

2.4. SITE DESIGN

Special attention should be given to the design of the site in Area 2. This transitional zone should have continuity with Area 1 with compatible development characteristics and encourage pedestrian movement throughout the Downtown, and should not be as car-centric as a more suburban area of Georgetown.

As a transitional zone it is important that care is taken in the site design as it relates to adjacent residential properties. Placement of buildings, parking, storage and garbage can have a negative impact on residential neighbors if not carefully considered.

2.4.A Setbacks

A wide variety of building setbacks can be seen throughout Area 2 and the distance of the setback and the features within the setback create two development characters. Sites with minimal or no setbacks promote an urban commercial character and sites with greater setbacks promote an urban residential character. The following maps describe the general location of these two distinct character areas. The Guidelines recommend setbacks to reinforce the urban commercial and urban residential character of existing sites and to promote the development of the two character areas in the future.



Infill construction in Area 2.

A.1 Setback for Urban Commercial Character

A new building should maintain the wall of buildings at the sidewalk edge. 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 this character area be located at the sidewalk edge, but it should be designed to provide visual interest.

- a. Where no sidewalk exists one should be installed that aligns with nearby sidewalks.



Example of urban commercial setback.

b. Where an existing historic building is set back from the property lines, additions should not obscure the historic building from the street view.

c. If an existing building is 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.

d. Locate a new building at the front property line. Align the building front at the sidewalk edge.

e. A minimum of 50% of the street frontage of a property shall have a building wall at the sidewalk edge.

A.2 Setbacks for Historic Residential Character

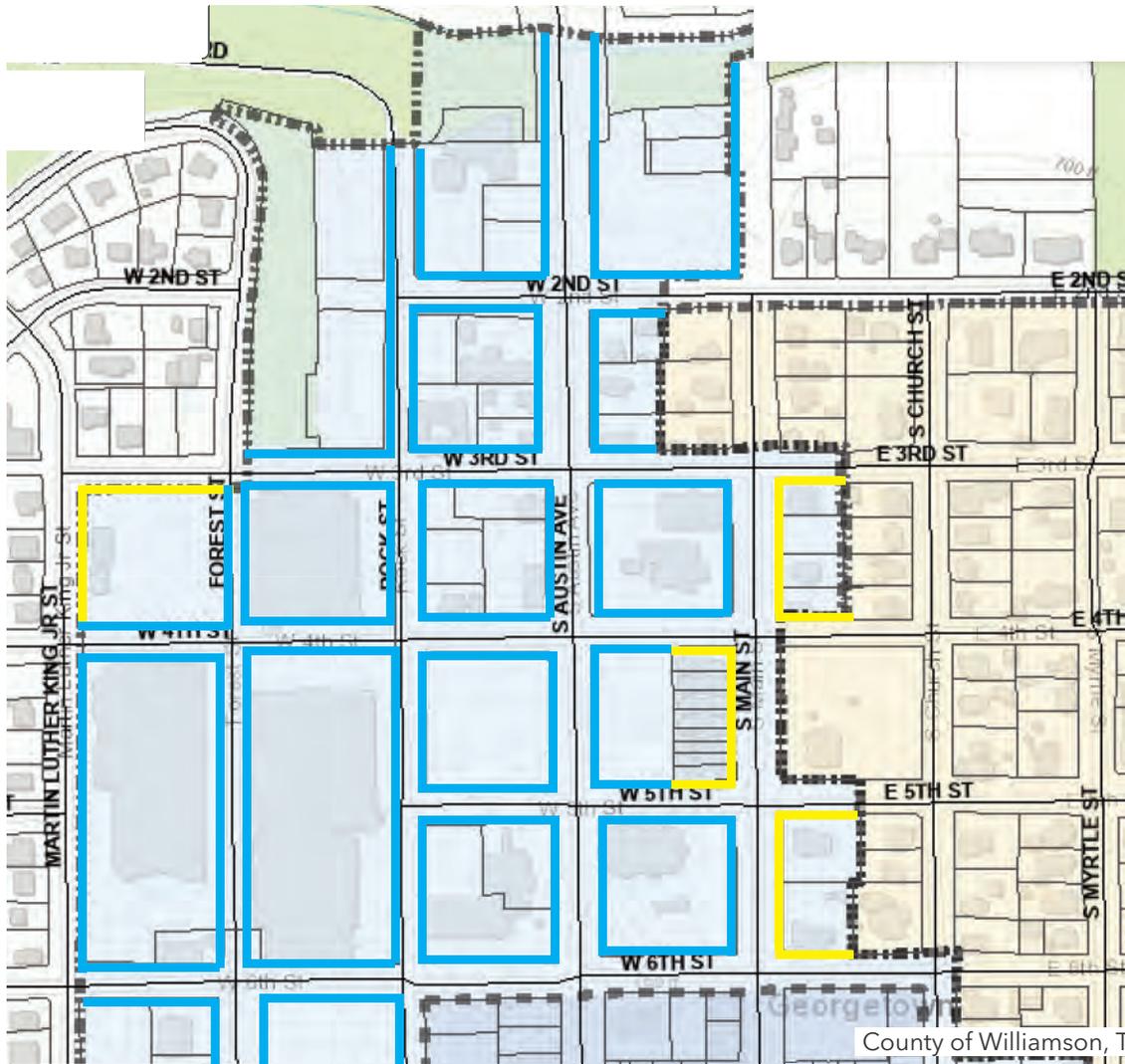
a. A new building setback, whether commercial, multi-family or single family should reflect the predominant setback of the blockface which it is on, not the block face across the street.

b. Landscaping within the setback should be residential in character and completely paved front setbacks are not allowed.



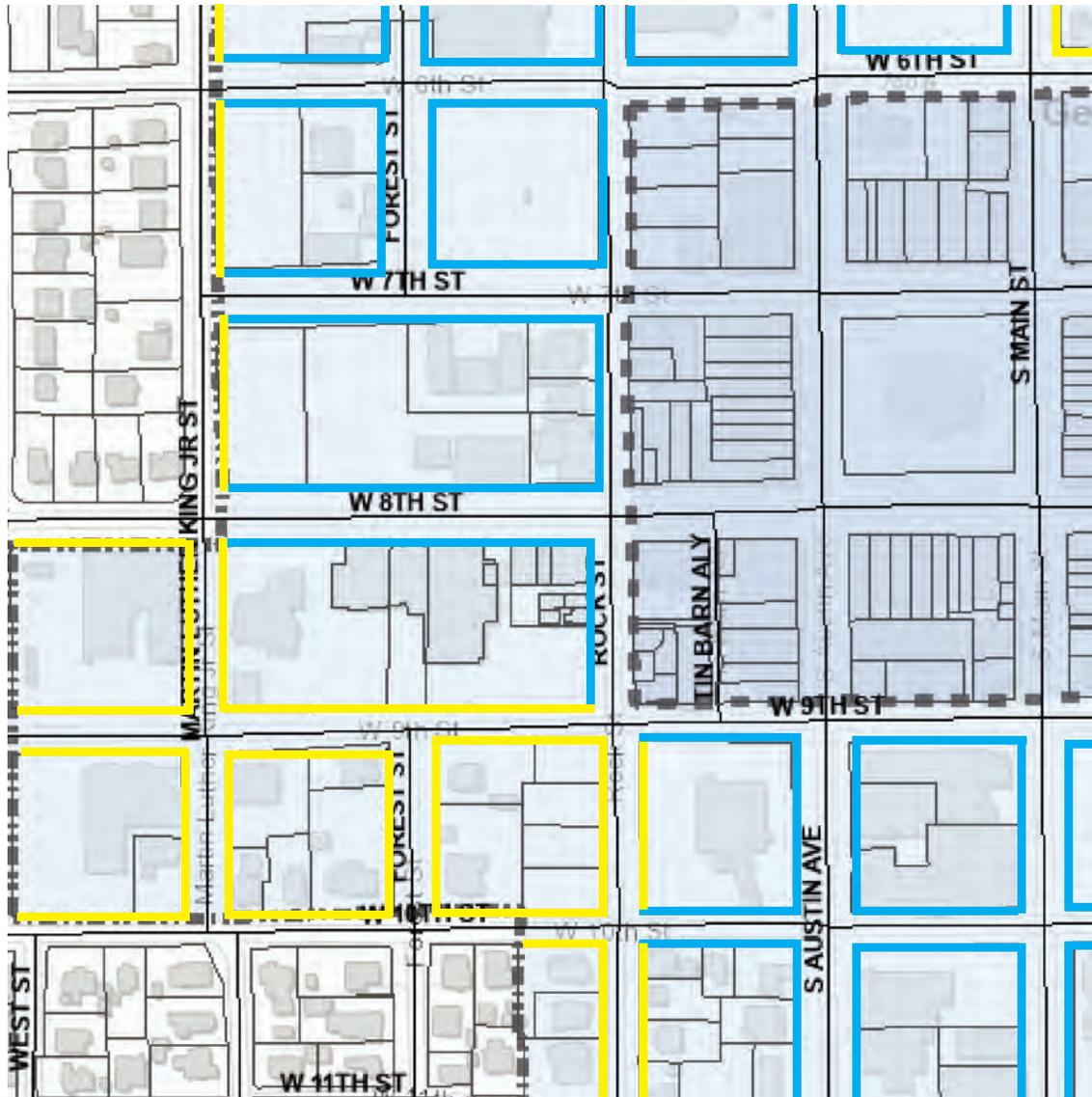
T-B: Examples of setbacks for commercial blocks.

Area 2 North West - Setback Map



-  Historic Urban Setback Character
-  Historic Residential Setback Character

Area 2 Center West - Setback Map



-  Historic Urban Setback Character
-  Historic Residential Setback Character

2.4.B Parking location and design

Note that standards for parking lot landscaping are set forth in Section 8.04 of the Unified Development Code and shall also apply.

Parking Lots

B.1 Minimize the visual impacts of a parking lot.

a. New parking facilities should be designed to be attractive, compatible additions to the Downtown.

b. Using high quality materials, providing a sense of scale in architectural details, and providing active uses at the sidewalk edge are methods that can mitigate the potentially negative impacts of new parking facilities.

c. A new parking lot should remain subordinate to the street scene. This can be achieved by placing a wall or landscaping between the parking lot and the public walkway.

B.2 Locate a surface lot such that it will be subordinate to other site features.

a. An on-site parking area should be located behind a building, where its visual impacts will be minimized.

b. Minimize the surface area of paving materials.

c. It is not appropriate to demolish a historic structure on a building's lot or surrounding lots in order to create additional parking. This includes where a detached garage of historic significance exists on a site.



T-B: Examples of rear and side street parking.



Street parking.

B.3 Locate a parking lot to minimize gaps in the continuous building wall of a block. Where a parking lot shares a site with a building, place the parking at the rear of the site (preferred) or beside the building (if there are no other options).

B.4 Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual buffer.

a. This may be a landscaped strip or planter.

b. Consider the use of a wall as screen for the edge of the lot.

c. Use a combination of trees and shrubs to create a landscape buffer.

d. Where a parking lot exists that is presently not screened or landscaped, consider a landscaping program or an infill building that relates to the surrounding historic context.

See the City of Georgetown's Unified Development Code for more guidance on required parking lot landscaping and screening.



Infill parking structure.

B.5 On site parking in front of buildings is not allowed in new construction.

Parking Structures

B.6 Minimize the visual impacts of a parking structure by designing it to enhance the activity of the streetscape.

B.7 Design a parking structure so that it creates a visually attractive and active street edge.



Parking structure.

a. When feasible, a parking structure in the area should be wrapped with retail, commercial, or another active use to shield the cars from view and to add activity to the street.

b. Other methods of activating the street adjacent to a parking garage include but are not limited to:

- Murals or public art
- Landscaping
- Product display cases/show windows

B.8 In the Downtown Overlay District Area 2, a parking structure shall be compatible with traditional buildings in the surrounding area.

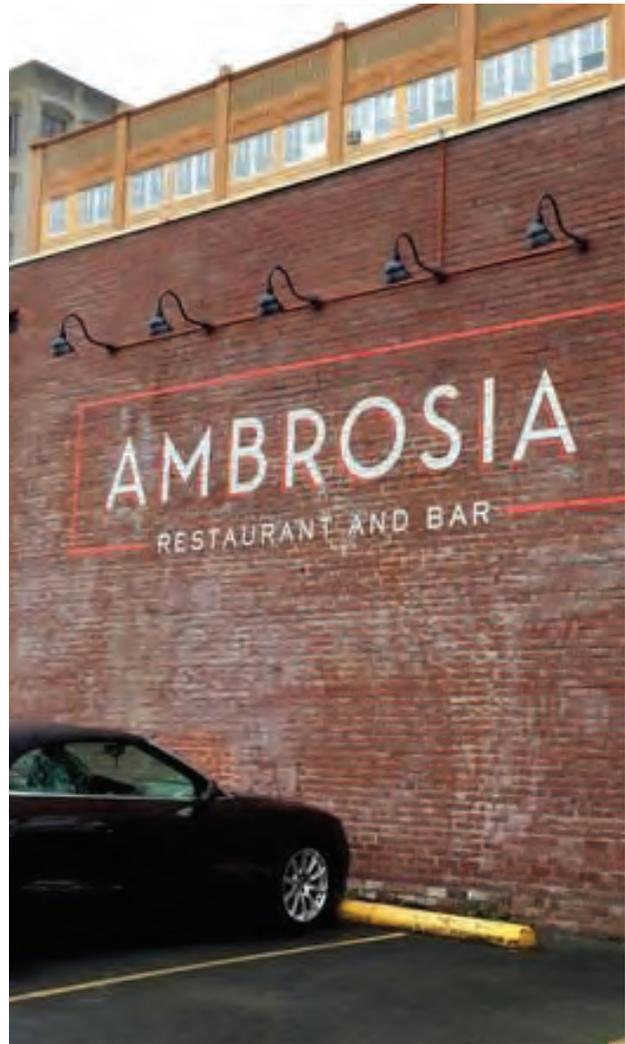
a. Respect the regular window pattern and other architectural elements of adjacent buildings.

b. Maintain the alignments and rhythms of architectural elements, as seen along the street.

c. Continue the use of similar building materials.

d. Avoid multiple curb cuts. These complicate turning movements and disrupt the sidewalk.

e. Reflect the traditional widths of buildings in the area.



Example of urban commercial parking.



Historic drive-thru in Area 2.

2.4.C Drive-Thrus

C.1 A drive-thru should not be placed in the front of a building. To maintain the pedestrian environment, drive-thrus should be located away from the pedestrian path at the rear of a structure.

C.2 Curb cuts for drive-thrus should be minimized. Curb cuts interfere with pedestrian flow.

C.3 Conflicts with pedestrians should be minimized when exiting a drive thru. Blind spots and landscaping design should be carefully coordinated.



Primary entrances should be on the face of the street.

2.4.D Primary Entrances

D.1 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

D.2 A building should have a clearly-defined primary entrance.

D.3 The building entrance should be recessed.

D.4 A primary building entrance also should be at or near street level.



Dumpsters and service areas should be located out of public view in rear or side areas. Stone walls shelter the garbage area from view.

2.4.E Service Areas

E.1 Minimize the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas.

a. Locate service areas away from major pedestrian routes. Place them at the rear of a building when feasible.

b. Dumpsters should be screened from public view.

c. When dumpsters abut a residential property they should be screened from

the residential property and setback by a minimum of 10 feet of landscaping. Landscaping should be evergreen and as tall as the dumpster.

d. Dumpster screening materials should be consistent with the exterior materials of the building. For example, masonry is preferred if the main structure is masonry. Corrugated metal or fiberglass is not appropriate. Wood fencing can be used if it is tall enough to enclose the dumpster. Landscaping surrounding the enclosure is encouraged.



Typical alley in Downtown.

2.5 BUILDING DESIGN

Area 2 has emerged from a heritage of residential buildings and 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, Area 2 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. Preserving these resources is encouraged and, when feasible, they should be incorporated into new developments.

In the portions of Area 2 that retained residential structures “transitional” character—a blend between commercial uses and residential structures—can be seen. Rather than constructing an urban, “Downtown” building in these blocks, a new design should relate to the traditional design characteristics and setbacks of surrounding buildings while also conveying the stylistic trends of today.



Commercial use of former residential structure.

A.1 Commercial buildings the Urban Commercial Setback blockface should relate to the commercial buildings in the core of Downtown (Area 1) through the consistent use of similar building materials, storefronts, recessed entries, and the alignment of these elements along a block. This tradition is strongly encouraged for new developments in Area 2 in the Urban Commercial blockfaces.

A.2 Commercial buildings and multifamily buildings located in Area 2 along the Residential Historic Setback blockfaces should relate to the historic houses through building shape, scale and materials.

2.5.B Pedestrian Environment

B.1 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 should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. Existing pedestrian routes should be enhanced.

B.2 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

a. Provide at least one of the following along primary pedestrian ways:

- A storefront
- Display cases
- Landscaping
- A courtyard or plaza

b. Include traditional elements such as display windows, kick plates, transoms, and canopies or awnings on commercial storefronts.

c. Avoid a blank wall or vacant lot appearance.



2.5.C 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.

C.1 Massing and Scale for Buildings in Commercial Urban block faces.

a. A new building shall reflect the traditional lot width as expressed by the following:

- Variation in height.
- Variation in the plane of the street-facing façades.
- Variation in architectural detailing and materials to emphasize the building module.

b. 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 façade height.



T-B: Pedestrian-friendly pathways.



Pedestrian-friendly pathways.



Inappropriate infill.

c. Where a large building is needed, divide the building into modules that reflect the traditional size of buildings.

d. A typical building module should not exceed 20-50 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 façade material for the extent of the building module.
- Variation in the façade height to reflect traditional lot width.

e. Variations in façade treatment should be continued through the structure, including its roof line and rear façade.

f. 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 the overall scale of the building.

g. A new building should incorporate a base, middle and cap. Traditionally, buildings were composed of these three basic elements. Interpreting this tradition in new buildings will help reinforce the visual continuity of the area.

h. Clearly define the three distinct parts that articulate a base, a middle and a cap by horizontal banding, belt courses, and major and minor cornices on multi-story buildings.

i. A single story building should have a storefront with a kick plate, display window with transom and an entry as well as a cornice.

C.2 Massing, Scale, and Form in Urban Residential.

Massing, scale and form for commercial and multifamily buildings on a Historic Residential block face should reflect the form of historic homes.

a. Buildings shall have elements of traditional house form such as varying height walls and sloped (or pitched) roof.

b. New construction should use residential elements and massing that relate to the scale of historic Georgetown houses. Porches, dormers and projecting bays can help achieve this compatibility.

c. The front façade of larger buildings should be modulated at the scale of historic homes. Modulation shall be between 25-35 feet in width.

- In a large building aligned parallel with the street, every other module should be set back from the front building line by a minimum of 10 feet. This is to reflect the typical historic house rhythm in the block. The offsets should be expressed from the foundation through the roof line.
- Courtyard or U-shaped buildings can also be considered with gable or hipped roofs facing the street.
- A vertical architectural element or trim piece can be used to accentuate the module.



Commercial use of former residential structure in Area 2.



Inappropriate infill.



Urban residential infill.

2.5.D Height



Urban residential infill.



Inappropriate infill.

D.1 Building heights in the Urban Commercial block face should provide variety.

a. New construction either abutting or across the street from a property that is residential in form (whether or not the residential form property is in the Historic District) should step down in height toward the street or toward the residential form structure. The height of the new structure adjacent to the residential form should not exceed 2 stories unless the residential structure is two or more stories in height.

b. Vary the building height in accordance with traditional lot width.

c. Set back upper floors to vary the building façade and roof forms.

D.2 Building heights in the urban residential block face should be one to two stories in height.

2.5.E Roofs

E.1 In Urban Commercial block faces the roofs can be flat with parapets or pitched.

E.2 In Urban Residential block faces roofs may be gabled or hipped with a slope of no less than 4:1. Roofs should be proportional to the height of the building walls. In an elevation drawing roofs should be no taller than one story.

E.3 Roof material on flat roofs should not be visible from the street.

E.4 Acceptable roofing materials on sloped roofs include:

- Asphalt shingles (dimensional architectural shingles are preferred)
- Standing seam metal roof with low profile cap
- Metal tiles
- Roof materials that appear similar to historic houses in Georgetown.

2.5.F Exterior Building Materials

Building materials should contribute to the visual continuity of the area. They should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity. This is especially true for buildings with high or medium significance. Buildings with low significance can have some flexibility as long as there is a compatibility of scale, texture and color with traditional materials.

F.1 Building materials in the Urban Commercial block face for new construction should be visually compatible with the predominant materials of the Downtown.



Asphalt roof.



Metal tile roof.



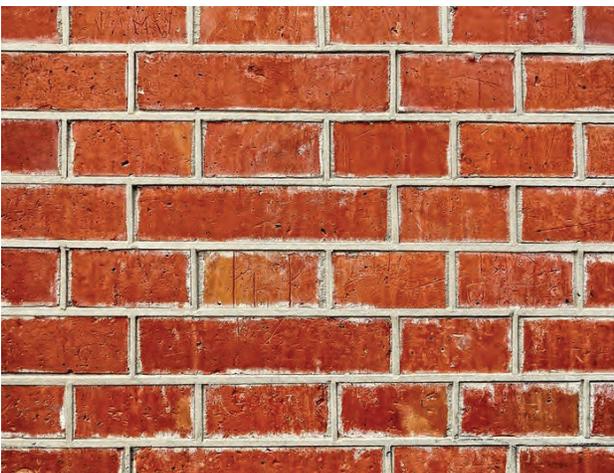
Standing seam roof.



Limestone.



Limestone.



Typical brick.

a. New materials should relate to the scale, durability, color and texture of the predominant materials of Downtown.

b. Masonry materials that convey a sense of scale are preferred.

- Brick and stone are preferred for new construction. Stone types should be limited to stone that is quarried in Texas, as that would have been the traditional material available. Simple ashlar or running bond patterns should be used. Rough finishes are preferred on stone. Thin set stone veneer or brick, sometimes referred to as “sticky brick or sticky stone” is only allowed in instances in which is indistinguishable from full dimension masonry materials.
- 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. Tilt wall is acceptable as a construction method, but painted or unpainted concrete, and exposed aggregate face is not allowed.
- New materials should have a demonstrated durability for the Central Texas climate. For example, some façade materials used in new construction are more susceptible to weathering and simply do not last as long as stone or brick.

c. 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, or glass and steel curtain wall are inappropriate and should be avoided as primary materials.

d. Traditional building materials such as wood, brick, and stone are encouraged.

- Horizontal lap wood siding of traditional dimensions is appropriate in most applications. Maintenance of traditional siding dimensions are encouraged.
- Vinyl siding is not allowed.
- New materials that are similar in character to traditional ones may be considered.
- Siding should be horizontal.

Alternative materials should have a proven durability in similar locations in this climate, such as cementitious fiber board.

e. Cementitious fiber board can be used as lap siding, shingle pattern and trim. Plain 4X8 sheets can not be used as a primary siding material. Metal panel systems and rain screens may be considered when they are compatible with material and surroundings.

F.2 Materials in the Urban Residential block face should reference the traditional materials used in homes in scale and texture.

a. Traditional wood siding, brick, limestone that is small enough to be placed by hand, and stucco are common in historic Georgetown residences. Painted wood siding is preferred.

b. Cementitious fiber board is acceptable with the exception of 4X8 sheets as the primary material. 4X8 sheets can be used where trim is used to reduce scale, such as in board and batten siding.



Wood siding.



Cementitious siding.



Vinyl siding.



Thinset veneer stone.

c. Vinyl siding and thinset veneer stone and brick (known as sticky stone and sticky brick) are not allowed.

d. Large scale materials such as steel and glass curtain walls, metal panel systems, rain screens, tilt wall with exposed concrete, painted concrete, or exposed aggregate are not allowed.

e. Industrial material or agricultural materials such as corrugated metal or corrugated fiberglass panels are not allowed.

2.5.G Windows



Thinset veneer brick.

Windows give scale to buildings and provide visual interest. Distinct window designs help define many historic building styles. Historic windows are set deep into a wall, and have substantial casings and sash components. This creates shadows that contribute to the character of the historic style.

G.1 Windows in Area 2

a. Windows in Area 2 should be vertical in design and of similar size to other windows on the block. A typical window is twice as tall as it is wide.

b. The pattern of window placement in the primary façade of a building should reflect the historical patterns of Georgetown buildings. Commercial Urban buildings have regularly spaced windows of equal size. Residential buildings have windows that are based on the façade composition and may vary in size. Too many or too few windows can seem out of place in the established rhythm.



Inappropriate curtain wall.

c. Window configurations should at a minimum be one-over-one. Single lite windows are not appropriate for Area 2 except in display windows.

d. Windows should be set a minimum of two inches behind the plane of the façade.

e. Glass should be clear and non-reflective.

G.2 Storefront Windows in the Urban Commercial block face

Storefronts in new buildings in the Urban Commercial block face shall be visually open and provide interest on the street.

a. The ratio of solid-to-void surface area shall be similar to that seen on commercial storefront buildings in Area 1.

b. First floors should be more transparent than upper floors.

c. Avoid a blank wall appearance that does not provide interest to pedestrians.

d. New storefronts can be constructed of wood, steel, anodized aluminum, or other materials with the same long-lasting characteristics.



Double-hung window.



Appropriate window replacement.



Incompatible window replacement.

e. A new storefront should have the following parts listed below. A rehabilitation project shall preserve these character-defining elements:

- Display windows: The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed. This will help maintain the interest of pedestrians by providing views to goods and activities inside the first floor.
- Transom: The upper portion of the display window, separated by a frame.
- Kick plate: Found beneath the display window. Sometimes called a bulk-head panel.
- Entry: Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.

f. Secondary public entrances are encouraged on a larger building or along an alley if there is parking in the rear of the site.



Appropriate commercial window.

G.3 Display Windows in Urban Residential block faces

Display windows in Urban Residential block faces should reflect the residential character of the building.

- a.** Display windows should be placed at pedestrian height.
- b.** Single lite windows used for display of goods are acceptable as long as they are architecturally consistent with the residential character. The use of bay windows, Palladian windows, Chicago style windows, or paired windows are ways to achieve this appearance.

2.5.H. Mechanical Equipment

Utility service boxes, telecommunication devices, solar devices, cables, and conduits are among the variety of equipment that may be attached to a building that can affect the character of the area. While solar energy collecting devices might not always be considered as mechanical or service equipment, for the purpose of these Design Guidelines they shall be.

H.1 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment as seen from the street.

- a. Do not locate window air conditioning units on the building's primary façade.
- b. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts on rooftops that are not visible from the public's view. If this is not possible, setback or appropriately screen rooftop equipment from view.
- c. Locate a satellite dish out of public view, to the extent feasible, and in compliance with other regulations.
- d. Paint mechanical equipment attached to the building fascia the same color as the fascia background to which it is attached in order to blend into the building.
- e. When locating mechanical equipment be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings as well as other neighboring properties.
- f. Character defining features of existing buildings (i.e. roofline, chimneys, dormers) must not be damaged or obscured when adding new roof mounted energy conservation systems such as solar devices.



T-B: Service areas on rear of building.



Inappropriate placement of mechanical equipment.



g. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way. These features should be installed in a manner which minimizes damage to historic materials.

H.2 Solar Equipment

a. Solar panels are prohibited unless they are not visible from the public right-of-way.

b. Use solar panels and solar devices that are similar in color to roof materials and use non-reflective finishes.

c. Solar panels should not be mounted to project from walls or other parts of the building.



H.3 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

a. Locate connections on secondary walls, when feasible.

b. Do not locate gas or electric meters on the roof.

T-B: Locate solar panels on rear of house.

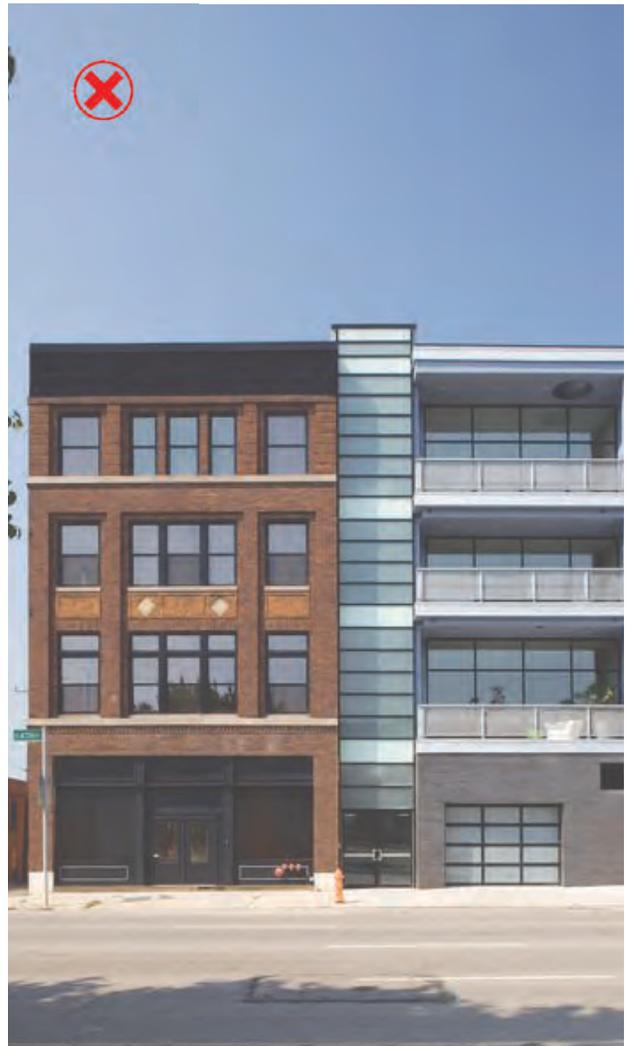
2.5.I Additions

I.1 Two distinct types of additions are considered to be appropriate: ground-level or roof-top.

a. A ground-level addition that involves expanding the footprint of a structure may be considered. Such an addition should be to the rear or side of a building. This will have the least impact on the character of a building, but there may be limited opportunities to do this.

b. An addition to the roof may be designed that is simple in character and set back substantially from the front of a building. The materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible to those of the existing structure, but also visually subordinate in character so as to avoid calling attention to the addition. The rooftop addition must not be visible from directly across the street.

c. Another option, which will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, is to design an addition to the front wall plane of the existing building. This option may only be considered on buildings that do not have a cornice. Only one story may be added. The addition must replicate the existing façade. Note: These buildings will not be eligible for historic Tax Credits at the State or Federal level.



T-B: Inappropriate commercial additions.



Inappropriate commercial additions.



Industrail style on the West side.

I.2 An addition shall be compatible in scale, materials, and character with the main building.

a. An addition shall relate to the building in mass, scale, and form. It should be designed to remain subordinate to the main structure.

b. An addition to the front of a building is inappropriate. However, where a building in the Downtown Overlay is set back from the front property line and the structure does not have historic significance, the first consideration for the placement of an addition should be to fill the gap between the existing building and sidewalk. This will maintain the consistent “street wall” desired in the Downtown.

2.5.J. West of Downtown Specific Guidelines

J.1 Character of Buildings

a. The character on the west side of Downtown historically differs from the rest of Area 2. This was a warehouse district. The buildings were larger, with fewer windows and more utilitarian in style. They lacked the more traditional base-middle-cap configuration. The building materials were also more industrial with little ornamentation, and often raised docks. Early warehouse buildings were often constructed of wood, metal siding, clay tile blocks, and concrete blocks as these were inexpensive and widely available. Buildings in this area can have a more industrial design quality to reflect the area history.

b. New buildings in this area can be contemporary design utilizing exterior materials traditionally found in Georgetown. Façades should have a street presence with some storefronts or large window openings to enliven the street.

2.5.K University Avenue and Austin Avenue As Entrance Corridors to the Historic Overlay District

These two avenues serve as major entrances into the Downtown and Old Town Historic Districts, giving a strong sense of place. The corridors should be identifiable and unique from the non-historic areas. Currently S. Austin Avenue and University Avenue between Rock and Church Streets in Area 2 are more suburban in character. Much of this is due to the influence of the automobile and the need to provide on-site parking. 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 would have been seen historically. Compatible building design in this area may have more simple building forms and less architectural detail than other parts of Area 2, and/or building design that references this historic context.

K.1 Create a sense of entry into the historic districts by having a uniquely designed street scape experience.

- a. Pedestrian paths, landscaping, and lighting at pedestrian scale should be encouraged at the street edge.
- b. Pedestrian crosswalks across the streets can be constructed of a different material.
- c. Street signs could be unique to the district.



Doug Smith Performance Center on W. 2nd Street.



Street scape view of W. University Avenue towards S. Austin Avenue.



Austin Avenue as an entrance to Downtown.

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