ARTICLE 1: CD-5D & CD-5 DESIGN GUIDELINES

DIVISION 1: INTRODUCTION

Section A.1.1.1 Purpose

A. The regulations in CD-5 and CD-5D establish the basic requirements for building mass and scale. (see Figure 1.1 Design Context Map). These design guidelines supplement the Character District standards in the following ways:

1. As advisory information for those who wish to better understand the intent of the design standards in CD-5 and CD-5D.

2. As part of design review for the administrative approval process.

3. As part of design review for the alternative compliance process when alternatives are applied for.

B. The guidelines within this document focus on allowing for flexibility in design while also protecting the character of the district and enhancing its pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. The guidelines and the review process through which they are administered seek to maintain a cohesive, livable place. Maintaining an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment is a fundamental concept. In addition, the guidelines serve as educational and planning tools for property owners and their design professionals who seek to make improvements.

C. The design guidelines also provide a basis for making consistent decisions about the appropriateness of improvement projects requesting alternative strategies through the City's design review process. This includes both administrative review as well as Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council review through the alternative compliance process. The design standards in the Land Development Code and the City's adopted building codes have been codified to meet the intent of the design guidelines. Projects that meet those standards and are not requesting exceptions shall be judged to have met the design guidelines.

DIVISION 2: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Section A.1.2.1   General Principles applicable to CD-5 and CD-5D

A. **Purpose.** This section sets forth fundamental principles for improvements in the districts. These principles are broad in nature, focusing on qualitative aspects of design. Each improvement project in the districts should help forward the goals outlined in the Introduction and should also comply with these fundamental design principles:

1. **Design for sustainability.** Aspects of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability that relate to urban design and compatibility should be woven into new developments and improvements.

2. **Enhance the public realm.** At the heart of the districts is an enhanced public realm, including streets, sidewalks and open spaces. Sidewalks and other pedestrian ways should be designed to invite their use through thoughtful planning and design. Improvement on private property also should enhance the public realm.

3. **Enhance the pedestrian experience.** Each improvement project should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. This includes defining street edges with buildings and spaces that are visually interesting and attract pedestrian activity. Buildings that convey a sense of human scale and streetscapes that invite walking are keys to successful design in the districts. Providing sidewalks of sufficient width for circulation and outdoor activities, and installing appropriate landscape and streetscape elements are also important.

4. **Design Excellence.** Each new development should express excellence in design. This includes the use of high quality, sustainable materials; utilizing high quality construction methods; and paying attention to the details of the project and its design. Thoughtful designs should enhance the character of San Marcos, be sensitive to its surrounding context and create an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

Section A.1.2.2   Principles Specifc to Downtown CD-5D

1. **Honor the heritage of the City.** Buildings, sites and components of urban infrastructure that have historic

significance should be preserved and considered as design inspiration for new work in the district. This does not mean copying earlier styles, but rather learning from them. New work around these resources should be compatible with them.

2. **Contribute to the sense of place.** Maintaining the distinct identity associated with downtown is important as it sets San Marcos apart from other communities in the region. This sense of place is established through a range of factors which should be considered in new developments. These factors include buildings that are smaller in scale that are designed to incorporate components that contribute to the street fronts as pedestrians walk along a downtown street. These buildings are often an eclectic mix of architectural styles and are home to a variety of uses including businesses and offices. In addition to a mix of businesses and uses that invite people downtown, street edges are designed to be inviting and to incorporate storefronts, seating areas and shaded spaces that welcome visitors. Finally, iconic landmarks and views help orient people when they're downtown.

3. **Establish a sense of visual continuity.** Establishing a sense of visual continuity throughout downtown is important. This sense of continuity can be established by public realm features such as a coordinated landscape palette. It can also be established by the built environment, through the use of similar building features. These features should be derived from traditional buildings downtown, especially those in the Downtown Historic District. These features can be interpreted in contemporary ways. While creativity in new building design is encouraged, balancing traditional building elements with new features and design contributes to the visual continuity of downtown San Marcos.

4. **Implement appropriate transitions and transition areas.** Where a sensitive use, such as a single family residential district, is adjacent to or near a CD-5D zone district property, incorporate transitions within a property or along a block to mitigate potential negative impacts on the residential property. These negative impacts could include looming buildings and loud noises, among other things. A wide range of strategies to reduce negative impacts exist and are explored in this Design Manual.

5. **Celebrate the Courthouse Square.** As the major focal point of the district, Courthouse Square should be valued in all urban design. This applies to properties in close proximity to the square, but also relates to improvements that may link other places to it, in terms of views, pedestrian circulation and building orientation.

6. **Design to fit with the context.** Improvement projects should consider their context. In some areas, that context remains strongly anchored by historic buildings. In other parts of the district, the context is more contemporary, with individual historic buildings sometimes appearing as accents. In still other areas, no historic structures exist. In this respect, "designing in context" means helping to achieve the long term goals for each of these areas.

7. **Promote creativity.** Innovation in design is welcomed in downtown. Exploring new ways of designing buildings and spaces is appropriate when they contribute to a cohesive urban fabric. This type of creativity should be distinguished from simply being "different."

8. **Design with authenticity.** The district is defined by buildings and places that reflect their own time, including distinct construction techniques as well as style. The result is a sense of authenticity in building and materials. All new improvements should convey this sense of authenticity.

9. **Design with consistency.** Buildings and places in the district that are highly valued are those which have a cohesive quality in their use of materials, organization of functions and overall design concept. Each new project should also embody a single, consistent design concept.

10. **Design with durability.** The district's cherished buildings and spaces are designed for the long term with durable materials. New work should have this same quality.

FIGURE 1.1 DOWNTOWN AND MIDTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT DESIGN CONTEXT MAP
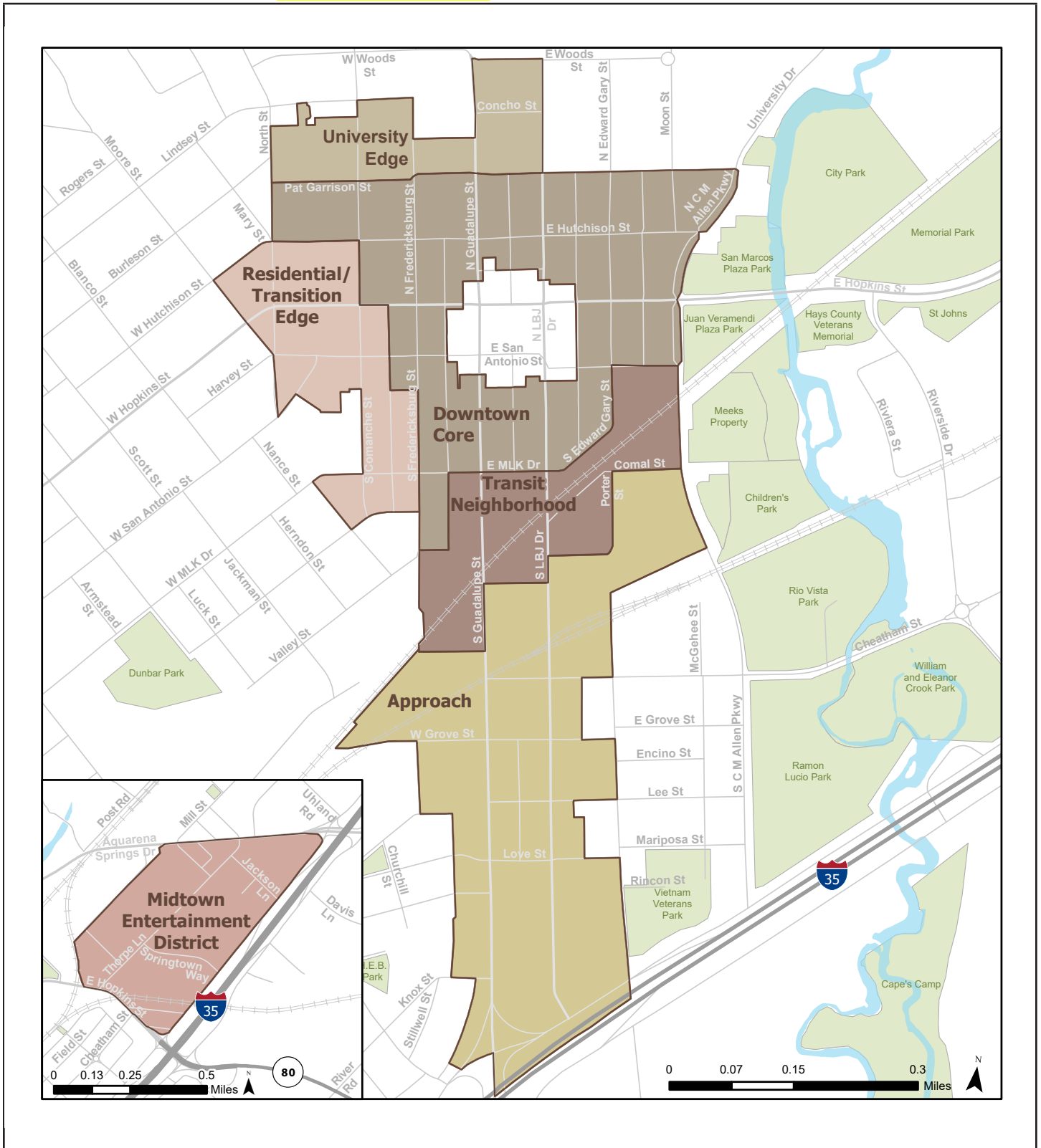
DIVISION 3: DESIGN CONTEXTS

Section A.1.3.1   Description of Context Areas

A.   Purpose. This section includes goal statements for each of the ~~downtown~~ design contexts ~~within CD-5D~~ as well as the Midtown Entertainment District ~~in CD-5~~ (see Figure 1.1 Downtown and Midtown Entertainment District Design Context Map). The five design contexts which are primarily zoned CD-5D are collectively known as 'downtown'. These contexts are areas identified by community workshop participants as having unique character, constraints and/or design goals. Please note the Downtown Historic District ~~Courthouse Square~~ area is not included, as a separate design review system is in place for the historic district. ~~See the maps on the previous page for the location of the design contexts.~~

1.   **University Edge.** ~~The University Edge context should create a safe, pedestrian-friendly transition between campus and CD-5D. New campus development in this context should be compatible in scale and respectful of the district's design traditions. In addition, within the University Edge there are key public views up to campus and down to the Courthouse Square. New development should preserve and enhance these views.~~ The University Edge context creates a pedestrian-friendly connection between campus and the Downtown Core context. New buildings may be larger in scale here, in keeping with campus scale, while drawing upon downtown's design traditions.

   Of special note are key public views, both north to campus and south to the Downtown Historic District. New development should preserve and enhance these views by varying building massing and creating outdoor spaces that permit views through to key landmarks.

   Key Characteristics.

   a.   Scale: Larger buildings here can be compatible with the scale of the university. Buildings in the University Edge should act as a transition in scale from the Downtown Core to the Texas State University Campus.

   b.   Building massing: Buildings vary in their massing, to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.

   c.   Street level character: Building fronts are visually interesting are activated primarily with stoops and forecourts. Storefronts and display cases may be appropriate in some cases.

   d.   Frontages and setbacks: A high percentage of each building front aligns at the sidewalk edge, however with some variation in setbacks for active outdoor spaces.

   e.   Parking: Parking is accessed from alleys and is concealed from the street, in tuck-under designs or structures.

2.   **Downtown Core.** ~~Within the Downtown context it is especially important to maintain compatibility with the Courthouse Square. Increased density is appropriate where it does not impact the character of the square.~~ The Downtown Core frames the Downtown Historic District and draws closely upon its design traditions to establish a sense of visual continuity between the two areas. New buildings express a scale at the street frontage that appears similar to that of buildings in the historic district. While compatibility with the historic styles is appropriate and important in the Downtown Core, replication of historic styles is inappropriate.

   Variations in the articulation of building fronts and in overall massing reflect the scale of the historic district, with expression elements that define traditional building widths and building heights that step down to traditional heights for portions of larger buildings. The rhythm of new building fronts reflects the width and rhythm of historic buildings. New building designs draw on and are compatible with the historic character, but are designed to be "of their time."

   Buildings in the Downtown Core should be pedestrian-friendly design that includes wide sidewalks, activated ground levels – transparent windows and display cases for example – and shaded walkways. The use of trees and overhangs to provide shade is crucial.

   Key Characteristics.

a. Scale: Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.

b. Building massing: Buildings vary in their massing, to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.

c. Street level character: Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility.

d. Frontages and setbacks: A high percentage of each building front aligns at the sidewalk edge, however with some variation in setbacks for active outdoor spaces.

e. Parking: Parking is accessed from alleys and is concealed from the street, in tuck-under designs or structures.

3. **Residential/Transition Edge.** For new development within the Residential/Transition Edge context it is important to minimize impacts from higher scale development on the character of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. New development should provide a transition in scale between the taller buildings in CD-5D and the existing residential neighborhoods. The Residential/Transition Edge design context houses a mix of uses including retail, cultural centers, churches, offices, and residential. Buildings in this design context create a transition from the more intensive development of the Downtown Core to the lower density residential neighborhoods that lie to the west.

Buildings draw upon both traditional residential and commercial types in their forms, materials and relationship to the street. Most buildings in this design context are set back from the street edge and include landscaping in front. This is particularly important for larger buildings. Courtyards and forecourts are appropriate. In some cases, smaller buildings may be located closer to the street edge. Along the sensitive edges of abutting residential districts, buildings are designed to minimize negative impacts, with reduced height, increased setbacks and landscaping.

Key Characteristics:

a. Scale: Buildings express heights that are one or two floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.

b. Building massing: Buildings vary in their massing, to express traditional residential forms and smaller commercial buildings.

c. Street level character: Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have porches and courtyards that connect to the street.

d. Frontages and setbacks: Setbacks vary, with some buildings close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.

e. Parking: Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

4. **Transit Neighborhood** Oriented Development. Projects within the Transit Oriented Development context should establish a strong pedestrian orientation. The street front character is especially important here to encourage pedestrian activity. The Transit Neighborhood context honors the culture and heritage of the surrounding neighborhoods and accommodates a mix of uses, with an emphasis upon housing that focuses on potential transit access. Taller buildings and higher density development is appropriate in this context, if it is designed to include elements of human scale and an active street level. The use of building modules to reduce the perceived scale of the building is crucial, especially if a new building is large in scale. New development draws upon the downtown's design traditions, but in more abstract ways than in the Downtown Core.

The eastern portion of the Transit Neighborhood may be a more appropriate location for taller, more dense development. Where it is near established single-family residential neighborhoods, transitions are needed to reduce negative impacts. Throughout the area, projects should have a strong pedestrian orientation. The street front character is especially important here to encourage pedestrian activity. New development also incorporates green spaces and bio-diverse landscaping, and connects to greenways when possible.

Key Characteristics:

a.   Scale: Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.

b.   Building massing: Buildings vary in their massing to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.

c.   Street level character: Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have plazas and courtyards that connect to the street.

d.   Frontages and setbacks: Setbacks vary, with some buildings close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.

e.   Parking: Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

5.   **Approach.** ~~The Approach context is the corridor between the highway and Downtown, providing an entry procession into the heart of Downtown. New development in this area should provide visual interest and not overwhelm the distinct character of the district.~~ The Approach context is the corridor between IH-35 and the Transit Neighborhood, providing an entry procession into the heart of downtown. New development honors the culture and history of the area, especially drawing on Hispanic heritage. Design conveys a preview of the character of downtown while drawing upon the distinct features of this area, including culturally significant sites such as the Cheatham Street Warehouse, the site of the MKT Railroad and the Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos. These important sites are emphasized rather than overshadowed in new development.

New, larger development focuses along Guadalupe and LBJ Streets with a mix of commercial and residential uses. It is scaled to be compatible with older established buildings that remain. The context is framed with lower density residential districts along the eastern and western edges. In these areas, projects are designed to provide compatible transitions to these neighborhoods with

reduced massing, increased setbacks, and landscaping. Outdoor space, such as courtyards and green space, is a key feature in new development.

Key Characteristics:

a.   Scale: Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.

b.   Building massing: Buildings vary in their massing, to express traditional residential forms and smaller commercial buildings.

c.   Street level character: Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have plazas and courtyards that connect to the street.

d.   Frontages and setbacks: Setbacks vary, with some buildings set close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.

e.   Parking: Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

6.   **Midtown Entertainment District.** The Midtown Entertainment District is defined as the area west of IH-35 within CD-5, Midtown on the Comprehensive Plan. New development in this area should enhance the public realm and the pedestrian experience by defining street edges with buildings and spaces that are visually interesting and attract pedestrian activity. Providing sidewalks of sufficient width for circulation, and outdoor activities, and installing appropriate landscape and streetscape elements is important. This area is a complement to the Downtown CD-5D and is an appropriate location for density and student housing, as well as associated entertainment, restaurant, and retail services.

Section A.1.3.2 Design Traditions

A. Overview. Many dimensional standards requirements for Character District – 5 Downtown (CD-5D) stem from the traditional buildings of the Downtown Historic District. The building components shared among historic buildings provide clues to what components are needed and what standards are appropriate for new development. For instance, traditional downtown building facades often include a kickplate with a large display window above, a mid-belt molding that caps the window transom, and vertically proportioned upper story windows. These windows are inset to create depth and shadow on the façade. Awnings and canopies are used to provide shade and shelter the sidewalk, and buildings are constructed of masonry materials (such as stone, brick, and detailed stucco) to create a sense of scale.

In addition to the individual components of a single building, the continuity among buildings along a block and within the Downtown Historic District is clear. Storefront widths vary only slightly and establish a clear rhythm along the block. Similar first floor heights are expressed through the mid-belt molding, the height of which is fairly consistent along a street front. The rhythm of upper story windows and their spacing creates visual consistency along the block. Finally, the cornice that caps each building varies only slightly in its height, defining the floors and aligning the buildings along a block. The repetition of a series of design components on traditional buildings in the Downtown Historic District, and throughout downtown San Marcos, provides precedent for the design of new buildings downtown. Many of these features are noted in Figure 1.2 - Figure 1.5.
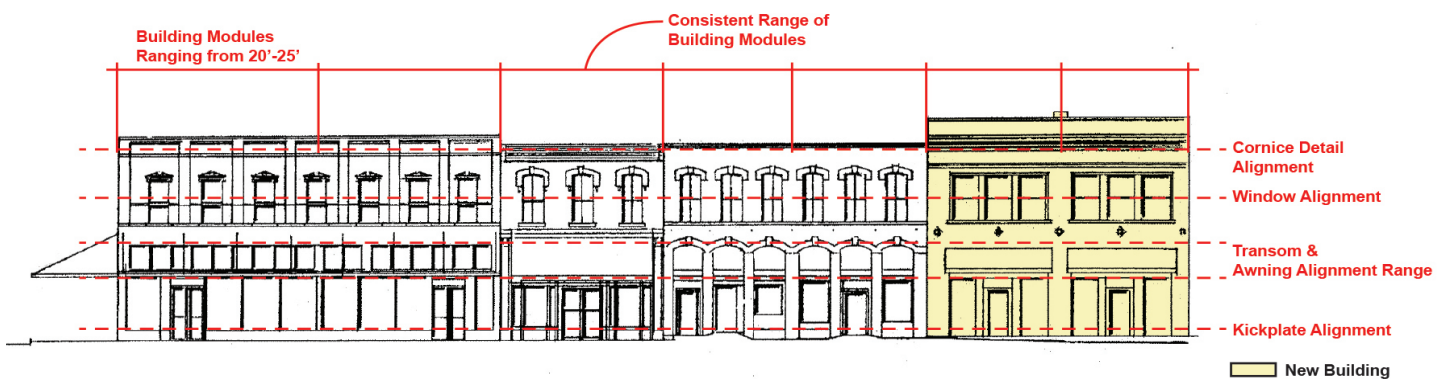
FIGURE 1.2

Consistent Window Spacing

Sills on New Building Align with Mid-Course Moldings on Historic Buildings

Awning of New Building Aligns with Arched Window Transom of Historic Building

FIGURE 1.3

Building Modules Ranging from 20'-25'

Consistent Range of Building Modules

Cornice Detail Alignment

Window Alignment

Transom & Awning Alignment Range

Kickplate Alignment

New Building

FIGURE 1.4

NOTE: The measurements lines on the street view photo above are used to approximate the heights of design elements on the buildings.

Recessed Entry Skews Measurement

Overall Height = 30'-32'
Ground Floor Height = 12'-14'
2nd Floor Height = 10'-12'
Storefront Height = 12'-14'

Kickplate Height = 1'-2'
Door Height = 7'
Canopy/Gallery Height = 8'-10'
Canopy/Gallery Overhang= 3'-5'
Transom Height = 4'
Upper Window Height = 6'-7'
Cornice Height = 3'

Ground Floor Trans. = 70-85%
Upper Floor Trans. = 20-30%

Blank Wall Length on
Ground Floor = 3' max.

FIGURE 1.5

NOTE: The measurements lines on the street view photo above are used to approximate the heights of design elements on the buildings.

Overall Height = 20'-22'
Ground Floor Height = 12'-14'
2nd Floor Height = NA
Storefront Height = 10'-12'

Kickplate Height = 1.5'
Door Height = 7'
Canopy/Gallery Height = 8'
Canopy/Gallery Overhang= 5'-6'
Transom Height = 3'
Upper Window Height = NA
Cornice Height = 3'

Ground Floor Trans. = 70-90%
Upper Floor Trans. = NA

Blank Wall Length on
Ground Floor = 3'-4' max.

DIVISION 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Section A.1.4.1   Building Height

A.   The variety in building heights that exist helps to define the character of the area. New development should continue the tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area. New buildings above three stories should set back upper floors to maintain a sense of human scale at the street and minimize impacts to lower scale historic structures in the district. The following Table 1.1 should be used when analyzing requests for additional height.

Table 1.1: Height Strategy by Context

Design Context	Goal(s)	Additional Height in First and Second Layer	Additional Height in Third Layer
University Edge	Preserve key public views up the hill to campus. Create a transition in height from the Downtown Core to the University.	Alternatives which maintain sufficient public access to key views up the hill may be considered. Building height that relates to traditional building heights in the Downtown Historic District is appropriate.	Alternatives may be considered where taller structures will provide greater residential opportunities within proximity to campus and key views are sufficiently maintained. Additional height may be considered when it is found to meet the requirements for alternative compliance and especially the design guidelines for varied massing and expression within the First and Second Layers.
Downtown Core	Maintain compatibility with traditional buildings in the Downtown Historic District. ~~Courthouse Square.~~	~~Flexibility for building height requirements may be considered where it will not be visible from the square. Overall mass should maintain a sense of human scale and not appear out of character with~~ Building height should be compatible with the historic buildings in the Downtown Historic District.	No additional height adjacent to the Downtown Historic District. ~~Additional height may be considered where it will not obscure key views.~~ Additional height may be considered where it will not obscure key views, but additional height above five stories is discouraged in this design context.
Residential/ Transition Edge	Maintain a sense of scale that relates to the adjacent residential zoning districts and uses. Create a transition from higher scale development in the Downtown Core. ~~Minimize impacts from higher scale development on the character of adjacent residential neighborhoods.~~ Provide a transition in scale between the CD-5D zoning ~~T5 zone~~ and the neighborhoods.	No additional height.	~~Additional height should only be permitted if it is not visible from the public right of way or the adjacent residential neighborhoods.~~ No additional height.

Transit Neighborhood ~~Oriented~~ ~~Development~~	Variety and creativity in building design, including height, is appropriate in this context. Taller buildings may be appropriate in this context as long as the height at the street is designed with the pedestrian in mind. ~~An increased density at and surrounding the future rail stop is desired.~~	Additional height at the street wall may be appropriate where the building maintains a sense of human scale and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.	Additional height may be appropriate here where the building maintains a sense of human scale and maintains a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
Approach	The intent for the Approach design context is to create an entry corridor that celebrates community heritage and welcomes visitors to downtown San Marcos as they exit the highway and move toward the Downtown Core. New design is scaled to be compatible with traditional buildings along Guadalupe and LBJ. ~~approach area is to provide corridors between the highway and Downtown.~~	Additional height is inappropriate in the first and second layers. ~~The intent for the approach area is to provide corridors between the highway and downtown.~~	Additional height may be appropriate where it does not directly impact residential neighborhoods. The building should maintain a sense of human scale and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
Midtown Entertainment District	Promote high-density mixed use development to complement Downtown.	Additional height may be appropriate where the building maintains a sense of human scale and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.	Alternatives may be considered where taller structures will provide greater residential opportunities within proximity to campus and key views are sufficiently maintained and alternative forms of transportation connections to campus have been accomodated.

Section A.1.4.2 Varied ~~Upper Floor~~ Massing Requirement.

A. ~~Specific to CD-5D~~ **Applicability.** The following guidelines are specific to CD-5D.

B. **Overview.** Buildings in CD-5D are typically three stories or less in height, although taller building heights can occur and are somewhat common in the third layer, depending on the design context. In most cases a range of building heights occur across a single block face. As the desired density increase is incorporated, it is important that new, taller structures not dominate the street front. Taller buildings should vary ~~upper floor~~ massing to provide variety in building height as perceived from the street and to maintain a sense of pedestrian scale at the sidewalk. If an alternative to the varied ~~upper floor~~ massing requirements is requested, the building shall exceed the minimum requirements of the blank wall area outlined in section 4.3.5.3 of the Land Development Code by adding additional Expression Tools and Building Elements.

C. **Guidelines.** In order to ensure a human scale is established in the design of new buildings, incorporate strategies outlined in Table 1.2 as well as the following guidelines:

1. Establish a sense of human scale in the design of a new building.

2. Reduce the overall perceived mass of a new building by dividing it into smaller modules.

3. Design each building module to reflect building widths and heights seen historically in the downtown.

Table 1.2 Varied Massing Requirement

Building massing techniques can be used to reduce the apparent scale of a building while also helping to create a more interesting building form. Stepping down the mass of a building adjacent to a pedestrian way or sensitive area will provide a smooth transition to a lower scale setting.
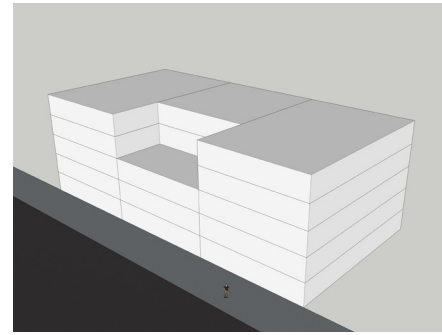
Front Stepback

A front stepback reduces the mass of a building along the street frontage.
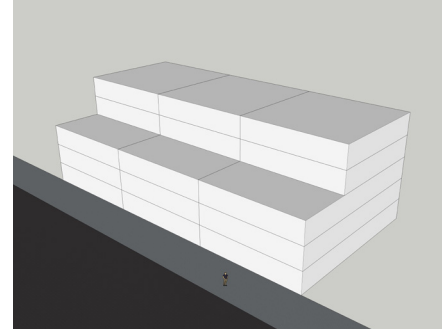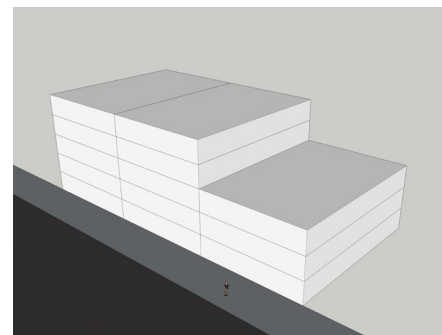

Middle Stepback

A middle stepback reduces the central mass of a building by expressing different modules.

Side Stepdown

A side stepdown reduces the mass of a building to provide a transition to a neighboring building of smaller scale or a pedestrian connection.

Rear Stepdown

A rear stepdown provides a transition between the rear of a building and a sensitive area such as an adjacent residential area or outdoor amenity space.
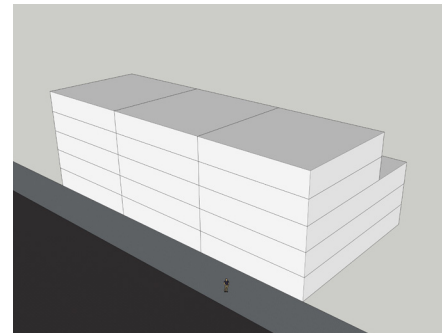
Section A.1.4.3   Expression Elements. ~~Building Mass and Articuation.~~

A.   **Applicability.** The following guidelines are specific to CD-5D. ~~Specific to CD-5D.~~

B.   **Overview.** Expression includes vertical and horizontal changes that influence the scale of the building. New development in downtown San Marcos should incorporate articulation techniques that promote a sense of human scale and divide the mass and scale of a larger building into smaller parts.

C.   **Guidelines.** Refer to the following guidelines and Table 1.3 to see how a variety of building articulation methods are accomplished.

   1.   Establish a sense of human scale in the design of a new building.

      a.   Use vertical and horizontal articulation techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.

      b.   Use expression techniques in proportion to a building's overall mass. For example, deeper insets are needed as a building's length increases.

      c.   Apply materials in units, panels or modules that help to convey a sense of scale.

      d.   Create a sense of texture through shadow lines which also provide a sense of depth and visual interest.

   1.   Incorporate horizontal expression lines to establish a sense of scale.

      a.   Use moldings, a change in material or an offset in the wall plane to define the scale of lower floors in relation to the street.

      b.   Align architectural features with similar features along the street, where a pattern of alignment already exists. This pattern of alignment is especially prominent through storefront windows and upper story windows in the Downtown Core, but is also visible in other design contexts downtown.

   2.   Provide vertical articulation in a larger building mass to establish a sense of scale.

      a.   Use moldings, columns, a change in material or an offset in the wall plane to define different building modules.

   3.   Use materials to convey a sense of human scale and visual interest to pedestrians.

   4.   Incorporate balconies to create depth and interest on a building façade.

   5.   Vary roof heights and cornice lines to create visual interest.

   6.   Incorporate a roof form that provides a cap.

      a.   Define a flat roof form with a distinct parapet or cornice line.

The following Table 1.3 illustrates ways in which a building can incorporate design features that create a sense of human scale. The table is divided into two sections – Primary Expression Elements and Secondary Expression Elements. The primary expression elements correspond directly with the Expression options provided in Section 4.3.5.4 of the Development Code. This section provides more detail and illustration of this category, of which new development must utilize at least two primary expression elements below in addition to the blank wall area requirements. The Secondary Expression Elements section includes additional tools that may be used if an applicant seeks alternative compliance with the standards outlined in the Code.

## TABLE 1.3 EXPRESSION ELEMENTS

PRIMARY EXPRESSION ELEMENTS

The design options described and illustrated below may be used individually, or in combination, to meet the intent of the design guidelines for building expression. Note that other creative building expression strategies may also be appropriate.
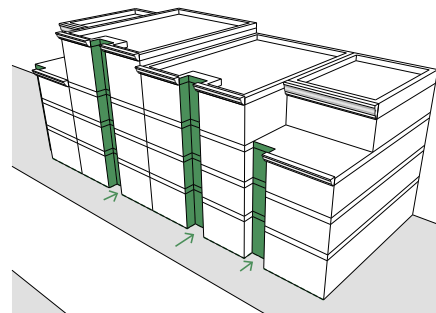
VERTICAL EXPRESSION ELEMENTS

VERTICAL EXPRESSION LINE

Expression lines project sufficiently from the face of a building wall to cast a distinct shadow. In this particular example, vertical expression lines are seen in the form of attached columns, which run the length of the building.
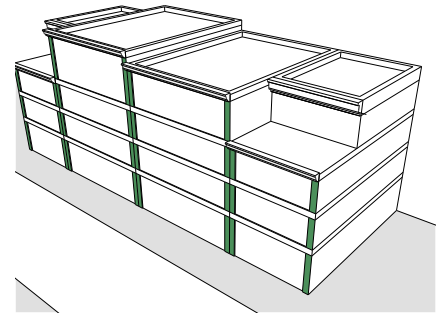
WALL NOTCH

A wall notch is a vertical expression line created by notching a building wall for its full height. In this example the central bay is inset from the flanking walls.

WALL OFFSET

A wall offset is similar to an increased setback, but with a larger dimension. It often provides a forecourt along part of the front of a building.
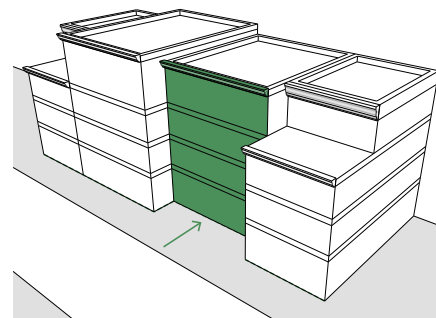
Table 1.3 Expression Elements (continued)

Primary Expression Elements (continued)

Horizontal Expression Elements

Horizontal Expression Line

Expression lines project sufficiently from the face of a building wall to cast a distinct shadow. In this particular example, horizontal expression lines are seen through moldings, window sills, awnings, canopies and the building cornice. Consider locating horizontal expression lines to reflect historic precedent.
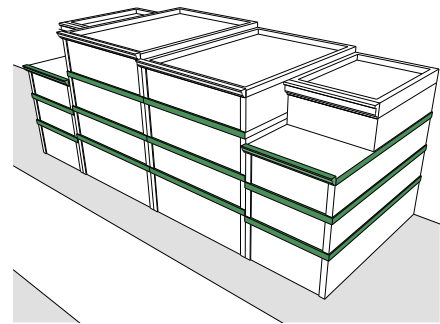
Cornice

A cornice, which projects beyond the building face sufficiently to project a noticeable shadow, establishes a cap to a facade.
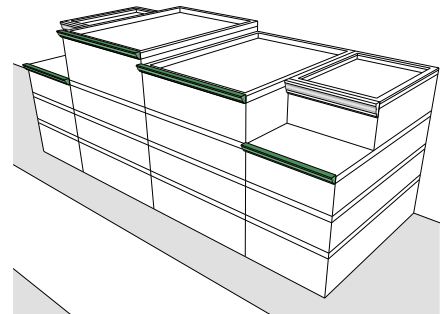
Varied Parapet Height

A variation in the height of the parapet provides articulation in facade and can break up a long cornice line. This expression tool does not provide additional interior square footage, despite the increase in height in this section of the facade.
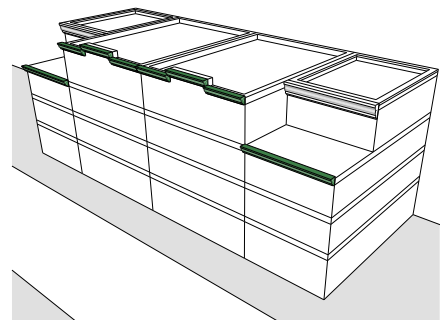
Table 1.3 Expression Elements (continued)

Secondary expression elements

One, or a combination of these Secondary Expression elements may be considered as an alternative to one of the required Primary Expression Elements through Design Review. See also Division 5 for additional examples.

Height Variation

A variation in height may occur as a setback of part of a floor or a change in roof line. In this example of a single building, a portion on the right is one story less than that on the left.
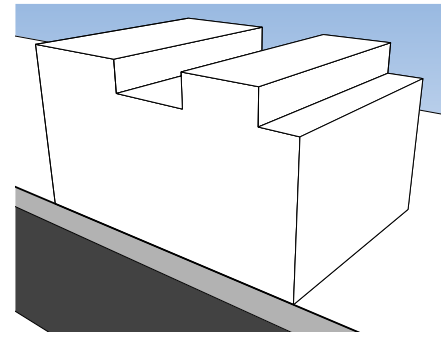
Color Change

Color changes may occur as significant vertical or horizontal design on a building wall, where it maintains an overall cohesiveness in the building design [i.e. avoid abrupt and inconsistent color changes]. In this example different facade modules vary in color.
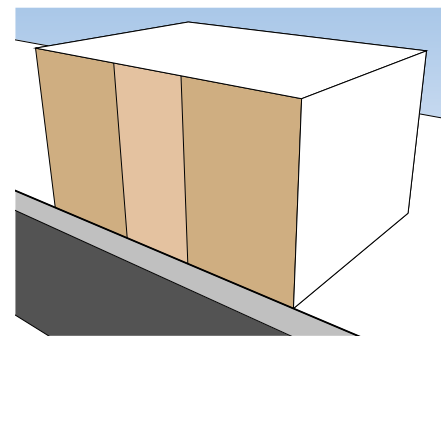
Material Change

Material change may appear as a significant vertical or horizontal surface. In this example of townhomes, a change in material expresses each unit.
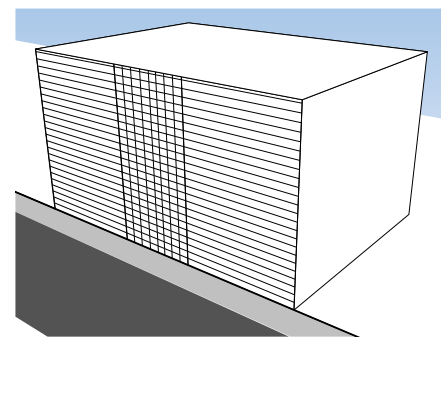
Section A.1.4.4   CD-5D Expression - Four-Sided Design

A.   Overview. A building's façade strongly impacts the pedestrian experience on an adjacent public space, such as a sidewalk or open amenity space. All building sides should be designed for public view, using building form and architectural details to create visual interest. The degree of detail may vary depending on the location of the wall, but some architectural detail is needed because a blank or featureless building façade can diminish interest. Thus, the design of a new building should be considered "in the round." This applies to buildings and parking structures in the zone district.

B.   Wall Classification. Early in the design process, determine which type of wall classification (primary, secondary or tertiary) applies to each side of the building. Primary walls have a higher priority, while secondary and tertiary walls have a lower priority respectively. Key factors to determine priorities for wall treatment are:

2.   Proximity to a public way (a street or walkway)

3.   Proximity to a sensitive edge

4.   Assigned primary frontage

5.   Service access

C.   Design Guidelines. In order to effectively design a new building to be four-sided in nature, design a building to provide interest on all sides that will be viewed from the public realm.

1.   All faces of a building should include architectural details to reduce the visual impact of a "back side." Visual interest can be provided through a variety of methods, including:

a.   Windows and doors

b.   Building articulation techniques

c.   Site walls and raised planters (A site wall is typically a short wall at the edge of a property. A small planting area between the sidewalk and the building would be created and a site wall would define the property line at the sidewalk.)

d.   Decorative wall treatments

2.   Incorporate more visual interest techniques on primary walls to differentiate from secondary and tertiary walls.

3.   Incorporate active uses and/or pedestrian-friendly features on the ground floor to encourage an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

D.   Wall Classification Examples. The following Table 1.4 illustrates the differences in wall treatments for a new building, ranging from "high priority" walls to those that are less of a priority. The intent is to ensure that all building walls include pedestrian-friendly features, but that the degree to which these features are incorporated is appropriate based on the location of the wall. The strategy illustrated in this table should be applied when considering Section 4.3.5.4 "Expression Elements" of the Development Code.

Table 1.4 Expression - Four-Sided Design

The degree to which Expression techniques may be applied varies by location on the site. The intent is to provide visual interest on all sides of a building.

Wall Type A: High Priority (Primary Wall)

This wall type is highly visible to the public and is important in conveying a sense of scale, visual interest and a pedestrian-oriented activity for the building and its site. This is the "front" of a building, either facing a street, into a development or onto an outdoor public amenity space. It should include a high percentage of glass to display goods and activities inside. (Note that a building may have more than one "Type A" wall, especially in "double-fronted" building scenarios, and when the building is at a highly visible location.)

A High Priority wall:
- Faces a public right-of-way and is in relatively close proximity to it
- Will be seen by users on a regular basis
- Contributes to a clustering of buildings that defines a place

Objectives for High Priority walls:
- Convey a sense of human scale in massing and detailing
- Have a high level of visual interest
- Invite pedestrian activity
- Provide views into interior functions

Wall Type B: Pedestrian-Friendly (Secondary Wall)

These are also in high-traffic areas, but are walls (or portions thereof) where internal functions do not lend themselves to designs with extensive amounts of transparency. For example, there is likely to be one wall where service doors are located, and public access is not appropriate. Because these are in high-traffic areas, a high degree of wall surface treatment is needed. This may include a broader range of options to achieve visual interest, including wall art or other architectural detailing.

A Pedestrian-friendly wall:
- Faces a pedestrian area
- Will be seen on a regular basis
- Includes some "back of house" or service functions

Objectives for Pedestrian-friendly walls:
- Convey a sense of human scale in massing and detailing
- Have a high level of visual interest
- Be compatible with pedestrian activity in the area

Wall Type C: Utilities, Service, and Auto-Access (Tertiary Wall)

Finally, there are walls that are more remote in terms of public exposure, such as along an alley. Even so, the objective is still to assure that these walls are seen as part of coherent design composition. A lesser level of detail may be appropriate.

A Service-Oriented wall:
- Is seen by the general public at a distance
- Is less frequently experienced by the general public
- Has service functions as a primary requirement

Objectives for Service Oriented walls:
- Convey a sense of scale in general massing
- Have a moderate level of visual interest
- Convey a sense of relatedness to the overall building design

E. ~~Traditional development patterns create a rhythm along the street by the repetition of similar building widths and vertical proportions. Variations in massing and building articulation should be expressed throughout a new structure, resulting in a composition of building modules that relate to the scale of traditional buildings.~~

1. ~~Provide horizontal expression at lower floor heights to establish a sense of scale.~~

2. ~~Provide vertical articulation in a larger building mass to establish a sense of scale.~~

3. ~~Maintain established development patterns created by the repetition of similar building widths along the street.~~

(Previous Section A.1.4.5) Canopies and Awnings.

F. **~~Specific to CD-5D.~~** ~~Canopies and awnings are noteworthy features on many buildings in the CD-5D, and their continued use is encouraged. Traditionally, these features were simple in detail, and reflected the character of the building to which they were attached. An awning or canopy should be in character with the building and streetscape.~~

G. **~~General to All.~~** ~~The use of canopies and awnings is encouraged to provide shade on the sidewalk when shade trees are not utilized. When awnings and canopies are placed near trees, the tree habit and mature canopy size shall be taken into consideration to ensure canopies and awnings do not inhibit the tree's growth.~~

(Previous Section A.1.4.6) **Window Design.**

H. **~~Specific to CD-5D.~~** ~~The manner in which windows are used to articulate a building wall is an important consideration in establishing a sense of scale and visual continuity. In traditional commercial buildings, a storefront system was installed on the ground floor and upper story windows most often appeared as punched openings. Window design and placement should help to establish a sense of scale and provide pedestrian interest.~~

1. ~~Provide a high level of ground floor transparency on a building in an area traditionally defined by commercial storefronts.~~

2. ~~The use of a contemporary storefront design is encouraged in commercial settings.~~

3. ~~Arrange windows to reflect the traditional rhythm and general alignment of windows in the area.~~

(Previous Section A.1.4.7) Building Scale

I. ~~A new building within CD-5D and CD-5 should convey a sense of human scale through its design features.~~

Section A.1.4.5   Views

A. **Overview.** Views within CD-5D from the public right of way to notable buildings throughout downtown – such as the Downtown Historic District, Courthouse, historic landmarks and churches – and to areas adjacent to downtown – such as the University – are important and should be retained. The location of a building on a site, in addition to its scale, height and massing, can significantly impact views from the public right of way – including streets, sidewalks, intersections and public spaces – to the important building.

B. **Guidelines.** The following guidelines should be implemented when considering views:

1. Provide a diversity of view experiences:

   a. These types of views may be considered:

      • View corridor: a long view along a street or through an open space

      • Framed view: a long view defined by buildings or rows of trees

      • View over a lower portion of a building

      • Atrium view: a view through a building with a high degree of transparency

      • Panoramic view from a public overlook

   b. View targets to consider include, but are not limited to:

      • Hays County Courthouse

      • Old Main at Texas State University

      • First United Methodist Church

2. Minimize the impacts of primary views from the public right of way to important buildings downtown and adjacent to downtown San Marcos.

3. Locate a building on a site to preserve views from the public right of way to important buildings by doing one of the following:

   a. Set a building back from the front lot line

   b. Incorporate a corner plaza

   c. Step upper stories of a building down towards the important building

C. **Options for Preserving Important Views.** Table 1.5 provides examples of design techniques that may be used to highlight views throughout downtown San Marcos. In addition, Table 1.6 illustrates two ways in which variation in building massing may be used to maintain an important view: (1) A stepdown in height for a portion of the building is positioned to maintain a view, and (2) A corner forecourt is used to maintain a view.

TABLE 1.5 VIEW PRESERVATION OPTIONS

PANORAMIC VIEW

A wide view from a key overlook or public space. This may be from a plaza or green space.

FRAMED VIEW WITH BUILDINGS

Focuses on a prominent landmark or vista. This may occur between buildings or form a "notch" in a single building.
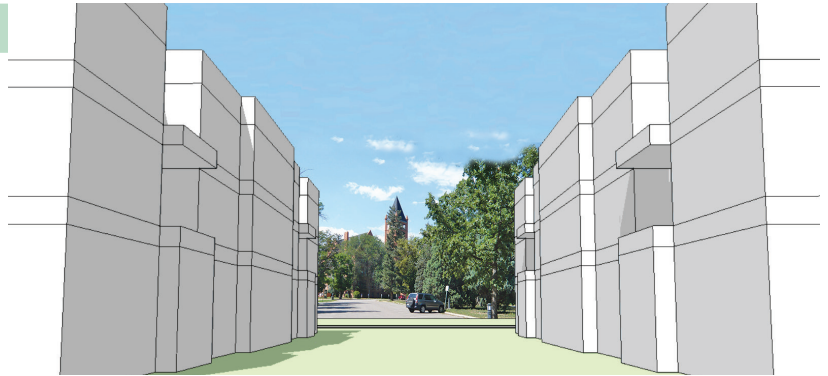
ATRIUM VIEW

A view through a glassed indoor space. This may be through a lobby or atrium.
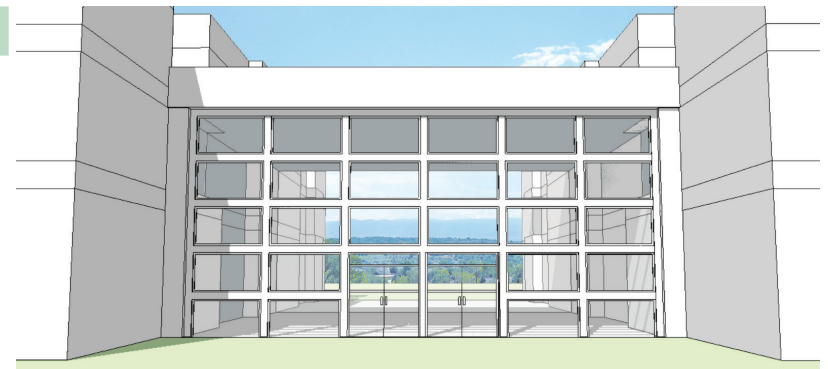
FRAMED VIEW WITH LANDSCAPING

A view defined by trees and other landscape features.
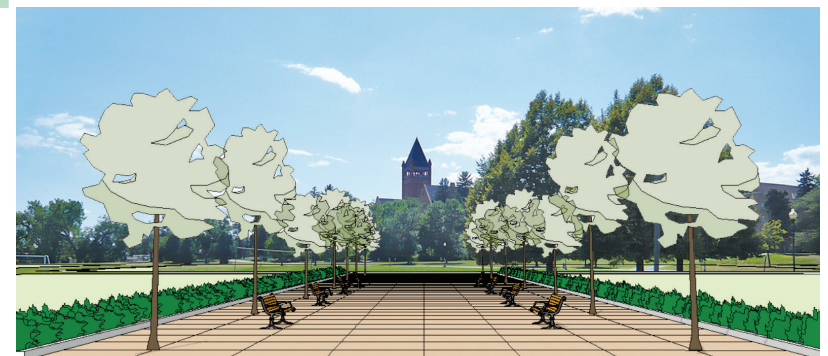
TABLE 1.6 OPTIONS FOR PRESERVING IMPORTANT VIEWS

These are examples in which varied building massing techniques can be used to preserve views from the public way to important features.

	View Towards Important Building	**View From Important Building**
DISCOURAGED: NEW BUILDING BLOCKS VIEW TO IMPORTANT BUILDING The placement of the 3rd story stepback is on the interior of the site and does not preserve the view of the church. The church tower is blocked by the 5 story wall at the corner.		
APPROPRIATE: NEW BUILDING STEPS BACK TO PRESERVE VIEW TO IMPORTANT BUILDING By locating the required 3rd story stepback at the corner of the building, the church tower is visible from the pedestrian level.		
APPROPRIATE: NEW BUILDING INCORPORATES CORNER FORECOURT/PLAZA TO PRESERVE VIEW TO IMPORTANT BUILDING With a forecourt/plaza at the corner of the building, the view of the church tower is more visible from the pedestrian level.		
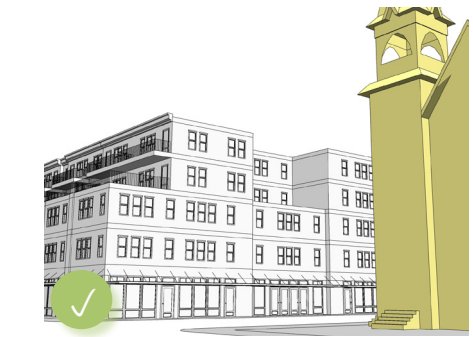
D. ~~(Previous Section on Views) Views within CD-5D from the public right of way to the University and Courthouse Square are important and should be retained.~~ The location of the building on a site, in addition to its scale, height, and massing, can impact views from the adjacent public right of way, including streets, sidewalks, intersections, and public spaces.

    1. ~~Minimize the impacts to primary views from the public right of way to the University and Courthouse Square.~~

Section A.1.4.6 Neighborhood Transitions

A. <u>Overview.</u> Sensitive neighborhood transitions are crucial to reducing conflicts between adjacent sites with differing uses as well as between adjacent zoning districts with different uses. Most commonly this is seen as a transition between a commercial use and an adjacent residential neighborhood, but it can also be occur at an interface with a natural feature such as a park or creek. Where a potential conflict occurs, a sensitive transition that limits the potential negative effects from the commercial activity on the residential property (such as towering heights or loud noise) should be incorporated into the development. Site design adjacent to an existing or future residential neighborhood should provide a compatible transition that minimizes potential negative impacts while promoting positive connections. In addition to the sensitive site transition guidelines below and diagrams in Table 1.6, refer to Varied Building Massing guidelines and diagrams in Table 1.2 to show how a building can be designed to transition the form toward a lower scale use.

B. <u>Guidelines.</u> The following guidelines should be used when considering Neighborhood Transitions:

    1. Design a site with a new land use to be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.

        a. Place and orient a building to minimize potential negative impacts on an adjacent residential neighborhood.

        b. Avoid orienting the rear of a building toward an adjacent residential neighborhood.

        c. Avoid creating an impassable barrier between a newly developed site and an adjacent neighborhood.

        d. Do not locate a mechanical or service area directly adjacent to a residential neighborhood.

    2. Minimize negative impacts of a commercial operation on an adjacent residential property.

        a. Locate a commercial activity that generates noise, odor or other similar impacts away from the shared lot line with a residential property.

        b. Where a commercial use is adjacent to a residential use, buffer or screen the commercial activities. This could include a buffer area with landscaping and outdoor amenities such as an exercise area, picnic area or pedestrian walkway.

        c. Where a fence or physical barrier is needed to minimize negative impacts from the commercial operation, utilize a barrier that retains some transparency.

    3. Design a landscape buffer area to include amenities. This may include:

        a. Multi-use paths

        b. Picnic areas

        c. Exercise areas

        d. Playgrounds

        e. Water features, including landscaped stormwater management

        f. Other landscape features

C. <u>Neighborhood Transitions Examples.</u> The following Table 1.7 illustrates a variety of strategies to design a transition to a sensitive adjacent property. These strategies focus on utilizing space for lower-intensity uses between a primary building and a sensitive edge to ease the transition. The intent of each of these strategies is to minimize potential negative impacts on a sensitive site, and to provide a compatible transition in terms of mass and scale. These strategies should be considered when designing a new development near a sensitive property as explained in Chapter 4, Article 3, Division 6: "Neighborhood Transitions" of the Development Code.

Table 1.7 Neighborhood Transitions

These pages illustrate alternative approaches for designing a compatible transition from a higher intensity development to a protected district or sensitive edge.
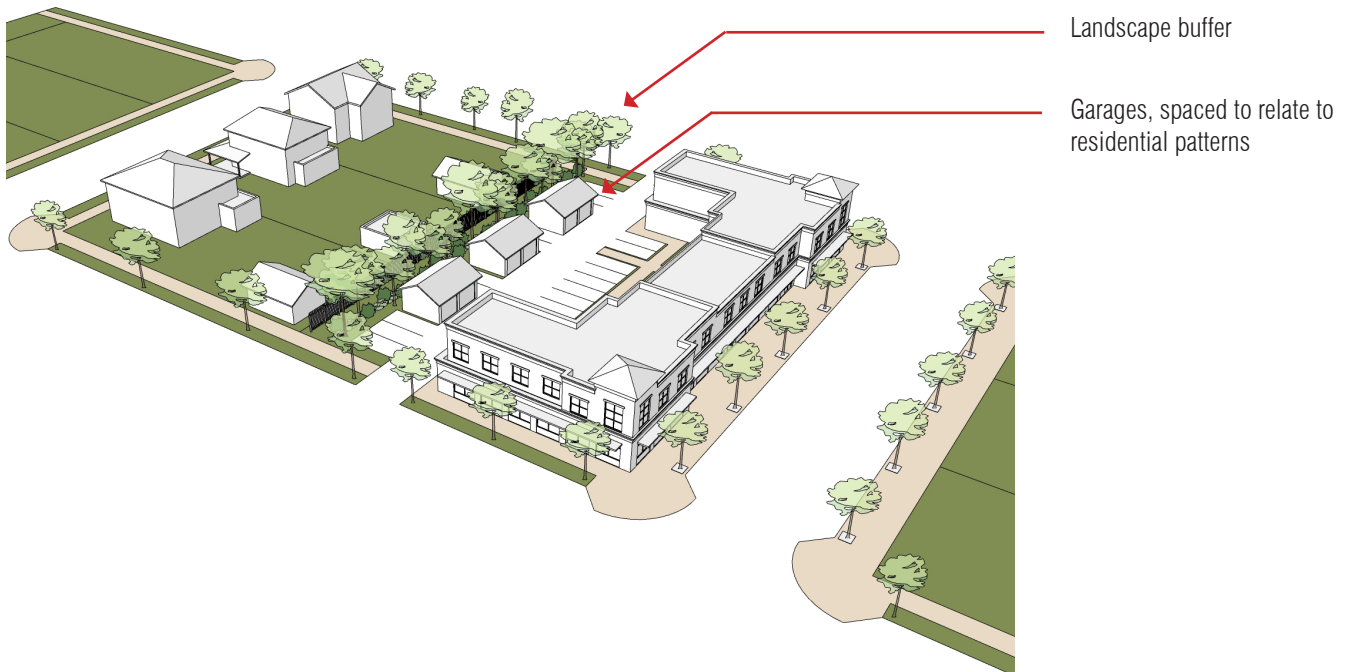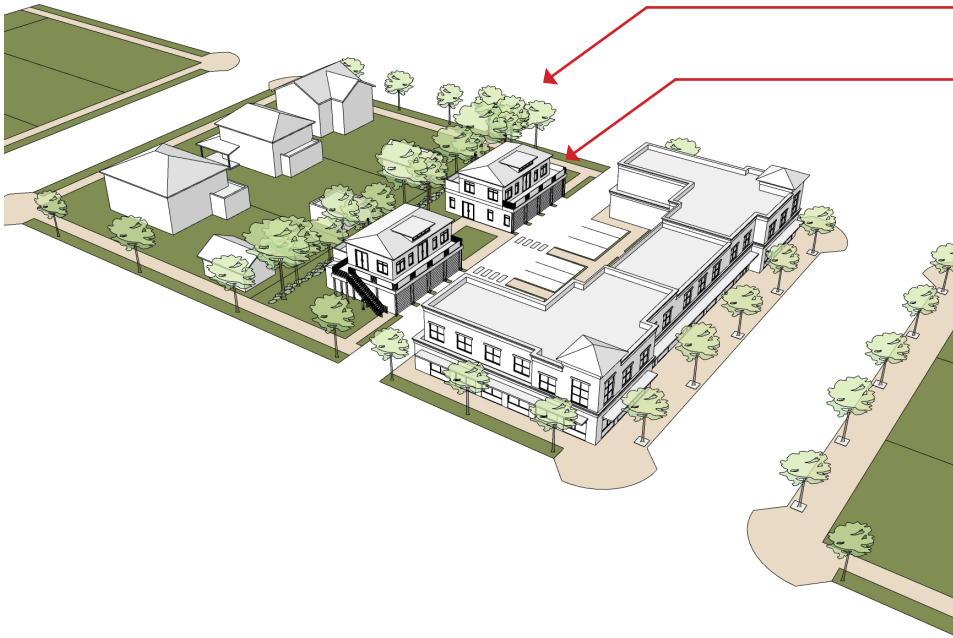
Parking With Landscaped Buffer

Landscape buffer

Parking divided into pods

Parking With Garages

Landscape buffer

Garages, spaced to relate to residential patterns
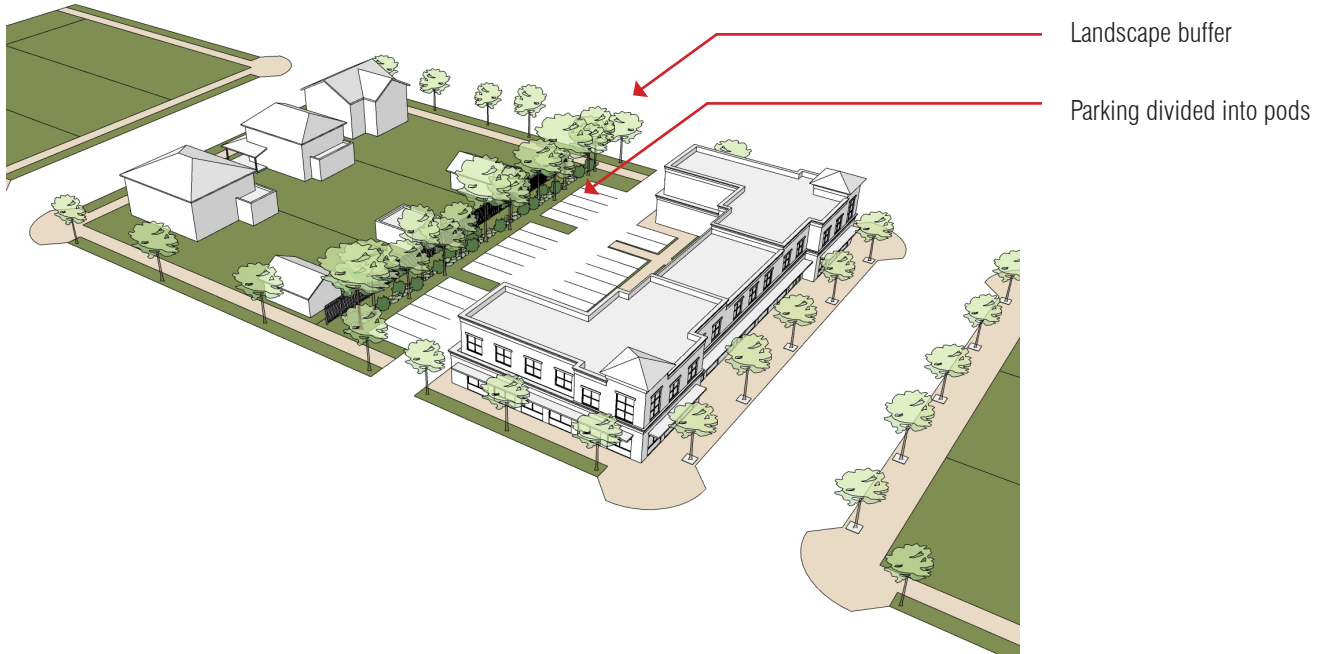
Table 1.7 Neighborhood Transitions (continued)

Residential Unit Over Garage as Transition

Landscape buffer

Residential units spaced to reflect residential development patterns

Townhouse Style Units as Transition
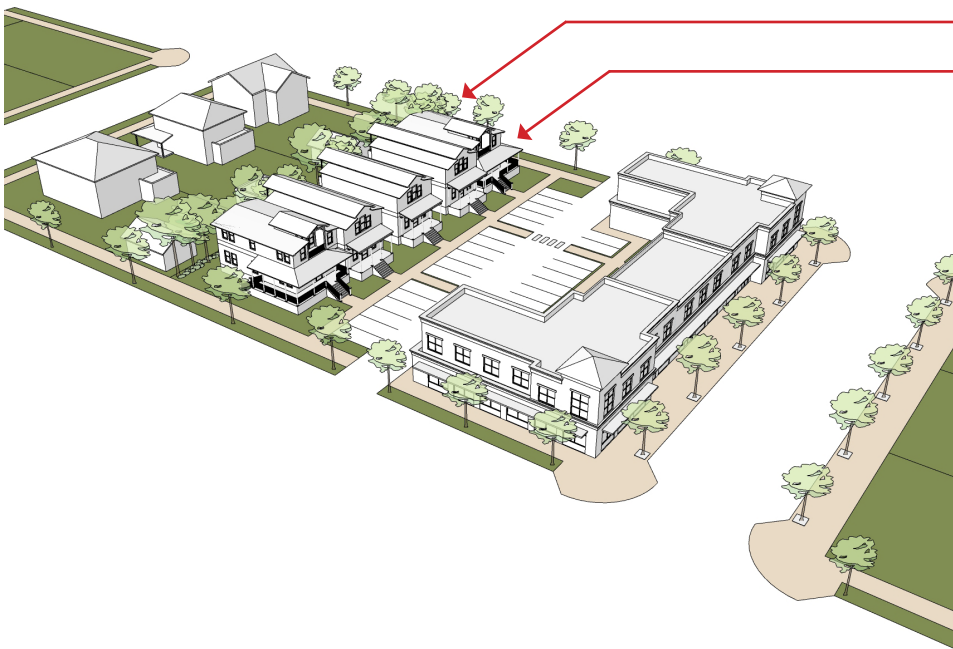
Landscape buffer

Townhouses, spaced to reflect residential development patterns

Table 1.7 Neighborhood Transitions (continued)

Low Impact Activity Area as Transition

Landscape buffer

Outdoor amenity space
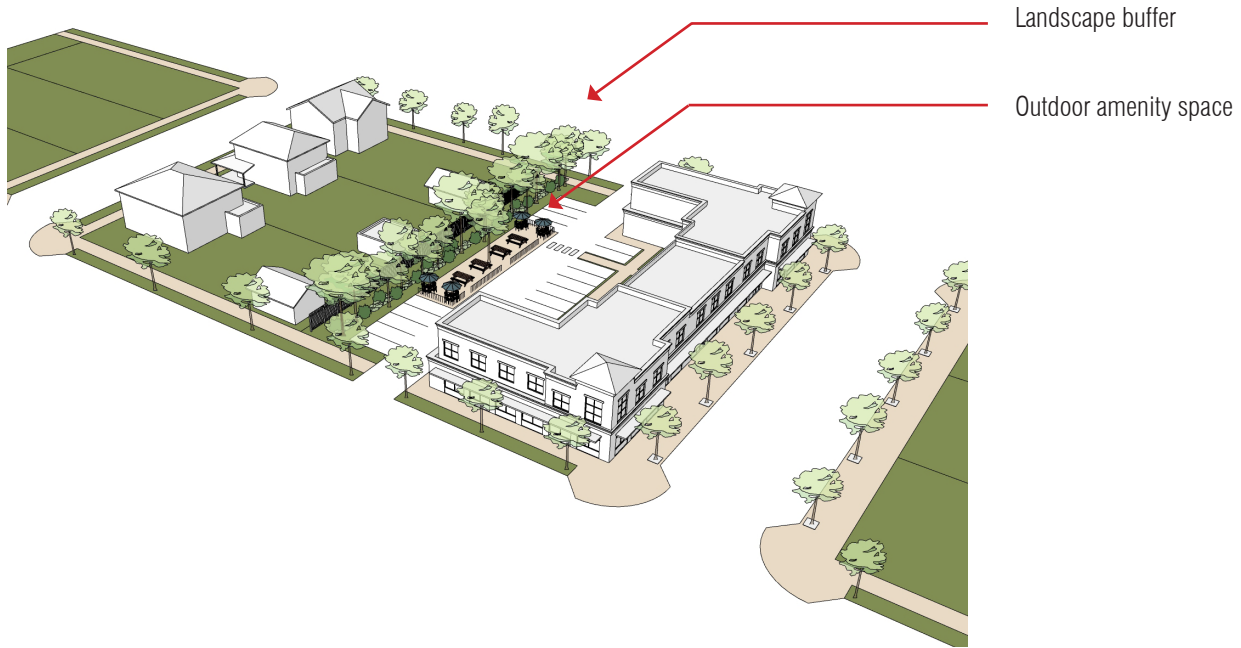
D. ~~Provide a compatible sense of scale along sensitive edges by using lower building heights for areas of a property adjacent to a sensitive site, conventional residential district, ND-3 or ND-3.5, or historic district.~~

~~(Previous Section A.1.4.7) Expression Tools~~

E. ~~Traditionally, buildings in CD-5D have an established sense of scale and proportion and express a visual rhythm and pedestrian interest at the street front. This should be continued in new projects in both CD-5 and CD-5D. Vertical and horizontal articulation should meet the intent of the blank wall area standards and express a sense of human scale and provide visual interest on a principal frontage.~~

1. ~~**Vertical Expression.** Vertical articulation techniques should provide interest in design and human scale. The purpose of these articulations is to ensure that the front of a new structure has a variety of offsets, surface relief, and insets to reflect a more traditional rhythm and scale at the street front.~~

2. ~~**Horizontal Articulation.** The objective of horizontal articulation tools is to create a sense of human scale, facade depth and visual interest on a building facade.~~

Section A.1.4.7   Building Materials

A. **Overview.** Building materials should contribute to the visual continuity of downtown San Marcos. Each material should be authentic and genuine, reflecting the scale, color, texture and finish of those used historically, especially in the Downtown Core. More flexibility is appropriate for design contexts further from the Downtown Core. The appropriateness of a material may also vary depending on whether it is used as a primary material or a secondary material. A primary material is one that covers the majority of the surface area of a prominent face of a building. A secondary material is also a part of a building's walls but is subordinate to the primary material. Other materials may also be used as accents and trim elements.

Historically, the palette of primary building materials was limited, with brick predominant. Other masonry forms, such as stone, were also common. Buildings in the Downtown Core should continue to utilize masonry materials, especially brick, as a primary building material. New buildings in the other design contexts should consider incorporating traditional materials, although other materials that convey a sense of scale and provide visual interest are also appropriate. Materials with matte finishes and those that are in units or modules that help to express scale are examples.

B. **Guidelines.** The following guidelines should be used when considering building materials:

1. Use building materials that appear authentic and that contribute to the visual continuity of downtown San Marcos.

a. A building material should have a texture, finish and scale similar to that used historically, especially in the Downtown Core design context.

b. Utilize genuine masonry, metal, concrete and glass, where possible.

c. Avoid using imitation or highly reflective materials.

2. Develop simple combinations to retain the overall composition of the building.

a. Avoid mixing several materials in a way that would result in an overly busy design.

3. Use high quality, durable building materials.

a. Choose materials that are proven to be durable in the San Marcos climate.

b. Choose materials that are likely to maintain an intended finish over time, when it is understood to be a desired outcome.

c. Incorporate building materials at the ground level that will withstand on-going contact with the public, sustaining impacts without compromising appearance.

4. Alternative primary materials may be considered when they are designed to express modules and a sense of scale. These may include:

a. Architectural metals

b. Glass curtain walls

**c.** Architectural concrete

  d.   Detailed stucco

C.   **Materials Examples.** The following Table 1.8 illustrates examples of materials that are appropriate in downtown San Marcos in the different design contexts. The table is organized into categories of building materials and three visual examples are provided by each. The intent of the table is to provide guidance for where certain materials may be appropriate as primary and secondary materials in the design contexts. This chart relates to Section 4.3.5.6 of the Development Code, "Durable Building Material Area."

TABLE 1.8 BUILDING MATERIALS

BRICK
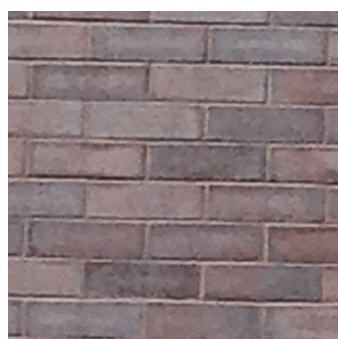
Appropriate in all contexts as primary and secondary material.			
	Glazed Brick	Red Brick	Yellow Brick
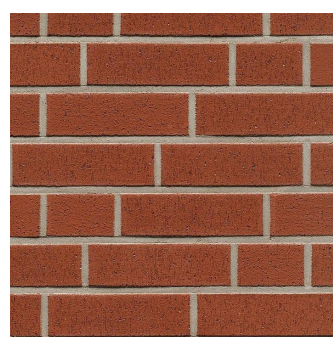
CONCRETE

Appropriate as primary material in: • University Edge • Transit Neighborhood Appropriate as secondary material in all contexts.			
	Detailed Concrete	Detailed Concrete	Detailed Concrete
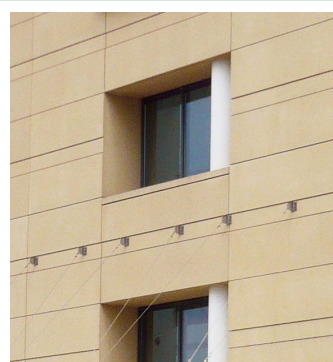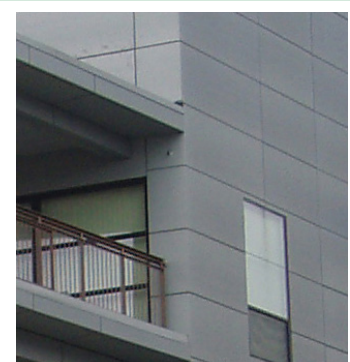
STONE

Appropriate in all contexts as primary and secondary material.			
	Rusticated Stone Veneer	Buff Limestone	Finished Ashlar Stone
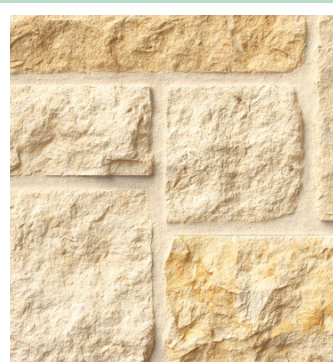
Table 1.8 Building Materials (continued)

Stucco

Appropriate as a secondary material in all contexts.

Detailed Stucco

Detailed Stucco
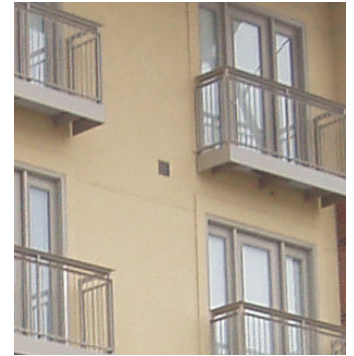
Detailed Synthetic Stucco

Special Masonry

Appropriate as a secondary material in all contexts.

Architectural Block

Architectural Block

Terra Cotta

Wood-Like Siding

This material includes wood and durable imitations such as fiber cement. Appropriate as a primary material and secondary material in the Residential/Transition Edge and along sensitive edges in the Approach.

Shingle Siding

Lap Siding

Modular Panels

TABLE 1.8 BUILDING MATERIALS (CONTINUED)

GLASS		
Appropriate as a secondary material in all contexts except the Residential / Transition Edge and the Downtown Core.			

| | Architectural Glass Blocks | Glass Paneling | Glass Curtain Wall |
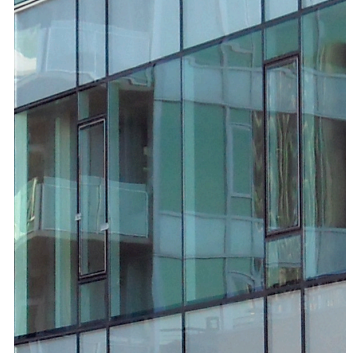
METAL		
Appropriate as a secondary material in all contexts except the Residential / Transition Edge and the Downtown Core.			

| | Metal Framework | Metal Cladding | Metal Framework |

Section A.1.4.8 Design Options for a Pedestrian-Friendly Ground Floor

A. **Overview.** Building design should incorporate features that help create a pedestrian-friendly street level by eliminating large expanses of blank wall area. High-quality ground floor design considers elements such as height, transparency, entrance location, canopies and awnings. In mixed-use areas such as CD-5D, it is especially important to incorporate active features into the ground floor, such as plazas and storefront windows, that create an inviting pedestrian experience.

B. **Guidelines.** The following guidelines should be utilized when considering options for a pedestrian-friendly ground floor.

   1. Design the ground floor to engage the public realm and promote pedestrian activity.

      a. Incorporate recessed entries, courtyards, forecourts or other setback in the ground floor façade that can be activated and connected to the public realm.

      b. Use design features such as windows, display areas and awnings to engage the street, provide shade and add pedestrian interest.

      c. Avoid long, blank wall areas that will diminish pedestrian interest. Instead, add visual interest to the visual interest to blank walls through at least one of the techniques shown in Table 1.9.

C. **Pedestrian-Friendly Ground Floor Options.** The following Table 1.9 illustrates a variety of ways that interest can be added to a blank wall or one with little architectural detail. While a storefront is not appropriate for all building types or in all areas of downtown, creating an environment that is enjoyable for pedestrians is essential. This means that the activation methods below should be applied to the ground floor of a development. These methods apply when considering alternative compliance for Section 4.3.5.2, "Transparency" and Section 4.3.5.3, "Blank Wall Area," of the Development Code.

TABLE 1.9 DESIGN OPTIONS FOR A PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY GROUND FLOOR

The design options described and illustrated below may be used individually, or in combination, to meet the intent of the design guidelines for ground floor design. The street level of a building should incorporate windows and other pedestrian-friendly features that invite pedestrian activity.
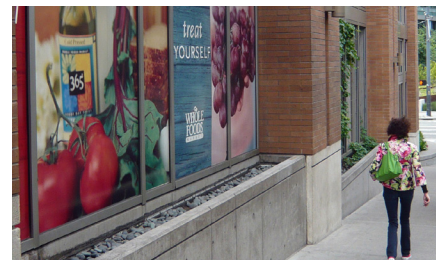
WINDOWS

A commercial building should incorporate a high percentage of transparent glass to actively engage the street and sidewalk. Windows may be combined with canopies, awnings, planters and other features to enhance the street level.
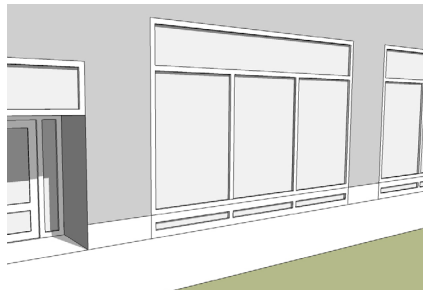
DISPLAY AREAS

Display cases or other product displays can create pedestrian interest and engage the street and sidewalk. Such treatments are especially appropriate along an otherwise windowless facade.

CANOPIES AND AWNINGS

Canopies and awnings help define the street-level pedestrian area and may provide shade or highlight entries and storefront windows.
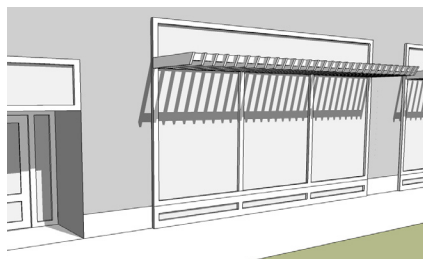
WALL ART

Wall art, mosaics and murals add interest, especially along an otherwise windowless facade.
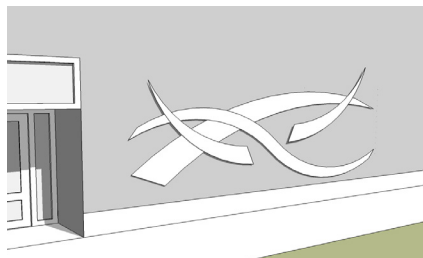
PLANTERS/LANDSCAPING

Integrated planters, large pots or other areas for landscaping add interest along the building facade and help engage the street and sidewalk.

Section A.1.4.9   Stratagies to Define the Street Wall of a Forecourt

A.   Overview. Forecourts are established when a part of a building is stepped back into a site, creating an internal patio or plaza that begins at the sidewalk edge. Incorporating a forecourt in the design of a new building is one way to activate the street frontage and connect the public realm to the private development.

B.   Guidelines. The following guidelines should be used when considering strategies to maintain the street wall of a forecourt and activate the forecourt to enhance the pedestrian experience. It should:

1.   Maintain a sense of definition of the street edge (such as with a change in paving or a line of plantings.)

2.   Engage the street (with views to amenities and activities within it)

3.   Provide interest and activity (such as with outdoor uses, artworks and water features)

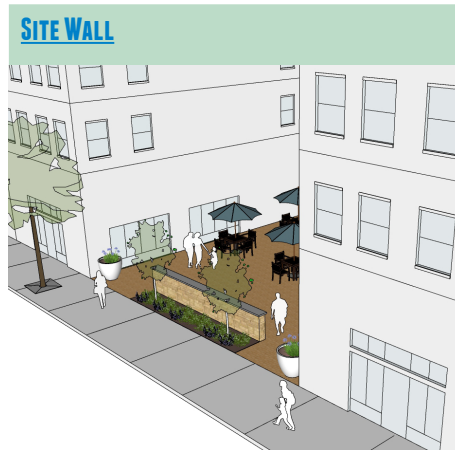4.   Be accessible (such as with pathways to the street and to building entrances)

C.   Forecourt Examples. The following Table 1.10 illustrates three ways that the edge of a forecourt can be designed to be a welcoming environment. The intent is to activate the space between the sidewalk and the beginning of a forecourt to draw in pedestrians. These apply when considering the design of a forecourt in Section 4.3.5.5, "Forecourt" of the Development Code.

Table 1.10 Strategies To Define A Street Edge With A Forecourt

Some strategies that define an active street frontage for forecourts are illustrated below. These are intended to maintain the line of storefronts at the street edge.

| Colonnade/Arcade	Site Wall	Planters
Extending a colonnade or arcade across a forecourt can help define the street edge.	A low wall with plantings can help bridge a forecourt to maintain an active, pedestrian-oriented street frontage.	A series of planters can help define the street edge along a forecourt.

Section A.1.4.10   Improving an Existing Front Setback

A.   **Overview.** In some existing development, part of the lot that abuts the street may be vacant or underutilized. For some sites, this means the building may be set back from the sidewalk leaving space for parking or other uses between the sidewalk and the building.

B.   **Examples of Improving an Existing Front Setback.** The Table 1.11 that follows illustrates ways that this underutilized property can be improved. Some strategies include construction of an addition to the existing building, while others focus on improving landscaping and outdoor amenities. These alternatives apply when considering alternative compliance related to additions to existing buildings in Section 4.3.3.3.E of the Development Code, "Nonconforming Build-to Requirement."

Table 1.11 Improving an Existing Front Setback

Improved Landscape and Pedestrian Access

- Walkway leads directly to the entrance.
- Trees provide seasonal shade and color.
- Benches invite pedestrian use.
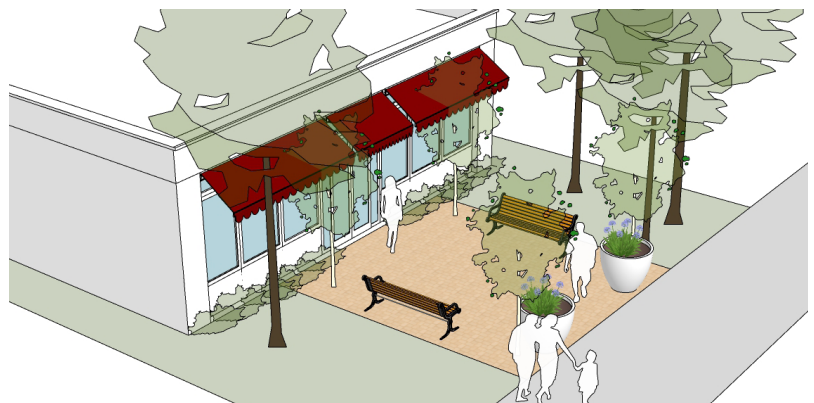
Hardscaped Frontage with Outdoor Dining

- Decorative paving adds visual interest.
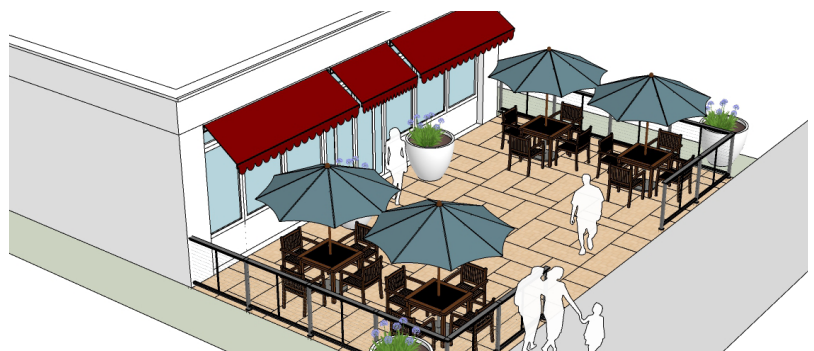- Outdoor seating activates the street edge.

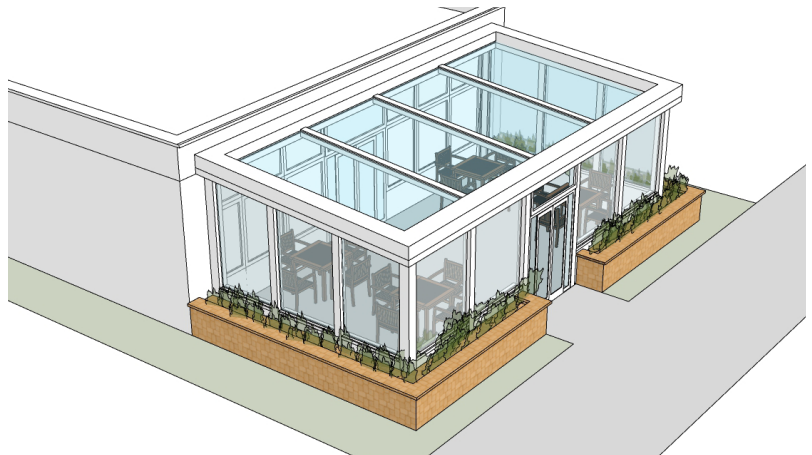## Table 1.11 Improving an Existing Front Setback (Continued)

Architectural Elements with Outdoor Product Display

- Architectural elements enhance the street presence.
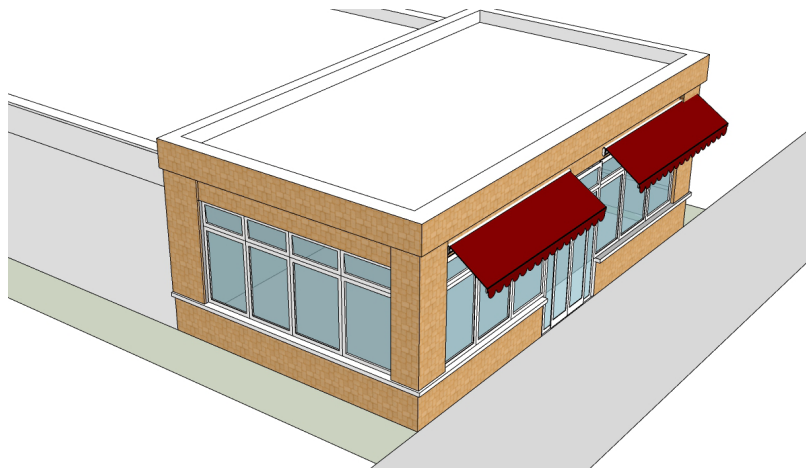- Product display invites pedestrian activity.

Conditioned Transparent Enclosure

- Glazed patio extends use through the seasons.

Building Expansion

- Addition to building front.
- This indicates an expansion that would potentially meet the build-to requirements of the Development Code.

Section A.1.4.11   Ways to Create and Activate Outdoor Space

A.   **Overview.** In some development situations, retaining open space on a lot is desirable to accommodate outdoor functions. In some situations, this may mean a building is located on one half of the site, while the other half is left open. In others, this may mean the corner of a lot is left open to function as a plaza, and in others, the building may be set back to accommodate for outdoor functions along that façade. While parking may be a component of the open space function in some situations, this space is primarily used for pedestrians and is utilized by the business(es) that open into the space. Some may use the space for outdoor dining, while others may use it for retail display space. By programming the space with active and passive uses, it becomes vital to the function of the building, and becomes an inviting place. These can also be used as a strategy for incremental development through an alternative compliance in Section 4.3.3.3.F – Build to Zone – of the Development Code.

B.   **Examples of Creating Oudoor Space.** The following Table 1.12 illustrates ways in which this outdoor space on a site can be utilized. The intent is to activate the space and to engage the street with pedestrian-oriented amenities. These alternatives can also apply when considering alternative compliance related to additions to existing buildings in Section 4.3.3.3.E of the Development Code, "Nonconforming Build-to Requirement", and Alternative compliance for Section 4.3.3.3.F for projects that may be pursuing incremental development of a lot.

Table 1.12 Activation of Open Space

Alley accessed parking and landscape treatments

- Landscape buffer screens parking (when parking is allowed).
- Outdoor use area activates the sidewalk edge.
- Side entrance orients to parking.

Shared plaza

- Outdoor seating flanks side entry.
- Walkway connects to parking in rear.
- Landscape edge defines building line.
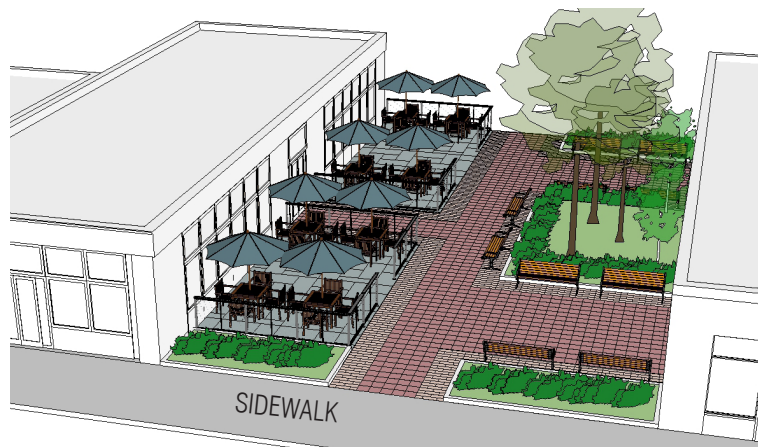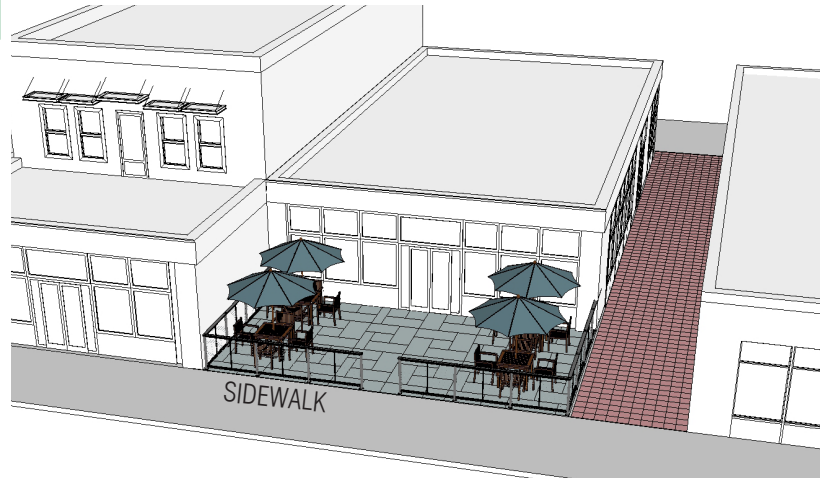- Entries open onto the plaza.

Table 1.12 Activation of Open Space (Continued)

Pedestrian pass-through and forecourt

- Side building with entry facing the street.
- Outdoor seating is placed in the front setback.
- A walkway connects to the alley.

Corner Forecourt/Plaza treatments

- Building facades on a corner are both set back to create an outdoor space
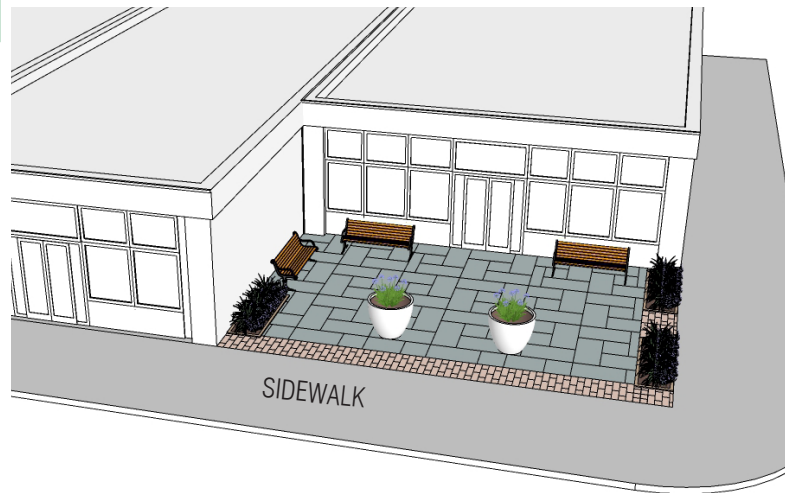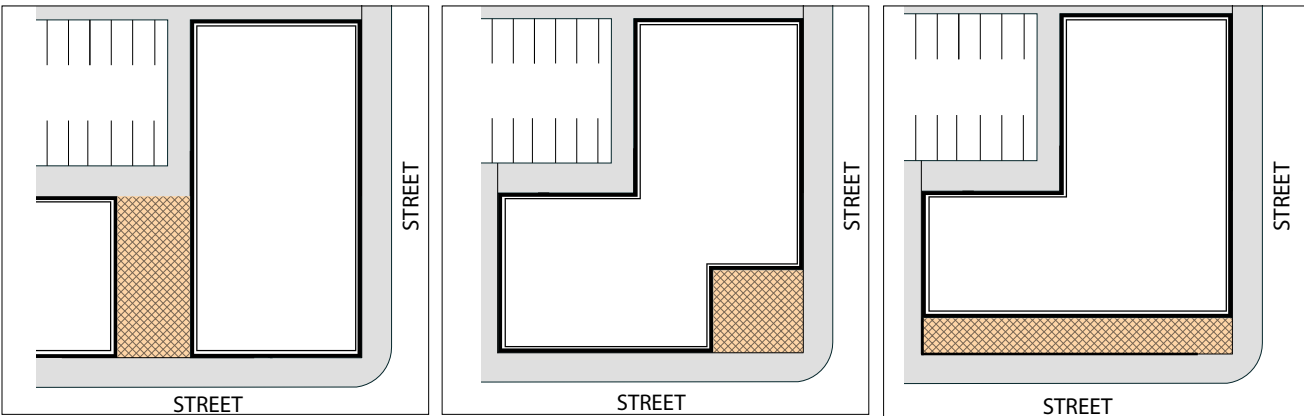- Corner plaza is activated and may be utilized by businesses that open onto the plaza.

FIGURE 1.6: OPTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE

A courtyard between buildings, integrated with the public sidewalk.

A corner plaza adjacent to the public sidewalk and street.

A linear outdoor dining or seating area.

Section A.1.4.12 Connectivity

A. **Overview.** Excellent pedestrian access should be provided between the public realm to a site and a building. A strong physical and visual relationship between these elements enhances walkability. Connectivity is also enhanced by breaking up a large block to provide pedestrian access.

B. **Guidelines.** The following guidelines pertain to connectivity.

1. Provide a physical pedestrian connection between a site and the public realm. Appropriate options include:

   a. A door that opens directly to a public space.

   b. A walkway that connects a building to a public space through a setback area.

   c. A plaza, outdoor seating area or patio that connects a building to a public space.

2. Provide public pedestrian access through a block (see Figure 1.7). Methods include:

   a. A simple path connecting two streets through a block.

   b. A pedestrian paseo integrated with an open space or retail amenity that connects through a block.

   c. An alley that is designed to be shared by pedestrians and automobiles.

FIGURE 1.7: THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTIVITY
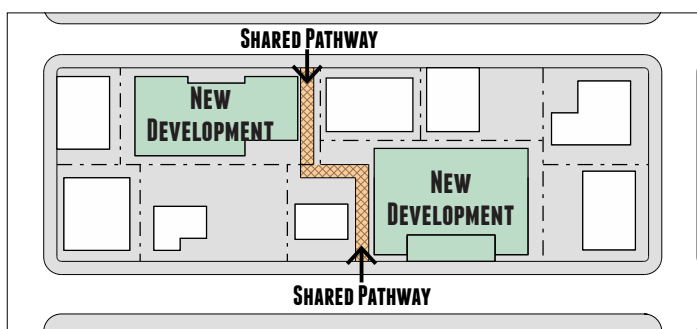
Section A.1.4.13 Working with Topography

A. **Overview.** Many sites in San Marcos include topographical features that influence development opportunities. Where possible, the design of a site should preserve and work within existing topography. Any regrading should maintain pedestrian and vehicular connectivity while minimizing potential negative visual impacts of large retaining walls. A building should be designed to step with the natural grade in order to minimize long foundation walls that pedestrians must walk along. The design of a building should ensure a connection to the street through the use of windows and entrances.

B. **Guidelines.** The below guidelines pertain to topography along with the supplemental examples in Table 1.13.

1. Design a site to integrate with topography.

   a. Use a series of landscaped terraces or stepped walls where a taller cut or change in grade is necessary.

   b. Incorporate an existing topographic landform as a natural or open space amenity.

2. Orient a building's primary façade along a level grade, where possible.

3. Design a building to step with the existing topography of a site.

   a. Step building foundations to follow site contours, when possible.

   b. "Terrace" a building into a hillside to minimize site disturbance and create private outdoor spaces and site features.

   c. Step the first floor of a building along a sloped street to maintain a close connection to the sidewalk level.

   d. Maintain continuous upper floor plates by varying first floor heights according to changes in grade.

4. Design façade elements to respond to changes in topography.

   a. Step building entrances to follow changes in building foundations.

    b.   Step windows with topography to ensure a continued visual connection and an active edge for pedestrians.

    c.   Limit the maximum length of an exposed foundation wall to maintain an active building edge.

    d.   Limit the maximum height of an exposed foundation wall to maintain a pedestrian scale.

5.   Step outdoor amenity spaces to follow changes in topography.

    a.   Use site elements such as seat walls and berms to transition between changes in grade.

    b.   Integrate landscape elements such as seating, lighting and others with changes in grade.

    c.   Consider locating a sloped sidewalk adjacent to stepped hardscape areas in order to maintain ADA access.

6.   Retaining walls are subject to the same guidance as blank walls. Refer to Table 1.9, "Design Options for a Pedestrian-Friendly Ground Floor", to ensure the retaining wall is designed with the pedestrian experience in mind.

Table 1.13 Working With Topography

Design a building to step with the existing topography of a site.

Integrate the elements of a building facade to respond to changes in topography.

This image is inappropriate because a pedestrian scaled is not maintained.

Section A.1.4.14   Strategies for Activating Frontages

A. **Overview.** Where possible, buildings in downtown San Marcos should be built to the build-to-line to support an active street edge. Some developments may opt to incorporate a forecourt, in which part of the front building wall is set back from the property line. Where this is the case, the forecourt should be designed to encourage active use. Landscape features, seating, lighting, outdoor dining and architectural features are all encouraged. These strategies should be integrated with the design of the building. Table 1.14 provides strategies for activating frontages.

Table 1.14 Strategies for Activating Frontages

Arcade

Landscape

Outdoor Dining

DIVISION 5: EXAMPLES OF APPLIED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following photographs provide examples of improvements that illustrate how some of the design guidelines may apply in CD-5D and CD-5. Some specific design features are identified in the captions. Note that, in some cases, while a specific design feature is described as being an appropriate example, the overall building shown may not meet all of the city's other design standards and guidelines.

Vertical Expression Lines; Cornice; Balcony

Varied Upper Floor Massing; Wall Offset

Wall Offset; Horizontal Expression Line

Wall Notch; Horizontal Expression Line

Vertical Expression Lines; Awning / Canopy

Wall Offset; Horizontal Expression Line; Materials Change

Varied Upped Floor Massing; Change in Materials

Varied Upper Floor Massing; Change in Materials; Balcony

Wall Notch

Change in Materials; Cornice; Stoop

Wall Offset; Cornice

Awning / Canopies, Cornice; Balcony

Step down in height adjacent to historic building

Wall Notch; Change in Materials

Varied Upper Floor Massing; Canopy / Awning

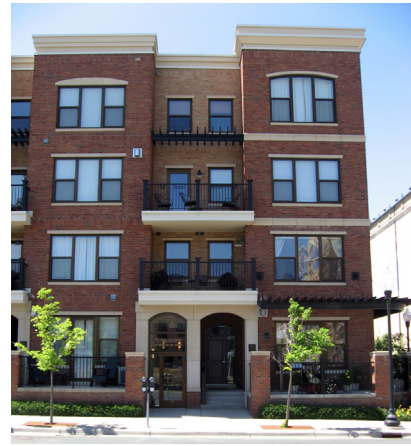**Canopy / Awning; Moldings; Vertical Proportions**

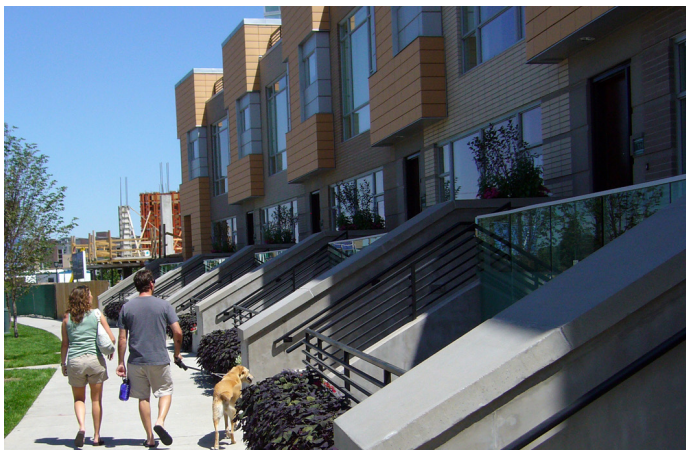
Wall Offset; Vertical Window Proportions

Varied Upper Floor Massing; Wall Notch; Cornice

Window design includes a frame and vertical proportions; Cornice

Wall Notch; Change in Materials; Cornice; Window Design includes vertical proportions (in sets of 3)

Wall Offsets; Stoop

Window Design includes sills, true divided lights, and window insets

Window design includes vertical proportions (in pairs) and true divided lights

Wall Notch; Awning / Canopy; Window moldings at second floor; Cornice

Awning / Canopy; Window ~~Design includes~~ sills ~~and vertical proportions~~

~~Change in Materials (at first floor); Cornice; Window design includes vertical proportions~~

Vertical Expression Line (pilasters or attached columns)~~; Cornice; Change in Material (first and upper floors)~~

Horizontal expression: cornice line, window sills, and accent materials ~~Cornice; Change in Materials (upper floor); Window Design includes insets, sills, and true divided lights~~

Vertical expression: pilasters, wall notch and material changes that reflect traditional modules ~~Varied parapet line; Change in Materials, Vertical Expression Line (pilasters)~~

Horizontal expression: cornice, window sills and moldings ~~Cornice; Window Design includes sills and insets~~

Horizontal expression: cornice, molding at second story and change in materials ~~Cornice; Second Floor Expression Line~~

Vertical Expression: Wall notches and changes in color ~~Wall Notches; Change in Materials (first floor); Cornice~~

Varied Massing: Upper Floor Stepback; Wall offset as vertical expression ~~Varied Upper Floor Massing; Wall Offset; Cornice~~

Vertical expression: changes in material and color, wall notches ~~Varied Upper Floor Heights; Wall Offsets; Cornice~~

Horizontal expression: Awning/canopy and window sills ~~Awning / Canopy~~

Vertical expression: Wall Notches, Change in Materials; Varied Massing: Stepback at upper floor ~~Wall Notches; Change in Materials (vertical and horizontal); Cornice~~