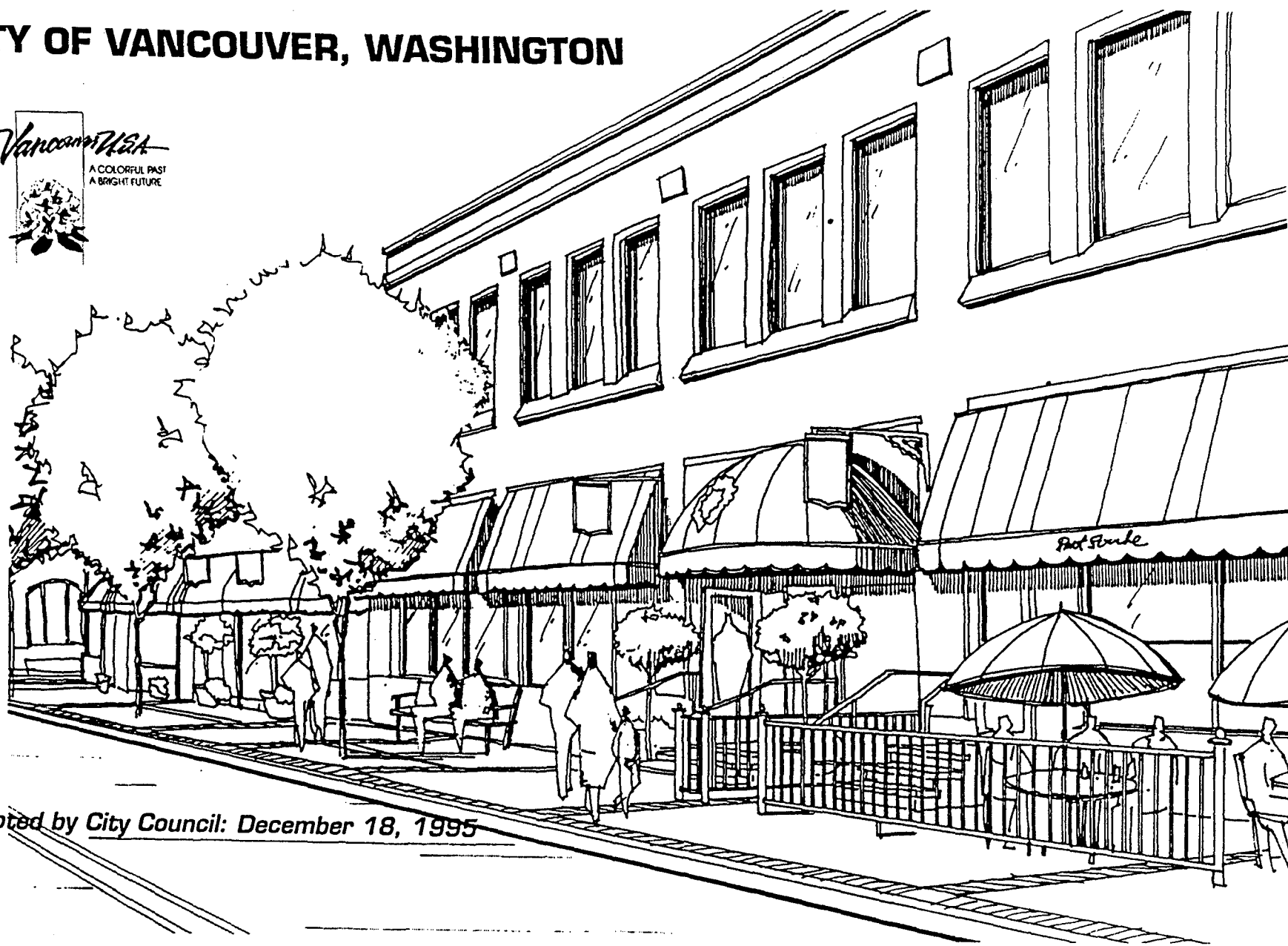


# DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

## CITY OF VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON



Adopted by City Council: December 18, 1995

# CITY OF VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

Project Review was established in 1978 to assist architects and developers in their efforts to ensure quality design in their projects, as well as compatibility of development projects with existing developments and City goals. The Committee reviews projects located within the area generally bounded on the north by Fourth Plain Boulevard, on the west by the Burlington-Northern railroad yard, on the south by the Columbia River, and on the east by the eastern boundary of Central Park (see map above).

The Downtown Design Guidelines Manual is one of the primary tools used by the Project Review Committee in reviewing the design of proposed projects within their jurisdiction. This design guidelines manual substantially updates the original manual, which was prepared by Rai Okamoto Associates in 1978. This document will serve to inform citizens and developers as to the character of proposed development for the central city area. The guidelines contained in this manual are to be used in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance and required design review procedures.

A primary objective of the original Design and Development Plan for Downtown Vancouver (on which the original Downtown Design Guidelines Manual was based) was to establish downtown Vancouver as the focus of commercial, cultural and political life in the community. This goal is also central to more recent design documents prepared for the City of Vancouver, including Anton Nelessen Associates' Visions for the Vancouver Urban Area, the Downtown Vancouver Association's Facade Improvement Manual, and various ordinances prepared as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update such as the Mixed Use District. Design concepts were also developed to take advantage of Vancouver's unique historical setting as the first permanent settlement in the Pacific Northwest, as well as its unique physical setting as the Gateway to Washington on the Columbia River and as an integral component of the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area.

Goal statements contained in the Visions for the Vancouver Urban Area provide a broad context for many of the design principles outlined in this Design Guidelines Manual. For example, the plan envisions an "...urban core that will become a point of local identity, which will further create a sense of place and engender neighborhood and civic pride. The plan envisions that new development and redevelopment will combine multiple uses—residential, civic, cultural, office, commercial—into single structures. A network of pedestrian-friendly streets and a multiplicity of uses on those streets will help to ensure that the downtown and other similar neighborhood centers do not close up at five o'clock. The density of the built environment will be alleviated by neighborhood and pocket parks. The downtown will be reborn as the most exciting neighborhood center in the urban area."



*Figure 1: Building design and location can create an interesting urban environment.*

## OUTLINE OF PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Most new developments and exterior remodel projects within the Project Review Area (see Map A) require Project Review Committee approval prior to the City issuing a building permit for proposed construction. Projects located west of I-5 and along the Columbia River Waterfront are reviewed using the *Downtown Design Guidelines*, but projects east of I-5 within Central Park are reviewed by the Committee using the "A Park for Vancouver" plan and associated *Central Park Design Guidelines Manual*.

Once a project has been identified as requiring approval by the Project Review Committee, the property owner or his/her agent must submit an application along with required architectural plans and information to the Department of Community Preservation and Development to schedule a meeting with the Committee.

The project review process is intended to assist the developer in designing projects that are compatible with the City's design guidelines, and therefore it is imperative that projects be presented and discussed with the Committee at the earliest possible stage of design. Discussions with the Committee early in the design process will help to facilitate the project's direction.

For major projects, a two-step review process is required, with the first meeting to be used for preliminary discussion of a project's design, and the second meeting to consider a more "finished" project proposal. This two-step process is also recommended for smaller projects.

Once a complete application is received by the Department of Community Preservation and Development, the project is then scheduled for the next available Project Review Committee meeting, at which a presentation is made by the applicant before the Committee at a public hearing. The Committee reviews the project for consistency with adopted guidelines and review criteria, and either approves, approves with modifications, or disapproves the project based on its criteria.

Once final Project Review approval has been obtained, the applicant may submit a building permit application to the City Building Division.

For more information about the Project Review process, please contact the Department of Community Preservation and Development at (360) 696-8005.

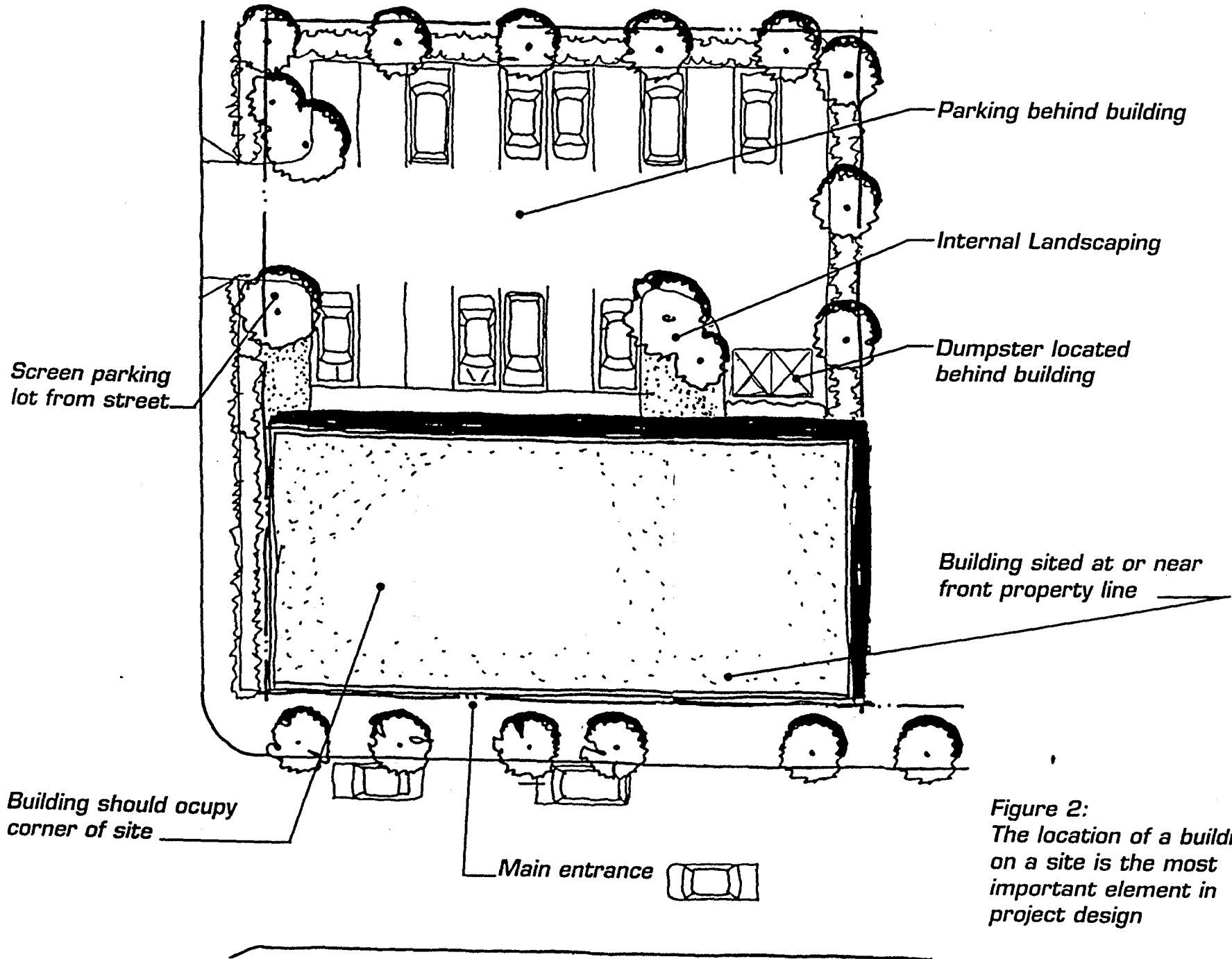
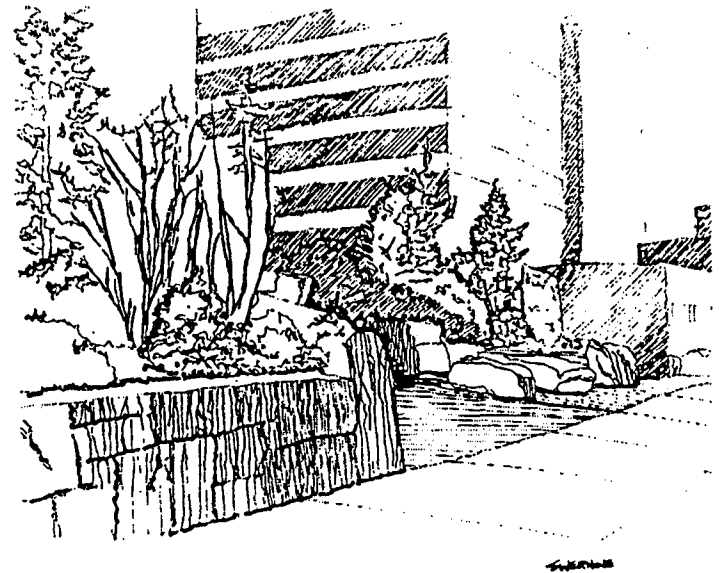


Figure 2:  
The location of a building on a site is the most important element in project design

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## SITE DESIGN

- Ground floor spaces adjacent to public areas, including sidewalks, should be devoted to “active uses” such as retail or service-oriented space, unless found to be infeasible due to site conditions. Inactive uses such as storage or offices requiring privacy should not be located at the ground floor.
- Where a site has frontage on two intersecting streets, the building and/or a plaza should be located at the corner of the site where the streets intersect. *(Figure 2)*
- Drive-in facilities are discouraged in the downtown area. *(Figure 2)*
- Whenever functionally feasible, buildings should abut the sidewalk with parking areas behind the building.
- Where buildings do not immediately abut the sidewalk, exterior semi-public “gathering spaces” created by design and placement of planters, low walls, steps, etc. are encouraged. In the design of new or renovated building frontages, temporary encroachment into sidewalk areas for cafes and retail sales is encouraged. *(Figure 3)* This encroachment should not impede pedestrian movement. Note: Encroachment into the public right-of-way may require a street use permit from the Department of Public Works. Contact Public Works at 696-8290 for more information.



**Figure 3:**  
*Semi-public plazas are encouraged*



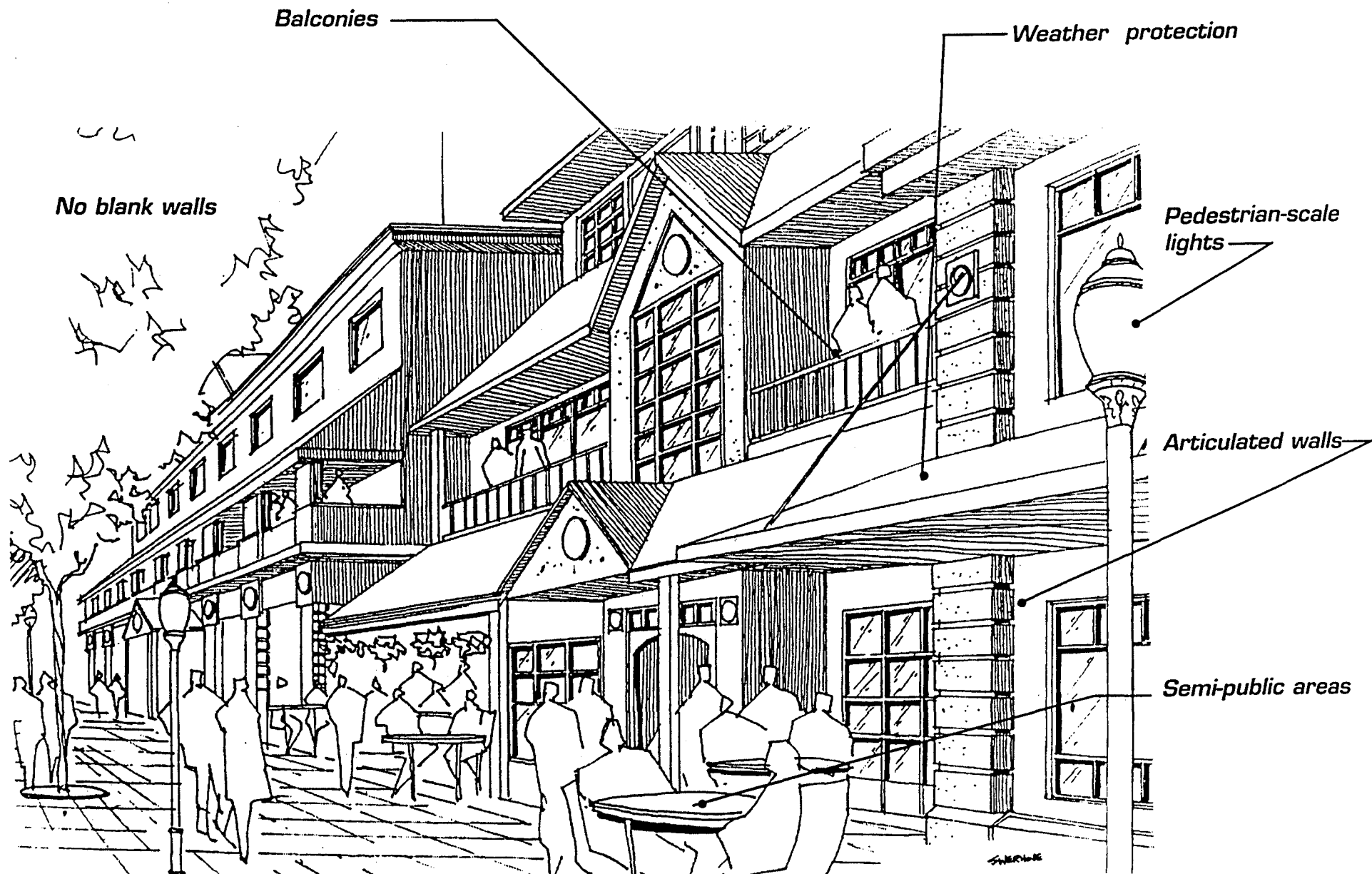
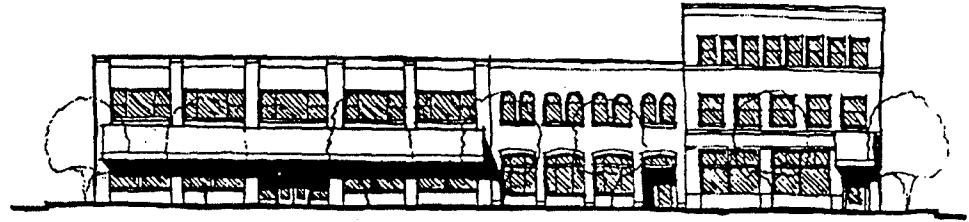


Figure 4: Design elements can add interest to a buildings appearance.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## BUILDING FORM AND APPEARANCE

- Large buildings should be architecturally treated to be visually compatible with adjacent small scale residential development.
- Vertical continuity of facades should be maintained for at least the first two floors along Main Street and other major pedestrian areas to reinforce a sense of enclosure of the street.
- Accessory buildings located on the same lot should be architecturally consistent with the major building.
- Rooflines should be consistent with the building's use and surroundings. Interesting details (such as the use of cornices) are encouraged.
- Maintain the building line by screening parking lots which abut the street. Hedges, fences, raised planters, and low walls combined with plantings are possible solutions. In some cases, the facade of the building may be retained with parking located behind it. *(Figures 2,9)*
- Bay windows and/or balconies projecting beyond the building facade into the street right-of-way are encouraged above the first story. Note: Approval from the City Department of Public Works may be required for such encroachment.
- Blank walls in excess of 15 lineal feet along sidewalks or other pedestrian areas are not permitted. All new construction having walls in excess of 15 lineal feet should have a substantial part of such wall surfaces provided with window areas open to interior views or displays. Where windows are not feasible, more than one type of surface material, texture, or color (including murals) should be used to visually break up long walls. Measures to enhance the appearance of existing blank walls in excess of 15 lineal feet, such as landscaping or murals, are encouraged. *(Figure 4)*



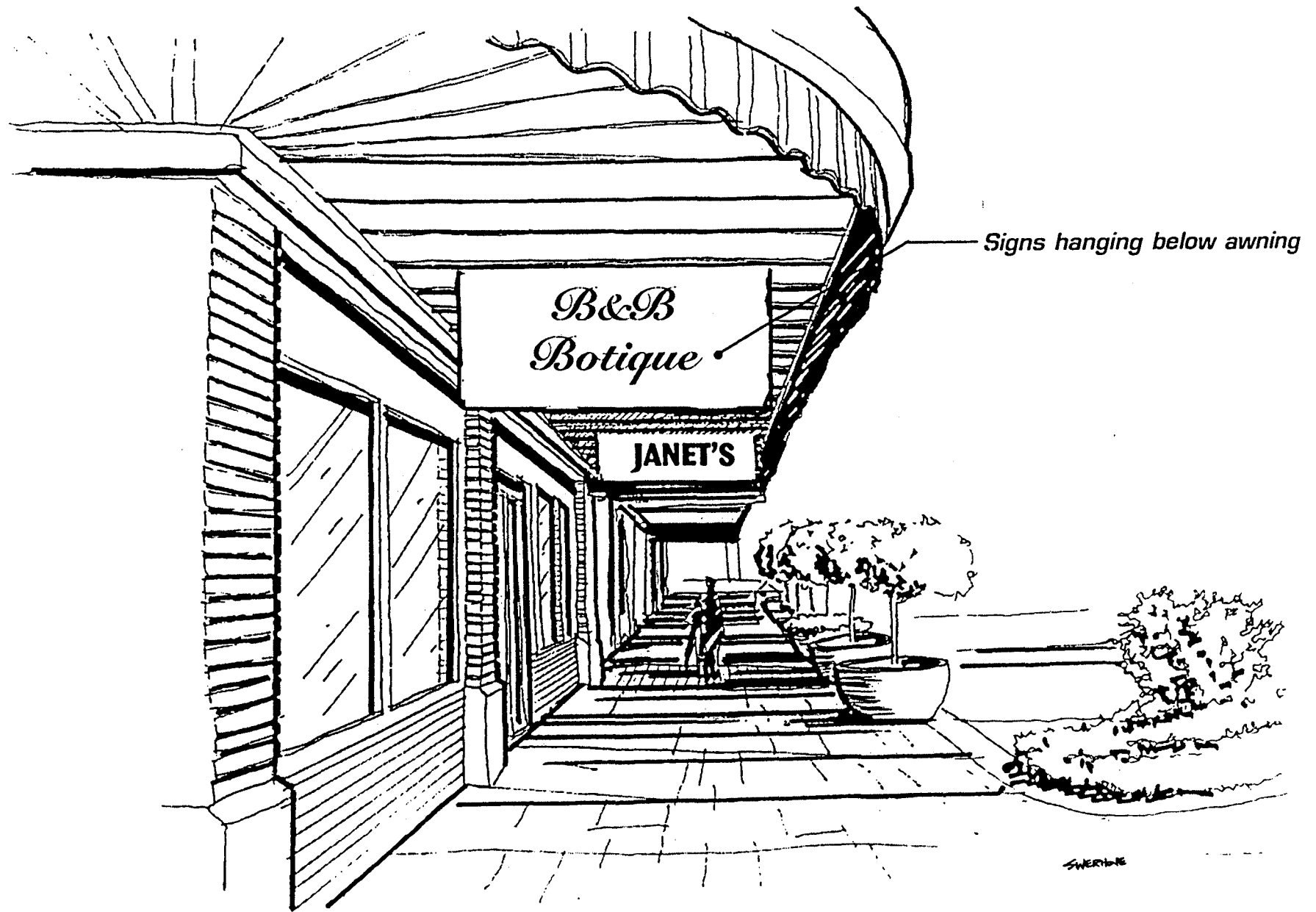


Figure 5: Awnings protect pedestrians from the elements and enhance the building appearance.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## WEATHER PROTECTION

Awnings are significant elements in the facades of commercial buildings in the downtown. When suitably designed and maintained, awnings convey that merchant's care for their buildings, their customers, and their business district.

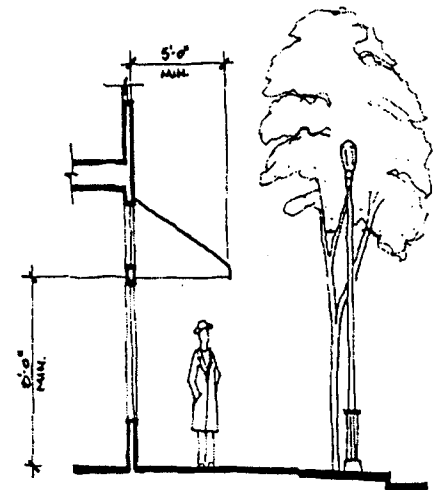
While their appearance is important, awnings and canopies also serve several practical functions. They protect people from the elements, they protect storefront windows from moisture, and they prevent excessive glare and heat build-up inside buildings. By blocking the mid-day sun, awnings and canopies protect merchandise in display windows from fading and heat damage.

Rain protection features are **mandatory** on new and renovated buildings within the Downtown Rain Protection Combining District, which generally extends along both sides of Main Street (including several side streets) from 5th Street to 15th Street. Specific dimensional requirements of such features are required within this district, therefore applicants are advised to review these standards (see Appendix A).

### Guidelines:

- Rain protection is encouraged at the ground level of all new and rehabilitated commercial buildings located adjacent to primary pedestrian routes. In predominantly retail-oriented areas, rain protection is strongly recommended. (Figures 4, 5)
- All weather protection features, whether in the Rain Protection District or not, shall have a minimum depth of 5 feet from building wall, and shall be located over the pedestrian path of travel. (Figures 6)
- All weather protection features shall have a minimum height above sidewalk of 8 feet. (Figures 6)
- The architectural character of the building should determine the design, scale and color of the awning.

**Figure 6: Minimum awning distance**



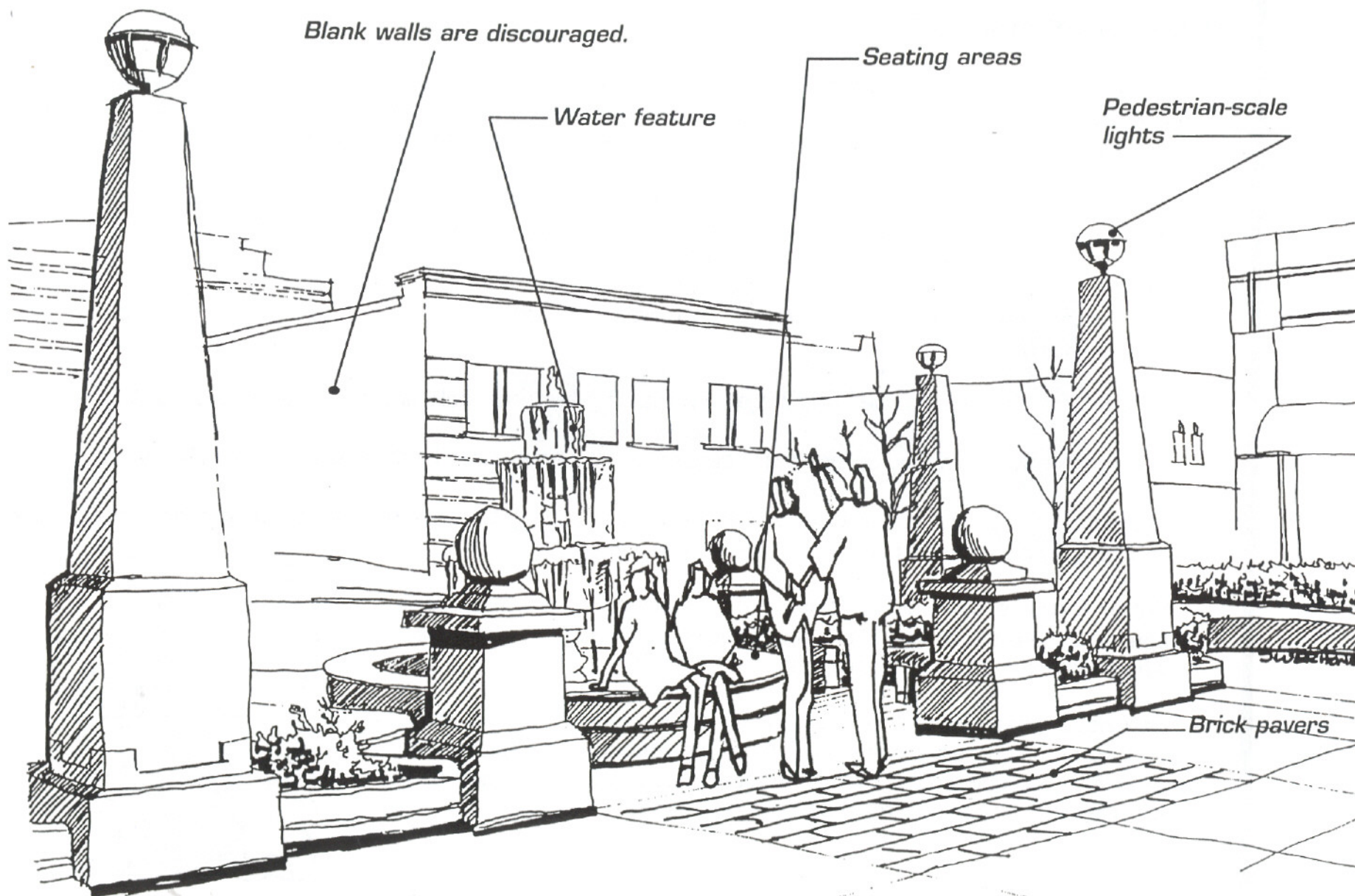
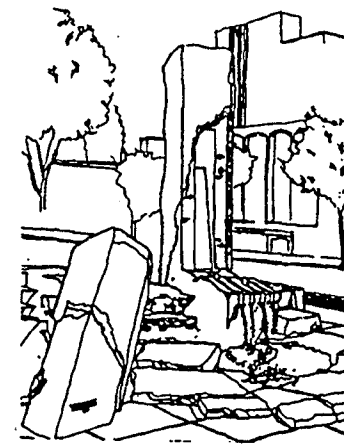


Figure 7: Public plazas with pedestrian amenities are encouraged.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

- Pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, etc. should be provided in areas open to the public, where sidewalk width can accommodate them. Design and location of such amenities shall be coordinated with the Public Works Department as well as the Project Review Committee. *(Figure 7)*
- Site services such as trash dumpsters, utility boxes, etc. should be located on the least visible side of the building and screened with hedges, fences, planter boxes or a combination of trees and shrubs.
- Add interest and variety to the walking surface by use of a material such as pavers, brick and/or stone, set in geometric or free form patterns. Materials selected should be compatible with other design elements. *(Figure 7)*
- Design light standards to be compatible with the architectural scale and character of the building.
- Use lighting to accent key architectural elements or to emphasize landscape features. *(Figure 7)*
- Add lighting to paths and sidewalks. Pedestrian-oriented lights, both on the street and on buildings, are encouraged to enhance pedestrian safety. *(Figure 7)*
- Water features such as fountains are a positive element of outdoor spaces accessible to the public and should be provided in such areas where determined to be appropriate. *(Figure 7)*
- Gateways, passageways, plazas, parks, waiting places, transit stops, and other unique sites offer numerous opportunities to integrate art-work into the downtown. Works of art are strongly encouraged to be provided in outdoor spaces accessible to the public.





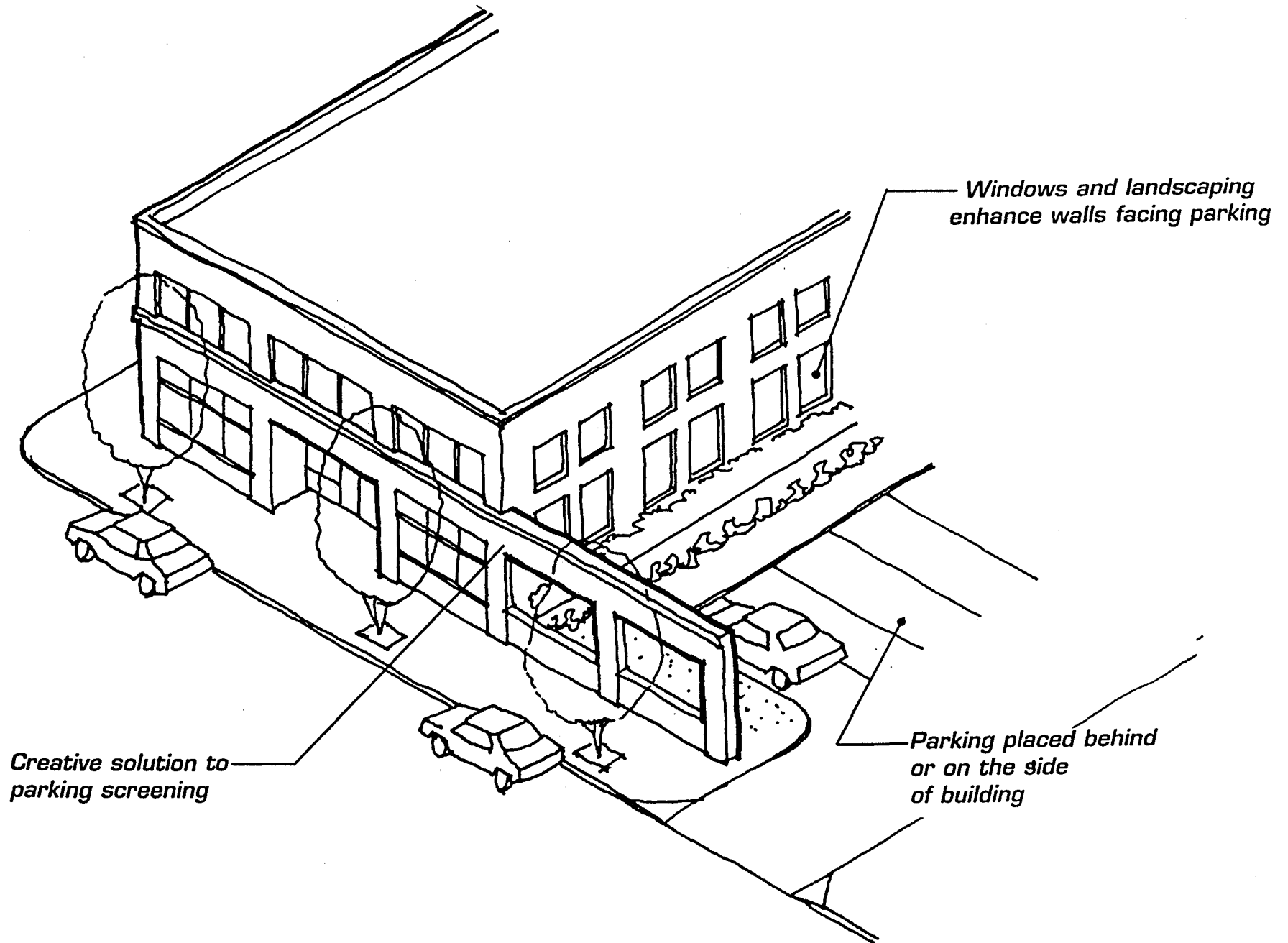
**Figure 8:** *Street trees and other landscaping softens the appearance of buildings and sidewalks.*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## LANDSCAPING

- Deciduous street trees shall be provided along all public streets, at 2" caliper, spaced at 30-foot maximum intervals. *(Figure 8)*
- Trees shall be of a type listed as "Recommended Street Trees" in the Urban Forestry Commission's Guide to Selecting and Planting Trees *(See Appendix B)*. For more specific advice in regard to desirable street trees, contact the city's Urban Forester, at 696-8290.
- As many mature trees as possible shall be retained.
- All planting and landscaping should be appropriate for the kind of wear and use they will be subjected to.



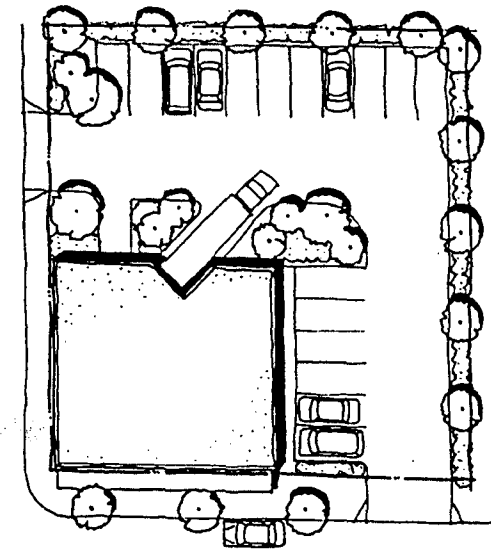


**Figure 9: Locate parking behind building, incorporating screening from the street.**

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## PARKING

- Service bays should be provided at the rear of buildings, incorporated into parking areas and screened from view from pedestrian areas. *(Figure 10)*
- Parking lots should be located at the rear of buildings and are not allowed in front of buildings. *(Figures 2,9,10)*
- Parking should generally not be provided at a rate higher than the amount required by the Zoning Ordinance.
- Landscaping and architectural treatment of blank sidewalls facing parking areas is encouraged. *(Figure 9)*
- Large paved areas not being used for auto sales shall be screened from the street by landscaping or a solid fence to a minimum height of 36 inches.
- Ground floor parking areas under buildings shall be screened from sidewalk areas by walls or planting strips.
- Elevators to parking garages should be directly accessible and visible from sidewalks.
- Surface parking areas in excess of 5,000 square feet should be landscaped internally with trees and shrubs to visually reduce their scale.



*Figure 10: Locate service bays behind buildings*



Figure 11: Different types of signs can be integrated with the building's facade to be consistent with one another.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

## SIGNS

The attractiveness of a sign is determined by size, placement, content, legibility, letter size, and contrast, as well as choice of material and illumination. Because each building is different in design, each sign must be considered individually.

The different character of the various sub-areas of the downtown can be reflected in the signs and graphics that are used. Certain kinds of uses, such as restaurants, retail shops, and other active pedestrian areas should use signs which are indicative of those activities. The guidelines in this chapter are organized by type of building sign.

Signs do not require approval by the Project Review Committee unless they are: a) part of a larger project; b) within a designated conservation district; or c) potentially out-of-character with the surrounding uses and structures, as determined by planning staff.

### General Sign Guidelines:

- The number and size of signs are regulated by the City's sign ordinance (VMC 20.82). However, in some instances, the maximum amount of signage permitted may allow multiple signs. Wherever possible, the allowable sign area should be consolidated into the minimum number of signs consistent with the design of the project and the needs of the occupant.
- Paper, cloth, vinyl, and other such materials that create an impermanent appearance when used as signs are strongly discouraged.

### Building Wall (Fascia and Projecting) Signs:

- Signs should be architecturally well-integrated with the building's facade with respect to scale, size, color, location, and type of materials. *(Figure 11)*
- The use of symbols representing the goods for sale or services rendered in the commercial facility is encouraged in pedestrian areas at the sidewalk level. *(Figure 11)*

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS

### SIGNS — *continued*

- Signs should be located so that building details will not be covered or otherwise obscured.
- Auto-oriented fascia signs should be of minimum area required for readability from no more than two blocks away (400 feet).
- Projecting signs should be of minimal area required for readability from no more than one block away (200 feet) and should not obstruct public signs.
- Signs should be aligned with those on adjacent buildings when possible. *(Figure 11)*
- Signs located in pedestrian areas should be flush-mounted on a building's facade low enough to be read from the sidewalk.
- Diverse graphics and signs which are pedestrian-oriented in size and location are encouraged in high activity areas.
- Signs should be designed and placed so they complement overall facade composition. *(Figure 11)*
- Each building should have only one primary sign on any one building face.
- Select lettering sizes which will be more visible to the pedestrian than to vehicular traffic. No more of than sixty percent of the sign face should consist of lettering.
- At least one sign on the building shall meet ADA standards for visibility.

### Free-standing Signs:

- Free-standing pole signs for individual commercial establishments are strongly discouraged in the downtown area.
- Low monument-type signs are preferred to pole-mounted signs, especially in mixed office/residential areas.
- Free-standing pole signs should not be visible from streets other than the one on which they are located, except for corner locations.

### Canopy Signs:

- Awning or canopy signs should not impede pedestrian traffic. (Figure 5)
- Business identification signs which hang down from canopies are encouraged. (Figure 5)

### Rooftop Signs:

- Rooftop signs in the downtown area are strongly discouraged.

### Illuminated Signs:

- The type and intensity of lighting should be compatible with both the design of the sign and adjacent buildings.
- Use of interior-illuminated awnings as signs is discouraged.

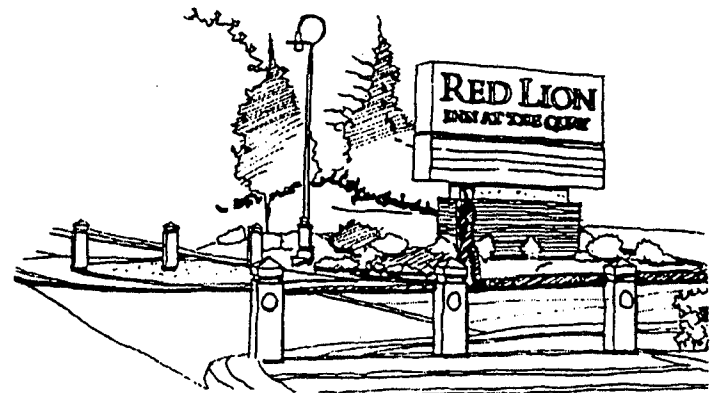


Figure 12

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN**

**W**ithin the downtown commercial area some sub-areas exist that have special qualities or problems that require guidelines in addition to those which apply to the area in a general way. These areas, (indicated on the Guidelines Zone Map) are as follows:

- **Lower Main Street (Old Town) Conservation Area**
- **Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings**
- **Columbia River Waterfront Area**

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN**

### **LOWER MAIN STREET (OLD TOWN) CONSERVATION AREA**

The Zoning Ordinance, at VMC 20.54, contains a special design district for the frontages along Main Street south of 8th Street, and for the first blocks of 7th Street on both sides of Main. This district recognizes the older buildings concentrated here, and attempts to ensure that the architectural character is maintained and enhanced, to emphasize Vancouver's unique historical setting. Guidelines covering this area are directed toward the same objectives as those that apply elsewhere in the downtown area — to increase pedestrian activity and reduce the negative impact of the automobile, in addition to ensuring compatibility of design with the older buildings of this district. These guidelines are supplemental to the general guidelines of this manual and VMC 20.54, and are intended to provide a building designer more detailed direction in meeting the City's design goals for this area. The Project Review Committee reserves the right to consult with the City Office of Heritage Services regarding any issue involving historic buildings, such as design, details, colors, etc.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Building heights and profiles of new construction should generally maintain a low scale of early 1900's streetscape; exceptions would be allowed for towers and ornamental architectural features that are in character with the architecture.
  
- Key buildings are those that establish the character of the special design district, such as:
  - C.C. Department Store (Vancouver Commerce Center) (101 E. 8th Street)
  - Pearlman Building (705 Main Street)
  - Chronis Building (617 Main Street)
  - 605-607 Main Street
  - Ford [Heritage] Building (601 Main Street)
  - 511 Main Street
  - Vancouver National Bank (801 Main Street)
  - Schofield Building (600 Main Street)
  - Donegan Building (614 Main Street)
  - Cady Building (109 W. 7th Street)



- Key buildings should be restored as much as possible to their original appearance. Weather protection elements may be added if compatible with the architectural character of the facade.
- Articulation of the street facade by the use of bay windows above the first floor and stairways is encouraged. Note: A street use permit from the City Department of Public Works is required if such features extend into the public right-of-way.
- Continuity of the cornice lines should be maintained.
- Window areas should be no more than half the wall area above the first floor and placed to preserve the "wall character" of the older buildings.
- All window frames in new buildings should have a greater vertical than horizontal dimension.
- First floor use should consist predominantly of pedestrian-oriented activity, therefore at least half of the first floor interior should be visible to the public way.
- Paint colors used for renovation and new construction should be similar to those generally in use during the late 19th century.
- Architectural materials not commonly in use in the early 1900's are discouraged in new construction and renovations. The use of brick or wood in a manner consistent with the designated key historic buildings is encouraged. The Downtown Vancouver Association's Facade Improvement Plan also contains examples of recommended building materials for such buildings.
- Metal window and door frames are permitted only with non-metallic appearing finish and color. They are discouraged in restoration of key buildings.
- All new and renovated buildings' details, such as window frames, door frames, parapets, cornices, etc. should be drawn from the precedents established in key historic buildings in the area or from buildings previously along Main Street, described in archival records, either by photographs or through words.
- Where roofs are visible, the roof form should be unobtrusive. Roofing materials shall be dark and gutters, downspouts and flashings should be inconspicuous.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN

### LOWER MAIN STREET (OLD TOWN) CONSERVATION AREA — *continued*

- Rain protection features should be compatible with the character of the building they are attached to and the old downtown district in general.
- Signs should reflect the graphic style of the early 1900's and should be made of materials compatible with the building.

### CONSERVATION AREAS AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Several individual buildings and sites have been identified as architecturally significant enough to warrant special efforts to preserve them. One of these — the Academy Building and grounds — is a dominant visual landmark of the downtown area. The 13th Street frontage between Main and Washington also contains several historically and architecturally significant buildings. In contrast to new development, these older buildings add an incalculable aesthetic value to the city center. As such, the architectural character of these areas should be preserved by any new development in the vicinity.

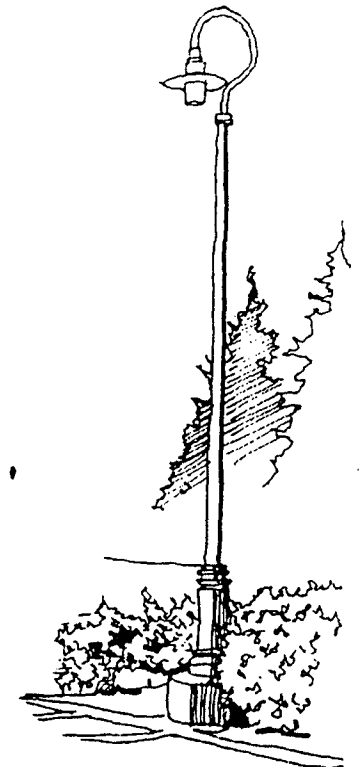
### COLUMBIA RIVER WATERFRONT AREA

This special area of consideration includes all of the Project Review area that is bordered by the Columbia River to the south and State Highway 14 to the north. The location along the river and significant public investment in a waterfront trail system presents a unique opportunity to integrate public and private spaces, residences, shopping, restaurants and office uses. The City considers the waterfront area to be one of its greatest assets, and therefore development should proceed using the following design considerations.

#### Building and Site Design:

- Multiple buildings on a single site shall be designed to create a strong visual relationship. Architectural treatment of a building should be consistent on all sides, and buildings should be sited to make optimal use of the waterfront setting.

- Waterfront development should take into account the relationship of adjacent buildings in terms of height, materials, scale, siting and architecture, and should preserve significant views. The size, character, and siting of proposed projects should relate to the functions of adjacent streets and pedestrian linkages.
- Mixed-use developments which provide increased opportunities for informal and planned activities beyond the typical 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work hours are encouraged. Such developments should include secure, well-lit pedestrian areas. In addition, site design which enhances opportunities for activities both within the project boundary and between existing adjacent developments are encouraged.
- The use of decorative pavement accents in sidewalks and near street intersections should be incorporated into project design.
- Buildings should be oriented to the public rights-of-way and should be placed close to pedestrian movement, and multi-use facilities designed to accommodate retail and other uses at the ground floor level are encouraged.
- Awnings, signs, and lights attached to buildings are encouraged to be located at a height which defines the first floor.
- All lighting, benches, and garbage containers must conform to designs approved by the City for the Columbia River Waterfront Trail. *(Figure 12)*
- Parking areas shall be screened from the waterfront trail by a three-foot high solid landscaped hedge or berm, or wall or fence. Large areas of parking should be landscaped internally with deciduous trees.



*Figure 12*



Figure 13: Multi-family developments should be designed to be sensitive to nearby single family residences.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

## SITE DESIGN

- New duplex and other multi-family residential buildings should be sited and designed to be as consistent with single family homes as possible, where the latter are predominant in the neighborhood.
- Such buildings should relate in the same way to the street as existing housing with front entrances facing the street and a clearly defined front and back yard.
- New buildings should have setbacks and side yards that are consistent with the surrounding residences in order to maintain the continuity of building placement.
- The consistency of scale of new duplex, triplex and fourplex construction in terms of height, depth, width, volume and shape with the existing predominant built form of the neighborhood is desired.

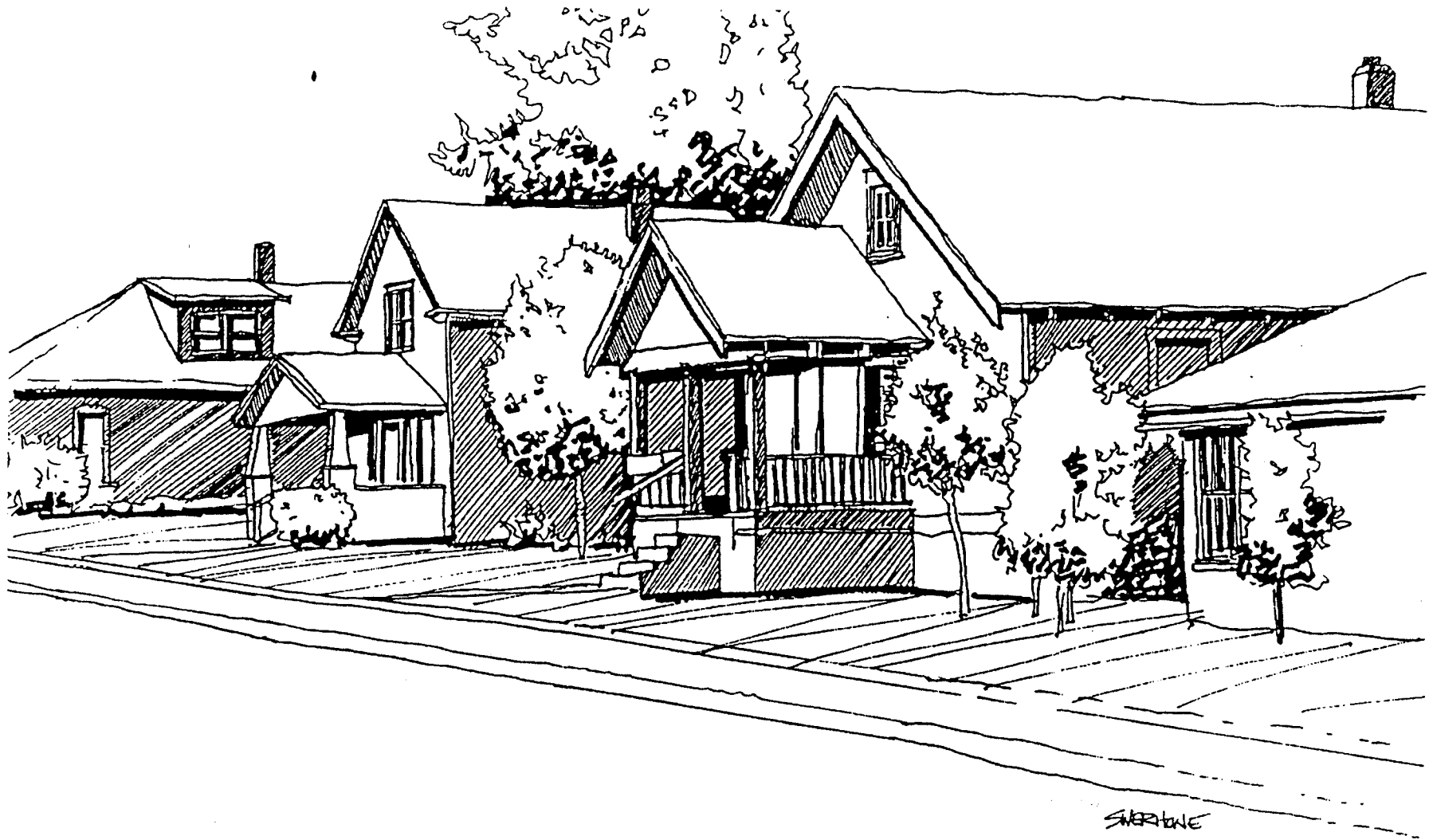


Figure 14: Older neighborhoods reflect a distinctive style of housing, which should be retained.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

## BUILDING FORM AND APPEARANCE

- Where long continuous buildings would be out of scale with surrounding areas, smaller roof sections, jogs or setbacks of portions of the building, changes in material or color, and other architectural means should be explored to mitigate negative visual impacts.
- As many units as possible should have entrances facing the street. *(Figure 13)*
- Openings along street frontages, such as windows, balconies, doors, decks and other features are encouraged to relieve long, blank walls and enhance street life. *(Figure 13)*
- Every attempt should be made to provide each residence with its own entrance. If this is not possible, the number of residences sharing entrances should be minimized to enhance privacy. *(Figure 13)*
- Walkways should be designed so that there is screening and/or a reasonable distance between visual access to individual units and pedestrian flow. Access balconies are discouraged.
- Stair towers should be integrated with the building form.
- The windows and/or building form should be designed so that visual intrusion between units within a project is minimized.
- In areas where there is no strong existing single family housing character, single family attached houses with no side yards should be considered, where permitted by the applicable zoning designation of the property. This allows single family home construction to make better use of a site by not wasting land in side yards. *(Figure 13)*
- New duplex, triplex and fourplex construction should not use materials for siding or roofing which are not found on an existing single family home within the neighborhood. The following materials are discouraged as siding: plywood, exposed concrete block, T111 or particle board, stone aggregate, and metal.
- Windows should be located so that visual and sound intrusion from adjoining buildings and the street is minimized. This should not be interpreted to discourage windows.



*Figure 15: Courtyards are an attractive alternative to multiple street entrances to multi-family buildings.*



# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

## BUILDING FORM AND APPEARANCE —*continued*

- New construction should be compatible with the existing visual character of the neighborhood with architectural features such as roof shape, porches, bay windows, entrance design, etc., keying from surrounding forms.
- Front porches and projecting features such as balconies, bays and dormer windows are encouraged.
- Building additions should be in keeping with the original architectural character, color, mass, scale, and materials. Additions should be designed to have the least impact upon character-defining features and should be located inconspicuously when viewed from the street.
- Smaller non-commercial buildings, where permitted, should have gable or hip roofs with medium to steep pitch. Dormers and gable roofed projections are encouraged.
- In renovating existing buildings, architectural integrity of street-oriented facades should be maintained. Additions and structural alterations should be limited to the side or rear yard facades and be minimally visible from the street.
- Front and side yards which abut a street should be visually open to the street. Hedges, retaining walls and fences which visually obscure front yards are discouraged. Fences, should be kept behind building lines, as viewed from the street. Chain-link fences within front yards are also strongly discouraged.
- Where feasible, efforts should be made to preserve older, salvageable single family structures in mixed residence/office areas either through conversion to higher density residential, office or mixed use.
- After preliminary review by the Committee, renovations or additions to historically-designated buildings may be referred to the City Office of Heritage Services for their recommendation.
- Free standing signs in these mixed residence/office areas should not be higher than five feet above grade. Monument-type signs are encouraged in place of pole-mounted signs.
- In mixed residence/office areas, if a sign is attached to a building, the height of the bottom of the second story window sill should be the maximum height permitted for a sign.



*Figure 16: Older residences reflect attention to detail and a strong orientation to the street.*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

## LANDSCAPING

- Landscaping guidelines outlined in the Downtown Commercial section of this manual shall apply to residential developments.

## PARKING

- No parking shall be located between a building and public way, unless it is demonstrated that no other site layout is feasible. Access to parking areas from alleys, rather than from streets, is desirable.
- The amount of paved area should not exceed that necessary for required parking spaces, vehicle maneuvering, and pedestrian pathways.
- Where possible, parking should be enclosed, within the building envelope or to the rear of the building form — either on a surface lot or more desirable, in a garage.
- Parking should be screened by planting and/or fences, from adjacent uses and the street where appropriate.
- Attempts should be made to minimize the size and number of curb cuts in order to preserve on-street parking spaces.

## USABLE OPEN SPACE

- Where open space is provided in multi-family developments, the following features should be provided: Including both private and semi-public open space into the project design is encouraged. Such open space should be of adequate size and dimension to permit outdoor activities to take place, both for children and adults.
- Screening should be provided to allow outdoor activity of residents to take place in semi-privacy. Privately-screened areas should be provided at each housing unit to be enjoyed by residents.
- When private open space is on the ground level, solid paving of asphalt or concrete is discouraged, although patio areas and other forms of attractive pattern paving or special brickwork are desirable.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS:**

- Downtown Vancouver Association's Facade Improvement Manual, 1994.
- Anton Nelessen's "Visions for the Vancouver Area"
- City of Vancouver Comprehensive Plan
- City of Vancouver Zoning Ordinance

For additional information, please contact the  
**Department of Community Preservation and Development**  
at (360) 696-8005.

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