

DOWNTOWN CORE DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Application

The purpose of the Town of Smiths Falls Design Guidelines is to provide a cohesive vision for urban design in specific neighbourhoods within the Town.

Guidelines are to be interpreted loosely as “Best Practices” and are not intended to be stringent and unaccommodating to designs that are complementary and exhibit principles of “good design”.

By illustrating a range of storefront design possibilities, these guidelines should assist merchants and owners with:

1. Renovating their storefronts;
2. More successfully attracting consumer spending; and
3. Realizing the potential each façade possesses.

1.2 Goals

The overall goals of these guidelines are to:

1. Encourage high quality storefronts which respect the architectural elements of the buildings they reside in;
2. Achieve consistent, high quality signage and façade treatments;
3. Conserve and restore upper storey facades, including significant architectural details; and
4. Implement the City’s downtown design policies, which specify that the Downtown Core shall evolve into a high quality, traditional Main Street design.

1.3 Objectives

1. To promote development that will enhance and reinforce the recognized or planned scale and character of the street
2. To promote development that is compatible with, and complements its surroundings
3. To achieve high-quality built form and strengthen building continuity along Traditional Mainstreets
4. To foster compact, pedestrian-oriented development linked to street level amenities
5. To accommodate a broad range of uses including retail, services, commercial uses, offices, residential and institutional

1.4 Official Plan and By-Law Direction

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide urban design guidance at the planning application stage in order to assess, promote and achieve appropriate development along Traditional Mainstreets. Specific site context and conditions will also be reviewed in conjunction with these guidelines.

These guidelines are to be applied throughout the town for all streets identified as a core area within the Official Plan. Where a Master Plan or relevant planning study exists, these guidelines will augment those documents.

The desired outcomes of the goals and objectives of these planning documents include: Increasing prosperity and opportunity for its residents and creating revenue growth for the Town that enables delivery of needed infrastructure and desired urban services (Official Plan Amendment Section: IE – 1.13)

Creating a well-designed, unique, and vibrant public realm with appropriate uses and facilities to maximize pedestrian activity; support community interaction; and attract residents, business, and visitors to Smiths Falls (Official Plan Amendment Sections: CD – 3.4, CD – 5.4)

2.0 BASIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR ALL BUILDING TYPES

2.1 Fundamental Principles of “Good Design”

“Principles applied to the elements of design that bring them together into one design. How one applies these principles determines how successful a design may be.” (Lovett, 2012) Good design should exhibit the following characteristics:

1. Elemental Harmony
2. Balance
3. Symmetry
4. Hierarchy
5. Scale/Proportions
6. Space/Void Contrast
7. Form (depth)
8. Colour

2.2 A Pedestrian Friendly Environment

To achieve an environment that people enjoy and feel comfortable in, design must encompass components such as:

1. Walkability
2. Low-leveled building heights to allow a ‘personal’ feel
3. Landscaping and street furniture
4. Awnings and enclosures to create security and a feeling of seclusion from traffic
5. An accessible and safe area for pedestrian traffic

2.3 Sustainable Design Principles:

Sustainability and green design initiatives are encouraged. Such improvements may include, but are not limited to:

1. Environmentally sustainable materials or alternatives are encouraged in order to create better conditions for a “green community”
2. Any implementation that means less carbon emissions qualify
3. Any improvements that are in accordance to LEED requirements are encouraged
4. Renewable/Restoration and repair of building materials
5. Low VOC products

6. Low impact landscaping
7. Water efficiencies
8. Renewable energy infrastructure
9. Waste diversion
10. Controllable/low impact/natural lighting

2.4 Windows and Doorways

1. Maximize the height:width ratio of windows
2. Increase the amount of window frames and sashing
3. Glass etching is encouraged for logos or names
4. Do not frost/glaze over large areas of windows
5. Entranceways: Ease of access is essential, lower door recessions and allow for outward swing only, maximize door width, glass doors are encouraged

2.5 Signage and Awnings

1. Avoid bright, harsh colours, fiber glass and plastic
2. Avoid low-quality awning material
3. Height: Raise signage high and limit the sign height to 3 feet
4. Projections: 3d signs, awnings and other projection features
5. Preserve the sign box and columns, but introduce a new base colour (dark tones are encouraged)
6. Do not place box signs in front of fascia. Instead, introduce appropriate signage, such as individualized lettering
7. Locate new signage between any columns and below the cornice
8. Signs shall not exceed 90% of the storefront width
9. Contemporary projecting signs are encouraged, but may be subject to an encroachment agreement
10. Contemporary signs should use highly contrasting text and backdrops. For example, white lettering on dark tone backgrounds (ie. black, dark grey and dark blue), black lettering on silver metallic panels, black lettering on glazed glass panels, etc.
11. Use high quality materials such as metal - avoid low quality fiberglass signs which are internally illuminated

12. Minimize the amount of text and phrases on the sign (store/restaurant name only)

2.6 Lighting

1. Make sure lighting is adequate for night time
2. Illuminate pilasters, columns and other architectural features of the building
3. Any recessions in doorways should be appropriately lit
4. Above mount lighting (ie. gooseneck) is strongly encouraged
5. Avoid internally illuminated signs, except for metallic sign boxes with transparent lettering; subtle and unobtrusive external lighting is preferred.

2.7 Material Selection

1. Use of high quality materials are encouraged (Example: Stone, brick, masonry, granite).
2. The use of stucco and fiberglass is discouraged.
3. Emphasis on natural colour pallets such as brown, red, yellow, and salmon is encouraged.

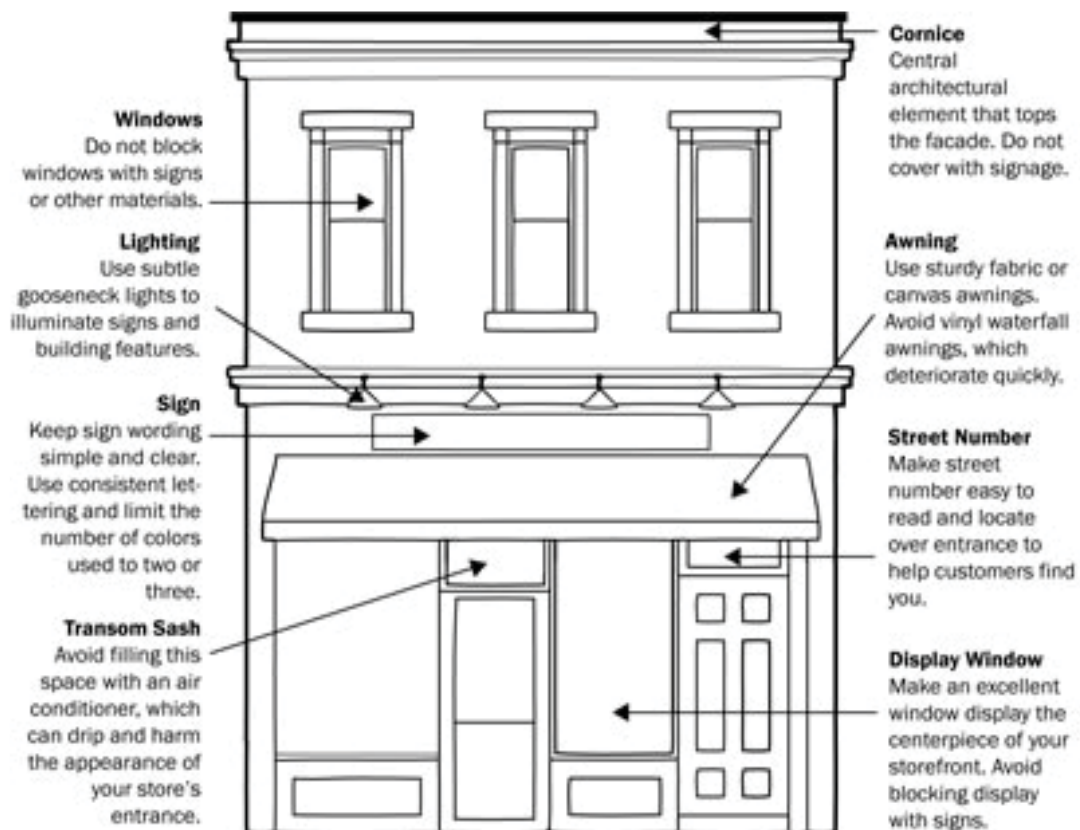
3.0 PRINCIPLES FOR RESTORATION AND REPAIR OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

3.1 Heritage Buildings

1. Smiths Falls contains a large heritage presence
2. Preservation of heritage stands as one of the top priorities
3. Revitalization and beautification is encouraged
4. Because of this, context must be considered when renovating store fronts
5. Improvements can still be made such as signage (individual lettering vs. box-base replacement) and paint
6. Any building niches or key features identified and agreed upon should be preserved in the current state (or repaired/revitalized if in a lesser state)

3.2 Identifying Key Architectural Features

1. Architecture varies in Smiths Falls so there are some architectural features that are unique
2. Design quality buildings that are rich in architectural detail and respect the rhythm and pattern of the existing or planned, buildings on the street, through the alignment of elements such as windows, front doors, cornice lines, and fascia etc.
3. Examples of “key architectural features” are windows, cornicing, banding, window placement, size and style, columns etc. (see Figure 1)



3.3 Upper Story Renovation

1. When repairing windows, if replacement is needed, use similar to the original size and style
2. Maintain, clean and repair existing architectural elements such as cornices, key stones, quoins, sills, lintels, etc
3. Remove stucco or metal paneling
4. Add lighting, shutter, and/or awnings
5. Set back the upper floors of taller buildings to help achieve a human scale and more light on the sidewalks
6. Locate residential units above street level to establish a mixed-use building and provide shared entrances to residential units, clearly accessible from the street. (For these units, consider triple glazed windows and bedrooms located away from the main street for noise and ventilation concerns).

4.0 PRINCIPLES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AND CONTEMPORARY BUILDINGS

4.1 Modern Design

1. Contemporary architecture includes minimal décor and strong geometric lines
2. Frame with distinct lines
3. Use large pilasters to frame entranceways
4. Windows should be framed narrowly or with accent pilasters
5. Do not cover existing pilasters, just use narrow framing for windows

4.2 Building Form

1. Locate mixed-use development by concentrating height and mass at nodes and gateways
2. Highlight buildings on corner sites, where two public streets intersect, with special treatment such as a corner entrance. Continue the same level of architectural detailing around both sides of the building
3. Provide pedestrian weather protection such as colonnades, individual canopies, awnings and balconies
4. Ensure adequate sunlight for sidewalks by building within a 45-degree angular plane measured from the opposite sidewalk curb
5. Design street sections with a ratio of building height to road corridor width of between 1:1 and 1:3. A ratio of 1:1 is appropriate for urban core areas, while a ratio of 1:2 to 1:3 is ideal for other traditional main streets

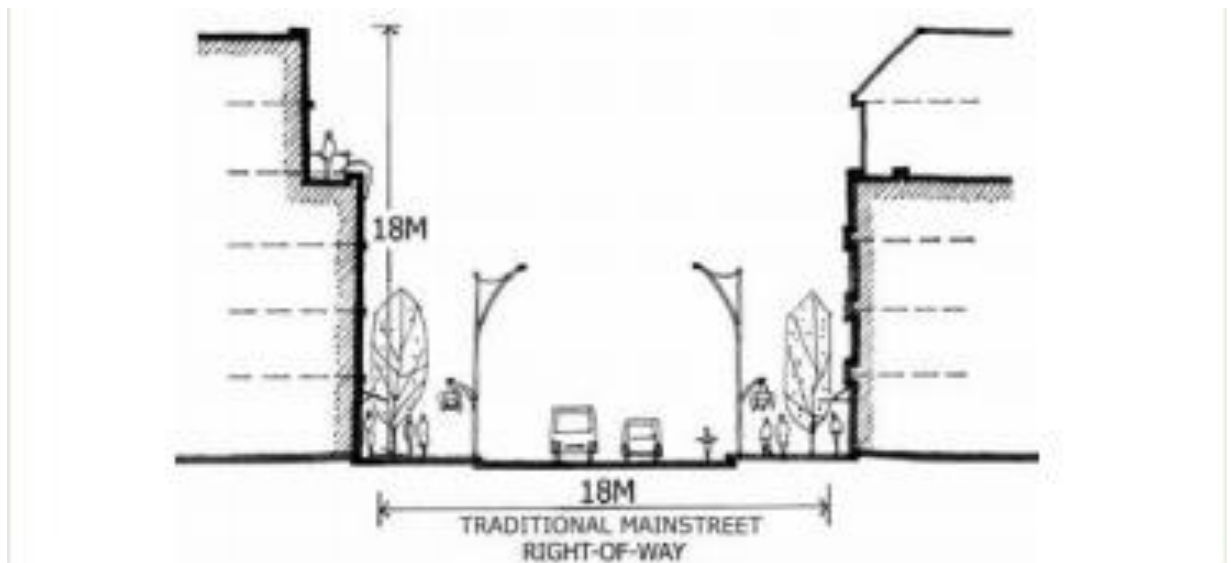


Figure 2 - Building Height Ratio