

## COMMERCIAL NEW CONSTRUCTION

### Intent

As investment in the Snohomish community continues, new buildings may be expected throughout the city, including the Historic District. With this in mind, it is important that new development contribute to the unique character of the Historic District. New construction should be compatible with the scale, massing, and pedestrian-oriented environment of existing development.

### Applicability

The design standards in this section apply to all new construction for commercial use within the Snohomish Historic District. Where a mix of uses is proposed within one building, these standards apply to the entire building. Standards for additions and alterations to existing structures may be found in section X. Standards for new residential construction may be found in section X.

### A. General Guidance

1. Building design should exhibit and incorporate elements that reflect the identity and visual character of the Snohomish Historic District, particularly styles and features of buildings developed between 1880 and 1930. Justification of consistency of proposed elements, proportions, relationships, or materials with local context may be necessary if antecedents within the community are not clear. Refer to Appendix X for historically appropriate architectural details and building styles in Snohomish.
2. Architectural styles and stylistic references should be consistent and not combined on one building or site.
3. Elements of pedestrian interest should be incorporated. These include large storefront windows, alcoves and seating areas. Public outdoor spaces are encouraged, as they contribute to the vitality and visual interest of the streetscape.
4. Orientation to the river is encouraged. New buildings south of First Street should incorporate south-facing windows, decks, and other amenities to take advantage of river views.

### B. Site Design

#### 1. Streets and Sidewalks

- a. The traditional grid pattern layout, with straight streets and alleys connected to other streets (no dead ends) shall be preserved for new development.
- b. Sidewalks shall be provided across all street frontages and up to all building entries. The typical width of sidewalks within the right-of-way for First Street and Second Street is between ten and 15 feet. Typical width on all other commercial streets is five feet with a planter strip.

## 2. Building Orientation

- a. Buildings shall be located at the front property line, except that entry alcoves and small outdoor pedestrian spaces may be located between the building and the sidewalk. Whenever possible, new buildings shall maintain a continuous façade with existing structures along the street frontage.
- b. Maintain the traditional orientation of the primary pedestrian entrance toward the street. One or more clearly-defined primary entrances is required. If a building or tenant space does not front on a public street, the entry shall be visible from a public street, with clear access from the street to the building entry provided.

### CONSISTENT



Buildings oriented consistently along front property line.

### INCONSISTENT



No clearly-defined pedestrian entrance on the street facing façade.

## 3. Parking

The intent of this section is to reduce the visual impact of surface and structured parking. Open space, landscaping and walkways should be incorporated wherever possible. On-site parking should be subordinate to all other uses. New surface parking should be designed to be attractive through use of high quality materials, and landscaping or public amenities at the sidewalk edge. Shared parking is encouraged where consistent with the provisions of Chapter 14.235 SMC, in order to reduce the total area devoted to parking in the Historic District.

- a. Parking lots shall have minimal exposure to the street or adjacent right-of-way.
  1. Parking shall be located to the rear or side of a site or building.
  2. Lots adjacent to an alley shall have the primary parking lot access from the alley.
- b. Parking lots shall be screened from adjacent public ways to reduce the visual prominence of vehicles. Screening methods may include structures, activity areas, architectural elements, or landscaping to draw attention from the parking area.
  1. Activity areas may include quasi-public or private gathering areas, including plazas and seating.

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2. Architectural elements shall be a minimum height of 2½ feet and may include wood or masonry walls or fences, decorative metal grilles, and/or other approved methods that meet the intent of this section. Materials shall be compatible with those of the building. Walls and fences shall be consistent with the standards contained in section X. Chain link is not acceptable.
3. Landscaping shall include a minimum 2½-foot tall composition of evergreen shrubs of a sufficient density to provide a visual offset from vehicles. Open trellis work or similar features that can be seen through may extend above the shrubs. Street trees with canopies above pedestrian height shall be included. Planting beds shall be a minimum of four feet wide.

## CONSISTENT



Landscape screening using a variety of plant species of sufficient height and density.

## INCONSISTENT



Inappropriate screening materials.

- c. Common driveways shall be used wherever possible to serve commercial facilities, in order to reduce curb cuts.
- d. Parking lots shall be visually screened from abutting residential land use designations, using solid wood or masonry fences to prevent headlights from shining into residences. Walls and fences shall be consistent with the standards contained in section X.
- e. Parking lots containing ten or more parking spaces must provide a minimum of one tree for every seven spaces, located in planting areas internal or peripheral to the parking lot. Such planting areas shall have a minimum dimension of five feet by three feet. Tree species shall be deciduous, minimum two-inch caliper at the time of installation. Parking lot planting areas shall also contain 85% coverage with ground cover plantings and evergreen shrubs.

## 4. Site Lighting

Site lighting provides comfort and safety. Fixtures must be adequately shielded to minimize glare onto nearby properties. Fixture design and screening can be used to control light level impacts.

- a. Light fixtures shall incorporate cut-off shields to direct light downward and prevent off-site glare.
- b. Lighting shall be provided at a scale that is appropriate for pedestrians. Parking lot lights shall be no more than 15 feet in height. Lighted bollards are encouraged for pedestrian walkways.
- c. The design of light fixtures shall not be contemporary, and shall incorporate historic references.

## CONSISTENT



Pedestrian scale lighting incorporating historic references.

## INCONSISTENT



Light poles are too tall and contemporary in appearance.

## 5. Equipment and Service Areas

Because exterior equipment, storage, and service areas can detract from the appearance of a building and site, these elements should be located away from streets and pedestrian areas, and screened from view. Wherever possible, service areas should be located within the building itself.

- a. The following shall be enclosed or obscured with screening materials: mechanical and electrical equipment (junction boxes, telecommunication devices, conduits, satellite dishes, HVAC equipment, meters, vault doors and covers, vents, and fans), garbage and recycling containers, utilities, outside storage areas.
- b. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall not be visible from adjacent streets and sidewalks. Rooftop equipment shall be set back from the outer building wall and/or screened using an extended parapet wall or other roof forms, to a height that equals or exceeds the height of the equipment.
- c. Screening methods may include a wall, fence, or vegetation. Refuse screening shall be opaque, or mostly opaque. Ground-mounted walls and fences shall be consistent with the standards contained in section X.
- d. Screening design shall be consistent with the character of the building and other site improvements.

## CONSISTENT



Opaque fence screening.

## INCONSISTENT



Inappropriate screening materials.

## C. Building Design

### 1. General

The intent of this section is to encourage new development in the Historic District that is complementary to, compatible with, and reflective of historic architectural examples constructed prior to 1930. Design elements include building and feature proportions, surface modulation, surface material appearance, detailing, fenestration, and hardware.

- a. Building design shall not serve to communicate or reflect a corporate identity or product marketed. Corporate identity shall be communicated through signage, rather than building architecture or external features (i.e., color schemes, logos, and distinct corporate architecture).

## CONSISTENT



Corporate identity is conveyed through signage rather than building design.

## INCONSISTENT



Corporate identity is conveyed through architectural features.

- b. Architectural styles and stylistic references shall be consistent and not combined on one building.
- c. The minimum height for primary street-facing façades shall be two stories.
- d. Vestibules, entries, trim, windows, and other façade relief features shall be consistent with historic examples.

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- e. Street-facing façades shall incorporate elements of pedestrian interest such as storefront windows, belt coursing, trim, weather protection, or other approved features that meet the intent.
- f. Buildings located on street corners shall include the same features and materials on both street-facing façades.
- g. Buildings containing residential uses shall provide at least one covered access to the residential units on the front of the building.
- h. Building design shall incorporate planned signage areas.

## CONSISTENT



Corner building with consistent features and materials on both street-facing façades.

## INCONSISTENT



The Greek Classical references on this mid-century building create a confusing appearance.

## 2. Building Materials

Exterior surface materials shall be consistent with traditional architectural materials and shall contribute to the appearance of a 100-year functional building life. Appropriate materials include brick, stone, wood, stucco, cast iron, and metal panels, when reflective of historic industrial buildings. Cement fiber siding is an appropriate alternative to traditional wood siding.

New or alternative materials shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the longevity and appearance of the material. The material must have a demonstrated durability in the local climate, and shall be used in a manner that appears similar in character to historic materials.

- a. The following exterior surface materials are prohibited, where visible from off-site locations.
  - 1. Plain concrete masonry unit
  - 2. Tilt-up and pre-cast concrete slab, if over more than 10% of the façade
  - 3. Corrugated metal
  - 4. Imitation or synthetic cladding materials such as vinyl, plastic, or aluminum

5. T1-11 siding
6. Exterior Insulated Finishing System (EIFS)
7. Mirrored glass
8. Vinyl windows
9. Perforated pressure treated lumber

## CONSISTENT



New construction utilizing traditional materials.

## INCONSISTENT



Tilt-up concrete has a contemporary appearance.

### 3. Ground Floor Details

The ground level of a commercial building should be clearly distinguishable from the upper floors. Historically, the ground floor is predominantly composed of large, fixed plate glass storefront windows, with opaque framing materials. Kick plates, bulkheads, cornices, recessed entries and transom windows are often incorporated. Conversely, upper floors are comprised of predominantly opaque materials with strongly vertically oriented window openings.

- a. The ground floor height of buildings located in the Historic Business District shall be a minimum of 12 feet, as measured from finished floor to finished ceiling.
- b. Pedestrian-scale interest at the street or other public right-of-way shall be provided by incorporating elements such as canopies or awnings that extend into the pedestrian realm, vestibules, alcove entries, or other approved elements that meet the intent of the standard.
- c. Storefront windows shall be provided on the primary façade. Transom windows and/or continuous ribbon windows with vertically oriented mullions are strongly encouraged.

## CONSISTENT



Alcove entries and large storefronts provide a sense of pedestrian scale.

## INCONSISTENT

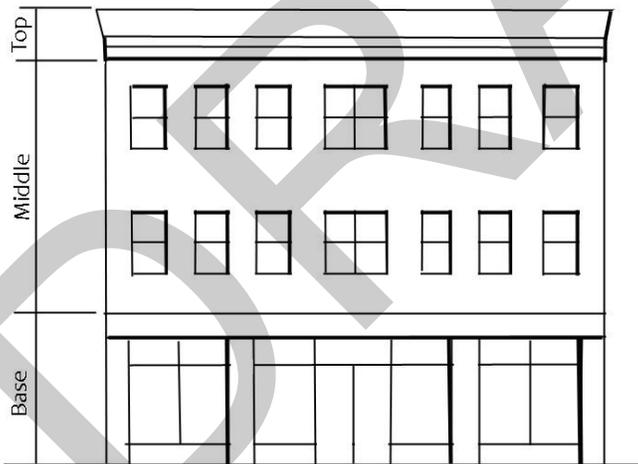


Ground level does not incorporate elements of pedestrian interest.

## 4. Massing, Scale, and Articulation

New commercial structures in the Historic District should reflect the underlying lot pattern. Building mass and articulation should be broken up, and should not be monolithic in scale. A building's elevation and mass should be modulated to match or replicate the narrow commercial façades typical of original development.

- a. Buildings taller than 30 feet shall have a clear base, middle, and top.



- b. Buildings shall be “four-sided”, meaning that all façades including side and rear façades shall be considered visible (unless facing onto an adjacent party wall) and shall be designed as an architectural façade composition. Blank façades shall not be visible from public spaces.
- c. Undifferentiated façades shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically. The mass of larger buildings shall be articulated through a variety in wall planes, with portions of the building face stepped back from the street. Planar differences shall appear to be structural elements.

## CONSISTENT



Recesses and projections appear structural.

## INCONSISTENT



Projections appear to be arbitrary and floating.

- d. Buildings shall be consistent with the height, scale, setbacks, and massing of existing historic structures, and achieve proportions that provide a sense of human scale.
- e. Alignment of horizontal elements such as windows and moldings shall relate to those of adjacent buildings, where feasible.
- f. A visual division shall be made between the street level and upper levels by using projecting elements, belt coursing, differing materials or a continuous window ribbon.

## CONSISTENT



Visual division between the ground level and upper levels using differing materials.

## INCONSISTENT



Structure lacking articulation and elements of pedestrian interest.

- g. Acceptable roof forms include traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets, or gabled and hipped roofs for smaller buildings, with a minimum primary slope of 8:12. Shallower pitches may be allowed on subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.
  - 1. Flat roofs shall include a parapet with a cornice or similar architectural feature.
  - 2. Sloped and gabled roofs shall include eaves that extend a minimum of 12 inches. The eave projection shall be consistent with the style of the overall building.

## 5. Windows

Display windows on the ground floor of retail and commercial buildings shall be the predominant surface on the first story, typical of original Snohomish commercial buildings.

- a. The street-facing ground level of new buildings in the Historic Business District shall be comprised of a minimum of 65% glazing.
- b. Commercial storefront style windows shall be incorporated for ground floor retail and commercial uses.
- c. Glazing shall be transparent. Highly reflective or darkly tinted glass shall not be used.
- d. Mullions and muntins, if proposed for upper story or ribbon windows, shall be vertically proportioned. False muntins, or simulated divided lites shall not be used.
- e. Upper story windows shall be vertically oriented. Typical window proportions include a height that is generally twice the dimension of the width.
- f. Windows shall be set back, or shall appear to be set back from the plane of the exterior building wall to create dimensional relief.

### CONSISTENT



Substantial storefront windows, upper story window trim creates dimensionality.

### INCONSISTENT



Insufficient glazing; windows have false mullions.

## 6. Building Lighting

Traditionally, exterior lights mounted to buildings were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances, and ground floor details. If building lights are proposed, special attention should be given to the character of fixtures and level of lighting. If used, building lighting should be used to accent building entrances, architectural details, and signs. Sign illumination should be considered when designing building lighting.

- a. Building light fixtures shall be shielded from the sky and adjacent properties, and focused on a particular element to prevent glare.
- b. Uplighting shall only be allowed when the glare will be interrupted by building features, such as a cornice or sill.

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- c. Lighting fixtures shall be consistent with the character of the Historic District and appropriate to the building style and surroundings. Lights shall not be recessed above the lower surface of an exterior ceiling or canopy.
- d. The use of neon, continuous or generally continuous LED tubing, and similar linear light arrays for building ornamentation is prohibited (excludes signs).

### CONSISTENT



Exterior light fixtures that emphasize architectural elements.

### INCONSISTENT



Tube lighting for building ornamentation.

## 7. Doors and Hardware

- a. Wood is the preferred material for doors. If metal is proposed, it shall be dark and shall not have a bright or shiny finish. Painted metal is acceptable. Fiberglass and plastic shall not be used.
- b. All primary commercial doors shall have extensive glazing, with a minimum of one foot between the glass and the bottom of the door. Kickplates are encouraged below the glazing.
- c. Metal used for exterior hardware shall be dark and shall not have a bright or shiny finish, with the exception of copper and copper alloys (including brass and bronze). Bright finished aluminum shall not be used.
- d. Hardware shall be traditional and historic in character, to the extent allowed under the applicable building code.

### CONSISTENT



Dark finish metal with brass hardware.

### INCONSISTENT



Bright finish, contemporary hardware; insufficient area beneath glazing.