

change discipline — design reference (non-governing)

status: design reference only

scope: human-facing system design

authority: none (does not govern AI behavior)

purpose

this document records how humans working on the homebase system think about change.

it exists to:

- prevent silent conceptual drift
- avoid preference-based churn
- preserve long-term structural integrity
- reduce repeated rediscovery of the same design arguments

this document does not define runtime behavior, enforcement, tests, or AI obligations.

it governs design decisions, not AI responses.

what this document is not

this document is not:

- an instruction block
- a universal core
- an interaction discipline
- a work or artifact governance module
- a test or evaluation authority

nothing in this document is embedded, executed, or enforced.

change classification (design lens)

when considering changes to governing artifacts, classify them conceptually as:

1. hardening change

addresses a real or observed failure mode

reduces ambiguity or hallucination risk

improves correctness or reliability

these are generally justified.

2. clarification change

improves wording precision

aligns text with observed behavior

does not change semantics

useful, but should be kept minimal.

3. preference change

reflects taste, comfort, or style

does not address a demonstrated failure

these should be treated skeptically.

4. expansion change

adds new concepts, rules, or surface area

increases system complexity

these require strong justification and caution.

versioning philosophy (design intent)

for governing artifacts (foundation, core, interaction, work modules):

- changes should be intentional and explicit
- version numbers signal behavioral or structural meaning
- silent mutation undermines trust

for reference documents like this one:

- version numbers are optional
- revisions reflect evolving understanding, not authority

acceptance questions (human check)

before accepting a change to a governing artifact, ask:

1. what failure does this address?
2. is the failure real or speculative?
3. does this introduce new assumptions?
4. does this belong in foundation, core, interaction, or a module?

5. does this increase complexity without improving reliability?

if these cannot be answered clearly, the change should pause.

size and discipline note

large governing documents increase:

- hallucination surface area
- misinterpretation risk
- accidental overlap between layers

growth should usually require tightening elsewhere.

continuity without memory

this document exists to support continuity through rules, not recall.

each design session should:

- treat current governing versions as authoritative
- apply the same reasoning discipline

- avoid re-litigating settled boundaries without evidence

summary

this document is a design compass, not a law.

it helps humans:

- reason consistently
- notice drift early
- protect the system from preference creep

it imposes no obligations on any AI.

end — change discipline (design reference)