

2



CHAPTER 2 DOWNTOWN GUIDELINES AREA 2

Area 2 is comprised of the blocks of development surrounding Area 1 in Downtown Georgetown. In order to understand the specific needs and requirements of Area 2, its existing character was examined and special care was taken to note its differences from Area 1. Area 2 has three general character areas within it: the western third (west of Rock Street); commercial buildings on Austin and University Avenues that are more suburban in character; and the remainder. The western portion of Area 2 is characterized by both civic buildings and utilitarian building types. This reflects the developmental history, distinct from the commercial development patterns around the Courthouse Square and where large homes have been replaced with commercial structures over time. This chapter will describe Guidelines for all of Area 2 with a subsection describing specific recommendations for the area west of Rock Street.

Chapter 2 will begin by outlining the existing character and development patterns of Area 2. The chapter will establish recommendations for the public realm, site design, building elements, and new building construction.

Design in Area 2

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:

- 1 To develop as a compatible extension of Area 1 so that the entire Downtown Overlay District is seen as a distinct commercial district that incorporates residential development.
- 2 To define the sidewalk edge with elements that are amenities for pedestrians.
- 3 To establish a sense of scale in buildings and streetscape design that can be enjoyed by pedestrians.
- 4 To minimize the visual impacts of automobiles.
- 5 To strengthen the pedestrian network of sidewalks, plazas, and paths.
- 6 Retain native vegetation with project design.
- 7 Maintain the feel of historic surroundings. For example, if the area is predominately residential structures converted to commercial uses, the residential appearance, scale, and character should remain.
- 8 To use similar building materials, storefront design, recessed entries, and front setbacks.
- 9 To minimize conflicts with residential neighbors.



Building marks a transition between Area 1 and Area 2.



Typical one-story commercial building in Area 2.

Design for Civic Institutions

The Design Guidelines focus on principles for rehabilitation and infill of commercial and mixed-use projects that reinforce the historic building fabric and enhance the pedestrian environment. To do so, they draw upon principles established in the design of traditional commercial buildings. While commercial properties occur most in the area, civic facilities are also part of the urban mix.

Civic facilities include churches, schools, libraries, art spaces, meeting facilities, courts, and government offices. Traditionally, buildings for these uses have contrasted with the framework of commercial storefronts. The historic Courthouse, as an example, stands apart from rows of commercial buildings, framed by a lawn. While it stands apart as a structure, it clearly is a part of the Downtown, with its entrances oriented to the street and walkways promoting pedestrian use. This helps to convey its civic function as a gathering place. This tradition of designing civic institutions as landmarks in the urban fabric should be continued. At the same time, the basic principles of urban design outlined in this document should still apply. Among them are these key principles:



Historic Williamson County Courthouse.



Georgetown City Hall.

Design principles for civic facilities:

- 1 Civic facilities should be located such that they encourage pedestrian traffic to nearby Downtown businesses;
- 2 Civic facilities should be designed to reinforce the Downtown fabric of streets and sidewalks;
- 3 Convenient pedestrian connections should link abutting civic buildings;
- 4 The edges of a civic property should be inviting to pedestrians;
- 5 The visual impacts of automobiles should be minimized;
- 6 Primary entrances should face the street, not parking lots;
- 7 A sense of human scale should be conveyed;
- 8 Impacts on adjacent historic resources should be minimized; and
- 9 Outdoor spaces designed for public use should be provided.

2.1. EXISTING CHARACTER

Area 2 of the Downtown Overlay District is sometimes referred to as the “Transition Zone” as it is the link between the historic nine-square Downtown and nearby neighborhoods. This area is not as cohesive as the central area and developed over a longer period of time. There are three observable areas within this zone: the general area, the area west of Downtown, and properties along Austin and University Avenues.

2.1.A General

Adjacent to the Downtown are more modest commercial buildings. Further away from the Downtown core are commercial structures from various eras that may have replaced earlier houses. Residential structures with commercial uses as well as residential structures still used as residences can be found in this area.

2.1.B Public Realm

B.1 The streets continue the grid pattern of Downtown. Sidewalks are wider and adjacent to the curb nearest Downtown, then are narrower with a parkway or planted area between the curb and the sidewalk as you transition away from the core, and in some places at the edges of Area 2 sidewalks have not yet been installed.

B.2 Landscaping varies as it moves away from Area 1. Along Austin Avenue and Main Street the trees are sparse, but beyond that they are quite abundant. Decorative landscaping can be found in residential areas and adjacent to public structures.



Example of former residential building being used as commercial in Area 2.



Examples of street furniture.



2.1.C Site Design

C.1 Lots are significantly larger than the core of Downtown.

C.2 Buildings are generally constructed up to the lot line in the Downtown core but gradually step back until there is significant space in front of buildings.

C.3 Parking is abundant in Area 2. Large parking lots take up entire blocks. On site parking can be found in this location.

2.1.D Building Characteristics

D.1 There are a wide variety of building types and forms within this area. There is not a predominant style or form. However, there is a strong sense of time and place because of characteristics found in the historic buildings. The buildings contain details relative to the period they were built. They are generally masonry or wood, have clearly defined entrances facing the street, have windows facing the street and landscaping in front. Most buildings have simple shapes such as rectangles or an L-shape. Likewise, the roofs are simple gable ends, or are hipped roofs. Commercial buildings that were purpose-built have flat roofs with parapets.



T-B: Examples of street furniture.

2.1.E West of Downtown

The existing character west of Downtown has a unique feel because of its historic relationship to the railroad. The historic buildings were built as warehouses and are simpler, more utilitarian buildings with less detail. New civic buildings have large footprints, may be multiple stories high, often with single entry points along a block face. Street furniture, and landscaping have been added to provide a more enjoyable pedestrian experience.

2.1.F Along Austin Avenue and University Avenue

Austin Avenue and University are major gateways into Downtown. As the car became more and more important these routes became lined with car-centric buildings. The buildings are set back from the street to allow for on site parking in front. This creates a wider perceived public realm with few pedestrian amenities.



Historic Light & Water Works Building.



Contemporary building construction along University Avenue.

2.2. RETAIN AND PRESERVE

Architectural Features

This section presents the design policies and Guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic resources located in Downtown Historic Overlay District Area 2.

Preserving original architectural details is critical to the integrity of an historic building. Where replacement is required, one should remove only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Even if an architectural detail is replaced with an exact copy of the original, the integrity of the building as an historic resource is diminished and therefore preservation of the original material is preferred.

2.2.A Original architectural details should be preserved in place.

The best way to preserve many of these features is through well-planned maintenance.

A.1 Avoid removing or altering any significant architectural detail.

A.2 Do not remove or alter architectural details that are in good condition or that can be repaired in place.

A.3 Avoid adding elements or details that were not part of the original building. Details such as decorative millwork or cornices should not be added to a building if they were not an original feature of that structure.

A.4 Protect and maintain significant stylistic elements.

A.5 Employ treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal, and reapplication of paint.



Masonry detail.

2.2.B Deteriorated architectural materials should be repaired rather than replaced.

B.1 When deterioration occurs, repair the material and any other related problems. It is important to recognize that all details weather over time and that a scarred finish does not represent an inferior material, but simply reflects the age of the building. Preserving original materials and features that show signs of wear is preferred to replacing them.

B.2 Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate, or otherwise upgrade existing materials, using recognized preservation methods such as those identified in the Department of the Interior's Historic Preservation Briefs, located online at <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/>.

B.3 Isolated areas of damage may be stabilized or fixed using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair. Special masonry repair components may be used.

B.4 Removing damaged features that can be repaired is not appropriate.

B.5 Protect features that are adjacent to the area being worked on.

B.6 When disassembly of an historic element is necessary for its restoration, use methods that minimize damage to the original materials.

B.7 When disassembly of an historic feature is required in a restoration procedure, document its location so it may be repositioned accurately.



T-B: Material detail of historic structures.



Detail of replacement windows.

B.8 Use approved technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing, and repairing architectural details. When choosing preservation treatments, use the gentlest means possible that will achieve the desired results.

2.2.C. Replacement of original architectural details and materials that have deteriorated beyond repair or are missing.

C.1 Replacement should occur only if the existing historic material cannot be reasonably repaired.

C.2 Remove only that which is deteriorated and must be replaced.

C.3 If parts are damaged or missing, it is preferred that they are replaced with the same material as the original.

C.4 Substitute materials may be considered when the original material is no longer available or not readily available. Substitute materials may also be used where the original is known to be susceptible to rapid decay, or where maintenance access may be difficult. These substitute materials should not be used wholesale, but only when replacing damaged or deteriorated materials.



Brick detail.



Masonry detail.

ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS



Cementitious Board with similar profiles for wood.



Fiberglass for formed metal, for example in cornices.



Metal decorative columns for wood decorative columns.



Metal clad or fiberglass clad wood windows with historic profiles for wood windows on upper floors.



Metal clad wood windows with historic profiles for wood windows on upper floors.

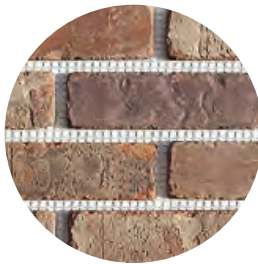


Aluminum storefronts clad in wood to achieve similar profiles.

UNACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS



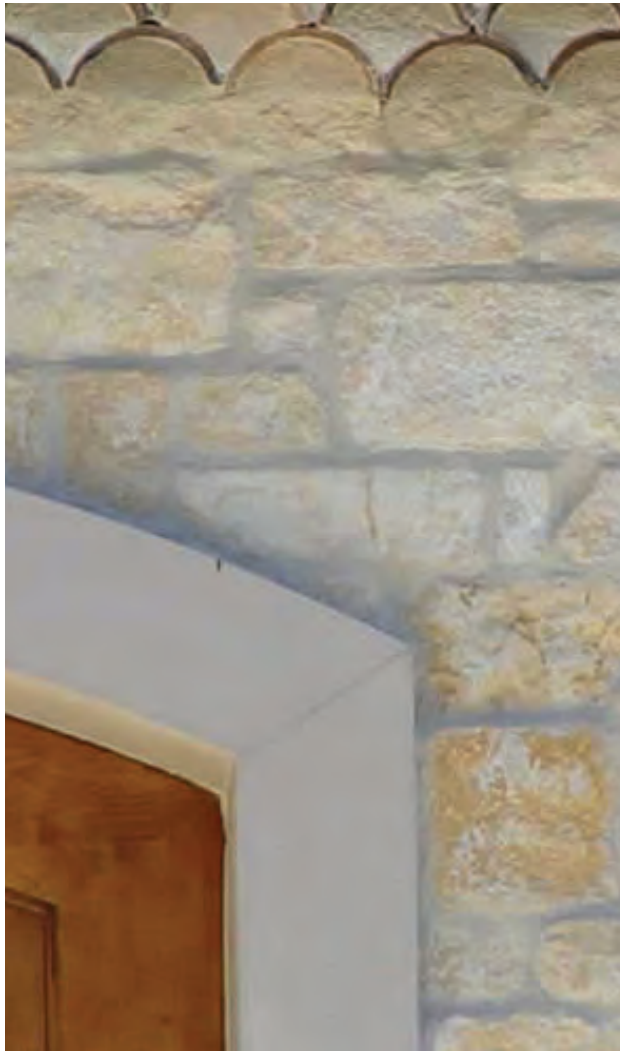
Vinyl siding.



Thin-set brick or stone (sometimes known as "sticky brick and sticky stone").



Exterior Insulated Finish System (EIFS) to replace stone or cast stone.



Masonry detail.

C.5 Replacement of missing or deteriorated details shall be based on original features. The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's heritage.

C.6 When inadequate information exists to allow for accurate reconstruction, use a simplified interpretation of the original. The new element should still relate in general size, shape, scale, and finish.

C.7 Avoid adding decorative elements, unless thorough research indicates that the building once had them. Conjectural "historic" designs for replacement parts that cannot be substantiated by documented evidence are inappropriate. Dressing up a building with pieces of ornamentation that are out of character with the architectural style gives the building a false "history" it never had, and is inappropriate.

Another factor which may determine the appropriateness of using substitute materials for architectural details is their location and degree of exposure. For example, lighter weight materials may be inappropriate for an architectural detail that would be exposed to intense wear.

2.3. PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

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.

2.3.A Streets

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.

A.1 Automobile circulation patterns, both internal and external, should be clearly identified and should not interfere with pedestrian or cyclist routes.

A.2 The rectangular street grid is important to the overall character of Area 2. Avoid one-way streets whenever possible. Two-way streets calm traffic and help create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

A.3 Curb extensions at corners reduce the pedestrian path when crossing streets. Consider using these at busy intersections.

A.4 Clearly identify the road edge and project entrances for both automobiles and pedestrians. Use landscaping and lighting accents to identify entrances.



T-B: Examples of streetscape in Area 2.



Example of improperly maintained parking.

A.5 Minimize the number of entrances along a street edge. Sharing ingress and egress points with neighboring projects is strongly encouraged with consideration to safety.

2.3.B On-Street Parking

B.1 On street parking helps create a “Main Street” feeling. Being able to park in front of a retail establishment is a perceived advantage to shoppers and encourages business.

B.2 Encourage short term on-street parking to increase turnover. Locate alternate parking options for employees.

2.3.C Canopies and Awnings

For the purposes of these Guidelines, an awning is a structure with a fabric or material surface, usually sloped. A canopy is a rigid structure with a metal roof, generally attached to a building by hangers or tie rods. Canopies can also be mounted to the ground plane with columns. Canopies and awnings can be character defining features. They provide a welcome reprieve from the hot Texas sun, or sudden downpours. They play an essential role in enhancing the pedestrian experience. Historically, awnings and canopies were noteworthy features of buildings in Downtown and their continued use is encouraged.

C.1 An awning or canopy should be similar to those seen historically.

C.2 An awning or canopy should be compatible in material and construction to the style of the building.

C.3 Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the façade. Solid colors or simple, muted-stripe patterns are appropriate.

C.4 Awnings should fit within the openings of the building.

C.5 Simple shed shapes are appropriate for awnings. Odd shapes, bullnose awnings, and bubble awnings are not appropriate.

C.6 A fixed metal canopy may be considered. Consider using a contemporary interpretation of canopies seen historically.

C.7 Use appropriate supporting mechanisms such as wall-mounted brackets, chains, or metal tie rods for canopies. These should be anchored in the mortar joints rather than into the stone or brick.

C.8 Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features. It should be mounted to highlight moldings that may be found above the storefront and should not hide character-defining features.

C.9 Mounting should not damage significant features and historic detail.

C.10 Internal illumination in an awning is inappropriate. Awnings should not glow.

C.11 Lighting that shines onto sidewalks from the underside of a canopy or awning is encouraged. Downlights or can lights may be concealed in the underside of a canopy. Shielded or low wattage lights may be used on the underside of a canopy.



T-B: Examples of awnings and canopies.

2.3.D Lighting



Canopy over entrance.



Pedestrian lighting.

Lighting on a site is important for both aesthetics and safety, and, on commercial properties, for customer awareness. Traditionally, lights were simple in character and were used to highlight buildings, signs, entrances, first floor details, walkways, and buildings. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a warm daylight color, were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices.

Use lighting for the following:

- To accent architectural details
- To accent building entrances
- To accent signs
- To illuminate sidewalks and pedestrian routes
- To illuminate parking and service areas, for safety concerns
- To illuminate a state or national flag

D.1 Site lighting should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience at night by providing a well-lit environment. Site lighting should reinforce the visual continuity of Downtown. The light fixtures (luminaries) and poles (standards) should be unifying design elements that promote visual interest and safety.

D.2 Minimize the visual impacts of architectural lighting.

- a.** All exterior light sources should have a low level of luminescence.
- b.** Wall-mounted floodlamps, wall packs etc. shall be shielded so that the light source is not visible off-site. Spotlights without shielding devices are not allowed.
- c.** A lamp that conveys a color spectrum similar to daylight is preferred. Metal halide and sodium are not appropriate.
- d.** Light fixtures should be appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale, and intensity of illumination.
- e.** Wall-mounted light fixtures should not extend above the height of the wall to which they are mounted.
- f.** Lighting that changes color, or creates motion is not appropriate.
- g.** Use a lamp that conveys the color appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale, and intensity of illumination.
- h.** Visible light strips are not allowed.
- i.** Multi-colored lights are not allowed.
- j.** A lamp that conveys the color spectrum similar to daylight is preferred. Color temperature should be 2700K-3000K.



Appropriate under-canopy lights.



Appropriate exterior building lights.



Inappropriate pedestrian lighting.

D.3 Provide low-scale lighting for pedestrian routes.

a. Lighting along the right-of-way should be a combination of pedestrian-scaled street lights and lights on adjacent buildings. Lighting in this location should be designed to be bright enough to illuminate paths but not produce harsh light or glare.

b. A lamp in a light fixture illuminating a pedestrian way should not exceed fifteen feet in height.



Inappropriate colored light building washing.

D.4 Lighting for parking areas, service areas, buildings, pedestrian routes, and public ways in Area 2 shall be shielded to prevent any off-site glare.

a. Note that this also applies to parking and service areas in Area 1.

b. Light sources that use the equivalent of 1,200 lumens per bulb or more shall be housed in fixtures and installed in a manner that will shield the lights from public view and avoid glare and light spill.

c. The light source shall not emit a significant amount of the fixture's total output above a vertical cutoff angle of 90 degrees directly visible from neighboring properties. Any part of the fixture providing this cutoff angle shall be permanently attached.

d. Keep parking area lighting at a human scale. The maximum height of parking lot luminaires shall be fifteen feet. This height may be increased to twenty-four feet if it is demonstrated that the overall visual impact of the lighting is the same or less than a fifteen foot high luminaire.



D.5 The light pole, or standard, should be designed to accommodate special decorative accessories.

a. In Area 2, the acorn street light design should remain simple without hanging baskets.

b. Mounts for seasonal lighting schemes should be considered.

D.6 Provide low-scale lighting for pedestrian routes. Lighting along the right-of-way should be a combination of pedestrian-scaled street lights and spillover from lights on adjacent buildings. Lighting in this location should be designed to be comfortable to pedestrians.



2.3.E Street Furniture

E.1 In Area 2, the benches and waste receptacles should be those identified in the Downtown Master Plan.

E.2 Advertising promotions on benches or other street furniture is not allowed under any circumstance.

E.3 Individual furnishings should be of designs such that they may be combined with other street furniture in a coherent composition.

E.4 Establishment names on street furniture, such as umbrellas, should be considered as part of the sign package for the business.



T-B: Appropriate use of string lighting.

2.3.F Sidewalks

F.1 Align new sidewalks with existing. The



street and overall town grid is of primary importance.

F.2 Preserve significant and unique features in sidewalks such as stamped names, dates, and business names.

F.3 When new sidewalks are to be installed, they shall be compatible with the traditional character of the streetscape.

a. A new sidewalk should align with those that already exist along a block.

b. Decorative paving should be used throughout the Downtown Overlay as noted in the Downtown Master Plan.

c. Sidewalks and crosswalks should be consistent with the sidewalk, intersection, and crosswalk designs in the Downtown Master Plan.

F.4 Sidewalks for pedestrian use along the street edge of a property shall not be constructed of crushed granite, cobblestones or similar material that creates an uneven walking surface.



2.3.G Landscaping

Trees and flowering plants help provide interest to pedestrians, as well as shaded protection from the summer sun. Using trees and flowering plants is strongly encouraged.

G.1 Use indigenous, native, and drought-tolerant plant materials when feasible.

G.2 Install new street trees to enhance the pedestrian experience. Locate street trees along edges of sidewalks, maintaining a clearly defined pedestrian travel zone.

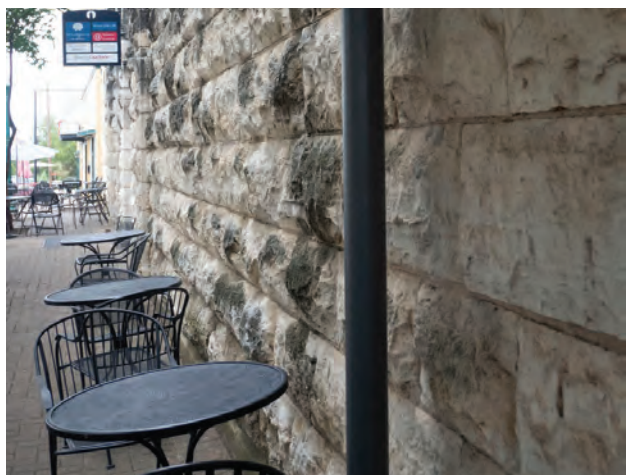
T-B: Appropriate lighting for pedestrian traffic.

G.3 Locate street trees in larger planting areas, such as buffer strips adjacent to parking lots and/or pocket parks.

G.4 Provide underground irrigation systems where needed to sustain landscaped areas.

G.5 Use flowers to provide seasonal colors.

G.6 Replace trees that are diseased or have passed their life cycle. The height of a street tree should be minimized, however, to avoid blocking views of storefronts and interesting details.



T-B: Examples of street furniture in Area 2.