

BLACK DIAMOND DESIGN GUIDELINES
for
The Historic Town Center



Adopted June 18, 2009

Introduction and Purpose

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan establishes a blueprint for growth that will both preserve and enhance the city's physical characteristics and community values. These design guidelines for the Town Center District provide specific recommendations to ensure that this district can maintain its unique, semirural, small town atmosphere while accommodating compact forms of new development.

Site Design

New development in the Historic Town Center district should place a strong visual emphasis on the street, and support active public space. Fulfillment of these broad design objectives requires an integrated approach to site planning. Buildings, parking, service access, plazas and courtyards must each recognize the important relationship between public and private space.

Building Design

The overriding objective of the building design objectives is to establish a high standard of design for new development within the community. The hallmark of design excellence will be to create places of enduring quality that uniquely fit into the district's small town setting. In particular, new development adjacent to historic structures should respect the existing fabric and provide a transition between the old and the new.

SITE DESIGN

3



Seating



Covered porch



Bollards

A. Orientation to the Street

Intent

The life of the Historic Town Center district is closely tied to the character of its public space. Collectively, buildings configure and shape the streetscape and other open spaces. New buildings should be located towards the street, at or near the sidewalk to promote community commercial activity, and heighten the presence and maintain the identity of the historic town center.

Guidelines

1. Locate and orient buildings to define public streets and civic spaces. In general, build up to the sidewalk and limit gaps to the minimum necessary to accommodate parking and access. Buildings with no setback need to include two or more of the following. Buildings that setback up to 10 feet from the back of sidewalk need to include four or more of the following:
 - a. Covered porch or boardwalk
 - b. Pedestrian scale bollard or other accent lighting
 - c. Special paving, such as colored/stained concrete, brick, or other unit paver
 - d. Seating, such as benches, tables, or low seating walls
 - e. Water feature
 - f. Sculptural art
 - g. Another feature that meets the intent with approval of the Community Development Director

Note: furnishings must be approved by the City

SITE DESIGN

4

B. Parking Lot Location

Intent

To locate parking in a manner that is as visually unobtrusive as possible, and provides safe, convenient access without detracting from the pedestrian environment.

Guidelines

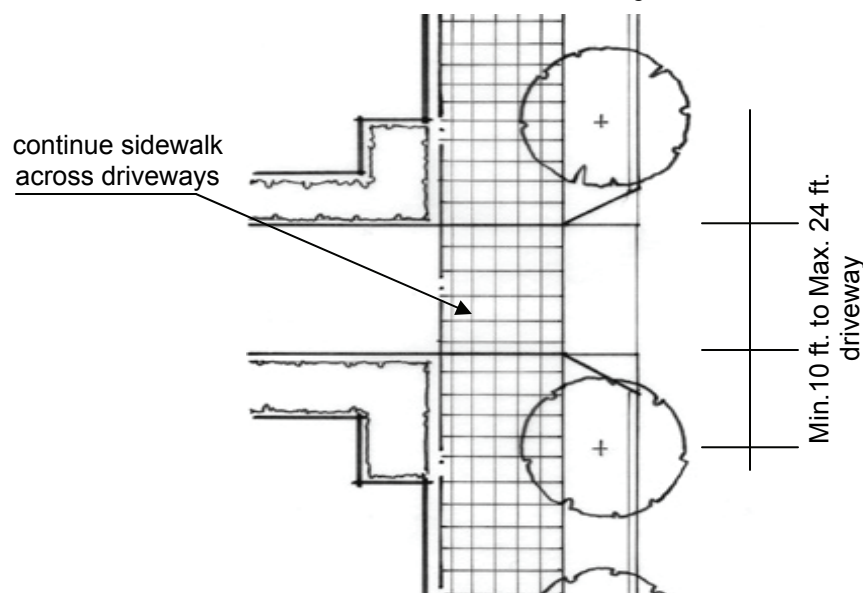
1. Parking lots shall be located behind or to the side of buildings.
2. Parking lots shall not abut street intersections (corner lots).
3. Enhance pedestrian safety by reducing and consolidating driveways, while providing for adequate access:
 - a. Distance between curb cuts in the same parcel or development shall not be less than 100 feet.
 - b. Driveways that cross sidewalks shall continue sidewalk pattern and material across the driveway.
 - c. Driveways shall not exceed 24' in width.
4. No parking stalls or drive lanes shall be placed between the building and the street.



Parking to the side of the building



Parking to the rear of the building



SITE DESIGN

5



Use landscaping and walls to screen parking



Screen surface parking from public view

C. Parking Lot Screening

Intent

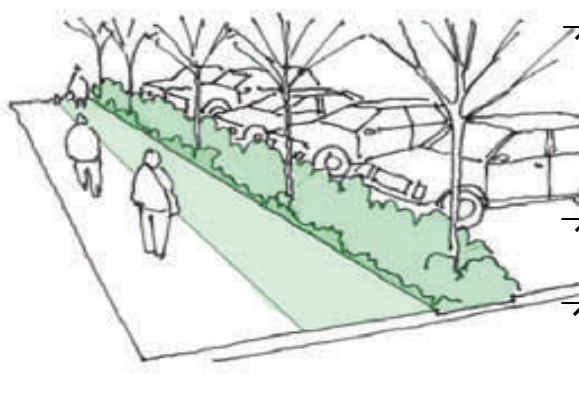
To reduce the impacts of surface parking.

Guidelines

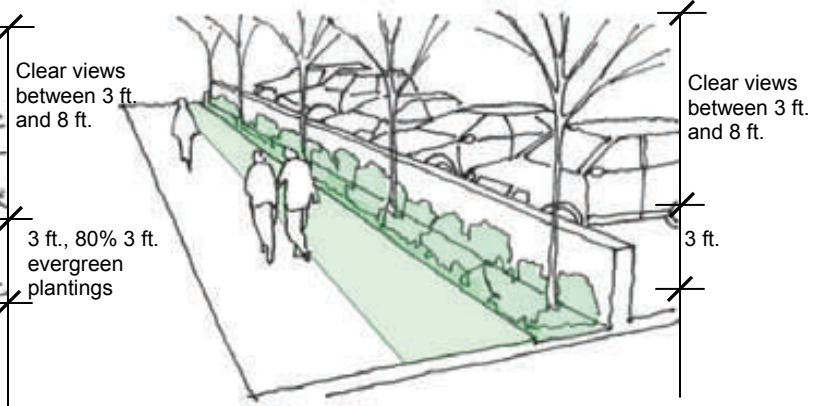
1. Parking lots located beside buildings shall be screened from the right-of-way with one or more of the following treatments:
 - a. Landscaping to sufficiently screen the first 3 feet in height.
 - b. Low walls made of decorative concrete, masonry, or other similar material and not exceeding a height of 3 feet.
 - c. Raised planter walls planted with a minimum of 80% evergreen shrubs not to exceed 3 feet in height.
2. Reduce visual impact of surface parking lots.

Where the parking lot is located to the side of the building and partially abuts the public right-of-way, one tree for every six spaces shall be provided;
Where the parking is behind the building and not visible from the public right-of-way, one tree for every eight spaces shall be provided.

note: no planting strip shall be less than 3 feet wide, 6 feet if trees are included



Example landscaping meeting screening requirement



Examples of low wall and landscaping

SITE DESIGN

6

D. Pedestrian Connections

Intent

The Historic Town Center district should connect through a network of public spaces and paths. New development should improve the pedestrian environment by making it easier, safer, and more comfortable to walk between businesses, to the sidewalk, to transit stops, and through parking lots.

Guidelines

1. Pedestrian connections shall be clearly defined with a combination of two or more of the following elements:
 - 6 inch vertical curb in combination with a raised walkway.
 - a trellis, special railing, bollards, and/or other architectural features to accent the walkway at key points.
 - a continuous landscape area minimum 3 feet wide (6 feet min. if trees are included) on at least one side of the walkway.
2. Pedestrian connections shall be reinforced with pedestrian-scale lighting to aid in way-finding.
3. Pedestrian walkways shall include clear sight-lines to building entrances and shall not be less than 4 feet wide.



Provide separated pedestrian connections to and through parking



Provide separated pedestrian connections to and through parking. Walkways should connect to the surrounding city pedestrian network, including sidewalks and crosswalks

SITE DESIGN

7



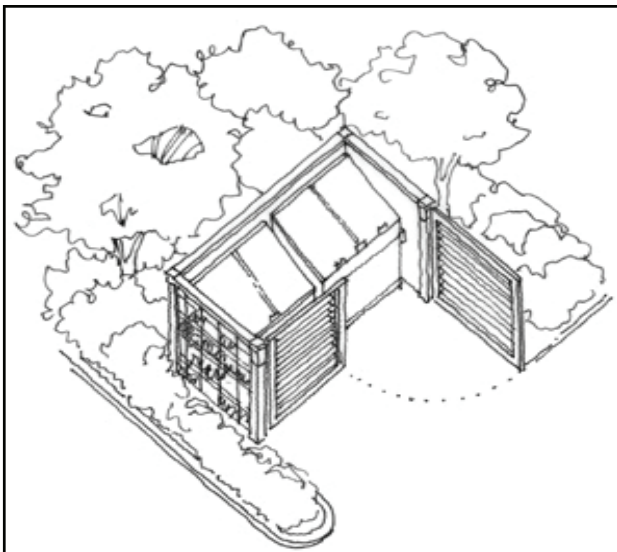
E. Screening of Trash and Service Areas

Intent

To reduce the impact of service, loading, and trash/recycling areas.

Guidelines

1. Service, loading and trash/recycling collection areas shall be screened from public view with solid evergreen plant material or architectural treatment similar to the design of the adjacent building.
2. Chain link is prohibited.



Screening with (a) natural material, (b) brick and plantings, and (c) a combination of heavy wood and vine covered trellis.

note: alternatives may be considered if designs meet the intent and are approved by the Community Development Director.

BUILDING DESIGN

8

A. Building Entrance

Intent

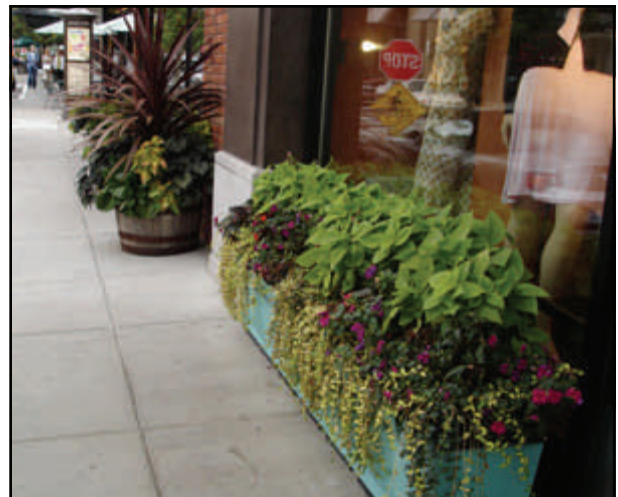
To ensure that entrances are easily identifiable and accessible from streets and sidewalks.

Guidelines

1. Primary entrances shall be located so that they are visible from the public right-of-way.
2. Main entrances shall have weather protection in the form of an awning, canopy or covered porch.
3. Main entrances shall include three or more of the following:
 - a. Pedestrian lighting
 - b. Decorative paving
 - c. Special materials like ornamental tile
 - d. Side lights
 - e. Clerestory
 - f. Landscaped pots and/or window boxes
 - g. Corner Entrance
 - h. Or other elements approved by the Community Development Director



Consider placing the main building entrance at a street corner, where feasible



Use design elements such as light fixtures, potted plants, canopies and special paving to accentuate a buildings entrance at the street

BUILDING DESIGN

9



Vary the three dimensional character of the building from bottom to top

B. Massing and Bulk

Intent

Reduce the apparent bulk of multi-story buildings and maintain a pedestrian scale compatible with Black Diamond's character.

Guidelines

Buildings above 30 feet in height shall:

1. Distinguish a "base" at ground level using articulation and materials such as stone, masonry, or decorative concrete.
2. The "top" of the building will emphasize a distinct profile or outline with elements such as a projecting parapet, cornice, upper level setback or pitched roof line.
3. The "middle" of the building may be distinguished by a change in materials or color, windows, balconies, or setbacks.



Rely on building massing and materials to place a strong visual emphasis on the street; change in materials are used to reduce the perceived scale of the building

BUILDING DESIGN

10

C. Transparency

Intent

Improve the pedestrian experience and safety by providing vision glass at the ground level.

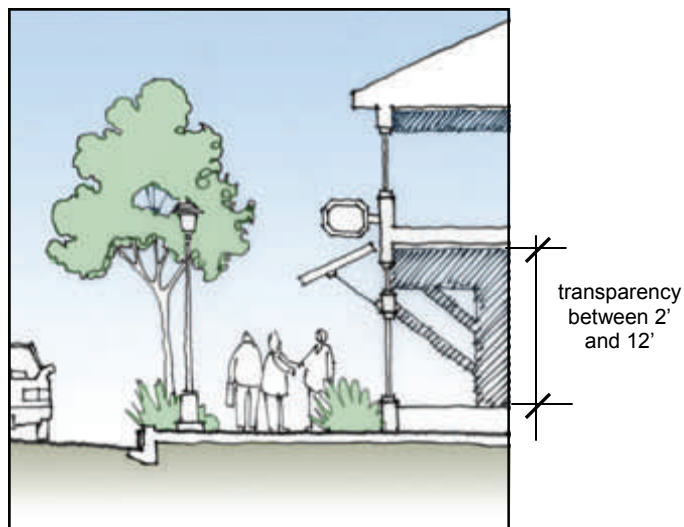
Guidelines

For new commercial buildings in the Town Center:

1. A minimum of 60% of any ground floor facade between 2 feet and 12 feet above grade and facing a street or public space shall be comprised of clear, "vision" glass.



Generous street-level shop windows and entrances animate the street



BUILDING DESIGN

11



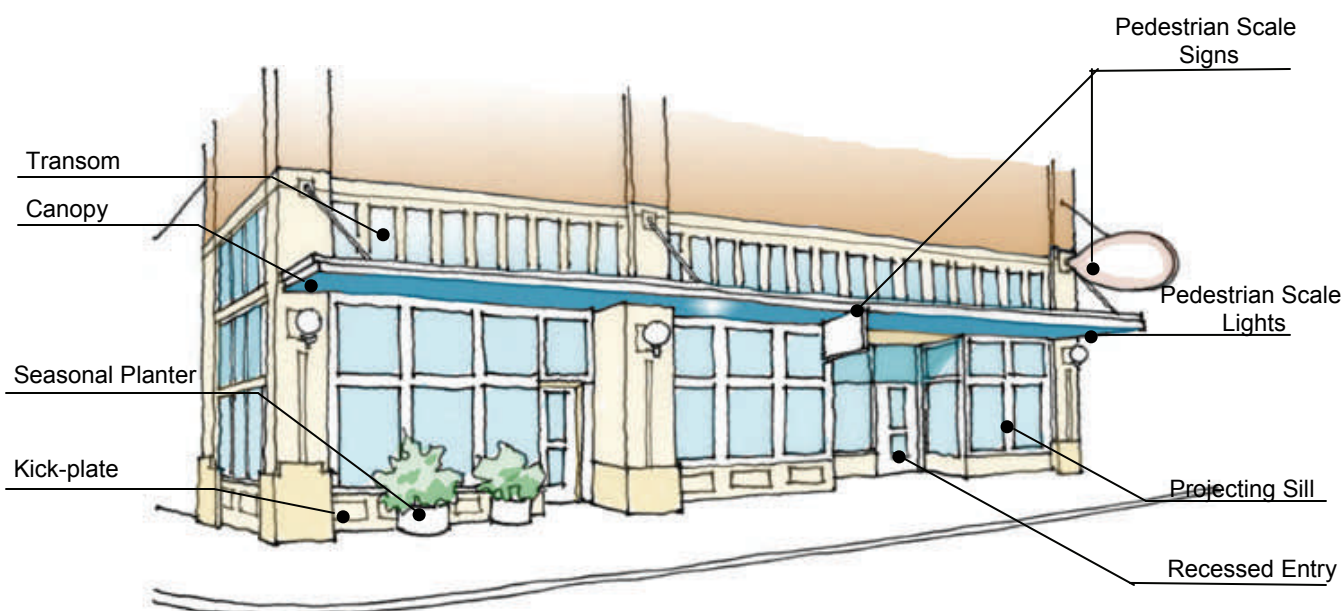
D. Ground Level Details

Intent

To create a socially and visually stimulating commercial district with street level facades that support pedestrian activity.

Guidelines

1. Reinforce the character of the streetscape with the greatest amount of visual interest placed along the ground level of buildings. Facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be designed to be pedestrian friendly through the inclusion of at least three of the following elements:
 - a. Kick-plates for storefront windows
 - b. projecting window sills
 - c. pedestrian scale signs
 - d. canopies
 - e. plinth
 - f. ornamental tile work
 - g. lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets
 - h. an element not listed here that meets the intent
 - i. transom



BUILDING DESIGN

12

E. Blank Wall Treatments

Intent

To reduce the visual impact of blank walls by providing visual interest.

Guidelines

1. Blank walls longer than 30 feet that face streets or are visible from residential areas shall incorporate two or more of the following:
 - a. Vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, ground cover and/or vines adjacent to the wall surface;
 - b. Artwork, such as bas-relief sculpture, murals, or trellis;
 - c. Seating area with special paving and seasonal plantings;
 - d. Architectural detailing, reveals, contrasting materials or other special visual interest.



Ground cover and vines help soften a flat facade



Architectural elements including building base, columns, lighting, trellis and faux windows



Artwork can provide visual interest and reveal a place's culture and history

BUILDING DESIGN

13



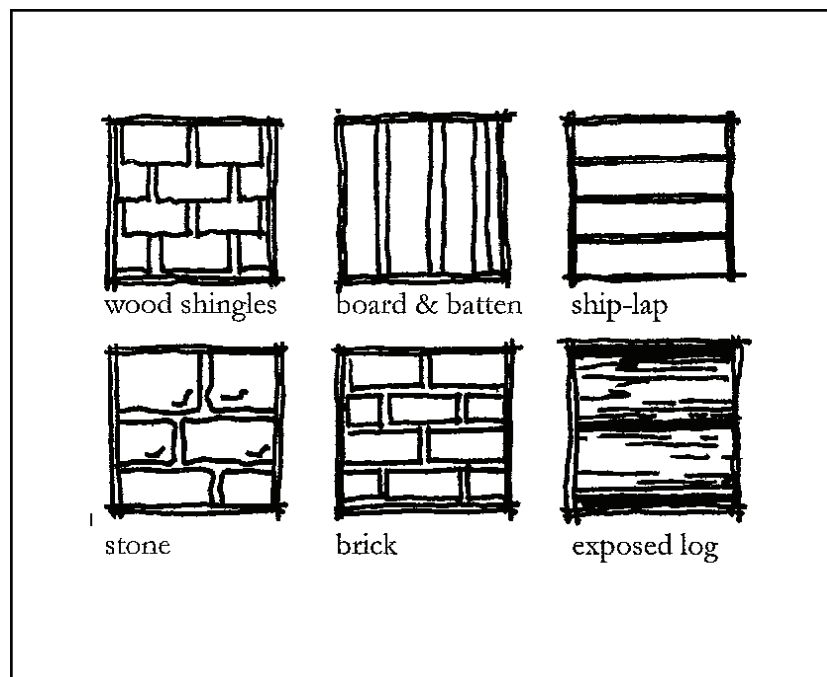
F. Historical Context

Intent

To promote building design that is sensitive to the overall character of Black Diamond.

Guidelines

1. Incorporate architectural elements into new development that reinforce the established character of Black Diamond including:
 - a. natural materials
 - b. window proportions
 - c. facade and canopy lines
 - d. covered boardwalks
 - e. front porch or stoop
 - f. extended parapets
 - g. decorative railings
2. Discourage mimicry or superficial historic reproduction.



SIGN DESIGN

14

A. Sign Design

Intent

To encourage small-scale, pedestrian-oriented signage that is compatible with the rural, historic character of Black Diamond.

Guidelines

1. Required sign placement:
 - a. On or under a marquee's, awning's, or canopy's vertical face (valance);
 - b. On the building facade, integrated with the architectural elements of the building;
 - c. On lower story windows.
2. Internally lit or backlit signs and billboard wall signs are prohibited.
3. Allow an increase of up to 20% for signs that are highly graphic in form, expressive and individualized.



Town Center Precedent: small-scale signs add individual expression of the storefront and detail and richness to the street level facade