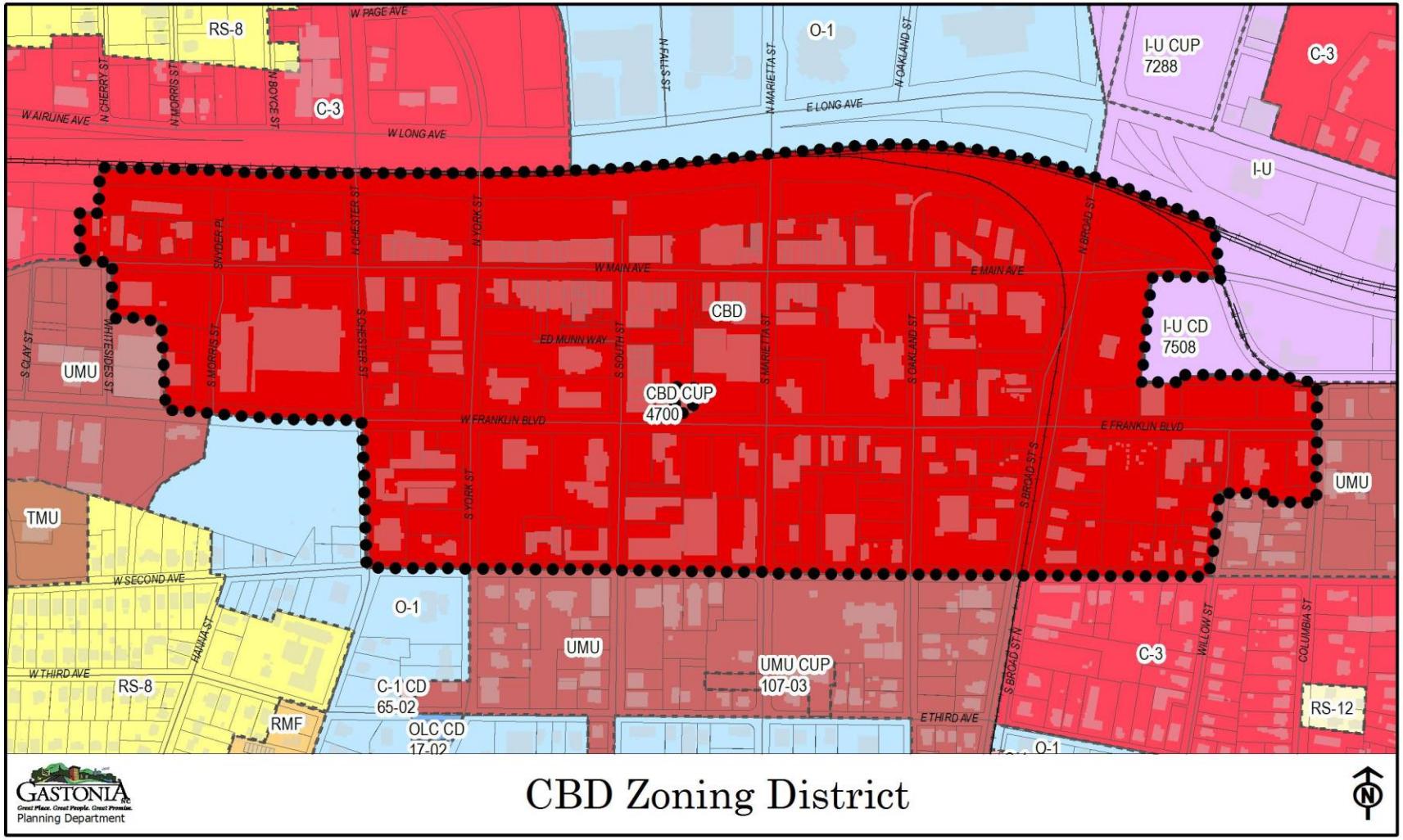
C-B District Design Guidelines

City of Gastonia, NC

Location: Central Business District



Design Review Committee (DRC)

Establishment of a staff committee appointed by the City Manager to review the exterior of all new construction and alterations to existing structures within the C-B district. DRC's review is based upon the included ordinance design standards (Key Principles).

- Submittal of drawings & details (site plan, elevations, etc.)
- DRC approval allows for zoning permit.
- Decision of DRC can be appealed to the Board of Adjustment
- DRC review can be done concurrently with evaluation of conditional rezonings or CUP's going to Planning Commission and City Council.

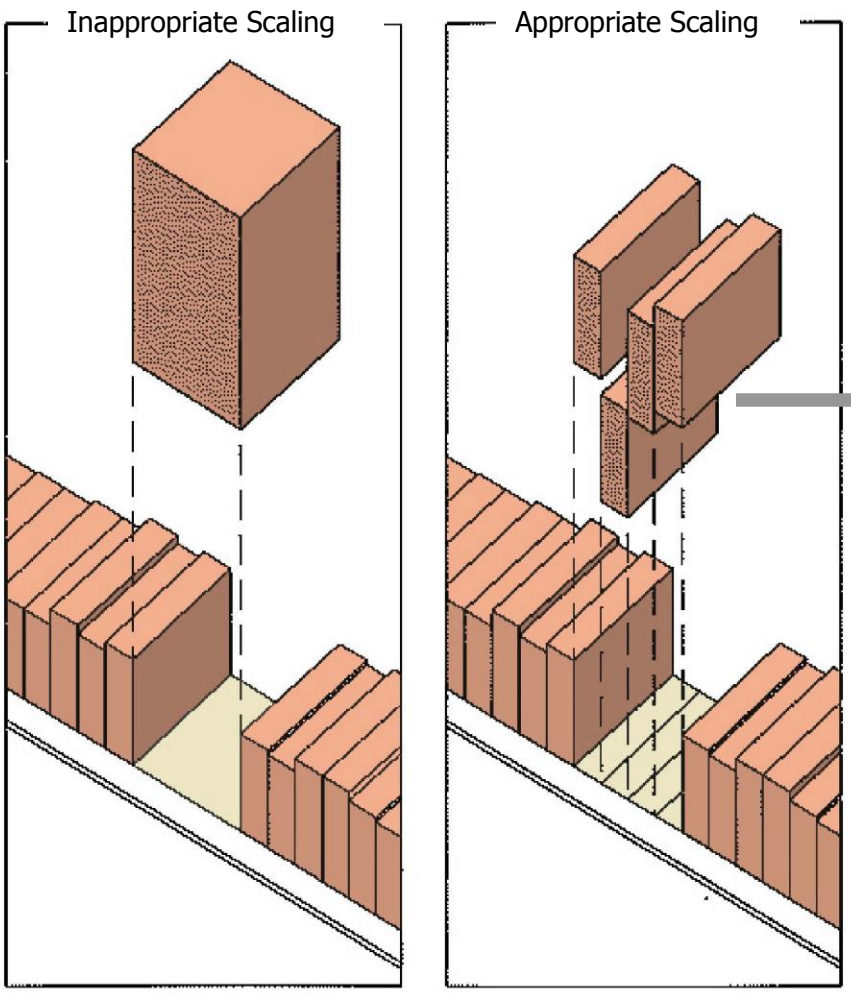
Key Principle: Proportion

A buildings' mass and scale shall be visually compatible with the buildings, structures and places to which it is related.

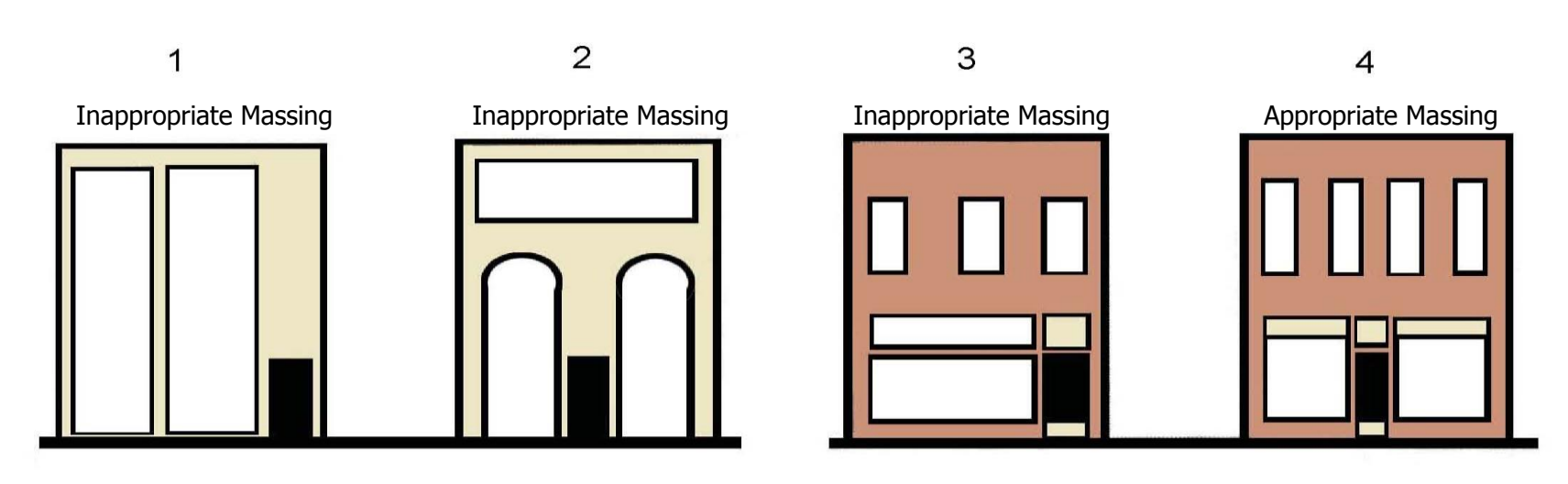
Establish "human scale" by using appropriately-sized materials and design features.

- Traditional brick sizes, traditionally-sized architectural elements & details (particularly at street level)
- Design should clearly define a base, middle and top to buildings.
- Divide buildings into modules architecturally by using features such as pilasters, vertical & horizontal bands, wall offsets, material variations, etc.

Key Principle: Proportion

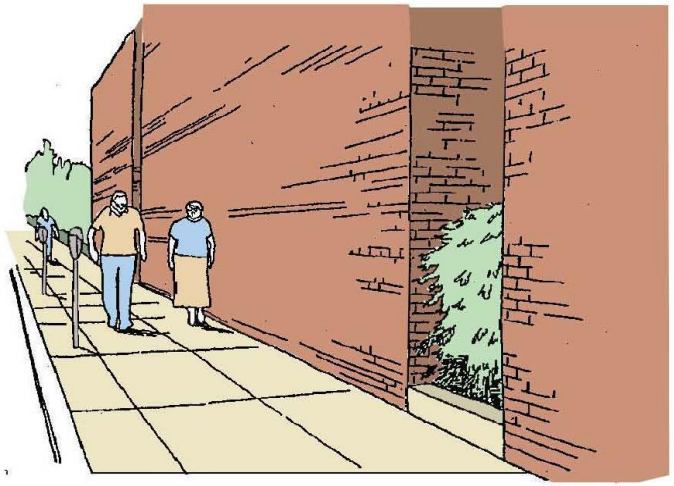


Key Principle: Proportion



Key Principle: Proportion

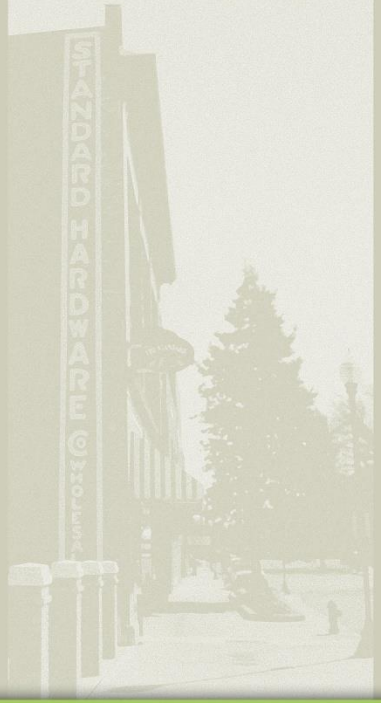
Inappropriate
Mass & Scale



Human Scale Design

Key Principle: Openings

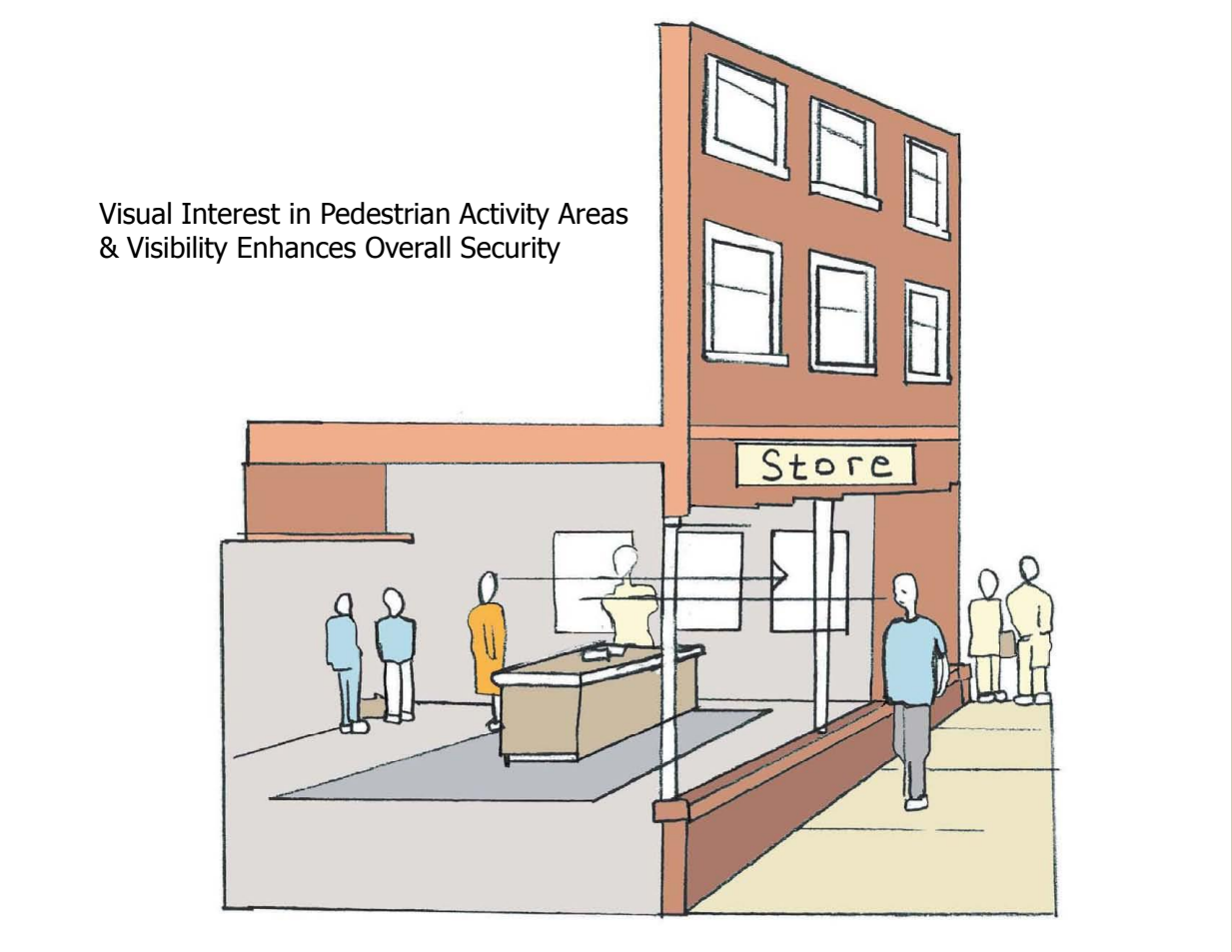
The relationship of the placement, dimensions and characteristics of the windows and doors in the building shall be visually compatible with buildings, structures and places to which it is related.



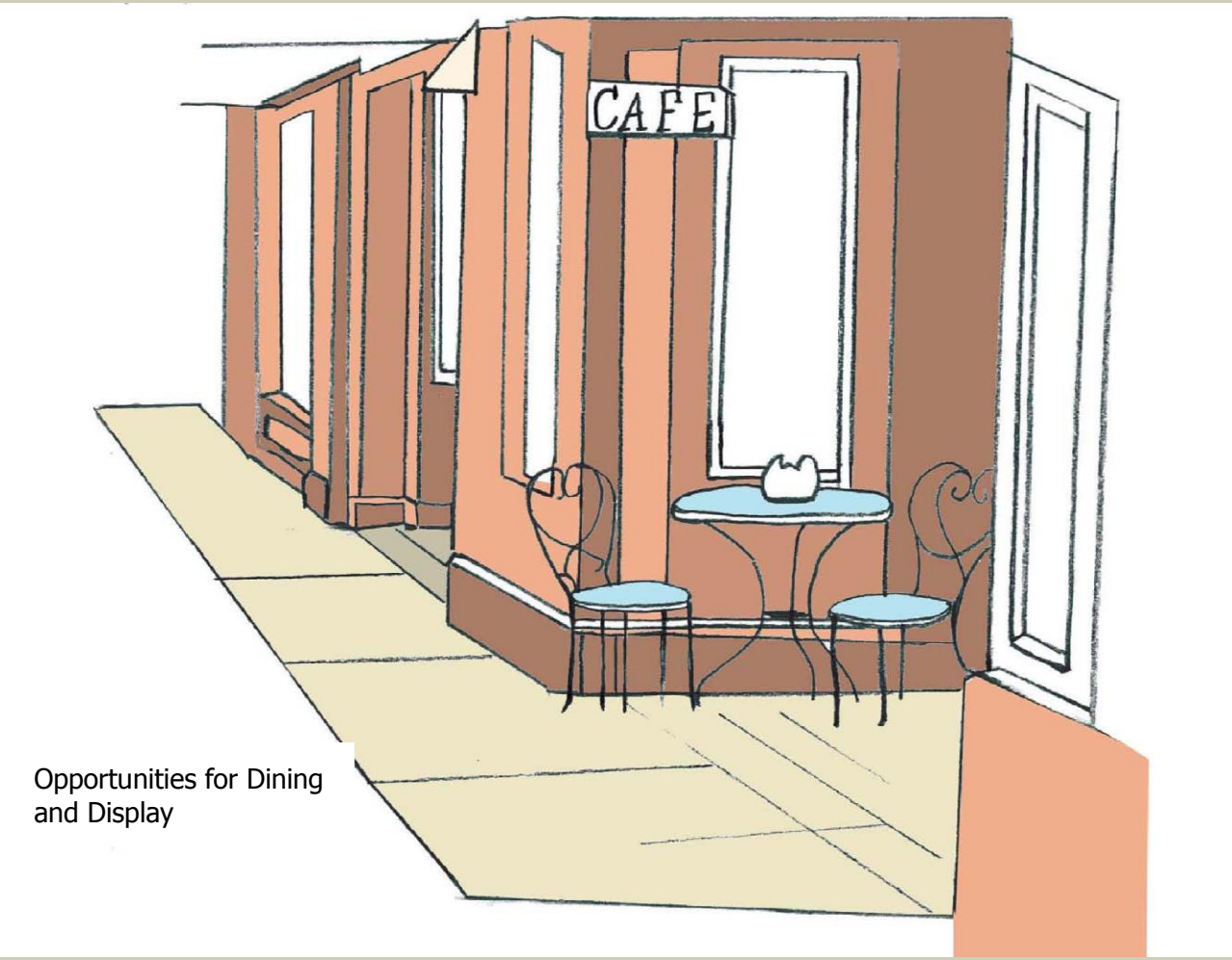
Emphasize the use of strong entryway and window design that is consistent with the architecture of the rest of the building and block.

- Entrances always directly to public sidewalks with windows along sidewalk.
- Emphasize recessed entrances (provide visual interest & opportunities for dining/display). Corner entrances at intersections.
- Doors and windows should emphasize the use of wood or finished metal for frames, sills & mullions, etc……..and include design details such as headers, molding, etc.
- No metal security doors or roll-down security bars along public streets.

Key Principle: Openings

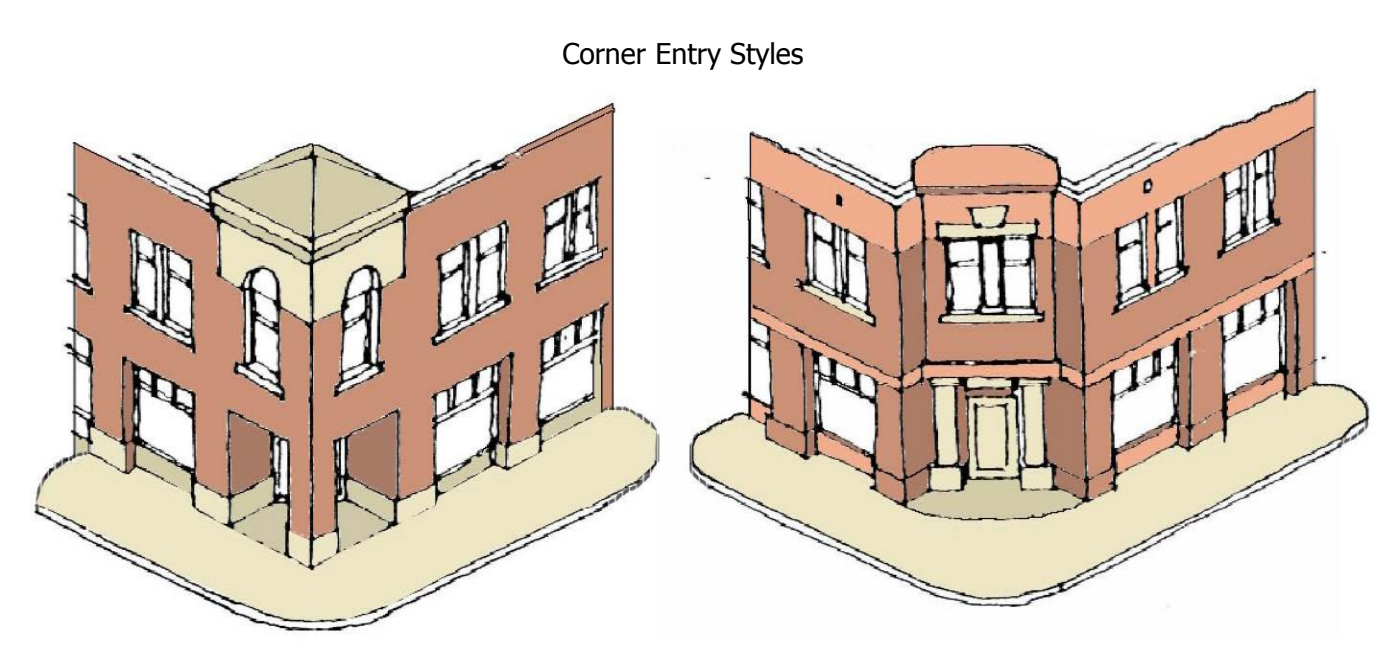


Key Principle: Openings



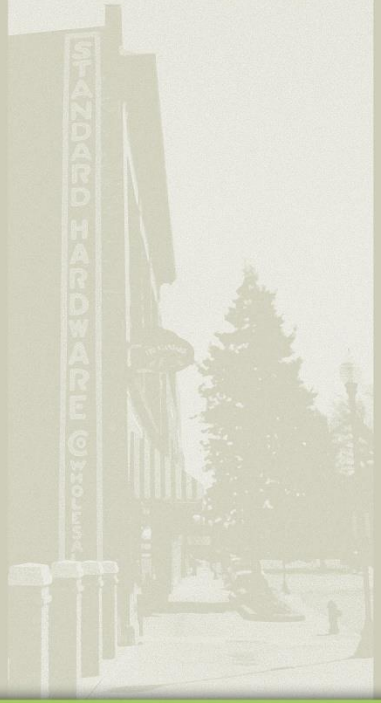
Opportunities for Dining and Display

Key Principle: Openings



Key Principle: Patterns

The relationships of elements in a façade of a building or structure shall be visually compatible with buildings, structures and places to which it is related.

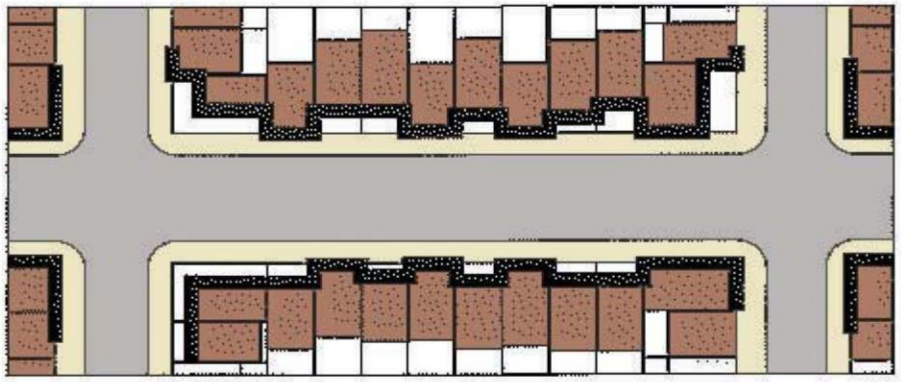


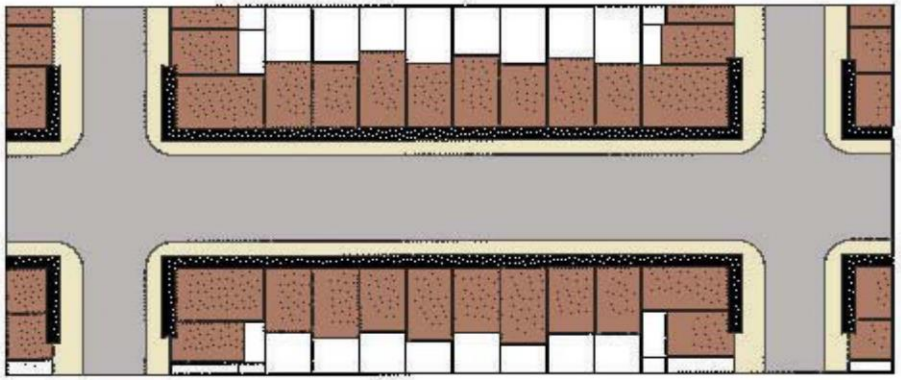
Align architectural features, from one building to the next, to create visual continuity, context & character.

- Maintain the rhythm of façade widths along the street frontage. For larger buildings this can be achieved through architectural variation.
- Continue the established building setback along street frontages. In order to allow for appropriate variation, use columns, etc. at larger recessed entrances.
- Align windows and other architectural elements, features and details with other buildings along the street (cornice, parapet, kickplate or bulkhead, etc.)

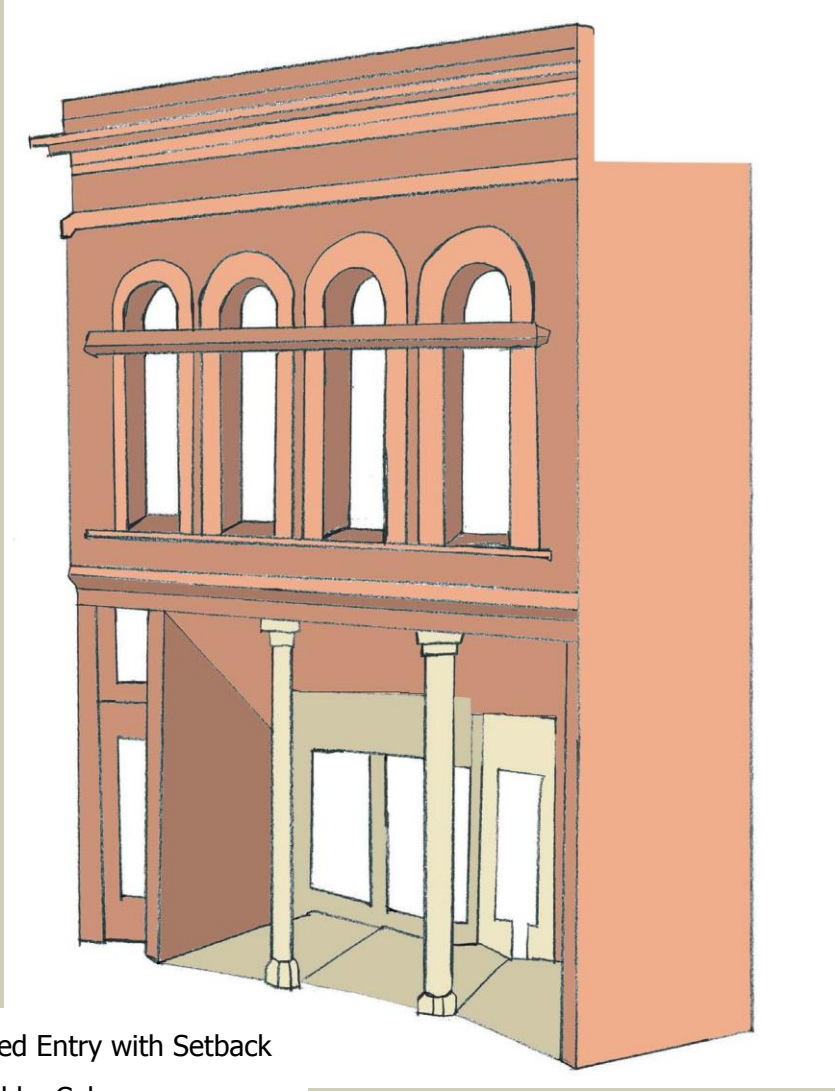
Key Principle: Patterns

Key Principle: Patterns





Key Principle: Patterns



Recessed Entry with Setback

Defined by Columns

Key Principle: Patterns

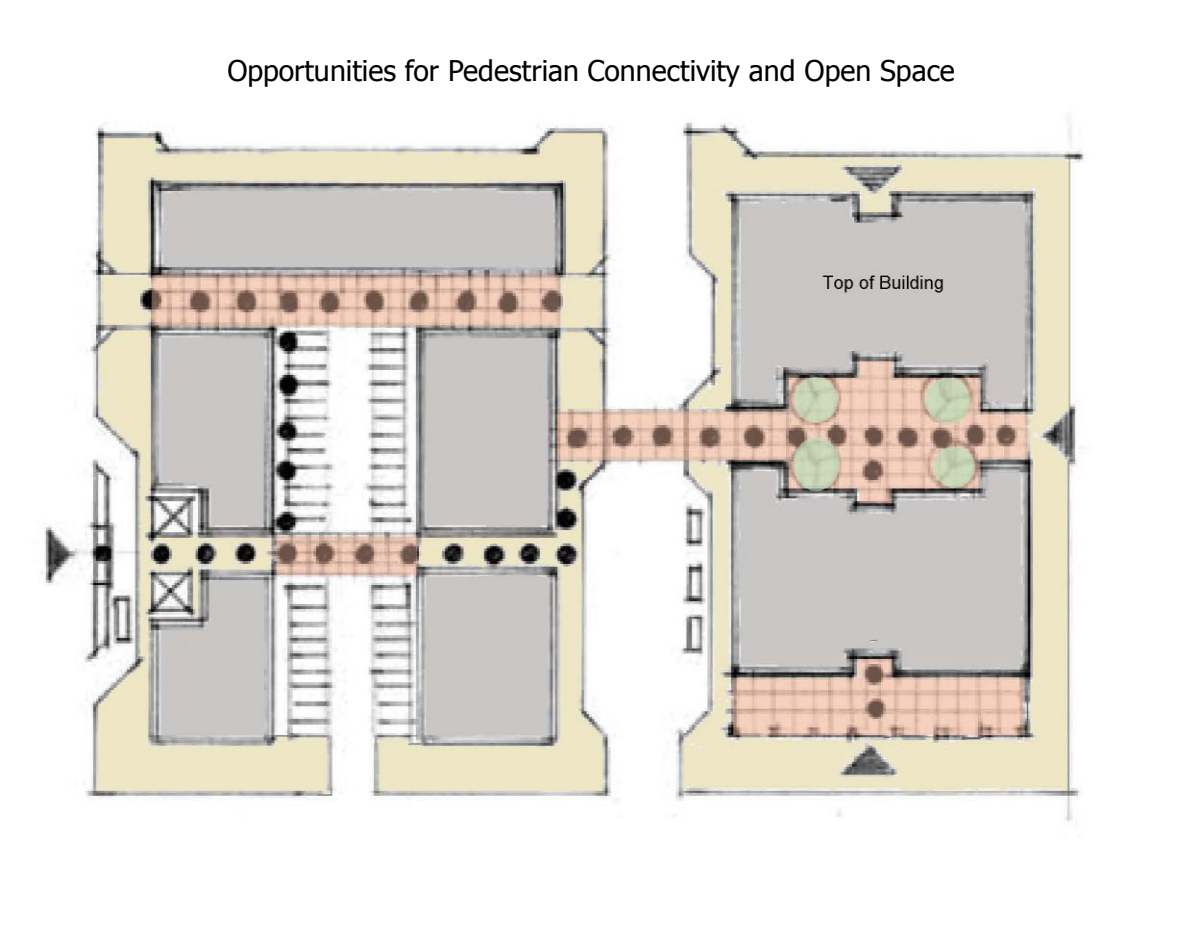
Key Principle: Spacing

The relationship of a building to the open areas between it and the adjoining buildings shall be visually compatible with the buildings, structures and places to which it is related.

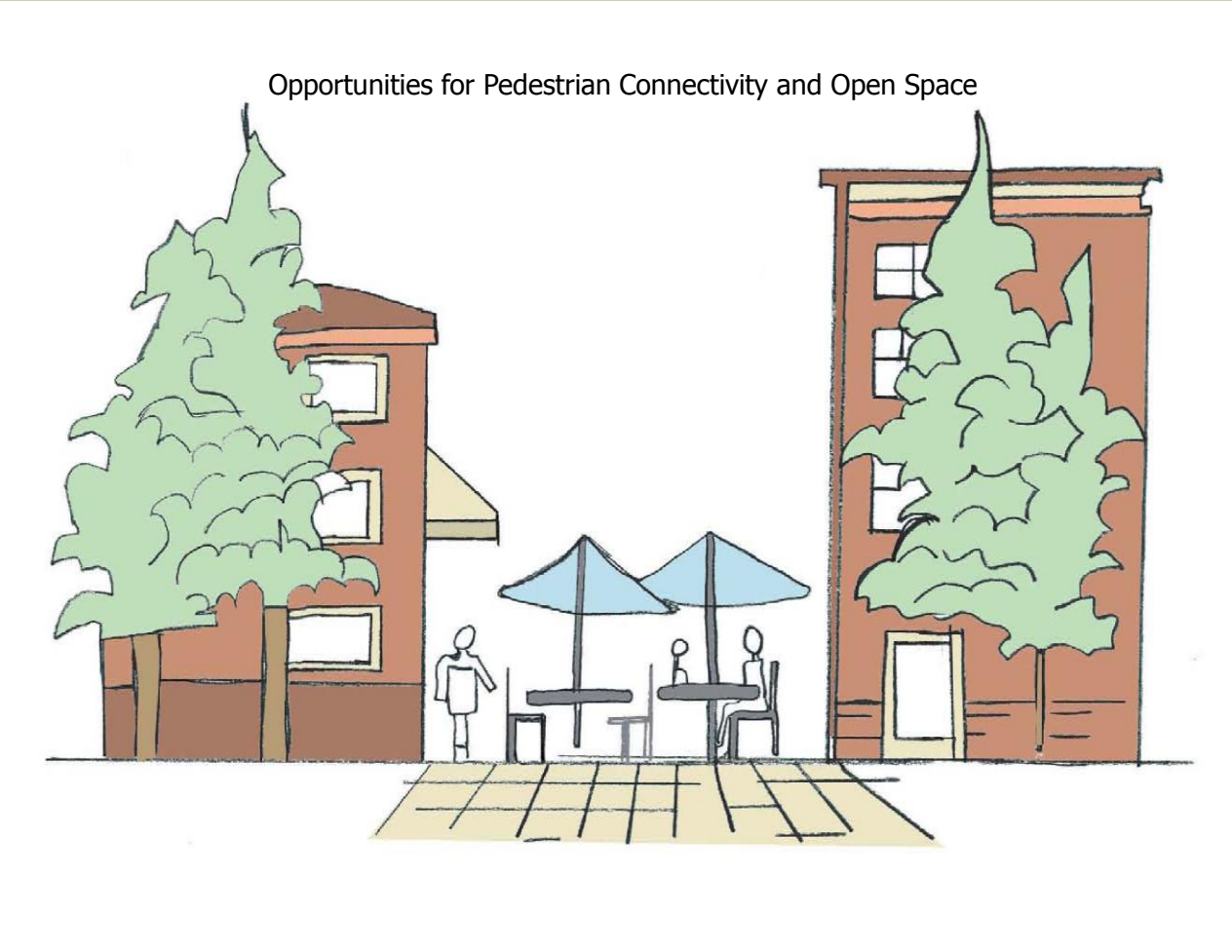
Incorporate (when possible) appropriate open spaces to encourage pedestrian connectivity, introduce small park-like features and create the feeling of outdoor rooms.

- Encourage through-block connections (particularly in larger projects), whether open air or covered by the structure, that are designed with artwork, seating, landscaping, etc.
- Orient open spaces toward important views & vistas and so that sunlight is maximized.
- Where possible and appropriate, include outdoor dining areas, rooftop terraces, balconies, etc.

Key Principle: Spacing



Key Principle: Spacing

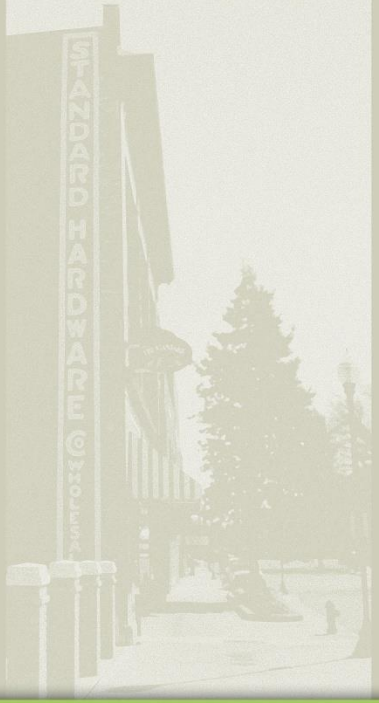


Key Principle: Presence

The projection, supports, height and relationship to streets and sidewalks, of awnings, canopies and balconies of a building shall be visually compatible to the buildings, structures and places to which it is related.

Maintain appropriate clearances and dimensions for balconies, awnings, recesses, etc. along public streets and access areas.

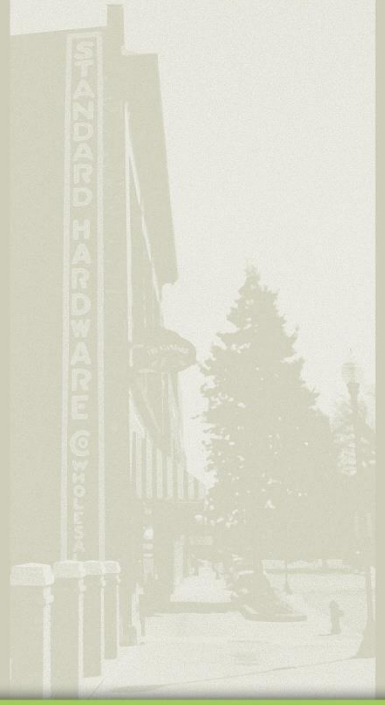
- Awnings should fit windows, doors and other openings so as not to obscure design details.
- Minimum eight-foot clearance from sidewalk for awnings & canopies.
- Building code provides further specific dimensional standards.



Key Principle: Presence

Key Principle: Roofs

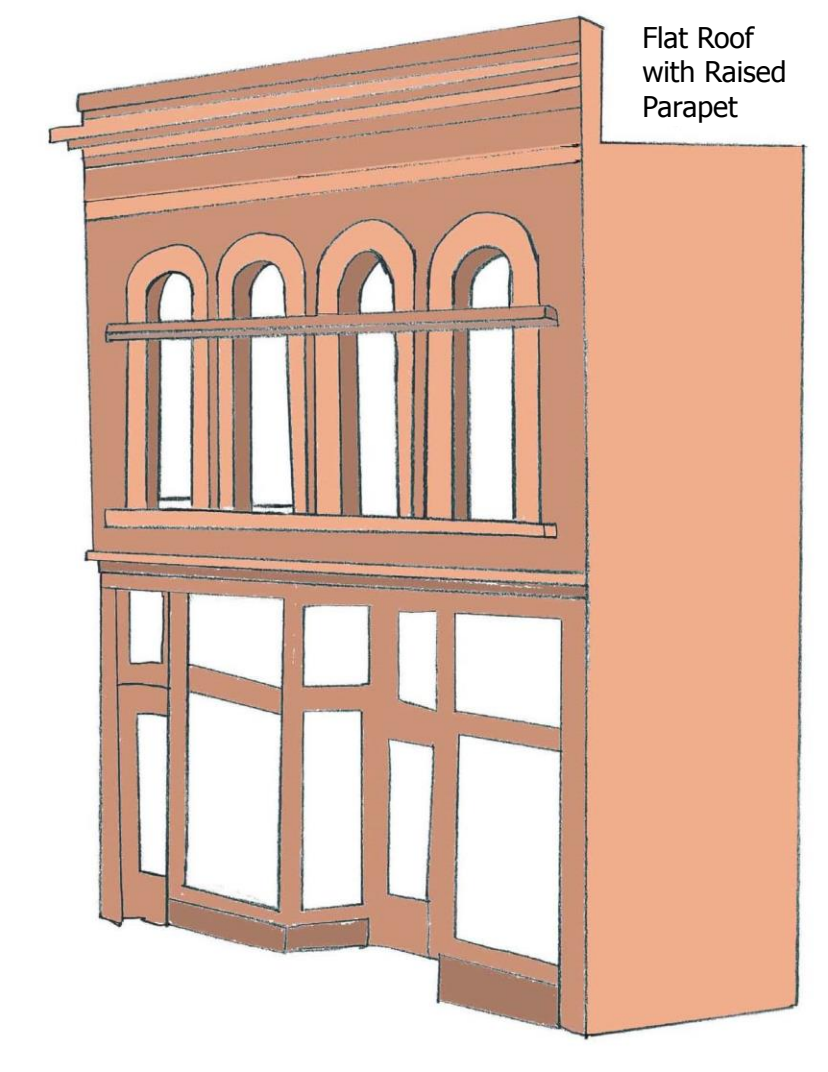
The roof shape and materials of a building shall be visually compatible with the buildings and structures to which it is related.



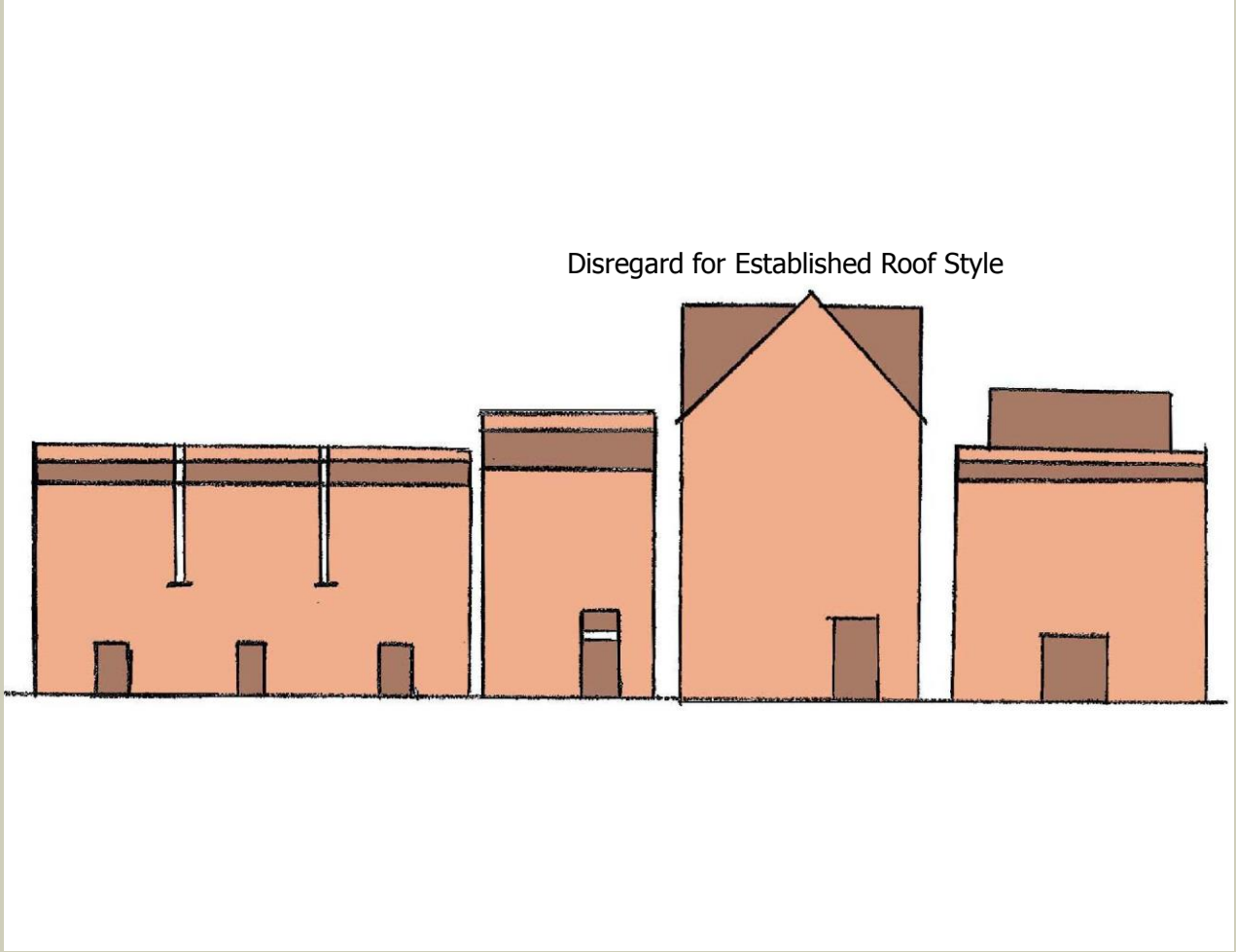
Retain the traditional flat roof design that is characteristic of most existing downtown development.

- Flat roof, raised parapet and decorative elements.
- Other roof types can be appropriate given specific visual context, such as terminating vistas (Rotary pavilion area, for example).

Key Principle: Roofs

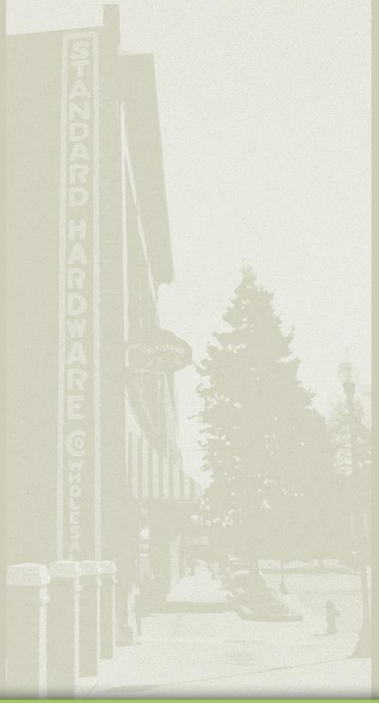


Key Principle: Roofs



Key Principle: Materials

The materials, textures and colors of the façade of a building shall be visually compatible with the predominant materials, textures and colors used in the buildings and structures to which they are related.



Integrate appropriate accent materials and elements into a predominantly masonry theme (in most cases) in keeping with traditional downtown design characteristics.

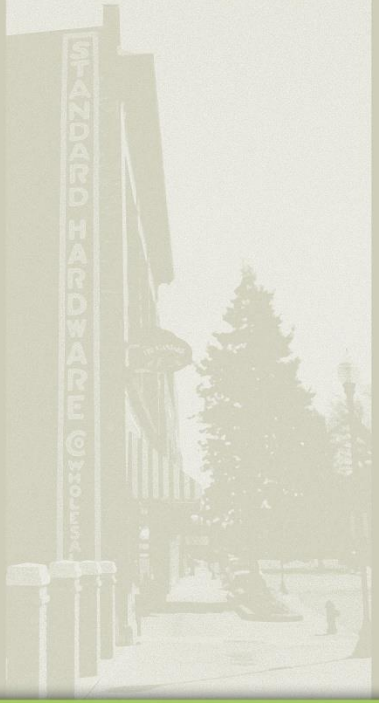
- Brick, stone, stucco, ornamental CMU (split-faced block)
- Accent materials allow for variety of appropriate colors and textures.
- Avoid very intense colors.
- DRC can approve alternate materials in specific circumstances (LEED).

Other: Historic Buildings

Projects involving the rehabilitation or expansion of downtown historic buildings should reflect the original architectural character of the building.

Honor the traditional design characteristics of the structure.

- Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

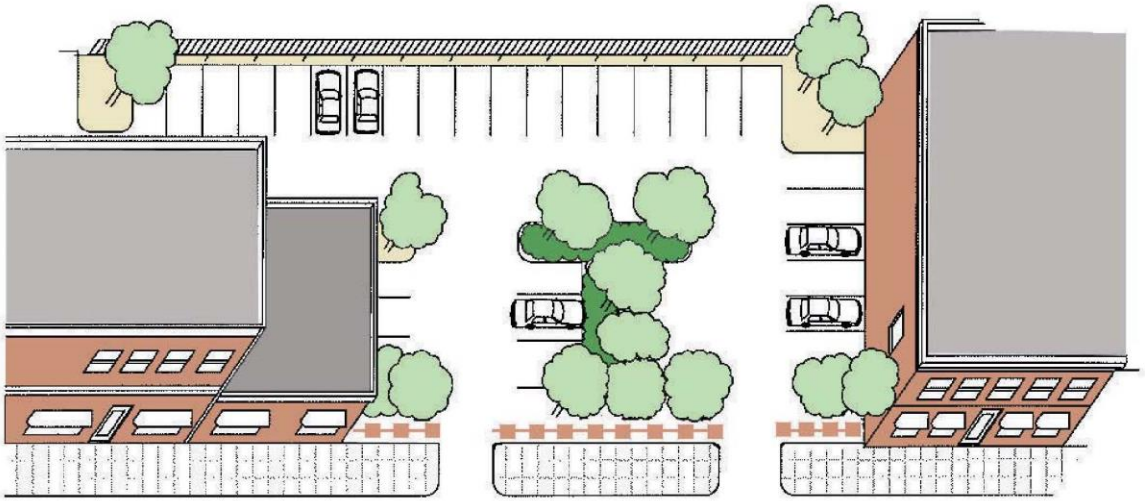


Other: Parking Lots & Structures

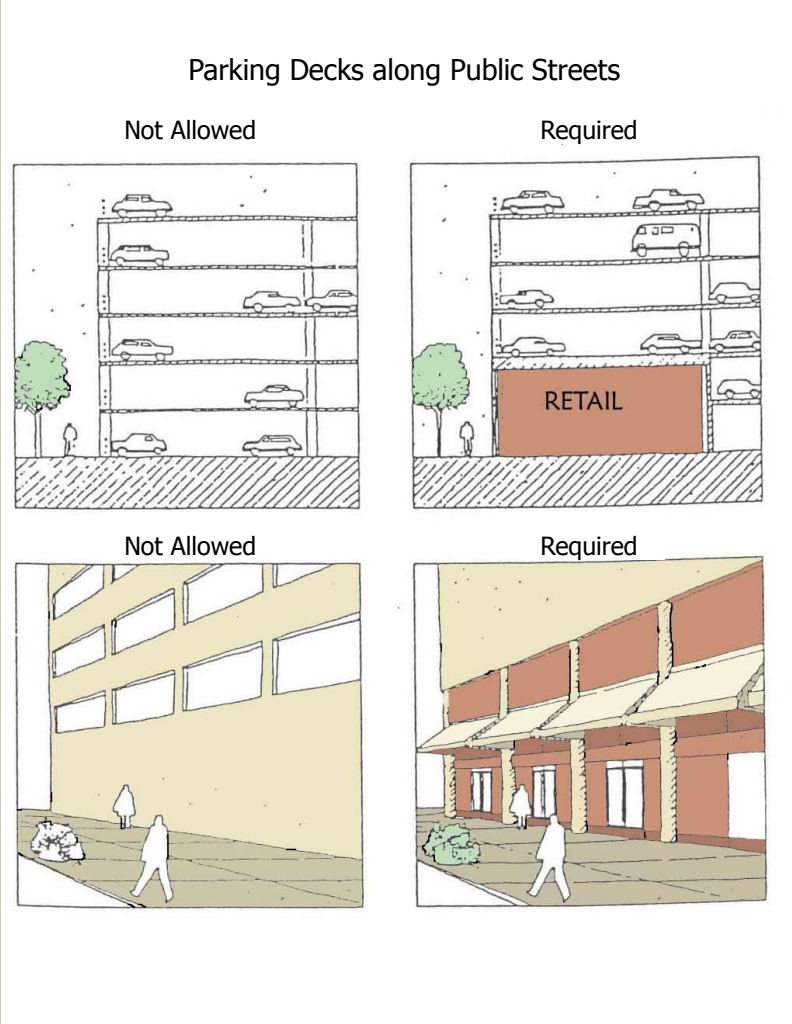
- No minimum parking requirements for virtually all uses in C-B District.
- Prefer parking, when included, to be located behind buildings (internal to block).
- Any surface parking area abutting a public street requires a masonry wall/fence.
- Parking decks must include leasable retail or service space(s) at the street level along public streets.

Other: Parking Lots & Structures

Parking Lot with Masonry Fence/Wall and Parking at rear of Buildings



Other: Parking Lots & Structures



Other: Drive-Thru Fast Food

- Allowed <u>only</u> on properties with frontage on two major thoroughfares.
- No franchise architecture (subject to all C-B standards).
- Requires outdoor seating areas and DRC may require other improvements.

Other: Dwelling Units

- **No detached single-family dwellings.**
- **Apartments and condos allowed on all upper floors (2nd & above)**
- **Generally no residential on street level. DRC can approve specified exceptions, including expansion of existing residential or in locations outside core retail/arts/entertainment area.**

The End (an example)