# Downtown Memphis
# **Design Guidelines and Principles**

DOWNTOWN
MEMPHIS
COMMISSION

# Downtown Memphis
# Design Guidelines and Principles

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## Special Thanks:

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# Introduction

These guidelines are organized into five sections: Design Principles, Overall Design Guidelines, Design Contexts, Signs and Historic Preservation. The Overall Design Guidelines are applicable to all portions of the CBID and are organized according to the various design issues such as: Neighborhood, Site and Buildings. The Context guidelines address those same design principles, but provide more specific direction based on the special character of an area. Thus, someone wishing to restore a building within the Main Street Mall area would first review the general principles for buildings, then refer specifically to the Downtown Core and the Historic Preservation guidelines. Finally, the Checklist for Development in the Memphis CBID (see Appendix), is provided as a reference for all critical design items that the Center City Design Review Board will be reviewing.

Charts and diagrams are provided throughout the document, to help identify which sections to use. A short summary of the contents appears for each chapter on its first page, which also helps to locate specific guidelines.

The purpose of these design guidelines is to ensure that such development continues to promote the community vision for Downtown and realize the benefits that all enjoy with an enhanced built environment.

## Section Contents

*This vision for Downtown Memphis is a synthesis of contributions from citizens who participated in a series of public workshops and focus group meetings that were held during the initial stages of developing these design guidelines, as well as from goals and objectives' statements gleaned from a variety of planning documents. These sources are referenced later in this section of the document.*

# A Vision for Downtown Memphis

***A thriving Downtown that is the heartbeat of the region, built on Memphis' unique character and authenticity, attractive to residents, workers, and visitors from all walks of life.***

The design guidelines contribute to this strategic vision by promoting the development of an urban environment that provides opportunities for citizens to live, work, and share community experiences in one place. With a range of living options, office spaces, eclectic shopping, restaurants, nightclubs, parks, and riverfront amenities, Downtown's neighborhoods thrive on the mix of uses and dense, urban development that forms the heart of the city. Downtown is unique in the sense that people can walk from place to place, dine at an outdoor café, run along the riverfront, dwell in an old warehouse, or relax on a rooftop.

Downtown's historic structures are valued assets, preserved for their architectural style, historic associations, and good urban form. New construction in historic districts respects its surrounding context and serves as a good neighbor while still being a product of its own time. New additions and modifications to Downtown's contexts reinforce and strengthen the unique character that makes Memphis authentic.

The built environment of Downtown is centered on people - not cars. Buildings contribute to the urban fabric by meeting the sidewalk's edge and inviting the attention of passers-by through innovative design, architectural details, windows, and variation in massing. Storefronts, architectural screens, and landscaping minimize the visual presence of garages and parking lots. Downtown's public spaces, from its streets and alleys to its parks, plazas, and river's edge, cater to the pedestrian's enjoyment with safe sidewalks, ample landscaping, artwork, resting spots, and places for gathering.

# About this Document

## The Purpose of Downtown Design Guidelines

The guidelines and the review process through which they are administered seek to maintain Downtown Memphis as a cohesive and livable place with an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment. They also promote preservation of historic, cultural and architectural heritage.

Design guidelines also help strengthen the local business environment and enhance property values by improving the quality of the built environment and by making Downtown Memphis a more desirable place to live, work and play.

## The Design Review Board

Public projects, and private projects that receive a public incentive or financial support, must receive approval from the Downtown Memphis Commission's Design Review Board (DRB) prior to start of work. The DRB will use these design guidelines when evaluating such proposals.

## Property Owners

Owners seeking incentives and public agencies should consult the guidelines when planning improvements to properties Downtown. For owners of historic properties, the guidelines also provide information that will help promote good stewardship of those cultural resources.

## The Community at Large

The guidelines also convey the community's ambitions for design in Downtown and in this sense they serve as an educational tool for those interested in helping to achieve the vision for Downtown.

## The Process of Developing the Guidelines

The Downtown Memphis Commission created this document in an interactive process with the community and Downtown stakeholders. The commission sponsored a series of focus group meetings and public workshops to engage the community in outlining the guidelines. These meetings included business and property owners, members of the design and construction industries, residents and neighborhood advocates.

In those working sessions, participants discussed positive attributes of Downtown and identified design issues associated with future development. They also identified specific subareas where sensitivity to context is important and refined goals for them. This material serves as the basis for the guidelines in this document.

*The commission sponsored a series of focus group meetings and public workshops to engage the community in outlining the guidelines.*

# Related Plans

A variety of planning documents form the base for these guidelines:

## The Downtown Memphis Strategic Plan

This 2006 plan establishes a vision and set of goals for Downtown Memphis while also identifying barriers that could stand in the way of Downtown realizing its potential. The plan states that:

*"A thriving downtown is the heartbeat of the region, built on Memphis' unique character and authenticity, attractive to residents, workers, and visitors from all walks of life."*

The Strategic Plan establishes the following goals:

- Downtown is safe, attractive, and livable.
- Downtown is a thriving regional economic hub.
- Downtown is inclusive and diverse.
- Downtown is an asset that is valued by the entire region.
- Downtown exemplifies Memphis' unique character and authenticity.

## The South Central Business Improvement District Comprehensive Plan

This 2002 plan seeks to coordinate future development of the South Central Business Improvement District (SCBID) to ensure that it occurs in a logical and sustainable manner. The district includes much of Downtown Memphis that lies south of the core. These are key recommendations:

- Encourage high density development to maintain activities in the area, with lower densities located away from the river and toward the south end of the SCBID
- Create employment opportunities in the area
- Establish green space
- Better acknowledge the cultural landscape of the area

## Community Redevelopment Plan for the Uptown Area

This 2001 plan addresses areas north of the Downtown Core. Several plan policies have been implemented, including new zoning for the area. An update to this plan has been prepared for the Pinch District and Wolf River Harbor that seeks to create a sustainable urban neighborhood and promote connectivity.

## South Forum Redevelopment Plan

This plan addresses the area directly south and east of the FedEx Forum Arena. Recommendations address land use and development patterns, infrastructure improvements, enhanced streetscapes, historic preservation and increased safety.

## CBID Streetscape Master Plan

• This 2001 plan provides recommendations and cost estimates for streetscape improvements throughout much of Downtown. Goals include enhancing connections among neighborhoods and attractions, increasing safety and recognizing the river as the city's "front door."

## Victorian Village Redevelopment Plan

This is one of several plans that provide recommendations for specific areas and neighborhoods within the CBID. It sets forth a number of specific actions to promote preservation of the historic Victorian Village neighborhood.

## Other Downtown Plans

These plans also provide a policy base for the design guidelines:

• Pinch Wolf River Harbor Master Plan
• Main Street Master Plan 2000
• Mid-Second Neighborhood Profile
• Downtown School Neighborhood Profile
• Medical District Master Plan 2001
• South End Extended Neighborhood Profile



*The CBID Streetscape Master Plan provides recommendations for streetscape improvements in different Downtown development contexts.*
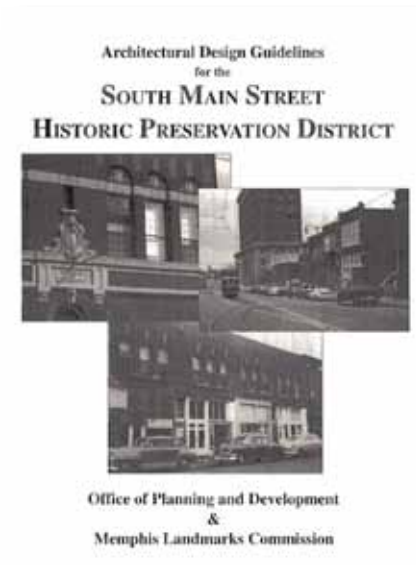
*Historic design guidelines currently exist for the locally-designated South Main Street Historic District.*

# Design Review System

The DMC's design review system covers these categories:

- Public development review (review of improvements to public properties, improvements in the public right-of-way and development projects receiving public funding)
- Development projects receiving DMC and affiliated incentives
- Sign review (review of all exterior signs)

The Downtown Design Review Board (DRB) conducts those reviews. For public development, the DRB uses a discretionary process supported by these design guidelines.

It is important to note that design review occurs within an underlying citywide regulatory framework that includes base zoning standards for all properties. Additional design review processes exist for some areas within Downtown, including special neighborhood review for Harbortown and South Bluffs. Furthermore, the Memphis Landmarks Commission (MLC) reviews development within locally designated historic districts and for individually designated landmarks.

In addition to the design guidelines in this document, these other documents apply:

## Historic Design Guidelines

The Memphis Landmarks Commission (MLC) uses historic design guidelines to review development in Downtown's locally designated historic districts. Some of these districts have specially-tailored preservation guidelines. In addition, a chapter of this document provides general preservation guidelines that apply to all locally designated properties of historic significance in Downtown. These are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.*

# Unified Development Code

The Unified Development Code (UDC) for the City of Memphis and unincorporated Shelby County was adopted in 2010. It provides the base zoning standards that apply in Downtown Memphis, including the existing Core and Medical District subareas.

As a unified code, the UDC includes subdivision regulations, standards for private property development and standards addressing the character of the public realm, including infrastructure such as public streets and sidewalks.

The objectives of the UDC are to:

- Guide the future growth and development in the City and County.
- Prohibit uses, buildings or structures incompatible with the character of established districts.
- Guide public and private policy and action to provide adequate and efficient public facilities.
- Minimize the pollution of air and water, to safeguard the water table, to maintain the adequacy of drainage facilities, and to encourage the wise use and management of natural resources.
- Encourage compliance with all applicable Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- Establish district regulations which encourage originality and flexibility in design to ensure that development is properly related to its site and to surrounding development patterns.

The UDC organizes many standards by building type. For example, standards require that a commercial or mixed-use type building be built near the sidewalk edge and have a high percentage of windows facing the street. Frontage standards provide an additional level of context sensitivity by varying building placement standards for different types of streets.

*The SCBID Comprehensive Plan lays out the vision for the southern part of Downtown Memphis.*

# Special Purpose Districts

Downtown Memphis includes special purpose zoning districts that are intended to implement the goals of special planning efforts for areas to the north and south of the core. These are also included in the UDC.

## South Central Business Improvement District

The South Central Business Improvement District (SCBID) was established in 2002 with the goal of revitalizing areas of Downtown that generally lie to the south of the core. In addition to general recommendations for the area, the SCBID Comprehensive Plan implements a series of special purpose zone districts.

Special purpose SCBID zone districts include:

- **Sports and Entertainment.** This district is intended to permit a mixture of uses and activities that will complement the sports and entertainment facilities located in the area around Beale Street and Peabody Place.
- **South Main.** This district protects the unique character of South Main Street area, including the South Main Street Historic District.
- **South Downtown Residential.** This district encourages new residential neighborhood development on the south side of Downtown.
- **Riverside Residential.** This district is intended to ensure that the riverfront will be an active, urban waterfront, while reinforcing the residential development along the southern end of Downtown and protecting the unique views of the Mississippi River.
- **Bluffview Residential.** This district promotes retention of historic buildings and encourages new design that is compatible with and enhances the unique architectural and historic character of the Bluffview neighborhood.
- **South Downtown Business Park.** This district is intended to permit the development and continued maintenance of commercial and industrial uses while allowing various mixed uses to promote economic development.
- **Gateway Commercial.** This district promotes redevelopment of a mixture of higher density residential, office, institutional, and commercial uses and provide an appropriate gateway to the south side of Downtown.

Base zoning standards for each special SCBID district address permitted use, density, height and setbacks. New construction and rehabilitation in the SCBID is also subject to a special site plan review process addressing parking, screening, site lighting and other considerations.

## Uptown

The Community Redevelopment Plan for the Uptown Area was approved in 2001 to provide a framework for achieving orderly and sustainable community development in the Pinch neighborhood and along the Wolf River Harbor. In addition to general recommendations, the plan implemented a series of special purpose zone districts for the area north of the core. Special districts include moderate and high-density residential, as well as mixed-use, light industrial and medical overlay zones.

# Overlay Districts

The UDC also identifies some overlay districts that are relevant to Downtown. The code includes additional standards for these areas related to site planning and building design that will influence the character of development:

## Medical Overlay District

This district permits a mixture of uses and activities that complement the medical facilities that are located in this area. Bulk regulations address building setbacks and overall height. Other standards influence the design of parking facilities.

## Local Historic Overlay Districts

The Historic Overlay District protects and conserves the heritage and character of the community by providing for the preservation of designated areas. Several of these locally designated districts are in Downtown.
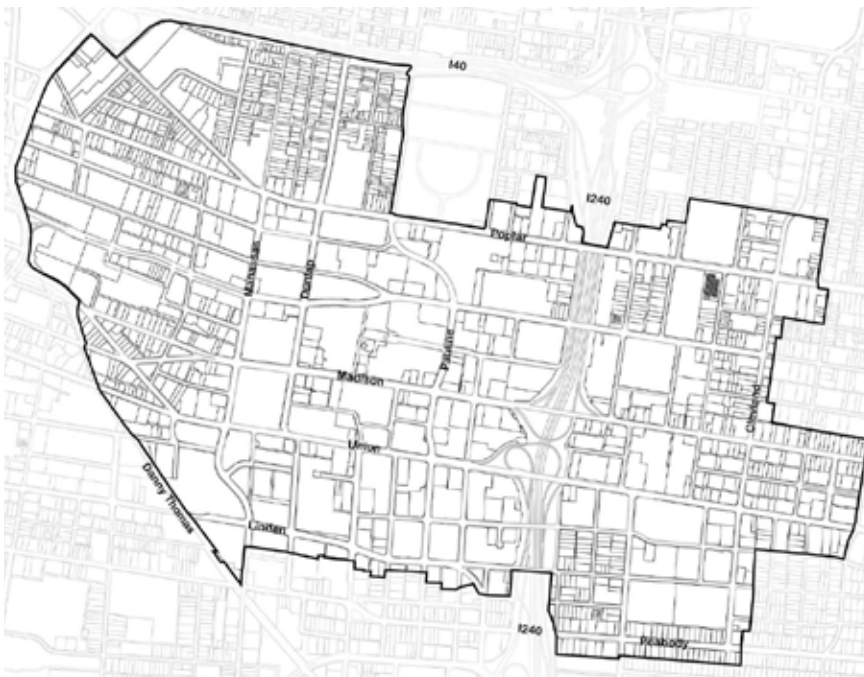
*The Medical Overlay District regulates the urban form of development in the Medical Center by addressing site design, building transparency, height, and streetscape improvements.*

## The Downtown Memphis Commission

As the official partnership between local government and the Downtown business community, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) administers Downtown design guidelines and sign code for Downtown. The DMC is an independent development agency that is primarily funded by a special assessment on commercial properties in the Central Business Improvement District (CBID).

The DMC's aim is to attract more people to Memphis and Shelby County and to its vibrant Downtown that is densely populated, authentic, mixed-use, walkable, clean, safe and fun. The design guidelines promote this mission. The Commission was established in 1977. It was known as the Center City Commission until 2011, when it was renamed the Downtown Memphis Commission to better reflect its role as an advocate for the area.

### Downtown Memphis
### Central Business Improvement District

# Using the Design Guidelines

## Guidelines Organization

Guidance information in this document is organized into these sections:

### Chapter 1: Design Principles

This chapter sets forth fundamental principles for improvements in Downtown Memphis. These are broad in nature, focusing on qualitative aspects of design that are relevant to work in the public realm, to site work, new buildings, and alterations and additions to existing ones.

These design *principles* apply to all work within the purview of the Downtown Memphis Commission, and will be used by the DRB and DMC staff when review applications for work in the area.

### Chapter 2: CBID Design Guidelines

This chapter presents the general design guidelines for work throughout the Central Business Improvement District. They are grouped into three sub-categories:

a. Neighborhood Design
b. Site Design
c. Building Design

These design *guidelines* apply to all work within the purview of the Downtown Memphis Commission, and will be used by the DRB and DMC staff when reviewing applications for work in the area.

### Chapter 3: Design Contexts

This chapter describes the design goals and considerations for each of the distinct design contexts that exist within the CBID. They provide additional information about how the design principles and guidelines, which are presented in the preceding chapters, are to be applied in each of the design contexts.

### Chapter 4: Sign Guidelines

This chapter includes guidelines for sign design in the CBID. They apply in addition to the Sign Code.

### Chapter 5: Historic Preservation

This chapter provides special guidance for treatment of historic properties in the CBID. They apply in addition to the design principles and guidelines in the preceding chapters.

# The Design Review Process

This diagram identifies the key considerations for the DMC's design review process.

## STEP 1

### Zoning Regulations?

An applicant should first contact the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to determine which zoning district applies to the subject property.

The Unified Development Code, UDC, contains information on each zoning district and defines the basic standards for development projects, such as maximum building height, density, transparency, setbacks, etc. All construction projects are subject to the zoning standards of the UDC.

## STEP 2

### Historic Property?

If the property is historic, the applicant should contact the Memphis Landmarks Commission to determine if the property lies in a locally designated Landmarks District or if the property is an individually designated local Landmark. Properties that are not locally designated (including National Register properties) are not subject to MLC review and may proceed to Step 4.

## STEP 3

### Landmarks Review?

Properties located in local historic districts (Landmarks Commission Historic Districts) or individually designated local historic Landmarks are subject to a design review process conducted by the Memphis Landmarks Commission (MLC).

**STEP 3**

**STEP 2**

**STEP 1**

Determine Applicable Zoning Regulations

Historic Property?

Non-Historic Property?

Designated as a Landmarks Historic Property

Not designated as a Landmarks Historic Property

Memphis Landmarks Commission Review
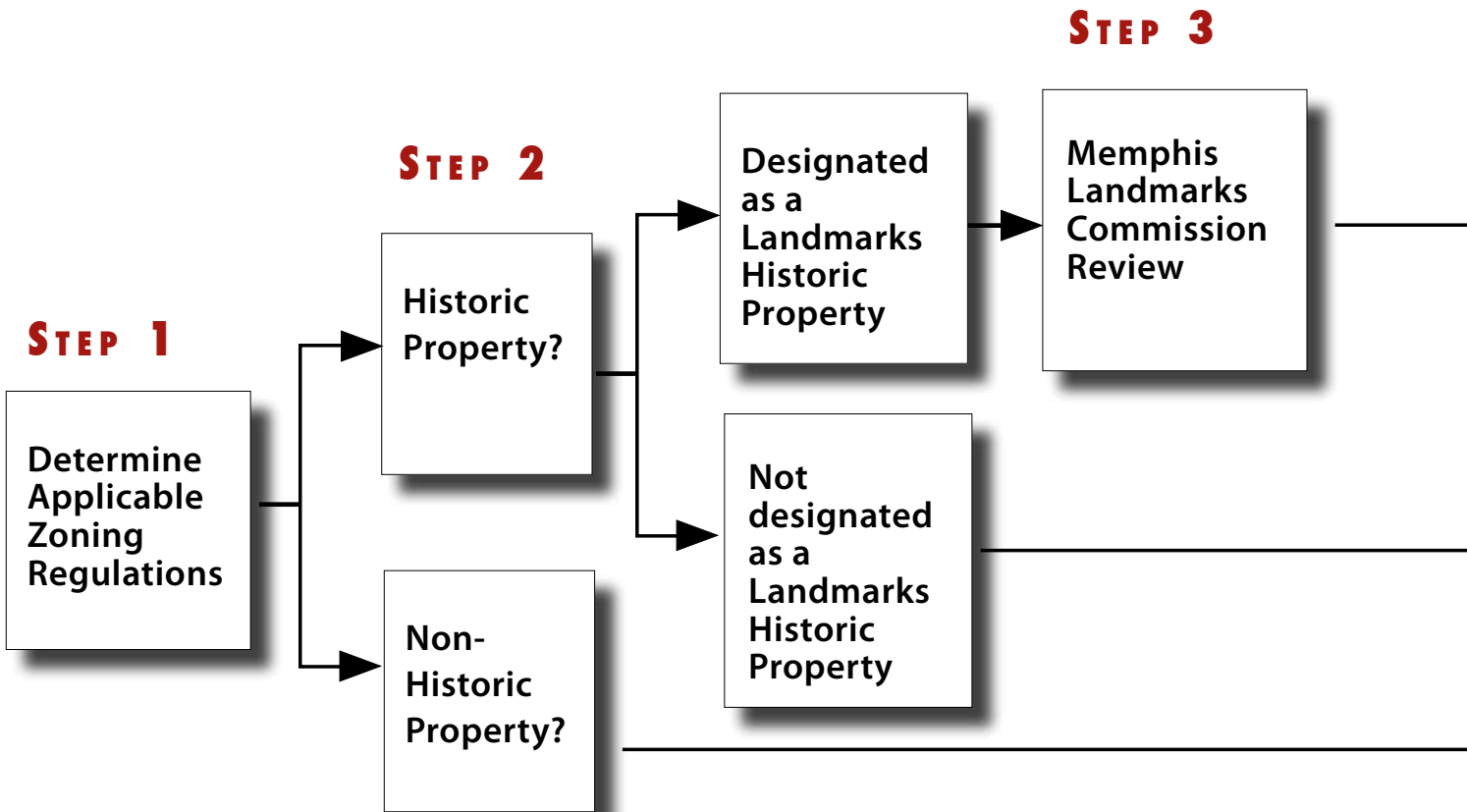
## S TEP 4
### DMC Incentives or Public Funding?

Development projects that receive public funding or incentives from the Downtown Memphis Commission or any of its affiliate boards are subject to a design review process administered by the DMC Design Review Board. Projects that receive neither DMC incentives nor public funding are not subject to review by the Design Review Board. If the DMC is not directly involved, property owners may voluntarily consider using these design guidelines.

## S TEP 5
### DMC Design Review Board Review

The DMC Design Review Board conducts design review based upon the design guidelines in this document.

## S TEP 4

## S TEP 5

Is the project receiving either DMC incentives or public funding?

Yes

No

DMC Design Review Board Review

Building Permit Application
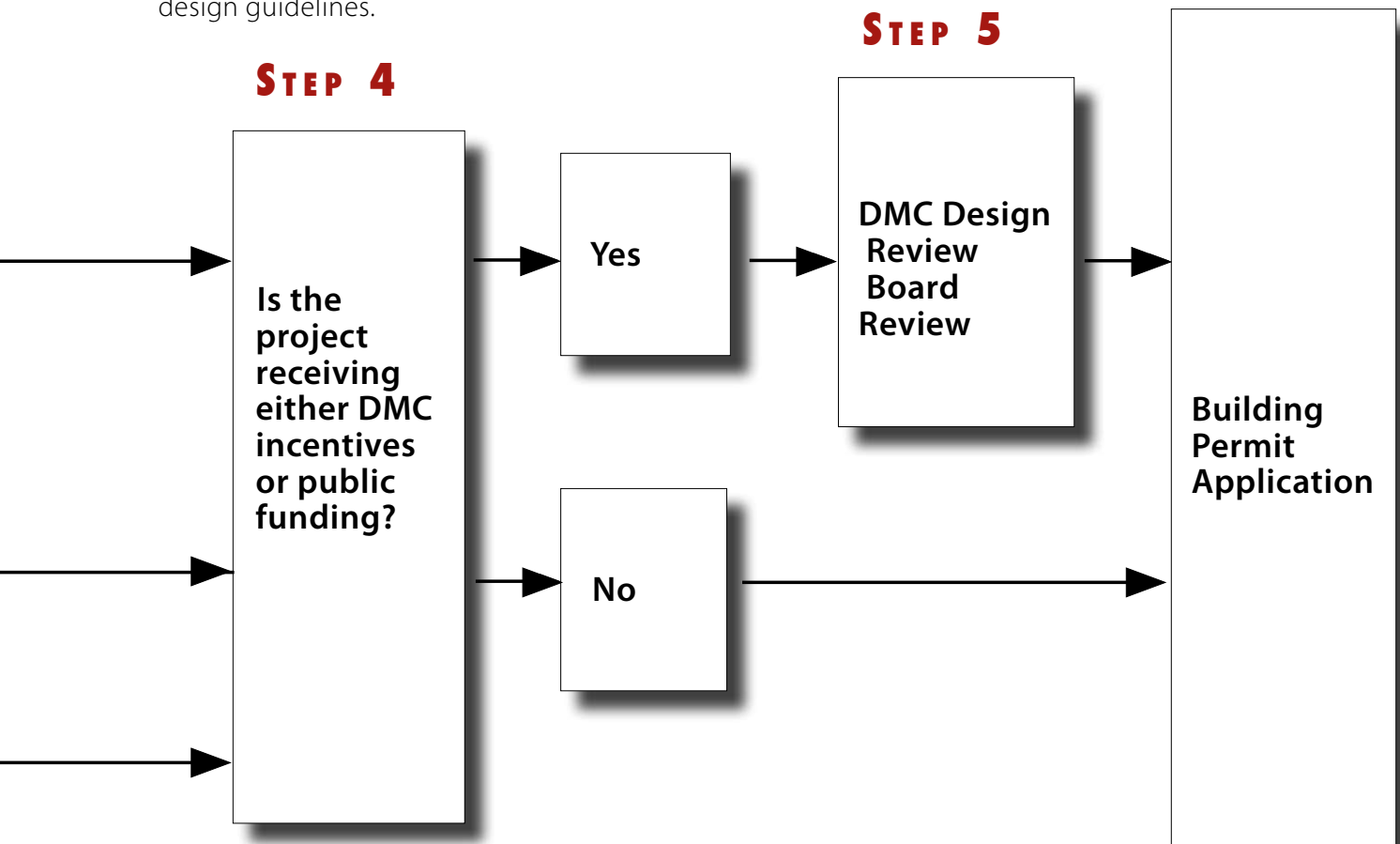
# Which chapters apply?

Use this chart to determine which chapters of the design guidelines will apply to a specific project.

| Type of Work | Chapter 1: Design Principles for Downtown Memphis (page 21) | Chapter 2: CBID Design Guidelines (page 29) | | | Chapter 3: Design Contexts (page 75) | Chapter 4: Sign Design Guidelines (page 127) | Chapter 5: Historic Preservation (page 139) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Neighborhood Level | Site Level | Building Level | | | |
| **New Building** | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| **Building Addition** | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| **Historic Property or Historic District** | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| **Landscape/Site Work** | X | X | X | | X | | |
| **Public Infrastructure Improvements** | X | X | X | | X | | |
| **Sign\*** | X | | | | X | X | |

**X** = This chapter applies to the type of work category.

\* = All exterior signs are also regulated by the CBID Sign Code.

## Application Steps

The key steps of the review process are:

1. Pre-application meeting with Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) staff to receive preliminary advice prior to submitting an application.

2. Application completion and submission to the DMC, to include all necessary information, such as physical dimensions, materials and colors. Applications must be deemed complete by DMC staff before they are formally reviewed and placed on the next agenda of the Design Review Board (DRB).

3. DMC staff will review the application and submit written recommendations to both the DRB and the applicant prior to the meeting at which the application will be considered.

4. In light of these guidelines, the DRB will consider the application, which will either be approved as submitted, approved with conditions, or denied. For additional information on the approval process, please consult with DMC staff.

**1**

**Pre-application meeting**

**2**

**Submit complete application**

**3**

**Staff review**

**4**

**DRB review**
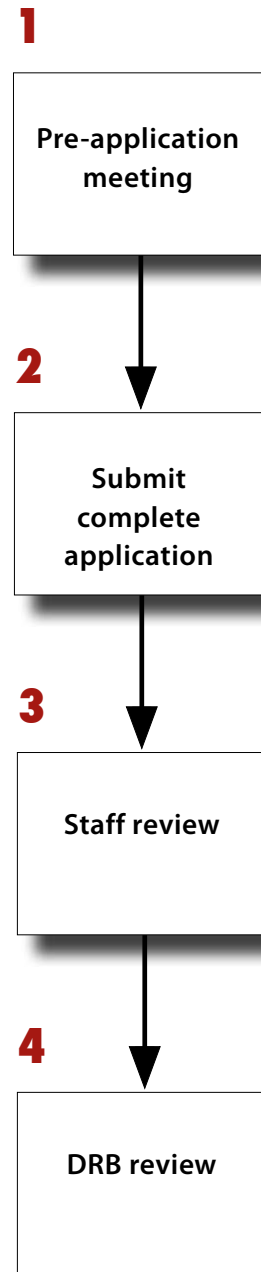
# Design Contexts

While the guidelines in this document apply throughout Downtown Memphis, the degree to which each applies, and the manner in which it is interpreted for a specific project, is influenced by the location of the planned improvements. For purposes of design review, the CBID is organized into a series of "design contexts," each of which carries with it certain design objectives. The contexts are defined by differences in development patterns, building character and to some extent, use. A specific design context may appear in multiple subareas where development patterns and design objectives are similar.
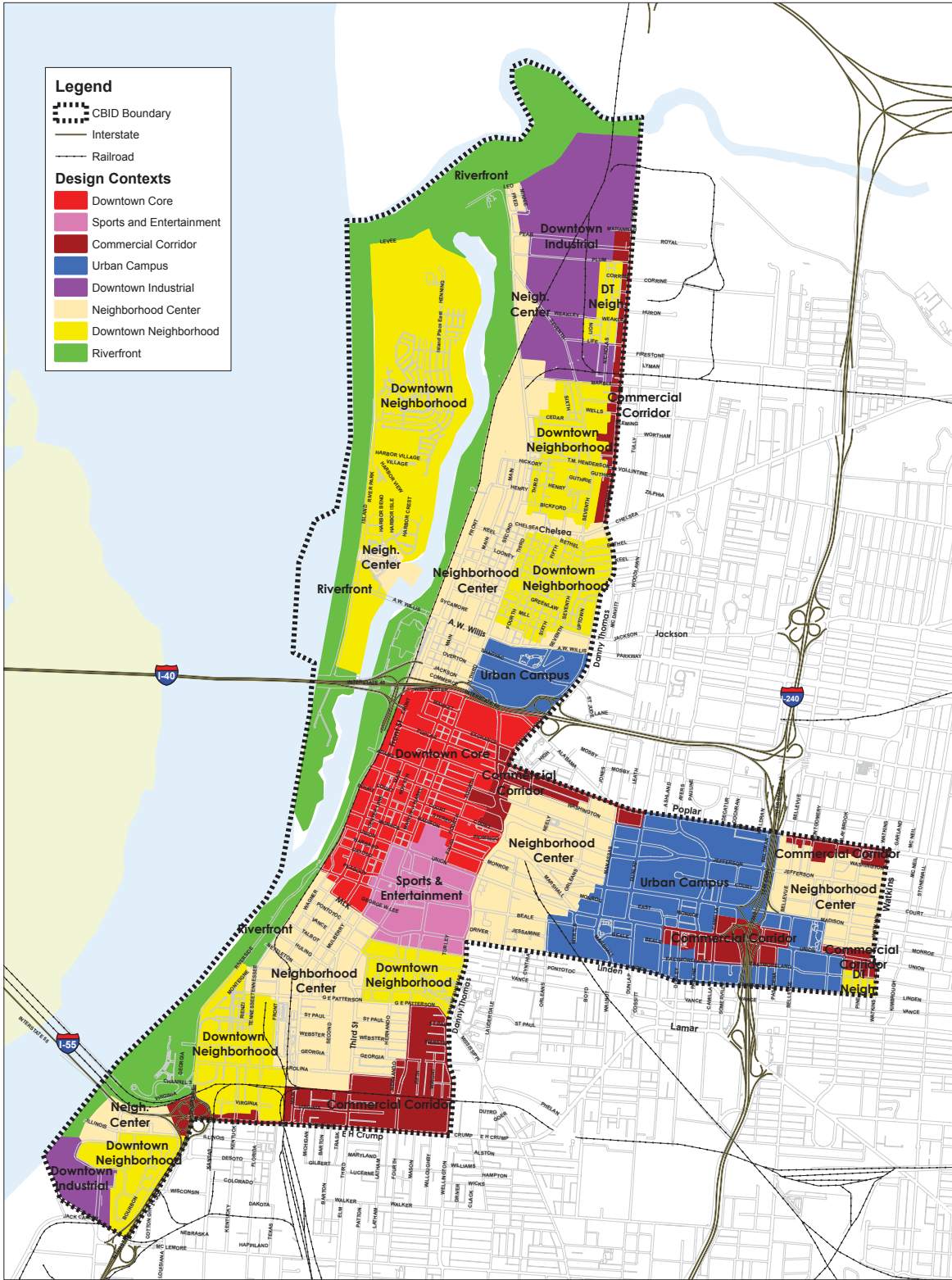
The accompanying map illustrates the general boundaries of Downtown design contexts. Descriptions of these contexts and the design considerations related to each one appear in Chapter 3 of this document.

## Projects Located Outside of Downtown

While the majority of projects reviewed by the DMC's Design Review Board are located in Downtown Memphis, some PILOT projects reviewed and approved by the Center City Revenue Finance Corporation (CCRFC) are located outside of Downtown.

For projects located outside of Downtown Memphis, but within the CCRFC's jurisdiction (ie- within the parkways system), DMC Staff will help the applicant identify the design context that will apply to their specific project. Please ask DMC staff if you have any question about how to identify the design context framework that will be used for your project.

# CBID Design Contexts



**Legend**
- :::::: CBID Boundary
- —— Interstate
- ·—·— Railroad

**Design Contexts**
- Downtown Core
- Sports and Entertainment
- Commercial Corridor
- Urban Campus
- Downtown Industrial
- Neighborhood Center
- Downtown Neighborhood
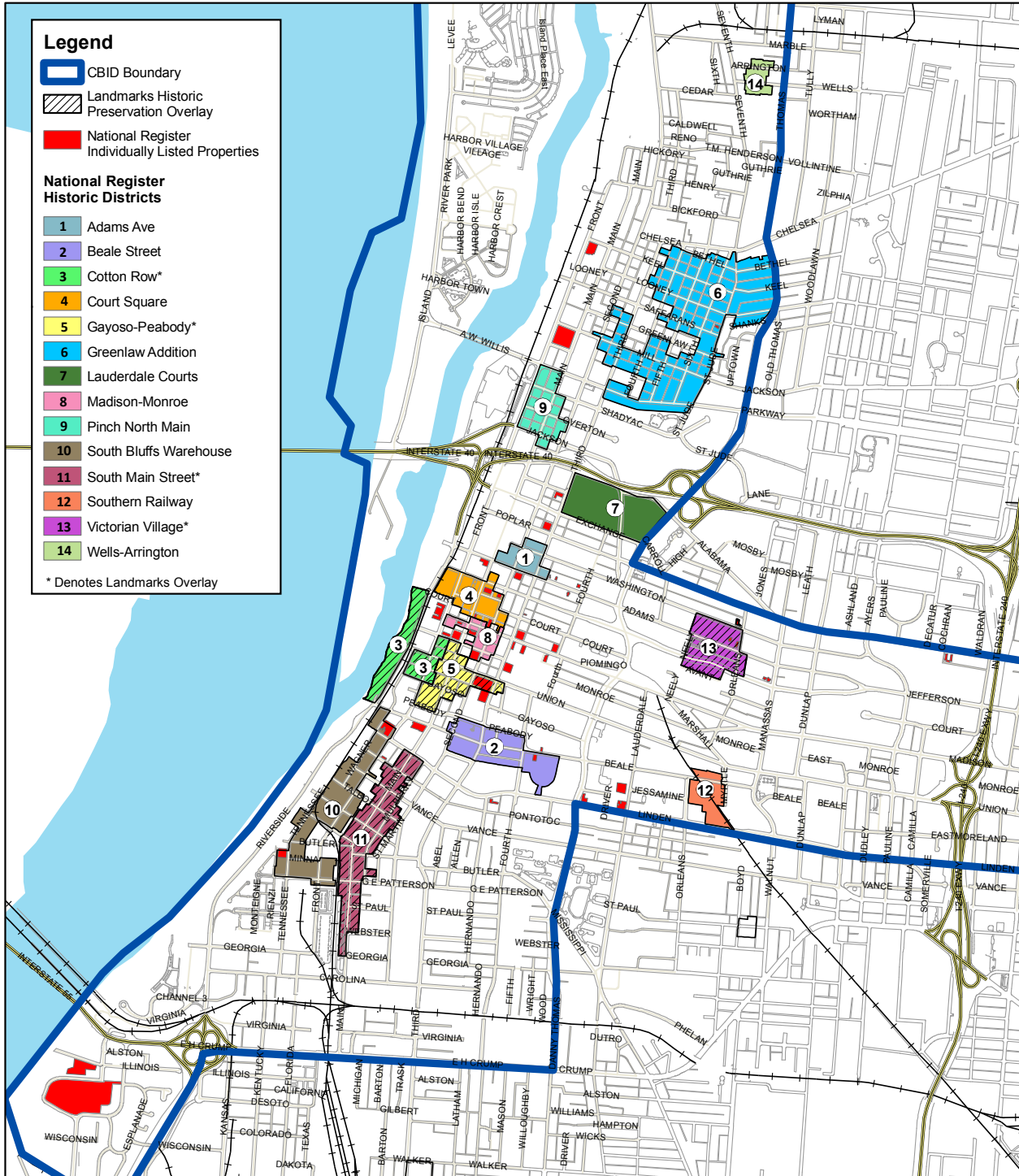- Riverfront

0   0.25   0.5   1
Miles

# Downtown Memphis Historic Districts

Downtown Memphis is home to a number of historic properties. Many of these properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are also part of locally zoned Landmarks Districts. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, and buildings that are 50 years old and older and are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Landmarks districts function as local overlay zoning; any alterations to the exteriors of existing buildings, in addition new construction, must be reviewed by the Memphis Landmarks Commission. The locations of National Register Districts and Landmarks Districts are shown on the adjacent map, where Landmarks Districts are denoted in the map key with an asterisk (*).

The general design principles and guidelines found in this document apply to all historic properties under review by the Design Review Board, including National Register properties, Landmarks properties, and non-listed historic properties that demonstrate architectural or historic merit. Although several of the Memphis Landmarks Districts have their own design guidelines, the Design Review Board will base its review only on the historic preservation guidelines in this document.

# Local and National Register Historic Districts in Downtown Memphis

There are 14 historic districts within the Central Business Improvement District.

**Legend**

- CBID Boundary
- Landmarks Historic Preservation Overlay
- National Register Individually Listed Properties

**National Register Historic Districts**

1. Adams Ave
2. Beale Street
3. Cotton Row*
4. Court Square
5. Gayoso-Peabody*
6. Greenlaw Addition
7. Lauderdale Courts
8. Madison-Monroe
9. Pinch North Main
10. South Bluffs Warehouse
11. South Main Street*
12. Southern Railway
13. Victorian Village*
14. Wells-Arrington

* Denotes Landmarks Overlay

Source: Memphis and Shelby County
Division of Planning and Development, July 2008.
Map last updated: March 19, 2009

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# Chapter 1
# Design Principles for Downtown Memphis

Each improvement project in Downtown Memphis should help forward the goals outlined in the introduction and also should comply with these fundamental design principles:

## P1: Achieve excellence in design.

Each improvement in Downtown Memphis should express excellence in design, and it should raise the bar for others to follow. This includes using high quality materials and construction methods and paying attention to detail.

## P2: Promote creativity.

Innovation in design is welcomed in Downtown Memphis. Exploring new ways of designing buildings and spaces is appropriate when they contribute to a cohesive urban fabric. This type of creativity should be distinguished from simply being "different."



## Section Contents

*P2: Promote creativity.*



*P1: Achieve excellence in design.*



*P2: Promote creativity.*

*P3: Design with authenticity.*

# P3: Design with authenticity.

Downtown is defined by buildings and places that reflect their own time, including distinct construction techniques as well as style. The result is a sense of authenticity in building and materials. All new improvements should convey this sense of authenticity.

# P4: Design with consistency.

Buildings and places in Downtown Memphis that are highly valued are those which have a cohesive quality in their use of materials, organization of functions and overall design concept. Each new project should also embody a single, consistent design concept.


*P4: Design with consistency.*

# P5: Design for durability.

Downtown's cherished buildings and spaces are designed for the long term with durable materials. New work should have this same quality.

# P6: Design for sustainability.

Aspects of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability that relate to urban design and compatibility should be woven into all new improvements.


*P6: Design for sustainability. Aspects of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability that relate to urban design and compatibility should be woven into all new improvements.*


*P5: Design for durability.*

## P7: Draw upon local design traditions.

Downtown exemplifies a unique character and authenticity, with lessons for new designs. Many buildings share similar features, materials and forms that reflect the city's design traditions and should be considered as inspiration for new work. This does not mean copying earlier styles, but rather learning from them.

## P8: Honor the heritage of the city.

Buildings, sites and components of urban infrastructure that have historic significance should be preserved. These resources range from isolated bits of historic paving and individual site features to noteworthy collections of buildings in historic districts. These properties should continue to serve the community while retaining their integrity. New work around these resources should be compatible with them.


*P7: Draw upon local design traditions.*


*P8: Honor the heritage of the city.*


*P7: Draw upon local design traditions.*


*P8: Honor the heritage of the city.*

*P9: Design to fit the context. Contemporary designs should fit with the scale and urban form of neighboring structures.*



*P10: Enhance the public realm.*



*P10: Enhance the public realm. Sidewalks, promenades and other pedestrian ways should be designed to invite their use through thoughtful planning and design. Improvement on private property also should enhance the public realm.*

# P9: Design to fit with the context.

Improvement projects should consider their context. In some areas, that context remains strongly anchored by historic buildings, landscapes and other structures. In other parts of Downtown, the context is more contemporary, with individual historic buildings sometimes appearing as accents. In still other areas, no historic structures exist. In this respect, "designing in context" means helping to achieve the long term goals for each of these areas.

# P10: Enhance the public realm.

At the heart of the vitality of Downtown is an enhanced public realm, including streets, parks and open spaces. Sidewalks, promenades and other pedestrian ways should be designed to invite their use through thoughtful planning and design. Improvement on private property also should enhance the public realm.

# P11: Enhance the pedestrian experience.

Each improvement project should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. This includes defining street edges with buildings and spaces that are visually interesting and attract pedestrian activity. Buildings that convey a sense of human scale and landscapes that invite walking are keys to successful design in Downtown Memphis. Designing sidewalks and other walkways to accommodate pedestrian traffic is also important. This includes providing sidewalks of sufficient width for circulation and outdoor activities, and installing appropriate landscaping.



*P11: Enhance the pedestrian experience.*

## P12: Provide signature open spaces.

Parks and other open spaces designed for outdoor use and public enjoyment are essential to Downtown's character and vitality. These include public squares, promenades, plazas and private courtyards. Improvements to existing parks and open spaces should enhance their appeal for public use. New parks and open spaces also should be designed with this principle in mind and should be designed for active use.

## P13: Keep the automobile subordinate.

Parking lots and structures should support other functions and not dominate the urban setting. They should be hidden, or at least visually buffered.

## P14: Celebrate the riverfront.

As the major factor in the early history of the city, the Mississippi River is a basic resource to be valued in all urban design. This certainly applies to properties in close proximity to the river, but also relates to improvements that may link other places to it, in terms of views, pedestrian circulation and building orientation.



*P12: Provide signature open spaces. Parks and other open spaces designed for outdoor use and public enjoyment are essential to Downtown's character and vitality.*



*P13: Keep the automobile subordinate. Parking garages with ground floor uses engage pedestrians and mitigate the visual impact of parking areas.*



*P14: Celebrate the riverfront.*

# Design Traditions of Downtown

Lessons from design traditions are useful in reflecting the basic character and framework of Downtown.  Most notably, they demonstrate that buildings are built at the sidewalk edge and with a rhythm of building fronts that reflect lot widths. These features serve as inspiration for new, compatible infill.

## Alignment of Fronts



*Most buildings are sited at the sidewalk edge and therefore the building fronts align.*

## Rhythm
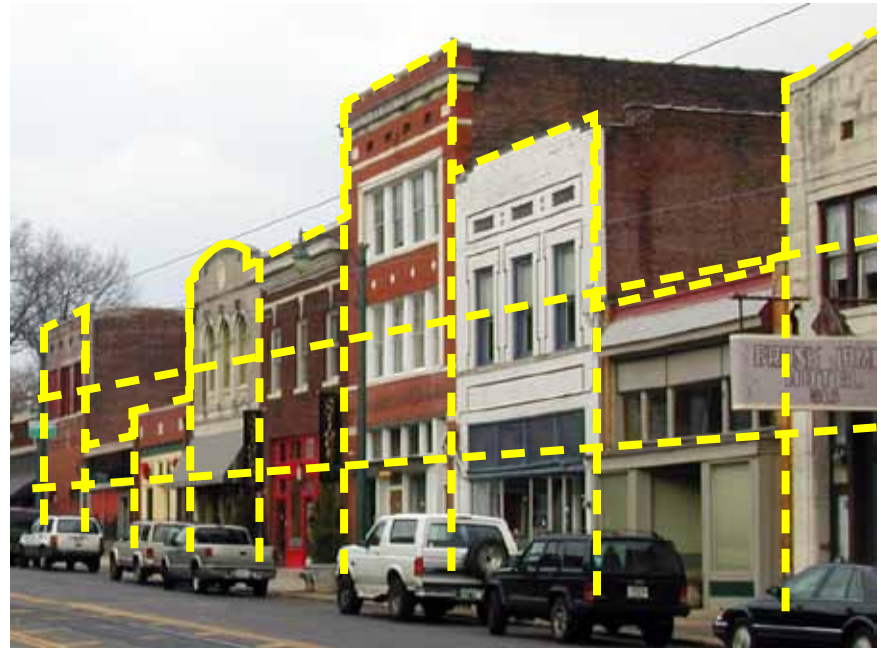


*Rhythm is created through variation in building heights in addition to the repetition of architectural features. Historically, buildings filled the entire width of their lots, and multiple lots composed the structure of a city block. This form resulted in a continuous, varied street frontage, where sets of aligned windows, transoms, and cornices punctuated the built environment. New development can demonstrate a sense of rhythm in a similar way with variations in height within a structure, a consistent pattern of ground level and upper-story windows and through facade details or materials.*

## Consistent Scale



*Even though there is a variety in overall building height, consistency in scale is evident in the first four floors of many buildings in Downtown Memphis. The first two to four stories are typically defined with windows of similar heights and with moldings that align along the block to express the traditional scale of the street. Even taller buildings fit with lower structures when they are designed to reflect this street level scale.*

## Alignment of Facade Elements



*Most buildings share a variety of design features, including the alignment of horizontal moldings and cornices. These help to unify individual blocks, even when building heights and styles vary.*

# Chapter 2
# Design Guidelines

This chapter provides design guidelines for work in the Memphis Central Business Improvement District (CBID). Investment is encouraged in Downtown Memphis, in a wide range of settings. This includes new buildings, additions to existing ones, landscaping, and other site work, both in the public right-of-way as well as within individual parcels.

Opportunities exist for new infill projects and other improvements that will increase density, strengthen the local tax base, enhance the quality of life, and contribute to a vital Downtown overall.

At the same time, it is important that each development contributes to an overall sense of continuity and identity in Downtown as a whole and in the individual design contexts. Design principles that encourage compatible scale and pedestrian-oriented environments serve as the basis for the guidelines in this chapter.

Note that this chapter also applies to historic properties, including National Register and Landmarks districts and individually listed properties. (For work on historic structures, additional guidelines for preservation, found in Chapter 5, also apply.)
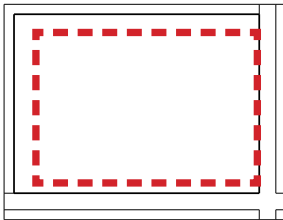
## Chapter Contents

1. Neighborhood level

2. Site level

3. Building level

# 2.1 Levels of Design in this Chapter

The guidelines in this chapter are grouped into three categories of design: (1) Neighborhood level, (2) Site level, and (3) Building level.

1. **Neighborhood level.** Design guidelines in this category focus on ways in which individual projects work together to create a vital, functioning neighborhood. Design in the public realm and consideration of how an individual property relates positively to others in the vicinity are important considerations.

2. **Site level**. Design guidelines in this category focus on how improvements on an individual property are organized, including the placement and orientation of buildings, the location of service areas and landscaping. Some of these guidelines focus on maintaining a sense of continuity with the neighborhood, while others address making the best use of the property in terms of creating a sense of place and enhancing function for users.

3. **Building level.** Design guidelines in this category address architectural character, scale, materials and details, with a focus on fitting with the design traditions of Downtown, while also encouraging new, creative approaches.

# 2.2 Neighborhood Design



*Building a cohesive, interconnected and pedestrian-friendly public realm is key to achieving a well functioning Downtown environment.*

Building a cohesive, interconnected and pedestrian-friendly public realm is key to achieving a well functioning Downtown environment. The public realm includes the public right-of-way (streets, sidewalks and pedestrian paths), public spaces (parks and plazas) and the front facades of buildings along the street wall. In terms of the public right-of-way, these design guidelines address site linkage and circulation through streetscape improvements, pathways, drives, parking and connections to public spaces. In terms of building design, this document provides guidance on building orientation, scale, massing, transparency and materials to ensure that future projects add visual interest to the public realm and contribute to the development of engaging street frontages.

Note that the Unified Development Code also promotes a sense of continuity in design at the neighborhood level, by establishing uniform setback lines, and mandating a consistent, pedestrian-friendly character in the design of building walls that abut streets. The guidelines in this section supplement those standards with more detail about how those requirements may be refined.

In addition to the UDC, the CBID Streetscape Master Plan sets forth specifications for public and private improvements to sidewalks. This includes specifications for minimum walkway clearances, locations for street trees and the use of different paving designs. The standards in the master plan also apply, with additional explanation provided in these guidelines.



*In terms of building design, this document provides guidance on building orientation, scale, massing, transparency and materials to ensure that future projects add visual interest to the public realm and contribute to the development of engaging street frontages.*

*Storefront windows and outdoor patios activate the public realm.*



*Successful urban development relates to the surrounding environment through the use of entryways, windows, and high-quality streetscape design.*

# 2.2.1 The Public Realm

The public realm of Downtown Memphis should be dynamic, active, inviting and be of high-quality materials. Both the public right-of-way conditions and exterior building design impact the function and character of the public realm.

**1.  Development projects should contribute to the public realm in a positive way.**

a.  The following urban design solutions can assist in creating a successful public realm:
   - Active street frontages
   - Pedestrian-oriented entries
   - Windows facing the street
   - Small public spaces linked to the sidewalk
   - Urban streetscape design and landscaping
   - Street furniture
   - Public art
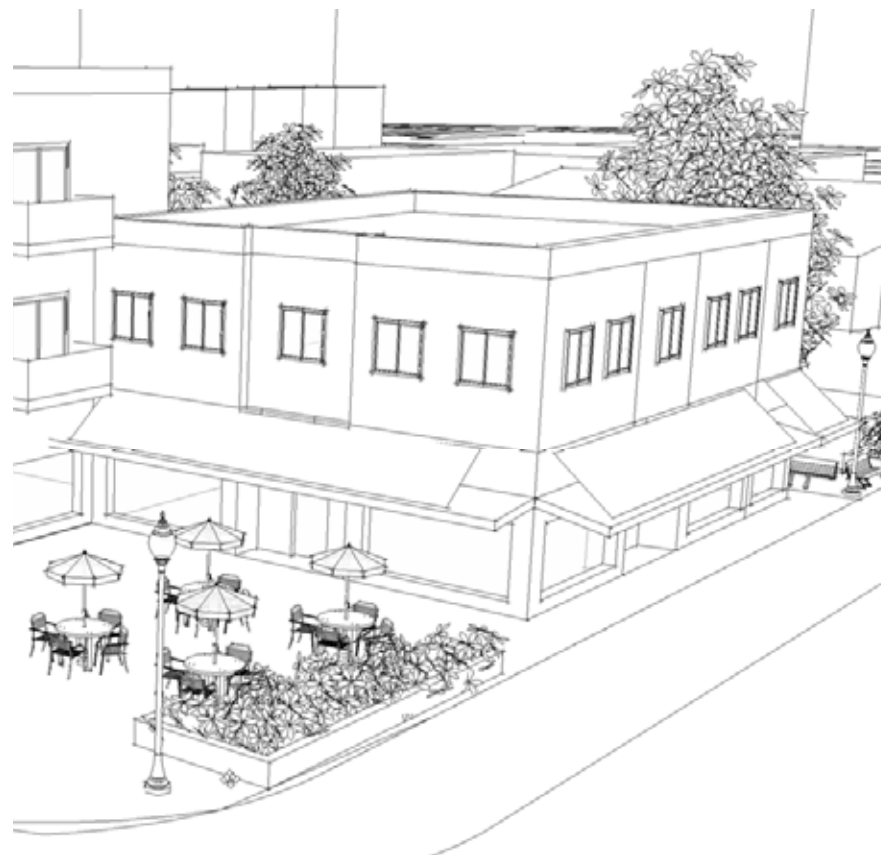


*Development projects should contribute to the public realm in a positive way.*

## 2.2.2 View from the Public Right-of-Way

Views from public rights-of-way to natural features and landmarks should be maintained and taken into account in the designing of sites and buildings. The location of the building on a site, in addition to its scale, height, and massing, can impact views from the adjacent public right-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, intersections, and public spaces. Development projects should try to preserve note-worthy views, such as views to the river.

**2. Enhance views from the public way to natural features and historic landmarks when feasible.**

a.  Strategically locate a building on a site to maintain key views or frame views as perceived from the public right-of-way.
b.  Vary a building's height and massing to provide view corridors.



*Strategically locate a building on a site to maintain key views or frame views as perceived from the public right-of-way. (For example, this building is set back, permitting views to the landmark Sun Records studio.)*

*Locate a new walkway to animate the Downtown pedestrian network and its associated outdoor spaces. (For example, these walkways connect to public sidewalks.)*

## 2.2.3 Pedestrian Connections

Pedestrian circulation systems provide access to buildings, court-yards, internal paths and plazas. These systems should interconnect and facilitate pedestrian movement. In most cases, these connections will simply involve an extension of the existing sidewalk network but should also include internal circulation systems within the development. This is especially relevant to urban campus settings and multifamily residential developments with clusters of buildings.

**3.    Connect a new development to established pedestrian ways.**

a.      Appropriate pedestrian connections include:
   - Sidewalks
   - Internal walkways, within an individual property
   - Mid-block passages
   - Multi-use alleys

b.      Appropriate features with which to connect include:
   - Plazas and courtyards
   - Other buildings

**4.    Locate a new walkway to animate the Downtown pedestrian network and its associated outdoor spaces.**

a.      Direct a walkway through a plaza, courtyard or other outdoor use area to help animate the space.



·Street

*Direct a walkway through a plaza, court-yard or other outdoor use area to help animate the space. (For example, this walk-way connects to active outdoor areas.)*



*Appropriate pedestrian connections include mid-block passages.*
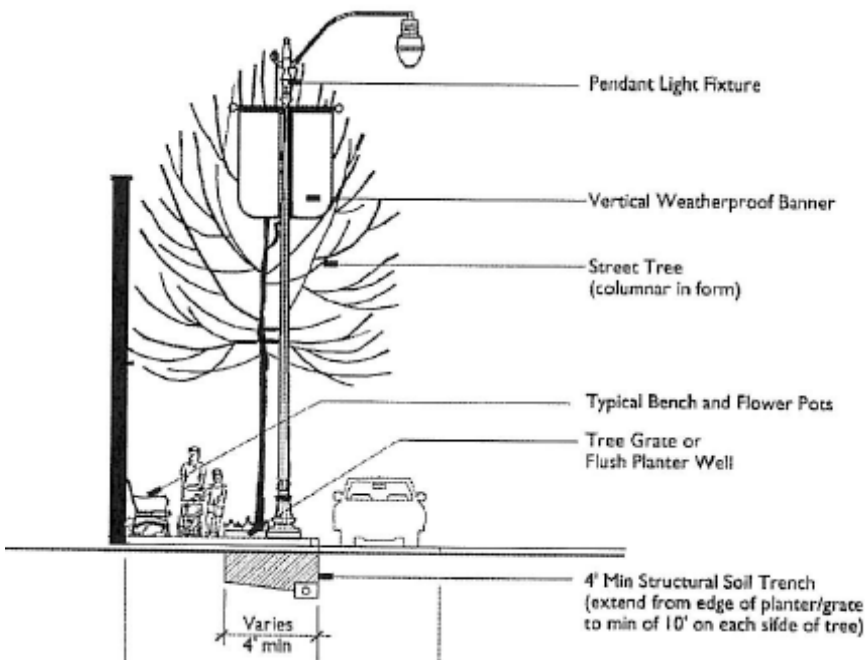
## 2.2.4 Streetscape Design

Streetscape improvements enhance sidewalks for pedestrians and help establish neighborhood identity. Streetscape design may address sidewalk width and materials, curb cuts, bump-outs, landscaping (street trees, tree lawns or planters), lighting, and street furnishings. These improvements should be coordinated, functional, and durable. Plant materials should be appropriate to the context as well.

Specific design standards for many of the streets in Downtown are set forth in the CBID Streetscape Master Plan and shall apply. In locations where the plan does not indicate which types apply, refer to the discussion of streetscape design considerations for the individual Downtown Design Contexts, which appears in Chapter 3.

Note also that the UDC establishes a palette of "street plates," which defines some basic requirements for sidewalk widths, location of trees and other furnishings. As these plates are assigned to individual streets Downtown, they also must be taken into consideration. In light of the standards and requirements in these documents, the following guidelines provide general direction for streetscape design.

*Streetscape improvements should be coordinated, functional and durable. Plant materials should be appropriate to the Memphis climate.*

Pendant Light Fixture

Vertical Weatherproof Banner

Street Tree
(columnar in form)

Typical Bench and Flower Pots

Tree Grate or
Flush Planter Well

4' Min Structural Soil Trench
(extend from edge of planter/grate
to min of 10' on each side of tree)

Varies
4" min

*The Downtown Streetscape Master Plan includes a series of sidewalk sections that establish basic design requirements and should be consulted in addition to the design guidelines in this document.*

*The use of similar trees, planters, and lighting creates a coordinated streetscape.*



*Outdoor furnishings should be made of durable materials.*



*Local plant species that tolerate both heat and cold and require minimal maintenance are most appropriate.*



*Historic streetscape features such as granite curbs and cornerstones should be preserved.*

**5.    Use a coordinated set of streetscape elements.**

a.    Consider the design context when determining sidewalk improvements.

b.    Consider the area's anticipated development density when determining sidewalk widths.

**6.    Furnishings should be durable and suitable for outdoor conditions.**

a.    Locate furnishings near actively used pedestrian areas, such as major pedestrian routes,  building entrances and outdoor gathering places.

b.    Locate furnishings so they will not impede the primary pedestrian way.

**7.    Street lighting should be compatible and pedestrian-scaled.**

a.    Fixtures should be shielded to minimize light pollution of nighttime skies.

**8.    Use plant materials that are appropriate to the Memphis region.**

a.    Use species that are cold hardy and drought tolerant. Native species are preferred.

b.    Avoid species that require significant maintenance and care.

c.    Choose materials from the lists of recommended plant species contained in the *UDC*.

**9.    Preserve historic streetscape features.**

a.    This includes curbs, pavers, benches and park structures.

b.    See Chapter 5 for additional guidance specific to historic preservation.

# 2.2.5 Site Furniture

Site furniture may include benches, chairs, tables, waste receptacles, bike racks and planters, as well as a variety of other furnishings designed for outdoor use. Some of these may be located in the public right-of-way, while others will be placed within a property, such as in a plaza or courtyard.

The CBID Streetscape Master Plan provides specifications for many site furnishings when they are to be located in the public right-of-way, and should be used in those cases. The specifications for Street Plates, as prescribed in the UDC, also will influence the design of site furnishings.



*Use furnishings that have proven durability in the Memphis climate. (Appropriate example)*

**10.   Select site furniture that is compatible with the specific design context.**

a.   Use furnishings that have proven durability in the Memphis climate.
b.   Site furniture may match that identified for the public right-of-way, or it may be distinguishable as separate from that, while remaining compatible in general character, form and materials.
c.   Also select designs that will be comfortable to use year-round. Selecting a bench design that drains is an example.

**11.   A customized design for site furniture is also appropriate.**



*A customized design for site furniture is also appropriate. (Appropriate example)*

a.   This may be an adaptation of standard furnishings that add a distinctive character to a specific site.
b.   Pieces that are well-crafted and that reflect skills of local artisans are especially welcomed.

## 2.2.6 Public Art

*Incorporating public art in a project is encouraged.*

*Locate public art to help activate an outdoor space.*

*Install public art where it can be comfortably experienced by pedestrians.*

*Public art located in the right-of-way should enhance the streetscape and should not impede pedestrian traffic.*

Public art is highly encouraged as an amenity in Downtown Memphis and as a way of bringing visual interest and special identity to individual sites and neighborhoods. Public art has the potential to not only enhance the site where it is located but have a positive impact on the broader neighborhood and Downtown community.

It is not the intent of these guidelines to address the content or selection of public art but rather to provide guidance about the appropriate placement of permanent installations.

A wide range of art mediums, from sculpture to murals and artistic lighting, can be appropriate Downtown. Public art can occur at a variety of scales, depending upon the specific purpose of the art piece and its particular site and context. For example, while large art pieces can be appropriate in an urban Downtown, smaller pieces can be very effective when they are planned to occur as "surprises," or "accents" to the public realm.

**12. Incorporating public art in a project is encouraged.**

a.    Public art should be complementary to the primary structure on site and the surrounding context.

b.    A public art piece located exterior to a building should be suitable for outdoor display, including its long-term maintenance and conservation requirements.

**13. Design public art to be an asset to Downtown.**

a.    Public art should help establish landmarks and points of interest Downtown.

b.    Design public art that respects neighborhood identity and reinforces the unique character of Downtown Memphis.

**14. Design public art to enhance the overall public realm and pedestrian experience.**

a.    Where appropriate, use public art to help create or enhance places of community gathering and active public use.

b.    Install public art where it can be comfortably experienced by pedestrians.

c.    Avoid locations and public art designs that impede pedestrian flow or could endanger the safety of adjacent property, pedestrians, or automobile traffic.

d.    Consider a public art location that will frame or enhance an important public view opportunity.

e.    Consider using public art strategically to help encourage the use of courtyards, plazas, and other public spaces.

# 2.3 Site Design

This section addresses site design within an individual parcel. The objective is to promote projects that have a comprehensive approach to the use of land, with a focus on enhancing the street, providing for efficient functional requirements and highlighting high quality and enduring improvements.

This includes considerations of the placement of a building on the site, as well as the basic approach to landscaping and outdoor amenities. Other functional requirements are also addressed. Locating automobile access, designing service and loading areas, and treatment of surface parking lots are topics addressed. It also includes design of outdoor amenities, including outdoor dining and general landscapes.
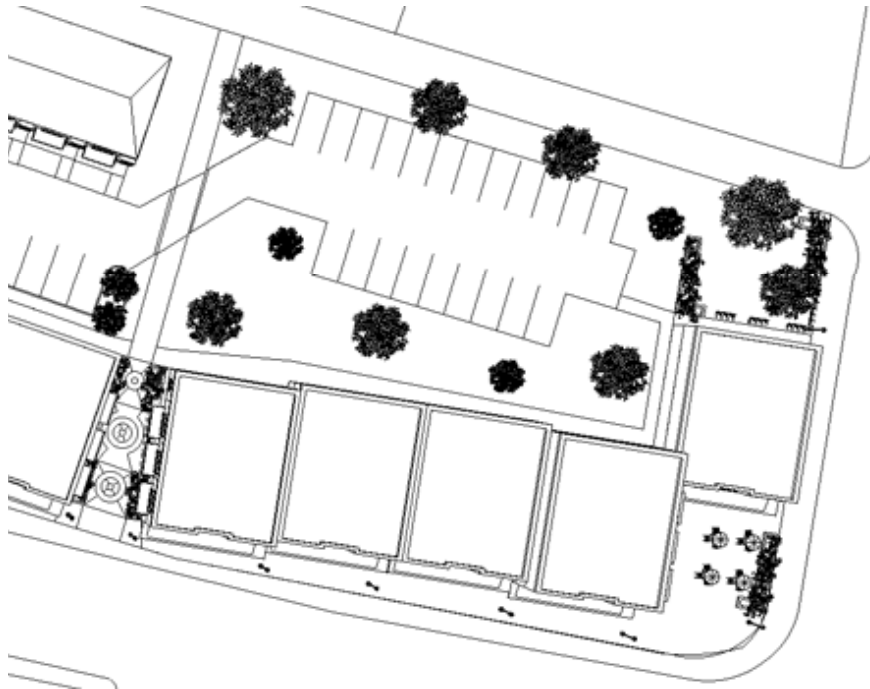
*The objective for site design is to promote projects that have a comprehensive approach to the use of land, with a focus on enhancing the street, providing for efficient functional requirements and highlighting high quality and enduring improvements.*
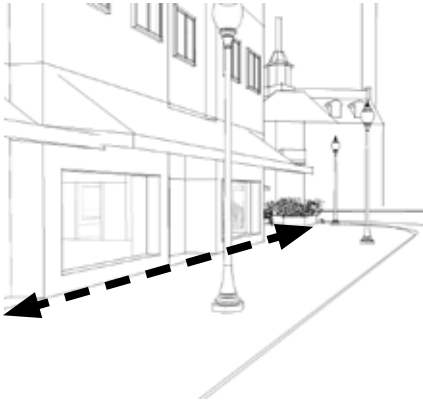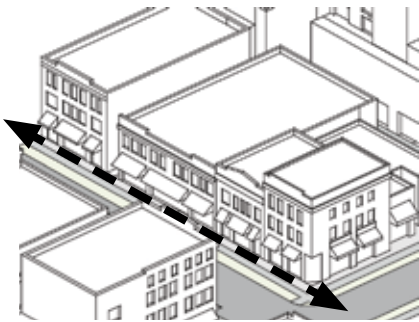
*Buildings should be constructed at or near the sidewalk edge according to the setback range established in the UDC.*

# 2.3.1 Building Setbacks and Build-To Lines

The uniform alignment of building fronts along a block helps to define a "street wall," which provides a sense of enclosure and a comfortable scale for pedestrians. The UDC defines basic "build-to" or "set-back" lines in Downtown. In some cases a range of permitted setbacks is established.

The setbacks and alignment of new buildings also should respect the pattern of setbacks that is described for the individual design contexts. (See the descriptions in the specific design contexts in Chapter 3.) In addition, maintaining established building front alignment is particularly important in Downtown historic districts.

**1. In areas that are predominantly commercial in character, buildings should align at the inside sidewalk edge.**

a.  A clearly defined street edge, composed of storefronts at the sidewalk, is the preferred pattern.

b.  This may be varied to some extent for outdoor dining, plazas and courtyards, but the predominant line of storefronts should be maintained.

c.  Examples are these design contexts:
    - Downtown Core
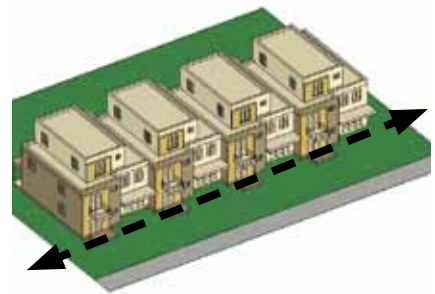    - Neighborhood Center
    - Sports and Entertainment

*A clearly defined street edge, composed of storefronts at the sidewalk, is the preferred pattern.*

**2. In areas that are designated as Downtown Neighborhood design contexts, buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback.**

a. In single-family contexts, this should reflect traditional front yard depths.
b. In multifamily contexts, this should provide space for stoops, porches, gardens, courtyards and landscaping.
c. See the UDC for basic setback requirements.

**3. In other design contexts, placing a building at the sidewalk edge is encouraged.**

a. In some contexts, varied setbacks may be present; however, the alignment of new construction with the sidewalk edge is preferred to strengthen the street wall.
b. Examples of these design contexts are:
   - Urban Campus
   - Downtown Industrial
   - Commercial Corridor



*Buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback. In multifamily contexts, this should provide space for stoops and small courtyards.*



*In the Urban Campus, Downtown Industrial, and Commercial Corridor contexts, setbacks may vary, but construction at or near the street is encouraged.*



*In areas that are designated as Downtown Neighborhood design contexts, buildings should establish a uniform front yard setback.*

*A building at a corner may face either, or both streets and may be at an angle.*



*Entry definition for an industrial context*



*A pergola identifies the entry into this multifamily project.*

# 2.3.2 Primary Building Entrance

The primary entrance of a structure should orient to a major sidewalk, pedestrian way, or plaza. The objective is to provide a sense of connection with the neighborhood, and add "eyes to the street." In most cases, locating the entrance directly facing the street is preferred, but in some designs, orienting an entrance to a courtyard that is already active and visible from the street will accomplish the same objective.

**4.  Orient the primary entrance of a building to face a primary street, or an active plaza or pedestrian way.**

a.  In some cases, the front door itself may be positioned perpendicular to the street. In this case, the entry should still be clearly defined. This may be achieved by incorporating a porch, stoop or canopy for residential building types, or a recessed entry, canopy or awning for commercial/mixed-use building types. Similar features that highlight an entrance may also be considered.

b.  The primary entrance should orient to a primary street, when feasible; in some cases, it may face a secondary street, when doing so would enhance the character of that street and the primary street is already activated with entrances of other buildings in the area.

**5.  Corner buildings have at least two facades visibly exposed to the street and should be designed to respond to their more prominent locations.**

a.  A building at a corner may face either or both streets and may be at an angle.



*A building at a corner may face either or both streets and may be at an angle.*

**6.** **Design the main entrance to a building to be clearly identifiable.**

a. Provide a sheltering element such as a canopy, awning, arcade or portico to signify the primary entrance to a building.

*Canopies define primary entrances in a variety of materials and forms in these examples.*

*Softscape natural amenity.*



*Hardscape plaza amenity.*

*The storm detention areas shown above are designed to serve as site amenities. Both design approaches are appropriate.*



*In dense urban environments, buildings may share an adjacent open space.*



*Shade trees and benches provide amenities for open space users.*

# 2.3.3 Open Space

Open space should be provided in a project, when opportunity exists and may take the form of a plaza, courtyard, mini-park or a landscaped feature that is visible from the public way. The opportunities for providing open space will vary by design context. In the Downtown Core, for example, this is likely to be limited to small plazas, whereas opportunities for larger, more "green" spaces may be feasible in the Commercial Corridor, Urban Neighborhood and Urban Campus contexts.

**7.  Create open space for public enjoyment.**

a.  Where open space is required for landscaping, consider designing the area so that it can be used or observed by the public as an asset.

b.  Inclusion of shade trees, seating, dining areas, or water features provide public amenities.

**8.  Also design site engineering features to serve as amenities.**

a.  When open space is needed to meet engineering requirements, consider designing the feature or area so that it can be actively used or observed by the public as an asset.

b.  Also, consider the opportunity to design the feature such that it may be shared with adjoining properties.



*Shared trail*

*Positive open space*
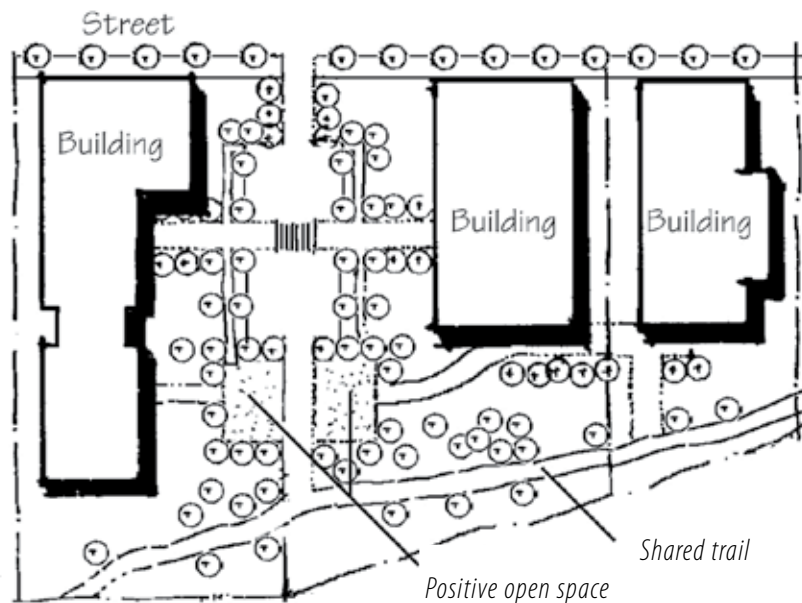
*Open space that can be enjoyed visually and functionally is considered to be "positive," as opposed to areas that are not well designed to accommodate use or serve as a visual amenity.*

# 2.3.4 Courtyards, Plazas and Pocket Parks

Courtyards, plazas and pocket parks provide places for people to gather, engage in activities and enjoy a sense of community, and these are encouraged throughout Downtown. These places should be planned to activate the street and enhance the pedestrian experience.

The size and location of such an amenity should be sufficient to accommodate the intended uses, and provide a sense of energy. It should not be over-sized, such that the space will appear to be under-utilized.

**9.      Design a plaza, courtyard or pocket park to be inviting.**

a.      Orient this space to link with other pedestrian activities, primary circulation paths, views, cultural resources and natural features.
b.      Size this space to provide a comfortable scale for pedestrians.
c.      Define the space with building fronts that convey a human scale.
d.      Locate the space along active pedestrian circulation paths.
e.      Locating a space  at the sidewalk level is preferred; a sunken or raised courtyard that is substantially separated from the sidewalk is discouraged.



*Locating a space  at the sidewalk level is preferred.*



*Locate a plaza along an active pedestrian circulation path, as this one is.*



*Design a plaza, courtyard or pocket park to invite pedestrian use, as these do.*



*Locating a space at the sidewalk level is preferred; a sunken or raised courtyard that is substantially separated from the sidewalk is discouraged. However, an active splash park or playground that is slightly lowered is appropriate.*

*Locate a dining area to facilitate pedestrian flow along the sidewalk.*

# 2.3.5 Outdoor Dining Areas

Outdoor dining areas and sidewalk cafés help animate the public realm and are welcomed throughout Downtown Memphis. An outdoor dining area or sidewalk café typically involves a grouping of tables and/or seating for the purpose of eating, drinking, or social gathering.

Outdoor dining areas are certainly encouraged Downtown but they should not block pedestrian traffic or create a public nuisance. When these areas are located on the public sidewalk or within the public right-of-way, additional approvals from the Downtown Memphis Commission, City of Memphis, and other related entities may also be required.

**10. Locate an outdoor dining area to accommodate pedestrian traffic along the sidewalk.**

a. Placing the dining area immediately adjacent to a building front is preferred, thus maintaining a public walkway along the curb side.

b. Maintain a clear path along the sidewalk for pedestrians; a width of 8 feet for this clear path is recommended, but this may be reduced to 5 feet where no other obstacles in the sidewalk will impede pedestrian traffic.

c. A railing, detectable barrier, a series of planters, or similar edge treatment can be used to define the perimeter of a permanent outdoor dining area.

d. If used, the railing or detectable barrier should be sturdy and of durable materials. For example, using a chain, cord, or other flexible system is typically discouraged.



*The boundary of a patio area may be defined with an awning in addition to temporary railings.*

**11. Design the outdoor dining area to be an asset to Downtown and appropriate for its site and the surrounding context.**

a. Tables and chairs should be high-quality, durable, and designed for outdoor use.

b. Tables, chairs, and other components of the outdoor dining area should not be permanently attached to public infrastructure or the public right-of-way. Approved patio railings may be allowed to be temporarily attached to the surface of the Main Street Mall or public right-of-way.

c. If the outdoor dining area is located on the public sidewalk or within the public right-of-way, floor coverings or raised platforms may not be used.



*Placing the dining area immediately adjacent to a building front is preferred, thus maintaining a public walkway along the curb side.*



*Rail construction must be sturdy and of durable materials.*



*Maintain a clear walkway along the dining area for pedestrians.*

*Consider using decorative and porous paving materials, and grass strips in driveways, as this driveway illustrates.*



*In urban contexts, on-site parking should ideally be accessed from alleys or side streets.*



*The width of curb cuts should be kept to a minimum.*

# 2.3.6 Auto Access to a Site

Automobiles may need access to a site for services and deliveries, or for parking. This access should be located in the least obtrusive place, while also meeting the necessary functional requirements. The objective is to promote pedestrian safety and activity by minimizing traffic crossing conflicts as well as avoiding the visual impacts of loading and service areas.

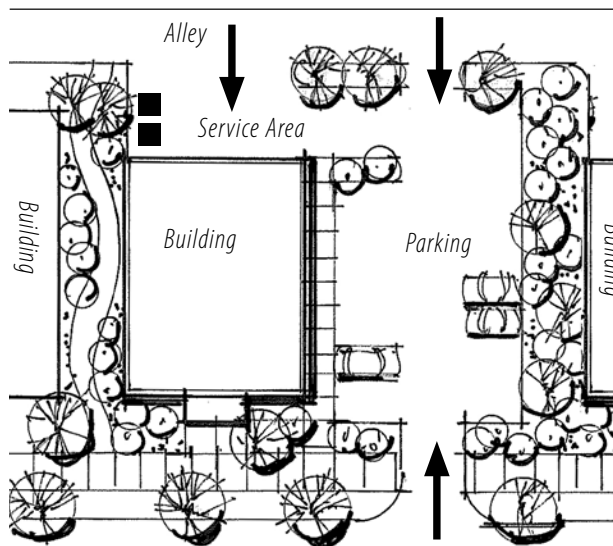**12. Locate a service area that requires vehicle access where conflicts with pedestrian circulation will be minimized.**

a. Provide access from an alley when feasible. This is especially important in the Downtown Core and Neighborhood Center contexts.

b. If an alley access is not feasible, then consider using a secondary street.

c. If necessary, install a service drive, which is located away from intersections and other areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic.

**13. Where a curb cut is to be installed, keep the width to a minimum.**

a. Consider using shared driveways between properties to reduce the number of curb cuts.

b. Utilize smaller curbs radii to match existing urban intersection context.

**14. Design service drives to be visual assets.**

a. Consider using decorative and porous paving materials, and grass strips in driveways. These are especially appropriate in the Neighborhood Center and Downtown Neighborhood contexts.

b. Utilize smaller curb radii to match existing urban intersection context.



*Locate a service area that requires vehicle access where conflicts with pedestrian circulation will be minimized.*

## 2.3.7 Surface Parking on Site

Generally the goal for the Downtown Core is to increase the density of development such that most parking will be in structures, either in facilities primarily designed for parking, or in a building in which parking serves other uses on the site. However, in some of the lower density design contexts, surface parking will continue to be necessary, and in the Downtown Core context, there are existing lots that may remain as such for the short term.

Where it does occur, the visual impact of surface parking should be minimized. On-site parking should be subordinate to other uses on the site and the street frontage should not appear to be a parking area. Where a portion of a lot will be exposed, it should be buffered with landscaping.

**15.   Minimize the visual impact of surface parking.**

a.   Locate a parking area to the interior of a site where feasible.
b.   This is especially important on a corner property. This is generally more visible than an interior lot, and it is important to provide a sense of enclosure of the street wall.

**16.   Site a surface lot so it will minimize gaps in the continuous building wall of a commercial block.**

a.   Place the parking at the rear of the site, or if this is not feasible, beside the building.
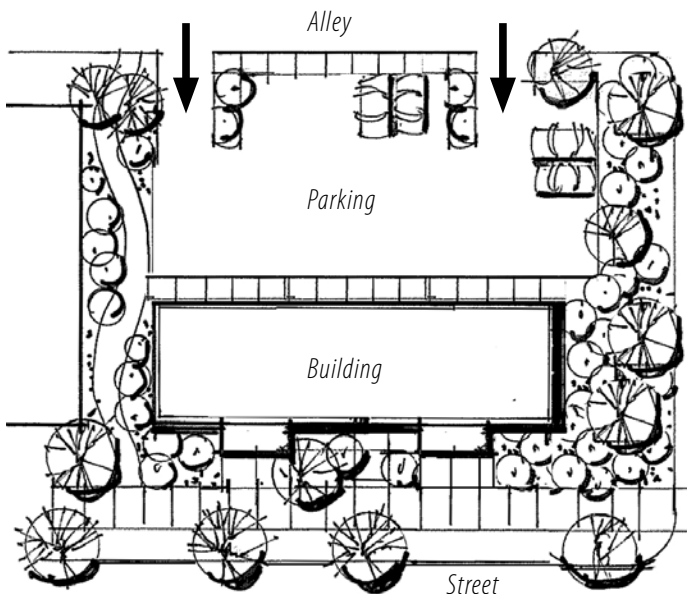


*Locate a parking area to the interior of a site where feasible.*

*A planted buffer may also be used, consisting of a combination of trees, shrubs and ground covers, as this one does.*



*Note that "buffering" does not mean fully screening the parking, but it does require creating a visual "filter" that softens the view of parked cars, as this one does.*

**17. Provide a visual buffer where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk.**

a.    Note that "buffering" does not mean fully screening the parking, but it does require creating a visual "filter" that softens the view of parked cars.

b.    A low wall may be used as a buffer. Its materials should be compatible with those of the building on the site.

c.    A planted buffer may also be used, consisting of a combination of trees, shrubs and ground covers.

**18. Divide a large parking area into small modules with landscape buffers.**

a.    The UDC establishes the maximum number of parking spaces that may be included in a single "pod," which varies by zone district. It also establishes minimum requirements for parking lot landscaping, interior and perimeter.

b.    A buffer that separates two parking modules should be a minimum of 8 feet in width.



*Provide a visual buffer where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk. This fence and low plantings provide an appropriate screening device.*
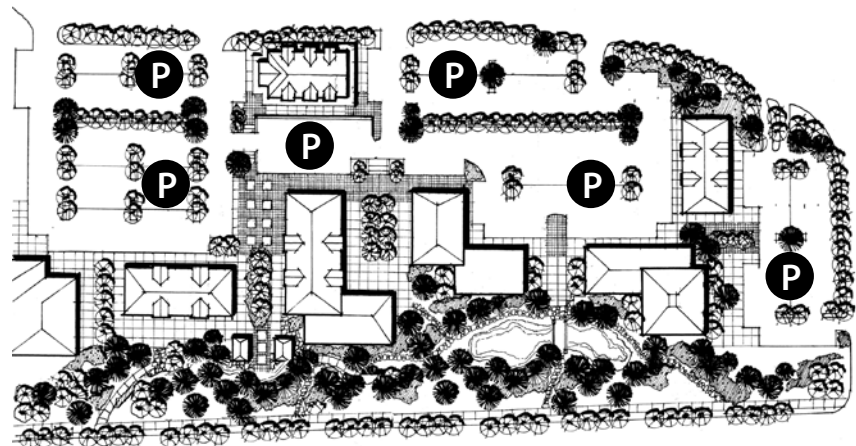


*Divide a large parking area into small "pods" with landscape buffers.*

## 2.3.8 Structured Parking

In most locations, structured parking at the street level should ideally have an active use at the sidewalk edge, especially at corner locations. However, there may be some locations where it would be impractical to require other uses to separate the parking area from the street. On some secondary streets, for example, it may be acceptable to screen parking and not have an active use.



*Parking garages screened with buildings or ground floor uses help to maintain the scale of an urban street.*

19. **When parking in a structure occurs at the street level on a primary street, it should ideally have an active use at the sidewalk edge.**

a.  On a secondary street, other methods of providing visual interest may be employed. In these locations, use architectural details, murals and public art, wall sculpture or display cases at the street level to provide interest to pedestrians.

20. **The massing of a parking structure should appear similar in scale to other buildings in the area.**

a.  See the guidelines for articulation of building mass in the next section "Building Design."

21. **Parking levels located above the first floor shall be screened.**

a.  Wrapping the parking with another use is preferred.
b.  When an active use is not feasible, provide an architectural screen.
c.  Screening that reflects window patterns along the street is encouraged.



*The massing of a parking structure should appear similar in scale to other active use buildings in the area. (This structure has an interior parking deck behind the "wrap" of articulated storefronts, while the exterior reflects facade widths that are typical of the area.)*

*Screening that reflects window patterns along the street is encouraged.*



*Complete screening of cars is not required, but it should be sufficient to minimize the visual impacts of autos.*



*On a secondary street, other methods of providing visual interest may be employed. In these locations, use architectural details. It should include decorative patterns, railings and details to provide visual interest. (This screen design is an example.)*



*When parking in a structure occurs at the street level on a primary street, it shall have an active use at the sidewalk edge, as this one does.*

**22.  An architectural screen shall be an integral part of the building design.**

a.  It should be of durable materials and finish and be consistent with the primary building materials.

b.  It should include decorative patterns, railings and details to provide visual interest.

c.  Complete screening of cars is not required, but it should be sufficient to minimize the visual impacts of autos.

## 2.3.9 Landscaping

In general, plant materials that are indigenous or well-acclimated and noninvasive should be used. Landscape design within a site should help to establish a sense of visual continuity.

**23.**  **Where plant materials are to be used, employ indigenous species.**

a.  Drought-tolerant plant species, native to the region and suitable to the climate should be used.
b.  Select plant materials from the *Memphis and Shelby County Landscape Manual*.

**24.**  **Use a coordinated landscape palette to establish a sense of visual continuity in the design of a site.**

a.  This applies throughout the property.
b.  Also consider relating to plant selections already established on abutting properties.

## 2.3.10 Fences and Walls

Fences and free-standing walls can be found throughout Downtown Memphis. The appropriate use of fencing and walls varies greatly by design context. Fences and walls generally define yards in traditional residential neighborhoods and screen parking and service areas in the more urban parts of Downtown.

Fencing and walls can also be helpful to property owners seeking greater security and privacy and may be appropriate along the rear and side of lots in some contexts. While fences and walls often serve a utilitarian function, they should also enhance the character of the street and appear to be integral components of site design. Aside from those that may be used to screen trash storage, fences and walls should typically be pedestrian scaled and permit partial views into the property.



*A fence enhances the character of the street and appears to be an integral component of site design.*



*Landscaping along a site should involve a coordinated pattern that establishes visual continuity.*



*Urban fences should be low in height and permit partial views onto the site. Trees or landscaping along the fence are strongly encouraged.*

**25. Design a fence to be compatible with its context, the site, and adjacent buildings.**

a.   Design a fence to be an integral part of the site and serve as an amenity that adds visual interest to the property.
b.   Use materials that are both durable and compatible with the primary structure on site.
c.   Metal fences are preferred in most cases.
d.   Vinyl, chain link, or any fence with razor wire is inappropriate.
e.   Painted wood is typically only appropriate in the Downtown Neighborhood design context.
f.   While fencing should be in scale with the context and site, fencing Downtown should typically be six (6) to eight (8) feet in height or less.
g.   Opaque privacy fences are inappropriate along primary street frontages. If an opaque privacy fence is appropriate along a secondary street, the fence should be set back at least two feet (2') from the sidewalk edge.

**26. Design a wall to be compatible with its context, the site, and adjacent buildings.**

a.   Design a wall to be an integral part of the site and serve as an amenity that adds visual interest to the property.
b.   Use materials that are both durable and compatible with the primary structure on site.
c.   Masonry walls are preferred in most cases.
d.   Solid walls along primary streets are inappropriate.
e.   Landscaping is strongly encouraged along the street-facing side of a wall, where appropriate for the context.
f.   While a wall should be in scale with the context and site, free-standing walls should typically be six (6) to eight (8) feet in height or less.

## 2.3.11 Exterior Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

Junction boxes, solar panels, wind turbines, external fire connections and standpipes, utility meters, telecommunication devices, cables, conduits, satellite dishes, HVAC equipment and fans, and other exterior equipment should be concealed from public view to the extent feasible while still meeting their functional requirements. For historic buildings and sites, installing or locating building equipment in a way that damages historic features should be avoided.

**27. Minimize the visual impacts of exterior building equipment from the public right-of-way and the surrounding neighborhood.**

a. Locate exterior building equipment out of public view when feasible.
b. Do not locate exterior building equipment on the façade or a primary elevation when other options exist.
c. When exterior building equipment must be located on a building elevation that is visible from the public right-of-way, screen it from view or design the equipment to be visually subordinate to the building.
d. Use low-profile or screened mechanical units on rooftops.



*Screen equipment from view or design it to be visually subordinate to the building. (In this industrial context, a metal and concrete screen is used.)*



*Mechanical units should ideally be located along the rear façade and screened from view.*



*Screen equipment from view or design it to be visually subordinate to the building. (This screen uses materials that are similar to the primary building.)*

*Screen a service area with a wall, fence or planting. (This brick wall is an example.)*

# 2.3.12 Service Areas

Service areas, such as loading docks, dumpsters, and delivery entrances, should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building. Service areas are typically most appropriate Downtown when located to the rear of a building and not visible from the public right-of-way.

**28.    Minimize the visual impacts of service areas.**

a.    Orient the service area toward service lanes or alleys and away from major streets.
b.    Screen a service area from view with a solid wall, opaque fence or heavy landscaping.
c.    Dumpsters must be screened from view, typically with a wall, fence, or similar durable enclosure.
d.    Where a service area must be oriented to the street, screen it with an architectural feature. The design should be in character with the building and provide visual interest at the street level.

**29.    Position a service area to minimize conflicts with other abutting uses.**

a.    Service areas should be located away from any abutting residential uses, where possible.



*Service areas should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building, as this one is.*

# 2.3.13 Drive-Through Facilities

Some commercial operations, such as bank tellers, gas stations, fast food restaurants and other retail and service-oriented businesses, desire drive-through facilities. Where these are permitted, they should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and should assist in achieving goals for consistent street edges defined with building walls. In that regard, a drive-through facility should be located to the interior of a property and should be visually subordinate to the primary structure.

Note that the UDC regulates curb cuts, driveway widths, general building location and canopy placement; these restrictions will impact the design and layout of drive-through facilities.

**30. Locate a drive-through facility behind the primary wall plane of a principle structure on a site.**

a. If it is attached to the primary structure, any canopy over the drive-through service area should be set back behind the wall plane a minimum of 10 feet.

**31. Driveways and waiting lanes should not be located between the sidewalk and the primary building.**

a. Locating the primary building at the sidewalk edge is preferred.
b. If the building is set back, the space between it and the sidewalk should be landscaped, and not used for drive-through lanes.

**32. Design a drive-through facility to be visually coordinated with the primary structure.**

a. Use materials and architectural details that are similar to and compatible with those of the primary structure.



*Drive-through facilities should be located at least ten feet behind the primary façade.*



*A drive-through facility should coordinate with the primary structure in terms of materials and architectural details.*



*Buildings with drive through facilities should ideally be built at the sidewalk edge with the drive-through located at the rear.*

# 2.4 Building Design

## 2.4.1 Architectural Character

A building should reflect the character of Downtown Memphis and respect the key features that are defined as being desirable for its specific design context.

**1. Innovative new designs are preferred.**

a. New designs should be compatible with traditional architecture in Downtown, but need not copy older styles.

b. New designs that draw upon the more fundamental characteristics of Downtown and of the specific design contexts are preferred.







*These examples illustrate new buildings that respect the key features of their contexts.*



*A new design should be compatible with traditional architecture in Downtown, but need not copy older styles.*

**2. Design a new building to reflect the key features of its design context**.

a. Compatibility with the context should be a primary consideration for a new building.
b. In those design contexts with a high concentration of traditional buildings, relating to them is especially important. (See Chapter 3.)
c. In other areas with emerging new character, the design objectives described for the specific design context should be respected.
d. A standard design employed by a commercial chain or franchise, which appears "generic" and not specifically designed for Downtown Memphis, is inappropriate.

**3. Establish a sense of "relatedness" in building designs.**

a. Features that convey a sense of relatedness include similar materials, the horizontal alignment of moldings and other wall features, and similar setbacks. These and other design variables are addressed in the subsequent guidelines.
b. In some cases, a more "iconic" building may be appropriate, especially for a civic or institutional facility, and at signature sites located at entry points into Downtown.



*A more "iconic" building may be appropriate, especially for a civic or institutional facility, and at signature sites located at entry points into Downtown.*



*Features that convey a sense of relatedness include similar materials, the horizontal alignment of moldings and other wall features, and similar setbacks.*

*A new building should step down toward lower scaled neighbors, especially when adjacent to historic properties and edges of historic districts, as this one does.*



*Position taller portions of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower scale.*



*Provide variation in building height in a large project.*

## 2.4.2 Building Height

The variety in building heights that exists in Downtown Memphis helps to define the character of the area. New development should continue Downtown's tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area.

**4.   Provide variation in building height in a large project.**

a.   This is especially relevant for a high rise building that would occupy at least a quarter of a block in the Downtown Core or Sports and Entertainment context.

**5.   Position the taller portion of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower scale or other sensitive edges.**

a.   Where permitted by the base zoning, towers and other taller structures should be located to minimize looming effects and shading of lower scaled neighbors.

b.   A new building should step down toward lower scaled neighbors, especially when adjacent to historic properties and edges of historic districts.



*Provide variation in building height in a large project. (These examples illustrates historic precedent in Memphis for varying building height.)*



*A taller structure should be located to minimize looming effects and shading of lower scaled neighbors, as this one is.*

### 6. Design floor to floor heights to establish a sense of scale and reflect Memphis traditions.

a. While overall building heights may vary along a block, a similarity in height should be perceived at the street level.

b. The first floor height should be taller than any upper floors and should appear similar in dimension to those seen traditionally. (See the UDC for minimum floor heights.)



*Design floor to floor heights to establish a sense of scale and reflect Memphis traditions.*



*The first floor height should be taller than any upper floors and should appear similar in dimension to those seen traditionally.*



*New development should continue Downtown's tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area. (These multifamily buildings have variations in height that help establish scale.)*



*While overall building heights may vary along a block, a similarity in height should be perceived at the street level.*

*Incorporate a base, middle and cap into the building design where this is established along the street wall.*



*Use materials that convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.*



*Articulating walls with architectural details, and window moldings help to achieve a sense of human scale in this industrial context.*

# 2.4.3 Building Scale

A new building should convey a sense of human scale. This can be achieved when one can reasonably interpret the size of a building by comparing features of its design to comparable elements in one's experience. Generally, a building's mass, height and articulation define human scale in a building. For example, if a building has a large expanse of blank wall space or towers above the street without varied massing, it might seem overwhelming to a pedestrian. Using materials in smaller unit sizes, articulating walls with architectural details, and including windows are examples of ways to achieve a sense of human scale.

**7.    Establish a sense of human scale in a building design.**

a.    Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass and to create visual interest. (See also the guidelines that follow for more about articulation techniques.)

b.    Use materials that convey scale in their proportion, detail and form. For example, materials applied in units, panels or modules help to convey a sense of scale.

c.    Incorporate a base, middle and cap into the building design where this is established along the street wall.

**8.    Provide horizontal expression at lower floor heights to establish a sense of scale.**

a.    Use moldings, a change in material, or an offset in the wall plane to define the scale of lower floors in relation to the street.

b.    Align the features with similar ones along the street, where a distinct alignment pattern exists.





*Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass and to create visual interest. (Changes in materials, and projecting walls and balconies convey horizontal and vertical expression in these buildings.)*

**9. Provide vertical articulation in a larger building mass to establish a sense of scale.**

a. Use moldings, columns, a change in material or an offset in the wall plane to define different building modules.
b. Organize modules to reflect traditional lots widths or facade dimensions.

**10. Maintain the established development patterns created by the repetition of similar building widths along the street.**

a. A new facade should reflect the established range of the building widths that occur on a block.
b. Where a building must exceed this width, use a change in design features to suggest the established range of building widths.
c. These variations should be expressed throughout the structure, resulting in a composition of building modules. For example, providing a change in wall planes and incorporating pilasters may be used to divide large wall planes into smaller components that relate to traditional building widths.



*Provide vertical articulation in a larger building mass to establish a sense of scale.*



*A new facade should reflect the established range of the building widths that occur on a block (as this one does).*

*Use moldings, columns, a change in material or an offset in the wall plane to define different building modules.*



*Use a change in design features to suggest the established range of building widths. (In this industrial context, variations in concrete modules convey scale.)*

## 2.4.4 Materials

Materials that are "authentic" and durable are preferred. Materials for new structures and additions to existing buildings should contribute to the visual continuity of the context and convey high quality in design and detail.

**11. New building materials should contribute to the visual continuity of the design context.**

a. Genuine masonry, metal, concrete and glass are preferred.
b. Imitation materials, such as synthetic lap siding, panelized brick or stone veneer and plastic, are generally inappropriate.
c. The use of highly reflective materials also is discouraged.
d. The material should be compatible with materials used most often in the context.

**12. Use high quality, durable materials.**

a. The material should be proven to be durable in the local Memphis climate.
b. The material should maintain an intended finish over time or acquire a patina, when it is understood to be a desired outcome.
c. Materials at the ground level should withstand on-going contact with the public, sustaining impacts without compromising the appearance. (Note that some synthetic materials will not sustain this degree of frequent contact.)



*Materials at the ground level should withstand on-going contact with the public, sustaining impacts without compromising the appearance. (Appropriate examples)*



*Concrete which is detailed to provide a sense of scale is an appropriate building material in Downtown Memphis, as in this example.*



*New building materials should contribute to the visual continuity of the design context.*

*Fiber cement board, formed in lap siding or as a board and batten panel design, may be an appropriate material in residential areas.*



*Contemporary interpretations of industrial materials are particularly recommended in the Downtown Industrial design context.*



*The material should maintain an intended finish over time or acquire a patina. This copper cladding is an example.*



*Architectural metals that have a high quality finish are appropriate.*



*Finished concrete, with scoring details is appropriate.*



*Architectural concrete block is an appropriate material.*







*Materials that are "authentic" and durable are preferred. (For example, these new materials convey their genuine character, but in ways compatible with traditional ones.)*

*Use genuine masonry units, which appear authentic in their depth and dimension.*          *Authentic stone is appropriate.*





*Brick and stone are well-established materials in Downtown and their continued use is encouraged.*

**13.   The use of traditional masonry materials, stone and concrete is encouraged.**

a.   Brick and stone are well-established materials in Downtown and their continued use is encouraged.

b.   Use genuine masonry units, which appear authentic in their depth and dimension.

c.   Assure that masonry units wrap around corners of walls, and thus do not appear to be an applied veneer.

**14.** **Architectural metals, which are detailed to provide a sense of scale, are appropriate.**

a.     The metal should have a proven durability in the Memphis climate.
b.     It should be detailed in a manner that will endure.
c.     Architectural metals should convey a sense of human scale. For example, a sense of scale can be achieved through the use of smaller scaled panels, varying forms and designs, creating patterns to provide visual interest, or eliminating expanses of unarticulated wall space.

**15.** **Genuine stucco may be considered as a material.**

a.     Stucco that is applied and detailed by hand is appropriate.
b.     It should be applied in a manner that is proven to be durable in the Memphis climate.
c.     It should be detailed to provide visual interest and provide a sense of scale.

*Architectural glass, and metals which are detailed to provide a sense of scale, are appropriate.*



*Stucco that is applied and detailed by hand is appropriate.*

*Use changes in material to express scale.*


*Architectural glass may be considered as a primary material.*

**16.    The use of synthetic stucco (such as EIFS) is discouraged.**

a.    However, it may be considered for use in limited applications, as small wall panels or as an accent on upper floors.

**17.    Use changes in material to express scale.**

a.    This will especially help a larger building fit into a context of smaller structures.

b.    However, assure that with a change in materials, the overall composition of the building design remains intact.

c.    Avoid mixing several materials in a design when the result would become overly busy. This defeats the purpose of using changes to provide a sense of scale.

**18.    Architectural glass may be considered as a primary material.**

a.    Detail glass to provide a sense of scale.

b.    Using glass that permits views into activities in the building is preferred, to provide visual interest.

c.    The use of tinted windows on the ground floor is inappropriate.

**19.    Architectural concrete may be used.**

a.    It should  be detailed to provide visual interest and convey a sense of scale.


*Detail glass to provide a sense of scale.*


*Assure that with a change in materials, the overall composition of the building design remains intact, as does this example.*

# 2.4.5 Street Level Interest

Buildings should be designed to provide visual interest to pedestrians. For example, commercial buildings with storefronts are of interest to passersby, while porches, courtyards, and decorative wall surfaces add interest to multifamily housing designs. These features encourage pedestrian activity and should be used.

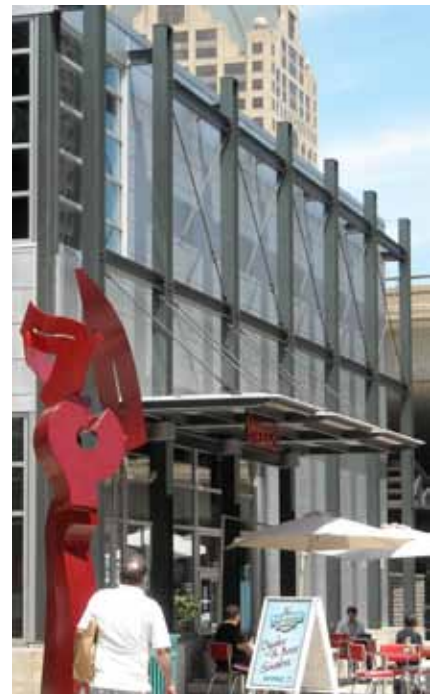**20.  Develop the street level of a building to provide visual interest to pedestrians.**

a.  All sides of a building should include architectural details to avoid presenting a "back side" to the street or to neighboring properties. Provide visual interest with:
  - Windows and doors
  - A display window that provides views to activities in the building.
  - Display cases for exhibits
  - Decorative wall surface, for example, a change in materials
  - Building articulation
  - Site walls and raised planters

b.  A large expanse of blank wall or garages are inappropriate on any street-oriented facade. Reference the UDC for specific transparency requirements.



*When a building is located close to a street or walkway, it should be designed to provide visual interest to pedestrians. (A storefront such as this is an example.)*



*Where a portion of a street level wall is set back from the street, a planter may be used to provide interest to pedestrians, as these examples illustrate.*



*Develop the street level of a building to provide visual interest to pedestrians. In this example windows and doors, canopies and streetscape elements provide visual interest.*

# Visual Interest at the Street Level



*Wall art provides visual interest.*



*A storefront provides visual interest.*



*Glass and metal railings provide visual interest.*



*Planters provide visual interest.*

*Projecting columns provide visual interest.*



*Green space in front of townhouses provides visual interest.*



*Architectural details provide visual interest.*



*Changes in materials and wall offsets provide visual interest.*

# 2.4.6 Exterior Building Lighting

The character and level of exterior building lighting is important and can help establish a sense of identity and cohesion Downtown. Exterior lighting can help create a sense of place, highlight distinctive architectural details, and reinforce the overall form, massing, and spatial characteristics of the building or site.

**21.   Use exterior lighting that will enhance the public realm and improve the pedestrian experience.**

a.    The lighting plan should be appropriate to the scale and function of the building and site.
b.    Locate light fixtures and equipment in a way that does not detract from the daytime appearance of the property.
c.    Where appropriate, use exterior lighting to enhance the nighttime appearance of trees, shrubs, and other landscape features.
d.    Design the lighting plan so that it does not endanger the safety of pedestrian or automobile traffic.

**22.   In most cases, exterior lighting should not be simple floodlighting but should enhance or emphasize the distinctive architectural features of the building.**

a.    Appropriate features to highlight include:
   - Building entrance
   - Architectural details
   - Signs
   - Outdoor use areas
   - Public art
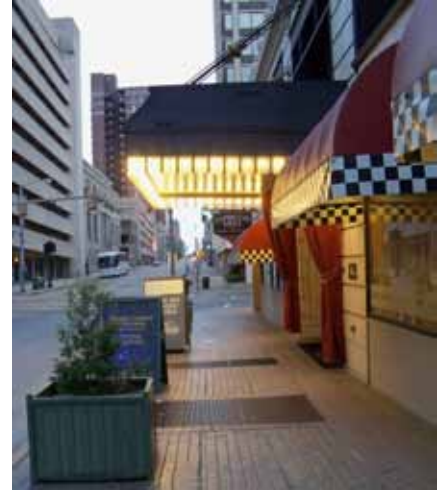


*Use lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.*



*Use lighting to accent key features of a building.*

*Use white lights that cast a color similar to daylight.*

**23. Minimize the visual impacts of architectural lighting on neighboring properties.**

a. Use exterior light sources with a low level of luminescence.
b. In most cases, use white lights that cast a color similar to daylight.
c. Washing an entire building elevation in light is generally best reserved for civic buildings and landmark structures.
d. Use lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.
e. Use light that blinks, moves, or flashes very judiciously. This type of "active light" should only be considered as an option after careful study to determine the potential impact on adjacent properties.

**24. Use shielded and focused light sources to prevent glare.**

a. Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light downward.
b. Do not use high intensity light sources or cast light directly upward.
c. Shield lighting associated with service areas, parking lots and parking structures.
d. Light sources should be designed, installed, and maintained to prevent light trespass onto a neighboring property or the public right-of-way.

# 2.5 Energy Efficiency and Building Performance

## Energy Efficiency in New Designs

The conservation of energy is a key objective in community planning. The design process should include an evaluation of the physical assets of the site to maximize energy efficiency and conservation in the placement and design of a building. Designs should address seasonal changes in natural lighting and ventilation conditions.

A design also should take into account potential effects on an adjoining property, in terms of its solar access and ability to implement the same sustainable design principles. Careful consideration should also be given to balancing sustainable design principles with those related to maintaining the traditional character of the area.



*Canopies and overhangs help to shade the building and reduce solar gain.*

**1. Locate a new building, or an addition, to take advantage of micro-climatic opportunities for energy conservation.**

a.  Orient a building to be consistent with established development patterns, when they are a part of the desired features for the context.
b.  Consider seasonal solar and wind exposure patterns when positioning a new building on its site.



**2. Design a building, or an addition, to take advantage of energy-saving and energy-generating opportunities.**

a.  Design windows to maximize daylighting into interior spaces.
b.  Use exterior shading devices, such as overhangs or shade trees, to manage solar gain in summer months.
c.  Energy-producing devices, including solar collectors and wind turbines, are encouraged where they also respect the character of the context.
d.  Use thermal storage walls on a portion of the south facing building exposure, where appropriate.



*Solar panels are encouraged to reduce energy consumption.*

**3. Maximize solar access for all properties.**

a.  New development should minimize impacts to solar access on adjoining properties.
b.  This is especially important for residential sites.

*Planting or retaining trees helps to shade buildings and reduce solar gain.*



*Grouping deciduous trees to provide shade in the summer and permit sunshine in the winter is an example of a sustainable landscape design.*



*Water retention ponds help to contain storm water runoff.*

**4. Use landscape designs to promote energy efficiency and water conservation. Appropriate strategies include the following:**

a. Retain existing mature landscape features that provide shade and protection from wind.
b. In residential settings, group deciduous trees and plants to provide summer shade and allow solar access in winter.
c. In some settings, plantings can be oriented to provide wind protection of plazas and entries in wintertime.
d. Use natural storm water retention basins that also serve as amenities.
e. Use energy efficient site lighting to minimize the amount of fixtures needed.

## Environmental Performance in Building Elements

The elements that make up a building, including windows, mechanical systems and materials, influence environmental performance. New building elements that improve environmental performance should be employed if they have been proven effective in this climate.

**5. Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.**

a. Such materials are:
   - Locally manufactured
   - Low maintenance
   - Materials with long life spans
   - Recycled materials

**6. Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.**

a. Consider the following:
   - Operable windows for natural ventilation
   - Low infiltration fenestration products
   - Interior or exterior light shelves/solar screens above south facing windows

**7. Minimize the visual impacts of energy devices on the character of the district.**

a. Mount equipment where it has the least visual impact on historic buildings, important view corridors and the river.
b. Exposed hardware, frames and piping should have a matte finish, and be consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.

# CHAPTER 3
# Design Contexts

This chapter addresses a series of design contexts within Downtown Memphis in which the design guidelines apply. These contexts are distinguished by differences in neighborhood development patterns, site design, building character, and to some extent, use. These contexts vary in scale, density, building type, and the positioning of the structure in relation to the street edge.

Many of these contexts have an established character, which should be respected and enhanced when planning new development. In each context, the predominant building types, materials and forms, as well as site plan configurations, set the precedents for compatibility in new construction.

On the other hand, there are other contexts where more change is anticipated and even preferred. Where places presently lack a distinct identity or fail to contribute to the vision for a walkable, vibrant community, the development of new contexts is an objective.

## How to Use This Chapter

The discussion in this chapter expands on the general guidelines set forth in the preceding one, focusing on the special design features for each specific context. It is to be used in conjunction with the general guidelines in the preceding chapter. The information in this chapter adds emphasis about how the general guidelines are to be applied and also provides additional information about design topics that are especially important for the individual areas.
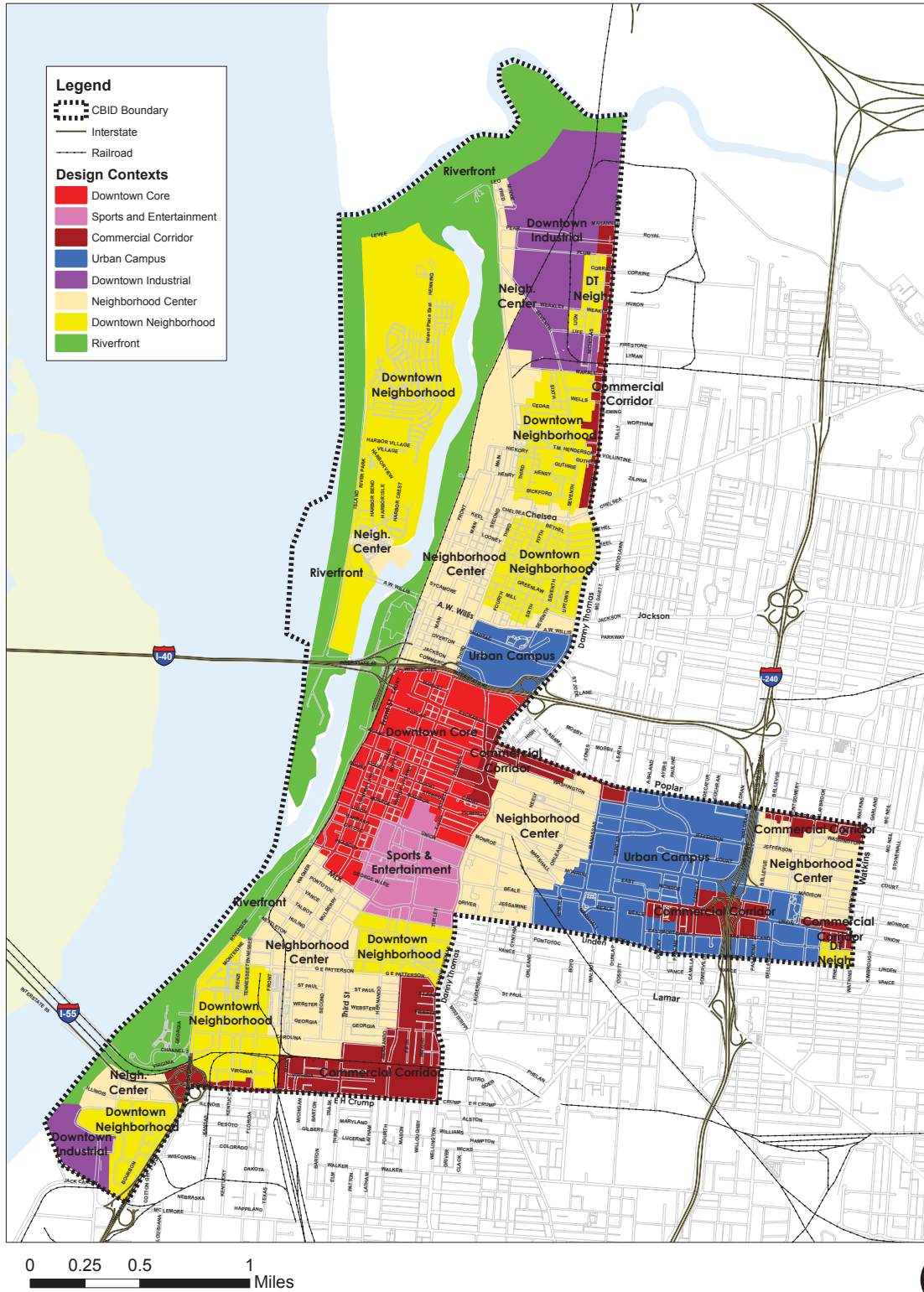
Note that some design contexts contain historic districts or other special overlays. In these areas, other design documents may apply in addition to the principles set forth here.

## Chapter Contents

# The Design Contexts of Downtown Memphis



**Legend**

- CBID Boundary
- Interstate
- Railroad

**Design Contexts**
- Downtown Core
- Sports and Entertainment
- Commercial Corridor
- Urban Campus
- Downtown Industrial
- Neighborhood Center
- Downtown Neighborhood
- Riverfront

0   0.25   0.5   1   Miles

*Note: This map represents boundaries drawn as of January 2012; however, the Commission may amend the boundaries from time to time. Applicants should check with commission staff to confirm the latest boundary. The DRB may also make the adjustments to certain contexts for individual properties that may be along the edges of the individual context boundaries.*

# Downtown Core

The Downtown Core is the heart of Memphis, containing the highest density and greatest concentration of buildings and activities in the city. Its skyline defines the city, as seen from the river and major highways.

The character of the Downtown Core is well-established, with a mix of building types and styles that provide diversity and interest, yet also with an overall sense of visual continuity that results from the repetition of similar building forms and materials as well as a shared orientation to the street and emphasis on the pedestrian. This sense of cohesiveness is to be respected as new development occurs. As the most "urban" part of the Central Business Improvement District, the Downtown Core should continue to convey this highly urban character. The objective is to build on the established features of the area, while encouraging high quality, creative designs that are uniquely Memphis.

Note that some locally-designated historic districts are embedded in the Downtown Core Context. For those special areas, the design principles in this section DO apply but, in addition, special consideration must be given to designing new buildings that are compatible with the historic buildings in that district.



*The Downtown Core is the heart of Memphis, containing the highest density and greatest concentration of buildings and activities in the city.*



*Reinforce the established urban character of the area.*

## Goals:

- Reinforce the established urban character of the area.
- Promote an active, pedestrian-friendly street level.
- Maintain a sense of visual continuity, while also providing accents to the basic character of the context.
- Encourage creative, high quality design.

*As the most "urban" part of the Central Business Improvement District, the Downtown Core should continue to convey this highly urban character.*



**Design Contexts and Memphis' Historic Districts**

*Note that locally designated historic districts are subject to review by the Memphis Landmarks Commission.*

*Other historic places may be listed in the National Register only. In those cases, Preservation Commission review is not required; however, Downtown Memphis will apply preservation guidelines to projects in those areas that are to receive incentives.*

# Downtown Core Context Map
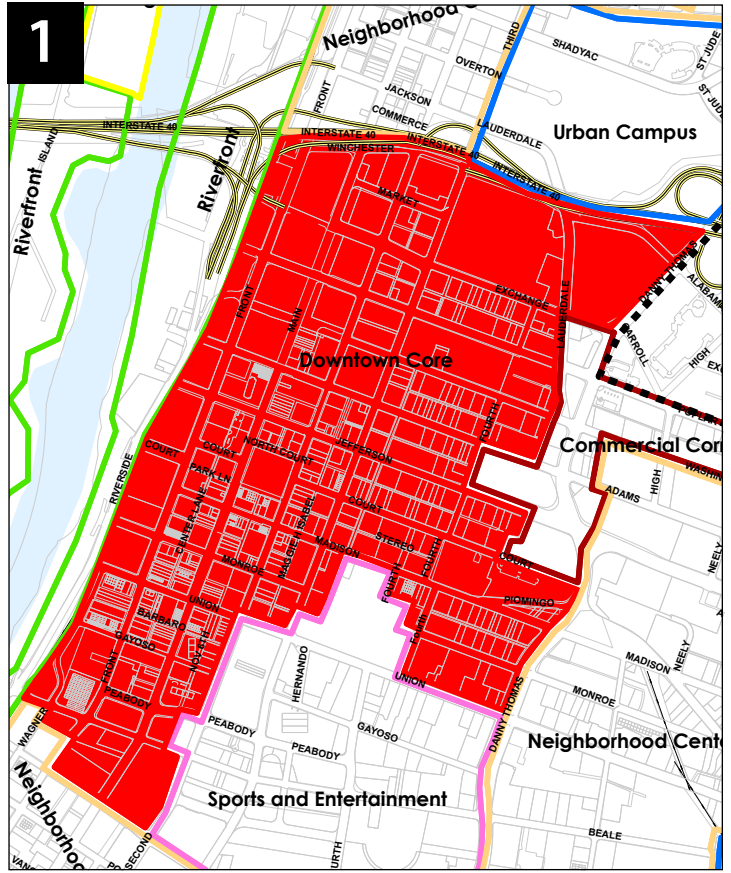
In applying the Design Guidelines (which appear in Chapter 2) to accomplish the goals for the Downtown Core, these are some key features of the Downtown Core that are to be respected, along with related design principles:

# Neighborhood Design Considerations: Downtown Core Context

## Street Patterns

Blocks are organized in a consistent grid, which is oriented along an axis that aligns with the river edge at this part of the Mississippi River. The grid is thus a few degrees off of a true north-south axis. A few exceptions exist, such as along Lauderdale Street, or Danny Thomas Boulevard (which defines the eastern boundary of the Downtown Core Design Context).

The traditional street grid of the Downtown Core should be maintained.





*Most buildings in the Downtown Core are built near the sidewalk edge with commercial uses at the street level.*

## Alignment at the Sidewalk Edge

Most buildings in the Downtown Core are built near the sidewalk edge with commercial uses at the street level. Building heights vary, but many exceed four stories, several quite substantially. This creates a strongly defined "street wall" that frames the public realm of streets and sidewalks.

This sense of alignment of building fronts at the sidewalk edge should be maintained. For this reason, the majority of a building face should be located at the sidewalk edge.

## Views

Views to community landmarks, such as the Mississippi River, public squares and historic structures exist, usually along street corridors, and sometimes through parcels where portions of buildings are lower than others in the area, or where a part of the building is set back from the sidewalk edge.

Providing views from the public way to civic landmarks and other amenities is important to connect the Downtown Core with other parts of Downtown Memphis. Because the core is quite dense with buildings, these opportunities are more limited than in other contexts, but still should be pursued when opportunities arise.

*Courtyards and plazas that provide accents along the urban street wall are particularly welcomed in the Downtown Core.*



*Since the Core is the densest area of Downtown, streetscape design should be urban in character with ample sidewalk width, street trees or planters, and pedestrian scaled lighting.*



*Courtyards and patios serve as urban amenities and provide transitions from private space to public space.*

A view to a key landmark may be maintained by setting a portion of a new building back from the sidewalk edge, perhaps to provide an entry plaza at a corner. While it is generally preferred to anchor a corner with a building mass, a setback may be appropriate when doing so would frame an important view. The majority of a building's front wall should still be positioned at the street edge, however.

## Streetscape Design

The streetscape in the Downtown Core is still evolving, but is envisioned to be "urban" in character. All materials should be durable, and have high quality finishes. See the *Memphis CBID Streetscape Master Plan* for the streetscape palette for specific streets.

# Site Design Considerations: Downtown Context

## Courtyards and Open Spaces

A few large public squares exist as accents in the Downtown Core, such as Civic Center Plaza and Court Square. In other places, small plazas and courtyards serve as amenities for individual parcels. These are relatively small in proportion to the buildings that frame them; they provide additional space for pedestrian activities.

Courtyards and plazas that provide accents along the urban street wall are particularly welcomed in the Downtown Core. These breaks in the street wall should be relatively small, however, in terms of the extent that it is interrupted. It is especially important in the Downtown Core that urban spaces be planned to be active with use and to be framed by buildings that will energize the spaces with pedestrian movement.

## Building Setback/Build-to Line

Building fronts should be located at the sidewalk edge (i.e., a 0-setback), to reinforce the urban street wall character of the Downtown Core. Exceptions are for civic and institutional buildings, which may be designed more to stand apart as landmarks.



*Future development should be built to the sidewalk edge to be compatible with the historic urban fabric of the Downtown area.*

## Structured Parking

Parking should not be visible from the street in the Downtown Core. The preferred design solutions are those in which active uses, such as storefronts, buffer parking from the street edge. While screening parking is a principle that applies throughout Downtown, it is essential in this context. Any new parking that is constructed here should be structured or heavily screened. This may occur as a building designed with parking as the primary purpose, in addition to new mixed-use structures with a parking garage component.

In the Downtown Core, any building that contains structured parking should ideally have other active uses at the street level. Although storefronts are the preferred ground floor design, other alternative measures for providing pedestrian interest at the street level, such as using display cases, public art, and architectural details are described in the guidelines and also may be employed.

## Parking Lot Screening

While any new parking in the Downtown Core should ideally be structured, some existing surface parking lots may continue to provide parking. Where surface parking does exist without a building in front, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, fences, and other decorative features.

## Landscaping

Landscaping within a site in the Downtown Core will typically occur in a plaza or courtyard as opposed to a lawn and should employ the same principles as those described for the streetscape in the section above. A more "urban" approach should be used, which may include the use of planters, decorative paving, site walls, and ground plantings that are more formal in nature.



*Use a more "urban" approach in landscape design. This includes using planters, decorative paving, and site walls, as well as ground planting that is more formal in nature.*



*Structured parking with ground floor retail or storefront screening is the most appropriate parking solution for the Downtown Core.*







*Planters with brightly colored flowers or greenery can be used for landscaping in dense urban contexts.*



*Where surface parking does exist, it should be screened with landscaping, fences, walls, or other decorative features.*

*Windows, moldings, and transoms at the street level express the human scale of a building. Future development should relate to the proportions of these features and maintain the same sense of scale.*



*Many of the historic buildings in the Downtown Core have tall first floor heights; future development should be constructed with similar first floor heights to maintain consistency in scale.*

# Building Design Considerations: Downtown Core Context

## Scale at the Street Level

The scale of the first two to four stories is relatively consistent. This is established with tall display windows, moldings, transoms and other architectural details. These generally align with others along a block. This helps to establish the perception of a uniform scale at the street level, even though the actual heights of buildings may be substantially taller, and vary within an individual block. This sense of scale at the street level should be maintained. The design guidelines illustrate ways in which to express the scale at the street level using the elements described above.

## First Floor Heights

The first floor of many buildings is relatively high, in the range of 14 to 18 feet tall, and has a high degree of transparency at the street level. This consistency of storefront heights reinforces the sense of alignment of building features along a block and contributes to the "urban" feel of the area. This alignment of first floor heights should be maintained.

## Variation in Building Height

Since the Core is the densest part of Downtown, high rise buildings are generally appropriate. However, in some historic districts, smaller scaled buildings are more appropriate to achieve compatibility with the surrounding context. (Note that absolute height limits are established in the Unified Development Code.)

In the Downtown Core, variations in building heights are important to develop visual interest, create an interesting skyline, and convey a sense of scale. Providing some variation in building height within an individual project should be a consideration in this context. In larger projects that occupy at least a quarter of a city block or more, variation in height is important as well.

*Variation in building height within a project contributes to sense of scale and creates a variegated skyline.*

## Building Materials

Masonry, brick, stone, and concrete predominate, and since these materials are highly durable, the use of these materials is encouraged. These materials appear in a variety of colors, textures, and finishes, which provide variation along the street wall.

Glass and metal also appear as important building materials, often secondary to masonry, but sometimes as primary materials. These materials and other new materials may be considered but should be used with a sense of authenticity and detailed in a manner that contributes to the sense of scale. When used, contemporary materials should have proven durability and result in high quality design and construction. The design guidelines provide examples of a variety of high quality materials.



*Traditional building materials such as masonry, brick, and stone are durable materials that are highly appropriate for Downtown Core construction.*

## Architectural Details

Many buildings have decorative surfaces that contribute to a sense of scale, as well as provide visual interest to the street. These details include the inherent textures of stone and brick surfaces, carved moldings, and applied ornamentation. Cornices also add to this visual interest. For these reasons, architectural detailing that enhances the visual interest of the street should be used in new building.





*Glass, metal, concrete, and other contemporary building materials may be considered if the material is detailed and designed to convey a sense of scale.*



*An example of architectural detailing that enhances the visual experience of the street.*

*The Downtown Industrial Context generally has a lower density development pattern with buildings and sites designed for manufacturing, processing, storage, or shipping purposes.*

# Downtown Industrial Context

The Downtown Industrial Context lies along the northernmost edge of the CBID. Its northern boundary reaches to the Wolf River, and its southern boundary lies approximately along Firestone Avenue. The majority of the land in this area is industrial in use and character, but enclaves of older, traditional residential neighborhoods still exist.

This context is distinguished from other Downtown contexts in the following ways: 1. lower density development pattern 2. lower percentage of building coverage on sites 3. sites may have a large amount of open area without structures 4. building designs are often utilitarian in nature, reflecting the functional requirements of the industries located there.

This is a context for which a new, or at least enhanced, character may be envisioned in the future. The existing character does NOT necessarily serve as a model.

The vision is to stimulate development and expansion of industries that are compatible with the surrounding community and the existing land use plans. Development in this context will be strongly influenced by the distinct functions of individual industrial uses, which often are expressed in building forms and site layouts. For that reason, unusual forms, new materials, and details that convey new technologies in building and design are especially welcomed.

From the standpoint of compatibility, the primary focus is to assure that the perimeter of each parcel is designed to accommodate pedestrian activity and serve as a "good neighbor" with any abutting residential areas.

## Goals for the Downtown Industrial Context:

• To promote building design and site design that meets the functional needs of industrial users while complementing the existing or planned development pattern
• To establish a pedestrian-friendly street edge
• To respect the boundaries of established residential neighborhoods

# Downtown Industrial Context Maps
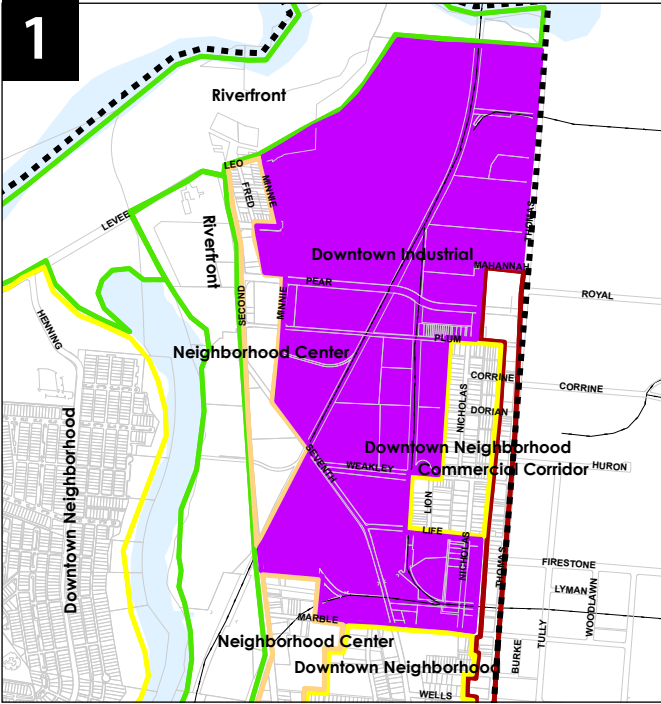
*Sidewalks with landscaping provide a visual buffer to parking areas.*



*Industrial buildings may be located near the street or set back from the street with landscaping in the foreground.*

In applying the Design Guidelines, which appear in Chapter 2, to accomplish the goals for the Industrial Context, these are some key design principles:

# Neighborhood Design Principles: Downtown Industrial Context

## Pedestrian Connections

Providing attractive and convenient pedestrian connections within an individual industrial property is important, as is providing links to public sidewalks that frame the exterior of each parcel in the Downtown Industrial Context.

## Streetscape

Sidewalks with street lights and landscaping are important to connect the industrial contexts with the surrounding neighborhoods. Reference streetscape Type G and Type F in the *CBID Streetscape Master Plan*.

# Site Design Principles: Downtown Industrial Context

## Building Setbacks

Building setbacks are expected to vary in this area. Some structures may be placed close to public sidewalks, while others may be located to the interior of their lots. No uniform building alignment pattern is expected. This differs from most other design contexts in Downtown.

## Primary Entrance Orientation

Although there may be limited opportunities to do so, when a building in the Downtown Industrial Context is located near the street, at least one primary entrance should be oriented to face the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment and provide a sense of connection with the community.

## Parking

Large parking areas as well as outdoor work areas are expected to occur in the Downtown Industrial Context. Many of these will be located well into the interior of a lot; but where they are located near a property edge, the visual impacts should be minimized as seen from the street. The preferred design solution is one in which a parking area is located internally on the property and is screened with a building in front. In other cases, the perimeter should be landscaped to buffer visual impacts, taking needs for safety and visual monitoring for security into consideration.



*Variation in building massing is encouraged to provide a sense of scale.*

# Building Design Principles: Downtown Industrial Context

## Mass and Scale

For a large industrial building, variation in building massing is encouraged when it is feasible in terms of the functions housed. This will help to provide visual interest and convey a sense of human scale. Stepping down the height of a building that is adjacent to a single-family residential neighborhood also is especially important.



*In addition to traditional building materials, durable, contemporary materials are also appropriate for the Industrial Context.*

## Materials

Materials in this context should be of high quality and have proven durability. A wide range of materials may be considered, including the more conventional brick and stone, as well as durable synthetic siding, glass and architectural metals. Stucco and other plaster treatments, when detailed to provide a sense of scale and visual interest, are also appropriate. Those that express advanced building technologies are particularly welcomed.

# Downtown Neighborhood Context

The Downtown Neighborhood Context occurs in the northern, southern, and eastern sections of the CBID. As its name implies, it is primarily residential in use with limited commercial development.

Single-family houses are the primary building type. Most single-family neighborhoods have uniform building setbacks and front yards. Many homes have one-story porches that face the street, contributing to a consistent sense of scale. Some multifamily housing exists in this context; most units are garden-style apartments.



*The Downtown Neighborhood Context, as its name implies, is primarily residential in use, with limited commercial, which exists primarily to serve the immediate vicinity.*
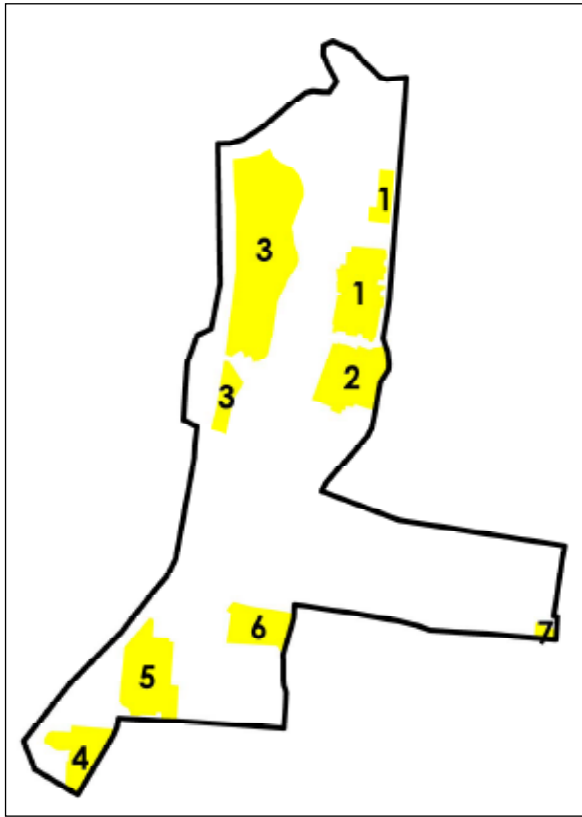
Compatible new, single-family and small scale multifamily buildings are anticipated in these areas. Maintaining the traditional scale and character of single-family streets with lawns or gardens in front and parking located to the side or rear is the objective for these places.
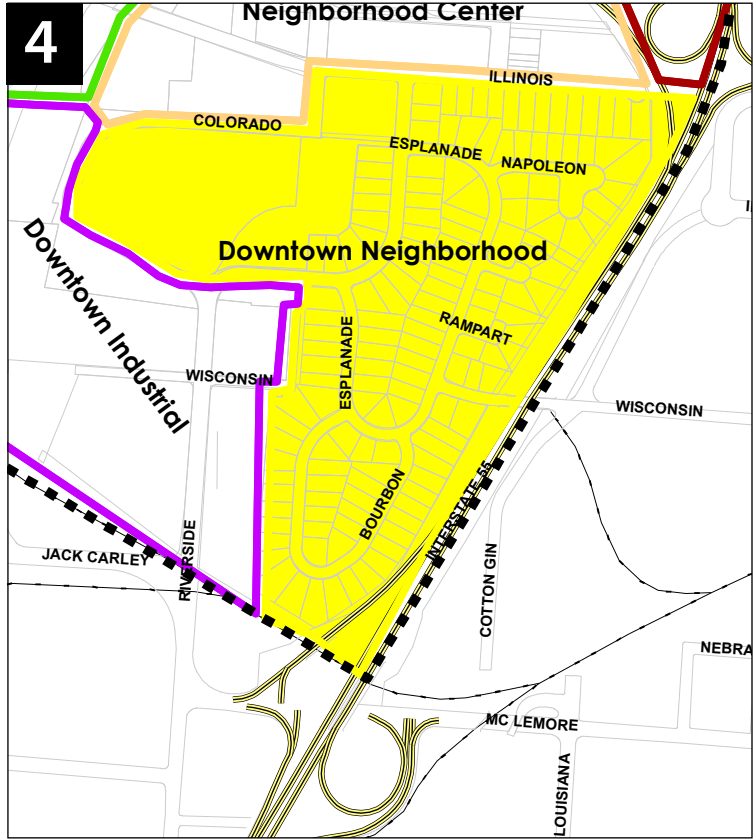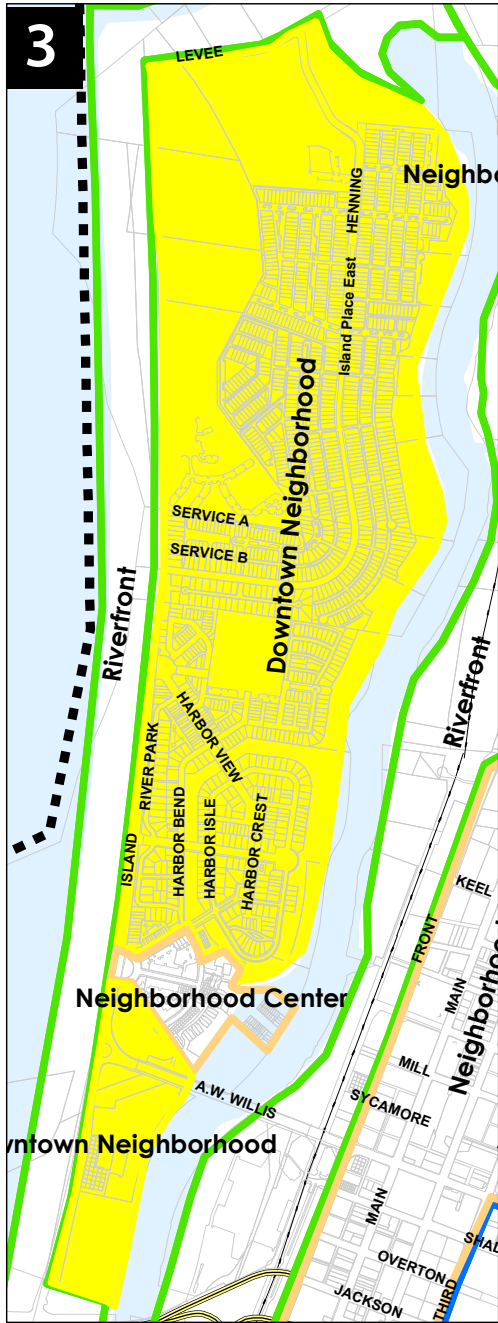
In some Downtown Neighborhood Contexts, more extensive infill is expected, primarily with the addition of multifamily buildings. In these areas, buildings should sit closer to the street edge and have small yards or stoops to establish a new sense of continuity.
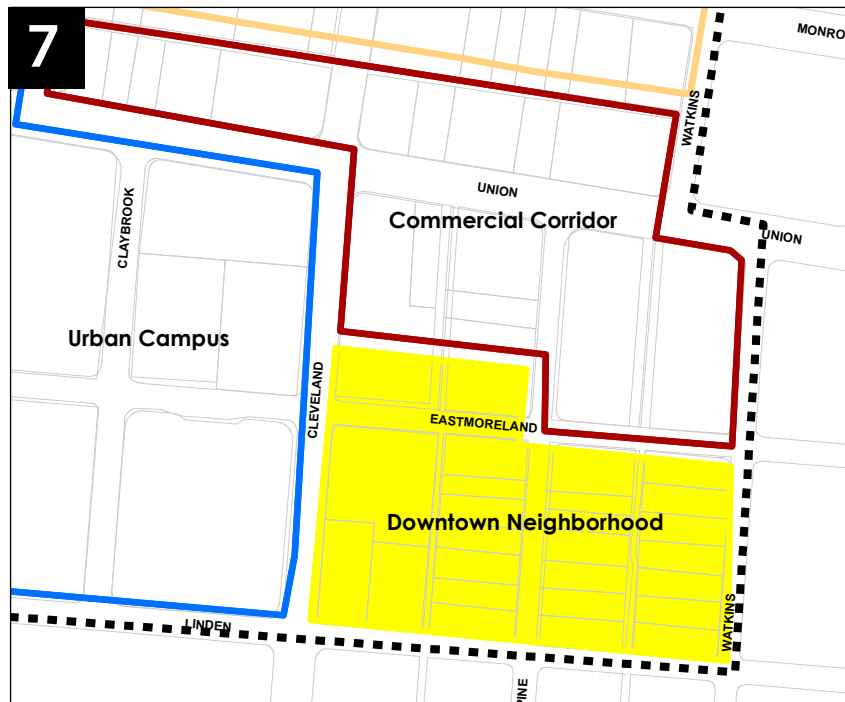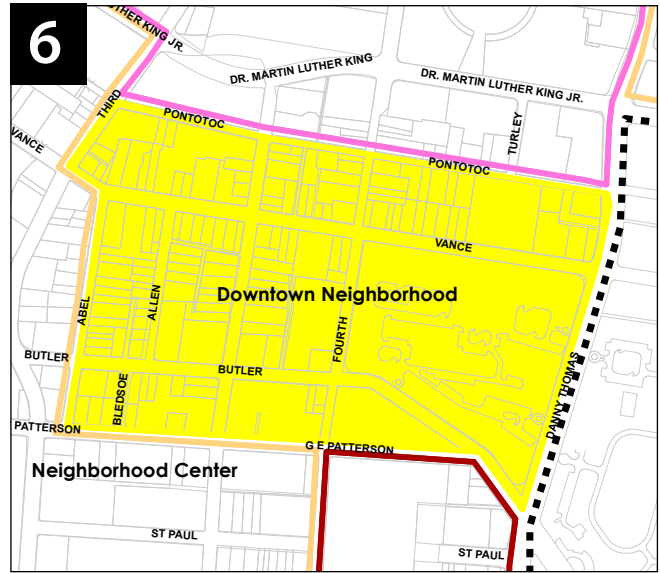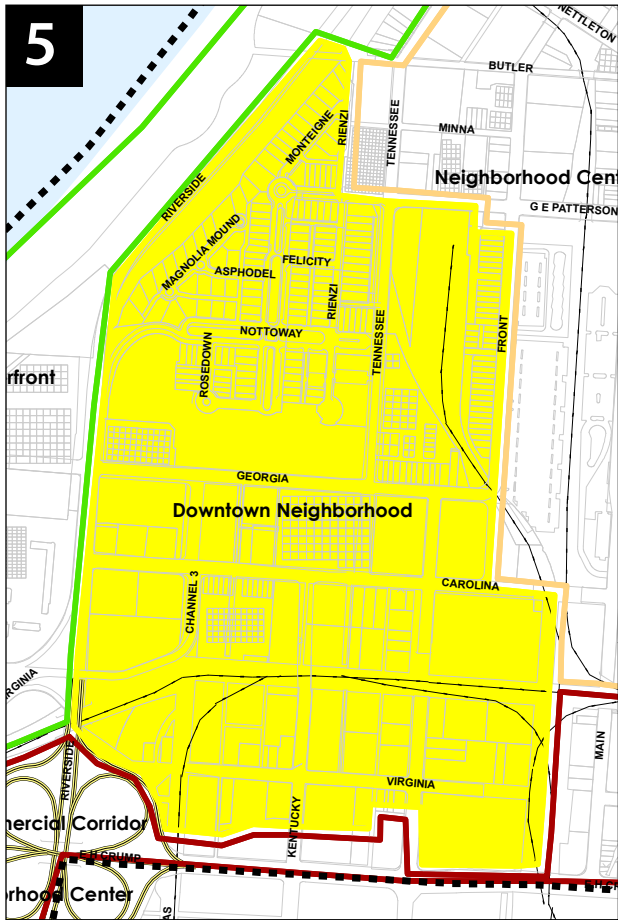
In most Downtown Neighborhoods, building heights are typically one to two stories high, although a few multi-story buildings do exist in some of these neighborhoods.





*Parts of the Downtown Neighborhood context contain multifamily buildings. Some exist at the edges of single-family neighborhoods, while others are concentrated together, forming a medium density living environment.*

# Downtown Neighborhood Context Maps

**3**

LEVEE

Neighbo

Island Place East

HENNING

Downtown Neighborhood

Riverfront

SERVICE A

SERVICE B

RIVER PARK

HARBOR VIEW

ISLAND

HARBOR BEND

HARBOR ISLE

HARBOR CREST

Riverfront

KEEL

FRONT

Neighborho

MAIN

Neighborhood Center

MILL

A.W. WILLIS

SYCAMORE

wntown Neighborhood

MAIN

OVERTON

SHA

JACKSON

THIRD

**4**

Neighborhood Center

ILLINOIS

COLORADO

ESPLANADE    NAPOLEON

Downtown Neighborhood

Downtown Industrial

RAMPART

WISCONSIN

ESPLANADE

WISCONSIN

INTERSTATE 55

BOURBON

JACK CARLEY

RIVERSIDE

COTTON GIN

NEBRA

MC LEMORE

LOUISIANA

Parking is usually accessed from the rear using an alley, which is preferred. In other cases, driveways may lead to the street, but nonetheless remain comparatively subordinate to the overall street scene.

## Goals:

- To maintain a sense of a cohesive residential neighborhood
- To provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge
- To enhance connections to commercial nodes and the civic core
- To minimize the visual impact of cars

# Neighborhood Design Principles: Downtown Neighborhood Context

## Pedestrian Connections

All development should directly connect to public sidewalks. For single-family areas, this typically means a walkway leading to a public sidewalk. In multifamily projects, walks also should connect to public sidewalks. Larger multifamily projects should include internal pedestrian circulation routes that link several buildings and also connect to public sidewalks. Opportunities to provide a connection to a Neighborhood Center should be considered for these larger projects when they abut the edges of those contexts.



*Sidewalks with a tree lawn and pedestrian scaled lighting are appropriate for the Downtown Neighborhood context.*

## Streetscape

Streetscapes should be designed according to the recommendations for Type C Streets in the *Memphis CBID Streetscape Plan*.



*Larger multifamily developments should provide internal pedestrian pathways in addition to sidewalks that connect with the surrounding neighborhood.*

# Site Design Principles:
# Downtown Neighborhood Context



## Building Setback

Buildings that are set back from the sidewalk edge and accommodate a front yard are preferred for single-family areas. A setback is also preferred for multifamily buildings but with less yard depth.

*Setbacks are appropriate in the Downtown Neighborhood context; however, multifamily setbacks should be less than setbacks for single-family residences.*

## Primary Entrance

It is especially important in the Downtown Neighborhood Context that primary entrances face the street to help enhance the walking experience and provide a sense of connection with the neighborhood. For single-family projects, a porch facing the street is appropriate. For multifamily projects, townhouse entries or a single shared lobby entry that faces the street are appropriate options.



## Courtyards

Courtyards that accommodate outdoor activities may be considered for larger multifamily projects and are appropriate in these contexts.

*It is especially important in the Downtown Neighborhood Context that primary entrances face the street to help enhance the walking experience and provide a sense of connection with the neighborhood.*

## Parking

Large parking areas that may be part of multifamily projects should not be visible from the street in the Downtown Neighborhood context. The preferred design solution is residential units or other active uses that buffer parking from the street edge. However, where a portion of a surface parking lot will not have a building in front, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, high quality fences or walls, and other decorative features.



*In this example, parking for residential units is located to the rear of the building.*

Individual parking areas, associated with driveways in townhouse configurations, are also appropriate. However, front yard parking pads are inappropriate. As in all contexts, the width of individual driveways should be minimized to limit the extent of interruptions in the sidewalk for pedestrians.



*Courtyards that connect with sidewalks and the street create desirable transition spaces between the private and public realms.*

*In single-family areas, landscaped front lawns are preferred.*



*The landscaped setback along this multi-family development is compatible with the lawns of surrounding single-family homes.*

## Landscaping

Landscaped front yards with traditional lawns are preferred in the single-family areas. In general, landscaping in single family areas should have more "green" in keeping with traditional lawns.

In multifamily areas, more "structured" designs are appropriate, such as patios and courtyards with landscaping.

# Building Design Considerations: Downtown Neighborhood Context

## Height

Maintaining a sense of a moderately-scaled, residential neighborhood is an objective in this context. In the single-family portions, buildings of two stories are preferred. Any taller buildings should include some one or two story portions in order to relate to the neighborhood.

Taller buildings may also be considered in these settings. In those areas with a concentration of multifamily structures, heights of two and three stories are appropriate, with some even at four stories. Where these taller buildings abut sections of single-family residential blocks, the higher portions should be set back from the neighborhood edge so they will not loom over adjacent single-family residential properties.

## Mass and Scale

For large multifamily projects that occupy several parcels, using variation in building massing is preferred to provide visual interest and to help convey a sense of human scale. Using vertical and horizontal articulation and changes in materials are some techniques which are illustrated in the design guidelines.



*In multifamily developments, building heights of two to four stories are most appropriate in the Downtown Neighborhood context. Varied massing is also important to achieving a sense of scale.*

## Street Level Interest

Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses. These devices are particularly appropriate in the Downtown Neighborhood Contexts:

• Porch or portico
• Stoop
• Windows
• Decorative wall surfaces
• Architectural details
• Landscaping

## Materials

Materials in this context should be of high quality and finish and have proven durability. Materials such as wood, brick, stone, concrete, and glass are preferred. Lap siding made of durable alternative materials may also be considered, as distinguished from many of the other design contexts where masonry and other materials are preferred. Stucco, when it is well detailed and of a durable quality, may also be used here.





*Porches and patios create a visually interesting streetscape.*





*Traditional, durable building materials such as brick, stone, and wood are very appropriate for Downtown Neighborhood construction.*

# Neighborhood Center Context

Neighborhood Center Contexts are located in the northern, eastern and southern portions of Downtown CBID. These are mixed-use, moderate-density areas with residential and commercial uses.

Most of these have a well-established character, often with historic buildings as anchors. The scale consists primarily of two-story to four-story buildings, although there are examples of taller structures. This context is to be respected and enhanced with compatible new development.

A Neighborhood Center has buildings with storefronts at the street level. These align at the inside of the sidewalk edge. Since most storefronts also are built to similar heights, they appear to align along a block, contributing to the visual continuity of the area. As with the Downtown Core, maintaining this sense of alignment of buildings is important. Although small public spaces such as courtyards and plazas do exist, a street wall of facades is a predominant feature.
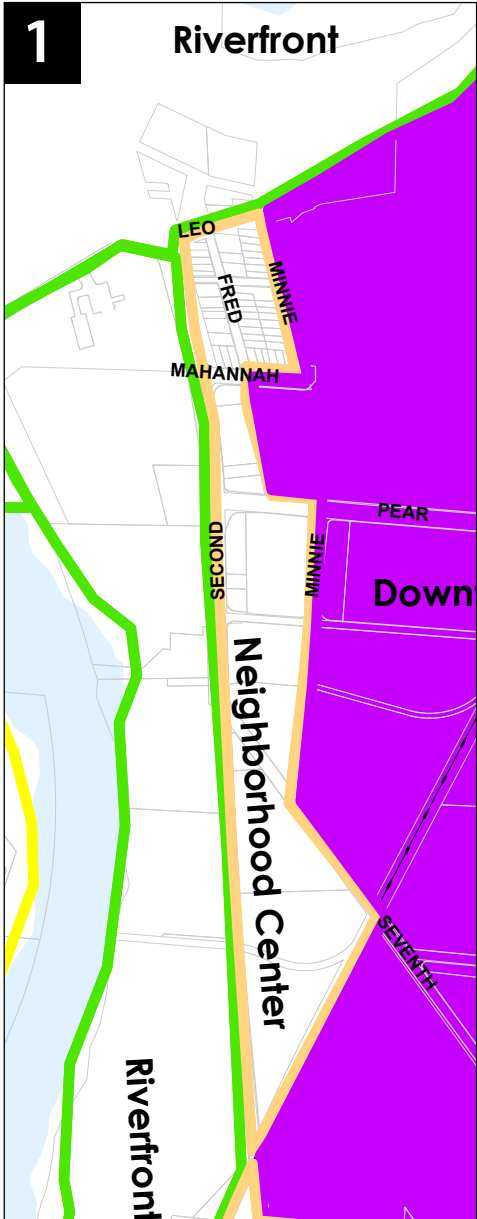
In terms of materials, masonry materials, such as brick and stone, are the most common.
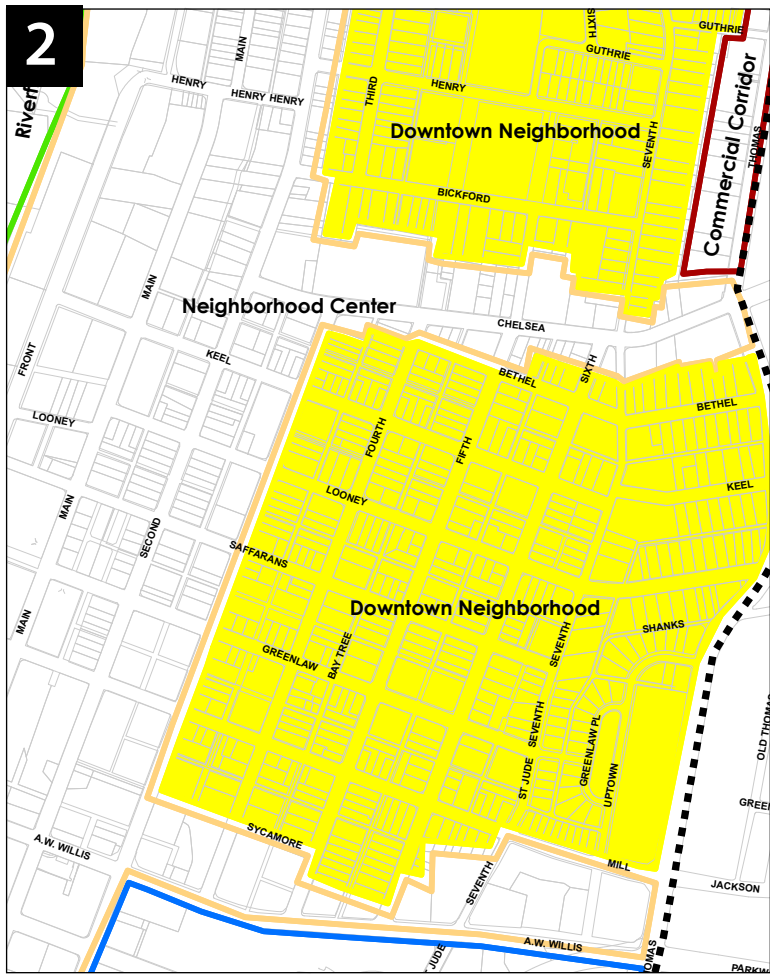
In many cases, a portion of the Neighborhood Center context is a historic district. In these areas, respecting the established context is especially important, and modifications to individual properties of historic significance will be reviewed using the preservation guidelines section.

*A Neighborhood Center has buildings with storefronts at the street level. These align at the inside of the sidewalk edge. Because most storefronts also are built to similar heights, they appear to align along a block, contributing to the visual continuity of the area.*

*The scale of buildings in a Neighborhood Center Context consist primarily of two-to four-story buildings.*
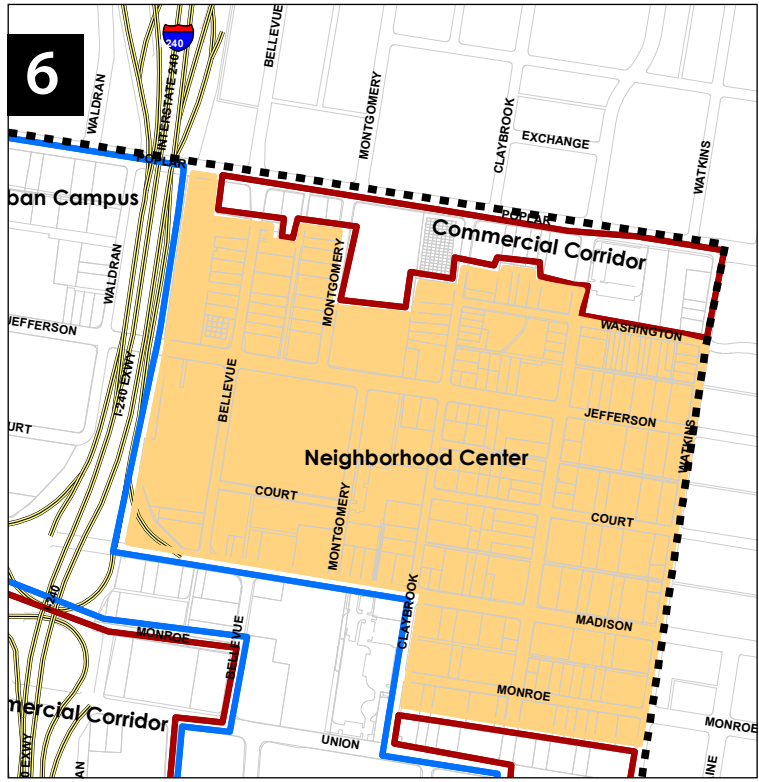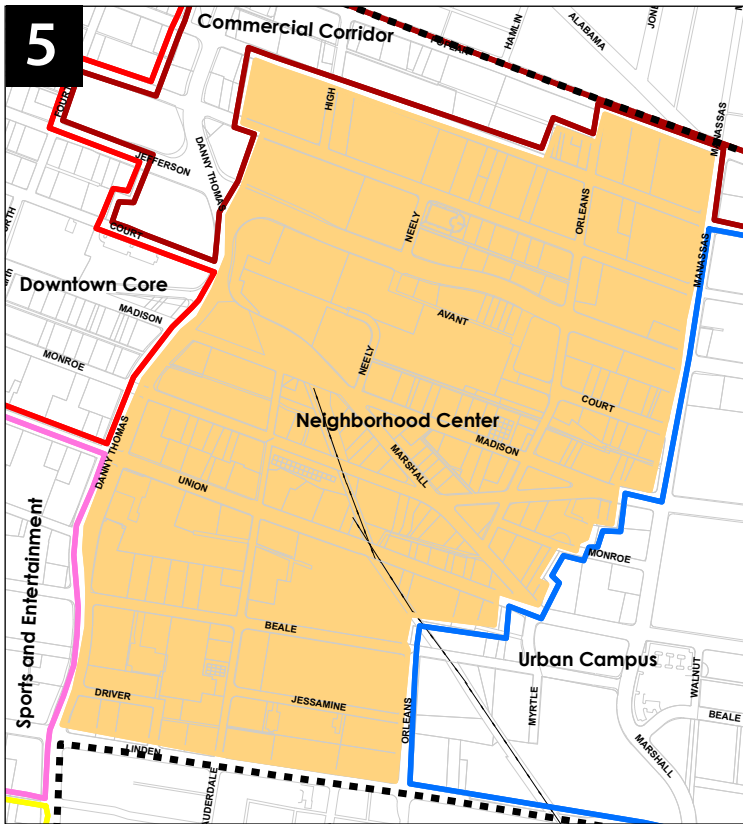
## Goals for the Neighborhood Centers:
- To encourage moderate density development that relates to the scale of the neighborhood
- To provide a coherent sense of identity
- To provide a pedestrian-friendly environment
- To provide opportunities for outdoor uses that support business activity

# Neighborhood Center Context Maps

**2**

Riverf

MAIN

HENRY
HENRY HENRY

THIRD

HENRY

GUTHRIE

SIXTH

GUTHRIE

**Commercial Corridor**

THOMAS

**Downtown Neighborhood**

SEVENTH

BICKFORD

FRONT

**Neighborhood Center**

CHELSEA

BETHEL

SIXTH

KEEL

BETHEL

LOONEY

FOURTH

FIFTH

KEEL

MAIN

LOONEY

SAFFARANS

SECOND

**Downtown Neighborhood**

SHANKS

MAIN

GREENLAW

BAY TREE

SEVENTH

OLD THOMAS

GREE

ST JUDE

SEVENTH

GREENLAW PL

UPTOWN

SYCAMORE

A.W. WILLIS

SEVENTH

MILL

JACKSON

JUDE

A.W. WILLIS

THOMAS

PARKW

**3**

R

HARBOR BEND

HARBOR ISLE

HARBOR CREST

ISLAND

**Neighborhood Center**

A.W. WILLIS

SYCA

wntown Neighborhood

**4**

Riverfront

GEORG

CHANNEL 3

VIRGINIA

E H CRUMP

**Commercial**

**Neighborhood Center**

ILLINOIS

COLORADO

ESPLANADE

NAPOLEON

**Downtown Neighborhood**

RAMPA

Map 5 – Neighborhood Center (Downtown Core, Commercial Corridor, Sports and Entertainment, Urban Campus)



Map 6 – Neighborhood Center (Urban Campus, Commercial Corridor)

*A uniform line of building fronts should be maintained, in order to provide a strong sense of enclosure for the street.*



*Open spaces in these contexts should remain relatively small and be subordinate to the line of building fronts that defines the street edge.*



*It is especially important in this context that the primary entrance of a building faces the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment.*

# Neighborhood Design Considerations: Neighborhood Center Context

## Streetscape

An "urban palette" of streetscape elements should be used in this context. For example, trees should be installed in tree grates or bump outs as opposed to planting strips or tree lawns. All materials should be durable and have high quality finishes. For streetscape improvements, Street Classifications Type A or Type C should be used, as defined in the *Memphis CBID Streetscape Master Plan*.

## Open Space

Generally, open spaces in these contexts should correspond to the surrounding context; often, open spaces will be relatively small and subordinate to the line of buildings that define the street edge. Courtyards and pocket parks are appropriate in this context.

# Site Design Considerations: Neighborhood Center Context

## Building Setbacks

A uniform line of building fronts should be maintained in order to provide a strong sense of enclosure for the street.

## Primary Entrance

It is especially important in this context that the primary entrance of a building faces the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment. The rhythm of storefront entries along a block invites walking and contributes to the sense of visual continuity of the area and should be maintained.

## Courtyards

Courtyards that accommodate outdoor activities are appropriate in these contexts. They should connect directly with public sidewalks.

## Parking

Parking should not be visible from the street in the Neighborhood Center context. The preferred design solutions are structured parking with active ground floor uses, such as storefronts, or surface parking located at the interior of a lot with liner buildings along the street. However, where surface parking already exists without a building in front, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, walls, and other decorative features.

# Building Design Principles: Neighborhood Center Context

## Height

Maintaining the traditional range of building heights in these contexts is preferred. These are generally two to four stories in height. Taller buildings may also be considered in these settings, where the traditional two- to four-story scale is expressed in building fronts, using the articulation methods described in the guidelines.

*Taller buildings may also be considered in these settings, where the traditional two-to four-story scale is expressed in building fronts, using the articulation methods described in the guidelines.*

## Mass and Scale

For large projects that occupy several parcels, variation in building massing is preferred to provide visual interest and to convey a sense of human scale. Overall building forms should retain simple rectangular elements to help establish a continuous street wall in these contexts.

## Street Level Interest

Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses. Some techniques to use include:

- Storefronts, where activities are visible from the street
- Decorative wall surfaces
- Architectural details
- Display cases
- Murals and public art
- Landscaping

*Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses.*

## Materials

As with all areas, materials in this context should be of high quality and finish and have proven durability.

*Where feasible, buildings should be located near the sidewalk edge with parking to the side or rear. Landscaping should be used where buildings are not at the sidewalk edge to define the pedestrian zone and separate it from parking areas.*
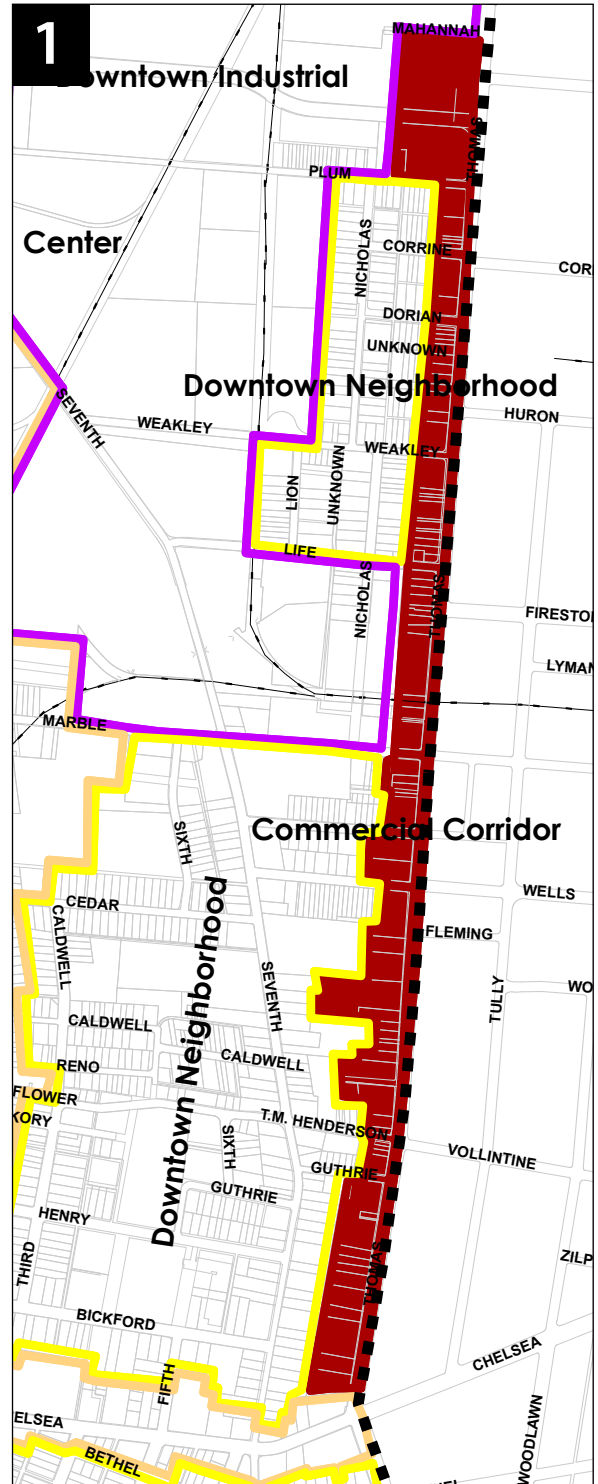
# Commercial Corridor Context

Generally, the Commercial Corridor contexts encompass major arterials that lead into Downtown. Currently, these areas are auto-oriented with buildings set back from the street and parking frequently located in front of the building. As major entryways into the Downtown Core, it is important that Commercial Corridors transition to an "urban" character rather than perpetuate a suburban commercial strip. The objective is for these corridors to develop with stronger pedestrian oriented frontages and more clearly defined street walls as opposed to lower density sites with open space and surface parking lots.

Where feasible, buildings should be located near the sidewalk edge with parking to the side or rear. Landscaping should be used where buildings are not at the sidewalk edge to define the pedestrian zone and separate it from parking areas.

It is also important that individual parcels become more "knitted" together, with cross-property linkages for autos and pedestrians to reduce multiple turning movements into the street. An increase in building density also preferred. Buildings with two or more stories that include a mix of activities will help to animate these corridors and provide space for uses that support the greater Downtown area.
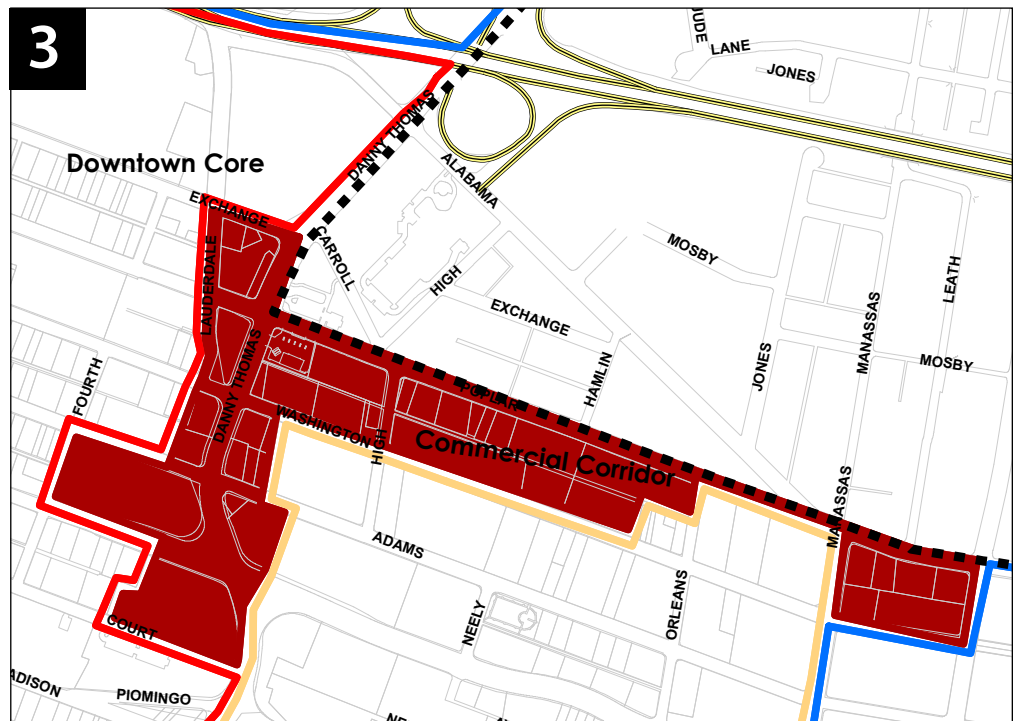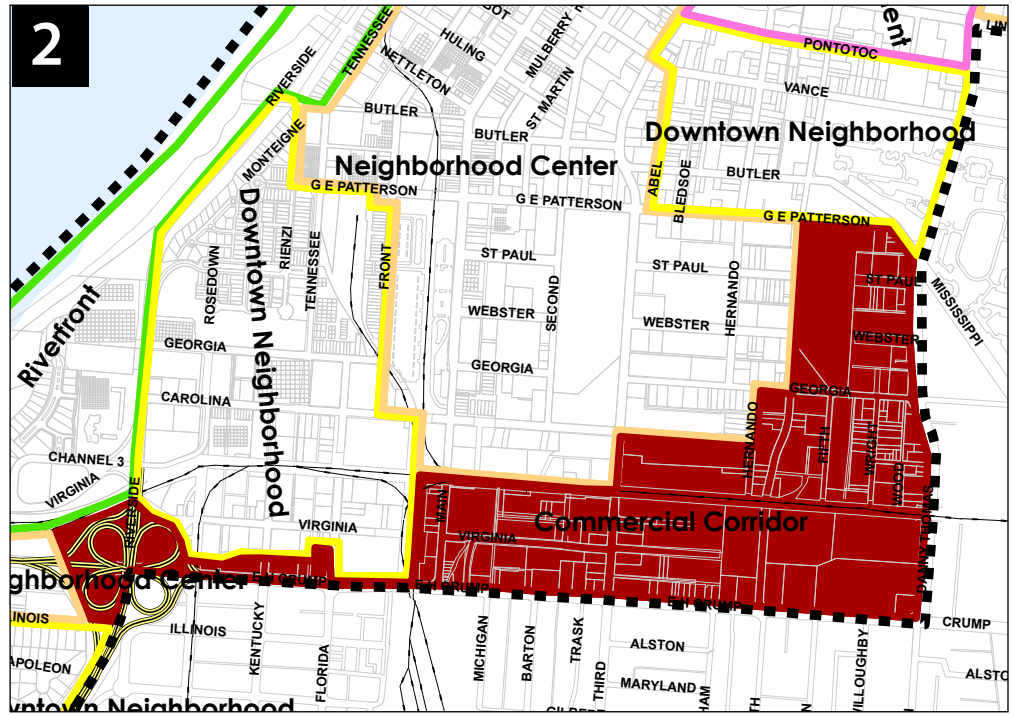
These corridors also abut established residential areas in many places, and it is important that these edges be "good neighbors." While screening incompatible uses is a minimum expectation, finding ways to link new mixed-use projects with adjacent neighborhoods is an objective.
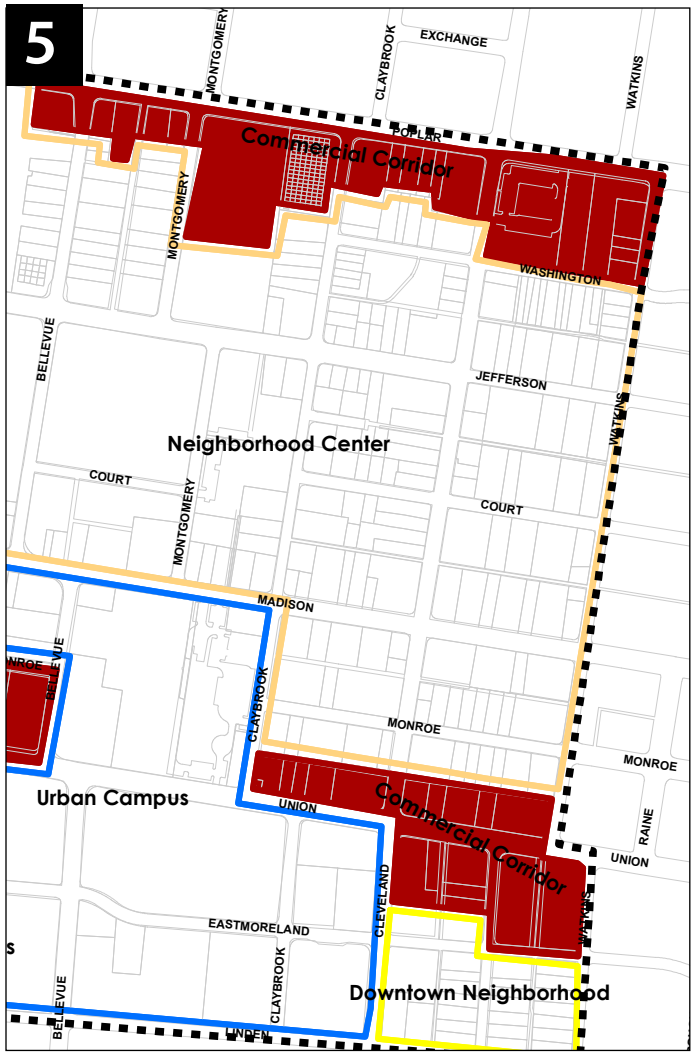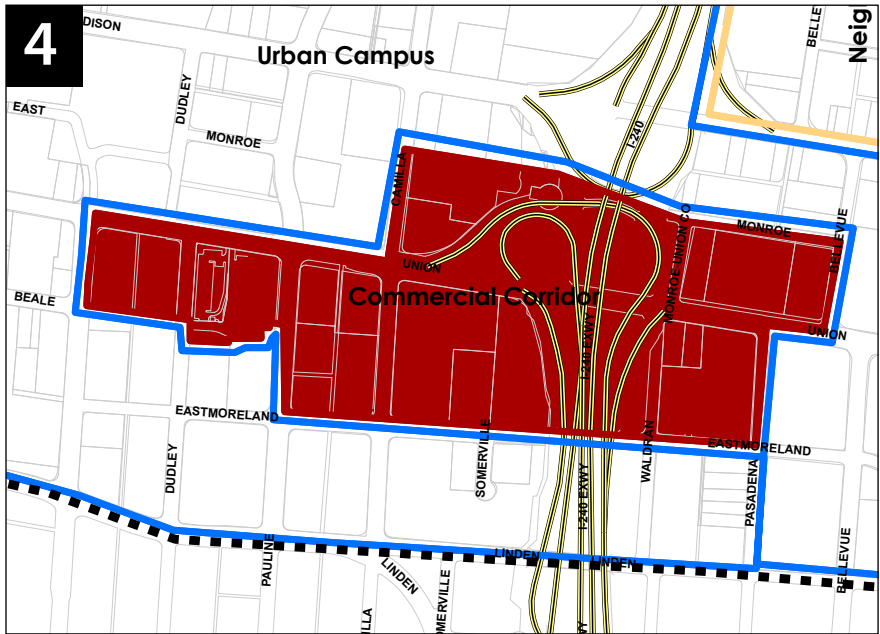
## Goals for the Commercial Corridors:

- To establish a sense of high quality design that relates to the Downtown Core
- To minimize the visual impacts of cars
- To enhance the public sidewalk system

# Commercial Corridor Context Maps

**4**

Urban Campus

Neig...

DISON

EAST

DUDLEY

MONROE

BELLE...

I-240

CAMILLA

UNION

Commercial Corridor

MONROE

BELLEVUE

MONROE UNION CO

BEALE

UNION

EASTMORELAND

DUDLEY

SOMERVILLE

BELLE PKWY

WALDRAN

EASTMORELAND

PASADENA

I-240 EXWY

BELLEVUE

PAULINE

LINDEN

SOMERVILLE

LINDEN

LINDEN

**5**

MONTGOMERY

CLAYBROOK

EXCHANGE

WATKINS

Commercial Corridor

POPLAR

MONTGOMERY

WASHINGTON

BELLEVUE

JEFFERSON

WATKINS

Neighborhood Center

COURT

MONTGOMERY

COURT

MADISON

MONROE UE

CLAYBROOK

MONROE

MONROE

Urban Campus

UNION

RAINE

Commercial Corridor

UNION

EASTMORELAND

CLEVELAND

s

BELLEVUE

CLAYBROOK

LINDEN

Downtown Neighborhood

*In the Commercial Corridor context, landscaping and street trees may be placed between the sidewalk and parking lot to enhance the visual appearance of a property from the street.*

# Neighborhood Design Principles: Commercial Corridor Context

### Pedestrian Connections

All development should directly connect to public sidewalks. Improving connections among properties in order to facilitate "parking once" and walking to a variety of services is important as well. Planning for cross-property walkways is an example that is particularly relevant to this design context.

### Streetscape

For streetscape improvements in this context, the *Memphis CBID Streetscape Master Plan's* Type E (Regional Vehicular) and Type G (Boulevard) are both appropriate.

# Site Design Principles: Commercial Corridor Context

### Building Setback/Build-to Line

Buildings may be aligned at the inside sidewalk edge or set back from the street. In these situations, it is important that the foreground be improved in ways that enhance the pedestrian experience and provide visual interest for motorists. This may include courtyards, landscaping, and outdoor display areas.



*In developments set back from the street, the foreground of the property should be improved with landscaping.*

## Primary Entrance

It is especially important in these contexts that primary entrances face the street. In some cases, where several buildings are to be clustered on a site, entrances may orient to a shared plaza or open space. In other locations, where a new building is located at the sidewalk edge, and parking is behind, the design may be "double-fronted" with an entry facing the street and another oriented to an internal parking lot.



*Primary entrances should face the street.*

## Courtyards

Courtyards, patios and plazas that accommodate outdoor activities are appropriate in these contexts and should connect directly with public sidewalks when feasible. When these spaces are associated with an existing building that is set back substantially from the street or where traffic volumes are high, it may be more desirable to locate outdoor uses in places that can be screened.



*In cases where parking exists in front of a building, parking should be limited to one aisle; landscaping should be planted between the parking area and the sidewalk.*

## Parking

The visual impacts of large parking areas should be minimized in this context. The preferred design solution is one in which an active use, such as a storefront, buffers parking from the street edge. However, in some cases, limited surface parking may exist between the public right-of-way and the building. In this case, parking in front of a building should be limited to one drive area with no more than two rows of parking (i.e. one row of parking immediately adjacent to the building and one row of parking spaces adjacent to the public right-of-way). In these cases, a landscaped buffer area should also be provided between the parking area and the sidewalk.

Although not preferred, if surface parking does exist without a building in front, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, high quality fences or walls, or other decorative features. In all cases, the width of individual driveways should be minimized to limit the extent of interruptions in the sidewalk for pedestrians.



*Patios and courtyards are encouraged to increase activity along the street.*

# Building Design Principles:
# Commercial Corridor Context

## Mass and Scale

For large projects that occupy several parcels, variation in building massing is preferred, to provide visual interest and help to convey a sense of human scale. Stepping down building heights adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods also is especially important.

## Materials

As in all contexts, materials should be of high quality. That said, a wide range of materials is appropriate along the corridors. Conventional brick and stone, concrete and architectural block are appropriate. Stucco and other plaster treatments, when detailed to provide a sense of scale and visual interest, are also appropriate in this context. Greater flexibility in their use may occur in this context. In particular, stucco, when well detailed and of durable quality, may be considered for use at the street level, and as a primary building material overall.



*Buildings should be constructed of durable materials such as brick, stone, and concrete; buildings that occupy large parcels should incorporate variation in massing to create visual interest and compatibility in scale.*

# Riverfront Context

The Riverfront Context consists of lands that are immediately adjacent to the Mississippi River and its related inlets. The setting is a blend of natural features and the built environment. Principally public lands, the riverfront is highly significant for its historical association, cultural meaning, and symbol as the foundation of the city's economy. It is the focal point of Downtown and a primary public amenity.

Although much of the Riverfront Context will remain as public open space, any future development should provide for public access to the waterfront and preserve views from different perspectives. In larger projects, buildings should be divided into modules to provide pedestrian access through the development to the riverfront and should be varied in height to provide preserve views for surrounding properties.





*The Riverfront Context consists of lands that immediately abut the Mississippi River and its related inlets. The setting is a blend of natural features and man-made alterations.*

## Master Planning:

In the riverfront context, where a sequence of related improvements may occur over time, is it appropriate to establish some design approvals in a master plan format, such that subsequent improvements of similar character may be approved administratively.

## Goals for the Riverfront Context:

- Reinforce the distinct identity of the riverfront by conveying its heritage and respecting the natural environment.
- Preserve view opportunities to the river from public viewpoints.
- Enhance pedestrian access to the river and connections that lead to the riverfront.
- Maximize opportunities for outdoor uses that support recreational activities.
- Promote creative new design for public features that complement the natural character and heritage.
- Preserve historic features that exist in the area.

# Riverfront Context Map

**2**

Downtown Neighborhood

Neighbor

Riverfront

Riverfront

Downtown Co

Sports and Enter

Neighborhood Center

Downtown Neighborhood



**3**

Riverfront

Downtown Neighborhood

Neighb

Neighborhood Center

Downtown Neighborhood

# Neighborhood Design Principles: Riverfront Context

### Reinforce Identity

All development should reinforce the distinct identity of the riverfront by conveying its heritage and respecting the natural environment. The Mississippi River's waterfront along Downtown has historically been an active working waterfront. Future uses that provide public amenities or attract people to the riverfront are encouraged. Connections to Downtown neighborhoods are important and should be strengthened through improved pedestrian access as well as enhanced views. Projects should preserve views to the river along corridors and from public viewpoints in adjacent Downtown neighborhoods.

### Pedestrian Connections

All development should directly connect to public sidewalks. Larger projects should include pedestrian circulation routes that link several sites and also connect to public sidewalks and crosswalks.

*Pedestrian connections along the riverfront can take a variety of forms; paved paths or promenades are more appropriate adjacent to densely developed areas, and less structured designs are more appropriate for less dense riverfront areas. Fountains, benches, and other amenities are encouraged.*

# Site Design Principles:
# Riverfront Context

## Open Space

Open spaces that are designed for active uses are encouraged. Open spaces may be designed for recreational use and accommodate walking, cycling, children playing, or other activities. Other forms of open space, such as pavilions, outdoor seating areas, or parks with public art installations are also encouraged. All public spaces should connect with pedestrian paths or sidewalks.
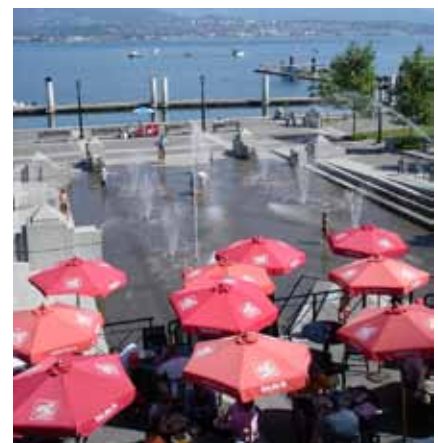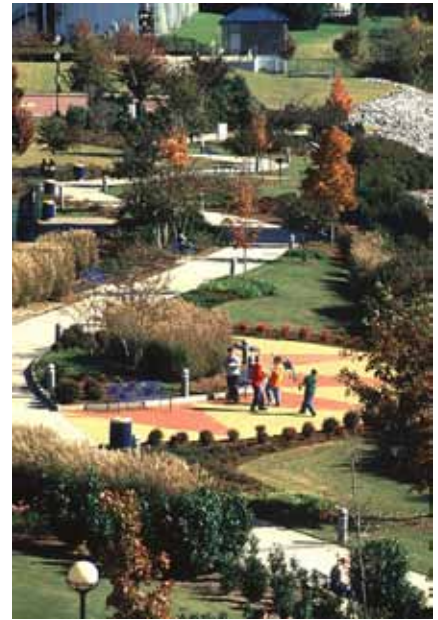








*Public open space could take the form of a pavilion, splash park, public art park or park with trails.*

## Parking

The visual impacts of large parking areas should be minimized in this context. Where surface parking does exist, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, walls and other decorative features.

## Materials

In the public realm, a wide range of hardscape materials may be considered, including brick and stone pavers. Concrete and asphalt surfaces, when detailed to provide a sense of scale and visual interest, are also appropriate.

## Building Setback

When buildings are incorporated into a riverfront project, building setbacks can be aligned at the inside sidewalk edge or setback from the property line. When a building is set back from the property line, the "foreground" should be improved in ways that enhance the pedestrian experience and create visual interest. Such improvements may include landscaping, courtyards, and patios.

## Primary Building Entrance

When a building is near the street, the primary entrance should face the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment; however it should not turn its back on the river. Other entrances may orient to the waterfront or to courtyards.



*Parking areas should be adequately landscaped. Small parking areas with landscaping are ideal for pedestrian entries to riverfront parks and trails.*

# Building Design Principles:
# Riverfront Context

## Mass and Scale

When buildings are incorporated into large riverfront projects that occupy several parcels, variation in building massing is preferred to provide visual interest and to help convey a sense of human scale. Stepping down building heights adjacent to the river is especially important.

## Ground Level Interest

Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the ground level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses. A range of solutions is appropriate, including:

- Decorative wall surfaces
- Architectural details
- Murals and public art
- Landscaping
- Canopies and pavilions
- Porches and patios

## Building Materials

A wide range of materials may be considered, including the more conventional brick and stone, as well as treated wood, glass, concrete, and architectural metals. Stucco and other plaster treatments, when detailed to provide a sense of scale and visual interest, are also appropriate

*Buildings along the riverfront may include public gathering spaces, restaurants, and residential units among other uses. Patios and balconies are encouraged for enjoyment of riverfront views.*

*The Sports and Entertainment Context lies along the southern and eastern edges of the Downtown Core.*



*The vision for this area is that it be energized with a variety of entertainment venues and that outdoor spaces also accommodate a mix of activities.*

# Sports and Entertainment Context

The Sports and Entertainment Context lies along the southern and eastern edges of the Downtown Core. The northern edge extends to Madison and includes the AutoZone Ballpark. The southern edge extends to Pontotoc Avenue and includes the FedEx Forum and Beale Street.

The vision for this area is a vibrant district that includes sports arenas, entertainment and music venues, theaters, bars, restaurants, and outdoor public gathering spaces. Since this is a place for the community and visitors to gather and share experiences, it should be energized with street activity during the day and into the evening.

A variety of building forms is anticipated that reflects the specialized uses related to sports and entertainment. Building designs should convey a sense of excitement and also have a strong sense of design integrity and longevity.

More activity in the public realm, including public art installations, plazas and outdoor spaces is encouraged. Designs should promote circulation among facilities to share activity and energy.



*Building designs should convey a sense of excitement and also have a strong sense of design integrity and longevity, with "fad" designs discouraged.*

# Sports and Entertainment Context Map
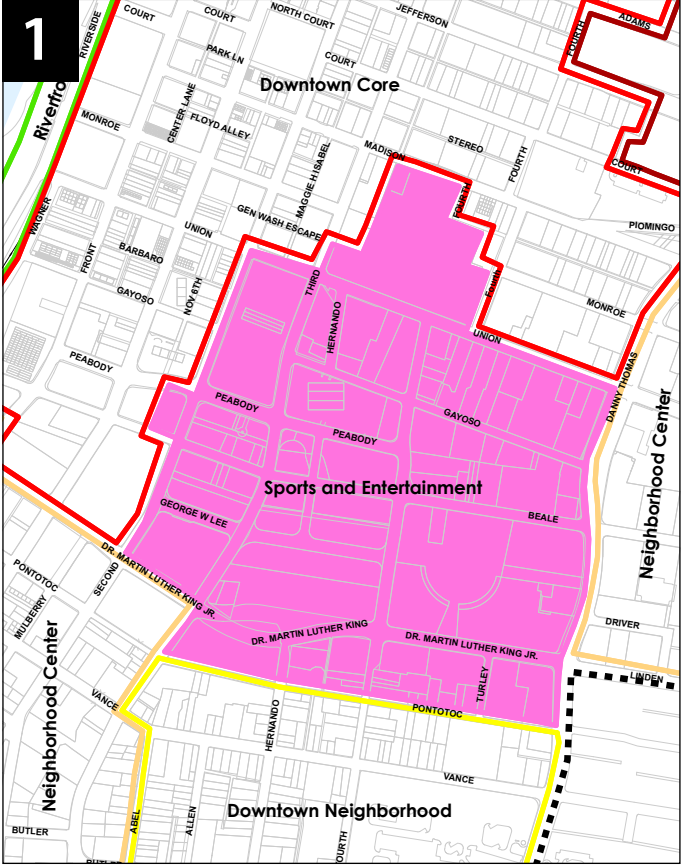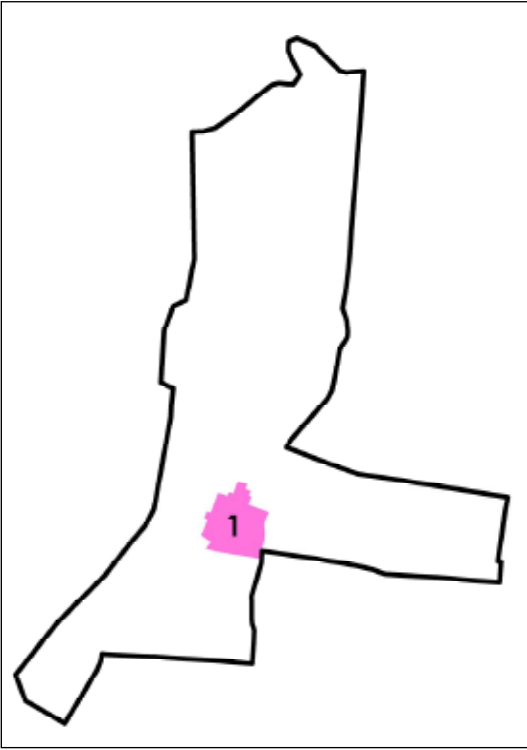
## The Beale Street District

Within the Sports and Entertainment Context, the Beale Street district is a place of special historical significance, and maintaining the scale of traditional buildings is very important. The boundaries of the Beale Street district in the Design Guidelines are consistent with the boundaries of the Beale Street National Register District that is illustrated on page 19 and enlarged below.



## Goals for the Sports and Entertainment Context:

- To create a sense of excitement and interest at the pedestrian level
- To establish a streetscape that is distinctive and conveys a sense of the arts and creative design, including public art
- To provide "previews" of activities through architectural transparency, signs, and public art
- To minimize the visual impact of automobiles

# Neighborhood Design Level: Sports and Entertainment Context

## Views

Providing views from the public way to civic landmarks and other amenities is important to connect the Sports and Entertainment Context to surrounding neighborhoods. Locating plazas and courtyards to make use of these view opportunities should be a high priority.

## Pedestrian Connections

Providing additional connections as feasible between major venues is important. For example, in a large project, creating interconnecting walkways should be considered.

## Streetscape

An "urban palette" of streetscape elements should be used in the Sports and Entertainment District, similar to that of the Civic Core. At the same time, there will be opportunities for artistic interpretations of some streetscape elements, such as benches, kiosks, and planters.

## Open Space

It is especially important in the Sports and Entertainment District that public spaces be framed by buildings and be planned to accommodate a variety of activities.



*Relating to the historic building context within the Beale Street Historic District is a high priority.*



*Providing views from the public way to civic landmarks and other amenities is important.*





*Open space may take the form of active plazas that bring vitality to the street and allow for public gathering.*



*Streetscape design in the Sports and Entertainment context should include wide sidewalks and street trees.*

# Site Design Level:
# Sports and Entertainment Context

### Building Setback/Build-to Line

Building fronts should be located at the sidewalk edge (i.e., a 0-setback), to reinforce the urban street wall character. Exceptions may be made for large scale entertainment facilities, such as arenas.

### Primary Entrance

It is especially important in this context that the primary entrance of a building face the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment.

### Courtyards

Courtyards, patios, and roof decks that provide gathering places and accommodate vendors and other activities are appropriate in this context. Spaces that incorporate public art are especially welcomed.

### Parking

Parking should not be visible from the street in this context. The preferred design solution is structured parking with active ground floor uses, such as storefronts, that buffer parking from the street edge. Surface lots are inappropriate. Where a surface lot exists, its edges should be landscaped until other solutions, as outlined in the guidelines, can be accomplished.

*With the exception of large scale entertainment facilities with plazas, buildings should be constructed at the sidewalk edge with primary entrances facing the street.*



*Structured parking with a retail frontage is the most appropriate parking design in this context.*



*Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level, to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses.*

# Building Design Level:
# Sports and Entertainment Context



*Variation in building height and massing is important to achieving a sense of sense of scale.*

## Height

Height limits are established in the UDC. However, when a development is large scale, variation in building heights within the project is encouraged

## Mass and Scale

For large projects that occupy several parcels, variation in building massing is preferred to provide visual interest and to help convey a sense of human scale.

## Street Level Interest

Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses. Although storefronts at the ground floor are preferred, the following options are also appropriate:



*Continuing the use of traditional materials is welcomed in this context; however, the use of new materials in innovative ways is appropriate.*

- Architectural details
- Decorative wall surfaces
- Murals and public art
- Landscaping

## Materials

While continuing the use of traditional materials is welcomed in this context, the use of new materials in innovative ways is also appropriate. Architectural metals, concrete, and glass are examples. The use of stucco is discouraged.

*Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level, to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses.*

# Urban Campus

The Urban Campus contexts lie along the northern and eastern edges of the CBID. Much of the Urban Campus context has groupings of buildings which are related in function, such as hospitals, research facilities, and educational institutions. Since people frequently move between buildings on campuses, connectivity through walkways and landscaping is important.

In this context, it is important for buildings to be visually related while it is understood that each campus complex may change and evolve over time. Landscape designs should be coordinated within a campus context to provide a sense of identity to the area.

## Master Planning:

In the Urban Campus context, where a sequence of related improvements may occur over time, it is appropriate to establish some design approvals in a master plan format, such that subsequent improvements of similar character may be approved administratively.

## Goals for the Urban Campus:
- Establish a distinct identity for each campus
- Establish a pedestrian-friendly environment along public streets
- Minimize visual impacts of automobiles from the public way
- Be "good neighbors" to abutting residential areas

# Urban Campus Maps
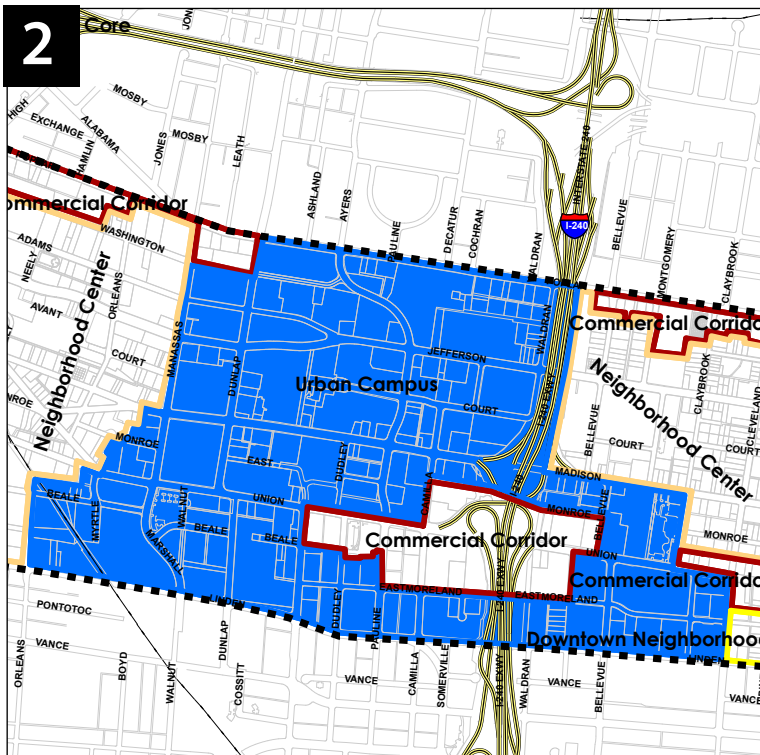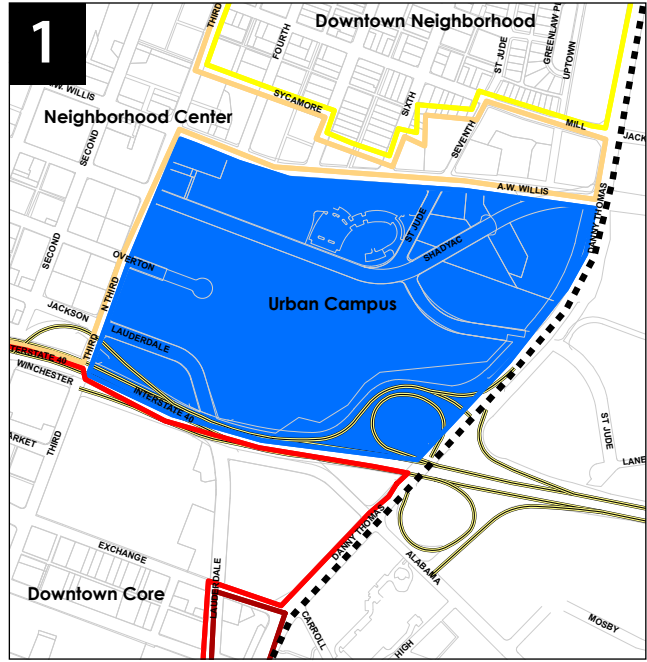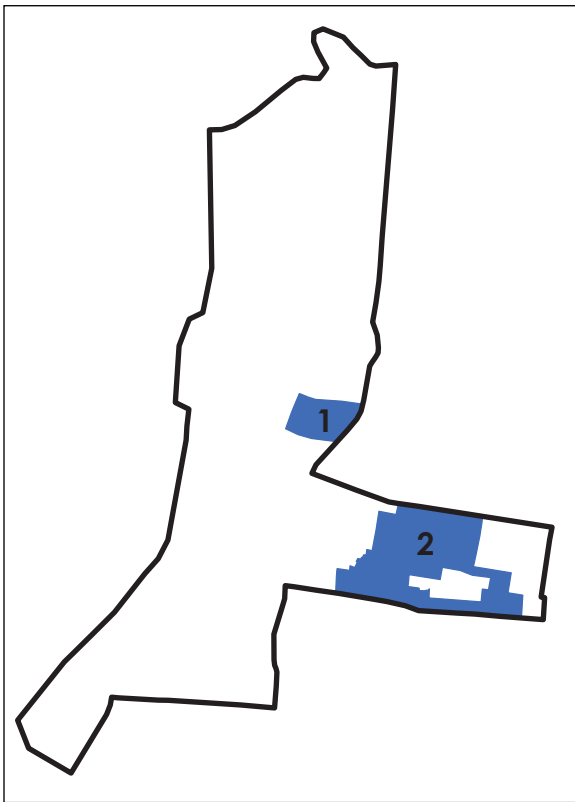
# Neighborhood Design Level:
# Urban Campus Context

### Pedestrian Connections

Providing attractive and convenient pedestrian connections within a campus is important, as is providing links to public sidewalks that frame the exterior of such contexts.

### Streetscape

An "urban palette" of streetscape elements should be used in this context. This palette includes:

- Street trees, with cutouts, located in the sidewalks.
- Benches and planters of finished, highly durable materials.
- Decorative paving, such as scored concrete or unit pavers to define special use areas

*On medical and educational campuses, common open spaces and pedestrian paths are important to linking related buildings.*

For specific streetscape standards for the Urban Campus context, reference the Medical Center Overlay within the Unified Development Code.

### Open Space

Providing open spaces that are designed for active uses is encouraged. Plazas and courtyards to connect to public sidewalks are preferred.



*Wide sidewalks with decorative paving, street trees, and benches comprise an urban streetscape palette.*

# Site Design:
# Urban Campus Context

### Building setback

Building setbacks along public sidewalks that frame the perimeter of an urban campus are a consideration. Buildings that are aligned at the inside sidewalk edge are appropriate as are ones that are set back. When a building is set back, it important that the "foreground" be improved in ways that enhance the pedestrian experience and provide visual interest. This may include courtyards and landscaping.



*If a building is set back from the street, the foreground should be improved with landscaping.*

## Primary Entrance

When a building is near the street, it is especially important in these contexts that a primary entrance faces the street to help enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment. Others may orient to courtyards, when a cluster of buildings faces onto it.

## Parking

The visual impacts of large parking areas should be minimized in this context. The preferred design solutions are structured parking or parking areas are located internal to the campus. Where surface parking does exist along a street edge, it is essential that it be screened with landscaping, walls and other decorative features

# Building Design: Urban Campus Context

## Mass and Scale

For large projects that occupy several parcels, variation in building massing is preferred to provide visual interest and to help convey a sense of human scale. Stepping down building heights adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods also is especially important.



*Structured parking is the preferred design for parking; surface parking lots should be screened with fences or walls and landscaping.*



*Variation in massing is important in large projects to convey a sense of human scale.*

*Storefront windows provide visual interest along the street.*



## Street Level Interest

Within this context, it is especially important that buildings convey visual interest and a sense of scale at the street level to encourage pedestrian activity and support a mix of uses. A range of solutions is appropriate, including:

- Storefronts
- Display cases
- Decorative wall surfaces
- Architectural details
- Murals and public art
- Landscaping
- Porches

## Materials

A wide range of materials may be considered, including the more conventional brick and stone, as well as durable synthetic siding and architectural metals. Stucco and other plaster treatments, when detailed to provide a sense of scale and visual interest, are also appropriate.



*Both traditional and contemporary materials are appropriate as long as they have proven long-term sustainability and are adequately detailed.*

# CHAPTER 4
# Signs

## Introduction

The CBID Sign Code is a City of Memphis ordinance that establishes the basic requirements for signs throughout the Central Business Improvement District (CBID), the area commonly referred to as Downtown. The CBID Sign Code is a regulatory document that includes limits on the number and size of signs, type, illumination and general placement. The CBID Sign Code is a separate document and is not a part of these Design Guidelines.

The design guidelines for signage in this chapter supplement the sign code standards and are to be used in the following ways:

- As a condition for approval of signs included in public projects and projects receiving incentives from the DMC
- As a means of determining the appropriateness of signs that applicants propose be classified as "sculptural" signs, as set forth in the sign code
- As advisory information for anyone wishing to develop higher quality signage for their project

## Sign Character

The goal for signs throughout Downtown Memphis is that they contribute to an overall sense of high quality design, creativity and distinct identity for the area. In this respect, all of the principles set forth in Chapter 1 apply to sign design.

In addition, the sign should be in keeping with the goals established for the relevant Design Contexts. These are described in Chapter 3, and will be considered by the DRB in determining appropriateness of sign proposals that are subject to the sign design guidelines.



## Section Contents

# Sign Character by Design Context

This chart summarizes the basic approaches that are appropriate for sign design in each of the Design Contexts for Downtown Memphis. This helps provide a basis for comparing and contrasting the intent of the sign code regulations for each of the contexts, and the application of the design guidelines in this chapter. Refer to the sign code itself for the prevailing standards.

| Design Context | Overall Character | Materials | Size | Illumination | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Downtown Core** | • Lively and visually interesting<br>• Pedestrian oriented | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate | • Moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site | • External illumination, internally lit channel letters, and exposed neon are typical<br>• If used, digital elements must be subordinate to the overall sign | • Sculptural and symbol signs are preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical<br>• Free-standing signs are not typically appropriate but may be considered for surface parking lots and sites without buildings |
| **Sports and Entertainment** | • Lively and visually interesting<br>• Use creative signs to convey the dynamic activity of the area<br>• In most cases, pedestrian oriented | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are discouraged | • Moderate to large scale, should be in character with and in proportion to the building | • Internally lit channel letters and exposed neon are typical<br>• Digital elements should be subordinate to the overall sign in most cases | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical<br>• Free-standing signs are not typically appropriate but may be considered for surface parking and vacant sites |

| Design Context | Overall Character | Materials | Size | Illumination | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Neighborhood Center** | • Subordinate to buildings<br>• Pedestrian-oriented | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate | • Moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site | • External illumination, internally lit channel letters, and exposed neon are typical<br>• Digital signage is not appropriate | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical<br>• Free-standing signs are not typically appropriate but may be considered for surface parking lots and vacant sites |
| **Downtown Neighborhood** | • Sensitive to residential uses<br>• Very limited in scale and illumination | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate | • Should be appropriately scaled for the structure and/or site | • External illumination and halo lighting are generally appropriate<br>• Digital signage is not appropriate | • Small building-mounted sign types are typically most appropriate<br>• Located illuminated signs away from adjacent residential uses |
| **Commercial Corridor** | • Balance pedestrian orientation and auto-orientation<br>• Should raise the standards for signs within the context | • A range of materials are appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are not encouraged | • Moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site but still visible to vehicular traffic where appropriate | • A wide range of illumination options may be appropriate<br>• If used, digital elements should be subordinate to the overall sign | • A wide range of sign types can be appropriate<br>• Signs should be located away from adjacent residential uses; consider providing a landscaped buffer for freestanding and illuminated signs |

| Design Context | Overall Character | Materials | Size | Illumination | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Urban Campus** | • Coordinated signs for a complex or grouping of buildings<br>• Use consistent graphics, sign types, illumination, and materials<br>• Use a master sign plan | • A range of materials are appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are discouraged | • Moderate to large scale, should be in character with and in proportion to the building | • A wide range of illumination options may be appropriate<br>• If used, digital elements should be subordinate to the overall sign | • A wide range of sign types may be appropriate<br>• Could be located interior to cluster or grouping of buildings or oriented to the exterior of the "campus" depending on purpose and function of signage<br>• Consider providing landscaping buffer for freestanding signs |
| **Riverfront** | • Respectful of the historic and natural character of the area<br>• Pedestrian oriented in most cases | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate | • Moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site | • External illumination, internally lit channel letters, and exposed neon may be considered<br>• Digital signage is not typically appropriate | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are appropriate<br>• Free-standing signs may be considered for surface parking lots and sites without buildings |

| Design Context | Overall Character | Materials | Size | Illumination | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Downtown Industrial** | • Sensitive to adjacent residential uses | • A range of materials are generally appropriate | • Should be appropriately scaled for the structure and/or site | • A wide range of illumination options may be appropriate<br>• If used, digital elements must be subordinate to the overall sign | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical<br>• Free-standing signs may be appropriate for larger sites and locations with an adequate building setback<br>• Signs should be located away from adjacent residential uses; consider providing a landscaping buffer for freestanding and illuminated signs |

| Design Context | Overall Character | Materials | Size | Illumination | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Historic Districts** | • Subordinate to buildings<br>• Pedestrian oriented | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate<br>• Rectilinear sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate | • Small to moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site | • External illumination, exposed neon, and halo lighting are generally appropriate<br>• Digital signage is not appropriate | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical |
| **Beale Street** | • Subordinate to buildings<br>• Pedestrian oriented<br>• Lively and visually interesting<br>• Use creative signs to convey the dynamic activity of the area | • High-quality, traditional materials are preferred<br>• New, innovative materials may be appropriate | • Moderate scale, should be subordinate to the structure and/or site | • External illumination, internally lit channel letters, and exposed neon are typical | • Sculptural and symbol signs preferred<br>• Building-mounted signs are typical<br>• Free-standing signs are not typically appropriate but may be considered for surface parking lots and sites without buildings |

# Sign Design Guidelines

## A Sign in Its Setting:

In Downtown Memphis, a sign is seen as serving two functions: first, to attract attention; and second, to identify the business or services offered. For a sign mounted on a building, if the facade is well designed, the building front alone can serve much of the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to focus on conveying information in a well-conceived manner. Similarly, for a free-standing sign, landscaping and other site amenities can help to give identity to the businesses located on the site. In this respect, each sign should be considered with the overall composition of the building and the site in mind.

**S.1** **Consider a sign in the context of the overall building and site design.**

a. Coordinate a building-mounted sign within the facade composition.
b. Coordinate all signage within a project. Developing a master sign plan for the entire property is encouraged; this should be used to guide individual sign design decisions.
c. The size, materials, details, illumination, and overall character of the sign should be compatible with the design context in which it is located
d. A sign should be in character with the overall materials, colors and details of the building.
e. Do not design or install signage in a way that damages or obscures architectural details or distinctive building elements.

**S.2** **Design a sign to be in scale with its setting.**

a. Design a sign to be in proportion to the building and site.
b. Design sign to be subordinate to the overall building in size and character.

**S.3** **Design a sign to highlight architectural features of the building.**

a. This is especially important for historic properties.
b. Locate a sign on a building such that it is compatible with the design elements of the facade.
c. Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features.

*Design a sign to be in proportion to the building, and subordinate to the overall building size and character. The example above shows appropriate sign placement and scale, while the example below is out of proportion with the building and obscures architectural features of the building.*
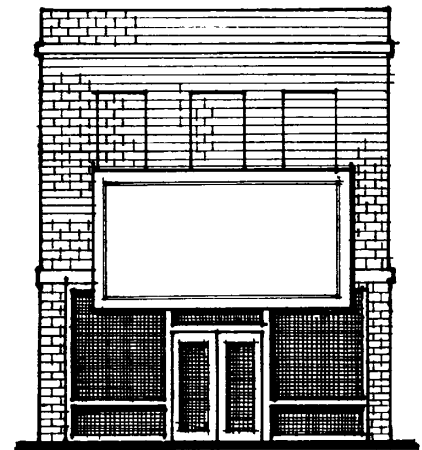
# Sign Character

The integration of the sign with the building or building facade is important and should be a key factor in its design and installation. Signs also should be visually interesting and clearly legible. Signs that appear to be custom-designed and fabricated and convey visual interest in the urban setting are preferred. Those that are scaled to the pedestrian are especially encouraged, where appropriate for the design context.

A symbol sign adds interest to the street, can be read quickly, and is remembered better than written words. Therefore, signs that incorporate symbols and are particularly welcomed.

**S.4     Design a sign to convey visual interest to pedestrians.**

a.       Use of symbols and pictographic images is encouraged.
b.       Use of a sign form that is dynamic, with articulated edges and shapes, is encouraged.

# Sign Material

A range of materials may be considered, as defined in the sign code. Most important is that the character and finish meet the objectives described here and in the sign code.

**S.5     Sign materials should be of proven durability in the Memphis climate.**

**S.6     Use sign materials that are compatible with the building.**

**S.7     Materials should be appropriate for a Downtown, urban environment**

a.       Standard plastic light boxes are generally inappropriate Downtown; however, custom formed plastic shapes and sculptural signs may be considered. For plastic signs, a matte finish is preferred.
b.       The use of painted wood and metal is allowed.
c.       Other synthetic materials may be used with a matte, painted finish that appears similar to a higher quality material.
d.       High gloss plastic is inappropriate for historic properties and within locally-designated historic districts.
e.       Plastic sign cabinets with plastic sign faces are typically inappropriate within locally designated historic districts.

*Design a sign to convey visual interest to pedestrians. The use of a dynamic sign with symbols and pictographic images and shapes is encouraged.*

*While a range of materials may be considered, the use of painted wood and metal is encouraged.*

# Sign Illumination

The sign code defines a range of lighting methods that may be considered in Downtown Memphis depending upon the design context. Overall, the intent is to minimize surface glare of panel signs and to manage light spill such that glare is not created on adjoining properties. Illumination should occur in a manner that is subordinate to the overall building, its site, and neighborhood while meeting the functional needs of the business. Within this framework, the creative use of lighting to add accent and interest to the street for pedestrians is encouraged.

## External Illumination

A sign that is lighted by an external source can be an appropriate approach for areas with high levels of pedestrian activity and in residential areas.

**S.8    An external lighting source can be appropriate for a sign.**

a.    Light intensity should not overpower the building or street edge.
b.    A warm light, similar to daylight, is preferred.
c.    Halo illumination may provide an effective and subtle form of lighting which can be used to accentuate both sign and building.

**S.9    An external light source should be shielded to direct the light and minimize glare.**

a.    Note, however, that the sign code considers neon-type lighting to be "external." This type does not require shielding.
b.    Neon illumination may also be considered in the designated design contexts, when it is used as a sculptural element or for message content itself.







*An external light source should be shielded, to direct the light and minimize glare.*





*Neon illumination may be considered when it is used as a sculptural element (above) or for message content itself (right).*

*If internal illumination is used, a system that backlights sign text only, as seen on the metal sign above, is preferred.*



*The sign code permits a sign panel to be illuminated when it is darker than the sign message. The intent is that the letters essentially appear to be backlit on a dark background.*

## Internal Illumination

**S.10  If internal illumination is used, it should be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.**

a.   Internal illumination of an entire sign panel is discouraged.

b.   If internal illumination is used, a system that backlights sign text only is preferred.

c.   Note, however, that the sign code permits the panel to be illuminated when it is darker than the sign message. The intent is that the letters essentially appear to be backlit on a dark background.

d.   This form of lighting can be used with either wall or sign panels or individual letters.

e.   The light source should not be visible.

f.   Edge lit signs are considered to be internally illuminated signs.

# Sculptural Signs

The sign code provides for a special category of sign type, termed "sculptural sign." The intent is to promote creative and innovative sign designs that are unique to Memphis and convey a high quality in execution and design. Specific criteria for classifying a sign as sculptural are set forth in the code. Signs that have dynamic shapes and symbols, and that make use of  the "air," or space around open components of the sign, are particularly encouraged.





*These sculptural signs are creative and innovative designs that are unique to Memphis and convey a high quality in execution and design.*

# Special Guidelines for Signs on Historic Properties

## Sign Color

**S.11  Color can be used both to accentuate the sign design and message and, when appropriate, to integrate the sign or lettering with the building and its context.**

a.  Use colors for the sign that are generally compatible with those of the building elevation where the sign is to be located.

## Sign Installation

The installation of a sign is an integral aspect in the retention of key architectural features and in minimizing damage to a historic building.

**S.12  Avoid damaging or obscuring architectural details or historic features when installing signs.**

a.  Minimize the number of anchor points when feasible.

## Historic Signs

**S.13  Preserve a historic sign, including painted wall signs where they exist, when feasible.**

a.  Maintenance is appropriate, as needed, to stabilize the sign, but complete restoration, or re-painting is not recommended.



*Color shall be used both to accentuate the sign design and message and also to integrate the sign or lettering with the building and its context.*



*Sign installation should minimize damage to the historic building.*

# CHAPTER 5
# Historic Preservation

This chapter provides guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic properties. The first section contains general guidelines for treatment of many of the key features that are found among many building types. For each of the features discussed, individual guidelines follow the preferred sequence of treatments. That is, first, one should maintain a feature in good condition. Next, repair the feature if it cannot be maintained. And only if that is not feasible, replace it in kind. Finally, compatible alterations may be considered.

A second section presents more guidance for specific building types, addressing features that may be unique to these different forms. A third section includes a collection of special considerations. Some of these may apply to any historic property; others are unique to specific property types.

## Section Contents

*Preserve significant character-defining features.*



*Repair deteriorated character-defining features.*

# General Historic Design Guidelines

## Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features contribute to the design of a structure. Select an appropriate treatment that will provide for proper preservation of a significant features. The method that requires the least intervention is preferred.

**H.1 Preserve significant character-defining features.**

a. Storefronts, cornices, porches, turned columns, brackets, exposed rafter tails and jigsaw ornaments are examples of character-defining features that should be preserved.

b. Do not remove or alter features that are in good condition or that can be repaired.

**H.2 Repair deteriorated character-defining features.**

a. Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade existing materials, using recognized preservation methods.

b. Removing a damaged feature that can be repaired is not appropriate.

**H.3 When disassembly of a historic feature is necessary for its repair, use methods that minimize damage to it.**

a.    When removing a historic feature, document its location so it may be repositioned accurately.

**H.4 Use technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing character-defining features that will maintain the original finish.**

a.    Use the gentlest means possible that will achieve the desired results.
b.    Employ treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint or stain where appropriate.

**H.5 Replace a character-defining feature accurately.**

a.    The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's history.
b.    Use the same kind of material as the original when feasible. However, a substitute material may be acceptable if the size, shape, texture and finish conveys the visual appearance of the original. Alternative materials are usually more acceptable in locations that are remote from view or direct contact.
c.    Restore altered openings on primary facades to their original configuration, when feasible.

**H.6 When reconstructing an element is impossible, develop a new design that is a compatible interpretation of it.**

a.    The new element should be similar to comparable features in general size, shape, texture, material and finish.

**H.7 Avoid adding details that were not part of the original building.**

a.    For example, decorative millwork should not be added to a building if it was not an original feature. Doing so would convey a false history.
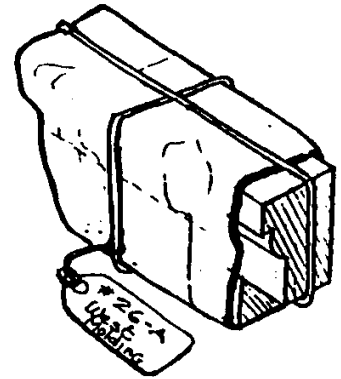


*When disassembly of a historic feature is required in a rehabilitation procedure, document its location so that it may be repositioned accurately.*
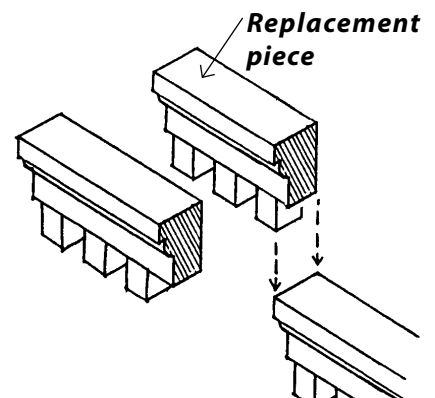


*Where replacement of an element is required, remove only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair.*



*Replace a character-defining feature accurately.*

*Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance. Once the non-historic siding is removed, repair the original, underlying material.*

# Materials and Finishes

Primary 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 or subjected to harsh cleaning treatments.

**H.8    Preserve original building materials.**

a.    Avoid removing original materials that are in good condition.
b.    Remove only those materials which are deteriorated, and must be replaced.
c.    Masonry features that define the overall historic character, such as walls, cornices, pediments, steps and foundations, should be preserved.

**H.9    Repair deteriorated primary building materials.**

a.    Repair by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.

**H.10   When replacing materials on primary surfaces, match the original material in composition, scale and finish.**

a.    If the original material is wood clapboard, for example, then the replacement material should be wood as well. It should match the original in size, the amount of exposed lap and in finish.
b.    Replace only the amount required. For example, if a few boards are damaged beyond repair, then only they should be replaced, not the entire wall.

**H.11 Do not use synthetic materials, such as aluminum, vinyl or panelized brick, as replacements for primary building materials.**

a. Primary building materials, such as wood siding and masonry, should not be replaced with synthetic materials.
b. Modular materials should not be used as replacement materials. Synthetic stucco and panelized brick, for example, are inappropriate.

**H.12 Covering original building materials with new materials is inappropriate.**

a. Vinyl siding, aluminum siding and new stucco are generally inappropriate on historic buildings. Other imitation materials that are designed to look like wood or masonry siding, fabricated from other materials, are also inappropriate.

**H.13 Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.**

a. Once the non-historic siding is removed, repair the original, underlying material.
b. If a structure has a stucco finish, removing the covering may be difficult, and may not be desirable. Test the stucco to assure that the original material underneath will not be damaged.



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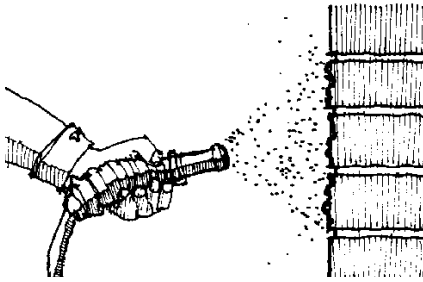


*Before*                    *After*
*Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.*

*Use approved technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing historic materials. As shown here, harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting or grinding are inappropriate.*



*Preserve significant architectural metal materials.*

## Cleaning Materials and Methods

**H.14 Use the gentlest means possible to clean the surface of a structure.**

a.    If cleaning is appropriate, a low pressure water wash is preferred.

b.    Perform a test patch to determine that the cleaning method will cause no damage to the material surface.

c.    Harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, can damage historic materials, changing their appearance. Such procedures are inappropriate.

d.    Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found.

## Wood

Wood was used historically for exterior siding, trim and ornamental details. Early woodwork should be retained, and, if necessary repaired. When properly maintained, wood has a long lifespan. To preserve external wood, maintain its painted finish.

**H.15 Protect wood features from deterioration.**

a.    Provide proper drainage and ventilation to minimize rot.

b.    Maintain protective coatings to retard drying and ultraviolet damage.

## Metal

Metals were used for a variety of applications including columns, roofs, fences and decorative features. They include cast iron, steel and copper. Traditional metals should be preserved.

**H.16 Preserve significant architectural metal features.**

a.    Provide proper drainage on metal surfaces to minimize water retention.

b.    Maintain protective coatings, such as paint, on exposed metals.

## Masonry and Concrete

Masonry includes stone, brick, terra cotta, stucco and concrete. These exist as building walls, site walls, steps and walkways.

**H.17 Historic brick or stone that is currently unpainted should not be painted.**

a. Masonry naturally has a water-protective layer, or patina, to protect it from the elements. Painting masonry walls can seal in moisture already in the masonry, thereby not allowing it to breathe and causing extensive damage over the years.

**H.18 Repoint mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration.**

a. Duplicate the old mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
b. Avoid using mortar with a high portland cement content, which will be substantially harder than the original.
c. Duplicate the mortar joints in width and profile.

**H.19 Preserve significant concrete features.**

a. Examples are walls, cornices, pediments, pilasters, and foundations.



*Repoint mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration.*

## Paint

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

**H.20 Plan repainting carefully.**

a. Always prepare a good substrate. Prior to painting, remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next intact layer, using the gentlest means possible.

**H.21 Using the historic color scheme is encouraged.**

a. If the historic scheme is not known, then an interpretation of schemes on similar historic buildings is appropriate.
b. Generally, one muted color is used as a background, which unifies the composition.
c. 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 windows a different color.
d. Brilliant luminescent and day-glow colors are inappropriate.
e. High gloss paints and finishes are inappropriate.

*Preserve the functional and decorative features of a historic window.*



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

# Building Components

## Windows

The character-defining features of a historic window, its distinct materials and its location should be preserved. In addition, a new window should be in character with the historic building.

**H.22 Preserve the functional and decorative features of a historic window.**

a.  Features important to the character of a window include its frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation and groupings of windows. See the following diagrams for an illustration of window features.

b.  Repair frames and sashes rather than replacing them, whenever possible.

**H.23 Preserve the position, number and arrangement of historic windows in a building wall.**

a.  On primary facades, enclosing a historic window opening is inappropriate, as is adding a new window opening.

**H.24 Preserve the historic ratio of window openings to solid wall on a primary facade.**

a.  Significantly increasing the amount of glass on a character-defining facade will negatively affect the integrity of the structure.

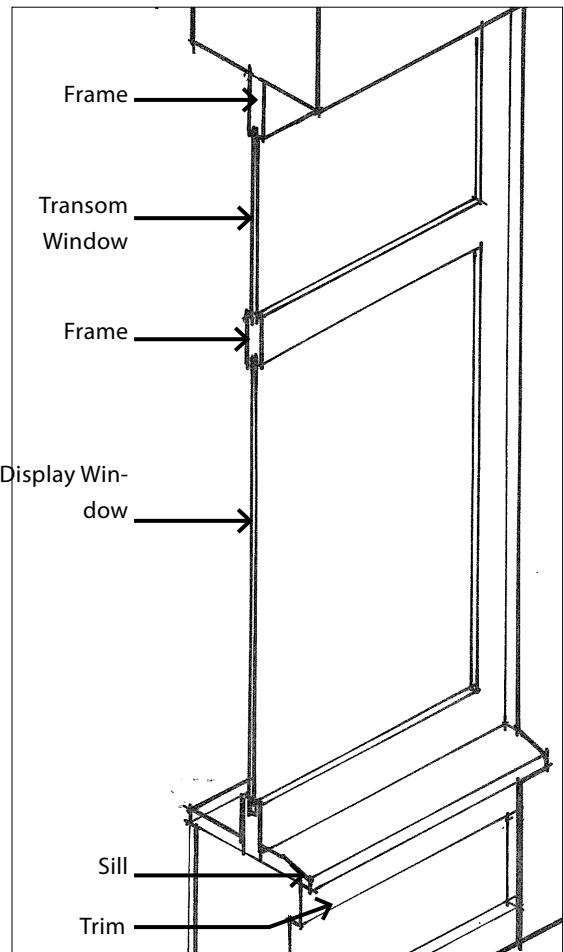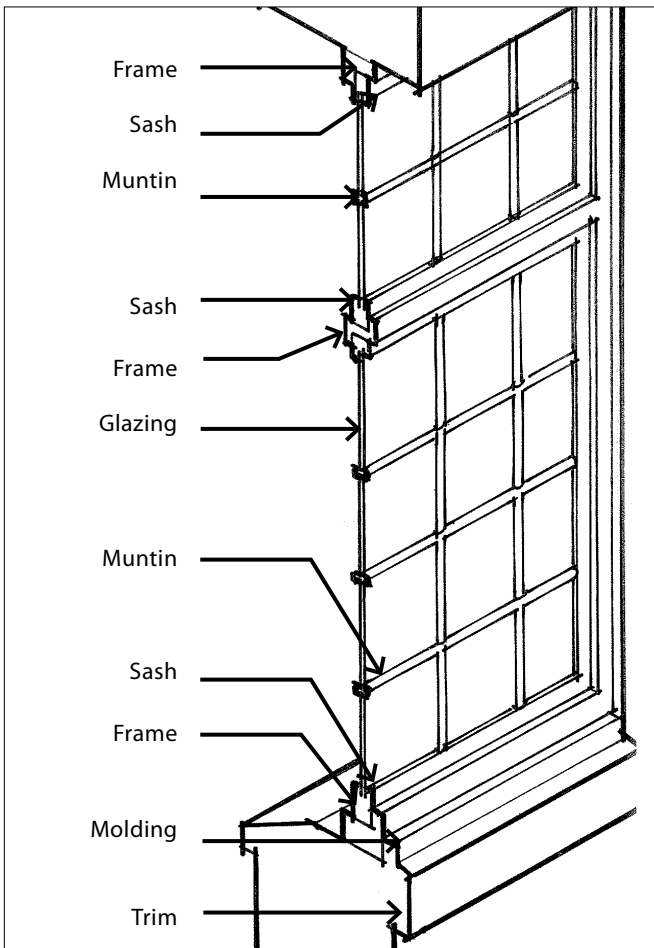**H.25 Preserve the size and proportion of a historic window opening.**

a.  Reducing an original opening to accommodate a smaller window or increasing it to receive a larger window is inappropriate.
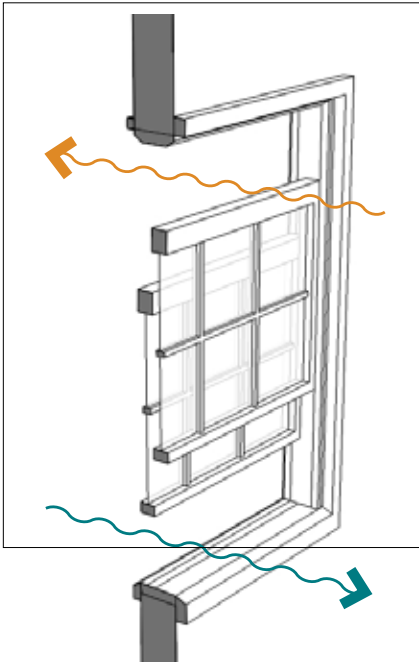
# Traditional Window Components



**Sash**
**Muntin**
**Glazing**
**Sash**

**Sash**
**Sill**
**Trim**
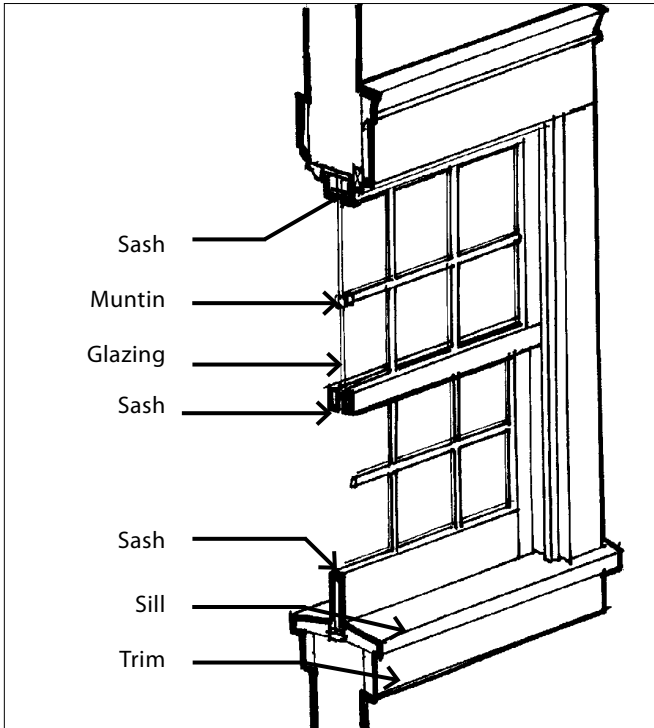
*Double Hung Window*

*The appearance of the window components should match those of the original in dimension, profile and finish.*



**Frame**
**Sash**
**Muntin**
**Sash**
**Frame**
**Glazing**
**Muntin**
**Sash**
**Frame**
**Molding**
**Trim**



**Frame**
**Transom Window**
**Frame**
**Display Window**
**Sill**
**Trim**

## DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW VENTILATION



*Double hung windows simultaneously allow for air circulation while saving energy.*

**H.26 Match a replacement window to the original in its design.**

a.   If the original is double-hung, then the replacement window should also be double-hung or appear to be so. Match the replacement also in the number and position of glass panes.

b.   Matching the original design is particularly important on key character-defining facades.

**H.27 In a replacement window, use materials that appear similar to the original.**

a.   Using the same material as the original is preferred, especially on street-facing facades. A substitute material may be considered if the appearance of the window components will match those of the original in dimension, profile and finish. However, vinyl is inappropriate.

b.   New glazing should convey the visual appearance of historic glazing. It should be clear. Transparent low-e type glass is appropriate. Metallic and reflective finishes are inappropriate.

**H.28 Match, as closely as possible, the profile of the sash and its components to that of the original window.**

a.   A historic wood window usually has a complex profile. Within the window's casing, the sash steps back to the plane of the glazing (glass) in several increments. These are important details that distinguish the actual window from the surrounding plane of the wall and this practice should be continued.

**H.29 Convey as closely as possible the character of historic sash divisions in a new window.**

a.   Muntins that divide a window into smaller panes of glass should be genuine on key facades and other highly visible places.

b.   Snap-on muntins located on the outside of a window may be used in secondary facades but should have a similar depth and shadow line.

c.   Strips of material located between panes of glass to simulate muntins are inappropriate.

## Energy Conservation in Windows

Historic windows can be repaired by reglazing and also patching and splicing wood elements such as the muntins, frame, sill and casing. Older windows were built with well seasoned wood that is superior to most new material. Repair and weather-stripping or insulation of the original elements is more energy efficient and less expensive and is also sound preservation practice.

**H.30 Enhance the energy efficiency of an existing historic window, rather than replace it. Use these measures:**

a.  Add weather stripping and caulking around the window frame.
b.  Install a storm window.
c.  Install an insulated window shade.

## Doors

The character-defining features of a historic door and its distinct materials and placement should be preserved. When a new door is needed, it should be in character with the building. This is especially important on primary facades.

**H.31 Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary entrance.**

a.  These include the door, door frame, screen door, threshold, glass panes, paneling, hardware, detailing, transoms and flanking sidelights.
b.  Avoid changing the position of an original front door.

**H.32 Maintain the original proportions of a historically significant door.**

a.  Altering the original size and shape of a historic door is inappropriate.

**H.33 When replacing a door, use materials that appear similar to that of the original.**

**H.34 When replacing a door, use a design that has an appearance similar to the original door, or a door associated with the building style or type.**
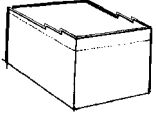


*Consider using a storm window to enhance the energy efficiency of an existing historic window, rather than replacing it.*
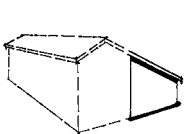


*Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary entrance.*

*Commercial flat roof*
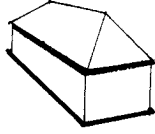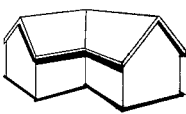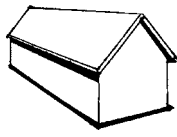
*Shed roof*  *Hipped roof*

*Cross-gabled roof*  *Gabled roof*

## Roofs

The character of a historic roof should be preserved, including its form and materials, whenever feasible.

### H.35  Preserve the original roof form of a historic structure.

a.  Avoid altering the angle of a historic roof. Instead, maintain the perceived line and orientation of the roof as seen from the street.

### H.36  Preserve the original eave depth of a roof.

a.  The shadows created by traditional overhangs contribute to one's perception of the building's historic scale and therefore, these overhangs should be preserved. Cutting back roof rafters and soffits or in other ways altering the traditional roof overhang is inappropriate.

### H.37  Preserve decorative and functional roof features.

a.  Preserve decorative elements, including crests.
b.  Retain and repair functional roof features, including chimneys, half-round gutters, boxed soffits and downspouts.

### H.38  New roof materials should convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally.

a.  When choosing a roof replacement material, the architectural style of the structure should be considered.
b.  Composition shingle roofs are generally appropriate replacements for wood shingles on residential buildings.
c.  Shingles that contain embedded photovoltaic systems are also appropriate in dark colors.

**Ridgeline**

**Soffit**

**Fascia**

**Rafters**
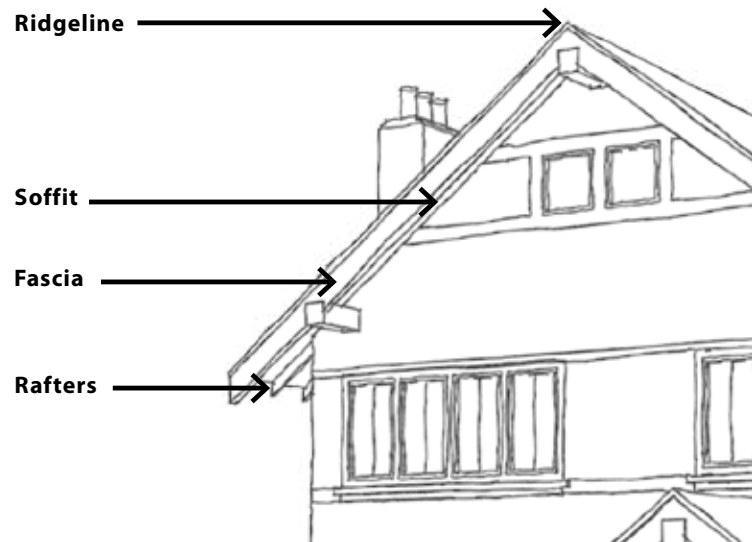
**H.39 Minimize the visual impacts of skylights and other rooftop devices.**

a.  A skylight that is flush with the roof plane may be considered where it remains visually subordinate.
b.  Skylights should not interrupt the plane of the historic roof, and should be located below the ridgeline.
c.  Locate electronic data transmission and receiving devices to minimize impacts to the extent feasible.

## Balconies and Roof Decks

Although in most cases one should avoid adding elements or details that were not part of the original building, a balcony or roof deck addition may be considered. This can enhance the adaptive reuse options for a commercial and industrial buildings. Balconies on the side or rear of a property may be considered when visually subordinate from public vantage points. They should have as little impact on the structure as possible and be a simple design.

**H.40 Design a balcony to be in character with the building.**

a.  Mount a balcony to accentuate character-defining features.
b.  The balcony should fit within the opening when feasible.
c.  Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the building. In most cases dark metal matte finishes are appropriate.

**H.41 A new balcony should be simple in design.**

a.  Simple metal work is most appropriate on commercial buildings.
b.  Simple wood and metal designs are appropriate for residential buildings.
c.  Heavy timber and plastics are inappropriate.
d.  The balcony should appear mostly transparent.



*A balcony should be in character with the building and simple in design.*

*These improvements located at the side of the building above and along an alley edge below, show compatible balcony configurations.*

# Treatment of Specific Building Types

This section provides specific guidance for three specific historic building types, commercial, residential and warehouse. These guidelines apply in addition to those in the preceding section.

## Historic Commercial Properties

This section applies in addition to the previous General Historic Guidelines section.
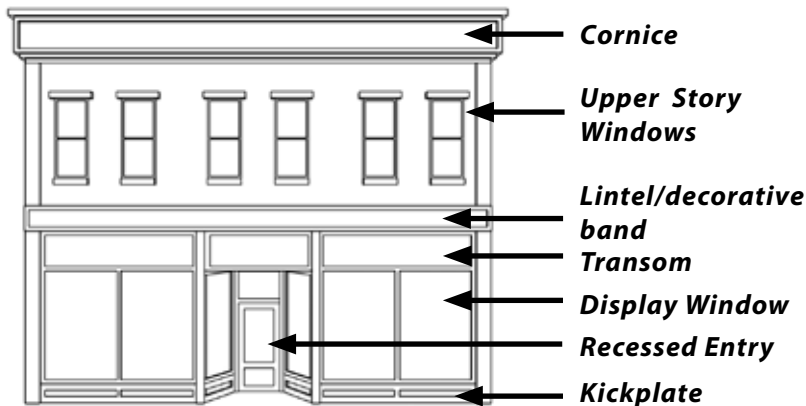
### Preservation of Commercial Facade with a Storefront

Many storefronts in Downtown Memphis have components seen traditionally on commercial buildings. The repetition of these standard elements creates a visual unity at the street that should be preserved. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed. Preserving a historic storefront maintains interest to pedestrians by providing views to goods and activities inside.



*Preserve character-defining features on a commercial facade with traditional storefront.*

**H.42 Preserve these character-defining features on a commercial facade with traditional storefront:**

- **Cornice molding:** A decorative band at the top of the building.
- **Upper-story windows:** Windows located above the street level often have a vertical orientation.
- **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.
- **Lintel:** A visible, horizontal supporting member located above the transom.
- **Transom:** The upper portion of the display window, separated by a frame.
- **Display windows:** The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed.
- **Entry:** Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- **Kickplate:** Found beneath the display window. Sometimes called a bulk-head panel.
- Also see the Historic Architectural Styles section in the Appendix to identify character-defining features of other commercial facades.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF A COMMERCIAL FACADE WITH STOREFRONT



- Cornice
- Upper Story Windows
- Lintel/decorative band
- Transom
- Display Window
- Recessed Entry
- Kickplate



*Compatible interpretations of traditional storefront components are appropriate where the original is missing.*



*Before*

### H.43  Rehabilitate an altered storefront to its original design.

a.    Use historic photographs when determining the original character of a storefront design.
b.    Reconstruct missing storefront components when feasible.

### H.44  Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of traditional storefronts may be considered where the historic facade is missing and no evidence of it exists.

a.    The new design should continue to convey the character of typical storefronts. The storefront system should be in proportion to the building. The storefront components should also be appropriately proportioned to one another.

### H.45  Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

a.    The kickplate, located below the display window, adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.
b.    If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

### H.46  If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

a.    Wood is an appropriate material for a replacement on most styles; however, alternative materials may also be considered when appropriately used with the building style.
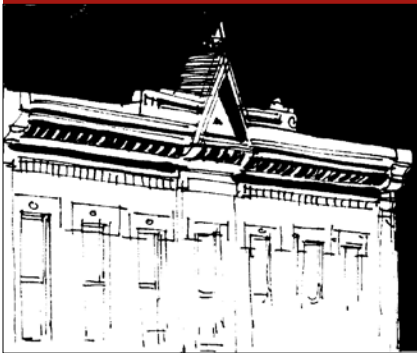


*After*

*Repair an altered storefront to its original design.*

## TREATMENT OF AN ALTERED HISTORIC CORNICE


**EXISTING BUILDING**
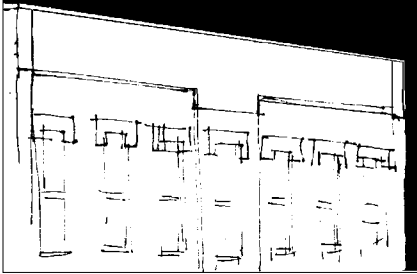
*Existing building with missing cornice.*


**RECONSTRUCTED**

*Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.*


**REPLACEMENT CORNICE**

*A simplified interpretation is appropriate if evidence of the original is missing.*

### H.47  Preserve the character of the cornice line.

a.  Most historic commercial buildings have cornices to cap their facades. Their repetition along the street contributes to the visual continuity on the block.

### H.48  Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

a.  Use historic photographs to determine design details of the original cornice.
b.  Replacement elements should match the original, especially in overall size and profile.
c.  The substitution of another old cornice for the original may be considered, provided the substitute is similar to the original.

### H.49  A simplified interpretation is also appropriate for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.

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



*Before*                    *After*

Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

**H.50  A parapet wall should not be altered on a highly visible facade.**

**H.51  Retain the original shape of the transom in a historic storefront.**

a.      Transoms, the upper glass band of traditional storefronts, introduced light into the depths of the building, saving on light costs. These bands should not be removed or enclosed.

b.      The shape of the transom is important to the proportion of the storefront, and it should be preserved in its historic configuration.

c.      If the original glass is missing, installing new glass is preferred. However, if the transom must be blocked out, be certain to retain the original proportions. One option is to use it as a sign panel or decorative band.



*Retain the original shape of the transom when reconstructing a missing one.*

## Treatment of an Altered Historic Commercial Facade

The guidelines in this section (Historic Commercial Properties) discuss a range of treatment options for commercial facades, including reconstruction and replacement in various ways. When applied to a building that is already altered, which would be the best approach? This diagram outlines the treatments to consider in making that decision. Treatment 1 is always the first priority.

**ALTERED HISTORIC COMMERCIAL FACADE**

### TREATMENT 1: RECONSTRUCT

**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.

### TREATMENT 2: SIMPLIFIED INTERPRETATION

**When should I use this treatment?**

- The building is a contributor to a district.
- There is less historical information available about the original design.

### TREATMENT 3: CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION

**When should I use this treatment?**

- There is substantial alteration, making "Treatment 1" difficult.
- There is less historic information about the original design.
- The context has more variety.

## Additions to Commercial Properties

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.

**H.52  An addition should appear subordinate to the main structure.**

a.      An addition should relate to the building in mass, scale, character and form.
b.      Roof forms should be compatible as well. An addition with a pitched roof is usually inappropriate for a building with a flat roof.
c.      An addition to the front of a building is inappropriate.
d.      Greater flexibility on less visible facades is appropriate.

**H.53  An addition should not damage or obscure architecturally important features.**

a.      For example, altering a historic cornice line should be avoided.

**H.54  An addition may be made to the roof of a building if it does the following:**

a.      An addition should be set back from the primary, character-defining facade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building and it should not be highly visible from the street.
b.      Its design should be modest in character, so it will not detract attention from the historic facade.
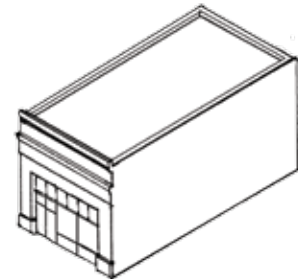c.      The addition should be distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.



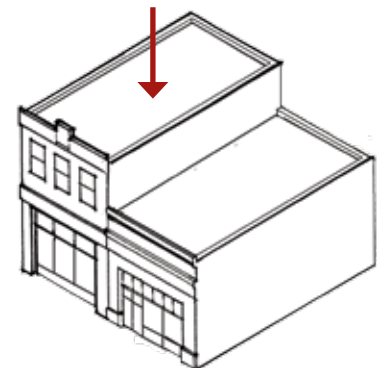*An addition should appear subordinate to the main structure.*

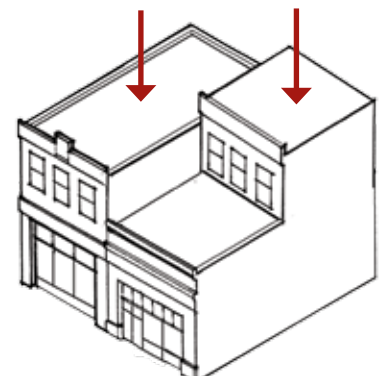**O RIGINAL  B UILDING**

*An original one-story building, before an addition. Compare with sketches below.*
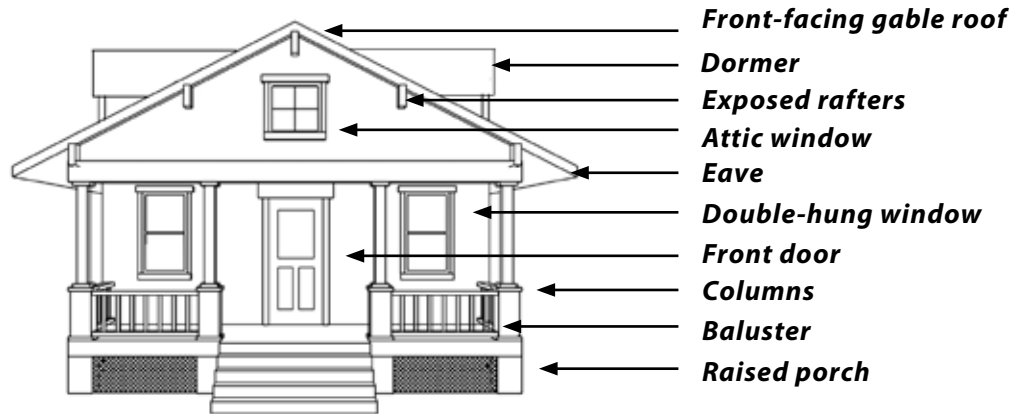


**N EW  A DDITION  TO THE  S IDE**



**N EW  A DDITION  TO THE  S IDE  AND  R OOF**

**CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS OF A RESIDENTIAL FACADE**

Front-facing gable roof
Dormer
Exposed rafters
Attic window
Eave
Double-hung window
Front door
Columns
Baluster
Raised porch

# Historic Residential Properties

This section applies in addition to the previous General Historic Guidelines section.

## Preservation of Historic Residential Facades

The character-defining features of a historic residential facade should not be altered, obscured or removed. The preservation of a residential facade also will help maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment.

**H.55 Preserve these character-defining elements on a traditional residential facade:**

- **Building and roof orientation:** Orientation of building and roof to the street.
- **Porch:** Typically a one-story, covered, unenclosed or partially enclosed entry element. A porch is typically raised to match the height or is located just below the top of the first floor. It is supported by columns and has a baluster.
- **Front door:** The primary entrance into the building. Typically a wood door, sometimes half glazed.
- **Windows:** Typically double-hung wood windows in earlier styles or horizontal banding in later styles.
- **Trim:** Wood that covers transition between building elements. This is sometimes a decorative molding.
- **Exposed rafters:** Structural component at eaves.
- **Eaves:** Portion of the roof that overhangs the vertical walls.
- **Attic window or vent:** An opening in a gable end.
- **Dormer:** A window that projects vertically from the roof or wall. It is a subordinate element to the primary roof.

## Additions to Residential Properties

An addition should be compatible with the primary structure and not detract from one's ability to interpret its historic character.

**H.56  A new addition should respect the mass and scale of the original structure.**

a.  An addition should be simple in design to prevent it from visually competing with the primary facade.
b.  For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic house.
c.  To keep the size of a higher mass as small as possible, use a lower plate height.

**H.57  Place an addition at the rear of a building, or set it back from the front, to minimize the visual impacts.**
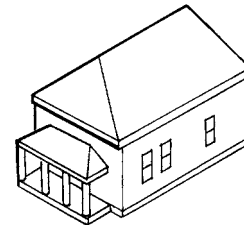
a.  This will allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent.

**H.58  The roof form of a new addition should be in character with the original structure.**

a.  When constructing a rooftop addition, keep the mass and scale subordinate to the primary building.
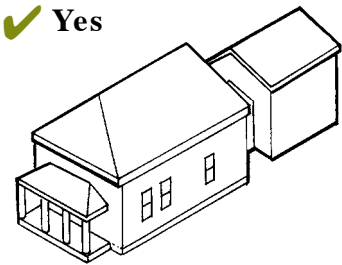
### ORIGINAL BUILDING



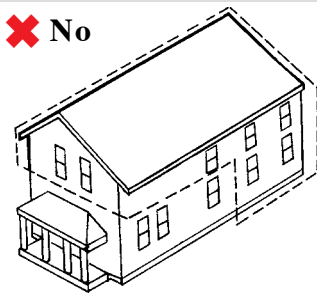### APPROPRIATE ADDITION TO THE REAR



✔ Yes

*Addition is set back behind the original and accessed by a connector.*

### INAPPROPRIATE ADDITIONS



✖ No

*Rooftop and rear addition not subordinate to the existing structure.*

## Porches

A porch is one of the most important character-defining elements of a residential structure. It provides visual interest and influences perceived scale. Preserve a porch in its original condition and form.

**H.59  Maintain an original porch when feasible.**

a.    Maintain the existing location, shape, details and posts of the porch.
b.    Missing or deteriorated decorative elements should be replaced to match existing elements; e.g., match the original proportions and spacing of balusters when replacing missing ones.

**H.60  Repair those elements of a porch that are deteriorated.**

a.    Removing damaged materials that can be repaired is not appropriate.

**H.61  If a porch has been altered, consider restoring it back to its original design.**

a.    If the historic design of the porch is unknown, then base the design of the restoration on other traditional porches on buildings of a similar architectural style.

**H.62  When replacing a porch is necessary, it should be similar in character, design, scale and materials to those seen traditionally.**

a.    The size of a porch should relate to the overall scale of the primary structure to which it is attached.
b.    Base the replacement design on historic documentation if available.
c.    Where no evidence of the historic porch exists, a new porch may be considered that is similar in character to those found on comparable buildings.

## Treatment of an Altered Historic Porch

The guidelines in this section discuss a range of treatment options for residential porches, including reconstruction and replacement in various ways. When applied to a building that is already altered, which would be the best approach? This diagram outlines the treatments to consider in making that decision. Treatment 1 is always the first priority.

**EXISTING ALTERED PORCH**



**TREATMENT 1:**
**RECONSTRUCTION**
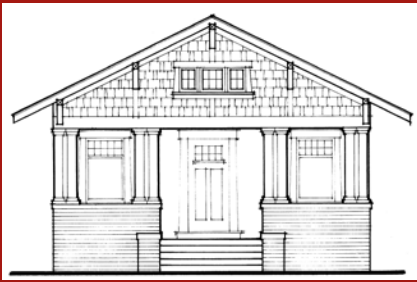


**When should I use this treatment?**

- The building dates from the period of significance and retains many of its key features.
- There is good historical information about the design.
- The needed materials and craftsmen are available.
- The context has many intact historic buildings.

**TREATMENT 2:**
**SIMPLIFIED INTERPRETATION**
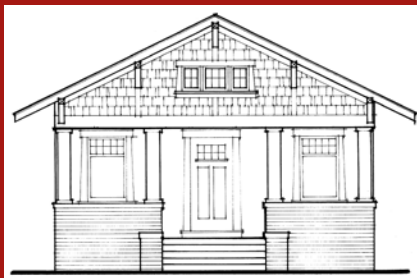


**When should I use this treatment?**

- The building is a contributor to a district.
- There is less historical information available about the original design.

**TREATMENT 3:**
**CONTEMPORARY INTE...**



**When should I use this treatment?**

- There is substantial deterioration, making Treatment 1 difficult.
- There is less historic information about the original design.
- The context has more variety.

*Adaptive reuse projects should maintain the character and integrity of the historic structure.*

# Special Considerations

## Adaptive Reuse

The best use for a historic structure is that for which the building was designed or a closely related use. 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 architecture.

**H.63  Seek uses that are compatible with the historic character of the building.**

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

**H.64  A new use that requires minimal change to the existing structure is preferred.**

a.     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. Designs should be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new functions.

## Historic Additions

Some early additions may have taken on historic significance of their own. One constructed in a manner compatible with the original building and associated with the period of significance may merit preservation in its own right. These existing additions should be evaluated for potential re-use.

In contrast, more recent additions that detract from the character of the building should be considered for modification or removal.

**H.65 Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.**

a.  For example, a kitchen wing located on a residential building may have been added in its history. Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original building in terms of materials, finishes and design.
b.  Another example is an early 1900s commercial building with a 1950s era storefront addition. The 50s era storefront could have achieved significance in its own right and may be worthy of preservation.

## Accessibility

Where it applies, owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent possible with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings and sites.



*Accessibility improvements should minimally impact the historic character of the building.*

**H.66 Generally, creating an accessibility solution that does not alter its historic characteristics is encouraged.**

a.  Identify the historic building's character-defining spaces, features and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.
b.  Alterations to historic properties that are designed to improve access for persons with disabilities should minimize negative effects on the historic character or materials.
c.  Provide barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.

# Energy Conservation and Generation

Improvements to enhance energy efficiency and energy collection should retain and complement the original building, site and its context.

**Building Orientation**

It is important to understand the orientation of a property, and the implications for solar access and weather impacts prior to beginning an energy conservation or generation project.

**Seasonal Design Strategies**

Solar angles and predominant wind patterns shift throughout the year, affecting the desired climate control strategy. The desired amount of natural lighting and ventilation can be managed based on these seasonal differences. Research the local climate at the beginning of any project.

## Solar Panels

Locate a solar panel to minimize the effect on the character of a historic building. Roof mounted solar panels should be flush with the roof profile and designed to minimize effects on the character of the structure. Placement should only be considered on secondary and rear facades.

**H.67 Minimize the visual impacts of solar panels on the character of the property.**

a.   Locate panels in visually subordinate positions.
b.   Where possible on secondary facades, set panels back from the front facade.
c.   Use the least invasive methods feasible to attach solar collectors to a historic roof. Design them to be reversible as well.
d.   Installing integrated photovoltaic systems should be planned where they will not hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the structure. For example, solar shingles on a rear or secondary facade would be appropriate.

## Energy Efficiency in Building Design

Improvements to enhance energy efficiency and energy collection should be planned to retain and complement the original building.

**H.68  Retain and enhance the energy efficiency of the original building.**

a.    Install additional insulation in an attic, basement or crawl-space. Additional insulation is a simple and typically noninvasive method to make a significant difference in a building's energy efficiency.
b.    Retain, repair or restore original shutters, awnings and porches as appropriate. Operable features such as these will increase the range of conditions in which a building is comfortable without mechanical climate controls.
c.    Retain and repair original roof material.
d.    Install draft stoppers in a chimney. Open chimney dampeners can increase energy costs by up to 30 percent.

**H.69  Enhance the energy efficiency of original windows and doors.**

a.    Retain the original window frame and glazing.
b.    Repair original windows and doors rather than replace.
c.    Safeguard, retain and reuse early glass, taking special care in putty replacement.
d.    Maintain the glazing compound regularly. Remove old putty with care.
e.    Weather strip and caulk original framework.
f.    Place storm windows internally to avoid the impact upon external appearance.
g.    Use storm window inserts designed to match the original frame, if placed externally.
h.    Double-pane glazing may be acceptable where original glazing has been lost and the frame can support the weight and profile. A storm window is still more efficient however.

Follow these basic steps when considering alterations for energy efficiency:

**Step 1**

First, do an energy audit.

**Step 2**

Always, maintain building components in sound condition.

**Step 3**

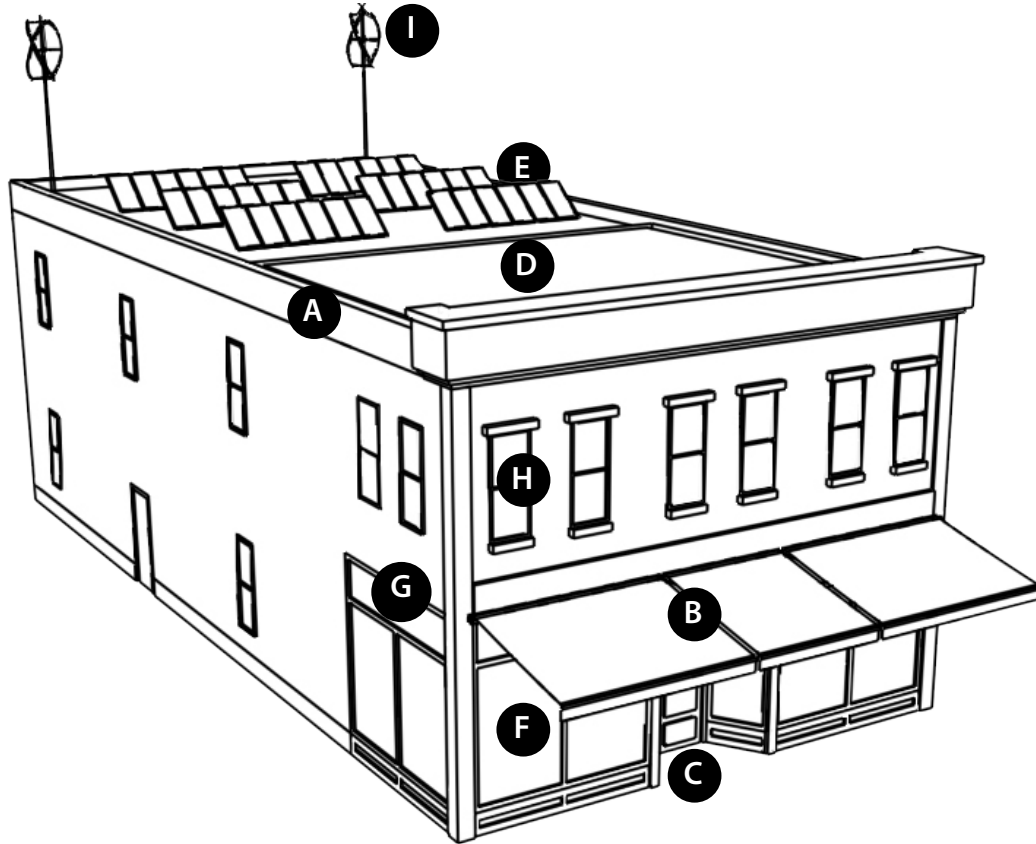Then, maximize inherent sustainable qualities.

**Step 4**

Next, design landscapes to conserve resources.

**Step 5**

Finally, add new technologies sensitively.

**A Attic**

- Insulate internally

**B Awnings**

- Use operable awnings to control solar access and heat gain

**C Doors**

- Maintain original doors
- Weatherstrip
- Consider interior airlock area

**D Roof Material**

- Retain & repair

**E Solar Panels**

- Set back from primary facade to minimize visibility from street

**F Storefront Windows**

- Maintain original windows
- Weatherstrip

**G Transoms**

- Retain operable transom to circulate air

**H Windows**

- Maintain original windows
- Weatherstrip and caulk
- Add storm windows (preferably interior)

**I Wind Turbines**

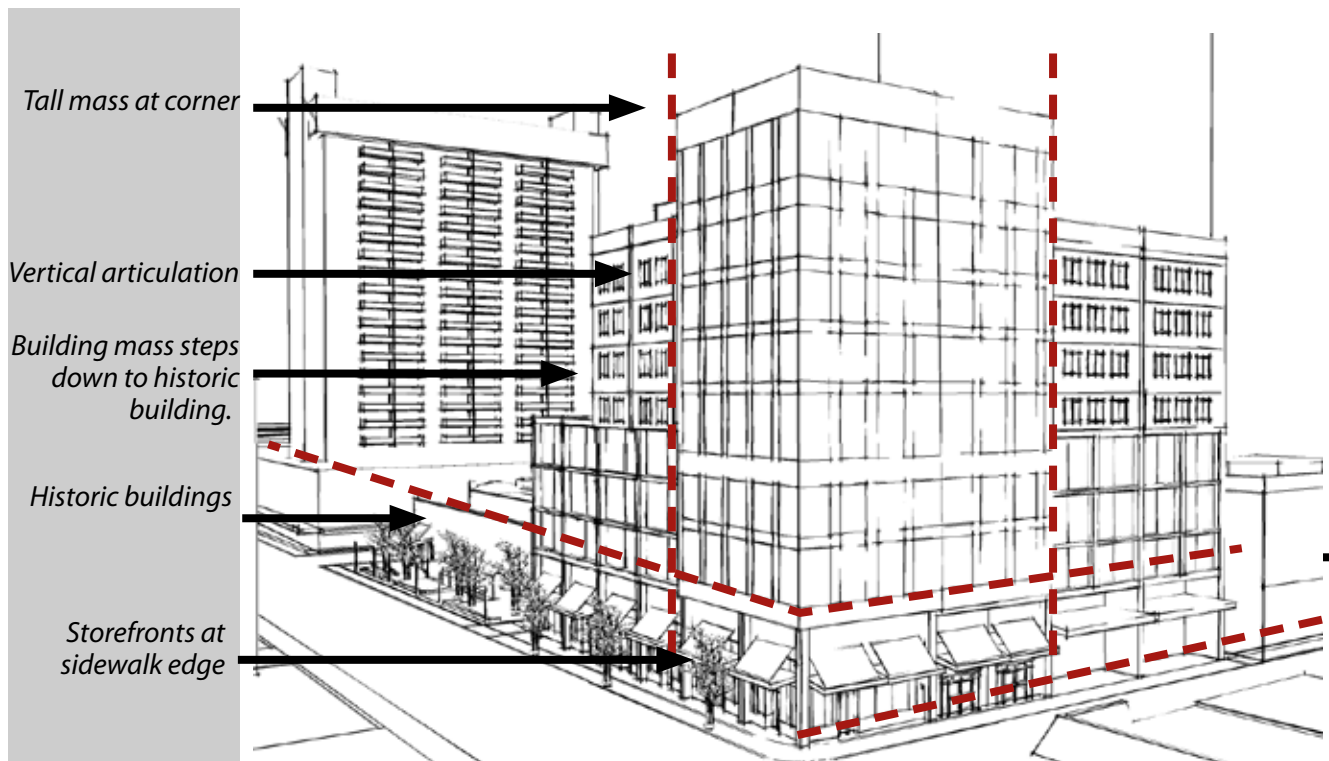- Set back from primary facade to minimize visibility from street

This diagram summarizes 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.

# Appendix: Case Studies

When the design principles and guidelines for Downtown Memphis are applied in combination, what might be the results? This section presents a limited selection of different project types from a variety of design contexts. The case studies focus on the massing, site organization and general orientation of the improvements that are represented.

## Case Study 1: Downtown Core Context

View 1

Tall mass at corner

Vertical articulation

Building mass steps down to historic building.

Historic buildings
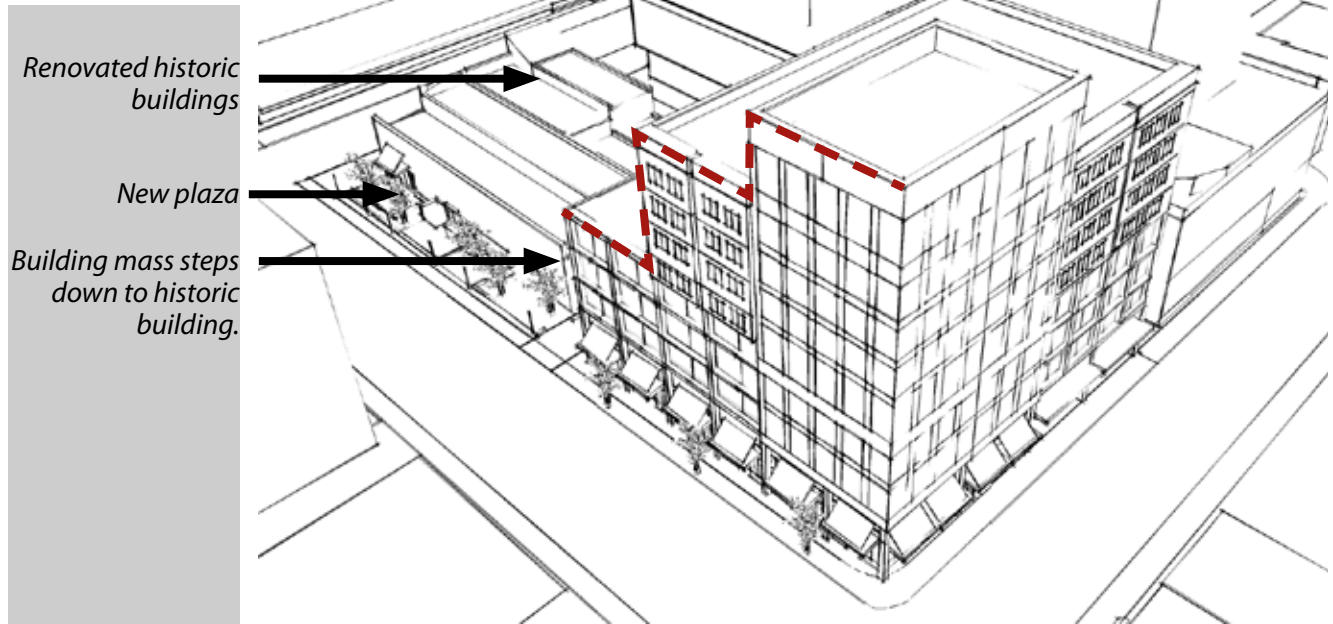
Storefronts at sidewalk edge

This site is typical of several in the core, where buildings align at the street edge and range in scale from one- and two- story historic buildings to high-rise towers. The central portion of this design is a mixed-use project. It includes a vacant lot, on a quarter of a city block, along with a set of one and two-story, historic buildings on an adjoining portion of the block, separated by an alley.
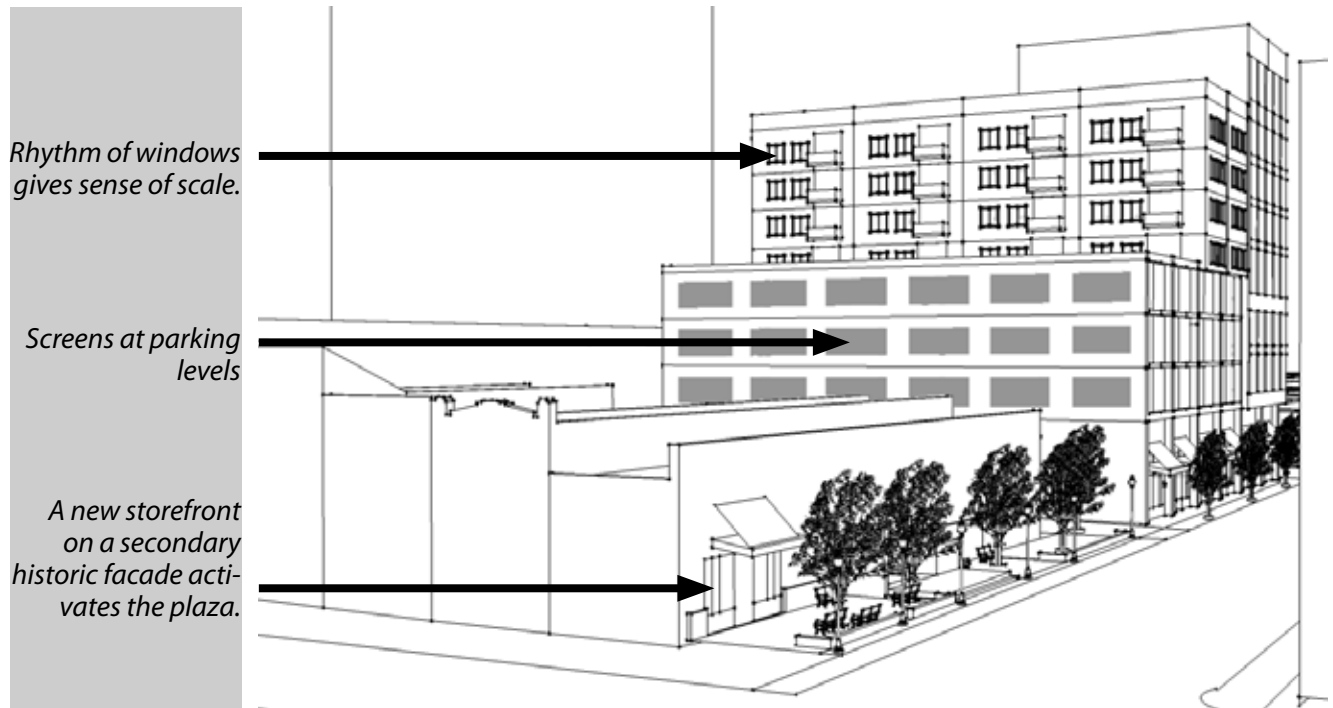
The project includes:

- An eight-story building anchors the corner, with retail space at the ground floor and residential and office uses above.
- The tower is flanked with a mid-rise portion with retail at the street level, then three levels of parking, and then four levels of office and/residential.
- Parking levels include architectural screens to provide visual interest and a sense of scale.
- The new building mass steps down toward the historic buildings.
- A vacant lot is improved as a pocket park at the corner, adjacent to the historic buildings.

## Case Study 1: Downtown Core Context

View 2
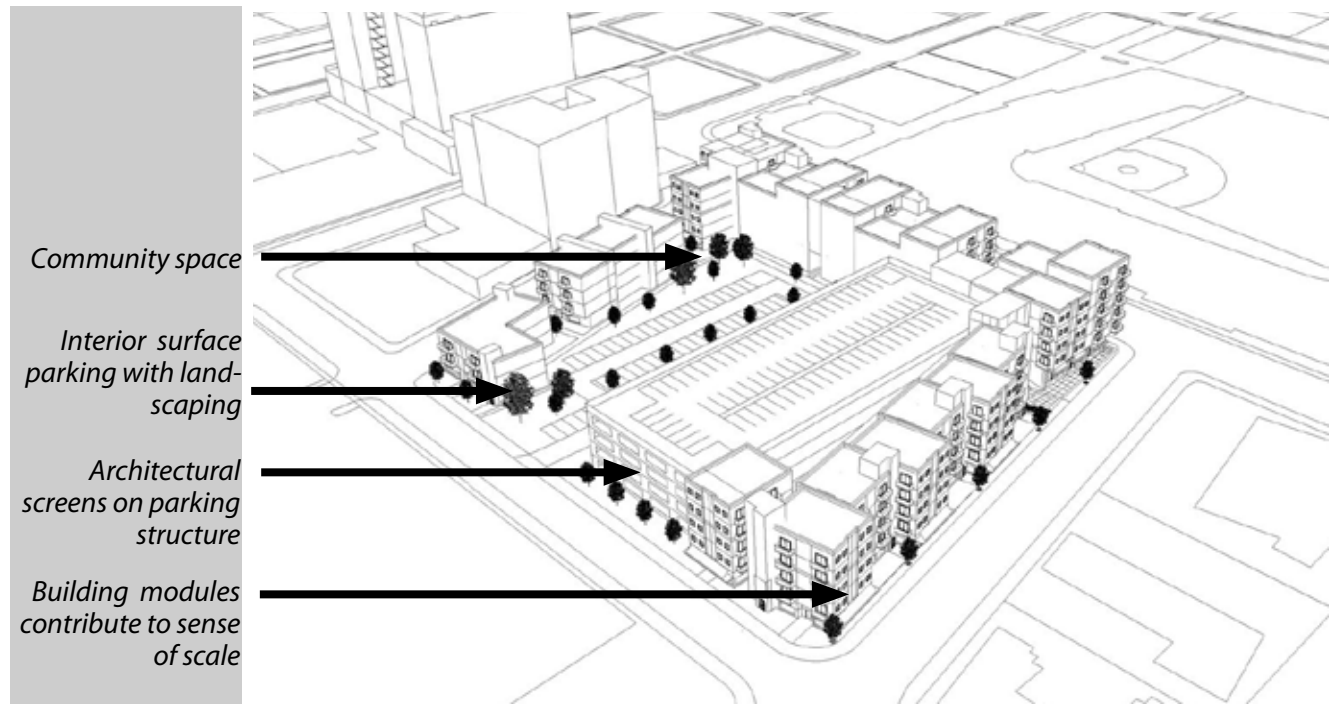
Renovated historic buildings →

New plaza →

Building mass steps down to historic building. →

View 3

Rhythm of windows gives sense of scale. →

Screens at parking levels →

A new storefront on a secondary historic facade activates the plaza. →

## Case Study 2: Sports and Entertainment Context

View 1



Community space

Interior surface parking with land-scaping

Architectural screens on parking structure

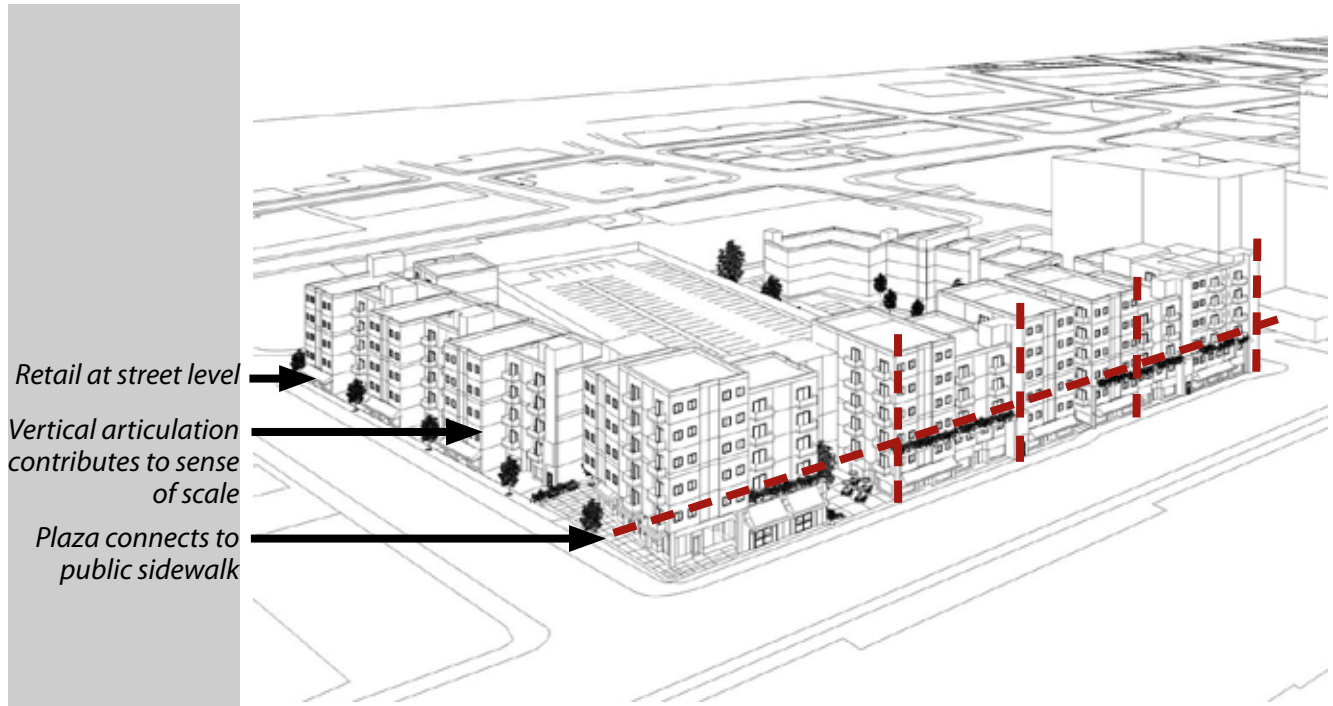Building modules contribute to sense of scale

This site represents redevelopment of a major portion of a city block in an area of moderately high density, with substantial pedestrian activity and outdoor uses. The project is designed to provide a mix of uses that relate to the baseball park, a nearby hotel, several entertainment venues in the area and an existing parking structure.
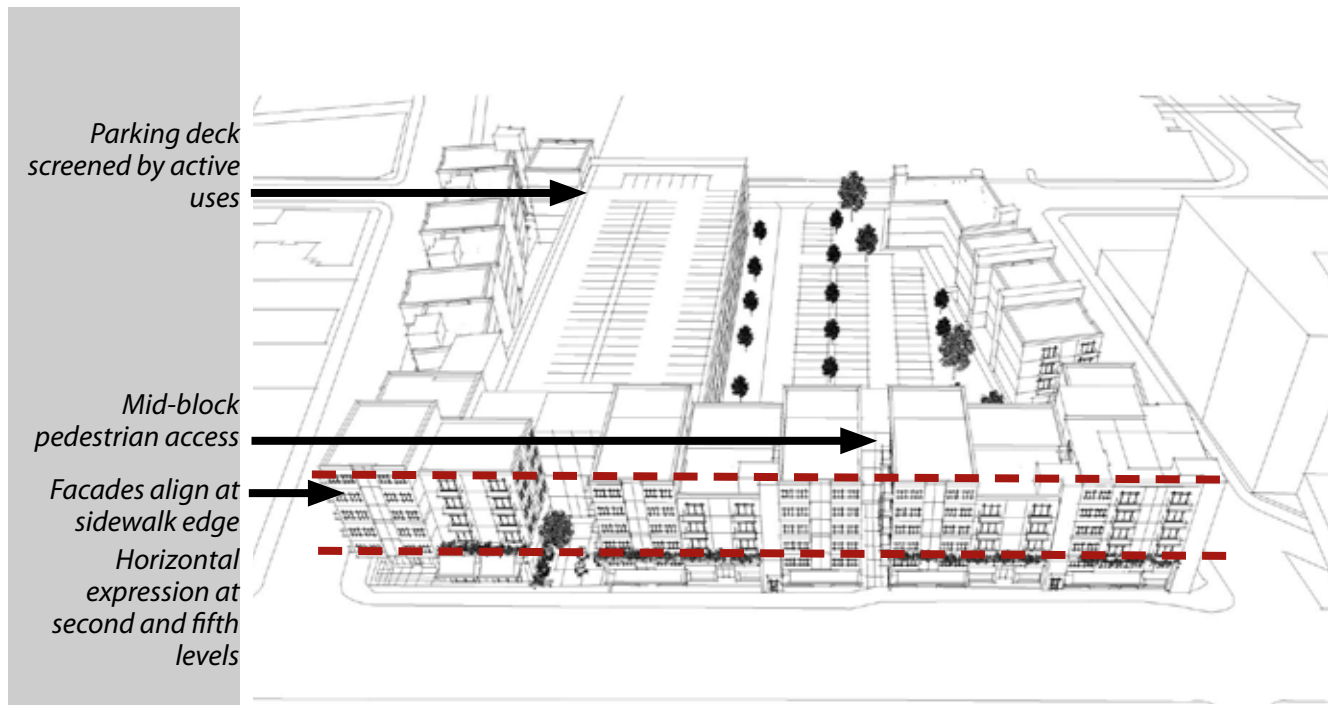
The project includes:

- Mixed-use buildings of 4 and 5 stories oriented to key streets
- Smaller commercial buildings lining secondary street edges
- Parking structure interior to the property
- Small courtyards for dining and outdoor activities
- Varied massing and articulation of building fronts

# Case Study 2: Sports and Entertainment Context

## View 2

Retail at street level →

Vertical articulation contributes to sense of scale →

Plaza connects to public sidewalk →

## View 3

Parking deck screened by active uses →

Mid-block pedestrian access →

Facades align at sidewalk edge →

Horizontal expression at second and fifth levels

## Case Study 3: Commercial Corridor Context

View 1

Residential neigh-
borhood behind

Carriage homes at
rear of property

Parking

Auto access

Storefronts at street
edge

Outdoor use area
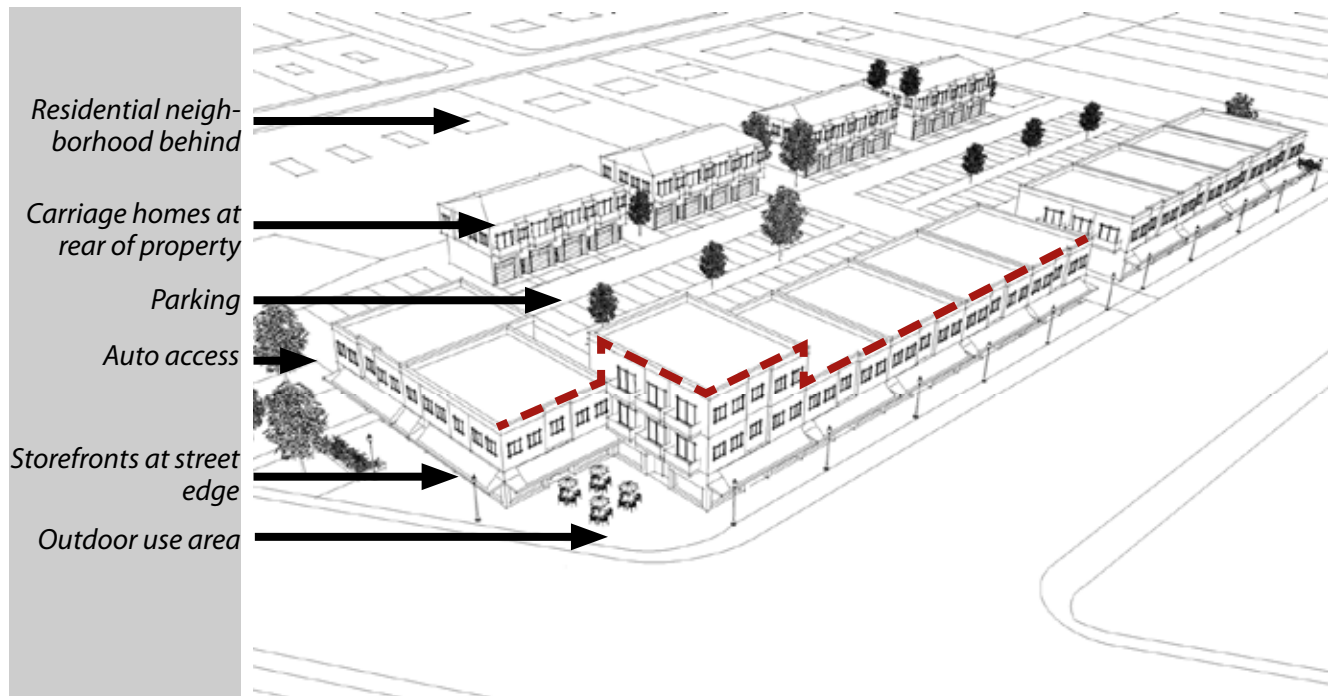
This project lies at a key intersection along a commercial corridor. It abuts an established single-family residential neighborhood to the rear of the property.

It includes:

- A "liner" building of commercial uses along the street edge
- Retail below with offices above at the street edge
- Liner buildings are "double-fronted," orienting to the street and to interior parking
- A row of carriage houses along the rear property line, as a transition to residential neighborhood behind
- Parking located to the interior
- Access drives are visible, but subordinate to the building wall
- Service areas located to interior, away from the residential edge
- Small corner plaza for outdoor use
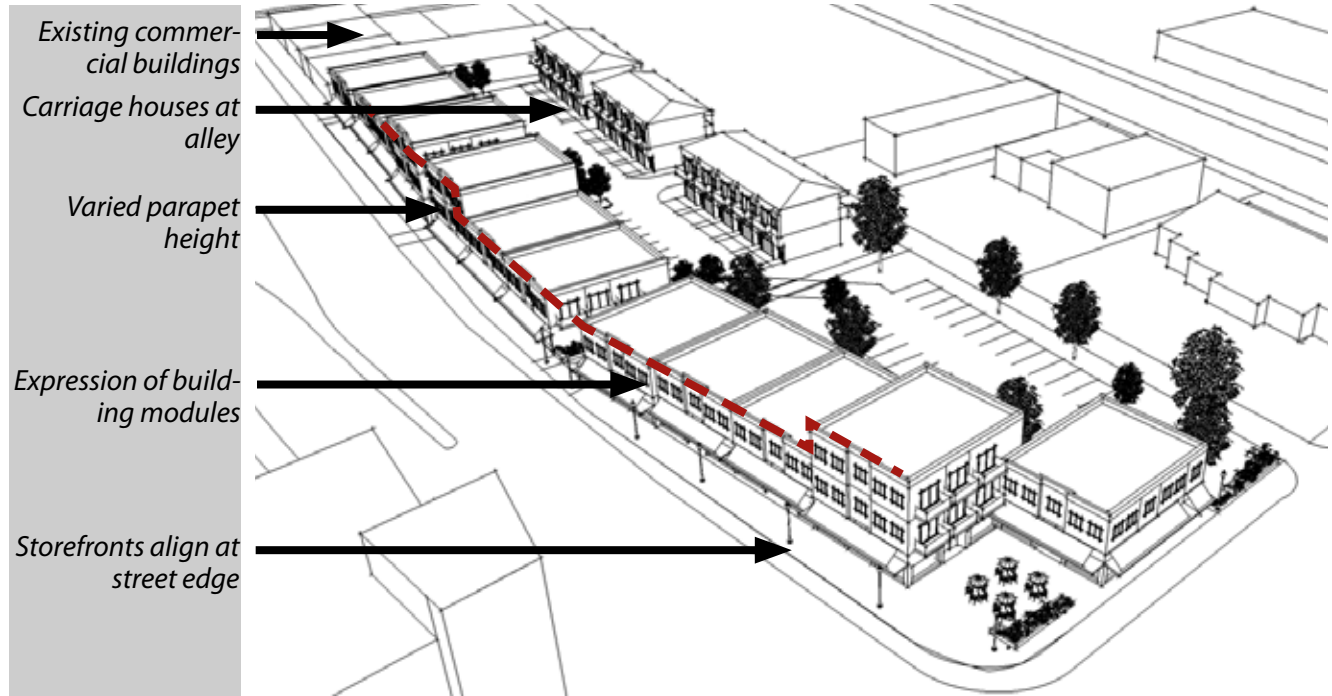
## Case Study 3: Commercial Corridor Context

View 2

Residential neigh-
borhood behind

Corner plaza

Corner plaza

Buildings at side-
walk edge

View 3

Articulation of
building front

Alignment of first
floors

## Case Study 4: Neighborhood Center Context

View 1

*Existing commer-
cial buildings*

*Carriage houses at
alley*

*Varied parapet
height*

*Expression of build-
ing modules*
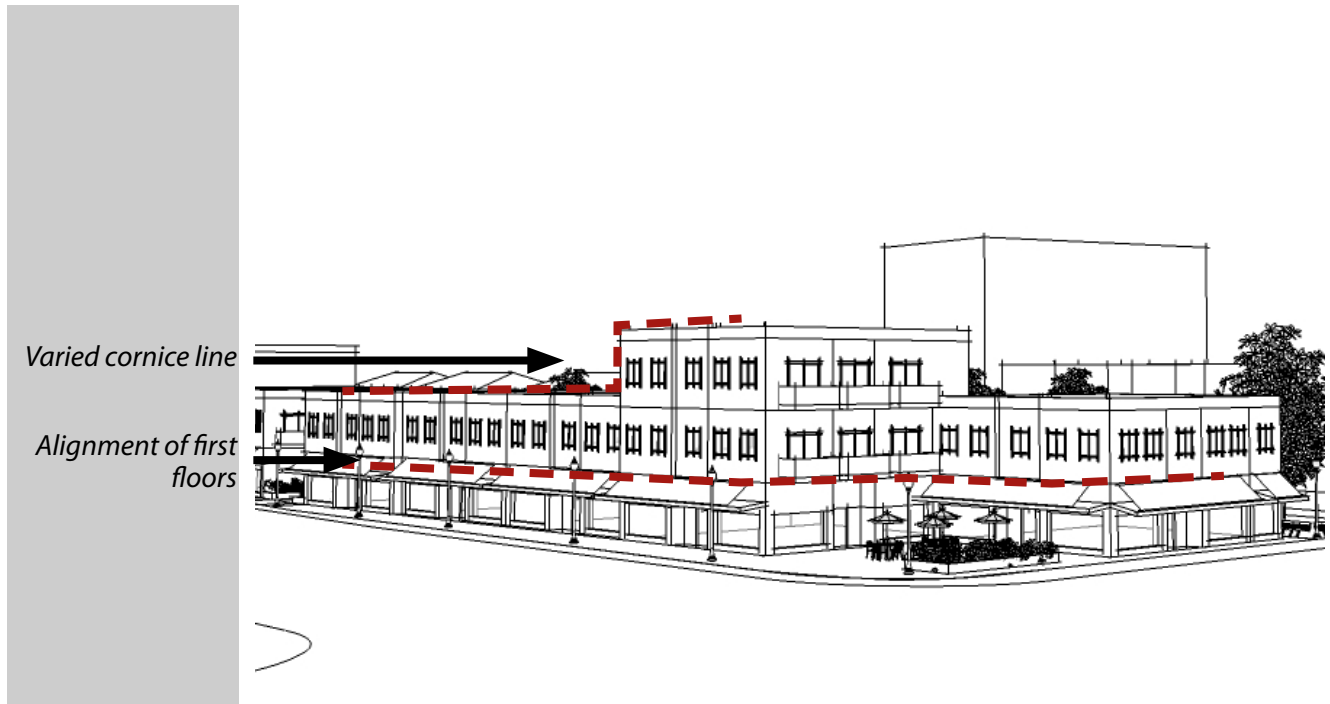
*Storefronts align at
street edge*

This site is in a Neighborhood Center context, with a mix of low and moderately scaled buildings in the area. It occupies a substantial portion of a block that faces a major street. Commercial buildings are placed at the sidewalk edge, in line with some smaller, existing commercial structures. Carriage house apartments, located above parking garages, define the alley edge of the development.
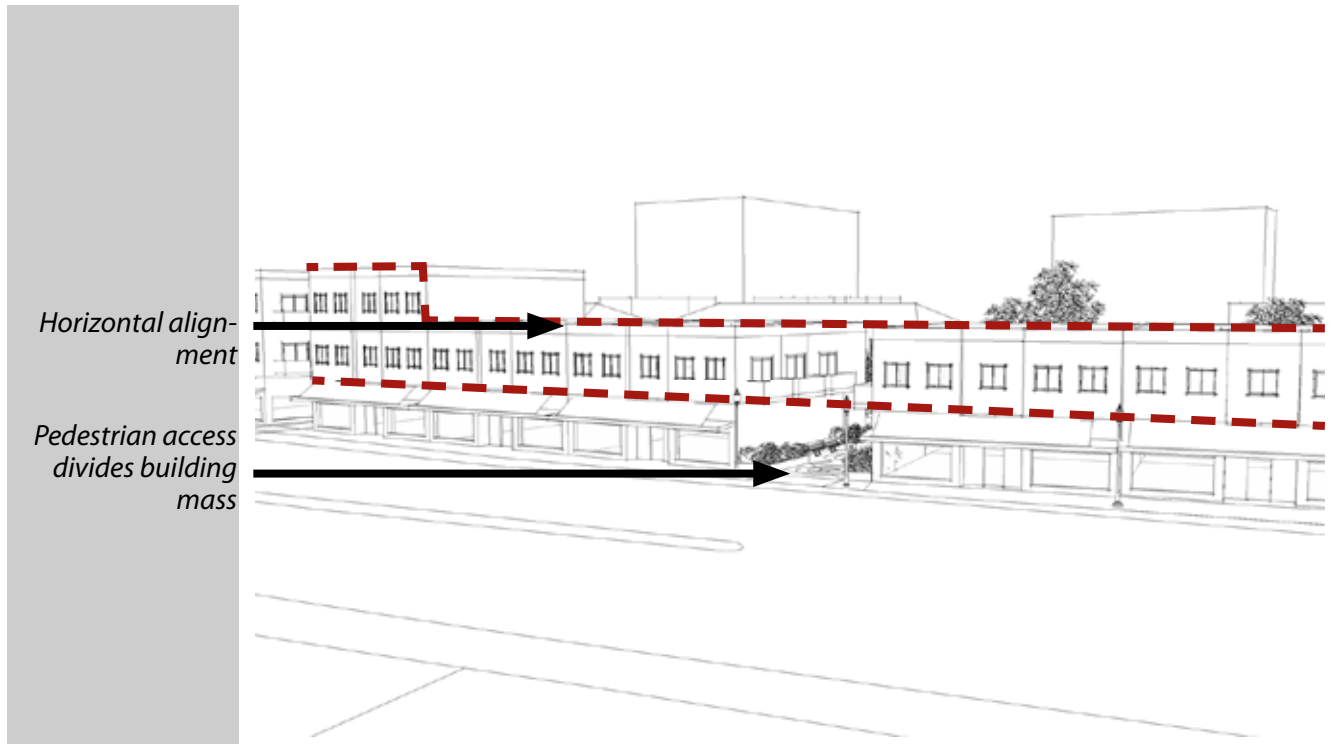
It includes:

- Commercial uses (retail) along the street edge
- Offices above retail
- A corner plaza
- Carriage houses along the rear of the property including housing above parking
- A pedestrian connection mid-block breaks up the length of the building face and provides potential for connection to a future development on the other side of the alley

## Case Study 4: Neighborhood Center Context

View 2

Varied cornice line

Alignment of first floors

View 3

Horizontal align-ment

Pedestrian access divides building mass

## Case Study 4: Neighborhood Center Context

View 4

Horizontal expression

Horizontal expression

Storefront at sidewalk

Plaza at corner

View 5

Balconies animate plaza

Walkway to residential
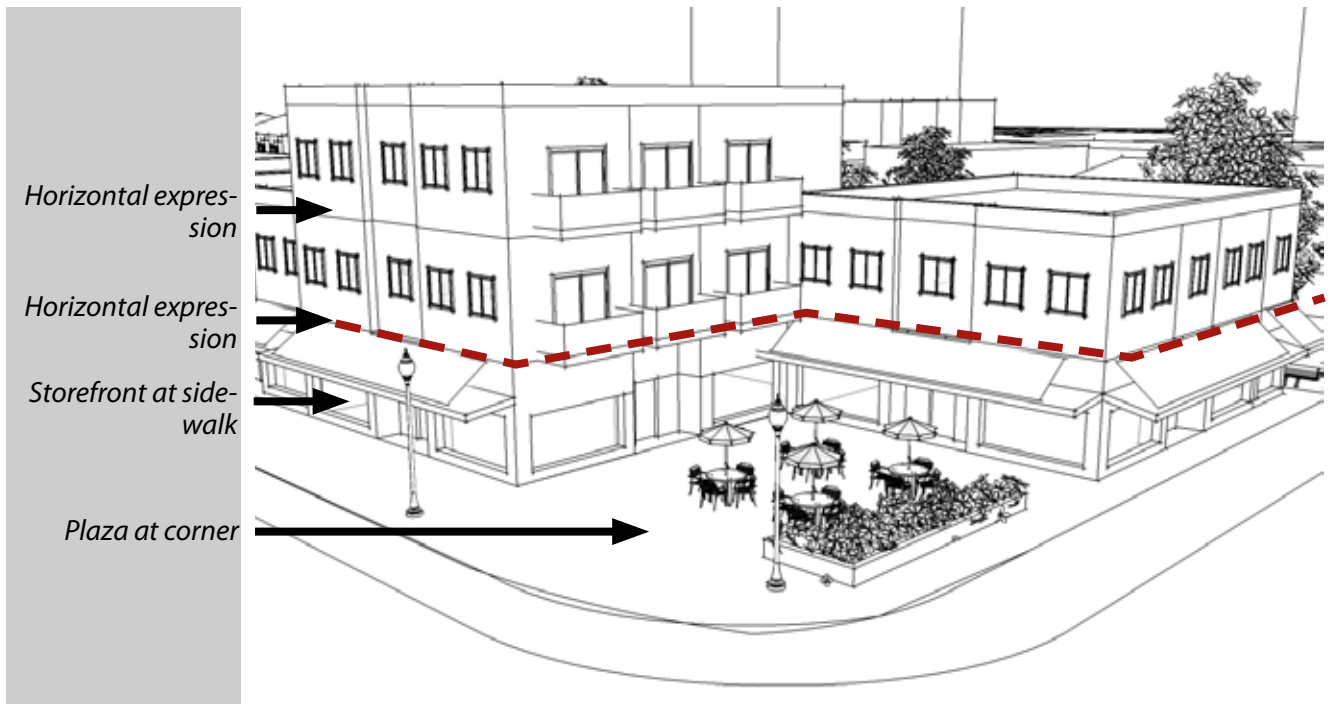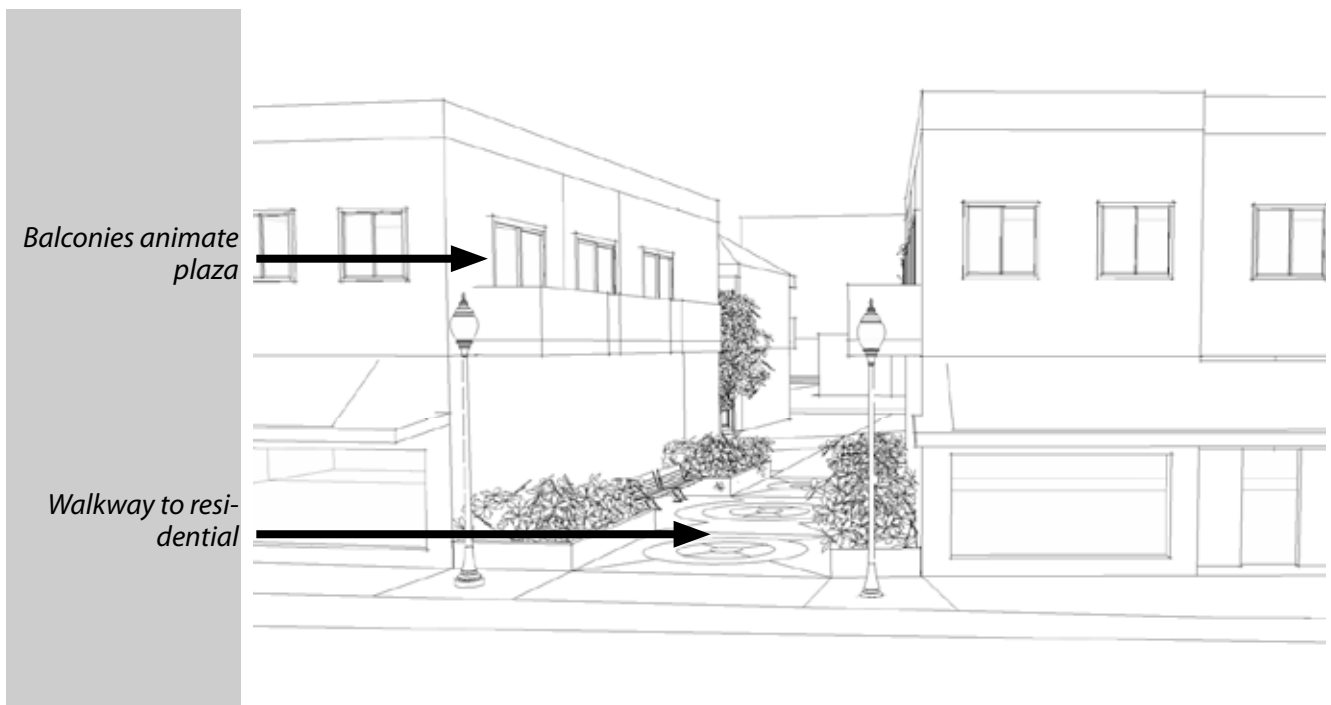
## Case Study 5: Downtown Neighborhood Context

View 1

*Row houses relate to residential edge*

*Multifamily entrance faces street*

*Varied parapets*

*Alignment of first floors*

This project lies along the edge of a Downtown Neighborhood Context. It covers a substantial portion of a city block. Some existing residential lies at a rear corner. Along the primary street, a mixed-use building anchors the corner, and includes commercial and residential uses. A multifamily apartment building also aligns at the sidewalk edge. A mid-block plaza provides an open-space amenity for the development. Parking is to the interior, and a row of three-story townhouses serves as transition to a single-family neighborhood beyond.

The project includes:

- Mixed-use building with varied façade articulation to reflect traditional lot widths
- Stepped parapet lines
- Multifamily residential with sloping roofs
- Primary entrances facing the street
- Surface parking, within the interior of the parcel
- Townhouses articulated to reflect traditional lot widths

## Case Study 6: Downtown Neighborhood Context

View 1



*Upper floor setback*

*Alignment of town-house patios*

*Pedestrian access*

This site lies along the edge of a Downtown Neighborhood Context. It occupies half of a block, and extends from the street to the alley. A portion of the development is a set of row houses, with individual entrances facing the street. The other portion is a three-story mixed- use building, with retail at the street level, offices at the second floor, and residential above.

It includes:

- Mixed-use building at the corner
- Row houses, with small entry patios
- Pedestrian connection to interior of development at mid-block
- Surface and structured parking located to the rear

## Case Study 7: Urban Campus

View 1



*Facade articulated into modules*

*Active uses screen parking.*

*Pedestrian access though block*

This site is along the street edge of block in an Urban Campus Context. It is "double-fronted," in that it orients to the street, but also to campus open space behind. The project includes a parking structure, with a "wrap" of commercial at the street level and some offices as the second level. Other portions of the parking structure have architectural screens.

The project includes:

• Active uses at the street edge
• Building divided into modules to reflect traditional scale
• Mid-block pedestrian connection to open space internal to the campus

# CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEMPHIS CBID

The following checklist is provided to assist applicants in meeting the basic requirements of the Design Guidelines. Although the checklist is based on the overall design guidelines for the CBID, applicants should still reference the design guidelines for the individual design contexts. Some of the checklist questions may not apply to every development project.

### Site Orientation

- Does the front of the building face toward the street and/or all other public spaces?
- Is the building's setback compatible with the setbacks or build-to lines established for the context?
- Are driveways strategically located off of alleys or side streets?
- Are driveway widths minimized and pedestrian friendly?
- Is parking located to the rear or the side of the building and properly screened from view?

### Public Realm & Streetscape

- Is the sidewalk width compatible with the level of pedestrian activity in the area?
- Is landscaping of a hardy species and planted in beds large enough to sustain growth?
- Is street lighting pedestrian scaled?
- Are streetscape furnishings coordinated, functional, and durable?
- Do streetscape furnishings allow for pedestrian traffic flow?
- Are fences and walls pedestrian-scaled and designed to fit the context?

### Building Scale

- Does the building convey a sense of human scale through massing, transparency, and architectural details?
- Does the height of the building relate to the height of surrounding properties or the context?
- Does the building's mass and proportions relate to surrounding properties or the context?
- For new construction in historic areas, is the scale of the building compatible with the surrounding context?

### Building Construction and Materials

- Are public entrances clearly articulated and oriented towards a primary street?
- Are window and door openings proportionally spaced and vertically aligned?
- Have blank walls facing streets and public spaces been eliminated?
- Are materials high quality, durable, and compatible with the context?
- In restoration projects, have architectural details been retained or historically replicated?
- For infill or additions in historic areas, does the architectural design reflect the surrounding context while clearly distinguishing between historic structures and new construction?

## Parking, Loading and Service Areas

- Is the garage masked with an active use or architectural screen?
- Does the parking garage utilize materials, colors, and openings that are sympathetic to surrounding properties?
- Is the parking lot visually screened or adequately landscaped?
- Are loading docks and waste facilities placed at the rear of the building and screened?

## Open Space & Landscaping

- Do open spaces connect with sidewalks, include landscaping, and provide site amenities?
- Are all areas not occupied by building, streets, or other real improvements planted/landscaped?
- Does the landscaping plan compliment the surrounding landscape design?
- Is landscaping designed to avoid obscuring building openings and architectural details?
- Are plantings of a sustainable nature in an urban environment?

## Design Contexts

- Does the project respect guidelines for its design context?
- Does the project take into consideration other planned developments in the area?