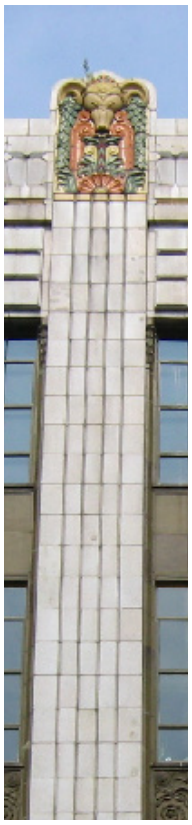

# Downtown Greensboro
# Design Manual - Process/Guidelines
# Adopted - September 7, 2010

Adopted September 7, 2010

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


**City Council**

| | |
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| Altina Layman | Director of Marketing & Community Affairs, United Arts Council |
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| Seth Coker | Signature Properties |
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# DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO

## DESIGN MANUAL - PROCESS/AREA GUIDELINES

Adopted September 7, 2010

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose & Intent.....i

Objectives.....i

Organization.....ii

Applicability.....iii

Review Process.....iv

Design Guidelines

Urban Residential Mixed Use Character Area .....1

Historic Core Character Area.....13

Pedestrian Mixed Use Character Area.....25

Glossary.....36

Quick Reference - Character Area Guidelines.....44

Appendices - See Design Manual Appendices

# DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO

## DESIGN MANUAL - PROCESS/AREA GUIDELINES

Adopted September 7, 2010

## PURPOSE & INTENT

The Downtown Design Manual is intended to be a helpful downtown design resource representing community expectations for new construction, additions and renovations in Downtown Greensboro. This manual aims to promote context appropriate development through clear, flexible design guidance, based on community input and a general urban design framework.

The Downtown Design Manual builds on a number of previous planning efforts and documents for Downtown. Among these are the South Elm Street Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2007, the Downtown Streetscape Recommendations presented in 2006, the Cedar Street/ Bellemeade Area Strategic Plan adopted in 2005, the Center City Plan sponsored by Action Greensboro in 2002, Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2003, and the Center City Development Plan adopted in 1991. These plans focus broadly on quality of life issues like community character, sustainable growth, and economic prosperity and demonstrate the need for enhancing urban character through diversity, pedestrian appeal, retention of historic resources, contextual infill and physical improvements to the public realm.

The Manual is both a policy and regulatory document that outlines a vision for Downtown and addresses basic aspects of urban design. The use of this manual for future development projects is important to promote an urban environment that stimulates new investment and enhances the existing environment.

## OBJECTIVES

The Downtown Design Manual:

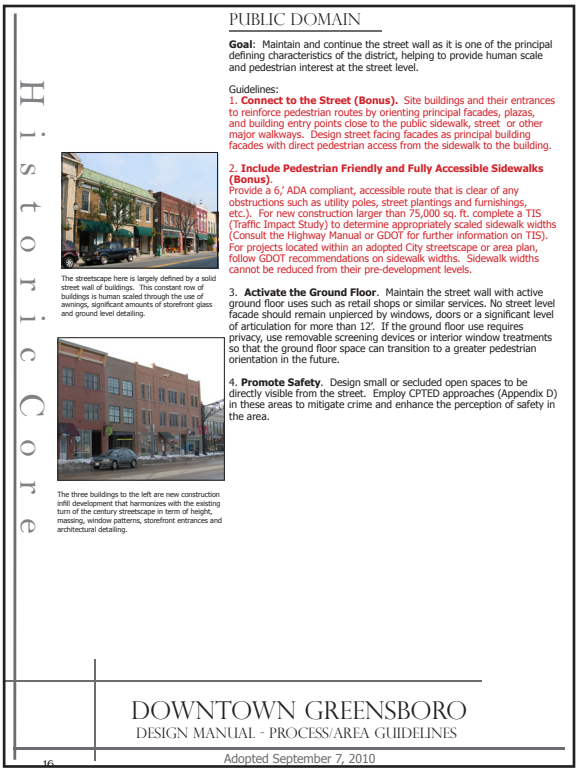
- Provides clear, flexible guidance for new investment that promotes visual harmony and encourages a vibrant and diverse center city
- Respects the need for continued re-investment in our downtown
- Enhances, respects and builds on established historic contexts
- Balances parking needs with an accessible, pedestrian-oriented environment

# ORGANIZATION

This manual features three chapters that reflect special "character areas" in Downtown; Urban Residential Mixed Use, Historic Core, Pedestrian Mixed Use (see map on following page). Each chapter addresses design elements that directly relate to urban design topics of a specific character area. Each design element lists a goal establishing an intent for addressing the design element. Goals are followed by guidelines. Guidelines represent strategies for new development and rehabilitation which will be used to review new projects in the area. Some of these guidelines are displayed in red text and labeled (Bonus) and carry more weight during the review process. These guidelines represent some of the key concepts of urban design in Downtown Greensboro. Graphics or illustrations are used throughout the Manual to more clearly express goals and guidelines.

Below is a simple diagram explaining the organization of the Manual:

Chapter
- ⇨Design Element
  - ⇨Goal
    - ⇨Guidelines



Historic Core

PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Goal**: Maintain and continue the street wall as it is one of the principal defining characteristics of the district, helping to provide human scale and pedestrian interest at the street level.

Guidelines:

1. **Connect to the Street (Bonus).** Site buildings and their entrances to reinforce pedestrian routes by orienting principal facades, plazas, and building entry points close to the public sidewalk, street or other major walkways. Design street facing facades as principal building facades with direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building.

2. **Include Pedestrian Friendly and Fully Accessible Sidewalks (Bonus)**. Provide a 6,' ADA compliant, accessible route that is clear of any obstructions such as utility poles, street plantings and furnishings, etc.). For new construction larger than 75,000 sq. ft. complete a TIS (Traffic Impact Study) to determine appropriately scaled sidewalk widths (Consult the Highway Manual or GDOT for further information on TIS). For projects located within an adopted City streetscape or area plan, follow GDOT recommendations on sidewalk widths. Sidewalk widths cannot be reduced from their pre-development levels.

3. **Activate the Ground Floor**. Maintain the street wall with active ground floor uses such as retail shops or similar services. No street level facade should remain unpierced by windows, doors or a significant level of articulation for more than 12'. If the ground floor use requires privacy, use removable screening devices or interior window treatments so that the ground floor space can transition to a greater pedestrian orientation in the future.

4. **Promote Safety**. Design small or secluded open spaces to be directly visible from the street. Employ CPTED approaches (Appendix D) in these areas to mitigate crime and enhance the perception of safety in the area.

The streetscape here is largely defined by a solid street wall of buildings. This constant row of buildings is human scaled through the use of awnings, significant amounts of storefront glass and ground level detailing.

The three buildings to the left are new construction infill development that harmonizes with the existing turn of the century streetscape in term of height, massing, window patterns, storefront entrances and architectural detailing.

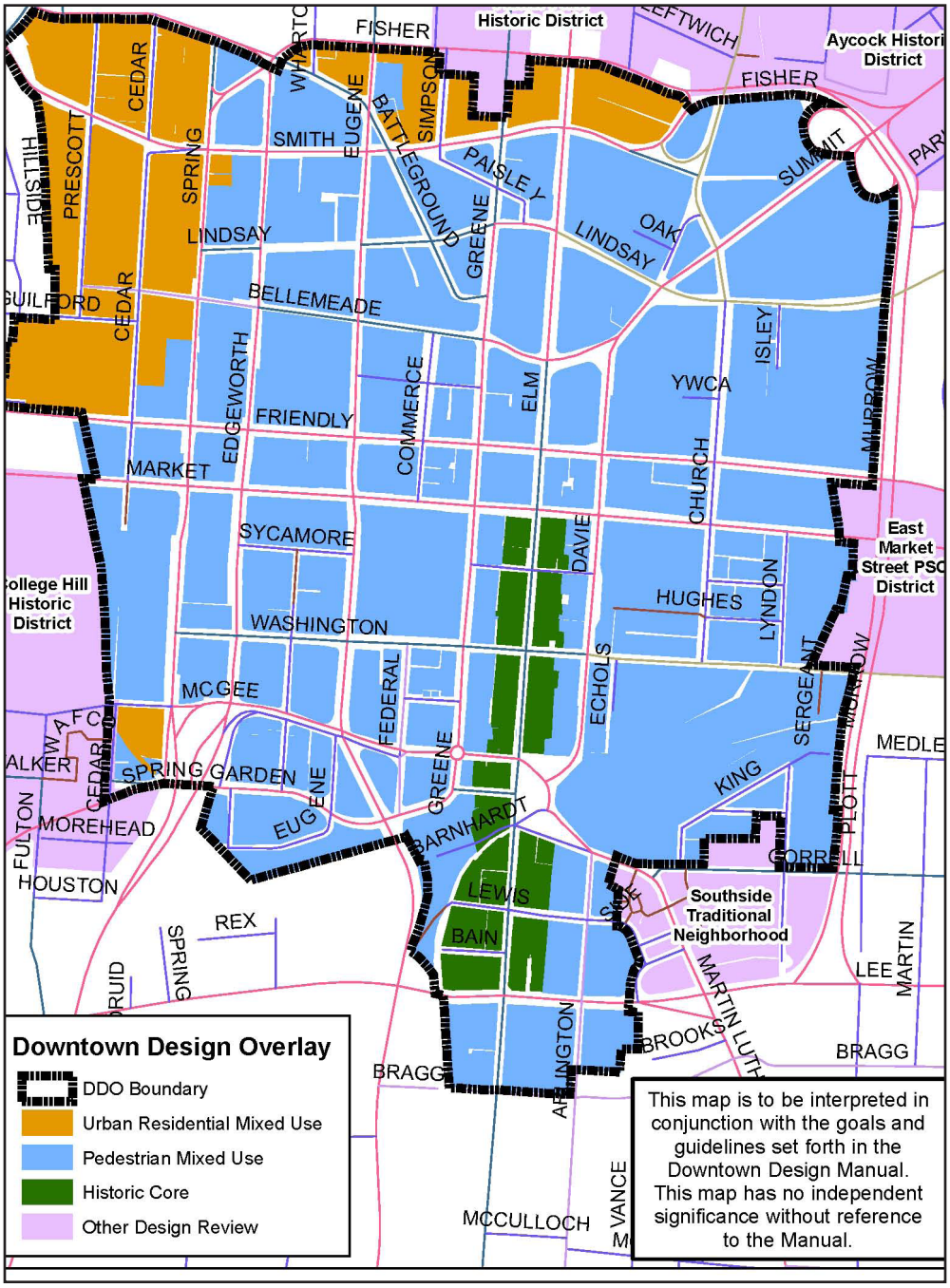
DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO
DESIGN MANUAL - PROCESS/AREA GUIDELINES
Adopted September 7, 2010

A separate book (Appendices) contains a series of appendices that supplement the chapters of this Manual. Information contained within the appendices is technical as well as interpretational and includes design principles that are best suited to an educational framework such as the guidelines for Streetscape (Appendix A) and Civic Spaces & Places (Appendix B).

While goals and guidelines are stated individually, they are both viewed as pieces of a collective document and not independent statements. The Manual ensures predictability in review by setting clear expectations, but also allows for flexibility in design by allowing designers to respond to surround context.

# APPLICABILITY

The following manual provides a new development review process for properties located within the Downtown Design Overlay District. This overlay district serves to facilitate high quality and compatible development within the Downtown area. All properties preparing to undergo new construction work and located within the boundaries of the Downtown Design Overlay (DDO) must have projects reviewed by staff according to the guidelines listed within the associated character area chapter. When new eligible development, redevelopment or infill occurs, such projects are subject to the guidelines described in this Manual as well as those standards defined by the base zoning and applicable building codes. Where the overlay guidelines are in conflict with the underlying zoning, the overlay guidelines take precedence.



# REVIEW PROCESS

The guidelines in this Manual apply to **new construction and renovations** that meet all of the following:

- Located within the DDO district
- Affects at least 375 sq. ft. of the first floor facade and
- Requires a building permit

The review process for new eligible development will remain as outlined in the Development Ordinance and comply with the design review illustrated below. A design and development related group, the Property Owners Review Team (PORT), will review development located within the DDO boundary not approved at the staff level (Option A below) and provide review for other projects that seek the group's advice voluntarily. The PORT will review development plans concurrent with the applicable approval authority. Further, any project located within the DDO and needing City Council approval will have City staff and PORT comments forwarded with the final approval being made by City Council. Persons interested in developing in downtown are encouraged to meet with staff as early as possible to determine the most appropriate review track.

**Option A (Fast Track)**

Development proposal submitted to City

↓

Project review by City staff; Planning staff staff advises applicant on ways to maximize design guidelines "points."

↓

Review shows that project <u>does meet</u> at least 75% of design guideline points. Staff approval memo is written

↓

Design plans approved administratively

**Option B (PORT Review)**

Development proposal submitted to City

↓

Project review by City staff or PORT (if submitted directly); applicant advised on ways to maximize design guidelines "points."

↓

Review shows that project <u>does not meet</u> at least 75% of design guideline points. PORT meeting is scheduled.

↓

Project reviewed by PORT. PORT makes comments and recommendation about project's compliance with Manual. Recommendation is non-binding.

↓

If project goes to City Council for a needed approval or related funding, PORT and staff comments are provided to Council.

Each guideline is worth one point, except for those guidelines in red text and labeled (Bonus), which are worth two points. Points are awarded for guidelines that cannot be addressed based on the proposed project or specific site constraints so as not to penalize a project and for ease of evaluation. A project must meet 75% of the total possible points in each chapter to pursue Option A. Below is a chart of the total possible points in each chapter and the points needed to achieve the 75% threshold.

| Chapter | # of Total Guidelines | # of Bonus Guidelines (2 points) | # of Regular Guidelines (1 point) | Total Available Points | 75% Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Urban Res. Mixed Use | 40 | 13 | 27 | 53 | 40 |
| Hist. Core | 34 | 10 | 24 | 44 | 33 |
| Ped. Mixed Use | 31 | 10 | 21 | 41 | 31 |

The Property Owners Review Team (PORT) is appointed by the Greensboro City Council to facilitate development by encouraging pedestrian-friendly and compatible design in the center city that enhances existing public and private investments. The team consists of Downtown stakeholders who are responsible for reviewing proposed projects and offering input, advice and options to encourage better development.

PORT members will use the Design Manual's guidelines to evaluate the project and may consider other merits of the project. After reviewing a proposed project, PORT will take an advisory vote, with the majority ruling on the project. The PORT chairperson will then provide a letter to the applicant and the City stating PORT's endorsement or non-endorsement of the proposed project. The PORT will meet as needed on a monthly basis.

Members of PORT will be comprised of:

Voting Members

- 1 property owner from the Urban Residential Mixed Use character area,
- 1 property owner from the Historic Core character area,
- 2 property owners from the Pedestrian Mixed Use character area,
- 1 representative from Downtown Greensboro Inc.'s Board, who is also a downtown property owner

Advisors (Non-Voting Members)

- 2 representatives from the design community who have recently been involved with projects in Downtown (i.e architect, landscape architect, engineer, urban and/ or landscape designer, historic preservationist, etc.),
- 1 Downtown Greensboro Inc. President or designee

The PORT will consist of 5 voting members and 3 advisory members who will be appointed by the City Council, serving staggered three year terms. A member may serve a maximum of two terms before leaving the PORT for at least one year.

All members must be residents of the city and be qualified based on demonstrated interest or experience in design, urban design, architecture, historic preservation, architectural history, planning, landscape design, development, or related fields. Members that represent a particular character area must be a property owner in that area.

Plans submitted within the DDO will follow the same timetable established for normal site plan or building plan review. Upon request, the PORT can review plans prior to formal plan submittal. A pre-submittal conference with staff is encouraged for all projects within the DDO.

Any property rezoned to 'Central Business District' after the adoption of the DDO and Manual, will also be included in the DDO boundaries and will be subject to this Manual.

For more information on approvals for any work in the Downtown Design Overlay district, please contact the City of Greensboro Planning Department, 336.373.2144 or www.greensboro-nc.gov/department/planning.

## LIST OF DEVELOPMENT TASKS

Below is a list of development related tasks that may require approval from the City of Greensboro. This is a partial list. Other development tasks may/may not need various levels of approval. Having PORT approval or approval from the Planning Department alone does not exclude development tasks from other applicable City approvals. Furthermore, when there is no PORT or Planning Department approval required, certain development tasks may still need City approval. Please contact the Planning Department's Urban Designer for any questions about approval or upcoming projects prior to any work taking place in Downtown.

New site plans
Additions greater than 375 sq. ft.
Exterior additions visible from public rights-of-way
Construction of new buildings
New or expanded parking areas/ lots
New sidewalk construction
Changes to historic features within the Historic Core that require site plan approval; such as window or fenestration changes, alterations to existing storefronts
New signs
New fences and retaining walls
Painting unpainted masonry in the Historic Core
Addition/ Change of exterior lighting
Repair or replacement of materials that are identical to or closely matching the original
Renovations consisting of the removal and replacement or covering of existing materials with new materials
Work requiring a building permit

## CHANGES TO MANUAL/OVERLAY DISTRICT

Amendments to the Downtown Design Manual or Overlay District will follow the same process as initial adoption. Amendments may only be proposed by persons with direct property ownership within the overlay district.

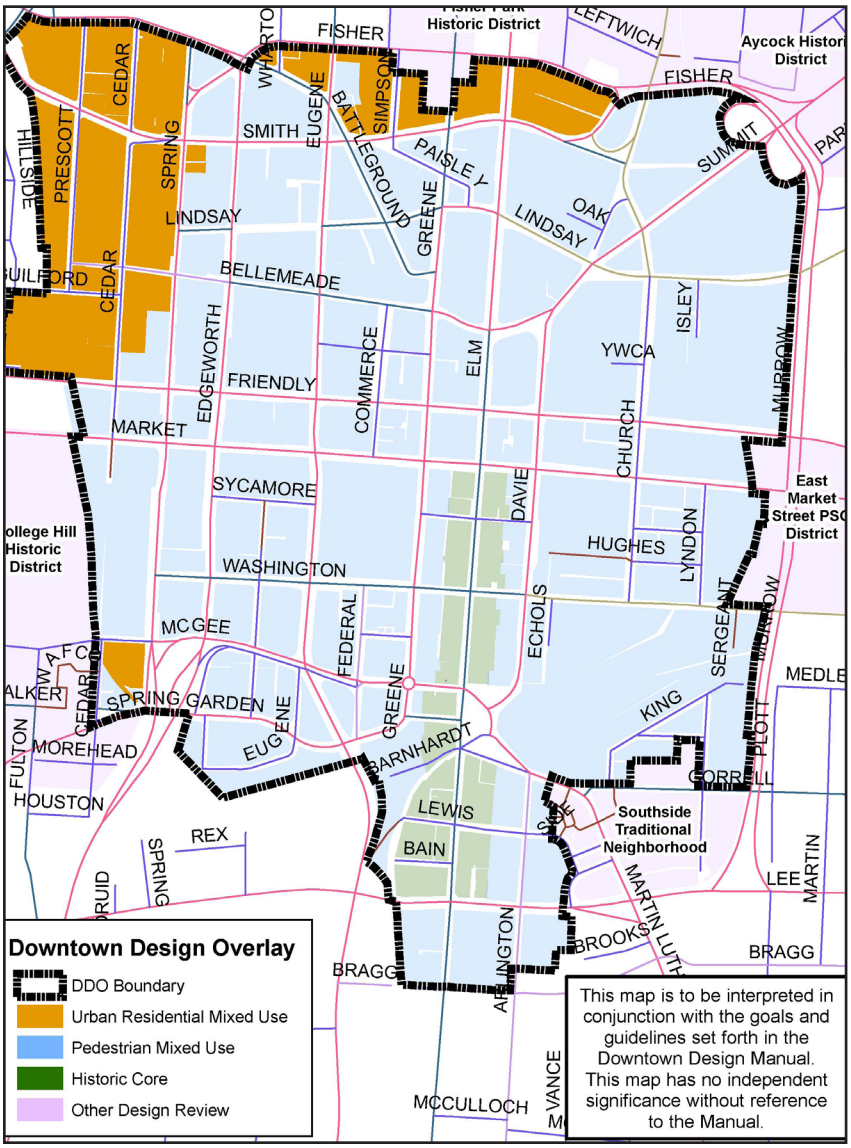
Any proposed amendments must by publicly advertised. Proposed amendments to the Downtown Design Manual must be reviewed through public hearings of the Planning Board and City Council. Proposed amendments to the overlay boundary, character area designation or individual properties must be reviewed through public hearings of the Zoning Commission and City Council.

City Council will make the final determination to approve or deny requested amendments.

# Urban Residential Mixed Use

## Area Description

The Urban Residential Mixed use areas (highlighted in orange in the image below) are composed of a mix of single family residences, small scale multi-family buildings and occasional small commercial and office structures. These structures are primarily one or two stories in height with a few three story buildings where topography allows. The residential character of this area is strongly maintained with small front yard setbacks, small front yards and porches mingling private and public spaces. Where commercial and office buildings occur, they generally serve the needs of surrounding residents without disrupting the character of the neighborhood. Compatibility with nearby residences is reflected in design for both site layout and buildings.




# DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO

## DESIGN MANUAL - PROCESS/AREA GUIDELINES

Adopted September 7, 2010

# PUBLIC DOMAIN

## Building Orientation & Siting

This commercial building, located between a residential area and downtown, uses elements that respect the context and character of the adjacent areas. The reduced setback and larger building footprint relates to the nearby commercial areas while the low height of the building and fenestration patterns relate to the nearby residential area as do the foundation planting and limited landscaping.

This building uses a corner entrance to address its intersection facing location. There is also a small courtyard area for outdoor seating adjacent to the sidewalk that helps reinforce pedestrian routes and provides transition between public and private spaces.

**Goal**: Use public spaces to encourage pedestrian activity and define public and private spaces. Maintain the area's character by respecting its layout, views, orientation, and street presence.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Connect to the Street (Bonus).** Site buildings, their entrances, principal facades, plazas, and building entry points close to the public sidewalk, street or other major walkways. Design street facing facades with direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building.

2. **Include Pedestrian Friendly and Fully Accessible Sidewalks (Bonus)**.
Provide a 6,' ADA compliant, accessible route that is clear of any obstructions such as utility poles, street plantings and furnishings, etc. For new construction larger than 75, 000 sq. ft. complete a TIS (Traffic Impact Study) to determine appropriately scaled sidewalk widths (Consult the Highway Manual or GDOT for further information on TIS). For projects located within an adopted City streetscape or area plan, follow GDOT recommendations on sidewalk widths for approval. Sidewalk widths cannot be reduced from their pre-development levels.

3. **Activate the Ground Floor.** Design ground floor street frontages to promote pedestrian activity.

4. **Pay Attention to Context.** New construction should respect the area's established character in terms of height, scale, massing, orientation and pedestrian access. The front and side setbacks of new buildings should be in context with properties on the same blockface.

5. **Connect to Amenities**. Provide safe, pedestrian access to and from the Downtown Greenway and other amenities.

6. **Promote Safety**. Use CPTED approaches (Appendix D) to insure small or secluded open spaces are visible from the street.

**Parking & Driveways**

**Goal**: Minimize the visual impact of vehicles and enhance pedestrian safety while insuring visual consistency.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Design for People First (Bonus)**. Locate parking structures behind the principal building line of buildings. Locate surface parking areas behind or to the side of the principal building line and buffer the lot from the sidewalk with landscaping and/ or low walls and fences less than 3 1/2' in height.

2. **Soften the Hardscape**. Use architectural elements or plants to break up large parking areas.

3. **Promote Safety**. Limit curb cuts for all vehicular areas. Use light fixtures that reinforce the residential character of the neighborhood.

4. **Be Innovative**. Consider using porous pavement systems such as GrassPave 2 and the like for parking areas to limit stormwater run-off and create a lighter development footprint*. Use alleyways and ribbon driveways to minimize the development footprint as well. *Contact Water Resources Stormwater Division if pervious materials are considered for a project.

5. **Include Clear Pedestrian Routes**. Provide clearly designated pedestrian paths through parking areas for non-residential and multi-family buildings. Mark paths using paint, elevated crosswalks or changes in materials. Extend public sidewalks across all driveway entrances with consistent materials.

This parking lot uses a planting yard and low stone walls to screen surface parking adjacent to a sidewalk.

These townhouses have covered, structured parking in their rear so that the street facing facades have active uses on the ground floor, creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

# MASSING & SCALE

**Context & Character**

**Goal**: Facilitate compatible development that defers to the established heights, massing and rhythm of the area while maintaining a human scale.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Complement the Historic Context of the Area (Bonus)**. Design new buildings to complement the height, scale, massing and rooflines of historic buildings

2.. **Emphasize the Ground Floor**. Buildings should be organized so the ground floor has the tallest apparent height with shorter upper stories.

3. **Employ Context Sensitive Design**. Relate the height and width of new construction to the established character of the area. For buildings that vary greatly in scale from adjacent properties, break up their mass into smaller modules to achieve visual compatibility. Stepping back taller upper stories may also help to achieve this relationship. Reinforce horizontal lines of adjacent buildings with balcony heights, principal rooflines, and/ or cornice heights.

4. **Represent a Unique Time and Place Through Design**. Incorporate surrounding characteristics such as massing, rhythm, details, and/ or fenestration patterns when designing a building in a contemporary style.

5. **Be Sensitive to the Details that Define the Area**. Include design elements such as porches at least 6' in depth, a pattern of projections and recessions on the facade of at least 3' in depth, covered entry ways, changes in roofline, projecting bays or box windows, or fenestration with clearly pronounced window sills and frames.

The apartment building on the left is compatible with the adjacent single family home by using front porches, similar massing and exhibiting a proportional relationship with balcony heights and cornice lines to break up its apparent mass.

The ground floor of this building appears taller than the upper floor by using a columned portico and vertically proportioned groupings of tripartite windows. These design elements help to give visual weight to the ground floor, a hallmark of traditional building.

**Building Entrances**

**Goal**: Complement the streetscape and established building presence with welcoming and easily identifiable entrances.

**Guidelines:**

1. **Provide for Easily Identifiable Entrances (Bonus)**. Orient principal facades and principal entrances toward the street. Where buildings are located and front on two streets, a single entrance may be located at the corner to address both street faces.

2. **Scale Entrances to the Pedestrian (Bonus)**. Use design elements to clearly define entrances and emphasize a pedestrian scale. This can be done with design elements such as architectural features, transoms and sidelights, changes in roof line, different massing, or unique materials.

This traditional building uses projecting bay windows, front porches, raised entry stairs and changes in roofline to emphasize entrances and the individual units in this row of townhouses.

This modern apartment building uses raised entrances, projecting balconies, variations in building plane and decorative brickwork to emphasize entrances and add visual variety to a large structure.

# BUILDING FACADE

**Facade Design**

**Goal**: Encourage interesting architectural expressions that exhibit unified visions and complement the established character of the area.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Make Ground Floors Welcoming and Safe (Bonus)**. Pierce ground level, street facing walls with a window or functional access such as a door or passageway every 15'.

2. **Design with Relatable Forms**. Design buildings that are three stories or taller with a distinct base, middle and top with the ground floor appearing taller than the upper levels. Proportion buildings and/ or bays to appear more vertical than horizontal.

3. **Design Buildings On All Sides**. Design rear and side building elevations that are visible from public rights-of-way with details and materials similar to those of the primary elevation. However, the highest amount of articulation should be on the primary, street facing facade.

4. **Don't Copy the Past**. Avoid building designs that are caricatures of past or imaginary forms, scale, details, etc.

5. **Match Details with the Overall Design**. Focus significant architectural details, enrichments and features on the principal facade.

6. **Make Building Entryways Easily Identifiable**. Use a higher level of architectural detailing for corner entries using design elements such as: towers, porch wraps, bay windows, corner entrances, plazas etc.

The ground floor is distinguished from the upper floor with a row of balconies. Also, the heavy amount of glass on the ground floor helps to create a "base" for the building while the second and third floors create a "middle" and the decorative parapet roof forms the "top" of the building.

The corner of this building has a higher level of detail and glass, helping to give the building additional presence at the intersection.

**Materials**

**Goal**: Respect the established building materials in the area through form, proportion, placement and material choices to support the area's overall character.

**Guidelines:**

1. **Design and Build for the Long Term (Bonus)**. Use exterior materials designed and/ or constructed for a long life expectancy such as brick, stone, cement plaster, wood, and fiber cement siding. Use materials such as metal, concrete, and the like only as accents. Unfinished or unpainted concrete, metal panels, plywood, pressed wood, EFIS and vinyl siding are unacceptable exterior materials for new construction.

2. **Retain Character Defining Features**. Avoid significant removal or alteration of original materials or features and spaces that characterize a property. When materials are significantly deteriorated, replace them with materials that match the characteristics of the original in terms of size, spacing, texture and edge detail.

3. **Relate Color and Materials to the Building Design**. Use materials that support the architectural concept of the building and are compatible with nearby buildings. Material and/or color changes should occur at a change of plane or floor level.

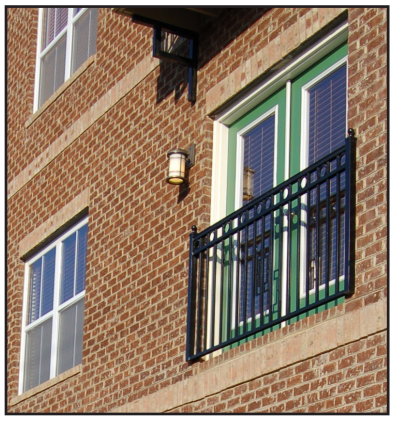
The highly decorative wood fretwork and features of this house-turned-office help to define it and the area that surrounds it. Retaining original materials like these is integral to creating transitional areas between neighborhoods and commercial areas of downtown.

The variety of exterior building materials on this streetscape exhibit traditional materials in the area such as brick and wood clapboarding.

# BUILDING FACADE

**Fenestration**

**Goal**: Emulate the established patterns and scale of windows and doors in the area to complement the architecture and reinforce human scale.



Vertically proportioned windows with recessed sills provide depth, dimensional and traditional proportional relationships within the building and among nearby structures.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Increase 'Eyes on the Street' and Pedestrian Friendliness With Doors and Windows (Bonus).** Windows, doors and other openings should comprise at least 15% of the ground floor elevation for residential buildings. For commercial and mixed use buildings, the ground floor should be at least 35% fenestration. Avoid using reflective and mirrored glass on street facing facades. In cases where privacy is required, consider using decorative glass or internal shades or curtains that may be removed at a later date.

2. **Retain and Complement Character Defining Features**. Retain and rehabilitate original windows. When retention is not feasible, replicate materials, window pattern, frames, surrounds and sizes. For replacement windows, use true divided lights or muntins that are fixed on both the interior and exterior surfaces.

3. **Avoid False Relationships**. Match shutters to the size and shape of their corresponding openings.

4. **Design with Texture**. Recess windows from the exterior wall at least 1/2 inch with a dominant sill to provide visible depth and/or accent windows with trimwork, different materials and/ or patterns.

**Landscaping & Retaining Walls**

**Goal**: Provide attractive landscaping, buffers and connections that are integrated into the site, its architecture and its surroundings.

**Guidelines:**

1. **Use Landscaping and Fencing as Part of the Design (Bonus)**. Integrate landscaping, fencing, retaining walls and the like with the site and its architecture. Use a mixture of plant materials, paving elements and plant accessories to create landscaping treatments unique to each property while complementing an area's aesthetic. Non-residential and multi-family properties that abut the street-right-of-way should meet one or a combination of the following design treatments:

a. Provide a street planting yard of at least ten feet in depth which consists of a rate of six understory trees for every 100 linear feet.

-or-

b. Provide a plaza in the front yard setback that consists of pavers or hardscape material different from the sidewalk and permanently fixed planters for vegetation.

-or-

c. Provide a six foot wide sidewalk with additional space to accommodate street trees between the sidewalk and the curb consisting of six understory trees per 100 linear feet of length or three canopy trees per 100 linear feet of length, where appropriate.

This commercial building utilized foundation plantings contained within a planting yard to soften the transition between its adjacent residential and commercial areas.

2. **Minimize the Visual Impact of Retaining Walls (Bonus)**. Retaining walls facing a street should follow one of the two options below:

a. Where terracing is used, limit each terrace to four feet in height and have a rise to run ratio of 1:1.

-or-

b. For retaining walls that exceed four feet in height without terracing, the retaining wall should be set back from the sidewalk with a ten foot deep planting yard which consists of trees planted at a rate of six understory trees for every 100 linear feet or canopy trees planted at a rate of three for every 100 linear feet where deemed appropriate.

-or-

c. Install public art along the retaining wall. Public Art should be approved by leadership of the United Arts Council, or the Urban Designer or other designated appointee to ensure that the work is appropriately sized and scaled.

-or-

d. Provide landscaping treatments that visually screen the retaining wall.

Here, a plaza in the front and side of the building provides public space with landscaping that complements its adjacent building and creates a compatible transition between differing setbacks.

3. **Design for Safety**. Use crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques when incorporating landscaping into building and site plans. (See Appendix D for more information on CPTED)

# SIGNAGE & LIGHTING

This sign is scaled to its respective building and addresses both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

**Signage & Lighting**

**Goal**: Allow visually engaging signage and lighting that support architectural concepts and add vitality and interest to the area.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Create Context Sensitive, Pedestrian Oriented Signage (Bonus)**.
Design signs that are compatible with the area, meet one of the descriptors below and the requirements of Article 14 of the Greensboro Land Development Ordinance.

   a. Projecting signs that comply with the dimensional and design standards of the Land Development Ordinance, Article 14-7.4 (D).

   b. Signs painted on buildings that do not exceed 5% of the wall area.

   c. Channel set lettering affixed to the building that does not exceed 5% of the wall area.

   d. Monument signs limited to 4' in height.

2. **Signage Should be Sensitive to the Area (Bonus)**. Internally illuminated signs and electronic message board signs are specifically discouraged.

3. **Integrate Signage with the Building**. Design signs and awnings that are part of the overall design and concept of a building. Orient signs to the pedestrian in terms of location and scale.

4. **Lighting Should Be Sensitive to the Area**. Use architecturally compatible lighting features. Avoid lighting that shines on to adjoining or nearby properties.

# SCREENING & AUXILIARY STRUCTURES

**Goal**: Use compatible designs so auxiliary structures are harmonious to the site or building.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Use Screening as Part of the Design (Bonus)**. Provide architectural or landscaped screening for all visible loading areas, exterior waste handling facilities, utility equipment, HVAC and similar mechanical equipment. "Green" mechanical features such as photovoltaic panels and the like should also be thoughtfully integrated into the building and site design.

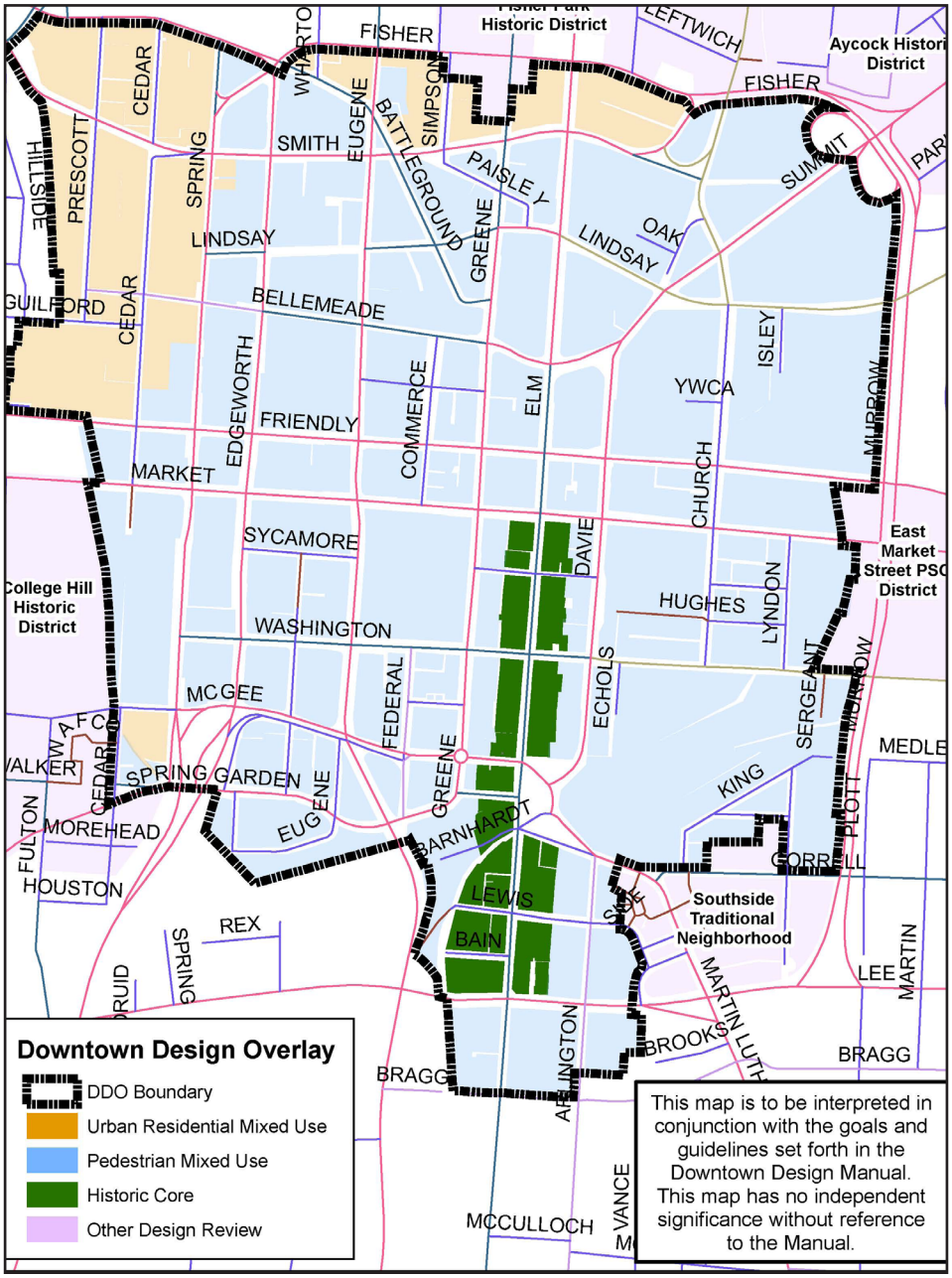
2. **Enhance the Area**. Outdoor storage is specifically discouraged.

This covered mailbox area uses lighting and materials to complement its main building so that that all structures on the site are compatible.

This dumpster container uses the site's topography to screen it from the road and complementary materials so that it is compatible with its main building.

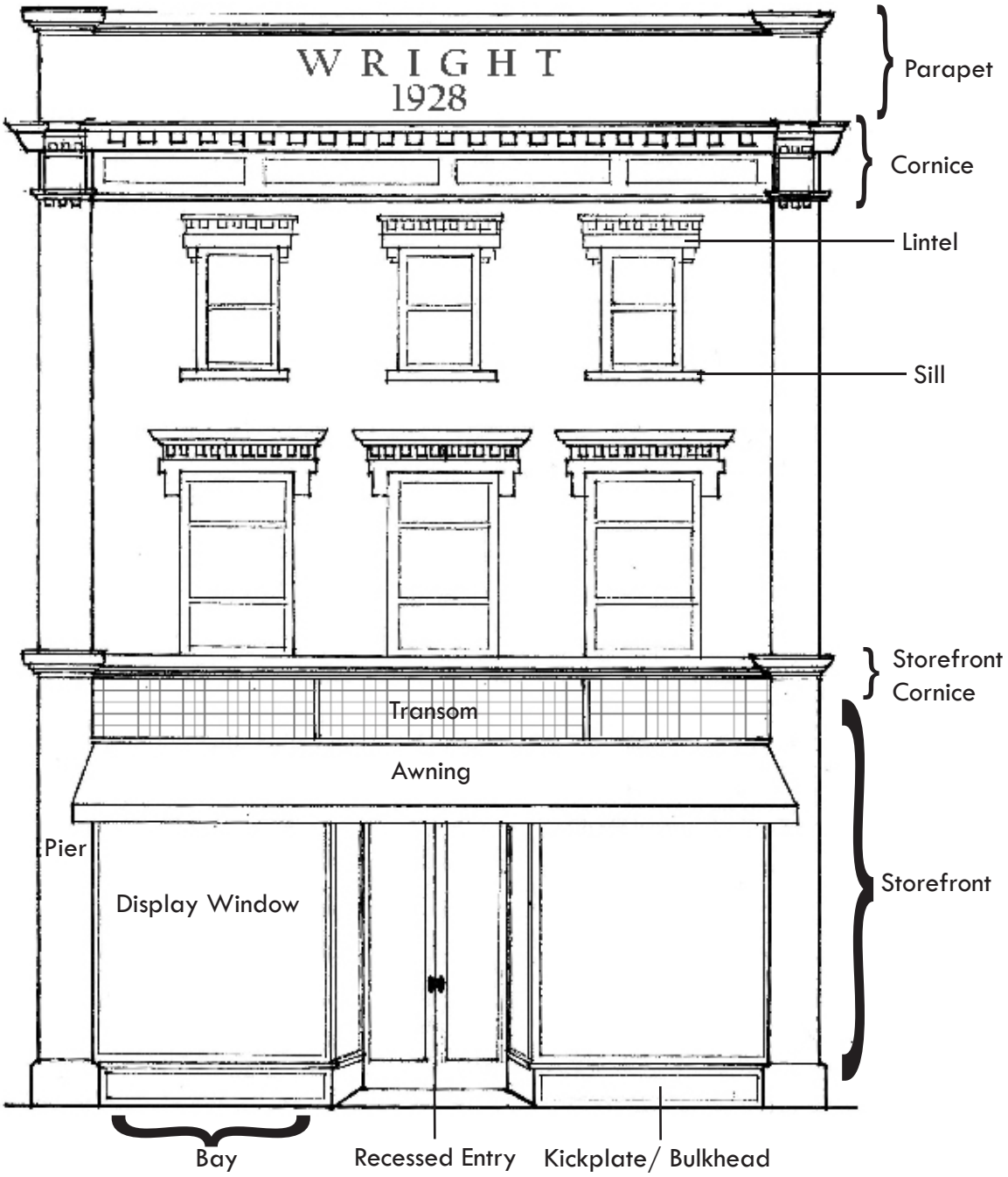
## Area Description

The historic nature of the area (highlighted in green in the image below) is largely defined by the continuous streetscape of buildings dating to the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. This area is both "the actual and traditional central core of the city". Most of the area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and stretches along South Elm Street. With simplified Italianate and three part commercial buildings the area remains one of the few mostly intact Turn of the Century districts in the country. Here, buildings directly meet the sidewalk with recessed entries, large storefront windows and high level of architectural detailing on the ground floor.



# Historic Building Facades

A commercial building's facade- its front or principle wall- contains most of the features that contribute to its architectural character. The facade generally consists of two parts; the storefront at ground level and the upper stories.



## PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Goal**: Maintain and continue the street wall as it is one of the principal defining characteristics of the district, helping to provide human scale and pedestrian interest at the street level.

Guidelines:

1. **Connect to the Street (Bonus).** Site buildings and their entrances to reinforce pedestrian routes by orienting principal facades, plazas, and building entry points close to the public sidewalk, street or other major walkways. Design street facing facades as principal building facades with direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building.

2. **Include Pedestrian Friendly and Fully Accessible Sidewalks (Bonus)**.
Provide a 6,' ADA compliant, accessible route that is clear of any obstructions such as utility poles, street plantings and furnishings, etc.). For new construction larger than 75,000 sq. ft. complete a TIS (Traffic Impact Study) to determine appropriately scaled sidewalk widths (Consult the Highway Manual or GDOT for further information on TIS). For projects located within an adopted City streetscape or area plan, follow GDOT recommendations on sidewalk widths. Sidewalk widths cannot be reduced from their pre-development levels.

3. **Activate the Ground Floor**. Maintain the street wall with active ground floor uses such as retail shops or similar services. No street level facade should remain unpierced by windows, doors or a significant level of articulation for more than 12'. If the ground floor use requires privacy, use removable screening devices or interior window treatments so that the ground floor space can transition to a greater pedestrian orientation in the future.

4. **Promote Safety**. Design small or secluded open spaces to be directly visible from the street. Employ CPTED approaches (Appendix D) in these areas to mitigate crime and enhance the perception of safety in the area.

The streetscape here is largely defined by a solid street wall of buildings. This constant row of buildings is human scaled through the use of awnings, significant amounts of storefront glass and ground level detailing.

The three buildings to the left are new construction infill development that harmonizes with the existing turn of the century streetscape in term of height, massing, window patterns, storefront entrances and architectural detailing.

# CONTEXT & CHARACTER

**Goal**: Design new construction and additions that are scaled to the pedestrian and respect the unique context of the area.

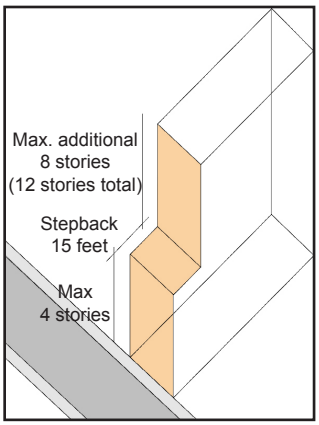
**Guidelines**:

1. **Relate Building Heights (Bonus)**. The principal facade of a building should step back 10-15′ if it exceeds a height of 4 stories or more on interior lots and 8 stories on corners. The maximum height for the area is limited to 12 stories.

2. **Complement Your Neighbors**. Build upon the existing rhythm of the streetscape by retaining harmonious relationships among buildings. Create modules of 20-30′ in width using design elements such as changing patterns, reveals, setbacks, columns or pilasters or three dimensional surface modulation.

3. **Pay Attention to Context**. Use parapet or flat roofs in the area. Sloped roofs are inappropriate unless concealed by a parapet or false front.

This building, while comprising nearly an entire block, breaks up its apparent mass by dividing the ground floor into a series of storefront bays approximately 20 feet in width. Note how the grouping of windows directly above each other give the building a vertical appearance.




Example of street facade step back as described in Guideline 1.

The series of parapet roofs help to create a playful and interesting streetscape with high levels of variation. The cast iron mortar and pestle create an iconic building that expresses its history and enhances its sense of place.

# FACADE

This Office Depot created a more pedestrian friendly street level appearance that harmonizes with the existing character of its Charlotte, NC neighborhood.

The enclosed porch, exterior covered stair and awning alter the historic integrity of this house from the late 1800s. Incompatible additions and design solutions may compromise a building's historic and monetary value and negatively affect the historic setting.

The custom terrazzo entryway attests to a unique building period in Greensboro. Retaining elements such as these give the area and Greensboro a unique sense of place.

**Rehabilitation, Renovation & New Construction**

**Goal**: Maintain the historic character of the area through materials, massing and design when rehabilitating or renovating structures and creating new construction.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Represent a Unique Time and Place Through Design (Bonus)**. Build new buildings and additions that are contemporary and indicative to their time and place while using a common language of design elements popular in the area. Divide buildings over three stories tall into three sections: base, middle and top. Incorporate features like kickplates, storefront entrances, transoms, awnings, parapets, cornices, decorative treatments and the like. Avoid using architectural trade and franchised singage unless they can be documented historically and are part of a restoration.

2. **Complement the Historic Context of the Area (Bonus)**. Design projects near historic structures to complement the height, scale, massing, window patterns, rooflines and architectural details of the surrounding historic context.

3. **Conserve the Historic Integrity of the Area**. Use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation when considering or beginning renovations and rehabilitations in the area (See Appendix E).

4. **Design on All Sides**. Design rear and side elevations that are visible from a public right of way with details and materials similar to those of the primary elevation. Always put the highest amount of articulation on the primary street facing facade.

**Fenestration & Storefronts**

**Goal**: Maintain the established rhythms of the area with a high level of transparent glazing at the ground floor, and help to promote activity at the street level.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Increase 'Eyes on the Street' with Doors and Windows (Bonus)**. For commercial and mixed use buildings use at least 35% fenestration on the ground floor. Locate windows to maximize the opportunity for surveillance of public and semi-public spaces. Avoid using reflective and mirrored glass on street facing, ground floor facades. In cases where privacy is required use decorative glass or internal shades or curtains that may be removed at a later date.

2. **Retain Character Defining Features**. Retain and rehabilitate original windows. When retention is not possible, replicate the size, shape, materials, windows patterns, frames, and surrounds. Use true divided light panes for replacement or new winodws. Design new windows to emulate the size, shape and level of transparency of historic window patterns in the area.

3. **Don't Create False Fronts**. Avoid creating decorative windows and doors that are not functional.

4. **Accentuate the Positives**. Clearly define building entrances and ground floors through the use of design elements such as, but not limited to: marquees, awnings, lighting, changes in roof line, different massing, or unique materials. Avoid using retractable, exterior security devices.

5. **Design with Texture**. Design and build openings with depth and texture to portray dimensionality. Recess windows from the exterior wall at least 1/2 inch with a dominant sill to provide visible depth or accentuate the windows with trimwork, different materials and/ or patterns.

This commercial structure has a strong emphasis on vertical elements with large display windows, a recessed entrance and changing materials and colors on the ground floor. Note that the display windows have sills close to the ground to allow for maximum visibility into the gallery.

This window is recessed from the facade , helping to give a sense of depth and dimensionality to the building

# BUILDING FACADE

## Materials

**Goal**: Utilize compatible building materials that enhance the established character of the area.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Design and Build for the Long Term (Bonus)**. Use materials such as brick, stone, cement plaster, wood, and fiber cement siding for principal exterior cladding. Use tile, terra cotta, decorative cast concrete, stone glass block, Carerra glass, metal, concrete, and the like as accents. Unfinished or unpainted concrete, metal panels, plywood, pressed wood, EFIS and vinyl siding are unacceptable exterior materials for new construction.

2. **Relate Materials to Their Use on the Building**. Use materials that are prevalent in the area and support a buildings's hierarchal composition. Use materials that appear heavier and more massive closer to the ground. Use materials that appear lighter on upper stories, parapets and cornices.

3. **Retain Character Defining Features**. Avoid significant, permanent alterations to materials, details or surfaces. Keep original materials or features that characterize a property. When defining materials must be replaced, match the characteristics of the original features in terms of size, spacing, texture and edge detail.

4. **Relate Color and Materials to the Building Design**. Use materials and color selections that support an architectural concept and are compatible with nearby buildings and emulate similar levels of detail. Design material and color changes to occur at a change of plane or floor level.

The carved stone facade of this building creates a distinctive ground level presence that relates to the upper stories while bringing a sense of scale and proportion to the pedestrian.

These buildings on South Elm Street exhibit the heavy presence of brick and stone that define the character of the area.

**Orientation & Parking**

**Goal**: Maintain the development patterns that define the area with street walls and building facades that are human scaled and proportional to block and street size.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Design for People First (Bonus)**. Minimize parking from public view while not interrupting the pedestrian orientation of the area. Screen structured parking that fronts on a public right-of-way with an architectural facade, activated residential or commercial uses or landscaping. Locate surface parking areas should be located behind or to the side of the principal building. Buffer surface parking lots from the sidewalk with elements such as landscaping or fences less than 3 1/2' in height. Drive thrus are not allowed in the area.

2. **Parking Areas Shouldn't Dominate the Streetscape**. Develop sites or parking areas in ways to allow new buildings and land uses in the future.

3. **Be Innovative**. Consider using porous pavement systems such as GrassPave 2 and the like for parking areas to limit stormwater run-off and create a lighter development footprint*. Using alleyways and ribbon driveways can minimize the development footprint as well. *Contact Water Resources Stormwater Division if pervious material are considered for a project.

4. **Include Clear Pedestrian Routes**. Provide clearly designated pedestrian paths through parking areas for commercial and/ or multi-family buildings. Designate paths with materials such as paint, elevated crosswalks or changes in materials. Sidewalks along public streets should extend across all driveway entrances using sidewalk materials.

This parking structure has a restaurant on the ground floor, helping to increase pedestrian activity on the street. The design also employs screens and architectural detailing to add variety and interest to the facade.

The parking structure above is used by a train station in the Washington DC area. The use of glass, its massing, materials and awnings create a pedestrian and vehicle friendly street presence that enhances the streetscape.

# LANDSCAPING

**Landscaping, Screening, Retaining Walls & Accessory Structures**

The screening for this dumpster thoughtfully incorporates the brick patterns and color of the adjacent buildings and uses public art to disguise the wood fencing.

**Goal**: Enhance the area with landscaping and mitigate the impact of accessory structures with vegetation or integrated design elements.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Use Screening as Part of the Design (Bonus)**. Design and locate accessory structures to relate directly to the character and detail of the primary structure or development. Where mechanical and service equipment and facilities exist and cannot be moved during renovation projects, provide screening that is architecturally compatible with the building and site. "Green" mechanical features such as photovoltaic panels and the like should be thoughtfully integrated into the building and site design.

2. **Fences Shouldn't Dominate the Streetscape**. Where screening is necessary use fencing that is limited to 4 feet in height. Appropriate fencing materials are brick, stone, wood and architectural metal. Incorporate public art into screening and structural motifs.

3. **Soften the Hardscape with Landscaping**. Use landscaping to create pedestrian oriented and welcoming spaces within the built environment. Plant street trees at a comparable rate and pattern as the existing streetscape for new buildings.

4. **Enhance the Area**. Outdoor storage is specifically discouraged.

The street trees and decorative tree grates on the sidewalk help to bring some greenery to the densely built area and makes the environment more human scaled.

# SIGNAGE, AWNINGS & LIGHTING

**Goal**: Complement the architectural character of a building and the area with creative sigs and awnings that are thoughtfully integrated into the building's overall design concept.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Create Signage that Enhances the Pedestrian Experience (Bonus)**. Place on premise signs to avoid interfering with sight lines, vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Signs are limited to the descriptors below:

   a. Signs painted on the facade and fascia that are externally illuminated; channel set lettering that is internally or externally illuminated; and signage affixed to the building that is externally illuminated and does not exceed ten percent of the wall area, but are limited to 400 sq. ft.

   b. Projecting signs and storefront projecting signs that comply with the dimensional and design standards of the Land Development Ordinance, Article 14-7.4 (D) and are limited to 12 sq. ft per side.

   c. Signs located in or on storefront windows limited to 30% of the total window area,

   d. Transom signs limited to 60% of the transom area.

   e. Signage printed or painted on awnings limited to 30% of the awning area.

   f. Temporary sandwich board signs limited to eight sq. ft.

2. **Signage Should be Sensitive to the Area (Bonus)**. Internally illuminated electronic message board signs are specifically discouraged.

3. **Enhance Buildings with Creative Signage**. Maintain existing historic signs in the area. New signs cannot obscure any significant architectural elements of the building.

4. **Respect the Design and Massing of the Building**. Address signs and awnings on an individual basis for each storefront. Avoid a single sign or continuous awning across a building's entire facade.

5. **Lighting Should Be Sensitive to the Area**. Use architecturally compatible lighting features to enhance a building's design. Use historically sensitive light fixtures that complement the area.

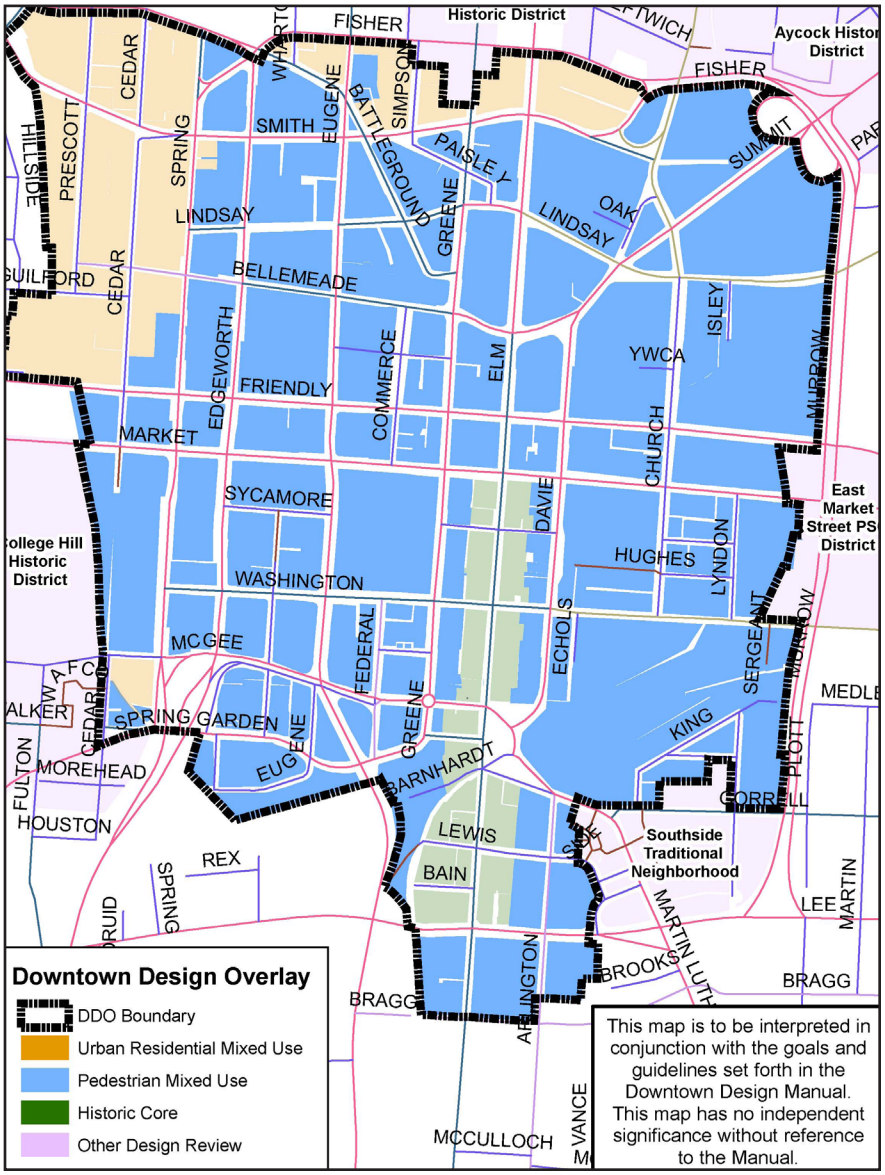
A building sign that incorporates the style and detail of the building while not obstrcuting any architectural elements.

The projecting signs on this streetscape add vitality and dimension to the area and offer ample opportunities for individualized expression while helping pedestrians orient themselves.

The contemporary marquee feature here lends a contemporary design approach to a traditional turn of the century commercial building.

## Area Description

The area described as Pedestrian Mixed Use (highlighted blue in below in the image beow) comprises much of downtown. Many of these spaces are located among areas with established character and context without having much coherency of their own. As such, great care and respect should be given to new development that abuts more established areas while encouraging greater amounts of pedestrian activity throughout downtown. Ideally, new development would comprise a mix of multi-family, vertical mixed-use structures, and commercial structures that respect the context of adjoining properties. These structures should have a strong pedestrian appeal with significant transparency on the ground floor, active street-level uses, and significant design details and articulation. Heights in this area may vary greatly, but street facades should maintain a pedestrian scale that defers to street and sidewalk widths.



## PUBLIC DOMAIN

This corner building addresses two street fronts with active ground floor uses, direct entrances from the sidewalk and a corner entrance set back from the sidewalk.

This brick wall is articulated with a mural to create visual interest on an otherwise plain brick wall.

The limited setbacks of these townhouses maintain the street wall, but provide a level of separation bewteen the private and public domain.

**Goal**: Complement pedestrian activity and interest at the street level for all new development.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Enhance the Streetscape with Visual Interest at the Ground Floor (Bonus).** Maintain and/ or create street walls with continuous linear development that allow for a variety of pedestrian oriented uses and compatible design. Articulate exterior, street facing walls at least every 15' with doors, windows, works of art, landscaping and garden areas, architecturally articulated facades or display areas. Buildings that are one or two times taller than their fronting street width help create an urban setting with a comfortable sense of enclosure that helps stimulate pedestrian activity.

2. **Connect to the Street (Bonus).** Site buildings, their entrances, principal facades, plazas, and building entry points close to the public sidewalk, street or other major walkways. Residential buildings are encouraged to have a limited separation from the sidewalk such as a small dooryard, elevation change, porch or stoop.

3. **Include Pedestrian Friendly, Accessible Sidewalks (Bonus)**. Provide a 6', ADA compliant, accessible route that is clear of any obstructions such as utility poles, street plantings and furnishings, etc. For new construction larger than 75, 000 sq. ft. complete a TIS (Traffic Impact Study) to determine appropriately scaled sidewalk widths (Consult the Highway Manual or GDOT for further information on TIS). For projects located within an adopted City streetscape or area plan, consult with GDOT for recommendations on sidewalk widths and approval. Sidewalk widths cannot be reduced from their pre-development levels.

4. **Activate the Ground Floor**. Stimulate pedestrian activity with uses such as retail, personal & business services, galleries and restaurants on street facing facades.

5. **Design for Each Site**. Articulate the corners of buildings located at intersections to provide added visual interest, and wayfinding opportunities.

6. **Connect to Amenities**. Properties that are directly adjacent to the Downtown Greenway should provide safe, pedestrian access to and from the Greenway.

**Goal**: Create compatible infill with existing pedestrian oriented buildings in the area.

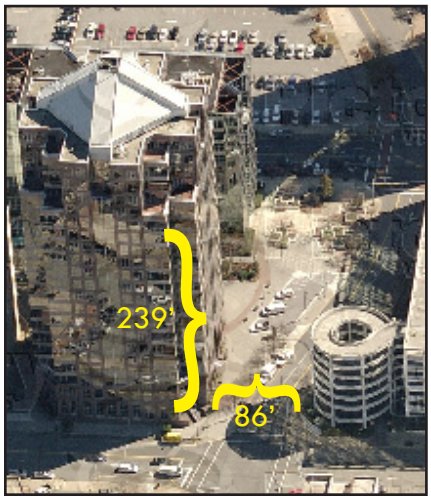
**Guidelines**:
1. **Buildings Should Fit with the Existing Grid**. Design new development to have a compatible relationship with the existing street, block widths and scale of the city grid. If the height of new development is designed to be taller than three times the width of its fronting street and sidewalks combined, then the building should step back any additional stories 15' from the principal facade or provide wider sidewalks or publicly accessible plaza space on the fronting street.

2. **Create Harmonious Massing Patterns Without Being Repetitive**. For large buildings, break up the overall mass of the building with recessions and projections on the facade to break up the building's overall proportions. Use the nearby existing rooflines, cornice lines, belt and string course to distinguish floor levels and relate new buildings to existing ones.

3. **Celebrate Nearby Historic Properties**. Incorporate historic properties that are adjacent or close to the development site with the overall design concept of the new development. If the height of the new development is designed to be more than three stories taller than adjacent residential properties or properties designated as Historic Core or Urban Residential Mixed Use, then consider stepping back any additional stories 15' from the principal facade. Historic properties may be defined as, but are not limited to: properties that are designated Guilford County Landmarks and properties listed or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Renovations or rehabilitations to historic structures should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation (Appendix E) to maintain Greensboro's unique historic resources.

This infill building uses physical clues from adjacent buildings so that cornice lines, massing, and ground floors heights are similar. Note how the upper floor is stepped back from the rest of building.

The infill building here breaks up a large structure into smaller masses and steps back its most significant height from the street creating a compatible context between existing buildings.




This office tower encloses public space without overwhelming it. It rises 239' feet in height before stepping back. The building's height before stepping back is approximately three times the width of the street and sidewalks.

# BUILDING FACADE

**Facade Design**

**Goal**: Create facades and building designs that exhibit a unified architectural expression that promotes pedestrian activity and enhances the design and character of downtown.

**Guidelines**:

1. **New Construction Should Uniquely Represent Its Time & Place (Bonus).** Exhibit unique and contemporary design solutions with new construction. Building treatments and architectural elements should be true representations of traditional building elements rather than exaggerated forms. Further, when a project must incorporate franchised signage and architectural trade into the design, the architectural trade should defer to the building design and not distract from its pedestrian appeal.

2. **Design All Sides of the Building**. Design rear and side elevations that are visible from a public right of way with details and materials compatible with those of the primary elevation.

3. **Display Proportional Relationships**. Buildings should exhibit a distinct base, middle and top. For buildings taller than three stories accommodate the majority of the height in the middle section. Create compatibility among floors with high levels of detailing especially at the ground floor by using elements such as, but not limited to: articulated entrances, storefront compositions, pilasters, decorative brick or stone work, and architectural details. For buildings taller than three stories, accommodate the majority of the height in the middle section.

This building uses a tall ground floor with large windows, entryway and decorative building numbers to accentuate the base, exterior treatments that are similar to each other in the middle and a decorative cornice at the top.

This Taco Bell uses text and its logo bell to identify the building while incorporating pedestrian friendly deign approaches with large amounts of glass, a scaled entrance, connections to the sidewalk and siting the building directly adjacent to the sidewalk.

**Entrances & Fenestration**

**Goal**: Design windows, doors and their placement to promote pedestrian activity and visual interest in the area.

**Guidelines**:

1. **The Ground Floor Should Encourage Visual and Pedestrian Interest (Bonus)**. Create open and inviting ground levels of non-residential and mixed use buildings with a high level of glass and detailing to encourage pedestrian activity and bring buildings to human scale at the street level. Typically, a ground floor composed of at least 35% transparent glass achieves this. For service, emergency or ventilation areas, integrate the openings to be part of the building design.

2. **Accentuate Building Entrances So that They're Easily Identifiable (Bonus)**. Highlight storefronts and building entrances with architectural features, canopies, awnings, lighting, color, different massing, or unique features or finishes.

3. **Select Materials That are High Quality and Durable**. Use great care when selecting window materials and finishes to enhance a building's design concept as window composition largely defines the character of a building. Lasting, repairable and durable materials are preferred over materials that require wholesale replacement such as vinyl.

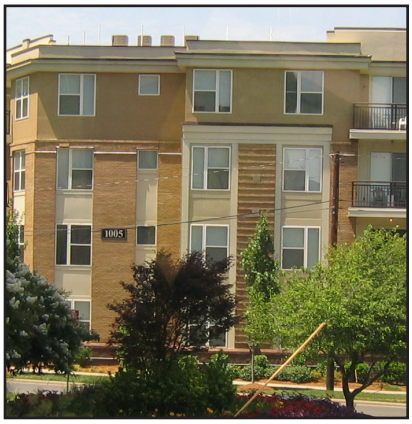
4. **Don't Create False Fronts**. Shutters are largely inappropriate in this area, but where shutters are used correspond them in size and shape to their respective window openings.

The large amount of transparant glass on the ground floor invites people in to the building while providing an opportunity for business owners to advertise their products.

The recessed entrance and traditional storefront design add visual interest to the street for this context sensitive infill building.

# BUILDING FACADE

The rusticated stone work on the ground floor gives visual weight to the building, making the groud floor appear heavier.




The complementary materials and colors on this building help to break up its apparent mass and add visual interest to the site and streetscape.

The color and material choices of the infill building on the left are complementary to those of adjacent buildings while maintaining a distinctly modern character.

**Exterior Materials**

**Goal**: Use building materials that enhance the character of the area and the building's design concept.

**Guidelines:**

1. **Relate Materials To Their Use On the Building**. Use materials that support a building's hierarchal composition. Materials that appear heavier and more massive should be used closer to the ground, whereas materials that appear lighter should be used on upper stories, parapets and cornices.

2. **Design and Build for the Long Term with High Quality Materials.** Durable, locally produced, natural and recycled materials are the most appropriate for new construction. Use the highest level of detail and materials with the greatest quality on street facing facades. The following materials are most acceptable for rear elevations not visible from public rights of way, service areas and accents: concrete or masonry block or brick larger than 4" x 12", aluminum, composite siding, concrete masonry units, and mimicked traditional materials. Materials with rustic, unfinished appearances like rough sawn plywood and concrete blocks are not recommended.

3. **Relate Color and Materials to the Building Design**. Avoid frequent material and color changes that are not incorporated into the building's design. Changes in material and color are most appropriate at a change of plane, however changes at outside corners are not recommended as it tends to make the materials and building form appear thin and less substantial. Clapboards are most appropriate for historic renovations or where the material can be documented as original or historic.

**Goal**: Incorporate landscaping with built structures to add pedestrian appeal and scale at the street level and provide visual continuity to the streetscape adjacent to public rights of way.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Integrate Landscaping and Site Features Into the Design (Bonus)**. Use landscaping, site features and screening as an integral approach to creating pedestrian oriented and welcoming spaces within the built environment. Consider incorporating public art into screening and structural motifs. Use a mixture of plant materials, paving elements and plant accessories to create landscaping treatments unique to each property while complementing an area's aesthetic.

2. **Minimize the Visual Impact of Retaining Walls(Bonus)**. Retaining walls facing a street should follow one of the two options below:

a. Where terracing is used, each terrace height should be limited to four feet in height and have a rise to run ratio of 1:1.

-or-

b. For retaining walls that exceed four feet in height without terracing, the retaining wall should be set back from the sidewalk with a ten foot deep planting yard which consists of trees planted at a rate of six understory trees for every 100 linear feet or canopy trees planted at a rate of three for every 100 linear feet where deemed appropriate.

-or-

c. Provide for public art along the retaining wall. Public Art should be approved by leadership of the United Arts Council, or the Urban Designer or other designated appointee to ensure that the work is appropriately sized and scaled.

-or-

d. Provide landscaping treatments that visually screen the retaining wall.

3. **Integrate Screening Into the Design**. Locate mechanical and service equipment/ facilities away from principal pedestrian routes. Where such equipment and facilities exist, and are adjacent to a public right of way, provide screening using architectural or natural landscaping elements. "Green" mechanical features such as photovoltaic panels and the like should be thoughtfully integrated into the building and site design.

4. **Enhance the Area.** Outdoor storage should be fully screened from public rights-of-way using landscaping and architectural features compatible with the building and site.

5. **Design for Safety**. Consider crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) when incorporating landscaping into building and site plans. (See Appendix D for more information on CPTED)

The street trees here lend shade to the sidewalk, bring a pedestrian scale to the streetscape and add visual diversity into the built environment.

This retaining wall, adjacent to a sidewalk, has broken up its apparent mass through the use of terracing and landscaping.

A combination of opaque and open fencing is used here to delinate between public and private spaces without obscuring views.

## PARKING

**Goal**: Promote pedestrian enhanced parking design to limit the visibility of parking areas so that pedestrian safety and activity are prioritized.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Parking Areas Should Defer to the Pedestrian Experience (Bonus)**. Minimize the visibility of surface parking lots, their access points and structured parking. Locate surface parking to the rear or beside buildings. When fronting on a public right-of-way, screen with one of the following: a three foot deep vegetated planting yard; decorative open fencing or low walls with landscaping treatments. Design structured parking with an architectural facade and/ or retail or commercial space on the ground floor. Cabling, chain link and razor wire are not appropriate design solutions.

The parking garage above uses a highly detailed architectural facade and a significant amount of glass thoughout the design so that the structure is pedestrian scaled and welcoming for motorists.

2. **Accommodate for Multiple Modes of Transit**. Install bicycle parking close to building entrances in visible and secure locations that are protected from the elements when feasible.

3. **Auto Oriented Facilities Shouldn't Interrupt Pedestrian Activity**. Drive thru facilities should not be visible from public rights-of-way. Drive thru windows and order locations should be located to the rear of the property with drive thru aisles and stacking spaces perpendicular to the street.

4. **Be Innovative**. Consider using porous pavement systems such as GrassPave 2 and the like for parking areas to limit stormwater run-off and create a lighter development footprint*. Using alleyways and ribbon driveways can minimize the development footprint as well. *Contact Water Resources Stormwater Division if pervious material are considered for a project.

This building locates its parking beside the building and screens it with vegetation and fencing. This approach maintains the street wall, incorporates landscaping and provides for the parking needs of the respective building.

# SIGNAGE & AWNINGS

**Goal**: Complement the architectural character of a building and the area with creative signage and awnings that are thoughtfully integrated into the building's overall design concept.

**Guidelines**:

1. **Create Distinctive Signage That Helps to Define and Beautify the Area (Bonus)**. Signage should complement significant architectural elements of a building with designs that are part of the building's overall design concept. Addressing signage and awnings individually for each storefront is preferred over a single sign or continuous awning stretching across a building's entire facade. Signs most appropriate to the area include on premise advertising signs that do not interfere with sight lines, vehicular or pedestrian traffic and meets the following minimum descriptions:

a. Hand painted mural signs on secondary building facades depicting the principal use's product, service, or name, or building name limited to 20% of the building face. One such painted sign is allowable per building face.

b. Two-dimensional wall signs affixed to the building that do not exceed 15% of the wall area, but are limited to 400 sq. ft. on secondary facades. Signs located on principal facades shall not exceed 10% of the wall area. Signs may only be illuminated indirectly.

c. Channel set lettering (cut out lettering) that does not exceed 15% of the wall area on secondary facades and ten percent on principal facades. Lettering may be illuminated directly, including neon, or indirectly.

d. Signs located parallel to or in storefront windows that are limited to 30% of total window area.

e. Transom signs limited to 60% of the transom area.

f. Temporary sandwich board signs limited to 8 sq. ft. per face. No more than one sandwich board sign should be allowable per building entrance.

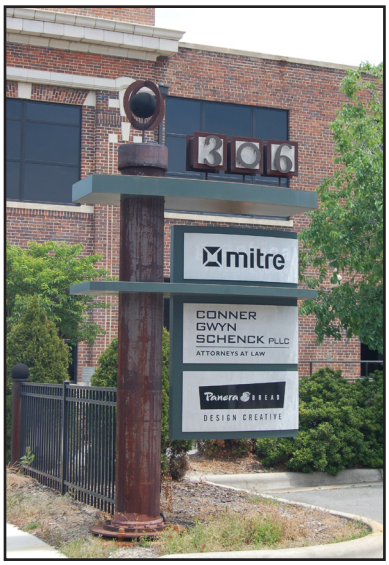
g. Free standing identification signs limited to 36 sq. ft. and eight feet in height with indirect illumination and limited to one sign per building.

h. Nonconforming outdoor advertising signs which already exist and, when replaced, meet the standards listed in Appendix G.

i. Projecting signs and storefront projecting signs that comply with the dimensional and design standards of the Land Development Ordinance, Article 14-7.4 (D) and are limited to 12 sq. ft per side.

Each storefront has its own individual awning while being contained within the same building. The individual awnings help to distinquish the storefronts and add interest to the streetscape.

Example of a hand painted sign on a secondary building facade.




This free standing identification sign incorporates artistic elements into its design while being identifiable to pedestrian, cyclists and motorists.

# SIGNAGE & AWNINGS (CONT'D)

**Signage & Awnings**

By being oriented to circulation routes, projecting signs are often easy to identify along a street. Projecting signs can be simple texts or elaborate artistic interpretations of a business.

j. Signage printed or painted on awnings limited to 30% of the awning area.

k. Signage on the face of a marquee or awning limited to 30% of the marquee or awning face.

l. Banners limited to 15 sq. ft. occurring no more frequently than 1/ 250 feet of frontage.

m. Electronic changeable copy signs that meet the following standards: display a static message content for a minimum of eight seconds; do not exceed 5,000 nits (candelas per square meter) during daylight hours and do not exceed 500 nits (candelas per square meter) from dusk to dawn; meet the aforementioned sigange size for all types of signs; are integrated into the overall building design; display only on-premise advertising; and require a Special Use Permit approved by the Zoning Commission.

These electronic copy signs are integrated into the building's overall design and display messages relating to the principal tenant.

2. **Lighting Should Be Sensitive to the Area**. Enhance a building's design concept with architecturally compatible lighting features. Consider using historically sensitive fixtures that complement the area.

Architectural lighting can highlight building features while having only a minimal impact on nighttime skies with full cut off fixtures and by ensuring that lighting doesn't emit beyond the roof line.

# GLOSSARY

Accessible Route: A continuous and unobstructed walkway within a pedestrian circulation path that provides full accessibility (in accordance with ADA).

Accessory Structure: A detached subordinate structure, the use of which is customarily incidental to that of the principal structure and which is located on the same zone lot as the principal structure. Also referred to as an 'auxiliary structure.'

Alley: A roadway set aside primarily for vehicular service access to the back or side of properties otherwise abutting on a street. An alley is designed to have a pavement width narrower than that required for a street with no parking allowed.

Architectural Trade: Building design or elements of building design that is trademarked, branded, or easily identified with a particular chain or corporation and is ubiquitous in nature.

Articulation: Emphasizing parts or distinct areas into a comprehensive design.

Auxiliary Structure: A detached subordinate structure, the use of which is customarily incidental to that of the principal structure and which is located on the same zone lot as the principal structure. Also referred to as an 'accessory structure.'

Awning: An architectural projection that provides weather protection, identity or decoration and is wholly supported by the building to which it is attached. An awning is comprised of a lightweight, rigid skeleton structure over which a covering is attached.

Balcony: A platform that projects from the wall of a building and is surrounded by a railing or parapet.

Bay: A part of a building marked off by vertical elements, such as columns or pilasters.

Belt Course: A molding or projecting course running horizontally along the face of a building. Also referred to as a stringcourse or band course.

Block Face: One side of a street between two consecutive features intersecting that street. The features can be other streets, boundaries of standard geographic areas.

Building Projecting Sign: See 'Projecting Sign.'

Bulkhead: A horizontal portion of a storefront between the ground plane and the sill of the window. Also referred to as a kickplate.

Carrara Glass: A pigmented structural glass, commonly used as wall surfacing, and common architectural element on commercial storefronts of the 1920s and 1930s. Also known as Vitrolite glass.

Canopy Tree: A species of tree which normally grows to a mature height of 40 feet or more with a minimum mature crown width of 30 feet.

Caricature: Deliberate exaggeration or distortion of architectural forms, massing and/ or scale so that built forms do not have a harmonious visual relationship.

Cement Plaster: An exterior finish consisting of Portland cement-based materials and sand, mixed with water to form a workable plaster. Cement plaster should not be confused with Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) or synthetic stucco systems.

Channel Set Lettering: Individually cut out letters which are set into prominent or sunken bands.

Clapboard: A long narrow board with one edge thicker than the other, overlapped horizontally to cover the outer walls of frame structures. Also called weatherboard.

Clerestory: An upper portion of a wall containing windows for supplying natural light to a building.

Comparable Rate: In reference to the planting of street trees- the regular rate at which trees have been planted or pits have been provided for the planting of trees.

Cornice: A horizontal molded projection that crowns or completes a building or wall.

Corner Lot: A lot abutting two or more streets at their intersection.

Curb Cut: A small ramp built into the curb of a sidewalk to ease passage to the street.

Door Yard: The yard or landscaped area surrounding the front entrance of a building.

Drive-thru: A separate structure, window or door allowing motorists to access business services without leaving their vehicle.

EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finishing System): A thick, synthetic stucco applied in a single layer that includes insulation, coatings and adhesives.

Egress: A means or place of going out; an exit.

Electronic Changeable Copy Sign: A sign or portion thereof that has a reader board for the display of text or graphic information which is defined by a small number of elements using different combinations light emitting diodes, fiber optics, light bulbs, or other illumination devices within the display area.

Facade: The front or principal face of a building; any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

Fascia: A flat horizontal band or member between moldings.

Fenestration: The design and disposition of windows and other exterior openings of a building.

Fiber Cement Siding: Building material used to cover the exterior of a building that is a composite material made of sand, cement and cellulose fibers.

Franchised Signage: Signage design that is trademarked, branded, or easily identified with a particular chain or corporation and is ubiquitous in nature.

Fretwork: Ornamental work consisting of interlacing parts, especially work in which the design is formed by perforation.

Front yard setback: The area measured between the property line abutting a street and the principal building line.

Full Cut Off Fixture: Lighting fixtures which have been designed so that the light output from the fixture is only directed downward, rather than sideways or upward. The window to emit the light is flat and flush with the fixture. The source of light is completely enclosed in the fixture, thus preventing light from escaping in the unwanted directions.

Glazing: Panes or sheets of glass set or made to be set in frames, as in windows, doors, or mirrors.

Ground Floor: The first habitable floor of a building above grade or the street level.

Hand Painted Mural Sign: Any sign which is applied to the facade of a building through the use of hand painting or staining techniques. These signs are only allowed when lettering styles are legible, contain only a simple message and are fabricated with quality materials and professional craftsmanship. All hand painted mural signs should be characteristic of the building's period and style.

Hierarchal Composition: Horizontal layering of building materials from the weightiest at the ground floor to the lightest at the top of the building.

Historic Property: A property that exhibits significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, or culture. Historic properties possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and: A. are associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or B. are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Human Scale: Design that considers certain building elements to encourage relationship between people and buildings. Such elements may be, but are not limited to: avoiding long, monotonous uninterrupted walls or planes, arcades, awnings, ground floor retail with storefronts having heavy glazing, entrances facing the street, visible public spaces, porches and balconies, and rear vehicle access.

Impervious Material: Materials or paving systems that do not allow for water infiltration through the material.

Ingress: A means or place of entering; entryway.

Internally Illuminated Box Sign: Opaque box containing signage which has a light source contained from within the box.

Kickplate: A horizontal portion of a storefront between the ground plane and the sill of the window. Also referred to as the bulkhead.

Light Pollution: Excess or obtrusive light emitted from exterior and interior lighting.

Marquee: A permanent roofed structure attached to and supported by the building and that projects into the public right-of-way.

Massing: The overall physical size of a structure and its components.

Median: The number which is in the exact middle of the data set.

Monument Sign: Any monolithic sign in which the bottom of the sign is flush with the ground.

Muntin: Any short or light bar, either vertical or horizontal, used to separate glass in a sash into multiple lights. Also called a windowpane divider or a grille.

Non-Invasive Species: Species that are native to a habitat or environment and do not tend to spread widely.

Normal Standard: The minimum standard number as described in Greensboro's Development Ordinance.

Outdoor Storage: The storage of any item outside of an enclosed building or structure. This includes but is not limited to building supplies, non-functioning equipment & appliances, materials stored in crates, boxes or shipping containers; lumber yards; pipe; wrecking; junk and salvage yards; vehicle storage yards; and other similar uses.

Parapet: A wall-like barrier at the edge of a roof or structure.

Parking Lot: Paved area whose main purpose is temporary car storage that is at least 400 square feet or contains three or more parking spaces.

Pedestrian Oriented Uses: Uses that promote and are promoted by the greater use of public area and sidewalks. These include spaces that sell merchandise, personal and business services, restaurants, galleries, retail banking and similar uses.

Pedestrian Scale: Used to describe the quality of a building that includes structural or architectural components of a size and proportion that relate to the human form and/ or that exhibits through its structural or architectural components the human functions contained within.

Pediment: An architectural element consisting of a triangular section found above a horizontal structure, typically supported by columns.

Pilaster: A slightly-projecting flattened column built into or applied to the face of a wall.

Planting Yard: A screen intended to separate uses, block or partially block visual contact, provide vegetation and enhance the appearance of individual properties,

Primary Facade: The main or principle elevation of a building. Typically the elevation with the highest amount of detail and fronting on a public roadway.

Projecting Bay Foundation: A bay which projects from the facade of a building and extends to the ground.

Projecting Sign: A sign that is end-mounted or otherwise attached to an exterior wall of a building which forms an angle with said wall, is located in the area between the storefront cornice and the building roofline and depicts the building name or principal use.

Public Art: Works of art in any media that have been planned and executed with the specific intention of being sited or staged in the public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. The term also refers to a particular working practice, often with implications of site specificity, community involvement and collaboration. The term is sometimes also applied to include any art which is exhibited in a public space including publicly accessible buildings.

Public Right of Way: A piece of land over which the public has the right to pass. Most regularly this refers to sidewalks and streets.

Rehabilitation: The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Retaining Wall: A structure that holds back soil or rock from a building, structure or area. Retaining walls prevent downslope movement or erosion and provide support for vertical or near-vertical grade changes.

Reveal: The part of the jamb of a window or door opening between the outer wall surface and the window or door frame or the whole jamb of an opening between the outer and inner surfaces of a wall.

Rhythm: A patterned repetition of a motif, formal element, etc., at regular or irregular intervals in the same or a modified form.

Ribbon Driveway: Driveway made of two parallel strips of pavement with grass or stone in between.

Sandwich Board Sign: Advertisement composed of two boards (holding a message or graphic) and set up (for example next to a store advertising its goods) in a triangle shape, hinged along the top.

Scale: A certain relative or proportionate size or extent.

Security Lights: Lighting which is used as a preventative and corrective measure against intrusions or other criminal activity on a physical piece of property. Security lighting may be provided to aid in the detection of intruders, to deter intruders, or in some cases simply to increase the feeling of safety.

Setback: The horizontal distance from the property line, street right of way line, or street centerline to the nearest part of the applicable building, structure, sign, or activity, measured perpendicularly.

Sidelight: A long, vertically oriented window located to the side of a door; often found in pairs.

Signage: A sign, wording, logo, or other representation that, directly, or indirectly, names, advertises, or calls attention to a business, product, service, or other commercial activity.

Sill: The lowest horizontal member in a frame or opening for a window or door.

Simulated Divided Light: A method of constructing windows in which muntins are affixed to the inside and outside of a panel of insulating glass to simulate the look of true divided light. These windows use gray foam spacers between the exterior and interior muntins to enhance the authentic look.

Solar Orientation: Placing a building on the site in such a way that the building takes full advantage of the sun's natural heat.

Stacking Spaces: An area with direct forward access to a service window of a drive-through facility.

Street Trees: Trees which are planted directly in the public right of way or very close to the public right of way (typically within 5-10 feet). Most street trees are located between the curb and building face planted underneath the sidewalk.

Street Wall: The apparent total mass of individual building facades on a street.

Storefront Projecting Sign: Any sign that is end-mounted or otherwise attached to an exterior wall of a building which forms an angle with said wall and is located in the area between the ground and the storefront cornice.

String Course: A molding or projecting course running horizontally along the face of a building. Also referred to as a belt course or band course.

Terra Cotta: A hard, fired clay, brownish-red in color when unglazed, that is used for architectural ornaments and facings, structural units, pottery, and as a material for sculpture.

Transom: A small window above a door or another window.

True Divided Light: A term which refers to windows in which multiple individual panes of glass or lights are assembled in the sash using muntins.

Understory Tree: A species of tree which normally grows to a mature height of 15 to 35 feet in height.

Urban Heat Island Effect: Occurs when city temperatures run higher than those in suburban and rural areas, primarily because growing numbers of buildings have supplanted vegetation and trees. Moreover, human activity itself generates heat.

Water Wise: Water-wise landscape design and management focus on working with nature and natural forces (such as rainfall) to create an aesthetically pleasing, livable landscape, while using less water from the local supply. Water-wise landscaping is also known as xeriscaping.

Wayfinding: The user experience of orientation and choosing a path within the built environment, and it also refers to the set of architectural and/or design elements that aid orientation. Urban planner Kevin A. Lynch coined the term in his 1960 book Image of the City, where he defined wayfinding as "a consistent use and organization of definite sensory cues from the external environment".

# DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO

## DESIGN MANUAL

## QUICK REFERENCE - CHARACTER AREA GUIDELINESS

| | Urban Residential Mixed Use | Historic Core | Pedestrian Mixed Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sidewalk Width** | 6' with a 2' planting strip | Meet prevailing minimum width | 6' ADA route and provide space for other amenities as needed |
| **Principal Access to Building** | Directly from the street | Directly from the street | Directly from the street |
| **Min. Lot Width** | Reduce up to 20% from zoning standard | None | None |
| **Orientation of Facade** | To the street | To the street | To the street |
| **Street Setback** | Not less than 5', not more than 20' and similar to adjacent properties | 50% of facade at the property line or prevailing setback | Not more than 10' from sidewalk or not more than 20' for residential |
| **Interior Setback** | At least 5', with 15' total | None | 5' when adjacent to residential zoning |
| **Parking Location** | Behind or beside building | Behind or underneath building | No requirement |
| **Parking Screening** | Screen with fence and/ or planting yard | Screen with buildings | Screen with buildings, fence, or planting yard |
| **Parking** | See page 3 | None | None |
| **Drive Thrus** | Not encouraged | Not encouraged | Not visible from the public right of way |
| **Ground Floor Use** | None prescribed | Pedestrian Oriented Uses | N/A |
| **Ground Floor Height** | Taller than upper floors | 15' minimum | N/A |
| **Roof Form** | N/A | Flat roof or parapet | N/A |
| **Building Massing** | Max. 35' wide modules | Max. 20-30' wide modules | N/A |
| **Max. Height** | No standard | 4 stories without a 15' stepback from facade | Context based. See page 27 |
| **Materials** | Metal, concrete, plywood, EFIS & vinyl discouraged for principal material | Metal, concrete, plywood, EFIS, vinyl & clap-boards discouraged for principal material | N/A |
| **Max. Length of Unarticulated Wall** | 12' for street level frontages | 12' for street level frontages | 15' for street level frontages |
| **Window/ Door Orientation** | Vertical | Vertical | N/A |
| **Street Trees** | 3 canopy trees/ 100 linear ft. | At similar rate to existing streetscape | Encouraged with new development. Page 31 |
| **Landscaping** | Street yard, or plaza, or street trees req'd | N/A | No standard |
| **Retaining Walls** | Max. rise = 4' | Not permitted | Max. rise = 4' |
| **Max. Fence Height** | Max. 3.5' in front yard | Max. 4' | Max. 3' if opaque; 6' if 75% open |
| **Signs** | See page 10 | See page 23 | See pages 33 & 34 |
| **Electronic Changeable Copy Signs** | Not encouraged | Not encouraged | See pages 34 |

***This listing is for general reference purposes only. Please refer to the Downtown Design Manual for a complete description.**