

Downtown Design Review Guidelines

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Purpose statement:

It is the purpose of these guidelines to aid architects for new buildings and renovation and additions to existing buildings in Asheville's downtown area to achieve buildings of distinction whose designs are true to the present day and sensitive to the architectural fabric of the city.

The existing fabric is made up of a diverse collection of buildings from the early 20th century, the 1920's boom and more recent times including a number of restorations and adaptive reuse projects. There is a remarkable collection of Art Deco buildings and other cosmopolitan styles characterized by rich detailing and form true to their styles and particularly appropriate for the urban environment.

Designers are asked to utilize entrances, show windows and other elements at street level to enhance the pedestrian experience and maintain the continuity of interest that makes great city streets. On upper floors, facades should express the functions within: residential needs are different from those of offices, hotel rooms from apartments, expression of such differences makes architecture. At the tops of buildings, penthouses, expressive roof forms, even screening for mechanical equipment can make skylines of interest.

Architects are asked to do what good architects of every period have always done: use the elements of their buildings to create designs expressive of the uses and spirit of their buildings and to contribute to the community of buildings which together serve, enhance and express the lives of the people who make the city.

John Rogers, AIA

STREET ORIENTATION & LOT LAYOUT

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Requirement 1: Build-to Line

Front Setback Requirement: A zero-front setback from the right-of-way line is observed.

- Option One - A setback of up to 50 feet from the edge of curb may be approved for places of worship, civic and governmental buildings and residential projects that will provide a public space such as a courtyard or plaza space.
- Option Two - A setback of up to 20 feet for uses in the district providing courtyard or plaza spaces in the setback area. The main facade of the building must face this setback area.
- Option Three - An adopted plan or other official document of the city recommends a greater setback.
- Option Four - A greater setback is determined as part of the design review process.

Courtyard and plaza spaces should meet definitions located in 7-2-5 of the UDO which describes form and purpose.

Side and Rear Setback: None required, except that a fifteen foot setback will be required when adjacent to residentially zoned property.

Requirement 2: Key Pedestrian Streets - Lot Coverage

For new construction along Key Pedestrian Streets, buildings are required to be constructed along a minimum of 80 percent of the frontage of the lot. This standard is not intended to restrict access especially for smaller lots. Access is covered under Access Standards above. On corner lots the 80 percent frontage requirement applies to the primary street.

Requirement 3: Key Pedestrian Streets - Loading Facilities

If provided, loading facilities shall be placed along alleys or streets not identified on the Key Pedestrian Streets map (found at the end of this section) as a first choice but may be located there if no other alternative is available.

Requirement 4: Off-Street Parking

There shall be no requirements for off-street parking in the Central Business District. No parking is allowed between the building and any abutting street.

Requirement 5: Parking Garage on a Key Pedestrian Street

Parking garages placed on a Key Pedestrian Street shall provide a full habitable story and use along the street-side facade(s) with a minimum depth of 20 feet or shall comply with the design and operations standards for opening and design organizations requirements for new construction.

Recommendation 5A: Along all streets, surface parking lots are masked from the street by a habitable building.

Recommendation 5B: Along all streets, surface parking lots are masked by landscape screening to soften the edges especially when there are no conflicts with driveways.

Recommendation 5C: Along all streets, parking structures are masked with a habitable use for two stories with a depth of at least 20 feet.

Recommendation 5D: Demolition of historic buildings (Local Landmarks and contributing structures in the National Register District) for the purpose of creating surface parking lots is discouraged.

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STREET ORIENTATION & LOT LAYOUT

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Requirement 6: Landscaping

Landscaping shall be provided as required in Section 7-11-3 of the UDO. Street trees are required in the CBD. When surface parking is included, additional parking lot landscaping is required. A wall may be substituted for shrubs when buffering surface parking from the street.

Recommendation 6A: Recommended materials for walls include brick, stone, metal or materials that may be part of a unified development proposal and contribute to a unique sense of place. Chain link is strongly discouraged.

Recommendation 6B: Consider other landscaping measures to soften the pedestrian experience by providing additional plantings other than just the minimum required, pervious materials, etc.

Recommendation 6C: Native and non-invasive landscaping material should be used. Refer to the Recommended Species List or City Arborist for questions regarding suitability.

Recommendation 6D: Urban landscape plantings should incorporate opportunities for irrigation and drainage systems to maintain plant vitality.

Requirement 7: Dumpsters and Mechanicals

Private dumpsters and free-standing service equipment shall be screened by solid partitions or other screening.

Recommendation 7A: When screening dumpsters and mechanicals, the materials and design should reflect the site and building under a unified development proposal.

Recommendation 7B: Dumpsters and other free-standing service equipment should not be placed on the primary facade.

Requirement 8: Sidewalks

Sidewalks in the CBD shall be a minimum of ten feet wide, or the City Traffic Engineer may approve an alternative width based on context of street and block. Narrower sidewalks may be approved in cases where there is insufficient space for a larger sidewalk.

Recommendation 8A: A prominent material change may be appropriate as a part of a building design to highlight the entrance to the building or to draw attention to the special features of a site.

Recommendation 8B: On Key Pedestrian Streets, it is recommended that sidewalks maintain at least 8 feet of unobstructed passageway.

Recommendation 8C: See the Asheville Streetscape Plan for specific details that may be designated for specific streets in the CBD.

Recommendation 8D: Granite curbing is encouraged as an appropriate material when constructing new sidewalks as well as sidewalk rehabilitation/replacement because of its historic precedent and because it is one of the most durable curbing materials. See Public Works Policy regarding granite curbing.

Recommendation 8E: Sidewalks are recommended along private parcels for access into a building or site and are recommended to follow City standards for width and detailing.

STREET ORIENTATION & LOT LAYOUT

Requirement 9: Street Furnishings

Street furnishings placed in the public ROW shall be approved by the Department of Public Works and will include but not be limited to benches, tree grates, lighting fixtures and waste receptacles.

Recommendation 9A: Refer to the Streetscape Plan for specific recommendations that pertain to the block or neighborhood. Street furnishings can promote a distinct character within the neighborhood and contribute to its unique identity.

Recommendation 9B: The use of local artisans for the design and fabrication of street furniture is encouraged.

Requirement 10: Vehicular Access

Vehicular entries shall be a maximum of 24 feet in width. In addition, driveway curb cuts are limited to a single standard driveway per blockface per development. The City Traffic Engineer shall make the final determination regarding access standards for situations where strict compliance is difficult while assuring the goals for a strong pedestrian environment in the CBD are met.

Recommendation 10A: Vehicular access, loading docks and trash collection should be placed along a rear service alley if one is present.

Recommendation 10B: On Key Pedestrian Streets, curb cuts for access driveways are discouraged.

Recommendation 10C: Encourage extra room on either side of a driveway to ensure clear visibility for both pedestrians and drivers of vehicles corresponding to the site visibility triangles per compliance to the UDO.

Recommendation 10D: A change of material in the sidewalk at the point of the driveway may provide a visual cue for pedestrians to be aware of potential traffic.

Requirement 11: Primary Pedestrian Entrance

All buildings shall have their primary pedestrian entrance on a frontage line. If the site is located on a Key Pedestrian Street then the primary entrance shall be located along that street.

Recommendation 11A: Consider a recessed principle entrance in order to identify the entrance and provide shelter.

Recommendation 11B: Awnings or canopies may be helpful for the pedestrian for sun shade and rain shelter and can also be used to signify the pedestrian entrance. An encroachment agreement will be required.

Recommendation 11C: Use doors with large areas of glass and wood or metal frame. Avoid residential type doors for non-residential uses.

Recommendation 11D: The primary entrance should be considered as an important component of a unified building front which should align with neighboring historic structures especially when located in the traditional core area.

STREET ORIENTATION & LOT LAYOUT

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Recommendation 11E: For residential-only buildings, exterior entrances for individual ground-floor units (and access to units on upper floors through other entries) are provided; or a prominent main lobby, highly visible to pedestrians and associated landscaping that contributes to street character have been provided.

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HEIGHT AND MASSING

Building Height: In the Central Business District, height is the vertical distance measured from a single point beginning at the primary pedestrian entrance to the surface level of the highest occupied floor.

Allowable height and massing should be determined through a series of steps as described in the requirements in the Height and Massing section of the checklist on this and the following pages. These form-based control mechanisms are cumulative. Height should generally be adjusted for a project in the following order:

- Context Transition Edge
- Height Zone
- Maximum Street Edge Height

See Map showing Context Transition Areas on page ____.

Image may be helpful for Requirement 1

Map Needed for Requirement 2

Map Needed for Requirement 3

Requirement 1: Minimum Height

The minimum height for new structures in the Central Business District will be two stories.

Requirement 2: Context Transition

- Option One - The building does not lie within 100 feet of a Context Transition Edge (indicated on the Height Zone Diagram on page ____).
- Option Two - The building lies within 100 feet of a Context Transition Edge (indicated on the Height Zone Diagram on page ____) and building walls of any elevation are set back from the Context Transition Edge a distance equal to at least 1.5 times their height. Regardless of the Context Transition Edge, two-stories of height are allowed where permitted by current zoning. See the Context Transition Diagram - Figure 1 for further detail. And either,
 1. The site does not abut a residentially zone property, or
 2. The site abuts a residentially zoned property, and a 15 foot setback from that property is provided.

Requirement 3: Height Zone Compliance

- Option One - The building lies within the Tallest Height Zone according to the Height Zone Diagram on page ____ and its overall height is limited to 265-feet.
- Option Two - The building lies within the Intermediate Height Zone according to the Height Zone Diagram on page ____ and its overall height is limited to 145 feet.

Note: Actual building heights may exceed this height by an additional overall amount of 50 feet to accommodate such uses as the final occupied floor, mechanical penthouses and roof cap features.

Requirement 4: Height Zone Setback from Specific Streets

Height Zone edge setback from the right of way: To protect certain views in downtown, as illustrated on the Height Zone Map on page ___ by a dashed line (specific to portions of four streets listed below), a height zone edge setback is established. The height zones for the Intermediate Height Zone and the Tallest Height Zone follow property lines except for the following streets where a height transition between these two zones 40 feet wide measured from the right of way line edge will be observed:

1. College Street between the tunnel and Town Mountain Road
2. Haywood Street between Battery Park Avenue and N. French Broad Avenue (south side)
3. Patton Avenue from Pearl Street to Otis Street (both sides of the street) and continuing from Otis Street to the point of Pritchard Park (south side)
4. Hilliard Avenue between Clingman Avenue and Pearl Street (north side)

Requirement 5: Shadow Impacts

Shadows from new construction on large and small public parks and public plazas are limited by the following standard:

1. Shadow impacts on any one point are limited to no more than two hours between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on the equinox at ground level. (March 21 or September 21 respectively)
2. Where no right-of-way exists between the proposed project and the public park or plaza, a 50-foot buffer, free from any shadow limitations, may be observed.

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Image would be helpful for REQ 5

Map of Parks

HEIGHT AND MASSING

This shadow impact standard will not apply to smaller public spaces such as pocket parks or private plazas, parks and courtyards. See the definition for parks specific to the Central Business District in section 7-2-5 of this chapter for further clarification.

Need map of traditional downtown core

Requirement 6: Street Wall Height in the Traditional Downtown Core

In order to enhance the traditional scale of downtown and ensure adequate air and light at the sidewalk level and neighboring properties, a visual demarcation will be established across the facade of the building at a height that is defined as the street wall. Corresponding to this elevation on the facade as step back across the front or side(s) will be provided and in limited circumstances described below, other alternatives may apply to ensure variety in new construction.

Street Wall Height: The street wall height and specific alternatives are established in the following ways:

1. If the property is located within the Traditional Downtown Core area as illustrated on the map following this section, the street wall will be set at between two and four stories with a recommendation to reflect the height of neighboring buildings;
2. If a parcel fronts on more than one street, the street wall

shall be established by:

- The ROW width of the Key Pedestrian Street if applicable; or
 - Measuring the ROW from the side of the building with the primary pedestrian entrance.
3. The street wall may wrap around to the side(s) at the same height or be re-established based on the ROW of the side street. For the purposes of this section frontage on a service alley will be treated the same as an internal property line and therefore would not require a street wall step-back, or;
 4. Throughout the CBD, a building that provides a setback along the frontage line to create a plaza or courtyard area (minimum depth ten feet), will not be required to establish a street wall. This setback area must exceed two-thirds of the building width along the frontage line, or;
 5. For areas outside the Traditional Downtown Core where the ROW area is greater than 75 feet, a building is not required to provide a street wall step-back or side step-back. Buildings in these situations will be required to meet other design and operational standards as applicable, or;
 6. Throughout the CBD, a variance may be sought as set forth in section 7-5-9.1 from the step-back requirements by meeting design guidelines that specify a clear visual demarcation provided between the base of the building and upper floors corresponding to the height of the street wall. The requested variance shall not result in conflict with building code requirements (see Facade Proportions Recommendations 1 and 2 for guidelines), or;
 7. Throughout the CBD, buildings determined to be signature buildings or proposed for landmark locations may seek a variance as set forth in section 7-5-9.1 from street wall and step-back requirements when they meet design guidelines specific to landmarks.

this section may need to be broken up a bit??

May need diagrams and images to explain concepts and alternatives

See the public view corridors map for recommended landmark locations.

Recommendation 5A - Although a street wall stepback may not be required, consider the existing context of the built environment and whether a street wall may be incorporated to reflect and enhance the character in the vicinity.

Requirement 7: Street Wall Height OUTSIDE of the Traditional Downtown Core

If the property is located outside of the Traditional Downtown Core, the street wall will be established by a one-to-one relationship to the width of the right-of-way (ROW). For example, a ROW of fifty feet would result in a maximum street wall height of fifty feet.

Requirement 8: Street Wall Step-backs

In order to enhance the traditional scale of downtown and ensure adequate air and light at the sidewalk level and neighboring properties a step-back at the street wall height is required according to the following standards. In no case shall the required step-back(s) decrease the buildable area by more than ***ten percent***.

- At the street wall height a minimum 10 foot wide step-back is observed along at least two-thirds of the length of the street-side facade (the remaining one-third may be provided at up to two hundred percent (2 X) of the street wall height), or
- A side step-back may be provided as an alternative according to the following requirements as applicable
 1. At the street wall height, a 40 foot wide step-back is provided along the side of the proposed structure. This 40 foot wide step-back may be split between two sides (such as 20 feet each side);
 2. Buildings taller than 75 feet shall provide a side step-back that equals one-half of the width of the facade above 75 feet. (Step back amount may be split between two sides. See street wall height description to determine the height of the corresponding street wall.)

Recommendation 8A: For new buildings that are wider than building facades in the immediate vicinity, the proportion of the street wall (1/3 street wall height exception) may be positioned to improve the scale to a more typical pattern.

Recommendation 8B: For taller buildings the portion of the building associated with the street wall will effectively serve as a base for the building and can have features (percentage of openings, different materials, etc.) for it that differentiate it from the upper portions of the building.

Recommendation 8C: Taller portions of buildings, and the increased street-wall exception (as described in the Maximum Street Edge Height requirement) are located near prominent street intersections and/or provide visual accent or frame views.

Requirements 9-12 Buildings Taller than 75 Feet

Follow Requirements 6-9. If the project will not exceed the 75 foot height, skip down to Requirement 13.

Requirement 9: Floor Plate Size

- Option One: For parcels 20,000 square feet and larger, the gross floor plate area is limited to 40% of the lot area.
- Option Two: For parcels smaller than 20,000 square feet, gross floor plate area may not exceed 8,000 square feet.
- Option Three: For parcels greater than 16,000 square feet, the agency or official responsible for project review may consider floor plates up to 50% if is surrounded by substantial permanent public or private open space that allows for views and access to direct sunlight.

HEIGHT AND MASSING

Need Flat Iron Image

Requirement 10: Maximum Horizontal Dimension

For floors above the 75-foot height threshold, the maximum horizontal dimension in any direction is limited to 145 feet for the first floor above the 75-foot height threshold.*

*Based on the dimension of the longest facade of the Flat Iron building.

Requirement 11: External Vista Points

Photomontages modeling the proposed building are required from each of the established external vista points as a tool to evaluate development proposals:

Merrimon Avenue at Gracelyn Street
College Street at the west side of the tunnel
Stephens-Lee Recreation Center
Biltmore Avenue at Short Coxe Avenue
1-240 at the Smoky Park Bridge
Town Mountain Road at the bridge over I-240

Recommendation 11A: Where possible, building mass is oriented to preserve view corridors and roof forms help to frame views.

Requirement 12: Public View Corridors

The proposed project lies within one or more of the established public view corridors as specified by the Downtown Commission and

For any public view corridors that the project lies within, photo-montages have been provided from the corresponding internal vista points as designated by the Downtown Commission, illustrating their proposed building’s presence in the skyline. See View Corridors diagrams for clarification or vista point locations.

Where possible, building mass is oriented to preserve corridors and roof forms help to frame views.

Requirement 13: Design Organization and Building Caps

Buildings shall demonstrate a building design organization on each facade such as but not limited to a base-middle-cap organization, vertical articulation or other organizing principle.

Building caps: Downtown Asheville has a wealth of buildings with distinctive caps that use special forms and materials. The unique diversity of building caps has become a defining feature of the downtown skyline. In order to frame views and provide attractive landmarks that enhance the skyline of the downtown area, building caps are required. The following requirements apply:

- Provide a cap to enhance a base-middle-cap oriented design, or
- Provide a cornice or other decorative band for flat roofs to serve as a cap.

Need photos of vertical articulation or other organizing principle

Need images of caps

HEIGHT AND MASSING

Recommendation 13A: A change in materials/colors alone may not be sufficient to show base middle cap organization or other organizing principle. Consider adding three-dimensional articulations to the plane using authentic materials providing variations in thickness and texture.

Recommendation 13B: Building caps should:

- Use slender building proportions that preserve and/or frame views;
- Be designed as attractive landmarks with special form and materials;
- Express the unique character and maintain variety among downtown buildings; and
- Enhance the overall skyline of downtown.

Recommendation 13C: In order to maintain originality and variety in the downtown skyline, building caps may reference but should not duplicate or emulate existing downtown examples.

Requirement 14: Rooftop Equipment Screening

Mechanical equipment and appurtenances necessary for the function of the building shall be enclosed and screened or otherwise designed to be integral with the overall building design, including but not limited to elevators, stairs, cooling towers and vent stacks.

Recommendation 14A: The need for rooftop equipment, stacks, and towers should be anticipated at the design and project approval stage so that the proper screening can be anticipated and incorporated into the design in a unified fashion. Failure to portray the rooftop screening needs may require re-approval of the building design.

FACADE RELATIONSHIPS & PROPORTIONS

Gradual height transitions between buildings prevent taller new buildings from feeling out of scale and character. Buildings of unequal height are brought into relationship through the use of horizontal definition lines – for instance, providing a horizontal line on the taller building that clearly aligns with a cornice on the lower building.

Recommendation 1A: Where buildings heights deviate greatly from the relative heights from nearby buildings, a general perceived similarity in building heights is maintained at ground level through the use of materials, detailing, color, reinforced horizontal lines etc. Cornices, upper story windows and storefront windows are aligned, especially if the new building will abut one of the contributing structures in the national register district. In a context where established buildings are of similar heights, align façade features such as moldings, cornices, and window sills. Storefront heights are aligned with others on the block, especially throughout the Core Area.

Recommendation 1B: Traditional façade components are incorporated in new designs, especially when they abut contributing structures in the national register district. The following is a list of traditional storefront features that should be considered in new building proposals and restorations:

- parapet cap or cornice
- sign band above the storefront
- awning or canopy
- transom
- recessed entry
- kick plate as a base to the storefront.

Recommendation 1C: The Commission will consider contemporary interpretation of historic storefront features.

Recommendation 1D: Provide a clear transition between the base (lower portions) of the building and upper floors at the street wall height by way of color and material changes that may use contrasting colors of the same material or a change in the material or module of the material used. This recommendation is especially important when seeking a variance from the street wall step back.

Recommendation 1E: A transition between the base of the building and upper floors corresponding to the height of the street wall can also be accomplished by providing greater scale in the base portion of the building for the floor to floor height dimension, larger size and scale of entrances and number and size of windows at the base. This recommendation is especially important when seeking a variance from the street wall step back.

Recommendation 1F: Appropriate façade width rhythm is maintained in the width of a new buildings for a single lot by providing façade changes that may mimic the traditional width of lots especially at the base portion of the building associated with the street wall. This may be accomplished at 50 – 100 foot intervals by varying setbacks, adjusting roof forms or adding architectural details.

Recommendation 1G: Building form is articulated at a range of intervals that relate to the scales of surrounding buildings, trees, people and other elements, especially for larger buildings set in smaller contexts. For areas without a strong inventory of buildings following an urban form the building intervals can be a useful tool to establish an urban context.

Recommendation 1H: New buildings are composed of elements at a range of horizontal and vertical scale intervals by

FACADE RELATIONSHIPS & PROPORTIONS

considering the following five divisions as a part of a new design:

- ▣ Building Bays, 42- to 64-feet in horizontal length (or other dimension best matching context) and extending vertically at least three stories.
- ▣ Primary Bays, 22- to 36-feet in horizontal length and extending vertically at least three stories.
- ▣ Secondary Bays, 10- to 16-feet in horizontal length and extending vertically at least one and one-half story.
- ▣ Window Bays, 3- to 6-feet in horizontal length and extending vertically at least 1.4 times horizontal length.
- ▣ Detail Units, of variable dimensions, but enclosing an area of approximately one square foot.

The Commission will consider contemporary interpretation of historic scale intervals.

Recommendation 1: For new buildings, consider using scale intervals that reference nearby older buildings.

Example of new building integrating the scale of an older structure: a bay window on a new building might be made to match the width of one on an older building, and exterior tiles or spandrels on a new building might be made to match the size of window divisions on an older building.

Larger buildings fit much better into smaller contexts when their volumes are broken up into a hierarchy of smaller volumes and scales that re-late to the smaller scales of other buildings, trees, people and other elements.

Building bays relate to the scale of typical residential building sections and overall street widths.

Primary bays relate to the scale of whole apartments in adjacent dwellings, street trees and street pavement widths.

Secondary bays relate to the scale of individual residential rooms, building entrances and sidewalk widths. (Architectural trim or a change in building materials is used to create a sense of the façade modules that are typical)

Window bays relate to the scale of typical building windows, doors, projecting bays and the human body.

Detail units relate to the scale of individual building material units such as bricks and shingles, as well as light fixtures, vegetation, and elements of the human body.

FACADE MATERIALS AND FENESTRATION DETAILS

Building fenestration is required because it enhances the character of downtown Asheville by providing features of visual interest at the sidewalk for the benefit of pedestrians, by defining the scale of buildings between the ground floor and upper floors and by improving the skyline vista of Asheville.

Add pictures to illustrate these points

Requirement 1: Fenestration Details: Windows, doors and other openings

- For buildings along streets designated as Key Pedestrian Streets (see map at the end of this section), at least 70% of the street-level façade is composed of windows, doors and other openings .
- For buildings along streets that are not designated as Key Pedestrian Streets, at least 50% of the street-level façade is composed of windows, doors and other openings.
- Residential buildings shall provide at least 30% (40% for live/work units) windows, doors or other openings along the street-level façade unless located along a Key Pedestrian Street where it will be required to meet the 70% standard noted above.
- All buildings are required to provide a minimum of 20% of the upper story areas as windows, doors or other openings with each face calculated independently. This requirement applies to exposed building sides unless otherwise restricted by the NC State Building Code.
- At street-level, areas of opaque wall may extend no more than 20-feet horizontally before beginning a window, door or other opening.
- Glass may be tinted but shall not be reflective.
- When the façade of a building follows the natural grade of a sloping site, windows and other openings which may start out at pedestrian-level quickly go overhead and no longer relate to the sidewalk; in these situations where the surface level of the floor reaches six feet or more above the sidewalk, that floor will be deemed to no longer be at the pedestrian level. Requirements for windows, doors or other openings will be reassessed for the remaining ground level façade length.

Recommendation 1A: Doors and storefronts should be designed at an appropriate scale with careful consideration to ratios and proportions of solids in between doors and windows.

Recommendation 1B: Storefronts should be developed as panels made of glass and non-masonry materials that fill the façade between the building’s structural columns and lintels, from the sidewalk to the interior ceiling, to visually connect interior to exterior, and to bring daylight deep into the building.

The height of the storefront should reflect the scale of the street, the building, and the main level space. Semi-opaque storefront transom panels, awnings or sign panels are encouraged to hide upper interior mechanicals, rather than shorter storefronts. Storefront elements should extend to the sidewalk level, rather than terminating at a horizontal building base.

Storefront panels should not be on the same plane as the building structural/facade elements. The scale of the entry door should reflect the scale of the interior space, with 8’ height doors and transoms suggested as a minimum.

Include photos

Requirement 2: Materials

The design of the base of a building as well as the quality and durability of its materials shall be emphasized at the first floor of structures. Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) are prohibited as a base material.

FACADE MATERIALS AND FENESTRATION DETAILS

Recommendation 2A: Using materials that resemble those in nearby historic buildings helps impart a sense of continuity in the Downtown environment and across eras. Historic materials may be re-interpreted and used appropriately as part of a contemporary composition.

Recommendation 2B: Consider incorporating materials of like size, shape, type, color or other intrinsic characteristic that are prominent in the context of the block.

Recommendation 2C: Large expanses of featureless wall surface at the street level are avoided, especially where they might discourage pedestrian activity in the Core Area. Storefronts, decorative surfaces or other features (such as murals) are used to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

Recommendation 2D: Where it is provided, storefront glass may be shaded by appropriate means in order to allow good visibility into store-front windows and to create pedestrian interest. Awnings, canopies, or arcades with storefront glass recessed are used to make the environment more appealing for pedestrians and to improve the visibility into stores.

Recommendation 2E: Non-traditional urban materials (such as unpainted rough-sawn wood and materials with a rustic image) are used carefully and in ways that relate to their traditional context. The use of modern sustainable or green materials may justify deviations from use of traditional urban materials

Highly reflective surfaces that will generate glare are avoided, especially at ground level. Where concrete walls or synthetic building “skins” are used, they are designed in muted finishes, and the surfaces are articulated in modules or subdivisions that help convey a sense of scale for the façade.

Recommendation 2F: Brick, terra cotta, cut stone, or other materials that have matte finishes and muted colors similar to brick and stone are used for large surfaces.

Recommendation 2G: Authentic materials are encouraged and other simulated finished system should not be used.

FACADE COLORS

Recommendation A: For rehabilitation and maintenance projects, façade colors have been reviewed with staff during a technical consultation.

Recommendation B: For new construction, color schemes that complement other buildings are used, and are “mixed and matched” from several buildings, not copied from one building entirely.

Other colors from the block are coordinated in the scheme to help tie the project in with others on the block.

Recommendation C: For new construction, color is used to coordinate façade elements in an overall composition.

Recommendation D: For new construction, base colors are muted earth tones or darker muted pastels. Bright colors are reserved for accents only. Accent colors are used for signs, awnings, and entrance doors.

Recommendation E: For new construction, only one base color is used for the majority of the background wall surface

Recommendation F: For new construction, trim colors do not contrast too strongly with base colors.

Recommendation G: For new construction, rehab, and maintenance projects, brick is left unpainted, especially for historic buildings.

If the brick is already painted, paint removal schemes that damage the finish with abrasive methods are avoided, (sand-blasting for example will damage the finish and accelerate erosion)

Recommendation H: The use of colors alone should not be a substitute for a clear change of materials or texture on a facade.

Recommendation I: Color bands should not be used exclusively to reference nearby building such as cornices.

REHABILITATION, MAINTENANCE & ADDITIONS

Requirement 1: Historic Building Review

If the building is designated as a local landmark by the Asheville City Council, the proposal will be reviewed by the Historic Resources Commission.

Recommendation 1A: The essential original design characteristics of the building have been respected.

All rehabilitation and maintenance buildings should be analyzed to determine which elements are essential to their character. Some may have historic ornament and decoration intact. Many others will retain the original building materials and proportions of openings. Theme designs that do not reflect the original character of the building should be avoided. The character established within the block should also be respected.

Recommendation 1B: Original sizes, shapes and locations of storefronts, recessed entries, kick plates, transoms, upper story windows, roof forms, façade ornamentation, and details should be maintained. Changes should be done in a way that can be easily reversed in the future.

Recommendation 1C: Renovations that eliminate all original characteristics are discouraged.

Recommendation 1D: The basic material characteristics of the building have been maintained, uncovered, or replaced with a similar material.

Recommendation 1E: Building fronts that are plain, lacking in historic significance and architectural detail have been devel-

oped with a new facade that reinforces general characteristics of other buildings on the block and incorporates the traditional elements described above and in Façade Colors, Façade Materials, and Façade Proportions.

Recommendation 1F: Renovations of single story buildings are encouraged.

Recommendation 1G: New vertical additions should be set back from the historic base to distinguish the new from the existing.

Recommendation 1H: New additions should have limited visibility from the pedestrian perspective.

Recommendation 1I: Rehabilitation projects may want to contact the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to see if historic tax credits are available.

Recommendation 1J: Projects using federal funding are required to coordinate review with the SHPO under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act.

Recommendation 1K: A courtesy review by the Downtown Commission is recommended for projects including or adjacent to local landmark buildings before they go on to the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) for formal approval.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation A: Ground floors containing dwelling units (other than live-work units) have a privacy separation from the side-walk, which is accomplished by raising the floor level of ground floor units at least 18-inches, and no more than 48-inches, above sidewalk grade at windows or doors.

Recommendation B: Rooftop terraces and green roofs are encouraged.

Recommendation C: Rehabilitation of existing buildings is sustainable.

Recommendation D: Conflicts that arise between these guidelines and sustainability efforts should be recognized and discussed. These design guidelines are not intended to preclude sustainable design features.

Recommendation E: Demolitions should always be considered as a last result after all other options for rehabilitation have been considered. Salvage and reuse of building materials should be considered as part of a demolition plan.

Recommendation F: When ground disturbing activity is part of a proposal, consider undertaking an archaeological study for below ground historic resources.

Recommendation G: During the construction process, creative screening of the site is encouraged.



