
City of Modesto 

Design Guidelines for Commercial & Industrial Development

Adopted September 12, 2006



Prepared by:

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Resolution of Adoption



**MODESTO CITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION NO. 2006-587**

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTING STAFF TO BEGIN A WORK PROGRAM TO IMPLEMENT THE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTING STAFF TO ANNUALLY REVIEW AND UPDATE THE DESIGN GUIDELINES AS NEEDED, AND DIRECTING STAFF TO PROVIDE QUARTERLY REPORTS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING PROJECTS BEING CONSIDERED UNDER THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

WHEREAS, the City is experiencing a substantial increase in requests for non-residential development resulting in concerns that new development should have some guidance to meet acceptable design standards, and Strategy V.A.4, which promotes the creation of walkable communities, and

WHEREAS, the 2001-2004 Strategic Plan, adopted October 23, 2001, includes Strategy V.A.5, which promotes the fostering of distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, and

WHEREAS, Action V.A.5.a of the 2001-2004 Strategic Plan, which promotes the establishment of aesthetic criteria for evaluation of projects, supports Strategy V.A.5 of the Strategic Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Urban Area General Plan provides that, “. . . The Urban Area General Plan presents a blueprint for the preservation of Modesto’s ‘quality of life’ while providing direction for the growth of business and industry to meet the needs of the future generations . . .”, which supports the concept of Design Guidelines, and

WHEREAS, Title 10 of the Modesto Municipal Code establishes regulations for the use of land and buildings for the public health, safety and general welfare and to

provide the physical, economic and social advantages resulting from an orderly, planned use of land resources, and

WHEREAS, the proposed "Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development" for commercial and industrial development in order to:

- A. Help keep Modesto architecturally distinctive and not allow it to become "anywhere USA"
 1. Maintain a high quality of craftsmanship in development through use of building styles, design elements, and materials that are found in the architectural vernacular of Modesto.
 2. Integrate local cultural and historical themes into building and site design where appropriate.
 3. Enhance and bring greater attention to gateways and key corridors to enhance the overall city image, beautify its entrances, visual corridors, and vistas to attract visitors and improve the overall experience for citizens.
 4. Design for surrounding context and scale of urban form and land uses.
 5. Require design excellence for infill and redevelopment sites.
 6. Minimize the use of "stock" plans and design in corporate and franchise architecture.
 7. Integrate public squares, public space and art that respond to local cultural and historical themes in development.
- B. Design for the pedestrian scale in appropriate areas.
 1. Encourage pedestrian oriented buildings and site planning in commercial development.
 2. Incorporate design elements that respond to, and take advantage of environmental conditions such as wind, sun, shade, et cetera, to improve the pedestrian experience, and that will provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience.
 3. Encourage an appropriate scale of building height to street width in commercial areas and minimize parking between buildings and the street.
 4. Respect the natural environment by protecting natural resources and integrating the natural environment and open space into building and site planning, wherever possible.
 5. Continue and improve streetscape landscaping
 6. Control outdoor lighting to provide necessary security, but not create spillage onto adjacent properties or interfere with views of night skies, and

- C. Assist in guiding the style and appearance of future development by giving potential developers a very good idea of what style of development is acceptable and desirable to the City.
- D. Providing a comprehensive set of guidelines early in the development process regarding City development expectations for builders, investors and residents so the “rules” are known up front. This will allow expedited City review of development proposals.
- E. Ensuring new development is consistent and compatible with the design and character of existing neighborhoods.
- F. Providing flexibility to encourage distinctive design themes in various areas of the community.

WHEREAS, the proposed “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development” is intended to be implemented in all commercial and industrial zones; and

WHEREAS, public workshops were held by the Planning Commission on July 6, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. and July 27, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in Room B300, Tenth Street Place, 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto, California, at which time public comments were received and considered, and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on August 21, 2006, at 7:00 p.m., in the, Tenth Street Place Chambers, located at 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto, California, at which time and place comments were received and evidence, both oral and documentary, was received and considered, and

WHEREAS, at said meeting, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council adopt the “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development” and to direct staff to begin a work program for implementation, and

WHEREAS, at said meeting, the Planning Commission further unanimously voted to add to the original recommendation that said “Design Guidelines for

Commercial and Industrial Development” be reviewed and updated, as needed to ensure they reflect the City’s vision for itself, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission desires to be informed about design review on a continuing basis and desires that staff prepare and present a list of projects being considered under the “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development” on a quarterly basis, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the City Council of the City of Modesto on September 12, 2006, at 5:30 p.m. in the Tenth Street Place Chambers, located at 1010 Tenth Street, Modesto, California, at which time and place comments were received and evidence both oral and documentary was received and considered, and

WHEREAS, “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development” is a policy document and therefore is not a project pursuant to Section 15378(b)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Modesto that it hereby adopts the “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development,” a copy of which is on file with the City Clerk’s office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City staff is hereby directed to (1) begin a work program for Implementation Option C, which would amend all commercial and industrial zones to require staff review of site plans and elevations for all commercial and industrial development, (2) annually review the Design Guidelines and update the Design Guidelines as needed, and (3) provide a list of projects being considered under the “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Development,” on a quarterly basis.

The foregoing resolution was introduced at the regular meeting of the Council of the City of Modesto held on the 12th day of September, 2006, by Councilmember Olsen, who moved its adoption, which motion being duly seconded by Councilmember Marsh was upon roll call carried and the resolution adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers: Dunbar, Hawn, Marsh, O'Bryant, Olsen,
Mayor Ridenour


Noes: Councilmembers: Keating

Absent: Councilmembers: None

ATTEST: Jean Morris
JEAN MORRIS, City Clerk

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By: 
SUSANA ALCALA WOOD, City Attorney

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 - PURPOSE

These design guidelines are intended to inform project designers, decision makers and the public of the City's expectations and preferences for the qualities to be incorporated in the design of new commercial and industrial development. The effective application of these guidelines is intended to result in development projects that respond to the unique characteristics of their individual sites, but that also fit into the wider context of the City.

These guidelines have been prepared because Modesto has become a city with a physical character and identity that is distinct, attractive, and widely appreciated by residents and visitors. At the same time, changes in the nature of business, marketing and the overall economy beyond our community have created pressures for types and styles of commercial and industrial development that have, without strong local guidance, made many other communities lose their distinctiveness and look and feel like everywhere else, and nowhere in particular. Modesto intends to maintain and enhance the character of commercial and industrial districts with attractive and pedestrian-oriented development, and functional and well-designed industrial parks that serve to attract stable, well paying jobs to the City and region.

In addition to assisting project designers and developers, these guidelines are considered by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the Planning Commission and City Council when considering discretionary approvals prescribed by the City's Zoning Ordinance. Planning Staff, the Board, Commission and Council will use the guidelines to evaluate the suitability and appropriateness of individual project design, and as a basis for exploring changes to proposed projects to better satisfy the community's objectives for attractive and environmentally sensitive commercial and industrial development within the City and its sphere of influence. The details of how the design guidelines are applied are described on the following pages.



Figure 1 -- McHenry Museum, I and 14th Streets



Figure 2 -- United States Post Office, I and 12th Streets





Figure 3 -- Sol P. Elias house, 1015 14th Street



Figure 4 -- 4120 Dale Road

1.2 - APPLICABILITY

Design issues are considered concurrently with the review of the entitlements that may be required for a given development project. In general, City staff, Board of Zoning Adjustment or Planning Commission review is required for all new and remodeled public and private commercial and industrial projects.

These guidelines are intended to inform the design of new commercial and industrial development and provide a greater measure of certainty to the design review process by stating the City's expectations for development in the City and its sphere of influence. Accordingly, they differ from standards which are mandatory requirements contained in plans and regulations such as the City's Municipal Code, Redevelopment Master Plan and individual specific plans. These guidelines are intended to supplement and compliment these regulations. Conversely, where design issues are specifically addressed by another plan or regulation, these guidelines will be applied. When conflicts arise between the recommendations of these guidelines and the requirements of adopted plans and regulations, the latter will prevail.

Design will occur in conjunction with the discretionary review of projects for all structures and physical improvements to commercial and industrial buildings that may significantly affect the aesthetic qualities of a site and as required by applicable provisions of the Zoning Code or specific plan. The definition of "significant" is somewhat subjective, but will be determined on a case by case basis within the context of the purpose and intent of these guidelines. Conversely, some types of changes to properties are considered "aesthetically insignificant". Design review exceptions include:

- A. Aesthetically insignificant projects.** The Community and Economic Development Director (hereafter "Director") or his/her designee may determine that a new small structure, or a change or addition to an existing building or other site feature, has no potential for conflict with the objectives of design review due to its size, location, form, materials or colors. In these cases, a separate application or fee are not required, and the plans may be stamped by the Planning Division and submitted to the Building Division for review.



- B. Minor or incidental projects.** The Director or his/her designee may determine that a project, such as a sign, building addition or remodel, or a new small building is minor or incidental to a larger, previously approved project. Plans for projects which an applicant believes are minor or incidental are submitted for staff review, along with an application and fee. The Director will decide if the project is required to be reviewed by the Board or Commission. The Director's action may be appealed to the Planning Commission.
- C. Demolitions.** A request to demolish a structure listed on the Inventory of Historical Resources may be subject to review and consideration by the Landmarks Commission and Planning Commission. If the Director determines that the structure to be demolished has historical, architectural or aesthetic significance, he/she will direct the applicant to submit plans for each proposed replacement structure to the staff, Board or Commission for approval prior to demolition. If determined not significant, the process for demolition proceeds through the Building Division without design consideration.



Figure 5 -- The Pacific Center, 1012 11th Street

1.3 - USE OF THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

These design guidelines will be used by City staff, Board of Zoning Adjustment, and the Planning Commission in the review of projects (additions, remodeling, relocation, or new construction) that require plan review in accordance with relevant provisions of the Modesto Zoning Ordinance. The application requirements and related forms are available online at the Community and Economic Development Department's web site: <http://www.ci.modestogov.com/ced/documents/>.

The purpose of plan review is to consider building design, site planning, landscaping, parking layout, signs, and other features that affect a project's function and appearance. In examining these project features, the plan review process looks at the way a project relates to the site, the surrounding neighborhood, and the community as a whole, taking into account issues such as emergency access.





Figure 6 -- 10th Street Plaza

Plan review is intended to help achieve a project that strikes a balance between the sometimes-competing interests of the applicant and the City. The City generally does not dictate particular styles of architecture or design; an exception may be development associated with an historic area or structure. Instead, the City strives to encourage creativity and architectural variety, while advocating new development that is comparable in scale and fits in with its setting and surroundings. Thus, the primary goals of the design review process are to:

- Maintain and enhance the community's quality of life for residents;
- Maintain property values;
- Attract growth in the local economy; and
- Preserve and enhance the City's natural beauty and visual character.

In addition, these Guidelines have been formulated to achieve the objectives of relevant policies of the Urban Area General Plan and other objectives adopted by the City. For example:

Modesto Municipal Code 10.2-2328 Design Review Guidelines. In reviewing any proposed development, the Board, Commission, Council or Director may utilize design review guidelines as may be adopted from time to time by the Board, Commission or Council.

Business Park designation (UAGP page III-4), Purpose and Intent:

To provide for areas of light industrial and employment-intensive uses, and to produce an environment conducive to industries and employers seeking an aesthetically attractive "campus-like" setting.

2001-2004 Strategic Plan, Strategy V.A.5: Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.

2001-2004 Strategic Plan, Action V.A.5.a: Establish aesthetic criteria for evaluation of projects.

Where deemed necessary by the decision-making body to achieve the objectives described above, these Guidelines may be used to modify the minimum and maximum standards for development provided in the City's Municipal Code.



The graphics included in these guidelines are intended to be illustrative, not prescriptive. However, in some instances the Guidelines provide more precise guidance such as a recommended height or width for a particular design element. These are recommended to help further the overall design objectives for commercial and industrial development discussed above.

1.4 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are five important parties who play a role in and have responsibilities in the design review process. They include: property and business owners, design professionals, City staff, Decision Makers, and the public.

- A. **Property and business owners** initiate the design review process when they propose new development on their property. They work with design professionals to design their projects, and they work with Staff, the Board and Commission to refine and consider their projects. They have several responsibilities including financial responsibilities for processing and development of their property. They also have a responsibility to consider the quality of their project design and how it will affect their property value and the property values of surrounding development. They need to consider how their project supports, enhances and/or fits in with existing development in Modesto and the City's overall desired image. The effects of their project on potential impacts to environmental, historical, and aesthetic resources should also be considered.
- B. **Design professionals** including architects, landscape architects, engineers, planners, etc. have a responsibility to design quality projects that respond to the sites' surroundings and the City as a whole, so that their project will be a positive addition to the community.
- C. **Staff of the Community and Economic Development Department** help applicants and designers in the appropriate application and interpretation of the guidelines, and make recommendations to decision-makers.
- D. **Decision Makers** include the Board of Zoning Adjustments and the Planning Commission and City Council. The Board of Zoning Adjustments is a panel of citizens appointed by the City Council to review and decide on



Figure 7 -- Husland house, 915 17th Street



Figure 8 -- Scenic Oaks





Figure 9 -- O'Brien's Market, 4120 Dale Road



Figure 10 -- 200 B Roseburg Avenue

applications for development projects in the City. The Planning Commission is likewise a panel of appointed citizens whose responsibilities emphasize policy recommendations to the City Council, but who are also charged with the responsibility for deciding certain types of land use entitlements.

- E. **The Public** is to be a sounding board with regard to new development by participating in the plan review process so that decision-makers remain in touch with the preferences of Modesto citizens.

1.5 - THE DESIGN CONTEXT FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City's expectations for design quality and character are shaped by the nature of Modesto and its setting. Consideration of this "context" in the design and development process is vital in achieving and maintaining the physical environment the community wants.

Modesto lies in the heart of a fertile agricultural region in the San Joaquin Valley. The Diablo Range provides a scenic backdrop to the west. In addition, both Dry Creek and the Tuolumne River flow through Modesto. Although the pace of development in Modesto is changing, residents are mindful of protecting its historic character and remembering its agricultural heritage. Modesto is also a city of trees. The rich alluvial soils of the San Joaquin Valley and abundant sunshine create ideal growing conditions for trees of almost every variety. Whether along a quiet residential street or a busy commercial district, trees have a unifying quality that is both comforting and attractive.

Modesto's remaining buildings from the era of settlement (1870 to the 1930s) are few, and reflect Spanish revival and Italianate influences with brick, plaster, and terracotta exteriors and fine details around doors and windows. These buildings impart a unique charm that is both functional and durable – qualities valued by the farmers who settled the area. Thus, no single style characterizes local commercial or industrial architecture. Although it is not the intent of the design guidelines to require any particular architectural style in new construction, it is important that proposed development be designed to be compatible with its surroundings. Therefore, an understanding of the architectural styles found locally can be helpful in considering design alternatives. Photographs of commercial and industrial buildings can be found in *Modesto: Images of Yesterday, Images of Today*, by Robert Gauvreau, and at the McHenry Museum.



1.6 – HOW THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES WERE PREPARED

To help prepare these Design Guidelines, the City retained the help of a consultant who worked closely with staff of the Community and Economic Development Department and Planning Commission. For the Design Guidelines to effectively capture the community’s ‘vision’ for new development, it was essential that the consultants gain a better understanding of the issues facing commercial and industrial development in Modesto by visiting the City’s commercial and industrial districts, discussing these issues with City staff and reviewing previous and ongoing efforts to address the issue of commercial and industrial design. This input helped shape the public review draft Guidelines that were considered by both the Planning Commission and the City Council at a series of public hearings.

1.7 – OVERALL GOALS FOR THE QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

How the built environment appears in relation to the surrounding landscape, and the quality of building and site design are key to continuing and advancing the goals of economic vitality and job growth in Modesto. To achieve these goals, the following objectives have been developed to assist designers and developers in understanding the City’s preferences for design quality in commercial and industrial development.

All commercial and industrial development should be designed to accomplish the following:

- A. Help keep Modesto architecturally distinctive; don’t let it become “anywhere USA.”
 1. Maintain a high quality of craftsmanship in development through use of building styles, design elements, and materials that are found in the architectural vernacular of Modesto.
 2. Integrate local cultural and historical themes into building and site design where appropriate.



Figure 11 -- 1020 15th Street



Figure 12 -- Comp USA, 3900 Sisk Road





Figure 13 -- 205 W. Granger Avenue

3. Enhance and bring greater attention to gateways and key corridors to enhance the overall city image, beautify its entrances, visual corridors, and vistas to attract visitors and improve the overall experience for citizens.
 4. Design for surrounding context and scale of urban form and land uses.
 5. Require design excellence for infill and redevelopment sites.
 6. Minimize the use of “stock” plans and design in corporate and franchise architecture.
 7. Integrate public squares, public space and art that respond to local cultural and historical themes in development.
- B. Design for the pedestrian scale in appropriate areas.
1. Encourage pedestrian oriented buildings and site planning in commercial development.
 2. Incorporate design elements that respond to, and take advantage of, environmental conditions such as wind, sun, shade, etc. to improve the pedestrian experience, and provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience.
 3. Encourage an appropriate scale of building height to street width in commercial areas. Minimize parking between buildings and the street.
 4. Respect the natural environment by protecting natural resources and integrating the natural environment and open space into building and site planning, wherever possible.
 5. Continue and improve streetscape landscaping.



6. Control outdoor lighting to provide necessary security, but not create spillage onto adjacent properties or interfere with views of night skies.



Figure 14 -- 1020 10th Street



CHAPTER II

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The form and scale of commercial development is shaped by the diverse nature of our modern economy and the manner in which consumers choose to move about, shop, work, and recreate. Each in turn influences how goods and services are produced and marketed. Accordingly, the guidelines for commercial development are organized into the following categories:

- General Principles of Design Applicable to All Commercial Development
- Large-Scale Retail Centers
- Stand-Alone/Infill Development
- Downtown and Other Pedestrian-Oriented Areas
- Guidelines for Specific Uses



Figure 15 -- Baja Fresh on Palendale Road



Figure 16 -- 1024 J Street



2.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN APPLICABLE TO ALL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Although commercial development covers a wide range of uses and settings, there are certain qualities common to each that should be expressed in the design regardless of its intended user or location within the City. The following guidelines should be applied to all new commercial development.

- A. Neighborhood compatibility.** In designing a commercial project for a given site, it is important to analyze the areas surrounding the building site to find elements of compatibility that can be used in a new design. While a certain degree of variety is desirable and encouraged, compatibility with the neighborhood should be considered.
- 1. Design.** Design factors that contribute to neighborhood compatibility include:
- a. Appropriate design theme;
 - b. Proportional building scale/size;
 - c. Appropriate building setbacks (if any) and massing;
 - d. Appropriate colors, textures, and building materials;
 - e. Adequate building articulation; and
 - f. Attention to form and function.
- B. Consistency of design.** Designs should demonstrate a consistent use of colors, materials, and detailing throughout all elevations of the building. Elevations which do not directly face a street should not be ignored or receive only minimal architectural treatment. Each building should look like the same building from all sides.



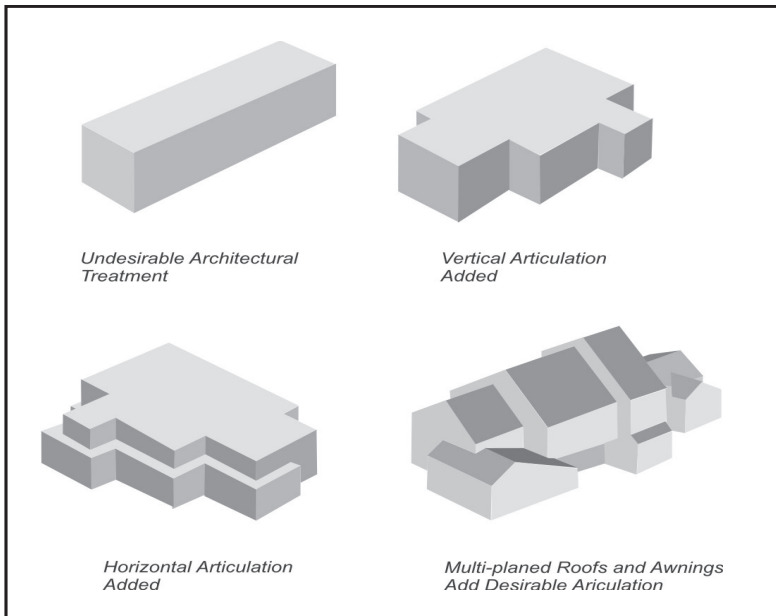


Figure 17 - Break up the apparent mass of buildings with vertical and horizontal articulation

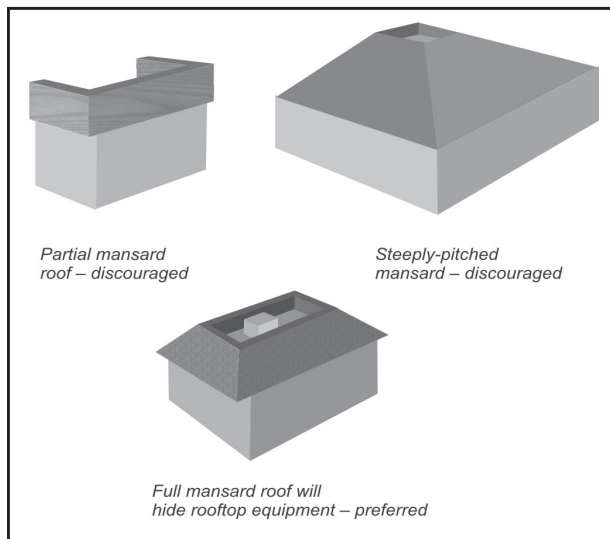


Figure 18 -- Desirable and discouraged mansard roofs

C. Form and mass. A building's design should provide a sense of human scale and proportion. Horizontal and vertical wall articulation should be expressed through the use of wall offsets, recessed windows and entries, awnings, full roofs with overhangs, second floor setbacks, or covered arcades. (Figure 17)

D. Roofline. Roof design contributes strongly to the image of a structure as having quality and permanence.

1. A structure with a pitched roof, or pitched roofs over key building elements can sometimes project a more small-town image and reinforce the pedestrian orientation that is encouraged in many parts of Modesto. Structures with flat roofs and parapets can be appropriate, particularly in the downtown, but with particular special attention to the wall-to-parapet juncture, and to cornice details (Figures 19 and 20).
2. Pitched roofs may be gable, hip, or shed-style, but should either be full pitched or should appear so from the street. Any flat portions (i.e., equipment wells) should be relatively small and rooftop equipment should not be visible from streets or other public areas. On larger structures, pitched roofs should be multi-planed to avoid large, monotonous expanses.
3. Flat roofs are appropriate for larger commercial structures when it is determined that a project's overall design is amenable to flat roofs and is otherwise consistent with the objectives of these guidelines. When flat roofs are used, there should be a continuous screening parapet topped with coping, or a cornice. Mansards should be used only to the extent that they maintain the same roof pitch as surrounding structures and are both high and deep enough to create the illusion of being a true roof. Steeply-pitched mansard roofs are discouraged. (Figure 18)



- E. Parapets.** Parapet walls should be treated as an integral part of the building design, with architectural detailing consistent with the rest of the façade, and should not appear as unrelated elements intended only to screen the roof behind them. (Figures 19 and 20)

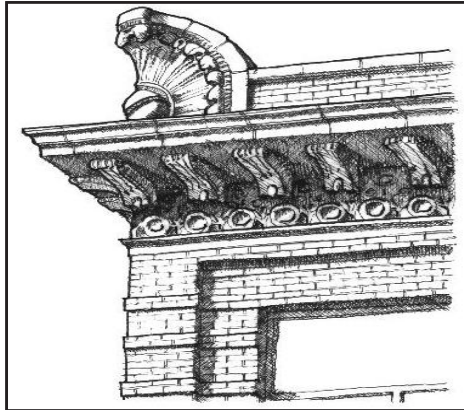


Figure 19 -- Parapet detailing adds visual interest to roofline



Figure 20 -- Parapet detailing of the McHenry Museum

- F. Entries.** Building entries should face the street and should be important and obvious elements in the design of a façade. (Figure 21)

1. Each entry should be protected from the elements and should create an architectural focal point for the building.
2. Wall recesses, roof overhangs, canopies, arches, columns, signs, and similar architectural features should be integral elements of the building's entry design, and used to call attention to its importance.
3. Entries should incorporate windows to provide natural light and air, and to invite patrons.
4. Where appropriate, entries should incorporate seating, public art, lighting and areas to gather.

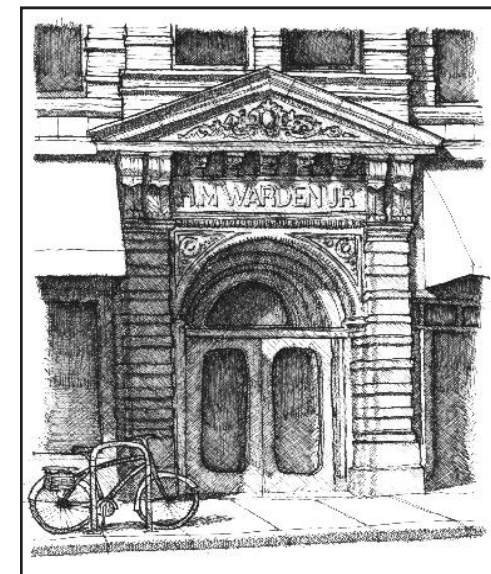


Figure 21 -- The entry should be inviting and clearly defined.



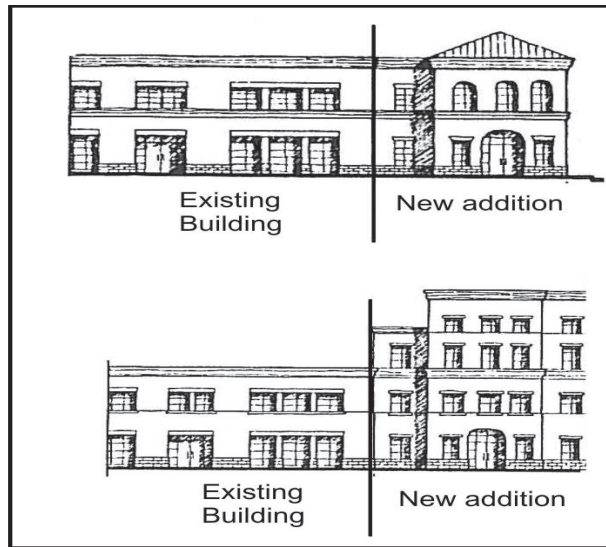


Figure 22 -- Additions to buildings should continue the form and character of the existing structure. Note the consistent form and spacing of windows and doors.



Figure 23

G. Additions to existing structures. The design of a building addition should follow the same general scale, proportion, massing, and detailing of the original structure, and not be in stark contrast to the original structure. Elements that help incorporate the main characteristics of the existing structure may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing structure to the addition; repetition of bay, window, and entrance spacing and cornice details; roof design and ground-level details; use of the same or complimentary colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar architectural details (such as window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration). (Figure 22)

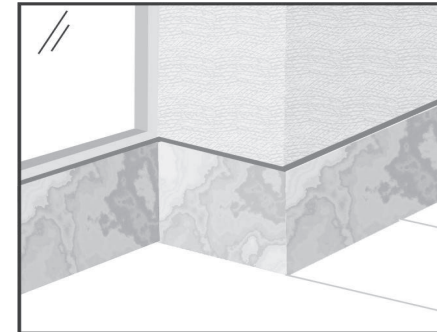
H. Materials and colors. Colors and building materials should complement the form and massing of a building and reinforce a sense of compatibility with the neighborhood or district.

1. Building Materials. Building materials should be carefully chosen to enhance the consistency of the architectural theme and design.

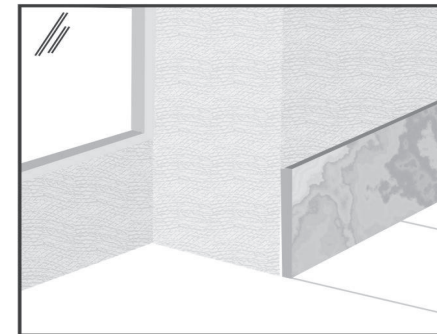
a. Materials should be used honestly. Artificial or decorative façade treatments, where one or more unrelated materials appear “stuck-on” to a building (such as artificial columns or posts), should be avoided. While authentic materials such as brick, stone, and wood are preferred, artificial products that effectively imitate real materials may be appropriate in limited situations. If artificial stone-like materials are used, they should look like local natural materials (for example, river rock, serpentine stone, etc.).

b. Exterior finish materials should be chosen and applied so that they do not appear “thin” and otherwise artificial, as in the case of “brick” veneer applied to a single building face so that it is obviously only 3-inches thick when viewed from the side. Veneers should turn corners, avoiding exposed edges and continue down the side of a building to a logical break, such as a change in wall plane.

- c. Downspouts and drain pipes should preferably be placed within building walls. If they must be placed on a building exterior, they should be integrated with the architectural design, colors, and finish materials of the building.
2. **Colors.** The exterior colors of a building are as important as the materials in determining how people think about the building and its surroundings. Colors should be compatible with the existing colors of the surrounding area but need not duplicate existing colors.
- a. The use of muted tones for the structure's base color is recommended. Color should not be used as an attention getting device.
- b. Accent colors should be used thoughtfully and compliment the base color or a variation of its hue, either weaker or stronger.
- c. The transition between base and accent colors should relate to changes in building materials or the change of building surface planes. Colors should generally not meet or change without some physical change or definition to the surface plane. (Figure 24)



This



Not this

Figure 24 -- Materials changes at outside corners gives the appearance of thinness and should be avoided



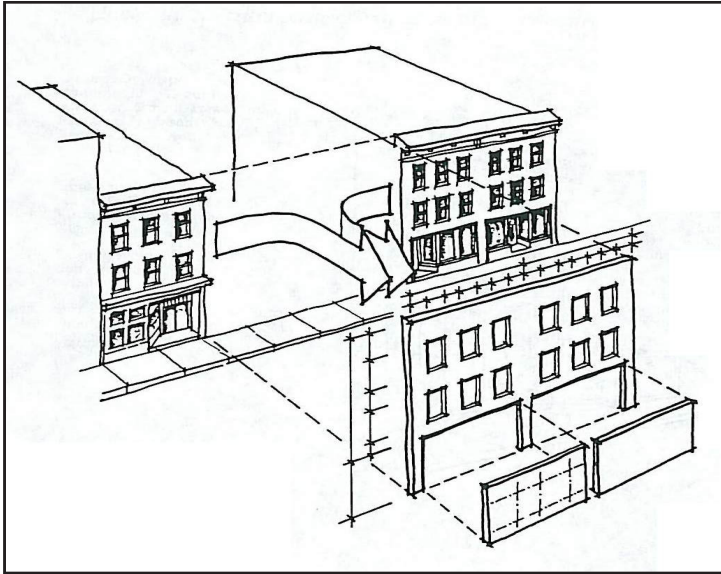


Figure 25 - Windows should maintain size and spacing of adjoining buildings



Figure 26 -- Window replacement should be consistent with adjoining buildings

I. **Windows.** Existing windows should be maintained, and not “walled-in” or darkened to provide more interior wall or storage space. Building street frontages where buildings are placed adjacent to the sidewalk should have windows comprising between 60 and 85 percent transparent (e.g., windows and doors).

1. Windows provided in new development should be consistent with the size and rhythm of spacing established on adjoining buildings. (Figure 25)

2. Window casings/frames should be constructed of durable materials that complement the form and character of the building. If aluminum is employed, it should be simple in design with a dark anodized or baked enamel finish. (Figure 26)

3. Ground floor windows should employ clear glass only, tempered to satisfy energy conservation requirements yet sufficiently transparent to afford views into the building. (Figure 27)
 4. Traditional mullions (true divided light windows) are preferred to muntins, which are short bars used to separate glass in a sash into multiple lights. Large windows without muntin or mullions are strongly discouraged. (Figure 27)
- J. Signs.** Every structure should be designed with specific consideration for adequate signing, including provisions for sign placement, sign scale in relation to building scale, and readability. However, building facades designed solely for the placement of signs is strongly discouraged. The colors, placement, and materials of all signs should be integrated with the architecture and façade details of the structure.

These guidelines are intended to supplement and compliment the City's sign regulations provided in Article 21 of the Modesto Municipal Code.

1. Examples of different types of allowable signs are provided in Figure 29.
2. The colors and materials of signs should complement the architectural style of the building.
3. The size of a wall sign should be in proportion to the scale of the wall to which it will be installed. Similarly, the size of a freestanding or monument sign should be scaled to its proposed location and compatible with surrounding signage.
4. Building signage should be located near the business entry.
5. Signing should be consistent in location and design throughout a development. The development of a signage program is highly recommended for projects with more than one business, including shopping centers, to encourage uniformity.



Figure 27 -- Ground floor display windows and "divided lights" above.



Figure 28 -- A sign consistent with the architectural character of the building



2.0 Design Guidelines for Commercial Development

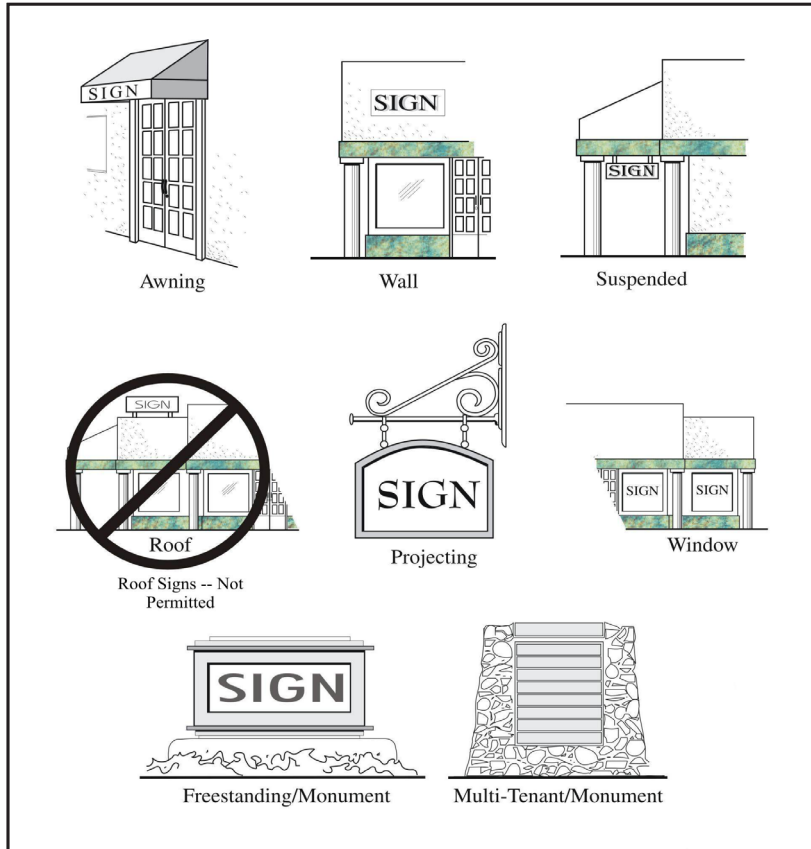


Figure 29 -- Types of Signs

- When more than one type of sign is used in a project, the styles of the signs should be consistent with one another so that the effect of the overall program is harmonious.
- Text should be kept to a minimum and designed for business identification, not advertising purposes. Location, size, materials and other features of a sign should be selected to achieve legibility.
- Wall signs, monument signs and low-profile freestanding signs are encouraged. Distinctive architectural features, planting, window displays and merchandise can often communicate some of the message and identity usually conveyed by traditional signage.



Figure 30 -- Wall signs should consist of individual letters compatible with the form and character of the building.



9. Monument and Freestanding Signs. The base of a monument sign or the poles supporting freestanding signs should be architecturally compatible with the architecture of site buildings and enclosed or clad in architecturally compatible materials. Freestanding pole signs are strongly discouraged. Sign faces of these types of signs should be sufficiently high to allow the placement of landscaping around the bases without obstructing sign visibility. (Figures 31 and 32)



Figure 31 -- Monument sign designed to complement the building architecture



Figure 32 -- Freestanding shopping center sign

10. Signage for pedestrians should be provided where necessary for orientation. Suspended and small projecting signs are good choices for business identification, particularly in the downtown. (Figure 33)
11. Illumination. Where permitted, lighting for signs should not create a hazardous glare for pedestrians or vehicles either in a public street or on any private premises. The light source should be shielded from view and excessive light spillage should be avoided. Indirect light source (e.g., 'goose neck' lights) are strongly encouraged in the downtown.



Figure 33 -- Pedestrian oriented sign



12. Lighting for externally illuminated signs should be indirect and utilize focused light fixtures that do not allow light or glare to shine above the horizontal plane of the top of the sign or onto any public right-of-way or adjoining property.
 13. Internal illumination. For internally illuminated signs, a dark background with lighter letters and graphics is generally preferable to the reverse. Raised lettering and graphics with halos or back lighting are also preferable to flat-faced signs with a light background and dark copy.
 14. Individual “channel” lettered signs are encouraged; “canister” type signs are discouraged.
- K. Site Planning.** The placement of buildings on a site and its relation to adjoining development, the street, pedestrian and vehicular access are important considerations in the design of development that complements its surroundings.
1. **Consider neighboring development.** Each development proposal should demonstrate consideration and modification of design as necessary for the existing conditions on and off the site including the following:
 - a. The uses on, and site layout of, neighboring properties;
 - b. The architectural style, shape and massing of neighboring structures;
 - c. Existing natural features (e.g., mature trees, landforms, etc.);
 - d. Opportunities to preserve or enhance views of Dry Creek and Tuolumne River Regional Park;
 - e. Privacy and solar access of the site and neighboring properties;



- f. Opportunities for new projects to provide physical links to adjacent development using sidewalks, and shared access drives and parking, whenever possible; and
- g. Opportunities for new projects to provide visual links to adjacent development in the form of similar landscaping, trees, etc., in addition to contextual architectural design as noted in b above.

2. Building and Parking Location. Buildings should generally be oriented parallel to streets and should be placed as close to the street as required setbacks and consistent building placement will permit. (Figure 34)

- a. Buildings may be angled to create interesting juxtapositions if there is a clear and desirable design goal to be achieved. However, the definition of the street edge is an important role for buildings and should be considered in project design. Variations from this guideline may occur for wider setbacks from the street if a pedestrian oriented use or activity area is proposed or needed (for example, outdoor dining or a rest area) or to maintain continuity with landscaped areas on adjacent properties.
- b. The orientation of buildings should respond to the pedestrian or vehicular nature of the street. Buildings with high pedestrian use should face and be directly accessible from the sidewalk.
- c. The City strongly encourages shared parking arrangements and reciprocal access where appropriate. Parking areas on adjoining parcels should be connected to allow continuous vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access. Pedestrian linkages between parcels and buildings should be located separately from vehicle connections where possible and, in all cases, clearly differentiated from vehicle ways.
- d. Scenic views and natural features around the site, and a site's location on a scenic route is strongly encouraged early in project design. For instance, the placement of buildings against Dry Creek and Tuolumne River Regional Park should not obscure

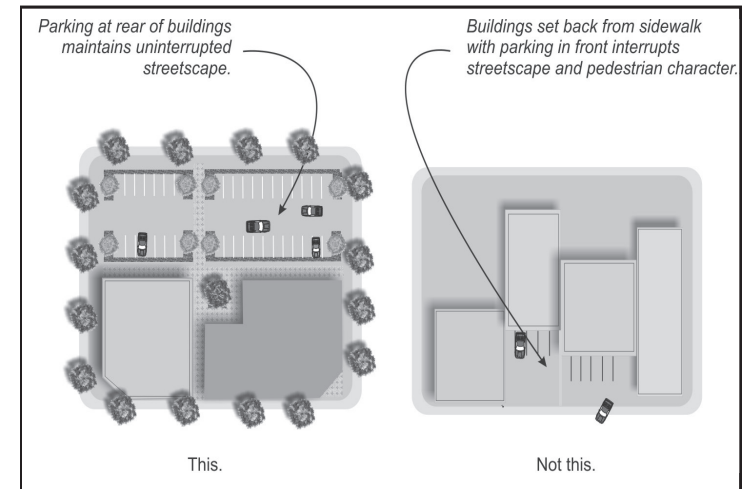
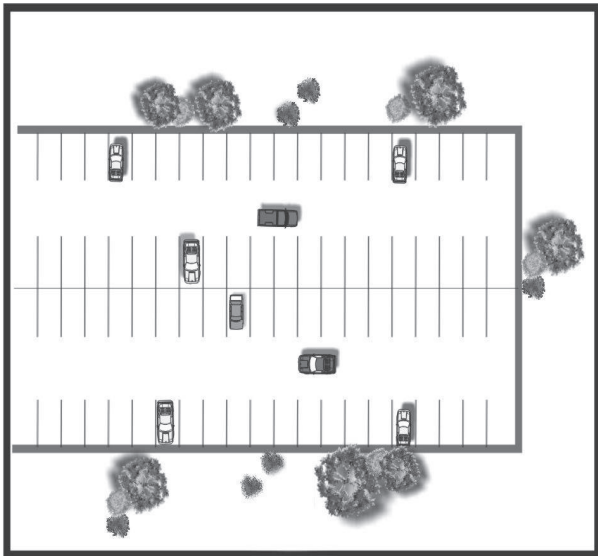


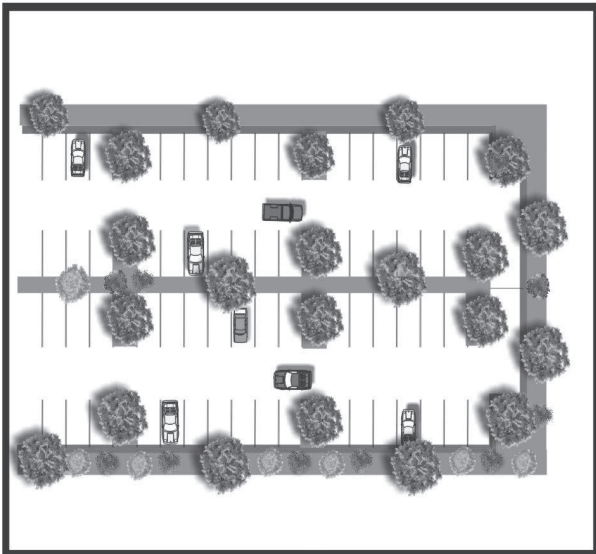
Figure 34 -- Parking placement should not interrupt the streetscape.



2.0 Design Guidelines for Commercial Development



Not This



This

Figure 35 -- Parking lot landscaping should break up the expanse of asphalt and provide safe pedestrian walkways.

views by being oversized, extremely tall, or use materials or colors to draw attention away from the natural environment. Access should be provided, as permitted, to trails and public space.

- e. Corner buildings should have a strong tie to the setback lines of each street. The primary mass of the building should not be placed at an angle to the corner. This does not preclude angled building corners, or an open plaza at a corner. The latter are strongly encouraged.
- f. The visual impact of parking lots should be minimized by locating these facilities to a portion of the site least visible from the street and by providing adequate screening, parking lot landscaping and setbacks. (Figure 35)
- g. Parking areas should be connected to building entrances by means of enhanced (patterned or stamped) paving.
- h. Handicapped access should be provided into the property from the nearest point of public transit.



- i. Loading facilities should not be located at the front of buildings where they will interfere with customer and employee traffic and be difficult to adequately screen. These facilities are usually more appropriate at the rear of buildings; however, loading areas should not look like an afterthought. They should be screened from street and off-site views to the maximum extent feasible, and should be architecturally integrated with the design of the building. Special attention should be given when designing loading facilities in a rear location adjacent to residential uses. Techniques such as block walls, enhanced building setbacks with landscaping, or fully enclosed loading areas and careful attention to the location and shielding of lighting and equipment (i.e., trash compactors, generators, etc.) can help minimize adverse impacts to residents. It is sometimes preferable to require that tenant spaces within a commercial project receive and ship products through the “front door,” rather than subject adjacent residential uses to the noise and night time glare associated with actual loading facilities. (Figure 36)



Figure 36 -- Loading areas should be integrated with the design of the building





Figure 37 -- Landscaping and seating provide for an inviting focal point and a place to gather and relax



Figure 38 -- Parking lot landscaping should shade parking areas and help break up the hardscape

L. Landscaping. Landscaped areas should be planned as an integral part of the overall project and not simply located in “left over” areas of the site.

1. Landscaping should be used to help define outdoor spaces, soften and complement a structure’s appearance, and to screen parking, loading, storage, and equipment areas. Landscaping should also be employed for its utilitarian qualities, such as the provision of shade, its ability to enhance the aesthetic appeal of a street, district or commercial site, and for its capacity to reinforce and complement historic cultural values.
2. The use of on-site pedestrian amenities (such as benches, shelters, drinking fountains, lighting, and trash receptacles) is encouraged. These elements should be provided in conjunction with on-site open spaces and be integrated into the site plan as primary features. (Figure 37)
3. Trees should be used in parking lots to help visually break up large expanses of paving and to provide some shading. Some trees within parking areas should be deciduous, to provide pavement surface shading during the warmer months, and to allow for solar gain during the winter. Tree species should be selected with rooting and canopy patterns to fit the spaces provided them. In general, species with messy fruits, pods, and seeds that will drop on the surfaces below are not good choices. (Figures 38 and 41)
4. Healthy, mature trees should be maintained and incorporated into the site design wherever possible.
5. Planting should be included on all developed sites. Planting areas should be integrated with the building design, enhance the appearance and enjoyment of the project and soften the effect of the buildings and paving. Landscaping should use a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground cover. A project’s planting should blend with vegetation on nearby property if the neighboring greenery is healthy and appropriate. The City encourages innovation in planting



design and choice of landscape materials.

6. Vegetation and natural features. Healthy existing vegetation should be kept and incorporated into site and planting plans if they improve the site's appearance or enhances its proposed use.
7. Extent of landscaping. A site should be adequately planted on all sides and on the interior. Trees should be planted along streets in accordance with the City's Tree Regulations. Those trees should be selected from the City's "street tree" list; trees not on the list may be used if approved by the City. Trees might be required on other parts of a site for screening.
8. Plant selection. The purpose of planting – shade, screening, erosion control or appearance, for example – should determine what types of plants are selected. Thickness, height, variety of color (not uniform), seasonal characteristics and ultimate growth should be considered. A generous amount of vegetation should be planted. Where planting is intended to perform a function such as screening or shading, its initial size and spacing should be designed in accordance with relevant provisions of the Modesto Municipal Code and supplemented by temporary architectural features such as screen fencing or an arbor.
9. Water conservation. The conservation and efficient use of water are important City goals. The City strongly promotes the use of native and drought tolerant materials and sets water efficient landscape standards. The following landscape standards should be applied to all new development.
 - a. Irrigated turf areas should not exceed 20 percent of the site's total area. Larger turf areas may be allowed where special water conservation measures are used, and where their primary purpose is for recreation rather than aesthetics, as in parks, playgrounds, and private rear yards. If a project is exempt from the development plan review process, the Director or his/her designee may allow larger turf areas using these criteria.



Figure 39 – Landscaping helps soften the transition between the street and the building face



Figure 40 – Landscaping in parking areas should provide shade and relief from the expanse of asphalt.



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Figure 41 -- Parking lot trees provide shade and relief from the expanse of asphalt.



Figure 42 -- Textured walkway adjoining landscape planter

- b. Water saving turf varieties or turf substitutes (groundcovers) should be used where appropriate.
- c. Planter and turf areas will be designated for maximum water efficiency and ease of maintenance. Turf should not be used in narrow planters, raised beds, and other relatively small planters as determined by the Director with Parks Planning and Development Division Manager or his/her designees. Turf planting on slopes over 15 percent causes excess irrigation runoff, and will not be allowed.
- d. Use decorative paving and alternative ground covers such as pathway bark, crushed rock, wood chippings, concrete, brick, or wood pavers to attractively landscape pathways, service areas, or areas difficult to maintain. (Figure 42)
- e. Plants should be selected appropriately according to their suitability to the climatic, geologic, and topographical conditions of the site. Protection and preservation of native species and natural areas is strongly encouraged, and any proposed removal will be evaluated for its appropriateness.
- f. Plants having similar water use should be grouped together in distinct hydrozones and irrigated by a separate valve. Non-potable water should be used wherever possible for irrigation.
- g. Plant selection should clearly emphasize the use of drought tolerant and water conserving plants.
- h. Curbs, headerboards, pavers, and other decorative materials should be used to define the edges of planters to reduce irrigation runoff into non-planted areas, and to define turf areas.
- i. Water features will be designed and maintained to use water efficiently. Pools, ponds, decorative fountains and other similar ornamental water features will use recirculating water. Water features will be of a design, shape, and size that maintains water loss through evaporation.



- j. Parking lots should be adequately landscaped to prevent large, uninterrupted expanses of paving. (Figures 40, 41 and 43)
 - k. Planted areas should have a two-inch thick layer of mulch to reduce soil moisture evaporation and discourage weed growth.
 - l. Use erosion control measures on planted slopes of 3:1 (33 percent) or steeper. Where runoff and erosion are likely, planter slopes should have jute mesh, straw matting or comparable biodegradable material to reduce erosion and allow plants to become established.
10. Placement. Plants should be placed with respect for their life cycles – for such factors as their ability to maintain and reproduce themselves, their size at maturity and their life span. Placement also should respect the different environmental requirements of different plants; factors such as temperature, moisture, soil, sunlight, and wind should be considered.
11. Irrigation. Most plants need to be irrigated to look their best. The City encourages the use of drought-tolerant plants; however, even these need regular water to become established. An appropriate irrigation system might include sprinklers, bubblers, a drip system and hose bibs, for example. The system should be designed for efficient, conservative use of water. The use of automatic watering systems, set to water at night, are encouraged. Planter areas need to be large enough to properly accommodate the proposed irrigation systems.
12. Protection for planters. Planting areas should be protected by wood, masonry or concrete curbing where necessary. (Figure 44)



Figure 43 -- Landscaping should be drought-tolerant and provide screening of parked vehicles.



Figure 44 -- Planter areas should be protected from the overhang of parked vehicles.





Figure 45 -- Utilities screened by landscaping

13. **Tree/Landscaping removals.** Proposals to remove trees over three inches in trunk diameter should be shown on plans. The type, trunk and canopy diameter, and status (e.g. to be removed, saved, relocated) needs to be noted. Landscaping should not be considered for removal as part of a demolition plan without accompanying development plan that demonstrates why the plantings cannot be saved and provides for an adequate replacement.

14. **Maintenance.** Landscaping plans should be designed with function and ease of maintenance in mind. Diseased vegetation should be treated and dead vegetation replaced. Configurations that tend to catch trash and debris should be avoided.

15. **Other Considerations.** Proposed landscaping should also be designed to address the following additional considerations:

- a. Maintenance and replacement
- b. Water shortages, potential problems with reclaimed water
- c. Effects of drought – plant loss, increased water costs
- d. Health concerns – Allergies (heavy pollen producing trees)
- e. Poor soils and poor drainage
- f. Intrusion of temporary structures into landscape space
- g. Safety issues – tree fall, root damage, visibility
- i. Disease concerns – pitch canker, borer beetle

M. Screening. Screening can protect and separate uses and site functions to decrease adverse noise, wind, or visual impacts and to provide privacy. The need for screening should be considered early in the design process so that screening elements (such as fences and walls, berms, and landscaping) can be effectively integrated into the overall project design and not added later as an afterthought. (Figure 45)

1. The method of screening should be compatible with the adjacent structure in terms of overall design, materials, and color.



2. Where screening is required at the ground level, a combination of elements should be considered including solid masonry walls, berms, and landscaping. Surfaces that are susceptible to graffiti, such as walls, should be covered with landscaping.
3. Roof-mounted equipment, including but not limited to air conditioners, fans, vents, antennas, and dishes should be set back from the roof edge and placed behind a parapet wall or in a wall, so they are not visible to motorists or pedestrians. Screening for equipment should be integrated into the building and roof design by the use of compatible materials, colors and forms. Wood lattice and fence-like coverings are not allowed for screening.

N. Refuse, storage and equipment areas

1. **Trash/recycling enclosures & service areas.** Refuse containers, service areas, loading docks, and similar facilities should be located out of view from the general public, and so that their use does not interfere with on-site parking or circulation areas, and adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
 - a. Trash/recycling enclosures and service and loading docks should be conveniently located and large enough to accommodate the uses on the site, but should not interfere with other circulation or parking on the site.
 - b. Trash containers should be located away from public streets and primary building entrances, and should be completely screened with materials that are consistent with those on adjacent building exteriors.
 - c. Trash storage areas that are visible from the upper stories of adjacent structures should be screened with a trellis or other horizontal cover to mitigate unsightly views. The covering structure should be consistent with the architectural style of adjacent buildings.



Figure 46 -- Trash enclosures should use materials that complement the architecture of a project



Figure 47





Figure 48 -- Lighting should complement the character of development.



Figure 49 -- Lighting for parking areas should be designed to confine the light to the site.

- d. Enclosures should be designed for long-term use and made of durable materials built on a concrete pad. (Figures 46 and 47)

O. Outdoor storage, display and sales. The following guidelines are intended to supplement and compliment the regulations provided in section 10-2.1009 of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. Outdoor storage areas where permitted should be screened with a solid fence, wall or mature hedge or other screen planting at least six feet high.
2. Where permanent outdoor storage of materials or sales items will exceed six feet in height. The materials should be provided with screening of comparable height and integrated with the overall design of the adjoining building.

P. Lighting. Lighting provides safety and orientation, but may also be a nuisance when it intrudes unnecessarily onto surrounding properties or the street. Conversely, lighting can enhance the aesthetic qualities of commercial development when used to complement its form and character and to create ambiance.

1. Outdoor lighting should be designed and installed consistent with relevant provisions of the Modesto Municipal Code. Lighting should be designed to illuminate at the minimum level necessary for safety and security, and to avoid harsh contrasts in lighting levels between the project and adjacent properties to the maximum extent possible. In all cases lighting should be designed to minimize glare by, among things, recessing the light within the fixture.
2. Light fixtures should not exceed 12 feet in height when adjacent to residential neighborhoods unless the setback of the fixture from the property line is twice the height of the fixture.
3. Lighting fixtures should not appear as an afterthought but should be integrated with the design of the buildings, parking and landscaping.



4. Lighting for parking areas and vehicular circulation lighting should be cut-off type fixtures that contain light on the intended area. Bollard type lighting for pedestrian activity areas may use other light sources. (Figures 49 and 50)
 5. Lighting fixtures in parking lots should be located to assure adequate light levels and to avoid displacing trees.
 6. Lighting fixtures in parking lots should not exceed 20 to 25 feet in overall height from the finished grade of the parking facility, except that light standards in large-scale commercial development may be taller so long as it can be demonstrated that such lighting will not adversely impact surrounding residential neighborhoods. (Figure 50)
 7. The design, size, and placement of outdoor lighting fixtures on buildings and in parking lots should be in keeping with the architectural style of the buildings. More, smaller-scale parking lot lights instead of fewer, overly tall and large parking lot lights should be installed. Outdoor light fixtures mounted on building walls should relate to the height of pedestrians. All light fixtures should be directed downward and shielded so that the light source itself is not visible and does not spill over to adjacent properties.
 8. Bollard-type luminaires 3 to 4 feet in height are encouraged as pedestrian lighting.
 9. Roof lights, wall washes, lighted roof panels and other methods of illuminating buildings are discouraged, including neon.
- Q. Walls and fences.** The fact that commercial and industrial uses often require large outdoor areas for production activities, parking, or storage necessitates the thoughtful design of surrounding walls and fences because they can become significant visual elements on the site. It is of primary importance to take into account the public street frontage impact of walls and fences
1. If walls are not required for a specific screening or security purpose they should not be used. The intent is to keep walls as low as possible



Figure 50

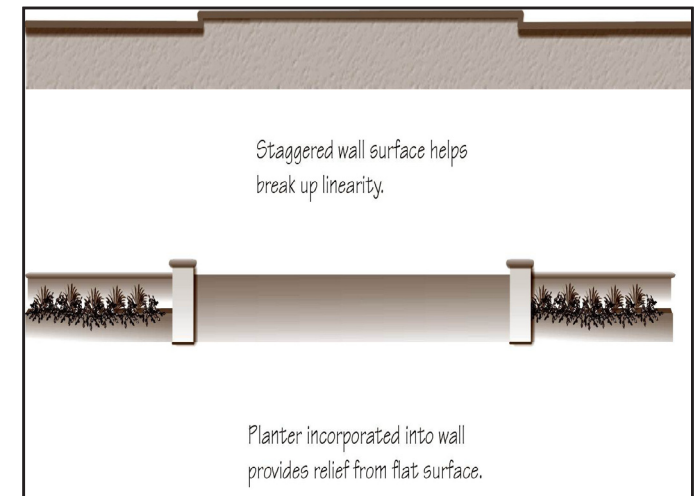


Figure 51 -- Long expanses of walls should be interrupted with landscaping, pilasters or changes in height





Figure 52-- Public art can help celebrate the rich history of the City and the region.

while still performing their screening, security and noise attenuation functions.

2. Where walls are used at property frontages, or screen walls are used to conceal storage and equipment areas, they should be designed to blend with the site's architecture. Landscaping should be used in combination with such walls whenever possible.
3. Long expanses of fence or wall surfaces should be offset and architecturally designed to prevent monotony. Landscape pockets should be provided along the wall. (Figure 51)
4. With taller walls over five feet in height, it may be more appropriate to have a stepped design which allows for the creation of a planter area between wall components. The use of trailing vines or groundcovers in these planters is encouraged.
5. When security fencing is required, it should be a combination of solid columns, or short solid wall segments, and wrought iron grill work, rather than the entire fence being a single material. Razor wire is prohibited. However, chain link fencing may be allowed when not visible from the street and so long as the fencing is vinyl or powder coated.
6. The aesthetic quality of walls and fences along collector and arterial streets should be given special consideration, especially where used to screen parking lots. Long stretches of the identical wall or fence should be avoided; changes in the design should be made at logical points along the length of the wall or fence, such as at intersections.

R. Public Art. Public art can enliven an urban environment, enrich pedestrian experience, and stimulate interaction between artist and viewer. In the City, public art, as with all other improvements, is subordinate to the overall purpose of enhancing the beauty and enjoyment of life in Modesto.

1. The placement of public art shall be consistent with relevant provisions of the Modesto Municipal Code and should be encouraged. Examples



of appropriate public artwork include (but are not limited to) sculptures, murals, fountains, and kinetic art. Public art should reflect a city-wide collection of diverse media and style.

2. Proposals for placement of public art should consider and describe the relationship of proposed works to their immediate surroundings and to the City, especially as the proposed location or artistic endeavor is reflective of important people and places in the history of Modesto.
 3. Plans for development may identify specific locations for public art, and works may be commissioned or purchased to strengthen the context of these locations.
 4. Poorly maintained public art is detrimental to a given commercial project and to the City. Works should not be installed (whether acquired by gift or purchase) unless accompanied by an endowment for long-term maintenance.
 5. Public art should be incorporated into streetscape elements such as paving, bus shelters, benches, tree grates, and fences, whenever feasible.
 6. Sites larger than 5 acres should create an open space or plaza with amenities such as benches, monuments, kiosks or public art. Amenities should be in prominent locations, interconnected with the uses and walkways on the site, and be landscaped.
- S. Telecommunications Facilities.** The placement and design of telecommunication facilities are regulated by provisions of the Modesto Municipal Code to promote the aesthetic appearance of the City, to ensure public safety, and to acknowledge and provide the community benefit associated with the provision of advanced communication services within the City.
1. The placement of telecommunications facilities (including towers for cellular phones, satellite earth stations, and associated facilities) shall be subject to relevant provisions of the Modesto Municipal Code which prescribes standards for the location, screening, minimum setbacks, structure height, colors and materials.



Figure 53-- Public art accompanied by outdoor seating in a public plaza.



- T. Drainage and Water Quality.** Site planning, grading, and landscaping that incorporates screening through the use of berms shall be designed to comply with the relevant provisions of the National Pollution Discharge Eliminations System (NPDES).

2.3 GUIDELINES FOR LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

Large-scale commercial projects generally exhibit the following characteristics:

- A building site of ten or more acres;
- At least one large “anchor” tenant space, along with multiple smaller attached tenant spaces;
- One or more detached tenant spaces, or “pad spaces” located near the street;
- Total building floor area of 100,000 square feet or more (project area);

Larger commercial centers present a number of design challenges relating to the size, form and mass of buildings and mass of parking area, an emphasis on customers who arrive primarily by motor vehicle (and by extension issues relating to on-site circulation for motor vehicles and pedestrians) and how such development can create desirable settings for shopping.

- A. Site planning for large-scale development.** Project site planning should emphasize pedestrian-oriented features, even though most customer trips to these facilities may be by auto. Even people who arrive by auto must walk from car to building; in addition, some customers may arrive by transit, bicycle or on foot. Buildings in parts of the City that are more suburban and auto-oriented in character should incorporate major on-site plazas, open space areas and streetscape elements for pedestrian use between the major tenants and the parking lot (as shown in Figure 57). In the case of new commercial structures located on major arterials, it may also be appropriate to provide landscaped setbacks between buildings and streets.



Figure 54



Figure 55



1. The layout of buildings and parking on the site should emphasize a strong relationship to adjoining streets, and encourage pedestrian circulation and access between the buildings and the street. Buildings should be placed near the street frontage on streets with slower traffic speeds and a pedestrian orientation, but may be located farther from a wide street with higher traffic speeds. The placement of buildings should also consider solar orientation, and the protection of outdoor pedestrian areas from the wind.
2. Site planning should include an outdoor use area or focal point adjacent to major building entrance. The area should provide public amenities such as a water feature, benches, landscaped areas with shade trees, public square, etc. Projects with two or more structures should group the buildings to define this space. (Figure 57)
3. When the site is located on a street or road identified as scenic in the Modesto Urban Area General Plan Circulation or Open Space Element, the building layout should also provide views through the property to natural features highlighted by the Circulation or Open Space Element.
4. Buildings backing onto and visible from State Route 99 should allow for clusters of evergreen trees and other extensive plantings to screen undesirable views of buildings.
5. Large scale commercial projects and shopping centers should be designed to locate a minimum of 30 percent of the total site frontage at the front setback line, with direct pedestrian access to the buildings from the sidewalk. Locating buildings near the front of the property, together with substantial landscaping, strengthens the overall streetscape, and helps screen off-street parking areas. (Figure 57)



Figure 56 -- Large tenant spaces should incorporate elements to break up the mass of the building.



2.0 Design Guidelines for Commercial Development

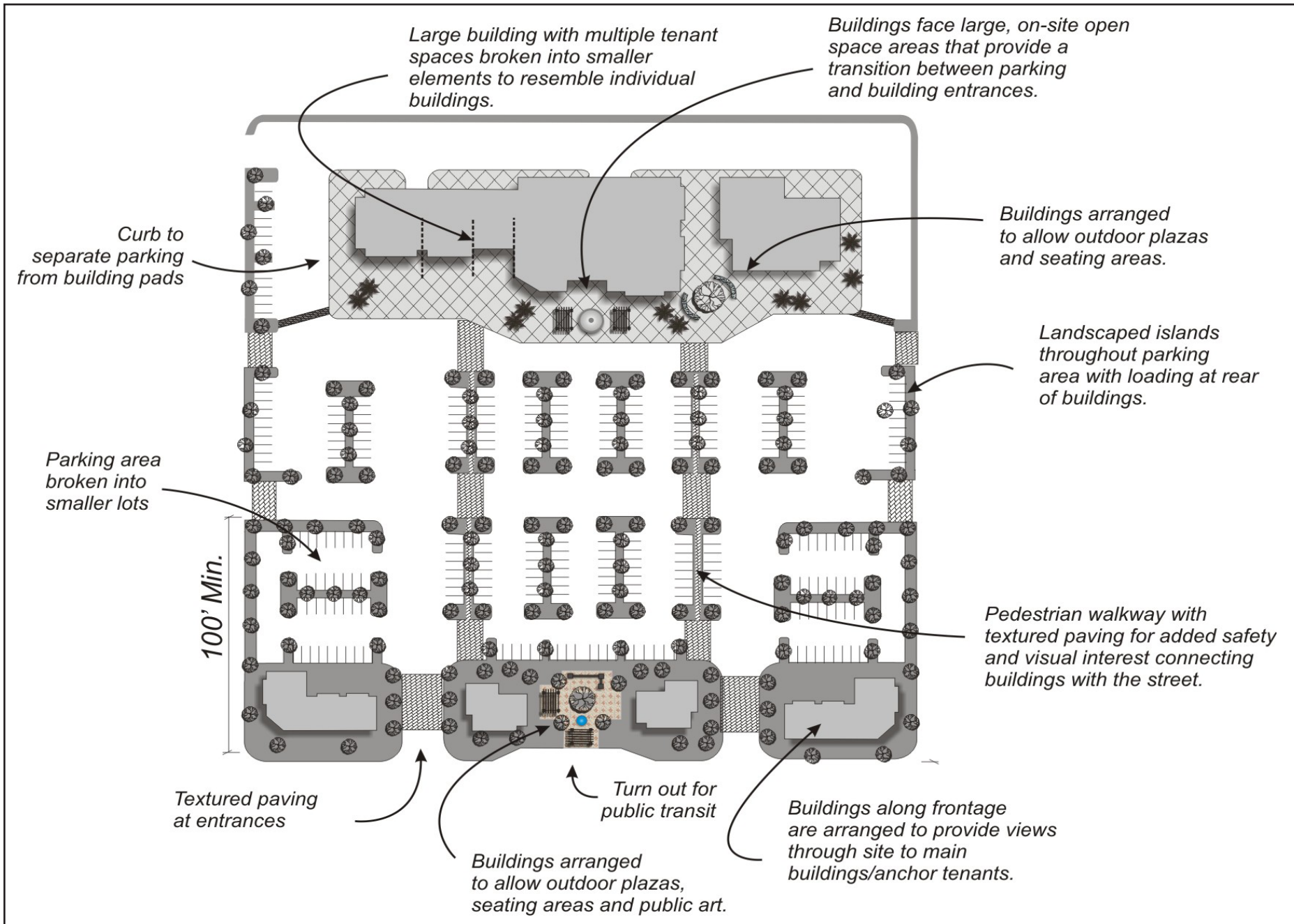


Figure 57 -- Large scale retail centers should facilitate pedestrian circulation



6. Multiple buildings in a single project should be designed to create a visual and functional relationship with one another. Whenever possible, multiple buildings should be clustered to achieve a “village” scale. This creates opportunities for plazas and pedestrian areas while preventing long rows of buildings. When clustering is impractical, a visual link should be established between buildings. This link can be accomplished through the use of an arcade system, trellis, colonnade, landscaping and trees, or enhanced paving. (Figure 58)
7. The location of open space areas should be accessible from the majority of structures, and should be oriented to take advantage of sun or shade, and offer wind protection, as appropriate. (Figure 59)
8. As a desirable objective, projects should seek to achieve a connection between the on-site pedestrian circulation system with the off-site public sidewalk at least once in each 200 linear feet of sidewalk adjacent to a project. (Figure 57)

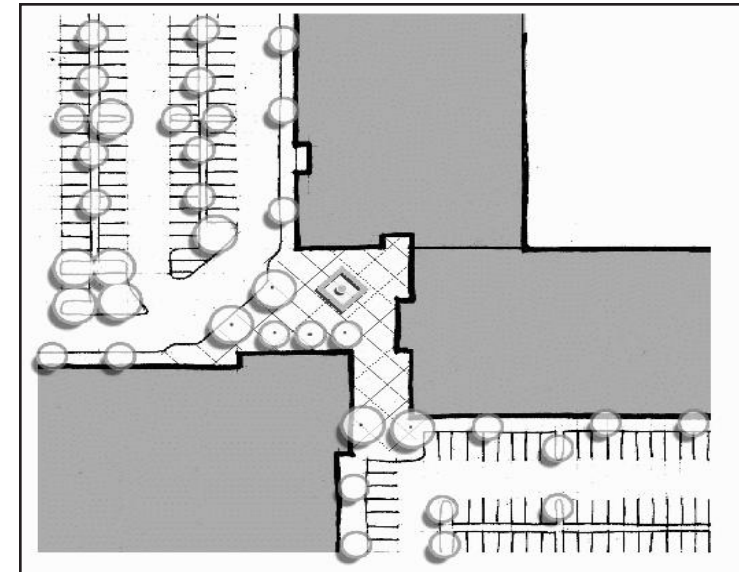


Figure 58 -- Buildings arranged to create an outdoor 'room'



Figure 59 -- Landscaped planter with outdoor seating





Figure 60 – Parking lots should be landscaped to provide shade and to break up the expanse of hardscape



Figure 61 – Parking lots should be landscaped to provide safe, landscaped pedestrian amenities.

B. Parking areas. Parking lots for large-scale commercial centers should be designed to be equally pedestrian and vehicular oriented, as follows.

1. **Location and Design of Parking.** Parking should not be the dominant visual element of a site. Large, expansive paved areas between the building and the street are to be avoided in favor of smaller multiple lots separated by landscaping or buildings, or located to the sides and rear of buildings. The design of large-scale retail centers should provide a portion of the required parking at the sides and rear of the building to avoid the appearance of a large expanse of asphalt between the buildings and the street.
2. **Landscaping.** Parking areas should include substantial landscaping, including trees planted in an “orchard” layout. Extensive landscaping throughout parking areas and the project site is highly desirable because landscaping can soften the appearance of large structures, assist in energy conservation by shading cars and by reducing heat gain by buildings adjacent to large asphalt areas, and make walking around the site a more pleasant experience for pedestrians. (Figure 60)
3. **Pedestrian Routes.** Safe and direct pedestrian routes should be provided through parking areas to primary entrances, and designed as noted under “Pedestrian Circulation.” (Figure 61)
4. **Overflow and Employee Parking.** Where appropriate because of site characteristics, surrounding land uses, and project site planning, parking areas intended for employees and peak-season overflow may be allowed to have screening perimeter landscaping only, with no internal plantings, provided that these parking areas are located behind the main structures and not readily visible from streets or residential areas.
5. **Shopping Carts (when appropriate to the tenant).** Parking areas should include shopping cart corrals of sufficient quantity and frequency so that carts can be conveniently dropped off without obstructing vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian movement, or being left in landscape planters.

C. Pedestrian circulation and amenities. It is the nature of large retail uses that most customers arrive by car and make purchases that cannot be carried home by foot or bike. Nevertheless, the large parking lots in these projects cause much of the customer's experience to be as a pedestrian, often walking long distances from car, to entrance and back, as well as between buildings. Safe accommodation for pedestrians is essential and should be an integral part of site design. (Figures 62 and 63)

1. Sidewalks at least ten feet in width should be provided along all sides of the lot that abut a public street.
2. Sidewalks should be provided along the full length of the building along any façade with a customer entrance, and along any façade abutting a parking area. The sidewalks should be located at least six feet from the façade to provide area for landscaping to help soften the transition from hardscape to the building, except where the façade incorporates pedestrian-oriented features such as pedestrian entrances or ground floor windows. Sidewalks should be ten feet wide, exclusive of any area planned for outdoor display or storage. The sidewalks should have wells (with 5' by 5' iron tree grates) for canopy trees at 30-foot intervals along the sidewalk edge adjacent to parking areas or vehicle access ways, so that the combination of building wall, sidewalk, and trees provide an enhanced pedestrian experience.
3. Pedestrian walkways within the site should be provided an all-weather protection feature such as an awning within 15 feet of either side of all customer entrances, which should also cover nearby short-term bicycle parking.
4. Pedestrian walkways within the site should be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of special pavers, bricks, or colored/textured concrete to enhance pedestrian safety and the attractiveness of walkways. Pedestrian circulation in parking areas should be parallel to traffic flow toward building entrances, and separated from drive aisles within 50 feet of entrances. Sidewalk landings should be provided and extended between parking spaces where needed to connect pedestrians to walkways, and accented with landscaping.



Figure 62 -- Landscaped walkways help reinforce the pedestrian character desired for large-scale retail development



Figure 63 -- Parking should be screened and provide safe access to the public right-of-way.



- Clearly demarcated and direct pedestrian routes should extend from peripheral public sidewalks and transit stops to the sidewalks that front commercial outlets. These routes should be distinguished from driving surfaces by using contrasting pavement materials.

D. Building design/human scale. Building design should be site-specific, and incorporate design themes and features reflecting Modesto's character and history. Building details should relate to the scale of pedestrians as well as passing motorists. The tendency of many "big-box" retail chains is to replicate a corporate or generic aesthetic, often treating the building elevations much like large, scale-less billboards. The lack of human scale and absence of architectural character or local connection serve to emphasize a disconnection between the chain store and the community. These conventional approaches to large-scale retail design are unacceptable in Modesto. (Figure 64)

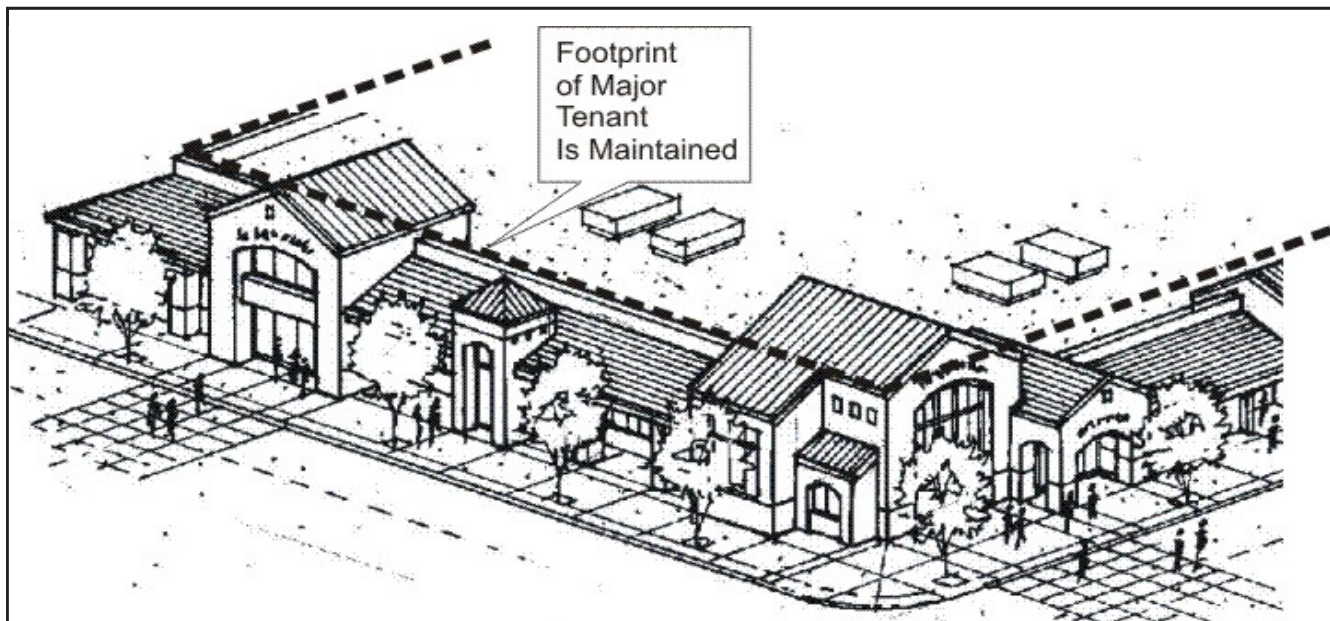


Figure 64 -- Large-scale retail should incorporate elements that reinforce a sense of human scale. These elements include (but are not limited to) dividing the facade into smaller segments that give the appearance of individual stores, the use of entry features, display windows and the use of 'liner shops' with separate entrances from the main tenant space.



E. Entrances. Where practical in the context of business operations, each side of a principal building facing a public street should feature at least one customer entrance. Where a principal building directly faces more than two abutting streets, this guideline should apply only to two sides of the building. The use of a corner entrance will satisfy the entrance requirement for only one side of the building.

Customer entrances should be clearly defined and highly visible, with features such as canopies or porticos, arcades, arches, wing walls, and integral planters.

F. Exterior wall materials. Predominant exterior building materials should be of high quality. Examples of these materials include brick, wood, stone, tinted/textured stucco, and tile accents. Smooth or split-faced concrete masonry units, tilt-up concrete panels, or prefabricated steel panels should generally be avoided for expansive wall surfaces, but may be appropriate in limited areas as building accents.

1. Building walls should incorporate the same quality and level of detail of ornamentation on each elevation visible from a public right-of-way.
2. Building façade details and materials should incorporate elements found in the traditional architectural vernacular of Modesto, and integrated into building design, and should not be or appear as artificial “glued/tacked-on” features, such as trellises that do not support plant materials, encouraging the perception of low quality.





Figure 65 -- Facade articulation helps break up the mass and scale of large retail buildings

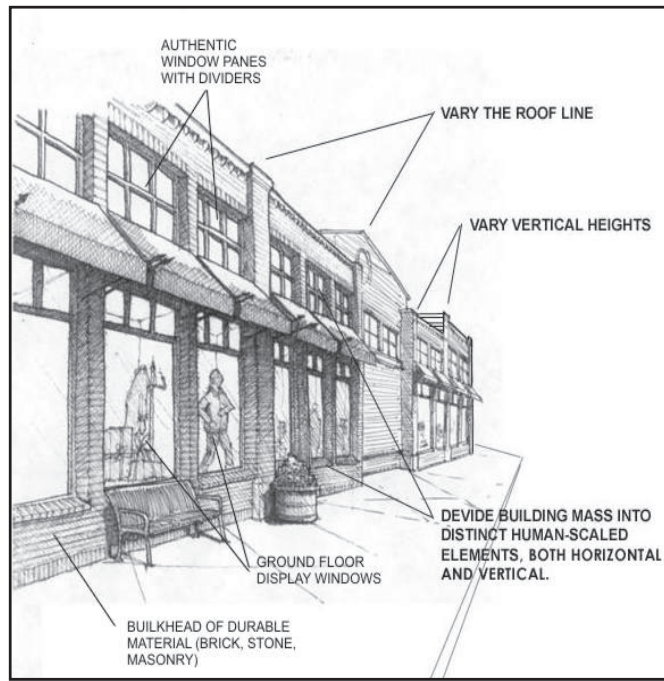


Figure 66 -- Elements of a storefront that contribute to a sense of human scale and quality of design

G. Wall design. All building walls, especially those visible from public roadways or residential areas should be designed to break up the appearance of a box-like structure.

- 1. Façade articulation.** Include extensive facade articulation in the form of horizontal and vertical design elements to provide variations in wall plane and surface relief, including providing a variety of surface textures, recesses and projections along wall planes. Facades of anchor buildings greater than 100 feet in length should incorporate recesses or projections at least 10 feet deep along at least 30 percent of the length of the facade. Ideally, these recesses or projections should accommodate secondary uses/liner shops, and/or reflect the different internal functions of the store. Primary building facades with prominent architectural elements such as arcades, colonades, repeated awnings, or shade/weather protection are strongly encouraged. Such elements should be placed around, and extend from the front to the rear of the building. (Figure 54, 55, 56 and 65)
- 2. Ground floor windows.** Ground floor windows with bulkheads are highly encouraged. These should ideally provide pedestrians with views into the building, but even display windows can improve the pedestrian experience of the building at the street or sidewalk level. The storefront of anchor buildings and pad buildings facing a pedestrian walk should be 50 to 85 percent transparent (window systems) with glass of 88 percent transparency, consistent with energy conservation requirements (Figure 66)
- 3. Design details.** A variety of building and wall features should be used, in ways that avoid a cluttered appearance. These may include varying colors, reveals, an external wainscot or bulkhead at the building base to reduce apparent bulk, cornices and parapet details, and moldings. The features should employ a variety of materials as appropriate for the architectural style.

Bulkheads should be constructed of a durable material other than stucco, such as tile, brick, rock, or pre-cast concrete. Windows,



awnings, and arcades should total at least 60 percent of the façade length abutting a street, whether anchor or pad buildings.

4. **Corporate identification.** Colors or logos identified with an individual company should be employed as building accent features, and not used as the main or dominant architectural feature of any wall.
 5. **Colors.** Large areas of bright, intense colors should generally be avoided. While more subdued colors usually work best for large facade areas, brighter accent colors may be appropriate for trim, windows, doors, and other key architectural elements. Bold stripes of color are not an adequate substitute for architectural detailing. Color schemes should be complementary and not clash.
- H. **Vertical wall articulation.** The height of building walls facing streets or on-site pedestrian areas should be varied so that the vertical mass is divided into distinct, human-scaled elements. (Figure 67)



Figure 67 -- Vertical articulation helps break up the mass of large buildings



1. Except on a pedestrian-oriented public street where buildings are at the back of the sidewalk, structures over 20 feet in height (typical for structures of two stories or more) should step back the building mass at least five feet for the portions of the structure above 14 feet (or the height where an actual second story begins) to provide visual variation.
 2. The facade of the areas stepped-back above the actual or apparent first floor should include detailed building articulation with windows, eaves, and decorative details such as tiles, wood trim, etc. as appropriate. It is also important that the facade below the step-back have a substantial structural appearance, and not simply appear as an awning “tacked-on” to the building.
 3. Building facades that are tall for no functional reason, have little surface articulation or relief, and are simply intended to provide high, visible surfaces for tenant signage are not appropriate.
- I. **Rooflines.** The roof lines should be varied to break up the mass of the building. Pitched roofs with roof overhangs proportional to the scale of the adjoining building wall are encouraged. Major roof-mounted equipment should not be visible from off the site. Cornices and decorative parapets should be utilized to conceal flat roofs and to screen any roof-mounted mechanical equipment. (Figure 67)



- J. Secondary uses/"liner" shops.** One approach to help break up the appearance of the large, primary building with more human-scale elements is to arrange secondary uses or departments such as pharmacies, photo finishing/development, snack bars, dry cleaning, offices, storage, etc., along the outside of the anchor building by projecting them outward or recessing them inward, while maintaining the overall floor plan and area of the major tenant. This includes providing the individual uses with separate entrances and windows facing the outside of the building. Food courts/bars should provide indoor, and sheltered outdoor, eating areas with tables, chairs, umbrellas, etc. (Figure 68)

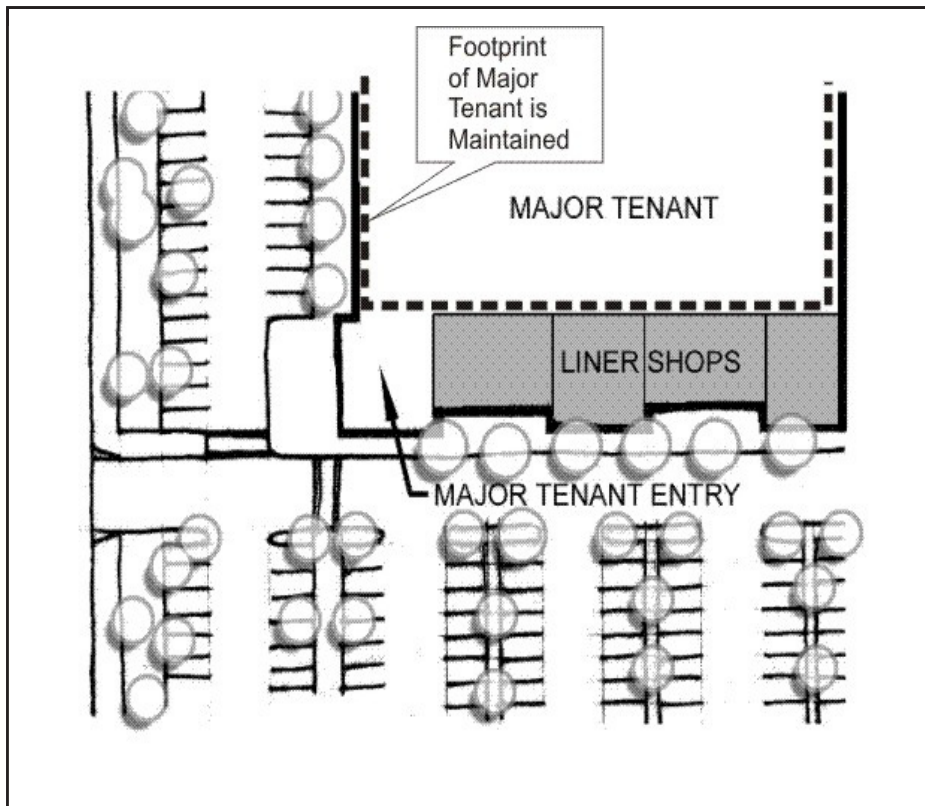


Figure 68 -- Liner shops fronting a major tenant building





Figure 69 -- Loading area completely enclosed with same materials used for building



Figure 70 -- Walkway through parking area

K. Loading areas. Loading docks, trash collection areas, outdoor storage, and similar facilities should be incorporated into the overall design of the building and landscaped, so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained, and out of view from adjacent properties and streets. Any screening materials should be of the same quality and appearance as those used on the building itself. (Figure 69)

L. Landscaping. Landscaping that complements and is in scale with the building should be provided adjacent to structures. Landscaping should include evergreen trees, shrubs and ornamental landscaping (and berms where appropriate) with all landscape areas having a minimum width of six feet. Landscaping should be used to create a focal point near front building entrances. Sidewalks and other walkways should also be integrated with landscape areas around building base and in parking lot areas. Trees should be planted in notable clusters within larger planting areas, and not exclusively in lines along building facades. Landscaping should be six feet in width, excluding hardscape and pathways. (Figure 70)

M. Signs. The signs provided in conjunction with a large-scale retail project should comply with the following guidelines.

1. Proposed large-scale retail projects should include a comprehensive program that effectively integrates signage into the project design.
2. Signs designed for freeway exposure should be incorporated into the design of a project. Lettering/sign elements should be in scale with the form and mass of the building.
3. Along with typical auto-oriented wall and freestanding signage, permanent, pedestrian-oriented window, awning, projecting, and suspended signs should also be provided as substitutes for excessive wall signs. (see Figures 71 through 74)



Figure 73 -- Monument sign consistent with architectural theme of building



Figure 71 -- Wall sign consisting of individually mounted letters



Figure 72 -- Awning sign



Figure 74 -- Projecting signs



2.4 GUIDELINES FOR STAND-ALONE/INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Infill development typically exhibits the following general characteristics:

- A smaller building site (less than ten acres) surrounded by existing commercial and/or a mix of commercial and residential development;
- A single building with one or more tenant spaces;
- The range of uses emphasizes neighborhood-serving and service businesses.

In designing a stand-alone or infill commercial project, it is especially important to analyze the areas surrounding the building site to find elements of compatibility that can be used in a new design.

A. Site planning and building placement.

1. The placement of the building and parking on an infill or stand-alone site should be consistent with the pattern established along the street. If no consistent pattern has been established, buildings should be located as close to the street as possible with parking located to the side or rear. (Figure 76)
2. Buildings should generally be placed parallel to the street with the main entrance clearly distinguished and also facing the street. The transition from street to building should be reinforced with a pedestrian walkway and landscaping that provides separation from parking and circulation area.
3. Wherever possible, buildings should be clustered on a site. This enables the placement of plazas or pedestrian ways and prevents long, “barracks like” rows of structures. Where clustering is impractical, a visual link among structures should be established by consistently employing unifying design elements. (Figure 75)
3. When parking is located between the street and the building, it should be adequately screened when viewed from the street. (Refer to Section 2.2 (K) for a discussion of parking lot screening).

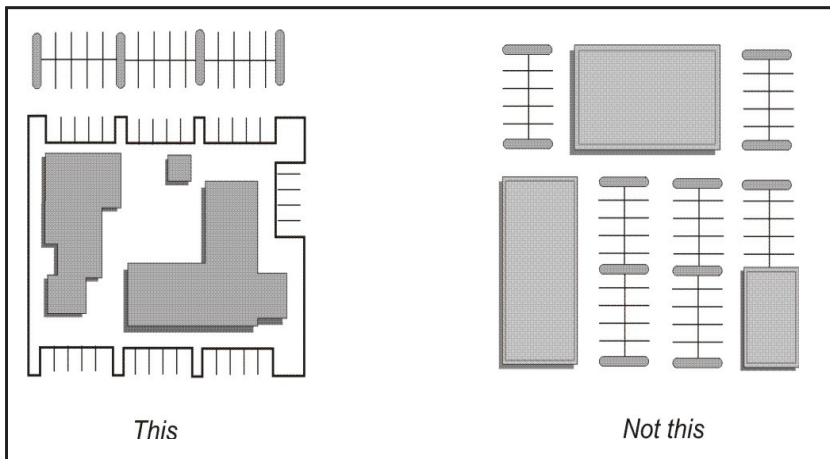


Figure 75 -- Cluster buildings on a site wherever possible to consolidate parking areas



4. Buildings and parking should be placed to minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. The pedestrian link between the building and the public sidewalk should be emphasized with textured paving, landscaping or trellises.

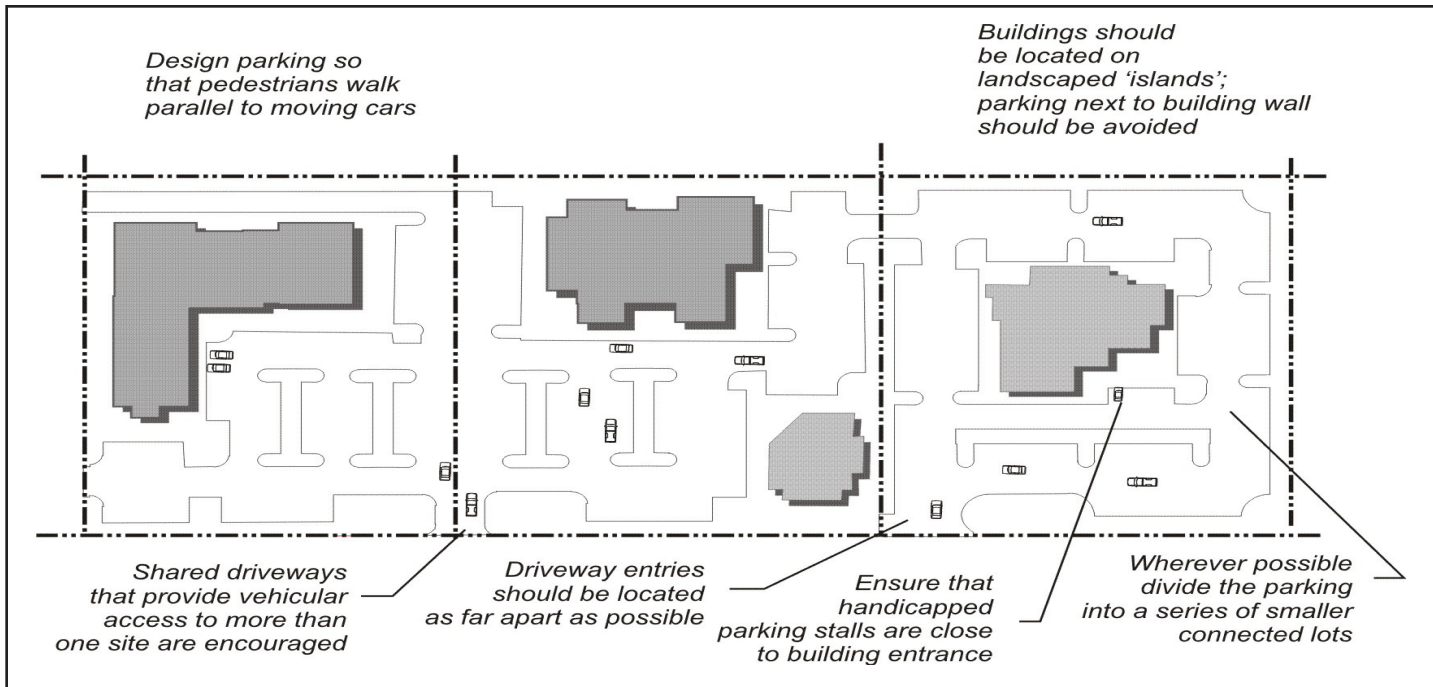


Figure 76 -- Infill development should be designed to function independently and, wherever possible, to share parking and access with neighboring properties



B. Form and scale of development.

1. The height and scale of buildings should be consistent with that established on surrounding properties and incorporate building design elements and features found in the neighborhood or district.
2. Commercial buildings should be designed to maintain privacy and quiet where such development adjoins a residential neighborhood. Where possible, loading and delivery areas should be located on the interior of a site where the commercial building will serve as a buffer to adjoining residences and yard areas. (Figure 77)



Figure 77 -- Commercial development should be designed to protect privacy and minimize nuisance impacts to adjoining residences



2.5 DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN AND OTHER PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED AREAS

The Modesto downtown is the heart of the community in several essential ways. The downtown is the city's center for cultural, entertainment, social, and governmental activities. It is also the area that most strongly defines Modesto in its national reputation as a livable city, and in how residents and visitors describe Modesto to those who have not seen it.

What sets apart the downtown is its pedestrian character and orientation where walking is the primary mode of travel. Although the downtown is perhaps the most striking example, other areas of the City exhibit pedestrian qualities that should be enhanced and preserved. Accordingly, this section of the Design Guidelines applies to the areas shown on Figure 80.

The primary goal of the guidelines that follow is to preserve and enhance the attractiveness of pedestrian areas of the City as places where: people prefer to walk rather than drive; and where pleasant sidewalks, shading trees, and variety of shops, restaurants, and other activities encourage people to spend time, slow their pace, and engage one another. The design of buildings and their setting, circulation, and public spaces in the downtown have, and will continue to play a crucial role in maintaining this character and vitality.

Another principal goal of these guidelines is to implement the vision of the downtown Redevelopment Master Plan wherever feasible.

- A. Street orientation.** Buildings in the downtown should be located at the back of the sidewalk unless space between the building and sidewalk is to be used for pedestrian features such as plazas, courtyards, or outdoor eating areas.

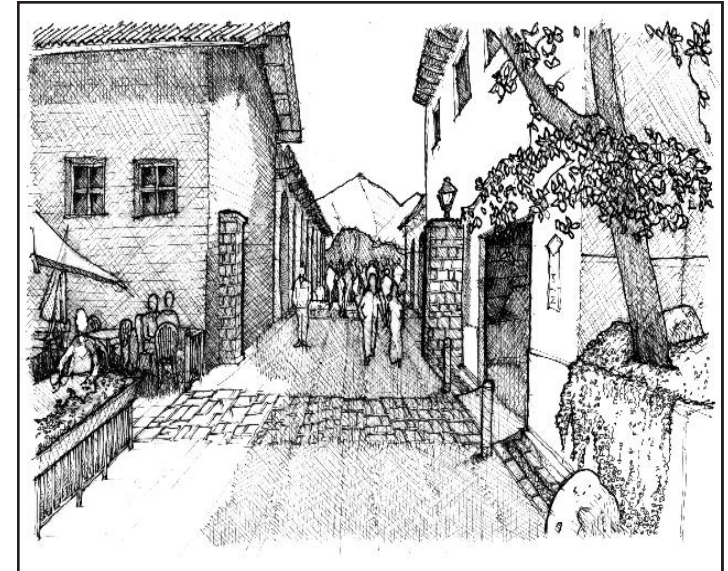


Figure 78

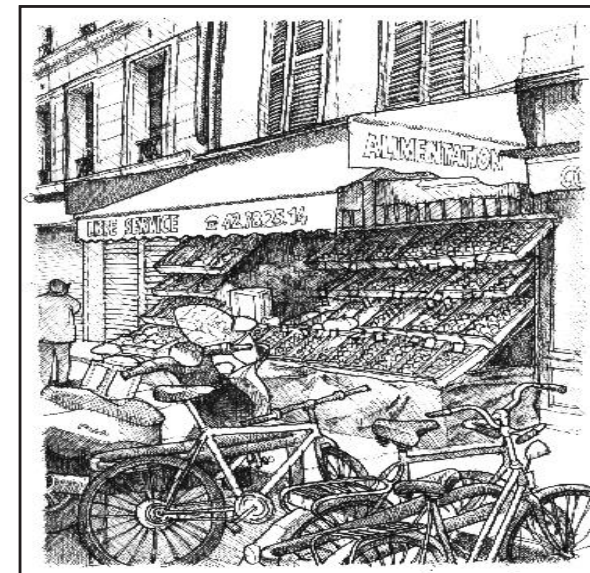


Figure 79



2.0 Design Guidelines for Commercial Development

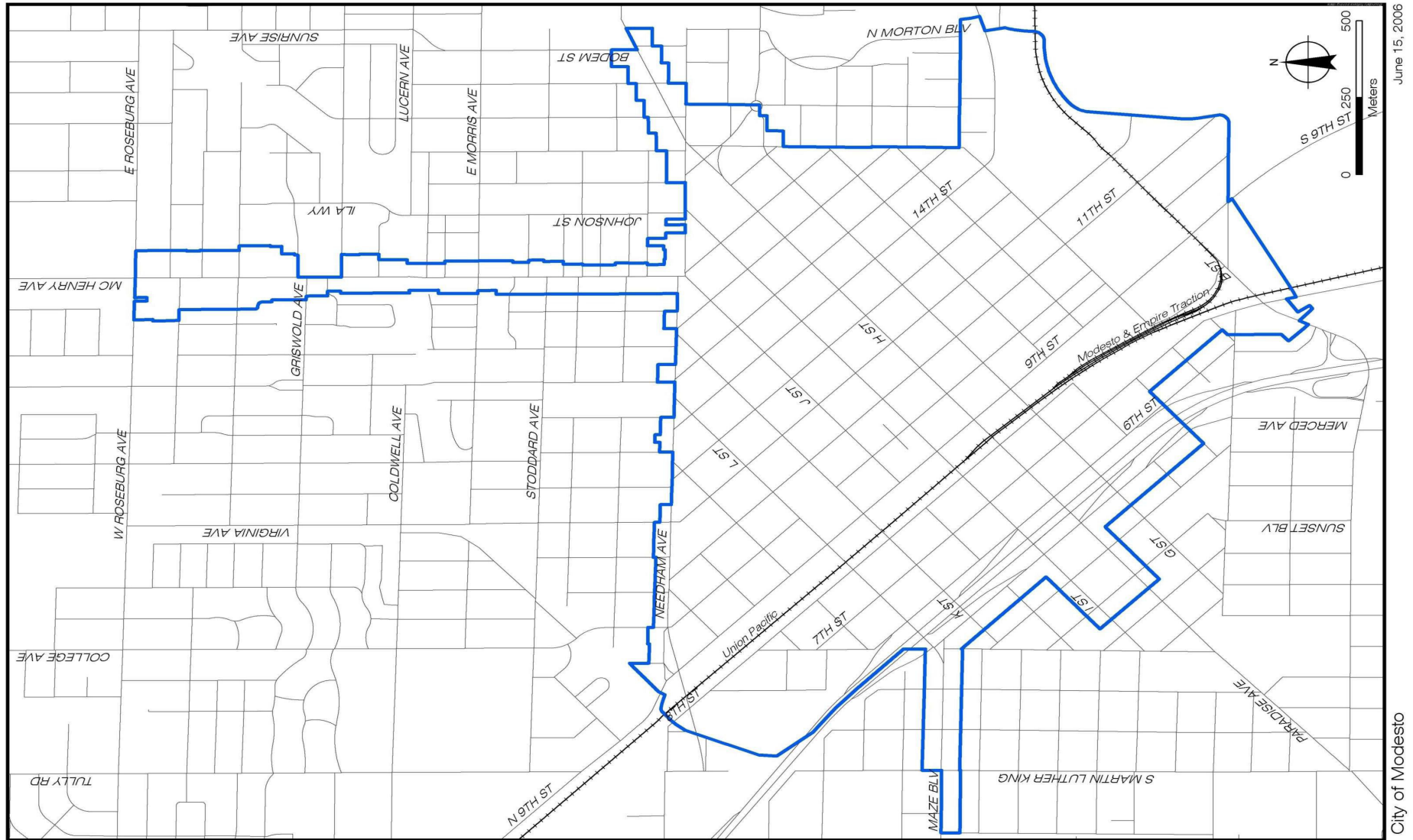


Figure 80 -- Downtown and Other Pedestrian oriented Areas

This map identifies commercial areas in Modesto that are pedestrian-oriented. Pedestrian-oriented areas are where pedestrians feel most comfortable. Features of these areas include relatively narrow thoroughfares (less than 100 feet curb to curb), short blocks, relatively shallow lots, buildings built to the edge of sidewalks, doors and windows facing sidewalks, separation between pedestrians and moving cars, parking lots behind buildings, and few, if any, blank walls. These features ease pedestrian access and create a sense of safety.



B. Height, scale. All buildings in the downtown should be at least two stories or 30 feet in height, particularly within the interiors of blocks. This height is needed to “enclose” the street so that it provides pleasant space for pedestrians. Multi-story buildings are desirable because they can provide opportunities for upper-floor offices and residential units. Multi-story buildings can increase the numbers of potential customers for ground floor retail uses and assist in maintaining their viability. Different building heights may be appropriate as follows:

1. The height and scale of new structures and alterations to existing structures should complement existing adjacent buildings and provide human scale and proportion; and
2. New structures should not be significantly taller or shorter than adjacent structures unless the proposed structure can provide a visual transition from the height of adjacent structures to its higher portions. (Figure 82)
3. New buildings should fit in with the existing vertical scale. (Figure 82). They should respect street-level views of Dry Creek and the Tuolumne River Regional Park (where appropriate), allow sunlight to reach public open spaces, and defer to a few tall, “landmark” buildings. Taller buildings would be more appropriate at mid-block than at corners, and their floors above the second or third should be set back to maintain a lower street facade. The tall buildings should include publicly accessible, open viewing spaces at the upper levels.

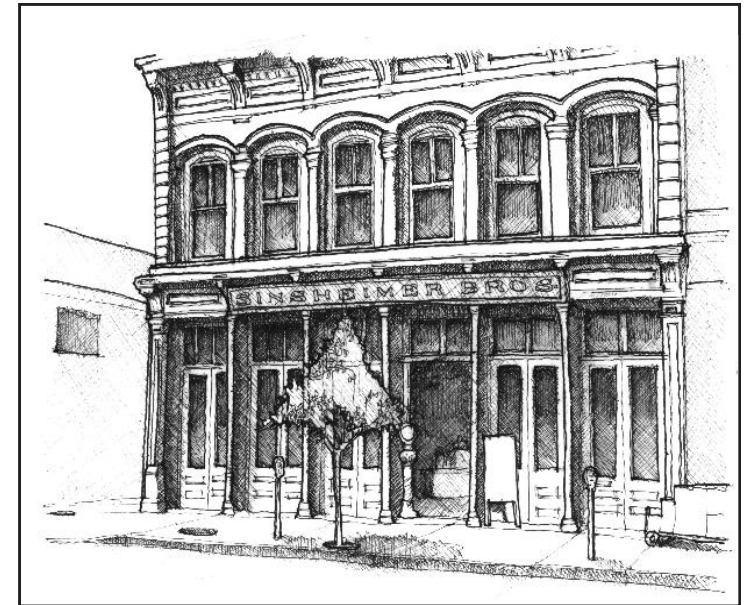


Figure 81 -- Windows and entry proportional to building height and width



This



Not this

Figure 82 -- Maintain the form and character established along the street frontage



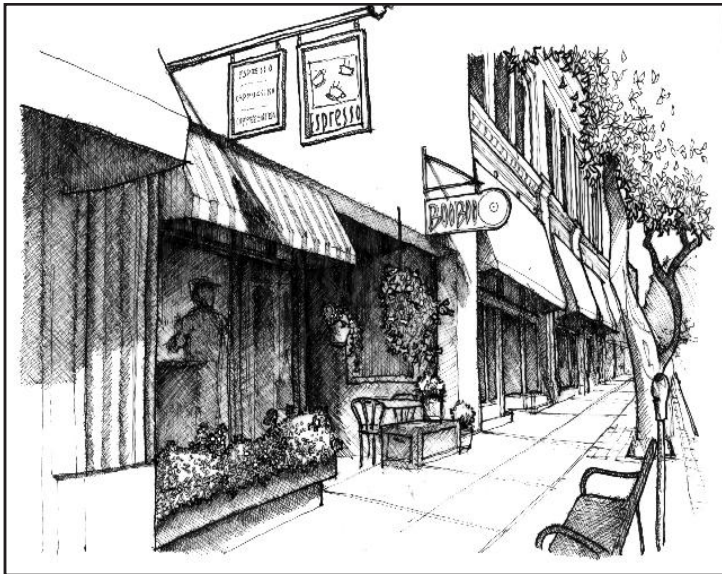


Figure 83

C. Façade design. New structures and remodels should provide storefront windows, doors, entries, transoms, awnings, cornice treatments and other architectural features that complement existing structures, without copying their architectural style.

- 1. Overall character.** In general, buildings should have either flat or stepped rooflines with parapets, and essentially flat facades. Walls with round or curvilinear lines, or large pointed or slanted rooflines should generally be avoided. Facade improvements to buildings listed on the inventory of historic places are subject to consideration and approval of the Landmarks Committee and, in certain circumstances, the Planning Commission (see Chapter I: Introduction and Applicability).
- 2. Proportions in relation to context.** Buildings should be designed with consideration of the characteristic proportions (relationship of height to width) of existing adjacent facades, as well as the rhythm, proportion, and spacing of their existing door and window openings. (Figure 84)

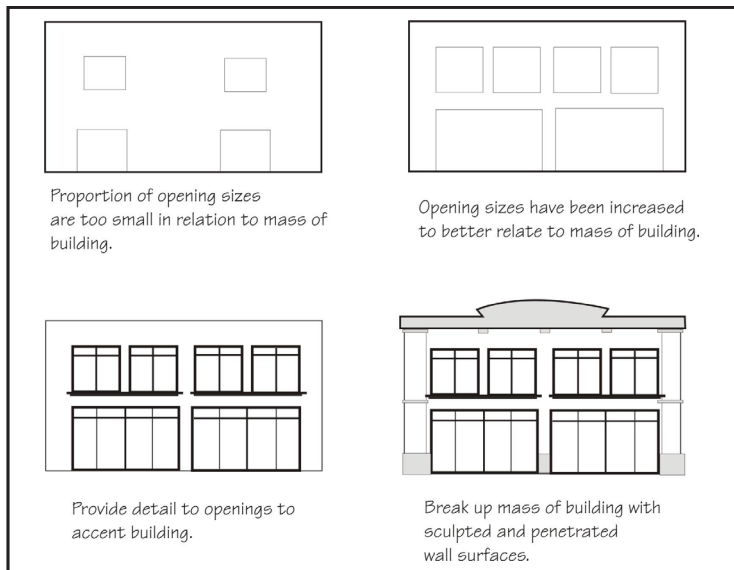


Figure 84 -- Building design should incorporate elements proportional to the height and width of the building face



3. **Storefront rhythm.** A new building facade that is proposed to be much “wider” than the existing characteristic facades on the street should be divided into a series of bays or components, defined by columns or masonry piers that frame windows, doors and bulkheads. Creating and reinforcing a facade rhythm helps tie the street together visually and provides pedestrians with features to mark their progress down the street. (Figure 85)
4. **Individual storefront proportions.** Storefronts should not overpower the building façade, and should be confined to the area framed by the support piers and the lintel above, consistent with classic “Main Street” architecture. (Figure 85)
5. **Wall surfaces.** Wall surfaces, particularly at the street level, should be varied and interesting, rather than unbroken and monolithic, because blank walls discourage pedestrian traffic. This can be achieved in a number of ways including:
 - a. Dividing the facade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass;
 - b. Constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads;
 - c. Providing recessed entries; and
 - d. Careful sizing, placement and overall design of signage that complements the form, scale and character of the building.
5. **Doorways.** Doorways should be recessed, as shown in Figure 86.

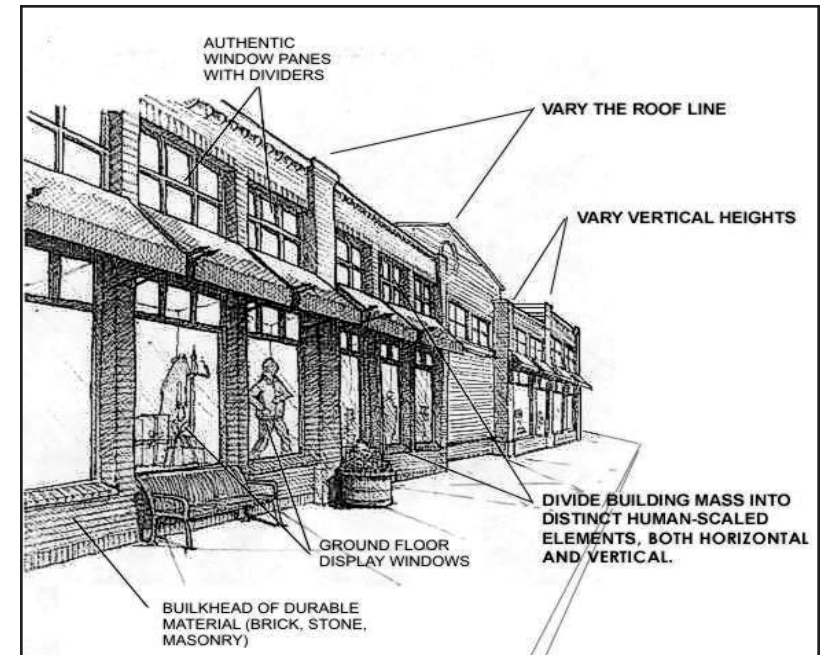


Figure 85 -- Storefront elements that promote a pedestrian scale

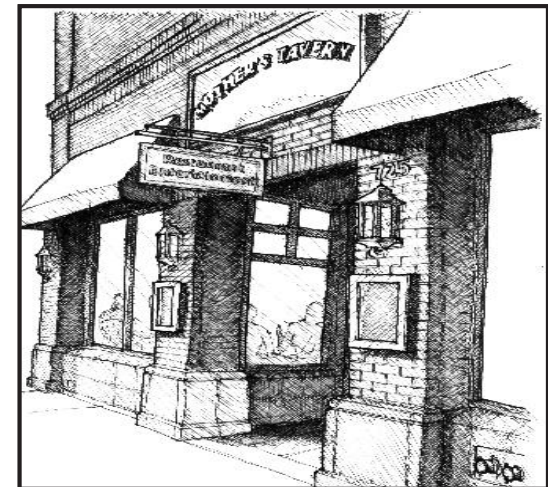


Figure 86 -- Recessed entry



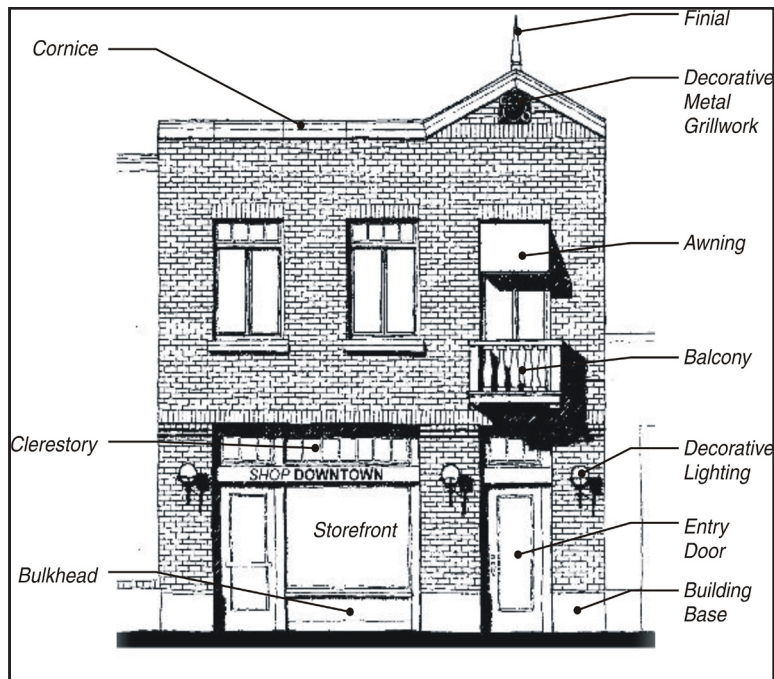


Figure 87 -- Components of a building face

6. Bulkheads. Storefront windows should not begin at the level of the sidewalk, but should sit above a base, commonly called a “bulkhead,” of 18 to 36 inches in height. Bulkheads should be designed as prominent and visible elements of building facades, and should be treated sensitively to ensure compatibility with the overall appearance of the building. Desirable materials for bulkhead facing include those already common in the downtown: ornamental glazed tile in deep rich hues, either plain or with Mediterranean or Mexican patterns; dark or light marble panels; and precast concrete.

D. Materials and architectural details. While downtown buildings have a variety of materials and architectural details, several consistent themes in these aspects of design in the downtown have helped to define its distinctive character.

1. Finish materials. The exterior materials of downtown buildings involve several aspects of color, texture, and materials. Materials with integral color such as hard smooth troweled plaster, tile, stone, and brick are encouraged. If the building’s exterior design is complicated, with many design features, the wall texture should be simple and subdued. However, if the building design is simple (perhaps more monolithic), a finely textured material, such as patterned masonry, can greatly enrich the building’s overall character.

Materials should complement those on significant adjacent buildings.

The following materials are considered appropriate for buildings within the downtown.

- a. Exterior plaster (smooth troweled preferred)
- b. Cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone), and precast concrete
- c. New or used face-brick
- d. Ceramic tiles (bulkhead or cornice)



- e. Clapboard (where appropriate)
- f. Glass block (transom)
- g. Clear glass windows

The following exterior finish materials are considered inappropriate in the downtown and are strongly discouraged:

- a. Mirrored glass and heavily tinted glass
- b. Windows with false divisions (i.e., a window where the glass continues uninterrupted behind a surface mounted mullion)
- c. Vinyl and aluminum siding
- d. Painted or baked enamel metal awnings
- e. Rough “Spanish lace” stucco finish, or similar finish
- f. Plywood siding
- g. Corrugated sheet metal
- h. Corrugated fiberglass
- i. Split face concrete block
- j. Exposed concrete block without integral color
- h. Neon accents are discouraged, especially in pedestrian areas



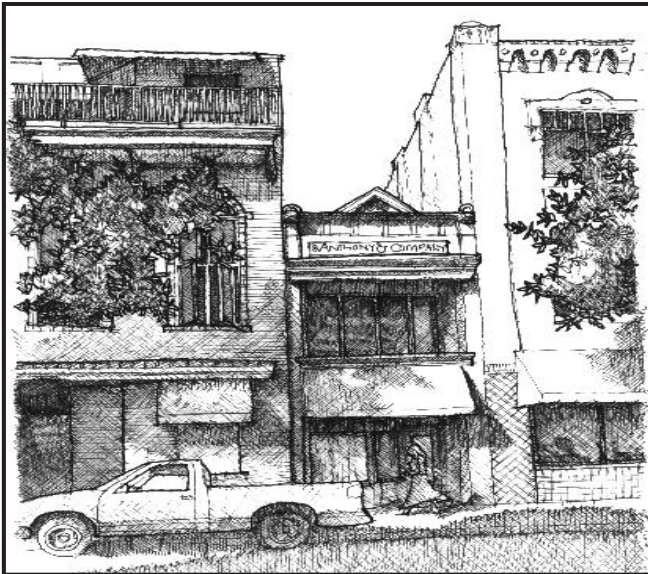


Figure 88 -- Storefront entrance

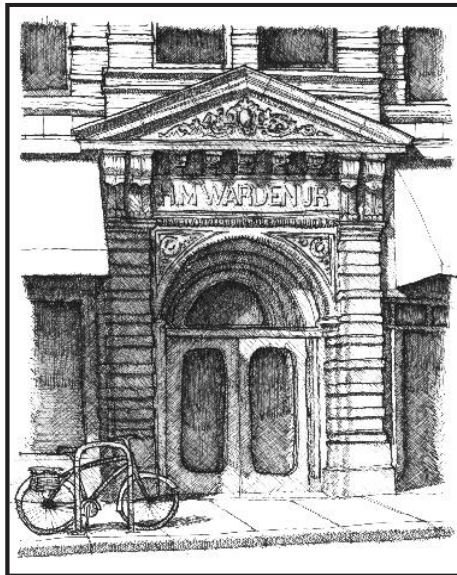


Figure 89 -- Recessed storefront entrance

2. **Remodeling.** Storefront remodeling often covers original decorative details, or retains them only as visual “leftovers.” Existing details should not be wasted in remodeling efforts. If enough remain, they can be restored as part of the original design. If only a few remain, they can be incorporated as design features in a new storefront. In either case, the design of changes to a façade should grow out of the remaining traditional details and create a harmonious background that emphasizes those details.
3. **Doorways.** Doors and storefront systems should be of materials and have details and ornament appropriate to the building wall materials (for example, an older brick building would more appropriately have wood and glass doors with brass fittings than aluminum-framed doors).
 - a. Storefront entrance doors should be recessed within the building façade to provide an area for pedestrians to transition from the interior space to the public sidewalk. The appropriate depth of the recess will depend upon the storefront design and available space, but should be at least the width of the entrance door. (Figures 88 and 89)
 - b. Doors themselves should be primarily of glass, to avoid conflicts between entering and exiting patrons.
 - c. Door and entry designs and materials should be compatible with the other storefront materials. Terrazzo and tile pavers are attractive and appropriate paving materials common in the downtown, while indoor/outdoor carpeting and wood planking are inappropriate materials.



4. **Windows.** Windows that allow pedestrians to see the activities within the ground floors of downtown buildings are important in maintaining the pedestrian orientation of the downtown. Ground floor windows adjacent to sidewalks encourage pedestrians to linger and improve safety, while extensive blank walls do not.
- When windows are added or changed, it is important that the design be compatible with the themes common on the same building and block. (Figure 90)
 - Use of clear glass (at least 88 percent light transmission) on the first floor is recommended. Introducing or changing the location or size of windows or other openings that alter the architectural rhythm or character of the original building is discouraged.
 - Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are not permitted. Any necessary security grilles should be placed inside, behind the window display area.
 - Traditional storefront transom windows should be retained whenever feasible. If the ceiling inside the structure has been lowered, the ceiling should be stepped up to meet the transom so that light will penetrate the interior of the building. (Figure 91)
 - Existing windows should be maintained, and not “walled-in” or darkened to provide more interior wall or storage space.

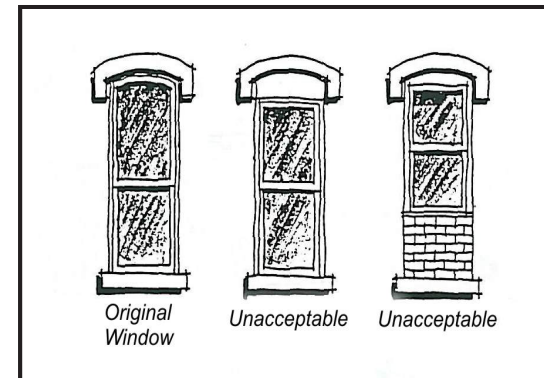


Figure 90 -- Replacement windows should be consistent with the style and quality of original windows



Figure 91 -- Storefront windows invite patrons to stop in and shop.



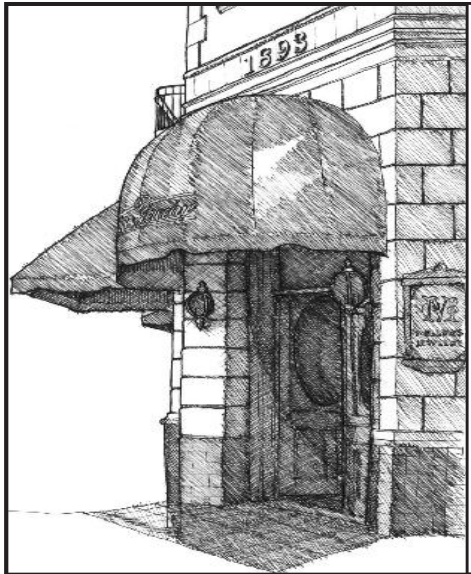


Figure 92



Figure 93

5. **Awnings.** Awnings should be retained and/or incorporated where feasible and compatible with the storefront. (Figures 92 and 93)
 - a. Where the facade of a commercial building is divided into distinct bays (sections defined by vertical architectural elements, such as masonry piers), awnings should be placed among the vertical elements rather than overlapping them. The awning design should respond to the scale, proportion and rhythm created by the bay elements and fit into the space created by the bay.
 - b. Awning shape should relate to the shape of the window or door opening. Barrel-shaped awnings should be used to complement arched windows while square awnings should be used on rectangular windows.
 - c. Awnings may not be internally illuminated.
 - d. Awnings can be either fixed or retractable.
 - e. The materials and color of awnings need to be carefully chosen. The use of second floor awnings should be coordinated with lower storefront awnings. Canvas is the most appropriate material for awnings. Metal, plastic (vinyl), or other glossy materials are not appropriate.
 - f. Awnings should be functional and at least four feet wide.
 - g. A single building face with multiple tenants should use consistent awning design and color on each building floor, unless the building architecture differentiates the separate tenancies.

6. Other details. A number of other details should be incorporated into exterior building design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. These details include such items as:

- a. Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets
- b. Metal grillwork, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways or gates
- c. Decorative scuppers, catches and down-spouts, preferably of copper
- d. Balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc.
- e. Flag or banner pole brackets
- f. Crafted artworks

E. Public spaces, plazas and courtyards. Public spaces on downtown sites should be designed as extensions of the public sidewalk by providing pedestrian amenities such as benches and fountains, and by continuing the pavement treatment of the sidewalk. (Figure 94)

1. Plazas and courtyards are encouraged within the downtown. Windows on the street that open to the sidewalk (e.g., restaurants and cafes) help bring vitality to the street and are encouraged.
2. Primary access to public plazas and courtyards should be from the street; secondary access may be from retail shops, restaurants, offices, and other uses.
3. Shade trees or architectural elements that provide shelter and relief from direct sunlight should be provided.
4. Courtyards should be buffered from parking areas or drive aisles by low walls (max. height of 3 feet), landscaping, or other features to clearly define the edges of the pedestrian space.



Figure 94



5. Ample seating should be provided.
6. Bicycle parking should be provided.
7. Textured paving for walkways and public space should complement the architectural style of a project and help tie the building and site planning elements together.

2.6 GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC COMMERCIAL USES

AUTO DEALERSHIPS (new and used autos)

Auto and other vehicle dealerships are typically characterized by large outdoor areas for the storage and display of vehicles, with comparatively minor portions of the site being used for structures and customer parking.

A. Site planning. Auto dealership site plans should incorporate the following features.

1. On-site areas for the unloading of vehicles from carriers.
2. Outdoor vehicle displays oriented toward streets are limited to permanent at-grade display areas with all structures architecturally consistent with the buildings on the site.
3. Storage and outdoor activity areas not for vehicle display (e.g., car washing, stacking areas for vehicles waiting for service, etc.) that are screened from view from public streets and any nearby residential area. (Figure 95)

B. Building design. Buildings on the site of an auto dealership should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.

1. Buildings should be consistent on all sides in terms of architectural style and exterior finish materials, and well articulated. (Figure 96)



Figure 95 -- Landscaping provided between the display area and the sidewalk while preserving visibility of products



2. The showroom should be oriented toward the major public street bordering the site.
3. Walls and fences should be architecturally consistent with the buildings. Chain link fencing visible from the street is strongly discouraged.
4. Service uses and areas should be entirely contained within the buildings. Internal vehicle access should be provided to each individual service bay. The access points to the service bays should not be visible to the public.
5. All storage areas should be screened from public view from streets and adjoining properties by walls/fencing and landscaping designed to complement the form, character and materials of the buildings.
6. Provisions should be made for a vehicle washing area. The wash rack should not be located so as to be visible or audible from any public street or residential area.
7. Landscaping should be provided along all display perimeters, but should be maintained at a low level (less than 32 inches), except for street trees along street frontages.



Figure 96 -- Car dealership with consistent use of color and materials



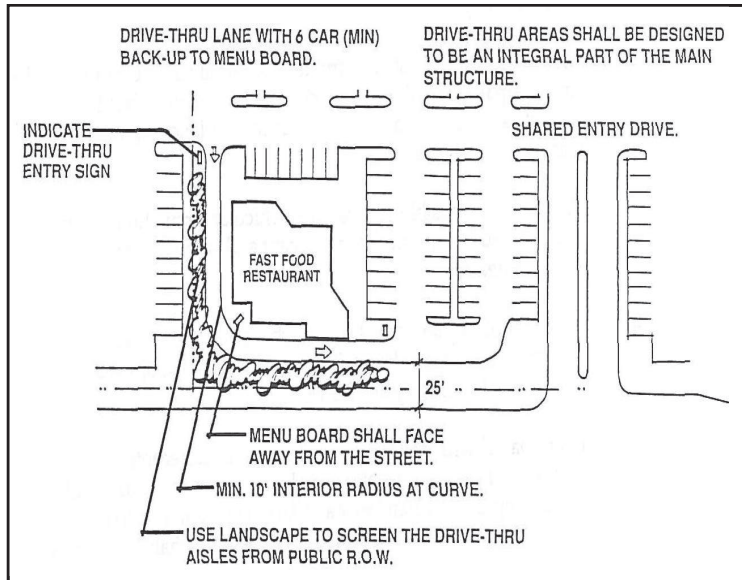


Figure 97 -- Drive-thru should be screened from street view



Figure 98

DRIVE-UP FACILITIES AND FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

Restaurants that specialize in the rapid delivery of food orders, high volumes of “to-go” orders, and clientele comprised primarily of motorists, present special design challenges. Without strong local design guidance, they tend to look identical from city to city, and can play a significant role in the loss of individual community identity.

A. Site planning/circulation. A structure accommodating a fast food restaurant should be placed at the back of the sidewalk, with parking and auto circulation areas located to the rear or side of the building, but not on the street side of a corner lot. (Figure 97)

1. The site plan for a drive-up business should be designed to prevent the disruption of pedestrian flow and activities on adjacent and surrounding properties.
2. Buildings should be oriented toward the street with pedestrian walkways separated from parking and drive-up facilities.
3. The arrangement of buildings, parking and drive-thru facilities should be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians through the use of court yards, plazas, outdoor dining areas and landscaped pathways that promote safe and convenient pedestrian access.
4. Parking and drive-thru facilities should be screened with landscaped berms and/or low walls integrated with the form and materials of the building.
5. Landscape plans should incorporate trellises, arbors, and planters to help separate parking and drive-thru facilities from pedestrian access and outdoor dining/gathering areas.
6. Drive-thru lanes should be at least 111 feet in length and capable of accommodating 6 vehicles from entry to pick-up window.

B. Building design. Fast food restaurants should avoid the use of “stock” franchise architecture, and instead be designed in compliance with the other guidelines in this document for commercial structures that emphasize the importance of considering the design context of Modesto. (Figures 98 and 99)

1. Play structures should be completely enclosed, preferably inside a building, and integrated with the architecture of the building. In all cases a play structure should be subordinate in scale to the building.

C. Signs. Signs for drive-up facilities should be pedestrian oriented and of small scale, consistent with the applicable provisions of the City’s Sign Regulations. Menu boards should face away from the street, screened from street view, and incorporated into the landscaping along the drive-thru.



Figure 99

OFFICES

Office structures differ from other commercial buildings in that their intensity of use is lower while building scale is typically larger, primary activities are not limited to the first floor, and there are fewer entries along building perimeters. Without careful attention in design to building form and mass, and street level features, these structures can impair the pedestrian orientation of a streetscape.

A. Site planning. Office site plans should incorporate the following features.

1. Office buildings should be “built to” the minimum required front setback.
2. Surface parking should be located towards the rear of the site or at the side of the building, with bicycle parking convenient to building entrances.
3. Multi-story buildings should not be placed adjacent to residential private open space areas (e.g., rear yards).



Figure 100 -- Entrances to offices should be distinct and easily identified



2.0 Design Guidelines for Commercial Development



Figure 101 -- Large office complex should be surrounded by a landscaped 'island' that helps soften its appearance from the street

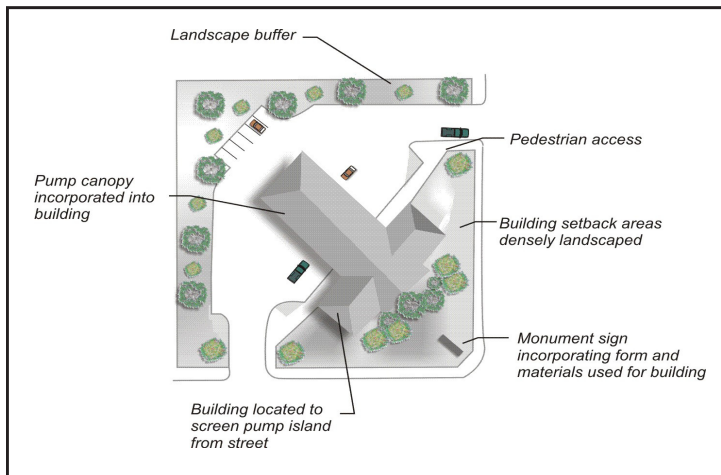


Figure 102 -- Service station bays should be screened from view by building placement and landscaping

4. The primary building entrance should face the street.

B. Building design. Office buildings should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.

1. Depending upon adjacent land uses and building scale and mass, it may be appropriate to place the first floor at the minimum setbacks, with upper floors set back further.
2. Building surfaces over two stories high or 40 feet in length should provide vertical and horizontal wall plane offsets.
3. Office structure facades should have extensive window areas.
4. The primary building entrance should be designed as a highly visible and significant architectural feature. (Figure 101)
5. Decorative elements should be focused at the pedestrian level; more architectural simplicity may be appropriate on upper floors.

SERVICE STATIONS

A service station (with or without a car wash) is an intensive auto-oriented use that is characterized by large areas of pavement.

A. Site planning. Service site plans should incorporate the following features. (Figure 102)

1. The site should be designed to accommodate anticipated car and truck (including fuel delivery truck) circulation patterns and minimize paving.
2. Driveway cuts should be limited to two per site, unless otherwise allowed by the Public Works Director or his/her designee for valid circulation reasons.



3. Service and wash bays should not face streets or residential properties. The visibility of service and wash bays should be otherwise minimized.
4. Gas pump canopies should be screened by the main building structure. The retail market/office building segment of the facility should be oriented along the street frontage, to encourage pedestrian use. Bicycle parking should be provided where the facility includes a convenience store.

B. Building design. Service station buildings should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.

1. Site specific architectural design is strongly encouraged. Corporate or franchise “stock” design solutions are strongly discouraged.
2. All structures on the site should be architecturally consistent and relate to an overall architectural theme.
3. High quality building materials are encouraged. Reflective, glossy, and florescent surfaces are discouraged.
4. The roof design of all structures, including pump canopies, should incorporate roof treatments with a low to moderate pitch. Flat roofs or mansard roof applications are strongly discouraged unless they are consistent with an established and attractive architectural theme in the site vicinity. (refer to Figure 18 on page 2.0-16)
5. Gas pump canopies should not be internally illuminated. Light fixtures should be completely recessed into the canopy so that the light source is concealed.
6. Each pump island should include stacking area for at least two vehicles (40 feet) at one end of the pump island.



Figure 103 -- A service station monument sign located in the landscaped setback area to provide sufficient sight distance in both directions.



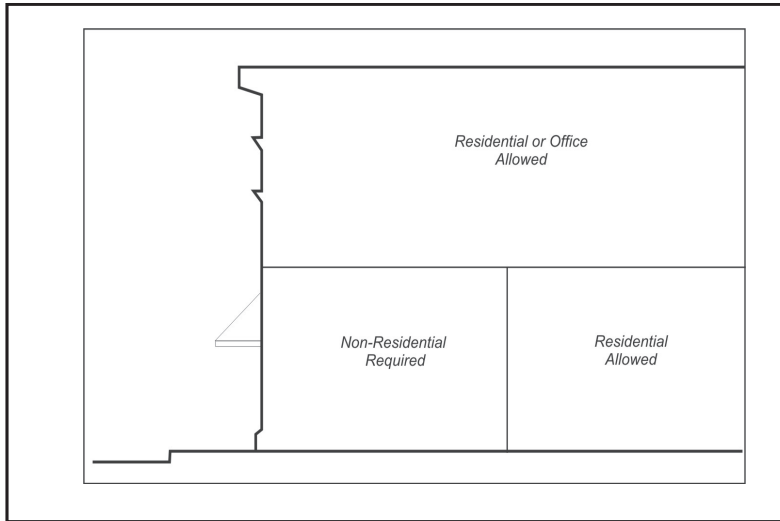


Figure 104 -- Elements of mixed-use development

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

A mixed use project combines residential and nonresidential uses on the same site, with the residential units typically located above the nonresidential uses (vertical mixed use). Residential units may be also allowed at ground level behind street-fronting non-residential uses (horizontal mixed use) only under limited circumstances (Figure 104).

A. Design considerations. A mixed use project should be designed to achieve the following objectives.

1. The design should provide for internal compatibility between the residential and non-residential uses on the site.
2. Potential glare, noise, odors, traffic, and other potentially significant impacts on residents should be minimized to allow a compatible mix of residential and nonresidential uses on the same site.
3. The design should take into consideration potential impacts on adjacent properties and should include specific design features to minimize potential impacts.
4. The design should ensure that the residential units are of a residential character, and that appropriate privacy between residential units and other uses on the site is provided.
5. Site planning and building design should provide for convenient pedestrian access from the public street into the nonresidential portions of the project, through courtyards, plazas, walkways, or similar features.
6. Site planning and building design should be compatible with and enhance the adjacent and surrounding residential neighborhood in terms of building design, color, exterior materials and amenities, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, roof styles, scale, and signage.



B. Mix of uses.

1. Within the downtown and other pedestrian areas, at least 75 percent of the floor area in each mixed use building should be devoted to non-residential use. This requirement is intended to allow mixed use projects within the downtown zone, while ensuring that the City's vacant commercial land resources are utilized primarily for commercial use.
2. Other zoning districts. Within other zoning districts, the floor area of the nonresidential portions of a mixed use project should equal at least 40 percent of the combined residential and nonresidential floor area on the entire site.
3. Allowable nonresidential uses. A mixed use project may combine residential uses with any other use allowed in the applicable zoning district.

C. Density. The residential component of a mixed use project shall comply with the maximum and minimum density requirements of the applicable General Plan designation and zoning district.

D. Site layout and project design standards. Each proposed mixed use project shall comply with the property development standards of the applicable zoning district, and the following requirements.

1. Location of units. Residential units shall not occupy ground floor space within the first 75 feet of floor area measured from each building face adjacent to a public or private street.
2. Parking. In order to encourage the development of residential uses in existing and new commercial areas, the use of shared parking provisions should be incorporated into mixed use projects in compliance with applicable provisions of the Zoning Code.



3. Loading areas. Commercial loading areas should be located away from residential units and should be screened from view from the residential portion of the project to the maximum extent feasible.
4. Refuse and recycling areas. Areas for the collection and storage of refuse and recyclable materials should be located on the site in locations that are convenient for both the residential and nonresidential uses.

E. Performance standards.

1. Lighting. Lighting for commercial uses should be appropriately shielded to limit impacts on the residential units.
2. Noise. Each residential unit should be designed and constructed to minimize adverse impacts from nonresidential project noise, in compliance with applicable provisions of the Zoning Code.



CHAPTER III

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 GENERAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. General design objectives. The following guidelines address the overall approach to industrial project design favored by the City.

1. A variety of building and parking setbacks should be provided to avoid long monotonous building facades and to create diversity within the project.
2. Buildings should be located on “open space islands”, which may be formally landscaped or set in a natural open space environment. The main entrance of the building should not directly abut the paved parking area. A minimum seven-foot landscape strip should be provided between parking areas and the portions of the buildings where parking is provided.
3. Building setbacks should be provided proportionate to the scale of the structure and in consideration of existing adjacent development. Larger structures require more setback area for a balance of scale and so as not to impose visually on neighboring uses.
4. The placement of structures to create plazas, courts, or gardens is encouraged. Setback areas can often be used to provide space for patio and outdoor eating areas.
5. The main elements of preferred business park/industrial site design include the following:
 - a. Easily identifiable site access;
 - b. Service areas located at the side and rear of buildings;



Figure 105



Figure 106





Figure 107

- c. Convenient access, visitor parking and on-site circulation;
- d. Screening of outdoor storage, work areas, and equipment;
- e. Emphasis on the main building entry and landscaping;
- f. Placement of buildings to provide plazas and courtyards;
- g. Landscaped open space to soften the transition between parking and the buildings and to provide gathering places for employees; and
- h. Multiple buildings clustered on the same site to create a campus-like setting that takes advantage of shared open space and pedestrian amenities.

3.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR INDUSTRIAL BUILDING DESIGN

- A. Style and character.** The inherently utilitarian nature of industrial buildings need not prevent the design of attractive industrial areas within the city. The architectural style of buildings in the business park/industrial category should incorporate clean simple lines. Buildings should project an image of high quality through the use of appropriate durable materials such as smooth plaster, stucco, brick, or masonry and well landscaped settings.
- B. Mass and scale.** As a category of structure type, typically bland industrial buildings often present unattractive, unadorned, “box-like” forms. A variety of design techniques should be used to help overcome this situation and to produce a cohesive design statement.
 - 1. Provide articulated facades with offsets and recessed entries.
 - 2. Blank walls between breaks in the building facade should be avoided especially where visible from streets and walkways.
 - 3. Entries to structures should portray a quality appearance while being architecturally tied into the overall building composition and scale.



4. Alteration of colors, textures, and materials should be used to produce diversity and enhance architectural forms.
5. A compatible variety of siding materials (i.e., masonry, concrete texturing, cement or plaster) should be used to produce effects of texture and relief that provide architectural interest.

C. Undesirable elements. Design elements which are undesirable and should be avoided include:

1. Large blank, unarticulated wall surfaces;
2. Exposed, untreated precision block walls;
3. Chain link fence and barbed wire;
4. False fronts;
5. Steeply pitched Mansard roofs;
6. Materials with high maintenance (such as stained wood, shingles or light gauge metal siding);
7. Mirror window glazing;
8. Loading bays or doors facing a street; and
9. Exposed roof drains and downspouts, except where integrated with the colors, materials, and other details of the building architecture.

D. Roofs. Roof design contributes strongly to the image of a structure as having quality and permanence.

1. Unless roofing materials are a part of the design element (for example, tiles, concrete or metal roofing elements), the ridge line elevation should not exceed the parapet elevation.



2. Piecemeal mansard roofs (used on a portion of the building perimeter only) should be avoided. Mansard roofs should wrap around the entire perimeter of the structure.
3. Rooftop equipment should be screened from view of parking areas, walkways and streets through the use of parapets or enclosures consistent with the architectural character of the building.

3.3 SITE PLANNING AND PARKING LOT/LOADING AREAS

- A. Parking and circulation.** Parking lots should not be the dominant visual elements of the site. Large expansive paved areas located between the street and the building are to be avoided in favor of smaller multiple lots separated by landscaping and buildings and located to the sides and rear of buildings whenever possible.

1. Site access and internal circulation should be designed in a straight forward manner which emphasizes safety and efficiency. The circulation system should be designed to reduce conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. (Figure 108)
2. Entrances and exits to and from parking and loading facilities should be clearly marked with appropriate directional signage where multiple access points are provided.
3. Parking lots adjacent to and visible from public streets should be adequately screened from view through the use of rolling earth berms which accommodate drainage, low screen walls, changes in elevation, landscaping or combinations thereof.

- B. Loading facilities.** Loading bays are key elements of the function of many industrial buildings, but can be problematic in creating an overall building design that is attractive from the public view. (Figure 108)

1. To alleviate the unsightly appearance of loading facilities for industrial uses, these areas should not be located at the front of buildings where it is difficult to adequately screen them from public view.

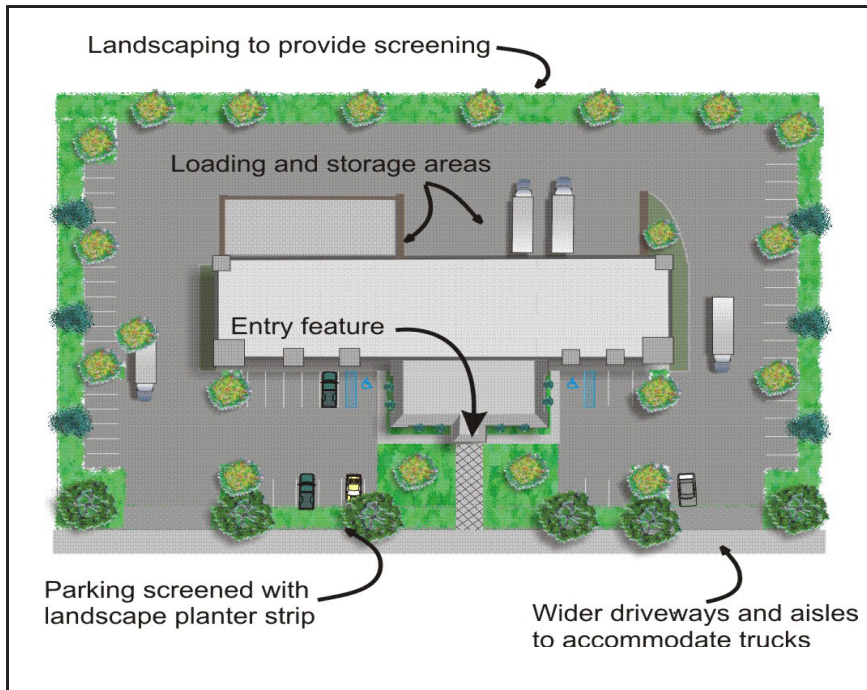


Figure 108 -- Industrial development should be designed to accommodate large trucks and to separate loading activities from parking areas for employees and customers



Loading facilities are generally more appropriate at the rear of the building where they are more functional and can be more effectively screened.

2. When site features prevent the placement of loading facilities at the rear of the building, loading docks and doors may be at the side of the building but should be screened from view by a combination of screen walls, ornamental landscaping and/or portions of the building. Gates should be located so as not to allow views from the public right-of-way into loading areas.
3. Rolling shutter doors located on the inside of the building are the preferred method for providing large loading doors while keeping a clean, uncluttered appearance from the exterior.
4. Loading areas should be designed so that trucks will not need to back-in from the public street onto the site. These maneuvers are unsafe, and should not be utilized except under extenuating circumstances.

C. Landscaping. Landscaping should be used on industrial sites to define areas such as entrances to buildings and parking lots, define the edges of various land uses, provide transition between neighboring properties (buffering), and provide screening for outdoor storage, loading and equipment areas.

1. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and be of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended purpose.
2. Landscaping around the entire base of buildings is recommended to soften the edge between the parking lot and the structure and the view of the structure from the public right-of-way. Landscaping should accent building entrances to provide a focal point. (Figure 109)
3. Use berming at the edge of the building in conjunction with landscaping to reduce the apparent height of the structure and its mass, especially along street frontages.



Figure 109 -- Landscaping should accentuate the building entrance



Figure 110 -- Landscaping should be used in conjunction with fencing to maximize screening and to enhance site security.





Figure 111 -- Utility lines screened by landscaping

4. Development in areas with native vegetation or located within foothill, riparian, viewshed or other unique natural environments are encouraged to use landscape designs and material which are sensitive to and compatible with existing vegetation.
 5. Plants should be drought-tolerant and suitable to the climate of Modesto.
- D. Screening.** The nature of some industrial uses and their sites may inevitably result in unsightly features. In these cases, screening features should be carefully designed so that their appearance is not equally unattractive.
1. Exterior storage and loading areas should be confined to portions of the site least visible to public view where screening needs are minimized.
 2. Where screening is required, a combination of elements should be used including solid masonry walls, berms, and landscaping. Chain link fencing with wood or metal slating is an acceptable screening material only for areas not visible from a public street or parking lot.
 3. Where permanent screening is required between a manufacturing zone and a residential zone, a decorative, solid masonry screening wall is required. Evergreen landscaping should be placed adjacent to the wall.
 4. Screening of mechanical equipment, backflow preventers etc. (Figure 111)



E. Metal buildings. All metal buildings should be designed to have architectural interest and articulation as is encouraged with conventionally built structures. Metal buildings are strongly discouraged unless they are of meritorious design. (Figure 112)

1. In addition to architectural metal panels, exterior surfaces should include either stucco, plaster, glass, stone, brick, or decorative masonry. Stock, “off-the-shelf” metal buildings are highly discouraged as main structures unless the design is consistent with the purpose and intent of these design guidelines.
2. Metal buildings should employ a variety of building forms, shapes, colors, materials and other architectural treatments to add visual interest and variety to the building. Architectural treatments should emphasize the primary entrance to the building.
3. All exterior surfaces of metal buildings that have a risk of being struck and damaged by vehicles or machinery should be protected with landscaped areas, raised concrete curbs, and/or traffic barriers.
4. The use of metal finishes should be limited to architectural detailing and ornamentation such as breaking up wall massing with metal banding; highlighting recessed wall panels, columns, or other components; emphasizing main entries or office portions of a buildings. Metal finishes should be limited to colorized aluminum or steel. Blank walls are prohibited.



Figure 112 -- An example of an attractive metal building



3.4 SIGNS

A. Signs. Every structure should be designed with a precise concept for adequate signing. Provisions for sign placement, sign scale in relation to building scale, and the readability of the sign should be considered in developing the overall project's signing concept.

1. All signs should be highly compatible with the structure and site design relative to color, material, and placement. (Figures 114, 115)
2. Monument-type signs are preferred for business identification; pole signs should be avoided. Where several tenants occupy the same site, individual wall mounted signs are appropriate in combination with a monument sign identifying the business park complex and address. (Figures 113, 116)
3. The use of carved wood, or backlit individually cut letter signs is encouraged.
4. The industrial site should be appropriately signed to give directions to loading and receiving areas, visitor parking and other special areas.



Figure 113 -- Monument sign for an industrial park



Figure 114



Figure 115



Figure 116



