

BENICIA, CALIFORNIA

DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION



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These Design Guidelines have been developed to help preserve the Benicia Downtown Historic District's ("Downtown District") character and historic resources. This document provides guidance to assist in the preservation, treatment and maintenance of their buildings and properties in the district. In addition, this document provides design guidelines for construction of new buildings that are compatible with the district.

Benicia Historic Preservation Goals

- › The method that requires the least intervention is always preferred.
- › The highest degree of integrity will be maintained.

Why Have Design Guidelines?

The design guidelines promote preservation of historic, cultural and architectural heritage within Benicia. They seek to maintain Benicia as a cohesive, livable place and avoid the inappropriate alteration or demolition of historic resources. Maintaining historic fabric and the context is a fundamental concept.

The design guidelines provide a basis for making consistent decisions about the appropriateness of improvements that are subject to approval in the City's design review process. In addition, they serve as educational and planning tools for property owners and design professionals who wish to improve a historic property or who propose new construction in the Downtown District.

While the design guidelines are written for use by the layperson to plan improvements, property owners are strongly encouraged to enlist the assistance of qualified design and planning professionals, including architects and preservation consultants, before beginning a project in the historic district.

Who Uses the Design Guidelines?

Property Owners

Owners should use the guidelines when planning improvements to properties in the Downtown District to establish an appropriate approach for rehabilitation and new construction. For owners of historic properties, the guidelines also provide information that will help promote good stewardship.

City Staff and the Historic Preservation Review Commission

City staff and the Historic Preservation Review Commission use the design guidelines to review historic rehabilitation and new construction projects. In doing so, they consider how each project meets the guidelines and promotes the design goals set forth here.

The Community

The guidelines also convey the City's expectations to the public so they can better understand what design elements are appropriate in Benicia.

Background for the Design Guidelines

The Downtown District Design Guidelines were established in the 1990 Downtown Historic Conservation Plan and updated in 2017. The intent of the update is to provide user-friendly design guidelines for the treatment of historic properties, alterations to non-historic buildings and the design of new infill structures within the district. This document also brings Benicia into alignment with historic preservation “best practices.” The documents described below provide the basis for the design guidelines.

Downtown Historic Conservation Plan

The Downtown Historic Conservation Plan (DHCP) was adopted to guide future development and alterations to existing structures in the Downtown Historic District. The conservation plan defines the boundaries of the historic district and provides information about the historic resources setting of the district.

Benicia Municipal Code

The Benicia Municipal Code (BMC) establishes the Historic (H) Overlay District zoning and sets a regulatory framework for the establishment of a historic district, designation of a historic landmark, procedures for demolition and design review, and standards for maintenance of structures. The BMC also sets parameters for land use and site development that are applied in combination with the design guidelines in the Downtown Historic District.

Benicia Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan

The Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan (DMUMP), adopted in 2007, presents a vision for the downtown that includes implementation of the mixed-use vision identified in the General Plan (1999), strategies for the improvement of First Street, and adoption of a Form-Based Code. The Form-Based Code replaces many zoning aspects of the Benicia Municipal Code, including land use, site development and parking standards. The DMUMP is applied in combination with the design guidelines and, where necessary, the BMC. Where there is a conflict between the DMUMP and the guidelines, as determined through the design review process, the guidelines take priority.

2011 Historic Context Statement City of Benicia

The Historic Context Statement, which was funded by a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant, was prepared to assist in the evaluation of Benicia’s historic resources and bring a greater level of consistency to the city’s historic preservation efforts. The Historic Context Statement provides an overview of significant themes in the development of Benicia from its earliest beginnings through the 1960’s. The document also identifies property types and their character-defining features and provides a framework for evaluating resources in accordance with the standards of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and Benicia Municipal Code.

1990 Downtown Streetscape Plan

The Downtown Streetscape Plan, adopted in 1990, establishes a vision for a distinctive historic district with a mix of uses, tree-lined streets, street lighting and vibrant landscaping; a downtown that serves the residents of Benicia and draws visitors from around the Bay Area and showcases its historic; and a waterfront devoted to public enjoyment. The Streetscape Plan includes a Public Improvements Program, Streetscape Design Standards and a Maintenance Program.



Figure 1. Preserving and enhancing historic places in Benicia tells the story of the City's past and its identity while also proving its commitment to sustainability.



Figure 2. Historic rehabilitation projects create direct and indirect benefits including materials and labor benefits for the local economy.

Benefits of Historic Preservation

Benicia's historic districts tell the story of its past and are central to the community identity. They are also an important aspect of the city's commitment to sustainability, which is an overarching theme of the Benicia General Plan (1999).

Preserving and enhancing historic places such as the Downtown District promotes the three basic components of sustainability. As summarized in the diagram below, the three components are: (1) Economic, (2) Cultural/Social, and (3) Environmental. Each of the components is described in greater detail below.

ECONOMIC

This component of sustainability relates to the economic balance and health of the community. Historic buildings represent a substantial economic investment by previous generations. The economic benefits of protecting historic resources are well documented across the nation. These include higher property values, job creation in rehabilitation industries, and increased heritage tourism. Quality of life improvements associated with living in historic neighborhoods may also help communities recruit desirable businesses.

Historic Rehabilitation Projects

Historic rehabilitation projects generate both direct and indirect benefits. Direct benefits result from the actual purchases of labor and materials, while material manufacture and transport results in indirect benefits. Preservation projects are generally more labor intensive, with up to 70% of the total project budget being spent on labor, as opposed to 50% when compared to new construction. Expenditure on local labor and materials benefits the community's economy.



Figure 3. Preserving historic places promotes the three basic categories of sustainability.

CULTURAL

This component of sustainability relates to the maintenance of the community's cultural traditions. Preserving historic places and patterns promotes cultural sustainability by supporting everyday connections between residents and the cultural heritage of the community. Benicia's history and a description of many of its historic buildings can be found in its [Historic Context Statement](#) that is available at the Benicia City Hall, Planning Division.

Many properties in the Benicia Historic Conservation District provide direct links to the past. These links convey information about earlier ways of life that help build an ongoing sense of identity within the community. It is this sense of a connection with the past and participation within a broader tradition that engages residents, business owners and visitors to celebrate Benicia through civic participation and individual investment.

The historic development pattern of the district promotes a high quality of life and helps build a sense of community. Benicia developed as a small town centered around the First Street business district and waterfront industries. As a result, the neighborhoods around First Street are compact and walkable with vistas toward the Carquinez Strait. The physical arrangement of the downtown provides opportunities to meet and greet along the street and waterfront paths. Storefronts, plazas, sidewalks and other direct connections to the public spaces provide opportunities for community interaction.

ENVIRONMENTAL

This is the most often cited component of sustainability. It relates to maintenance of the natural environment and the systems that support human development.

Rehabilitation of historic resources is an important part of environmental sustainability and green building initiatives. It directly supports environmental sustainability through conservation of embodied energy, adaptability and other factors that keep historic buildings in use over long periods of time.

Embodied Energy

Embodied energy is the amount of energy used to create and maintain the original building and its components. Preserving a historic structure retains this embodied energy by preserving the energy and resources invested in its construction, and reduces the need for producing new construction materials, which require more energy to produce. Studies confirm that the loss of embodied energy by demolition takes three decades or more to recoup, even with the reduced operating energy costs in a replacement building.

Building Materials

Many of the historic building materials used in the district contribute to environmental sustainability through local sourcing and long life cycles. Buildings constructed with locally sourced material, such as wood and stucco, were



Figure 4. Creating a sense of a connection with the past and participation within a broader tradition engages residents, business owners and visitors.



Figure 5. Preserving a historic structure retains its embodied energy by preserving the energy and resources invested in its construction.



Figure 6. Many of the historic building materials used in the district contribute to environmental sustainability through local sourcing and long life cycles.

built for longevity and ongoing repair. The hard, “old growth” wood used for historic structures is durable and resistant to decay. Today, new structures utilize a significant percentage of manufactured materials. These materials are often less sustainable and require extraction of raw, non-renewable materials such as vinyl. High levels of energy are involved in production, and the new materials may also have an inherently short lifespan.

The sustainable nature of historic building materials is best illustrated by a window. Older windows were built with well seasoned wood from durable, weather resistant old growth forests. A historic window can be repaired by re-glazing as well as patching and splicing the wood elements. Many contemporary windows cannot be repaired and must be replaced entirely. Repairing, weather-stripping and insulating an original window is generally as energy efficient and much less expensive than replacement.

Construction Quality

As a rule, the quality of early construction and materials was higher than those used in many late 20th Century buildings. Lumber used in early Benicia came from mature trees, was properly seasoned and typically milled to “full dimensions,”

providing stronger framing and construction. The high quality of construction in earlier buildings is an asset that is difficult to replace.

Adaptability

The floor plans of many historic properties easily accommodate changing needs. They permit a variety of uses while retaining the overall historic character.

Landfill Impacts

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, building debris constitutes around a third of all waste generated in the country. The amount of waste can be reduced significantly if historic structures are retained rather than demolished.

How to Use This Document

DESIGN REVIEW TRACKS

The design guidelines chapters are grouped into “tracks” for purposes of design review. The tracks are shown in the chart on page 10, which also indicates what types of projects fit within each track and which chapters should be referenced for each project type.

Preservation Track

Projects involving a historic (“landmark” or “contributing”) property will be considered using the Preservation Track. Note that in some cases when a “non-contributor” is intended to be restored with the objective of obtaining historic designation, this track will also apply. Chapter 3, which focuses on rehabilitation of historic structures, will be used to review this track.

New Building Track

Projects that involve a new structure and work on most existing, non-contributing buildings will be reviewed using this track. Chapter 4, which focuses on new construction and non-contributing buildings, will be used to review this track.

Other Improvements Track

Projects involving site work, signs and a variety of other specialized project types are reviewed in the “Other Improvements Track.” For many of these, the focus is on Chapter 2, which addresses all projects. Signs are to be reviewed using Chapter 6.

Note that some projects will include a combination of improvements that engage more than one of the tracks. Use the steps described on the following pages and the chart on page 10 to determine which track applies to a specific project.



Figure 8. Contributing properties to the Downtown District will follow the Preservation Track.



Figure 7. Projects involving a historic landmark property will be reviewed using the Preservation Track.



Figure 9. New construction will be reviewed using the New Building Track.

Which Chapters Apply?

Use this chart to determine which chapters of the design guidelines apply to a proposed improvement project. Some projects will include work in more than one track: in this case a combination of chapters will apply.

PROJECT TRACK		CHAPTER TO USE:					
		1. Introduction	2. General Design Guidelines for All Projects	3. Design Guidelines for Structures	4. Guidelines for New Construction and Non-Contributing Structures	5. Guidelines for Environmental Sustainability	6. Sign Design Guidelines for All Projects
Preservation Track <i>Historic Property: Contributing or Landmark</i>	Rehabilitation of a Historic Property	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Addition to a Historic Property	✓	✓	✓		✓	
New Building Track	Improve a Non-contributing building	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Construction of a new building	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Other Improvements Track	New Site Work, Mechanical, Service, Signs, etc.	✓	✓	✓ +	✓	✓	

(+) Guidelines could apply to some projects in this category.

WHICH DESIGN REVIEW TRACK SHOULD MY PROJECT FOLLOW?

The guidelines are organized into groups of chapters that represent “tracks” for different types of improvements. This chart defines the track that will apply to a specific proposal.

Step 1: Which Zoning District?

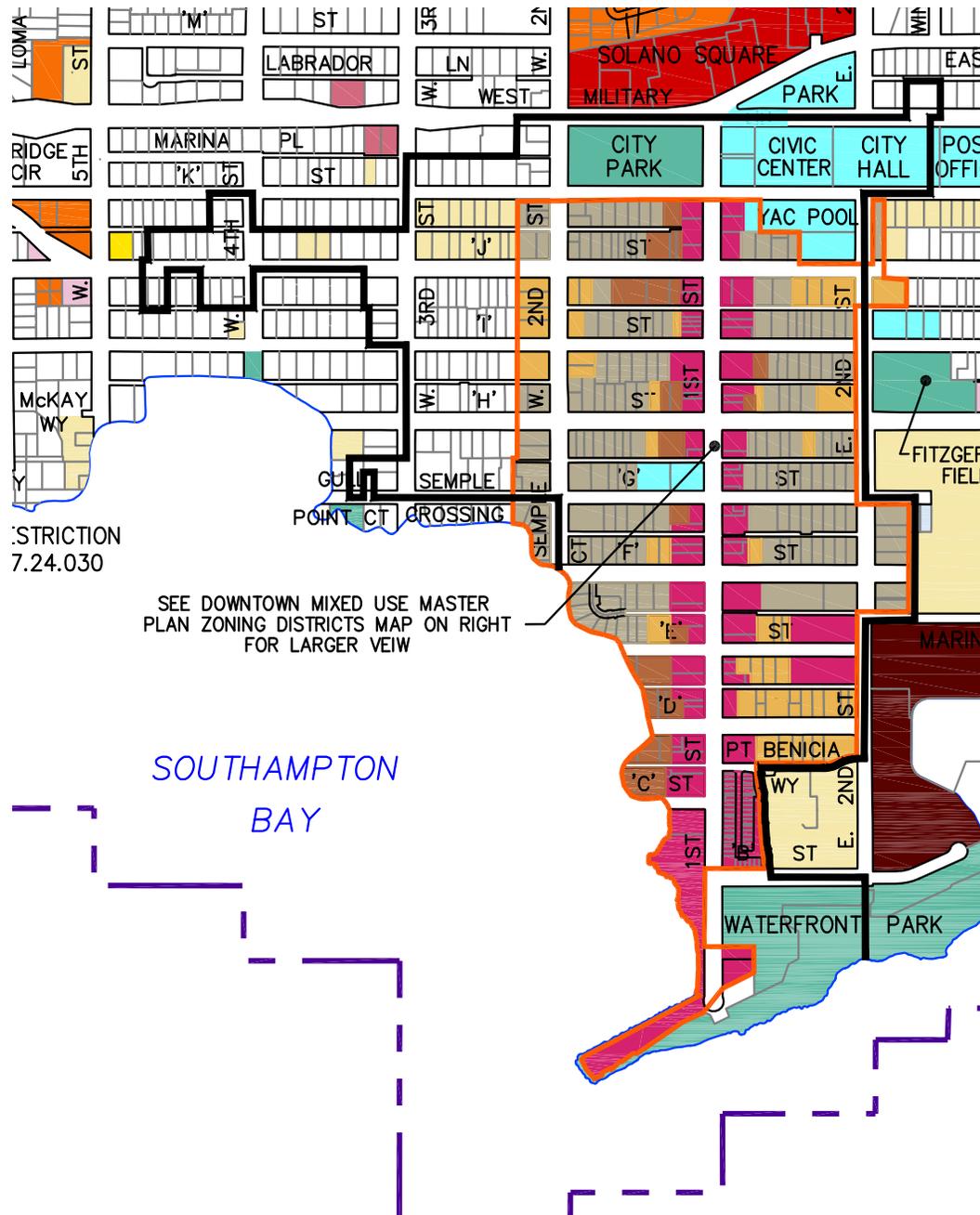
The underlying zoning defines standards for building heights, setbacks and lot coverage. For this, the user should refer to the Benicia Municipal Code and Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan Form-Based Code. The Zoning requirements are objective and mandatory, while the design guidelines are typically qualitative criteria that supplement existing standards. In the Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan Area, the design guidelines may supersede the Form-Based Code where in conflict and where appropriate to implement the historic preservation objectives of the district.

Step 2: What Type of Improvement?

Work on an existing building may be evaluated as a Landmark building, Contributor, or Non-contributor. The designations of historic significance are contained within the Historic Survey, which is available in the City of Benicia Community Development Department and on the Benicia website.

For projects that involve a new building, chapters related to new construction will apply. Other projects including signs, site improvements and energy efficiency are treated separately.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION



RESTRICTION
7.24.030

SEE DOWNTOWN MIXED USE MASTER
PLAN ZONING DISTRICTS MAP ON RIGHT
FOR LARGER VIEW

SOUTHAMPTON
BAY

ZONING MAP LEGEND:

- OS OPEN SPACE
- PS PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- RS SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL • 0 – 7 DU/
- RM MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL • 8 – 14 D
- RH HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL • 15 – 21 DU/
- PD PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
- CC COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
- CO OFFICE COMMERCIAL
- CG GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- CW WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
- IL LIMITED INDUSTRIAL
- IG GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
- IW WATER RELATED INDUSTRIAL
- IP INDUSTRIAL PARK

DMUMP MAP LEGEND:

- TOWN CORE
- TOWN CORE-OPEN
- NEIGHBORHOOD GENERAL
- NEIGHBORHOOD GENERAL-OPEN

GENERAL LEGEND:

- BENICIA CITY LIMITS BOUNDARY
- HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT
- LOT / PROPERTY LINE
- STREET / ROAD / HIGHWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
- SHORE LINE / EDGE OF WATER BODY
- DMUMP BOUNDARY

Step 3: What Type of Existing Building?

All existing structures in the Downtown District are classified with respect to their historic significance, using criteria established by the National Park Service. A historic survey inventory serves as the starting point for determining historic significance. However, in some cases, conditions may have changed or new information is now available that would influence a determination of significance. The City will work with the property owner to confirm the status of historic significance. Three classifications are used:



Landmark Structure

A “landmark” is a building that is determined to be historically significant. Designations of historic significance are based upon the period between 1847-1940, which is defined as the historic district’s “period of significance.” A landmark will possess sufficient integrity to convey its history, or is capable of yielding important information about that period, and is a unique resource to the community. They are significant in national and/or local history, architecture, engineering and culture. For all landmark properties, the Preservation Track shall apply. The design guidelines will be applied rigorously.



Contributing Property

A “contributing property” is one determined to be historically significant. Designations of historic significance are based upon the period between 1847-1940, which is defined as the historic district’s “period of significance.” A contributor will possess sufficient integrity to convey its history, or is capable of yielding important information about that period.

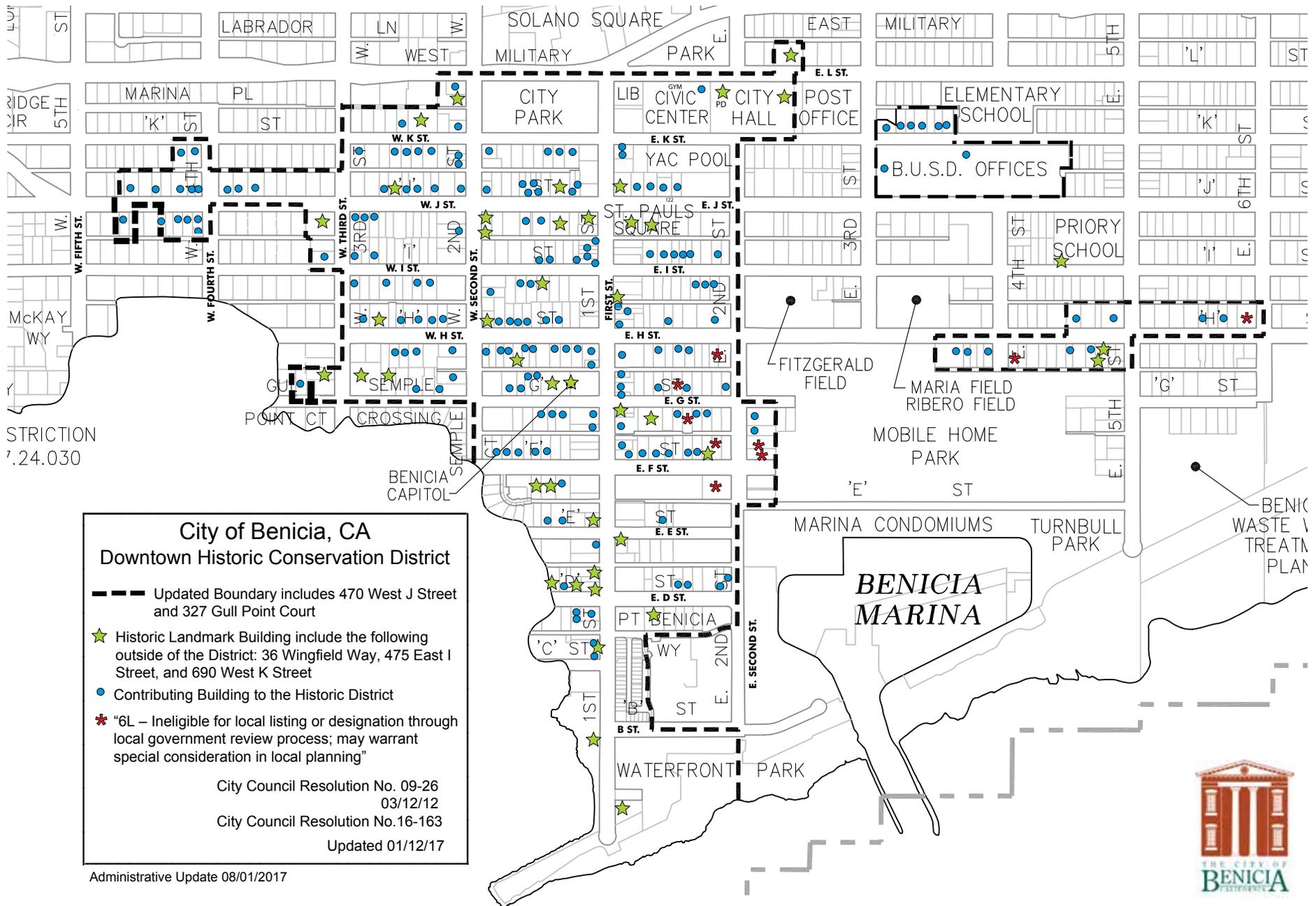
Note that some designated historic properties may have been altered from their original designs. These alterations may include window replacement, cornice removal, a porch enclosure or covering of a building’s original materials. Nonetheless, these altered properties may retain sufficient building fabric to be considered contributors. For all contributing properties, the Preservation Track shall apply. Some flexibility may be allowed in the application of the design guidelines.



Non-Contributing Property

The classification of “non-contributing” applies to those lacking historic significance. This includes a range of properties. Some are of more recent construction (those less than 50 years old.) Others are older (more than 50 years) but have been so substantially altered that they no longer retain their integrity. The New Construction Track applies to these properties, except as noted below.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION



Design Guidelines Format

The design guidelines are presented in a standardized format as illustrated below.

A → NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDITIONS

B → This section provides design guidelines for designing compatible additions to historic buildings. An addition should be compatible with the primary structure and not detract from one's ability to interpret its historic character. Guidelines regarding new construction in Chapter 4 also apply to new additions.

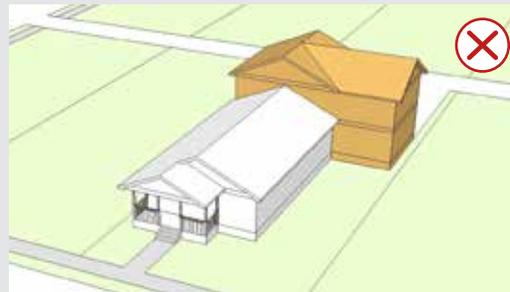
C → 2.1 Place an addition at the rear of a building or set it back from the front to minimize the visual impact on the historic building.

- › If a rear addition is not feasible, an addition on the secondary façade is acceptable when it is designed to complement the original building without overpowering it.
- D** → › Where an addition is to be placed on a secondary façade, set it back from the primary façade a minimum of 15' and design it to be lower in height than the historic building.

E →



Appropriate: Rear addition with a connector between the addition and the historic building.



Inappropriate: Two-story addition at the rear of historic building does not maintain height or form of original building.

Key

A Design Topic Heading

B Intent Statement: This explains the desired outcome for the specific design element and provides a basis for the design guidelines that follow.

C Design Guideline: This describes a desired outcome related to the intent statement.

D Additional Information: This provides a bullet list of examples of how, or how not to, comply with the standard.

E Illustration(s): These provide photos and/or diagrams to illustrate related conditions or possible approaches. They may illustrate permitted or prohibited solutions as described at right.

Sidebars

These provide additional information that will be helpful in understanding the standard. In some cases, a sidebar includes links that direct the user to additional material; this may be technical information about a rehabilitation procedure or other helpful information.

Permitted and Prohibited Solutions

In many cases, images and diagrams in the historic preservation standards are marked to indicate whether they represent permitted or prohibited solutions



A check mark indicates permitted solutions.



An X mark indicates solutions that are prohibited.

Planning a Preservation Project

Preservation projects may include a range of activities, such as maintenance of existing historic elements, repair of deteriorated materials, replacement of missing features and construction of new additions. When planning a preservation project, it is important to determine historic significance, assess integrity and understand how the building is going to be used prior to outlining an appropriate treatment strategy that will inform the overall project scope. This section summarizes important steps and approaches to consider when planning a preservation project.

For more information see:

The California Office of Historic Preservation provides the DPR 523 series of forms which are used for recording and evaluating resources and for nominating properties as California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and to the California Register of Historical Resources. To view the forms and to learn how to prepare a form, visit:

http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28351

The Benicia Historical Museum also provides important historical information online and at their on-site museum. To learn more online, visit:

<http://beniciahistoricalmuseum.org/virtual-exhibits/>

DETERMINE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

What makes a property historically significant? In general, properties must be at least 50 years old before they can be evaluated for potential historic significance, although exceptions do exist when a more recent property clearly has historical value. A property may be significant for one or more of the following reasons:

- › Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- › Association with the lives of significant persons in our past
- › Distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- › A structure that yields or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory
- › A structure, property, object, site, or area with sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration
- › An established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community.

ASSESS INTEGRITY

In addition to being historically significant, a property also must have integrity in that a sufficient percentage of the structure must date from the period of significance. The majority of the building's structural system and materials should date from the period of significance and its character-defining features also should remain intact. These may include architectural details such as storefronts, cornices, moldings and upper-story windows on commercial buildings, and dormers, porches, ornamental brackets and moldings on residential buildings. The overall building form and materials should also be intact. These elements allow a building to be recognized as a product of its own time. It may be necessary to research primary materials, such as historic photographs or drawings, or to engage a historic preservation architect in assessing the integrity of a historic structure.

Accepted Treatments for Historic Resources

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties identify four distinct approaches to the treatment of historic properties-preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. Please refer to web site for the most current description of these treatments (<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>). The following list describes permitted treatments for historic resources that may be considered when planning a preservation project. Much of the language addresses buildings; however, sites, objects and structures are also relevant.

Preservation

“Preservation” is the act of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building. The foundation of preservation is proper maintenance, such as painting or cleaning. Work focuses on keeping a property in good working condition.

Restoration

“Restoration” is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features and character of a property as it appeared in a particular time period. Features from later periods must be removed for an accurate restoration and to use the Restoration Treatment. This may apply to an entire building, or to restoring a particular missing feature.

Reconstruction

“Reconstruction” is the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific time and in its historic location. This has limited application, in terms of an entire building, but may apply to a missing feature on a building. Reconstruction can only be initiated when physical evidence of the feature is available. This may include photographs and/or historic prints of the building. The reconstruction must be accurate in its replication. Note, if a building is substantially reconstructed, it may lose its integrity.

Rehabilitation

“Rehabilitation” is the process of returning a property to a state that makes a contemporary use possible while still preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values. Rehabilitation may include a change in use of the building or the construction of an addition. This term is the broadest of the permitted treatments and applies to most work on historic properties.

Combining Treatments

For many projects a “rehabilitation” approach will be the overall strategy, because this term reflects the broadest, most flexible of the approaches. Within that, however, there may be a combination of treatments used as they relate to specific building components. For example, a surviving cornice may be preserved, a storefront base that has been altered may be restored, and a missing kickplate may be reconstructed.

Before & After Images of Historic Structures in Benicia

Before: 242 West H Street (1977)



After: 242 West H Street (2004)



Before: 117 West I Street (1977)



After: 117 West I Street (2004)



Before: 710 1st St. (1977)



After: 710 1st St. (2004)



Figure 10. The before and after images on page 18 and 19 illustrate the successes of Benicia's preservation program to date. Many of Benicia's historic buildings have been appropriately rehabilitated. Future rehabilitation opportunities still exist throughout the community. The Majestic Theater is one example of a future rehabilitation project that could occur.

Before: 1st St. looking toward I St. (1910)



Before: 140 West J Street (1920)



Before: 415 1st St. (1977)



After: 1st St. looking toward I St. (2018)



After: 140 West J Street (2018)



After: 415 1st St. (2018)



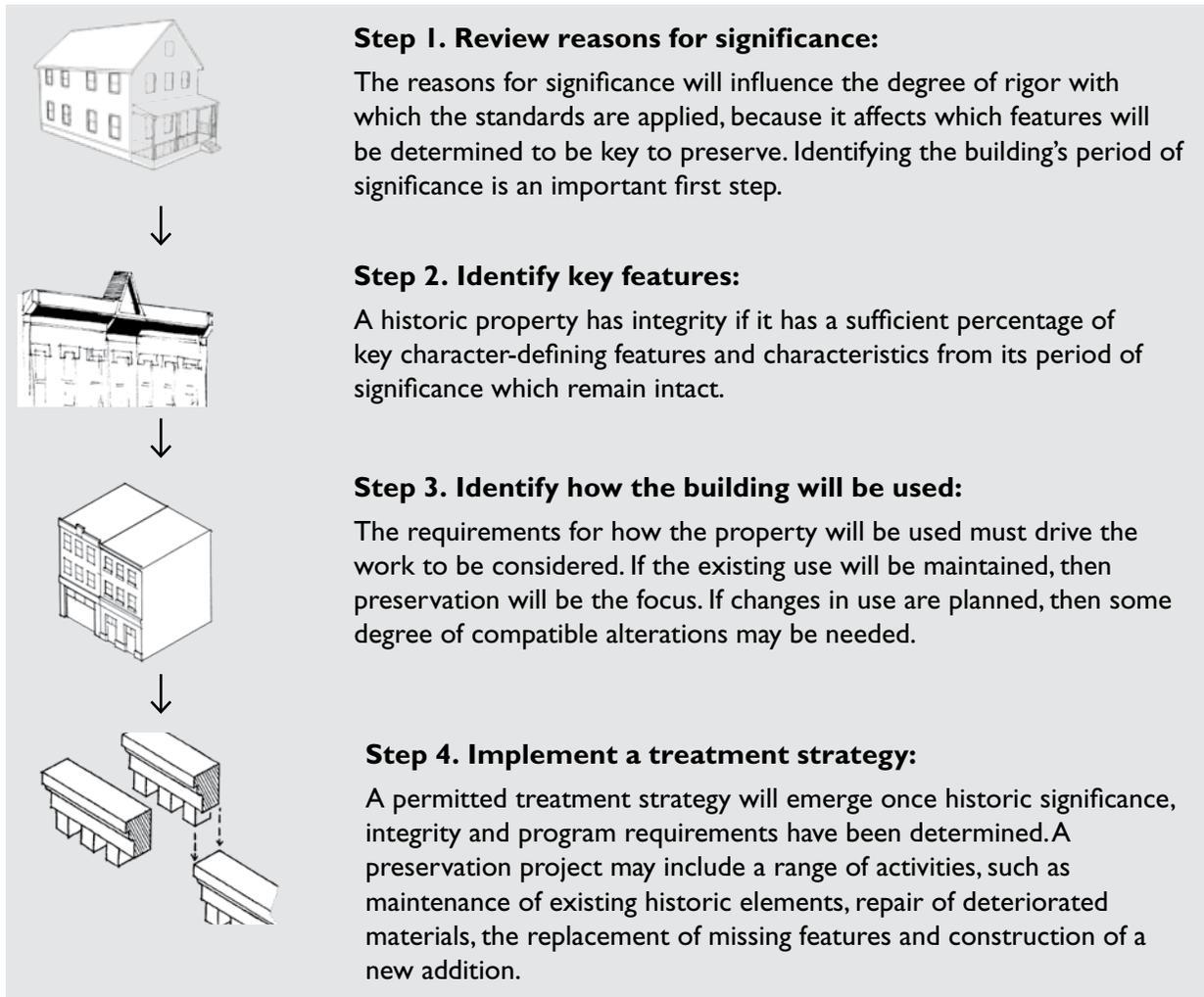
Steps to Consider for a Successful Preservation Project

A successful preservation project must consider the significance of the historic resources, its key features and the project's program requirements. The tables and diagrams presented here and on the following pages provide overall guidance for planning a preservation project.

Follow the steps below when planning a preservation project.

For more information see:

For assistance in determining character-defining features for a specific architectural style, refer to "A Field Guide to American Houses," by Virginia Savage McAlester.



Preferred Sequence of Actions

Selecting an appropriate treatment for a character-defining feature is important. The method that requires the least intervention is always preferred. By following this tenet, the highest degree of integrity will be maintained. The following treatment options appear in order of preference.

When making a selection, follow this sequence:

Step 1. Preserve:

If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it as such.



Step 2. Repair:

If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it accurately to its historic condition, based on historic evidence.



Step 3. Replace:

If it is not feasible to repair the feature, then replace it in kind, (e.g., materials, detail, finish). Replace only that portion which is beyond repair.



Step 4. Reconstruct:

If the feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from appropriate evidence. If a portion of a feature is missing, it can also be reconstructed.



Step 5. Compatible Alterations:

If a new feature (one that did not exist previously) or an addition is necessary, design it in such a way as to minimize the impact on historic features. It is also important to distinguish a new feature on a historic building from the historic features, in subtle ways.

Which Areas are the Most Sensitive to Preserve?

For most historic resources in the Downtown District, the front wall (“primary façade”) is the most important to preserve intact; alterations to a front wall are rarely permitted. Many side walls (“secondary wall”) are also important to preserve where they are highly visible from the street. By contrast, portions of a side wall that is not visible or minimally visible may be less sensitive to change. The rear wall is sometimes the least important (except for free-standing landmarks, those along waterfronts or certain institutional buildings), and alterations can occur more easily without causing negative effects to the historic significance of the property.

- A** **Location A: Primary Façade**
 Preservation and repair of features in place is the priority. This is especially important at the street level and in locations where the feature is highly visible.
- B** **Location B: Secondary Wall, Which is Highly Visible**
 Preservation is preferred, especially on Historic Landmark buildings. Some flexibility in treatment may be considered with a compatible replacement or alteration. Some flexibility to the alteration of features on historic institutional structures may be permitted where maintenance and repairs take priority.
- C** **Location C: Secondary Wall, Which Is Not Highly Visible**
 Preservation is still preferred; however, a compatible replacement or alteration may be acceptable when it is not visible to the public. More flexibility in treatment may be considered with a compatible replacement or alteration. Some flexibility to the alteration of features on historic institutional structures may be permitted where maintenance and repairs take priority.
- D** **Location D: Highly Visible Rear Wall**
 This applies to many cultural buildings of historic significance, such as civic buildings, waterfront areas and other landmarks that are viewed “in the round” or border a public space such as a park. Preservation and repair in place is the priority. Some flexibility to the alteration of features on historic institutional structures is permitted where maintenance and repairs take priority.
- E** **Location E: Rear Wall That Is Not Highly Visible**
 A compatible replacement or alteration may be acceptable when it is not visible to the public. A higher level of flexibility in treatment may be considered. Some flexibility to the alteration of features on historic institutional structures is permitted where maintenance and repairs take priority.

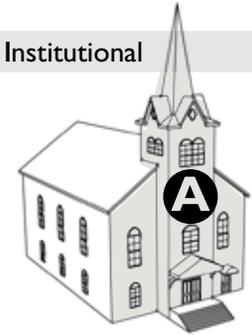
Primary Façade: Residential



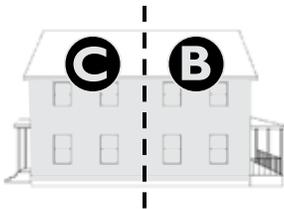
Primary Façade: Commercial



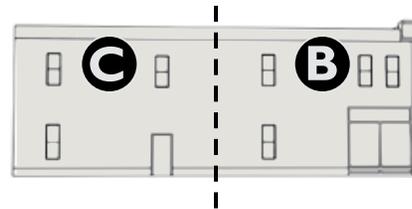
Primary Façade: Institutional



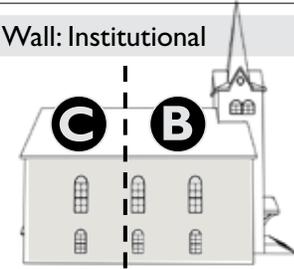
Secondary Wall: Residential



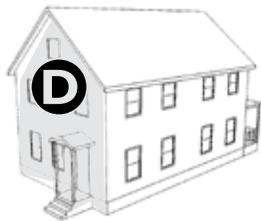
Secondary Wall: Commercial



Secondary Wall: Institutional



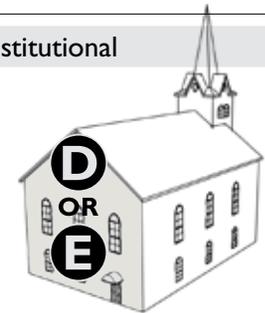
Rear Wall: Residential



Rear Wall: Commercial



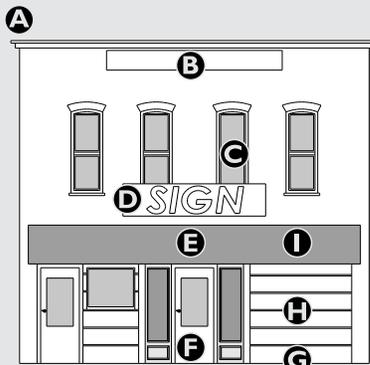
Rear Wall: Institutional



Developing an Improvement Strategy

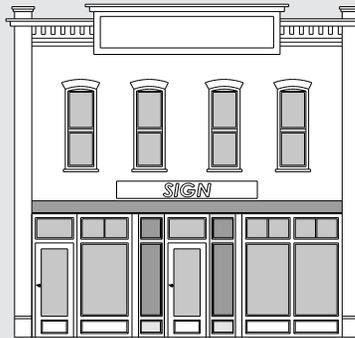
The guidelines discuss a range of improvement options, including reconstruction and replacement of features in various ways. When applied to a building that is already altered, which would be the best approach? This diagram outlines the approaches to consider in making that decision.

Altered Historic Commercial Façade



- A** Pilasters removed
- B** Ornamental cornice removed
- C** Upper story windows intact
- D** Sign obscures window details
- E** Molding and transom
- F** Original door missing
- G** Bulkhead missing
- H** Display windows altered
- I** Clerestory window covered

Approach I: Accurate Restoration



When should I use this treatment?

- › The building is highly significant
- › There is good historical information about the design
- › The needed materials and craftsmen are available
- › The context has many intact historic buildings
- › To receive the most financial assistance

Approach II: Rehabilitation (Simplified Historic Interpretation)



When should I use this treatment?

- › The building is part of the fabric of the district
- › There is less information available about the historic design
- › A phased project is planned
- › To receive some financial assistance

Approach III: Rehabilitation (Contemporary Interpretation)



When should I use this treatment?

- › There is substantial alteration, making other options difficult
- › There is less information about the historic design
- › The context (the block lacks a substantial number of historic structures that retain integrity) has more variety
- › Financial assistance is not a priority



Figure 11. An historic building prior to its remodel.



Figure 12. Interim improvements to the building included removing the canopy, providing a new sign and painting the stucco covering.



Figure 13. A later rehabilitation effort included removing the stucco, reconstructing the cornice and installing a new storefront system.

Phasing a Preservation Project

In some cases, a property owner may need or wish to make interim improvements, rather than take on a complete rehabilitation of a historic property. This work should be planned such that it establishes a foundation for future improvements that will further assure continued use of the property and retain its historic significance. For example, a simplified cornice element may be installed on a commercial storefront, in lieu of reconstructing the original design, with the intent that an accurate reconstruction would occur later.

2.1 Plan interim improvements to retain opportunities for future rehabilitation work that will enhance the integrity of a historic property.

- › Preserve key character-defining features while making interim improvements.
- › Avoid interim improvements that would preclude opportunities for more extensive rehabilitation in the future.

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GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR ALL PROJECTS

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This chapter provides site and building design guidelines for all projects in the Downtown District. It covers a variety of topics that may arise in rehabilitation projects, new building designs and site improvements including the placement of a building, designing service areas and outdoor areas.

Site Design Guidelines

This section provides site design guidelines for historic properties and new construction projects in the Downtown District. Site planning involves any work not directly related to a primary or secondary structure on a site. Important site considerations include view corridors, building location, vehicular considerations, landscape, outdoor areas and service areas, for example.

VIEWS AND VIEW CORRIDORS

Views from public rights-of-way to natural features should be maintained and considered when locating a new building. The location of a building on a site, in addition to its scale, height and massing, can impact views from adjacent public spaces, including streets, sidewalks, intersections, trails and parks. Development projects should preserve noteworthy views, such as views down the many streets that terminate at the water. The view corridor down First Street is a prime example of an important view to preserve. In addition, the vista points along the water's edge should also be preserved. Refer to Figure 1 for key view corridors, vista points and open spaces to maintain.

2.1 Preserve views from the public way to natural features and vista points.

- › Do not block a view corridor or vista point.

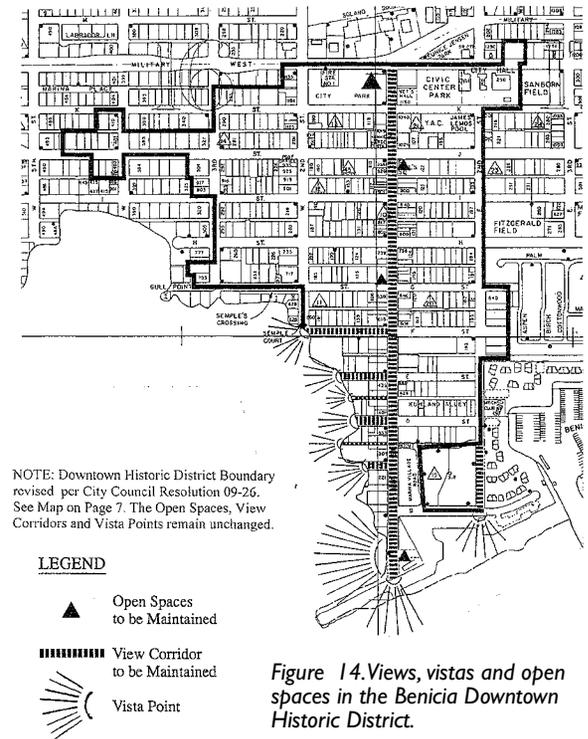


Figure 14. Views, vistas and open spaces in the Benicia Downtown Historic District.



Figure 15. Maintain historic open spaces, such as City Park (top photo) and the Benicia Capitol State Historic Park (bottom photo).

PARKS

Parks are key features of the district, including the Capital grounds, St. Paul's Square, City Park and much of the Benicia waterfront. Many of these spaces have strong historical associations. Improvements to parks and trails should contribute to the District and should be preserved. Future improvements to bicycle and pedestrian connections to and through the historic district will support the commercial and public nature of Benicia's historic downtown, and improve access to the Carquinez Strait.

2.2 Maintain historic open spaces.

- › Refer to Figure 1 for key open spaces that should be maintained.

2.3 Design improvements to parks to preserve the character of the space and the views to and from the space.

LOT SPLITS AND PARCEL ORIENTATION

While the historic district is generally “built out” with little vacant land, property owners of oversized lots may seek to split the lot where permitted by the underlying zoning. In doing so, a parcel should orient in the direction that is consistent with the predominant block pattern where it is located. Parcels should also be split into rectangles rather than in a jogging fashion.

2.4 When splitting a lot at the end of a block, orient the resulting parcels to match the predominant orientation of the lots on the end of the block.

2.5 When splitting a lot on the interior of a block, orient each of the resulting parcels to the primary street.

2.6 When splitting a lot, divide it into rectangles rather than jogging the parcel line.

2.7 When evaluating a lot split, consider the future visual impacts of building bulk and placement on adjoining historic structures and prevailing development patterns.

TOPOGRAPHY

Site work should be planned to protect the existing topography on First Street and the residential neighborhoods. It should also respect any archaeological resources located in the District. If archaeological resources are discovered while conducting work to a project site, work should be stopped and the California Office of Historic Preservation should be contacted. This section is provided to address residential and commercial rehabilitation and infill projects and doesn't apply to the Waterfront Park Plan improvements. This section also provides information about how to treat and respect archaeological resources.

2.8 Maintain historic topographic features of a site.

- › Cut and fill grading techniques are to be avoided.
- › Minor changes in grade that will improve site drainage or that will direct moisture away from a structure are appropriate.
- › Minor changes in grade for the purpose of site or landscape improvements or restoration are appropriate.
- › Avoid a change in grade that would alter the visual relationship of historic buildings to the site.
- › Avoid a change in grade that would have an adverse effect on the site's structures or neighboring structures through the redirection of moisture or stormwater.

2.9 Design a new building foundation to conform to the existing topography.

- › Divide large grade changes into a series of benches or terraces, when necessary. Step the foundation of a building to follow site contours, when feasible.
- › Where stepping a foundation is not possible, disguise the cut with building placement and/or building walls, and provide a landscape buffer system at the top of the cut.

2.10 Avoid negative impacts to archaeological resources.

2.11 Where impacts cannot be avoided, mitigate them, using best practices.

2.12 If unexpected archaeological resources are encountered during site work, cease work and notify Benicia Planning staff.



Figure 16. Maintain historic topographic features of a site.



Figure 17. Locate a parking area at the rear or to the interior of the block along First Street.



Figure 18. Locate a new parking area to the side or the rear of a residential building. It should be located off an alley where one is present.

SURFACE PARKING AND ACCESS

The visual impact of surface parking and access to parking shall be minimized. On-site parking must be subordinate to other uses.

2.13 Minimize the visual impact of surface parking.

- › Locating a surface parking area along First Street is prohibited.
- › Locate a parking area at the rear or to the interior of the block along First Street. This is especially important on corner properties. Corner properties are generally more visible than interior lots, serve as landmarks and provide a sense of enclosure to an intersection.
- › Locate a new parking area to the side or the rear of a residential building. It should be located off an alley where one is present. If it is located to the side it shall be located behind the front façade and not in the front yard.

2.14 Design vehicular access to a surface parking area to occur from an alley or secondary street.

- › Where an alley is present, vehicular access should be provided from the alley. New driveway curb cuts should not be introduced on the street frontage.
- › Vehicular access from a public street may be considered where primary parking lot access from an alley would result in disproportionate vehicular impacts to adjoining single family uses.

2.15 Design vehicular access to commercial parking areas to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.

- › Vehicular access from properties along First Street is prohibited.
- › In a commercial setting, limit the number of vehicular access points on a block, where possible.
- › The width of a vehicular access point should not exceed the standard established by zoning, as oversized driveways may result in increased traffic hazards.

2.16 Provide a visual buffer around surface parking lots.

- › A surface parking lot that adjoins residential areas or public streets should be screened on all sides by a minimum three foot hedge, fence or low wall.
- › Landscape materials should be primarily evergreen to provide year-round screening.
- › Materials for fences or low walls must be compatible with those of nearby buildings.

Outdoor Areas

Outdoor areas occur as accents along the street in several conditions: as a front yard in a residential setting, and as an outdoor dining area or as a small plaza in a commercial setting. The character and setting of the site or a historic building will influence the form, location or appropriateness of such a space. These shall be integrated with the design of the site and the building. Where feasible, outdoor areas should be anticipated in the design of new construction or rehabilitation and provide a transition between the public and private realm.

SMALL PLAZAS AND COURTYARDS IN COMMERCIAL SETTINGS

Small plazas and courtyards may be considered in commercial settings and for institutional buildings. However, within the heart of First Street, where the greatest concentration of storefronts align, creating numerous gaps in the street wall is discouraged.

2.17 Design a small plaza or courtyard to include features to promote and enhance its use.

- › The space should be directly accessible to the public way.
- › The space must have at least one of the following:
 - Street furniture or seating areas
 - Public art
 - Historical/interpretive marker
 - Trees/landscaping

2.18 Incorporate site features in outdoor spaces that are in keeping with the historic character of institutional properties.

- › Signage and similar improvements should be subordinate to the setting and prominence of the landmark.
- › New site features should not interrupt a historic landscape plan.



Figure 19. Design a small plaza or courtyard to include features to promote and enhance its use.



Figure 20. Design a small plaza to be directly accessible from the public way.



Figure 21. The combination of a small patio and lawn is appropriate for an adaptive reuse project in a commercial area.

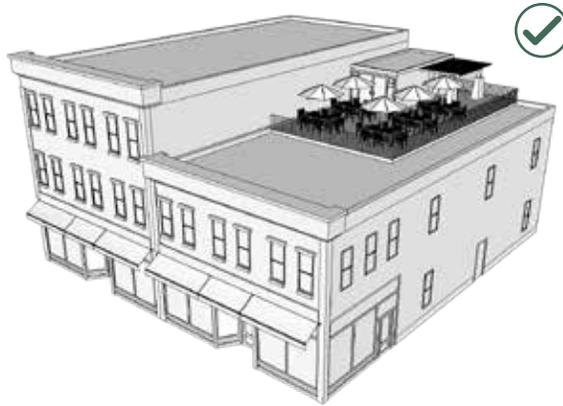


Figure 22. Set back a rooftop deck from the building façade so that it is not visible from the street.



Figure 23. Dining areas located to the side of a commercial building along First Street should be flush with the sidewalk.



Figure 24. Where a dining area is located to the side of the building, is set back from the front façade and is raised greater than 2' above the sidewalk, it should be open to the sky.

TERRACES, PATIOS AND DECK SPACE IN COMMERCIAL SETTINGS

Improvements that provide areas for active outdoor use (i.e., dining) are welcomed amenities, but they must be in character with the commercial setting. They should be visually subordinate to the individual property as well as the street in general, and should avoid negative impacts on adjoining properties. There are typically three locations: flush with the sidewalk, above the sidewalk (raised) and rooftop.

2.19 Locate and design an outdoor dining area to minimize negative impacts on the streetscape and the historic context.

- › A dining area should be located to the side or rear of a building. See the city for other potential locations.
- › Dining areas located to the side of a commercial building along First Street should be flush with the sidewalk,
- › Where a dining area is located to the side of the building and is raised greater than 2' above the sidewalk, it should be set back a minimum of 15' from the front façade of the building. This is not appropriate for buildings along First Street.
- › Set back a rooftop deck from the building façade so that it is not visible from the street.
- › An outdoor dining area should be open to the sky.

FRONT AND SIDE YARDS IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

In many of the residential areas of the Downtown District, a distinct historic residential character is defined by landscaped front and side yard setbacks. Where these spaces exist, maintain this tradition.

- › Maintain front and side yard open space in a residential setting.
- › Plantings and other landscape features should remain prominent at the street front in this setting.
- › Permitting damage or deterioration of existing features through adequate protection of maintenance is inappropriate.



Figure 25. Plantings and other landscape features should remain prominent at the street front in this setting.

FENCES, SITE WALLS, RETAINING WALLS AND HITCHING POSTS

Retaining walls, fences and site walls are found throughout the Downtown District, and are often associated with residential contexts. Cast in place concrete retaining walls are typical features on some blocks in the historic district where the primary structures are elevated from the street. Site walls that define a property or act as the base of a fence are also traditional residential features. Historic site and retaining walls are character-defining features that help establish a sense of visual continuity along the block, and should be preserved. Where new retaining or site walls are installed, they should complement the traditional walls in the District and consider the building design.

Front yard fences also occur in some areas. Traditionally, these fences were relatively low in height and had a “transparent” character that allowed views into yards, providing interest to pedestrians. Where they already exist, traditional fences should be maintained on a site. A new or replacement front yard fence should be similar in character with those used traditionally in the neighborhood. In addition, fences should relate in character to the principal structure on the lot and to the context.

A few historic hitching posts are also found within the district. They contribute to the historic integrity of the property and should be preserved.

2.20 Preserve original fences, retaining walls and hitching posts.

- › Maintain any distinctive details and protective finishes.
- › When necessary, use a replacement material that matches the original in color, texture, size and finish.
- › Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair.
- › If repointing is necessary, use a mortar mix that is similar to that used historically and apply it in a joint design that matches the original.
- › Do not paint a masonry wall, including cast in place concrete retaining walls.
- › Do not increase the height of a retaining wall or fence.
- › Avoid damaging or removing historic materials.
- › Where a consistent type of retaining wall extends across multiple frontages along a block, retain a consistent alignment, height and general appearance for any new or replacement sections.



Figure 26. Preserve original fences, retaining walls and hitching posts.



Figure 27. Contemporary interpretations of a traditional fence should be compatible with the historic context.



Figure 28. Design a new fence in the front yard to be compatible with the character of the historic property.

2.21 Design a new fence in the front yard to be compatible with the character of the historic property.

- › Design a fence along a front or corner side property line to be of a simple open picket, wrought iron or similar “transparent” style not exceeding three (3) feet in height.
- › Contemporary interpretations of a traditional fence should be compatible with the historic context.
- › The finished side of a fence shall face the public way.
- › Do not use chain link, horizontal board, split rails, plastic, concrete block or other solid masonry.
- › Note that using no fencing at all in the front yard in a residential setting is often the most appropriate approach.

2.22 Minimize the visual impacts of a privacy fence.

- › Locate a privacy fence on minimally visible side and rear property lines only. It is inappropriate to locate a privacy fence in the front yard.
- › Privacy fences should be set back significantly from the front facade.
- › Consider removing inappropriate chain link or privacy fences when visible from the street.
- › Planting of windbreaks or hedgerows to function as a privacy “fence” in front may be considered, where adequate historic documentation exists.
- › Privacy fences and hedgerows should not exceed six (6) feet in height.

2.23 Design a new site or retaining wall to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing walls in the district.

- › Design a wall to be similar in scale and materials to that seen historically.
- › When building a solid wall, use a finish and material that is similar in texture, mass and durability to historic walls in the neighborhood.
- › Construct a new retaining wall of dressed stone, field stone, or textured or split faced concrete block or poured concrete designed to resemble stone.
- › Do not use railroad ties, rough-cut concrete block or standard concrete block.
- › Plain or rough textured poured concrete walls higher than 12 inches or plain cinder block masonry unit walls are inappropriate.

SITE LIGHTING

Light spill onto adjacent properties and into the night sky should be minimized. The light level at the property line is a key design consideration. This is affected by the number of fixtures, their mounting height and the intensity of light emitted per fixture. It is also affected by the screening and design of the fixture.

2.24 Use shielded and focused light sources to prevent glare.

- › Incorporate cut-off shields on light fixtures to direct light downward.
- › Commercial building lights should be downward directed and shielded. Light should not be permitted to spill onto the adjacent right of way or emit glare into upstairs residential units. Light towers, search lights, and similar types of temporary or permanent fixtures are discouraged.

2.25 Provide lighting for a pedestrian way that is appropriately scaled to walking.

- › Mount lights for pedestrian ways on short poles or consider using light posts (bollards).

2.26 Light fixtures should be in character with the setting.

- › Fixtures should be compatible with architectural and site design elements.
- › Freestanding light poles are discouraged.



Figure 29. Provide lighting for a pedestrian way that is appropriately scaled to walking.

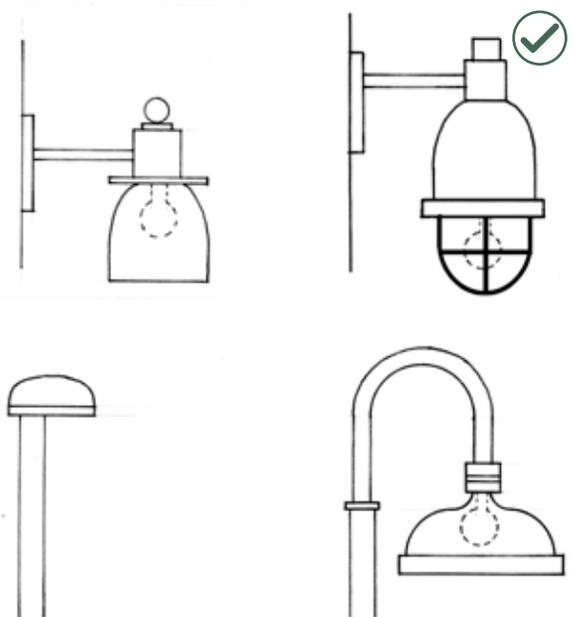


Figure 30. Light fixtures should be in character with the setting.



Figure 31. Use lighting to accent building entrances and signs.

BUILDING LIGHTING

The character and level of lighting that is used on a building is of special concern. Traditionally, exterior lights were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances, and first floor details. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight, were relatively low intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices. Although new lamp types may be considered, the overall effect of modest, focused, building light should be continued.

When installing architectural lighting on a historic building, use existing documentation as a basis for the new design. If no documentation exists, use a compatible light fixture. Building lighting should be installed in a manner so as not to damage the historic fabric of the building and should be reversible.

2.27 Use lighting to accent building entrances and signs.



Figure 32. Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light.

2.28 Minimize the visual impacts of architectural lighting.

- › Use exterior light sources with a low level of luminescence.
- › Use white lights that cast a similar color to daylight.
- › Use lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.
- › Avoid “uplighting” a building facade or outlining the frame or roof of a building.
- › Wall fixtures should be mounted on the first floor, approximately eight (8) feet above grade.

2.29 Use shielded and focused light sources to prevent glare.

- › Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light. Wall pack and flood lighting that emits light in all directions is discouraged.
- › Shield lighting associated with service areas, parking lots and parking structures. Lenses should be recessed within the fixture; sag, convex and drop lenses are discouraged.
- › Appropriate building lighting includes indirect concealed lighting appropriate to the architectural character and function of the building
- › Do not use high intensity light sources or cast light directly upward.
- › Avoid excessive light spill from buildings.

STREET TREES

In many parts of the Downtown District, street trees in the public right-of-way are a defining feature of a streetscape. Existing street trees should be maintained and not removed. Refer to Chapter 12.24 of the Benicia Municipal Code for more details about street trees and heritage trees.

2.30 Maintain street trees in the public right-of-way.

- › Do not damage or remove existing street trees.



Figure 33. In many parts of the Downtown District, street trees in the public right-of-way are a defining feature of a streetscape.



Figure 34. Maintain street trees in the public right-of-way.



Figure 35. Locate a service entrance, waste disposal area or other similar use away from street frontages and shoreline paths.



Figure 36. Screen a service area with a wall, fence or planting.

SERVICE AREAS

Service areas should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building.

2.31 Minimize the visual impact of a service area.

- › Screen a service area with a wall, fence or planting.
- › Locate refuse containers for commercial and institutional uses within a solid masonry or wood enclosure.
- › Design a service area screen to be in character with the building and the site it serves.

2.32 Locate a service entrance, waste disposal area or other similar use away from street frontages and shoreline paths.

- › Locate service and refuse areas to the rear of a property when feasible.
- › Refuse disposal and storage areas are not permitted along a public street frontage.
- › Locate areas for outdoor storage, truck parking and loading, trash collection or compaction, or other such uses to avoid visibility from abutting streets, waterfront, parks and interference with the pedestrian environment.

2.33 Position service areas to minimize conflicts with adjoining uses.

- › Minimize noise impacts by locating sources of offensive sounds away from other uses.
- › Provide for alley access to service areas, when feasible.
- › Refuse enclosures should not adjoin a single family property line.

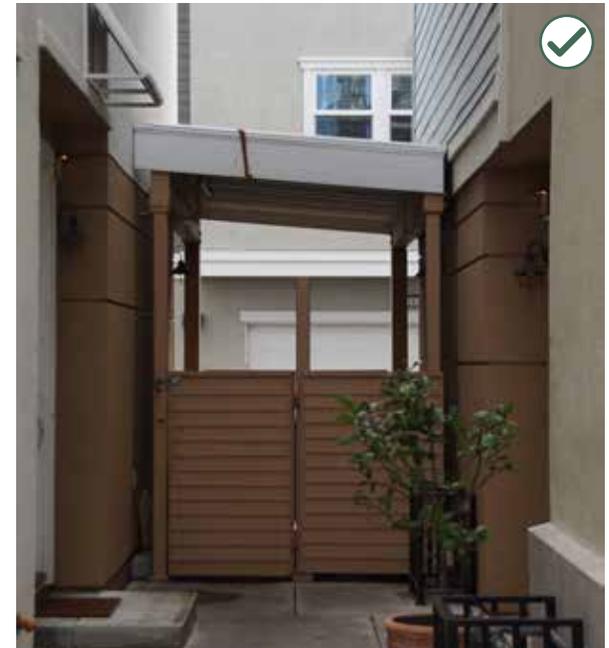


Figure 37. Position service areas to minimize conflicts with adjoining uses.

STRUCTURED PARKING

Structured parking is sometimes necessary to include in a commercial area to accommodate employees and visitors. Where structured parking is included, it should not be accessed or visible from First Street. The ground level of a structured parking facility should be designed to activate the pedestrian realm, and upper levels of the parking facility should be screened.

2.34 Locate a parking structure to be accessed from an alley or side street.

- › Do not locate a new parking structure to be accessed from First Street.
- › Do not locate a new parking structure to front directly onto First Street at the ground level.

2.35 Design a parking structure to blend into the commercial part of the District.

- › Wrap the parking structure with an active use at the sidewalk edge along First Street and secondary streets.
- › If an upper level(s) of a parking structure fronts onto First Street, design the façade to incorporate the general scale, massing, rhythm and proportion of openings and materials seen in historic commercial buildings. Refer to Chapter 4: Guidelines for New Construction and Non-Contributing Structures for more information.

2.36 Design a parking structure to enhance walkability and minimize the visibility of cars.

- › Where possible, wrap a parking structure with another use. At an upper-story level, this could include a commercial or residential use.
- › When wrapping a parking structure with another use is not feasible, utilize at least one of the following screening methods:
 - An architectural screen that reflects window patterns along the street and that utilizes materials that are compatible
 - A “living wall” that provides greenery on multiple sides of the structure
 - Architectural paneling that creates visual interest that is compatible with materials used on adjacent buildings
 - Wall art that provides visual interest
 - Providing interesting details and materials to avoid presenting a “back side” to neighborhood properties and the street.



Figure 38. Design a parking structure to blend into the commercial part of the district.



Figure 39. Design an awning, gallery or canopy to be in character and proportion to the building.



Figure 40. Design an awning or canopy to remain a subordinate feature on the façade.

AWNINGS, GALLERIES AND CANOPIES

Traditionally, awnings and galleries were noteworthy features on commercial buildings, and their continued use is encouraged. Galleries were the most prominent feature along First Street at the turn-of-the-century. Operable awnings also occurred. These features helped to regulate internal climatic conditions and to keep the walkway clear. Today, these features provide a similar function and are typically simple in detail, color and design. Canopies didn't appear in early Benicia, but they are appropriate today since the roof feature is a close cousin to the traditional arcade. The exception is the support system. The design guidelines that follow provide information about awnings, galleries and canopies themselves; information about signs on awnings and canopies is provided in Chapter 6.

2.37 Design an awning, gallery or canopy to be in character and proportion to the building.

- › Design an awning or canopy to fit in the opening it covers.
- › Choose colors that are compatible with the façade. Solid colors are encouraged.
- › Awnings and canopies should not hide a building façade, distort its proportions, or cover architectural features.
- › Choose a simple shape. A shed shape is preferred. Avoid shingle, mansard or arch-shaped forms.
- › Design an awning or canopy to remain a subordinate feature on the façade.
- › Do not internally illuminate or backlight an awning.

- › Plastic, vinyl or metal awnings are discouraged.
- › The support system for a canopy should be simple in design.
- › Select awnings that are complementary to the style and color of adjacent storefronts, particularly on a single building with multiple storefronts.
- › It is inappropriate to add a gallery to an existing historic building where it didn't exist before.
- › A new gallery, canopy or awning should align with similar features along the street.
- › A new gallery should be simple in design.

2.38 Minimize damage to historic materials when mounting canopies and awnings.

Avoid anchoring directly into architectural details, when feasible.

2.39 Install an operable, fabric awning.

- › Install an operable awning to increase the energy efficiency of a building by providing shade in the summer months and solar access in the winter months.

PUBLIC ART

Public art celebrates Benicia’s active artist community and is welcomed as an amenity to the downtown setting. It should be designed as an integral component of the urban environment. Public art must be strategically located to serve as an accent to a streetscape, plaza, park or other public area.

2.40 Incorporate public art where feasible and where appropriate.

- › Incorporate art that complements the context and character into streetscapes or building elements.
- › Strategically place public art at civic facilities to serve as accents.
- › Consider locating public art at gateways, parks, plazas and points where views terminate at a public space, without interrupting an important view corridor or vista.

2.41 Public art should be compatible with the historic context.

- › Locate public art such that the ability to perceive the character of historic buildings nearby is maintained.
- › Do not install public art in a location that impedes one’s ability to interpret the historic character of the Downtown District.

2.42 Locate public art installations to enhance the urban environment.

- › Locate artwork in strategic locations such as gateways or as focal points in public plazas or parks.
- › Integrate public art within the urban environment, such as the Granizo tiles and decorative patterns in the First Street sidewalk.



Figure 41. Incorporate public art where feasible and where appropriate.



Figure 42. Locate public art installations to enhance the urban environment.



Figure 43. Incorporate art that complements the context and character into streetscapes or building elements.

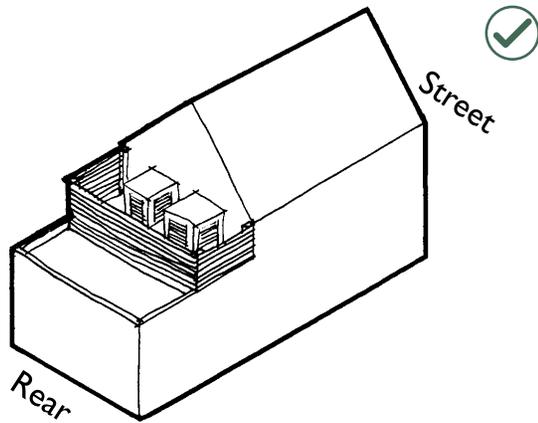


Figure 44. Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment.



Figure 45. Screen building equipment from view.

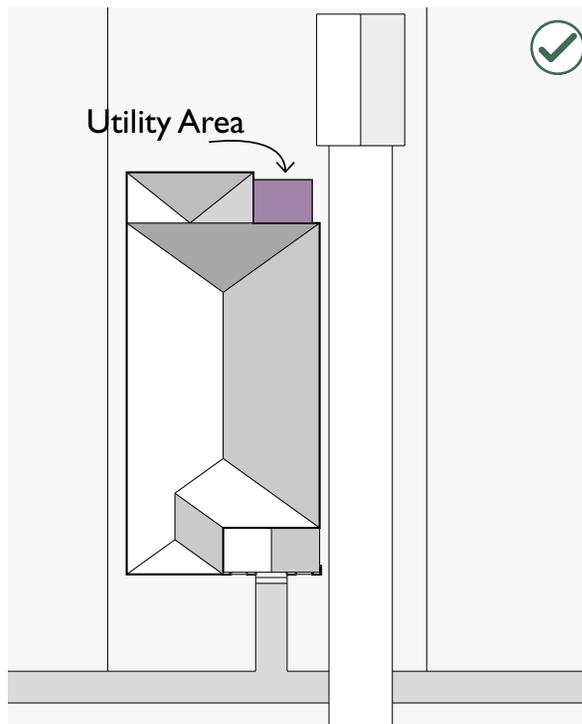
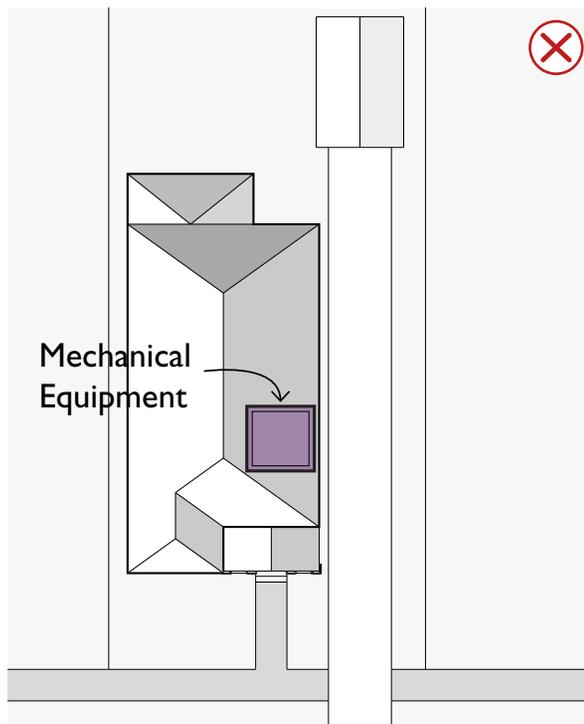


Figure 46. Locate a utility or mechanical equipment to minimize visibility from the street.

BUILDING EQUIPMENT

Externally mounted mechanical equipment, including junction boxes, external fire connections, antennas, telecommunication devices, cables, conduits, satellite dishes, HVAC equipment and fans, may affect the character of a property. These should be screened from the public right-of-way to avoid negative impacts on all properties.

2.43 Minimize the visual impacts of building equipment on the public way and the District as a whole.

- › Screen building equipment from view.
- › Use low-profile or recessed mechanical units on rooftops and set them back from the building front.
- › Locate satellite dishes and mechanical equipment out of public view.
- › Do not locate equipment on a front façade.

2.44 Minimize the visual impacts of utility lines, junction boxes and similar equipment.

- › Locate utility lines and junction boxes on secondary and tertiary walls, and group them together.
- › Group utility lines in conduit, and paint these elements to match the existing background color.
- › Locate a utility pedestal (ground mounted) to the rear of a building.

COLOR

Traditionally, color schemes in the Downtown District were relatively muted. A single base color was applied to the primary wall plane. Then, one or two accent colors were used to highlight ornamental features, as well as trim around doors and windows. Commercial structures along First Street were either brick, or wood painted in a similar muted palette. The traditions of using limited numbers of colors, typically muted, should be continued. The design guidelines below do not specify which colors should be selected, but rather how they should be used.

2.45 Utilize color to make the façade “read” as a single composition.

- › Employ color schemes that are simple in character.
- › Using one base color for the building walls and another for the roof is preferred.
- › Using one to three accent colors for trim elements is also preferred.
- › The exception is for a larger building where building modules may be the emphasis. In this case, some difference in color may be appropriate.



Figure 47. Building elements shall be finished in a manner similar to that seen traditionally.

2.46 Use muted colors for the base or background that continue the traditional color palette of the Downtown District.

- › Building features should be muted, while trim accents can either be a contrasting color or a harmonizing color.
- › An accent color should not contrast so strongly as to not read as part of the composition.
- › Use matte or low luster finishes instead of glossy ones.
- › Utilize non-reflective, muted finishes.
- › Do not use bright high-intensity colors.

2.47 Building elements shall be finished in a manner similar to that seen traditionally. The following are recommended treatments:

- › Wood siding: painted
- › Brick: unpainted, natural color
- › Window frames and sash, doors and frame and storefronts: wood – painted
- › Highly reflective materials, weathered wood and clear finishes are prohibited on large surfaces. A clear finish is permitted on a wood entry door.
- › Do not paint surfaces that were traditionally unpainted.

Two color paint scheme:



Figure 48. When designing a color scheme, consider the entire composition: The back plane of the main façade is a major surface for which a scheme should be devised. A color scheme for the front plane, composed of a porch in this case, should also be designed.

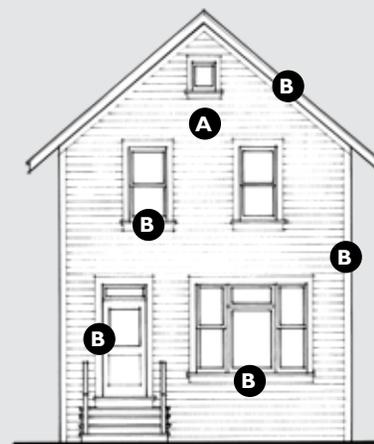


Figure 49. Apply a base color to the main plane of the façade (A). Apply a primary trim color to window and door frames, and edge boards (B).

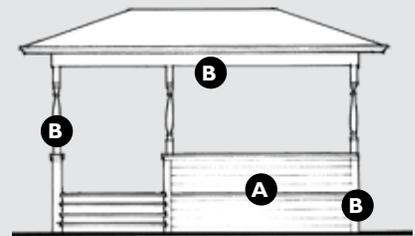


Figure 50. Apply a color to the front porch plane of the façade; if a solid porch wall is provided instead of balusters, this color should match the base color. For trim, columns, balusters and edge boards the trim color is typically the same color as the trim on the main building plane (B).

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3

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES



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The City seeks to preserve the historic integrity of historic properties in the Downtown District. This means employing best practices in property stewardship to maintain the key character-defining features of individual historic resources. This chapter provides design guidelines for the rehabilitation of properties defined as landmark structures or contributors to the District.

General Preservation Principles

The following design guidelines translate the general principles for historic preservation, especially the treatment of individual historic buildings and site features. These design principles should be considered when making improvements to a historic property.

3.1 Respect the individual historic character of a property.

- › The basic form and materials of a building, as well as architectural details, are a part of the historic character.
- › Do not try to change the style of a historic building or make it look older than its actual age.
- › Confusing the character by mixing features of different styles or periods can adversely affect the historic significance of the property.

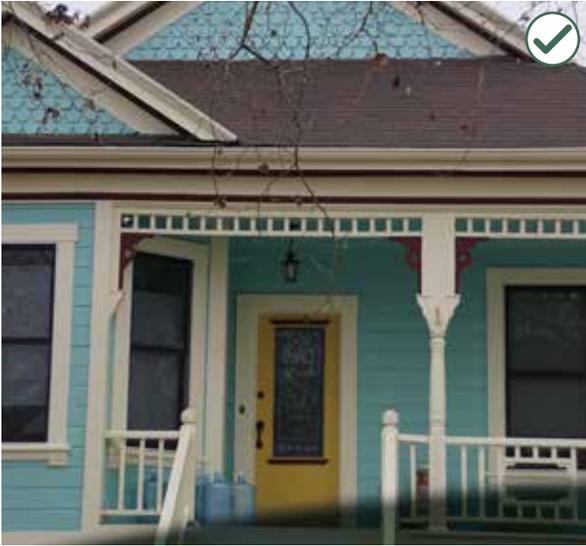


Figure 51. Protect and maintain character-defining features and stylistic elements.

3.2 Seek new uses that are compatible with the historic character of the property.

- › The City of Benicia encourages ongoing use of historic buildings as a critical aspect of historic preservation.
- › Converting a building to a new use that is different from the historic use is considered to be an “adaptive reuse,” and is a sound strategy for keeping an old building in service. For example, converting a residential structure to offices is an adaptive reuse. A good adaptive reuse project retains the historic character of the building’s exterior while accommodating a new function on the inside.
- › Every effort should be made to provide a use for the building that will require minimal alteration to the building, especially on the exterior, and its site.
- › Changes in use requiring the least alteration to significant elements are preferred. In most cases designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new uses.

3.3 Protect and maintain character-defining features and stylistic elements.

- › Character-defining features and other examples of skilled craftsmanship should be preserved. The best preservation procedure is to maintain historic features from the outset to prevent the need for repair later. Appropriate maintenance includes rust removal, caulking and repainting.
- › These features should not be removed.
- › When considering a treatment for a character-defining feature the method that requires the least intervention is always preferred.
- › The highest degree of historic integrity should be maintained when improving a historic property.

Character-Defining Features

This section provides specific guidance for historic building types and identifies character-defining features that should be maintained. These guidelines should be followed in addition to the guidelines beginning in the “Architectural Details” section on page 55.

HISTORIC COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

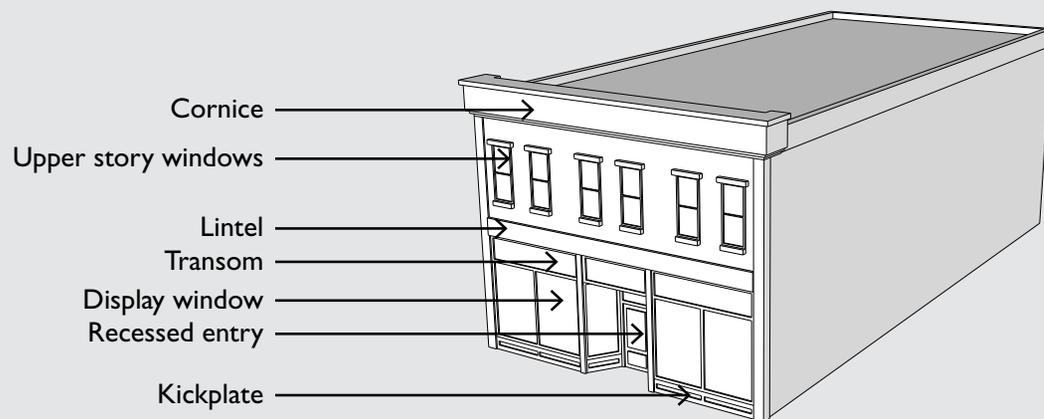
Many building fronts along First Street in Benicia’s downtown have commercial building components, such as storefronts, that should be preserved. The repetition of these character-defining features creates a visual unity at the street level that defines the historic use of the buildings and encourages patrons to explore the business district. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed.

3.4 Preserve these character-defining features on a commercial building front:

- › Cornice: A decorative band at the top of the building
- › Upper-story windows: Windows located above the street level, often having a vertical orientation
- › Lintel or mid-belt cornice: A decorative band at the top of the first floor
- › Sign band: A flat band running above the transoms to allow for the placement of signs
- › Storefront: A composition of the following features:
 - Transom: The upper portion of the storefront system, separated by a frame

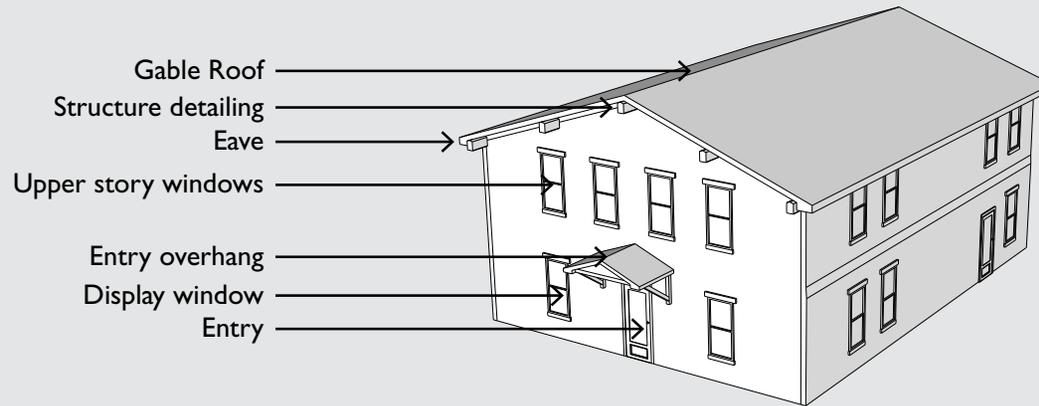
- Display windows: The main portion of glass, often located within the storefront system, where goods and services are displayed. In Benicia, display windows also appear as ganged and individual windows placed within the building facade.
- Entry: Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess, also sometimes a part of a storefront system; in Benicia entries for corner buildings may be set at an angle to the corner
- Kickplate: Found beneath the display window within the storefront system
- Architectural details: Trim, moldings, etc. (sometimes with stylistic influence)

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF A COMMERCIAL FAÇADE



The following illustration represents some, but not all, of the typical character-defining elements of commercial building façades. See the Architectural Styles section in the Appendix to identify key features of other commercial façade styles.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF A COMMERCIAL FAÇADE- GABLE ROOF



3.5 Preserve these character-defining features on a commercial building front with a sloped roof:

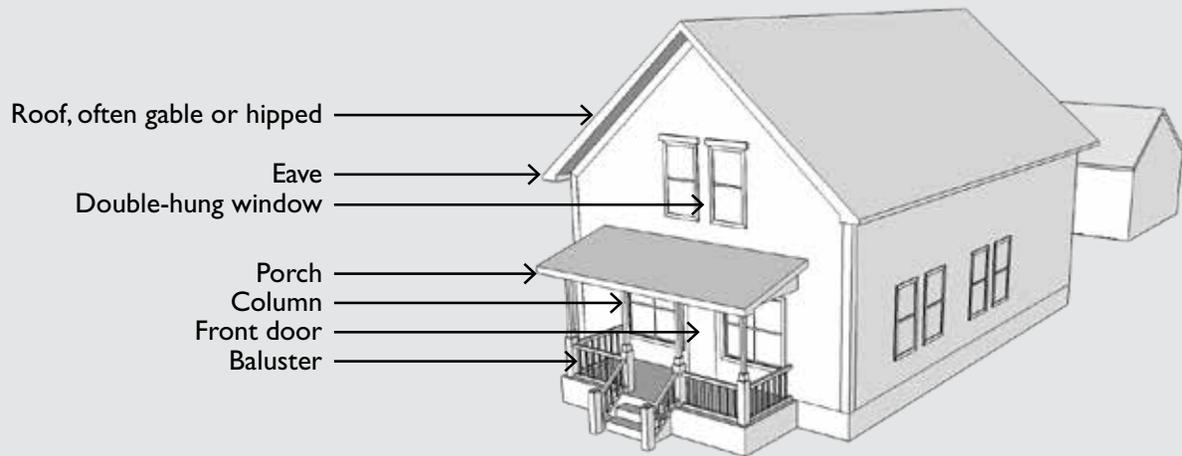
- › Roof shape: Gable or hipped roof
- › Upper-story windows: Windows located above the street level, often having a vertical orientation
- › Display windows: Windows at the street level where goods and services are displayed. These typically appear as ganged and/or individual windows placed within the building façade.
- › Entry: Slightly recessed from the sidewalk

The following illustration represents some, but not all, of the typical character-defining elements of commercial building façades. See the Architectural Styles section in the Appendix to identify key features of other commercial façade styles.

HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Many residential buildings in the Downtown District have similar character-defining features (porches, windows, entry doors, etc.); however, they represent a variety of building styles. Despite the range of styles and time periods represented in the district, the repetition of these features creates a visual unity at the street level that should be preserved. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed. The preservation of a residential façade also will help maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF A RESIDENTIAL FAÇADE



The following illustration represents some, but not all, of the typical character-defining elements of residential façades. See the Architectural Styles section in the Appendix to identify key features of other residential façade styles.

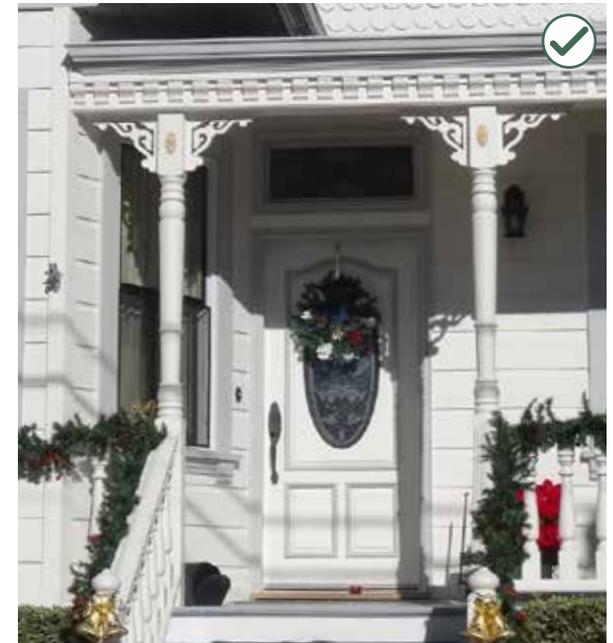


Figure 52. Preserve character-defining features on a traditional residential front.

3.6 Preserve these character-defining features on a traditional residential front:

- › Building and roof orientation: Orientation of building and roof in respect to the street
- › Roof form: Gable, hipped or flat roof
- › Exposed rafters: Structural component at eaves
- › Attic window or vent: An opening in a gable end
- › Eaves: Portion of the roof that overhangs the vertical walls
- › Porch: A one-story covered, unenclosed or partially enclosed entry element
- › Front door: The primary entrance into the building
- › Window: An opening in the walls
- › Dormer: A window that projects vertically from the roof or wall
- › Architectural details: Trim, moldings, etc. (sometimes with stylistic influence)



Figure 53. Preserve these character-defining features on a traditional institutional building:

HISTORIC INSTITUTIONAL PROPERTIES

The Downtown District includes institutional buildings, such as churches and civic buildings, that in many cases remain in use from their original function. These buildings are designed to be prominent buildings within the community, and their setting and character-defining features should be preserved. Sometimes, institutional buildings are at risk of decay due to funding shortfalls and unique maintenance needs. Therefore, a preservation plan should be developed for these projects to identify a treatment strategy.

3.7 Preserve these character-defining features on a traditional institutional building:

- › Building location and orientation: Typically set back from and oriented towards the street. The setback from the street often includes a plaza or landscaped area.
- › Building foundation: Often raised above the sidewalk level.
- › Building entry: Usually highlighted using architectural elements, color or form; often raised above the sidewalk and accessed via stairs.
- › Window: An opening in the walls
- › Architectural features: Porticoes, balconies, galleries, etc.
- › Architectural details: Trim, moldings, etc. (sometimes with stylistic influence)

3.8 Prioritize the preservation of character-defining features on the primary and highly visible secondary façade.

- › Develop a preservation plan for a historic building to identify maintenance priorities.
- › Consider some flexibility in the alteration of features on secondary and rear façades when funding preservation repairs for the entire building isn't feasible (i.e., allowing compatible window replacement while retaining the original opening and matching the window profile and composition, etc.)

Architectural Details

Architectural details help convey the historic and architectural significance of historic buildings, such as its building style, and should be preserved. The method that requires least intervention is expected.

3.9 Maintain significant architectural details.

- › Retain and treat exterior stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity.
- › Employ preventive measures such as rust removal, caulking and repainting.

3.10 Replace architectural details when they cannot be repaired.

- › Document the location of an architectural detail that must be removed to be repaired so it may be repositioned accurately.
- › Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade deteriorated architectural detail using recognized preservation methods.
- › Do not remove or alter distinctive architectural details that are in good condition or that can be repaired. Consult with the City of Benicia Planning Division prior to removal of any distinctive architectural details.

3.11 Reconstruct an architectural detail accurately if it cannot be repaired.

- › Use a design that is substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's history.
- › Use the same kind of material as the historic detail. However, an alternative material may be considered if it:
 - Has proven durability
 - Has a size, shape, texture and finish that conveys the visual appearance of the historic feature
 - Is located in a place that is remote from view or direct physical contact
- › Do not add architectural details that were not part of the historic structure. For example, decorative millwork shall not be added to a building if it was not a historic feature as doing so would convey a false history.
- › Consult with the City of Benicia Planning Division prior to attempting reconstruction of any missing or deteriorated architectural details.

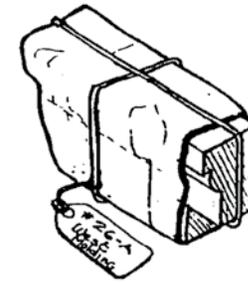


Figure 54. Document the location of a historic feature that must be removed and repaired so it may be repositioned accurately.



Figure 55. Maintain significant architectural details.



Figure 56. Do not add features that were not part of the historic structure. For example, decorative millwork shall not be added to a building if it was not a historic feature as doing so would convey a false history.



Figure 57. Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the material.

Materials and Finishes

Historic building materials should be preserved in place whenever feasible. If the material is damaged, then limited replacement which matches the original should be considered. These materials should never be covered. Preserving original building materials and limiting replacement to only pieces which are deteriorated beyond repair reduces the demand for, and environmental impacts from, the production of new materials.

3.12 Maintain historic building materials.

- › Protect historic building materials from deterioration.
- › Do not remove or clean historic materials that are in good condition.
- › Use a low pressure water wash if cleaning is necessary. Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch does not have a negative effect on the historic material.
- › Do not use harsh cleaning methods, which can inhibit the function and/or appearance of the historic material, (such as sandblasting, which can damage its structural or visual integrity).

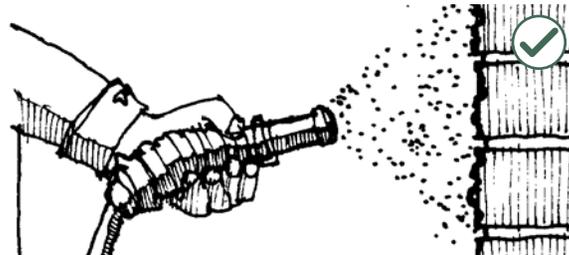


Figure 58. Do not use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, which can damage historic materials.

3.13 Preserve the visibility of historic materials.

- › Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.
- › Repair historic, underlying material once a non-historic material is removed.
- › Do not cover or obscure historic building materials.
- › Do not add another layer of new material if a property already has a non-historic building material covering the historic material.

3.14 Repair historic building materials when needed.

- › Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- › Replace only those materials that are deteriorated, and beyond reasonable repair.



Figure 59. Do not remove damaged materials that can be repaired. In this case, loose shingles may be re-secured while missing ones may be replaced.

3.15 Replace historic building materials in-kind, if repair is not feasible.

- › Use the same material as the historic material to replace damaged building materials.
- › Replace only the amount of material that is beyond repair.
- › Reclaimed materials, such as salvaged siding boards and bricks, may be appropriate if they match the original material in size, form and overall appearance.
- › Use replacement materials that are similar in scale, finish and character to the historic material.
- › Use replacement materials with proven durability.
- › In some instances, alternative materials are appropriate when they're located on an accessory building, on an addition, on a rear wall of a primary building or on a part of a side wall that is not visible from the street. (See "Using Alternative Materials on a Historic Building.")
- › Do not use synthetic materials, such as EIFS, aluminum, vinyl or panelized brick, as replacements for primary building materials.
- › Green building materials, such as those made with renewable and local resources, may be considered for replacement materials where they will not impact the integrity of a building or its character-defining features.

MAINTAINING HISTORIC MATERIALS

The primary historic building materials used in Benicia include masonry (brick, mortar, stone, terra cotta, stucco, concrete) wood and metal. Such materials should be preserved and rehabilitated whenever possible. Appropriate treatments to protect specific materials from deterioration include:

Masonry

- › Maintain the natural uncovered water-protective layer (patina).
- › Do not paint (this can seal in moisture, which may cause extensive damage over time).
- › Repoint deteriorated masonry mortar joints with mortar that matches the strength, composition, color and texture of the original. Also, duplicate the mortar joints in width and profile.
- › Maintain masonry caps to insure proper drainage.
- › Repair damaged sections of stucco by removing the original and patching areas with stucco that match the original in color and texture. The most frequent type of damage to stucco usually appears as cracks, which can allow moisture to seep into the wall system.
- › Install control joints to alleviate cracking of stucco if no control joints exist.

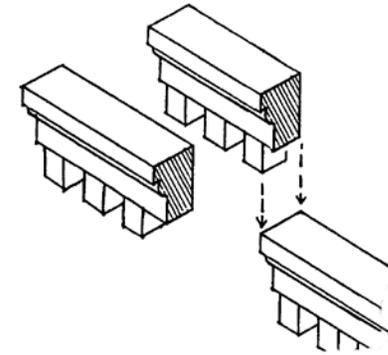


Figure 60. Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade deteriorated features using recognized preservation methods.

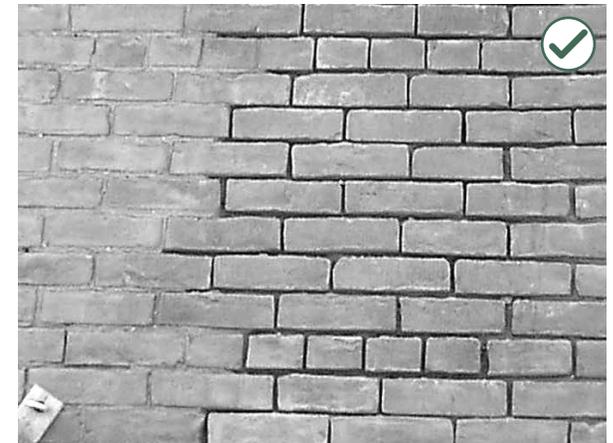


Figure 61. Repoint deteriorated masonry mortar joints with mortar that matches the strength, composition, color and texture of the original. Also, duplicate the mortar joints in width and profile.



Figure 62. Replace only the amount of material that is beyond repair.

Wood

- › Maintain paint and other protective coatings to retard deterioration and ultraviolet damage.
- › Provide proper drainage and ventilation.
- › Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond well to earlier oil-based paints without a primer coat.
- › Metal
- › Maintain protective coatings, such as paint, on exposed metals.
- › Provide proper drainage.

All Materials

- › Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair and special masonry repair components also may be used.
- › Use a low pressure water wash if cleaning is appropriate. Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found.
- › Do not use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, which can damage historic materials, changing their appearance.

USING ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS ON A HISTORIC STRUCTURE

The design guidelines sometimes refer to the use of alternative materials when replacing character-defining features and architectural details, such as windows, siding and molding. An alternative material is one which is different from that used originally for a specific application. Such materials may include:



- › PVC decking or fencing
- › Aluminum siding
- › HardiePlank siding
- › Cementitious fiber siding
- › Spray-on coatings
- › Synthetic stucco
- › Panelized brick
- › Other non-original materials

Some common alternative materials for specific architectural features include wood, plaster, concrete and stucco for porch columns, wood for railings, asphalt shingles for roofs and wood or fiber cement for trim. These examples are not an exhaustive list; other alternative materials may be used for these architectural features and other architectural features may also be replaced with alternative materials.

Alternative materials may also include materials used to replace historic architectural details such as a resin-cast cornice used in place of a stamped metal cornice. In other cases, an alternative material may be traditional when used for other applications, but new for the particular detail being considered. Using wood to replace an original stamped-metal cornice is an example.

Alternative materials may be considered by the city on a case-by-case basis as replacement materials, or for use on a new addition, or a new building in a historic district. The city will consider factors including:

Potential Impact on Historic Significance

Removing original material diminishes the integrity of a historic property by reducing the percentage of building fabric that remains from the period of historic significance. Retaining the original material is always preferred. If this is not feasible, alternative materials may be considered. When used, an alternative material should convey the character, including detail and finish, of the original to the greatest extent feasible.

Appearance

An alternative material should have a similar profile, texture and finish as the original material. Some synthetic siding has an exaggerated, rusticated finish that is an inaccurate representation of original clapboard, and many vinyl products have a sheen that is out of character with that of painted wood and metal.



Figure 63. An alternative material should convey the character, including detail and finish, of the original to the greatest extent feasible (aluminum clad).

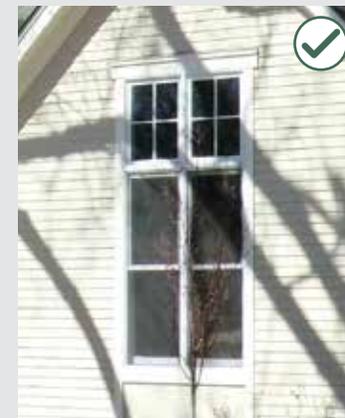


Figure 64. An alternative material should have a similar profile, texture and finish of the original material (hardi-plank)

USING ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS ON A HISTORIC STRUCTURE, CONTINUED.



Figure 65. An alternative material such as vinyl should have proven durability. These sashes are too thin.

Durability

An alternative material should have proven durability in similar applications. While some new materials are very sturdy, others may degrade quickly and can be difficult to repair.

Location

Up close, it is easier to identify some alternative materials due to differences in texture, finish and feel. Tapping on a hollow plastic column or fence does not convey the same experience as the original. For this reason, locations that are more remote are better. Similarly, use of alternative materials is more appropriate on non-primary façades. See “Which Areas Are Most Sensitive To Preserve” on pages 22-23 for more information.

Cost

Some alternative materials are promoted because their initial costs appear to be less than repairing or replacing the original. When the other qualities of appearance and durability are proven, then the less expensive option may be appropriate. However, long-term, “life cycle” costs should also be weighed. Sometimes, the up-front saving is deceptive.

Environmental Impacts

The potential environmental impacts of alternative materials should also be considered including impacts associated with manufacture, transport, installation and ability to recycle.

Interaction with Historic Building Materials

Some alternative materials may interact negatively with historic materials. For example, some metals may corrode and stain original materials and some window and siding materials may expand and contract with temperature changes in ways that degrade weather-protection properties.

3.16 Covering original building materials with new materials is inappropriate.

- › Do not use vinyl siding, aluminum siding or new stucco on historic buildings. Other imitation materials that are designed to look like wood or masonry siding, fabricated from other materials, are also inappropriate.
- › Do not add another layer of new material to a property that already has a non-historic building material covering the original, which would further obscure the original.

3.17 Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.

- › Repair the original, underlying material once the non-historic siding is removed.
- › Where a structure has a stucco finish, test the stucco prior to removal to assure the original material underneath will not be damaged.
- › Consult with the City of Benicia Planning Division prior to undertaking any removal of covering materials, as issues such as lead or asbestos contamination may require special attention.



Figure 66. Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.



Figure 67. Repair historic, underlying material once a non-historic material is removed.



Figure 68. Covering original building materials with new materials is inappropriate.



Figure 69. Maintain and repair original decorative windows in their original size, location and design, rather than replace them.



Figure 70. Preserve the position, number and arrangement of historic windows in a building wall.

Windows

Historic windows are very important character-defining features that help convey the significance of historic structures, and should be preserved. Windows are among the first features noticed by those passing by a building and are one of the most important character-defining features of a building. Windows located on the primary façade of a house are almost always formally arranged in regular patterns. Original historic windows are usually made of wood and can be fixed, double hung, casement, or awning type. Historic decorative windows including beveled, stained and etched glass are also found in windows and doors.

Windows can be repaired by re-glazing and patching and splicing elements such as muntins, the frame, sill and casing. Repair, weatherization, and installation of interior storm windows are frequently the most energy efficient, and least expensive, solution. If a historic window cannot be repaired, a new replacement window should match the original in design.

3.18 Maintain and repair historic windows.

- › Retain and preserve windows in their original location, size, type, groupings, materials and design.
- › Preserve all historic window components including the frame, sash, panes, caning, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings and operations.
- › Repair and maintain windows regularly, including trim, glazing putty and glass panes.
- › Repair, rather than replace, frames and sashes.
- › Restore altered window openings to their historic configuration.
- › If necessary, install interior storm windows to preserve exterior appearance.

3.19 Maintain and repair original decorative windows in their original size, location and design rather than replace them.

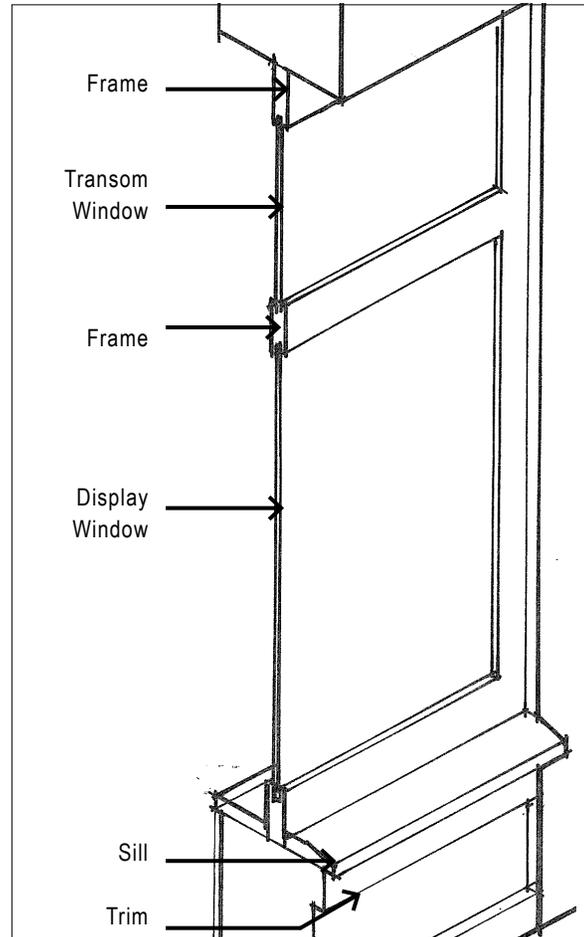
- › Match caning profile and material when replacement is necessary.
- › Match color and shape of glazing, when feasible.

3.20 Preserve the position, number and arrangement of historic windows in a building wall.

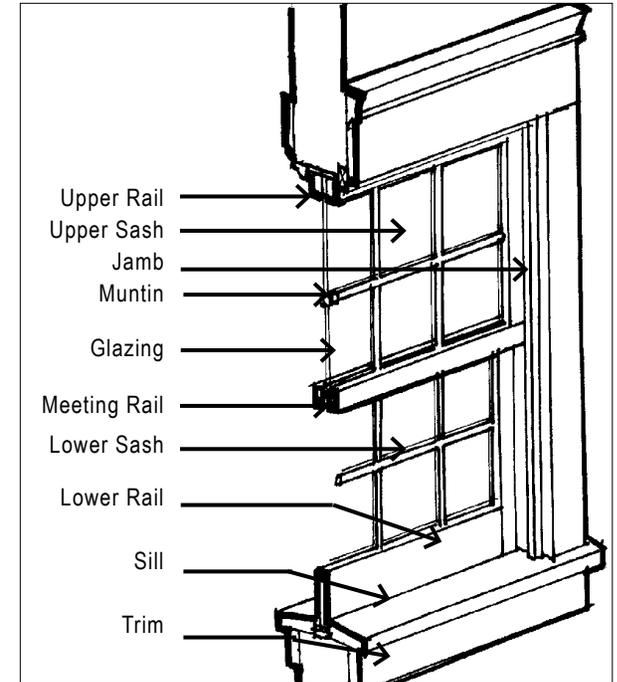
- › Do not enclose a historic window opening or add a new window opening on a primary façade.

3.21 Replace a historic window in-kind, if repair is not possible.

- › Give special attention to matching the historic design and materials of windows located on the primary or secondary façade.
- › Factors to be considered in determining whether the severity of deterioration of windows requires replacement include damage, excessive weathering, loss of soundness or integrity of the wood, deterioration due to rot or insect attack, and cost to repair.
- › A replacement window should match the original location, type, size, profile, glazing pattern (number of panes), true-divided muntins, clear window glazing (low-e glass is preferred), and material of the historic window, when possible.
- › Do not use vinyl or unfinished materials as window replacement materials.
- › Do not use metallic or reflective window glazing.
- › Do not add non-original decorative glass to primary façades.
- › Alternative materials are typically only appropriate when they're located on an accessory building, on an addition, on a rear wall of a primary building, or on a part of a side wall that is not visible from the street. (See "Using Alternative Materials on a Historic Building.")
- › Do not add non-original decorative glass to primary façades.



Storefront Window
(Commercial)



Double Hung Window
(Residential, Commercial, Warehouses)



Figure 71. Provide a storm window that is simple in design. Its framing components should be designed to match the width of the historic windows side, top, middle and bottom rails, if placed externally.



Figure 72. Unfinished metal storm windows such as these alter the character of window openings, and should not be used on primary elevations. A metal storm window may be appropriate if the frame matches the proportions and profiles of the original window and has a painted finish.

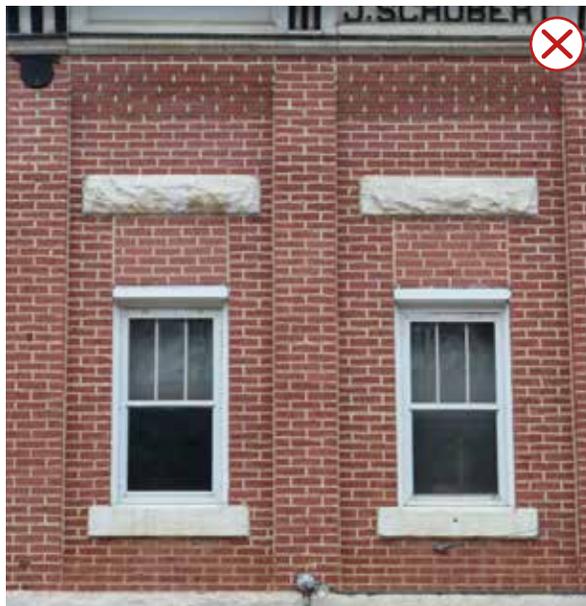


Figure 73. Restore a historic window opening that previously existed.

3.22 Design a storm window to minimize its visual impacts.

- › Install full exterior storm windows to provide protection and enhance energy efficiency.
- › If a window did not historically have a storm window, consider locating a new storm window internally to avoid exterior visual impacts, when feasible.
- › Provide a storm window that is simple in design. Its framing components should be designed to match the width of the historic windows side, top, middle and bottom rails, if placed externally.
- › It should also match the material and finish of the historic window.
- › Storm windows should provide a full view of the original window.

3.23 Restore a historic window opening that has been altered, when feasible.

- › Restore a historic window opening that previously existed.
- › Place a new window to fit within the historic opening.

3.24 When necessary, locate and design a new window opening to preserve the overall rhythm and arrangement of windows on a secondary or rear building wall.

- › Locate a new window opening to match the general arrangement of historic windows in a building wall.
- › Design a new window opening to match historic window proportions on the same façade.

Doors and Entries

Doors and door surrounds are highly visible and significant in defining the style and character of a building. It is important to keep the original style of entrance doors. Most historic front doors are made of wood with raised or recessed panels. Some incorporate a high level of detail and ornamentation including colored, stained, beveled or etched glass panels. The design, materials and location of historic doors and entries help establish the significance of a historic structure and should be preserved. When a new door is needed, it should be in character with the building.

3.25 Maintain and repair a historic door.

- › Preserve historic and decorative features, including door frames, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, detailing, transoms and flanking sidelights.
- › Do not alter the historic size and shape of an original door opening.
- › Do not change the historic locations of door openings on primary façades.
- › Do not add a new door opening on a primary façade.
- › When installing a storm door, select a full glass design or one with minimal structural dividers to retain the visibility of the historic door behind the storm door.
- › Repair and maintain doors regularly, including trim, glazing putty and glass panes.
- › Repair, rather than replace door features.

3.26 Replace a historic door in-kind, if repair is not possible.

- › Use materials that are similar to that of the historic door.
- › When replacing a historic door on a primary façade, use a design that is similar to the historic door and compatible with the historic building style.
- › Replacement doors should be similar to the original in material, style, glazing (type of glass and area) and lights (pane configuration). Wood is an acceptable material for use in replacement doors.
- › When replacing a historic door on a non-primary façade, use a design that is in character with the historic architectural style, when feasible.

3.27 Locate and design a new door and entry to preserve the historic composition.

- › If a new door opening is needed to meet safety codes or to enhance the use of a property, doors should be added at the rear or secondary façades of the homes where they are not readily visible.
- › Locate a new door to be consistent with the historic architectural style of the structure.
- › Design a new door or entry to match historic door proportions.



Figure 74. Maintain and repair a historic door.



Figure 75. The design, materials and location of historic doors and entries help establish the significance of a historic structure and should be preserved.



Photo to come

Figure 76. Maintain original driveway access locations when feasible and in the interest of public safety.

Photo to come

Garages

Garages evolved from carriage or coach houses, which were originally used to stable horses, and store buggies and carriages. From the 1900s on, single-story garages became more prevalent as a shelter for storing automobiles. Most historic garages in Benicia are detached structures accessed from alley, although in some areas of the historic district, garages were built to the side of the building, or constructed below the first floor. Garages are traditionally subordinate in scale and character to the primary structure and this character should be maintained throughout the district. Preservation of historic garages is encouraged, but isn't required.

3.28 Maintain original driveway access locations when feasible and in the interest of public safety.

- › Do not introduce new driveway access from public street Use the alley when feasible.

3.29 Preserving an original garage is encouraged.

- › Keep historic garages and carriage houses in good repair, similar to the primary building on the lot.
- › Avoid removing a historic garage or carriage house, when possible.
- › Garage doors and windows may be replaced with alternative material when they are located along the alley.

3.30 Maintain historic garage doors on the front of the building, when feasible.

- › Preserve historic features, including frames and detailing.
- › Do not alter the historic size and shape of an original garage door opening.
- › Do not change the historic locations of garage door openings on primary façades.

3.31 When replacing a garage door on a historic structure that faces the street, choose a door that is simple in design.

- › Where a historic garage door must be replaced on the front of the building, use similar materials and a simple utilitarian design similar to the historic garage door. Note: garage doors on the front of the building were typically custom openings, and a new garage door will likely need to be custom as well.
- › A new garage door should not compete with the architectural style of the historic building.
- › A new garage door should not swing or encroach on the public right-of-way.

Exterior Light Fixtures

While they are not typically character-defining features, freestanding light fixtures and light fixtures attached to a building contribute to the character of the property and to the safety of pedestrians. Light standards can be found in the Benicia Municipal Code; the following section addresses some of the qualitative aspects of light fixtures.

Historic light fixtures should be maintained where possible. A new light fixture should not detract from the character of a historic building, or imitate a historic style. A new light fixture should be simple in design and should complement the historic character of a building. Further lighting design guidelines are provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines for All Projects.

3.32 Maintain and repair a historic light fixture.

- › Replace a historic light fixture in-kind, or provide a new fixture that is simple in design and compatible with the historic building.
- › Choose a simple design for a new light fixture that doesn't draw attention away from the front façade. An appropriate fixture is one that is recessed in the ceiling of a porch with a warm and low light level. Another option is a simple wall mounted light that is a contemporary interpretation of an older style that complements the building style. It should be shielded, and made with durable materials.
- › Faux historic fixtures are inappropriate.
- › Do not choose a light fixture that is different than the style of the historic building.
- › Do not choose a light fixture that distracts from the architecture of the historic building.



Photo to come

Photo to come



Figure 78. Preserve the form, materials and features of an original historic roof.



Figure 79. Preserve functional and decorative roof features, including original parapets, fascias, dormers, chimneys and eaves, especially when they are character-defining features of the structure.

Historic Roofs

Roofs are one of the most important features of historic buildings. Functionally they shelter buildings from the weather. Visually, roof shape, elements, details and materials can significantly contribute to the appearance and architectural style of buildings. Many roofs in the residential areas of the Downtown District are hip and gable roofs; roofs on historic building along First Street and other commercial areas of the District are a mix of flat, hip and gable roofs. Where a similar roof form is seen throughout a block, a visual continuity is created and should be maintained.

The slope or pitch of a roof is an important determinant of roof shape. Roof pitch is a ratio of “rise” over “run”. For example, a 4:12 pitch describes a roof that increases 4” in height (rise) for every 12” of horizontal run.

The form, size, shape, pitch and materials of a historic roof help define the character of the building as it is perceived from the public way and should be preserved.

3.33 Preserve the form, materials and features of an original historic roof.

- › Maintain the perceived line and orientation of the roof as seen from the street.
- › Maintain roof overhangs, such as eaves and soffits, because they contribute to the perception of the building’s historic scale.
- › Preserve functional and decorative roof features, including original parapets, fascias, dormers, chimneys and eaves, especially when they are character-defining features of the structure.
- › Avoid altering the pitch of a historic roof.
- › Do not cut back exposed roof rafters and soffits.

3.34 Repair original roof materials and features, and replace only when necessary.

- › Check roof flashing for open seams and look for breaks or holes in the roof surface.
- › If replacement is necessary, use materials similar in color, finish, texture and profile to the original. Low profile asphalt shingles, for example, are appropriate replacements for wood shingles.
- › Replace severely deteriorated soffits, eaves and fascias with in-kind material to match profiles, shapes, and color of the original.

3.35 Minimize the visual impacts of rooftop alterations.

- › Do not visually overwhelm the original roof, particularly street-facing elevations, by altering the roof form, slope and materials (i.e. replacing asphalt shingles with tiles).
- › Do not remove or alter sizes of historic dormers on street-facing elevations.
- › Do not install new roof features, such as dormers, balconies, roof decks, or skylights on an area that will be seen from a primary or high-visibility secondary façade.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Gutters are used to direct water from the roof away from the building foundation. There are boxed in gutters that are interior to a soffit, K-style gutters and half round gutters, for example. Preservation of historic gutters is encouraged.

3.36 Maintain and repair original gutters and downspouts.

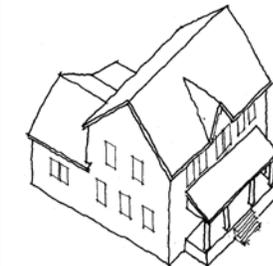
- › Retain and repair gutters and downspouts.

3.37 Replace gutters and downspouts in-kind, or provide new gutters that are simple in design and compatible with the historic building.

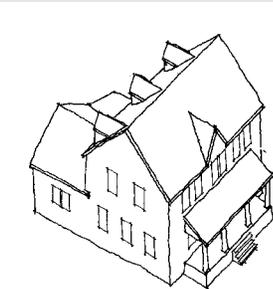
- › Where it is not possible to replace existing gutters in-kind, choose a quality metal gutter with a matte or non-reflective finish that minimizes visual impact to the architecture.
- › Match the size, profile, and material of original gutters and downspouts, when feasible.
- › Do not replace built-in gutters with exposed gutters.
- › Do not install vinyl or PVC gutters and downspouts.
- › Do not use copper where it was not used historically.

3.38 Locate new or replacement gutters and downspouts similar to the original gutters.

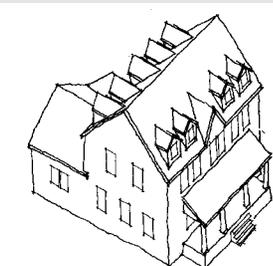
- › Locate them away from significant architectural features on the primary façades of a building.



Original Residence



Dormer Additions to the Rear



Dormer Additions to the Front

Figure 80. Do not visually overwhelm the original roof, particularly street-facing elevations, by altering the roof form, slope and materials.



Figure 81. Maintain and repair a historic foundation.



Figure 82. Re-point historic masonry foundations to match the historic design.

Masonry Foundations

A historic building foundation contributes to the character of a historic structure and should be preserved. Above ground foundation walls are often visually distinguished from the main wall by a change of material.

Historic foundations should be maintained. Altering or replacing historic foundation walls is discouraged. However, it may be necessary to replace historic foundation walls with compatible new materials where the historic foundation is deteriorated beyond repair. (See *Maintaining Historic Materials* page 57)

3.39 Maintain and repair a historic foundation.

- › Re-point historic masonry foundations to match the historic design.
- › Design landscaping and other site features to keep water from collecting near the foundation.
- › Do not cover a historic foundation with newer siding material.
- › Do not conceal foundation windows with masonry, glass block or concrete block.
- › Do not install windows, window wells or an access door on the front façade of a historic foundation.

3.40 Replace or provide a foundation wall using new material that is similar in character and height to historic foundations.

- › For example, if a stone foundation must be replaced, use a material that conveys the scale and texture of the historic fabric.
- › Use similar details that resemble those used in foundations on similar nearby historic properties, when feasible.
- › A new foundation wall should be similar to the height of a historic foundations. Where historic homes were put on significantly raised foundations, these aren't to be used as models for a new foundation.

Paint

Historically, most wood surfaces on the exterior of a building were painted to protect them from weathering. Stucco structures also were sometimes painted.

Seek professional advice when repainting a historic building since they often have lead based paint and this is a hazardous material (see Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <https://www.epa.gov/lead>).

3.41 Plan repainting carefully.

- › Seek professional advice when planning to repaint a historic building or any character-defining features.
- › Do not paint unpainted masonry.
- › Do not use destructive paint removal methods such as torches, sandblasting or water blasting which can irreversibly damage historic materials.

3.42 Using a historic color scheme is encouraged.

- › Generally one muted color is used as a background, which unifies the composition.
- › One or two other colors are usually used for accent to highlight details and trim. These should be applied consistently; for example, do not paint each window a different color.
- › Brilliant luminescent and day-glow colors are inappropriate.
- › High gloss paints and finishes are inappropriate.



Figure 83. Generally one muted paint color is used as a background color to unify the composition.



Figure 84. Use materials for ramps that are compatible with the original building materials and design.



Figure 85. Add an accessibility ramp to the side of a structure when feasible.

Accessibility

Where it applies, owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent possible with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Title 24 provisions, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings and sites. Note: substantial alterations to the interior or exterior may trigger ADA compliance.

3.43 When adding accessibility features, such as ramps, minimize impacts on historic buildings and the surrounding historic context.

- › Provide barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled and for homeowners to age in place, to the highest degree possible, while preserving significant historic features.

- › Create an accessibility solution that is independent from the historic building and does not alter its historic characteristics, when feasible. This will ensure that accessibility improvements are reversible to accommodate future changes in technology or building use.
- › If it is necessary to add a permanent ramp on the primary façade of a home, construct the ramp with wood and with a traditional design to match the original porch design in material, style and dimensions, if feasible.

3.44 When adding accessibility features to historic institutional buildings, or other buildings that are located on a landscape site, ensure compatibility with the historic site.

- › Integrate ramps with the building's architecture and landscape setting.
- › Consider providing access by gently re-sloping a large lawn and eliminating the need for railings, ensuring the historic character of the buildings and site are not negatively impacted.
- › Use materials for ramps that are compatible with the original building materials and design.
- › Avoid installing re-manufactured steel ramps and/or other wheelchair lifts on the primary façade of a historic building.

Accessory Buildings

Some blocks in the Downtown District have alleys that provide automobile and service access to many of the properties. As a result, most accessory buildings and carriage houses are located to the rear of the property, along the alley. While buildings in the rear generally have little impact on the character of the street, they do contribute to the character of the alley context and should be preserved. Constructing a new accessory building is discussed in Chapter 4.

Existing Building Additions

Some existing building additions may have become historically significant in their own right because they were built within the period of significance. Unless the building is being accurately restored to an earlier period of significance, additions that have taken on significance should be preserved. However, more recent additions built outside the period of significance may detract from the character of the building and could be considered for modification or removal.

3.45 Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.

- › Respect character-defining building features of a historically-significant addition.
- › Do not demolish a historically-significant addition.

3.46 Consider removing an addition that is not historically significant.

- › Ensure that the historic fabric of the primary structure is not damaged when removing these features.



Figure 86. While buildings in the rear generally have little impact on the character of the street, they do contribute to the character of the alley context and should be preserved.



Figure 88. Maintain character-defining features of a commercial building front.

Guidelines for Historic Commercial Buildings

The design guidelines below address topics specific to the rehabilitation of historic commercial properties. They supplement the preceding design guidelines for historic buildings. Both sections apply.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING FRONTS

Many commercial building fronts along First Street in downtown Benicia have traditional commercial building characteristics (see commercial building character-defining features on page 51.) The repetition of these features creates a visual unity at the street that should be preserved. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed. Preserving a historic commercial building front helps to perpetuate the identity of the district and maintains interest to pedestrians by providing views to goods and activities inside at the street level.

3.47 Maintain character-defining features of a commercial building front.

- › Preserve historic and decorative features, including storefronts, isolated display windows, upper story windows, trim, moldings, etc.
- › Do not alter the historic size, shape and location of an original opening.
- › Repair, rather than replace existing character-defining features.
- › It is understood that it may not be possible to repair an entire storefront in one step. In this case, a phasing plan that prioritizes repairs should be developed.

3.48 Repair an altered commercial building front to its original design, when feasible.

- › Use historic photographs when determining the original character of the design.
- › Note, that it may not be possible to achieve all original features, such as large awnings that extend significantly over the sidewalk.

3.49 Retain the original shape of the transom in a historic storefront.

- › Preserve the original shape of the transom.
- › If the original glass is missing, installing new glass is preferred.
- › Do not remove or enclose original transoms.

3.50 Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

- › Preserve the original kickplate.
- › If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

3.51 If the original kickplate is missing, develop a compatible replacement design.

- › Use wood or a material that is compatible with the existing building materials.

3.52 Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of a traditional storefront may be considered where the original is missing and no evidence of it exists.

- › Utilize a new design that continues to convey the character of a typical storefront. This includes display windows, kickplate and transoms for example.
- › The storefront should be in proportion to the building and the components should be appropriately proportioned to one another.



Figure 90. Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of a traditional storefront may be considered where the original is missing and no evidence of it exists.



Figure 89. Retain the original shape of the storefront including the transom, door height and kickplate on a historic building.

Altered Cornice



Reconstructed Cornice



BUILDING CORNICE

Original cornices can be distinctive features on historic commercial buildings and many include decorative features. They are a character-defining feature of the building and should be preserved.

3.53 Preserve a historic cornice.

- › Preserve decorative features of a cornice and do not alter the historic height or shape.
- › Repair, rather than replace existing architectural detailing.

3.54 Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

- › Use historic photographs to determine design details of the original cornice.
- › Match the original in overall size and profile.
- › Where an original cornice is missing, consider the substitution of another old cornice for the original, provided they are similar.
- › Where an original cornice is missing, consider an alternate material; for example, a decorative cast or metal cornice could be replicated in wood and painted.

3.55 A simplified interpretation is also appropriate for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.

- › Appropriate materials include brick, stamped metal, wood and some durable synthetics.

3.56 A parapet wall should not be removed or altered on a highly visible façade.

- › Inspect parapets on a regular basis. They are exposed to the weather more than other parts of the building, so watch for deterioration such as missing mortar or excessive moisture retention.
- › Avoid waterproofing treatments, which can interfere with the parapet's natural ability to dry out quickly when it gets wet.

3.57 When retrofitting a historic cornice or parapet to improve its ability to withstand seismic events, any negative impacts to the feature should be minimized.

- › Consult a professional when retrofitting a historic building for seismic events.



Figure 91. Preserve decorative features of a cornice and do not alter the historic height or shape.

BUILDING GALLERIES

Where one exists, a historic building gallery is a key feature of a commercial building front. The gallery connects the first and second stories and defines the sidewalk edge and can also provide shade and protection from the elements. Where a historic gallery exists, it should be preserved.

3.58 Preserve an original building gallery.

3.59 Repair an original building gallery where possible.

- › Use a material that matches the original materials in profile, shape and appearance.
- › Choose a material that has proven durability in the Benicia climate.

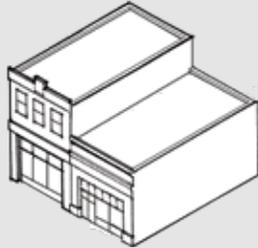
3.60 Reconstruct a missing gallery where historic evidence is available.

- › Use historic photographs to determine design details of the original gallery.
- › Do not add a gallery to a historic building where no historic evidence or documentation exists of an original gallery.
- › Ensure that adequate walk space is provided on the sidewalk, accounting for posts and other obstructions.
- › Coordination with the Department of Public Works will be required for galleries that overhang a right-of-way.



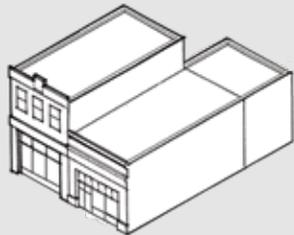
Figure 92. Preserve an original building gallery.

Locating an Addition to a Historic Commercial Building:



Historic Structure

The one and two-story commercial buildings illustrated above are historic.



Rear Addition

The rear addition illustrated at right is appropriate.



Rooftop Addition

The rooftop addition illustrated at right is appropriate because it is set back from the front façade.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING ADDITIONS

Two distinct types of additions to historic commercial buildings may be considered. First, a ground-level addition that involves expanding the footprint of a structure. Such an addition should be to the rear or side of a building. This will have the least impact on the character of the building. Second, an addition to the roof may be designed that is subordinate in character and set back substantially from the front of a building. In addition, the materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible with those of the existing structure. The sections found in Chapter 4: Designing in Context, General Design Guidelines for New Construction and Materials also apply to new additions.



Figure 93. Design an addition to relate to the building in mass, scale, proportion, character and form.

- 3.61 **Design an addition to appear subordinate to the main structure.**
 - › Design an addition to relate to the building in mass, scale, proportion, character and form.
 - › Do not locate an addition at the front of a building.

- 3.62 **Locate an addition so it does not damage character-defining features.**
 - › For example, avoid altering a historic cornice line.

- 3.63 **Design an addition to relate to the historic building, but to be clearly distinguishable as new.**
 - › Design an addition to be clearly distinguishable from the historic building, to avoid confusing the later addition with the historic building. For example, use contemporary details and materials that have similar horizontal lines.
 - › It is also appropriate to use the same materials; however, building features should be designed to be contemporary, or simple in design.
 - › Use similar opening proportions, façade rhythms, articulation and horizontal elements as the original structure.

3.64 An addition may be made to a flat roof of a commercial building if it does the following:

- › A roof addition should not be highly visible from the street and should preserve the perception of the building's historic scale.
- › The ceiling height of a roof addition should match the proportions (existing ceiling heights) of the existing building.
- › Where a roof addition is less than 15 feet in height, it should be set back at least 15 feet from the primary, character-defining façade.
- › Where a roof addition exceeds 15 feet, it should maintain a 1:1 ratio of height to setback from the primary, character-defining façade.
- › Design an addition to be a similar form as the original building, when feasible.
- › Design an addition to be modest in character, so it will not detract attention from the historic façade.
- › Design an addition to be distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.
- › Any new roof form should be proportional and appropriately scaled to the existing historic structure.

Setbacks of Vertical Rooftop Additions

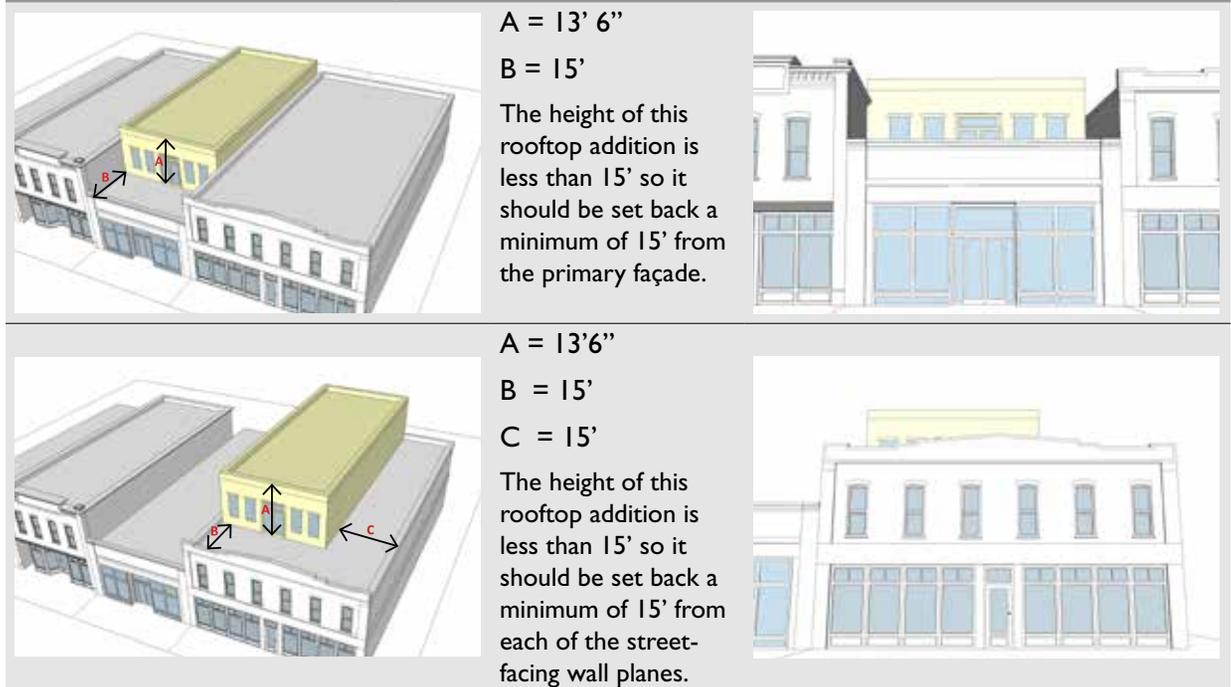


Figure 94. In general, a rooftop addition on a historic building should be set back from the primary façade by a dimension that is equivalent to the height of the addition, or fifteen feet, whichever is greater. A rooftop addition on a historic building that is located on a corner should be set back from the primary façade by a dimension that is equivalent to the height of the addition, or fifteen feet, whichever is greater; and should be set back from other street-facing wall planes by a dimension that is equivalent to half of the height of the addition, or fifteen feet, whichever is greater.



Figure 95. Maintain the existing location, shape, details and posts of the porch.



Figure 96. Repair those elements of a porch that are deteriorated.



Figure 97. Do not enclose an open porch.

Guidelines for Historic Residential Building Components and Sites

The design guidelines below address topics specific to the rehabilitation of historic residential properties. They supplement the preceding design guidelines for historic buildings. Both sections apply.

PORCHES

A porch is one of the most important character-defining features of a residential building. It provides a formal connection between the house and the street, provides visual interest and influences perceived scale. Almost always, the detailing used in the design of the porch is also found on the home and is meant to complement the overall design. In some cases, porches in Benicia were later additions that have taken on significance over time. Preserve a porch in its original condition and form.

Repair a deteriorated porch instead of removing or replacing it. This approach is preferred because the original materials contribute to its historic character. Even when replaced with an exact duplicate, a portion of the historic building fabric is lost; therefore, such treatment should be avoided when feasible.

If necessary, replace a missing porch with one that appears similar to that seen historically. The first step is to research the history of the house to determine the appearance and materials of the original porch. The most important aspects of a replacement design are its location, scale and materials. Unless reconstructing a porch from historic documentation, it is not necessary to replicate the details of the original porch or a porch design copied from a similar style house. It is important that new details be compatible (similar form, scale and materials) for the design of the porch and the style of the house.

3.65 Preserve the original porch, when feasible.

- › Maintain the existing location, shape, details and posts of the porch.
- › Maintain the overall composition when replacing porch features (i.e., when replacing balusters, match the original proportions and spacing).
- › Do not enclose an open porch.

3.66 Repair those elements of a porch that are deteriorated.

- › Do not remove damaged materials that can be repaired.
- › If replacement of porch features is required, replace only the deteriorated or damaged components of the porch to closely match the original in scale, dimension, style, design, and material and with the same details if possible.

3.67 If a porch feature has been altered, consider restoring it back to its original design.

- › If the historic design of the porch feature is unknown and there is no documentation of the original design, base the design of the restoration on other traditional porch features on buildings of a similar timeframe and architectural style.
- › The style, layout and design of new porch features should always be consistent with the house. Incorporate steps of the same material as the porch floor (e.g., porches with wood floors should also have steps made of wood, not concrete or brick).

3.68 When porch replacement is necessary, it should be similar in character, design, scale and materials to those seen traditionally.

- › Design the size of a porch to relate to the overall scale of the primary structure to which it is attached.
- › Design a replacement porch based on historic documentation.
- › Detailing a porch with non-traditional elements creates a false sense of history and is inappropriate.
- › If the historic design of the porch is unknown and there is no documentation of the original design, base the design of the replacement on other traditional porches on buildings of a similar timeframe and architectural style.

3.69 Use materials similar to those seen historically on a new porch.

- › Where materials similar to those originally used for a porch are unavailable, alternative materials that match the original in proportion, composition and texture may be considered.
- › Do not introduce brick or concrete staircases and steps if not original to the structure.

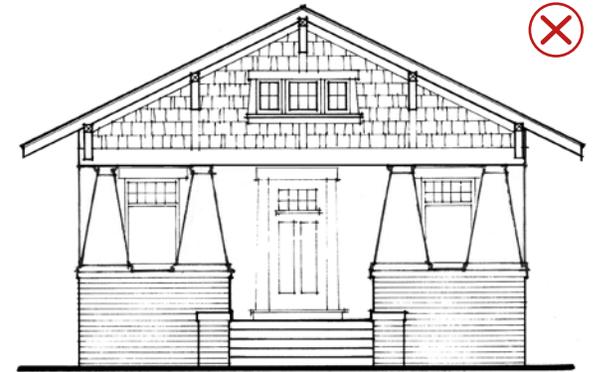


Figure 98. Detailing a porch with non-traditional elements creates a false sense of history and is inappropriate.

Typical porch features

KEY:

A	Porch Eave
B	Porch Vent
C	Decorative Roof Beam / Triangular Knee Brace
D	Column
E	Balustrade/Guardrail
F	Raised Pier
G	Porch Deck
H	Skirting/Screening
I	Stringer
J	Handrail

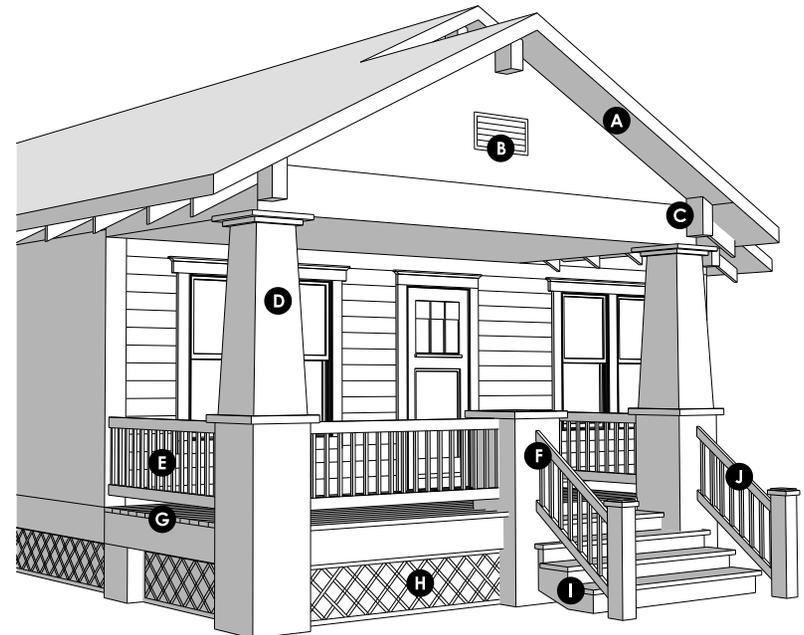




Figure 99. Maintain a historic porte cochere.

PORTE COCHERES

A porte cochere is a character-defining feature for an entryway and vehicular approach to a historic structure. Where a historic porte cochere exists, it should be preserved. New porte cocheres should not be added to buildings that did not historically have one.

3.70 Maintain a historic porte cochere.

- › Preserve the original form and any architectural details.
- › Do not enclose the structure.

3.71 Repair or replace a damaged porte cochere to its historic appearance.

- › Use materials that are similar to that of the historic materials.
- › When replacing a historic material, use one that is similar in proportion, depth and appearance.

NEW FOUNDATIONS

Some historic residential buildings in Benicia were designed to have the first floor raised above grade to exceed historic flood water levels or to account for topography of a site, sometimes by several feet but generally no more than half a story in height. In some cases, particularly for historic residential buildings that may not have been built with a foundation or when the foundation is deteriorated, it may be necessary to provide a new foundation. New foundations should be compatible with the surrounding historic context and should not negatively impact character-defining features of the historic structure such as a porch and its steps.

3.72 Locate the foundation height of a residential building to be compatible with the building type and surrounding historic context.

- › Ensure that the foundation height of an elevated structure is in scale with historic structures on the block face.
- › Ensure that the foundation height is compatible with the character and proportions of the elevated structure.
- › Do not raise a structure to install a street-facing garage door or new living area beneath the first floor.

3.73 When raising a residential building, minimize the visual impacts of any alterations, especially to character-defining features.

- › Maintain the design integrity of the original porch and stairs, along with the original historic fabric.
- › In the raised portion of the structure, align new window openings with window openings on the original part of the structure.

3.74 When raising a residential building, extend stairs to be compatible with the design of the front entry and porch.

3.75 Use compatible building materials for a new foundation.

- › Ensure that the materials are in scale and character with the historic building, and with other historic buildings on the block face.
- › Acceptable foundation materials include stone and poured concrete.
- › Typically, brick or brick veneer is an inappropriate material for a new foundation.



Figure 100. Locate the foundation height of a residential building to be compatible with the building type and surrounding historic context.

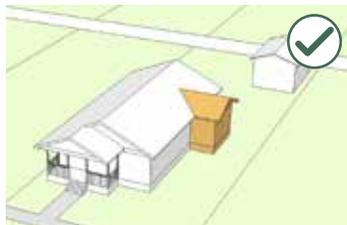
Rear Addition with Connector

- › Addition is placed to the rear of the structure, minimizing its visibility from the street
- › Addition is separated with a connector to distinguish it from the historic structure
- › Roof pitch matches historic building and eave line is maintained



Side Addition Set Back from Front Façade

- › Addition is not taller than the historic building
- › Addition is set back from the front wall of the historic building
- › Addition is attached to only one rear wall and does not require demolition of any portion of the building beyond the location to which it is connected



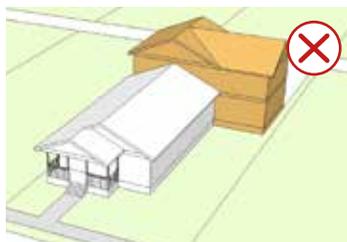
Rooftop Addition Inset from Historic Walls

- › Roof pitch matches that of historic building, but rooftop additions are not appropriate in Benicia



Two-Story Addition Offset from Historic Walls in “L-Form”

- › Height overwhelms historic building
- › Does not maintain corners of historic structure



NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDITIONS

This section provides design guidelines for designing compatible additions to historic buildings. An addition should be compatible with the primary structure and not detract from one’s ability to interpret its historic character. Guidelines regarding new construction in Chapter 4 also apply to new additions.

3.76 An addition should not result in the extensive removal of historic materials and should not damage or destroy significant original architectural features of the house.

3.77 Place an addition at the rear of a building or set it back from the front to minimize the visual impact on the historic building.

- › If a rear addition is not feasible, an addition on the secondary façade is acceptable when it is designed to complement the original building without overpowering it.
- › Where an addition is to be placed on a secondary façade, set it back from the primary façade a minimum of 15’ and design it to be lower in height than the historic building.

3.78 Design a new addition to respect the mass, scale and proportion of the original structure.

- › Design an addition to correspond in scale to the existing building and to not overpower it.
- › For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic building.
- › Design an addition to be simple in design to prevent it from visually competing with the primary façade of the historic building as viewed from the street.
- › Exact duplication of historic details and ornamentation on the original house is generally discouraged.

3.79 Consider incorporating a compatible connector between a historic building and new addition.

- › Use a one story or one-and-a-half story connector. Stepping down the height from the historic building is preferred.
- › Position the connector where it will have the least impact on the historic fabric of the existing building, typically at the rear of the building.
- › The design guidelines in this section also apply to a connector.

3.80 Design a roof form of a new addition to be in character with the original structure.

3.81 Where small increases in space are desired, consider the installation of a rooftop dormer.

- › When it is appropriate to the style, use a dormer to increase interior headroom height as opposed to raising the eave or ridge height of the roof.
- › Design a dormer to be visually subordinate to the overall roof mass and to be in scale with those on similar historic structures.
- › Locate a dormer on a side or rear façade.
- › Locate a dormer below the ridge line of the primary structure.
- › Design a dormer to be similar in character to the primary roof form.
- › Minimize the number and size of dormers as to not overwhelm the scale of the primary structure.

3.82 Do not install a new attached garage to the front of a building.

- › See Chapter 4 Design Guidelines for New Construction.

3.83 Residential garage additions are inappropriate.



Figure 101. Design a new addition to respect the mass, scale and proportion of the original structure.



Figure 102. This is a compatible rear addition even though it is slightly taller than the historic building. It is compatible because it is offset, separated by a connector and uses compatible materials.

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4

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES



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GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES



Figure 100. Rather than imitating older styles, a new design should relate to the fundamental characteristics of the historic context while also conveying the design trends of today.

This chapter provides design guidelines that promote new construction and changes to non-contributing structures in the Downtown District that are compatible with the historic context of the District. It includes design guidelines for new buildings and accessory buildings.

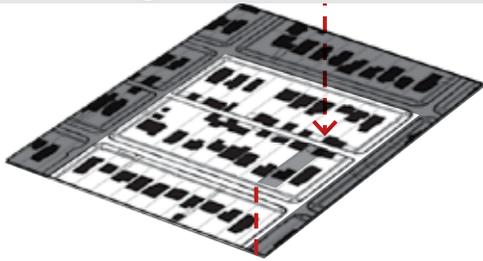
Designing a building to fit within the historic character of the Downtown District requires careful thought. Preservation in a historic district context does not mean that the area must be “frozen” in time, but it does mean that, when new building occurs, it should be in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of the district. This does not imply, however, that a new building must look old. In fact, imitating historic styles is discouraged.

Rather than imitating older styles, a new design should relate to the fundamental characteristics of the historic context while also conveying the design trends of today. It may do so by drawing upon basic ways of building that make up a part of the character of the district. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street, its neighbors, and its basic size, mass, form and materials. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally nearby, visual compatibility results. Note, it is important that new construction complement the buildings found along its specific block. A design that is appropriate along one block may not work on another block.

Historic District:



Surrounding Context/Block:



Adjacent Properties:

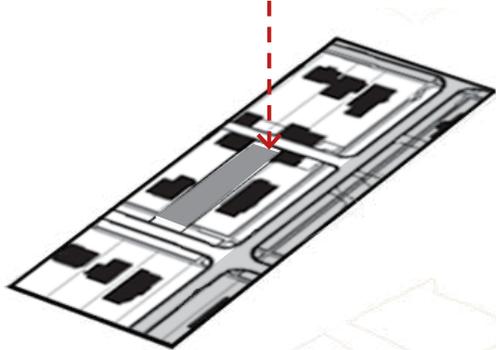


Figure 101. This series of illustrations provides examples of terminology related to design context. This particular example highlights a residential context.

Designing in Context

New construction projects in the Downtown District should be compatible with the surrounding historic context. This is especially important when considering new construction in a historic district. Context can be considered on three levels: Neighborhood Framework, Site Design and Building Design.

NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK

Neighborhood framework features are high-level characteristics that are often shared across blocks. They include the size and arrangement of lots and the layout of streets and alleys. In many cases, these features were established when properties were originally subdivided, helping to bind individual parcels together into a cohesive image.

Specific features in this category that contribute to physical character include:

- › Street layout (grid)
- › Lot size
- › Lot orientation
- › Alleys
- › General topography
- › Views & vistas

Most neighborhood framework features are fixed and will not change as new development occurs. However, the framework features of a neighborhood often influence the visibility and perception of new construction. A solid understanding of the neighborhood and site context should inform the design of new development so that new buildings and other improvements are responsible additions to the physical context of their neighborhood.

Residential Neighborhood Context: Block Montages

East F Street (looking North)



East F Street (looking South)



West H Street (looking North)



West H Street (looking South)



**CHAPTER 4: GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION
AND NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES**

West J Street (looking South)



West J Street (looking South continued)



SITE DESIGN

Site design elements relate to the arrangement of buildings and landscapes on individual properties. They include patterns of building setbacks, the percentage of landscape and open space, as well as the placement of site features on an individual parcel.

Specific features in this category that contribute to physical character include:

- › Amount of open space
- › Building setbacks
- › Fences
- › Building orientation
- › Location of primary and accessory buildings (such as garages)
- › Parking location
- › Drives and curb cuts
- › Cut & fill (site-specific topography)

BUILDING DESIGN

The design characteristics of historic buildings also help to define the physical context that contributes to the character of a neighborhood.

Specific features in this category that may be used in defining physical context:

- › Building age
- › Building style
- › Building height (including overall building height, and floor to floor plates)
- › Building form
- › Variation in wall planes
- › Building width
- › Floor area to lot size ratio
- › Building materials
- › The relationship of windows to solid wall areas (solid-to-void ratio)
- › Building use
- › Roof lines
- › Eaves and eave lines
- › Location of entries
- › Location of accessory structures



Figure 102. Porch height alignment defines the physical context that contributes to the character of the neighborhood.



Figure 103. The photograph above is an example of a new multi-family residential building type.



Figure 104. Commercial buildings are found predominantly on First Street and immediately to the east and west on some neighboring streets.

BUILDING TYPES

Considering the design characteristics above, there appear to be several distinct building types located in the Downtown District. These include:

Residential Building Types

These are found in the neighborhoods to the east and west of First Street and are typically designed with a pitched roof form. They include single-family dwellings, duplexes, flats and apartments, although single-family dwellings are the most common property type in the area. Many of the buildings also exhibit some or all of the following qualities:

- › Vernacular style
- › One- to one-and-a-half stories
- › Some grand examples throughout, but concentrated on East and West K Street
- › Bluff areas overlooking Carquinez Strait

Residential buildings tend to remain in use for their original purpose. However, historically Benicia had several boarding houses and hotels. Over time, these have incorporated commercial uses on the ground floor.

Commercial Building Types

Commercial buildings are found predominantly on First Street and immediately to the east and west on some neighboring streets. One type of commercial building is designed using a flat or parapet roof. The second type of commercial building utilizes a pitched roof form, most often a gable or hipped roof. This latter type of commercial building includes some distinct design considerations, which are noted throughout this document. These buildings tend to remain in use for commercial purposes, with residential or office uses located on upper stories.

Institutional Building Types

Institutional properties include libraries, courthouses, post offices, schools, churches, hospitals, social halls and union halls. These are typically larger, more ornate buildings than other property types. Most of Benicia's institutional buildings are located along First Street or in the upper portions of the Historic District, such as West J Street and East K Street. Many of these buildings represent some of Benicia's most outstanding architectural works, such as the old Masonic Hall and St. Paul's church. Due to their importance in the community, some of these buildings, such as the Benicia Capital Building, have been landmarked.

General Guidelines for New Buildings

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ORIENTATION

Traditionally, the primary entrance of a building faced the street. In residential settings, it was often sheltered by a porch; in a commercial setting, the entry was often recessed. These traditional development patterns should be continued.

4.1 Maintain the traditional orientation of a building to the street.

- › The placement of a new building should be consistent with the predominant orientation and setbacks of the historic buildings on the block.
- › Locate the primary entrance to face the street.
- › Where a front door is positioned perpendicular to the street, clearly define the entry with a walkway, porch, or stoop for residential building types, and with a recessed entry or canopy for commercial building types.

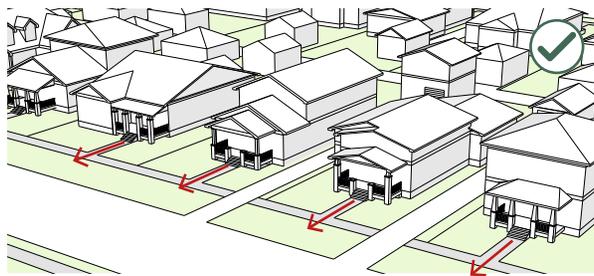


Figure 105. Maintain the traditional orientation of a building to the street.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

In order to assure that the history of the Downtown District can be understood, it is important that any new building be distinguishable from the historic structures. That is, a new building should appear as a product of its own time in terms of its style, while also being compatible with the context.

4.2 Design a new building to be recognized as current construction, while respecting design characteristics of the historic buildings in the context.

- › Use a simplified interpretation of historic designs found in the context, or use a contemporary design that reflects the established design characteristics. For example, use contemporary details, such as window moldings and door surrounds, to create interest and convey the period in which the structure was built and then locate them in a similar manner.
- › At a minimum, an acceptable design should be neutral and not detract from the historic context.
- › Include features that relate to the block, such as front porches in a residential setting, or a storefront in a commercial setting.
- › Do not employ a design or color palette that distracts from surrounding historic architecture and context.
- › A new building should employ a distinct architectural design concept and avoid “eclecticism,” which is the attempt to incorporate elements of various historic architectural styles into a single building design.

4.3 Do not imitate older historic styles for new structures.

- › Do not imitate a historic building’s stylistic features, as it blurs the distinction between old and new buildings and dilutes the true historic appearance of the District.
- › The design of a new building should be simply composed; avoid replicating or mimicking the distinctive features of landmark buildings or historic architectural styles.



Figure 106. Design a new building to be recognized as current construction, while respecting design characteristics of the historic buildings in the context.



Figure 107. Use exterior materials that create visual interest from the public realm and that are compatible with adjacent properties and the block.

Materials

Building materials for new structures, additions to existing contributing structures and non-contributing structures should contribute to the visual continuity of the neighborhood. They should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity. Select materials which are high quality, convey a sense of human scale and provide visual interest. Use green materials and those which improve environmental performance that have been proven effective in the local climate. Materials should also minimize negative environmental impacts.

4.4 Use traditional building materials that appear similar in scale, color, texture and finish to those used historically in the context.

Appropriate primary materials for all commercial buildings include:

- › Horizontal wood siding that is painted. This siding is the most typical material found in the district.
- › Stucco that is painted and is either smooth or lightly textured
- › Terra cotta

Appropriate primary materials for flat-roofed commercial buildings include:

- › Brick or brick veneer (i.e., thin brick set in mortar)

Inappropriate principal building materials for commercial buildings include (this list is not comprehensive):

- › Imitation or processed materials such as used brick, lava rock, PermaStone, TI-II and grooved plywood
- › Rustic or rough-hewn materials such as rough-sawn wood siding, textured-finish plywood, shakes, field stone and cobblestone
- › Utilitarian or industrial type materials such as corrugated metal siding, plastic panels, plywood siding, plain concrete block or slumpstone or exposed concrete
- › Synthetic stucco products such as Dryvit or EIFS

Appropriate secondary or accent façade materials for commercial buildings include:

- › Building bases made of smooth concrete, dressed stone or split-faced concrete masonry units
- › Brick or brick veneer (i.e., thin brick set in mortar)
- › Architectural details made of wood or stamped or rolled sheet metal
- › Railings made of milled wood or steel pipe. Wrought iron may be acceptable in limited applications for mixed-use buildings.
- › Tile, terra cotta or stone accents
- › Wood shingles in combination with painted wood siding (for pitched roof commercial buildings)

Inappropriate secondary or accent materials for new commercial construction include (this list is not comprehensive):

- › Wrought iron
- › Heavy timber
- › Shingles – wood, concrete or composition
- › Clay tile for mini-roofs, parapet coping or other accent applications

Appropriate primary materials for residential buildings include:

- › Horizontal wood siding and/or wood shingles, which should be painted
- › Stucco, if it is the original or predominate finish for adjoining building

Inappropriate principal building materials for residential buildings include (this list is not comprehensive):

- › Plywood, aluminum or other panel siding products, TI-II and composition shingles
- › Brick, stone, concrete and other types of masonry materials
- › Metals or metallic finishes
- › Rustic, rough-hewn or heavily textured materials such as wood shakes, rough-sawn timber or siding
- › Set in or “nail-on” aluminum windows with thin frames set close to the exterior wall surface

Appropriate Primary Commercial Materials



Wood



Stucco



Brick

Appropriate Primary Residential Materials

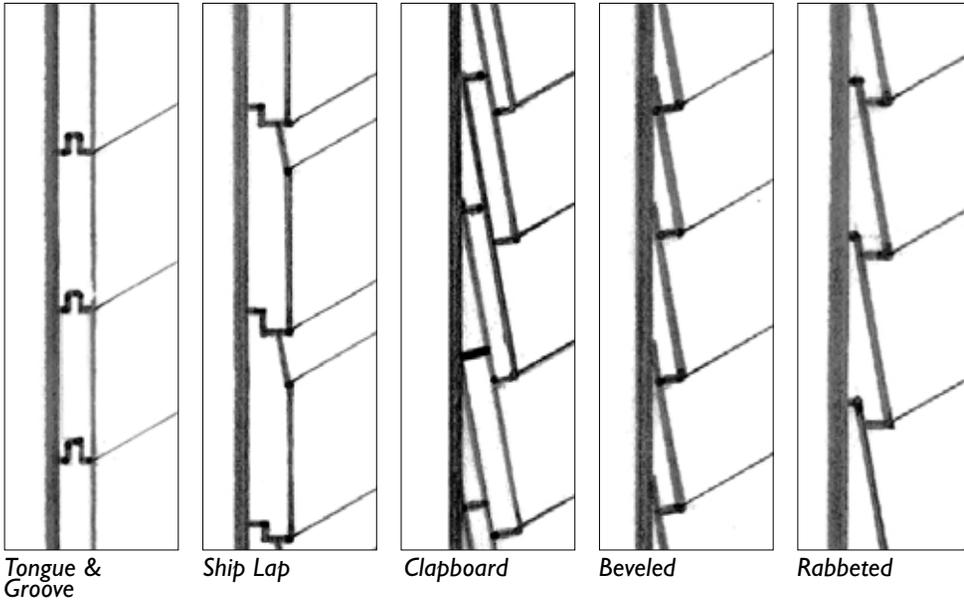


Wood

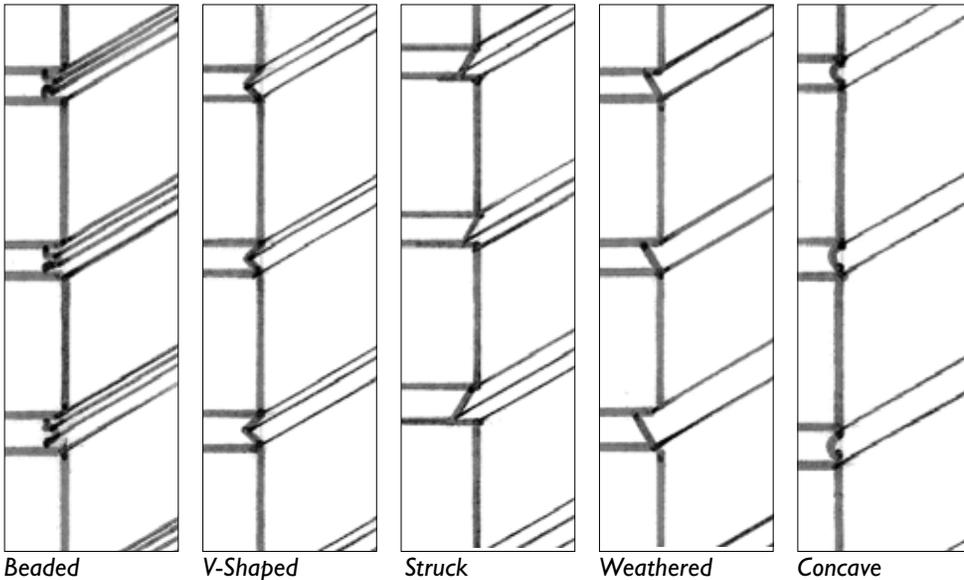


Stucco

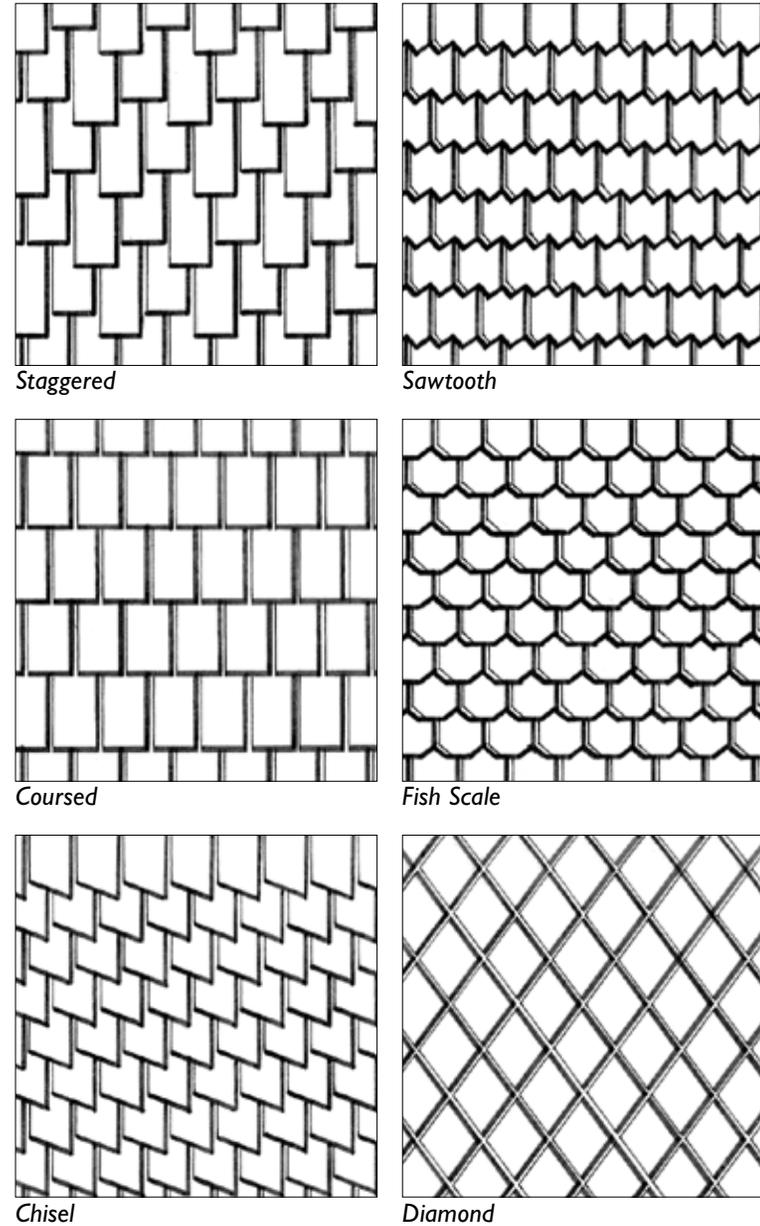
EXTERIOR SIDING



MASONRY JOINTS



SHINGLE PATTERNS



4.5 New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing.

- › Utilize alternative materials, such as fiber cement board siding (Hardi Board) only when they can be made to appear similar in scale, proportion, texture (smooth finish) and finish (paint) to those used traditionally for that particular building type.
- › Avoid introducing new materials with an appearance that is inconsistent with the historic context.

4.6 Use building materials that contribute to the traditional sense of scale of the block.

- › The dimensions of masonry and siding materials should be consistent with the surrounding area.

4.7 Establish a sense of human scale in the building design.

- › Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.
- › Incorporate modest changes in color, texture and materials to help define human scale.
- › Use architectural details to provide visual interest.
- › Use materials that help to convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.
- › Long blank walls are inappropriate.

4.8 Use high quality, durable materials.

- › Use materials that have proven to be durable in Benicia's local climate.
- › Where materials are pre-finished, ensure that façade materials maintain an intended finish over time, or acquire a patina which is understood to be an outcome of normal interaction with the elements. For example, colored concrete, plastics, or pre-colored cement siding shouldn't fade over time.

4.9 Use roofing materials that are compatible with the historic context.

- › Utilize composition shingles of neutral colors where pitched roof forms are visible.
- › Use a similar profile as traditional materials. For example, avoid the use of rustic and heavy-looking materials such as wood shakes and formed clay or concrete tiles for new commercial roofs.
- › Avoid highly reflective materials, which may result in glare.
- › Consider the use of mission style clay tiles or other decorative roofing materials only when authentic for the architectural style of the building.



Photo to come

Figure 108. Additions to non-contributing buildings should not take on such visual or physical prominence that they overwhelm nearby contributing and landmark structures.

Additions to Non-Contributing Properties

Additions to non-contributing properties in the Downtown Historic District should be compatible in scale and character with the historic buildings in the block. Both commercial and residential noncontributing buildings occur in the district. In general, alterations to noncontributing buildings should follow the applicable (commercial or residential) design guidelines for new construction, in addition to the following design guidelines.

Some non-contributing buildings have historic qualities, are designed with distinct architectural character and have consistency of materials, details and massing in themselves, which many people may appreciate and wish to retain. When alterations are planned, designing these improvements in a way that is consistent with this existing character is encouraged, but it is not a requirement because “preserving” this character is not expected for a non-contributing (non-historic) property.

4.10 Design an addition to a non-contributing building to be compatible in mass and scale with historic buildings in the District.

- › Step down the height of an addition when it abuts a smaller historic structure.
- › Additions to non-contributing buildings should not take on such visual or physical prominence that they overwhelm nearby contributing and landmark structures.

4.11 Locate an addition to a non-contributing building to maintain established setback patterns found in the District.

Guidelines for New Commercial Building Types

This section provides design guidelines for new commercial building types. New commercial building construction should reflect many of the design features found within traditional commercial buildings. The guidelines also apply to new additions to non-historic commercial buildings.

BUILDING SETBACKS

Buildings in the downtown create a strong edge to the street because they are traditionally aligned on the front lot line and usually built out the full width of the parcel to the side lot lines. In some areas of the downtown, small forecourts or plazas adjoin the sidewalk edge. These unexpected pockets of private open space help to add variety to the street environment but should remain the exception. The physical alignment of buildings is vitally important to the First Street commercial district where a street wall is a prominent feature.

4.12 Reflect the traditional setbacks seen within the block.

- › Where historic structures are positioned at the sidewalk edge, creating a uniform street wall, locate a new building to maintain this alignment. Some flexibility may be permitted where public placemaking benefit is provided. For example, a seating area, modest forecourt, small plaza or dining area may be considered.
- › Locate corner buildings to the front property line on both street property lines. These buildings are critical to the downtown character as they establish a presence at intersections and invite pedestrian activity along a street.
- › Avoid physical gaps in the street wall along First Street. Where gaps are necessary, minimize interruptions by providing outdoor dining or gathering spaces, low decorative or seating walls or low decorative fencing.



Figure 109. Where historic structures are positioned at the sidewalk edge, creating a uniform street wall, locate a new building to maintain this alignment.

Development Prototype

In some locations off First Street a cluster of buildings may be appropriate. These can provide small pockets of open space with shared parking.

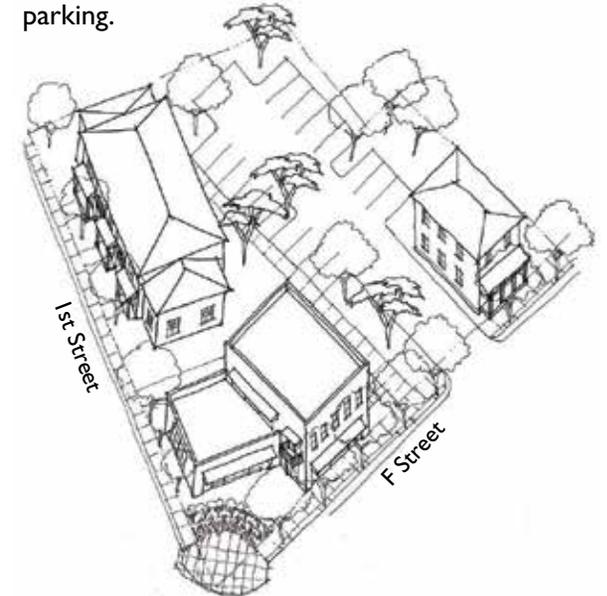




Figure 110. Orient a building toward a plaza to invite pedestrian activity.



Figure 111. Incorporate transparent features to create a connection between the building functions and the pedestrian realm.

4.13 Maintain the traditional pattern of buildings facing the street.

- › Locate a primary entrance to face the commercial street and design it to be prominent.
- › Angled corner entrances are appropriate for buildings located at the intersection of First Street and a secondary roadway.
- › For a commercial storefront, use a recessed entry.

4.14 Orient a building toward a plaza to invite pedestrian activity.

- › Orient a building entrance to face the plaza.
- › Provide a storefront or pedestrian-friendly façade.
- › Consider providing an active use at the ground level such as an outdoor dining area to activate the plaza.



Figure 113. Consider providing an active use at the ground level such as an outdoor dining area to activate the plaza.

Double-fronted

Some commercial buildings in the District present opportunities for the building to orient toward multiple features. For instance, buildings fronted by the water and First Street should orient toward both, by providing a pedestrian-friendly façade.

4.15 Design each façade to be pedestrian-friendly.

- › Incorporate transparent features to create a connection between the building functions and the pedestrian realm.
- › Design a prominent entrance for each façade.



Figure 112. Design each facade to be pedestrian friendly. For instance, buildings fronted by water and First Street should orient toward both.

BUILDING MASS AND SCALE

Traditionally commercial buildings had a variety of heights, rooflines, building shapes and storefronts that, together, created what we now think of as the traditional main street.

A new building should be in harmony with the scale and appearance of First Street, particularly at the street level. Scale includes not just the overall height and width of a building, but also the sizes and proportions of building features, as they relate to each other and to people. People interpret their surroundings by their experience which, in the downtown, is typically from the pedestrian perspective. This is sometimes referred to as “human scale.” For example, providing a storefront creates a sense of human scale. A sense of scale is also affected by the size and proportions of a building as it relates to its neighboring buildings. New buildings should not be monolithic in scale or greatly contrast with those seen traditionally in the District. To ensure human scale is achieved in new downtown commercial development, it is important to focus design attention on aspects most directly experienced by pedestrians, such as the scale of the building and architectural details at the street level.

Traditional buildings along First Street mostly have simple rectangular volumes or masses, and this should be continued. Mass, or massing, is a combination of building volume and the arrangement of the shapes and forms that make up the building. A building could be long and low, tall and skinny, or something in between.

These features are some of the important characteristics of commercial building types and should be respected in all new construction.

4.16 Establish a sense of human scale in building designs.

- › Use vertical and horizontal articulation (offsets) to break up large façades.
- › Incorporate subtle changes in color, texture and materials in building designs to help define human scale. It is not necessary to create “false” building façades to achieve this objective.
- › Use architectural details that create visual interest and convey a three-dimensional façade.
- › Use materials which help to convey scale through their proportions, detailing and form.
- › Use appropriately scaled signs and awnings to engage pedestrians and help define building entries.
- › Avoid long, featureless walls not broken up by architectural elements such as windows and doors.
- › Ensure that proportions of openings or other architectural elements are consistent with existing buildings on First Street, particularly those along the same block, to maintain visual continuity.



Figure 114. Use materials which help to convey scale through their proportions detailing and form.



Figure 115. Incorporate subtle changes in color, texture and materials in building designs to help define human scale.



Figure 116. Design a new building to include floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those of traditional buildings in the area.



Figure 117. Incorporate a base, middle and cap in a new building.

4.17 Maintain the traditional height of buildings as perceived at the street level.

- › Design a façade to be of a height that falls within the established range of the block.
- › Design a new building to include floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those of traditional buildings in the area.

4.18 Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of uniform building widths along the street.

- › Design a new façade to reflect the established range of the building widths seen on the block.
- › Where a modest increase in building width is proposed, use a change in design features to suggest the traditional building widths. Modest changes in façade material, window design, façade height or decorative details are examples of techniques. These variations should be expressed through the structure such that the composition appears to be a collection of smaller building modules.
- › Where buildings in excess of 75' are proposed, a significant offset or pass-through should be provided so they don't appear as one large mass.

4.19 Incorporate a base, middle and cap in a new building.

- › This should appear similar to the traditional proportions and composition of base, middle, and cap features of a historic building.

4.20 Position a taller portion of a structure away from neighboring buildings of a lower-scale.

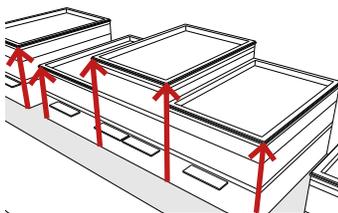
- › Step a building down towards lower-scaled neighbors, including adjacent historic properties.
- › Buildings along First Street generally have a prevailing height of one to two stories. New buildings should present a consistent or complimentary height as viewed from the pedestrian level, with any additional height elements, such as a half story, penthouse or rooftop mechanical equipment, stepped back using a line of sight methodology.



Figure 118. Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of uniform building widths along the street.

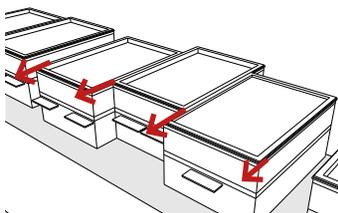
Recommended Articulation Methods

The following models illustrate some ways in which a building can be articulated to express a human scale.



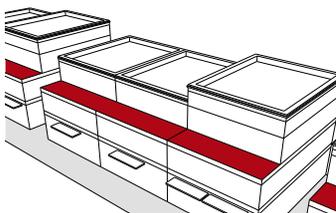
Vertical Variation

Vertical variation is an actual change in the vertical scale of a building of at least one floor.



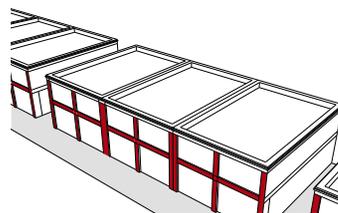
Wall Plane Offsets

Wall plane offsets include notches or breaks in the building façade. They should generally extend the full height of the building and are most successful when combined with changes in roof form or building materials.



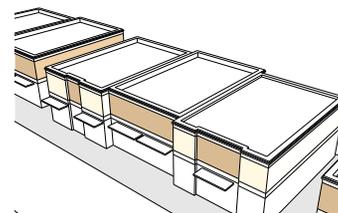
Upper Level Stepback

Upper level stepbacks add visual interest and reduce the visual mass and scale or potential looming impacts of a larger building.



Wall Plane Projections

Wall plane projections include pilasters, moldings or columns that generally rise the full height of the building façade to add visual interest and express traditional façade widths.



Variations in Material

Variations in material add visual interest and express traditional façade widths. Such changes may be vertical or horizontal and often follow a repeating pattern. See “Appropriate Building Materials ” on page 96 for more information.

Note:
Images and models in this diagram are intended to illustrate articulation techniques. The design, mass and scale of the images may be inappropriate for Benicia.



Figure 119. A prominent unifying element in the commercial area of the Downtown District is the similarity in building forms that exists. Many are simple rectangular solid structures with flat roofs, although gable and hipped roof forms are also characteristic of the district.

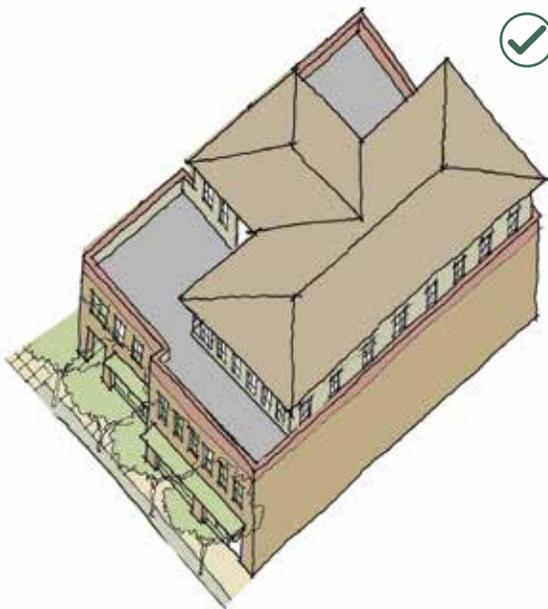


Figure 121. Simple rectangular forms should be dominant on commercial façades.



Figure 120. Design a new building to reflect the roof forms seen traditionally such as flat, hipped and gabled roofs.

BUILDING AND ROOF FORM

A prominent unifying element in the commercial area of the Downtown District is the similarity in building forms that exists. Many are simple rectangular solid structures with flat roofs, although gable and hipped roof forms are also characteristic of the district. This simplicity of form should continue, in terms of the predominant features of any new building.

4.21 Simple rectangular forms should be dominant on commercial façades.

- › Design the façade to appear as a flat surface, with any decorative elements, and projecting or setback “articulations” to be subordinate to the dominant form. A projecting gallery may be appropriate in limited applications where appropriate to the context and design intent of the building.

4.22 Design a roof form to be similar to those used traditionally.

- › Design a new building to reflect the roof forms seen traditionally such as flat, hipped and gabled roofs.
- › Do not use “exotic” roof forms such as A-frames and steep shed roofs.
- › Do not utilize a complex mix of roof forms.

HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT

A strong alignment of horizontal elements exists along the street. Alignment is seen at the first floor level with moldings found at the top of display windows; where upper floors exist, alignment is found among cornices, eaves, window sills and headers. This alignment of horizontal features on building façades should be preserved. Slight variations do occur throughout the downtown, which highlight the district's evolution over time and add visual interest. Major deviations from these relationships disrupt the visual continuity of the street and are to be avoided.

4.23 Maintain the general alignment of horizontal features on a building front.

- › Typical elements that align include:
 - › Storefronts
 - › Window moldings
 - › Tops of display windows
 - › Awnings
 - › Cornices, copings and parapets at the tops of buildings (some variation in heights is appropriate)
 - › For large buildings, there should be some slight variation in alignments between the horizontal façade elements.



Figure 122. Define the first and second floors with clearly distinguishable details.

4.24 Define the first and second floors of commercial buildings with clearly distinguishable details.

- › Incorporate changes in horizontal details to help define the first and second floors.
- › Incorporate changes in material, color, texture, pattern or wall plane to help define the first and second floors.



Figure 123. Incorporate changes in horizontal details to help define the first and second floor.



Figure 124. Use a ratio of solid-to-void (wall-to-window) that is similar to that found on traditional one- and two-story commercial building fronts.



Figure 125. When incorporating a storefront into a new design, express all of the components that create a storefront.

COMMERCIAL FAÇADE CHARACTER

Historic commercial façades in the District, especially along First Street, exhibit a mix of façade designs. Some buildings incorporate a traditional storefront system with large display windows at the street level and smaller windows on the second floor. Other two-story buildings in the commercial area incorporate modest sized windows on the ground floor, with similar windows on the second story above. In addition, single-story buildings exhibit a mix of windows with some utilizing a storefront and others utilizing modest sized fixed windows. With this eclectic mix of building fronts along First Street, a new building front may be designed in a variety of ways. However, the design should still reflect established building alignments, solid-to-void ratios and recessed entries. In addition to the display area, some historic buildings also incorporate galleries. Galleries extend along the outside wall of the building, typically along First Street, and are supported by columns that are open on three sides.



Figure 126. When incorporating a storefront into a new design, express all of the components that create a storefront.

4.25 Use a ratio of solid-to-void (wall-to-window) that is similar to that found on traditional one- and two-story commercial building fronts.

- › The following composition of window openings to wall area are appropriate:
- › Storefront at the street level with punched window openings on the second floor. The lower floor appears more transparent.
- › Punched window openings at both the street level and upper floors. The street level can appear more transparent or equal to the openings on the upper floor.
- › A combination of a storefront system at the street level and punched openings. The lower floor appears more transparent.
- › For one-story buildings, a storefront system, punched window openings or a combination of the two is appropriate.

4.26 When incorporating a storefront into a new design, express all of the components that create a storefront.

- › Express a kickplate, display window and transom in a new storefront design.
- › Design storefront components and upper story windows to be similar in height and proportion to traditional commercial buildings in the District.
- › Floor to ceiling display windows on commercial storefronts are to be avoided.

4.27 Incorporate a recessed entry to maintain the pattern created by historic commercial buildings.

- › Set the door back an adequate distance from the front façade to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians. A recessed dimension of four feet is typical for commercial entrances.
- › Entries should be recessed only on the bottom floor; upper stories should maintain the presence at the street property line.
- › Whereas prominent storefront entrances are encouraged, exterior doorways that access upper levels should be set away from First Street and employ minimal detailing.
- › Use transoms over doorways to maintain the full vertical height of the storefront.
- › Do not position new doorways in a manner that would require doors to open into the public right-of-way.

4.28 Design a new gallery to be similar to those found traditionally.

- › Design a new gallery to be simple in design.
- › Design a new gallery to reflect a similar height and depth to traditional galleries.
- › Design a gallery to be continuous along the building front.
- › Incorporate columns that are evenly spaced and scaled to be similar to those found traditionally.
- › Ensure that adequate clearance is provided on the public sidewalk for pedestrian travel and anticipate accessibility requirements for customers and passers-by.

4.29 Use durable storefront materials that are compatible with the scale and context of the District.

Appropriate storefront materials include:

- › Clearly or lightly tinted glass in painted wood frames or factory finished colored aluminum frames
- › Concrete ceramic (not mosaic) tile, wood or metal panels (painted), marble or stone panels (not tiles) for the kickplate
- › Glass doors in frames to match storefront framing
- › Milled wood doors – with or without glazing

Inappropriate storefront materials include:

- › Clear anodized aluminum frames for doors or windows
- › Materials listed as inappropriate for façades
- › Brick infill for the base of storefront windows. Brick is only acceptable if it is an integral part of the storefront design and is the same color and pattern of brick used for the overall façade.
- › Wood shakes or shingles for storefront bases, fixed awnings or mini-roofs

4.30 Use similar window and door proportions to those seen traditionally.

- › Design windows to emphasize the vertical dimension. A general rule for individual windows (not storefronts) is that the height of the window should be twice the dimension of the width in most areas.
- › If a larger window is needed, combine sets of vertically proportioned windows.
- › Do not utilize odd window shapes such as octagons, triangles and diamonds in the District.



Figure 127. Use similar window and door proportions to those seen traditionally.



Figure 128. Incorporate a recessed entry to maintain the pattern created by historic commercial buildings.

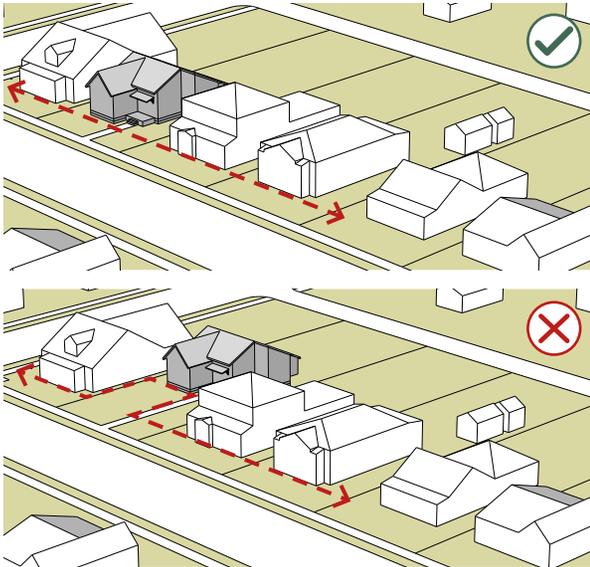
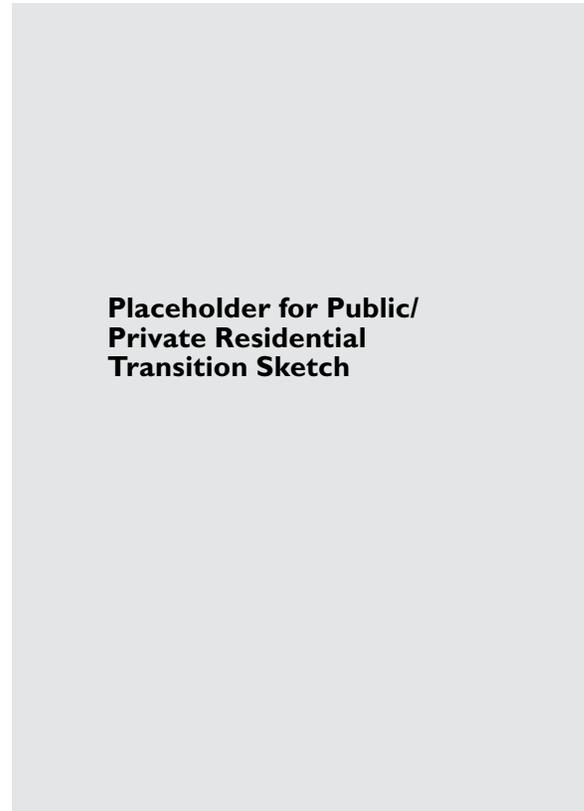


Figure 129. Reflect the traditional setbacks seen within the block.

Guidelines for New Residential Building Forms

This section provides design guidelines for new residential buildings in the Downtown District.



Placeholder for Public/ Private Residential Transition Sketch

BUILDING SETBACK

Building setbacks in a traditional neighborhood reflect a hierarchy of public and private space. It is a progression that begins at the street, which is the most public space, then proceeds through the front yard, which appears “semi-private,” and ends at the front door, which is the “private” space. This sequence enhances the pedestrian environment and contributes to the character of a residential neighborhood; this should be maintained.

- 4.31 Maintain the traditional setback pattern of the neighborhood.**
 - › Align a new building within the established range of setbacks that occur along the block.
 - › In a traditional residential neighborhood, maintain the front yard with live landscape material. Do not cover the front yard with paving, stones or large outdoor decks.

- 4.32 Provide a walkway from the street to the building.**
 - › Provide a walkway from the street to the front porch, or front door of the primary residence.

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ORIENTATION

The compatible placement and orientation of new residential buildings with historic development patterns is crucial in order to retain the character of the neighborhood.

4.33 Locate a new primary building to fit within the established setback and yard patterns seen in the District.

- › Locate a structure to maintain the side and rear yard spacing pattern on the block as seen from the street.
- › Where front yard setbacks are uniform, place a new structure in alignment with its neighbors.
- › Where front yard setbacks for historic structures vary along a block, place a new structure within the established range of front yard setbacks.
- › The arrangement of buildings and yards should be respected along alleys, where the space between a detached garage and the primary residence creates a corridor of private open space along the block.

4.34 Preserve the traditional orientation of buildings along the street.

- › Orient a new building front to face the street.
- › On a corner lot, orient the new building to align with the predominant entrance frontage for the surrounding area (typically facing a north or south property line).



Figure 130. Orient a new multifamily building front to face the street.



Figure 131. Locate a new primary multifamily building to fit within the established setback and yard patterns seen in the district.



Figure 133. Design a porch to be compatible with the historic context.

PRIMARY ENTRANCE

A new residential building should have a clearly defined front entrance that is oriented to the public street.

4.35 Clearly define a primary entrance.

- › Provide a front porch, open terrace or similar feature for single-family and two-family residential buildings.
- › Incorporate a projecting portico, porch, canopy, awning or recessed entry with decorative surrounds to define a primary entry for multifamily building types.
- › New buildings should not have the front entrance oriented to an alley.

4.36 Design a porch to be compatible with the historic context.

- › Proportion a front porch and its key features to be compatible in size (height and width), height and scale with the building and its surrounding historic context.
- › Locate a front porch in alignment to those seen in the neighboring context.
- › Use materials and porch elements that are similar to those seen historically, but simpler in design. Some contemporary interpretation may be appropriate. They should not copy stylistic details from historic buildings.

4.37 Minimize the appearance of outdoor balconies and decks.

- › Locate decks to the rear of the property to respect the historic context.
- › A balcony may be appropriate if modest in size and incorporated into a gable end or porch roof. The preferred location of a balcony is on the rear or secondary façade of the home.



Figure 132. Clearly define a primary entrance.

MASS AND SCALE

Traditionally residential buildings had a variety of heights, rooflines and building shapes that, together, created what we now think of as the traditional residential neighborhood.

A new building should be in harmony with the scale and appearance of the traditional residential block. Scale includes not just the overall height and width of a building, but also the sizes and proportions of building features, as they relate to each other and to people. People interpret their surroundings by their experience, which is typically from the pedestrian perspective. This is sometimes referred to as “human scale”. For example, providing a front porch creates a human scale, especially in a residential setting. These features should be respected and utilized in all new construction to relate to historic residences. A sense of scale is also affected by the size and proportions of a building as it relates to its neighboring buildings. New buildings should not be monolithic in scale or greatly contrast with those seen traditionally along the street. To ensure human scale is achieved in new residential development, it is important to focus design attention on aspects most directly experienced by pedestrians, such as the scale of buildings and architectural details at the street level. Larger, multi-family buildings should use smaller building modules to reflect the predominant scale and façade rhythms of nearby historic residences.

Most traditional residential buildings have simple rectangular volumes, or masses with some variation in the wall plane, and this should be continued. For example, incorporating projecting bays, porches and balconies helps to articulate the mass. Mass, or massing, is a combination of building volume and the arrangement of the shapes and forms that make up the building. A building could be long and low, tall and skinny, or something in between, for example.

These features are some of the important characteristics of residential building types and should be respected in all new construction.

4.38 Construct a new building to be similar in mass and scale to traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

- › Design a new building to be within the typical range of building volumes along the block.
- › Use traditional features that convey a human scale, such as windows and doors of similar sizes.
- › Use building materials of traditional dimensions. Horizontal wood siding is encouraged.
- › The scale of a new structure should not compete with, or visually overwhelm, that of nearby landmark structures.
- › This guideline may result in designs that do not achieve the full size potential of underlying zoning.



Figure 134. Construct a new building to be similar in mass and scale to traditional buildings in the neighborhood.



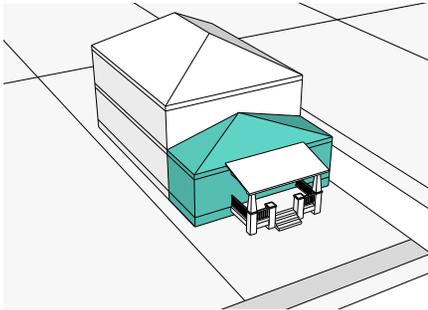
Figure 135. Use façade articulation techniques to help a building fit within the scale of the surrounding historic context.

Articulation Methods

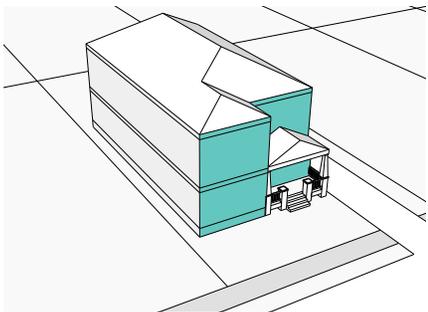
The following models illustrate some ways a building mass can be varied to reduce the perceived mass and to relate to the scale of adjacent buildings. A photo accompanies each model to show a built example of the articulation method.

Front Wall Articulation Methods

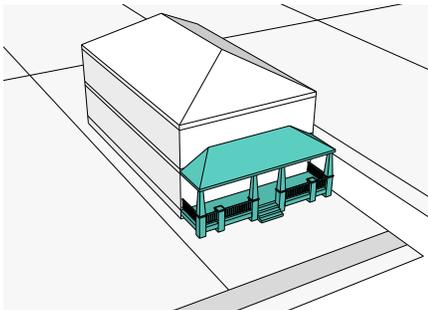
Front Wall Stepback



Front Wall Offset

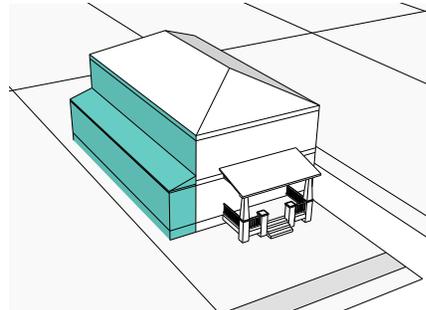


Front Wall One-Story Element

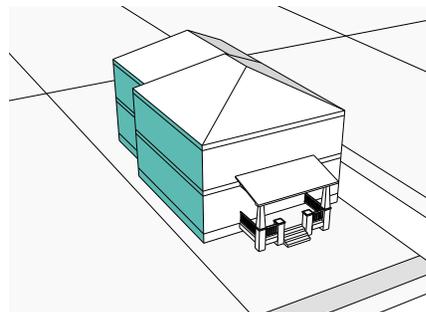


Side Wall Articulation Methods

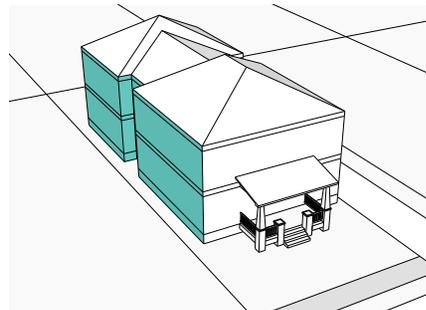
Side Wall Stepback



Side Wall Offset



Side Wall Plane Change



4.39 Design a building front to appear similar in size to traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

- › Design the height of a new building to fall within the established range of the block, and to respect the traditional proportions of height to width. New construction should not exceed the predominant building height of the historic structures on the block by more than one-half story.
- › Design floor-to-floor heights and foundation heights to appear similar to those of traditional buildings in the area. Note, foundations that were raised from the original foundation should not be used for comparison.
- › Use a similar building width as those seen traditionally.

4.40 On a larger structure, subdivide the mass into smaller “modules” that are similar in size to traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

- › Subordinate modules may be attached to the primary building form.
- › Avoid busy and complex building forms.
- › For two modules of similar size, provide a connector between them to separate the volumes.



Figure 137. Design a building front to appear similar in size to traditional buildings in the neighborhood.



Figure 136. The new building above is out of character because it appears much larger than the houses in the surrounding context.



Figure 138. Although the two houses are quite different in design, the overall effect is harmonious, thanks to similar massing, scale, and form.



Figure 139. On larger multifamily buildings, use facade articulation techniques to help the buildings fit within the scale of traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

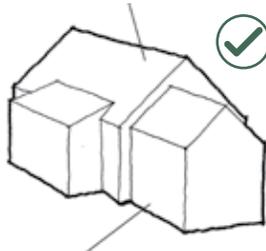


Figure 140. Subdivide the mass of a larger building into a simple primary volume with additional secondary volumes, similar to historic buildings in the surrounding context.

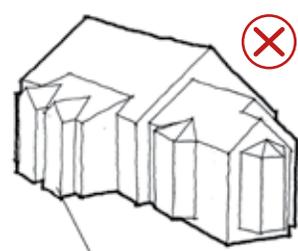


Figure 141. Avoid “busy and complex” building forms.

- 4.41 On larger buildings, use façade articulation techniques to help the building fit within the scale of traditional buildings in the neighborhood.**
- › Use vertical and horizontal wall offsets (changes in wall plane) to reduce the overall scale of a building as viewed from the street and to reduce the visual impacts of long side walls.
- 4.42 Position taller portions of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower-scale.**
- › Design a building to step down towards lower-scaled neighbors, especially historic properties.
- 4.43 Consider the topography of a site and design a foundation to fit the site.**
- › For instance, if a site is raised above the street level, design a foundation to be at or slightly above finished grade so that the building does not loom over the street.

BUILDING AND ROOF FORM

In the majority of the District, a similarity of building and roof form also contributes to a sense of visual continuity. In order to maintain this characteristic, a new building should have basic building and roof forms similar to those seen traditionally.

4.44 Use building and roof forms similar to those seen traditionally on the block.

- › Design a new building to include a roof form that is seen traditionally, which is often a hip or gable roof with overhanging eaves and occasionally a flat roof.
- › Do not use an exotic or shed roof form on a primary structure.



Figure 143. Design a new building to include a roof form that is seen traditionally, which is often a hip or gable roof with overhanging eaves and occasionally a flat roof.



Figure 142. Do not use an exotic or shed roof form on a primary structure.



Figure 144. Use materials that are of a similar color, texture and scale to materials of the primary building.



Figure 145. Locate a secondary structure off an alley, where possible.

SECONDARY STRUCTURES

Secondary structures, such as garages and accessory dwelling units, are traditionally subordinate in scale and character to a primary structure and are typically located to the rear of the lot. They are primarily used for parking garages, storage and living units. While structures in the rear generally have little impact on the character of the street, they do have an impact on the character of the alley and the neighbors to the rear. This subordinate character should be maintained.

4.45 Locate a secondary structure to the rear of the lot.

- › Locate a secondary structure off an alley, where possible.
- › Where it is not possible to locate a secondary structure off an alley, locate the secondary structure toward the rear of the lot set back significantly from the primary structure.
- › Orient the garage door to the alley.

4.46 Design a new secondary structure to be subordinate in height to primary structures seen along the street front.

- › Design a secondary structure to be no more than one-and one-half stories in height.

4.47 Design a secondary structure to be compatible with the primary structure.

- › Design the mass, form and roof shape of a new garage or secondary structure to be compatible with the primary structure.
- › Use materials that are of a similar color, texture and scale to material of the primary structure.



Figure 146. Design a secondary structure to be no more than one-and one-half stories in height.

4.48 Provide garage access from an alley where possible.

- › Do not use double or multiple garage doors on street front façades.
- › Where no alley is provided, garages should be accessed from the side street on a corner lot. A driveway access may be required for mid-block parcels, but the driveway should extend to the rear of the lot where the detached garage is located.



Figure 147. Design the mass, form and roof shape of a new garage or secondary structure to be compatible with the primary structure.

Recommended Locations for Secondary Structures

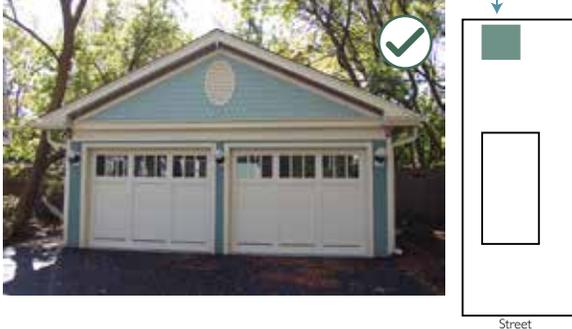
The diagrams below illustrate the recommended location for a secondary structure. This includes a shed, studio, garage or other type of building.

Detached Structure to the Rear of Primary Structure (Visible from the Street)



The secondary structure is located to the rear of the site and is visible from the street.

Detached Structure to the Rear of Primary Structure (Not Visible from the Street)



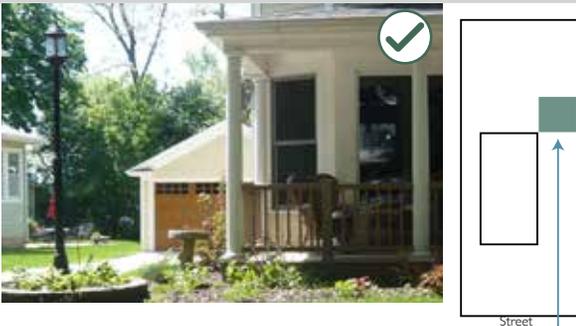
The secondary structure is located to the rear of the site, and placed fully behind the rear of the primary structure.

Attached Structure to the Rear of Primary Structure (Not Visible from the Street)



The secondary structure is located to the rear of and attached to the primary structure. It is not visible from the street.

Detached Structure at Rear of Primary Structure



The secondary structure is located to the rear of the primary structure and is visible from the street.

Incorporated Structure, Flush with Front Wall of Primary Structure



The secondary structure is slightly recessed from the front-most wall of the primary structure.

Attached Structure to the Side of and Flush with Front Wall of Primary Structure



The secondary structure is attached to the primary structure and is flush with the front wall of the primary structure.

Guidelines for New Civic Buildings

The design guidelines in this section focus on principles for new civic building projects that reinforce the historic building fabric and enhance the pedestrian environment in the Downtown Historic Conservation District. To do so, they draw upon principles established in traditional commercial and residential buildings. While these are the majority of property types that will occur in the area, civic facilities should be a part of the urban mix as well.

Civic facilities include museums, churches, schools, libraries, fraternal buildings, transit improvements, courts and governmental offices. The tradition of designing civic institutions as landmarks in the urban fabric should be continued. At the same time, the basic principles of urban design outlined in this document should still apply.

4.49 Civic buildings should reflect basic urban design principles in their designs.

- › Locate a civic facility such that it encourages pedestrian traffic to nearby businesses.
- › The location of a civic facility should not interrupt or interfere with the continuity of the surrounding area, for example blocks that are entirely commercial or residential in character.



Figure 148. Construct a civic facility that is appropriately scaled to its environment and engages the pedestrian along the street.

4.50 Design an outdoor civic space to enhance the downtown fabric of streets, public spaces and sidewalks.

- › Design an outdoor civic space for active public use and encourage pedestrians to use the area.
- › Minimize the visual and safety impacts of automobiles.
- › Provide convenient, safe, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian connections.
- › Maintain significant view corridors.
- › Design the space to balance landscape and hardscape elements.
- › Design the space to include streetscape furnishings such as lighting, benches and public art.

4.51 Construct a civic facility that is appropriately scaled to its environment and engages the pedestrian along the street.

- › Design a civic facility to:
- › Provide a pedestrian-friendly street level.
- › Reflect the design guidelines for mass, scale and materials for commercial building types.
- › Convey a sense of human scale.
- › Locate an entrance to face the street or outdoor civic space rather than parking lots.
- › Consider a design for a civic facility that sets it apart from other traditional buildings within the context.

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GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Promoting a more sustainable community is a fundamental goal for the City of Benicia. The guidelines in this section address sustainability from a design perspective and apply to both historic preservation and new construction throughout the Downtown Historic District.

At a neighborhood level, this may include ways in which buildings are designed to provide solar access to abutting properties. For individual historic buildings, it includes making best use of inherent energy-saving features; for all sites, it includes considerations for use of sustainable materials, managing storm water and a variety of technological systems.

General Sustainability Guidelines for All Projects

The guidelines in this section apply to all types of projects that might incorporate improvements that could enhance the sustainability of the building or site.



Figure 149. Use native and drought-tolerant species to be suited for Benicia's dry and windy summer climate in a landscape design where feasible.



Figure 150. Locate trees and other vegetation to provide for summer shading and allow winter solar access.

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Landscape improvements can have a very significant impact on sustainability. For example, a landscape design can moderate the temperature of a home by providing shade in summer and solar warming in winter. Landscape improvements can contribute to water efficiency, clean air and minimize urban heat island effects. In all cases, designing improvements to enhance the sustainability of a building, its site and neighborhood is a goal.

Landscape designs, including plantings and site structures, can take advantage of microclimatic conditions for energy conservation. Consider managing solar and wind exposure in all seasons in making landscape decisions. Researching the Benicia climate to understand how to best take advantage of these factors will be important. Property owners should also become familiar with state requirements relating to landscape water efficiency, as well as local standards and best management practices for on-site stormwater management. The Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMA) provides resources to address post construction requirements, which can be found at: <http://basmaa.org/Announcements/resources-to-address-post-construction-requirements-phase-ii-provision-e12>.

- 5.1 **Select plant species that support sustainability.**
 - › Use native and drought-tolerant species that are suited to Benicia's dry and windy summer climate in a landscape design where feasible.
- 5.2 **Locate plants to maximize sustainability benefits while retaining the traditional context.**
 - › Locate trees and other vegetation to provide for summer shading and allow winter solar access.
- 5.3 **Design landscape improvements to maximize the efficiency of water use on site.**
 - › Plan to minimize or eliminate watering. For example, place drought-tolerant plants along the contours of a sloped site to help slow runoff and increase percolation into the soil, thereby reducing or eliminating the need to irrigate those plants.
 - › Where use of a watering system is necessary, use one that minimizes water loss, such as a drip irrigation system.
 - › Place more water-intensive species in areas which receive shade, as this reduces evaporative water loss.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) PRINCIPLES

Low Impact Development (LID) is a specific development strategy that addresses stormwater runoff at the source, closely mimicking the natural, pre-development, hydrologic systems rather than building infrastructure to handle runoff. Integrating stormwater management and LID principles into the design of a site not only helps address stormwater effectively, but can also be used to create outdoor areas with active uses. For this reason, properly integrated LID and stormwater management practices help achieve the goals of these design guidelines overall. The guidelines below are intended to promote the use of Low Impact Development principles while also providing site amenities that help enhance community image. In some instances, LID techniques and other stormwater measures may be required by the City of Benicia’s stormwater manual.

5.4 Incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) principles to mitigate stormwater impacts.

- › Incorporate a natural drainage way as an amenity into the site plan.
- › Avoid altering or obscuring natural drainage ways.
- › Additional LID management systems include:
 - Permeable surfaces and paving systems
 - Bioretention and other planted drainage areas
 - Green roofs, rain barrels/cisterns and other building systems

5.5 Incorporate and design stormwater management systems as site amenities.

- › Possible stormwater management systems include:
 - On-site rainwater collection and filtration
 - Outdoor areas that serve as rainwater detention/retention area
 - Green roofs to help address stormwater impacts
- › Minimize the use of rip rap and other devices that do not appear natural in character.

5.6 Incorporate stormwater management systems to maximize water quality. Consider management systems that:

- › Infiltrate stormwater into the ground to mimic the natural water cycle.
- › Remove pollutants from stormwater through uptake by plants and trees in rain gardens.
- › Provide flows through vegetative buffers to remove nutrients and pollutants.

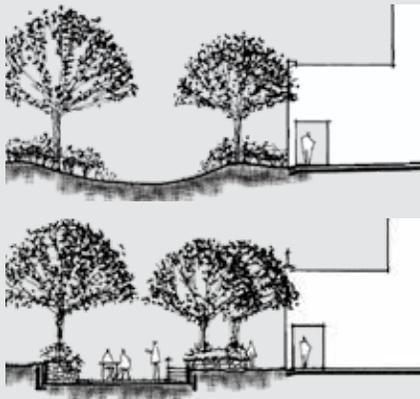


Figure 151. Incorporate stormwater management systems to maximize water quality.

Low Impact Development Systems as Site Amenities

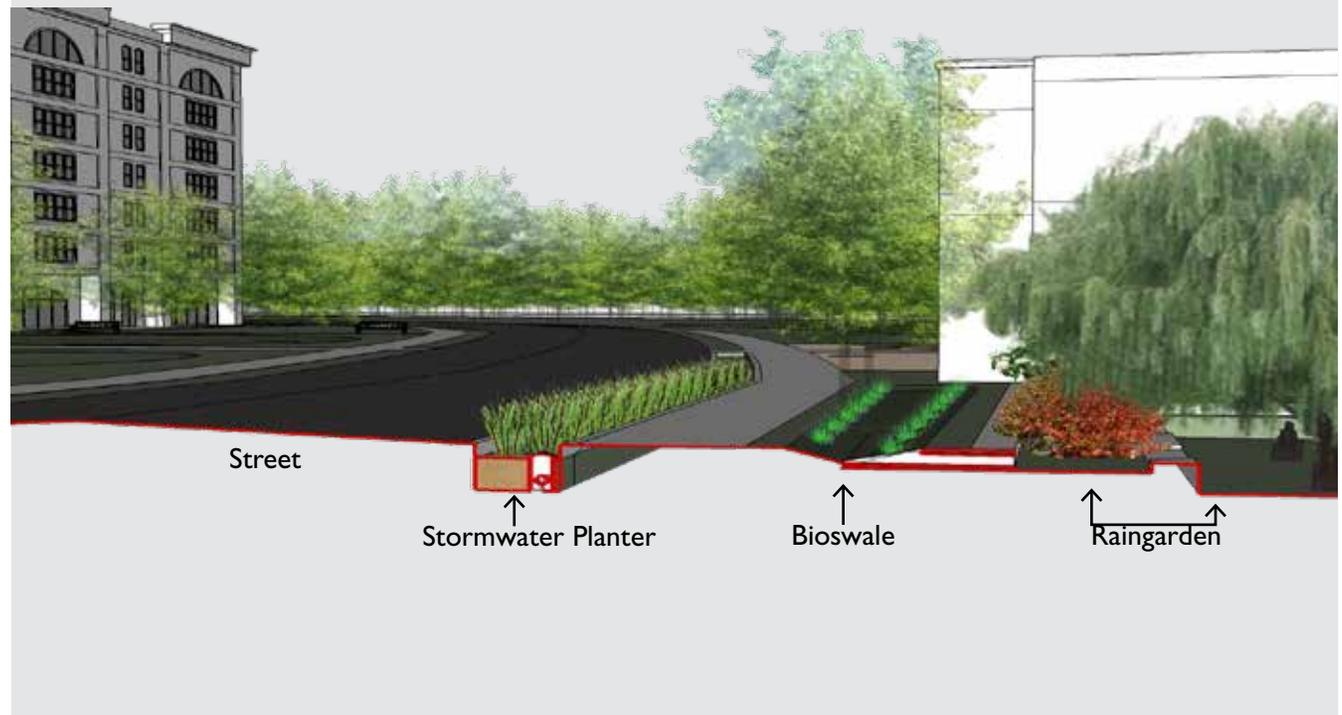
Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management approach to address rainfall in a way which more closely mimics the natural hydrologic system at the site prior to any development. Techniques include those which infiltrate, store, filter, evaporate and detain stormwater close to the location where the rain fell. LID principles encourage integrating stormwater management systems into landscapes and open space throughout a site. Illustrations, resources and other information regarding LID principles and stormwater management systems are provided below.

Stormwater Retention Areas as Amenities



The design guidelines promote using LID principles to integrate stormwater management systems with public open space areas. The stormwater treatment areas illustrated above serve as a passive landscape amenity (top) and an outdoor seating area with a permeable surface (bottom).

Coordinating Management Systems to Promote Low Impact Development



Permeable Surfaces



Permeable surfaces include paving systems that allow rainwater to percolate into the ground underneath. Such systems can significantly reduce runoff generated by parking areas, drive aisles, pedestrian paths and plazas.

Stormwater Planters



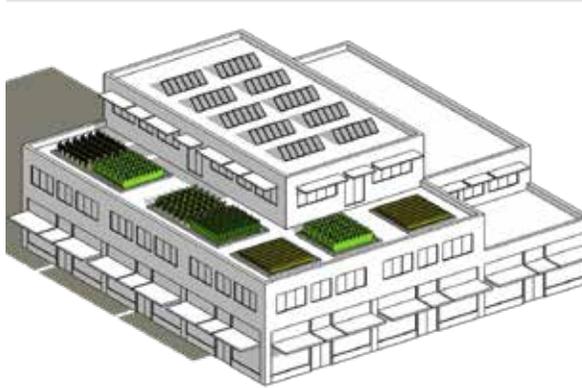
Stormwater planters are specialized planter systems installed adjacent to a sidewalk to manage street and sidewalk runoff. The planter is lined with a permeable fabric, filled with gravel or stone, and topped off with soil, plants, and sometimes trees.

Bioretention



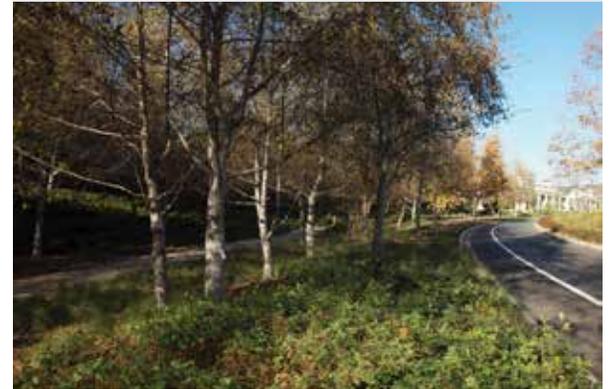
Bioretention systems manage and treat stormwater runoff in a shallow depression filled with a soil bed and planting materials to filter runoff. They help provide greater site utilization and attractive landscape areas while protecting water quality.

Green Roofs



Green roofs and roof gardens are vegetated roof systems that help detain, filter and absorb rainfall. They may also provide heating and cooling benefits for the building.

Bioswales & Vegetated Swales



Bioswales and vegetated swales are linear bioretention systems used to partially treat water while also conveying flows to larger bioretention or other stormwater management systems.

Tree Preservation



Preserving mature trees helps manage the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground to provide benefits for stormwater management.

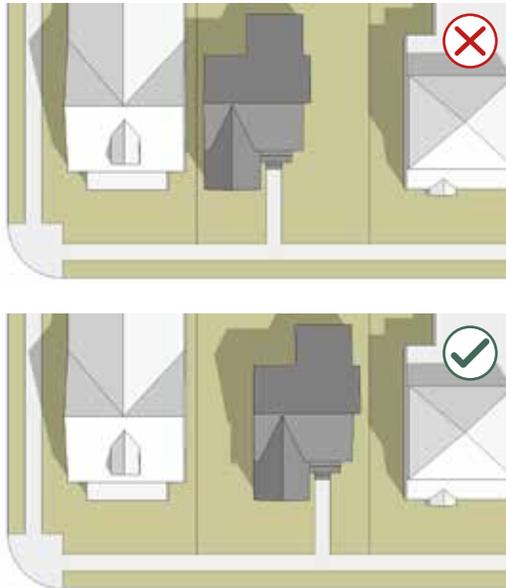


Figure 152. Locate a new building to maximize passive solar potential. This example illustrates a building (top) imposing on its neighbor's solar access.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS TO NEIGHBORS

A design should take into account the potential effect on an adjoining property and the neighborhood setting, in terms of its sustainability and solar access.

5.7 Maintain solar access opportunities for neighboring properties.

- › For example, limit shading of south-facing façades, outdoor dining areas, plazas and garden areas.

5.8 Incorporate sustainable practices and green infrastructure which increases energy efficiency and beautifies buildings and spaces.

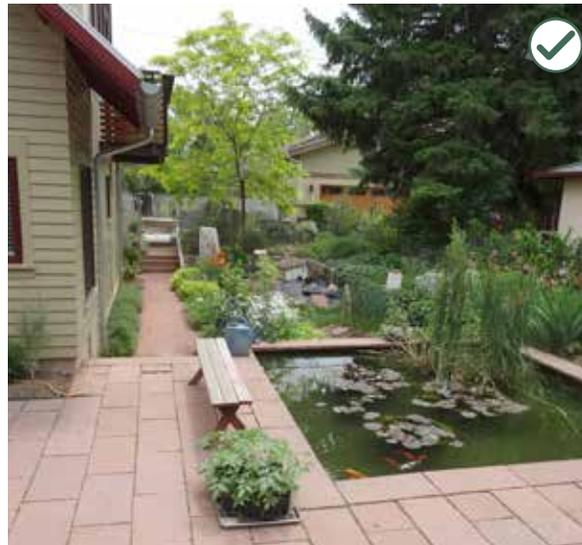


Figure 153. Incorporate sustainable practices, such as an urban garden, that increase energy efficiency and beautifies buildings and spaces.

PAVING MATERIALS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Permeable paving maintains moisture in the soil, reduces demand on storm sewer systems and allows for ground water recharge. Permeable paving materials should be incorporated into site designs including courtyards, plazas and walkways. They also should be considered in the design of service and parking areas.

5.9 Design a permeable paving system to convey a character similar to traditional paving materials in residential neighborhoods.

- › Apply permeable paving materials similarly to traditional paving materials in the District.
- › Using paving strips and paving stones or bricks for walks and drives in traditional residential settings is encouraged.

5.10 Provide a permeable parking surface when feasible.

- › Permeable pavement surface parking systems are encouraged in residential and commercial areas. They reduce stormwater runoff, and enhance water filtration and storage. These types of systems can also help to reduce heat island effects.

Sustainability of a Historic Building

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Original building features and systems that contribute to sustainability should be maintained in good operating condition.

5.11 Preserve the inherent energy efficiency of a historic building.

- › Identify inherent sustainable features and operating systems and maintain them in good condition.
- › Repair or restore covered, damaged or missing features where appropriate.

5.12 Maintain a building's sustainability features in operable condition.

- › Retain original awnings and transoms to increase the range of conditions in which a building is comfortable without mechanical climate controls.
- › Maintain windows in operable condition to increase natural ventilation and reduce the need for mechanical climate control during moderate weather.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Improvements to enhance the energy efficiency shall complement the historic building. The structure, form and materials shall be sensitively treated to preserve the building's character.

5.13 Use noninvasive strategies when applying weatherization improvements.

- › Weather-stripping, insulation and wood storm windows are energy efficient, cost effective, and historically sensitive approaches.
- › Weather-strip the original framework on windows and doors.
- › Install additional insulation in an attic, basement or crawl space as a simple method to make a significant difference in a building's energy efficiency. Provide sufficient ventilation to avoid moisture build-up in the wall cavity.
- › Where applicable, install draft stoppers in a chimney. Open chimney dampeners can increase energy costs by up to 30 percent.
- › Install weatherization in a way that avoids altering or damaging significant materials and their finishes.
- › Use materials which are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.

Double-Hung Window Ventilation

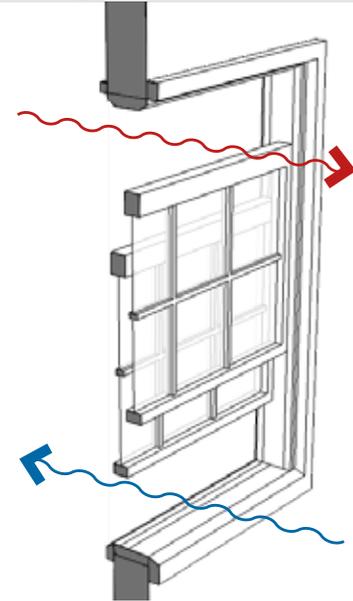


Figure 154. Double-hung windows allow for two-way ventilation with cool air flowing in and warm air flowing out.

5.14 Enhance the energy efficiency of original windows and doors.

- › Make best use of original windows; keep them in good repair and seal all leaks.
- › Safeguard, retain and reuse early glass, taking special care in putty replacement. Maintain the glazing compound regularly. Remove old putty with care.
- › Use operable systems to enhance performance of original windows. This includes wood storm windows, insulated coverings, curtains, and awnings. Double pane glazing may be acceptable where original glazing has been lost and the frame can support the weight and profile.



Figure 155. This rain barrel is part of a resource conservation strategy. Locate energy generating technologies like this feature towards the rear of a building if feasible.

INTEGRATING ENERGY GENERATING TECHNOLOGIES ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS

When integrating modern energy technology such as solar collectors or wind turbines into a historic structure, maintain the resource's historic integrity and the ability to interpret its historic significance. The use of energy-generating technologies should be the final option considered to make a historic building more energy-efficient. One should first utilize strategies to reduce energy consumption prior to undertaking an energy generation project. Consider the overall project goals and energy strategies when determining if a specific technology is appropriate for a project.

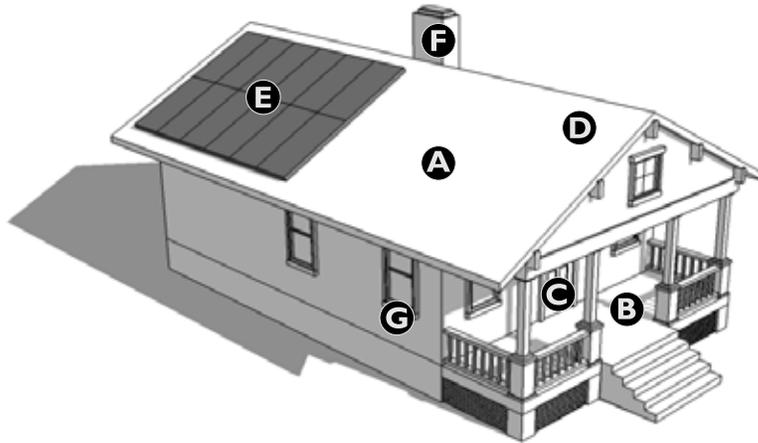
As new technologies are tried and tested, it is important that they leave no permanent negative impacts to historic structures. The reversibility of their application will be a key consideration when determining appropriateness.

- 5.15 **Locate an energy generating device to minimize impacts to the historic character of the resource.**
 - › Locate energy generating equipment where it will not damage, obscure or cause removal of significant features or materials.
 - › Maintain the historic character of the building in doing so.

- 5.16 **Install any new technology in a reversible manner.**
 - › Install energy generating devices in such a way that they can be readily removed and the original character easily restored.
 - › Use materials which are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.

Historic Residential Building Energy Efficiency Strategy:

The following National Park Service preservation brief at www.nps.gov provides additional information: *Preservation Brief 3: Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings*



- A** Attic & Walls:
 - › Insulate internally

- C** Doors:
 - › Maintain original doors
 - › Weatherstrip
 - › Install a storm door

- E** Solar Panels:
 - › Set back from primary façade to minimize visibility from street

- G** Windows:
 - › Repair & retain original or early windows

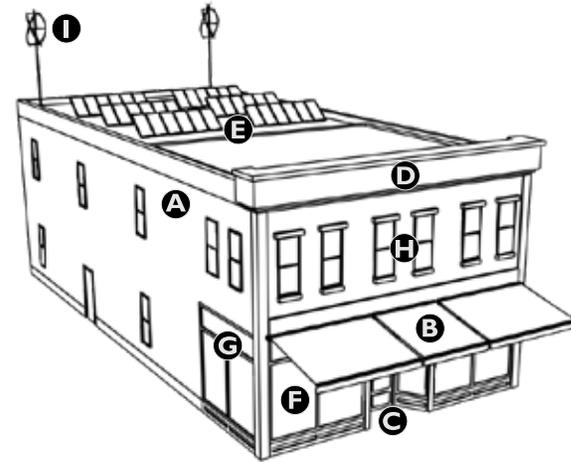
- B** Awnings & Porches:
 - › Restore porches and awnings

- D** Roof Material:
 - › Retain & repair

- F** Chimney:
 - › Install draft stopper

Historic Commercial Building Energy-Efficiency Strategy:

This diagram below illustrates a general strategy for energy conservation on a traditional commercial building. These measures can enhance energy efficiency while retaining the integrity of the historic structure.



- A** Attic:
 - › Insulate internally

- C** Doors:
 - › Maintain original doors
 - › Weather-strip

- E** Solar Panels:
 - › Set back from primary façade to minimize visibility from street

- G** Clerestory Windows:
 - › Retain operable clerestory window to circulate air

- I** Wind Turbines:
 - › Set back from primary façade to minimize visibility from street

- B** Awnings:
 - › Use operable awnings to control solar access and heat gain

- D** Roof Material:
 - › Retain & repair

- F** Display Windows:
 - › Maintain original windows
 - › Weather-strip

- H** Windows:
 - › Maintain original windows
 - › Weather-strip and caulk
 - › Add storm windows



Figure 156. Consider installing collectors on a subordinate addition or a secondary structure where applicable.



Figure 157. Locate attached or detached solar technologies, such as solar panels and solar cells, where sun will be harvested, as well as where technologies are least visible from the public realm.

SOLAR COLLECTORS

Solar collectors should be designed, sized and located to minimize their effect on the character of a historic building.

5.17 Minimize potential adverse effects from solar collectors on the character of a historic building.

- › Place collectors to avoid obscuring significant features or adversely affecting the perception of the overall character of the property.
- › Size collector arrays to remain subordinate to the historic structure.
- › Minimize visual impacts by locating collectors back from the front façade when feasible.
- › Mount collectors flush below the ridge line on a sloping roof so the basic roof form is apparent.
- › Consider installing collectors on a subordinate addition or a secondary structure where applicable.
- › Exposed hardware, frames and piping should have a matte finish, and be consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.

5.18 Use the least invasive method feasible to attach solar collectors to a historic roof.

- › Install a collector in such a way that it can be removed and the original character easily restored.
- › Collector arrays should not threaten the structural integrity of the building.
- › Avoid damage to significant features when attaching solar collectors.

5.19 Consider using building-integrated photo voltaic technology where the use of new building material is appropriate.

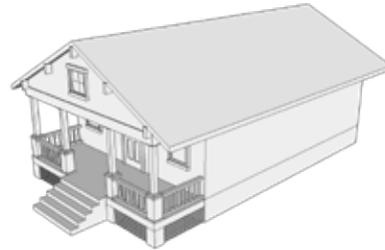
- › Installing integrated photo voltaic systems should be planned where they will not hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the structure. For example, installing solar shingles on a rear or secondary roof facade where the original roof material is missing or significantly damaged would be appropriate.

Locating Solar Panels on a Historic Structure

When locating historic panels on a historic building, it is important to consider the building's significance as well as the visibility of the proposed installation location.

Existing Structure

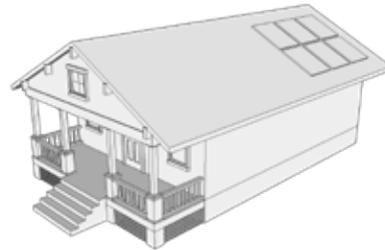
The two-story structure illustrated at right has a significant south-facing sloped roof area.



- › Gable roof end faces the street
- › Side of roof faces south

Preferred Location

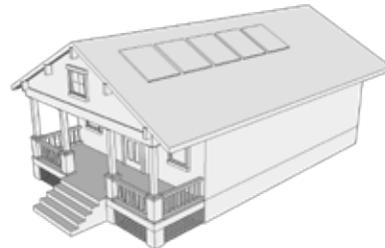
If the existing structure has a high level of historic significance, the surrounding context has many intact historic structures or the roof is highly visible, panels should be set back from the front façade and flush-mounted to the roof



- › Panels are set back from the front façade
- › Panels are flush with the roof

Acceptable Location

If the roof is highly visible and/or site constraints restrict solar access, it may be appropriate to locate flush-mounted solar panels towards the front façade.



- › Panels are set back from the eave, but closer to the front
- › Panels are flush with the roof
- › Panels are subordinate to the roof plane



Figure 158. Design building projects to reduce stormwater runoff by including a green roof.

GREEN ROOFS

A green roof, which uses vegetation as a means of moderating building temperatures and conserving water, may be suitable for some flats roofs, particularly on commercial buildings. When planning a green roof, minimize visual impacts that affect one's ability to interpret the historic character of a building. Compatibility with the historic district should be the primary consideration as well. Note that it is not the intent to hide a green roof completely from view, but to assure that the historic character of the property can still be perceived.

5.20 Minimize adverse effects of a green roof on the character of a historic building and the district.

- › Locate a green roof on a historic residential building to the rear of the building or on a subordinate side wing set back from the front façade.
- › Locate a green roof on a flat-roofed historic commercial building to be set back from the parapet.
- › Consult a professional engineer prior to installing a green roof to ensure an existing structure can be modified to accommodate a green roof.

DECONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING MATERIAL RE-USE

Deconstruction refers to the careful disassembly of a building, or its components, such that the materials can be reassembled or reused in other construction. While maintaining historic building materials in place is best, occasionally their removal will be necessary. To the maximum extent feasible, historic building materials approved for removal should be reused on site or repurposed for use off-site. Keeping these historic building materials in use will reduce demand on landfill space and maintain a greater supply of appropriate materials for the repair of other historic properties. A building may not be demolished or deconstructed without review by the Historic Preservation Review Commission, as outlined in Chapter 17.54 of the Benicia Municipal Code.

5.21 Plan for the repurposing of historic building materials when approved for removal or demolition.

- › Repurpose the maximum amount of historic building materials feasible.
- › When alternatives to demolition have been exhausted, and demolition of a historic property approved, a deconstruction program should be used to guide the careful salvage of historic materials, details and features.
- › Consider repurposing other intact and salvageable building materials for the reconstruction and/or new construction, as well.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Preserving rather than replacing a building can significantly reduce environmental impacts. Re-using a building preserves the energy and resources invested in its construction, and removes the need for producing new construction materials.

The best use for a historic structure is that for which the building was designed or a closely related one. Every effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building, one that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site. An example of an appropriate adaptive use is converting a residence into a Bed and Breakfast. This can be accomplished without major alteration of the original building fabric.

It may be that in order to adapt a building to the proposed new use, such radical alteration to its significant elements would be required that the entire concept is inappropriate. In most cases, however, designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new functions.

5.22 Seek uses that are compatible with the historic character of the building.

- › The use should not adversely affect the historic integrity of the building.
- › The use should not alter character-defining features of the structure.
- › The use may help to interpret how the building was used historically.

5.23 Choose a new use that requires minimal change to the existing structure when feasible.

- › When a more significant change in use is necessary to keep the building in active service, those uses that require the least alteration to significant elements are preferred.
- › Where a larger alteration is needed in order to accommodate a new use and to keep the building in active service, design the changes to respect the historic integrity of the building.



Figure 159. Choose a new use that requires minimal change to the existing structure when feasible. This gallery utilized the open floor plans, entrances, plaza space and lighting of the original buildings.

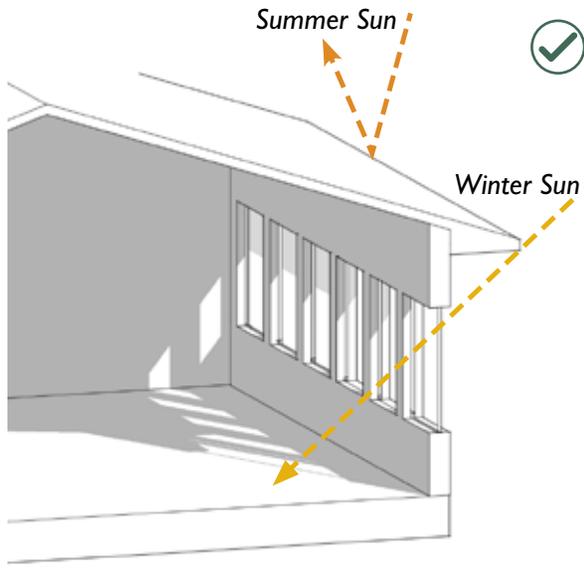


Figure 160. Shape a building's mass to maximize solar energy potential. An eave overhang protects the wall material and also assists in cooling the building in the summer.

New Construction and Sustainability

The Benicia General Plan sets goals for the long-term sustainability and livability in the Downtown District. New construction supports sustainability by leveraging existing infrastructure and bringing housing and employers into closer proximity of downtown. New construction in the Downtown District should further support sustainability by incorporating energy efficient designs while maintaining the traditional character of the area.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN

The design of a new building should maximize the potential for natural daylighting and solar energy collection while also ensuring that the building's massing is compatible with the traditional context.

5.25 Shape a building's mass to maximize solar energy potential.

Consider the following strategies:

- › Building designs that allow natural daylighting to the interior.
- › Articulated wall planes that provide shade or increase solar access to interiors.
- › Roofs oriented to accommodate solar collectors.
- › Thermal storage walls on a portion of the south facing building exposure, where appropriate.

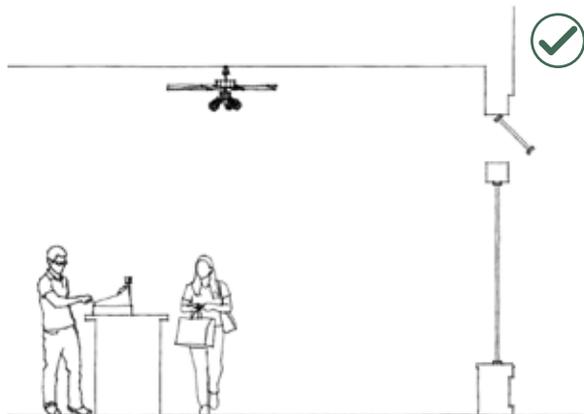


Figure 161. Operable storefront window transoms provide ventilation in a context appropriate design.

5.24 Orient a building to maximize energy efficiency while ensuring compatibility with adjacent, lower-scale structures.

Appropriate strategies include:

- › Positioning the taller portion of a building along a north-south axis to minimize shading on lower scale structures to the north.
- › Designing a building to minimize shading on south-facing facades of adjacent buildings during winter months.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING ELEMENTS

The elements that make up a building, including windows, mechanical systems and materials, can significantly impact environmental performance. They should be designed to maximize the building’s environmental performance, while promoting compatibility with surrounding sites and structures. New materials that improve environmental performance are appropriate if they have been proven effective in Benicia’s climate.

5.26 Use green building materials that are compatible with the historic context.

5.27 Use green building materials whenever possible.

Green building materials often have a long life span and are often:

- › Locally manufactured
- › Low maintenance
- › Recycled or repurposed

5.28 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.

Consider the following:

- › Operable windows for natural ventilation
- › Low infiltration fenestration products
- › Interior or exterior light shelves/solar screens above south-facing windows

5.29 Minimize the visual impacts of energy collection devices on the character of the District.

- › Where feasible, mount equipment where it has the least visual impact.

5.30 Minimize the visual impacts of a green roof on the character of the District.

- › Design a green roof to be out of view from the street.
- › Use a green roof where a flat roof form is compatible with the building type found in the District.
- › Limit the height of vegetation such that it does not overwhelm the character of the building.



Figure 162. Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control. These awnings provide shade for cooling in the summer while allowing for sunlight to provide heat in the winter.

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SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR ALL PROJECTS

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SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR ALL PROJECTS



Signs are important elements of the Downtown District and balancing their functional requirements with the objectives for the overall character of the district is a key goal. Their placement, relationship to historic features and general character are key considerations. A sign on a historic property should be integral to the design of the building and clearly visible to customers. New signs should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with historic signs in the district.

Title 18 of the Benicia Municipal Code provides the basic requirements for signs, including permitted sign types and dimensional standards. Please consult Benicia City staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

Design of New and Modified Signs

Whether it is attached to a historic building or associated with new development, a new or modified sign should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with the natural and built environment. It should also reflect the overall context of the building and surrounding area and should not negatively impact a historic structure in any way. Appropriate sign types for commercial buildings include wall, window, shingle and awning signs. Under-marquee signs may be permitted on a case by case basis. Freestanding signs (except for existing directories) and A-board signs aren't appropriate on First Street.



Figure 163. Avoid damaging or obscuring architectural details or features when installing signs.



SIGN CHARACTER

A sign should be in character with the materials, colors and details of the building. Its content should be visually interesting and clearly legible. Illumination sources should be shielded to minimize glare and light pollution.

6.1 Design a sign to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- › Design a sign to be simple in character.
- › Locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the façade itself.
- › Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of the building.
- › All sign types should be subordinate to the building and to the street.



Figure 164. Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of the building.

SIGN LOCATION

A sign should be located to be clearly legible from the pedestrian realm and should not damage or obscure historic architectural details. More information about locating a specific sign type on a building front can be found in the “Design of Specific Sign Types” section.

6.2 Locate a sign to be visible and legible from the pedestrian realm.

6.3 Locate and mount a sign in a location that does not obscure or damage historic architectural features.

6.4 Locate signs for businesses on and above the ground floor in a building directory sign placed near the ground floor entrance.

6.5 Do not locate a sign higher than the level of the second floor window sills, or on or above the parapet or roof.

6.6 Do not cover a transom panel with a sign.

- › Street addresses on transom panels are permitted.

SIGN MATERIALS

A sign should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with the natural and built environment.

6.7 Use sign materials that are compatible with the architectural character and materials of the building.

- › Use permanent, durable materials that reflect the Benicia context.

Appropriate sign materials are:

- › Wood or MDF panels – routed and painted or sealed
- › Wood or metal panels – smooth finished and painted or stained.
- › Individually mounted letters – non-reflective metal, natural cast or formed and painted, or painted wood, plastic or MDF
- › Window signs of vinyl, letters, paint or gold leaf
- › Awning signs with vinyl, painted or silk screened letters or images
- › Cast metal plaques, especially for small directory signs
- › Directory signs of matte finished plastic insert panels, mounted behind glass frames



Figure 165. Use sign materials that are compatible with the architectural character and materials of the building.

Inappropriate sign materials include:

- › Plastic sign panels, except for the changeable portions of a directory sign
- › Plastic or plastic-faced individual letters unless intended for a painted finish
- › Box or cabinet signs
- › Neon signs
- › Any non-durable, rustic, industrial type material which would be incompatible with the design guidelines for building or accent materials



Figure 166. Use cast metal plaques, especially for small interpretive signs.



Figure 167. Use colors for the sign that are generally compatible with those of the building front, and that contribute to legibility and design integrity.



Figure 168. Use a simple typeface design.

SIGN COLOR

Color shall be used both to accentuate the sign design and message, and to integrate the sign or lettering with the building and its context.

6.8 Use colors for the sign that are generally compatible with those of the building front, and that contribute to legibility and design integrity.

- › Limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used, although accent colors may also be appropriate.

SIGN GRAPHICS

Sign lettering and graphics shall be designed to be visually interesting and clearly legible.

6.9 Design a sign to be graphic.

- › To the extent feasible, design a sign to use symbols, images and logos rather than extensive wording.

6.10 Use a simple typeface design.

- › Use no more than two or three distinct typefaces on a sign.
- › Avoid the use of elaborate script and overly intricate typefaces

SIGN INSTALLATION

The installation of a sign is an integral aspect in the retention of key architectural features and in minimizing damage to the building. When installing a new sign on a historic building, it is important to maintain the key architectural features of and minimize potential damage to the building.

6.11 Do not damage or obscure architectural details or features when installing signs.

- › Design a sign to integrate with the architectural features of a building, not distract from them.
- › Minimize the number of anchor points when feasible.
- › Avoid painting a sign onto a significant architectural feature.
- › Do not locate a support for a sign to extend above the cornice line of a building to which the sign is attached.
- › Do not locate a sign structure or support to obscure or damage any significant architectural feature of a building, such as a window or door frame, cornice, molding or fragile material.

SIGN LIGHTING

A sign illumination source shall be shielded to minimize glare and shall not overpower the building or street edge. Small and discreet modern fittings may provide an unobtrusive alternative to traditionally styled lamp units.

6.12 Use a shielded light source on a sign, when lighting is desired.

- › Direct lighting towards a sign from an external, shielded lamp.
- › Use a warm light, similar to daylight.
- › If halo lighting is used to accentuate a sign or building, locate the light source so that it is not visible.
- › Do not overpower the building or street edge with lighting.

6.13 Indirectly illuminate a sign.

- › Use concealed or inconspicuous spot lights or backlighting.
- › Do not use exposed neon or fiber optic tubing.

6.14 Minimize the visual impact of lighting associated with signs.

- › Do not use lights, whether permanent or temporary, as a form of signage.
- › Do not internally illuminate a sign.
- › Do not use bare bulb lights for sign lettering or illumination.



Figure 169. Direct lighting towards a sign from an external, shielded lamp.

Design of Specific Sign Types

A variety of sign types may be appropriate in the Downtown District if the sign contributes to a sense of visual continuity and does not overwhelm the architecture of the building. In addition to the design guidelines described in the “Design of New and Modified Signs” section, the guidelines below discuss appropriate placement and design of individual sign types. Refer to Title 18 of the Benicia Municipal Code as well to learn more about standards for specific sign types.

AWNING AND CANOPY SIGN



AWNING AND CANOPY SIGN

An awning sign is flat against the surface of the awning material. A canopy sign is one that is suspended below a canopy; it is typically perpendicular to the building face, but may be parallel to the building where it is recessed.

- 6.15 Use an awning or canopy sign in areas with high pedestrian activity.
- 6.16 Use an awning or canopy sign when other sign types would obscure architectural details.
- 6.17 Locate an awning sign on a valance or the end panels, or along the bottom edge of the front awning panel.
 - › Design an awning sign to not cover more than 50 percent of the end panel area nor more than 20 percent of the front (street-facing) panel.



DIRECTORY SIGN

A directory sign displays the tenant name and location for a building containing multiple tenants, and helps users find the location of each building tenant.

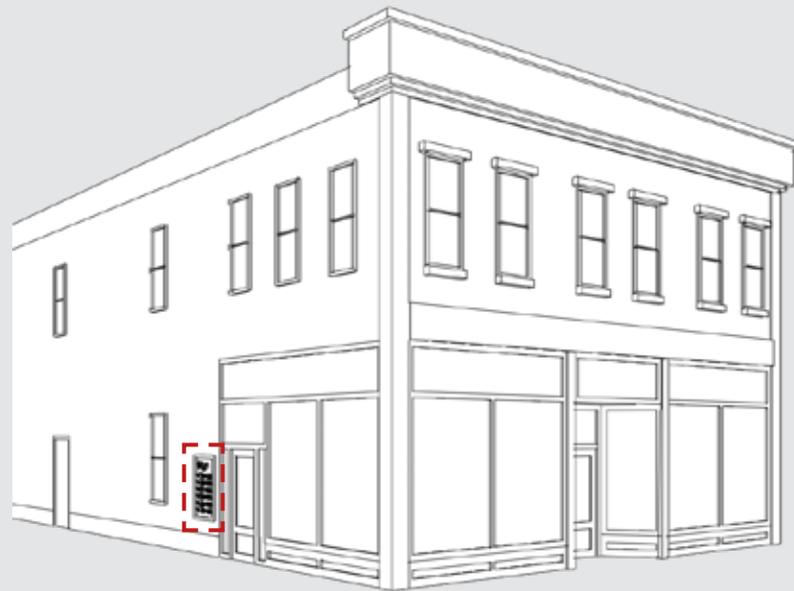
6.18 Use a directory sign, or tenant panel, to consolidate small individual signs on a larger building.

- › Locate a consolidated tenant panel or directory sign near a primary entrance on the first floor wall of a building.

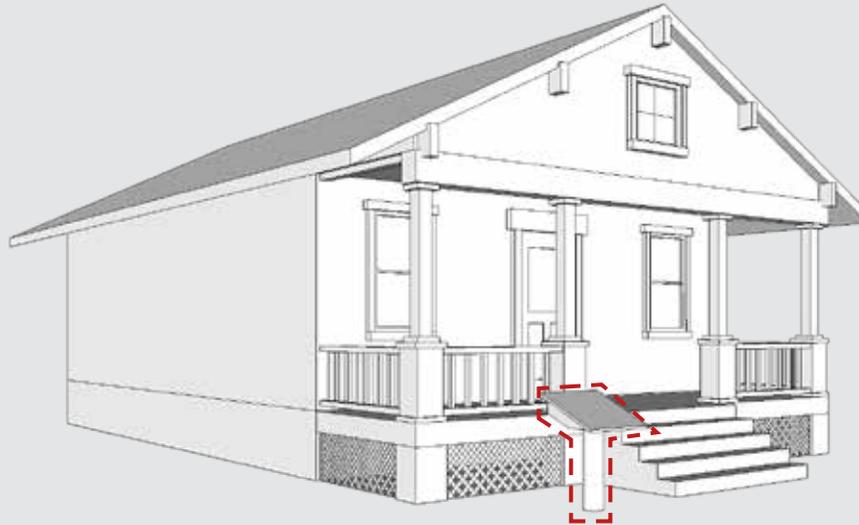
6.19 Wall mount a new directory sign.

- › Limit exterior directories or name plates to three (3) square feet in area.

DIRECTORY SIGN



INTERPRETIVE SIGN



INTERPRETIVE SIGN

An interpretive sign refers to a sign or group of signs that provide information to visitors on natural, cultural and historic resources, or other pertinent information. An interpretive sign may be erected by a non-profit organization or may be a public sign erected by a national, state or local government agency.

Generally, an interpretive sign should comply with the design standards for the sign type that is the closest match, such as a wall sign for a plaque mounted on a historic building. The guidelines below apply to a common freestanding sign type.

6.20 Design an interpretive sign to be simple in character.

- › Design the sign to be easily read and viewed by pedestrians.

6.21 Design and locate a sign to remain subordinate to its context.



PROJECTING AND SHINGLE SIGNS

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a structure and is affixed at the top and bottom so that the sign does not move at all in the wind. A shingle sign is similar to a projecting sign, except that it is only affixed to the wall at the top of the sign structure, meaning that the sign could move in the wind or if touched. Projecting signs are typically discouraged; some forms of projecting signs may be prohibited.

PROJECTING AND SHINGLE SIGNS



6.22 Design a bracket for a projecting sign to complement the sign composition.

6.23 Locate a projecting sign to relate to the building façade and entries.

- › Locate a small projecting sign near the business entrance, just above or to the side of the door.
- › Mount a larger projecting sign higher on the building, centered on the façade or positioned at the corner.
- › A projecting sign should be located at or just above the first floor pedestrian level and should not extend above the eave of the roof.
- › Signs should be eight (8) feet above grade at minimum.



6.24 Locate a shingle sign to relate to the building façade and entries.

- › Locate a shingle sign so the top mounting height corresponds to a horizontal trim element on the façade, where possible.

6.25 Mount a shingle sign between eight (8) feet above grade (bottom clearance) and the second floor sill line or eave line, whichever is lower.

- › Locate a shingle sign so the top mounting height corresponds to a horizontal trim element on the façade, where possible.

UNDER-MARQUEE SIGN



UNDER-MARQUEE SIGN

An under-marquee sign refers to a sign that is placed below an awning or marquee.

6.26 Mount hanging or “under-marquee” signs below the roof eaves or porch at the building entry.

- › Limit hanging or “under-marquee” signs to six (6) square feet in area, per sign.
- › Signs should be eight (8) feet above grade at minimum.
- › Such signs shall be limited to one per tenant.



SYMBOL SIGN

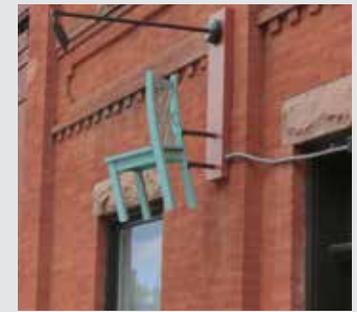
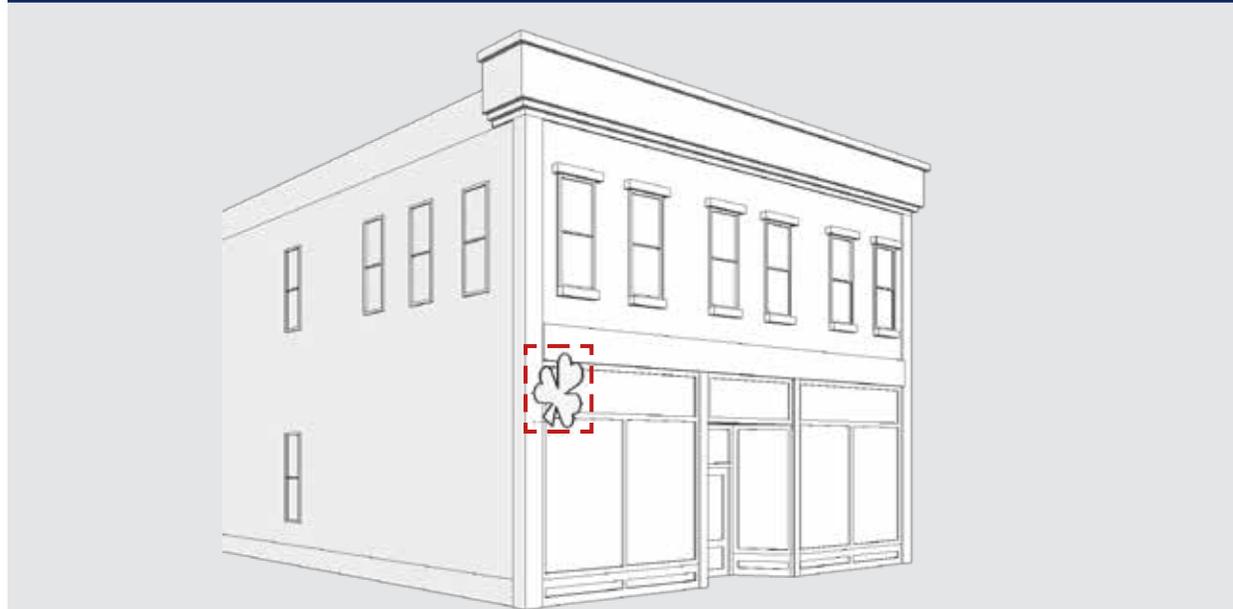
This refers to a symbol displayed on a sign, or a standalone symbol, that displays a certain word, name or idea, such as a barber pole. This type of sign can be read quickly and is often remembered better than written words. A symbol sign may be located on the interior of a display window or may be installed on an exterior façade. If attached to an exterior façade, a symbol sign is often located above or beside the primary entrance, and is often affixed to a wall or hangs through the use of brackets, such as in a hanging sign.

6.27 Locate a symbol sign to be easily recognized, but in a location that does not detract from the architectural features of the structure or impede pedestrian activity.

- › When mounting a symbol sign to an exterior façade of the structure, locate the brackets or sign supports so they do not negatively impact or destroy architectural features.
- › When locating a freestanding symbol sign on the exterior of a building, choose a location that is visible but does not obstruct pedestrian activity.

6.28 Design a symbol sign to be in scale with the building and its architectural features.

SYMBOL SIGN



6.29 Design a symbol sign to contribute to, and not detract from, the building and its features.

- › Choose a color or colors that complement the colors of the building.
- › Design a symbol sign to be simple and easily recognizable, so that it does not compete with the architectural features of the structure.

BARBER POLE



BARBER POLE

Barber poles were seen historically and easily identify a building's use. Where a barber pole is desired, it should be designed to reflect the historic design of such signs, or should be a reconstruction of a historic barber pole. A new barber pole should be located to be easily visible from the public right of way and should rotate, but should not be internally illuminated. Only one barber pole is allowed per property.

6.30 Design a barber pole to be compatible with the district.

- › Design a barber pole to be in scale with the building. A barber pole should not exceed thirty (30) inches in height.
- › Where possible, locate a barber pole inside the building so that it is visible through a window or doorway.



WALL SIGN

A wall sign, or “flat sign”, is any sign attached to the outside face of a building. It is erected parallel to the face of the building on which it is supported and may include a plaque, panels, or individual letters or logos.

6.31 Place a wall sign to promote design compatibility among buildings.

- › Place a wall sign to align horizontally with other signs on nearby buildings.
- › Wall signs are inappropriate above the first floor, except in an approved sign program or necessary for building identification.
- › Limit wall signs to 12 square feet in area.

6.32 Place a wall sign to be relatively flush with the building façade.

- › Design a wall sign to minimize the depth of a sign panel or letters.
- › Design a wall sign to fit within, rather than forward of, the fascia or other architectural details of a building.
- › Do not mount a wall sign where architectural features will be obscured or destroyed.

6.33 Place wall signs to integrate with historic building details and elements.

- › Locate a wall sign to fit within a panel formed by decorative moldings or transom panels, where they exist.

BARBER POLE



WINDOW & DOOR SIGN



WINDOW AND DOOR SIGN

A window sign is any sign, picture, symbol or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, sale or service at the location. Place these signs within one foot of the inside window pane or upon the windowpanes or glass and which is visible from the exterior of the window.

- 6.34 Design a window sign to minimize the amount of window covered.**
 - › Scale and position a window sign to preserve transparency at the sidewalk edge.
- 6.35 Limit a window sign to 20 percent of the ground floor frontage window area occupied by a given business.**
- 6.36 Window signs are inappropriate above the first floor.**
- 6.37 Seasonal graphic window signs are encouraged.**
 - › Such signage should be incorporated into a window display and temporary in nature.
- 6.38 Window signage may include individually applied vinyl or painted letters.**
 - › Paper or poster board signage that is taped or otherwise adhered to the window should not be applied to storefront areas.
 - › Large graphics that obscure the view to interior storefront and dining areas are to be avoided.

FREESTANDING SIGN

A freestanding sign is one that is mounted to one or two simple poles.

6.39 A freestanding should be appropriate to the context.

- › The sign should be limited to (4) feet in height, measured from grade at that point, and shall not exceed 12 square feet in area, as measured on a single side.
- › Exclude monument type bases, pillars or other architectural or structural supports from this calculation.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

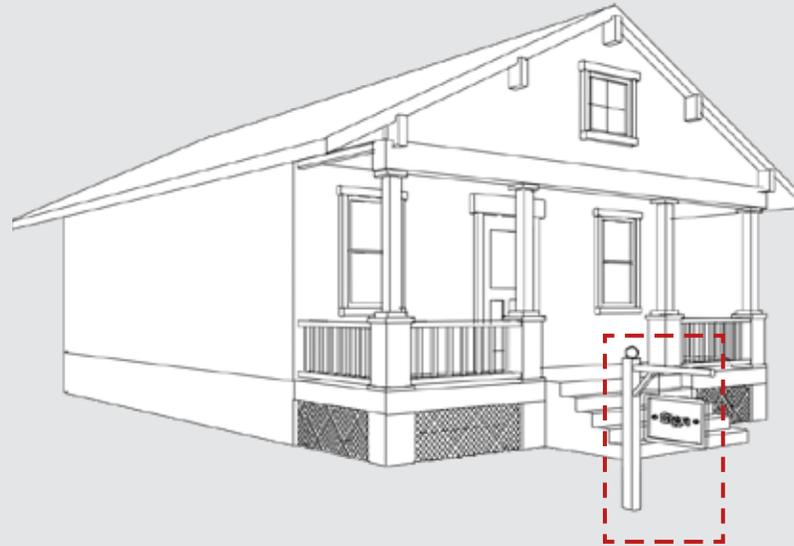
The use of a temporary sign may be desired to commemorate special events, grand openings or promotional sales. Temporary signs can take a variety of forms and should follow the guidelines presented for each sign type in the previous sections, in addition to the guidelines below. Consult the Benicia Municipal Code for additional requirements for temporary signs.

6.40 Locate a temporary sign to be visible and in the appropriate location for the sign type chosen.

- › Do not obscure or cover architectural details with a temporary sign. Large vinyl banners that cover storefront and upper story windows are inappropriate.
- › Do not cover a primary entrance or full window with a temporary sign.

6.41 Design a temporary sign to be in scale with the building and surrounding context.

FREESTANDING SIGN



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