Commercial, Lodging, and Historic District
Design Standards and Guidelines

Updated 2017

City of Aspen, Colorado

THE CITY OF ASPEN

rowland+broughton
architecture / urban design / interior design

BendonAdams

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Introduction

The **Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines** focus on the fundamentals of urban design that promote a sense of neighborhood identity and will enhance the livability of the city for residents and visitors alike.

This document and the Commercial Design Review process promote buildings that reference Aspen's history: Aspen's architectural vernacular is generally small, pedestrian-scaled, and thoughtful in design and detailing. Aspen is a unique community, rich with history, dramatic landscapes, a vibrant economy, and a vital cultural scene. Each of these elements contributes to the appeal of the City and enhances its livability. Acknowledgment of existing neighborhood context is integral to preserving and to highlighting Aspen's local architectural vernacular. The ***Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines*** provide specific design parameters to achieve these goals.

The ***Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Standards and Guidelines*** also help preserve and encourage walkable neighborhoods. Attractive and useful pedestrian amenities, interesting ground level storefront design, appropriate building mass, and responsive site design contribute to successful commercial and mixed-use neighborhoods, and are a priority.

The City does not intend to limit creativity in the built environment, but instead to promote architecture and site design that create cohesive neighborhoods that are walkable, interesting, and vibrant.

Reference the Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP) to better understand the community's vision and character.

▼ *Strengthening walkable areas through design is promoted.*

Zone Districts and Character Areas

There are two primary tools that dictate building location, size, height, and form: Zone Districts and Character Areas. These two systems serve distinct purposes but work in concert to ensure development meets dimensional and land use requirements as well as design objectives.

Zone Districts establish the maximum size a building can be and the general location it can be placed on a property. They regulate the overall uses and dimensions of development, including setbacks, height and floor area.

Character Areas work to preserve the character and history of existing development and foster consistency and cohesiveness between neighboring developments. They provide detailed requirements for building design, landscape, site layout, materials, etc.

As a general rule, all properties in a zone district have the same basic allowed development rights in terms of height and floor area. However, there are identifiable neighborhoods within the core of Aspen that do not necessarily follow the strict boundaries of the zone districts. For this reason, Character Areas have been created to specify appropriate treatment in terms of material, roof form, window pattern, etc. based on context.

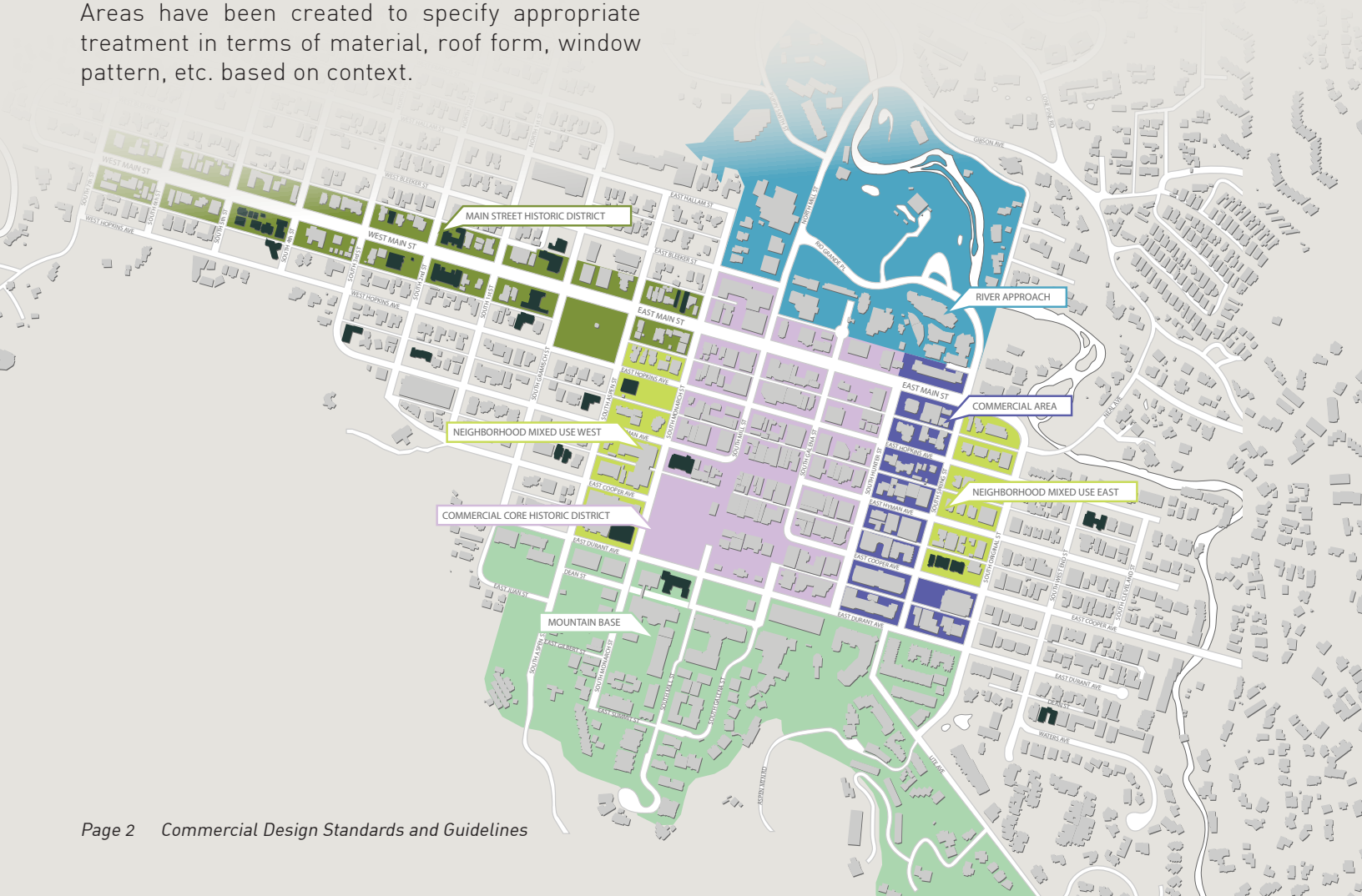
Purpose of Character Areas

Each Character Area defines a neighborhood with similar characteristics such as steep topography, minimal setbacks, or a large collection of historic buildings. The design standards and guidelines for the Character Areas reinforce historic and existing development patterns. Customized design parameters create a sense of cohesion that strengthens neighborhood context and a positive pedestrian experience.

Each Character Area includes a section on the history of development in the area. Understanding the background of neighborhood development is crucial to understanding the existing character.

> 2012 AACP Policy: Development should "... reflect our architectural heritage in terms of site coverage, mass, scale, density and diversity of heights..." (Growth Management Policy V.3)

Reference the complete Character Area Map in the Appendix.



Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

The Historic Preservation Design Guidelines apply to all properties that are listed on the **Aspen Inventory of Historic Landmark Sites and Structures**. A designated landmark that is subject to Commercial Design Review is required to apply both the ***Historic Preservation Design Guidelines*** and the applicable ***Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines***.

A property located within the Main Street Historic District or the Commercial Core Historic District, but not a designated landmark, is subject to the applicable ***Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines*** but is not subject to the ***Historic Preservation Design Guidelines***.

Historic buildings are the backbone of Aspen's character.

2012 AACP Philosophy: Preservation of historic structures and sites, the historic town layout, landscapes, and neighborhood ditches connect us to the people, patterns and events that are the fabric of our town. In preserving our history, we ensure our culture and legacy is imparted to future generations.

The Character Areas provide tools to be contextual in architecture and site design.

Community feedback was instrumental in developing this document.

Commercial, Lodging, and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines Update

The City has conducted design review in the historic districts since 1974 and on a case-by-case basis in other areas until 2007, when city-wide commercial design guidelines were adopted. The guidelines have been periodically updated to reflect current community values.

For this update, an extensive public process was undertaken, including small group meetings, presentations, pop-up booths, walking tours, and public open houses. Elected officials, City review boards, the resident community and visitors provided their visions for Aspen's commercial, historic district, and lodging neighborhoods. The feedback was instrumental in the development of this document.

Several methods were used to obtain feedback, including pop-up booths.

Design Review Process

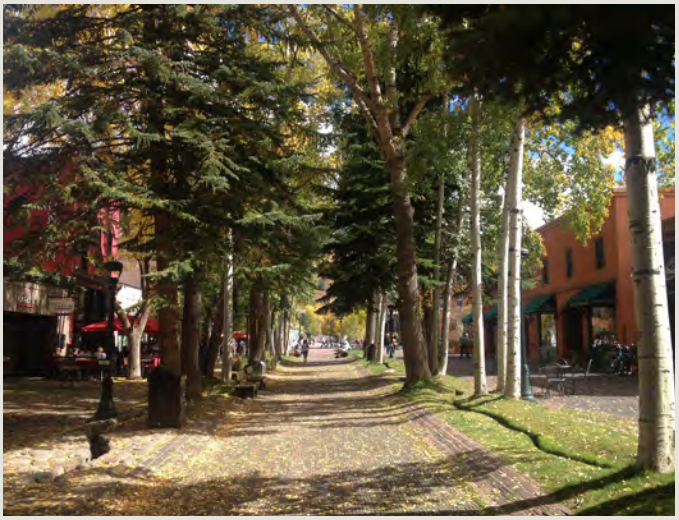
Commercial Design Review is the process used to evaluate a proposed project's compliance with the Standards and Guidelines and compliance with Pedestrian Amenity requirements. Commercial Design Review is conducted by the Planning and Zoning Commission or Historic Preservation Commission and is generally broken up into two steps - Conceptual and Final Review. Projects of limited scope may be subject to one-step review that consolidates Conceptual and Final.

Conceptual design review focuses on site planning, mass, scale, proportion, parking, height, and other elements that define the shape and placement of the proposed development. Final design review focuses on materials, architectural details, fenestration, landscaping, detailed roofscape, operational characteristics, and other elements that define the architecture and landscape of the proposed development. The progression from Conceptual to Final Reviews promotes discussion at the macro level before moving into the micro details of a project.

The Planning and Zoning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission appreciate a clear explanation of context and site analysis. An applicant should be prepared to explain their intent and approach and be able to articulate how the proposal contributes to a sense of place in the community, Models, story poles, material samples and other information will assist in the review process.

Photo by Brent Moss Photography.

Detailed elements including fenestration and materials are considered during Final design review.



The context of the Pedestrian Malls require unique design considerations.

If a commercial, lodge, or mixed use property is not in a designated Character Area, consult the Planning Office to receive an assigned Character Area.

How to Start a Commercial Design Project

When beginning a Commercial Design project, an applicant should follow these steps:

1. Review the Zone District Map to determine the zone district.
2. Review the Character Area Map (page 103) to determine the Character Area.
3. Read the Commercial Design Standards and Guidelines (this document).
4. Analyze the existing neighborhood and block context to identify patterns that define architectural character, enhance pedestrian experience, and preserve sense of place.
5. Identify nearby historic landmarks or other key character defining features.
6. Determine if the property is within an Environmentally Sensitive Area. Reference the Land Use Code or call the Planning Office for more information.
7. Remodel projects should address the following:
    - Determine the amount of demolition for the proposed remodel project. Reference the Land Use Code for how to calculate demolition.
    - Identify existing key character defining features of the building to be retained, if any.

▼ *Photo by Jason Dewey.*

How to Use this Document

The ***Commercial, Lodging and Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines*** *(Standards and Guidelines)* work in tandem with the Land Use Code Commercial Design Review Chapter. The *Standards and Guidelines* are broken into specific character Area chapters for each neighborhood and a General chapter. Each project subject to Commercial Design Review must address the standards and guidelines within the General chapter and the applicable Character Area chapter.

The Appendix (page 99) includes the Character Area Map and a glossary of terms used throughout this document.

Standards and Guidelines
How are Standards and Guidelines different?

Standards appear like this: Bold, Italics and Color Blocked

Standards are required. Standards are generally topics which have been adopted as requirements in the Land Use Code and are being re-stated here for clarity. When a standard is not met, a project revision or an application for a Variation from the review Board is required. Reference the Land Use Code for more information on Variations.

Guidelines appear like this: Bold and Italics

Guidelines are recommendations; however, an effort to meet the guideline or the intent of the guideline is required for all projects. Guidelines are not applicable in all cases and need to be evaluated in context for the practicality of the measure and the scope of the project. The review Board must determine that the appropriate guidelines have been adequately met in order to approve a project.

Each commercial project is subject to both the General chapter and a Character Area chapter.

Unique site features such as steep topography may be considered in evaluating the standards and guidelines.

Not all of the standards and guidelines will apply for remodel projects.

Some types of Pedestrian Amenity may not be appropriate in all areas.

Each Pedestrian Amenity type has certain requirements, such as defining the property line.

Pedestrian Amenity

Pedestrian Amenities are physical or operational improvements to private property or public rights-of-way within commercial areas, intended to contribute to a vital downtown atmosphere.

In addition to addressing all other applicable standards and guidelines, a project may be subject to Pedestrian Amenity requirements. The applicability and required amount are listed in the Land Use Code, and the allowed methods to meet the requirement are listed within this document. Each Pedestrian Amenity method lists Character Areas where it may be used. If a Character Area is not listed, then that Pedestrian Amenity method is not an allowed option.

For example: **Subgrade Courtyard Pedestrian Amenity (CA, NMU, RA Character Areas)** is only allowable in the Commercial Character Area, Neighborhood Mixed Use Character Area and River Approach Character Area. A project that is located within the Commercial Core Historic District is not allowed to use this Pedestrian Amenity method to meet the requirement.

Pedestrian Amenity is an important element to the design of Aspen's commercial areas.


INDEPENDENCE
1889
BUILDING
RALPH LAUREN
501
WALK
ONLY
NO
STOPPING
STANDING
PARKING
ANYTIME


A·T·COWENHOVEN
& Co
BURBERRY
BURBERRY

General

The purpose of Commercial Design Review is to preserve and to encourage appropriate architecture that creates walkable neighborhoods and supports the heritage of Aspen.

The Standards and Guidelines below apply to all projects subject to Commercial Design Review.

Aspen Historical Society [1]

Site Planning and Streetscape

The original townsite was platted in 1880 based on an orthogonal pattern, regardless of topography. Orienting buildings parallel to the street reinforces the traditional network of streets and alleys and enhances the pedestrian experience.

Today, given the increased height and density of development, site planning and the relationship to streets and adjacent properties have a particularly important role in shaping neighborhood character.

Special care should be taken when placing a building within the River Approach and Mountain Base character areas. The majority of parcels in these areas are not located on the traditional townsite grid and topography of the site should be given additional consideration.

1.1 All projects shall provide a context study.

- *The study should include the relationship to adjacent structures and streets through photographs, streetscape elevations, historic maps, etc.*

1.2 All projects shall respond to the traditional street grid.

- *A building shall be oriented parallel to the street unless uncharacteristic of the area. Refer to specific chapters for more information.*
- *Buildings on corners shall be parallel to both streets.*

▼ *Original Townsite of Aspen - 1896 Willits Map*

Landscape design can enhance relationships between pedestrian access and architecture.

The iconic Elks Building sits on its property lines.

Hardscape can enhance the street scene.

1.3 Landscape elements (both hardscape and softscape) should complement the surrounding context, support the street scene, and enhance the architecture of the building.

- *This applies to landscape located both on-site and in the public right-of-way.*
- *High quality and durable materials should be used.*
- *Early in the design process, consider stormwater best management practices as an integral part of the landscape design process.*

1.4 Where there is open space on a site, reinforce the traditional transition from public space, to semi-public space to private space.

- *This may be achieved through a fence, a defined walkway, a front porch element, covered walkway, or landscape.*

1.5 Maintain alignment of building facades where appropriate.

- *Consider the entire block of a neighborhood to determine appropriate building placement. Carefully examine and respond to the variety of building alignments that are present.*
- *Consider all four corners of an intersection and architectural context to determine appropriate placement for buildings located on corners.*
- *Consider the appropriate location of street level Pedestrian Amenity when siting a new building.*

1.6 When a building facade is set back, define the property line. Review the context of the block when selecting an appropriate technique. Examples include:

- *A fence which is low in height and mostly transparent so as to maintain openness along the street.*
- *Landscaping, though it may not block views of the architecture or a Pedestrian Amenity space. Hedgerows over 42 inches are prohibited.*
- *Benches or other street furniture.*

Alleyways

Alleys are an important feature of most of the Character Areas. Traditionally, Aspen alleyways were unpaved, supported a range of building materials, and often had small buildings located along them. They continue to function as a utilitarian location for back of house operations, deliveries, required utilities, and mechanical areas.

Staying true to traditional development, alleys are an appropriate area for simple building forms and materials. It is important to design an alley facade with special attention to reduce perceived building mass. Wherever possible, pedestrian access and appealing alleyscapes should be achieved in the design. Improved access to alleyways creates opportunities for small commercial space.

The following guidelines only apply to properties that are adjacent to an alley.

1.7 Develop alley facades to create visual interest.

- *Use varied building setbacks and/or changes in material to reduce perceived scale.*

1.8 Consider small alley commercial spaces, especially on corner lots or lots with midblock access from the street (See Pedestrian Amenity Section PA4).

- *Maximize visibility and access to alley commercial spaces with large windows and setbacks.*
- *Minimize adverse impacts of adjacent service and parking areas through materials, setbacks, and/or landscaping.*

Alleys are often used for utilities, back of house access, and parking.

Develop alley facades with special attention to material selection and building form.

Alleys can be developed to help reduce perceived building mass and provide pedestrian scale.

Integrate parking into the architecture as a garage enclosure by matching the color to adjacent materials.

Architectural details break up the massing of an alley and the garage doors blend into the facade.

Screen surface parking.

Parking

The Aspen community values a positive pedestrian experience and encourages walking and biking to get around town. Designs for on-site parking should minimize conflicts between pedestrians and cars.

The original Aspen townsite includes alleyways, which are an appropriate location to access parking. Neighborhoods without alleys require additional measures to accomodate cars successfully.

Because parking areas can detract from other desirable qualities of a neighborhood, the visibility of on-site parking should be reduced in all locations.

The following standard only applies to properties that are providing on-site parking.

1.9 Minimize the visual impacts of parking.

- *All on-site parking shall be accessed off an alley where one is available.*
- *Break up the massing of the alley facade, especially when garage doors are present.*
- *Consider the potential for future retail use accessed from alleys and the desire to create a safe and attractive environment for cars and people.*
- *If no alley access exists, access should be from the shortest block length.*
- *Screen surface parking and avoid locating it at the front of a building. Landscaping and fences are recommended.*
- *Consider a paving material change to define surface parking areas and to create visual interest.*
- *Design any street-facing entry to underground parking to reduce visibility. Use high quality materials for doors and ramps and integrate the parking area into the architecture.*

Building Mass, Height, and Scale

Designing a new building to fit within the context of the neighborhood requires careful thought. Researching historic maps, identifying nearby historic landmarks, and defining key character features of a neighborhood are critical steps before designing a new building. Special care is required for development adjacent to a designated landmark. New development has the opportunity to positively impact the cohesion of a neighborhood. Specific context descriptions are provided in each Character Area Chapter to define these features.

1.10 A new building should appear similar in scale and proportion with buildings on the block.

1.11 A minimum building height difference of 2 feet from immediately adjacent buildings is required.

- *The height difference shall be a minimum of 15 feet wide.*
- *The height difference should reflect the range and variation in building height in the block.*
- *This may be achieved through the use of a cornice, parapet or other architectural articulation.*

1.12 On lots larger than 6,000 square feet, break up building mass into smaller modules.

- *A street level front setback to accommodate Pedestrian Amenity in accordance with the Pedestrian Amenity Guidelines may be an appropriate method to break up building mass.*
- *Building setbacks, height variation, changes of material, and architectural details may be appropriate techniques to vertically divide a building into modules.*

Aspen contains many historic landmarks including the Independence Square building.

New construction must appear similar in scale and proportion with buildings on its block.

Varied building heights are important for larger developments.

Stepping down to historic resources is important for development adjacent to historic buildings.

Small scale additions to small historic resources are most appropriate.

1.13 Development adjacent to a historic landmark should respond to the historic resource.

- *A new building should not obscure historic features of the landmark.*
- *A new large building should avoid negative impacts on historic resources by stepping down in scale toward a smaller landmark.*
- *Consider these three aspects of a new building adjacent to a landmark:* ***form, materials and fenestration****.*
  - *When choosing to relate to building form, use forms that are similar to the historic resource.*
  - *When choosing to relate to materials, use materials that appear similar in scale and finish to those used historically on the site, and use building materials that contribute to a traditional sense of pedestrian scale.*
  - *When choosing to relate to fenestration, use windows and doors that are similar in size, shape, and proportion to those of the historic resource.*

Maps showing locations of historic landmarks are available online, at the Aspen Historical Society and at the Planning Office.

Relating to a historic resource through a variety of methods is appropriate.

Street Level Design

Street level design directly contributes to the vitality, walkability, and overall success of a commercial, lodge, or mixed use area. The relationship of entrances and storefronts to the street is critical. Carefully considered pedestrian-scaled elements can enhance the experience along Aspen's streets and reinforce neighborhood character.

1.14 Commercial entrances shall be at the sidewalk level and oriented to the street.

- *Finished floor and sidewalk level shall align for at least 1/2 the depth of the ground floor where possible. If significant grade changes exist on property, then the project will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.*
- *All buildings shall have at least one clearly defined primary entrance facing the front lot line, as defined in the Land Use Code. An entrance located within a chamfered corner is an alternative. (See Commercial Core Historic District).*
- *If a building is located on a corner lot, two entrances shall be provided; a primary entrance facing the longest block length and a secondary entrance facing the shortest block length.*

1.15 Incorporate an internal airlock or air curtain into first floor commercial space.

- *An airlock or air curtain shall be integrated into the architecture.*
- *Adding a temporary exterior airlock of any material to an existing building not allowed.*

Street level entries are important pedestrian features.

Varied scaling and rhythm devices create an interesting and inviting streetscape.

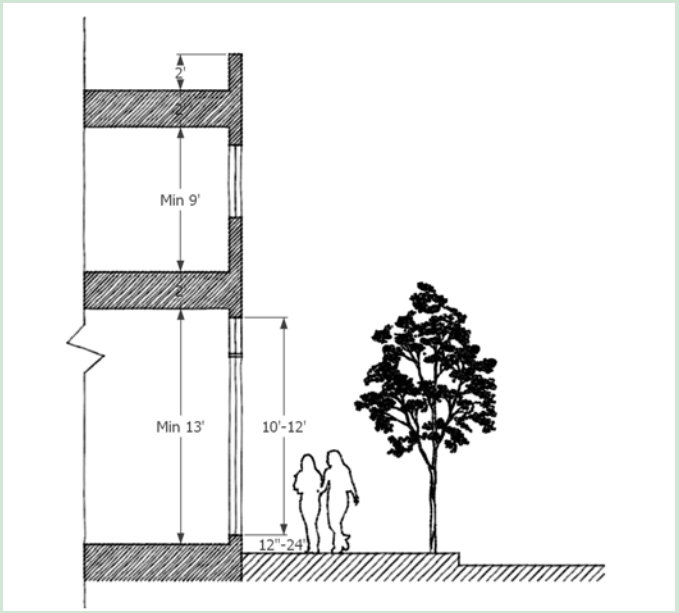
Pedestrian-scaled elements, materials and rhythms should be incorporated.

Transom windows may be appropriate.

1.16 Entries that are significantly taller or shorter than those seen historically or that conflict with the established scale are highly discouraged.

- *Transom windows above an entry are a traditional element that may be appropriate in neighborhoods with 19th century commercial buildings.*
- *Entries should reflect the established range of sizes within the context of the block. Analyze surrounding buildings to determine appropriate height for entry doors.*

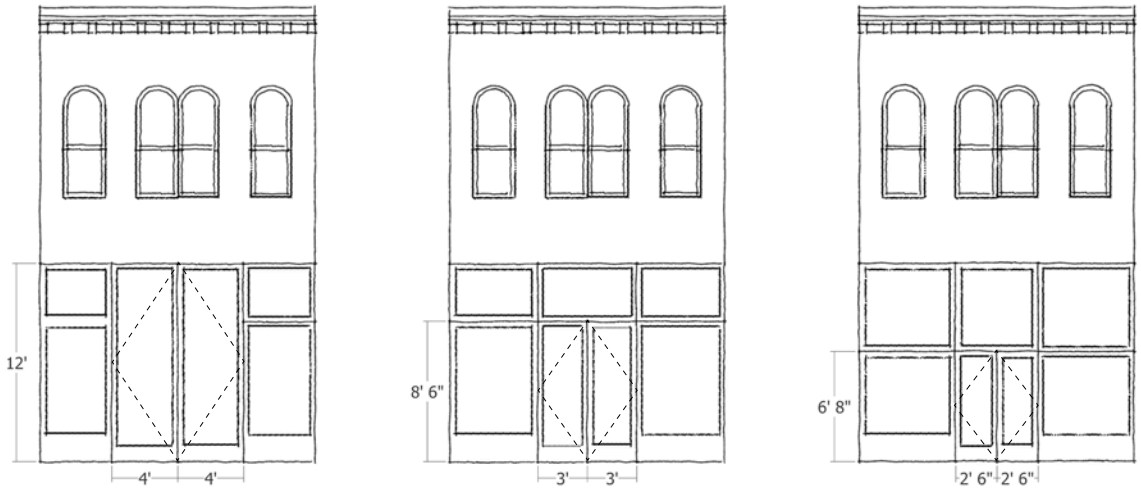
1.17 ATMs and vending machines visible from the street are prohibited.



Historic proportions of a two-story commercial building in Aspen.

Refer to Chapter 11 of the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines for more information on appropriate new construction, remodels, or additions adjacent to landmarks.

Entries should reflect the established range and not be over- or undersized.



OVERSIZED DOORS PREFERRED DOORS UNDERSIZED DOORS

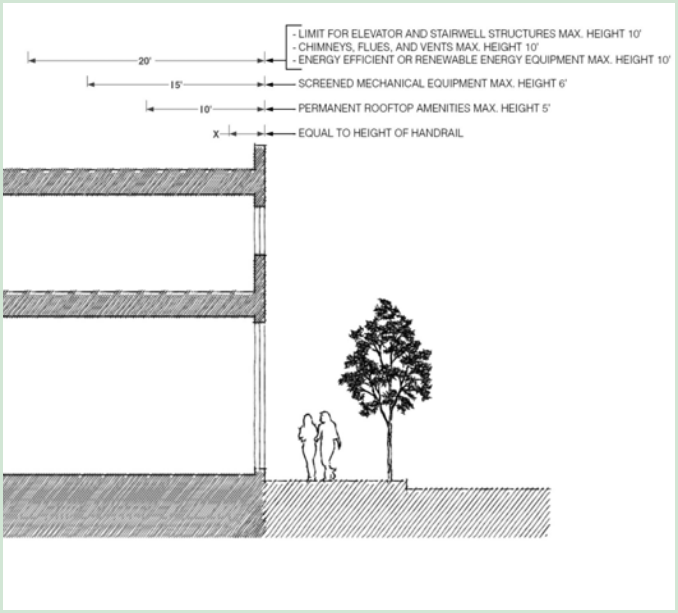
Roofscape

The roofscape of a building is considered the fifth facade given its visibility from nearby buildings and mountains. As such, careful attention should be paid to creating a thoughtful, organized, and varied roofscape. Rooftop design can be a challenge considering the need to place mechanical equipment, venting, and elevator shafts on the roof. A successful roofscape can minimize the visual impacts of these elements and also incorporate City goals such as storm water treatment through a green roof system or streetscape vibrancy with an activated roof deck. Consider a birds-eye view when creating a roof plan.

Screen rooftop features from view.

1.18 The roofscape should be designed with the same attention as the elevations of the building.

- *Consolidate mechanical equipment, including solar panels, and screen from view.*
- *Locate mechanical equipment toward the alley, or rear of a building if there is no alley access.*
- *Use varied roof forms or parapet heights to break up the roof plane mass and add visual interest.*



The Land Use Code establishes minimum setbacks for various rooftop features.

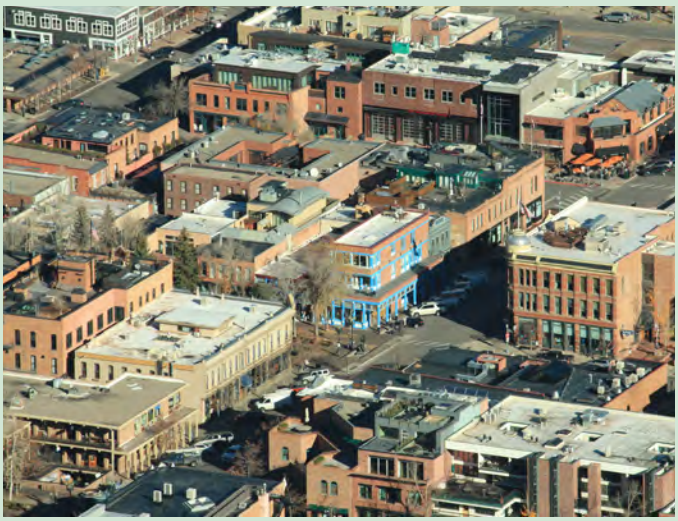
1.19 Use materials that complement the design of the building facade.

- *Minimize the visual impact of elevator shafts and stairway corridors through material selection and placement of elements.*

1.20 Incorporate green roofs and low landscape elements into rooftop design where feasible.

1.21 Minimize visibility of rooftops railings.

- *Mostly transparent railings are preferred.*
- *Integrating the rooftop railing into the architecture as a parapet or other feature, may be appropriate considering the neighborhood context and proposed building style.*
- *Set back the railing a distance that equals or exceeds the height of the railing.*


Varied roof forms enhances the neighborhood character.

Materials and Details

In the 19th Century, Aspen had a limited range of architectural materials: red brick, painted wood, glass, and locally sourced sandstone. In the mid-century the palette expanded to include natural wood, stucco, river rock and moss rock, metal, concrete block, and bricks of other tones. It is important to maintain a relationship to the existing material palette evident in the general vicinity while allowing some new materials and material technology to be used.

The color palette of natural materials throughout the commercial and lodging neighborhoods represents Aspen's environment, with browns and reds being the predominant colors. High quality materials that relate to the context of the neighborhood and the building type are important. Carefully consider existing color schemes and textures within a neighborhood before selecting materials. Paint color is variable and is not subject to review.

Introducing a new material may require other aspects of the architecture to show restraint. Materials must have a proven performance in Aspen's extreme climate.

Materials are required to convey the range and quality found in the Character Area.

1.22 Complete and accurate identification of materials is required.

- *Provide drawings that identify the palette of materials, specifications for the materials, and location on the proposed building as part of the application.*
- *Physical material samples shall be presented to the review body. An onsite mock-up prior to installation may be required.*

1.23 Building materials shall have these features:

- *Convey the quality and range of materials found in the current block context or seen historically in the Character Area.*
- *Convey pedestrian scale.*
- *Enhance visual interest through texture, application, and/or dimension.*
- *Be non-reflective. Shiny or glossy materials are not appropriate as a primary material.*
- *Have proven durability and weathering characteristics within Aspen's climate.*
- *A material with an integral color shall be a neutral color. Some variation is allowed for secondary materials.*

1.24 Introducing a new material, material application, or material finish to the existing streetscape may be approved by HPC or P&Z if the following criteria are met:

- *Innovative building design.*
- *Creative material application that positively contributes to the streetscape.*
- *Environmentally sustainable building practice.*
- *Proven durability.*

1.25 Architecture that reflects corporate branding of the tenant is not permitted.

Sustainable design is encouraged through materials, energy efficiency, fenestration, site planning, and thoughtful open space. AACP Policy I.1 Achieve sustainable growth practices to ensure the long term viability and stability of our community and diverse visitor based economy.

Lighting, Service and Mechanical Areas

The character and intensity of outdoor lighting can greatly impact neighborhood character. The City of Aspen has comprehensive exterior lighting standards, defined in the Land Use Code. These standards balance the needs of the building with the desire to enjoy the dark night skies.

When the service and mechanical areas of a commercial building are well designed, the building can better contribute to the overall success of the neighborhood. Poor logistics of one building can detract from the quality of surrounding properties. Efficient delivery and trash areas are important to the function of alleyways.

1.26 The design of light fixtures should be appropriate to the form, materials, scale, and style of the building.

1.27 Trash and recycle service areas shall be co-located along an alleyway where one exists, and screened from view with a fence or door.

- *Screening fences shall be 6 feet high from grade (unless prohibited by the Land Use Code), shall be of sound construction, and shall be no less than 90% opaque, unless otherwise varied based on a recommendation from the Environmental Health Department.*

1.28 Design trash and recycle areas thoughtfully and within the style of the building, with the goal of enhancing pedestrian and commercial uses along alleys.

1.29 Delivery areas shall be located along an alleyway where one exists.

- *Shared facilities are highly encouraged.*

1.30 Mechanical equipment, ducts, and vents shall be accommodated internally within the building and/or co-located on the roof.

- *Screen rooftop mechanical equipment and venting with a low fence or recess behind a parapet wall to minimize visual impacts.*

1.31 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

- *Group and discreetly locate these features.*
- *Use screening and materials that compliment the architecture.*

1.32 Transformer location and size are dictated by City and utility company standards and codes.

- *Place a transformer on an alley where possible.*
- *Provide screening for any non-alley location.*

Reference City Municipal Code for trash size and location requirements.

Efficient service areas are important to the function of alleyways.

Screen mechanical equipment and trash and recycle areas from view.

Replacing features such as balconies is considered a remodel.

Alterations should relate to the existing building style.

Exterior grade altered for an accessible entrance.

Remodel

Upgrading an existing building through a remodel can improve energy efficiency, building function and appearance, and meet community goals to reduce construction waste. Altering specific features of a building, such as replacing exterior materials or constructing an addition to an existing building, is considered a remodel project. A project that reaches the demolition threshold as defined in the Land Use Code is not considered a remodel. It is important to carefully plan a remodel to meet the design guidelines and neighborhood character where feasible. Gradually bringing remodel projects into conformance with design guidelines reinforces neighborhood character.

These guidelines apply to projects that are proposing changes to an existing building but do not reach the demolition threshold.

1.33 All remodel projects shall meet Standards 1.22 and 1.23.

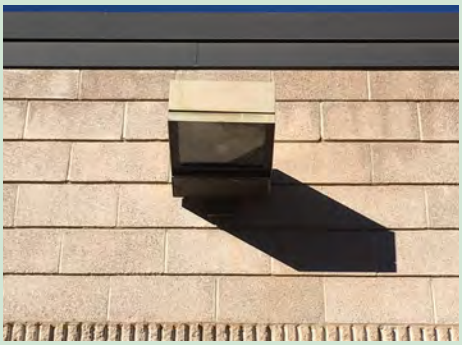
1.34 Consider updating windows, doors, and/or primary entrances to better relate to the Character Area and pedestrian experience.

1.35 Design alterations to relate to the existing building style and form that may remain.

1.36 Incorporate elements that define the property line in accordance with Guideline 1.6.

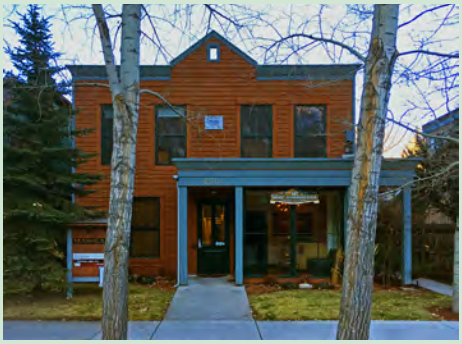
1.37 Creative solutions that incorporate ADA compliance into the architecture are encouraged.

- *Minimize the appearance of ramps by exploring other on-site options such as altering interior floor levels or exterior grade.*

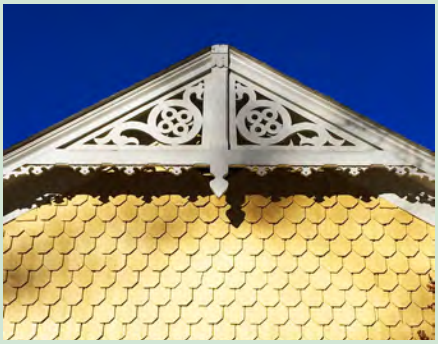


Examples of Architectural Lighting

Examples of Entries



Examples of Storefront Design

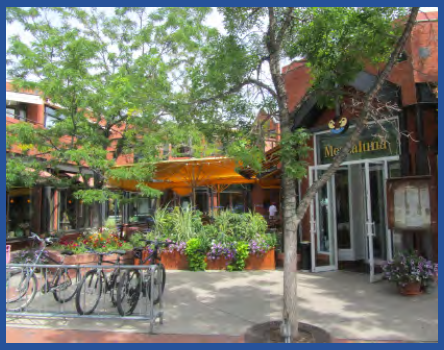






Examples of Architectural Details

Pedestrian Amenity



Pedestrian Amenity

The Aspen community considers open space to be a pedestrian amenity and a top priority. Maintaining the feel of a natural environment with frequent opportunities to dwell outdoors is of utmost importance.

Well-designed open spaces should enhance the streetscape, creatively reinforce property boundaries, and support a variety of uses. The goal of the Pedestrian Amenity requirement is to create intentionally designed and meaningful open space that conveys human scale, provides relief from the built environment, and improves the experience in commercial, mixed-use, and lodging neighborhoods. Successful Pedestrian Amenity space allows for nature to blend into the built environment.

Most Pedestrian Amenity spaces should be open to view from the street, open to the sky, and not permanently enclosed with walls. Visibility adds to vitality at the street level. These spaces should be versatile and easily adaptable for different uses. Restaurant seating and outdoor food vending are particularly appropriate uses of Pedestrian Amenity space. Where on-site Pedestrian Amenity is required, it should be usable and accessible space. Pedestrian Amenity need not be available to the public at all times, but needs to contribute to an active streetscape and promote interaction and engagement.

There are many different options to meet the required Pedestrian Amenity for a property, such as physical or operational improvements to private property, improvements to the public right-of-way, or cash-in-lieu payment, to be used by the City for the creation of related amenities.

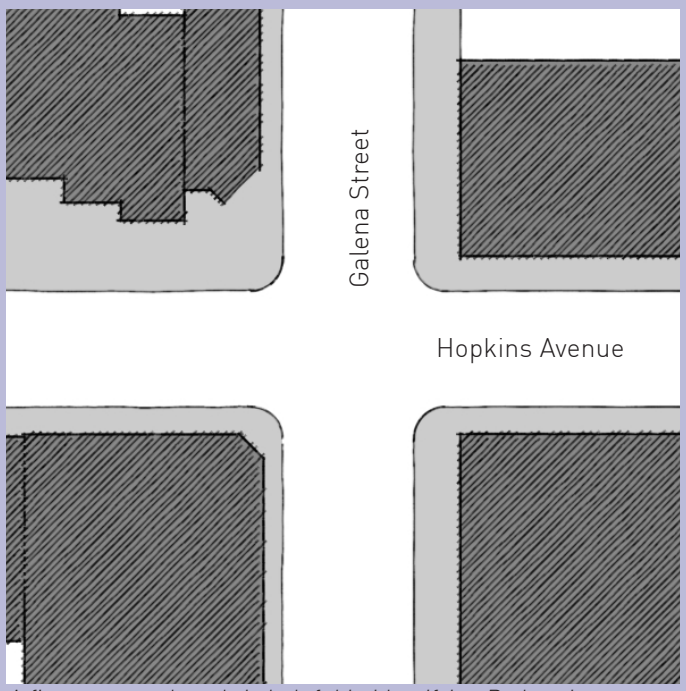
Each type of Pedestrian Amenity space and applicable Character Areas are described in the following standards and guidelines.

Successful amenity space provides a varied pedestrian experience. ▼

Questions to Consider

1. Is there a successful Pedestrian Amenity space on an adjacent or nearby property already?
2. Is there good solar access?
3. How have the historic development patterns been maintained or eroded?
4. Can the proposed Pedestrian Amenity utilize innovative design to connect to the proposed architecture?
5. How does the proposed Pedestrian Amenity enhance the intersection and overall context?
6. How can the architecture create a Public Amenity that provides the highest quality for a variety of potential uses?

Consult the Land Use Code for elements allowed within setbacks.



A figure-ground study is helpful in identifying Pedestrian Amenity space opportunities.

▼ *Pedestrian Amenity space provides relief from the built environment and an active streetscape.*

Street level seating for restaurants on the property can be considered Pedestrian Amenity.

Seating can create areas to relax and interact.

Street Level Pedestrian Amenity PA1 - (All Character Areas)

Historic maps of 19th century Aspen illustrate a densely developed downtown core with minimal building setbacks. This pattern generally remains in place today. Setbacks are varied as development moves out from the downtown core. The Design Standards and Guidelines recognize and encourage this historic pattern of development by providing more Pedestrian Amenity options for properties located outside of the Historic Districts. Properties within the Historic Districts need to maintain historic integrity and continuity. Street level Pedestrian Amenity must be carefully planned to highlight, not erode, these important development patterns.

PA1.1 Maximize solar access to Pedestrian Amenity space on the subject property.

- *At grade Pedestrian Amenity on the north side of the street is discouraged, except when providing a front yard along Main Street.*

PA1.2 Consider all four corners of an intersection when designing street level amenity space on a corner lot.

- *If one or more lots on the intersection already includes a large corner Pedestrian Amenity, a new corner amenity space may not be appropriate.*

Setbacks for street level amenity vary as development moves out from the core. ▼

PA1.3 Street level Pedestrian Amenity spaces should be equal to a minimum of 1/3 of the total Pedestrian Amenity requirement.

- *For example, a requirement of 300 square feet of Pedestrian Amenity can be comprised of three 100 square feet spaces; but cannot be comprised of one 275 square feet space and one 25 square feet space.*

PA1.4 Street level Pedestrian Amenity shall be within 18 inches above or below the existing grade of the street or sidewalk which abuts the space.

PA1.5 Street level Pedestrian Amenity areas shall be open to the sky.

- *Direct access to the Pedestrian Amenity from the street is required.*
- *A street level Pedestrian Amenity space may be covered, subject to HPC or P&Z approval. If the space is covered, the street-facing portion shall be entirely open.*

PA1.6 Design meaningful street level space that is useful, versatile, and accessible.

- *Small unusable spaces are inappropriate.*
- *Consider providing space for future outdoor merchandising or restaurant seating opportunities when designing the space.*
- *Providing good solar access, capturing mountain views, and providing seating is recommended.*
- *Do not duplicate existing nearby open space.*
- *Storage areas, delivery areas, parking areas, or trash areas are not allowed uses within Pedestrian Amenity space.*

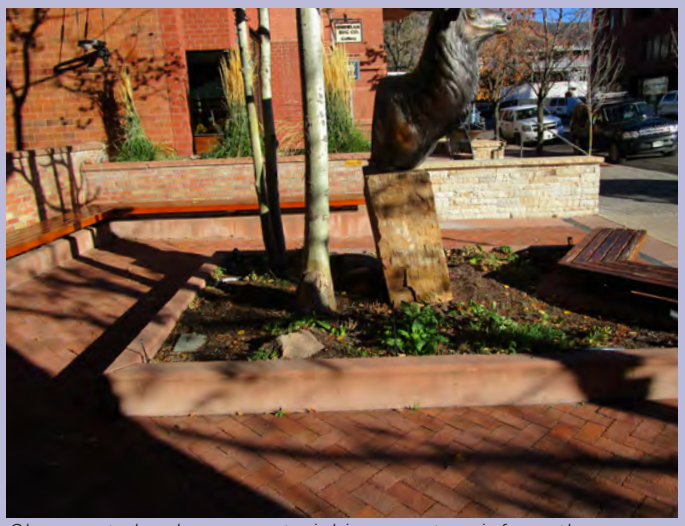
PA1.7 Design amenity space that enhances the pedestrian experience and faces the street.

- *On corner lots, Pedestrian Amenity space may be considered on side streets or adjacent to the alley rather than facing primary streets.*

Planters can define a property line.

Storefronts can line an amenity space.

Successful amenity space allows for future retail and restaurant use.



Changes to hardscape material is a way to reinforce the property line.

Low planters and softscape adds to a successful amenity space.

Using a variety of techniques is appropriate.

PA1.8 Street level Pedestrian Amenity space should reinforce the property line. Consider the context of the block when selecting an appropriate technique. Examples include:

- *Overhangs: A cantilevered roof or retractable awning that stretches to the property line.*
- *Fences: A low fence, mostly transparent, that allows views into the Pedestrian Amenity space.*
- *Landscape: Low planter boxes. If including trees, the mature tree canopy size should not prohibit views into the amenity space. Hedgerows over 42 inches are prohibited.*
- *Street Furniture: Permanent, fixed benches or other pedestrian-related elements may be considered to establish property lines.*
- *Surface Material: A change in hardscape material to differientiate between Pedestrian Amenity and right-of-way.*

PA1.9 Street level Pedestrian Amenity may be appropriate on a case-by-case basis within the Commercial Core Historic District.

- *Consider the existing context of the block .*
- *Clearly define the property line as defined in PA1.8.*
- *In this District, street level Pedestrian Amenity should be subordinate to the line of building fronts.*

PA1.10 Street level Pedestrian Amenity may include providing public access to the mountain or river in the Mountain Base and River Approach Character Areas through a trail easement, subject to Parks and Engineering approval.

PA1.11 Within the Main Street Historic District, required building setbacks may be used toward a Pedestrian Amenity requirement.

Second Floor Pedestrian Amenity
PA2 - (CC, CA, NMU, MB, SL, RA)

Second floor or rooftop amenity can bring vitality to upper floors, provide outstanding mountain views, create meaningful upper floor setbacks, and still allow a building to define the property line at ground level, which reinforces traditional commercial development patterns.

PA2.1 A second floor Pedestrian Amenity shall be in the form of a deck that is visible from, and adjacent to the street.

- *Railing height shall not be increased above the minimum IBC requirement.*
- *Historic landmark parapets may be exempt, subject to HPC approval.*
- *Railings shall be a minimum of 50% transparent unless located in the Commercial Core Historic District where transparent railings may not be appropriate, given the pattern of decorative cornices capping buildings.*

PA2.2 Pedestrian Amenity is highly discouraged on the roof of the second floor.

PA2.3 Second floor amenity shall be accessed directly from the street.

- *Remodels and historic landmarks may be exempted from this requirement, subject to P&Z or HPC approval.*
- *A separate exterior entrance is preferred.*
- *A public access easement may be requested by the City as part of an approval.*

PA2.4 Second floor Pedestrian Amenity should be equal to a minimum of 50% of the total Pedestrian Amenity requirement.

PA2.5 All second floor Pedestrian Amenity shall be open to the sky.

- *Small seasonal umbrellas or retractable canopies may be allowed, subject to Planning Staff, HPC or P&Z approval, as long as these features do not cover the entire space and do not obstruct views in from the street.*

PA2.6 Design meaningful space that is useful, versatile and accessible.

- *Small unusable spaces are inappropriate.*
- *Consider providing space for future outdoor merchandising or restaurant seating opportunities.*
- *Providing good solar access, mountain views, and seating is recommended.*
- *Storage area or trash area are not allowed uses within pedestrian amenity space.*

PA2.7 The Pedestrian Amenity shall be directly connected to a publicly accessible area.

- *A second floor Pedestrian Amenity in a lodge may be accessible from a restaurant, lobby, or other adjacent public space.*
- *Access to second floor Pedestrian Amenity shall be integrated into the architecture, either through an interior or exterior space.*

PA2.8 Design wayfinding to the second floor amenity into the architecture.

Restaurants can utilize second floor spaces successfully with outdoor seating. ▼

The Pedestrian Malls are a significant urban park in downtown Aspen.

Proposed development along the Pedestrian Malls should strongly consider the existing amenities.

Pedestrian Malls Pedestrian Amenity PA3 - (CC)

On the Pedestrian Malls, on-site amenity space may duplicate the experiences offered by the Malls and Wagner Park. Replicating open space can erode the streetscape and can dilute the success of on-site Pedestrian Amenity spaces.

PA3.1 Off-site Pedestrian Amenity or cash-in-lieu payment for Mall improvements and maintenance is strongly recommended. See Section PA6 or Chapter 26.412 Commercial Design Review of the Land Use Code for cash-in-lieu payment calculation.

PA3.2 The design of on-site amenity on the Pedestrian Malls requires consideration of the following:

- *The presence of other street-facing, street level amenities in the block means that additional street facing Pedestrian Amenity may be inappropriate.*
- *On corner lots, if the intersection already contains street level amenity on the Mall, additional street level Pedestrian Amenity should not be created.*
- *Spaces designed to highlight adjacent historic landmarks may allow for a new Pedestrian Amenity on the Mall.*
- *A project's success in defining the property line based on Standard PA1.8 may allow for a new Pedestrian Amenity on the Mall.*
- *Other restrictions on the property such as designated viewplanes may justify a new Pedestrian Amenity on the Mall.*

▼ *Cash-in-lieu payment for Pedestrian Mall properties is strongly recommended.*

Midblock Pedestrian Amenity
PA4 - (CA, NMU, MB, RA)

Midblock walkways create open space between buildings, activate alleyways, and provide alternative locations for commercial space and outdoor dining. This type of Pedestrian Amenity should be used sparingly throughout town to preserve historic development patterns.

PA4.1 New midblock Pedestrian Amenity walkways shall not be located in a block face that already has a midblock walkway.

PA4.2 Midblock Pedestrian Amenity shall provide access to additional commercial space.

- *The amount of Pedestrian Amenity of the feature counts as double. For example, a midblock walkway that is 500 square feet in size is equal to 1,000 square feet for the purposes of Pedestrian Amenity calculation.*
- *Commercial space shall be accessed directly from the walkway and at least 40 feet back from the street edge.*
- *Midblock Pedestrian Amenity shall extend the length of the lot to the alley and be a minimum width of 10 feet.*

PA4.3 Midblock Pedestrian Amenity walkways shall be open to the sky.

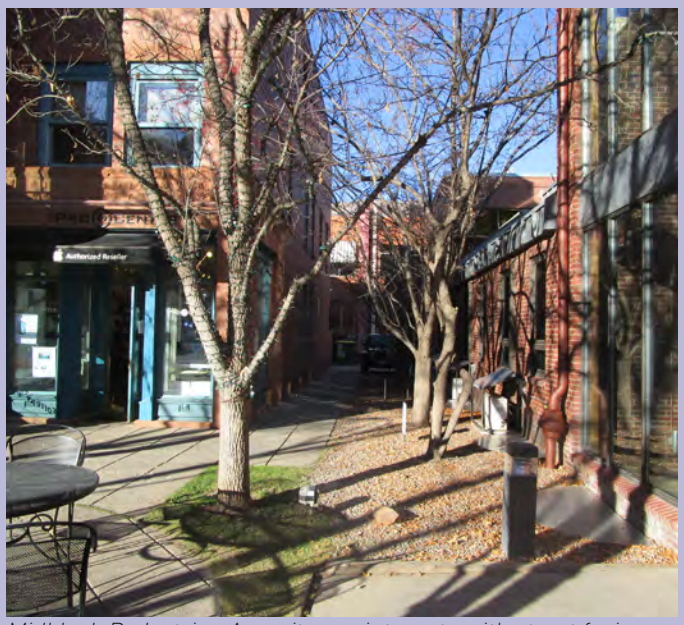
- *A midblock Pedestrian Amenity space may be covered subject to HPC or P&Z approval. If the space is covered, the street-facing portion shall be entirely open.*

PA4.4 Design the space to be surrounded with high quality materials and architectural details.

PA4.5 A midblock Pedestrian Amenity should include lighting and landscape elements.

PA4.6 Design wayfinding to the midblock walkway into the architecture.

Alternate space for commercial use is a benefit of a midblock Pedestrian Amenity.



Midblock Pedestrian Amenity can integrate with street facing Pedestrian Amenity.

A covered midblock amenity space is subject to HPC or P&Z approval.

Subgrade Courtyard Pedestrian Amenity PA5 - (CA, NMU, RA)

Lower level walk-out patios, also referred to as subgrade courtyards, may provide additional opportunities for commercial uses. When carefully designed, these spaces have the potential to provide natural light and open space for commercial tenants. The design, placement, and neighborhood context of subgrade courtyards are critical to their success as a positive addition to the streetscape.

PA5.1 A subgrade courtyard shall be visible from, and adjacent to the street.

- *Access shall be provided from the street.*
- *The measurement of a subgrade courtyard shall not exceed 30% of the lot width.*
- *Railings shall allow views into the Pedestrian Amenity space and be a minimum of 50% transparent.*

PA5.2 New subgrade courtyards are not permitted on corner lots, unless located along the side lot line, towards the rear of the lot.

PA5.3 Subgrade courtyard Pedestrian Amenity should be equal to a minimum of 30% of the total Pedestrian Amenity requirement.

- *Access and circulation are included in the calculation of Pedestrian Amenity.*

PA5.4 A subgrade courtyard shall be no more than 10 feet below the existing grade of the street or sidewalk which abuts the space.

PA5.5 Design of the subgrade courtyard at grade should reinforce the property line.

- *Consider the context of the block when selecting an appropriate technique to the property line.*

PA5.6 Design meaningful space that is useful, versatile, and accessible.

- *Small unusable spaces are inappropriate.*
- *Consider future outdoor merchandising or restaurant seating when designing the space.*
- *Providing good solar access and seating is recommended. North facing courtyards are prohibited.*
- *Storage area or trash area are not allowed uses within Pedestrian Amenity space.*

PA5.7 All subgrade courtyard spaces shall be open to the sky.

- *Small seasonal umbrellas or canopies that do not cover the entire space prohibiting views in from the street may be allowed, subject to Planning Staff, HPC or P&Z approval.*

PA5.8 A subgrade courtyard shall be accessible from the interior of commercial use(s) abutting the Pedestrian Amenity space.

- *Integrate clear access to this space into the architecture through interior or exterior corridors.*
- *Limit ramps, stairs and elevators leading to the courtyard.*

PA5.9 Design wayfinding to the subgrade courtyard space into the architecture.

Views into a subgrade courtyard are important. ▼

Off-site Pedestrian Amenity
PA6 - (All Character Areas)

Off-site pedestrian amenity is an option when on-site amenity is not feasible or not appropriate as determined by HPC or P&Z. Off-site amenity must be constructed by the applicant and include improvements equal to or exceeding the cash-in-lieu amount calculated according to the Land Use Code. A permit is required for modifications within the publicly owned right-of-way, including planting strips, street trees, and sidewalks. In general, the right-of-way within a given neighborhood should have a consistent design character. Covered walkways are found throughout Aspen's commercial neighborhoods. Covered walkways introduce a one-story pedestrian scaled element to a building and may be appropriate in specific areas. Coordination with the Engineering Department and Parks Department is required.

PA6.1 Off-site improvements shall be located within the block of the subject property.

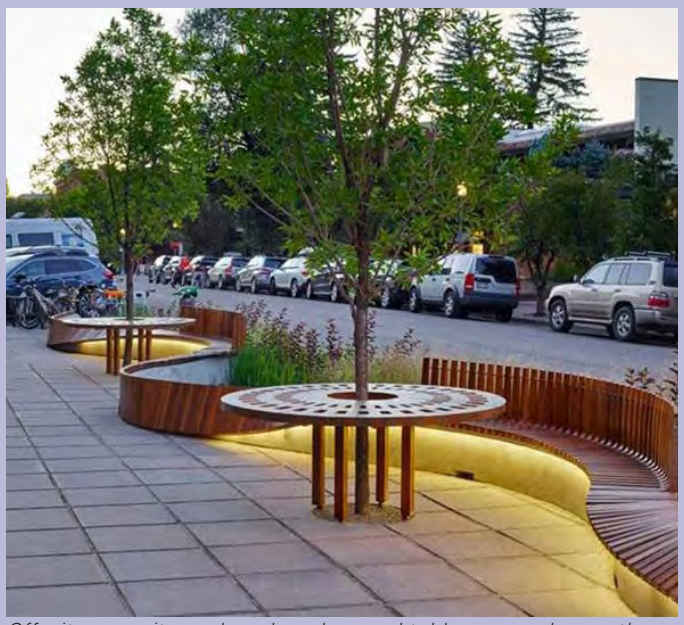
- *The proposed design shall not detract from nearby historic resources.*
- *The proposed design shall provide or enhance the streetscape or historic district.*
- *A right-of-way may be altered to reflect the design of an adjacent building.*
- *Only off-site improvements that are completed beyond minimum Engineering requirements shall qualify as Pedestrian Amenity.*

PA6.2 Covered walkways are prohibited in blocks that already have a similar feature.

- *The final design of these features shall be subject to Engineering Department and Parks Department approval.*

PA6.3 At least 50% of the block shall meet standard City of Aspen right-of-way design.

PA6.4 Additions to the streetscape should enhance the pedestrian experience.



Off-site amenity such as benches and tables can enhance the pedestrian experience.

▼ *Covered walkways can be appropriate in limited locations.*

Interior courtyards provide opportunity for additional commercial access.

Communal seating can help activate an interior courtyard.

Interior Courtyard Pedestrian Amenity PA7 - (CC, CA, NMU)

Interior courtyards offer areas for the public to get out of the weather and enjoy a communal space. Well designed and successful interior courtyards are easy to find, versatile, large, and include communal seating. Interior Pedestrian Amenity activates and increases presence of smaller commercial spaces that front the courtyard.

PA7.1 Design interior courtyards to be versatile.

PA7.2 Interior courtyards shall provide primary access to commercial uses to count as Pedestrian Amenity.

PA7.3 Commercial spaces adjacent to an interior courtyard shall have large storefront windows open to the interior courtyard.

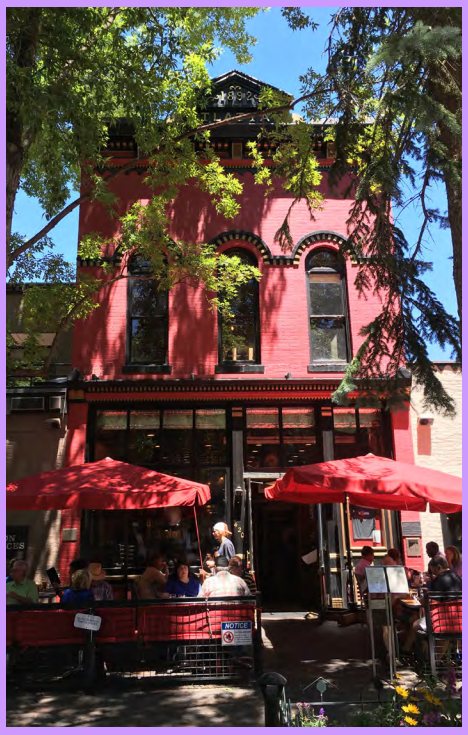
PA7.4 Interior courtyards should include communal seating and tables.

PA7.5 Incorporate wayfinding to the interior courtyard into the architecture.

PA7.6 Interior corridors or hallways leading to the interior courtyard do not count as Pedestrian Amenity space.

Interior courtyards can provide protection from the weather ▼

Commercial Core Historic District



Commercial Core Historic District

Improvements must respect the 19th-century historic context and development patterns and offer compatible new design that highlights Aspen's sense of place and small town character.

This house, at 302 E. Hopkins Avenue, built in 1883 appears to be the oldest frame structure in Aspen. There are seven Victorian-era homes left in the Commercial Core.[6]

The 1886 Aspen Block, at 303 S. Galena Street, appears to be the oldest masonry building in Aspen. It was constructed of red brick and featured white sandstone quarried at Maroon Creek. This is reported to be the first cut stone used in Aspen.[1]

History

In 1880, based on promising evidence of silver mining potential, two men vied to be the first to officially plat the townsite and control its early development. Clark Wheeler succeeded by snow-shoeing over Independence Pass from Leadville in February 1880 and named the city Aspen. His Aspen Town and Land Company, with the backing of eastern investors, laid out a 2.5 acre area which is primarily today's Commercial Core. Initially, growth was hampered by lack of the infrastructure required to make mining profitable, however this quickly changed. Within the first five years of development, better roads into the valley were constructed and telegraph, telephone, water, and electrical service were all established. A newcomer, Jerome B. Wheeler, added the all important smelter to process ore.

Construction boomed and Aspen had a brick yard, sawmills and lumberyards by the mid 1880s. Even so, according to the 1886 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, much of the core was still occupied by dwellings, with a limited number of businesses. Masonry became an increasingly popular building material after several devestating fires hit the downtown.

By 1887, Aspen was served by railroads and by 1892, the town's population had increased to 12,000 people, making this the third largest city in the state.

Aspen seen from the Durant Street fire tower in 1908.[2]

Aspen's most grand, iconic buildings of the period were the Wheeler Opera House, built in 1889 at 320 E. Hyman Avenue, the Hotel Jerome, built in 1889 at 330 E. Main Street, and the Elk's Building constructed in 1891 at 210 S. Galena Street. The Hotel Jerome and the Elk's Building are primarily red brick, with beautifully carved red sandstone details. The Wheeler Opera House was faced entirely with red sandstone. There were only two other Victorian-era stone buildings in Aspen: the Hyman Brand Building at 203 S. Galena Street and the Cowenhoven Block at 501 E. Hyman Avenue. While brick and masonry structures are the majority of the surviving Victorian commercial buildings in Aspen (25 of the 36 nineteenth century buildings still standing) this is likely due to their substantial construction and may create a misconception that this type of building was the most common in the 1800s.

Early Aspen was a very isolated place and its short development heyday before the silver crash prevented it from reaching the potential it might have otherwise seen. Victorian-era building materials were very much locally based and limited; the exception being cast iron storefronts and pressed tin accents that could be delivered by train. These limitations are important facts of Aspen history that should be considered in current choices for development. Most of the historic building fabric of Aspen was modest wood construction.

A view of the Commercial Core in the 1950s. After the silver crash a number of the original buildings were removed, leaving a sparse landscape downtown.[1]

Victorian-era buildings have witnessed over 100 years of Aspen's exciting history. Car race on Mill Street, 1952.[9]

There is no documentation of any significant construction of new buildings in the Commercial Core from 1893 until the late 1940s, when businesses like the Prospector Lodge (since demolished and rebuilt at 301 E. Hyman Avenue) began to appear with the start of the ski industry.

In 1974, the City made Aspen's Commercial Core one of the earliest historic districts in the State. Design review has been undertaken since then to ensure that new construction reflects the history of the town. The premise is that Victorian-era buildings should guide new building design.

This effort must acknowledge the fact that the Victorian landmarks do not comprise the majority of the buildings in the core today. Many of the buildings in this neighborhood were built in the 1960s through 1980s. Some are significant examples of other eras of architecture, including three AspenModern landmarks which are distinctly different than their 19th-century predecessors. They add to the richness of the neighborhood but are limited in number and each are unique.

A view of Aspen in 1981, substantially built up in the ensuing three decades.[1]

A mix of building heights is an important component of the historic character of downtown, and it should be recognized that the area has traditionally featured buildings with a relatively small footprint next to much larger commercial block structures.

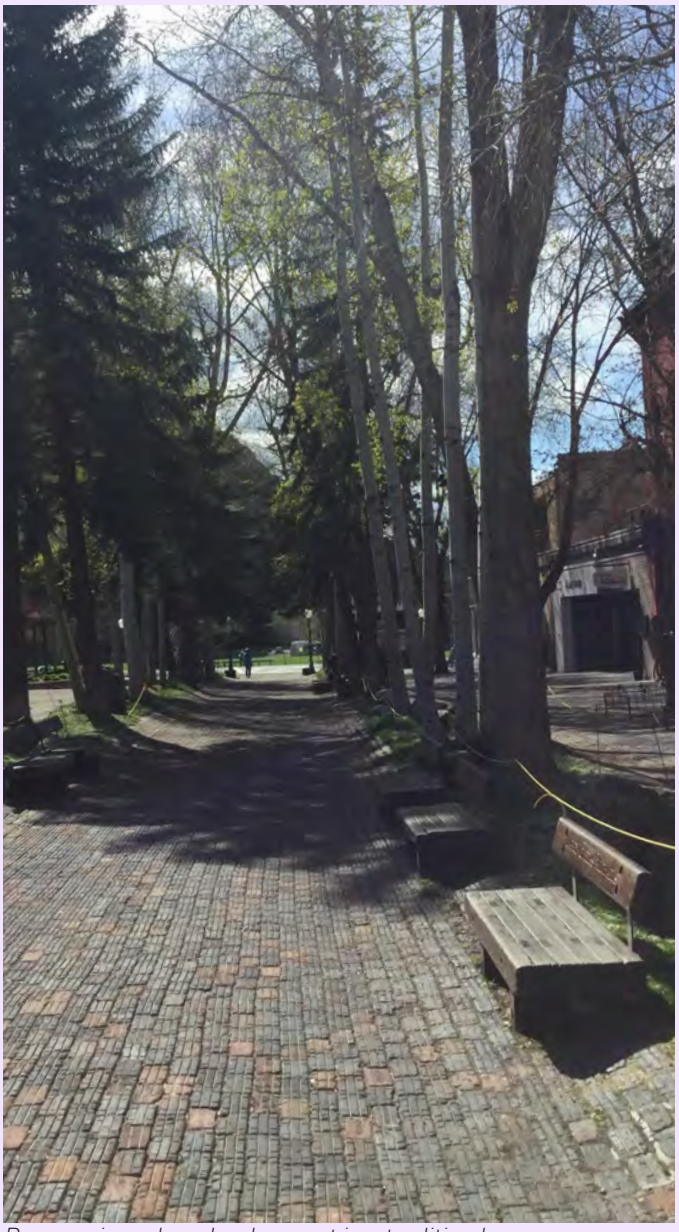
The most character shaping modern change to the Commercial Core Historic District was the Pedestrian Malls, built in 1976. The Malls claimed entire streets as sidewalks, brought nature into the City, and offered a dynamic contrast between new design philosophies and old 19th-century buildings. In the same way, new development can enrich downtown and respect the unique character of Aspen through careful and historically informed design choices.

Guido's Swiss Inn, seen in 1963, has been heavily remodeled but stands at 403 S. Galena Street, adding to the variety of architecture in the Commercial Core.[1]

119 S. Mill Street, built in 1956.[5]

Early additions to the Red Onion, 420 E. Cooper Avenue, seen in 1958, reflect the modest scale of some periods of development in Aspen.[8]

▼ *Hyman Pedestrian Mall. ©Robert C. Bishop.*



Progressive urban development is a tradition here.

Existing Character

The Commercial Core Historic District has strong connection to its 19th-century mining heritage, which creates a defined sense of place that resonates with the community and visitors. Almost half of the Commercial Core buildings are designated landmarks, including three AspenModern buildings that reference Aspen's mid-century renaissance. Substantial Victorian-era structures of local masonry and expert craftsmanship indicate a clear pattern of development and reflect that era's feeling of pride and optimism for the future. Thse buildings were built to last. Modern architecture woven into the core reflects the post war success of Aspen as a ski resort with international stature.

The design of buildings in the Commercial Core should celebrate the historic character.

Building Placement

A clearly delineated street edge is important within the Commercial Core Historic District because it supports commercial use, improves pedestrian experience, and aligns with traditional development patterns that set commercial buildings at the front property line. Historically, only small pockets of open space and minimal building setbacks were found throughout the District. Current policies encourage more significant downtown open space, which must be factored carefully into site planning.

In the Commercial Core, the buildings typically define the lot line at the street and alley.

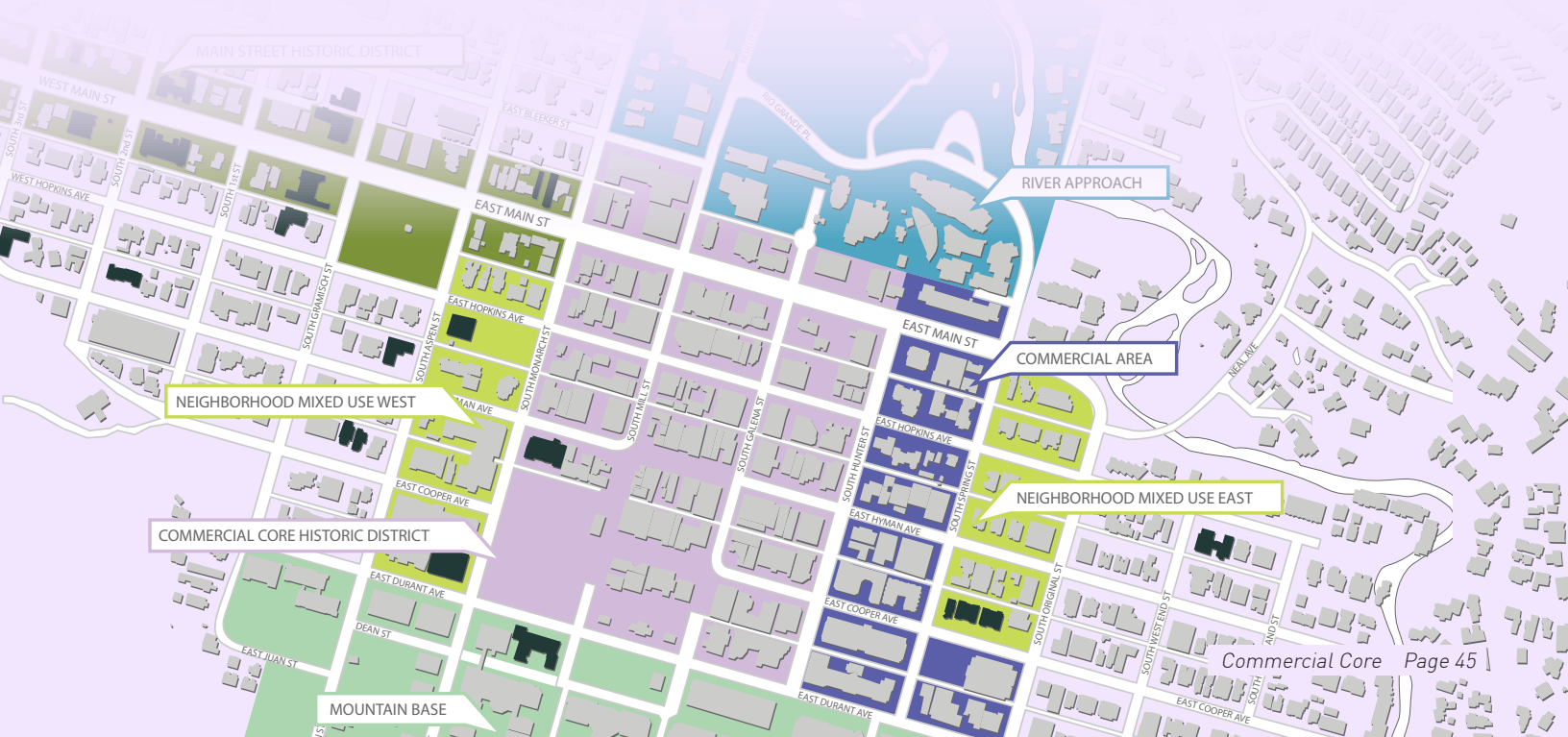
2.1 Maintain the alignment of facades at the property line.

- *Place as much of a building at the property line as possible to reinforce historic development patterns.*
- *A minimum of 50% of the first floor building façade shall be at the property line. This requirement may be varied by the Historic Preservation Commission based on historic context or in order to accommodate Pedestrian Amenity (See Pedestrian Amenity Chapter).*
- *A minimum of 70% of the first floor building facade shall be at the property line for properties on a pedestrian mall.*

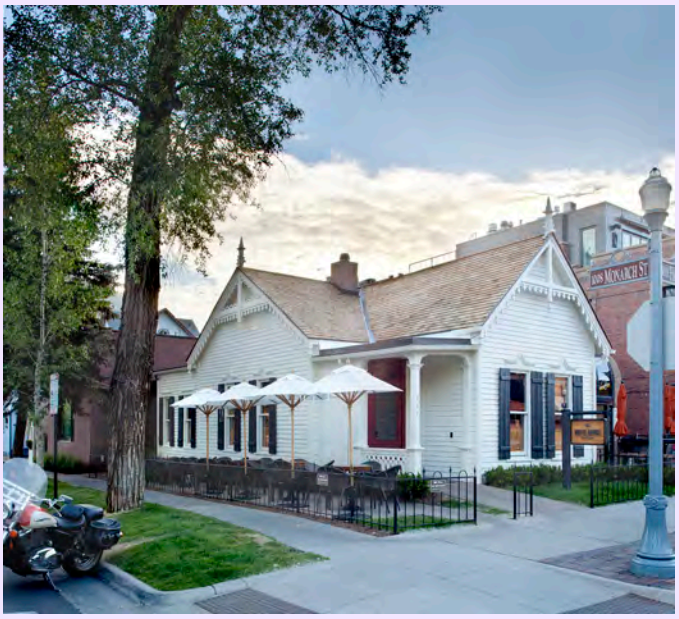
2.2 Consider a 45-degree chamfer for corner lots where appropriate.

- *Analyze all four corners of the intersection for compatibility.*
- *A primary entrance into the building should be through the chamfered corner.*

The chamfered corner of the Wheeler Opera House.



The three-story Hotel Jerome is an iconic 19th-century building.



Originally a residence, this historic cottage now has an addition which serves its commercial use.

The hierarchy of the first floor storefront design is a common and successful design element.

Architecture

The buildings which define the desired characteristics of the Commercial Core Historic District were built within a 10-year period between 1883 – 1893. Usually between one to three stories in height, these late 19th-century commercial buildings are divided into distinct horizontal bands. The first floor is commonly transparent for the display of retail goods and to invite the pedestrian in. With the introduction of cast iron storefronts, the weight of second and third stories of these Victorian commercial structures was able to be carried over large expanses of glass on the first floor.

Upper stories have smaller windows and were usually reserved for more private spaces such as a residential or office space.

The fact that no new construction occurred for more than 50 years after the Victorian period, creating a significant development gap, is unique and important to local history. This distinction should not be blurred by the introduction of architectural references which are not part of Aspen's heritage. Imitation faux-Victorian architecture and unrelated contemporary architecture are inappropriate in the Commercial Core Historic District. New buildings or additions that utilize differentiation but emphasize compatibility are most appropriate. Creating differentiation by introducing contrasting styles or statement buildings within the historic district leads to the gradual erosion of character and sense of place.

New construction should do more than relate to context with a flat roof or a tall commercial storefront. Buildings that focus on the fundamentals of architecture: spatial relationships, hierarchy, proportion, details, materials, texture, rhythm, and character will contribute value to the built environment. The focus should be more on supporting a sense of place rather than creating a stylistic statement. The goal is not boring new architecture: development which is creative, responsible, simple, elegant, communicative, and familiar is desired.

2.3 Development should be inspired by traditional late 19th-century commercial buildings to reinforce continuity in architectural language within the Historic District. Consider the following design elements: form, materials, and fenestration. Pick two areas to relate strongly to the context.

- *When relating to materials, use traditional application of materials commonly found in the Historic District, such as wood, brick and stone, and use similar texture and color to the historic context.*
- *When relating to fenestration, large vertical windows on the ground level and punched vertical openings on upper levels, with a similar solid to void ratio, are appropriate.*
- *When relating to form, note that rectangular forms are predominant with limited projecting or setback elements. Most roofs are flat, but some gables are present and these may be a reference for new design.*

Development should be sensitive to single story historic structures.

Punched openings on upper floors are common.

▼ *Pedestrian experiences should always be considered.*

A traditional 19th-century commercial building.

The scale of additions should respond to the historic context.

Remodels can enhance pedestrian experience.

Building Proportion, Scale, Height, and Width

A variety of building heights and widths in the Commercial Core Historic District is desirable. The original town site lots are 30 feet by 100 feet in size. Historically, building widths downtown were as small at 15 feet and as large as 90 feet. Today, where large properties are being developed, the design should break up a building into modules which reinforce the smaller scaled buildings of the 19th century.

2.4 Respect adjacent iconic historic structures.

- *Development near historic landmarks may use Pedestrian Amenity design as a transition or buffer to highlight the importance of adjacent historic structures.*
- *Use simple architectural details, materials and massing that do not detract from nearby historic landmarks.*

2.5 The massing and proportions of a new building or addition should respond to the historic context.

- *Two-story buildings are encouraged. A two-story high one-story element should be used with finesse and discretion.*
- *On larger buildings, stepping down to a one-story element within the composition is appropriate and consistent with the historic pattern of the district.*
- *Building modules or individual features should generally be tall and narrow in proportion.*

2.6 One-story buildings on lots larger than 6,000 square feet are discouraged.

- *This includes buildings that read as "one-story" from the street and have a significant second floor setback.*
- *Evaluation of appropriateness should be based on existing context and how the building fits into the streetscape. Impact on the Historic District, impact on adjacent landmarks, and other restrictions such as viewplanes will also be considered.*

2.7 Buildings on lots larger than 6,000 square feet should incorporate architectural features that break up the mass.

2.8 Composition of the façade, including choices related to symmetry and asymmetry, should reflect the close readings of patterns established by the 19th-century structures.

- *The pattern of building widths or bays within a building varies from 20 to 30 feet. Variety is preferred.*
- *Provide historic precedent using historic maps and adjacent landmarks to determine appropriate building width, height, and form. Photographs, dimensional drawings, figure-ground diagrams, are all examples of tools that can be used to illustrate precedent.*
- *Align architectural details and features with the surrounding context.*

Articulation of building materials can break up mass.

Reference to historic lot width is preferred.

There are many historic references for material, symmetry, and asymmetry in Aspen.

Flat roof forms are characteristic of the area.

Some historic structures have pitched roof forms.

A centered, recessed primary entrance has clear hierarchy.

First Floor

A rhythm of recessed entryways and tall commercial storefronts is integral to the character of Aspen's Commercial Core Historic District. The repetition of these features along the street contribute to a stimulating pedestrian experience, downtown vitality, and human scale. First floor storefronts that are taller than upper levels help to reinforce the traditional appearance. Entrances facing both the primary and secondary streets add vitality to the streetscape and create versatile commercial spaces with the potential to be divided into smaller spaces in the future.

2.9 Recessed entries are required.

- *Set a primary entrance back from the front façade a minimum of 4 feet.*
- *Alternative options that define an entry and reinforce the rhythm of recessed entryways may be considered.*
- *For corner lots, primary entries must face front lot line as determined by the Land Use Code and/or be located in the chamfered corner where applicable.*

2.10 Secondary recessed entrances are required for buildings on lots larger than 6,000 square feet, and on the secondary street for corner lots.

2.11 Maintain a floor to ceiling height of 12 to 15 feet for the first floor and 9 feet for the second floor.

- *The ability to vary this requirement shall be based on demonstration of historic precedent amongst adjacent landmarks. Storefronts should be taller than the upper floors.*
- *The floor to ceiling height of the first floor may be dropped to 9 feet after the first 25 feet of building depth from a street facing facade.*

2.12 Maintain an architectural distinction between the street level and upper floors.

- *Material changes, placement of fenestration, and architectural details may be appropriate tools to differentiate between floors.*

2.13 Street level commercial storefronts should be predominately transparent glass.

- *Window design, including the presence or absence of mullions, has a significant influence on architectural expression. Avoid windows which suggest historic styles or building types that are not part of Aspen's story.*

Storefront proportions are important for the pedestrian experience.

Window design has an influence on architectural expression. Photo by Brent Moss Photography.

Window rhythm is important for retail storefronts.

Cornice and mid-belt moldings were a prominent detail in 19th-century design.

Unpainted brick is an appropriate building material.

Historic buildings create a unique context for visitors to Aspen.

Details and Materials

As 19th-century commercial construction evolved, the amount of ornamentation and high style influences evolved as well. Cornice and mid-belt moldings became more prominent, more elaborate window and door openings were used and much of the facade was covered with varying degrees of applied ornamentation. Architectural details and material selection for new buildings or remodels are paramount to a successful and contextual building within the Commercial Core Historic District. While it is inappropriate to mimic historic details because it creates a false sense of history, subtle reference to 19th-century commercial details may be appropriate.

Materials should reflect those found within the Commercial Core Historic District: unpainted brick, textured large pieces of locally sourced sandstone, and painted wood. Painted metal details are found on some historic landmarks.

2.14 Architectural details should reinforce historic context and meet at least two of the following qualities.

- *Color or finish traditionally found downtown.*
- *Texture to create visual interest, especially for larger buildings.*
- *Traditional material: Brick, stone, metal and wood.*
- *Traditional application: for example, a running bond for masonry.*

Main Street Historic District

Main Street Historic District

Preserve the residential scale of the neighborhood and the character of the landscaping including generous front yards, low fences, mature trees and irrigation ditches.

A typical miner's cottage at 208 E. Main Street.[1]

History

Initially, development in Aspen was located in close proximity to the core of town and the mines. Development along Main Street was sparse until the mid 1880s. The creation of a horse drawn street-car line in 1889 contributed to the spread of construction along Main Street and into the West End. Some of the largest Victorian-era homes in Aspen were built here between 1888 and 1893. These highly visible and ornate buildings were home to several of the families who prospered the most from silver mining.

A Victorian brick structure, at 201 E. Main Street, covered in stucco in the 1940s.[1]

128 E. Main Street, built in 1890 by Jack Atkinson, an early prospector who made his fortune after locating the Little Annie and Midnight Mines. The Atkinson family also owned the brickyard that supplied the material for this home.[2]

From its beginnings, Main Street from 7th Street to Monarch Street was almost entirely residential. The majority of the buildings were one story "miner's cottages", with only a handful of other uses mixed in, such as churches and a grocery store. Buildings were primarily wood frame with gable roofs, on open lots. A few examples of false front buildings and flat-roofed brick structures were built as well.

One of the most beloved characteristics of Main Street is its design as a wide boulevard lined with cottonwoods. Ditch companies began to be formed in the City in the early 1880s to bring water into the townsite. Small trees were relocated from the banks of local streams, and planted in orderly rows. Though these trees did not reach maturity during the mining era, Main Street, for much of its history, has had a soft edge, grand trees, and a clearly residential character, with landscaped front yards and low fences surrounding many properties.

Another reflection of Main Street's early development can be seen in the alleys, some of which feature small scale historic sheds, carriage houses, and garages. Many of the alleys in this area are still unpaved. No roads in Aspen were paved until the early 1960s.

The 300s block of Main Street in 1890.[1]

Alleys feature small scale historic sheds.

▼ *Looking east on Main Street in 1925.*[1]

Lodging at 435 W. Main Street, c. 1930s.

The original Aspen Public Library at 120 E. Main Street.

More than 50% of the lots in this Character Area contain Victorian-era structures, which was the justification for naming Main Street a historic district in 1976. There are other important structures in this neighborhood. For instance, starting in the 1930s, lodging development occurred along Main Street, first as small scale cabins and then as larger motels. Most of those that remain are are identified as "Small Lodges" and reviewed as an additional Character Area.

Modernism is found on Main Street, for instance the original public library designed by Fritz Benedict and built at 120 E. Main Street in 1960. Though these buildings tell Aspen's story, they are generally one of a kind and do not form a pattern for the neighborhood.

Main Street is Aspen's front porch and the first impression as one enters town. It is the setting for races, parades, and banners announcing community events. Though the area is affected by vehicular traffic more so today than in the past, the historic scale and architectural character still reinforce that Aspen is a small city.

▼ *Winterskol parade, 1991.*[1]

Car racing on Main Street, 1953.[9] ▼

Existing Character

For many, Main Street is the first impression of Aspen. It is a snapshot of Aspen's history. The rhythm of mature cottonwoods, ditches and sidewalks, and generous yards with one- and two-story Victorian buildings strongly convey Aspen's mining heritage. Small lodges are mixed within the District along with modernist architecture. More than half of the buildings in the Main Street Historic District are designated landmarks. Preservation of the context of historic Main Street is vital to the designated landmarks and to Aspen's small town character. The majority of Main Street is 19th-century residential buildings with gable roof forms. Painted wood siding, simple picket fences, and perpendicular walkways to porches are character defining features among the Victorians. As Main Street approaches downtown, the residential feel gradually transitions into commercial character with smaller yards and a greater intensity of uses. New buildings and remodels should reflect these characteristics. Because most properties in the district are landmarked or fall into the Small Lodge Character Area, there are few opportunities for new buildings in the Main Street Character Area.

In addition to the following guidelines, historic landmark properties are also subject to the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines.

320 W. Main Street.

430 W. Main Street.

Main Street Historic District is defined by Victorian-style architecture.

Primary entrances should face the street.

Building placement varies from one end of Main Street to another.

Building Placement

Aspen's Victorian-era buildings are parallel to the lot lines, with the primary entrance facing the street. This helps establish the pedestrian friendly quality associated with the Main Street Historic District. For many blocks within the Main Street Historic District, front yards are similar in depth, resulting in a relatively uniform alignment of building fronts which contributes to the sense of visual continuity. Maintaining the established range of setbacks, including side yards, is important to maintaining that continuity.

3.1 Orient a new building or addition to the street.

- *All buildings should be arranged parallel to the lot lines, maintaining the traditional grid pattern.*
- *Generally, do not set a structure forward of any historic resources within the block. Alignment of front setbacks is preferred. An exception may be made on a corner lot.*

Architecture

Imitation faux-Victorian architecture and unrelated contemporary architecture are inappropriate in the Main Street Historic District. New buildings or additions that utilize differentiation but emphasize compatibility are most appropriate. Creating differentiation by introducing contrasting styles or statement buildings within the historic district leads to the gradual erosion of character and sense of place.

New construction should do more than relate to context with a gable roof. Buildings that focus on the fundamentals of architecture: spatial relationships, hierarchy, proportion, details, materials, texture, rhythm, and character will contribute value to the built environment. The focus should be more on supporting a sense of place rather than creating a stylistic statement. The goal is not boring new architecture: development which is creative, responsible, simple, elegant, communicative, and familiar is desired.

Most historic buildings in Aspen are composed of simple forms – a simple rectangular solid with a gable is typical. In some cases, a building consists of a combination of simple forms. A new building within the Main Street Historic District should respect these traditions.

3.2 Design a new structure to be recognized as a product of its time.

- *Consider these three aspects of a new building; form, materials, and fenestration. A project should relate strongly to the historic district in at least two of these elements. Departing from one of these categories allows for creativity and a contemporary design response.*
  - *When choosing to relate to building form, use forms that are similar to the historic district.*
  - *When choosing to relate to materials, use materials that appear similar in scale and finish to those used historically in the district and use building materials that contribute to a traditional sense of human scale.*
  - *When choosing to relate to fenestration, use windows and doors that are similar in size and shape to those in the historic district.*

3.3 The imitation of older historic styles blurs the distinction between old and new buildings and is discouraged.

- *Overall, details should be modest in character.*

Front yards and gardens are prevalent along Main Street.

Building materials are typically painted wood or brick.

Front porches are a traditional way to create a transition from public to private.

The perception of mass can change with the material used.

Roof forms shall be in character with surrounding historic buildings.

Building Proportion, Scale, Height and Width

More than half of the properties within the Main Street Historic District are designated 19th-century landmarks that are one to two stories and 1,000 to 2,200 square feet in size. The maximum perceived mass of new buildings or remodels within the Main Street Historic District should reflect this character by creating detached buildings on a property or through one building that is clearly broken up into distinguishable modules using connecting elements, material changes, or roof forms, for example.

3.4 Construct a new building to appear similar in scale and proportion with the historic buildings in the district.

- *Subdivide larger masses into smaller modules that are similar in size to the historic buildings in the historic district.*
- *Reflect the heights and proportions that characterize the historic district.*
- *Use secondary structures to break up mass of buildings. These are most appropriately located along alleyways.*

Maintain relationships of scale and setbacks. ▼

3.5 Roof forms should be in character with surrounding historic buildings.

- *Roof forms should be simple.*
- *If applicable, gable ends should be oriented toward the street.*
- *Carefully consider roof eaves, orientation of ridgelines, roof pitch, dormers, and other features as a way to either create compatibility or differentiate a new building or addition.*

3.6 Design a front elevation to be similar in scale to historic buildings in the district.

- *The primary plane of the front elevation should not appear taller than historic structures.*

3.7 Clearly define the primary entrance to a new building with a front porch or similar feature.

- *The front porch should be functional, and used as the means of access to the front door.*
- *A new porch should be similar in size and shape to those seen traditionally.*

3.8 Design an addition to be compatible in size and scale with the main building.

- *An addition that is lower, or similar in height to the existing building, is preferred.*

3.9 When planning an addition to a building in a historic district, preserve historic alignments on the street.

- *Some roof lines and porch eaves on historic buildings may align at approximately the same height.*
- *An addition should not be placed in a location where these relationships would be altered or obscured.*
- *Detach building mass along alleyways, similar to the pattern of traditional shed development.*

New buildings should appear similar in scale to historic buildings in the district.

Front elevations are typically residential in form and articulation.

The Mesa Store building is an example of a false storefront.

Painted wood mixed with natural wood is appropriate.

New construction can be referential without copying historic details.

Details and Materials

Wood and brick are the primary building materials found on Victorian-era buildings within the Main Street Historic District. It is important to maintain consistency in material palette throughout the Main Street Historic District. Carefully consider existing material colors, finishes, and textures within the block before selecting materials. Study the typical placement and character of architectural details.

3.10 Use building components that are similar in size and shape to those of the Victorian-era residences seen traditionally on Main Street.

- *These include windows, doors, and porches.*
- *Overall, details should be modest in character.*

3.11 Architectural details should reinforce the historic context of the block.

- *Consider how detailing can be used to create relationships between new and old buildings while still allowing for current architectural expression.*
- *Consider scale, location, and purpose of historic detailing to inform new designs.*
- *It is inappropriate to imitate historic details.*

3.12 Primary materials should be wood or brick.

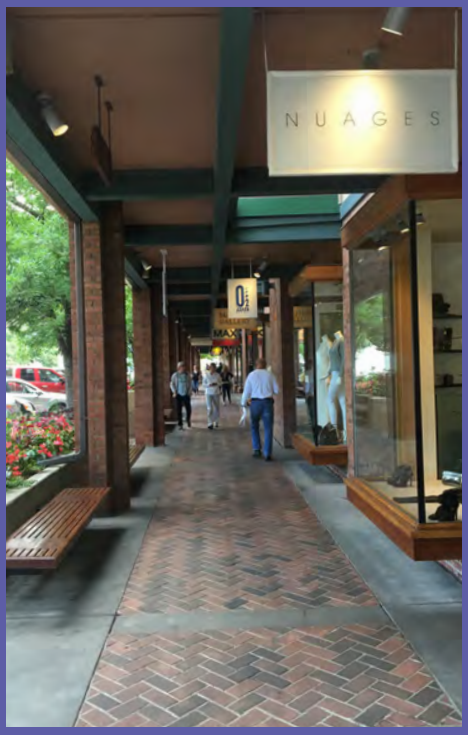
- *Alternate primary materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the historic context of the block.*

3.13 Secondary materials should relate to the historic context.

- *More variety is acceptable for secondary materials if a relationship to the historic palette can be demonstrated.*
- *Stone should be limited to the foundation.*

3.14 Use roofing materials that are similar in appearance to those seen historically.

Commercial Area



Commercial Area

An extension of the Commercial Core Historic District with an emphasis on pedestrian walkability and a balanced mix of traditional and modern architecture.

Patricia Moore's art gallery and residence at 610 E. Hyman Avenue, designed by Ellie Brickham, as seen in 1966. Photo Denver Public Library.

History

The Commercial Character Area was occupied by a mix of miner's cottages and commercial spaces during the Victorian period. No Victorian-era commercial buildings remain in this neighborhood today.

Instead, the commercial architecture in these blocks is predominantly 1950s and 60s Modernist structures, many of which served as the informal headquarters for the artist community and counter culture of the day. Personalities central to this time and place like artist and architect Tom Benton, writer Hunter S. Thompson, architect Ellie Brickham, and gallery owner Patricia Moore created a design environment that was distinct from traditional Aspen.

▼ *A composition of moss rock, exposed concrete beams and wood siding at the entrance to the Steak Pit restaurant, in the City Market building, 1965. Since remodeled.*[1]

Aspen residents' practical needs were fulfilled by a new Aspen Post Office, built in 1960 at Hyman Avenue and Spring Street, and City Market, Aspen's first chain grocery store built at 711 E. Cooper Avenue in 1967. These contemporary buildings contributed to the new neighborhood aesthetic and activity level. Benton's 1969 Crandall Building at 630 E. Hyman Avenue reflects this dynamic era as well.

On a larger scale, occuping an entire city block, Fritz Benedict's Aspen Square at 617 E. Cooper Avenue, built in 1969, introduced a lodge with large balconies and ground floor retail shops sheltered by an arcade.

Many of the commercial buildings in this area, including Alpine Bank, built at 600 E. Hopkins Avenue in 1973, feature moss rock, highly textured brick, heavy timbers, and other organic materials to merge modern architecture with a local material palette.

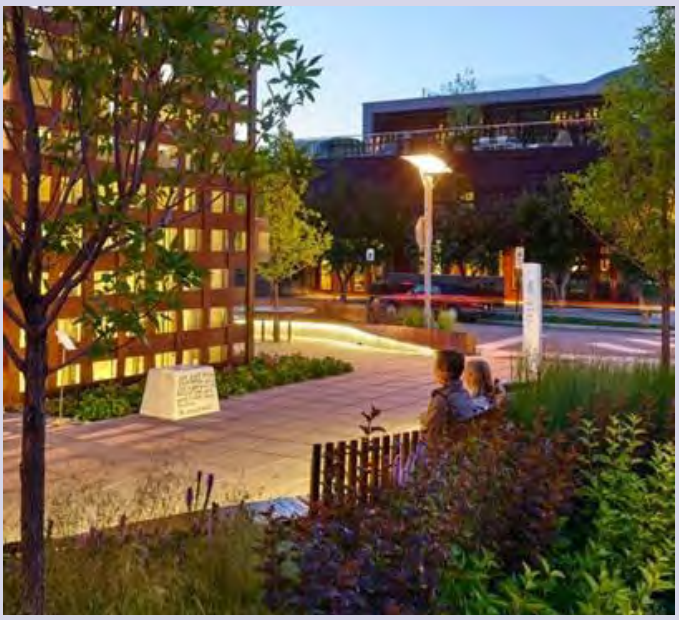
Recent redevelopment projects like the Aspen Art Museum, at 637 E. Hyman Avenue in 2014 and the Spring Building at 119 S. Spring Street in 2013 are once again enlivening the Commercial Character Area in the introduction of new architectural expressions.

Tom Benton's Crandall building with redwood siding and unpainted concrete block, 1969.

The Spring building at Hopkins and Spring Street.

▼ *Aspen Square, a mix of shops and lodge units.*[11]

The area is characterized by a more urban design.



Pedestrian amenities of the Aspen Art Museum.

Existing Character

The Commercial Area is an extension of the Commercial Core Historic District: two- and three-story, flat-roofed buildings with storefronts are prominent. Open space in the form of front yard setbacks and subgrade courtyards along with zero lot line development add variety to the neighborhood. This neighborhood is defined by AspenModern properties as well as 19th-century residential structures. Variety in design compared to the adjacent Commercial Core Historic District is evident in the range of architecture and site design. While some properties in the area are completely residential, the overall character of the district is commercial.

Patricia Moore's studio today.

Building Placement

There is a transition from the traditional commercial buildings found in the Commercial Core Historic District to the Commercial Character Area, where historic landmarks are not as prominent. New development should reinforce commercial character by reflecting some of the traditions of 19th-century commercial buildings with an emphasis on pedestrian experience, creative design solutions, architectural diversity, and well-planned open space. Building placement should respond to the existing context.

4.1 Properties adjacent to the Commercial Core Historic District require careful consideration when siting a new building.

- *A narrow range of setbacks, or no setback, may be appropriate for properties closest to the Commercial Core Historic District.*

Pedestrian experience can affect the relationship of a building to the street.

Development should reinforce commercial character and provide positive pedestrian experiences.

This design offers a flat roof broken up by a varied silhouette.

The area is home to some AspenModern designs.

Architecture

Architecture in this neighborhood should promote versatile commercial spaces and a balanced mix of traditional and modern architecture that references the Commercial Core Historic District while encouraging creative design solutions. This balance is especially important for properties that are adjacent to the Historic District, where a sensitive transition from the historic context is desired.

Two-story flat-roofed buildings are common in this neighborhood. They relate to the adjacent Historic District and can encourage active roofscapes, adding visual interest in town as viewed from Aspen Mountain, Smuggler Mountain, or Red Mountain.

Designing buildings with similar roof forms and overall building shape creates cohesion, which is important to maintaining a sense of place within the Commercial Character Area.

Outdoor spaces can enhance the architecture.

4.2 Variations on traditional 19th-century commercial design are encouraged.

- *Design solutions should reference some traditional commercial characteristics. These include tall storefront windows, defined entries, and smaller windows on upper levels.*
- *Creative interpretations of 19th-century design is recommended.*
- *Design should support, but not imitate historic architecture.*
- *Properties adjacent to an AspenModern landmark may relate to, but not mimic the AspenModern architecture. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, considering the context of the block.*

4.3 Two-story buildings are appropriate.

- *Vertical proportions should be emphasized through massing, as well as architectural details and features such as windows, materials, and floor to ceiling heights.*

4.4 Maintain a minimum floor to ceiling height of 10 feet for the first floor and 9 feet for the second floor.

- *The floor to ceiling height of the first floor may be dropped to 9 feet after the first 25 feet of building depth from a street-facing facade.*

4.5 Maintain an architectural distinction between the street level and upper floors to reinforce 19th-century commercial traditions.

- *Material changes, placement of fenestriation and architectural details may be appropriate tools to differentiate between floors.*

4.6 Flat roof forms are appropriate and reinforce the commercial nature of the neighborhood.

- *Other roof forms may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the context of the block, adjacent historic landmarks, and other restrictions such as viewplanes.*

The proportions of this entrance emphasize verticality.

This building uses its form to define the difference between street and upper levels.

Flat roofs are a defining a characteristic of the area.

The material selection here is more flexible than in the historic areas of the city

Material articulation can take many forms in this neighborhood.

Details and Materials

Ground floor elements should be related to commercial character through storefront design and street level open space, rather than through more residential based features such as front porches or small street level windows.

Building materials in the Commercial Character Area consist of mostly brick, masonry, stone, metal, and wood. There are some examples of less familiar, trendy materials. While material selection in this character area is more flexible than the Commercial Core Historic District, materials should be subtle and applied using traditional techniques.

4.7 Large storefronts are recommended on the ground level.

- *If large storefronts are not used, ground level details should reinforce the commercial character.*

4.8 If non-traditional materials are used, they should be subtle in appearance and location and applied using traditional techniques.

Traditional materials help eclectic buildings have a relationship with historic structures. ▼

Neighborhood Mixed Use

Neighborhood Mixed Use

A distinct transition from commercial to residential character with an emphasis on pedestrian walkability, front yards, and smaller scale architecture.

Hannah Dustin building, 1969.

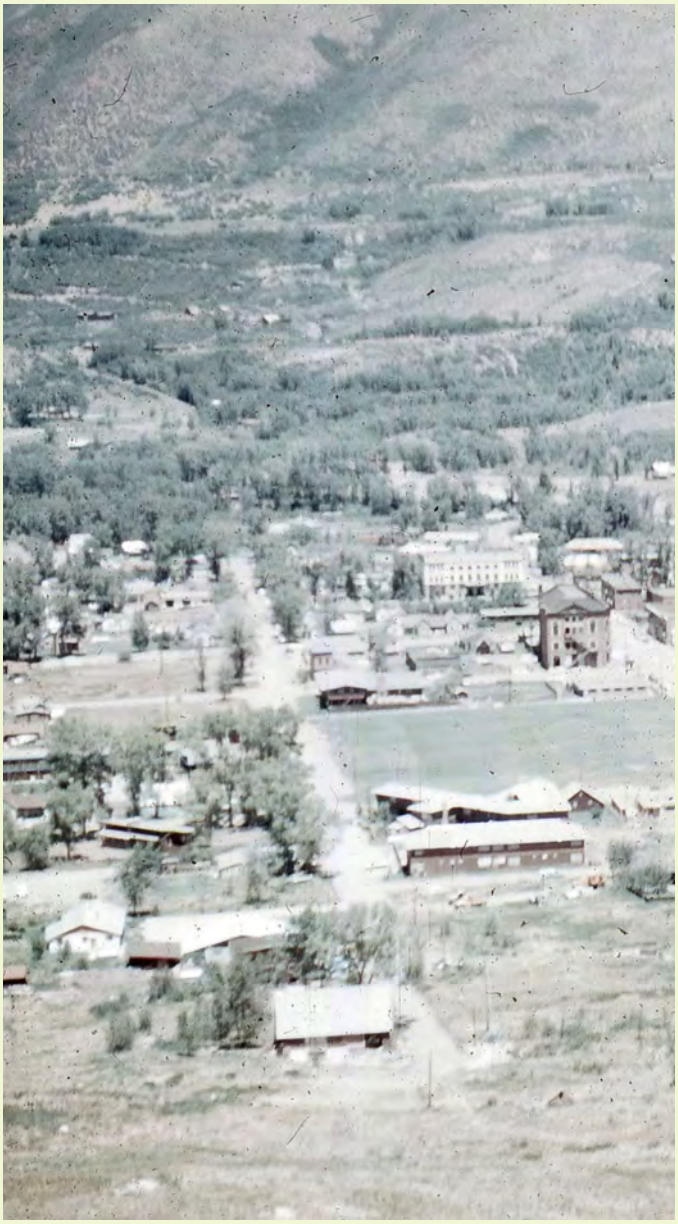
Aspen Athletic Club, 1976.

History

This Character Area bookends downtown along the east and west. The area to the east of Spring Street has been primarily defined by residential use, especially in the Victorian period, when the blocks were filled with small houses. Historically, a handful of commercial buildings and a planing mill, which supplied the fast paced development of town, existed in this area. None of them remain today.

Like the Commercial Character Area, modern architecture of the 1960s and 70s appeared in this neighborhood and remains influential today, particularly commercial buildings like the Aspen Athletic Club at 720 E. Hyman Avenue, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright student Robin Molny in 1976, and the 1969 Hannah Dustin building at 300 S. Spring Street, designed by Heneghan and Gale, architects of the iconic Prince of Peace church, located at the roundabout. In both cases, heavy timber framing, brick, and glass curtain walls were chosen for the buildings, which also feature tall atrium lobbies to let in abundant natural light.

The western segment of this Character Area, west of Monarch Street, was predominantly residential during the Victorian period. Three landmarked residences from the Victorian period continue to provide a reflection of this history. As seen in the photo at right, many buildings disappeared during the Quiet Years following the silver crash. This persisted until the development of several small lodges in the 1960s. Examples include the Edelweiss cabins, which were replaced in the 1980s with the notable Hotel Lenado, designed by Harry Teague and reflecting a balance of new architectural ideas and Aspen personality.



Looking down Monarch Street with the Neighborhood Mixed Use West to the left.[1]

Hotel Lenado seen in 2007. Photo courtesy Harry Teague Architects.

Edelweiss Lodge.[3]

405 South Monarch Street.

Francis Whitaker's studio seen in 1965.[1]

This neighborhood was home for 25 years to celebrated blacksmith Francis Whitaker, who worked out of the Mountain Forge at 230 E. Hopkins. Avenue. Whitaker was so influential as an artist and teacher that the National Education Association named him a National Heritage Fellow. The large public park at Hopkins Avenue and Monarch Street is named in his honor.

In recent years, some of the remaining small lodges in the area have been replaced. The original Limelight lodge, built in the early 1950s was replaced with a new, much larger hotel in 2007. Similarly, Dancing Bear replaced the modest Aspen Court Lodge in 2008.

Original Limelight lodge.[8]

New Limelight lodge.

The Dancing Bear replaced the Aspen Court Lodge and Charthouse. Photo courtesy Dirk Braun.

Existing Character

The Neighborhood Mixed Use Character Area is largely residential with a mix of office and service uses interspersed. A variety of sloped roof forms and more open building placement is found in this neighborhood, creating a predominantly residential character that is clearly distinguished from the Commercial Character Area.

This is the only Character Area that is divided into two locations. There are two separate Neighborhood Mixed Use Areas (NMU): NMU East is to the east of the Commercial Character Area and contains mostly two-story residential buildings with fences defining front yards; NMU West is to the west of the Commercial Core Character Area and contains a more diverse range of heights, building sizes, and a mix of uses including large lodge buildings, residential, office, and service uses.

Increased open space on the site is important as the scale transitions from commercial to residential.

Front yard setbacks should be provided.

Building Placement

In order to reinforce the residential character of the neighborhood, front yard setbacks are appropriate and often required by the Zone District. Increased open space around a building is important to a successful transition from this neighborhood to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. It is equally important to create versatile open space, not just landscaping, that can be used by commercial businesses.

5.1 Incorporate open space into building placement and site design.

- *Consider a transparent fence to define the street edge.*
- *Soft and informal landscape design is encouraged.*
- *Useful open space that supports a variety of uses is recommended.*

5.2 A front yard setback should be provided.

5.3 The building entry should be easily seen from the street.

Material selection in this Character Area is more flexible.

Architecture should support the existing residential character.

A variety of setbacks is encouraged.

Architecture

The predominant building type within both the east and west neighborhoods is large multi-family residential buildings. There are only a handful of mixed-use buildings and lodge buildings that contribute some variety in architecture and intensity of use to the neighborhood. The only two mixed use buildings in the east neighborhood – 720 East Hyman Avenue and 300 South Spring Street - were designed by important mid-century architects, the former being a designated AspenModern landmark.

Architecture in this neighborhood should address the existing residential character by introducing smaller scaled buildings with street level open space. Roof form and overall building shape can create cohesion within a neighborhood: look at neighborhood context for appropriate design. Gable or pitched roofs are particularly appropriate in this neighborhood.

5.4 Gable or pitched roof forms are appropriate and reinforce the residential character of the neighborhood.

- *Other roof forms, such as flat roofs, may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the context of the block, adjacency to historic landmarks, and other restrictions such as viewplanes.*

Mountain Base

Mountain Base

An extension of the built environment into the mountain topography, where mountain access, alpine inspired architecture, and improved pedestrian experience are desired.

The neighborhood as seen in the 1893 Bird's Eye View of Aspen. The north side of Durant Street was lined with commercial structures and public buildings such as City Hall and the fire tower. Mining structures and many small homes sat on the base of the hill. Only one residence remains from this era.

History

In the Victorian era, Aspen was the largest silver producer in the country, providing 1/16th of all the silver in the world. Most of the mining activity took place in this neighborhood, on Aspen Mountain.

After the crash of the mining industry and a long period of halted development and economic growth, Aspen was a relic of its former self. In 1936, hope returned after Swiss mountaineer Andre Roch surveyed the area to study the potential for the new recreational sport of skiing. By 1938 Roch's Run was cut and the Boat Tow, two wooden toboggans hoisted with old mining equipment and a Model A engine, pulled four people at a time 600 feet up the hill to ski. World War II brought the momentum of this endeavor to a stop, until 1945, when Walter Paepcke, a visionary businessman from Chicago visited Aspen and saw the possibilities for a utopian community nurturing the mind and body. In 1946 the Aspen Skiing Company was founded by Paepcke, and Lift 1, then the longest chairlift in the world opened in 1947, with it's base on Aspen Street.

▲ *The base of Aspen Mountain, picturing remaining mining structures and homes in 1923.*[4]

Ski lodges began to be built in the vicinity, starting with Norway Lodge in 1949 and followed by a series of buildings modeled after the European Chalet style characterized by low pitched gabled roofs, decorative carvings and moldings, and balconies. Buildings like the Mountain Chalet at 333 E. Durant Avenue, begun in 1954, and the Skiers Chalet lodges at 710 S. Aspen Street and 233 Gilbert Street, begun in 1955, provided an appropriate imagery to the new resort. A number of residential developments, such as Alpenblick, built in 1965 at 711 S. Galena Street, adopted this style as well. Shadow Mountain Condominiums, built in 1965 at 809 S. Aspen Street, melded chalet and modern elements to create an architecturally striking complex at the upper edge of the neighborhood.

Mountain Chalet.[1]

Skiers Chalet.

Shadow Mountain Condominiums.

The original Little Nell lodge.[12]

The Little Nell as of today.

The Tipple Inn, seen in 1966.[1]

In the 1950s, access to the Little Nell ski run was by T-bar, which was soon replaced with a chairlift. With the construction of the gondola and the current Little Nell hotel in the mid 1980s, the energy of the ski era shifted significantly from the Lift 1/ Aspen Street side of the hill to Galena Street and Durant Avenue. (Upcoming redevelopment along Aspen Street along with lift upgrades is expected to restore a balance between the two portals to the mountain.)

Other architectural influences on the built environment in this neighborhood have included the previous mining structures, as reflected in the Tipple Inn, built in 1956 and since demolished.

Wrightian architecture characterizes the area in examples like the Fasching Haus at 747 S. Galena Street, designed by Ted Mularz and built in 1966 and the North of Nell condominiums, 555 E. Durant Avenue, designed by Taliesen trained firm Erickson and Stevens in 1965.

Fasching Haus in 1970.[6]

Aspen Alps, seen in 1980.[10]

Perhaps more than anyone else, Fritz Benedict, who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright and became Aspen's first resident architect in 1945, left a lasting influence on this neighborhood with the Aspen Alps, a complex of lodge condominiums set on 7 ½ acres at the base of the mountain, with ski in ski out access. Benedict was a pioneer in the design of ski areas and favored timber, bricks, and stone, all in neutral colors, setting his low slung buildings into the landscape.

As illustration of the thoughtful design necessary in this neighborhood in particular, the late 1980s construction of the Ritz Carlton, now St. Regis, a 300-room hotel fronting Dean Street required several redesigns and was highly controversial, reflecting the community's goal that large scale new construction be a good fit for the City.

Ritz Carlton, now St. Regis, built in the 1980's. Photo courtesy The St. Regis Aspen Resort.

Existing Character

Originally the site of early mining operations, this neighborhood consists of primarily residential and lodge uses. The connection to the townsite grid is eroded in this neighborhood due to the steep topography and the lack of alleyways. Traditional block sizes, street pattern and traditional building orientation diminish as the streets approach Aspen Mountain. Open space is generally internalized within a development in the form of a pool, or it exists in the form of a large surface parking area facing the street. A mix of mountain vernacular styles is characteristic and is an important feature to preserve.

Building Placement

This neighborhood has significant steep slopes that do not encourage pedestrian traffic and create challenging sites for new development. The pedestrian experience can be greatly improved by design that encourages walkability and accessibility.

As one moves up the hill, the sense of transitioning into an alpine area, separated from the town below increases. In this neighborhood, architectural context, nature, topography, and the visibility of buildings from far away vantage points are all important considerations in siting a new building.

6.1 On lots greater than 15,000 square feet, the massing of the building should be broken into smaller volumes.

6.2 Place a building into the topography to minimize visual impacts from downtown and to reinforce a strong relationship to the mountain.

- *Make mountain access easier when siting a building.*
- *For larger projects, offer pedestrians multiple entry points.*
- *Emphasize horizontal elements to blend the building into the topography.*
- *Step a building up the hillside to minimize visual impacts and allow points of entry to be at natural grade.*

In the Mountain Base, streets give way to ski runs.

6.3 Minimize retaining walls.

- *When retaining walls are necessary, integrate them into the architecture.*

6.4 Incorporate open space into building placement and site design.

- *Create views through the property to the mountain slopes to strengthen mountain connection to the neighborhood and improve the pedestrian experience.*

6.5 Eclectic and creative approaches to break up building mass and scale is encouraged.

- *Consider separate buildings on a property, or linked exterior walkways instead of internal corridors.*

6.6 Create interest along the street, for instance by providing places for the public to sit.

6.7 Carefully plan parking areas and loading zones to minimize visual impacts

The Skiers Chalet, built in 1955.

Shadow Mountain Condominiums, built in 1965.

A mix of architectural styles is found in the Mountain Base.

Stone as a base material is appropriate.

Easily identifiable architectural details are encouraged.

Architecture

A mix of architectural styles that respond to the mountain topography define this neighborhood and allow visitors to locate their lodging. It is important that buildings within this neighborhood respond to the steep slopes, but equally important is a variety of building styles, types, and eras.

6.7 Roof forms should be low pitched to reinforce the mountain character of the neighborhood.

- *Other roof forms may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the context of the block, adjacent historic landmarks, and other restrictions such as viewplanes.*
- *Flat roofs are particularly appropriate to provide upper level decks and for installation of mechanical equipment.*

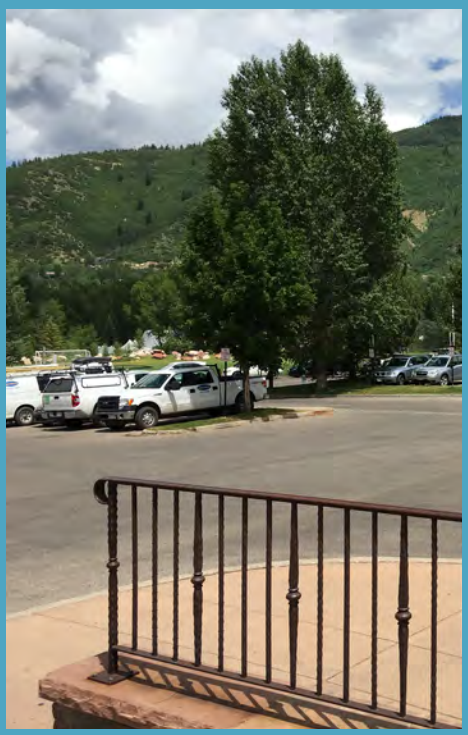
Details and Materials

Similar to the range of architectural styles, there is a mix of materials and details. Many of the buildings within this neighborhood have been renovated in the past ten years with new materials, windows, and details. A wide range of materials and architectural details are appropriate in this eclectic neighborhood.

6.8 Easily identifiable architectural details are encouraged.

- *Character defining details are recommended to engage the pedestrian, to promote variety of architecture, and to aid in wayfinding.*

River Approach



River Approach

Promote walkability, permeability in architecture, connections to the river and natural environment, and innovative new architectural design and technology.

Denver and Rio Grande Station, 1947.[4]

A walking platform created on top of an abandoned railroad bridge over Hunter Creek, 1972.[9]

History

The River Approach Character Area has historically functioned as an industrial zone. In the 19th century this was the location of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad station, a hydroelectric plant, foundry, brewery, and various mining functions.

In 1963, freight hauling on this leg of the D&RG came to an end and a number of small businesses began to operate in the area, forming an industrial park providing services including vacuum and car repair, construction materials, ski tuning, and Sport Obermeyer's manufacturing warehouse, all housed in very modest structures. The area was zoned as "Service, Commercial, Industrial" to protect some of the uses that could potentially be pushed out by higher rent occupants if they were permitted.

The connection to the river and the natural environment in this area became increasingly appreciated in the late 1960s. The railroad right-of-way was repurposed as a trail. In 1968 the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES) was established and in 1977 a master plan was adopted for the City-owned Rio Grande property, leading to the creation of playing fields, trails, open space, and the home of cultural organizations such as Theater in the Park and the former Aspen Art Museum location.

Aspen Post Office, 235 Puppy Smith Street, built in 1980.[1]

The construction of North Mill Station in the 1970s, and the 1980 relocation of the Aspen Post Office from downtown to Puppy Smith Street increased activity in this part of town.

An influx of arts oriented businesses led to some adaptations of existing buildings which reflected the creativity of the tenants and resulted in a "messy vitality" that became a catchword in the 1990s for describing the desired character of Aspen as a whole.

Most recently, in 2006, the Obermeyer family undertook a substantial redevelopment of their property which retained many long time businesses and added the largest pocket of residential development in the area.

The entry to an architecture firm, added to this 60s era warehouse in the 1990s, at 412 N. Mill Street.

Service oriented businesses were accommodated in Obermeyer Place, 601 Rio Grande Place. Photo by Robert Millman.

The delineation of walkway and alley is successful at the new Pitkin County Library.

Obermeyer Place features a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Existing Character

The River Approach Character Area abuts the Commercial Core Historic District and stretches downhill to the Roaring Fork River. There is a range of building types in this neighborhood from industrial to traditional styles, and a range of uses including civic, service, industrial, and restaurant uses. The existing street pattern is less rigid than the traditional grid: streets naturally follow the river curves and the topography. There are few alleys in this neighborhood so parking and access is often located directly off the street. Pathways and parks in the area have been greatly improved to incorporate wayfinding, stormwater management techniques, and a strong connection to the river that is organic in character.

Building Placement

Because this neighborhood is located off of the traditional street grid, building placement is less structured and tends to respond to steep grades and the watercourse of the Roaring Fork River. Surface parking needs and restrictions on development close to the Roaring Fork River provide possibilities for positive street presence and pedestrian amenities. When designing a new project, consider walkability, accessibility, and minimizing retaining walls and curbcuts. Working with a landscape architect early in the design process is strongly recommended for this neighborhood to maximize connectivity and relationship between the street, the building, and the river.

7.1 Place a building to respond to the natural environment.

- *Consider grade changes and the river when siting a building.*
- *Horizontal buildings that blend into the topography may be appropriate.*

7.2 Minimize retaining walls where possible by siting building into the topography.

- *Where retaining walls are necessary, integrate them into the architecture.*

7.3 Incorporate open space into the building placement and site design.

- *Soft and informal landscape design that is curvilinear, similar to that found on a natural river bank, is encouraged.*
- *Consider views through the property to the river to strengthen connection to the natural environment, and to enhance the neighborhood and pedestrian experience.*

Properties near the Roaring Fork River may be subject to Stream Margin Review. Refer to the Land Use Code for more information.

The landscape of the river can be brought into the buildings.

Consider the open space on the site and site retaining walls.

Curvilinear design brings the landscape into contact with the architecture and references the river.

Use materials that reference the surroundings.

River Approach should continue to be eclectic.

River Approach includes a variety of building types.

Architecture

There are a mix of architectural styles in this neighborhood, including traditional commercial buildings and industrial warehouse style buildings. This neighborhood is separated from the original Aspen townsite by a steep grade change. This significant change in topography draws a boundary that separates the River Approach neighborhood from the more traditional development patterns and styles found in downtown Aspen. Architecture in this area should be an eclectic mix of styles. Traditional architecture is not recommended in this neighborhood, as traditional commercial styles start to blur the line between downtown neighborhoods and the River Approach Character Area. Industrial styles indicative of the types of allowed uses in the neighborhood are recommended. This is the neighborhood to experiment with innovative building types and building techniques. While there is an open forum for architectural design, small-scaled buildings that do not overwhelm the neighborhood are imperative to the pedestrian experience.

7.4 Preserve the diverse and industrial character of the neighborhood and encourage connection to the river and natural environment.

- *Architecture should respond to the topography and natural environment through setbacks, stepped buildings, and sensitive landscape design.*
- *Traditional 19th-century commercial building is not recommended.*

7.5 Use eclectic and creative approaches to break up building mass and scale.

- *Consider separate buildings on a property, or linked exterior walkways instead of internal corridors.*

7.6 Unique roof forms and overall building shape are encouraged in this neighborhood.

- *Innovative building technology and design are encouraged.*

Details and Materials

Materials and details should reflect the architectural style of the building. There are a wide range of building materials in this neighborhood, which create the context for innovative material types and applications. Promoting creativity and innovative solutions does not translate into low quality materials or overly simplistic manufactured buildings with no architectural interest or details. Low quality materials, such as stucco or vinyl are not appropriate. Architectural details should relate to and highlight the overall design of the building.

A variety of building forms are appropriate.

7.7 Enhance the natural environment and funky character through materials and details.

- *Carefully consider material application, texture, and architectural details.*
- *Materials and architectural details should reflect the use of the building. For example, thick stone columns or heavy timbers are indicative of lodging and are inappropriate.*
- *Use of metal is appropriate.*

In this natural setting, keep architectural details simple.

7.8 Larger, more industrial sized fenestration is appropriate here.

▼ *Industrial detailing can recall the utilitarian aesthetic of sheds and trestles.*

Small Lodges

Small Lodges

Encourage Small Lodges to be compatible with neighborhood character and to promote special lodging experiences through creative design solutions.

Chamber of Commerce lodging sign, 1953.[7]

History of the Neighborhood

The opening of the ski resort in the late 1940s created a sudden need for new lodging in Aspen. Rather than construct large hotels like the Hotel Jerome, family run businesses with a limited number of rooms went up, scattered around town. These lodges provided an intimate visitor experience, due not just to the size of the operations, but also because their location in residential neighborhoods allowed guests to be a part of the community, if only for a weekend.

Mountain Chalet, 333 E. Durant Avenue (on right), was constructed and is still owned by the Melville family, beginning with their first three rooms in 1954 and expanding multiple times as the ski resort thrived.[10]

Boomerang Lodge, 500 W. Hopkins Avenue, built in phases beginning in 1956, and designed and operated for almost 50 years by Frank Lloyd Wright trained architect Charlie Paterson.

Many of the small lodges were chalet style because they were either built by Europeans or were built to provide the imagery that a visitor to a mountain town wanted to see. Others, such as the Tyrolean Lodge, have a rustic character. The Hearthstone House and Boomerang Lodge are architect designed in the Wrightian style. The small lodges were typically much larger than the residential context within which they were set, and architecturally different.

Tyrolean Lodge, 200 E. Main Street, still owned and operated by the Wille family, artists and mountaineers, who owned Cortina Lodge on Main Street and built this lodge in 1970.

As property values increased in the 1980s and some original owners moved on, many small lodges were demolished and replaced by new hotels or condos, or converted into multi-family and affordable housing. The concept of identifying properties as small lodges that should be protected is a notion that began in the 1980s as people began to appreciate that these were an asset to Aspen and were important affordably priced accommodations.

The small lodges are an important part of Aspen's skiing history and fabric. A few are also historic landmarks, such as the Snow Queen, a converted Victorian era home, and examples of AspenModern, such as the Boomerang, and the Hearthstone House.

The Snow Queen Lodge, 124 E. Cooper Avenue, built as a residence in 1885, converted to a lodge in 1972 and still operated by the same family, with 9 rooms available. Photo Denver Public Library.

▲ *Annabelle Inn, 232 W. Main Street, originally built in 1948 as the Christmas Inn and since remodeled.*[1]

Small lodges appear in a range of sizes and styles.

Existing Character

Small Lodges are scattered throughout residential, commercial, and mixed-use neighborhoods. These lodges are a range of styles and sizes. Each lodge provides a different type of visitor experience. Most of the buildings have some character defining architectural features and amenities that highlight the lodge use.

Small lodges provide a different experience because of their locations.

Many of the small lodges have primarily wood facades.

Architecture

Small lodges should fit within and enhance their neighborhood. Many of these lodges are located in residential areas, not one of the other Character Areas addressed in this document. Determine the existing characteristics of the neighborhood before designing a new building or addition, to ensure compatibility.

Building placement may be challenging considering the high density needs of lodge. Most existing small lodges have parking in front of the building, usually on portions of the right-of-way. A redevelopment should relocate parking to the rear of the structure where feasible, and provide loading zone parking at the front only. Consider walkability, accessibility, parking, and neighborhood context when siting a small lodge building.

Lobby design can create dynamic entrances that strengthen relationships between the building, the neighborhood, and the pedestrian. A prominent front porch or canopy is one way to identify the entry, provide human scale, and relate to neighborhood character.

8.1 Carefully design parking areas and drop off locations and include landscape features that reduce the visual impact of these functions.

- *Provide access to parking areas from an alley if one is adjacent to the property.*

8.2 Building scale should reflect the character of the neighborhood and enhance the pedestrian experience.

- *Incorporate pedestrian scaled elements. For example, a front porch introduces a one-story element that relates to residential context and is human-scaled.*
- *Subdivide larger masses into smaller modules that are similar to surrounding buildings.*

8.3 Provide a clearly defined entrance to the lodge.

- *Entrances should face the street.*
- *Entrances should have clearly defined walkways.*

8.4 Landscaping should be used to create attractive outdoor space, and screening where appropriate.

Subdividing larger masses into smaller modules can help reflect the character of the neighborhood.

Historical renovations are important for saving the Small Lodges of Aspen.

A clearly defined entrance must be provided.

Balance the detail and materials of the neighborhood context with that of a lodge function.

Brick and painted wood are appropriate materials in all Character Areas.

Details and Materials

Materials, fenestration, and details should reflect the lodge use; however, they also must relate to neighborhood character. Architectural details that are unique to the lodge's identity are encouraged.

8.5 Building materials, fenestration, and details should be thoughtful and compatible with neighborhood character.

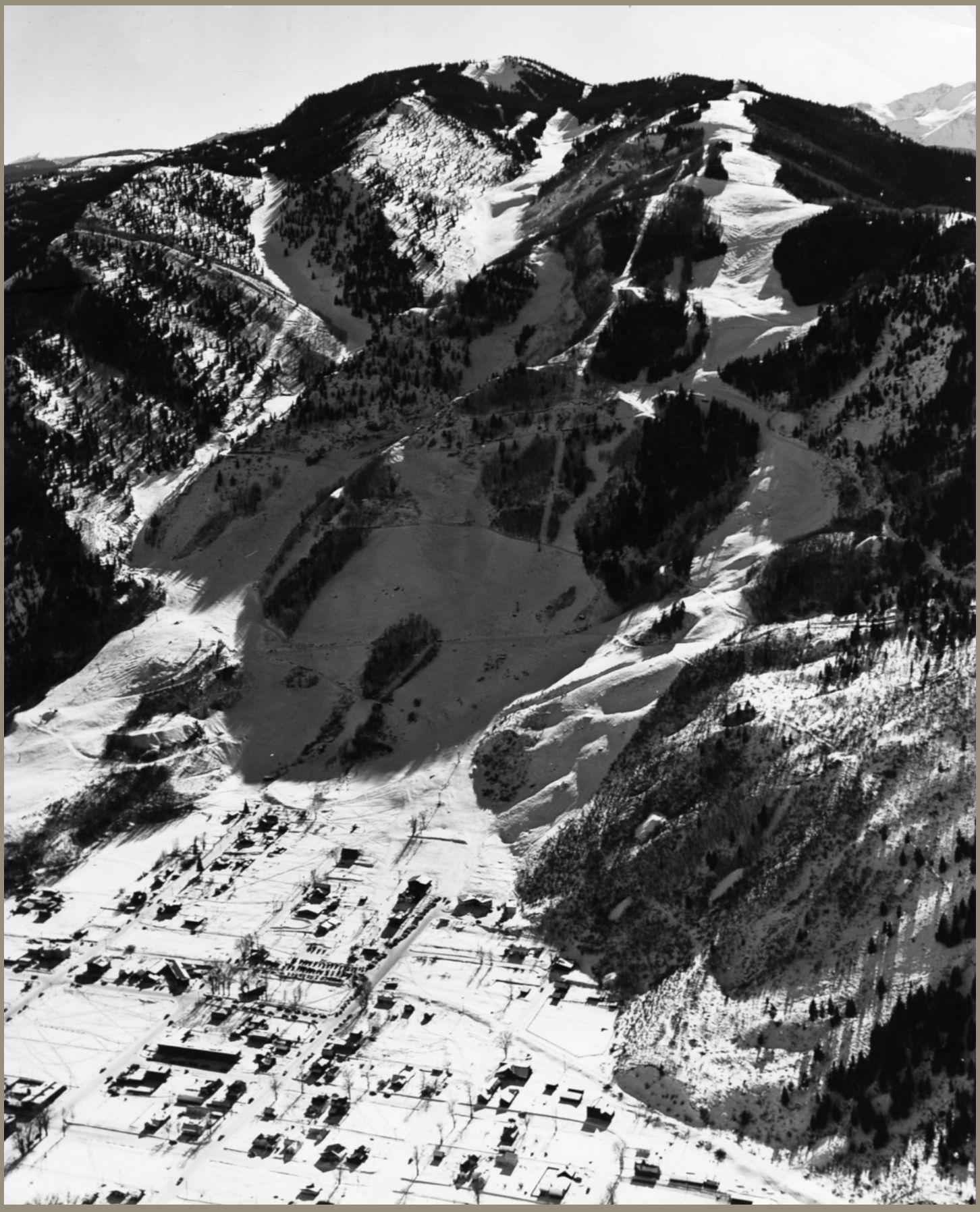
- *Balance lodge use and neighborhood character through thoughtful architectural details.*
- *Simplicity in material application, texture, and architectural details is strongly recommended. Complex forms and materials are not appropriate. Consider the visual impact of significantly larger amounts of fenestration compared to what may be found in adjacent structures.*

Additional Guidelines for Small Lodges on Main Street

Small Lodges on Main Street are also required to meet the guidelines for the Main Street Historic District Character Area.

Color can help give visual hierarchy to a lodge. ▼

Appendix



Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Alley

A public or private way for vehicular traffic having less width than a street and used as a secondary access to abutting property, normally at the rear.

Arcade

A series of columns or other vertical elements supporting a roof structure.

Aspen Area Community Plan

A comprehensive community plan adopted and amended by the City Council and Board of County Commissioners which establishes the City's and Aspen Metropolitan Area's land use and development planning philosophy, goals and policies.

Canopy

A roof-like cover that projects more than five (5) feet from the wall of a building.

Character

A set of qualities or features that make a place or building notable or historically identifiable. This may include such elements as form, method of construction, building materials and details.

Commercial use

Land, structure, or portion of a structure intended to support offices, retail, warehousing, manufacturing, commercial recreation, restaurant/bar, or service oriented businesses, not including lodge units or hotel units.

Cornice

A crowning projection at a roof line, often with molding or other classical detail.

Dormer

A small gable or shed roof projecting from the slope of the primary roof of a building and usually covering a window.

Façade

The faces or elevations of a building. All wall planes of a building which are visible from one side or perspective.

Fenestration

The arrangement of windows and doors on the facades of a building.

Gable Roof

A roof with two slopes, usually centered on the volume below. Gables may be referred to as a "front gable" where the gable faces the street on the primary facade, or a "side gable" where the ridgeline runs perpendicular to the primary facade, street, or entry. "Cross gables" contain both conditions.

Landscape

An area developed with softscape, the living animated materials, or hardscape, which is nonliving or manmade materials. These may be incorporated independently or together into the site design.

Hedgerow

A row of closely spaced bushes, trees, or shrubs that create, or have the potential through growth maturity to create a largely opaque visual barrier.

Human (or Pedestrian) Scale

The perceived size of a building which reflects a sympathetic proportional relationship to human dimensions and which contributes to the person's perception and comprehension of the size, scale, height, and massing of buildings or other features of the built environment.

Neighborhood

The area adjacent to or surrounding existing or proposed development characterized by common use or uses, density, style, and age of structures and environmental characteristics.

Mass

The combination of the three dimensions of length, height, and depth which give a building its overall shape. A building is often composed of many masses, hence the term massing, which is often used to describe the form or shape of structures.

Modulation

Variation in the plane of a building wall, often used to provide visual interest.

Module

A unit of a building structure which is based on a standard pattern of standard dimensions, or a distinct component forming part of an ordered system.

Parapet

A low wall, located at the top of any sudden drop, such as at the top of the facade of a building.

Park

A publicly or privately owned area of land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses or as a refuge for wildlife.

Pedestrian-oriented

The desgin of the environment to make movement by pedestrians fast, attractive and comfortable for various ages and abilities.

Public right-of-way

A dedicated strip or other area of land on or over which the City and/or public may travel or use for passage and within which public utilities and/or streets, alleys, trails, sidewalks and other ways may be installed.

Remodel

A construction project comprising revisions within or to elements of an existing structure, as distinct from additions to an existing structure.

Roofscape

The view of the rooftop of a building.

Setback

An area commencing and extending horizontally and vertically from a lot line, property line or other boundary which shall be unoccupied and unobstructed from the ground upward, excepting trees, vegetation, and/or fences or other structures or projections as allowed. (See Supplementary Regulations — Section 26.575.040, Yards).

Scale

The sense of proportion or apparent size of a building or building element as created by the placement and size of the building in its setting: scale usually applies to how the sense is perceived in relation to the size of a human being and refers to the apparent size, not actual size, since it is always viewed in relationship to another building or element.

Sidewalk

That portion of a street or right-of-way which is paved and designed for use by pedestrians.

Story

A space in a building between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor or ceiling above, which is more than 50 percent above finished grade.

Streetscape

All of the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, landscaping, etc.

Subgrade Courtyard

An outdoor uncovered space developed below the grade of the surrounding ground which may provide exterior access from a lower level of a building directly to the public right of way.

Transom

A narrow window, sometimes hinged at the top, positioned over a doorway or larger window.

Vernacular

Architecture that makes use of common regional forms and materials at a particular place and time.

Wayfinding

The information available to people which they need to find their way around the city and can be verbal, graphic, architectural, and spatial.

Yard

The grounds surrounding a building on the same lot or parcel which are unoccupied and unobstructed above and below ground, except for trees and vegetation or as otherwise permitted in this Title. (See Supplementary Regulations — Section 26.575.040, Yards. See also Setback.)

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[2]Aspen Historical Society, Shaw Collection
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[8]Aspen Historical Society, Stewart Slide Collection
[9]Aspen Historical Society, Mary Eshbaugh Hayes Collection
[10]Aspen Historical Society, Aspen Skiing Company Collection
[11]Aspen Historical Society, Ann Hodges Collection
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CHARACTER AREA MAP

not to scale

- COMMERCIAL CORE HISTORIC DISTRICT
- MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
- COMMERCIAL AREA
- NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE
- MOUNTAIN BASE
- RIVER APPROACH
- SMALL LODGE

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