

Park Avenue

Winter Park, FL

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: 3/4 mile long corridor
Client: City of Winter Park
Year Adopted: 1998

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



New construction (at right) blends seamlessly with historic buildings along Park Avenue.



Public improvements and revised regulations, established by the City and Dover, Kohl & Partners, created a new framework for private mixed-use development along Park Avenue.

The Project

Park Avenue is among Florida's most gracious main streets, with its urban buildings and signature Central Park. In 1997, the City, under the leadership of Planning Director Don Martin, initiated design improvements and an implementation strategy for the aging main street. Sidewalks were widened for retailing and outdoor dining, vehicular travel lanes were narrowed, and a prescription was provided for the design of main street buildings and civic buildings based on enduring principles of traditional civic art. Gladding, Jackson, Kerchner, Anglin, Lopez, Rinehart and GAI Consultants Southeast assisted Dover, Kohl & Partners in the development of Park Avenue's Streetscape Master Plan.

Process and Principles

The Avenue's rich history and its special place in the life of Winter Park brought together the varied interests of many people who care deeply about Park Avenue. The details of the Master Plan were resolved in an open, public process. While formal work began in the spring of 1997, some ideas started evolving much earlier. The "Winter Park in Perspective" event in 1994 and the Park Avenue Charrette in 1996 brought forward early concepts for improving the downtown and preserving the unique qualities of the Avenue.

The master plan effort began with regular meetings of the Park Avenue Review Committee, a multi-stakeholder group established by the City Commission to direct the work of staff and consultants. Residents participated in a series of well-attended, public "summits" to review work in progress and offer ideas. "Maintenance-of-Business" workshops and surveys were used to gather input from downtown merchants and property owners. The fundamental public desire was for the improved Avenue to look "as if it had always been this way." The Plan therefore sought to avoid anything that may appear contrived or dated on this classic main street.

Status

Improvements to Park Avenue have been completed. In 2002, Rollins College constructed a grand main entrance to their campus, located at the terminus of Park Avenue, which further enhances these streetscape improvements. This project, known as the McKean Gateway, and the College's Marshall and Vera Lea Rinker Building (which opened in 2003), were designed by Dover-Kohl's affiliated architecture firm, Chael, Cooper & Associates. Work on both of these architectural projects earned the firm the 2006 Palladio Award for New Design.



Designed with livability in mind, Park Avenue features sidewalks that are wide enough to be comfortable for pedestrians. This welcoming public space is crucial to restaurant and retail success.



The new Marshall and Vera Lea Rinker Building was designed to engage the McKean Gateway on the southwest corner of Park and Fairbanks Avenues.

Park Avenue Plan Details

As the City was preparing to make considerable repairs to the utilitarian elements of Park Avenue's infrastructure, the opportunity to make other, more visible improvements – in a step-by-step sequence – became apparent. The timing of these improvements also coincided with a period during which the Avenue was maturing to join the class of "great world streets."

Recognizing that Park Avenue, like many other great streets, has a definite beginning, middle and end, Dover-Kohl proposed a design with streetscape elements that were intended to respond to the character of each block. Key features, such as building disposition and placement, sidewalk widths and materials, roadway dimensions, landscaping, crosswalks, street furniture, and signage, were redesigned or introduced. These elements are fundamental to creating a high-quality public space, and are particularly important in maintaining competitive main street environments.

An important phasing sequence was also developed for the project, taking care that businesses experienced reduced disruption during construction. A comprehensive cost analysis was also completed as part of the Master Plan.

Incremental Redevelopment and Infill

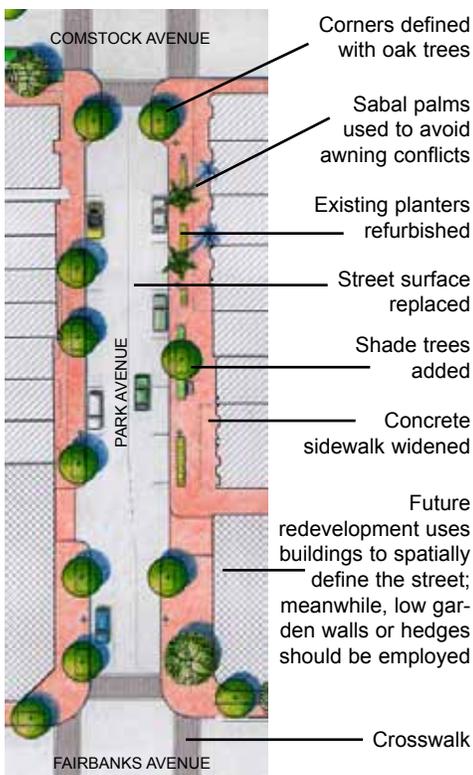


1997 conditions of Park Avenue at Fairbanks Avenue



Proposed redesign of Park Avenue at Fairbanks Avenue, with incremental infill completed over time

Trees, Plantings and Paving



Block Detail

Utilities and Public Services



Previous conditions along Park Avenue



Redesign of Park Avenue

- Concrete utility poles were unsightly.
- At the corner of New England Street, for example, the historic clock was obscured behind the pedestrian crossing signal.
- Trash cans, newspaper vending, signal controls and fire hydrants tended to collect on corners.
- The sidewalk was too narrow, and the pedestrian space at the corner is too small.
- Wide sidewalks allowed for the planting of shade trees.
- Concrete utility poles were replaced with traditional fixtures and mast arm signal.
- Trash receptacles and other pedestrian obstacles were placed on side streets or in mid-block areas.
- Pedestrian space was increased at the corner.