This chapter presents design guidelines that apply to Area 2, the ring of streets and blocks that encircle the Town Square Historic District. The design guidelines are organized into a series of relevant design topics. Within each category, individual policies and design guidelines are presented, which the City will use in determining the appropriateness of the work proposed.

However, if your property is located within the boundaries of the Town Square Historic District (Area 1) and you are considering a new construction project, then please consult Chapter 12 for the relevant design guidelines, instead of this chapter. If your project is in the Old Town Overlay District please consult Chapter 14 for the relevant design guidelines, instead of this chapter.

This area has emerged from a heritage of residential buildings and then later structures that were commercial in nature, but developed at a relatively low density, with substantial portions of land given over to automobiles. In more recent years, the area has developed with a mix of uses, including offices, retail, and some residential. While many of the buildings are relatively new, some older structures survive, which contribute to a pedestrian-orientation and may in some cases have historic significance. Preserving these resources should be encouraged and, when feasible, they should be incorporated in new developments.
The area should continue to develop with a mix of uses and improvements should occur in a manner that enhances the experience for pedestrians and to build a sense of visual relatedness among properties. Even though automobile circulation routes significantly affect the character, it is still possible to strengthen pedestrian links and to improve the edges of properties such that a sense of human scale is conveyed.

In those portions of Area 2 that developed as residential blocks a “transitional” character—a blend between commercial and residential structures—should be seen. Rather than constructing a storefront type building in these blocks with predominantly residential characteristics, a new design should relate to the traditional design characteristics of surrounding buildings while also conveying the stylistic trends of today.

**Design Goals**

Those commercial streets in Area 2 surrounding the Town Square Historic District should develop in a manner that is inviting to pedestrians while also accommodating automobiles. Development should include a mix of building types, including older structures and more contemporary ones. Each should reflect the design trends of its own time, while also contributing to a sense of visual continuity and strengthening the pedestrian experience. In addition, a combination of uses is encouraged, including residential, office, and retail.

The design goals for Area 2 are:
- To define the sidewalk edge with elements that are amenities for pedestrians.
- To establish a sense of scale in buildings and streetscape design that can be understood by pedestrians.
- To minimize the visual impacts of automobiles.
- To strengthen the pedestrian network of sidewalks, plazas, and paths.
- Retain native vegetation with project design.
- Maintain the feel of historic surroundings, for example if the area is predominately converted residential structures the residential appearance, scale, and character should remain.
- To utilize similar building materials, storefront design, recessed entries, and front setbacks.

**Building Setbacks**

A wide variety of building setbacks can be seen throughout Area 2. Much of this variety is due to the influence of the automobile and the need to provide on-site parking. This parking typically has been provided in front of the building for consumer convenience. However, this trend erodes the view of the edge of buildings located along a sidewalk as was seen historically. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that new developments in Area 2 should build on this tradition and locate buildings at the front lot line.
Mass and Scale
A variety of building sizes exist in this area. While contemporary design approaches are encouraged, developments should continue to exhibit a variety of sizes, similar to the buildings seen historically and traditionally.

Building Materials
Building materials of structures should contribute to the visual continuity of the area. They should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity.

Architectural Character
Commercial buildings throughout the Downtown Overlay District should relate to one another through the consistent use of similar building materials, storefronts, recessed entries, and the alignment of these different elements along a block. This tradition is strongly encouraged for new developments in Area 2.

One of the concerns in building design is that when national chain companies or their franchises construct buildings in Area 2 that they do so in a way that reinforces the design traditions of Georgetown. Some typical issues and negative impacts often associated with national chain or commercial franchise designs include:

• Bright logo colors are used over large expanses of a building.
• Large blank walls on “big box” buildings are bland and out of scale, and discourage pedestrian activity.
• Buildings are surrounded by parking lots and cars. Primary entrances are typically oriented to these parking lots, rather than to the street.
• Metal panels and large areas of featureless stucco are often used and these are out of character and not of human scale.

Instead, these building types shall comply with the design guidelines that follow.

Pedestrian Environment
Area 2 should provide a controlled, organized automobile system which provides a safe pedestrian environment. Streets, sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping should define the road edge and encourage walking, sitting, and other pedestrian activities.

Projects that can occur in the area also may have automobile activity associated with them. This should not, however, make it an unsafe environment for the pedestrian or cyclist. Automobile circulation patterns, both internal and external, should be clearly identified and should not interfere with pedestrian or cyclist circulation systems.
Policy: A new building should maintain the wall of buildings at the sidewalk edge.

A new building should contribute to a pedestrian friendly environment by providing an active street edge. (2008)

Also consider using fence, or other structural element, that reflects typical storefront elements.

Define the edges of a lot with landscaping, such as low-scale urban street trees or shrubs. (Georgetown, Washington, DC)

Continuity of design within the Downtown Overlay District is a goal of the city, both in terms of connecting individual projects and town blocks. Not only should a new building in Area 2 be located at the sidewalk edge, but it should be designed to provide visual interest.

13.1 Locate a new building at the front property line.
  • Align the building front at the sidewalk edge.
  • A minimum of 50% of the street frontage of a property shall have a building wall at the sidewalk edge.
  • Where no sidewalk exists one should be installed that aligns with nearby sidewalks.

13.2 Where a portion of a building must be set back, define the edge of the property with landscape elements.
  • For example, define the edges of a lot with landscaping, such as low-scale urban street trees or shrubs.
  • Landscaping elements should be compatible with the character of the area in size, scale, and type. Free-form, suburban type landscaping is inappropriate in this setting.
  • Also consider using a fence, or other structural element, that reflects the position of typical storefront elements. These elements should align with nearby traditional commercial building types.

A minimum of 50% of the street frontage of a property shall have a building wall at the sidewalk edge.
Policy: The overall mass of a new building should convey a sense of human scale.

Buildings in the downtown should appear similar in height and width to commercial structures seen traditionally in Area 1.

13.3 A new building shall reflect the traditional lot width as expressed by the following:
- Variation in height at internal lot lines.
- Variation in the plane of the front façade.
- Variation in architectural detailing and materials to emphasize the building module.
- Variation in the façade height to reflect traditional lot width.

13.4 Building heights of larger projects should provide variety.
- A larger development should step down in height towards the street or smaller, surrounding structures.
- Vary the building height in accordance with traditional lot width.
- Set back the upper floor to vary the building façade profile(s) and the roof forms across the width and the depth of the building.
- Vary the façade (or parapet) heights at the front.

Divide a larger building into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen traditionally.

Consider dividing a larger building into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen traditionally.
13.5 Large project sites should be developed with several buildings, rather than a single structure.
- This will help reduce the perceived size of the project.
- The façade height shall be varied to reflect traditional lot width.

13.6 Where a large building is needed, divide the building into modules that reflect the traditional size of buildings.
- A typical building module should not exceed 30 feet in width. The building module should be expressed with at least one of the following:
  - A setback in wall planes of a minimum of 3 feet
  - A change in primary facade material for the extent of the building module
  - A vertical architectural element or trim piece
- Variations in facade treatment should be continued through the structure, including its roofline and front and rear facades.
- If a larger building is divided into “modules,” they should be expressed three-dimensionally throughout the entire building. Variation in height should occur where the site is larger than two traditional lot widths, in order to reduce overall scale of the building.

13.7 Maintain views to the courthouse.
- In certain circumstances views to the courthouse shall be taken into consideration when designing a new building.
- A new building shall not be so tall as to block views of the courthouse.

Note: See UDC Section 4.12 Courthouse View Protection Overlay District.
Policy: Building materials for new construction should be visually compatible with the predominate materials of this area.

New materials should relate to the scale, durability, color and texture of the predominate materials of downtown.

13.8 Masonry materials that convey a sense of scale are preferred.
- Brick and stone are preferred for new construction.
- New materials should appear similar in character to those used traditionally. For example, stucco, cast stone, and concrete should be detailed to provide a human scale.
- New materials should have a demonstrated durability for the Central Texas climate. For example, some facade materials used in new construction are more susceptible to weather and simply do not last as long as stone or brick.

13.9 A simple material finish is encouraged for a large expanse of wall plane.
- A matte, or non-reflective, finish is preferred.
- Polished stone and mirrored glass, for example, are inappropriate and should be avoided as primary materials.

13.10 Traditional building materials such as wood, brick, and stone are encouraged.
- Horizontal lap siding of traditional dimensions is appropriate in most applications.
- Maintenance of traditional siding dimensions are encouraged.
- Brick or stone, similar to that used traditionally, is also appropriate.
- Highly reflective materials are inappropriate.
- New materials that are similar in character to traditional ones may be considered. Alternative materials should have a proven durability in similar locations in this climate.
13.11 Use roof materials that appear similar to those seen traditionally.
- Metal and shingle roofs are preferred.
- Clay tile is discouraged.

Policy: A new building should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment by providing an active street edge.

The downtown should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. Streets and sidewalks should encourage walking, sitting, and other outdoor activities. Buildings also should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. Existing pedestrian routes should be enhanced. These are important concepts because buildings are experienced at close proximity by pedestrians.

13.12 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Provide at least one of the following along primary pedestrian ways:
  - A storefront
  - Display cases
  - Landscaping
  - A courtyard or plaza
- Include traditional elements such as display windows, kickplates, and transoms on commercial storefronts.
- Avoid a blank wall or vacant lot appearance.

13.13 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.
- A building should have a clearly-defined primary entrance.
- The building entrance should be recessed.
- A primary building entrance also should be at or near street level.

13.14 Clearly identify the road edge and project entrances for both automobiles and pedestrians.
- Use landscaping and lighting accents to identify entrances.
13.15 Minimize the number of entrances along a street edge.
- Sharing ingress and egress points with neighboring projects is strongly encouraged with consideration to safety.

13.16 Place parking areas to the rear of a site when feasible or disburse throughout the site.
- See also the design guidelines for Parking found in Chapter 8.

Policy: In those portions of Area 2 that developed as residential blocks a “transitional” character—a blend between commercial and residential structures—should be seen.

Several blocks of Area 2 were originally part of a single-family neighborhood. It is now, in essence, a place of transition between the true commercial core of the Downtown Overlay District and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Although commercial uses are expected throughout Area 2, residential-type structures still establish the architectural tone for many of the blocks. Therefore, new developments should sensitively relate to these traditions while also building upon commercial characteristics seen elsewhere in the downtown.

Variation in height should occur where the site is larger than two traditional lot widths, in order to reduce overall scale of the building.

13.17 A building shall fit within the range of yard dimensions seen in the block.
- The front yard setback of a new building should match the established range of adjacent buildings.
- Where the setbacks are uniform, the new building should be placed in general alignment with its neighbors.
- In those areas where setbacks vary slightly, but generally fall within an established range, the new building should be within 10 feet of the typical setback in the block.
13.18 Buildings shall convey a sense of human scale.
• Use building materials that are of traditional dimensions.
• Provide a one-story entry element that is similar in size to those seen traditionally.
• Use a building mass that is similar in size to those seen traditionally.
• Use elements that provide a sense of scale.

13.19 Building heights of larger projects should provide variety.
• A larger development should step down in height towards the street or smaller, surrounding structures.

Height varied between two and three stories.

Buildings on sites larger than two traditional lot widths should be designed to reflect the traditional scale of development.
13.20 Sloping roofs such as gable and hipped roofs are appropriate for primary roof forms.
- A blending of sloping roof forms and flat roofs may be appropriate for larger projects.

13.21 A porch on a converted residential structure should remain in place.
- Retain the original residential integrity of the building.

13.22 New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.
- A new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among commercial and residential buildings in the community without copying them is preferred. This will allow them to be seen as products of their own time yet compatible with their historic neighbors.

Traditional building materials such as wood, brick, and stone are encouraged (2008).

New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged. (Boulder, CO)

Develop the ground-floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity. Consider providing a courtyard or plaza where a building’s entrance must be setback. (Boulder, CO)
Applying the Design Guidelines: How may the infill guidelines be applied in real situations?

The design guidelines for new commercial construction in Area 2 presented in this chapter can be combined to develop a comprehensive program of development of a property. The images on the following pages depict two infill examples from other communities and a potential infill development scenario for Georgetown. These examples all address situations where auto-oriented areas have re-developed to appeal more to pedestrians.

The first case study, in Danville, California, includes the redevelopment of two blocks along a major arterial, which parallels the historic Main Street. Design standards required that new buildings be constructed at the sidewalk edge.

This row of new, double-fronted buildings defines the sidewalk edge of a major arterial street in Danville, California. The building is also divided into modules that reflect the traditional building characteristics.

Seen from the interior parking lot, the “second” storefront facade is apparent.

The edge of the infill site in Danville reveals the parking area, which is located in the interior of the lot and accessed between the two rows of buildings.
Application of guidelines for a new development in Area 2
In this example, the guidelines for new development in Area 2 are applied to an entire block. The assumption is that the entire block is developed as a single project, although similar results could occur with cooperative development among individual property owners.

The focus of the project is providing a mix of uses, including retail at the street level, and offices and residences above. The structure is divided into a series of “modules” that reflect the traditional widths of buildings constructed in the downtown.

Canopies and awnings align along the first floor level, providing a sense of visual continuity while also sheltering the sidewalk. Building heights vary among one and two story segments. This creates variety in massing and also creates some upper level balconies and decks. A corner plaza contributes to the open space; this could be outdoor seating for a café. While “notches” such as this are provided along the street, the majority of the street wall is defined with storefronts, to define the pedestrian zone.

A limited amount of parking is provided in the interior of the lot, in an auto court. The remainder of the parking would be provided off-site, preferably in a civic parking structure. Canopies and awnings align along the first floor level, providing a sense of visual continuity while also sheltering the sidewalk.
Application of guidelines for a new development in Area 2
In this example, the guidelines for new development in Area 2 are applied to an entire block. The assumption is that the entire block is developed as individual projects that adhere to one overall development plan.

Compared with the development scenario on the opposite page, this particular infill scheme includes a lower density of buildings with a landscaped street edge. The key to this scenario is the use of “anchor” buildings at the corner of all lots. Such a development could include commercial uses (such as retail) on the ground levels of buildings and office space or residential units on upper floors.
Application of guidelines for a new “transitional character” development

In this example, the guidelines for a new “transitional” development in Area 2 are applied to an entire block. The assumption is that the entire block is developed as a single project, although similar results could occur with cooperative development among individual property owners.

This mixed-use project would provide neighborhood-oriented commercial and residential units. This building complex complements the nearby single-family residential neighborhood in that it steps down in height on the block face nearest the residences and incorporates sloping roof forms. The residential units also incorporate one-story porches and small front yards. The parking is located to the interior of the lot and would be buffered along the street edge. Commercial uses - which include office and retail space - are mostly located on the ground floor and several residential units are located on the second floor.