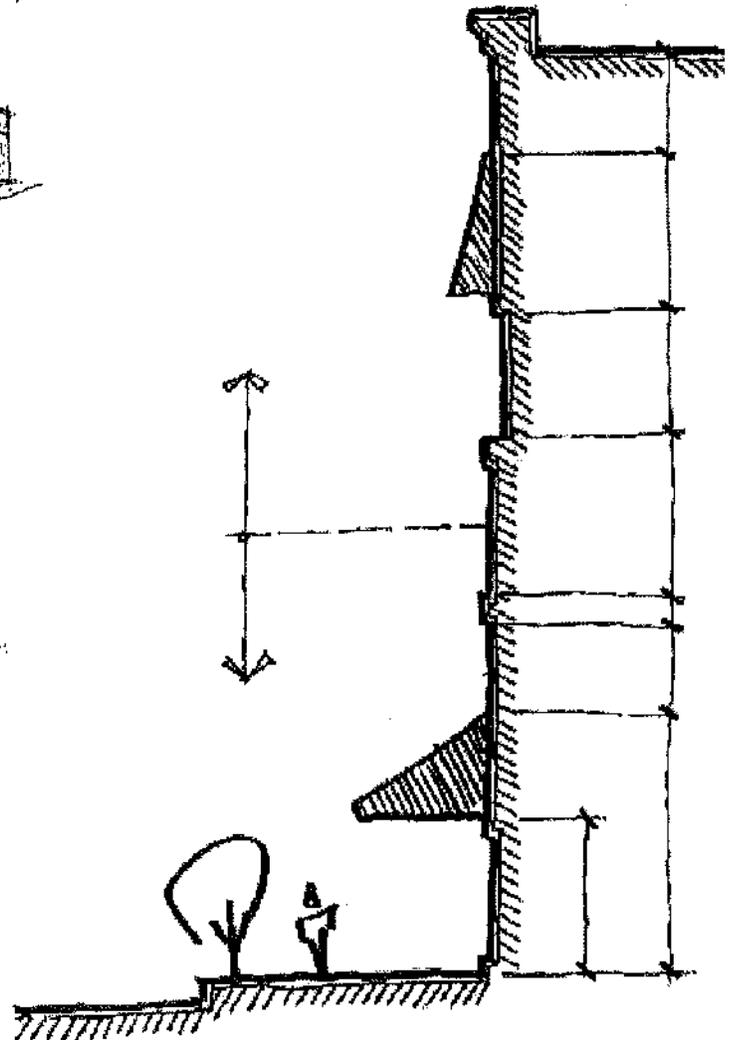
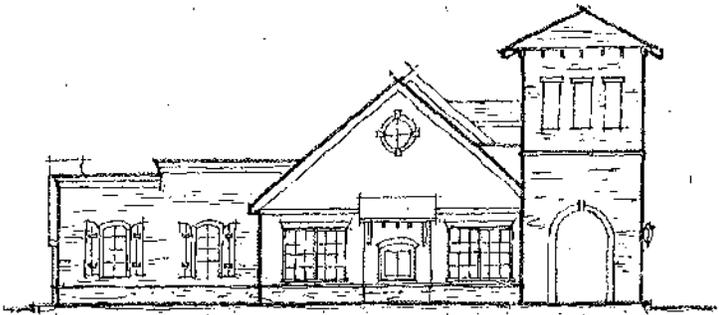
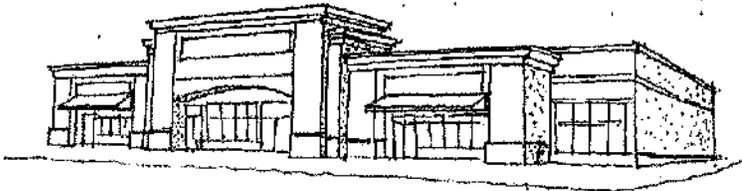
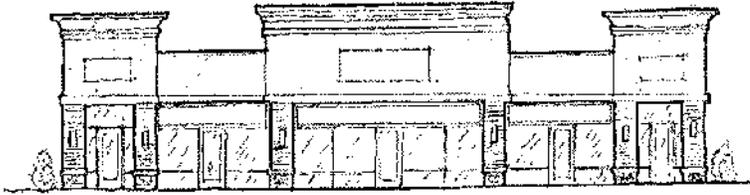


Commercial Design Handbook

City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois



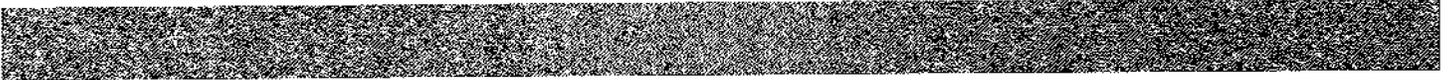


Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction and Instructions	3
Section 2: Architectural Design Guidelines	5
2.1 Architectural Scale, Mass & Proportion	5
2.2 360° Architecture	9
2.3 Windows & Entryways	13
2.4 Awnings & Canopies	17
2.5 Building Materials & Details	21
2.6 Cornices & Parapets	25
2.7 Roofs and Eaves	29
Section 3: Case Studies	33
3.1 Retail	33
3.2 Office	35
3.3 Hotel / Assisted Living	37
3.4 Commercial Warehouse	39
Section 4: Reserved	41



Section 1

Intent:

The intent of the design review process is to identify the City's expectations with regard to the design of commercial buildings and to provide a consistent framework that facilitates the review and approval of commercial buildings in a cost-effective and timely manner. The Commercial Design Handbook promotes architecture that fits within and contributes to the character and context of the City's existing commercial districts. The guidelines are meant to help achieve good design, not a certain stylistic result. The Commercial Design Handbook establishes criteria for building design and the established site plan review process. The Handbook breaks commercial architecture into seven (7) general elements. Each of the elements includes an intent and architectural design guidelines. Sketches, photographs and descriptive captions are used to aid in the understanding of the preferred design solutions and illustrate design solutions to avoid.

The Handbook does not dictate solutions, but rather provides general guidelines and examples intended to help guide developers in making decisions for a variety of specific design issues. The guidelines should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility to better respond to the varying conditions and constraints inherent to individual sites and complexities of commercial development. The Handbook is intended to assist designers, developers and owners in the preparation of development proposals and assist the City's elected and appointed decision-makers in the review and consideration of commercial applications. The Commercial Design Handbook is based on the City's Comprehensive Plan commercial design goals and objectives. There is no intent to create an architectural review board or additional layer of review.

Key Objectives:

The goal of the Commercial Design Handbook is to enhance the visual character of the City's commercial districts by promoting better architecture. The objectives of the Commercial Design Handbook are to:

1. Serve as a predictable guide for change that provides the needed flexibility to respond to conditions and constraints inherent to specific sites and evolving trends in commercial development.
2. Balance the economic requirements of the development with aesthetic concerns of the community.
3. Create an attractive physical environment for businesses that encourages sustainable building practices.
4. Promote architectural continuity and building designs that are adaptable to multiple uses for extended building lifecycles.
5. Convey a sense of human scale by strengthening the pedestrian environment through the use of pedestrian features, landscaping and meaningful outdoor spaces that relate to one another.

When Required:

Commercial developments that require site plan review, particularly as part of a planned use or special use permit, would be subject to these general guidelines. Please note that other city regulations and ordinances may also influence the proposed design of future projects, such as:

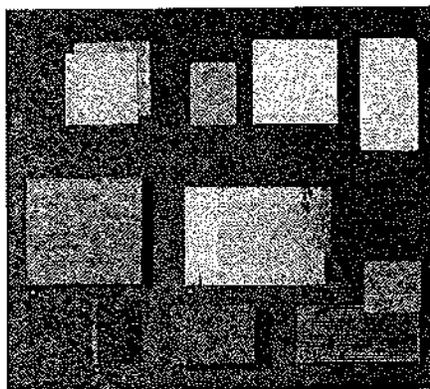
1. City building codes
2. Americans with Disabilities Act & Illinois Accessibility Code
3. NPDS Phase I & Phase II Requirements
4. Scott Air Force Base Joint Land Use Study Recommendations
5. Use of Economic Incentives

Procedures:

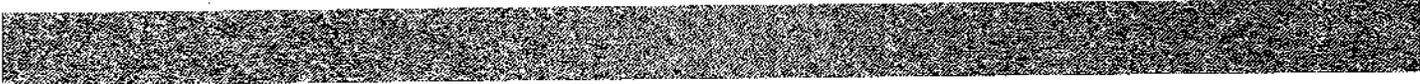
The design review process starts with a pre-application meeting with City staff. The intent of the pre-application meeting is to inform the petitioner of the City's site plan and building design review procedures and familiarize the City with the proposed development. As part of the preliminary review, the petitioner should provide a conceptual sketch of the proposed building(s) and a general description of the development including the proposed use or uses, finished floor area, building height, number of stories, proposed construction type and proposed building materials.

After the pre-application meeting, the petitioner may submit the necessary items for review pursuant to the City's Site Development Plan review procedures. The review of a proposed building's design would typically occur during the general site plan review rather than through a separate track to help expedite the project in a timely manner. Applications should include the following:

1. A site plan containing the information required pursuant to the City's Zoning Code.
2. Architectural elevations showing the proposed exterior building design and materials, including dimensions.
3. Sections of the site showing the existing and proposed grade elevations and building heights.
4. Boards showing samples of exterior building material samples, building colors, finishes and materials may be provided to better illustrate proposed design concepts.



Sample Board



Section 2.1

Architectural Scale, Mass, & Proportion

Intent:

The intent of the architectural scale and mass guidelines is to utilize a building's massing, façade, windows and entryways to create an identifiable order of horizontal and vertical elements. Negative visual impacts arising from the scale, bulk and mass inherent to large buildings and shopping centers should be mitigated through the application of these guidelines.

Guidelines:

Massing should relate to the site and be consistent or compatible with the scale, form and proportion of existing development in the immediate area by addressing the following guidelines:

1. Break up the Façade. The use of recesses and projections should be used to create articulations and shadow lines that help break up the massing of large buildings. The minimum depth of a recessed or projected surface should be one foot and the minimum width should be five feet.
2. Integration. Large buildings should integrate features along façades visible from the public right-of-way and pedestrian routes and entries to reduce the apparent building mass and achieve an architectural scale consistent with other nearby structures.
3. Base, Middle & Top Proportions: The vertical mass in multi-story buildings should be divided into smaller scale components that include a base, middle and top to reduce the perceived height and create architectural interest. First floors should be taller than upper floors and differentiated architecturally to create a sense of human scale.
4. Window & Entryway Treatments. Provide window and entryway treatments in façades visible from streets to reinforce the human scale and create architectural interest. Windows and doors should include decorative mullions, lintels, sills, glazing, and framing details. (See also Section 2.3)
5. Architectural Elements: The mass of large buildings can be made more visually interesting by incorporating architectural components such as awnings, balconies, bay windows, dormers, building-mounted lighting fixtures or sconces, cornices and parapets.
6. Rooflines: A distinctive roofline can reduce perceived building height and mass, increase compatibility with smaller scale and/or residential development, and add interest to the overall design of the building. (See also Section 2.7)
7. Materials: When there is a change in the building plane, consider a change in the building materials, colors, or patterns. (See also Section 2.5)
8. Landscaping: Provide trees complimented with low lying bushes and perennials that relate to the architectural massing of the façade and provide seasonal color, contrast and texture.
9. Tenant Liners: In shopping centers with anchor tenants, the use of smaller tenant spaces lining the entrances of street-facing façades should be used to reduce the apparent bulk by breaking-up the overall building façade. (See also Section 2.3)

Illustrated Guidelines



Avoid large continuous massings



Break up the façades into smaller massings

Building height does not break up into smaller parts and feels massive

Massive buildings produce elevations that can be intimidating to approach and lack interest

A detailed cornice helps define the top of the building

Façades of larger/taller buildings should be divided into proportions that include a top, middle and base to help diminish their overall mass

Awnings help soften façades and identify windows & doors

Human Scale

Top

Middle

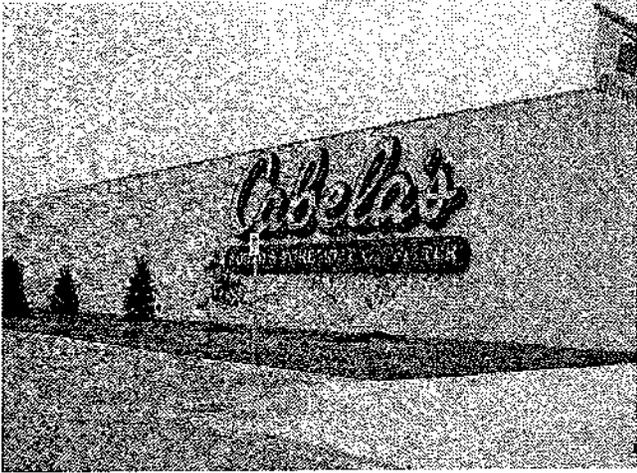
Base

Avoid

Preferred

The diagram compares two building elevations. On the left, under the heading 'Avoid', is a tall, narrow, and featureless vertical wall. A tree and a person are shown at its base for scale. On the right, under the heading 'Preferred', is a taller building facade divided into three distinct horizontal sections: a 'Top' section with a decorative cornice, a 'Middle' section with a series of windows, and a 'Base' section with an awning over the entrance. A 'Human Scale' is indicated at the bottom right. Text annotations describe the benefits of these features: a cornice defines the top, dividing the facade into top, middle, and base sections to reduce mass; awnings soften the facade and identify windows and doors.

Avoid



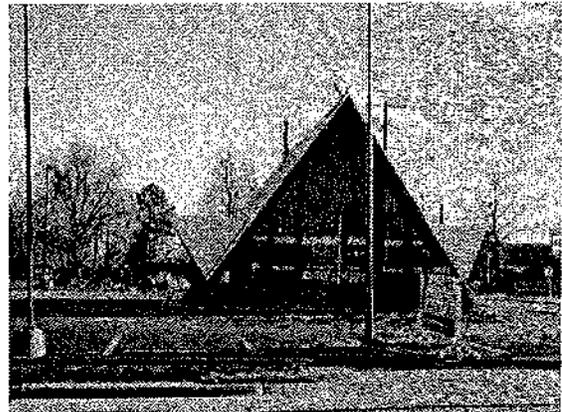
Avoid large/long masses with no off-sets or relief



Avoid large gables that dominate the façade



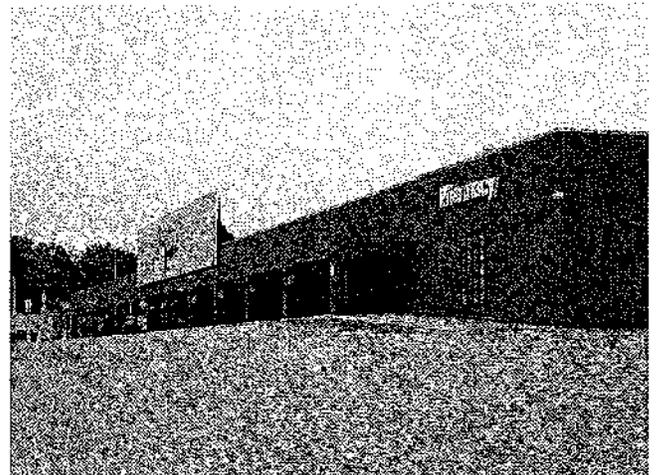
Avoid painted patterns to break up massing



Avoid roofs that are disproportionate in scale with the façade and other building elements

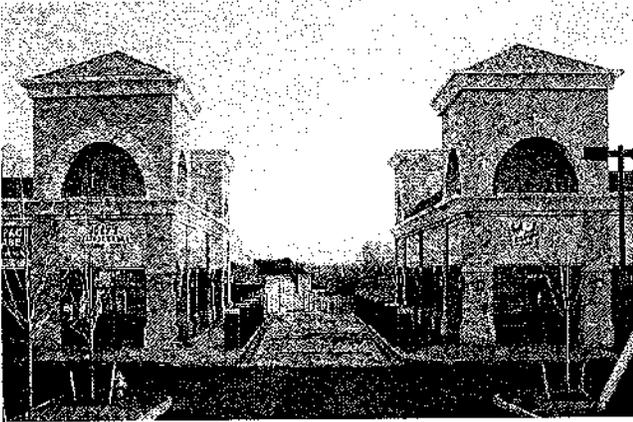


Avoid massing elements that are unbalanced



Avoid long, horizontal massing with no vertical relief

Preferred



Massing elements define building entrances



Building projections help break up large massing



Building recessions and projections help break up the massing of large buildings



Building massing accentuates entrance



Materials vary with changes in building plane



Building has a defined base, middle and top



Section 2.2

360° Architecture

Intent:

The intent of the 360° architectural guidelines is to reinforce the established pattern and design of buildings and create buildings that provide a consistent architectural quality and character on all building faces, except those not visible from a public right-of-way.

Guidelines:

1. Architectural treatments (e.g., materials, colors, façade design, roof lines) and the use of screening devices (walls, fences, berms, landscaping) should be consistent and compatible on all sides when visible from a public right-of-way.
2. Building materials used on a primary façade should continue for a distance of no less than two feet on the adjoining side or rear elevation.
3. Building faces not visible from a public street or right-of-way may utilize materials other than those used on the primary façade. However, the material selection and overall design should be durable and maintain a unified appearance with the primary façade.
4. Service elevations should utilize landscape buffering and screening to shield views from public right-of-way and adjacent properties.
5. All buildings located on a parcel fronting a street should be oriented toward the street and contain an identifiable entrance.
6. Building setbacks should reflect the existing setbacks of neighboring buildings. To best reflect the setbacks of existing development the average setback of the neighboring buildings should be used.
7. In undeveloped areas buildings should maintain a zero setback from the street, except portions of the façade may be notched, recessed or extruded to accentuate entrances, dining areas, window displays and outdoor display area, when permitted.
8. All electrical and mechanical equipment on or near a building should be screened from view or isolated so as not to be visible from any public right of way. Such screens and enclosures should be treated as integral elements of the building's appearance.
9. Loading docks, trash enclosures, outdoor storage and other accessory structures and uses should be incorporated into the overall design of the building to maintain a unified appearance.

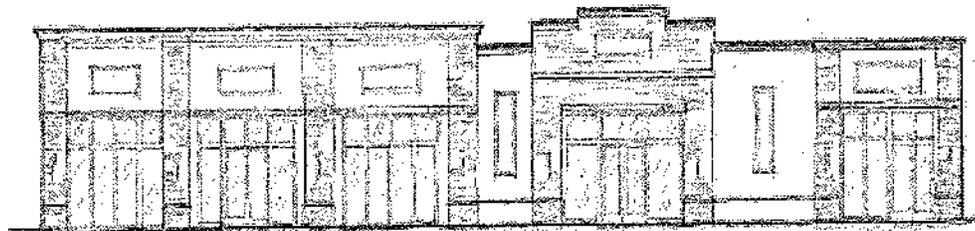
Illustrated Guidelines

Front Elevation



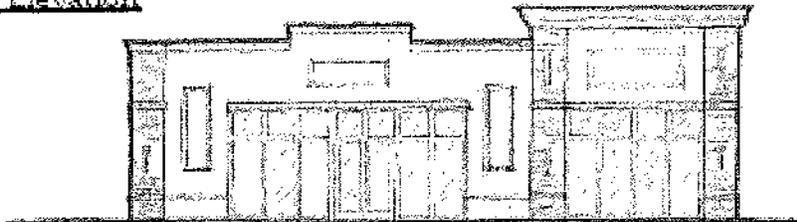
Front elevation has main entry, defined by architectural detail

Rear Elevation



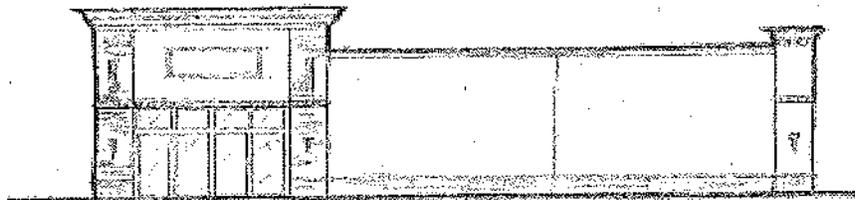
Rear elevation has employee entrances and continues the material and window treatments

Side Elevation



Side elevation materials and windows wrap from the front elevation to the sides of structure

Side Elevation

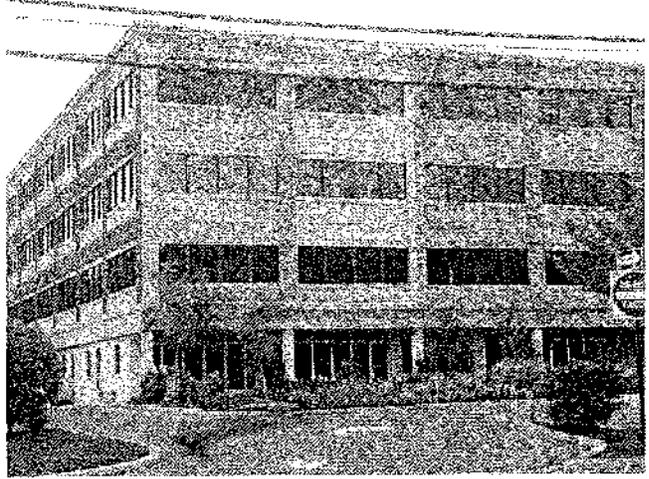


Side elevation materials and windows wrap from the front elevation to the sides of structure

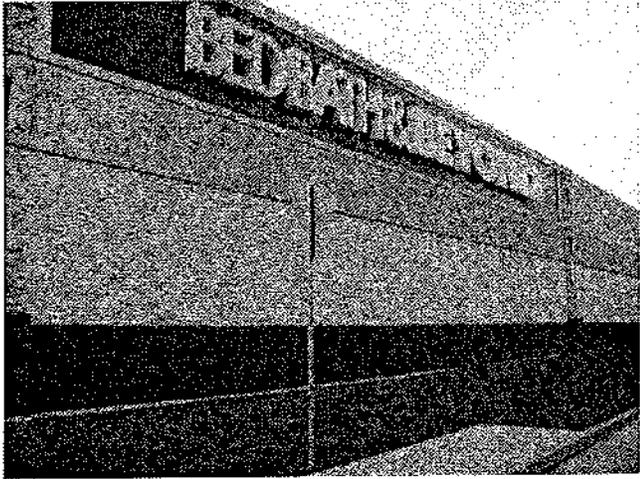
Avoid



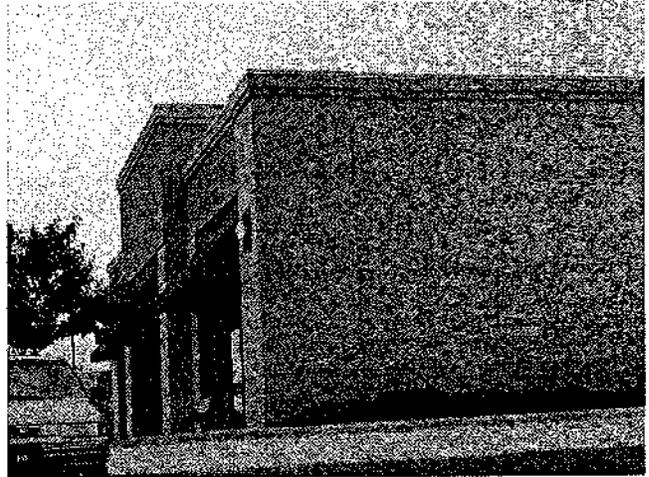
Entrance design only, front façade contains different design, materials and color



Exterior building materials inconsistent on front and side elevations



Avoid painted on materials & designs to address



Storefronts on the corner should wrap the sides



Side elevation not consistent with front elevation



Do not change materials at the vertex of a corner

Preferred



Front Elevation:
Similar use of awnings and materials on all sides



Side Elevation:
Similar use of awnings and materials on all sides



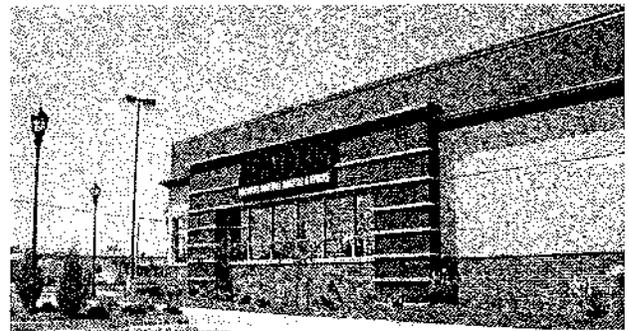
Continued use of architectural features and landscaping on rear façade



Dumpster screening & rear façade utilizes same materials/design as main façade



Landscaping, materials & design on rear façade are similar in quality and design as primary façade



Front façade details and landscaping wrap around and continue along the side elevation

Section 2.3

Windows & Entryways

Intent:

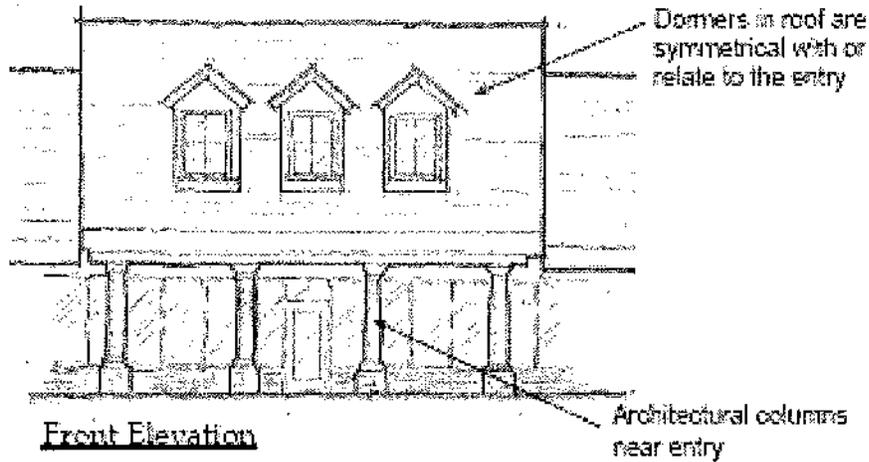
The main entrance should be the primary focal point of the building. Entryways and windows should be used to provide views of merchandise and business operations, provide casual surveillance and take advantage of the sun's passive solar energy and natural light.

Guidelines:

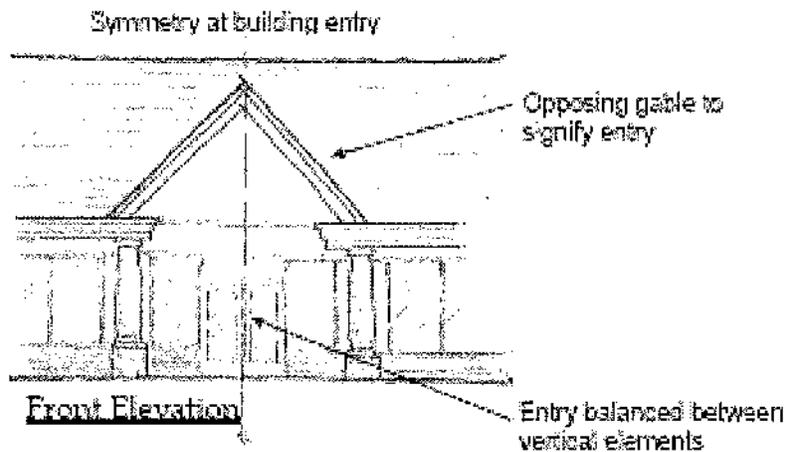
1. The path of entry should be perpendicular to the front property line.
2. Main building entries should be parallel to the front property line and include a well defined entryway such as a recessed entrance, protruding entrance, truncated corner entryway or other design that creates a well-defined entry.
3. Building faces fronting a street or public right-of-way should incorporate a combination of awnings, building-mounted lighting, pedestrian level display windows, storefronts and entrances.
4. Each floor of any building façade facing a street should contain transparent windows that allow views of indoor nonresidential space or product display areas. Windows should cover at least 20% of the wall area, but no more than 70%.
5. Upper story windows should be vertically aligned with the location of windows and doors on the ground level, including storefront or display windows.
6. Decorative lintels, sills, glazing, door design, moldings or framing details should be used on windows and entryways located on façades facing public streets to create architectural interest and enhance the pedestrian realm. Window treatment should be as follows:
 - A. Windows should be surrounded by trim, molding and/or sill at least four inches wide. Stone or masonry lintels and sills should be incorporated in masonry and stucco clad buildings. Wood trim should be incorporated into wood clad buildings.
 - B. Commercial buildings with no trim or molding should have window frames at least two inches wide.
 - C. Multiple-paned windows should be used to help create visual interest.
7. The following approaches should be considered for all large-scale retail development to break up the architectural massing of large unadorned walls and enhance the visual appearance of building frontages.
 - A. Line the primary façades of anchor tenants with smaller tenants, each having their own entrance and at least one window.
 - B. Provide minor storefronts for each department of a big box user. Each storefront should physically express internal functions/departments (i.e. food court, bank, pharmacy, florist, etc.) and have its own entrance and at least one window.

Illustrated Guidelines

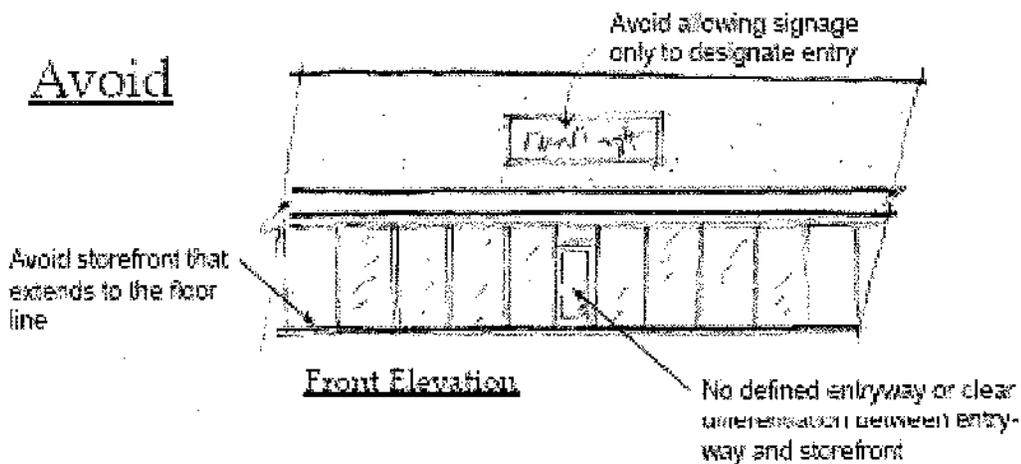
Preferred



Preferred



Avoid



Avoid



Façade dominated by large, single panes of glass that extend to the floorline.



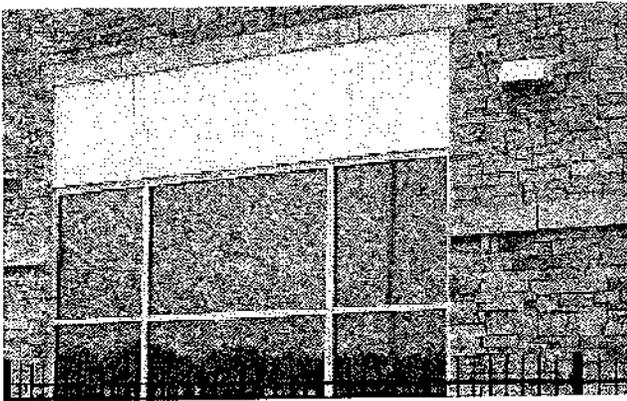
Street-facing façade does not include pedestrian entrances, lighting, awnings or landscaping



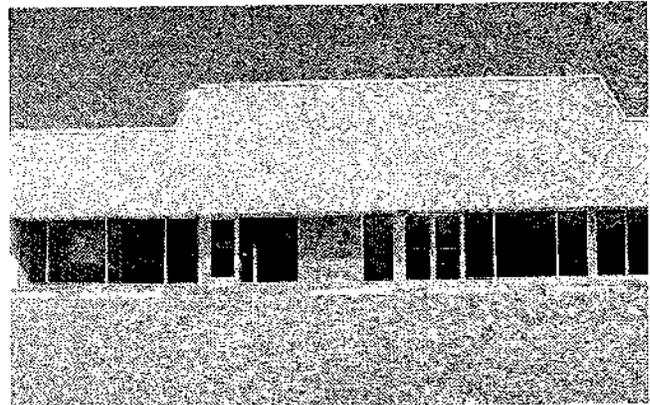
The storefront is dominated by reflective glass with no defined entryway



Façade lacks windows to allow views of indoor space or product display areas



Faux storefronts are discouraged



Windows and doors are not proportionate with other architectural elements

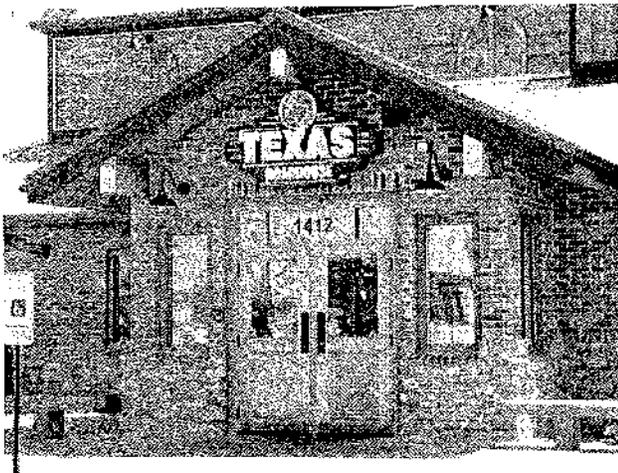
Preferred



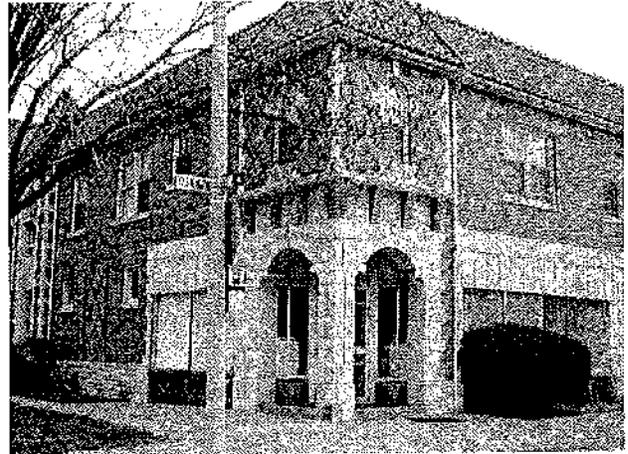
Storefront is transparent to pedestrian's view



Entry has vertical definition, signage, and awning



Entry is clearly defined with gable roof, signage and opposing windows



Pedestrian entrance is clearly defined



Entry is defined with change in material and Projection



Storefront is transparent and entrance is on the street facing façade



Section 2.4

Awnings & Canopies

Intent:

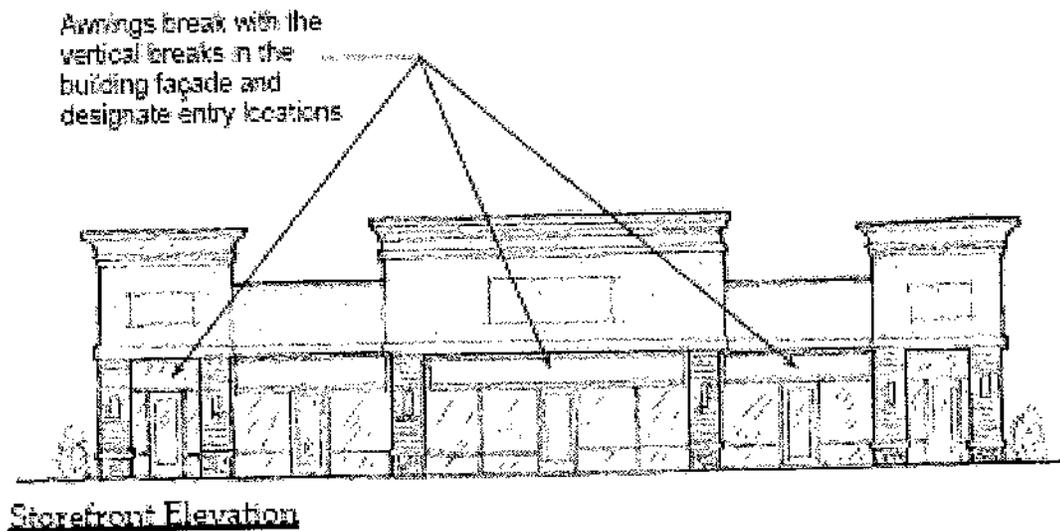
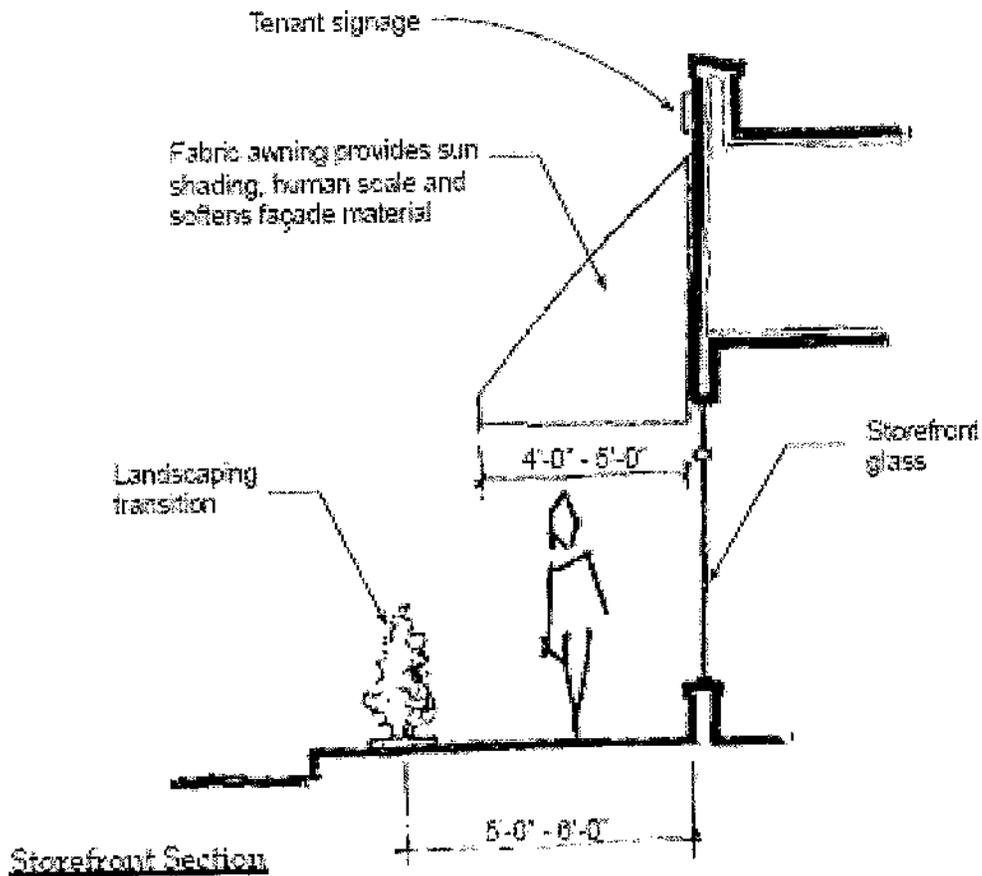
Canopies, awnings and similar features that create shade, protect buildings and users from the elements and physically and visually identify points of entry are encouraged.

Guidelines:

All building façades with an entrance fronting a street should provide an overhead canopy, enclosure or other building projection or recess designed as an integral part of the building entrance as follows:

1. Canopies should be of a color and texture that compliments the architectural design of the façade.
2. Canopies should be open to light and air and provide a transition from outdoor space to indoor space.
3. Canopies should be constructed of durable, low maintenance materials that provide weather and sun protection. Fabric, plastic or other non-durable materials should be maintained in "like-new" condition.

Illustrated Guidelines



Avoid



Awning extends the full length of façade



Awning is too high and small to provide cover for pedestrians



Awnings do not relate to the store fronts



Empty trellis awnings provide no shade



Fabric awning is ripped and falling apart

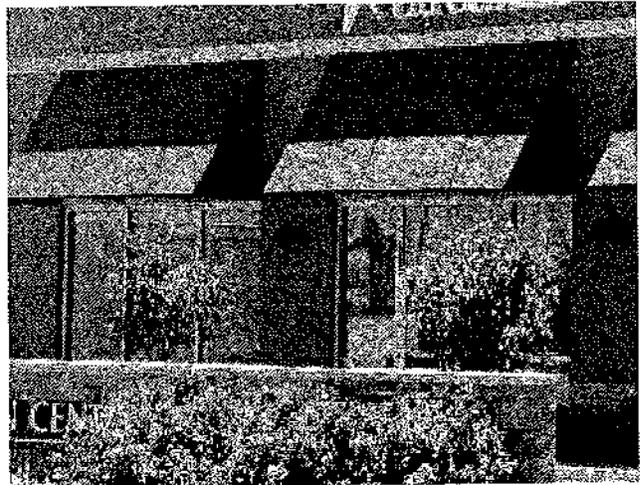


Awning extends the full length of the façade

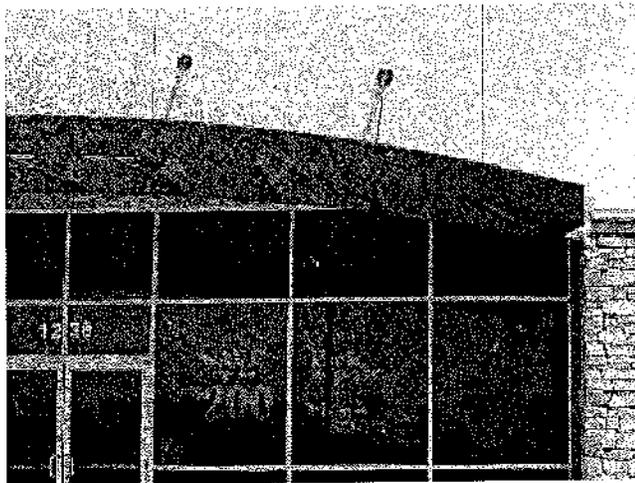
Preferred



Metal awning provides shade and durability



Awnings are proportional to windows



Durable materials are encouraged for awnings



Awning orientation consistent with windows



Fabric awnings maintained in like-new condition



Metal awnings help define the entryway and provide protection from the elements

Section 2.5

Building Materials & Details

Intent:

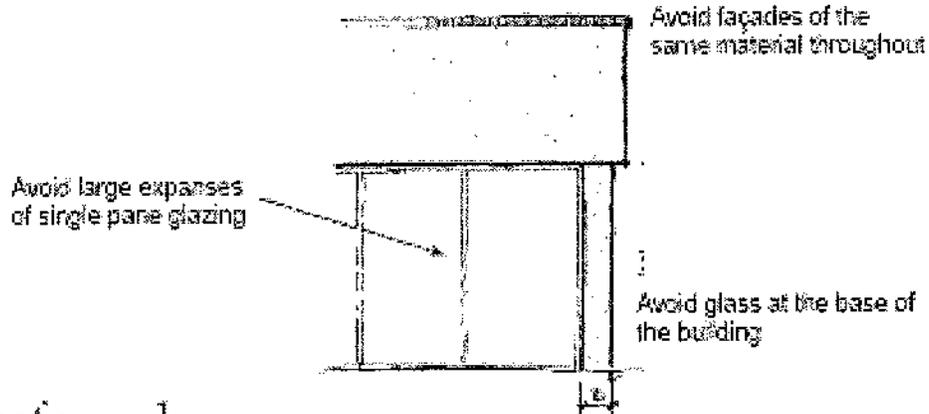
The intent of the building materials and details guidelines is to promote the use of complimentary exterior building materials that are durable and have a lasting architectural character.

Guidelines:

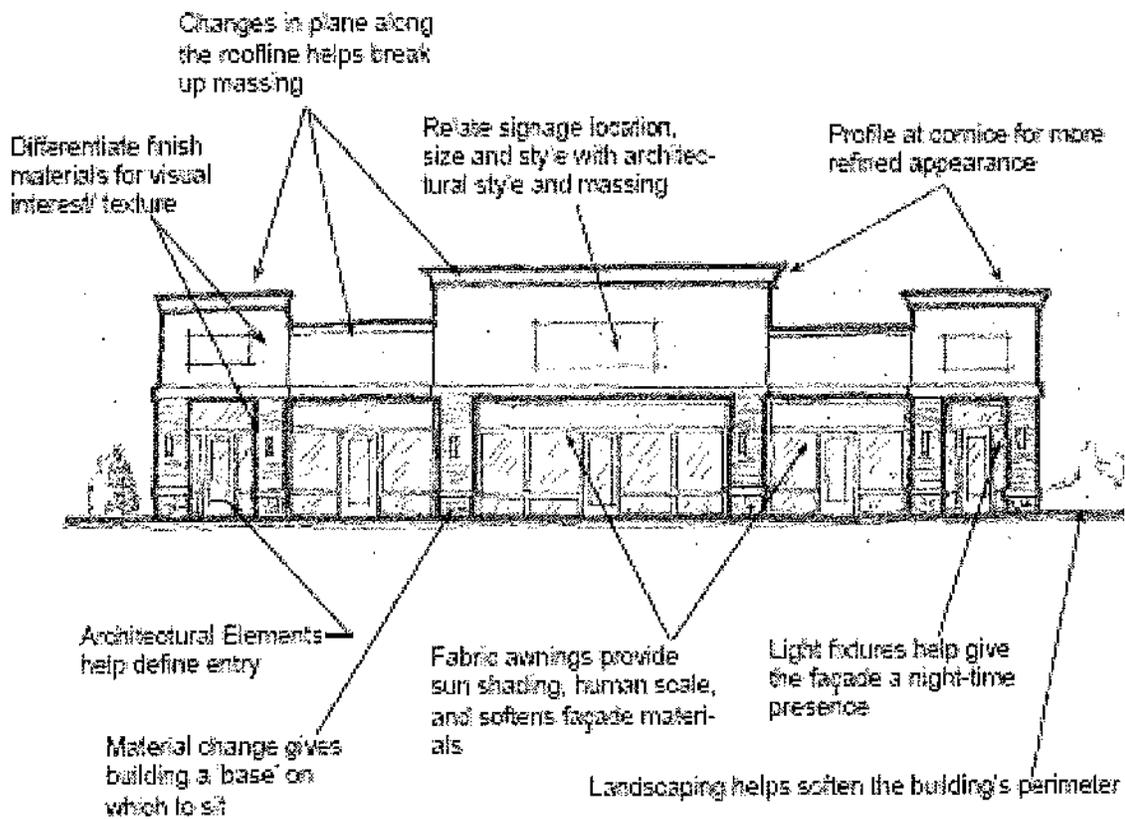
1. A minimum of 50% of all building surfaces should consist of one or more of the following materials:
 - A. Stone material consisting of granite, sandstone, slate, limestone or other durable all-weather stone.
 - B. Brick material composed of hard fi red (kiln fired) all-weather brick or other durable all-weather facing brick.
 - C. Stucco or approved gypsum concrete or plaster materials.
 - D. Wood lap siding or fiber-cement lap siding that offers an architectural appearance that is equivalent to the quality and durability of the materials listed above.
2. The use of external insulating finishing system (EIFS), corrugated metal, coated metal siding, aluminum siding, and vinyl siding should be limited to accent features only. EIFS and vinyl siding should not be used on the base of the building façade or other areas where it could be easily damaged by yard equipment or constant contact by vegetation or pedestrians.
3. The use of highly reflective or glossy materials or coatings should be limited to building accents only.
4. Site lighting, security lighting and architectural/landscape lighting that provides the user with illumination levels appropriate for the designed use is encouraged as follows;
 - A. Illumination levels should be uniform throughout the site, minimize glare and avoid light that is projected on adjacent properties.
 - B. Up-lighting and down-lighting should be used to highlight architectural features and compliment other site features and pedestrian use areas.
 - C. All lighting should include shields to more efficiently utilize the light source by controlling the direction and glare.
 - D. Excessive lighting that restricts star gazing, contributes to light pollution, unnatural sky glow and wastes energy is discouraged.
5. Black coated, decorative or period lighting is recommended. "Cobra-head" lighting fixtures are not appropriate for on-site lighting.
6. All exterior building materials and lighting should be complimentary and selected from a consistent palette used throughout the development, except on service façades that do not face a public right-of-way.
7. When there is a change in the building plane, consider a change in the building materials, colors, or patterns to create visual interest and break up the massing.

Illustrated Guidelines

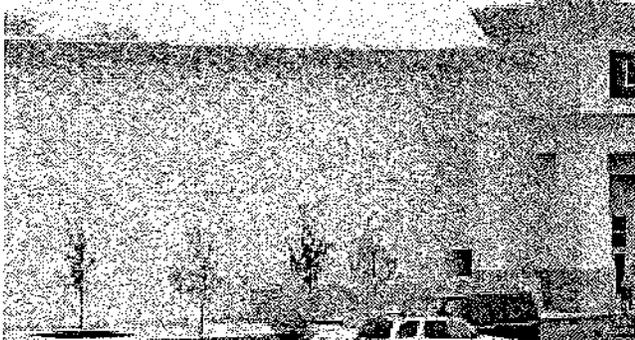
Avoid



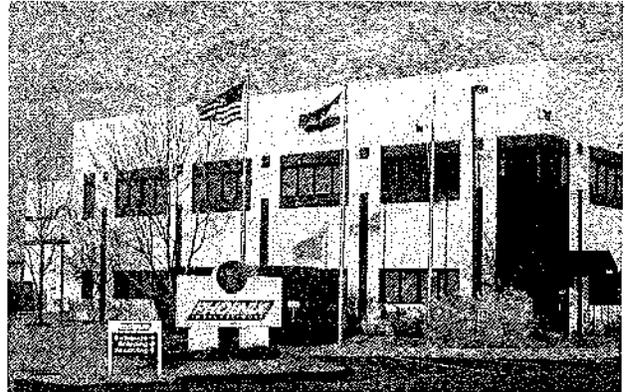
Preferred



Avoid



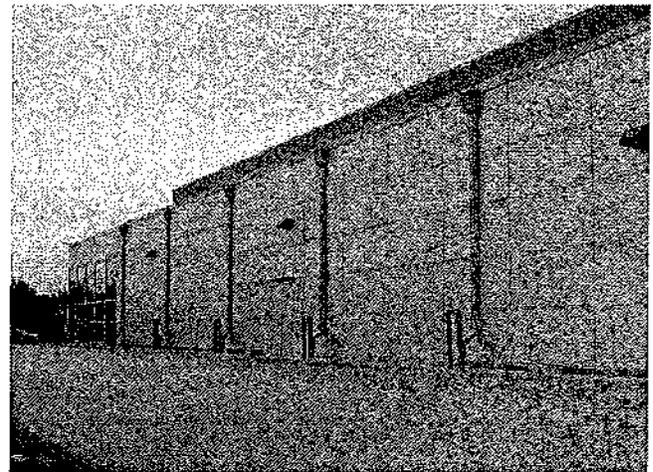
Avoid large expanses of the same material



Painted on materials are discouraged



Overuse of metal panels



Large walls of single material are discouraged



Highly visible side façades lack architectural details

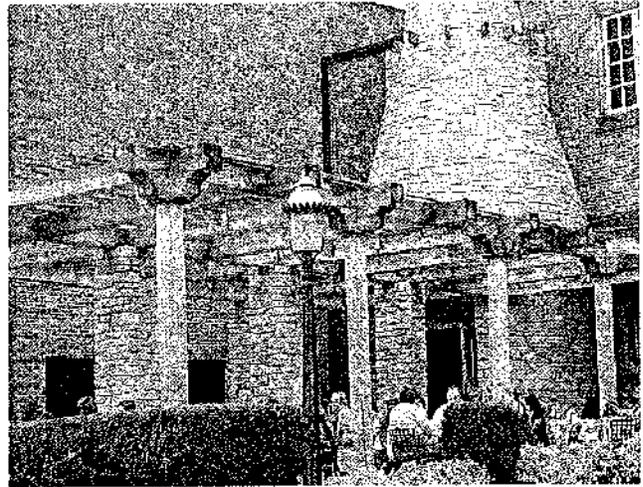


Building façade is dominated by one material

Preferred



Changes in material help define entry



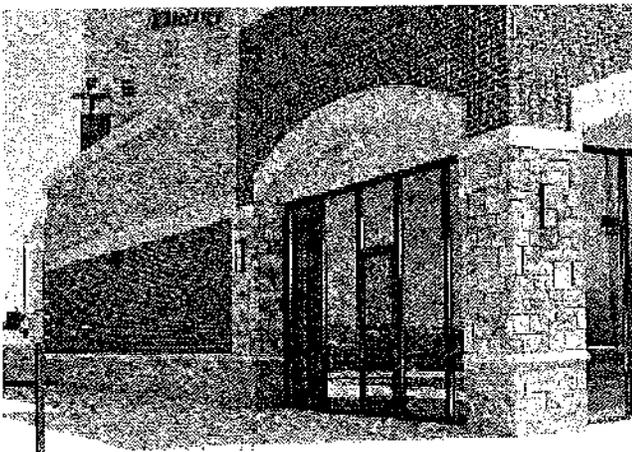
Good use of masonry & wood exterior materials



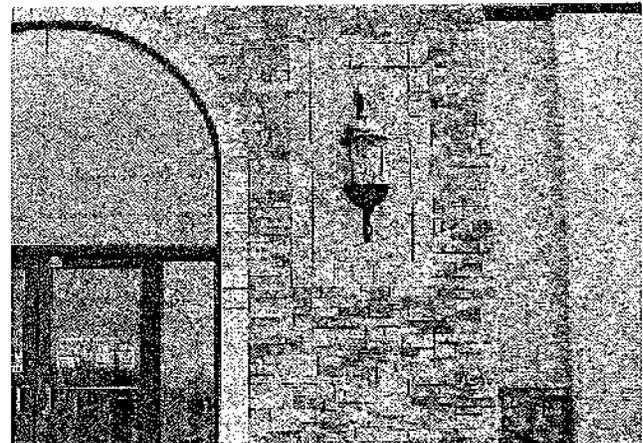
Differentiation between vertical/horizontal materials and window materials



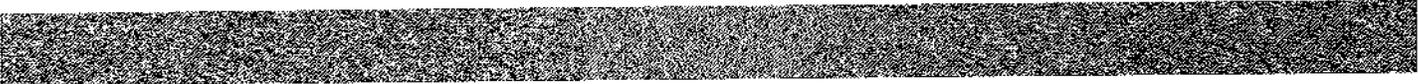
Base material differs from building material



Materials change in stacking order for visual interest



Architectural lighting is encouraged



Section 2.6

Cornices & Parapets

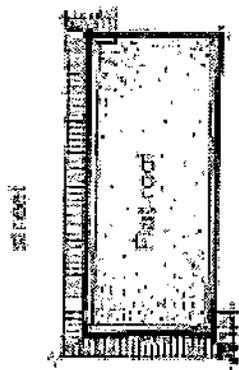
Intent:

A cornice and parapet wall should be used to visually terminate an exterior wall on a flat-roofed building. A cornice provides protection to the exterior façade that a pitched roof overhang would normally provide and helps transition the vertical wall plane and the horizontal roof plane.

Guidelines:

1. Flat roofs should incorporate a cornice into street-facing façades.
2. Cornices should wrap a minimum of 2 feet around exterior corners.
3. Simple parapets with a stone or brick cap are acceptable for rear and side elevations.
4. Flat roofs projecting from a street-facing façade should include a cornice around the entire projection.
5. The dimensions, style and proportions of cornices and parapets should be consistent with the other architectural façade and roof elements.

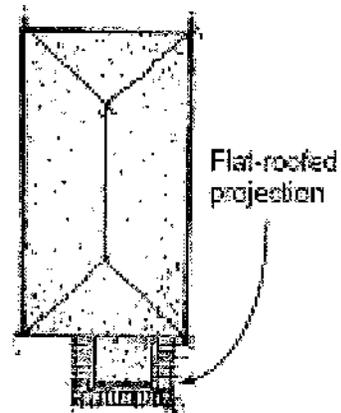
Illustrated Guidelines



street



street

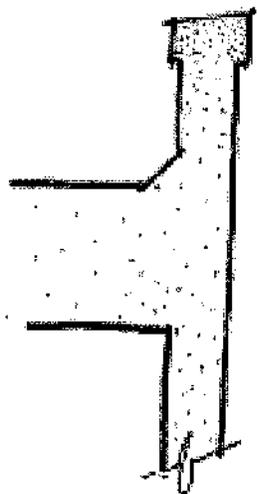


street

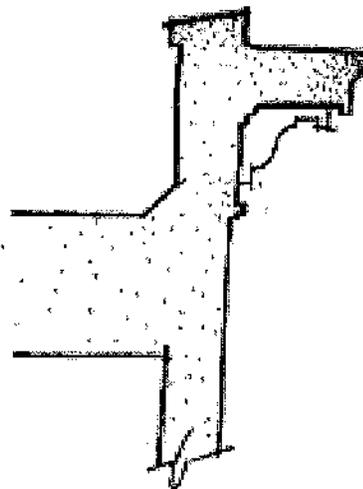
Two Street Facing Facades: Wrap cornice around exterior corners or to the first bay spacing at corresponding façade

One Street Facing Facade: Wrap cornice around exterior corners or to the first bay spacing at corresponding façade

Street Facing Building Projection: Wrap cornice around entire projection

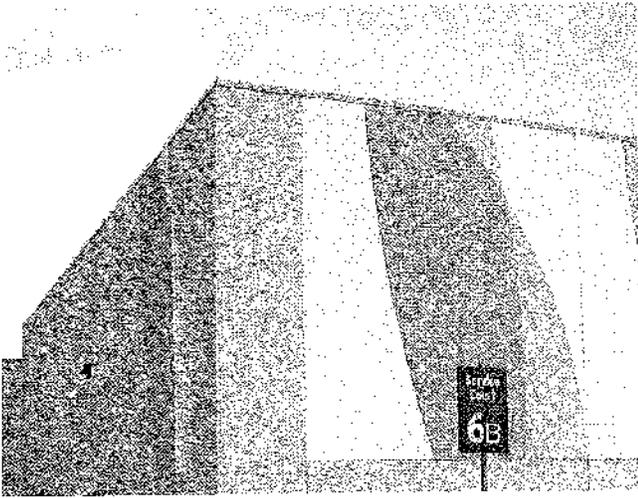


Simple Parapet with Stone or Brick Cap



Parapet with Cornice

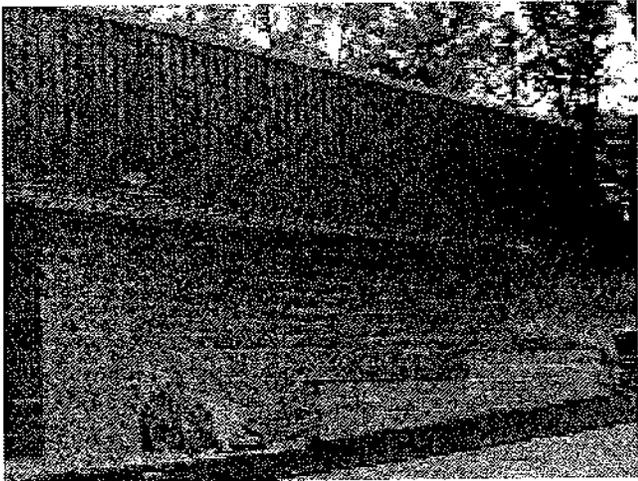
Avoid



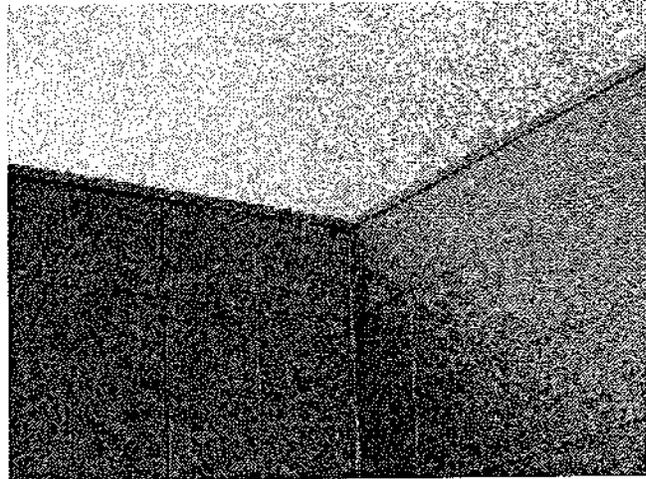
No cornice, lacks definition of top of building



Metal cornices are discouraged



Cornice is too large and disproportionate



This metal cap cornice is discouraged



Parapet does not extend across all street facing facades

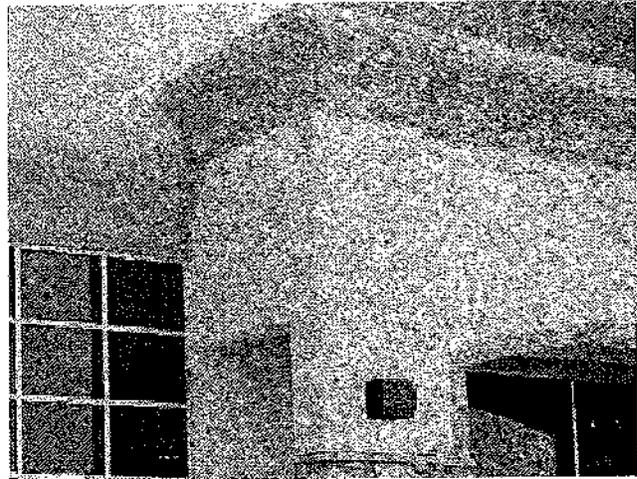


Avoid the use of metal caps on stone walls

Preferred



Cornice articulates with building mass



Cornice wraps all the way around projections



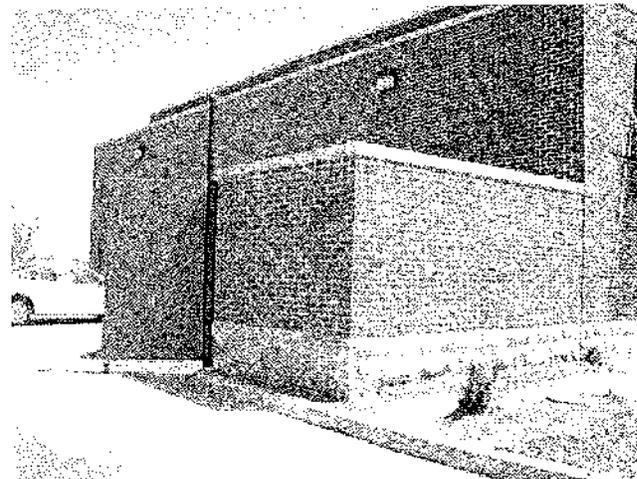
Cornice wraps the corner on street facing façades



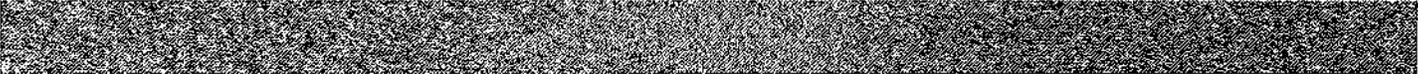
Cornice varies with different projections for visual interest



Simple stone cornices can be effective in defining the top of a structure



Simple stone cornices are also effective in defining top of wall



Section 2.7

Roofs & Eaves

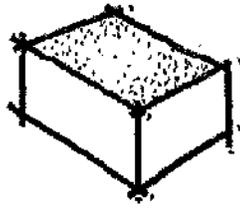
Intent:

Roofs should be simple forms such as hip, flat, shed or gable. Eaves should provide a transition between the façade and roof planes and provide overhangs that offer protection from the elements and create visual interest. A distinctive roofline can reduce perceived building height and mass, increase compatibility with smaller scale and/or residential development, and add interest to the overall design of the building.

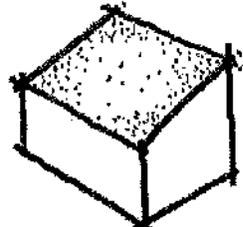
Guidelines:

1. Building rooftops should have the following features:
 - A. Parapets concealing flat roofs and rooftop equipment and/or;
 - B. Overhanging eaves.
2. Roofline offsets should be provided to lend architectural interest and variety to the massing of a building and to relieve the effect of a single, long roof. The use of alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables or other roof elements should be used to add visual relief and physically break up the massing of the overall façade.
3. Flat-roofed designs should include architectural details such as cornices and decorative eaves to provide interest to the roofline. (See also Section 2.8 Cornices and Parapets)
4. Excessive slopes or changes in the horizontal or vertical roof plane are discouraged.

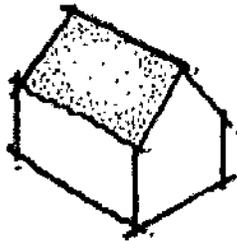
Illustrated Guidelines



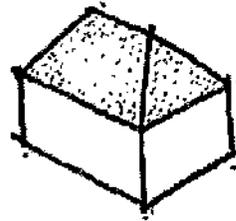
Flat Roof



Shed Roof

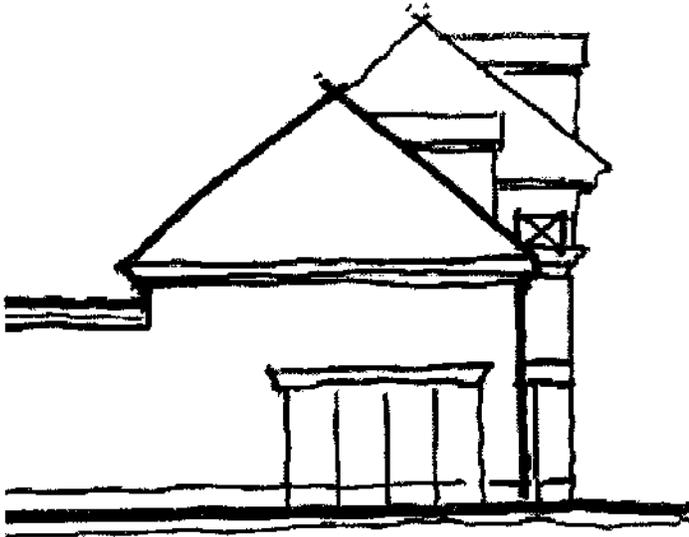


Gable Roof

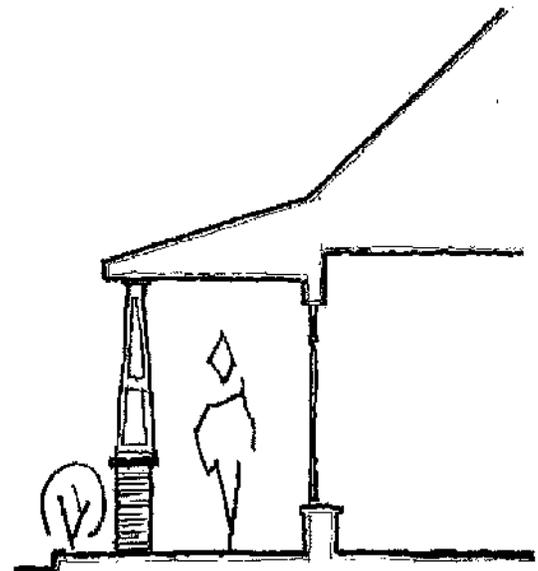


Hip Roof

Preferred



The use of stepped gables, alternating dormers and eaves adds visual relief by physically breaking up the massing of the building.



Overhanging roof and eave helps break up the scale of the façade and provides weather protection.

Avoid



Roof design does not maintain a simple roof form



Roof design combines roof types unnecessarily



Roof design contains no eaves or projection



Roof design includes too many roof forms and slopes



Roofs should have eaves on vertical projections



Projections with sloped roofs should have eaves

Preferred



The use of varied roof forms and complimentary materials add visual interest



Simple roof forms are encouraged



The roof reinforces the design and massing of the façade



The eave provides shade for the windows and helps breaks up the horizontal massing



Simple gables help define entry



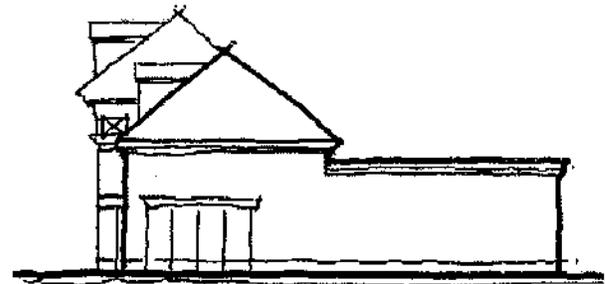
Arcade for pedestrians is formed from roof eaves

Section 3.1

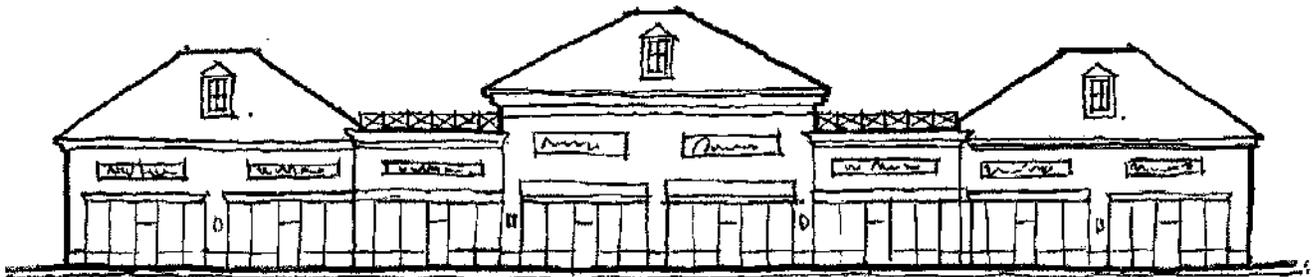
Retail

Key Architectural Details:

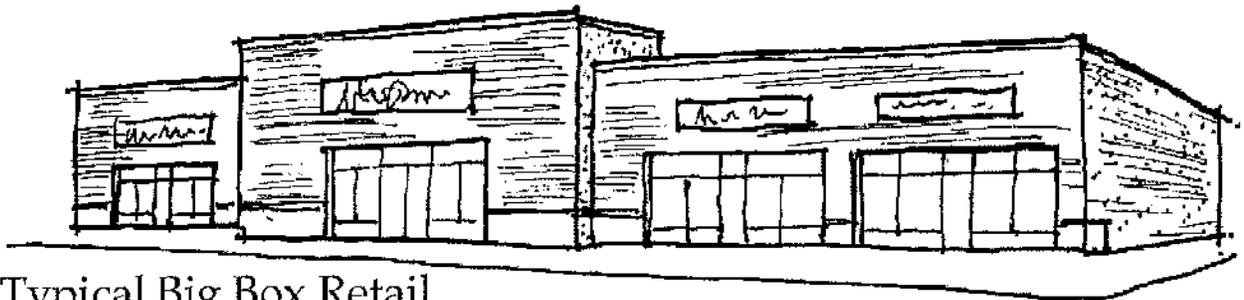
A group of storefront buildings can be combined to form a mixed-use neighborhood center



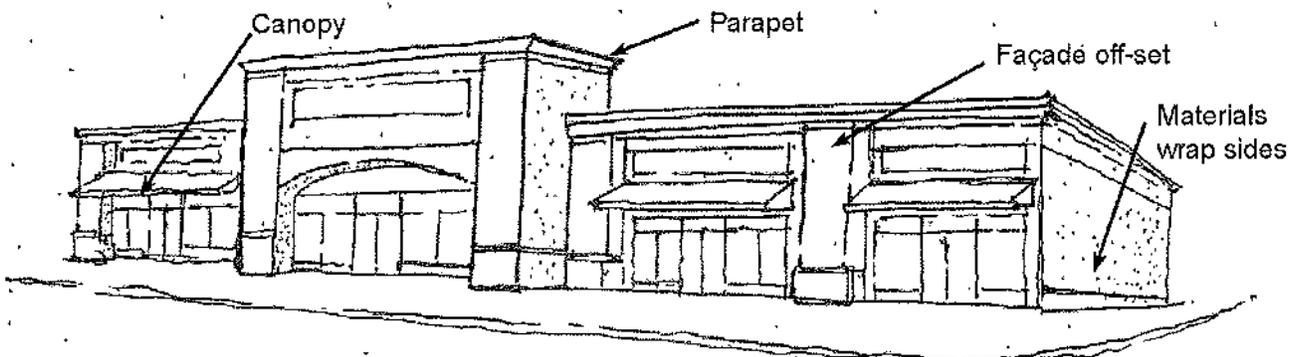
Side Elevation



Front Elevation



Typical Big Box Retail



Enhanced Big Box Retail

Photo Examples



Example of the preferred use of architectural scale, mass & proportion, see also Section 2.1



Example of the preferred use of cornice/parapets and building details, see also Sections 2.2 & 2.5

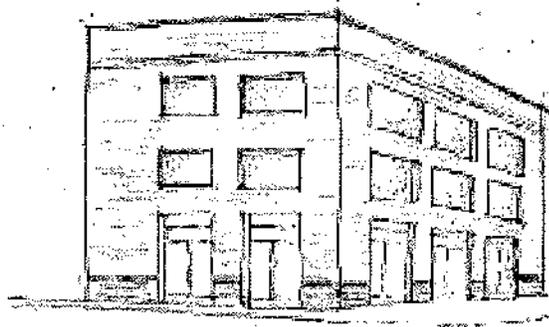


Example of the preferred use of awnings & canopies for retail, see also Section 2.4

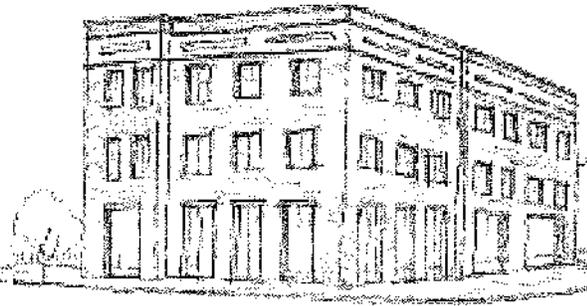
Section 3.2

Office

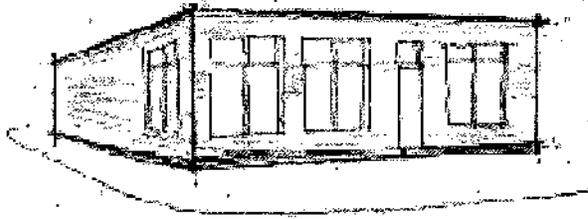
Key Architectural Details:



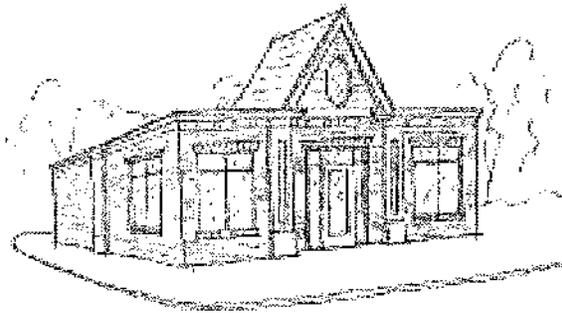
Typical Large Office



Enhanced Large Office



Typical Small Office



Enhanced Small Office

Residential features such as sloped roofs, dormers and recessed windows surrounded by stone or masonry lintels and sills are encouraged to give office buildings a more residential appearance

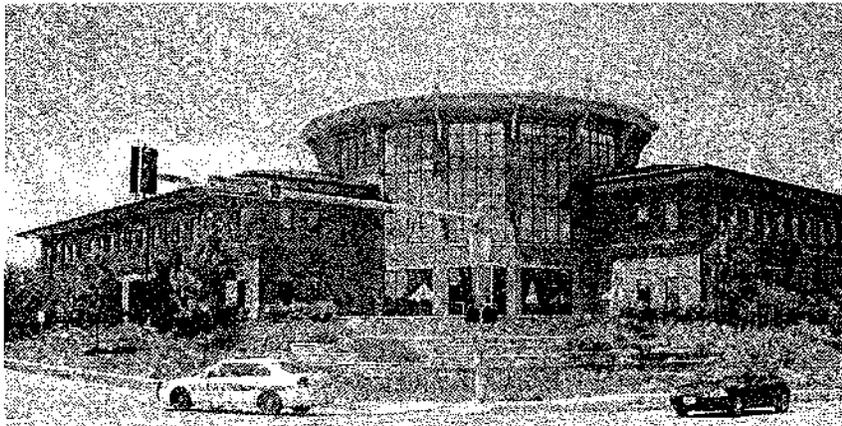
Photo Examples



Example of the preferred building materials, details, windows and entryways, see also Sections 2.3 & 2.5



Example of the preferred use of architectural scale, mass & proportion, see also Section 2.1



Example of the preferred roof design and architectural massing, see also Section 2.1 & 2.7

Section 3.3

Hotel / Assisted Living

Key Architectural Details:

Shutters, if used, should be used on the residential portion of buildings and should be proportionate to the windows



Before Elevation



After Elevation

To the extent possible, hotels, hospitals and other buildings providing overnight accommodations should contain residential design features, such as pitched roofs, dormers, shutters and a primary entryway

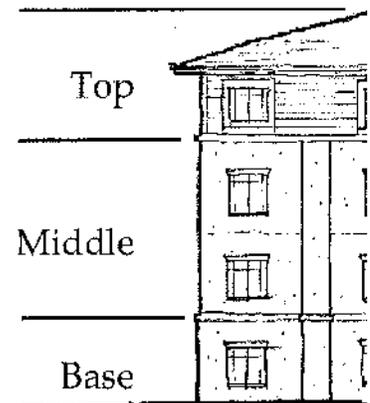


Photo Examples



Example of the preferred use of architectural scale, mass and proportion, see also Section 2.1.



Example of the preferred use of windows & entryways, see also Section 2.3



Example of the preferred use of roof design & eaves, see also Section 2.7



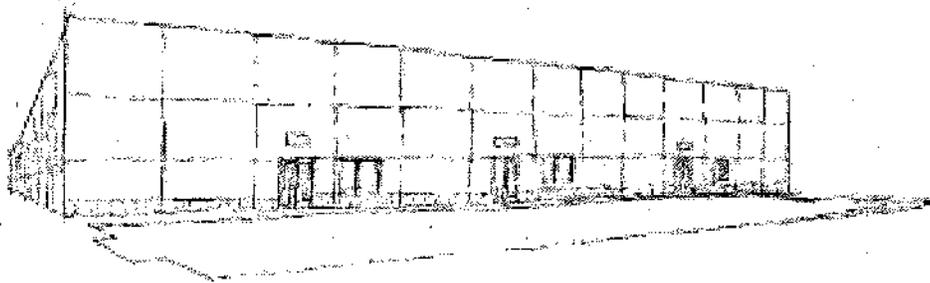
Example of the preferred use of architectural design elements for hotels

Section 3.4

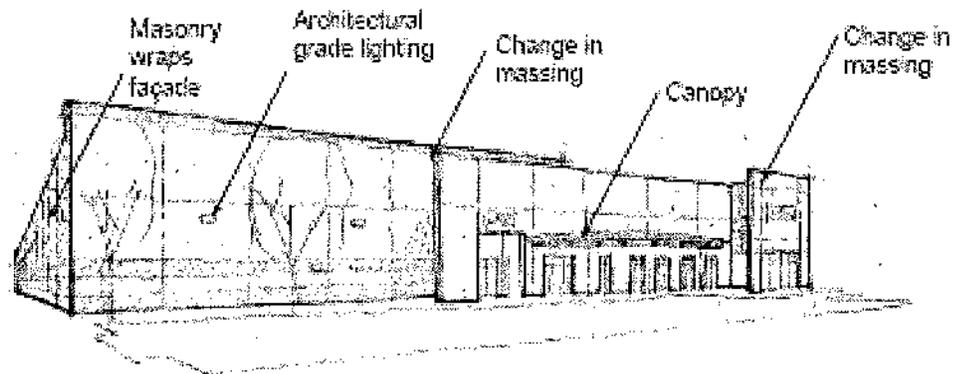
Commercial Warehouse

Key Architectural Details:

The design of large industrial and warehouse buildings should reduce the apparent bulk by dividing the building into smaller masses. Ideally, the distinction of each mass should relate to the internal function of the building or indicate a logical hierarchy for breaking down the mass of the building.

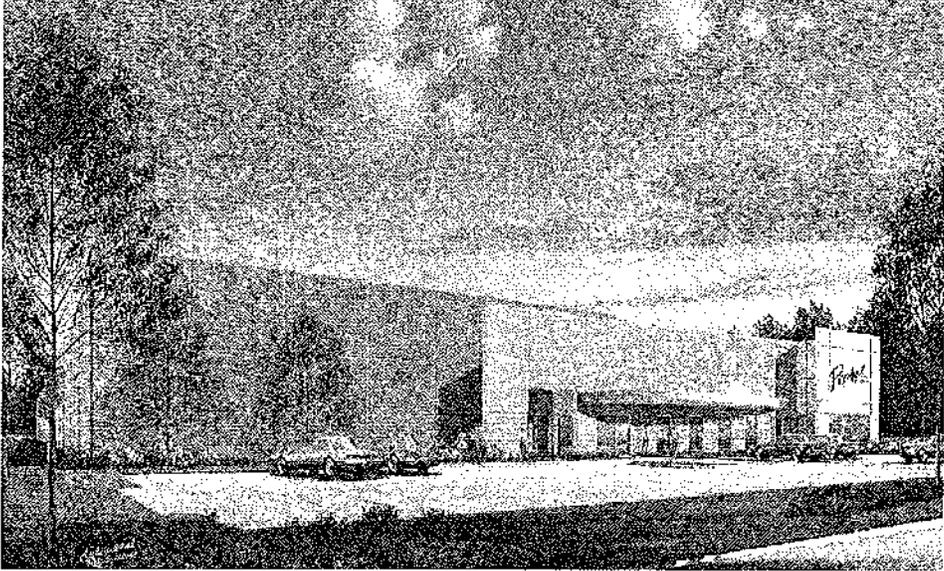


Typical Warehouse



Enhanced Warehouse

Photo Examples



Example of the preferred use of architectural design elements for warehouse



Example of the preferred use of architectural design elements for warehouse



Example of the preferred use of architectural design elements for warehouses

Section 4

Reserved