



**EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA
C-1 (General Commercial) DISTRICT
DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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I. INTRODUCTION

GOALS

These guidelines have been created to provide guidance and development objectives to be applied to all renovations and new construction within the C-1 (General Commercial) Zoning District, with the objective of managing and guiding growth toward the realization of specific urban design objectives. These guidelines are provided for the enhancement of the downtown area as the functional and symbolic center of the City.

This District is established in order to achieve the following objectives for the City's downtown:

- Generate pride in the downtown area
- Create a visual and social identity as a unique urban place
- Create an environment which is active throughout the day and evening
- Encourage pedestrian activity by creating a safe and enjoyable pedestrian experience
- Recapture the intimacy and character of a traditional downtown
- Maintain a consistent and high level of design quality
- Protect property values through quality control
- Establish the DeMers and Riverfront areas as the cultural, retail, financial, government and entertainment center of the community. Housing, and services will be an additional complement where practical.
- Create an urban setting that contrasts with and brings together the suburban qualities that typify other areas of the city

THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN EAST GRAND FORKS

In the wake of the flood of 1997, the City of East Grand Forks was left with the need to rebuild and a unique opportunity to rethink the downtown area -- to recreate it as the focal point of the community.

The downtown area will be a vital commercial and residential district with a concentration of activities appealing to people of all ages, with civic functions, recreational and cultural events, shopping and services. The downtown will be a place to come to enjoy being a part of the community. It will be a place to relax outdoors, to take a stroll, to meet friends, find some entertainment, or play tag in the park. The downtown will be a vibrant, comfortable place with attractive public spaces for social interaction.

Downtown will be easy to identify as one moves from an open rural and suburban landscape to the more clustered townscape. It will be well defined by pedestrian scaled street spaces and attractive old and new buildings. The downtown will be a unique expression of local character, activated by people who live and work there.

The City of East Grand Forks is committed to the highest quality in the C-1 Zoning District. Buildings should contribute to a strong overall downtown character; building facades should add richness and detail to the public spaces they define. Public spaces will work for the people who inhabit them. It is in the spirit of this vision that these guidelines are intended to serve.

Landscape of the public streets and sidewalks, the town square, the River Walk and parks will be the city's obligation. It should be public policy that plantings should be orchestrated with artworks to create open spaces for active and passive enjoyment by the citizens. Every effort should be made to preserve existing mature trees.

II. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

BOUNDARIES

These guidelines apply to all renovations and new construction within the C-1 (General Commercial) Zoning District.

All plans for structures within the district must be reviewed by the Planning Commission for compliance.

General municipal code provisions will continue to apply to the C-1 (general Commercial) Zoning District.

All work shall be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

III. DESIGN CONCEPTS

Enhance the Connection
to the river

Encourage entertainment uses along the waterfront with a promenade overlooking the river.

Develop a Mixture of Uses
in the Downtown Area

Concentrate retail, restaurant, entertainment and services with mixed-use above which can include housing, hotel, club, or office uses. Include within the C-1 District residential uses of variety of rents or price.

Preserve Structures of Merit
and Develop Infill Between

Existing brick structures should be preserved, and new construction should reflect their design in massing, material, color, and scale.

Reduce the Impact of Traffic and
Improve Pedestrian Ambiance

Line main roadways with street trees, planting strips, historic light standards, banners, and kiosks to provide a visual interest for pedestrians.

Use Buildings to
Define the Street Space

Hold the façade of new buildings in the District to the street property line. Setbacks should be uniform.

Preserve Mid-block Alleys for
Pedestrian Use and Vehicular Access

Create landscaped open space in the center of blocks by requiring development along the outer perimeter. This mid-block space is a shared area and parking for all buildings in the block. Open parking areas fronting on DeMers are discouraged.

Reinforce Existing and Create New
Focal Points

The old street layout is reconfigured to create a civic focal point at Government Center and another on the river, thus giving the C-1 Zoning District focal points.

Preserve existing mature trees.

IV. DESIGN GUIDELINES



Site

Building coverage is permitted up to 100%. Lots may be redivided where possible to provide 30' and 60' lot increments.

To define the street space, developments should extend to the public right-of-way line at streets. Side yards at DeMers are discouraged. No rear yard setback is required.

On-site parking, service entries, trash and loading areas should be located at the back of the property and accessed from rear alleys. Equipment should be located at the back of the building or on the roof.

Service areas and equipment should be screened from public view with enclosures and/or landscaping. Enclosures should be compatible with the building in design and color. No equipment should be mounted on street facades. Artificial plants and astroturf should not be used in the downtown district. See section on fencing.

Site improvements should be coordinated with the City's streetscape improvement specifications and are subject to design review. See the Greater Grand Forks River Forks Plans, April 1994, for Destination Street Streetscaping proposals.

Parking

New developments will not be required to provide its own on-site parking but a limited number of their necessary parking spaces should be created at the rear of the property.

Parking lots and structures should be located at the rear of or underneath buildings, with access via the rear alleys. Parking lots located at the front or side of the building are discouraged.

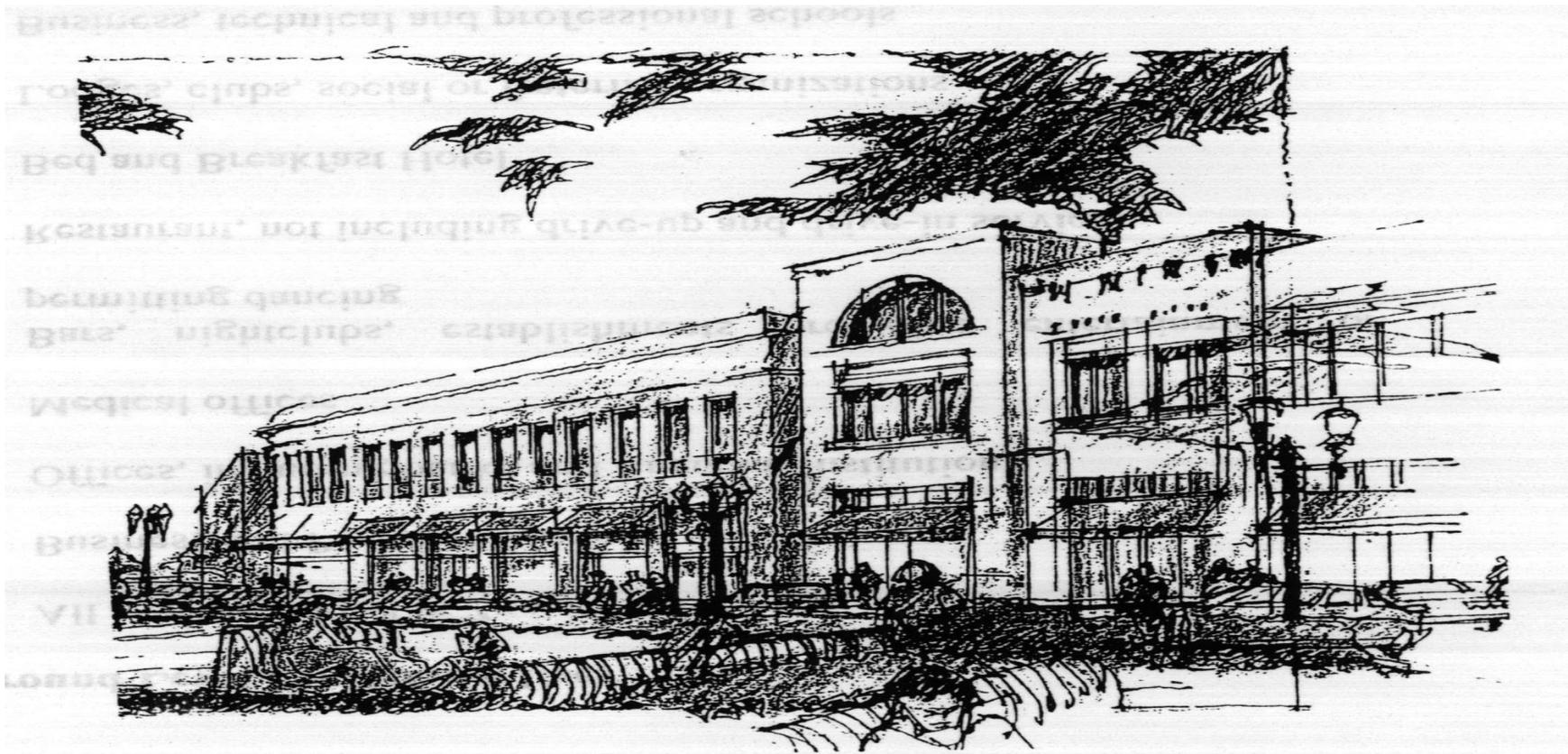
Vehicular entry points to parking lots from DeMers are not encouraged.

Additional curb cuts or driveways are discouraged except from alleys. Existing driveways and curb cuts may be relocated or replaced

Off-street parking should be designed so that a car will not have to use a public street to move from one location to another within the same parking facility.

Surface parking lots should be screened from streets by low walls, open fencing, or landscaping (see section on Fencing). Surface lots should be landscaped to 5%, distributed over the parking area. Landscaping between parking and building walls is encouraged.

Parking structures should have no ventilation exhaust grilles or shafts adjacent to public streets.



Height

The main vertical wall surface at the sidewalk line should have a minimum height of 32' and maximum height of 45' (not including pitched roof areas) with a clear architectural definition at this height. Additional facade articulation such as pediments and sloped roofs are encouraged above this height.

The first floor should have a minimum ceiling height of 10'-0" for other uses and 12'-6" clear to accommodate retail -- suggested floor-to-floor height is 15'-0" to 18'-0". The first floor should be no more than one foot above sidewalk level.

Massing & Architectural Treatment

New buildings should maintain a streetwall in line with contiguous building facades along the street property line. Facades should have the rhythm and scale of narrow building increments. The main building facade should be brick with brick piers occurring at intervals no more than 20'. Suggested bay widths are 15' and 20'.

Large building projects, with either single, large tenants or multiple tenants, must continue the visual appearance of smaller, individual buildings.

First floor setbacks from the front property line while upper floors project out to the front property line, are discouraged.

The facades of adjacent structures should be considered in the design of new projects to avoid clashes in architectural style and materials.

Buildings should be designed with a building base and a top, with horizontal articulation at approximately 20' to maintain pedestrian scale and articulation of the top portion of buildings, through the introduction of horizontal bands, cornices, etc.

Large expanses of vertical and horizontal wall surface should be avoided at street level. Decorative facade ornament is encouraged. Intricacy of detail and richness of texture provide an added dimension to the pedestrian experience.

Storefronts should be setback slightly, 4-8 inches, from the face of facade piers. Additional front setbacks are allowed only at ground level for entries, to a maximum of 10% of the width of the facade. Setbacks or plazas between the property line and the building are discouraged.

Narrow mid-block pedestrian passages and arcades or protected areas that create wider sidewalk areas for cafes, etc. may be allowed under limited circumstances. In such cases where a partial or complete setback of the building is allowed, it should be demonstrated that these spaces will be active pedestrian areas. No parking is encouraged in these areas.

During renovations of existing brick buildings, architectural elements, distinguishing features and good craftsmanship should not be removed. Repair such elements, and when not possible, they should be replaced to match or to reflect existing materials and details. Modern materials that have been applied to historic facades should be removed.

Signage, awnings and lighting should not obscure architectural facade elements.

Designers are encouraged to study The Creamery (at DeMers and 4th Street) in East Grand for inspiration.

Roof Treatment

Reinforce the typical building increment of 15' to 30' by breaking roof lines with changes in height, loggias, , or stepbacks. Interesting and varied roof forms are encouraged

Rooftop equipment should be screened from view or integrated within the architecture of the building.

Ground Level Treatment

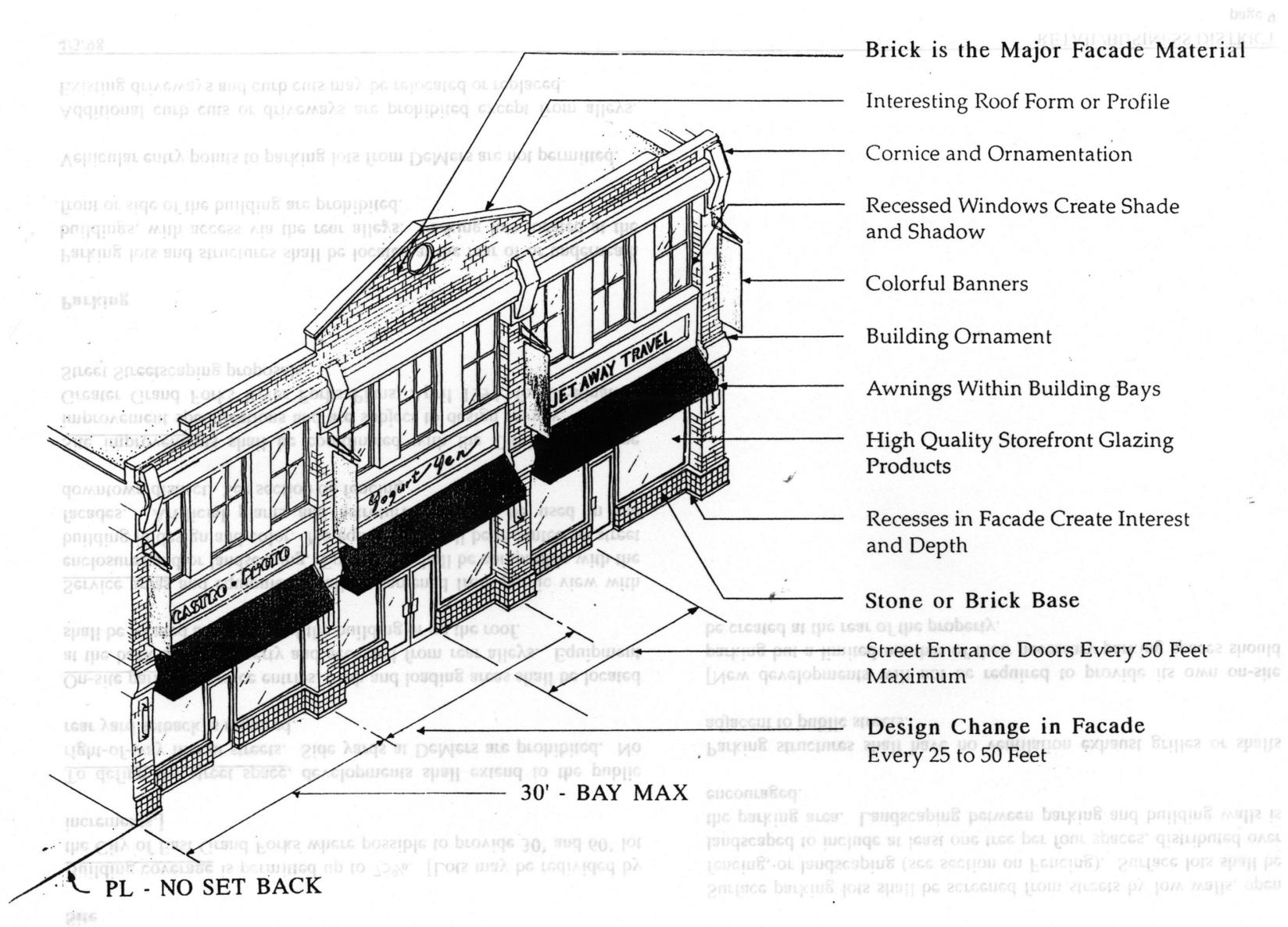
Uses generating high activity are especially encouraged at DeMers Avenue intersections. Buildings located at corner intersections should incorporate architectural features at ground level which enrich pedestrian movement, such as trellis structures and other elements which enhance visual interest on the corners. Entries should not be located at the corners of the building.

Street-frontage establishments should have their primary access directly to street with entry doors at intervals no greater than 60 feet to avoid long expanses of inactive frontage. A change in major compositional elements of the street level facade is recommended at intervals of 40 to 60 feet.

To provide a visual connection between public and private space and to maximize interest for pedestrians, storefront construction should be minimum of 60% transparent glass with a maximum of 85% transparency.

Storefronts should be setback a minimum of 8 inches from the face of facade piers, and storefront windows should not extend to the ground. Transom windows with narrow glass panes are encouraged.

Blank, solid end or side walls on street frontages should be avoided. If necessary for interior reasons, the wall should receive some form of articulation such as display windows, awnings, cornice bands, etc.



Brick is the Major Facade Material

Interesting Roof Form or Profile

Cornice and Ornamentation

Recessed Windows Create Shade and Shadow

Colorful Banners

Building Ornament

Awnings Within Building Bays

High Quality Storefront Glazing Products

Recesses in Facade Create Interest and Depth

Stone or Brick Base

Street Entrance Doors Every 50 Feet Maximum

Design Change in Facade Every 25 to 50 Feet

30' - BAY MAX

PL - NO SET BACK

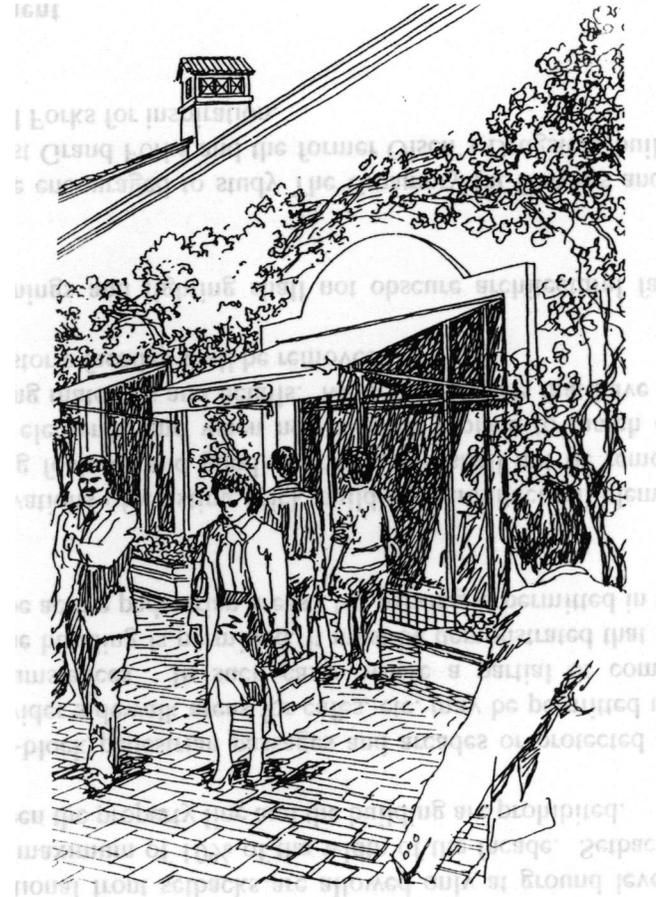
Storefront infill materials may vary according to the list of acceptable materials. Particular attention should be paid to detailing and craftsmanship within the pedestrian's view and touch, e.g., special storefront detail, facade ornamentation, special materials.

Detailed door and window profiles and hardware are encouraged.

Flower boxes, flags and banners reinforce the pedestrian nature of the street, and are encouraged.

Businesses with secondary fronting on mid-block pedestrian passageways should provide those passageways with attractive windows and doors.

Buildings facing the continuous raised river walk should provide a covered walkway system that will shelter pedestrians extending 6'-0" and continuous along the length of the facade. Covering should comply with Door/Window Overhanging Protection.



Upper Level Treatment

Upper story street wall construction should be a minimum of 35% transparent.

Small-scaled windows are encouraged because they provide an illusion of greater expanse, greater distance, and forced perspective. Windows should be inset from the wall surface to provide shadow and shade detail, and should have accent colored mullions and frames. Double-hung sash or casement windows are preferred.

Windowless expanses of building wall at the sides and back should be avoided. When unavoidable, those walls should be made interesting by means of surface relief, color or material change, or special surface treatment.

In mixed-use buildings with upper level housing, adequate soundproofing should be provided to protect the residents from noise impacts of adjoining uses.

Building Materials

The primary material for the street front facades should be brick.

Glossy finishes should be avoided. Reflective glass is considered undesirable.

Other materials should be dark in color. Primary colors should be reserved primarily for graphics.

Excepting the primary framework of the building wall, the following list of materials is not acceptable. Use it as a source for guidance and inspiration.

Building Wall - Primary Facade

- Acceptable materials
brick - color similar to brick at The Olson Drug Store or a soft tone, reddish brick. (See Appendix for Materials List)
brick and stone are the preferred materials for accents, string courses, cornices, bases, and the like, but other materials may be proposed
- Discouraged materials
materials other than brick, except as noted above
mottled or variegated brick

Building Wall - Infill

- Acceptable materials
new or used face-brick
cut stone
terra-cotta
metal shingle - galvanized, steel, copper, stainless steel, nickel, etc.
natural metal panels
cast iron
wood - clapboard siding, board & batten
transparent glass, decorative glass
plaster (lightly troweled or sand finish)
ceramic & quarry tile
- Discouraged materials
coarsely finished, rough-sawn or artificial rustic materials
mottled or variegated brick
oversized and white brick mortarstone
flagstone
imitation masonry products
large-aggregate concrete wall panels
baked enamel metal panels
aluminum siding or panel systems
wood shingle or diagonal wood siding
imitation wood products

corrugated fiberglass
vinyl or painted steel siding
astro-turf
shiny, reflective, or rough finishes

Roofs (where visible)

- Acceptable materials
flat concrete or clay tiles
slate or slate appearing substitutes
standing seam metal roofs (not batten)
metal shingles
corrugated metal - galvanized steel, copper, stainless steel
- Discouraged materials
painted composition shingles with thickness or simulated depth
crushed stone
exposed corrugated metal
cedar shake
brightly colored tile (orange, blue, etc.)

Fences/Walls/Gates

- Acceptable materials
new or used face brick
cut or carved stone
concrete with smooth or lightly textured surface
split face block
wrought iron
- Discouraged materials
concrete block, whether colored or unfinished
chain link or “cyclone” fences
split rail

Door/Window Overhanging Protection

Awnings of umbrella canvas, glass or metal overhanging the sidewalk are encouraged to shelter openings of buildings from sun and rain at the bottom floor. Awnings are also allowed at upper floors.

Awnings should respect the style and character of the structure on which they are located, particularly in the material and color (color of awnings subject to city review).

Profiles should be pitched and open from below. Box shapes are discouraged. Consider the profile and height of awnings of adjacent buildings. Internally illuminated and back-lit awnings as a graphic device are discouraged.

Awnings should not obscure architectural elements. The highest point of an awning or its superstructure should not be higher than the midpoint of the space between the second story window sills and the top of the first floor storefront window, awning, or transom.

The minimum height of an awning/canopy or a sign hung from an awning should be 7-8' above the sidewalk, except for a flexible valance which may not be less than 7' above the sidewalk. Maximum extension should be 6'. It is recommended that the low side of awnings be kept to the minimums.

Vinyl awnings are discouraged.



Lighting

Exterior lighting at building facades should only illuminate entries, signage and significant architectural elements. Lighting should not cover architectural elements.

Visible fluorescent lamps, colored lamps, internally illuminated signs and awnings are discouraged. Seasonal colored lamps are not allowed.

Exterior Christmas decorations will be a district program.

Signage

Signage should be integrated with, and should not cover, architectural facade elements, including cornice elements. Rooftop signage is discouraged.

An ideal location for primary signage is in the space above the storefront windows or awning/canopy. The highest point of a sign should not be higher than the midpoint of the space between the second story windowsills and the top of the first floor storefront window, awning, or transom.

Total square footage of signage allowed per business should be no more than 16 square feet, with the height of the letters not exceeding 12 inches, and should comply with ADA requirements. Signs should contain a minimum of words to avoid visual clutter.

Signs may be painted on awnings, with a surface area not exceeding 12 square feet and with the height of the letters not exceeding 12 inches, provided such signs should be limited to identification of the name or address of the building or an establishment contained therein.

Signs are intended to announce a company's location not the type or service or merchandise sold. Such information is discouraged, except for address and hours of business; such letters are limited to 2 ½ inches high.

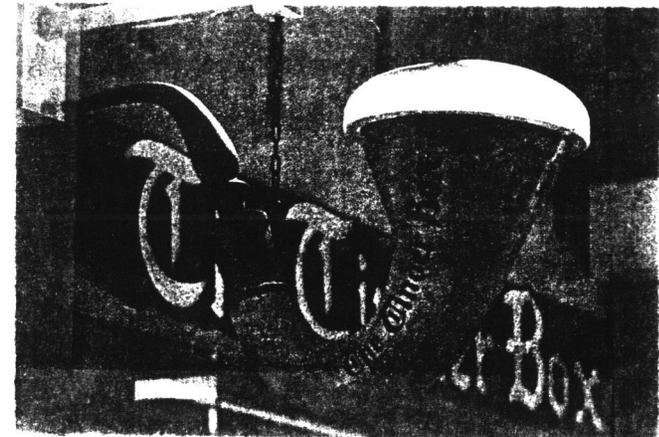
No sign should project beyond the property line more than 8 inches, except double-faced signs perpendicular to the storefront may project up to 36 inches. Multi-faced signs are discouraged. Decorative double-faced projecting signs are encouraged.

Street numbers should be prominently displayed at building entrances.

Flashing lights, moving signs and signs painted directly onto building facades are discouraged on the exterior of buildings. Internally illuminated signs may be used if only the letters emit light, and are smaller than 6.25 square feet. No signs with lit backgrounds will be encouraged.

Signage may be painted directly storefront glazing.

Small plaque signs next to secondary entrances, such as to second floor spaces, are allowed with a surface area not exceeding 1 square foot.





Fences

Solid fences or freestanding walls, other than those finished in brick, over 42 inches high are discouraged along streets. Fencing should be a dark, solid color that blends with or compliments the building color. Brick fences/garden walls may be 6'-0" high.

Parking area fencing encouraged:

- masonry up to 24 inches high when in conjunction with wrought iron, painted steel, and/or landscaping
- wrought iron and painted steel open fencing when used with landscaping

Trash area fencing encouraged:

- masonry that compliments building color
- painted wood
- brick



