Aiken, Aiken

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

City of Aiken Government

Old Aiken
Design Guidelines

Prepared for
The City of Aiken

Adopted August 8, 2005 • Amended May 26, 2006
Amended July 18, 2007 • Amended April 14, 2008
Amended October 13, 2008 • Amended January 25, 2016
Amended June 26, 2017 • Amended April 9, 2018

Community Design Solutions
2307 lincoln street columbia, sc 29201
803.240.9050
randylwilson@earthlink.net
www.randylwilson.com

...creative services for community building

McBride DALE
CLARION

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

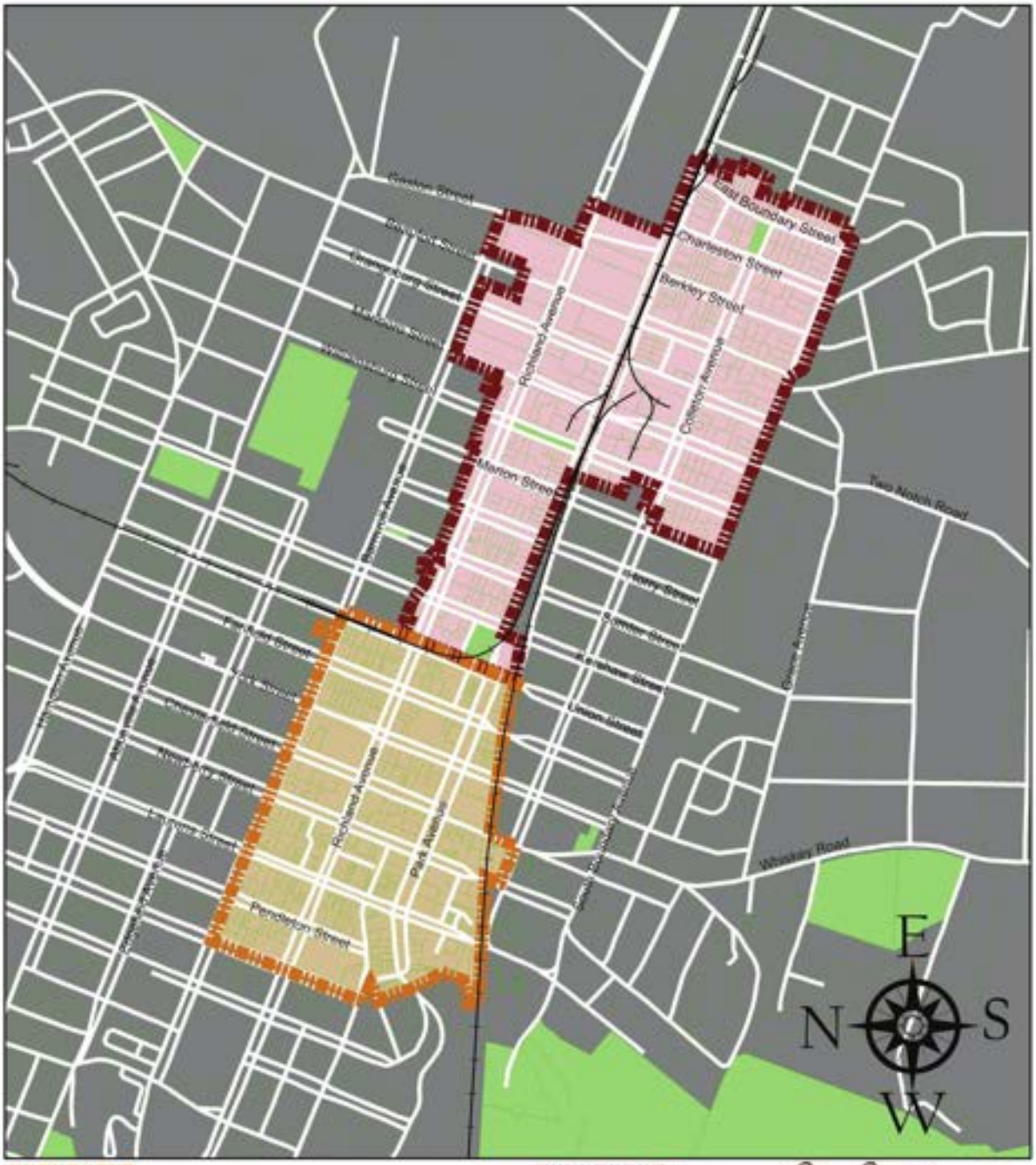
Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Old Aiken Design Overlay District Boundaries



Downtown

Neighborhood Area

Introduction

1.1 Old Aiken Design Overlay District Boundaries

The Old Aiken Overlay District is composed of two sub-districts, the Downtown and the Neighborhoods. The buildings and land located in the Downtown Area should be regulated by the Downtown Commercial-Type Guidelines and Residential Guidelines, while buildings and land located in the Neighborhood Areas should be regulated by the Neighborhood Commercial-Type Guidelines, Residential Guidelines, and the Industrial-Type Guidelines presented in this document. Each building type is represented by a different color header to help indicate which guidelines apply to a particular project. Additionally, the guidelines are divided into a set of Site Design Guidelines, Architectural Design Guidelines, and Miscellaneous Guidelines that apply to elements such as signs and lighting.

These Guidelines are intended to follow the type of the building and not the use within the structure recognizing that older buildings may be converted for alternative uses but the structure should maintain the integrity of its original purpose. New structures are categorized by the same building types as the existing structures. The secondary level of information is based on the general location of the building which primarily applies to Commercial-Type buildings. Third, the Guidelines are differentiated between existing structures that will be restored and new buildings that may be proposed.

These Guidelines have been updated to include Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings and Industrial-Type buildings to help encourage high-quality compatible developments in the portions of Old Aiken outside of the Downtown Area. The character of these areas is different from the Downtown so the Guidelines are varied by location.

Color Coding for Building Types

Miscellaneous / General

Downtown Commercial-Type

Neighborhood Commercial-Type

Industrial-Type

Residential -Type

Note on streets and façades

The guidelines for new commercial and industrial buildings often refer to primary or secondary streets. For the purpose of these guidelines a primary street or road refers to the east-west avenues in the City, and the secondary roadways refer to the north-south streets. This is primarily applicable in the Neighborhood Area. Primary façades are those façades visible from public rights-of-way, and secondary façades are rear or side surfaces of the buildings that will not be visible from the roads.

1.2 Introduction

Purpose & Goals of the Guidelines

Goals of the Old Aiken Design Guidelines for Aiken, SC

- Protect the unique architectural characteristics of Aiken's downtown buildings and environment located within the Old Aiken Overlay District.

- Provide a guide for renovation and new construction:
  ~ Prefer new construction to be interpretations rather than imitations of historic buildings.
  ~ Provide illustrative, positive case studies of desired design direction.
  ~ Promote numerous "can do" solutions rather than only impose what "cannot be done."
  ~Process to be an opportunity to educate the public on design-related issues.

- Provide an objective guide for design review decisions.

- Ensure compatibility of design guidelines with the vision and goals of the Old Aiken Master Plan.

- Develop guidelines that direct the physical design of downtown without creating unnecessary barriers to development.

- In general, the goals of the Old Aiken Design Guidelines are:
  ~ Preserve and enhance the aesthetic beauty of the downtown district;
  ~ Protect and celebrate the heritage of Aiken;
  ~ Preserve and protect older architectural features;
  ~ Maintain a pedestrian friendly environment;
  ~ Use historic assets for economic development and community revitalization;
  ~ Promote heritage tourism; and
  ~ Foster appropriate development.

The intent of the design review process is to ensure that new construction and proposed alterations of existing properties will not adversely affect the architectural character of Old Aiken as established in the public process of developing these Guidelines and as articulated in the goals at left. The Design Review Board has adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as the basis for guidance on rehabilitation design for historic properties. These Guidelines expand those Standards and bring focus to Aiken's own historic context and resources.

The two-fold purpose of the Design Guidelines is the same regardless of whether the application concerns an existing property or a proposal for new construction. First, providing the owners of downtown properties assistance in making decisions about maintenance, improvements, or architecturally sensitive design within an existing context. Second, providing the Design Review Board with a framework for objective evaluation of proposed improvements or designs. These Guidelines reflect the Design Review Board's philosophy that underlies all its decisions: to encourage the preservation and careful treatment of the city's historically significant resources, while recognizing the need for continuing adaptation and improvements to these resources as well as the introduction of new architectural assets.

Introduction

1.2

Purpose & Goals of the Guidelines

Objectives of the Guidelines

❖ The Guidelines provide information to property owners about maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and historic and/or distinctive characteristics of the buildings in Old Aiken. The standards in the Design Guidelines are not rigid. Instead, they are to be used as guiding principles in preserving the character and integrity of properties in Old Aiken, while encouraging profitable business activities.

❖ Included are a variety of ways to design exterior renovations or new construction in Old Aiken. These guidelines will assist in maintaining the character of the District. They will also allow for individuality and architectural creativity.

❖ Property owners are encouraged to consult a licensed architect and the City of Aiken to ensure that exterior rehabilitation, improvements or new construction are appropriate for the building and surrounding properties.

Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

1.3 Introduction

Process of Guideline Development

In late-summer 2004, the City of Aiken, in conjunction with the Aiken's Downtown Development Association formed a sub-committee charged with the task of developing design guidelines for the historic downtown commercial area utilizing a public participation process. This sub-committee was comprised of representatives from Aiken Downtown Development Association, the City of Aiken, and the general public. The City hired Randy Wilson, architect for Community Builders (the non-profit administrator of the State of South Carolina's Main Street Program) to facilitate the process and draft the design guidelines. As charged by the City, the sub-committee engaged in a highly public and participatory process that involved the following:

❖ Sub-Committee meetings, which were open to the public, were held to present the benefits of design guidelines as well as establish the scope and goals of them. Some of the important goals that flowed out of these times included, but were not limited to, the following: a) the guidelines creation process should be open to the public and actively involve the public so that the finished product would be based on a broad base of consensus and not merely additional regulations handed down from local government; b) that the guidelines be positive in nature, informing the public of all the things they "could do" with their property as opposed to regulations that only told what "could not be done" to one's property; c) that the process be educational in nature, so that the general public would become increasingly aware of the importance of good design; and d) that the guidelines would have at their essence a desire to safeguard the investment of BOTH the private sector and public sector by ensuring that subsequent changes or additions to downtown were compatible with the rich architectural and planning legacy Aiken enjoys.

❖ Sub-Committee working sessions, which were open to the public, conducted windshield surveys (that addressed the context within which downtown resides), sidewalk surveys (that addressed specific architectural design issues such as building heights, setbacks, ornamentation, color, style, etc.), and photographic inventories (of every downtown building to create a "moment-in-time" collage) for the purpose of understanding the nature of Aiken's existing architectural heritage.

❖ Two Public Workshops, which were open to, and well attended by, the public were conducted. During the first workshop, participants were led in a facilitated process to understand the nature of Aiken's existing architectural building stock. For example, participants were asked to identify common elements among the majority of downtown buildings such as style, height, setback, etc. that would guide recommendations for new construction. Participants were also given disposable cameras to photograph the "best of Aiken" to inform the sub-committee of the types of buildings, details, etc. the residents of Aiken value, hold dear, and desire to protect. During the second workshop, the general public helped craft the outline for the design guidelines by stating the issues that should be addressed. Moreover, the participants were once again given disposable cameras to take positive and negative examples of each design issue/criteria for inclusion in the guidelines. In many ways, the resulting document herein was created by and owned by all that participated in the process.

Task Force Created

Public Workshops were a critical part of the process.

Sub-Committee Meetings

Goals of the Design Guidelines

Public Workshops were a critical part of the process.

Sub-Committee Work Sessions

Public Workshops
Workshop I: September 28, 2004
Workshop II: October 14, 2004

City Council Created Downtown Overlay District
August 2005

Guidelines Amended to Include Residential
May 26, 2006

Guidelines Amended for Expansion of Downtown Overlay District
July 18, 2007

Chapter 2

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Site Design

Site Design

Site Design

2.1.1 Building Setback/Alignment

Figure 2.1.1 New, infill buildings should be set approximately the same distance from the road as adjacent buildings.

Typically, zoning ordinances address building setback in terms of distance away from the street or property line. In the context of a historic downtown, the goal is to provide a place where the pedestrian has priority and this is done primarily by placing the buildings as close to the street as possible. New buildings in an historic context need to be considered by "build-to" lines as opposed to setback lines. (See Figure 2.1.1 for an illustrative example).

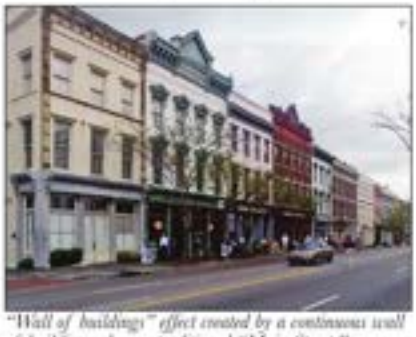
Entrances may be set back beyond the front façade provided that structural elements, such as columns, pilasters, etc., align with the street setback of adjacent buildings.

Good example of new construction that aligns with adjacent buildings. Recessed entry is utilized, yet columns maintain the alignment of the "street wall" created by the building faces.

Guidelines

❖ Buildings in the downtown district should work together to create a "wall of buildings" effect associated with traditional "Main Street" areas.

❖ New construction and infill buildings should maintain the alignment of façades along the sidewalk edge. Exceptions may be granted if the setback is pedestrian-oriented and contributes to the quality and character of the streetscape. An example would be for a park or outdoor dining space. Exceptions may also be granted for buildings whose functions are uniquely different from traditional downtown commercial buildings such as churches and houses for which a different setback would be appropriate.

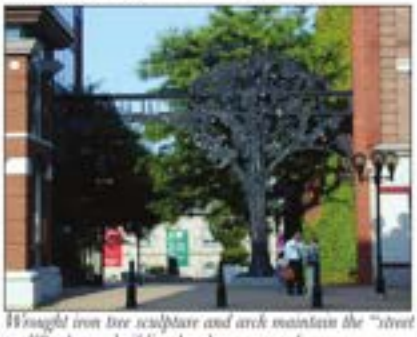


"Wall of buildings" effect created by a continuous wall of buildings along a traditional "Main Street."

"Wall of buildings" effect created by a continuous wall of buildings along a traditional "Main Street."

❖ In the Downtown Business district, a new building or addition should be set back from an adjacent building when the proposed new construction is determined to need appropriate separation from such adjacent building. This determination may take into account any public safety issues raised by the Building Official or City of Aiken Department of Public Safety.

Wrought iron fence and landscape buffer maintain the "street wall" where a building has been removed.



Wrought iron tree sculpture and arch maintain the "street wall" where a building has been removed.

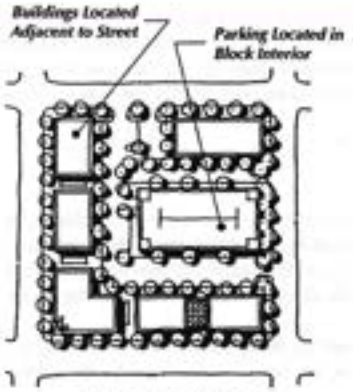
❖ In instances where a building has been removed from the "street wall of buildings," consider utilizing other devices such as landscaping, sculpture, arches, etc. to maintain the continuity of the "street wall" edge.

2.1 Site Design

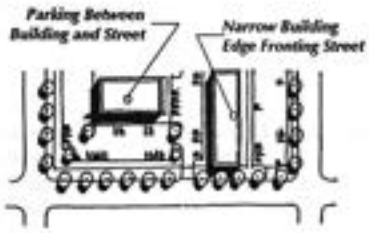
Downtown Commercial-Type

2.1.2 Street Orientation

The way that a structure is oriented to the street plays a large role in establishing the overall feeling of the street. As a general rule, buildings should be oriented so as to engage and maintain pedestrian interest. Following are specific directions on how this can be accomplished.



Appropriate Siting



Inappropriate Siting

Guidelines

❖ Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage. While side or rear entries are also encouraged, a predominant building entry should be oriented toward the dominant pedestrian route.

❖ In cases where the functional entry might be to the side or rear of the building (e.g. a hotel with a drop-off area to the side or rear of the building), a physical gesture of entry should still be considered along the major street frontage.

❖ Buildings on corners should include entry design features that address both street frontages.

Good example of rear entrance to a commercial building with primary entrance on the street side.

Good example of appropriate corner treatment for a corner building with two primary street frontages. The 45 degree corner addresses both streets while the additional ornament highlights the entry door.

Good example of appropriate corner treatment for a corner building with two primary street frontages. The 45 degree corner allows the entry to address both streets equally.

Good example of appropriate corner treatment for a corner building with two primary street frontages. The 45 degree corner addresses both streets while the column anchors the corner and completes the block.

Good example of appropriate corner treatment for a corner building with two primary street frontages. The rounded corner and change in color distinguish the entry from the rest of the building.

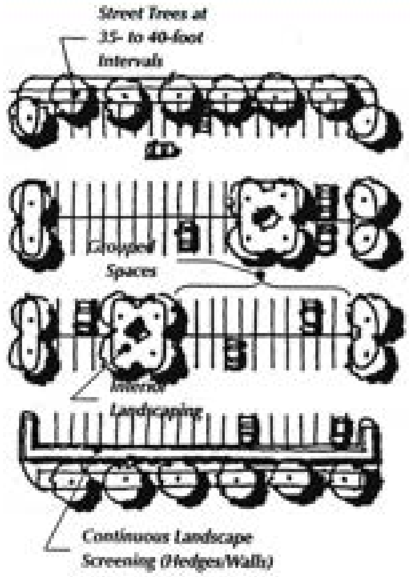
Good example of appropriate corner treatment for a corner building with two primary street frontages. The dome further accentuates the entry location.

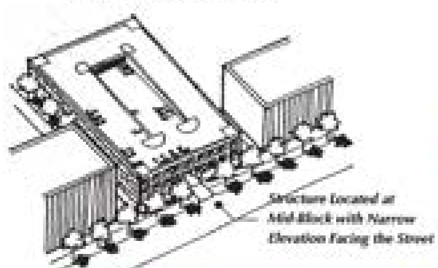
Site Design

2.1

Downtown Commercial-Type

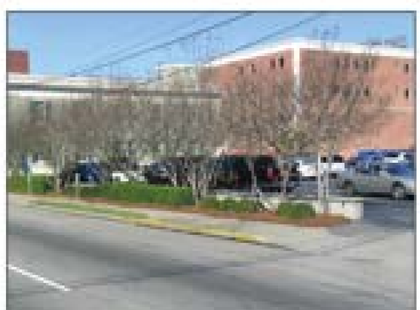
2.1.3 Parking





Low brick wall treatment to buffer surface parking lot from adjacent sidewalk.

Heavily landscaped structured parking to conceal utilitarian use. Use of quality building material such as brick.



Landscape and wall treatment to buffer surface parking lot from adjacent sidewalk and roadway.

Structured parking with retail on the first floor and lattice screened parking levels above.

Landscape treatment to buffer surface parking lot from adjacent sidewalk.

The automobile is a necessary part of the modern city. Accommodating the need of parking automobiles is critical to the quality of place of Aiken.

Surface Parking:
New surface parking lots should be designed to minimize the negative impact of large paved surfaces on the quality of the visual environment. New surface lots should be designed according to the following goals:

Guidelines
- ❖ Locate parking facilities on blocks and streets in which they best serve their function without jeopardizing the pedestrian quality of the downtown.
- ❖ Locate surface parking lots at the interior of the block and not at corner locations. In a downtown setting corner locations are important as building sites for prominent buildings. Parking lots on corners in the downtown area give the appearance of an incomplete block.

Structured Parking:
Some of the important elements to consider in evaluating the design of parking facilities are building massing, height, scale, and setback to adjacent buildings; the location of the facility within the downtown; and its security, landscaping, and lighting.

Guidelines
- ❖ Produce attractive parking facilities that are compatible additions to downtown which add to, rather than detract from, the area's architectural character and function.
- ❖ Enhance pedestrian activity at the sidewalk level through the use of retail uses on the first floor of structured parking and buffered landscape areas around surface parking.
- ❖ Ensure that the design of the facility is of the highest quality. See examples at right.

The overall character of the downtown district is defined by more than the buildings. Landscape features of the streetscape, such as the pattern of street trees and planting strips between the sidewalk and the curb, and choice of paving textures, form a significant part of the historic character of an area. Similarly, traditional landscape designs help to unify the district visually. In Aiken, the median, or parkway, replete with mature trees and low plantings define the spaces between the streets and buildings. These traditional patterns should be maintained as the district continues to evolve.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain the established pattern of medians, or parkways, in downtown Aiken.

❖ Maintain the established spacing pattern of street trees.

❖ Preserve existing street trees whenever possible.

❖ When a tree must be removed, or where there is a gap in the rhythm of street trees, install new street trees in locations that continue to express the established rhythm.

❖ Maintain the existing street furniture palette that has been established in downtown Aiken. Examples of street furnishings include benches, vintage lighting poles, bollards, trash receptacles, newspaper dispensers, bicycle racks, etc.

❖ Maintain the high level of quality and detail in public space design that has been established in downtown Aiken. Examples of quality design in the public realm include, but are not limited to, the Newberry Festival Site.

❖ The street rights-of-way of Aiken's 19th century grid plan should be retained. If development is proposed for a right-of-way abandoned by the City, the right-of-way should either be reestablished or be made recognizable as having been once part of the old town plan.

The heavily landscaped medians, or parkways, are one of the most distinguishing elements to the Aiken streetscape.

Appropriate streetscape and landscape elements create an environment for social gathering and pedestrian safety.

Public realm streetscape improvements have been executed with excellence and attention to detail.

Appropriate streetscape and landscape elements create an environment for social gathering and pedestrian safety.

A common palette of streetscape elements such as pavers, tree plantings, bollards, vintage light poles, and clearly demarcated crosswalks create both an attractive and safe downtown.

A common palette of streetscape elements such as mast arm traffic signals, tree plantings, vintage lights, benches and clearly demarcated crosswalks create both an attractive and safe downtown.

Site Design

2.1

Downtown Commercial-Type

2.1.5 Alleys

Aiken has a wonderful tradition of appropriate alley treatments that meet the needs of both pedestrians and automobiles.

Good example of screening service equipment and trash bins utilizing wood gates with wrought iron ornament.

Excellent example of an attractive secondary (rear) entrance to a building with a major entrance on the predominant pedestrian & auto route side of the building as well.

The alleys in traditional downtowns were historically used for secondary access to the buildings, for deliveries, and as storage places for horses and buggies, and later, for cars. While today's alleys have evolved, downtown alleys can create secondary pedestrian systems to navigate the downtown and may also provide an alternate means of access to shops, restaurants and other commercial uses. In Aiken, there is rich precedent for the successful use of alleys for pedestrian and automobile alike.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain alley access for pedestrians and automobiles yet retain the character of alleys as clearly secondary access to properties.

❖ Retain and preserve the variety and character found in the existing rear access to buildings along the alleys.

❖ Incorporate pedestrian-scaled street lighting and accent lighting to highlight building and alleyway entrances.

❖ Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries, if original walls are not damaged.

❖ Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building element that can be visually improved, should be designed as an integral part of the overall design.

❖ Where intact, alley façades should be preserved along with original features and materials. Alterations should be sensitive to and compatible with the scale and character of the building and area.

2.1.6 Fences & Railings

Fences and railings define the boundary between public and private areas and create safety barriers for pedestrians. Site specific designs are encouraged that reflect Aiken's history, adjacent architecture, or public art. Typically, no signage, advertising, goods or merchandise should be placed on the fencing. Railing designs should reflect an open, transparent feeling. Visually closed-in fences and railings that prohibit views into the public space are generally not appropriate.

Simple, yet elegant, wrought iron fence which defines the boundary between private and public property without hindering views to or from either.

Guidelines:

Materials such as metal rails and posts, stone or brick piers, and wood may be used. A level of detailing or ornament used in the construction of the fences or railings is encouraged.

❖ Decorative elements incorporated into the railing design are encouraged. (See bottom right example.)

❖ In general, metal surfaces should have a black finish although colors that are incorporated as part of a coordinated color plan for the building, or that are used characteristically throughout the downtown, may be considered.

❖ Temporary fences and railings that have a make-shift appearance should be avoided. Chains, ropes and unsupported railings are unacceptable materials.

Simple painted wood picket fence which defines the boundary between private and public property, yet maintains views to or from either.

Simple wrought iron fence which defines the boundary between private and public property.

While permissible in a residential area, this type of privacy fence is inappropriate for a downtown commercial area.

Ornate wrought iron gate segregating an alley entryway from the public sidewalk.

Site Design

2.2 Neighborhood Commercial-Type

2.2.1 Building Setback/Alignment

Traditionally, Commercial-Type buildings in Old Aiken Neighborhoods have been set to the sidewalk or between 0 and 10 feet from the sidewalk, with an entryway feature, steps or another pedestrian feature in the additional area.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain the traditional character of the neighborhoods by creating a cohesive rhythm between the Commercial-Type buildings in the Neighborhood Areas.

❖ Reestablish the alignment of façades along the streets in the Neighborhood Areas with new Commercial-Type infill.

❖ As a general rule, the primary façade of Commercial-Type buildings in the Neighborhood Areas should be set to the edge of the sidewalk, or setback from the edge of the sidewalk no more than 10 feet with entrance ramps, stoops, and covered porches built to the sidewalk.

❖ In locations without sidewalks, buildings should be set back no more than 15 feet from the road right-of-way.

Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings need to meet the needs of both pedestrians and customers arriving by car. In order to accommodate vehicular access to the individual sites, buildings should not occupy the entire frontage of a lot (unlike in the Downtown). As a general rule, buildings should be oriented to engage and maintain pedestrian interest as well as passing motorists. Access to parking areas should remain visually obvious.

Guidelines

❖ Orient the main entries toward the dominant pedestrian route either from the public right-of-way, or on-site from parking areas. When parking is provided to the side of the building, corner entrances that provide equal prominence to both sides of the building are encouraged. Secondary side or rear entries are also encouraged.

❖ The primary façade should be designed with storefront display windows to engage passing pedestrians and motorists. Even if the primary entrance is not located on the façade facing the primary street, a secondary entrance is encouraged on this façade.

❖ Set buildings—not parking areas—to the corner of the intersecting streets on corner lots.

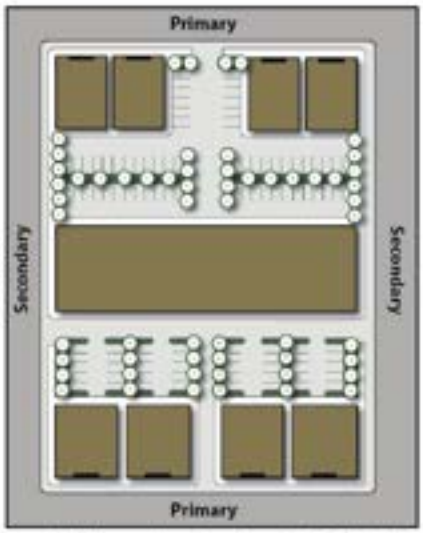
❖ Dedicate no more than 80 feet of continuous frontage to surface parking (including entrances and drive aisles) on any parcel or building lot with frontage along a primary road.

❖ When large lots are redeveloped or multiple lots are consolidated and redeveloped it may be appropriate to set large structures back further from the main road and locate parking in the interior of the lot with smaller buildings occupying the frontage and meeting the maximum setback of 10 feet.

Some visible parking to the side of Commercial-Type buildings is permissible. This illustration shows a parking area approximately 80 feet in width. To maintain the building rhythm no more than 80 feet of continuous frontage along a block should be dedicated to surface parking

Corner entrances on buildings address both roads and are inviting to pedestrians.

The secondary entrance on the building above is designed to address the parking area.

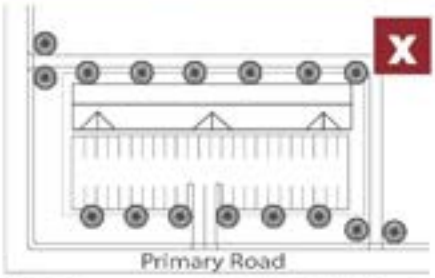


Large buildings can be set near the center of the block with smaller buildings and access points along the primary roads to maintain the preferred building rhythm along the frontage.

Site Design

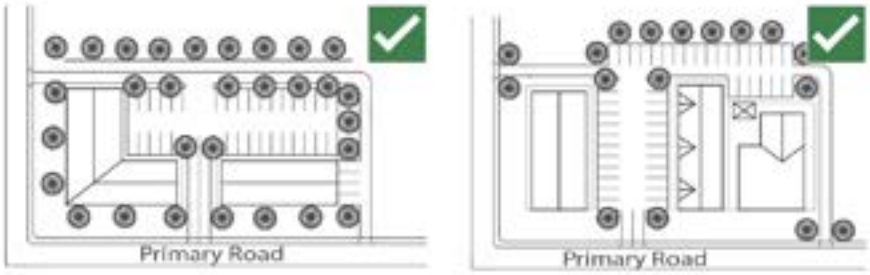
2.2 Neighborhood Commercial-Type

2.2.3 Parking



Parking lots on corners or entirely in front of buildings is not appropriate.

Surface parking lots should be designed to minimize the negative impact of large paved surfaces on the quality of the visual environment. They should not be the prevailing visual feature of Outer Commercial-Type development.



Placing parking lots for Commercial-Type buildings to the side or rear of a structure is more appropriate in the Neighborhood Areas.

Guidelines

❖ Locate parking facilities to the side or rear of Commercial-Type buildings, not between the building and the primary street. Exceptions may be made when multiple structures are located on a single lot with a depth greater than 300 feet- where the buildings may surround a parking area.

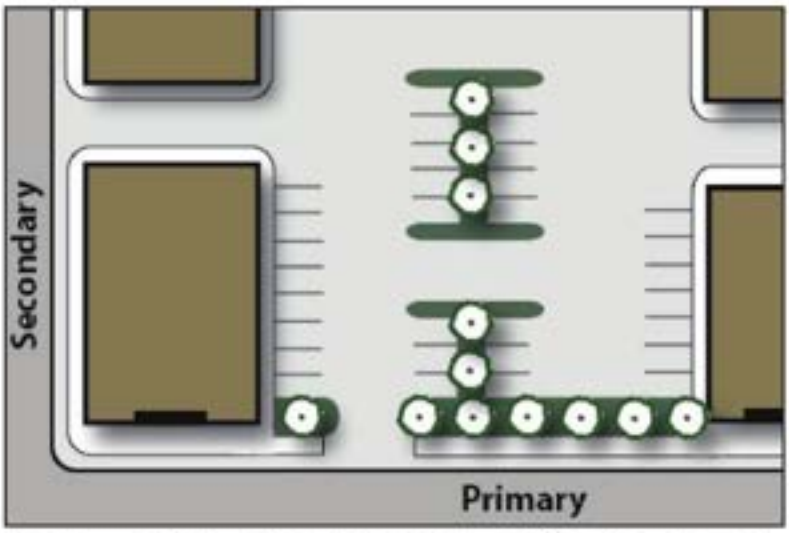
❖ Surface parking should not be located on corners of blocks.

❖ Locate vehicular access points to individual lots where they are visible from the primary roadway.

❖ Provide no more than one vehicular access point per lot for each frontage. Corner lots may have two access points (one onto each street).

❖ Provide shared access for adjacent lots whenever possible to reduce the number of access points necessary along the primary road.

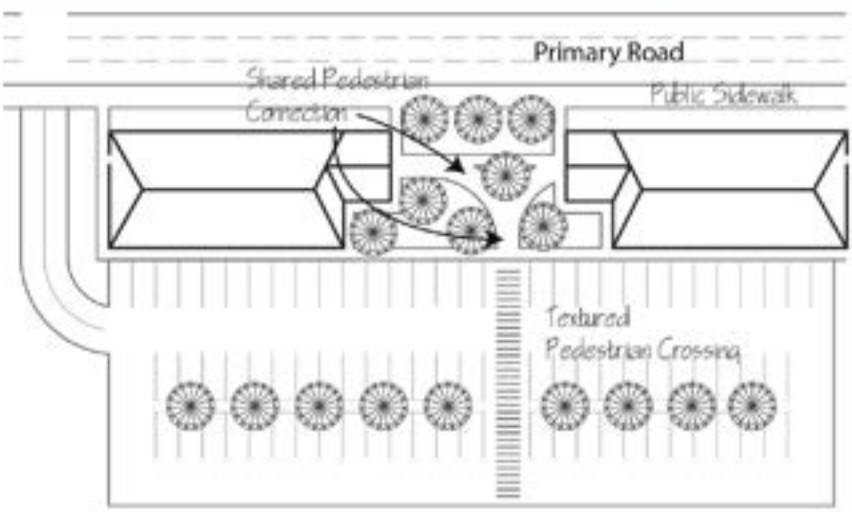
❖ When parking lots on adjacent lots abut one another, and include more than one bay of parking internal buffering should be employed to create a visual split in the parking area and reduce the appearance of surface pavement from the primary road.



The shared access point for these buildings is located on the primary road. Internal landscaping is used to break up the parking area and delineate the various parking areas for the different businesses.

2.2.4 Pedestrian Features

Pedestrian features should be provided in the interior of the site to facilitate safe travel for pedestrians from public sidewalks and primary parking areas to the main entrance of the building. Sidewalks and paths should be separated from vehicular flow by a change in paving materials, colors, bollards, and/or curbing. Pedestrian features can be incorporated into the landscaping islands in parking areas to further enhance the design of parking areas.



Guidelines

❖ Provide internal pedestrian paths leading from the primary parking areas to the main entrance of the building when parking for a site is provided in more than one double bay of parking.

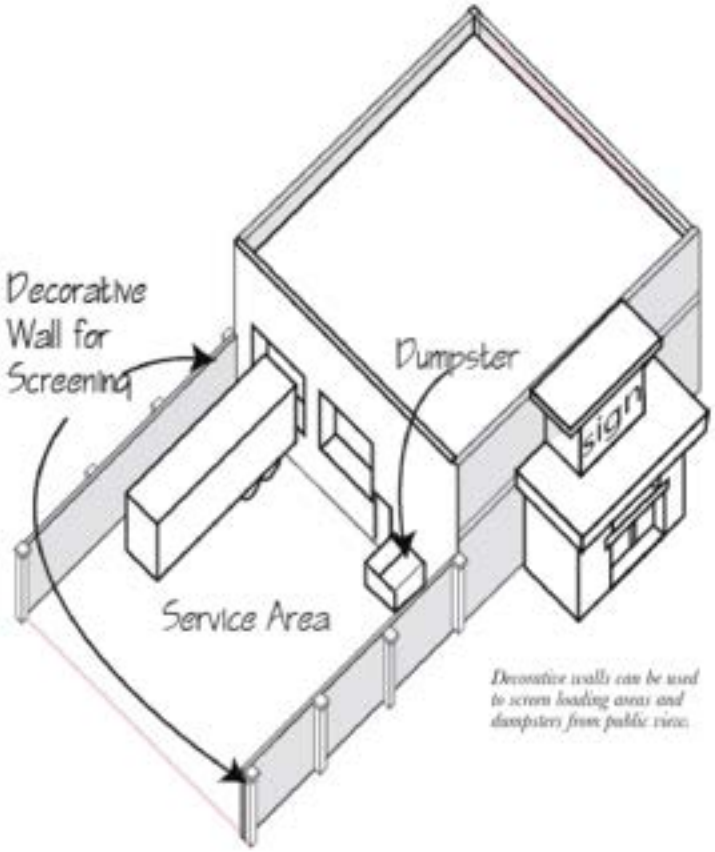
❖ Provide pedestrian paths connecting the public sidewalk to the primary entrance, when the primary entrance to the building is not located on the façade of the building facing the primary street.

Site Design

2.2.5 Relationship to Surrounding Uses

2.2

Neighborhood Commercial-Type



Decorative walls can be used to screen loading areas and dumpsters from public view.

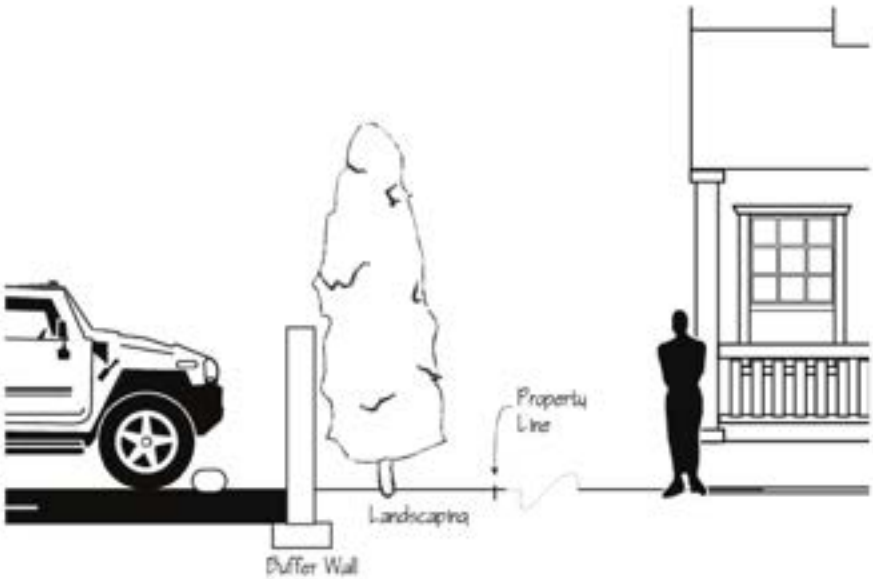
The commercial-type development in the Neighborhood Area is frequently located on the same block or across the street from residential uses. While this mix of uses provides a traditional land use pattern and offers access to retail businesses within walking distances of homes, it also can create potential conflicts. As new Commercial-Type uses are developed in Neighborhood Areas, they should be designed to respect surrounding uses, and reduce possible negative impact on local residents.

Guidelines

❖ Screen mechanical equipment, loading areas, and trash receptacles from view from adjacent homes.

❖ Use landscaping and hardscaping to minimize the effect of noise and light from the Commercial-Type use on adjacent homes.

❖ Locate windows on Commercial-Type buildings to avoid direct sight lines into adjacent residential properties to protect privacy.



Strategic placement of walls and landscaping can significantly reduce the impact of noise and light generated on commercial sites.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Site Design

2.3 Industrial-Type

2.3.1 Building Setback/Alignment

Industrial-Type uses traditionally occupy larger structures than commercial uses. These sites do not need to accommodate the retail traffic associated with Commercial-Type uses. As a general rule, buildings should be oriented to engage and maintain pedestrian interest as well as passing motorists. Access to small parking areas to accommodate customer parking should remain accessible, but the majority of parking for the site should be located to the rear of the building with secondary employee entrances on the side or rear of the building.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain the traditional character of the corridors and industrial areas in the Neighborhood Areas by creating a cohesive rhythm between the buildings in the Neighborhood Areas.

❖ Reestablish the alignment of façades along the major corridors in the Neighborhood Area with new Industrial-Type infill. As a general rule, the primary façade of Industrial-Type buildings along primary roads should be set to the edge of the sidewalk, or setback from the edge of the sidewalk no more than 10 feet and entrance ramps, stoops, and covered porches should be built to the sidewalk. In locations where sidewalks are not present, buildings should be set back from the right-of-way no more than 15 feet.

2.3 Site Design

Industrial-Type

2.3.2 Street Orientation

Industrial-Type uses are typically designed to address the needs of employees, limited customer traffic-usually by vehicles, and the loading and unloading of deliveries. The main customer entrance or office entrance should be oriented to face the primary street or corridor.

Guidelines

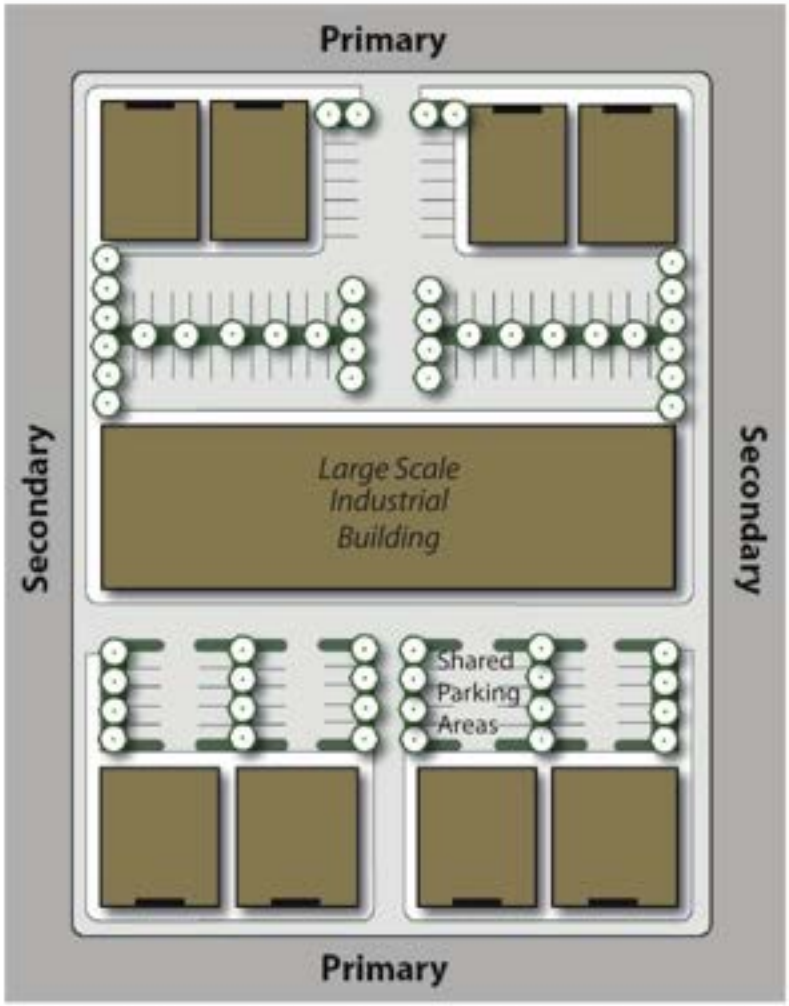
❖ Orient the main customer or office entries toward the primary roadway to offer easy identification of these entrances. Secondary side or rear entries for employees and service are also encouraged.

❖ Provide windows on the primary façades to add visual interest to passing pedestrians and motorists, and avoid monotonous blank façades.

❖ Set buildings—not parking areas—to the corner of the intersecting streets on corner lots.

❖ Dedicate no more than 80 continuous feet of lot frontage along primary roads on a single block to surface parking.

❖ When large lots are redeveloped or multiple lots are consolidated and redeveloped it may be appropriate to set large structures back further from the main road and locate parking in the interior of the lot with smaller buildings occupying the frontage and meeting the maximum setback.



This site plan shows how large buildings can be set in the central portion of the block with parking set away from the primary roads. Smaller buildings are located along the primary frontage of the block with access points to shared parking areas from both the primary and secondary roadways.

Site Design

2.3

Industrial-Type

2.3.3 Parking and Access
2.3.4 Pedestrian Features
2.3.5 Relationship to Surrounding Uses

2.3.3 Parking and Access

Surface parking lots should be designed to minimize the negative impact of large paved surfaces on the quality of the visual environment. They should not be the prevailing visual feature of Industrial-Type development.

Guidelines:

❖ Locate the majority of the parking facilities to the side or rear of Industrial-Type buildings.

❖ Locate the access to the primary employee parking areas off of the secondary street, rather than the primary street.

❖ Small areas of parking for visitors or customers may be located between a portion of the primary façade and the primary street. However, this area should not accommodate more than 10% of the site's overall parking.

❖ Surface parking should not be located on corners of blocks.

❖ Provide no more than one vehicular access point per lot on the primary road. Corner lots may have two access points. Multiple access points may be provided on secondary streets to allow for adequate maneuverability of trucks for delivery and loading activities.

❖ Provide shared access for adjacent lots whenever possible to reduce the number of access points necessary along the primary road.

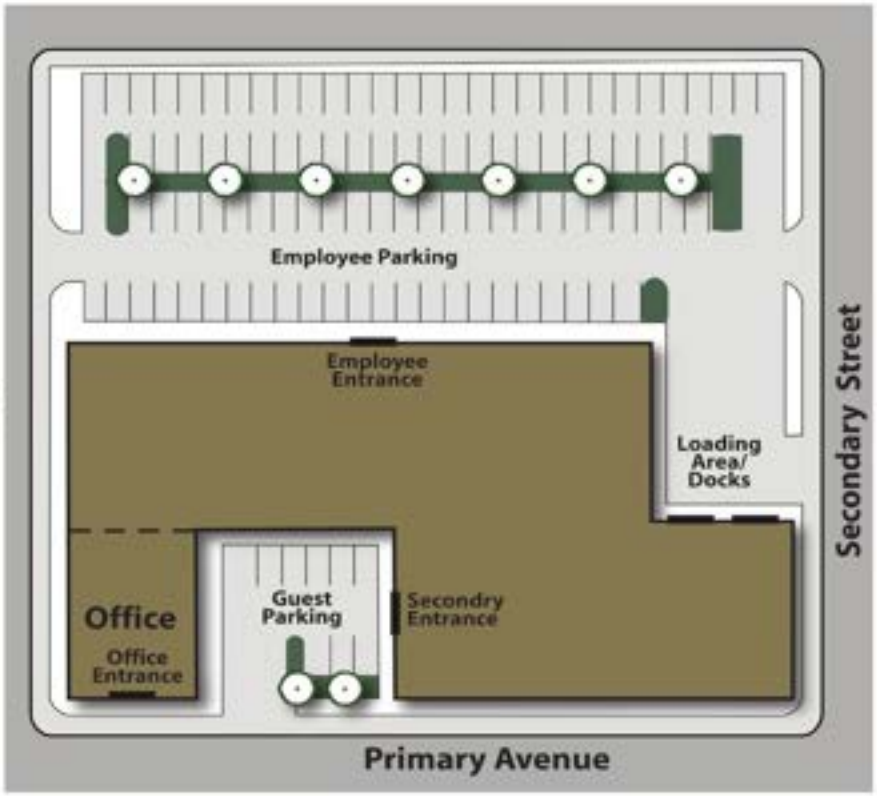
2.3.4 Pedestrian Features

Pedestrian features for Industrial-Type uses should be designed in accordance the guidelines for Commercial-Type uses in section 2.2.4.

2.3.5 Relationship to Surrounding Uses

The Industrial-Type development in the Neighborhood Areas is frequently located on the same block or across the street from residential uses. While this mix of uses provides a traditional land use pattern and offers pedestrian access to industrial areas, it also can create potential conflicts. As new Industrial-Type uses are developed in the Old Aiken Neighborhood Areas, they should be designed to respect surrounding uses, and reduce possible negative impact on local residents.

The standards in section 2.2.5 should be followed to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.



The primary parking on this site is for the employees. The employee parking area has 100 parking spaces located to the rear of the structure with access off of the secondary streets. A small area of parking with 9 spaces has been provided to the front of the building. The 9 spaces are less than 10% of the sites total number of parking spaces.

To accommodate the parking configuration. Employee entrances have been located on the rear of the building with easy access to the parking areas.

The office entrance is located to the front of the building to address the primary avenue.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Site Design

2.4

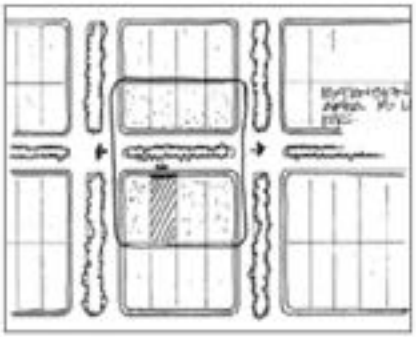
RESIDENTIAL-TYPE

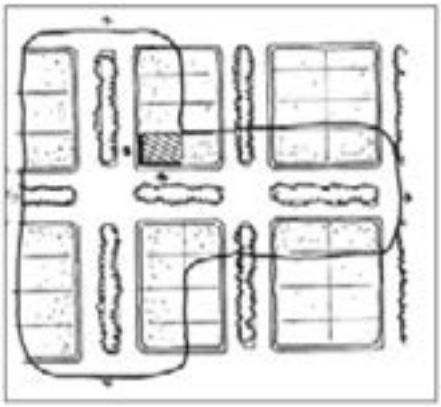
2.4.1 Setback & Placement

The emphasis on the front of a principal building, which normally should have a strong orientation to the street and details providing human-scale, should be on the entrance for pedestrians, not the one for vehicles. While durable, high-quality modern materials expected to last into the next century can be acceptable, their appearance should not cause a building or group of structures to dominate the streetscape or disrupt the character of the neighborhood.

This currently popular house style would not fit in locations listed in the Aiken Historic Register. The prominent garage, use of different materials on the façade, and the massing are inconsistent with Aiken's historic structures.

Not only is it important to be sensitive to the overall character of the neighborhood when planning a new building, it is also crucial to examine the immediate context. Look closely at any old buildings, open spaces, and landscape features that relate visually to the site; these include structures and spaces on the subject property, those visible from the site, and ones that are in the immediate vicinity. The size of the area that should be considered as part of the context and strongly influence the design varies and can be unique for each site.





Area of influence. Above, interior site, and, right, corner site, showing suggested minimum area that should be considered context.

The neighboring buildings and landscape elements within the context should be examined to determine whether any significant features and spaces or consistent patterns of relationships between structures are present. Also, if the existing structures in the area have a common style or were built during a similar period, that common style should influence, but not necessarily dictate, the design of new buildings. New buildings do not necessarily have to replicate the design or features of neighboring buildings in order to be harmonious.

Setback & Placement

New buildings should conform to the setback, placement, and spacing patterns of structures within the context.

The public spaces within Aiken's traditional neighborhoods are often defined by the front edge of individual structures. This building setback line should ordinarily be maintained with new construction.

Placement of main buildings and accessory structures in relation to side and rear property lines, the curb line, significant open spaces, or each other can also be important to defining public, semi-public, and private spaces. If there is a consistent pattern, the established rhythm normally should be maintained with new construction. Patterns of spacing between buildings and the amount of open space around buildings should also be respected.

In the Downtown Business district, a new building or addition should be set back from an adjacent building when the proposed new construction is determined to need appropriate separation from such adjacent building. This determination may take into account any public safety issues raised by the Building Official or City of Aiken Department of Public Safety.

Always verify legal setbacks required by the City's Zoning Ordinance. Conflicts may be resolved by application to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Size, Scale & Proportion

The size, scale, and proportions of new buildings should conform to that of existing structures if there is a dominant pattern within the context.

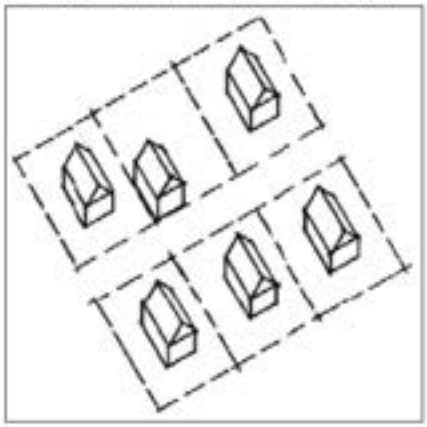
Although the sizes of existing principal structures varies within Aiken's neighborhoods, the scale of buildings within rows of buildings or along one side of a block is generally consistent and is most easily identified by the size of the footprint and number of stories.

New construction should have a comparable number of floor levels to neighboring buildings, whether one-, two-, or three-story levels. A new building should be no higher than the tallest building in the immediate vicinity unless it is to be a significant public building. It should not be shorter than the old main buildings nearby unless it will serve as an outbuilding.

Not only does the number of stories determine a building's scale, but the height of each story, or floor-to-floor height, can also affect the scale of individual buildings. Older buildings typically contained much higher ceilings than those constructed more recently. This is most noticeable in the case of one-story structures where differences in ceiling height dramatically affect the exterior proportions of the building façade. Floor-to-floor heights should be matched as closely as possible to those of surrounding buildings so as to maintain comparable ground-to-eave heights.

Proportions —the relationships between horizontal and vertical dimensions —of new principal buildings should be consistent with old ones within the context, and those of outbuildings should be harmonious with the main buildings to which they relate.

(Diagram Below)
The placement and setbacks of the building drawn in the top center lot are inconsistent with the pattern set by nearby structures. For new buildings, such inconsistency is discouraged.



Massing & Roof Form

Massing and roof form should be treated in a way that makes the volume, shape, and composition of the new building compatible with existing structures and public spaces within the context.

The massing of a building—the volume and arrangement of its geometric forms—is key to its visual interest and compatibility with surrounding structures. Massing usually should be similar in complexity to buildings of similar size and type in the vicinity. Large buildings normally require more complex massing than small structures to be in scale with the neighborhood.

Roof form is primarily determined by the shape of a building's floor plan, particularly the exterior walls. The orientation of the floor plan, whether it stretches across its lot or runs from front to back, will determine the look of the roof from the street. The type of roof—gabled, hipped, gambrel, or some variation of these—will project a certain character to the entire structure.

Gable and hip roofs with a moderate pitch are usually appropriate on Aiken's residences. Flat roofs, while acceptable on some nonresidential structures, are usually not allowed within the predominately residential neighborhoods. Unusual roof forms should be used only to accentuate the importance of a significant public building.

Orientation

The directional emphasis of the roof form, the massing, and the location of the main entrance for a new building should be similar to that of existing buildings.

A new structure should be designed to respect the existing pattern of orientation existing within its context.

Site Design

2.4.3 Site Features & Parking

To protect a distinctive tree, soil compaction, grade changes, trenches, and pavement near and within the drip line should be avoided. Parking under the tree is strongly discouraged.

Aiken's old homes were designed to have guests enter through the front door.

The character of the landscape surrounding a building is an important design consideration. Topography, existing vegetation, sun orientation, access, and site features should be taken into account when planning a new structure.

Site Features & Open Spaces

The siting and construction of new buildings should respect significant natural and man-made site features, historic open spaces, and structures.

Important site features and open spaces, such as old brick walls, garden structures, and significant recreation facilities, should be retained.

Topography

New buildings should be sited and planned to fit the topography of the site.

The land should not only slope away from a building to prevent moisture damage, it should also meet the foundation in a way that is appropriate. It should not appear that a stock plan was selected for a site the plan does not fit.

Vegetation

Significant existing vegetation, especially plantings from old gardens and trees, should be retained.

Existing trees and vegetation that provide character to neighborhoods should be protected. New structures should be located to preserve trees. Grading changes and soil compaction within or close to the drip line must be avoided if a tree is to be retained.

Sun Orientation

Orientation in relation to the sun should be considered in the design of building exteriors and landscape features and spaces.

Sun and shade affect the use of interior and exterior spaces, especially porches. For climate control, old houses often employed overhangs, porches, awnings, and other devices to provide shade and help keep interior spaces cool. Similar features are appropriate for new buildings.

Light and shadow can give emphasis to the appearance of design details. The same details on the shaded north side of a structure will look different where illuminated by sunlight.

Access & Parking

New buildings and their sites should be planned to be attractive to pedestrians. Garages and parking lots should not dominate the design of buildings and their sites.

Old main buildings in Aiken usually have a prominent front entrance for visitors and a comfortable path to that doorway. The same should be true for new structures. Parking for visitors should be convenient to that entrance and should not, by its location, direct guests to private or service entrances. Visitor parking, however, should not cause a building to be set back further from the street than its neighbors or to necessitate paving a large portion of the front yard area.

Where necessary, parking lots should be small and screened. Alternatives to asphalt paving should be considered. Placement of garages and owner parking should usually be inconspicuous and away from the front of the house.

Hierarchy

Public, semi-public, and private areas should be differentiated in the design of new building exteriors. The design of main buildings and outbuildings should also express relative importance.

The location of the main entrance and spaces for visitors should be clearly distinguishable from service entrances and private spaces. This can be accomplished with such elements as porches and ornamentation.

Outbuildings should usually be smaller and less elaborately detailed than main buildings, especially if located in close proximity.

Transition Space

In new construction, attention should be given to the transition spaces between the street and interior spaces.

Older buildings, and historic structures, in particular, usually relate well to their surroundings. This is especially true in warm climates where porches or balconies and front-to-rear fenestration were part of everyday life.

In these cases, the building itself would often connect to the public space, such as a street, sometimes through exterior spaces. One of these was often a covered porch which opened into a garden or courtyard. Whether one was arriving on foot or by carriage or horseback, there was a definite sequence of spaces which led to the front, or formal entry. While this made for an interesting approach for the visitor, it also gave a sense of connectedness to the building and its setting.

Articulation

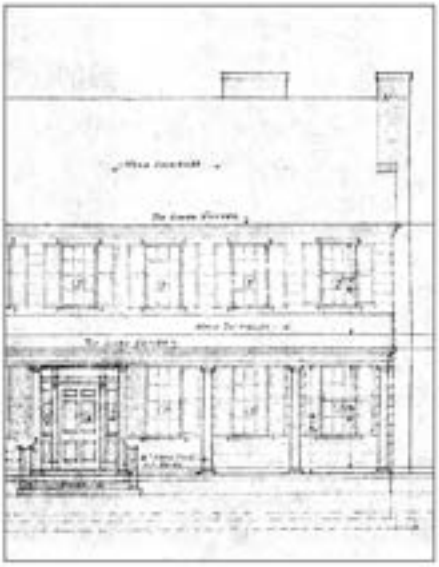
Large blank walls facing a street should be avoided. Façades should be broken by the use of openings, decorative details, pilasters, recessed areas, balconies, or other features.

Especially if they are close to the street, building walls should be designed to be appealing to pedestrians. Building mass should be divided to create rhythm and visual interest.

Openings

The area occupied by windows and doors and the placement and proportion of openings usually should be similar to that of old buildings nearby.

The rhythms of neighboring buildings do not have to be exactly duplicated, but windows and doors usually should have some similarities in size, proportion, and the amount of wall space they cover.



Chapter 3

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Commercial Architectural Guidelines for Commercial-Type Buildings

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Downtown Commercial

3.1 Existing Buildings

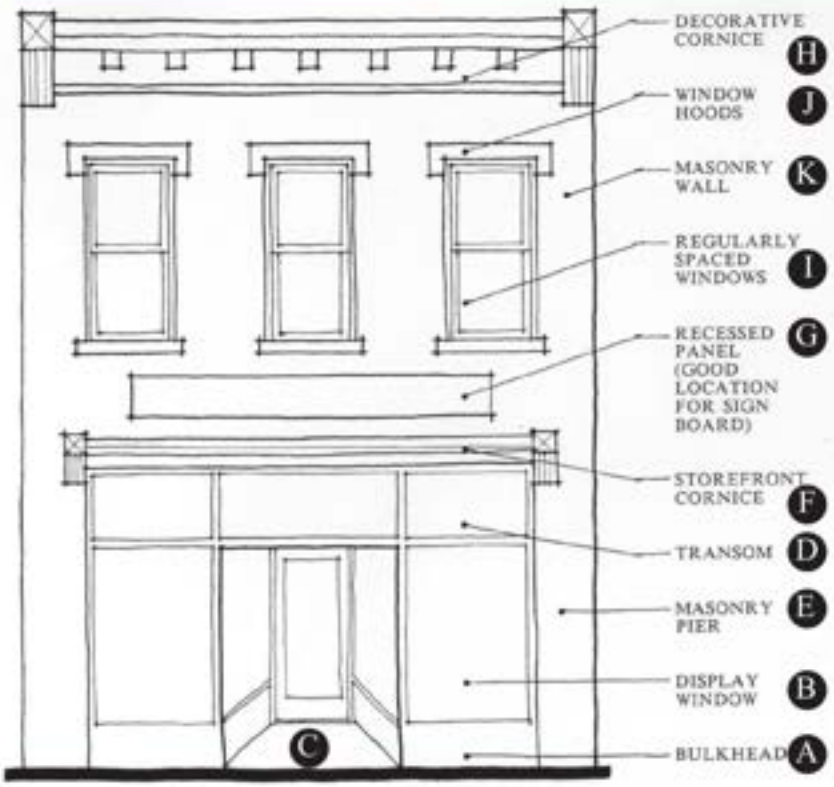
While it is acknowledged that changes to structures in the downtown district will occur over time, it is also a concern that these changes do not damage the historic building fabric and character of downtown. This character is precisely what makes Aiken unique and enhances real estate values in the downtown area. Inconsistent improvements will decrease the value of all downtown properties and a desired outcome of these guidelines is to safeguard the investment that both the private and public sector have made in downtown Aiken. Preservation of the exteriors and storefronts of these buildings will continue their contribution to the unique architectural character of the downtown. Any building renovation or alteration, no matter the planned use, must retain the overall design integrity of the historic building by protecting the original features and materials and respecting the traditional design elements.

The renovation/restoration of older structures provides an excellent means of maintaining and reinforcing the architectural character of Aiken's traditional downtown and should be encouraged. Renovation and expansion not only increases property values in the area but also serves as an inspiration to other property owners and developers to make similar efforts.

When an existing structure is to be renovated or expanded, care should be taken to complete the work in a manner that respects the original design character of the structure. The appropriate design guidelines in this chapter are provided as an aid to owners whenever a structure is to be renovated or expanded.

Downtown Commercial

3.1.1 Preservation of Traditional Façade Elements



Elements of the Traditional Façade

***Note**: It is not the intention of this guideline to recreate the past if the original building façade does not exist. However, if the original façade had been modified over time, and documentary evidence such as photographs of the original features exist, then one recommended alternative is to restore the façade. Where exact reconstruction is not practical, new, contemporary interpretations of the original details are appropriate as long as the scale and character of the original detail is retained.*

Preservation of traditional façade elements found on existing buildings creates patterns along the face of the block that contribute to the overall historic character of the area. These elements include:

A. Bulkhead (or "kick plate") as base to building fronts
B. First floor display windows
C. Recessed or covered central entrance areas or angled entrances on corners
D. Transoms above entrance doors
E. Masonry pier or building frame pilasters
F. Storefront cornice
G. Sign panel area
H. Parapet walls with caps or cornices
I. Vertical window patterns, shapes, window sills on second floor
J. Window hoods (occasionally)
K. Masonry wall

The façade elements define a building's visual qualities and character. Respect the original design and materials of the building. Even when a buildings use has changed, it is still important to retain and/or interpret traditional façade elements.

Do not apply theme designs that alter the original character or architectural style such as coach lanterns (e.g. *to make the building look more "Colonial"*), mansard designs (e.g. *to make the building look more "Victorian"*), wood shakes (*e.g. to make the building look more "Arts & Crafts"*), non-operable shutters, and small-pane windows if that is not the actual style of the building and/or they cannot be documented historically.

Preservation or restoration of ornamental details such as cast iron storefronts, pressed metal cornices, metal window hoods, and any other specialty ornament is particularly encouraged. Adding more elaborate ornamentation than was originally found on the building façade is typically inappropriate as it renders a false history to the building.

3.1.2 Removal of Inconsistent Elements

Before *After*

Carolina Furniture Building, Conway, South Carolina

The vertical metal siding (or "slip cover") conceals the architecture beneath & prevents alignment of architectural elements with adjacent buildings. Removal of metal slip covers is often inexpensive and produces dramatic results. See example above from Conway, SC.

Retain original materials wherever possible through repair and restoration. Avoid concealing original façade materials. If the original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible. If portions of the original material must be replaced, use a material similar to the original. Brick was the predominant building material used in the downtown. Avoid the use of materials that are not visually compatible with the original façade, such as shiny metals, mirror glass, plastic panels, and vinyl windows or doors. (*Note: vinyl clad windows and doors may be allowed provided they are detailed in a manner --e.g. true divided lights for windows-- that causes them to appear as similar to the original.*)

The choice of materials and composition at the storefront & upper façade level is visually incompatible with the traditional pattern of downtown commercial architecture. The historic architectural elements of the buildings are concealed. The absence of horizontal alignment of façade elements results in visual chaos.

Guidelines

❖ Preserve original façade materials whenever possible.

❖ Remove metal slip covers when they conceal the original architecture beneath and prevent the horizontal alignment of building elements with adjacent buildings.

❖ Whenever possible, remove any material that conceals traditional façade elements and repair, restore, or replace in a manner sympathetic to the style and history of the building.

For most traditional buildings, large panes of glass at the display window level with solid kick plates below are appropriate. Multi-pane designs that divide the storefront window into small components should only be used if they restore proven historic elements and original openings.

Preserve the original kick plate or bulkhead whenever possible. For buildings with historic significance, restore the original bulkhead from documentary evidence. If original information is not available, develop a new simplified design that retains the original character and dimensions of the bulkhead that would most likely have been on the building. For renovations where there is no documentary evidence, appropriate bulkhead materials are: brick, painted wood panels, stone, and glazed tile or painted metal in muted tones. Align the bulkhead with those of other traditional buildings in the block.

The use of a clear glass transom over doors within the upper part of the display window area is most appropriate. Retain the original materials and proportions of the transom opening. If the framing that defines the transom has been removed, re-establish it in a new design. If the interior ceiling is lower than the transom line due to later renovation, raise the dropped ceiling up from the window to maintain its traditional dimensions. Align transom framing with other adjacent buildings to maintain a clear line along the block face. The area above the transom or storefront cornice has traditionally been used for a sign or decorative element.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain traditional recessed entries where they exist.

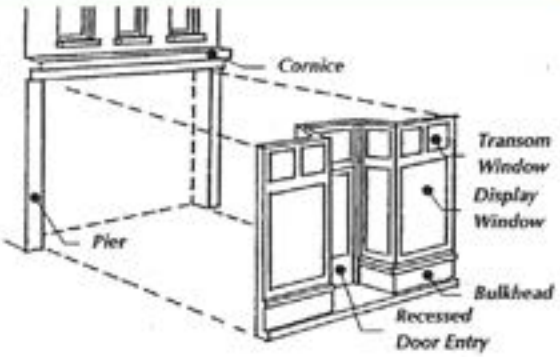
(continued above)

Guidelines *(continued)*

❖ Maintain the original size, shape and proportion of storefronts and openings to retain the historic scale and character.

❖ Maintain the bulkhead, or kick plate, below the storefront display window element.

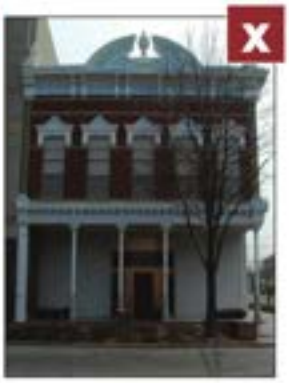
❖ Preserve the transom and sign board area features.



The transom area of these two storefront needs a transparent treatment to respond to the traditional storefront layout.

One way to deal with the transom area is to conceal it with an awning. All the other elements of the traditional storefront are dealt with appropriately in this example.

Good example of storefront renovation utilizing new materials adhering to traditional storefront composition.



Examples of inappropriate storefront renovations & replacements.

3.1.4 Window Renovation and Replacement

This arched-top window appropriately fills in the entire masonry opening.

In this example, the original arched-top windows were removed and rectangular units were installed in their place with a wooden "filler" inserted in the arched area. This gives the appearance of an "eye lid" closing above the windows. Always fill the opening with an appropriately sized window.

True divided light wood windows were the norm in traditional construction. 4-over-4 pattern.

Historically, windows were true divided lights in nature. Traditionally, most windows installed during the period of Aiken's primary downtown commercial development were 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 in pattern. However, installations such as the 6-over-1 pattern shown above were used successfully to introduce character and variety.

The consideration of horizontal alignment of windows unifies these three buildings of dissimilar heights, colors and detailing.

Tri-partite window provides visual interest.

Re-open or reveal upper-story windows if they are presently covered. If lowered ceilings are necessary, pull the dropped ceiling back from the window. If re-opening the window is not feasible, recreate the original windows with new units to match the original as closely as possible. If original to the building, shutters may be considered to define the original window proportions.

Maintain the original spacing patterns of the windows. Preserve the window frame, sash, and surrounds. Repair rather than replace original windows whenever possible; if repair is not feasible, replace with windows that match the existing windows as closely as possible. Size, frame and trim material, method of operation, size of sash members, window frame elements, and the pattern of divided lights are important features to replicate.

A traditional material such as wood was used predominantly in downtown Aiken and is, therefore, most appropriate. However, other materials such as metal-clad or vinyl-clad windows may be utilized provided they replicate the shape, detailing and form of the original windows as closely as possible.

Guidelines

- Whenever possible, repair, rather than replace existing windows.
- If repair is not feasible, and the window must be replaced, match the existing window in terms of size, materials, method of operation and detailing.
- The window opening itself should be carefully preserved. It should not be made larger or smaller to accommodate a differently sized window.
- Window materials other than wood may be considered provided they replicate the original shapes, detailing and form of the original windows as closely as possible.

3.1.5 Door Renovation & Replacement

The style and detailing of this door is inappropriate to the building itself and the overall character of the district. The door utilizes a window and panel system that would have been associated with a "colonial" style building, not the Victorian/Commercial style of downtown Aiken.

Full-lite, wood doors, as shown in these two photos were traditionally used in downtown commercial districts. Contemporary materials and interpretations of this tradition are appropriate.

Good examples of replacement doors responding to the traditional door treatment of historic commercial buildings.

The material, detailing, and lack of transparency in these doors are inappropriate replacement solutions.

Successful "contemporary interpretation" of the traditional full-lite storefront doors..

Successful "contemporary interpretation" of the traditional storefront door

Front doors and primary entrances are among the most important elements of traditional buildings. The original size and proportion of a front door, the details of the door, the door surround, and the placement of the door all contribute to the character of the entrance. Where possible, original doors and door hardware should be retained, repaired and refinished, provided they can comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If new replacement doors are necessary, they should be compatible with the character and design of the structure itself and the downtown district as a whole.

Guidelines

❖ Maintain original doors whenever possible.

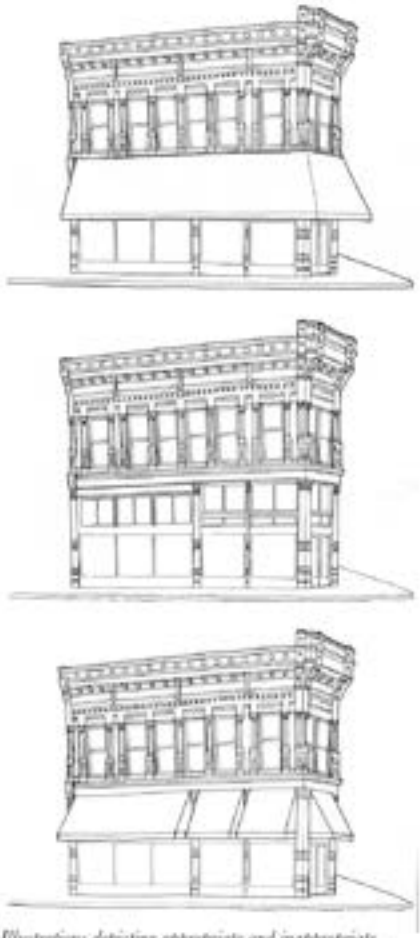
❖ Repair damaged original doors and door assemblies whenever possible following recognized preservation methods.

❖ Retain and preserve the functional, proportional and decorative features of a primary entrance. These features include the door and its frame, sill, head, jamb, moldings, and any flanking windows.

❖ If an original door must be replaced, the replacement door should match the original as closely as possible. If documentation of the original door is not available, then the appearance of the replacement door should be based on original doors on similar structures in the downtown area.

❖ Doors in additions to existing structures should reflect the proportions (height and width) of doors in the existing structure and the district.

3.1.6 Awnings or Canopy Renovation & Replacement



Illustrations depicting appropriate and inappropriate placement of awnings. Awnings at top do not respect the supporting frame of the building nor the corner entrance. Awnings at bottom fit within the building frame and bend at the corner to highlight entry.

Perfectly executed awning installation.

Shingled canopy appears as oversized awning concealing transom, sign panel & upper façade components.

Original awning hardware should be used if it is in working order or is repairable. The traditional canvas, slanted awnings are most appropriate for older storefronts and are encouraged.

Replacement awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening to emphasize the building's proportions. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details. For example, they should not extend above the traditional transom opening. Consult the City of Aiken's ordinances for regulated mounting heights. Align awnings with others on the block. This applies particularly to the bottom line of the awning. Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom. The valance may be used for a simple signage such as the name or address of the business housed within the building.

Operable fabric awnings are also encouraged. Metal awnings or canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building façade and not appearing as tacked-on additions. Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the entire building front. Awnings on the upper stories are generally discouraged.

Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the building. In general, solid color awnings should be used on buildings with intricate and abundant architectural detailing, while striped awnings might be utilized on simpler buildings to introduce color and vitality to an otherwise "plain" building.

Guidelines

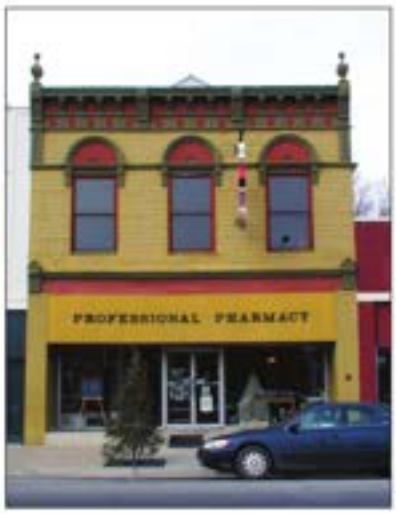
- ❖ Awnings may be used to provide visual depth and shade, color and detail.
- ❖ It is strongly preferred that awnings in the downtown commercial area not utilize vinyl nor be backlit.

3.1.7 PAINTING

Most buildings in downtown Aiken were constructed of brick and were unpainted. Whenever possible, keep the wall material of the building its natural, unpainted finish. If it is necessary to paint the building, the preferred approach would be to paint it the color of the underlying natural material. (*Note: If the reason for painting the building is to conceal unsightly repairs or maintenance issues such as cracks or spawling due to structural flaws, leaks, or water penetration, those issues will remain after painting!*) Finally, if the building is to be painted and there is a strong preference to ***not*** paint the building the color of the underlying natural material, then a color should be selected that coordinates with the color of the buildings to the subject property's right and left. If design assistance related to paint color selection is desired, the City of Aiken, through Aiken Downtown Development Association (ADDA), has access to the architect for the State of South Carolina's Main Street Program who can provide color selection advice.

Painting dramatically changed the appearance and character of this downtown Columbia, SC building.

Done properly, painting can be one of the simplest and most dramatic improvements one can make to a façade. It gives the façade a well-maintained appearance and is essential to the long life of many traditional materials.

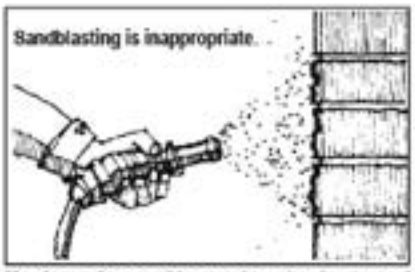


Examples of successfully executed painted color schemes on downtown commercial buildings.

Guidelines

- ❖ Keep historically unpainted buildings unpainted.
- ❖ Utilize historic and compatible paint colors when painting a historic building.
- ❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices.
- ❖ Address maintenance issues to the wall materials prior to painting.

Terra cotta cornice cleaning via a low-pressure water wash and mild detergent.



Use the gentlest possible procedures for cleaning and refinishing historic materials. Abrasive methods such as sandblasting are strongly discouraged, as they permanently erode building materials and finishes and accelerate deterioration.

Traditional building elements should be maintained in order to preserve their integrity as character-defining features. These elements could include, but are not limited to, masonry window sills, ornamental entry doors, cast iron storefront surrounds, masonry wall materials, window hoods and cornices. Surface cleaning should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other harsh cleaning methods that may damage historic building materials are strongly discouraged. Waterproofing and graffiti proofing sealers should be used after cleaning and repair.

Guidelines

❖ Abrasive methods such as sandblasting are inappropriate, as they permanently erode building materials and finishes and accelerate deterioration.

❖ If cleaning is to be considered, use a low-pressure water wash. Chemical cleaning also may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found.

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

❖ Avoid removing damaged materials when they can be repaired.

❖ If masonry has been painted, it may be preferable to continue to repaint it, because paint removal methods may cause damage to the building materials and finishes.

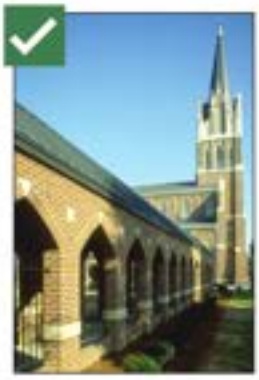
3.1.9 Replacement of Unavailable Components

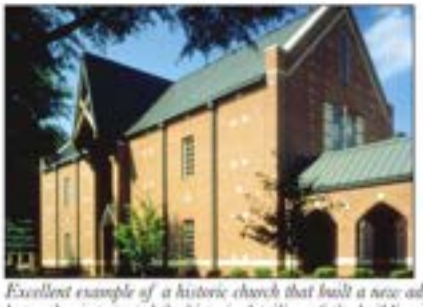
When traditional construction materials cannot be replaced or matched, care should be taken to match the original pattern, thickness, color, and texture as closely as possible with available materials. An abundance of replication components are readily available on line. An excellent resource is www.traditional-building.com.

Guidelines

- Utilize existing components whenever possible.
- Utilize compatible components when original components are unavailable.
- Repair deteriorated primary building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- Avoid removing damaged materials when they can be repaired.

3.1.10 Additions to Existing Structures





Excellent example of a historic church that built a new addition. The new addition did not pretend to be historic, but rather interpreted the historic detailing of the building (e.g. brick patterns, water table, Gothic windows, spire) in contemporary ways and with modern materials.

Negative example of a property satisfying the criteria to "be distinct" from the original structure, but failing miserably to "be compatible" with the original structure and it's district surroundings.

It is normal for buildings to evolve over time as additional space is needed or new uses are accommodated. Additions to existing structures within the overlay district are appropriate as long as they do not destroy traditional features, materials, and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site. They also must be distinguishable from, ***yet compatible with***, the overall architectural character of the district.

Guidelines:

❖ New additions should be interpretations of the existing buildings whereby the architectural characteristics of the existing structure are incorporated using modern construction materials & methods. This may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing structure to the addition; repetition of window patterns and entrance spacing; use of harmonizing colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar, yet distinct, architectural details (*e.g., window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration, etc.*).

❖ New additions should be designed so that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.

❖ Decks, stairs and other minor additions should use similar materials, design, and colors to the original building. These additions should occur in areas not visible from the street.

❖ The primary focus in reviewing additions will be on aspects of new construction that are visible from public streets.

Existing Buildings

3.1.11 Demolitions & Relocations

Demolition of existing buildings is strongly discouraged. Consequently, the Design Review Board will use its authority to delay demolition of historic structures whenever possible to investigate means to save the building.

However, it is recognized that, in some cases, older structures may deteriorate to the point that rehabilitation is technically infeasible. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not appropriate ***AND*** demonstrate a clear plan for the re-use of the site and any related new construction after demolition.

Occasionally, demolition is the only course of action that remains for a property. A plan for the site's reuse is a critical component in the evaluation of a request for demolition.

Guidelines:

❖ If an existing building's condition is deteriorated such that rehabilitation and use of the building is judged to not be feasible, a request for demolition may be considered by the Review Board. It is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not feasible.

❖ If public safety is threatened, interim steps may be taken to close and stabilize the structure.

❖ Any requests for relocations to or from the Overlay District shall be reviewed by the Review Board.

❖ Any application for a demolition shall include plans for the re-development of the site after demolition.

Downtown Commercial

3.2 New Buildings

The future is bright in downtown Aiken as public and private investment has created an atmosphere that is conducive to commercial development. The addition of new, infill construction in the downtown area is welcomed and represents a progressive mindset and robust economy. However, there is strong sentiment that new construction in the downtown area respect the architectural traditions that have preceded it. It is not necessary, nor even encouraged, that new construction copy historic styles, but rather interpret those principles and details in a contemporary manner. In so doing, the best of our architectural past is honored, yet a new tradition of architectural style is allowed to flourish.

In the pages that follow, many of the aforementioned traditional architectural principles and details are described so that an accurate understanding and interpretation in new designs can result.

3.2 Downtown Commercial

New Buildings

3.2.1 Building Heights

The majority of buildings in the commercial area of downtown Aiken are two stories in height. (See Figures 3.1.2 and 3.1.3) While there are exceptions, both higher and lower, in the downtown area, new buildings should strive to be compatible in height to the buildings to the immediate left and right. For example, a new building planned between two-storied buildings on each side should strive to be two stories in height as well. However, if a one-story building is proposed in the same location, a higher-than-normal upper façade and parapet should be considered to help it relate to the two-story buildings that surround it. (*See example at right of a one-story McDonald's that utilizes this technique to make it appear as a two-story building.*) Buildings that are taller than two stories should utilize techniques such as shorter floor-to-floor heights and running trims to relate to the heights of adjacent shorter buildings. Consult local building codes and zoning ordinances for maximum building heights.

This franchise architecture (which is typically one-story tall) utilizes a false upper façade to give it the appearance of being two-stories tall in order to relate to its surroundings.

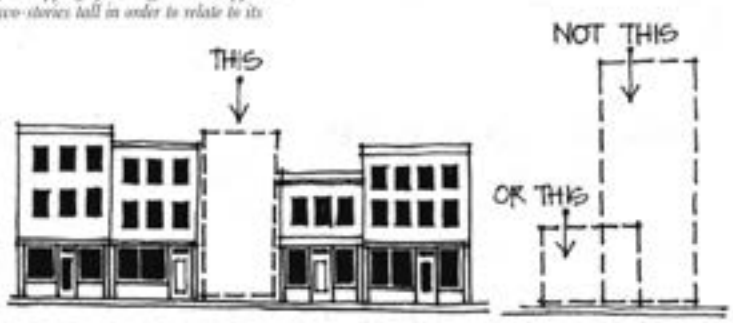


Figure 3.1.1 New, infill buildings should be approximately the same height as adjacent buildings.

Guidelines:

❖ Buildings in the downtown district should relate to the characteristic height of their immediate right and left.

❖ Except for areas where existing structures are predominantly single-story, the minimum height should typically be two stories, even if the building contains only one functional story.

❖ Low profile buildings will not yield the density and character desired for the downtown area, and should, therefore, be discouraged.

Prototypical block finds several different façades with various treatments yet a consistent building height that unifies the downtown.

Figure 3.1.2 Laurens looking west between Park and Richland. (continued on page 21)

Figure 3.1.3 Laurens looking west between Richland and Barnwell. (continued on page 21)

Blank wall at pedestrian level is unappealing. Scale & proportion of upper floor windows are incompatible with surroundings.

Façade articulation (reflected in paver pattern) creates a pleasing pedestrian experience beside this building.

The façade is literally the exterior of a building that "faces" or "fronts" the street. It is the architectural front of the building and is typically distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

Building façades, or "frontages," are critical to the pedestrian quality of the street. The width and pattern of façade elements can help pedestrians negotiate a street by providing a standard measure of progress. This is true regardless of the overall width of the building; for example, a building can extend for the full length of a block and still have a façade design that divides the building into smaller, pedestrian scale elements. The following guidelines deal with establishing a pedestrian-friendly rhythm in new buildings.

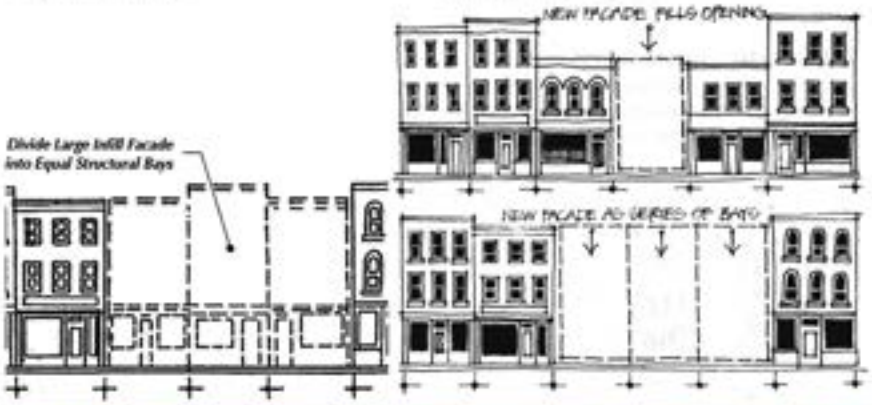
Large building sub-divided into bays with clear hierarchy and delineation of entry.

Long building sub-divided into bays with clear hierarchy and delineation of entry.

Guidelines:

❖ The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing, adjacent building façade elements should be respected in relation to new infill development.

❖ Whenever an infill building is proposed that is much wider than the typical façades on the street, the new building façade should be broken down into a series of appropriately proportioned "bays." (*See photo and sketch examples on this page that demonstrate this technique.*)



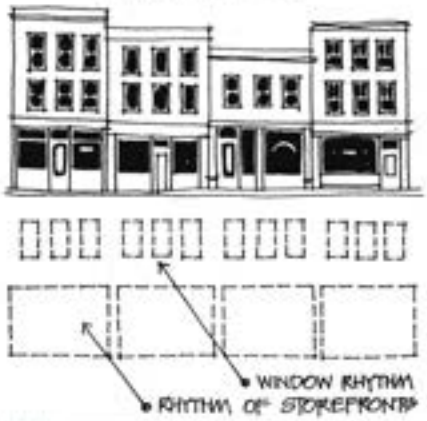
3.2.3 Alignment of Architectural Elements

The alignment of architectural features and elements, from one building to the next, creates visual continuity and establishes a coherent appearance throughout the downtown. On commercial buildings they create patterns along the face of the block that contribute to the overall character of the area. Building façades should be designed to reinforce these patterns and support the area's established visual character. Some façade elements that typically align with adjoining buildings include:

A building kick plates or bulkheads
B the top and bottom heights of first floor display windows
C transoms above entrance doors, and clerestory elements in display windows
D storefront windows
E awnings & canopies
F upper-story window openings and styles
G sign band above the street level
H parapet and cornice line
I window sills on upper floors
J roof lines and proportions

When these alignments are not considered, visual chaos can result as illustrated negatively in some of the adjacent photographs.

Dissimilar buildings (in terms of style, color, etc.) are unified by the alignment of architectural elements such as copings, awnings & canopies, storefront heights, etc.



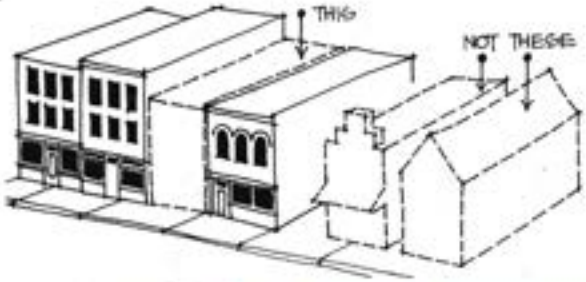
Visual chaos occurs when the alignment of traditional architectural elements are interrupted.

Guidelines:

❖ Whenever an infill building is proposed, the common horizontal elements (e.g., cornice line and window height, width, and spacing) established by neighboring structures should be identified and the infill design should complement and accentuate what is already in place.

Dissimilar buildings (in terms of style, color, etc.) are unified by the alignment of architectural elements such as copings, awnings & canopies, storefront heights, etc.

Vertical elements such as towers or church spires create variety on the city skyline.



The roof is one of the most important details on any building. It has often been said that the two most important places on a building are "where it meets the ground and where it meets the sky." In addition to finishing the building vertically, the roof can also be used to identify and establish entry points and to provide orientation from a distance. The upper-story details, such as running trims, windows (with companion sills, lintels, and occasionally hoods), tiles, medallions, recesses, cornice and fascia of a building are important elements to consider as they both create visual interest by their detail and are critical elements for alignment with adjacent buildings.

The roof form becomes the dominant element of this façade and is incompatible with its surroundings.

The triangular treatment at the center of the roof line creates interest and delineates entry. The upper floor details such as precast tiles and recessed panels above the windows creates interest at the second floor.

Guidelines

❖ Cornice lines of new buildings (horizontal rhythm element) should complement buildings on adjacent properties to maintain continuity.

❖ Radical roof pitches that create overly prominent or out-of-character buildings are discouraged. Shallow gables or fenestrated parapets can create visual interest while keeping the building in character with surrounding buildings. (*See two examples adjacent at left.*)

❖ In the case of civic structures and churches, however, some roof treatment such as a gable, dome or spire is appropriate and adds variety to the downtown skyline.

❖ Roof-mounted mechanical or utility equipment should be screened. The method of screening should be architecturally integrated with the structure in terms of materials, color, shape and size. Equipment should be screened by solid building elements (e.g., parapet wall) instead of after-the-fact add-on screening (e.g., wood or metal slats) whenever possible.

Both variety and uniformity were attained in the treatment of the roof line of these three buildings.

Occasional variety in the roof line is acceptable, particularly when horizontal alignment with adjacent buildings is maintained. This roof line would have been even more appealing had the original tile roof material been maintained.

3.2 Downtown Commercial

New Buildings

3.2.5 Wall Materials

The use of brick as the primary building material is encouraged, but not mandated, to reflect traditional building patterns in the commercial area of downtown Aiken. (See Figures 3.5.1 & 3.5.2 below which illustrate the preponderance of brick as the dominant building material in the commercial area of downtown Aiken). Choose accent materials similar in texture and scale to others in the district. These include, but are not limited to:

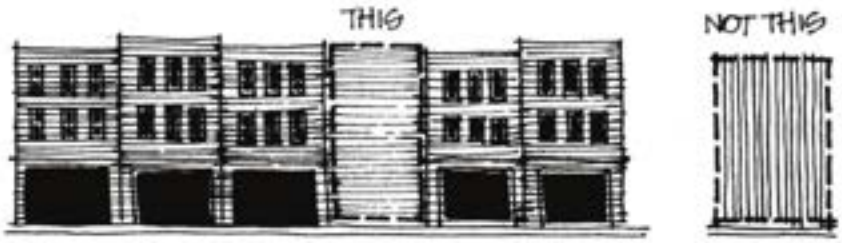
- Brick and stone masonry
- Wood details such as windows
- Clear or lightly tinted glass
- Ceramic accent tiles
- Concrete and stone as lintels and wood or concrete columns

The following materials are generally inappropriate as ***primary*** wall materials:

- Coarsely finished, "rustic" materials, such as wood shakes, shingles, or plywood.
- Corrugated metal
- Stucco surfaces, especially synthetic stucco applications
- Metal slipcovers
- Residential type sliding glass doors
- Imitation wood or stone siding
- Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material when near the pedestrian level
- Mirror or metalized reflective glass

Guidelines

❖ Wall materials should be selected to coordinate with neighboring structures and the overall downtown context. (*See example at right.*)



EXISTING FACADES OF SIMILAR MATERIALS

The preservation of the existing brick on this building relates it to the entire downtown area.

The reflective glass of this building would be highly inappropriate in a context such as Aiken where brick is the predominant building material.

Good use of brick as the predominant building material on a new building. This choice of wall material not only relates to the adjacent Court Tennis building, but also the downtown area as a whole.

Figure 3.5.1 Laurens looking west between Park and Richland.

Figure 3.5.2 Laurens looking west between Richland and Barnwell.

3.2.6 Exterior Wall Colors

Colors used on new commercial buildings in the Downtown should be coordinated with adjacent structures.

Guidelines

❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred based colors used on new Commercial-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted palette or pastels and whites. Additionally, deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors including but not limited to primary colors should be reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents.

❖ Any proposed color scheme including but not limited to those with trademarked colors or colors affiliated with a brand that is not in conformance with these guidelines must be approved by the Design Review Board.

❖ No fluorescent, day-glo, neon, or reflective colors should be used in the construction of a new Commercial-Type building.

3.2.7 Piers/Building Frame

The piers that frame the storefront and visually anchor the upper façade play an essential role in creating the unified architectural framework which organizes the street level's visual diversity. Where these piers have been eliminated or reduced in size, the architectural definition of the façade will appear weak and the upper architecture inadequately balanced. The piers' width and spacing should give both structural and visual support to the façade.

Guidelines

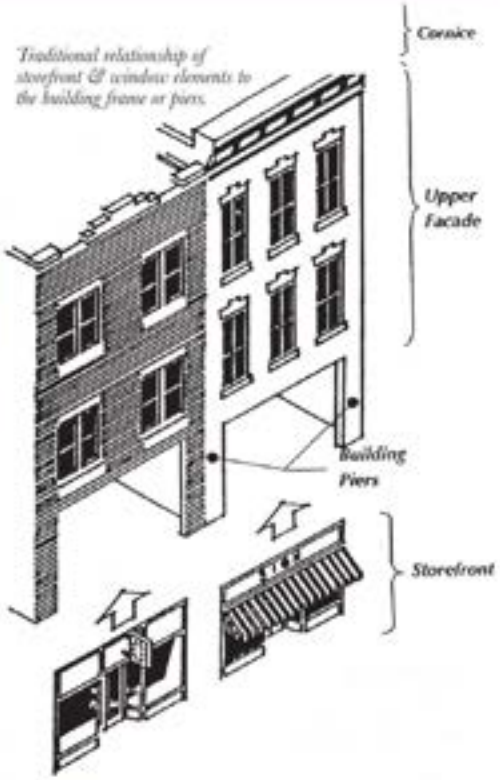
❖ To emphasize the piers' integral role in defining the architectural character of the upper façade, they should be treated with the same surface material.

❖ Piers which segment the storefront are recommended on wide buildings to improve proportional balance. (*See upper left example.*)

❖ Awnings and storefront elements should be constrained within the piers to further emphasize the vertical and supporting nature of the piers to the upper floor.

The piers on this building are expressed clearly by virtue of their material, color, and continuity from the first floor to the upper floor.

Traditional relationship of storefront & window elements to the building frame or piers.



The absence of framing piers and their replacement with visually inappropriately sized columns make the building look as though it will collapse on itself.

These two buildings do a good job of expressing the masonry piers that support the upper façade. However, they could have been improved had the awnings been constrained within the piers.

Full-lite, wood doors, as shown in these two photos were traditionally used in downtown commercial districts. Contemporary materials and interpretations of this tradition are appropriate.

Tri-partite window provides visual interest.

Example of new construction that interprets historic patterns of doors and windows while using contemporary materials and detailing.

Historically, windows were true divided lights in nature. Traditionally, most windows installed during the period of Aiken's primary downtown commercial development were 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 in pattern. However, installations such as the 6-over-1 pattern shown above were used successfully to introduce character and variety.

Arch-topped windows can provide visual interest and character to a building. 1-over-1 pattern.

True divided light wood windows were the norm in traditional construction. 4-over-4 pattern.

The windows installed in this existing building are inappropriate. They should relate to, and fill, the entire arched opening in the masonry veneer.

The consideration of horizontal alignment of door (storefront) and window elements unifies these three buildings of dissimilar height, bays and detailing. Predominantly 2-over-2 windows facilitate unity.

The detailing of this door is inappropriate to the building itself and the overall character of the district.

Front doors and primary entrances are among the most important elements of traditional buildings. Likewise, the placement, size and detailing of windows in the façade are among the most character-defining elements of a building. These two elements in new construction must simultaneously relate harmoniously to the new building while being compatible with adjacent buildings and the overall nature of doors & windows in the district. (*See figures 3.1.2 & 3.1.3 for typical door and window treatments in the downtown area.*)

Guidelines

❖ Doors in new structures should reflect the proportions (height and width) of doors in the existing structure and/or the district.

❖ Windows should be compatible in proportion, shape, location, pattern, and size with windows of the characteristic structures in the commercial downtown district.

❖ Windows in new structures should reflect the window patterns and proportions of the existing structures in the downtown area and utilize similar materials as found on most doors and windows in the district.

❖ Openings should indicate floor levels, and should not occur between floors.

❖ Consider the horizontal alignment of door and window elements with adjacent structures (*See Section 3.3*) when considering floor-to-floor heights and door and window placement.

3.2 Downtown Commercial

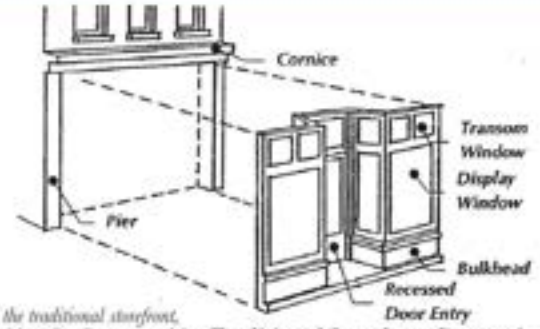
New Buildings

3.2.9 Storefront

The first floor of downtown commercial buildings should be primarily transparent, with a pedestrian orientation and "storefront appearance." It should be noted that the term "storefront" does not necessarily imply that a building has a retail commercial use; storefronts are simply the parts of the building that face the street and connect with the sidewalk.

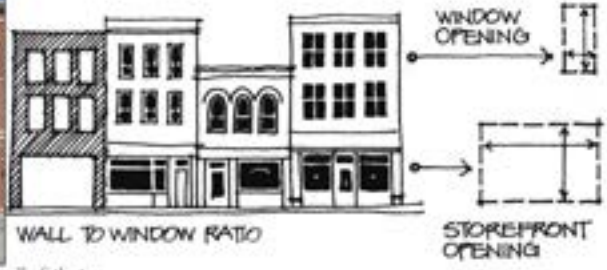
The ground floor of the typical downtown Aiken structure was designed to be what is now referred to as a "traditional" storefront or sales floor. Traditional storefront buildings were designed to provide space for two or more businesses, separated by masonry columns or piers forming distinct storefront structural bays. New buildings should continue this tradition in a contemporary manner. Examples of successful contemporary interpretations in an existing context may be seen in the photographs to the left.

Successful "contemporary interpretation" of the traditional storefront, with three-part vertical & horizontal composition. See diagram at right.

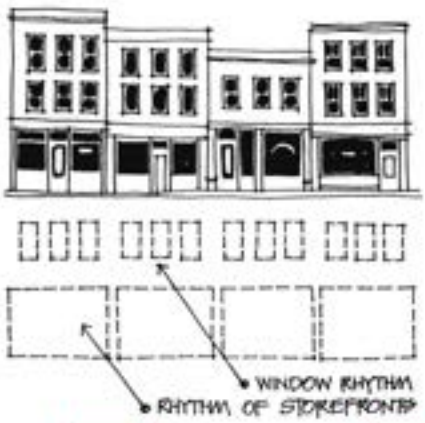


Traditional Storefront Composition

Successful "contemporary interpretation" of the traditional storefront separating the "display windows" with brick piers, and maintaining recessed door entry.



Successful "contemporary interpretation" of the traditional storefront. This building uses a glass canopy to create the covered entry of a historic storefront canvas awning



Examples of inappropriate storefront alterations. From left to right: new storefront features a "colonial theme" that is stylistically inappropriate; reflective glass prohibits pedestrian interaction with the storefront; storefront has been removed entirely and covered up with incompatible wall material and columns appear undersized and "weak."

Guidelines

❖ The main entrance to a building should be emphasized to delineate a clear point of arrival, or entry.

❖ Commercial storefront entries should typically be recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This provides more area for display space, a sheltered transition area to the interior of the building and emphasizes the entrance.

❖ As long as the traditional storefront composition *(that is, "three-up-and-three across." Vertically: bulkhead, display window & transom. Horizontally: display window, door, display window)* is adhered to, a variety of building materials such as metal, wood or masonry are appropriate as the framing members for the bulkhead, storefront display windows, and transom.

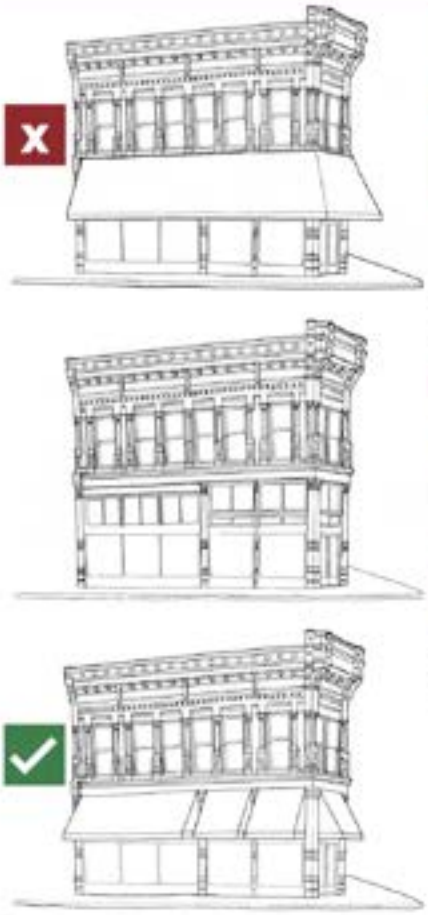


Figure 3.11.1 Illustrations depicting appropriate and inappropriate placement of awnings. Awnings at top do not respect the supporting frame of the building nor the corner entrance. Awnings at bottom fit within the building frame and break at the corner to highlight entry.

Perfectly executed awning installation.

Metal and glass canopy interprets the historic role of a canvas awning or metal canopy and clarifies entry on this new building.

Metal canopy interprets the historical role of the traditional canvas awning.

Steel canopy interprets the historical role of the metal canopy.

The shingled "roof" awning/canopy is inappropriate to the scale of the building & conceals the upper façade.

Shingled canopy appears as oversized awning concealing all upper façade components.

Awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening, and emphasize the building's proportions. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details. Where possible, align awnings with others on the block, particularly the bottom edge. Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom. While it is generally preferred that no signage be applied to the body (or sloped portion) of the awning the valence may be used for simple signage such as the name or address of the business located in the subject building.

Guidelines

❖ Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the building. In general, solid color awnings should be used on buildings with intricate and abundant architectural detailing, while striped awnings might be utilized on simpler buildings to introduce color and vitality.

❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices.

❖ Metal canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building façade and not appearing as tacked-on additions.

❖ It is strongly preferred that awnings in the downtown commercial area not utilize vinyl nor be backlit.

3.2.11 Balconies

Balconies are railed or balustraded platforms that project from the building to create a sense (sometimes actual, sometimes implied) of the interior of a building being extended to the outside. Second story balconies are characteristic of a number of buildings found in downtown Aiken. When used appropriately in new buildings, balconies can add color, detail and functionality (i.e. access to outdoors from upper floors) that a building would otherwise lack.

Well executed balcony and support bracket.

Example of portico balcony/canopy from downtown Aiken.

Guidelines

❖ Integrate the balcony into the structure either by setting it into the building or by incorporating a well-detailed supporting bracket system.

❖ Introduce ornament and detailing in balcony railings to add character and visual interest to the building.

❖ Use appropriately scaled and detailed brackets or supports.

Contemporary interpretation of traditional balcony element creates a sense of extending the inside of the building to the outside.

Contemporary interpretation of traditional balcony element on this building introduces color and detail.

Appropriate balcony installation in downtown Aiken.

Positively, this balcony installation provides a level of detail/ornament. Negatively, it should be questioned why you would have a balcony that is inaccessible/non-functional since the windows behind are fixed in nature.

This kind of building would not be suitable for the Old Aiken Overlay due to the level of glazing.

This design is far more appropriate due to its continuous horizontal trim and recessed windows, as well as the creation of bays at the first level.

This section does not overrule any existing guidelines; it expands upon that which has been previously stated in this document. New buildings and Additions in the Downtown Overlay District should maintain the vertical plane established by adjacent buildings.

The first story of multi-story structures may set back a maximum of 12 ft. from the front property line with columns supporting the upper floors.

Exterior Ornamentation:
1. Horizontal trim is encouraged at the top of the 1st or 2nd story level and at the top of the building.

2. Predominantly vertical trim should be avoided above the 2nd floor level.

Glazing:
The area of glazing above 2nd floor should be minimum of 12% and maximum of 40% of the total facade above 2nd floor.

Glazing above the 2nd floor should be no more than 25 SF per window, including frame, with vertical/horizontal proportions of 1.75/1 which allows for a 42 SF double window. Reflective glass is strongly discouraged.

Glazing is desirable on the first floor to provide an open and welcoming environment for pedestrians.

While the facade of upper floors helps define the street space, it is punctuated by its window openings so depth and shadow are as important as size of the openings. The actual glazing should be recessed 4-6 from the building face. Likewise, the window frame should have a thickness of at least 4" including the sash.

Materials
See the current guidelines in section 3.2.5 on "Wall Materials". Materials shall be similar to that of surrounding structures and will be approved by DRB on a case by case basis. Use of more than three materials on the exterior of a single building is discouraged.

Design Approach
Architectural design of the 1st and 2nd floor façade should relate closely to the existing one and two story downtown storefronts where more vertical elements and glazing are typical.

The ground level floor of buildings over two stories should reflect the character of existing structures of the Old Aiken Overlay through facade articulation and the creation of appropriate "bays" as noted in Section 3.2.2 on "Facade Proportions and Rhythm". Entrances should be clearly defined and easily visible to provide an inviting and pedestrian-friendly environment in Aiken's Downtown.

The Bank of Western Carolina, which was previously located in downtown Aiken, is a good example of what buildings over two stories should look like in the Old Aiken Overlay.

The use of more than three materials on the exterior of a building is discouraged.

3.2.13 Structured Parking

Monolithic structures devoted solely to parking would not be appropriate.

As an example, this building shows that it is possible to have structures with parking on the interior that don't make their purpose obvious. While the details may not align with downtown Aiken, this building with interior parking would contain suitable mixed uses.

The parking garage on Cumberland Street in Charleston, SC is another example of how mixed use parking could be appropriate for the Old Aiken Overlay.

This section does not overrule any existing guidelines; it expands upon that which has been previously stated in this document. Structured Parking should be designed with as much attention to architectural detail as any other building in the Old Aiken Overlay District. Parking garage entrances should be minimized visually, and curb cut widths should be limited where possible. Consider adding parking entrances and exits to lanes and alleyways instead of prominently displaying them on avenues and streets.

Incorporating mixed uses, such as retail and restaurants, on street frontages at ground level is recommended in order to provide a continuous pedestrian oriented facade. First and second levels should be distinguished from upper levels to maintain the scale and character of existing buildings in the Old Aiken Overlay District. Entire buildings devoted to parking are discouraged.

While upper level openings on parking buildings may be larger than those of other uses, openings should include masonry or railing details compatible with adjacent buildings. Automobiles should not be visible from main thoroughfares on the first level.

The top level of parking buildings should include parapets, roof overhangs, or other design features which would be typical of downtown buildings.

Facade proportions (height to width) should be consistent across other buildings.

3.2 Downtown Commercial

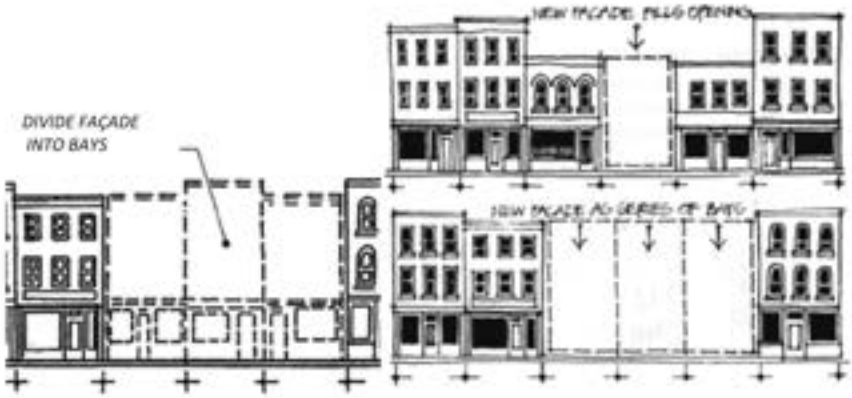
New Buildings

3.2.14.1 Large-Footprint Buildings - Overview

Any new construction in the Downtown Business District should be sympathetic to the traditional development pattern of Downtown Aiken. This section is not intended to replace other sections of the Old Aiken Guidelines; but rather assist in the implementation of existing guidelines as they apply to large-footprint buildings.

Example of scale and variance in façade breakup in Downtown Aiken

Traditionally, buildings in Aiken were constructed on individual parcels, which typically could be as narrow as 24 ft. Storefronts were often 24 ft. and usually less than 50 ft. wide, if parcels were combined for a double storefront. Most commercial buildings in the Downtown Business District included a second story with living space or storage. Buildings in Downtown Aiken are predominantly two- and three-stories in height; and single-story buildings are less common, as are buildings over three stories in height. Thus, all proposed construction is best assessed in the context of a specific location to determine the relationship with the existing urban framework.



Guidelines:

❖ Buildings in the Downtown District should relate to the height of the existing Downtown buildings.

❖ Low profile buildings do not yeild the density and character desired for Downtown Aiken and are discouraged.

❖ Minimum height should typically be two-stories.

Example of well-defined vertical breaks, and effective use of design elements to provide unique building facades for buildings of similar massing and scale

Example of where return to scale and style of pre-existing structure may be appropriate.

Scale and Proportion

An effective way for larger-footprint buildings to relate to the existing rhythm of the existing Downtown fabric is the use of vertical breaks. New larger-footprint buildings constructed in the Downtown Business District should maintain the scale of existing and/or historic building facades by incorporating vertical breaks at intervals of 24 to 60 feet apart. To replicate individual building fronts, designers are encouraged to vary horizontal trim, cornices, and parapet heights to minimize continuous horizontal building lines.

Guidelines:

❖ Large-footprint buildings should be broken down into a series of appropriately proportioned "bays" or vertical breaks.

❖ When creating "bays" or vertical breaks, large-footprint buildings should vary horizontal trim, cornices, parapet heights, and other design elements.

❖ Infill development may incorporate elements that reflect adjacent structures of historic significance, or pre-existing structures of historic significance on the subject site.

New Buildings

3.2.14.3 Large-Footprint Buildings - Storefronts New & Windows

Downtown buildings are typically distinguishable by their individual storefronts which include large shop windows and considerably more detail in surrounding masonry than upper floors. The height of the first floor facade often varies from façade to façade. To reinforce vertical breaks in the facade, vary first floor wall heights and heights of horizontal trim on upper levels. Additionally, building signage should be designed to address the pedestrian nature of Downtown Aiken, and should not be uniformly applied to all storefronts.

Example of appropriate and inappropriate storefront features in Downtown Aiken

Windows in upper floors, although smaller in proportion, provide opportunities for added detail at heads and sills. Ample wood window frames combined with wall thicknesses of older buildings generated more of a three dimensional façade on traditional multi-story buildings. Additionally, variation in upper floor architectural details, such as the cornice, parapet, string course or other such features provide an opportunity for delineation within vertical breaks.

Examples of appropriate features and alignment of upper floor openings in Downtown Aiken

Guidelines:

❖ Doors and windows in structures should reflect patterns and proportions of existing structures in Downtown Aiken.

❖ Large-footprint buildings with multiple storeforonts should vary storefront elements to reflect the character of Downtown Aiken.

❖ New buildings should provide adequately-sized window frames with approperiately recessed windows for upper level stories.

❖ Window characteristics and upper-floor detail elements should vary slightly along with vertical breaks in the facade.

3.2.14.4 Large-Footprint Buildings - Materials

Stone masonry and brick are examples of appropriate building materials for Downtown Aiken

While there are a variety of materials utilized in the exterior of downtown buildings, including painted and unpainted brick, as well as stucco, a primary material usually extends through each floor from wainscot to the parapet. The wainscot, if one exists, may be a contrasting material to provide a more durable finish at ground level. Avoid alternating materials of contrasting color within one facade panel.

Glass curtain walls & corrugated metal as a primary material are considered inappropriate building materials for Downtown Aiken

Guidelines:

- Appropriate materials in Downtown Aiken include brick and stone masonry, wood details, clear or lightly tinted glass, ceramic tile accesnts, concrete and stone as lintels, and wood or concrete columns.

- Inappropriate materials include simulated wood siding, corrugated metal as primary materials, and glass curtain walls.

- Natural colors or a muted palette are preferred; brighter, more vivid colors may be used for accents on a limited basis.

- No fluorescent or day-glo colors, or reflective materials should be used in new structures.

Wood or tile may be considered as accent materials.buildings of similar massing and scale

Existing Buildings

3.3.1 Renovation

The renovation of existing Neighborhood Area Commercial-Type buildings provides an excellent opportunity to maintain and reinforce the architectural character of Aiken's neighborhoods, which generally reflects an early 20th century roadside style, and is encouraged. The existing architectural character of the Commercial-Type buildings in the Neighborhood Areas are not as strong as that of the Downtown because many of the historic buildings are gone and newer structures, which are not consistent with the desired character of the Neighborhoods, have replaced them.

Guidelines:

❖ Existing structures which exhibit the characteristics detailed for new construction or those with the desired Downtown or Neighborhood Commercial-Type or historic residential characteristics should be treated as contributing structures and efforts to reinstate these features should be encouraged when they are renovated or expanded.

❖ When any exterior redevelopment or expansion is undertaken on existing structures which are not in conformance with the site and architectural guidelines for new Neighborhood Commercial-Type structures, effort should be made to modify façades to come into conformance with the standards for new buildings.

❖ When an existing structure is to be renovated or expanded, care should be taken to complete the work in a manner that respects the original design and character of the structure. The methodology guidelines for renovation to existing Downtown Commercial-Type Buildings (**Section 3.1**) can be applied to improvement or restoration of contributing Neighborhood Commercial-Type Buildings to aid owners whenever a structure is to be renovated or expanded.

❖ The guidelines in section 3.1.7 Painting should be used as general direction for restoration or modification to existing neighborhood commercial-type buildings. However the following guidelines should also be observed as indication of the preferred color palette.

1. A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred based colors used on existing Commercial-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted palette or pastels and whites. Additionally, deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors, including but not limited to primary colors should be reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents.

2. Any proposed color scheme including but not limited to those with trademarked colors or colors affiliated with a brand that is not in conformance with these guidelines must be approved by the Design Review Board for use on signs.

3. No fluorescent, day-glo, neon, or reflective colors should be used in the construction of a new Commercial-Type building.

❖ If a building historically used as a residence is converted to a commercial use, the residential character of the architecture should be maintained. For renovation to residential structures being converted to commercial uses the design guidelines in **Chapter 5** should be used to aid owners in choosing the appropriate methods.

3.3.2 Demolition & Relocation of Historic Structures

Demolition of existing buildings is strongly discouraged. Consequently, the Design Review Board will use its authority to delay demolition of historic structures whenever possible to investigate means to save the building.

However, it is recognized that, in some cases, older structures may deteriorate to the point that rehabilitation is technically infeasible. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not appropriate ***AND*** demonstrate a clear plan for the re-use of the site and any related new construction after demolition.

Guidelines:

❖ If an existing building's condition is deteriorated such that rehabilitation and use of the building is judged to not be feasible, a request for demolition may be considered by the Review Board. It is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not feasible.

❖ If public safety is threatened, interim steps may be taken to close and stabilize the structure.

❖ Any requests for relocations to or from the Overlay District shall be reviewed by the Review Board.

❖ Any application for a demolition shall include plans for the re-development of the site after demolition.

3.4 Neighborhood Commercial

New Buildings

3.4.1 Building Height & Scale

The traditional Commercial-Type buildings along in the Neighborhood Areas are generally one or two stories in height; have a rectangular footprint with the width of the building being approximately 1/2 its depth; and occupying 40-60% of the frontage of the lot. New Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings should generally respect these proportions.

Guidelines:

❖ Various story heights ranging between 8 and 12 feet per story are encouraged. However, buildings shall not exceed the maximum building height as specified in the Zoning Ordinance Table 4.3.1. Nonresidential Design Standards.

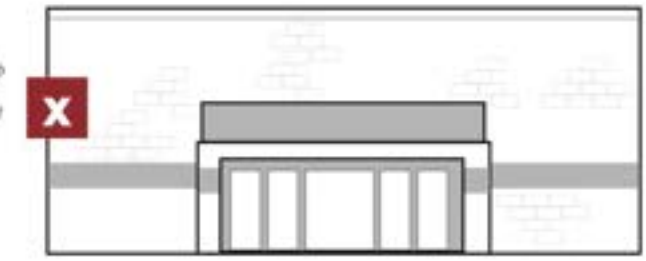
❖ Commercial-Type buildings located adjacent to residential buildings should be designed to have a total height of no more than 20 feet for a distance of 35 feet from the right-of-way. Buildings may be stepped-up to the maximum heights beyond this distance.

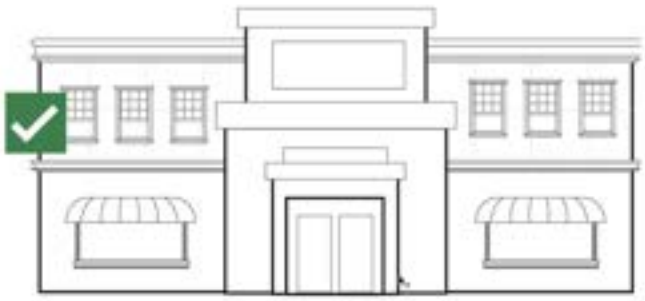
❖ Single-story buildings with an exterior finished wall height of more than 12 feet should not be permitted unless:

1. The building is set back from the primary road by 200 feet or more, with multi-story buildings, or smaller single story buildings located between the building and the primary road; OR

2. The façade can be vertically articulated to present the appearance of two or more fully finished stories with correct proportions as described in 3.4.2.

Above: A proposed commercial-type building should respect the adjacent residence by stepping up the building height over twenty feet only at a distance of 35 feet from the shared property line.





The three elevations show the same size building façade of about 20 feet in height. The first image is unacceptable because it appears very boxy and out of character with the Neighborhood Areas. The acceptable options show how the same size façade can be modified to appear as if it is a two-story building and break-up the mass of the structure.

The balance between the roof form and the use of upper-story windows helps maintain proportion in this structure.

The proportion between the height, depth, and width of buildings is as important to the character of the outer areas as are the individual dimensions themselves. The preferred portions for Neighborhood Commercial-Type primary façades reflect approximately a 2-to-3 ratio of either vertical or horizontal proportions. These proportions should be considered for the entire bulk of the structure including the roof.

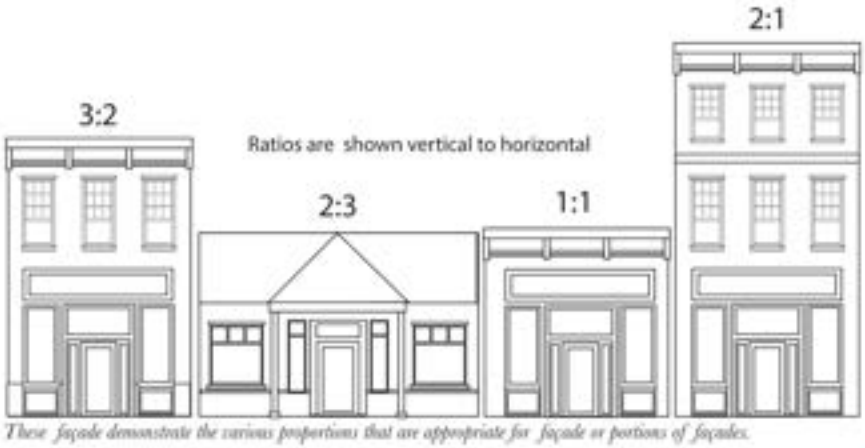
Guidelines

❖ The external appearance of buildings should be balanced so that buildings do not appear top heavy. Boxy and visually overbearing treatments of the upper portion of the façade are inappropriate.

The longer façade of this building is articulated both vertically and horizontally through the use of bays and a water table, string coursing and a cornice moulding.

❖ The primary façade of buildings are encouraged to have a square or slightly rectangular or taller appearance.

❖ The exterior of the building should have a clear base or foundation, a middle, and a top section with an exterior indication of a change in floors. These façade elements should be used to emphasize the proportions of the building and relate the vertical dimension of the structure to the human-scale.



These façade demonstrate the various proportions that are appropriate for façade or portions of façades.

3.4 Neighborhood Commercial

New Buildings

3.4.3 Architectural Elements & Details

Application and use of architectural elements and details lends style, character, and quality to a building. Building façades should include architectural detail to present a finished appearance that will enhance the character of the Neighborhoods. Proper use of details also adds to façade articulation and breaks otherwise large expanses of a façade into more human-scale elements.

The proportion between an overall building façade and various details cannot be generalized for all architectural styles. However, careful attention is necessary when considering detailing. Generally, buildings with tall stories and large-scale façades should have heavier mouldings and larger windows than a building with shorter stories. By keeping in mind the preferred portion of the façade and/or bays in section 3.4.2 and that a story should be between 8 and 12 feet, a rhythm can be established. Architectural details should support the preferred proportions and rhythm.

Aiken's existing neighborhood commercial uses are diverse and located in close proximity to a variety of residential neighborhoods. The existing structures in the city provide an eclectic array of architectural styles which should be drawn from when considering the detailing and style of a new building.

While no one architectural style is required for new Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings, the identification of a specific architectural theme or style is encouraged and appropriate details are encouraged for all new Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings to convey this style.

Guidelines

❖ The following architectural elements or details should be used in the design of new Neighborhood Commercial-Type Buildings:

A. Kick plates or bulkheads, or other base material
B. Water Table
C. Columns, colonnades, pilasters, or piers
D. Porticos, awnings, canopies or other entrance features
E. Bays or recesses
F. Sidelights and/or transom windows
G. String course or belt coursing
H. Window details such as projecting lintels and sills, mullions or muntins
I. Transom or clerestory windows
J. Cornices and corbels, and
K. Overhanging eaves.

The size/scale of detail elements should be proportionally correct for the overall structure and contribute to a cohesive identity for the building. Detailing which is too small or too large can create the appearance that detailing was "tacked-on" after the design of the building was completed and should be avoided.

The preferred elevation shows a building with windows that are approximately 66% of the story height. The other elevations show the same building with detailing that is too small and too large to convey the effect of proper proportions.

This is an inappropriate application of a mansard style roof for Commercial-Type buildings in Neighborhood Areas.

This fast-food restaurant uses a gabled and hipped roof form, this roof type is appropriate on commercial-type buildings less than 15 feet in height in neighborhoods.

Roof treatments and upper-story details contribute strongly to the appearance of a building and significantly impact the balance and mass of a structure. The roof form and upper-story detailing should be designed to enhance the intended proportions of the building and should never become the dominant element of the façade to avoid creating "top heavy" buildings.

Guidelines:

❖ The use of cornice moldings, pediments or other capping features to delineate the "top" of the buildings is encouraged.

❖ Flat or mansard-style roofs should not be used on single-story buildings or buildings with a finished wall height of 15 feet or less.

❖ Mansard-style roofs should only be considered appropriate on buildings with three or more stories.

❖ Gabled roof forms must be used on buildings with finished wall heights of less than 15 feet. The distance from the finished wall height to the peak of the roof should not be greater than half the total building height to prevent an overbearing roof form. Hipped, front or side gable roof forms are appropriate. As a typical roof form in the Aiken area the "broken" or double gable form is particularly appropriate.

❖ Side-gabled roof forms are encouraged to incorporate other detailing including but not limited to dormers to break up large areas of the roof.

❖ Large footprint, or square footprint single-story buildings should be designed with compound gabled roof forms to create variety and reduce the apparent bulk of the roof forms.

The illustration to the left shows the different types of pitched roof forms, most of which are appropriate on single-story buildings except the Mansard or French roof.

3.4.4 Roof & Upper Story Details (continued)

❖ Flat roofs with parapets and decorative cornices are appropriate on buildings with at least two stories with finished wall heights of more than 20 feet.

❖ Creative treatments of traditional roof elements to screen rooftop equipment from view from the primary road and/or adjacent residential uses are encouraged. Roof-mounted mechanical or utility equipment should be screened in a manner that is architecturally integrated with the structure through the use of materials, color, shape and size. The screening materials should be solid building elements such as parapet walls, or cupolas rather than add-on screening materials whenever possible.

Traditional roof structures such as these cupolas can be used to house roof top equipment on gabled roof forms. On flat roofs with parapets, equipment can be placed out of site by keeping the parapet higher than the equipment.

The use of a parapet and dimensional cornice mouldings adds depth and character to the building. Additionally the parapet serves as an integrated element of the building that screens roof-top equipment.

Exterior building materials used on new Neighborhood Commercial-Type Buildings should convey high-quality design.

3.4.5a Permitted Materials

❖ New Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings should have a primary exterior covering of brick, stone, wood siding (clapboard, board-and-batten, or shingle) or modern manufactured materials that realistically replicate the appearance of the natural materials listed above unless listed as a prohibited material below.

❖ Accent materials shall comprise no more than 25% of the building's exterior wall surface. Neighborhood Commercial-Type Buildings may incorporate any of the permitted primary materials as an accent. Additional acceptable accent materials include: stucco, tiles, terra-cotta, exterior insulated finish systems, or decorative concrete masonry units.

❖ Other materials that are not listed as prohibited may be considered by the Design Review Board on a case-by-case basis as a primary or accent building material.

3.4.5b Prohibited Materials

❖ Exterior covering materials that are prohibited on new Neighborhood Commercial-Type buildings include: vinyl, aluminum, or steel siding, corrugated steel, standard concrete masonry units, tilt-up concrete, highly reflective or mirrored materials.

3.4.5c Preferred Colors

❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred base colors for use on new Commercial-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted palette or of pastels and whites. Deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors including but not limited to primary colors should be coordinated with the base colors and reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents. Any proposed color scheme not consistent with these guidelines including but not limited to those with trademarked or brand affiliated colors must be approved by the Design Review Board.

3.4.5d Prohibited Colors

❖ No fluorescent, neon, or reflective colors should be used in the construction of a new commercial-type building.

3.4.5e Variation of Materials and Colors in Facades

❖ Variation in materials and colors on a façade is permissible, provided the variation enhances the human-scale of the buildings, and is used to define specific elements of the building. The number of materials and colors on the exterior façade of a building should be limited to a maximum combination of four (4) complementary materials and colors.

❖ Changes in materials should occur at inside corners of buildings or transition with an appropriate trim detail. Material changes at outside corners or in the middle of a wall give an impression of thinness and artificiality which should be avoided.

❖ The use of coordinating trim material is encouraged on all façades of a building, and should be used to break larger wall planes into smaller more human-scale elements.

3.4 Neighborhood Commercial

New Buildings

3.4.6 Doors, Entrances & Windows

The placement and design of primary entrances and windows are among the most contributing elements to the overall appearance of a building. The placement, size, and detailing of windows and entrance ways should enhance the overall design of the building and relate to the desired high-quality character for corridor development.

Guidelines

❖ Windows and doors should be detailed with architectural elements such as projecting sills, molded surrounds and/or lintels.

❖ Doors and entrance ways should be enhanced with transom windows, or sidelights to increase the transparency of the building's façade. They should be emphasized to delineate a clear point of arrival or entry.

❖ Doors in new structures should be appropriately scaled for the building and include detailing that relates the entrance way to the overall architectural theme of the structure. Doors with full or partial lights are preferred.

❖ Commercial storefront entries should typically be recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This provides a sheltered transition area to the interior of the building and emphasizes the entrance.

❖ Windows in new structures should be appropriately scaled and located for the building's size and scale (a window should be approximately 50% to 66% the height of the story), and include detailing that relates the windows to the overall architectural theme of the structure.

Covered corner entry.

A window with projecting lintel and sills.

Changes in the roof line, recesses and covered entrance adds emphasis to the main entry into these buildings.

Examples of traditional storefronts show the various parts of an entry way including transom windows, recessed doors, and display windows.

The placement of the windows both horizontally and vertically reinforces the bays with a slight modification in the pattern between bays. The windows are also aligned vertically and horizontally. The windows are approximately six feet in height and the building façade is approximately 20 feet in height. Notice also that the distance between the top and bottom row of windows is not greater than the height of the windows.

Although these two buildings are different styles and have different windows, the windows are aligned vertically along the block creating consistency and reinforcing a unified character for the area.

❖ Window placement should emphasize the articulation of the building's façade and maintain a consistent pattern or rhythm to these ends.

❖ Vertically proportioned windows that have a greater height than width are preferred. However, horizontally long windows may be appropriate when they are used as storefront display windows, are consistent with the architectural style of the building or are multi-partite that have divided lights emphasizing a rhythm that is compatible with the architecture of the building.

❖ On buildings with an exterior finished wall height of 12 or more feet, second story or clerestory windows should be used in combination with other architectural detailing to create the appearance of a second story. This is particularly important on single-story structures with a wall height exceeding 15 feet.

❖ Consider the horizontal alignment of door and window elements with adjacent structures when considering floor heights and door and window placement.

❖ All window openings should be fitted with transparent glass. Tinted glass may be appropriate for climate control, but fully opaque or mirrored glass is discouraged.

3.4.7 COVERED WALKWAYS

The use of awnings, canopies, trellises, arcades, and balconies to create sheltered or covered walkways is encouraged on new commercial structures in the corridors. These features provide shelter from the elements and enhance the architecture of the building.

Guidelines

❖ For further information on awning and canopy placement and design please refer to section 3.2.10. Awnings and Canopies.

❖ Awning, trellis, arcade, and balconies should be constructed of materials which are complementary to the primary exterior materials and style of the building. While materials may be in addition to the primary materials, the colors used in the covered walkways should be part of the palette used on the main structure.

Chapter 4

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Industrial Architectural Guidelines for Industrial-Type Buildings

Industrial-Type

4.1

Existing Buildings

4.1.1 Facade

4.1.2 Window & Door

There are not many existing Industrial-Type Buildings with a strong contributing character. Many of the oldest buildings have been modified and the newer structures were not built with a specific style in mind. Many of the existing Industrial-Type Buildings are large block buildings or pole structures with minimal windows or detailing.

Because there are a wide variety of existing Industrial-Type structures, it is difficult to pinpoint an exact set of guidelines for renovation or alteration of these structures.

The renovation or re-use of existing Industrial-Type Buildings offers an opportunity to improve and reinforce the architectural character of Aiken's industrial areas. As with the Commercial-Type buildings in the Neighborhood Areas many of the historic buildings are gone and newer structures, which are not consistent with the desired traditional character of the Neighborhood Areas, have replaced them.

Existing structures which exhibit the characteristics detailed for new Industrial-Type buildings or those with a historic designation should be treated as contributing structures and efforts to reinstate the contributing features should be encouraged when they are renovated or expanded.

4.1.1 Facade

- Do not apply theme designs that alter the original character or architectural style of existing Industrial-Type Buildings.

- Preservation or restoration of ornamental details are encouraged. Adding more elaborate detailing than was originally present is discouraged.

- Retain original materials wherever possible through repair and restoration. Avoid concealing original façade materials. If the original façade has been covered uncover it if possible.

4.1.2 Window & Door

- Whenever possible repair rather than replace existing windows or doors. If repair is not feasible, and windows or doors must be replaced, match the existing or original in terms of size, materials, method of operation and detailing.

- The window or door opening itself should be carefully preserved. It should not be made larger or smaller to accommodate a different size window or door.

- If original windows or doors have been changed, restoration of the original size and type is recommended.

- If internal modifications to a building require a window or door opening facing a primary street to be closed, the opening should be filled with a compatible building material while maintaining the rhythm of the existing window pattern.

- Windows and doors may be made of modern materials as long as they replicate the original shapes, detailing and form of the original window as closely as possible.

4.1.3 Painting, Repair & Cleaning

- The painting, repair & cleaning of existing Industrial-Type structures that are determined to have historical significance should be completed in a manner as described in **Section 3.1** of these Guidelines in subsections 3.1.7, 3.1.8, and 3.1.9. on pages 43, 44, and 45.

- The guidelines in section 3.1.7 Painting should be used as general direction for restoration or modification to existing neighborhood commercial-type buildings. However the following guidelines should also be observed as indication of the preferred color palette.

    1. A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred based colors used on existing Industrial-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted palette or pastels and whites. Additionally, deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim.

    2. Brighter, more vivid colors, including but not limited to primary colors should be reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents. No fluorescent, day-glo, neon, or reflective colors should be used.

    3. Any proposed color scheme including but not limited to those with trademarked colors or colors affiliated with a brand that is not in conformance with these guidelines must be approved by the Design Review Board for use on signs.

4.1.4. Demolition & Relocation of Historic Structures

Demolition of existing buildings is strongly discouraged. Consequently, the Design Review Board will use its authority to delay demolition of historic structures whenever possible to investigate means to save the building.

However, it is recognized that, in some cases, older structures may deteriorate to the point that rehabilitation is technically infeasible. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not appropriate ***AND*** demonstrate a clear plan for the re-use of the site and any related new construction after demolition.

Guidelines:

- If an existing building's condition is deteriorated such that rehabilitation and use of the building is judged to not be feasible, a request for demolition may be considered by the Review Board. It is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not feasible.

- If public safety is threatened, interim steps may be taken to close and stabilize the structure.

- Any requests for relocations to or from the Overlay District shall be reviewed by the Review Board.

- Any application for a demolition shall include plans for the re-development of the site after demolition.

Industrial-Type

4.2.1 Building Heights & Scale

The existing Industrial-Type Buildings in the Neighborhood Areas vary in height and bulk. However, by nature these buildings are often larger than their commercial counterparts. Warehousing and equipment often require larger open spaces.

New Industrial-Type buildings should be held to the same high standards as Commercial-Type buildings.

Guidelines

❖ Various story heights are appropriate; however, buildings shall not exceed the maximum building height as specified in the Zoning Ordinance Table 4.3.1. Nonresidential Design Standards.

❖ Industrial-Type Buildings located adjacent to residential buildings should be designed to have a total height of no more than 20 feet for a distance of 35 feet from the right-of-way or property line. Buildings may be stepped-up to the maximum heights beyond this distance.

❖ Single-story buildings with an exterior finished height of more than 12 feet should not be permitted unless:

1. The building is setback from the primary road by 200 feet or more, with multi-story buildings, or smaller single-story buildings located between the building and the primary road; OR

2. The façade can be articulated with appropriately scaled windows for the single-story, OR

3. The façade can be vertically articulated to present the appearance of a clerestory or full second story.

This historic industrial structure from Charlotte, NC illustrates how a tall single-story building can be appropriate when large-scale windows are used in conjunction with other architectural details. If this building did not have the tall windows it would seem much larger than it does because of the large surface planes that would be exposed.

The proportions between the height and width of the building façades is important to the character of the Neighborhood Areas. The preferred portions for elements of an individual façade are square or an approximately 2-to-3 ratio. These proportions should be considered for the entire bulk of the structure including the roof. Similar proportions should also be considered for individual elements of the façade including detailing and window openings.

This illustration shows a building that is approximately 24-feet in height and 61 feet in width. In order to break the long horizontal plan of the façade into more vertically proportioned elements the façade has been articulated with a series of bays. The six equal bays are 12 feet in width creating a 1:2 horizontal to vertical ratio for each component. The central bay which houses the main entrance into the structure is a double bay of just over 24 feet in width creating a bay with a 1:1 horizontal to vertical ratio or square bay adding emphasis to the entrance.

Additionally this building elevation demonstrates the clear delineation of a base, middle and top portion of the structure through the use of architectural details, which are described in more detail on the following page.

Guidelines

❖ The external appearance of buildings should be balanced so buildings do not appear top heavy. Buildings may have various floor heights but upper stories should generally not be larger than the first story. A decrease in floor height of more than 25% from one story to the next is also discouraged unless the upper-story is intended as a clerestory.

❖ The façades visible from public rights-of-way should have a horizontal to vertical dimension ratio between 1:1 and 2:3, or be divided into bays that generally reflect these proportions.

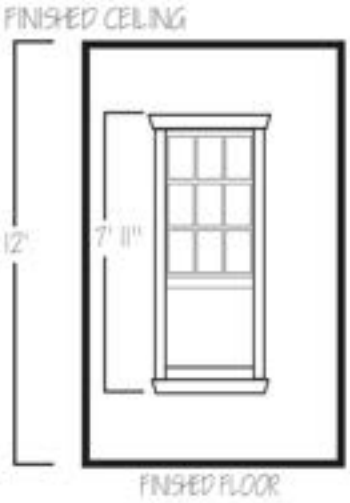
❖ Buildings that appear to be horizontally long without the use of bays are discouraged because they are not consistent with the desired character of the Neighborhood Areas.

❖ The exterior of the building should have a clear base or foundation, middle, and a top section with an exterior indication of a change in floors. These façade elements should be used to emphasize the proportions of the building and relate the vertical and horizontal dimension of the structure to the human-scale.

❖ As a general rule, windows should be approximately 66% or greater of the height of the story to keep them in proportion to the overall building.

❖ As a general rule, the distance between the bottom of the upper-story windows and the top of the lower-story windows shall not be greater than the height of the upper-story windows. Variation may be employed as accent or to add emphasis to a particular element of the façade.

❖ A horizontal pattern or rhythm shall be established based on the placement of windows and doors. When true transparent windows are not feasible the rhythm can be maintained by creating "bricked" openings that share the dimensions and exterior detailing of the other openings in the structure.



This illustration shows the area of a window that is approximately 66% of the height of the story. This ratio is a general rule of thumb, and smaller windows may be appropriate when balanced with other architectural detailing on the façade. See the illustrations on page 59 for the effect created by windows that are to small or to large.

Industrial-Type

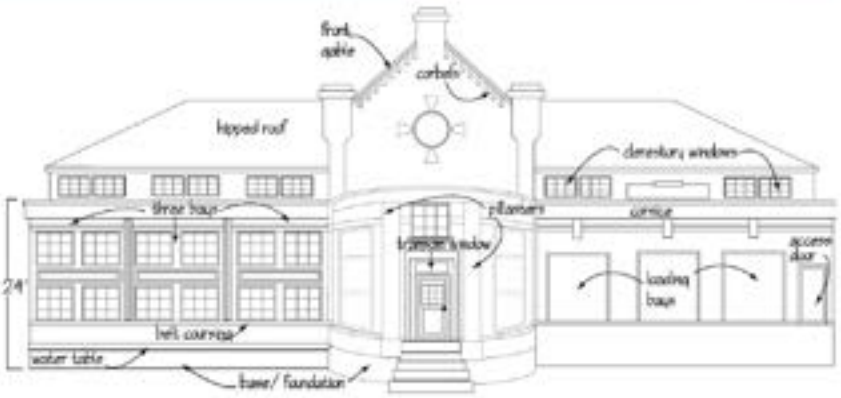
4.2.3 Architectural Elements & Details

Application and use of architectural elements and details lends style, character, and quality to a building. Building façades facing public rights-of-way require a higher level of detail than do rear or side façades. Not all of the following elements must be used on every building but the use of some of the following architectural elements or details should be used in the design of new Industrial-Type Buildings.

A. Foundation, kick-plate, or other base material
B. Water table line or molding
C. Columns, colonnades, pilasters, or piers
D. Porticos, awnings, canopies or other entrance features
E. Bays or recesses
F. String courses, soldier courses, belt coursing
G. Window details such as projecting lintels, sills, and divided-light windows
H. Transom or clerestory windows
I. Cornices and corbels, or tiles at the upper limits of the façade
J. Overhanging eaves.

❖ While no one architectural style is required for new Industrial-Type Buildings, the identification of a specific architectural theme or style is encouraged and appropriate details should be used to convey the chosen style.

❖ As with the size of windows, the size and scale of the architectural details should be proportionally correct for the overall structure and contribute to a cohesive identity for the building. Detailing which is too small or too large can create the appearance that detailing was "tacked-on" after the design of the building was completed and should be avoided.



This illustration was created from an actual existing industrial building and shows the level of detail on traditional industrial buildings was extremely high. Although every detail does not need to be applied to every new industrial building, many of these features should serve as inspiration to create industrial buildings with quality design, rather than flat boxes.

X

These buildings illustrate common contemporary industrial structures which are inappropriate in the neighborhoods of Old Aiken. The lack of detailing results in flat boxes that are out of character with the neighborhoods. The upper example employs no variation on materials and appears to be a box sitting on the ground with no foundation. The second building is slightly better with contrasting trim, an awning and a different material used for the foundation. However the lack of windows and overhanging eaves are not appropriate for industrial structures in Old Aiken.

X

Although in various states of repair, these three older industrial buildings illustrate common roof forms employed in industrial buildings that are appropriate in Old Aiken.

Roof treatments and upper-story details contribute strongly to the appearance of a building and significantly impact the balance and mass of a structure. The roof form and upper-story detailing should be designed to enhance the intended proportions of the building and should never become the dominant element of the façade to avoid creating "top heavy" buildings.

Guidelines

❖ Industrial-Type Buildings that face primary roads should follow the guidelines from the Neighborhood Commercial-Type Buildings. (**Section 3.4.4**.)

❖ Minimized roof forms and detailing may be considered for rear or side portions of Industrial-Type Buildings or buildings that are not visible from residential areas or primary roads if it will not impact the overall character of the building or the general area.

4.2.5 Wall Materials and Colors

Exterior building materials used on new Industrial-Type buildings should convey high-quality design.

4.2.5a Permitted Materials

❖ The primary façades of new Industrial-Type buildings should have a primary exterior covering of brick, stone, wood siding (clapboard, board and batten, or shingle) or modern manufactured materials that realistically replicate the appearance of the natural materials listed above unless listed as a prohibited material below.

❖ The secondary façades (not visible from a public right-of-way or residential areas) of new Industrial-Type Buildings may have a primary exterior covering of corrugated steel, aluminum or steel siding, standard concrete masonry units (cinder block) or similar materials provided they are painted or colored to blend with the materials used on the primary façade and the Design Review Board finds the use of said materials will not be detrimental to the overall character of the building or the outer area.

❖ New Industrial-Type Buildings may incorporate any of the permitted primary materials as an accent. Additional materials may be used as an accent that comprises no more than 25% of the buildings exterior wall surface. Acceptable accent materials include; decorative tiles, terra-cotta, stucco, exterior insulated finish systems, or decorative concrete masonry units.

❖ Other materials that are not listed as prohibited may be considered by the Design Review Board on a case-by-case basis as a primary or accent building material.

4.2.5b Prohibited Materials

❖ Exterior covering materials that are prohibited on new Industrial-Type Buildings include: vinyl siding, tilt up concrete, highly-reflective or mirrored materials.

4.2.5c Preferred Colors

❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred base colors for use on new Industrial-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted palette or of pastels and whites. Deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors including but not limited to primary colors should be coordinated with the base colors and reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents. Any proposed color scheme not consistent with these guidelines including but not limited to those with trademarked or brand affiliated colors must be approved by the Design Review Board.

4.2.5d Prohibited Colors

❖ No fluorescent, neon, or reflective colors should be used in the construction of a new Industrial-Type Building.

4.2.5e Variation of Materials and Colors in Facades

❖ Variation in materials and colors on a façade is permissible, provided the variation enhances the human-scale of the buildings, and is used to define specific elements of the building. The number of materials and colors on the exterior façade of a building should be limited to a maximum combination of four complementary materials and colors.

❖ Changes in materials should occur at inside corners of buildings or transition with an appropriate trim detail. Material changes at outside corners or in the middle of a wall give an impression of thinness and artificiality which should be avoided.

❖ The use of coordinating trim material is encouraged on all façades of a building, and should be used to break larger wall planes into smaller more human-scale elements.

The placement and design of primary entrances and windows are among the most contributing elements to the overall appearance of a building. The placement, size, and detailing of windows and entrance ways should enhance the design of the building and relate to the desired high-quality character for development in Old Aiken.

Guidelines

❖ Window openings are required on primary façades; however on secondary façades window openings are not required but are encouraged when interior configurations allow windows.

❖ Windows and doors on primary façades should be detailed with architectural elements such as projecting sills, molded surrounds, lintels and/or bricked arches. Detailing on windows and doors on secondary façades may be less detailed.

❖ Doors and entrance ways associated with the primary façade of new Industrial-Type buildings should be enhanced with transom windows, or sidelights to increase the transparency of the building's façade. They should be emphasized to delineate a clear point of arrival or entry.

❖ Doors in the primary façades should be appropriately scaled for the building and include detailing that relates the entrance way to the overall architectural theme of the structure.

❖ Doors with full or partial lights are preferred. Solid doors may be used for rear entries.

❖ Garage or loading doors should be located to the side or rear of the structure when possible. If they are integrated into a primary façade, they should be designed to coordinate with other façade elements through color and materials.

❖ Windows in new structures should be appropriately scaled (approximately 66% of the height of the story in which they are placed) and located for the building's size and scale, and include detailing that relates the windows to the overall architectural theme of the structure.

❖ Window placement on primary façades should emphasize the articulation of the building's façade and maintain a consistent pattern or rhythm to these ends. When the interior configuration of a building requires an interruption in façade openings that would disrupt the rhythm, techniques such as bricked-in windows or "blanks" may be employed to continue the pattern; however, no more than 25% of the window openings on a façade should be "blanks".

A bricked-in opening or "blank" is an appropriate method for continuing a window placement pattern in areas where interior layouts do not allow for true openings.

This side façade shows blanks used in place of actual window openings to continue the established window pattern in locations where windows were not feasible.

This side façade shows an appropriate window pattern and a side entry.

❖ Vertically proportioned windows that have a greater height than width are preferred for areas around entrances from the primary avenue. Horizontally long windows may be appropriate in other parts of the façade when they are consistent with the architectural style of the building or are multi-partite that have divided lights emphasizing a rhythm that is compatible with the architecture of the building.

❖ On buildings with an exterior finished wall height of 12 or more feet, second-story or clerestory windows should be used in combination with other architectural detailing to create the appearance of a second-story or clerestory. This is particularly important on single-story structures with a wall height exceeding 15 feet.

❖ Consider the horizontal alignment of door and window elements with adjacent structures when considering floor heights and door and window placement.

❖ All window openings should be fitted with transparent glass. Tinted glass may be appropriate for climate control, but fully opaque or mirrored glass is discouraged.

❖ Approximately 25% of the linear width of the primary façade should be dedicated to glazing or door openings. However, a completely glazed façade is not appropriate.

This illustration shows an Industrial-Type building with a 24-foot tall single-story main section that employs multipart windows that create the appearance of two stories. Clerestory windows are used on the upper extension of the façade.

This illustration shows a building façade with 25% of the linear width dedicated to window and door openings. An adequate quantity of glazing on the primary façade is the most important, secondary façades do not need to have as much glazing.

Buildings with completely glazed façades are not appropriate in Old Aiken and should be avoided.

Chapter 5

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Residential

Architectural Guidelines for Residential-Type Buildings

5.1 Residential-Type

Existing Buildings

The renovation of existing residential structures provides an excellent means of maintaining and reinforcing the architectural character of Aiken's traditional downtown and should be encouraged. Renovation and expansion not only increases property values in the area but also serves as an inspiration to other property owners and developers to make similar efforts.

When an existing structure is to be renovated or expanded, care should be taken to complete the work in a manner that respects the original design character of the residence. The appropriate design guidelines in this chapter are provided as an aid to owners whenever a residential-type structure is to be renovated or expanded.

5.1.1 COLOR OF MATERIALS

Colors of materials should be selected to be harmonious with the design and age of the structure and with properties in the immediate vicinity. In the South, light colors were often used because they reflect heat.

The design of the structure should guide color schemes. Colors that were historically on the building may be the best choice. If composition roofing shingles are to be replaced with the same material and the building originally had a wood shingle roof, consider selecting shingles that most closely resemble the original material.

The impact of color on the setting must be considered. For most buildings, particularly those in a residential area, colors should blend with those used in the vicinity. Different or contrasting colors should usually be reserved for important public buildings.

The Willcoxes probably named "Rose Roof" for the color of its composition roofing shingles.

The use of a different or contrasting color can make a feature stand out—as with the white railings on this building.

GUIDELINES

❖ Utilize historic and compatible paint colors when painting a historic building.

❖ A palette of preferred historic and alternative colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred base colors for use on Residential-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted or historic palette or of pastels and whites.

❖ Deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors including but not limited to primary colors should be coordinated with the base colors and reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents.

❖ Any proposed color scheme not consistent with these guidelines including but not limited to those with trademarked or brand affiliated colors must be approved by the Design Review Board.

❖ No fluorescent, neon, day-glo or reflective colors should be used on existing Residential-Type buildings.

5.1.2 FOUNDATIONS

Rehabilitation projects involving foundation work should preserve the original appearance and materials of the foundation. If an open foundation must be enclosed, the infill should be either a simple wood lattice or a well-ventilated enclosure using material similar to that of the original foundation. If possible, the enclosure should be recessed to preserve the original foundation appearance. Additional foundation vents should be compatible in style and material with the structure.

The most common material used for the supporting base of old buildings in Aiken is brick. Although some of Aiken's old structures have basements or have floors at grade level, the most prevalent foundation types are brick piers or solid masonry with a crawl space.

Foundations should not be altered to disguise problems, which must be identified and solved. Typical problems are cracks from differential settlement, failure due to inadequate structure, decay of materials, and damage from renovations.

The following are among the considerations used to decide whether foundation alterations are appropriate.

- The cause of foundation problems must be addressed and repairs made before any proposed cosmetic alterations to hide damage will be considered.
- Windows, doors, or other openings should not be enlarged or cut into a foundation unless the size and placement of the new openings are compatible with the design of the building and its structural integrity.

(Continued)

- Existing openings may be sealed with a compatible material only if it can be shown that foundation ventilation will be adequate.
- Recessed brick lattice between brick piers normally is acceptable if the brick matches the existing foundation. Concrete may be allowed if it has been covered with a finish, such as a smooth stucco, that is compatible with the building.
- Decorative, original foundation vents should be retained.
- Paint and other coatings will not be considered as a substitute for masonry repairs and repointing.
- Additions to a foundation, such as new porch piers, should match the appearance of old, intact materials.

Lattice is an appropriate infill between piers, especially for porches. It allows air circulation to prevent moisture from accumulating under a building.

The acceptable brick enclosure (top photo) was "pierced" to allow for air flow under the building. While the infill (bottom photo) was recessed to emphasize the original brick piers, the lack of ventilation is inappropriate.

5.1.3 EXTERIOR MATERIALS

Original exterior materials shall be maintained. The application of artificial materials shall be strongly discouraged.

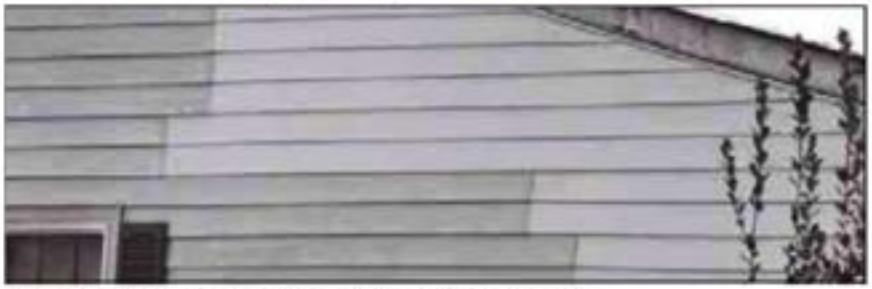
The most common exterior wall material of old buildings in Aiken is wood, including clapboard or weatherboard, drop siding, and shingles. Other common materials are brick and stucco. If properly maintained, all of these materials can last for many years. Changing the exterior material, even to one that mimics the original, affects appearance.

The distinctive wood shingle walls of this house on Hayne Avenue are a characteristic of the Shingle style.

Each board of drop siding (German, shiplap, or novelty siding) has a rounded channel above a flat surface.

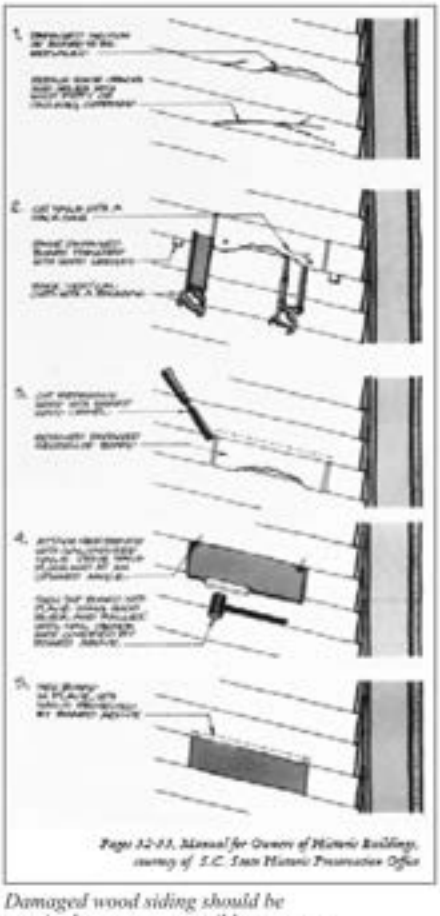
5.1.3A Exterior Materials: Wood

Above: The renovations on this house included removal of synthetic siding. Because the synthetic siding did not have the same dimensions as the original wood siding, it had significantly altered the appearance of the building.



Some disadvantages of synthetic siding include dents from impact on aluminum (top left); permanent distortion of vinyl caused by exposure to temperature extremes (top right); and the difficulty of matching colors, which can change over time (above).

An advantage to wood over vinyl and aluminum siding is the relative ease of successful minor repairs. Since vinyl can change color and the finish on aluminum can wear, small, inconspicuous repairs to these materials can be difficult or impossible. Removing a large area of old wood siding or shingles is rarely necessary. Depending upon the type of damage, various techniques can be used to repair clapboards, board-and-batten siding, and drop siding. When necessary, even one deteriorated wood shingle can be removed and replaced.



Page 32-33, Manual for Owners of Historic Buildings, courtesy of S.C. State Historic Preservation Office

Damaged wood siding should be repaired as soon as possible to prevent problems. Fillers can be used for minor repairs. A large damaged area can be repaired as illustrated above. Replacement of an entire board usually is not necessary.

5.1.3B EXTERIOR MATERIALS: SYNTHETIC & SUBSTITUTE SIDING

Substitute and synthetic sidings include vinyl and fiber-cement; aluminum; pressed wood; and asphalt. Masonry and stucco are occasionally used to cover wood siding.

Substitute siding will not be approved:

- if it would be applied over damaged or rotten materials. All deteriorated materials must first be repaired or replaced with similar materials.
- if it does not match the existing materials in size, profile, scale, finish, and articulation.
- if it cannot be installed without irreversibly damaging or obscuring the architectural features, trim, or detail of the building.
- if it would not be installed in the correct manner with respect to moisture and vapor barriers and design of cornerboards.
- if it is textured with an exaggerated wood-grain or "sandblasted" finish.
- if it would be installed over face brick.
- if it would be installed over existing substitute siding.

Substitute or synthetic siding may be appropriate when the siding (without a pronounced texture) would be used for new construction or on rear additions to existing wood frame structures.

The aluminum siding on Rest Period (above) was painted because its finish had worn.

A substitute material will not be allowed if it is proposed as a cosmetic treatment or if it could hide instead of prevent future damage. A substitute material may be appropriate if:

- existing materials are poor in quality or are causing damage to more significant old materials;
- a close match cannot be made between in the original material and new material of adequate quality;
- building or other code requirements make the use of the original material impossible.

Not only must a substitute material match the appearance of the existing material and meet long-term performance expectations, it must also have similar physical properties or be installed in a way that the differences can be tolerated. The differences in how the substitute material and old materials will weather are important.

Installation of substitute siding changed the appearance of the building shown above. Because of the vinyl siding and probably a thin layer of insulation beneath it, the window frame and cornices are recessed instead of slightly projecting. Soffits are no longer smooth wood. If peeling and blistering paint led to the siding installation, the siding may be trapping the moisture that caused the paint problems and creating an ideal environment for decay and wood-loving insects.

5.1.3C EXTERIOR MATERIALS: MASONRY

A brick bond, such as this Flemish bond, can be an important design feature.

Mortar joints should be kept in good repair. Significant moisture damage is evident in this photograph.

Covering masonry with another material to mask symptoms of moisture accumulation will not be allowed. Measures should be taken to deal with the problem rather than to hide it.

While brick bonds and patterns were frequently used to embellish old brick structures, other masonry materials are sometimes found as ornamental features. Stone was occasionally employed for foundations or trim, but its most common use in Aiken was for curbs, walls, gateposts, terraces, and tombstones.

Covering old masonry with another material or other treatments that would mask symptoms instead of solving a problem will not be allowed. Before corrective measures are taken to deal with moisture accumulation, the underlying cause must be correctly identified.

Waterproof and water-repellant coatings and sealers will not normally be approved because they are unnecessary for sound masonry, they can change the appearance of the brickwork, and they are more likely to cause damage than moisture penetration through the surfaces of masonry units. Because they are not as potentially harmful and are easier to remove, paints that allow vapor transmission may be allowed when there is damage such as significant spalling or crumbling resulting from sandblasting. Removal of paint from old masonry buildings is discouraged because the paint may have been applied to help solve a moisture penetration problem or to hide inferior or mismatched materials.

5.1.3D EXTERIOR MATERIALS: STUCCO

While not as prevalent for the exterior surfaces of Aiken's old buildings as wood, stucco is a common historic material. Applied on masonry or frame structures, it usually is part of the original design and should not be removed. When stucco has been added, the original exterior materials probably have been damaged by the application process and probably would have to be replaced if the stucco were to be removed.

Although stucco can protect badly deteriorated masonry walls, the addition of new stucco to surfaces which did not historically have it will not normally be approved.

Stucco is a common exterior wall material in Aiken.

5.1.4 Roofs

Roof form is an essential design element of all buildings and should be retained. Old roof features that contribute to the style and character of a structure—including steeples, towers, dormers, cupolas, belvederes, skylights, and vents—should be preserved. New features added to roof surfaces normally should be placed so as not to be visible from public street rights-of-way. Distinctive roofing materials, such as metal, slate, and tile, should be retained and repaired, if possible; when replacement is necessary, the same material should be used.

Gable and hip roofs are the two most common roof forms in Aiken, and they are found on houses of a variety of architectural styles. Steeply sloped gables are characteristic of Gothic Revival structures, while the Colonial Revival buildings have lower roof pitches. Aiken's Dutch Colonial Revival homes have gambrel roofs, and the wings of the Willcox Inn feature mansard roofs. Queen Anne houses often have complex roof shapes that combine different roof types. Shed roofs were often used for additions and porches.

Radically altering the roof form and pitch where visible from a public street is discouraged because it changes the appearance and style of a structure and also affects the surrounding streetscape. However, if a poor existing design has caused chronic problems, some minor modifications might be justifiable.

Preservation of an old roof feature is encouraged because the feature may serve an important purpose and also add to visual interest. Adding conspicuous features, including new skylights, cupolas, or dormers, is discouraged if they would adversely impact the character of an old roof or the design of the affected structure. New roof features must be compatible in size, scale, color, and materials; usually should be as inconspicuous as possible; and must not damage or hide any important old features.

Raw wood shingles should not be spray painted after installation. If shingles are to be painted, they should be dipped prior to installation; when the entire shingle has been treated, later painting can be restricted to only the exposed surfaces. Vapor-impermeable coatings should be avoided.

Metal shingles and standing-seam metal roofs were used in Aiken during the 1800s and early 1900s, sometimes to replace wood shingle roofs. Metal could be used where the roof shape or a low pitch made other materials inappropriate, and it offered other advantages, including fire resistance, light weight, low maintenance, and low cost. The most common metal in use during the period was iron or steel, usually plated with tin or terne (a tin and lead alloy). Appropriate new metal replacement materials are available. A precise match, especially for metal shingles, may not be feasible unless the quantity required warrants custom manufacture. However, it is important to replicate as closely as possible the spacing and dimensions of seams on a standing-seam metal roof and the scale and texture of shingles.

The complex roof shape and tower of the Charlie Hill House (303 Newberry Street, NW) are important to the design of the Shingle style house.

A new wood shingle roof was installed on 320 Fairfield Street, SE, in the mid-1990s. The installation matched as closely as possible an old wood shingle roof found under asphalt roofing shingles. The old wood shingles had a green tint, which probably was a chemical treatment for inhibiting the growth of fungus.

5.1.5 GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Gutters and downspouts should be maintained in their original appearance and location on a building. When the addition of gutters is necessary, it is particularly important that the downspouts be situated at the edges and corners of buildings and along porch supports to minimize the visual impact.

Gutters and downspouts are available in a variety of profiles. When they are replaced or added, usually the style of the old ones should be duplicated. If gutters are needed in a location that is visible from a street, color selection can help camouflage them. Installation of new gutters should not hide any ornamental details.

The downspouts of the house above are correctly positioned on porch supports and at the corners of the building.

Damage to exterior wood was probably caused by gutters and downspouts that were leaking or that were not cleaned frequently.

Below: The missing and damaged portions of downspouts should be replaced.

5.1.6 CHIMNEYS

The octagonal chimneys of Rose Roof were constructed in the 1920s and are unusual in this area. They could have been inspired by chimneys from the native lands of Elise and Frederick S. Willcox, who were from Europe.

The chimneys on the ca. 1900 Rothrock Cottage at 702 Chafee Lane are a distinctive feature of the house.

Original chimneys are distinctive components of historic structures and should be maintained in their original state rather than covered over with stucco or some other material. Because chimneys have such a significant impact on the appearance of a building, they should not be removed or replaced even if no longer in use.

If a new chimney is added to a building, it usually should be as inconspicuous as possible, and its materials, design, and decorative details should complement existing masonry features.

The number and style of chimneys are important indicators of the age of a building.

This chimney (above) probably is brick with a corbeled cap. The stucco was probably applied in lieu of repointing and detracts from the original character of the building.

5.1.7 PORCHES, BALCONIES, STEPS & ATTACHED DECKS

Porches, balconies, and steps are usually key design features to retain without alterations. Their repair shall not result in the removal of old materials, unless seriously deteriorated. If replacement is necessary and different materials are used, the new materials must be compatible with remaining old materials. Front porches and porches on primary elevations should not be enclosed. When a porch is enclosed, porch design elements should remain intact and clearly visible. A new porch, balcony, or attached deck should not be added to the front of a building unless it restores a missing feature.

Porches, steps, and balconies usually are important to the appearance and style of old buildings and should not be enlarged, reduced, or removed, even if a structure has been reoriented for a new use. Columns, pilasters, posts, balusters, railings, and other design elements should be retained.

Enclosing an exterior space that was intended to be open is a significant design change that should be avoided. If a porch or balcony is to be enclosed, the primary material should normally be something translucent, such as screen or clear glass. Framing for the enclosure should be compatible, inconspicuous, and usually recessed behind the existing structure.

If a new porch, stairway, balcony, or attached wooden deck is added, it should usually be in an inconspicuous location unless it would restore a missing feature. In addition to compatibility of size, shape, materials, color, and other elements with the existing design, potential effects on the appearance of old materials will be considered—for example, whether the proposed design of a deck would allow water to splash up and eventually damage old wood siding.

The porch is the most significant feature of this Horry Street house.

Above: Sleeping porches were popular during the 1800's and early 1900s.

Above: The detailing of the porch on the right probably was once the same as that of the house on the left. The metal supports are inappropriate because they completely alter the character of the porch.

Enclosure of a front porch will not normally be allowed by the Review Board because it can dramatically alter the appearance of a house. The two houses in the above photographs, which are next door to each other, were probably once almost identical.

5.1.8 Entrances & Doors

Entrances usually should not be altered, enclosed, moved, or added. Old doors and their surrounds should be repaired and retained. If an old door or entrance feature is deteriorated beyond repair, the replacement normally should match the original. When a significant entrance design element is missing, it should be replaced with one of the same size and of a design appropriate to the type, age, and architectural style of the building. New screen, storm, and security doors should be compatible in design and materials with the entrance and should not detract from the character of the building. Paint should not be removed from a door which was originally painted.

Regardless of the architectural style of a building, the front entrance normally is the focal point of the façade. While a porch may emphasize an entrance, the design of the door and its surround are often detailed in a way to draw attention. Transoms, fanlights, and sidelights were frequently used and not only provide natural light for the interior but also frame a doorway. Pediments and pilasters were often applied in Aiken to accentuate a front doorway.

Secondary entrances can also be important to the design of a structure. They usually do not receive the same attention to details as the front entrance unless they were intended to be seen by visitors. Utilitarian doorways, like stable doors, can be character-defining features of a building.

Old doors in Aiken are made of wood and are usually rectangular. On vernacular and utilitarian structures, they may be simple. Paneled doors in a variety of styles, sometimes with glazing, are the most common for residences. The design for doors was usually carefully selected to fit the desired style of the building. Very late in the 1800s and early in the 1900s, stained and varnished doors became common; however, many doors were painted.

A storm or security door that is the plain, full-view type or that has a frame design consistent with the door it covers will usually be approved. The color of the frame should blend with the door behind it; raw aluminum or a contrasting color generally will not be allowed.

Above: The screened door on this house would not have been approved because its style contrasts with the style of the house.

Below: Examples of entry designs that should be preserved.

5.1.9 WINDOWS & STORM WINDOWS

Every effort should be made to retain the original windows. If they cannot be repaired by a competent carpenter, replacement windows should be of like material and configuration. It is always preferable to keep the original window and use exterior storm windows of the same size and color as the old window frame than to replace the entire window with a new window. In fact, the air space between the old window and a properly installed storm window greatly increases the thermal efficiency of the window unit, and exterior storm windows protect the paint and glazing of the original window and lower maintenance costs.

Shutters which frame the old window are also important to repair and retain. Be sure they are attached with brackets or hinges on the window frame where they belong, and do not simply tack them on to the house.

The type, size, shape, and pane configuration of windows are important, but details, such as the irregularities in old glass and the profile of muntins, can distinguish antique windows. Although new windows offer technological advances and the hope of less maintenance, authenticity is lost with replacements. Replacements touted as being maintenance-free may not be so after the warranty expires and the finishes age. With proper care, old wooden windows can last indefinitely, and often the wood used in windows assembled before World War II is more durable than what is currently available. Retrofitting old windows with weather seals, storm windows, and interior draperies and shutters, can improve energy conservation and noise buffering.

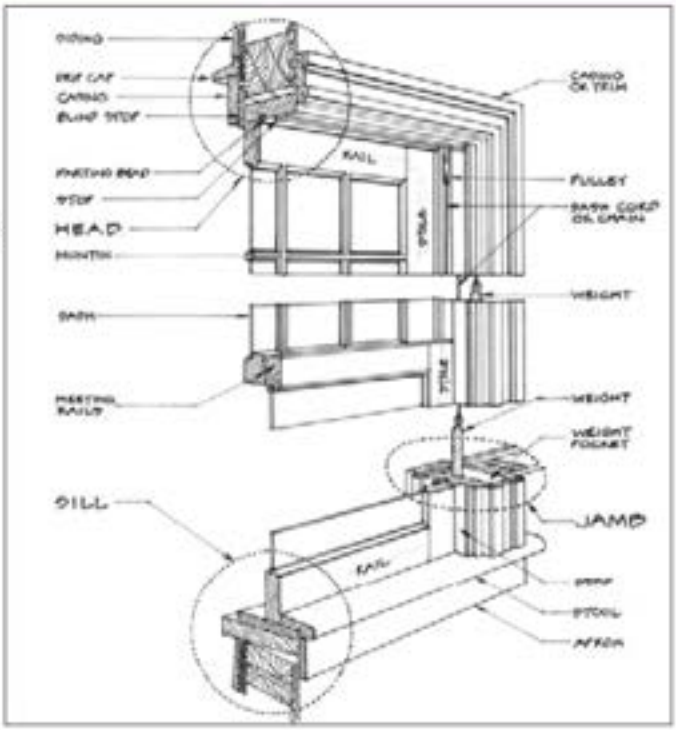
The new, oversized window on the side of this house would not have been approved by Aiken's Design Review Board.

WINDOWS

The key to successful planning for the treatment of existing windows is a careful, unbiased evaluation of the existing physical condition and needed repairs for each window unit. Often windows look in worse condition than they really are. When a window is loose and air infiltration is a problem, adjustments to stops, new caulking, and weatherstripping may be needed. Damage caused by moisture penetration should be prevented and usually can be repaired, sometimes with consolidants or partial replacement. Wood beneath unsightly paint frequently is sound, but paint failure usually indicates a moisture problem that needs to be addressed. Likely solutions to old window problems are shown on the following pages, and publications providing how-to information are listed in the Sources section.

5.1.9 WINDOWS & STORM WINDOWS (CONTINUED)

Typical parts of an old double-hung sash window. Sash windows, a Dutch invention, arrived in America around 1700. New double-hung windows do not have the sash counterweights shown in the drawing. Access to the counterweights is usually through a panel in the jamb, and broken sash cords can be replaced.



TYPICAL WINDOW PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS (Source: *The Old-House Journal Guide to Restoration*, which contains additional information for diagnosing and correcting window problems.)

Problem	*Solution*
Sticking sash	Remove paint buildup. Lubricate with paraffin or soap. Check sash cords, counterweights, & pulleys. Plane wood only as a last resort.
Broken sash cord	Replace cord or chain.
Draftiness	Weatherstrip & caulk. Check sash locks.
Missing or loose putty	Remove loose putty, reputty, and then paint.
Missing or broken muntin	If possible, repair with epoxy. If necessary, buy or make a new muntin to match the original.
Broken glass	Reglaze.
Peeling paint	First, eliminate sources of moisture. Then strip or scrape loose paint, caulk, prime, & repaint.
Rotten or loose bottom rail in lower sash	Brace rail connection with flat angle, or splice in a new bottom rail.
Rotted sash or sill	Repair rotted areas with consolidants, or replace.

The name "window" is derived from a word that literally means "wind's eye"—indicating the fact that windows at one time were only shuttered openings. Casement windows are a type that predates sash windows.

5.1.9 WINDOWS & STORM WINDOWS (CONTINUED)

Energy conservation is not a justification for wholesale destruction of old windows, which can be made more efficient with such measures as the addition of storm sash. According to the October 2000 issue of Consumer Reports magazine, it is likely to take 20 years or more to recoup the cost of replacing old, single-glazed windows with new, energy-efficient ones. However, some conditions, such as stuck sash due to warping, warrant replacement.

The decision-making process for selecting a replacement window should not begin with a survey of available contemporary window products; it should start with a look at the window requiring replacement. Attempt to understand the contribution of the window to the appearance of the façade including:

- the pattern of the openings and their size;
- proportions of the frame and sash;
- configuration of window panes;
- muntin profiles;
- type of wood;
- color;
- characteristics of the glass; and
- associated details such as arched tops, hoods, or other decorative elements.

Develop an understanding of how the window reflects the period, style, or regional characteristics of the building and/or represents technological development. A replacement window should retain as much of the character of the historic window as possible.

Generally, replacing a window that is too damaged to be repaired with an entire new window of the same material, size, design, details, color, etc. is recommended. Coatings, applied films, and changes in glazing that noticeably alter the color, shade, or reflective qualities of windows will not normally be approved.

The primary concern of the Review Board will be the impact of the project on the design of the structure and on the surrounding area. Non-traditional materials and designs will be allowed as long as there is no adverse visual impact on the neighborhood.

Before the English invention of machine-rolled glass in 1832, available manufacturing techniques limited window panes to small sizes. Glass was a luxury in early America, and most of it was imported until well into the 1800s. Although it was possible by the late 1800s to use a single large sheet of clear glass, the examples on the left illustrate the popularity of using glass panes for decorative effect and the revival of interest in stained glass.

STORM WINDOWS

Many styles of storm windows are available to improve the thermal performance of existing windows. The use of storm windows should be investigated whenever feasible because they are thermally efficient, cost-effective, reversible, and allow the retention of old windows. Exterior storm window frames may be made of wood, aluminum, vinyl, or plastic. However, the use of unfinished aluminum storm windows is not allowed, and the storm windows must be sized to fit the windows they cover. The visual impact of storm windows may be minimized by selecting colors which match existing trim color. Arched-top storms are available for windows with special shapes. Interior storm windows do not require Design Review Board approval; if they are used, condensation should be prevented by creating a seal on the interior storm sash while allowing some ventilation around the prime window.

If an exterior storm sash is used over a window with leaded glass, it is important to vent the exterior glazing at the top and bottom to prevent buckling of the window the storm sash is intended to protect.

Although the original windows appear to be still intact in the example above, ill-sized storm windows have been placed over them. The gaps created by the too-small storm windows have been filled in with wood at the top, greatly compromising the appearance of the windows.

COMPARISON OF WINDOW FRAME MATERIALS

(Adapted from: *Ideas for Great Windows & Doors.* Sunset Publishing Corporation, 1993. "Comparing Window Frames," p. 69)

Wood

Pros. Durable and insulating, wood window are available prefinished, primed, or bare. If properly maintained, they can last for hundreds of years.
Cons. Regular refinishing is essential because wood windows can rot if not properly maintained. Moisture can cause wood frames to stick, and paint buildup can make them both difficult to operate and prone to air infiltration.
Cost. Quality and finish dictate the initial cost. Upkeep is an additional, ongoing expense.

Clad Wood

Pros. Wood frames manufactured with a thin layer of aluminum or vinyl have the insulating advantages of wood and do not require exterior maintenance for the life of the cladding material.
Cons. Paintable cladding is required if a color other than the limited number of standard shades is desired. Rot can occur under cladding.
Cost. The cost is about the same as prefinished wood and about 20 percent more than bare wood.

Vinyl

Pros. Insulated vinyl can be more energy efficient than wood, and vinyl without steel reinforcing is as efficient as wood.
Cons. Because dark colors absorb too much heat, vinyl frames are normally available in only white or beige.
Cost. Not as inexpensive as low-end aluminum windows, vinyl windows can cost as much as premium wood windows.

Aluminum

Pros. A light, strong material, aluminum retains its shape better than wood or vinyl. Color-bonded or anodized aluminum is practically maintenance-free.
Cons. Aluminum is prone to scratches and nicks. Even if designed with a layer of nonconduting material to act as a thermal break, aluminum frames are not as energy-efficient as other types of window frames.
Cost. The price of aluminum windows varies from equal to about half of the cost of premium wood windows.

Fiberglass

Pros. Strong and durable, fiberglass is more insulating than wood. Window frames are available with a brown or white polyurethane coating that can be painted.
Cons. The long-term performance of fiberglass windows, which were debuted in the Northeast in 1990, is unknown.
Cost. The cost is close to that of premium wood windows.

Steel

Pros. Steel windows, which have factory finishes, are very durable.
Cons. Steel windows are expensive and are not available in double-hung and slider styles. Although better than aluminum, they are less energy efficient than other window frame materials
Cost. Although competitive for some applications, such as curved or very large windows, steel is the most expensive window frame material.

5.1.10 DETAILS

Decorative, craft, and functional details that are important to the historic or visual character of a structure should be retained and protected. Replacement of missing details should be based on documentary, physical, and/or pictorial evidence and be compatible with surviving character-defining features. Application of ornamentation inappropriate to the style, type, and age of a structure will not be permitted.

Important details and ornamentation can often be found on old structures from the foundation level to the chimneys—from decorative grillwork that allows ventilation under the structure to the brick details of a chimney top. They can provide evidence of the age and function of the structure, and they usually are representative of the period or architectural style. Significant details should be identified, maintained, and repaired since they are essential to the character of a structure and reflect the technology, materials, and craftsmanship available when they were created.

The presence or absence of ornamentation usually is a key aspect of the design of a building. Patterns, color, and texture in the application of materials can make a feature of a building prominent as can decorative trim. Consequently, even subtle changes to details and ornamentation can significantly change how a building is perceived and how it relates to neighboring structures.

Alterations that change the material, that obscure evidence of the way a feature was crafted, that change the surface finish or texture, or that impact details characteristic of a building's architectural style should be avoided. Painting a previously unpainted surface, repointing masonry joints with mortar that does not match the old, and adding ornate trim to plain window frames are examples of alterations that usually are considered inappropriate.

Restoration of damaged details should preserve as much original material as possible. If a distinctive detail is missing or severely deteriorated, the replacement should match the old in design, texture, color, and other visual characteristics, and, where possible, materials. Historical photographs, drawings, and descriptions along with physical evidence should be used when planning the reapplication of a lost feature. When adequate documentation to precisely replicate the original detail is unavailable, a new design compatible with the design and other ornamentation of the building and with structures in the vicinity may be appropriate.

Never try to make a building look older, grander, or more rustic than it was originally by using details belonging to another period, style, or type of building. The results of changing significant details are either unconvincing or misleading.

As illustrated by these photographs, Aiken's residential buildings contain a wealth of interesting ornamentation and details.

5.1.11 AWNINGS & CANOPIES

Rose Hill is an example of an old house in Aiken that historically had awnings.

On houses and other types of structures, canvas awnings may be allowed either if they replicate awnings that historically were on the building or if their design, size, color, and details complement existing features and the location. Installation of an awning must not damage significant old building materials or hide important design features. New awnings and canopies made of metal, plastic, and other materials are discouraged.

Scale. An awning should not be so large that it overwhelms a façade or hides significant architectural features.

Proportion and form. The directional emphasis of a building's design should influence the proportions of the awning or canopy.

Ornamentation, materials, and color. Design details, color, patterns, materials, and illumination for awnings and canopies should be chosen to suit the building and its surroundings and not to draw attention.

5.1.12 CODE COMPLIANCE

Compliance with health and safety codes and handicap access requirements should be carried out with a minimum of impact to the historic character of old buildings.

Health and safety codes and legislation requiring accessibility for the disabled can necessitate alterations to old buildings that are not used as private residences. When compliance is required, owners should work with the City's building inspectors to meet standards and should strive to avoid loss of significant features and spaces. Any changes should be compatible in scale and design with the old structure, and they should, if possible, be reversible.

Above: The placement of fire escapes at the rear of buildings usually is appropriate.

Above left: The wheelchair lift at Woodlands in Summerville provides access near the front entrance and eliminated the need or a ramp. Such lifts are effective for three-to-ten foot changes in elevation.

Left Middle: This handicapped ramp is inappropriate because it dominates the small building. The enclosure of the front porch also would not meet the Design Review Board guidelines.

Two Bottom Images: This appropriate handicapped ramp is easy to locate from the off-street parking area and is inconspicuous from the street.

5.1.13 ADDITIONS

Additions shall respect the character and integrity of original buildings and must not be designed to appear as original components. Typically it is best to position additions at the rear or on view-obstructed sides of buildings. New additions can dramatically change the appearance of structures, and they can hide, destroy, or damage significant old features and materials.

The Board's primary concern will be the impact of the design change on the existing residence; such additions should not dominate or clash with old buildings nearby. The Board will not normally approve plans for an addition unless all of the following three criteria are met.

1. Features and materials important to the character of the structure and its setting would be preserved.

An addition should be planned to minimize noticeable changes to the design of an old structure and its surroundings and to limit permanent loss of old materials and important spaces. Ideally, the addition should be inconspicuous to passersby. In the future, it should be possible to remove the addition, expose the original craftsmanship and form, and then return the structure and site to the original design.

Regardless of its size, an addition requires the loss of old materials and/or changes to the immediate setting. Placement and design of the addition should take advantage of the fact that all parts of an old building and its site are rarely of equal significance. Concealment or harm to decorative features should be avoided as should changes to façades and spaces designed to be seen by the public and guests. Consequently, changes to the back or sides of a building usually have the least impact.

Elimination of old features and materials can sometimes be minimized by limiting the number of openings between the old and new and by incorporating existing openings into the design. Material loss can also be reduced by keeping the point of contact of the addition with the old building as small as possible.

Above: The small, one-story additions on the left do not detract from the original design of the house.

For some locations, the appropriate size of an addition may be severely restricted or any addition may even be deemed inappropriate. An example of where this could be true would be a building designed to be seen on all sides. This could also occur within a very significant complex of buildings or where a tree eligible for preserving is located.

2. The design of the addition would be compatible with the existing structure and its context.

The character of each old property is different and is determined by design, materials, and setting. Some design principles that affect character include placement, scale, proportion, shape, massing, rhythm, and directional emphasis; these are explained in the Appendix section of this publication beginning on page 98.

A new addition should strongly relate to the existing building, which should retain its prominence. Considerations for making additions compatible include the following.

Placement. An addition should be located to minimize changes to the proportions and profile of the old building. Because Aiken's buildings are not tall, rooftop additions or a new story would usually be too conspicuous to be acceptable. Front additions, including decks, are also rarely appropriate. Side and rear additions normally should be set back from the adjacent building wall and roof. The addition of dormers, which can convey a false impression about the original design of a structure, may be allowed on a building if there is no reasonable alternative and the placement can be inconspicuous. Visible garage additions should be avoided; on historic properties, garages were usually separate structures located in the back yard.

Size, scale, and proportion. The scale and proportions of an addition should be carefully planned so that the form of the old building is visible and not overpowered. Usually, the height and width of an addition should not be greater than that of the old building, and the floor-to-floor heights should generally appear consistent.

Shape and massing. The massing and shape of the old building, including its roof type and pitch, should be respected by an addition.

Rhythm and directional emphasis. The placement, shape, and proportions of features, such as windows and doors, should relate to the treatment of openings in the old building.

Materials and details. Materials and design details should complement the old in their size, texture, color, and other particulars; they do not necessarily have to match the old. Large areas of glass, such as a greenhouse addition, usually should be confined to an inconspicuous location.

3. The new addition would be distinguishable from the old and would not create a false impression about the original or historic appearance of the structure.

While compatibility is important, slavish copying of the old building should be avoided. Some difference in detailing, material, or color is needed to clearly indicate that the addition is not a portion of the original structure. After an addition is constructed, it should still be possible to recognize the original form of the building.

Built in the early 1900s, this residence was enlarged considerably for use as a hotel. Both rear and side additions were made for the new use. While the brick and roofing of the additions match that of the old structure, the detailing is less elaborate. The form of the original house, which is still dominant, is evident.

5.1.14 DEMOLITION & RELOCATION OF STRUCTURES

Demolition of existing buildings is strongly discouraged. Consequently, the Design Review Board will use its authority to delay demolition of historic structures whenever possible to investigate means to save the building.

However, it is recognized that, in some cases, older structures may deteriorate to the point that rehabilitation is technically infeasible. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not appropriate ***AND*** demonstrate a clear plan for the re-use of the site and any related new construction after demolition.

Guidelines:

❖ If an existing building's condition is deteriorated such that rehabilitation and use of the building is judged to not be feasible, a request for demolition may be considered by the Review Board. It is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate that rehabilitation is not feasible.

❖ If public safety is threatened, interim steps may be taken to close and stabilize the structure.

❖ Any requests for relocations to or from the Overlay District shall be reviewed by the Review Board.

❖ Any application for a demolition shall include plans for the re-development of the site after demolition.

Residential-Type

5.2

New Buildings

Construction plans are reviewed to ensure that new residential buildings will be in harmony with the style, form, proportion, texture, and arrangement of old residential structures and that valuable features and open spaces will be protected. An appropriate new building is one that takes design cues from neighboring old structures, that responds to its site, and that utilizes materials which will last indefinitely if maintained.

In planning for the construction of a new residential-type building, the starting point should not be examination of floor plans and favorite architectural styles in pattern books. Instead of being thought of as a sculpture isolated from its setting, a new structure needs to be viewed as a feature of a large composition. The guidelines in this section for new residential-type construction outline some considerations important for a successful design.

5.2.1 Details & Materials

Design Vocabulary

The design vocabulary of existing structures within the context should, in most cases, suggest design concepts and individual architectural elements for new construction.

Shapes, rhythms, and design details are a few design vocabulary elements of neighboring structures that should influence the design of a new building.

Materials

Exterior materials for new construction should be compatible with those of historic structures on the property or in the neighborhood.

Compatible materials may not be necessarily identical to those of surrounding buildings, but they should normally be found within the surrounding neighborhood. This applies to types of exterior siding and trim, masonry, roofing material, and windows.

While substitute siding and trim is not recommended for existing buildings, its use in new construction is allowed on a case-by-case basis with some exceptions. Vinyl or hardboard siding with an exaggerated texture is not acceptable.

While either wood or a durable substitute siding that resembles wood siding is generally an appropriate exterior material for new construction in historic neighborhoods, the use of brick veneer should be approached with care. Although brick or stucco was used in the construction of some fine old buildings in Aiken, those materials were less common than wood except on nonresidential structures. When used, brick should be selected carefully, with attention to texture, method of forming, and color. Brick companies offer a variety of styles which simulate old molded brick in texture and color.

Exterior materials usually should be consistent on all visible sides of a building. While subtle differences in details between the material on a façade and the sides of a building may sometimes be acceptable, different materials will not normally be approved.

Windows in new buildings usually should be operable. Insulated glass will be allowed provided that muntin grids, when used, are permanent and are found on the exterior surface of the glass. Nontraditional materials for window frames may be allowed if it can be shown that they will be as durable as traditional materials.

The details on this new house would not be compatible with Aiken's historic neighborhood homes.

Above: Chimneys covered with vinyl siding are not appropriate for houses attempting to blend with Aiken's historic buildings.

Below: The design vocabulary and use of materials of this house would not blend with Aiken's historic buildings.

Colors of materials for new buildings should be chosen to complement the design of the structure. Except for important public buildings or as small accents, colors should blend with those on buildings within the context. Color can play an important role in making a building stand out in its setting. Since the goal of the Design Review Board is to ensure that new construction is harmonious with the old, colors that create a dramatic contrast will not normally be approved.

Guidelines

❖ A palette of preferred colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred base colors for use on Residential-Type buildings should be the natural color of the material in the case of brick or stone, of a neutral muted or historic palette or of pastels and whites.

❖ Deep saturated hues may be used as accents or trim. Brighter, more vivid colors including but not limited to primary colors should be coordinated with the base colors and reserved for limited use (no more than 10% of a façade area) as trim or accents.

❖ Any proposed color scheme not consistent with these guidelines must be approved by the Design Review Board.

❖ No fluorescent, neon, day-glo or reflective colors should be used on existing Residential-Type buildings.

Chapter 6

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Miscellaneous

6.1 Miscellaneous Guidelines

Artwork

Artwork includes paintings, sculptures, murals and other objects whether attached to a building or freestanding. Downtown Aiken has a rich tradition of creative artistic installations of many and varied forms. A few samples are included in the photographs at right.

Guidelines

❖ Retain and preserve artwork that contributes to the overall historic character of a building, site or district.

❖ Artwork, when applied or affixed to a building, should be subordinate to the overall building

❖ Artwork should not obscure or damage building elements or details. For instance, a mural should not cover windows. However, a mural may creatively incorporate a window into it's composition as long as its function is not compromised.

❖ When applied to or affixed to a locally designated historic structure, artwork should not detract from the historic character of the building, site or district, nor should it confuse the public regarding the period of significance of the building or district through anachronistic images or details.

Miscellaneous Guidelines

6.2

Signs

In Aiken, as in many American towns, the visual distinction between the traditional downtown business district and outlying general commercial strips has become blurred. Sign manufacturers and designers have encouraged businesses downtown to install the type of large-scale signs used along commercial highways, where signs need to be larger to attract the attention of motorists passing at high speeds. Pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, such as much of downtown Aiken, were designed to accommodate shoppers strolling along sidewalks and motorists driving at slower speeds. Signs to attract the attention of these passers-by should accordingly be encouraged; this chapter provides guidance on how to evaluate the quality of signs to ensure that this is done in a manner sympathetic to the architectural character of downtown Aiken.

While size is an important aspect of signs, proper sizing does not ensure an attractive sign. Other considerations such as location, lettering style, color and illumination are also very important in designing an attractive, functional sign. The guidelines that follow address these issues, and others, and are intended to help business owners put up quality signs that add to and support the architectural character of downtown Aiken.

Guidelines

The following general design guidelines should be considered prior to developing signs for any project.

6.2.1 Color

Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication. It can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings.

• Limit the total number of colors used in any one sign. Small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive, but the competition of large areas of many different colors decreases readability.

• Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.

• A palette of preferred sign colors approved by the Design Review Board is available in the Planning Department to provide general direction on color choices. The preferred based and lettering colors for signs are of a neutral muted palette or of pastels and whites, or deep saturated hues. Brighter more vivid colors, including primary colors, should be coordinated with the base colors and reserved for limited use as trim or accents on the signs. Any proposed color scheme including but not limited to those with trademarked colors or colors affiliated with a brand that is not in conformance with these guidelines must be approved by the Design Review Board for use on signs.

6.2 Miscellaneous Guidelines

Signs

• Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs should be avoided. Bright day-glo (fluorescent) colors should be avoided as they are distracting and do not usually blend well with other background colors.

• Sign colors should complement the colors used on the building and the context (i.e. adjacent buildings and overall block) as a whole.

• Advertising signs should not be painted directly over entire brick façades, however, smaller wall-painted signs can be appropriate (*see example, second from bottom on page 50*). Antique/historic painted signs (e.g. "Coca-Cola Signs") or advertisements may be preserved and restored when they add to the overall character of the building. These types of signs are not counted as signs per local ordinances if they do not relate to the business occupying the building.

6.2.2 Materials

The following materials are recommended for signs in downtown Aiken:

- Wood (carved, sandblasted, etched, and properly sealed, primed and painted, or stained).
- Metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed and painted or factory coated to protect against corrosion).
- High density pre-formed foam or similar material. New materials may be very appropriate if properly designed in a manner consistent with these guidelines, and painted or otherwise finished to compliment the architecture.
- Custom neon tubing, in the form of graphics or lettering, may be incorporated into several of the above permitted sign types.
- Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the face of the façade where they are placed.

• The selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.

• Individually-mounted internally illuminated channel letters, and internally illuminated plastic-faced cabinet signs are generally discouraged.

• Paper and cloth signs are not suitable for exterior use because they deteriorate quickly. Paper and cloth signs are appropriate for interior temporary use only. The use of signs on paper or cloth should be the result of careful thinking about readability and the resultant image of the business.

6.2.3 Sign Legibility

An effective sign should do more than attract attention, it should communicate its message. Usually, this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering.

• Use a brief message whenever possible. The fewer the words, the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief, succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive. Evaluate each word. If the word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it detracts from it and probably should be deleted.

• Avoid spacing letters and words too close together. Crowding of letters, words or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, over-spacing these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually,

again obscuring the message. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75% of sign panel area.

• Limit the number of lettering styles in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.

• Avoid hard-to-read, overly intricate typefaces and symbols. Typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.

• Avoid faddish or bizarre typefaces if they are difficult to read. These typefaces may be in vogue and look good today, but soon may go out of style. The image conveyed by the sign may quickly become that of a dated and unfashionable business.

• Use symbols and logos in the place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.

6.2.4 Sign Illumination

The way in which a sign is to be illuminated should be considered carefully. Like color, illumination has considerable value for visual communication.

• First, consider if the sign needs to be lighted at all. Lights in the window display may be sufficient to identify the business. This is particularly true if good window graphics are used. Often, nearby street lights provide ample illumination of a sign after dark.

• If the sign can be illuminated by an indirect source of light, this is usually the best arrangement because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the structure cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the face of the structure as well. Indirect lighting emphasizes the continuity of the structure's surface, and signs become an integral part of the façade. *(See two examples at top of this page utilizing "goose neck" lights to accomplish this scenario.)*

• Whenever indirect lighting fixtures are used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas and any public right-of-way. Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.

• Back-lighted solid letters, or channel letters, are a preferred alternative to internally illuminated letter signs. Signs comprised of opaque individually cut letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's façade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.

• The most appropriate type of sign illumination in downtown Aiken is indirect lighting. Again, indirect lighting helps the sign to appear as an integral part of the façade, not something that was added later. Indirect lighting is also more appropriate for historic or traditional downtown commercial districts and produces a more intimate ambiance on the street.

6.2.5 *WALL/PANEL SIGNS*

Signs should be placed consistent with the proportions and scale of the elements within the structure's façade. A particular sign may fit well on a plain wall area, but might overpower the finer scale and proportion of a lower storefront. A sign which is appropriate near an entry may look tiny and out of place above the ground level.

• Signs should be located where architectural features or details suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign. The best location for a wall sign is typically a band or blank area between the first and second floors of a building.

• Signs should be placed on buildings consistent with sign locations on adjacent buildings. This can establish visual continuity among store fronts. *See Section 3.3, Alignment of Architectural Elements.*

• In pedestrian-oriented areas, such as downtown Aiken, signs should relate to the sidewalk instead of motorists. In this case, small projecting signs or signs under awnings are very appropriate. Place signs in close proximity to the store entrance.

6.2.6 *PROJECTING SIGNS*

Projecting signs, or those which extend perpendicular from the building, are one of the most historically appropriate sign methods. The number of projecting signs per business should be limited to one. The distance between projecting signs should be at least 30'-40' to avoid too many signs competing for the pedestrian's attention.

• On a multi-storied building, the sign should be suspended between the bottom of the second story window sills and the top of the doors or windows of the first story. On a one-story building, the top of the sign should be suspended in line with the lowest point of the roof.

• The sign should be hung at a 90° angle from the face of the building.

• The bottom of the sign should maintain at least a 8-10 foot pedestrian clearance from the sidewalk level. *Consult the City of Aiken's Zoning Ordinance for specific mounting height requirements.*

• All signs which project over a public right-of-way may require a City of Aiken sign or encroachment permit.

• Decorative iron and wood brackets that support projecting signs are encouraged.

• The supporting brackets should relate to the shape of the sign. The most important feature of a bracket should be its ability to hold up the sign.

• To avoid damaging brick and stonework, brackets should be designed so that they can be bolted into masonry joints when possible.

6.2.7 *Window Signs*

(Note: Consult the City of Aiken's zoning regulations to determine if temporary signage mounted on the inside of a store window is counted in the overall sign square footage limits.)

In general, window signs (permanent or temporary) should not cover more than 50 percent of the area of each window. Exceptions to this standard may be granted by the Design Review Board where graphics are utilized to screen utility, mechanical, office, waiting rooms, kitchen equipment, and vacant spaces. Otherwise, opaque window signs or graphics designed to obscure views into and out of buildings are not appropriate.

• Window signs should be limited to individual letters and logos placed on the interior or exterior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside.

• Painted window signs represent one of the most treasured historic sign art forms and should be encouraged when executed by a skilled professional.

• Window signs shall be designed to primarily address pedestrian traffic, and shall not be of a scale or nature to detract from the architecture of the building or district.

• Glass-mounted graphic logos may be applied by silk screening or pre-spaced vinyl die-cut forms. Perforated vinyl may be appropriate in instances where graphics are designed to screen interior spaces.

6.2.8 *Awning Signs*

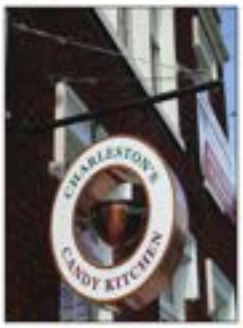
Placing signage on the body, or sloped portion, of an awning is generally discouraged. However, simple signage such as the address or name of the business placed on the valence is generally appropriate.

• The text copy should be limited to the address or name of the business only. Letter color should be compatible with the awning and the building color scheme.

• Backlit awnings and vinyl material are generally discouraged.

6.2.9 *Figurative Signs*

Signs which advertise the occupant business through the use of graphic or crafted symbols, such as shoes, keys, coffee pots, books, etc. are encouraged. Figurative signs may be incorporated into any of the allowable sign types identified above.



Chapter 7

Old Aiken Design Guidelines

Appendix

Appendix

7.1 Architectural, Design & Planning Terms

Appendix

Alignment (Architectural) The visual alignment and subsequent placement of architectural elements such as windows, cornice elements, soffits, awnings, etc. from one structure to adjacent structures in order to promote frontages continuity.

Arch A curved structure supporting its weight over an open space such as a door or window.

Articulation Describes the degree or manner in which a building wall or roof line is made up of distinct parts or elements. A highly articulated wall will appear to be composed of a number of different planes, usually made distinct by their change in direction (projections and recesses) and/or changes in materials, colors or textures.

Awning A fixed cover, typically comprised of cloth over a metal frame, that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

Balcony A railed projecting platform found above ground level on a building.

Baluster The upright portion of the row of supports for a porch railing.

Bay (Structural) A regularly repeated spatial element in a building defined by beams or ribs and their supports.

Build-To Line When placing new buildings in an existing context, it is important to approximately align them with the buildings to its right and left. In these cases, the new building should be "built-to" the line of the existing buildings rather that being considered in terms of setback. *See "Setback" herein.*

Bulkhead The space located between the pavement/sidewalk and the bottom of a traditional storefront window. Sometimes referred to as "kickplate."

Canopy A projection over a niche or doorway; often decorative or decorated.

Colonnade A row of columns supporting a roof structure.

Column A vertical support, usually cylindrical, consisting of a base, shaft and capital, either monolithic or built-up of drums the full diameter of the shaft.

Cornice The horizontal projection at the top of a wall; the top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.

Architectural, Design & Planning Terms

Curb Cuts The elimination of a street curb to enable vehicles to cross sidewalks and enter driveways or parking lots.

Eaves The overhang at the lower edge of the roof which usually projects out over the walls.

Façade The exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

Fascia The outside horizontal board on a cornice.

Fenestration The arrangement and design of windows and other openings in a building.

Frontages The aggregated façade wall composed of uninterrupted placement of individual urban oriented structures located side-by-side along an entire block as opposed to individual buildings located within the block. The continuity of frontages contributes to what has historically been referred to as the "Main Street Wall of Buildings."

Infill A newly constructed building within an existing development area.

Kickplate *See "Bulkhead" above.*

Lot A parcel of land, in single or joint ownership, and occupied or to be occupied by a main building and accessory buildings, or by a dwelling group and its accessory buildings, together with such open spaces and having its principal frontage on a street, road, highway or waterway.

Masonry Wall construction of such material as stone and brick.

Mass Mass describes three dimensional forms, the simplest of which are cubes, boxes (or "rectangular solids"), cylinders, pyramids and cones. Buildings are rarely one of these simple forms, but generally are composites of varying types. This composition is generally described as the "massing" of forms in a building. During the design process, massing is one of many aspects of form considered by an architect or designer and can be the result of both exterior and interior design concepts. Exterior massing can identify an entry, denote a stairway or simply create a desirable form. Mass and massing are inevitably affected by their opposite, open space. The lack of mass, or creation of perceived open space, can significantly affect the character of a building. Architects often call attention to a lack of mass, by defining the open space with low walls or railings. Landscape architects also use massing in design such as in grouping of plants with different sizes and shapes. Plant masses can be used to fill a space, define the boundary of an open area, or extend the perceived form of an architectural element.

7.1

Architectural, Design & Planning Terms

Appendix

Monolithic A single large flat surface (façade) without relief. A massive unyielding structure that has no proportion for people to relate to, nor does it respond to the scale of adjacent buildings.

Mullions The divisional pieces in a multi-paned window.

Ornamentation Details added to a structure solely for decorative reasons (i.e. to add shape, texture or color to an architectural composition).

Parapet A low wall generally running around the outside of a flat roof.

Pattern The pattern of material can also add texture and can be used to add character, scale and balance to a building. The lines of the many types of brick bonds are examples of how material can be placed in a pattern to create texture.

Pier A stout column or pillar that typically frames the storefront portion of a building.

Primary Building Façade The particular façade of a building which faces the street to which the address of the building pertains.

Proportion The concept of proportion deals with the ratio of dimension between elements. Proportion can describe height to height ratios, width to width ratios, width to height ratios, as well as ratios of massing. Landscaping can be used to establish a consistent rhythm along a streetscape which will disguise the lack of proportion in building size and placement.

Recess A hollow place, as in a wall.

Rhythm (Horizontal, Vertical) The regular or harmonious recurrence of lines, shapes, forms, elements or colors, usually within a proportional system.

Rustication A method of forming stonework with recessed joints and smooth or roughly textured block faces. A regularly spaced recess in masonry work.

Scale (Human) Scale is the measurement of the relationship of one object to another object. The scale of a building can be described in terms of its relationship to a human being. All components of a building also have a relationship to each other and to the building as a whole, which is the "scale" of the components. Generally, the scale of the building components also relate to the scale of the entire building. The relationship of a building, or portions of a building, to a human being is called its relationship to "human-scale." The spectrum of relationships to human-scale ranges from intimate to monumental. The components of a building with an intimate scale are often small and include details which break

those components into smaller units. At the other end of the spectrum, monumental scale is used to present a feeling of grandeur, security, timelessness or spiritual well-being. Building types which commonly use the monumental scale to express these feelings are banks, churches and civic buildings. Landscape or hardscape elements can also bring human-scale to a large building by introducing features such as a tree canopy, leaf textures, color and fragrance.

Setback The minimum horizontal distance between the lot or property line and the nearest front, side or rear line of the building (as the case may be), including porches or any covered projection thereof, excluding steps.

Sill The framing member that forms the lower side of an opening, such as a door sill. A window sill forms the lower, usually projecting, lip on the outside face of a window.

Spalling The process, usually caused by moisture being trapped inside bricks, whereby the face of the brick falls off due to extreme changes in temperature.

Storefront The traditional "main street" façade bounded by a structural pier on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom and the lower edge of the upper façade on top, typically dominated by retail display windows. The parts of the building that face the street and connect with the sidewalk

Street Wall The edges created by buildings and landscaping that enclose the street and create space. Sometimes called, "frontages."

Surface Materials Can be used to create a texture for a building from the roughness of stone to the smoothness of marble or glass. Some materials, such as wood, may be either rough (such as wood shingles or re-sawn lumber) or smooth (such as clapboard siding).

Texture The concept of texture refers to variations in the exterior façade and may be described in terms of roughness of the surface material, the patterns inherent in the material or the patterns in which the material is placed. Texture and lack of texture influence the mass, scale and rhythm of a building. Texture also can add intimate scale to large buildings by the use of small detailed patterns, such as brick masonry.

Transom The horizontal division or cross-bar in a window. A window opening above a door.

Trim The decorative finish around a door or window; the architrave or decorative casing used around a door or window frame.

7.2 Appendix

Acknowledgements & Sources

Shortly after the adoption of the Aiken Downtown Architectural Design Guidelines in August 2005, it was determined that a residential component to the guidelines should be included. Therefore, in May 2006, Community Design Solutions was contacted to enfold the residential component of the Historic Preservation Commission's Design Review Manual. Then in late 2006 it was determined that the Downtown Design Overlay District would be expanded again to encompasse other areas of Old Town Aiken. McBride Dale Clarion Was retained to craft guidelines for Corridor or roadside commercial areas and industrial buildings. The result is this revised publication.

The Historic Preservation Commission's Design Review Manual was created by Margaret Marion of Aiken. This author is indebted to Ms. Marion for all content, text and photographs, included herein as Chapter 4, "Guidelines for Residential-Type Buildings." Ms. Marion is also responsible for the authorship of the "Sources" section that follows.

Sources

Many resources are available to help guide property owners on the care of old buildings and on planning work. Some of the materials used in the preparation of this document are listed in this section, and many of them should be available at the Aiken County Library. Additional information and advice can be obtained from the City of Aiken Planning Department and the other agencies and organizations listed below. Under the Zoning Ordinance, the Design Review Board has the final authority over work under its jurisdiction.

Organizations & Agencies

Local:

City of Aiken Planning Department
P.O. Box 1177 (214 Park Avenue, SW)
Aiken, SC 29802
(803) 642-7608
www.aiken.net

Historic Aiken Foundation
P.O. Box 959
Aiken, SC 29802

State:

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
S.C. Department of Archives & History
8301 Parklane Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29223-4905
(803) 896-6100
www.state.sc.us/scdah/histrcpl.htm

National:

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.
www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/index.htm

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 588-6000
www.nthp.org

NTHP Southern Regional Office
William Aiken House
456 King Street
Charleston, SC 29403
(803) 722-8552

Publications

Magazines:

Old-House Journal
2 Main Street
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930
(800) 234-3797

Traditional Building
69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11217
(718) 636-0788

Brochures:

Preservation Briefs *(These publications prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior are available for purchase from the Superintendent of Documents and, in limited quantities, from the S.C. Department of Archives & History.)*

- #1 The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings
- #2 Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings
- #3 Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings
- #4 Roofing for Historic Buildings
- #5 The Preservation of Historic Adobe Buildings
- #6 Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings
- #7 The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra-Cotta
- #8 Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings
- #9 The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
- #10 Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
- #11 Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts
- #12 The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass)
- #13 The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows
- #14 New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns
- #15 Preservation of Historic Concrete: Problems and General Approaches
- #16 The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors
- #17 Architectural Character - Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character
- #18 Rehabilitating Interiors of Historic Buildings
- #19 The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs
- #20 The Preservation of Historic Barns

- #21 Repairing Historic Flat Plaster - Walls and Ceilings
- #22 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco
- #23 Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster
- #24 Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches
- #25 The Preservation of Historic Signs
- #26 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings
- #27 The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron
- #28 Painting Historic Interiors
- #29 The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs
- #30 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs
- #31Mothballing Historic Buildings
- #32 Making Historic Properties Accessible
- #33 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass
- #34 Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors: Preserving Historic Composition Ornament
- #35 Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation
- #36 Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes
- #37 Appropriate Methods for Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing
- #38 Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry
- #39 Holding the Line: Controlling Unwanted Moisture in Historic Buildings
- #40 Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors
- #41 The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings: Keeping Preservation in the Forefront

Preservation Tech Notes

Design Guidelines and Information from Other Locales

Anderson Notter Associates, Inc. and Historic Salem Incorporated. *The Salem Handbook: A Renovation Guide for Homeowners*. n.p.: Historic Salem Incorporated, 1977.

Frazer Associates. *City of Manassas Historic District Handbook*. 1990.

German Village Society Guidelines.

John Milner Associates. *The Beaufort Preservation Manual*. 1979.

LDR International, Inc. *City of Columbia, South Carolina, City Center Design/ Development Guidelines*. 1998.

*Material Treatment Guidelines for Rehabilitation in Savannah's Historic District.*1990.

Pickart, Margaret M. M. Gettysburg Design Guide: *A Guide for Maintaining and Rehabilitating Buildings in the Gettysburg Historic District.* n.p.: Gettysburg Historic Architectural Review Board, 1997.

Sullivan, Charles, Woodford, Eileen, et. al. *Maintaining Your Old House in Cambridge*. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge Historical Commission, 1988.

Books

General:

Alexander, Christopher, Ishikawa, Sara, and Silverstein, Murray. *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1977.

Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. *Caring for Your Historic House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Kitchen, Judith L. *Caring for Your Old House: A Guide for Owners and Residents*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991.

Morton, W. Brown III, Hume, Gary L., Weeks, Kay D. and Jandl, H. Ward. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1992.

Poore, Patricia, ed. *The Old-House Journal Guide to Restoration*. New York: Dutton, 1992.

Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission. *Easy Guide to Rehab Standards*. Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, 1992.

State Historic Preservation Office, SC Dept. of Archives and History. Manual for Owners of Historic Buildings. 1995.

SPECIFIC ISSUES:

Curtis, John O. *Moving Historic Buildings*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1991 reprint.

New York Landmarks Conservancy. *Repairing Old and Historic Windows: A Manual for Architects and Homeowners*. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1992.

London, Mark. Masonry: *How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone*. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1988.

Mandelker, Daniel R. and Ewald, William R. *Street Graphics and the Law*. Washington, D.C.: Planners Press, 1988.

BUILDING STYLES & TERMS:

Blumenson, John J.-G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

Harris, Cyril M., ed. *Historic Architecture Sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1984.

Phillips, Steven J. *Old-House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture (1600-1940)*. Lakewood, Colo.: American Source Books, c 1989; Washington, D.C.:Preservation Press, 1992.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: New American Library, 1980.