

SECTION 4.03

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES

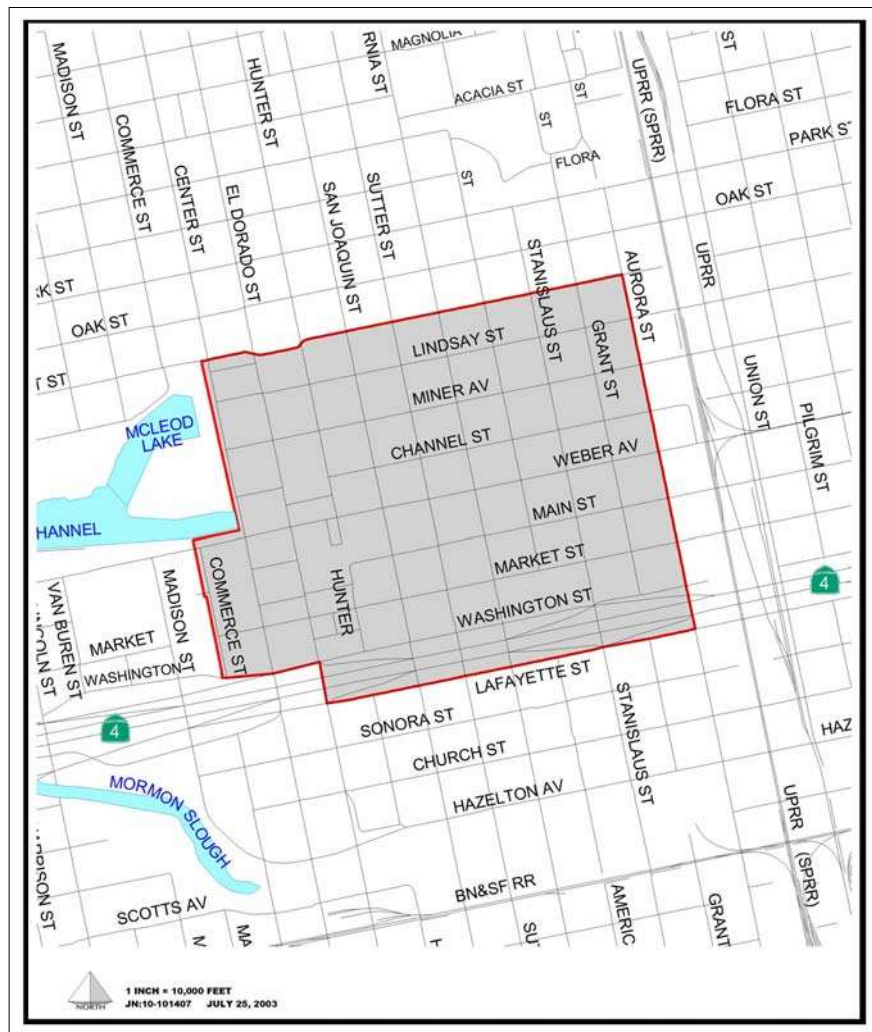
INTRODUCTION

4.03.010

This section provides design guidelines for Stockton's Downtown Commercial District as shown on the map below.



Photo by Leslie Crow



The guidelines are intended to promote quality new development and renovation of existing buildings that will strengthen the unique urban and historic character of Stockton's downtown, enhance pedestrian activities, and encourage continued economic growth and investment through the promotion of well-designed projects.

APPLICABILITY

4.03.020

The design guidelines in this section are applicable within Stockton's Downtown Commercial District as shown on the map above. The guidelines apply to the following types of projects:

- Development of new buildings
- Additions to existing buildings
- Exterior remodeling/rehabilitation of existing buildings
- Parking lots
- New signs and awnings and refurbishing of existing signs and awnings
- Other on-site improvements

In addition to the design guidelines in this section, guidelines in Section 4.01, General Commercial Design Guidelines, and Section 4.02, Special Commercial Use Design Guidelines, should also be reviewed and implemented whenever they apply to the proposed project.

GENERAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES

4.03.030



Photo by Leslie Crow

The design guidelines for Stockton Downtown Commercial District are based on a variety of objectives that when taken together are aimed at revitalizing the downtown as the City's cultural and economic heart. The following objectives constitute the foundation for the design guidelines provided in this section.

- **Sense of History** – Maintain downtown's unique, historic character by encouraging design concepts that reinforce Stockton's history without repeating it.
- **Unique Character**—Encourage development that recognizes and reinforces downtown's unique physical attributes, such as views to the Channel and to buildings with unique architecture (e.g., Hotel Stockton). Encourage development that is supportive of cultural uniqueness and avoid designs that are uniform and lack individual identity.
- **Authenticity** – Preserve existing historic elements in an authentic manner. Do not encourage designs that lead to the creation of buildings with a false historic look.



Photo by Leslie Crow

- **Human Scale/Comfort** – Provide a physically comfortable environment by maintaining a scale of development that people can relate to and feel comfortable in. Encourage building materials and elements that are appropriately scaled. Emphasize the use of gathering places, pedestrian amenities, open space, and landscaping.
- **Pedestrian Orientation** – Encourage a strong pedestrian-orientation for all development in the downtown. Provide pedestrian-oriented storefronts and avoid blank walls in pedestrian areas. Provide street level activities and connections that encourage pedestrian circulation.
- **Quality Development** – Maintain a sense of quality development through the use of superior materials and architectural detailing. Materials should be highly durable and low maintenance.
- **Safety** – Maintain a high level of public safety through the appropriate design of spaces and amenities, including pedestrian areas, parking lots, landscaping, and lighting.
- **Art and Culture** – Promote community, values, and culture through the provision of works of art in public places. Reinforce cultural identity through the encouragement of architectural designs that promote local cultural heritage.

SITE PLANNING AND PARKING

4.03.040

Issues

Site planning and parking considers how the various components of a development (i.e., buildings, circulation, parking, open space, landscaping, etc.) relate to adjacent streets and existing development, and how the various components relate to each other within the development site. The main issues related to site planning include:

- Ensuring that new development has the appropriate relationship to the street given the context of surrounding development.
- Ensuring that new development takes into account its relationship to and interface with surrounding existing development.
- Ensuring that the arrangement of onsite facilities has been planned in a comprehensive manner and that the layout of the various site components is efficient, convenient, safe, and aesthetic.

Objectives Supported

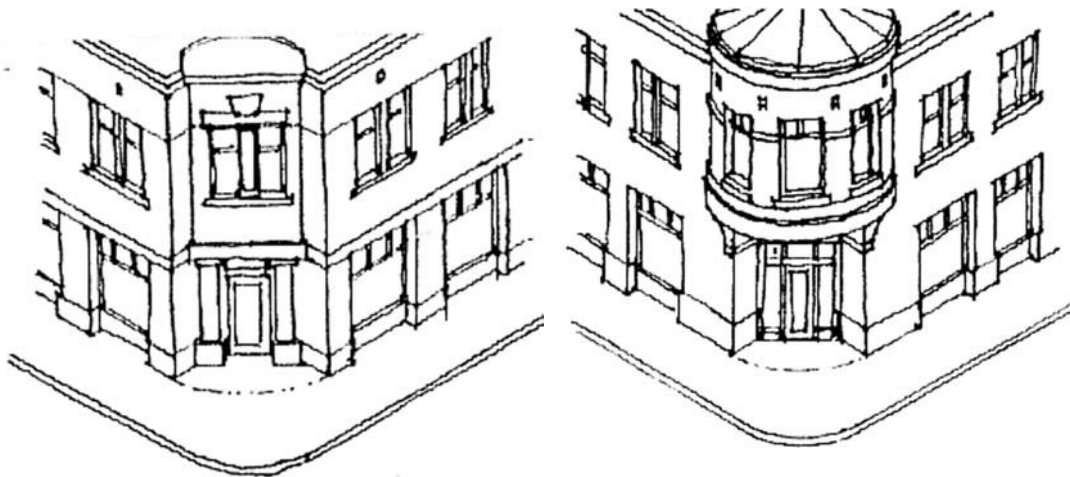
- Sense of History
- Unique character
- Authenticity

- Human scale/comfort
- Pedestrian orientation
- Quality development
- Safety
- Art and culture

A. Setbacks

Building setbacks have a distinct impact on the quality and scale of urban spaces. Minimizing setbacks along streets and between buildings helps to create a sense of enclosure and maintains the continuity of storefronts and display windows.

1. New buildings in the Downtown Commercial District should be built to the front and side property lines to form a continuous line of active building fronts along the street with the exceptions described below.
2. Portions of a building's façade may be set back to provide areas for plazas, pedestrian areas, outdoor eating spaces, and small landscaped areas. Such areas should be provided with outdoor furniture and amenities appropriate for the space.
3. The provision of corner setbacks and cutoffs is strongly encouraged to facilitate pedestrian movement, provide better visibility for drivers, and accentuate corner buildings.



Setback the corners of buildings at intersections to provide better visibility and add visual interest.



Open areas at corners provide downtown spaces for gathering.

B. Street Level Activity Areas



Ground floor frontages should provide for active retail space and pedestrian-orientation.

Street Frontage Requiring Ground Floor Retail with no Surface Parking/Curb Cuts: In order to retain and promote pedestrian activity, selected streets in downtown Stockton are required to have retail use on ground floor street frontages (e.g., shop windows and pedestrian entrances) and no surface onsite parking adjacent to the street. These include: Main Street, Weber Street, and Miner Street between Stanislaus and Center. On these street frontages, surface parking and curb cuts are not allowed.

C. Integration of Parking and Pedestrian Movement

The provision of safe, convenient pedestrian links between parking areas and businesses is an important element in enhancing the vitality of downtown. Parking areas should be linked directly to public sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, or open space areas.

D. Open Space

Open space in the form of landscaped plazas and courtyards will enhance the downtown environment for the benefit of the public and employees. Areas of green will provide relief from the otherwise hard-edge urban environment consisting primarily of buildings and pavement. The provision of open space and landscaping is strongly encouraged throughout the downtown area as a means of enhancing the pedestrian environment and providing diversity, contrast, and color to the street scene.

1. The provision of usable pedestrian-oriented open space is strongly encouraged, especially for new projects on sites of 10,000 square feet or larger. The following types of open space should be considered:
 - Plazas and courtyards
 - Outdoor dining
 - Corner cut-off areas with enhanced amenities



The provision of usable open space in the downtown is strongly encouraged.

2. Plazas should directly abut the public sidewalk and be physically and visually accessible.
3. A minimum of 10 percent of a plaza's area should be landscaped with a combination of ground cover, shrubs, and shade trees.
4. A minimum of one sitting place for each 100 square foot of plaza area should be provided in addition to any seating for outdoor dining.

5. Plazas or other pedestrian areas should not double as vehicle access, parking, or loading areas.
6. At least 50 percent of plaza areas should have access to direct sunlight for the duration of daylight hours. General open space provided primarily for visual relief and landscaping need not comply with this guideline.
7. Plazas and other public open space should be well lit at night. The minimum light level at the surface should be one foot-candle. Entries to buildings and semi-enclosed areas should have a minimum illumination of two foot-candles.



Small outdoor areas abutting the public sidewalk provide human scale and places to gather.

E. Landscaping

1. Landscaping should be used to soften the hard elements of the built environment and to introduce a humanizing element amid the large-scale buildings.



Landscaping should be used to provide human scale and comfort in the downtown.

2. Landscaping should be provided to enhance architecture and public open spaces, buffer incompatible uses, and visually screen areas of negative visual impact.



Dense landscaping provides screening for parking structure.

3. Landscaping should be used to relieve the negative appearance of solid, windowless elevations where these cannot be avoided.
4. Where appropriate, landscaping on private property should relate to and be compatible with landscaped areas in the public right-of-way.
5. Plant materials should be highly tolerant of urban conditions such as heat gain from surrounding pavement.
6. Landscaped areas should be provided in a three-tier design consisting of low, medium, and tall plant materials. These should generally be arranged with lower plants in the foreground and taller plants in the background.
7. The use of crushed rock, pebbles, small stepping stones, and similar materials are not appropriate in landscaped areas in an urban environment and are strongly discouraged. The use of bark chips and mulch are appropriate materials within planting beds and containers for moisture retention and to control dust.

F. Street Furniture and Hardscape

1. Street furniture elements (e.g., benches, trash receptacles, light standards, etc.) included within private developments should complement the street furniture planned for public rights-of-way.
2. The relative sizes and design of private street furniture should be compatible with the architectural style of building to which it relates, while also complementing street furniture in the public right-of-way.
3. Street furniture should be constructed of durable, easily maintained materials that will not fade, rust, or otherwise quickly deteriorate.
4. The use of decorative paving at building entrances, plazas, and courtyards is strongly encouraged.
5. In places where private and public paved areas join (e.g., plazas, outdoor cafes, and gallerias), the surfaces of each should be compatible in terms of color, material, texture, and pattern. In the case of a plain concrete sidewalk, compatibility is not an issue.



Well-designed, durable street furniture complements the architectural style of the building.

ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND DETAILING

4.03.050

Issues



Photo by Leslie Crow

The physical aspects of a building that define its appearance include numerous elements such as height, shape, scale, proportion, design details, materials, and finishes. The well-designed project considers all of these elements carefully and develop a cohesive design that fits within the context of surrounding development. The main issues related to architectural form and detailing in the downtown area include:

- Ensuring a harmonious relationship between new and remodeled buildings, the immediate visual environment, and downtown’s overall design framework.
- Ensuring that the mass and scale of the building fits within the context of surrounding development and does not sharply contrast with or dominate other development in the area, especially as related to older and historic buildings.
- Ensuring that the building is well designed by including the appropriate level of design detail on all facades and avoiding blank/uninteresting facades, especially adjacent to pedestrian areas.
- Ensuring that buildings maintain a pedestrian scale and orientation at the ground floor level.

Objectives Supported

- Sense of History
- Unique character
- Authenticity
- Human scale/comfort
- Pedestrian orientation
- Quality development
- Safety
- Art and culture



Photo by Leslie Crow

A. Building Mass and Organization

Appropriate building massing, the overall volumetric organization of major building elements, contributes significantly to overall building appearance and scale. How these elements are assembled will largely define the relationship of the building to its immediate environment. New buildings should take their inspiration from the earlier buildings adjacent to them and the following guidelines.

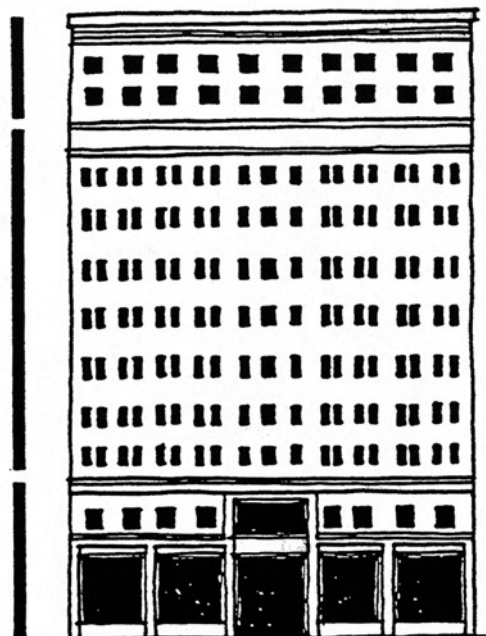
1. Each building should be designed with a well-defined base, a mid-section or body, and a top story or roofline.



Photo by Leslie Crow

- **Building Base** - The design of the building base should differentiate it from the upper portions of the building. This may be a projection of the lower wall surface and/or a different material or color. It may be created by a heavier or thicker design treatment of the entire ground floor for a building of two or more floors, or by a setback of the upper floors.
- **Mid Section** - The preferred architectural character of the mid-section is to treat it as a solid wall with recessed windows or groupings of windows. Long or large wall surfaces with flush-mounted windows or no windows should be avoided.
- **Roofs and Rooflines** - The design of roofs and rooflines should provide visual interest from the streets below and should complement the overall façade composition. Roofs of historic commercial buildings should be used as an inspiration for new designs. Flat roofs are acceptable if a strong, attractively detailed cornice and/or parapet wall is provided.

TOP	Roof Cornice Capital Story Distinctive top: e.g., Dome, Cupola
MID SECTION	Fascia Transom Mezzanine Floors above Street Level
BASE	Base Story Store Front Pedestal



2. Buildings should be composed of elements and details representative of Stockton's architectural heritage. This may be expressed through the use of columns, pilasters, cornices, window and door treatments, and storefront details. Designers should familiarize themselves with the design elements and details used on older buildings in the Downtown Commercial District and should incorporate contemporary versions of these older designs.
3. Roofs and rooflines should provide visual interest and develop a strong relationship to the overall composition of the building.
 - Decorative roof lines are strongly encouraged
 - Flat roofs are acceptable if a strong, detailed cornice or parapet wall is provided

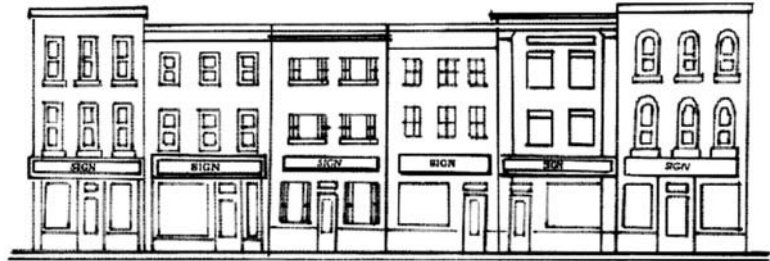
B. Façade Composition

Buildings should have a well-defined base, a clear pattern of openings, structural bays, and a prominent entrance at the street level. Side and rear façades should also receive appropriate design attention whenever pedestrian activity is present. Windowless blank walls should be avoided.

1. To create a pedestrian-scaled environment at the street level, buildings should provide a well-defined and articulated base. This can be a projection of the wall surface and/or a different material or color. It may be created by a heavier or thicker design treatment of the entire ground floor or floors, or by a setback of the upper floors.
2. The pattern of windows, wall panels, pilasters, building bays, and storefronts should be based on a module derived from Stockton's prevailing module of ground level building features. Generally, storefronts and building bays should be approximately 30 feet in width. Features based on this module should be carried across windowless walls to relieve blank facades.

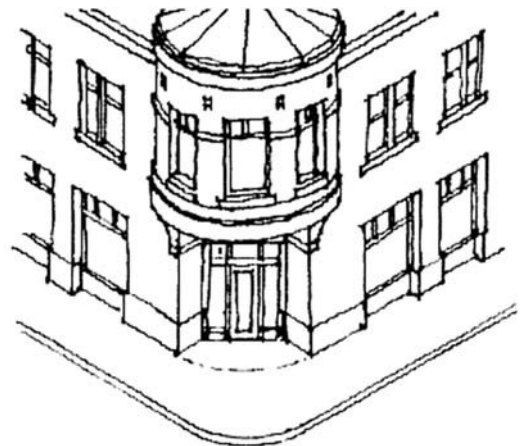
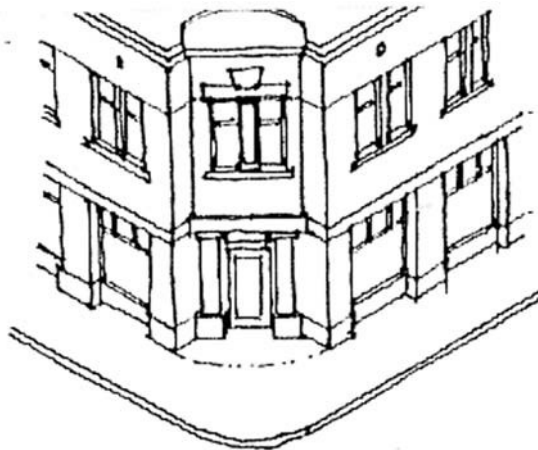


Example of typical building bay widths.



Storefront widths should be based on a consistent module of approximately 30 feet.

3. Special architectural features such as gables, towers, turrets, or similar elements should be used to accent buildings at street corners, at the terminus of a street corridor, alley, or pedestrian way.



Use of architectural features is encouraged to accent building entrances at street corners.

4. Main building entrances should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from first floor storefronts. At least two of the following treatments should be incorporated:
 - Marked by a taller mass above, such as a tower, or within a volume that protrudes from the rest of the building surface;
 - Located in the center of the façade, as part of a symmetrical overall composition;



Well-defined entrance to a Stockton building.

- Accented by architectural elements, such as columns, overhanging roofs, canopies, or awnings;
- Marked or accented by a change in the roofline or change in the roof type.



Storefront entries should be identified by unique architectural details.



Architectural element at corner adds interest / identification.

5. Corner buildings should provide prominent corner entrances.
6. Side and rear building facades should have a level of design detail and finish compatible with the front façade, particularly if they are visible from streets, adjacent parking areas, or residential uses.
7. Blank windowless walls are strongly discouraged and are usually only appropriate on interior side property lines where they are generally not visible from public view. If blank windowless walls are proposed, appropriate wall articulation should be incorporated into the design to be compatible with the more prominent facades of the building.
8. Windows are an important element of a building's overall composition. The manner in which they are designed is a strong indicator of a building's quality.
 - In general, upper stories should have a window to wall area proportion (typically 30% – 50%) that is smaller than that of ground floor storefronts.
 - Window proportions should be vertical or square in shape.
 - Glass should be inset a minimum of 3 inches from the exterior wall surface to add relief to the wall surface; this is especially important for stucco buildings.
 - Clear glazing is strongly recommended. Reflective glazing is discouraged. If tinted glazing is used, the tint should be kept as light as possible.

- Shaped frames and sills should be used to enhance openings and add additional relief. They should be proportional to the glass area framed; (e.g., a larger window should have thicker framing members).

C. Storefronts

Each storefront should be treated like a small building with its own base, roofline, and door and window pattern.

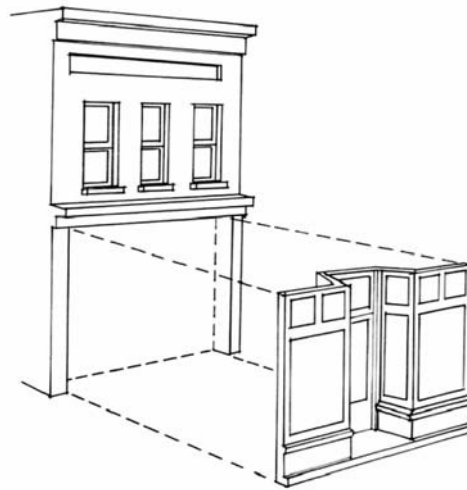
1. Large display windows should encompass a minimum of 60 percent of the storefront surface area. A lesser percentage may be allowed for office-type uses, but blank, windowless walls are strongly discouraged.



Well-designed storefront with good proportions.

2. Windows in office buildings should also be as large as possible. Interior privacy may be accomplished through the use of frosted or etched glass, blinds, or curtains. However, windows should not be eliminated in an attempt to create privacy.
3. The base panel (bulkhead) below the display window should have a minimum height of 24 inches and a maximum height of 40 inches. Materials in this area should be visually heavier or the same as adjacent walls. The use of materials such as tile, granite, marble, and similar materials found on existing buildings in the downtown is strongly encouraged.
4. Recessed entries are strongly encouraged. Recommended treatments include:
 - Special paving materials such as ceramic tile

- Ornamental ceilings
 - Decorative light fixtures
5. Doors should be substantial and well detailed. They should match the materials, design, and character of the display window framing.
 6. Cornices should be provided at the second floor to differentiate the storefront from upper levels of the building and to add visual interest. This also allows the storefront to function as the base for the rest of the building.



New storefront should maintain same proportions as the original.

USE OF MATERIALS AND COLOR

4.03.060

Issues

The proper use of finish materials and colors is very important in the development of a high quality project. In the downtown area, the main issues related to the use of finish materials and colors include:

- Ensuring that materials and colors are simple, unobtrusive, and are compatible with surrounding development while conveying a timeless quality.

- Ensuring that materials are of a high quality and that they are durable and require minimal maintenance.
- Ensuring that materials and colors are used in a consistent, logical manner that relates to the overall design of the building and surrounding buildings.

Objectives Supported

- Sense of History
- Unique character
- Human scale/comfort
- Quality development

A. Building Materials

1. If the building mass and pattern of windows and doors is complex, simple wall surfaces are preferable. If the building volume and the pattern of wall openings are simple, additional wall texture and articulation should be employed (e.g., bricks or blocks, ornamental relief). In both cases, pilasters, columns, and cornices should be used to add visual interest and pedestrian scale.
2. The palette of wall materials should be of high quality and consistent with the overall design concept for the building. Using the same or similar high quality wall materials as adjacent or nearby buildings will help maintain and strengthen the downtown's character.
3. Building materials should be highly durable and require only minimal maintenance.
4. Full size brick veneer is preferable to brick tile. Brick veneers should be mortared to give the appearance of structural brick. If brick tile applications are used, they should incorporate wrap-around corner and bullnose pieces to minimize a veneer appearance.

B. Color

Color can dramatically affect the visual appearance of buildings and should be carefully considered in relation to the overall design of the building. Much of the existing color in downtown derives from the primary building finish materials, such as brick, stone, and terra cotta. This should be maintained and strengthened in the development of new and remodeled buildings.

1. The dominant color of buildings should relate to the inherent color of the building's primary finish materials.
2. Colors should visually relate building elements to each other, and also individual facades to each other. The colors chosen for a building façade should relate to neighboring façades.
3. No more than three colors should be used on any given façade. This includes any "natural" colors such as unpainted brick or stone. The three colors constitute the:
 - Primary base color
 - Secondary color
 - Minor trim color
4. A secondary color can be used to give additional emphasis to architectural features such as building bases (like a wainscot), pilasters, cornices, capitals, and bands.
5. If the minor trim is a third color, it should strengthen the color scheme already established by the base and secondary colors. In most cases, when two colors are used on trim, the minor trim color should be a darker shade of the major trim color.
6. Large areas of white color are strongly discouraged. White is the brightest of colors and should be used with careful consideration because of its glare and effect on surrounding buildings.

BUILDING ACCESSORIES

4.03.070

Issues

Building accessories (e.g., awnings, lighting, signs, etc.) play an important role in finishing a building's overall design and adding visual interest. If they are not properly coordinated with the overall design of the building, they can severely detract from an otherwise well-designed building. The main issue related to building accessories is:

- Ensuring that any accessories added to a building are well integrated with the overall design of the building in an aesthetically pleasing way so that they contribute to a cohesive building design and do not detract from it.

Objectives Supported

- Sense of History
- Human scale/comfort
- Pedestrian orientation
- Quality development

A. Awnings

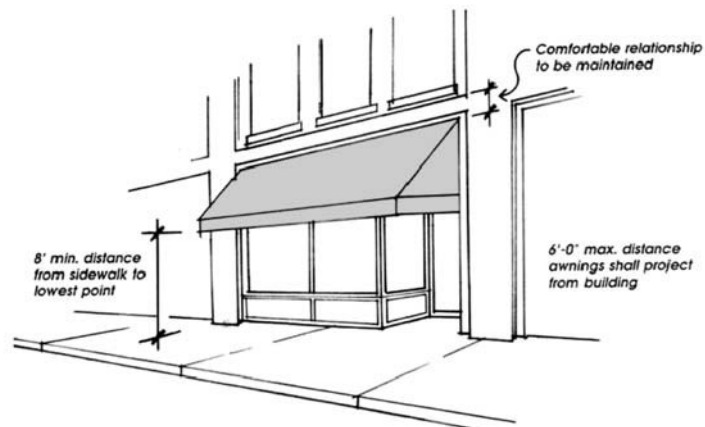
The use of awnings is encouraged. They provide protection for pedestrians, add interest and color to buildings, and allow placement of pedestrian – oriented signs.



Use awnings to add interest, color, and protection from the elements. These awnings fit well within the building's window and door openings.

1. The design and placement of awnings should be sensitive to the overall façade of the building. Where the façade is divided into distinct bays or sections, awnings should be placed within the elements rather than overlapping them. Awning placement should respond to the scale, proportion, and rhythm created by these elements, and should not cover piers, pilasters, clerestory windows, and other architectural features.
2. When there are several businesses in one building, all awnings should be the same in terms of color, trim, and form. Awnings may have simple signs on the valance to differentiate the individual businesses within the building.

3. Awnings should be of high quality materials (e.g., canvas, acrylic coated canvas, copper, or glass), shall be fire retardant to meet City standards, and be consistent with the overall building design. Aluminum, vinyl, or backlit awnings will generally detract from the quality desired for downtown and are not allowed.
4. The minimum height of awnings should be 8 feet above the sidewalk and should not project more than 6 feet out from the face of the building.



Appropriate awning placement.

B. Lighting

Nighttime illumination is important in creating an interesting and safe downtown environment. In addition, it can serve to highlight building design features, add emphasis to prominent entrances and plazas, and to create an ambiance of vitality and security.

1. Exterior lighting should be designed as part of the overall architectural style of the building. It should relate to the design elements of the building and highlight interesting design features.
2. For safety, identification, and convenience, the entrances of buildings should be well illuminated. The average level of illumination for entryways, arcades, and similar enclosed areas, should be 2 foot-candles.
3. Energy conservation should be an important consideration in lighting plans. Plans should be developed consistent with the latest technical and operational energy conservation concepts.

C. Security grilles

1. The use of scissor-type security grilles on the exterior of a building is prohibited. They communicate a message of high crime and cannot be integrated visually into the design of the building's facade.
2. If security grilles are necessary, they should be placed inside the building behind the window display area at a minimum distance of 2 feet behind the window. If this is not physically possible, grilles can be recessed into pockets in the storefront that completely conceal the grilles when they are retracted.



Avoid the use of security grilles on the exterior of the building.

D. Signs

Refer to Section 6.01, Sign Design Guidelines.

ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS

4.03.080

Issues

Adding on to, remodeling, or renovating existing buildings are means of extending a building's useful life. The main issues to consider when altering a building through these processes include:

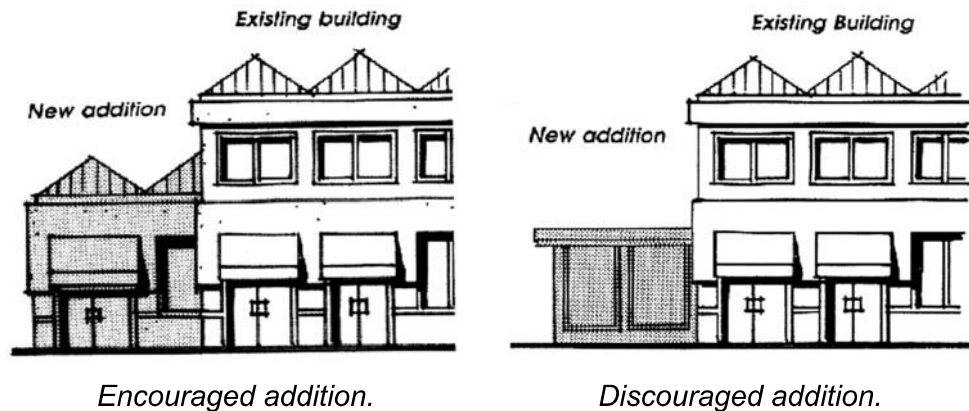
- Ensuring that the new addition or remodeled/renovated component is consistent with the existing design of the building and not a sharp contrast.
- Ensuring that when buildings are remodeled/renovated, especially older buildings and historically significant buildings, that contributing design details are properly maintained and restored.

Objectives Supported

- Sense of History
- Unique character
- Authenticity
- Human scale/comfort
- Pedestrian orientation
- Quality development
- Art and culture

A. Additions to Existing Buildings

1. Additions to existing buildings should be designed to be integrated with the existing structure. The design of a proposed addition should follow the general scale, proportion, massing, and detailing of the original structure, and be harmonious, not a stark contrast.
2. New additions should be interpretations of the existing buildings wherein the main characteristics of the existing building are incorporated using modern construction methods. This may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing building to the addition; repetition of window and entrance spacing; use of harmonizing colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar architectural details (i.e., window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration).
3. New additions should be designed so that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.



B. Facade Renovation

Buildings are often altered over time in an effort to keep up with changing architectural styles or to remake a tired image. Unfortunately, such changes tend to produce a gradual erosion of the original character of the downtown. Restoration of buildings that have been substantially or carelessly altered is strongly encouraged and should follow the guidelines below. Historically significant buildings should follow *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (see page 3.02 - 36), or as amended.



Example of restored cornice detail.

1. **Respect the Original Design.** Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and should not incorporate alterations that create an appearance unrelated to the original design of the building. Building design represents the philosophy and technology of a specific time. Rehabilitating a building should not strive to create a preconceived concept of a historic style but should reuse the existing materials and design to the greatest extent possible.
2. **Retain and Restore Significant Elements.** Distinctive stylistic features that exemplify the style should be uncovered, retained and restored. If restoration is not possible or feasible due to damage or deterioration, original elements of design that define the style should be recreated. In the event that previous renovations have covered these elements, they should be uncovered and repaired as necessary.



The significant design elements and materials on this building have been retained.

3. **Replace Damaged or Lost Features.** Damaged architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Patching and splicing should be performed when possible rather than replacement. If replacement is necessary, the new materials should match the original material being replaced in terms of color, texture, and other important design features. Replacement of historic elements should be made with the original material when possible, but when necessary, substitution may be made if the substitute materials convey the visual appearance of the original feature.

When an entire feature is missing, it should be replaced by researching historic plans or photographs. If accurate data is not available, a new design that is compatible with the remaining features of the building may be used. This newly created element should be designed to work with the size, scale, and material of the entire building.

4. **Minimize Alterations.** When alterations to an older building are necessary to ensure its continued use, these changes should not alter, obscure, or destroy significant architectural features, design details, or materials. Façade changes should be considered only after closely evaluating alternate means of achieving the same end.
5. **Removal of Elements Inconsistent with Original Façade.** Existing building elements incompatible with the original façade should be removed. These include: security grilles, overdone exterior embellishments, and modernized façades using such elements as metal canopies and bright aluminum doors and windows. The façade should then be restored to reflect its original appearance. The remodeling/restoration should stress the conservation of the stylistic features of the original building.
6. **Repair and Cleaning.** Surface cleaning of original building materials should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other harsh cleaning methods that may damage building materials should not be undertaken. Waterproofing and graffiti proofing sealers should be applied after cleaning and repair.

C. Seismic Retrofitting

1. Where structural improvements for seismic retrofitting affect a building's exterior, such improvements should be done with care and consideration for the impact on appearance of the building. Where possible, such work should be concealed. Where this is not possible, the improvements should be planned to carefully integrate into the existing building design.

2. Seismic structural upgrading should be conducted at the interior of the building if possible unless the structural elements blend into the architecture of the façade.
3. Shear walls should not be introduced into the storefront where display areas currently exist.