



Downtown Design Guidelines

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Introduction

Johnstown, Colorado was settled in the 1860s, growing during the late 19th and early 20th centuries into a regional market community to serve the surrounding local agricultural area. During this period a two-block area of Parish Avenue became the commercial and mercantile heart of the growing town, a collection of one - and two-story masonry, wood and stone buildings of historical and architectural significance, worthy of preservation.

The Town of Johnstown recognizes that it's downtown contains the historic character and charm to remain the heart of the community into the 21st century. A task force was created to guide a downtown master planning and streetscape design process led by Earen Russell of EDAW, Inc., Fort Collins, Colorado. As part of this master planning, the Town Council commissioned the creation of this Downtown Design Guidelines manual in 2008 to assist property owners, developers and residents in preserving and enhancing this irreplaceable community asset - it's historic downtown.

The intent of these Design Guidelines is to:

- Protect and preserve the historic buildings in downtown Johnstown.
- Encourage the appropriate restoration of building facades within the historic downtown.
- Protect and enhance the qualities of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, while providing design guidance to allow their conversion to more commercial uses.
- Provide design guidance for property owners in the restoration, rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of their historic properties.
- Provide design guidance for the redevelopment and infill of vacant properties within the downtown area.
- Provide specific design examples for historic building features and treatments, such as awnings, signage and lighting.
- Discourage inappropriate additions and conversions of historic buildings.

The following guidelines have been developed by Aller • Lingle • Massey Architects P.C., Fort Collins, Colorado, with assistance from EDAW, Inc. The project was directed for the Town of Johnstown by John Franklin, Town Planner, and Roy Lauricello, Town Manager.

The guidelines are intended to provide design assistance to individual property owners for restoration or rehabilitation of their downtown properties, encourage appropriate historic preservation techniques, and guide new development so that it remains compatible with the historic fabric of downtown Johnstown.

How the Design Guidelines will be used:

The Downtown Design Guidelines will be used to evaluate projects requesting grant funding from the Town of Johnstown's Facade Grant Program.

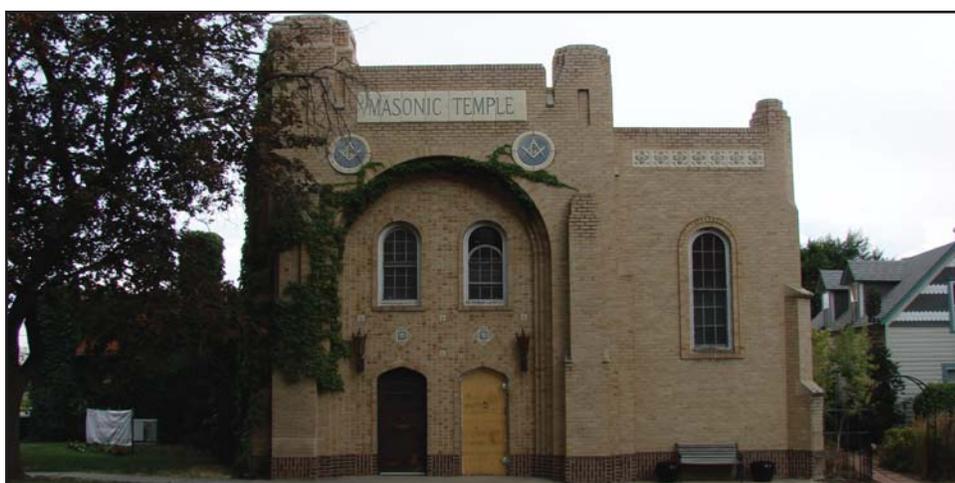
How specific designs will be reviewed:

Building or property owners will submit scaled plan and elevation drawings for their proposed facade restoration, rehabilitation or new infill construction project. The designs will be reviewed by the town council for compliance with these Design Guidelines and other applicable Town of Johnstown codes and standards.

Preserve buildings with historic significance to the community

Johnstown's historic downtown contains a variety of significant buildings that should be preserved, establishing the scale and character for downtown and providing design guidance for future development.

- Johnstown's historic downtown buildings tell the history of the community and establish it's unique character.
- The Parish Avenue downtown core is characterized by predominantly one-story commercial block structures, with a few significant two-story buildings. This scale of one- and two-story buildings should be retained and used to guide the design of future development.
- The historic integrity of existing downtown buildings should be retained and enhanced.
- 'Theming' or other artificial historical references are not needed to establish the character of downtown.
- Retaining and reusing older buildings promotes environmental sustainability, with restoration or rehabilitation consuming far fewer resources than new construction.



- While most buildings on Parish Avenue are examples of early 20th century commercial block architecture, a variety of architectural styles are present, including Victorian, Neo Gothic, Craftsman and Moorish influences. This diversity of styles should be enhanced through future development and infill construction.
- Retain and continue the diversity of architectural styles.
- Demolition of, or major alterations to, historic buildings is strongly discouraged.

Maintain historical architectural details

Historic buildings are distinguished by the unique details, materials and craftsmanship of their construction.

- Distinctive historic details and embellishments establish a unique character for the building. Original architectural elements that should be preserved include:
 - Cornices
 - Window hoods
 - Windows
 - Entrance doors and frames
 - Storefronts
 - Transoms
 - Mouldings, dentils, brackets, medallions, and other architectural details
- Historic details illustrate the quality and craftsmanship of the era in which the building was constructed. Many historic details provide excellent examples of the hand-tooling and workmanship of local stone masons and master carpenters.

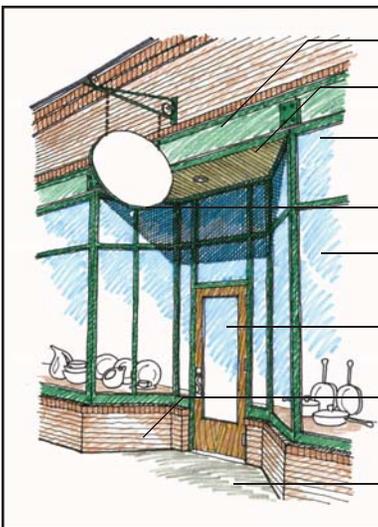


- Retain and preserve unique and character-defining building details.
- Preserve and restore damaged building details.
- Replicate and reconstruct missing cornices, pilasters, quoins or other character-defining historic details. Any such reconstruction should be based upon accurate physical evidence or appropriate historical photographs.
- Preserve original corbels, dentils and other brick and stone masonry details.
- Preserve original stone or ceramic tile entrance stoops.
- Preserve original transom glass.

Use ground level storefronts to enliven the street

Ground level retail storefronts are indicative of the mercantile economy of historic downtowns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They often feature formal, symmetrical facades, large expanses of display windows flush with the building walls, recessed entrances and decorative glass transoms.

- Retail storefronts of historic buildings create an intimate, pedestrian scale along the street, encouraging residents to slow down, interact and ‘window shop’.
- The primarily glazed, ground level storefronts create a distinction between the ‘public’ retail facade and the more ‘private’ areas of the upper levels, often expressed by individual punched windows.
- The higher ceilings of historic, ground level retail storefronts have a character not often found in more modern construction.



- Exposed steel lintel beam
- High ceilings and soffits
- Transom or clerestory glass
- Bracket mounted signage
- Clear glass for display windows
- Recessed building entrances
- Raised kick boards of wood, stone or brick
- Decorative stone or tile entry stoop



- Retain and preserve existing historic storefronts.
- Retain the scale and proportions of historic storefronts.
- Preserve historic materials and details of storefront kick boards, transom glazing and entrance doors.
- Remove modern dropped ceilings and other obstructions visible through transom windows.
- Where photographic documentation does not exist to guide an historically accurate restoration, modern materials are permitted for reconstructions of missing elements, such as kick boards.
- Non-historic storefronts can use modern materials, such as aluminum storefront framing.



Encourage infill development

Communities are encouraging infill development of vacant downtown properties and redevelopment of inappropriate or under valued buildings to revitalize their historic downtowns. Designed properly, new construction can blend seamlessly with original, historic buildings to create a vibrant downtown environment.

- Open or undeveloped downtown properties break the rhythm of the streetscape, leaving gaps in the downtown fabric that accumulate litter and debris, and encourage vandalism, graffiti and loitering.
- Infill development should respect the scale and massing of the historic downtown streetscapes.
- Palettes of materials and colors for new development should be compatible with the materials and colors of nearby historic buildings.



- Maintain cornice alignment
- Use simplified historical details, such as window hoods
- Maintain upper story window pattern
- Maintain signage band alignment
- Continue pattern of retractable awnings
- Maintain alignment of transom windows
- Maintain pattern of recessed entrances



- New infill development should respect the scale of both the adjoining historic buildings and the overall streetscape. New development within the historic 2-block core of Parish Avenue should be limited to two stories.
- New infill development should not mimic the historical designs and details of existing structures, but be designed to be compatible with and complement them.
- New infill development should replicate the rhythm of the historic facades, through the use of pilasters or other details to establish bays in the facades, ground level storefronts, alignment of upper levels windows, cornices and other treatments.
- New infill development should utilize high quality building materials, complementary to existing historic materials.
- Use of modern materials, such as corrugated metal, is not permitted as the predominant building facade material. Their use should be minimized for canopies, kick boards, etc.

New construction should reinforce the streetscape

Infill of vacant lots or redevelopment of inappropriately sited structures can restore the streetscape and enhance the vibrancy of the historic downtown.

- Existing buildings that have been constructed set back from the historic street edge break the rhythm of the streetscape, and leave ‘pockets’ of sites that are uninviting to pedestrians.
- Existing development that has occurred haphazardly can result in the same social issues associated with empty or undeveloped downtown properties.



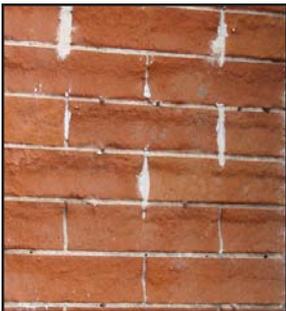
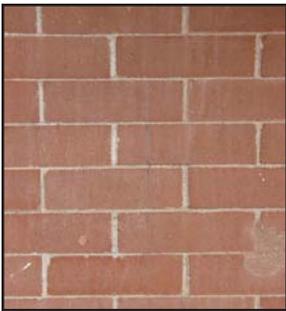
Discouraged

- Building facades of new infill development or redevelopment should be aligned with the facades of existing historic buildings to create a uniform streetscape.
- Similarly, facades of new development on corner lots should adhere to the streetscapes of both streets.
- New construction set back from the street by parking lots is discouraged.

Maintain natural materials and colors

Historic buildings are distinguished by the natural textures, colors and quality of their materials.

- Materials of historic buildings often utilized local materials and represent the workmanship of local craftsmen.
- Materials of historic buildings illustrate the local history of construction and building trades. Hand-faced stone or soft-fired brick masonry establishes a building's place in history and distinguishes it from wire-cut brick, cast iron, or the steel and glass construction of later eras.
- Likewise, the colors of natural materials help establish a building's history and indicate the use of locally available materials.
- Modern metal siding and other 'industrial' materials are inappropriate as primary facade materials in the historic downtown area.



Not Permitted

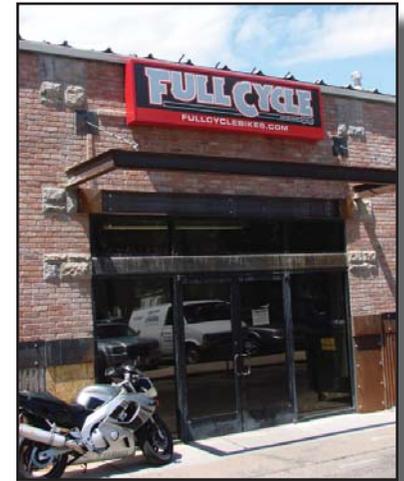


- Historic brick or stone masonry should be preserved and mortar joints repointed as needed to maintain their historic character.
- Sandblasting of historic brick or stone masonry is not permitted.
- Historic brick or stone masonry should be preserved, and gently cleaned to remove dirt and pollution damage. High-pressure washing of historic brick is discouraged.
- Historic brick or stone masonry should not be painted. Painting and, in some cases, sealing of historic brick or stone masonry does not allow the building walls to ‘breath’ and can lead to deterioration from moisture build-up within the walls.
- If buildings have been painted, stripping of the paint using products specifically developed for historic brick, stone or other materials is encouraged.
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings should use materials of like kind, including salvaged brick and other materials, where possible.
- Natural and earth tone colors are encouraged, with limited use of bolder, darker colors as accents. Use of primary or fluorescent colors is discouraged.
- Use of historically accurate color palettes is encouraged, as appropriate, for different architectural styles.

Encourage alley entrances

Historic downtowns have been typically platted with alleys at mid-block, running parallel to the primary commercial streets. Often mid-block alleys also connect to the primary streets. These alleys provide a remarkable ‘untapped’ resource for pedestrian connections, extending the retail areas of the downtown and connecting retail businesses and restaurants to parking areas accessed from the alleys.

- Alleys can provide convenient pedestrian pathways, connecting properties to the primary commercial streets and each other.
- Providing public access to retail and commercial businesses from the alley will enliven the alley.
- If improved, alleys can become an integral part of the fabric of the historic downtown, moving well beyond their limited historical, utilitarian service uses.
- Patios, courtyards and upper level decks add activity, color and landscaping to the alleys.



- Add new windows where appropriate
- New retractable fabric awnings
- New alley signage
- New facade lighting
- Enhance alley ambiance with landscape materials
- New courtyard entry element or gate
- Create new rear enclosed courtyard with design elements that complement the original building



- Open ground level entrances from rear alleys where possible.
- Create enclosed alley courtyards or patios where appropriate to the building's use.
- Design of alley entrances should be subordinate to the primary, street facing entrances of the building.
- Materials, details and colors used for alley entrances should be complementary to those used on the building's primary facade.
- Use of modern materials is acceptable, provided the design is compatible with the historic building.
- Add new or enlarged windows into the building's rear wall when possible.
- Develop common areas for trash and recyclable collection, limiting the proliferation of unsightly and unhealthy trash dumpsters behind every building.
- Screen gas meters, electric meters and other utilities.

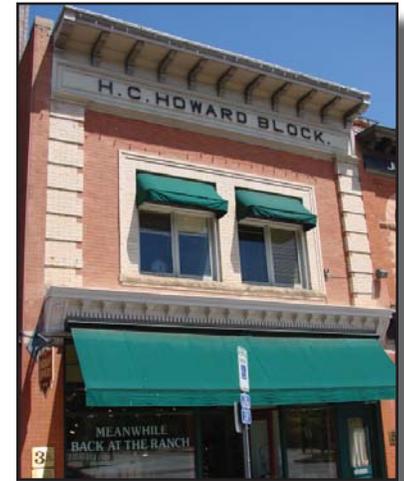


Discouraged

Install building awnings

Awnings have been used for centuries to shade the facades and display windows of buildings and provide residents with protection from the elements.

- Historic commercial and mercantile buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries used awnings extensively to help cool the buildings in the era before air conditioning, often including upper level windows. Awnings continue to provide a cost-effective method to shade windows and conserve energy.
- Retractable awnings provide the necessary shading and cooling effects in the hot summer months, but can be retracted during the winter to allow the warming sun to penetrate to the building interiors.
- Awnings provide a unifying design element to enhance the downtown streetscape, and provide opportunities for colorful accents and signage.



Awning signage

Awning lighting

Retractable canvas awnings with valances

Individual awning structures relate to bays of building facade



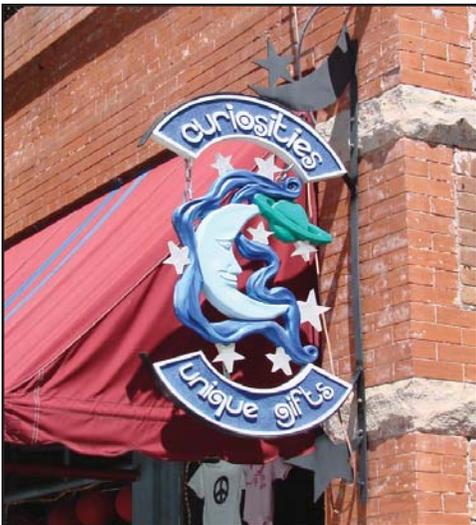
Discouraged

- Awnings are encouraged for all ground level commercial and retail buildings with storefront display windows, particularly on east, south and west facing facades. They are generally not needed for north facing facades.
- Awnings should be designed to complement the building's architecture. They should fit within the limits of the building's window openings without overlapping adjacent materials. If facades are composed of multiple bays, the awnings should be individual units that respond to these bays, fitted between the pilasters or columns.
- Awnings should be retractable for historic authenticity and to take full advantage of shading in the summer and sun in the winter.
- Awnings should be designed in a simple, single slope profile, with or without a valance. Modern barrel or domed shapes are discouraged.
- Use canvas or other natural fabrics for awnings, in muted colors.
- Color and striping patterns on awnings should complement the architecture of the building, not be used as a sign to draw attention to the building.

Bracket mounted signage is preferred

Bracket mounted signage projecting from walls is an effective, historically-sensitive method to provide building signage for historic downtowns.

- Projecting, bracket mounted signs are more pedestrian in scale, typically mounted on pilasters or walls at a height closer to the sidewalk.
- Projecting, bracket mounted signs are oriented perpendicular to the movement of pedestrians along the sidewalk, a more appropriate and sensitive solution than larger, flush mounted signs oriented to the automobile.
- Projecting, bracket mounted signs can help illustrate the history of the downtown, retaining historical signs and features such as neon and edge lamps appropriate to their period.



- Use projecting, bracket mounted signage where possible. Signs should be affixed to, or hung from, brackets such that the bottom of the sign is at least 12'-0" above the sidewalk. Signs should not be mounted higher than ___' above the sidewalk, or project above the roof or parapet.
- Historical signs should be retained and preserved, including neon and other details.
- Sign sizes, styles and mounting heights should be consistent and complementary in order to unify the streetscape.
- Modern signage designs are permitted, provided the designs are compatible with the historic building.
- Signs can be externally illuminated with small floodlights or similar fixtures, provided the lighting is directed back toward the sign and does not cause glare onto the street or sidewalk.
- Modern internally-lighted cabinet style signs are discouraged.

Flush wall signage is allowed

Flush wall mounted signage can also be an effective, historically-sensitive method to provide building signage for historic downtowns. Sign placement, sizes and mounting heights are critical in ensuring the compatibility of this type of signage with the downtown streetscape.

- Small, flush mounted signs should be pedestrian in scale, oriented to pedestrians along the sidewalk instead of to the automobile on the street.
- Wall mounted directory signage can be used to identify tenants on upper floors, or in larger, multi-tenant buildings.



- Use flush wall signage where bracket mounted signage is not possible. Signs should be mounted at least 12'-0" above the sidewalk, but no higher than ___'.
- Historical signs should be retained and preserved.
- Sign sizes, styles and mounting heights should be consistent and complementary in order to unify the streetscape.
- Signs can be externally illuminated with small floodlights or similar fixtures, provided the light is directed back toward the sign and does not cause glare onto the street or sidewalk.
- Modern signage designs are acceptable, provided the designs are compatible with the historic building.
- Modern internally-lighted cabinet style signs are discouraged.

Encourage awning and window signage

Awning and window signage is the oldest and most historically accurate form of signage for historic downtown districts.

- Both window signage and awning valance signage is pedestrian in scale and easily relates information to the visitor along the sidewalk.



- Signage on awnings is permitted, either on the sloped body of the awning or on the valance. Valance signage is preferred for its more appropriate scale.
- Window signage is encouraged in conjunction with complementary wall or bracket mounted signs.
- Colors and styles for awning signs should be complementary to the awning fabrics.
- Awning signage should not be back lighted.
- Window signage should be in scale with the window area, not obstructing the view to the interior of the business.

Introduce facade lighting

Appropriate lighting on building facades can highlight the materials and historic character of the building and accent distinctive architectural features, while enhancing public safety.

- Subtle facade lighting enhances the character and ambiance of the historic downtown.
- Facade lighting can be used to supplement street lighting for improved pedestrian safety.
- Facade lighting can be used as lighting for wall mounted signage.



- Subtle wall-washing facade lighting is permitted. Fixtures should be downward directed, with emphasis placed on the street level areas of the facade where the lighting will enhance pedestrian safety.
- Retain and preserve historic facade light fixtures.
- Fixture styles, finishes and light source should be compatible with the scale and materials of the historic building facade, and complementary to awnings, signage and other features.
- Use of modern light fixtures is permitted, provided the placement and design is compatible with the historic building.

Preserving the character of residential streetscapes is important to the community

Rutherford street is a residential street of well-maintained homes one block west of Parish Avenue, which has seen some buildings converted from residential to business uses. It should be anticipated that this trend will continue along S.H. 60 and south along Parish Avenue. Design guidelines are important to maintain the character and charm of this area.

- The residential character of these streetscapes should be maintained, while allowing the adaptive reuse of houses into contemporary business uses.

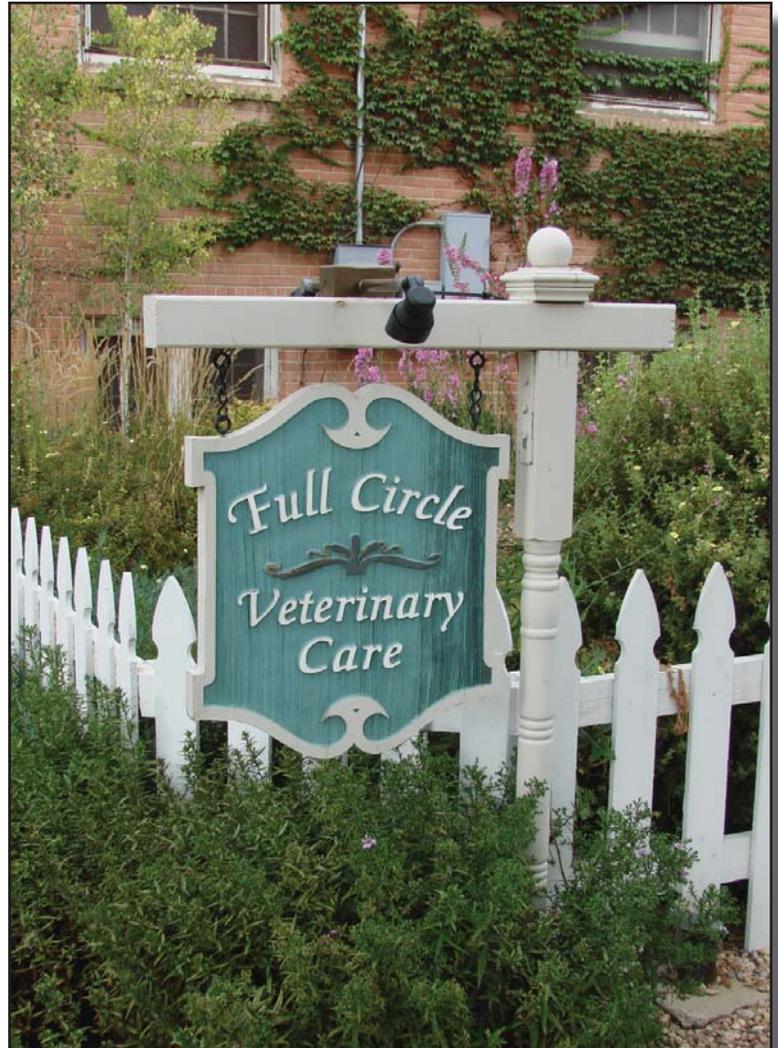


- Maintain the residential character of the streetscape by enforcing the existing front yard setbacks, and retaining the current streetscape of detached sidewalks, turf covered tree lawns and street trees.
- Demolition of, or major alterations to, historic houses is discouraged. Retain historic houses and other outbuildings, but allow a sensitive conversion to commercial uses.
- Retain the diversity of architectural styles.
- Continue use of decorative fences to enclose the front lawn areas.
- Parking should be provided off of the alley, and not in rear or side yards.

Encourage appropriate residential signage

As traditionally residential properties in the historic downtown area convert to commercial, signage for business needs to be provided in a manner that maintains the integrity of the neighborhood.

- Signage should not detract from the character of the neighborhood
- Signage in these areas should be of a type and size to complement the house and property.



- Signage in residential neighborhoods should be relatively small in size and low in profile, in order to maintain the residential scale of the streetscape. Signs should not exceed 4'-0" in height.
- Signage should be residential in character, using low gate-type or post mounted signs.
- Materials and colors used for signage should be compatible with the house or building that they are associated with.
- More modern sign designs and materials are permitted, if other design criteria is met.
- Signs can be externally illuminated with small floodlights or similar fixtures, provided the lighting is directed back toward the sign and does not cause glare onto the street or sidewalk.
- Modern internally-lighted cabinet style signs are allowed for properties fronting S.H. 60.

Provide accessibility to historic buildings in a sensitive way

As historical buildings are restored or adaptively rehabilitated for use as commercial or office uses, handicapped accessibility to the public will be required. This is particularly the case for historic houses, which were typically constructed with main level floors raised several feet above the adjoining grade.

- Handicapped access should be sensitively designed to protect the historic appearance of the front or street facing building facades.



Discouraged

- Handicapped access is required to the main level of all historic buildings or houses adaptively converted to commercial or public use, but is not required to be to the front door. Access to existing or new side or rear entrances is permitted if it is not an unreasonable distance from public sidewalks or parking areas.
- Handicapped accessible ramps or lifts should be sited on the side or rear of the building, so as not to adversely impact the historic front or street facing facades.

- Construction of handicapped accessible ramps leading from the public sidewalk to the front porch or entry to an historic building is discouraged.
- Ramps should be designed in a style that is compatible with the building, using materials that complement its primary building materials and details.

Encourage a mix of uses

Several areas adjacent to Johnstown's historic downtown, particularly to the east and along S.H. 60, are underdeveloped and excellent candidates for redevelopment. It seems appropriate that these areas develop at a more urban density, with buildings fronting the streets and parking organized to the rear.

- A more intense pattern of development in these transition areas will provide the historic downtown with an enlarged population of customers, visitors and residents.
- New development in these areas should encourage mixed-use, blending residential housing with traditional commercial and retail businesses and providing downtown live/work opportunities.
- New development should support the pattern of historical development of downtown Johnstown, one- and two-story buildings organized in traditional block faces, with buildings fronting tree-lined streets.

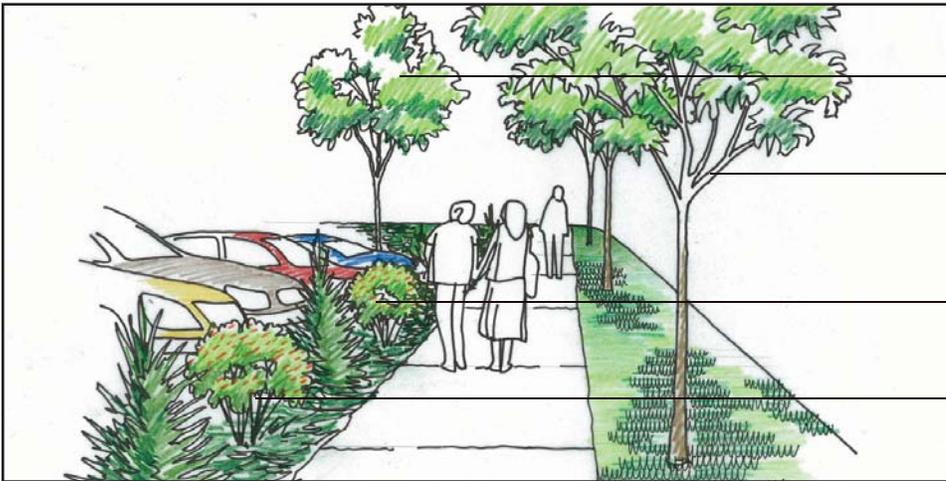


- Infill development within the transitional areas between the Parish Avenue historic downtown and residential areas to the east and south should be more ‘urban’ that ‘suburban’ in character, with new buildings constructed to the sidewalks instead of set back with large lawn areas.
- Design guidelines for building scale, massing, facade treatments, materials and details are similar to those recommended within the historic downtown area.

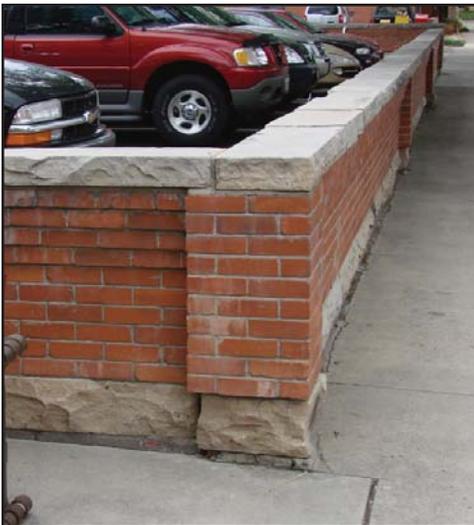
Screen surface parking from public view

The availability of adequate and convenient parking is an essential component to a healthy and vibrant downtown. Surface parking in or near the historic downtown is the most reasonable and cost-effective solution to supplement on-street parking for communities the size of Johnstown.

- Surface parking lots adjacent to historic downtown business districts are essential to the area's economic health.
- The appearance of downtown parking areas should enhance and contribute to the character of the historic buildings and streetscape, using landscaping and walls constructed of high quality materials to screen the parking from sidewalks and other public areas.



- Trees for interior parking lot shading
- Canopy street trees in tree lawn
- Low shrubs to screen parking lot - minimum 24" high
- Use deciduous and coniferous plantings for year round screening



- Screen surface parking areas within the historic downtown.
- Landscaping and / or low screen walls should be used to separate the parking from adjacent sidewalks and other public areas.
- Screen walls should be constructed of brick and stone masonry, stucco and other materials compatible with the adjacent historic buildings.