visually defined by buildings, walls, trees, and other vertical elements.

## 1. Count long sight lines — both sides, beyond study area

Directions:

- Walk the entire length of the block.
- As you walk count the number of directions (front, right, and left) in which you see at least one long sight line at any point along the block (0 min, 3 max). Do not count views down cross streets on ends of blocks.
- Record a 1 if you had a long sight line in one direction, a 2 for two directions, and a 3 if you had a long sight line in all three directions at least once during your walk through.

**Note**: Do not force it. Long sight lines should be visible without strain.

Definitions:

**Long sight line**: the ability to see at least 1000 ft or about 3 city blocks into the distance at any point during your walk through the block.

Examples:


1: you can see far (ahead) into the distance.

0: the trees block a long sight line (ahead).

0: the building blocks long sight lines (to the right).

1: the cross street creates a long sight line (to the left).

Questions:

**Q.** Does it count if you can see some distant sky through the trees? (see examples)
**A.** Only count it if the view is not significantly obstructed. Widely-spaced trees may allow for long sight lines.
**Q.** What if the block is on a downhill slope?
**A.** If there is a long sight line due to the incline or elevation of the block, count it.
**Q.** What if you can see through the frame of a building that is being constructed?
**A.** Do not count sight lines through buildings.

## 2a & 2b. Estimate proportion street wall

**a) your side, within study area (10 ft)**
**b) opposite side, within study area (10 ft)**

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Note the proportion of your side of the block that consists of a street wall (of the total block length). Do the same for the opposite side of the street (excluding the cross streets from the denominator).
- Record the proportion estimates (use decimal increments of .10) for your side and the opposite side (two measurements).

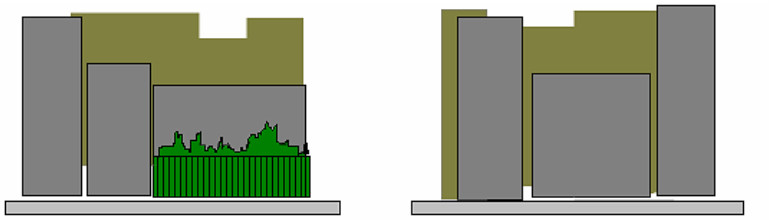
Definitions:

**Street wall**: the effect achieved when structures on a block continuously front the sidewalk/path providing a defined street-edge and feeling like a wall. A façade or wall over 5 ft contributes to the street wall if it is set back no more than 10 ft from the sidewalk/path edge. Gates/fences, greenery, or both over 5 ft tall that obstruct more than 60% of your view of the space beyond also count. Lawns, lots, driveways, and alleys break the street wall.

**Note**: Construction sites with solid partitions over 5 ft (and within 10 ft of the sidewalk/path edge) add to the street wall. If lots under construction are not blocked off and present enough information (all walls), code the block imagining the structure(s)-to-be. If you cannot determine the structure of an open lot (not enough of built yet), there is no street wall.

Examples:

1: the buildings are consistently less than 10 ft from the sidewalk edge



1: all gray buildings are within 10 ft of sidewalk edge; cross street is ignored in street wall calculation

0: the stairs do not create a street wall

1 & 0: for the sections here, the fences are high enough, but only the first creates an obstructed view (the shrubs)

Questions:

**Q.** Do cross streets break the street wall? (see examples)
**A.** No. Cross streets do not count as breaks in the street wall.
**Q.** What about brownstones with stairs coming down to the sidewalk? (see examples)
**A.** If brownstones are set back no more than about 10 ft they create a street wall.
**Note:** Brownstones almost always create a street wall. Give them a 5 ft grace and please take a picture if you find an exception.
**Q.** Do fences or walls add to the street wall? (see example)
**A.** If the fence is over 5 ft tall and obstructs over 60% of the view overall, it contributes to the street wall.

## 3a & 3b. Estimate proportion sky — a) ahead, beyond study area; b) across, beyond study area

Directions:

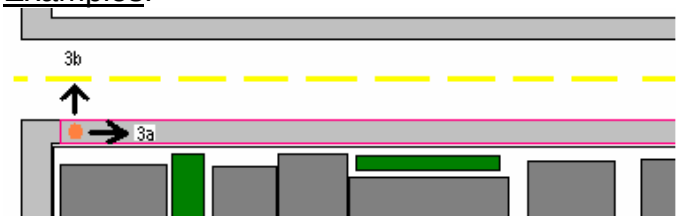
- Look directly ahead.
- Without moving your head, assess the percentage of sky visible in your frame of vision.
- Record the estimated proportion (use decimal increments of .05).
- Do the same, this time looking across the street, directly to your left. Make sure you are standing at the beginning of the block just past the cross-street.

**Note**: sky visible through a glass obstruction does not count as visible sky.

Definitions:

**Frame of vision:** your frame of vision is the "box" that is visible when you look ahead with your line of sight parallel to the ground. To better define the area, make a box with your fingers (thumbs and pointer fingers) and hold it up to your face. Slowly move it away until you can see all four sides—this is your "box."

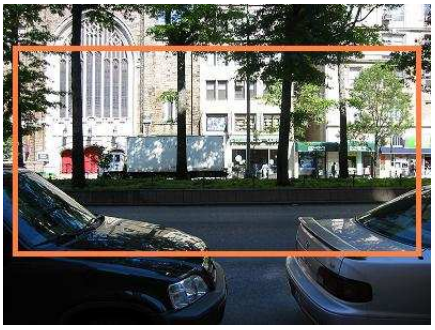
Examples:




Positioning: 3a – look ahead, 3b – look to your left

The "box"

.05: very little sky ahead



0: No sky across

Questions:

**Q.** What if the building to my left is under construction?

**A.** If it is under construction, there is an obstructed view and therefore the proportion of the sky you can see will be smaller.

## 4. Record street trees — both sides, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Note the presence of street trees on both sides of the street and on the median strip (if one is present).
- Circle the letter in the box that corresponds to the location of the street trees; leave it blank if there are none. Y = your side, O = opposite side, M = median strip.

## Human Scale

The size, texture, and articulation of physical elements that match the size and proportions of humans and, equally important, correspond to the speed at which humans walk.

### 1. Identify long sight lines — both sides, beyond study area

Directions:

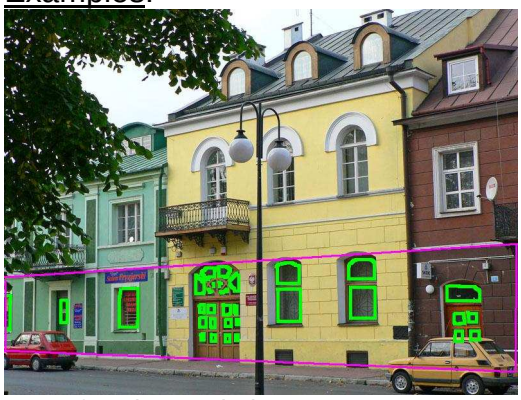
- Same rules apply as Enclosure Step 1. Use that measurement. Do not measure twice.

### 2. Estimate proportion windows at street level — your side, within study area

Directions:

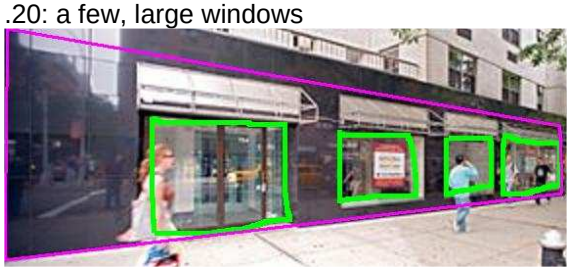
- Walk the length of the block.
- Note the proportion of street-level façade on your side that is covered by windows of any size.
- Record the proportion out of the whole block length (use decimal increments of .10) that is covered by street-level windows.

Examples:



.20: a few, large windows

.40: heavily-windowed apartments



.70: large retail windows

.00: no buildings, no windows

Questions:

**Q.** Do sunken or raised first floor windows count?

**A.** Include only the windows on street level. The windows should be oriented to the eye-level of passing pedestrians.

**Q.** Do windows in buildings under construction count?

**A.** If the building is being constructed behind a partition or does not have all walls yet, windows do not exist for the lot. Buildings that are being maintained or renovated and are not behind solid construction partitions have windows.

**Q.** If the windows are cloudy, made of reflective glass, or the curtains are drawn, are they included?

**A.** Yes. Street level windows are at the scale of and intended for humans and give the impression that there is activity beyond or within the building and should count.

**3. Estimate average building height** **your side, within study area**

Directions:

- Walk the length of the study block.
- Note the height of the buildings on your side, whether they are set back, and the percentage of the block that the buildings of the same height occupy.
- Record the heights of the buildings (record buildings of the same height together) considering their width, the total length of the block, and thus the percentage of the block (adding to 100%) each building height spans on the reverse side of the form.
- You may wait to compute the average when you return to the office.

**Note**: if there are no buildings, there is a zero height.

Definitions:

**Building height**: the number of floors, including the roof floor of buildings with slanted roofs and dormers and any visible sunken floors.

**Set back**: buildings that move back from the street as their height increases or buildings that are farther than 20 ft from the sidewalk/path edge.

Examples:

20+ floors


1.5 floors

Questions:

**Q.** What if you cannot discern the number of floors from your vantage point either because the building is too tall or because the floors are not easily identifiable?

**A.** Record 20+ floors if you know the building is over 20 floors and you cannot make a better estimate.

**Q.** What if the building has different heights?

**A.** Count to the highest floor of the building.

**Q.** What if you can't tell where one floor starts and the next begins?

**A.** If you can see the complete height, try using a building with known height near it as a guide (i.e. it is twice the height of the building with 15 floors, therefore, it has 30 floors).

**Note**: Make sure to document the percentage of the total block length the building occupies.

## 4. Count small planters — your side, within study area

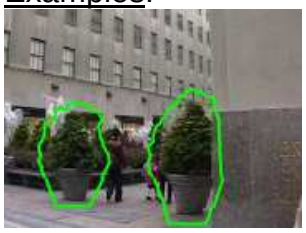
Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count all the visible street-level planters on your side of the block and within 10 ft of the sidewalk edge. This includes planters on private and public property but not those inside enclosed parks or gardens.
- Record the total number of small planters on your side, within the study area.

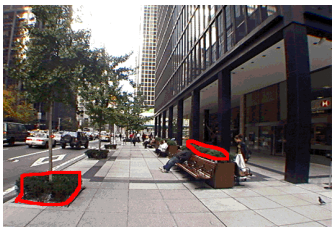
Definitions:

**Small planters**: any potted arrangement of trees, shrubs, or flowers that are smaller than 10 $ft^2$ at their base. The planter should be within 10 ft of the sidewalk edge and appear to be permanent (not small enough to be able to be brought inside at the end of the day) but **not** in-ground.

Examples:



YES. This counts as two; the raised bed behind does not count



NO. These are in ground or too large and permanent

Questions:

**Q.** If the plants in the pot are dead, do I still count the planter?
**A.** Count the planter even if the plants are dead because there is the intention of a planter.
**Q.** What if the planter is on a porch or set back from the sidewalk?
**A.** If the planter is located no higher than 10 ft from and no lower than the street level, it counts.
**Q.** What if the planter is behind a fence?
**A.** If you can see the planter, it is less than 10 ft from the sidewalk edge, and it is not within an enclosed park or garden, you may count it.

## 5a. Count street furniture and other street items — your side, within study area

Directions:

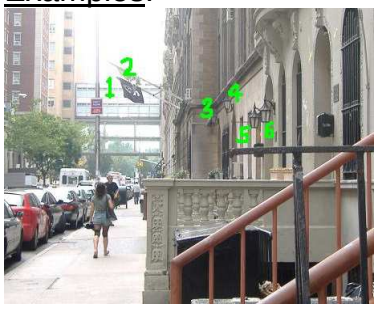
- Walk the length of the block.
- Count visible street furniture and other items on your side and within the block. Do not count furniture in enclosed parks, gardens, plazas, and courtyards.
- Record the total number if it is under 40; record "40+" if over.

Definitions:

**Street furniture and other street items**: only the following: tables (without associated chairs), chairs (without associated tables), vendor displays (count one per vendor), ATMs, hanging plants, benches, flower pots, parking meters, umbrellas, trash cans (public only), newspaper boxes, mail boxes, bike racks, bollards (count one per set), hydrants, flags, banners, merchandise stands, street vendors, pedestrian-scale street lights (not for cars), phone booths (one per structure), bus stops (count 1 per stop), and train stations (count one per entrance).

**Note**: Do not count tables and chairs for outdoor dining. These will be counted separately. However, if chairs are not associated with outdoor tables (they are alone), count each chair or stack of chairs. Where there are both stacked tables and chairs, count each table only.

Examples:



6: flags, lanterns


3: parking meter, retail display, partition (NOT: planter, dining tables)

12: pedestrian lanterns, banners, trash cans, bollards, information booth, train station

12: double benches, bike racks, lantern with bus schedule, bus station, banner

Questions:

**Q.** What does not count?

**A.** If the object is on the list, count it. Objects such as construction materials, street lights, parking and traffic signs, and garbage bags sitting on the curb do not count.

**Q.** Do furniture displays (retail furniture) count?

**A.** Yes, they do count.

**Q.** What if there are over 40 pieces of street furniture?

**A.** Do not count all the items, simply record "40+."

## 5b. Count outdoor dining tables — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the number of outdoor tables for dining on your side and within the study area.
- Record the number of tables you count.

**Note**: these are tables with associated chairs or benches.

Examples:


7: tables with associated chairs (3, 4, 6 are 2 tables together, but are presented as single dining units)

Questions:

**Q.** What if there are no chairs associated with the tables, but the tables are clearly intended for outdoor dining?

**A.** If there are no chairs because they have all been moved elsewhere on the sidewalk to accommodate a party, the chairs are still associated and you can count the tables. If the chairs are stacked or if there are no chairs, count the tables as street furniture (5a), as well as each stack of chairs (as described above).

**Q.** What if two or more tables have been brought together?

**A.** Two tables brought together can be counted as one, more than that, count separately.

## 5c. Count other lights — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the number of pedestrian lights no more than 10 ft above ground level.
- Record the number of lights you encounter.

Definitions:

**Other lights**: outdoor lights that are not on poles; usually attached to a building façade or lining the side of a path.

## Transparency

The degree to which people can see or perceive what lies beyond the edge of a sidewalk/path or public space and, more specifically, the degree to which people can see or perceive human activity beyond the edge of a street or other public space.

### 1. Estimate proportion windows at street level — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Same rules apply as Human Scale Step 2. Use that measurement. Do not measure twice.

### 2. Estimate proportion street wall — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Same rules apply as Enclosure Step 2a. Do not measure twice.

### 3. Estimate proportion active uses — your side, within study area

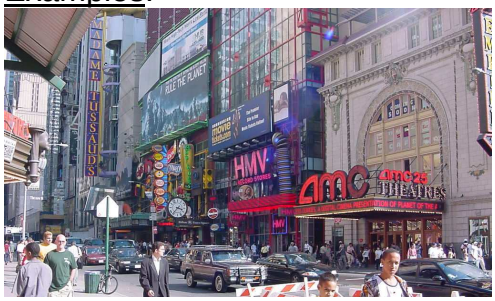
Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Note the amount of active-use buildings that are on your side within the study area. If a building is active, assume all sides are active (even blank walls).
- Record the proportion of the total block (use decimal increments of .10).

Definitions:

**Active use building**: one in which there is frequent pedestrian traffic (more than 5 people enter/exit while you are observing the block).
**Always active**: parks, stores, restaurants, attached/apartment-style residential buildings, hospitals, and schools.
**Always inactive**: construction sites, parking lots, churches, detached/single residence units, and vacant or abandoned lots.

Examples:



1: stores, theaters, and restaurants are always active


Unknown building: you would need to watch for pedestrian traffic.

Questions:

**Q.** If you do not know the building's use, how do you assess the activity?
**A.** If the building appears to be residential, look for signs that indicate people live there (mailboxes, buzzers, window treatments, etc). If you cannot conclude or the building is an unknown non-residential building, watch the pedestrian traffic during the time you are measuring the block and record the building as active if more than 5 people enter or exit while you are observing the block.
**Note:** Residential buildings may not be identifiable as defined under imageability, but if the building can be assumed to be residential, it can be considered active.

## Complexity

The visual richness of a place that depends on the variety of the physical environment, specifically the numbers and kinds of buildings, architectural diversity and ornamentation, landscape elements, street furniture, signage, and human activity.

## 1. Count buildings — both sides, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the visible buildings on both sides of the street within the study area.
- Record the number of buildings within the study area.

**Note**: This includes corner lot buildings and all buildings that are enterable from the study area only.

Definitions:

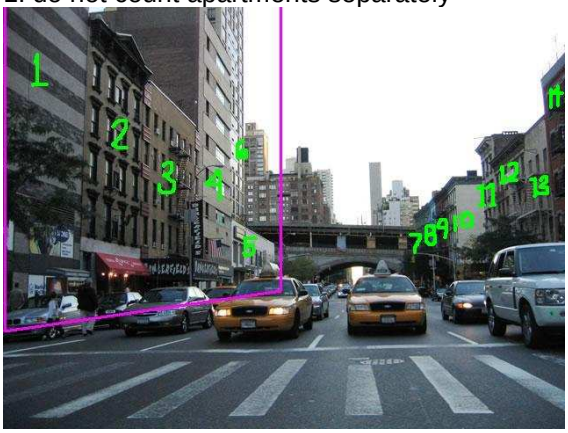
**Visible building**: buildings that can be distinguished by separate doors/entrances (especially for residential), architecture, colors, etc.

Examples:

3: the doors distinguish the buildings

1: do not count apartments separately

1: this is one large and non-rectangular building




14: buildings (both sides, within study area)

Questions:

**Q.** Is a sidewalk or path front of brownstones only one building? (see example)

**A.** Remember, this is about complexity. If the brownstones can be distinguished by different doors, different colors, different ornamentation, etc., count them individually.

| **2a. Count basic building colors** | **both sides, within study area** |
|---|---|

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the number of basic building/structure/surface colors on both sides of the street within the study areas. Do not distinguish between different shades of the same color.
- Record number of distinct building colors.

Definitions:

**Basic color**: the color used for the majority of the building's facade.

Examples:

2: red brick, sandstone

3: white, orange-yellow, brown

Questions:

**Q.** What if there is more than one basic color on a single building?

**A.** If one color is the overwhelming majority, count only that color; if both colors are significant, count the two colors separately.

## 2b. Count building accent colors — both sides, beyond study area (10 ft)

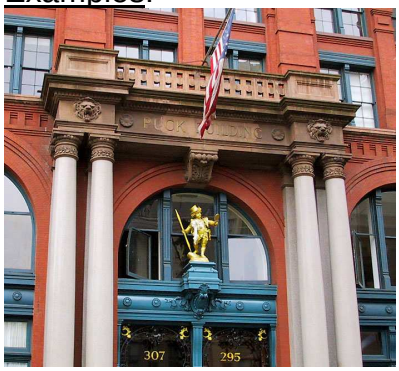
Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count the number of accent colors used on either side of the street and within the study areas.
- Record the number of distinct accent colors.

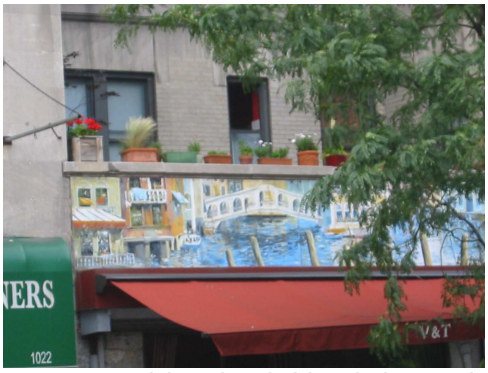
Definitions:

**Accent color**: the color used for building trims and roofs, street objects, awnings, signs, etc.

Examples:




4: gold, white, brown, teal




3: green, red (awnings), blue (primary sign color)

0: both buildings have no accent colors

Questions:

**Q.** If the accent color is the same as the basic color, does it still count? (see examples)
**A.** No, if the building is one color, it has no accent color.

## 3. Record outdoor dining — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Same rules apply as Imageability Step 6. Use that measurement. Do not measure twice.

## 4. Count public art — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Walk the length of the block.
- Count individual pieces of public art that are within the study area or intended for viewing from the sidewalk/path.
- Record the number of pieces of public art.

Definitions:

**Public art**: monuments, sculptures, murals, and any artistic display that has free access. Art must be the size of a small person or have clear identification indicating its status as art (creator, dedication, year, materials, etc).

Examples:

3: all are examples of sidewalk art

1: if visible (and intended to be viewed) from the sidewalk, private art counts

1: the first is a graffiti mural (public art) while the other are tags (not public art)

2: buildings are counted (as one instance) if they have artistic entities on them

Questions:

**Q.** What if the art is clearly on someone's property? (see examples)
**A.** If the art is visible to the passing pedestrian, it has free access and it can be considered public art.
**Q.** What if the art is incorporated into a building façade? (see examples)
**A.** If the art can be isolated as a specific artistic element of a façade, the building counts as one instance of public art.
**Q.** How small or simple can the art be? (see examples)
**A.** It should be semi-permanent, be intended for the viewing of others, and add to the visual appeal and complexity of the block. Small fountains, and graffiti murals would be included but simple chalk drawings and graffiti tags would not be included.

## 5. Count pedestrians — your side, within study area

Directions:

- Same rules apply as Imageability Step 7. Use that measurement. Do not measure twice.

| **Measuring urban design qualities scoring sheet** | | | | auditor: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| street: | | | from: | | to: | | |
| block ID / face num: | | | date & time: | | weather/temp: | | |
| **step #** | **quality** | **step** | | **process** | **direction** | **study area** | **recorded value** |
| | | | **Imageability** | | | | |
| 1.1 | imageablity | accessible courtyards, plazas, parks, and gardens | | count | both sides | within | |
| 1.2 | imageablity | visible/prominent major landscape features | | count | both sides | beyond | |
| 1.3 | imageablity | proportion historic building / block (xclude thru st) | | est. (.10) | both sides | within | |
| 1.4 | imageablity | buildings with identifiers | | count | both sides | within | |
| 1.5 | imageablity | buildings with non-rectangular shapes | | count | both sides | within | |
| 1.6 | imageablity | presence of outdoor dining | | Y=1/N=0 | your side | within | |
| 1.71 | imageablity | people | walk-through 1 | walk | your side | within | |
| 1.72 | | | walk-through 2 | through | | | |
| 1.73 | | | walk-through 3 | | | | |
| 1.74 | | | walk-through 4 | | | | |
| 1.75 | | | Total/4 | | | | |
| 1.8 | imageablity | noise level (1-5; 5 is loudest) | | est. (1-5) | both sides | within | |
| | | | **Enclosure** | | | | |
| 2.1 | enclosure | long sight lines (0-3) | | count | both sides | beyond | |
| 2.21 | enclosure | proportion street wall | | est. (.10) | your side | within | |
| 2.22 | enclosure | proportion street wall (xclude thru st) | | est. (.10) | opposite side | within | |
| 2.31 | enclosure | proportion sky | | est. (.05) | ahead | beyond | |
| 2.32 | enclosure | proportion sky | | est. (.05) | across | beyond | |
| 2.4 | enclosure | street trees (Y=your side, O=opposite, M=median) | | presence | both sides | within | Y O M |
| | | | **Human Scale** | | | | |
| 3.1 | human scale | long sight lines (0-3) | | ---- | both sides | beyond | |
| 3.2 | human scale | proportion window (street-level) / block | | est. (.10) | your side | within | |
| 3.3 | human scale | building height | | average | your side | within | |
| 3.4 | human scale | small planters | | count | your side | within | |
| 3.51 | human scale | pieces of street furniture & other street items | | count | your side | within | |
| 3.52 | human scale | outdoor dining tables | | count | your side | within | |
| 3.53 | human scale | lights on buildings (not more than 10 ft. high) | | count | your side | within | |
| | | | **Transparency** | | | | |
| 4.1 | transparency | proportion window (street-level) / block | | ---- | your side | within | |
| 4.2 | transparency | proportion street wall | | ---- | your side | within | |
| 4.3 | transparency | proportion active use / block | | est. (.10) | your side | within | |
| | | | **Complexity** | | | | |
| 5.1 | complexity | buildings | | count | both sides | within | |
| 5.21 | complexity | basic building colors | | count | both sides | within | |
| 5.22 | complexity | accent colors | | count | both sides | within | |
| 5.3 | complexity | presence of outdoor dining | | ---- | your side | within | |
| 5.4 | complexity | pieces of public art | | count | both sides | within | |
| 5.51 | complexity | people | walk-through 1 | ---- | your side | within | |
| 5.52 | | | walk-through 2 | | | | |
| 5.53 | | | walk-through 3 | | | | |
| 5.54 | | | walk-through 4 | | | | |
| 5.55 | | | Total/4 | | | | |
| | | | | | | Take a picture! | |

**Buildings: Number (5.1), Non-Rectangular (1.5), Historic (1.3), Identified (1.4), & Active (4.3)**

**Your side, buildings:** **(% must equal 100)**

| | Non-Rct | Historic | ID | 1 fl Actv | Height | Street %: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | |
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**Opposite Side, buildings:** **(% must equal 100)**

| Non-Rct | Historic | ID | Street %: |
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| Yellow | | |
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| Blue | | |
| Purple | | |
| Pink | | |
| Brown | | |
| Gray | | |
| White | | |
| Black | | |
| Gold | | |
| Silver | | |