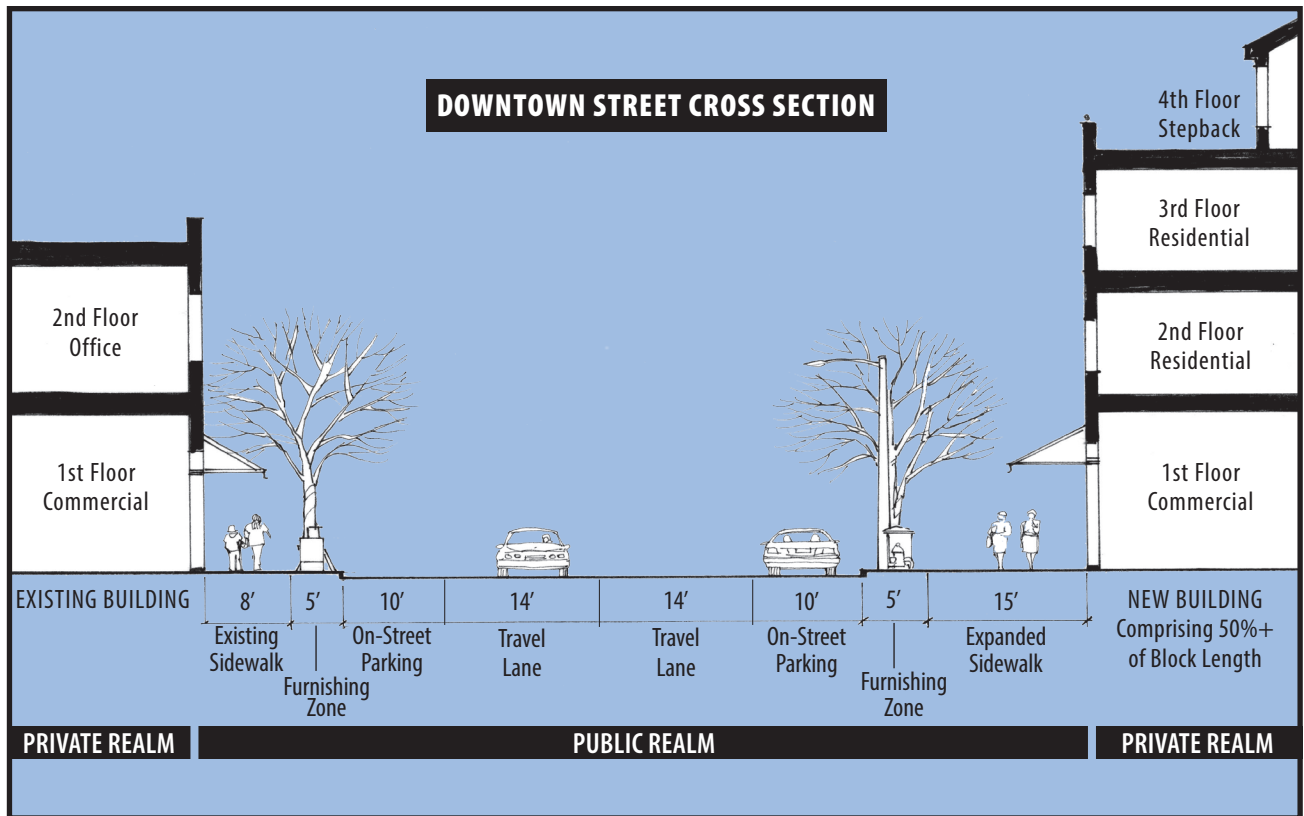


# Downtown DESIGN GUIDELINES



Prepared by Knoxville-Knox County Planning  
for the City of Knoxville, Tennessee

Revision: 12/10/2019

Effective Date: 3/14/2020

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# **Downtown DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

The Downtown Knoxville (DK) zoning, as well as the entire City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance, can be viewed at the Knoxville-Knox County Planning office or viewed online at [knoxplanning.org](http://knoxplanning.org).

The original guidelines were adopted by:

Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission - February 8, 2007

Knoxville City Council - March 27, 2007

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# Introduction



There have been several plans regarding the development of downtown Knoxville. The most recent *City of Knoxville Downtown Improvement Strategy* (March 2005) is a document that takes into account the work of Crandall Arambula and the Nine Counties One Vision Task Force. It includes an action plan that calls for the development of “downtown urban design guidelines” with the purpose that the establishment of design guidelines and streetscape improvement programs will enhance developer confidence and stimulate new investment.

In addition to the action plan, the Downtown Improvement Strategy created a civic vision: *“Downtown Knoxville . . . will be a vibrant, walkable place where people congregate to live, work, shop and play.”*




The goals of the Guidelines are to define expectations and allow flexibility, while fostering high-quality design. The Guidelines have been drafted to respect the existing downtown qualities, community desires and the need for reasonable provisions for both public and private improvements. In order to accomplish this, Knoxville-Knox County Planning has hosted several public meetings (see Appendix C).

The Guidelines are formatted into three sections: 1) General Principles relating to the Public Realm, the Private Realm and Historic Resources, 2) Specific Recommendations regarding Districts - the Grid district, the Boulevard district, the Warehouse district and the Promenade district, and 3) Administration of the Guidelines.

# MAP 1: Downtown Design Guidelines Boundary



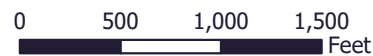
## Map Information

-  Downtown Design Guidelines Boundary
-  Downtown Design Guidelines Area
-  Historic (H) Overlay Zoning District (local)\*

\*Any local Historic overlay areas within these Design Review Board boundary are not subject to these Design Guidelines.

Official maps are available for inspection at <https://www.kgis.org/kgismaps/Map.htm>. The zoning layer is amended frequently through action of City Council. Therefore, recent zoning changes that have been approved by City Council may not be reflected here. Verify all zoning with Knoxville-Knox County Planning staff at (865) 215-2500.

Scale: 1:9,600



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# Section 1: General Principles



## **A. PUBLIC REALM AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

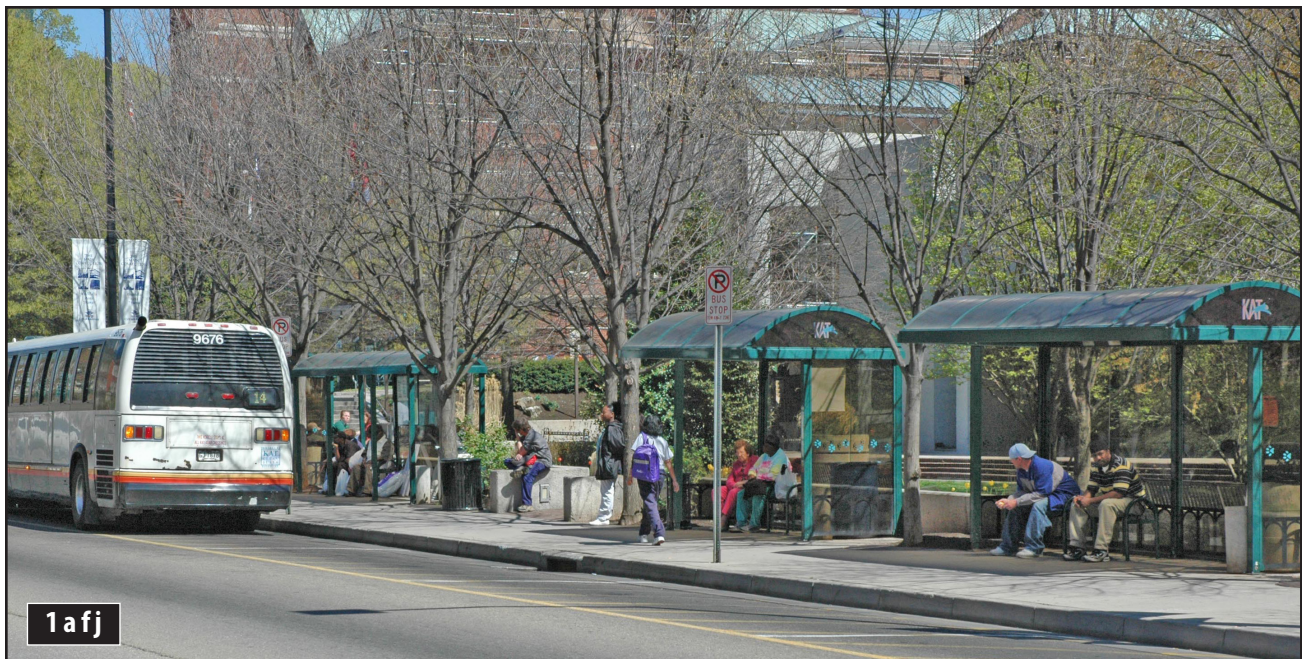
The public realm is composed of streets, sidewalks, and public open spaces. Public space is defined by development and supports a diversity of uses. It promotes transit use and pedestrian activity. It can be considered the “outdoor room” created by surrounding buildings.

Public buildings should also be designed in accordance with the guidelines of this document. The same principles regarding private development (see pages 9-20) should be applied to local, state and federal government building design.

## A. PUBLIC REALM

### 1. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST SAFETY

Consider pedestrians first, then transit, then the automobile in designing and developing downtown places. Public utilities and streetscape amenities should be located to support safe, convenient, and unimpeded pedestrian flow. Due to the nature of the narrow downtown streets with low traffic speeds it is relatively safe to bike within the downtown area. However, bike lanes and greenways leading to downtown, and places to store bicycles once downtown should also be considered. For more information, please see the *Knoxville Regional Bicycle Plan (2002)*.



## GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Prioritize pedestrian safety and comfort through public amenities, such as pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, and trash receptacles.
- 1b. Require sidewalks and crosswalks that are accessible to all and are aesthetically pleasing.
- 1c. Create standards for sidewalks (including size and materials) that establish a sense of visual continuity.
- 1d. Widen sidewalks to accommodate street trees and amenities with a minimum 5-foot clear pedestrian passage.
- 1e. Establish a “furnishing zone” in which the sidewalk furniture creates a buffer for pedestrians from vehicular traffic.
- 1f. Adopt standards for types of sidewalk furniture, like benches, trash receptacles, newspaper stands, etc.
- 1g. Consolidate curb-cuts and locate driveways near mid-block, when necessary; alley access should be provided for service and parking, if feasible.
- 1h. Install and time traffic signals to maximize pedestrian safety and convenience.
- 1i. Provide safe bicycle connections to downtown and accommodate bicycle parking.
- 1j. Incorporate consistent, clearly marked bus and trolley stops and provide route schedules through signs or kiosks.
- 1k. Repair pavement surfaces (asphalt, brick, concrete, etc.) to original standards when underground utility or other repairs are necessary.



# A. PUBLIC REALM

## 2. RESIDENT AND VISITOR ORIENTATION

People like to easily understand and remember the places they inhabit. Landmarks and views help residents and visitors orient themselves and find their destination. Additionally, signs, maps, and other way-finding tools are important.



### GUIDELINES:

- 2a. Establish a comprehensive way-finding system for pedestrians.
- 2b. Create consistent parking signs and directional signs for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic.



# A. PUBLIC REALM

## 3. PARKING FACILITIES

It is important to ensure that parking facilities (both public and private) are safe, accessible, and clearly marked. New parking facilities should be designed to be attractive, compatible additions to downtown. In general, new parking facilities should remain subordinate to the street scene.



### GUIDELINES:

- 3a. Create parking garages that do not contain blank walls. Allow for future commercial uses that may not be feasible at the time of construction.
- 3b. Locate parking garages under structures, or provide for retail, residential or office uses that line the garage. Corner locations are preferable for commercial uses.
- 3c. Locate surface parking lots to the side or rear of buildings. No surface parking lots should be created in front of buildings.
- 3d. Screen surface lots, where they abut a public sidewalk, with decorative walls, fencing and landscaping.
- 3e. Distribute shade trees within surface lots at a ratio of 1 tree per 8 parking spaces. Trees may be planted in wells between spaces.
- 3f. Provide pedestrian-scale lighting (10-15 feet in height) that uniformly illuminates the lot.
- 3g. Access to parking garages should not limit options for future development of contiguous or adjoining space, especially on corners.

# A. PUBLIC REALM

## 4. DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION

Beautifying downtown can occur through many different elements including architecture, landscape architecture, horticulture, art, and performing art. These elements provide expressions of local history and culture. They contribute to local identity and unique qualities of downtown. Public spaces should be designed to include art and beautification.



### GUIDELINES:

- 4a. Foster downtown beautification with landscaping and plantings, public art, and public open space.
- 4b. Establish performance spaces for the arts including opportunities for artists to perform, display, or create work.
- 4c. Plant street trees where possible. Choose tree planting locations that will not significantly alter the setting of, or harm the materials of historic buildings.





## B. PRIVATE REALM

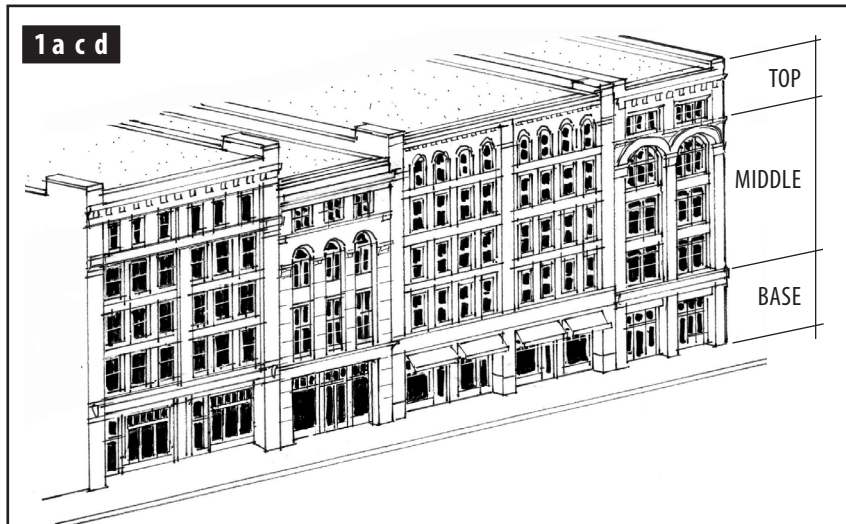
The private realm is composed of the buildings, structures, and private or quasi-public open spaces. The private realm is commonly defined by building envelopes. These guidelines are not intended to govern the use of the structures, but to foster complementary design between the public and the private realms.

Various architectural styles have contributed to the character of downtown development. The goal of these guidelines is to recognize potential for architectural diversity while adhering to the principles outlined in this section.

## B. PRIVATE REALM

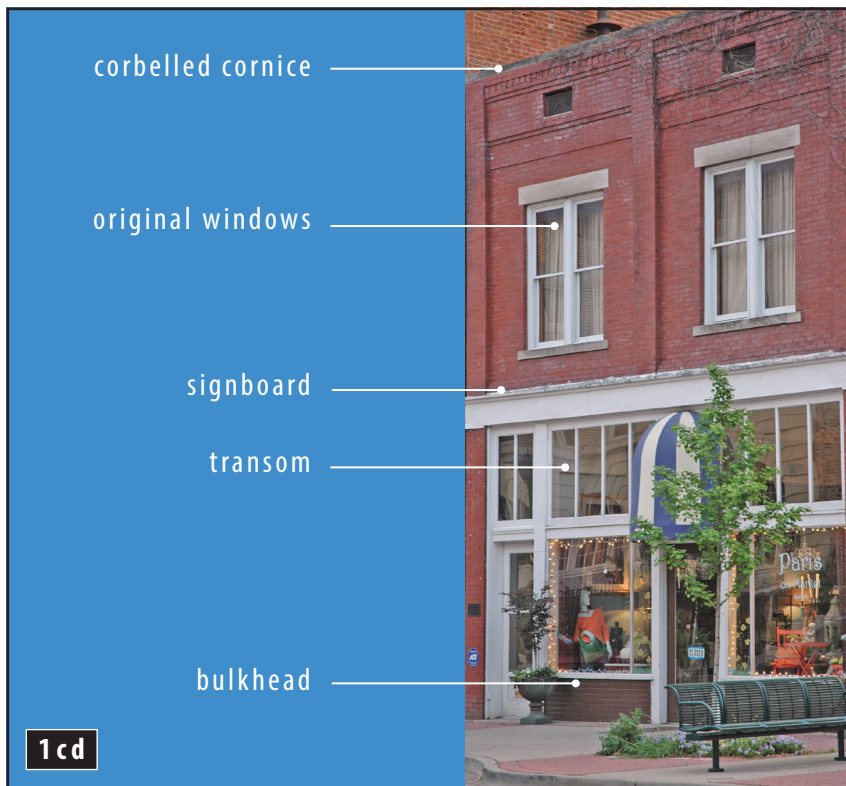
### 1. BUILDING MASS, SCALE AND FORM

Building form should be consistent with the character of downtown as an urban setting and should reinforce the pedestrian activity at the street level. Creating pedestrian-scale buildings, especially at street level, can reduce the perceived mass of buildings. Historically, building technology limited height and subsequently created pedestrian-scaled buildings typically less than 10 stories. Building technology no longer limits the height of buildings, however, there is still a need for buildings that respond to pedestrians. The use of 'human-scale' design elements is necessary to accomplish this. Human-scale design elements are details and shapes that are sized to be proportional to the human body, such as, upper story setbacks, covered entries, and window size and placement.



#### GUIDELINES:

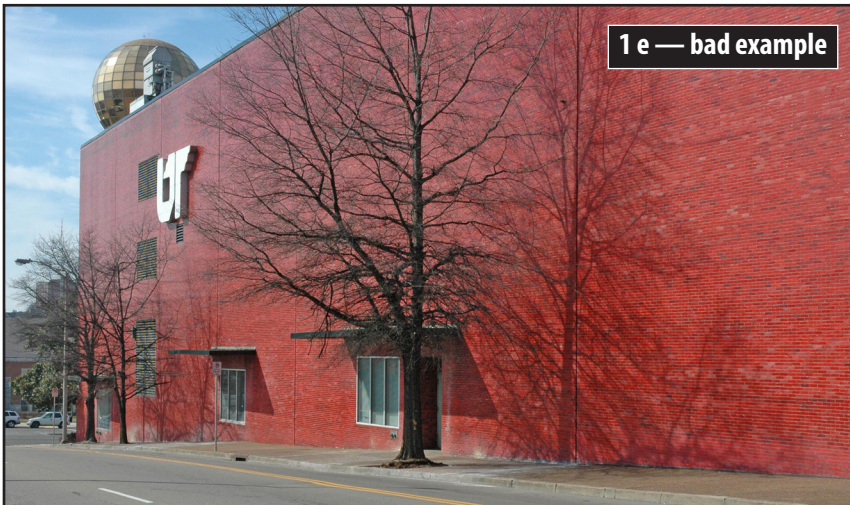
- 1a. Maintain a pedestrian-scaled environment from block to block.
- 1b. Foster air circulation and sunlight penetration around new buildings. Buildings may be designed with open space, as allowed under existing DK zoning; or buildings may be 'stepped back' on upper floors with lower floors meeting the sidewalk edge.
- 1c. Use building materials, cornice lines, signs, and awnings of a human scale in order to reduce the mass of buildings as experienced at the street level.
- 1d. Divide larger buildings into 'modules' that are similar in scale to traditional downtown buildings. Buildings should be designed with a recognizable base, middle, and top on all exposed elevations.
- 1e. Avoid blank walls along street-facing elevations.







1 b c



1 e — bad example

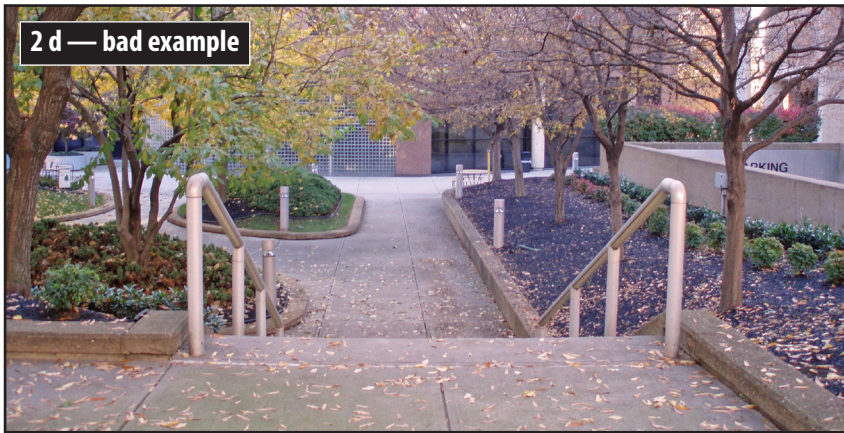


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## B. PRIVATE REALM

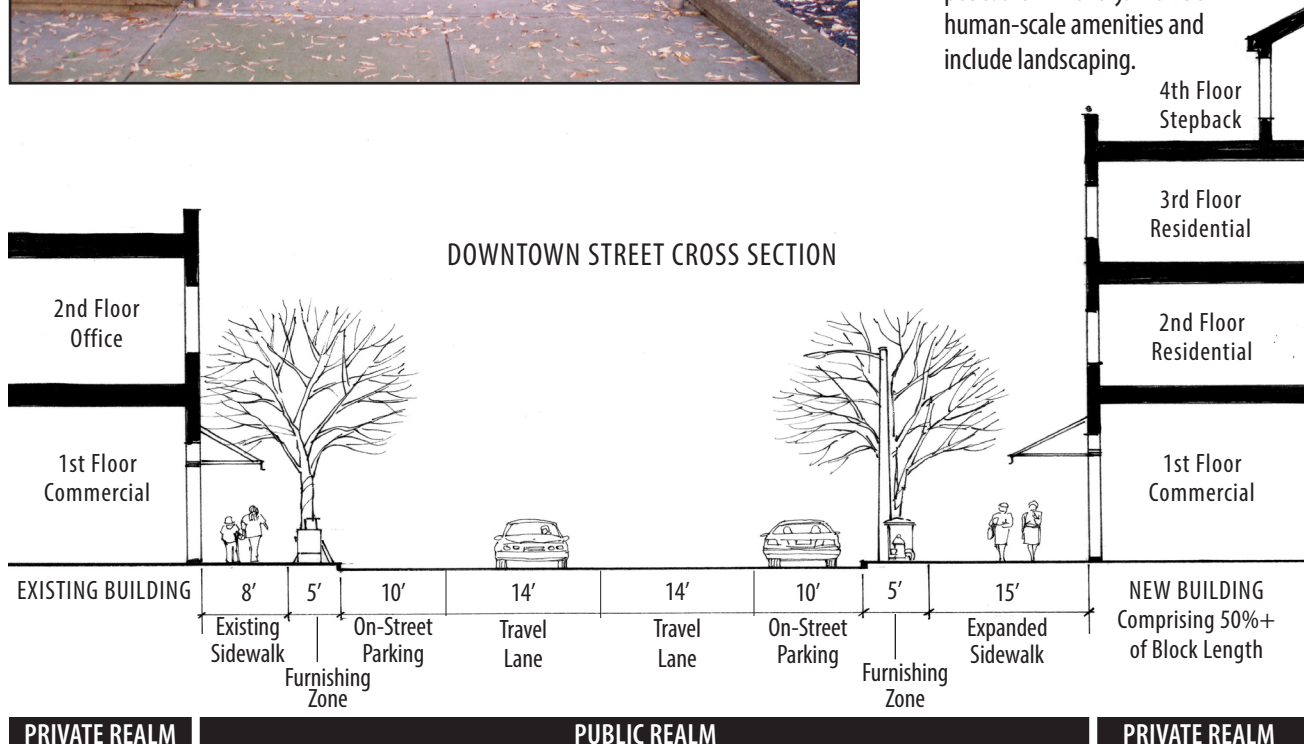
### 2. BUILDING LOCATION

It is important to establish a strong relationship among buildings, sidewalks, and streets. This is typically accomplished through consistent setbacks that locate buildings on the same line.



#### GUIDELINES:

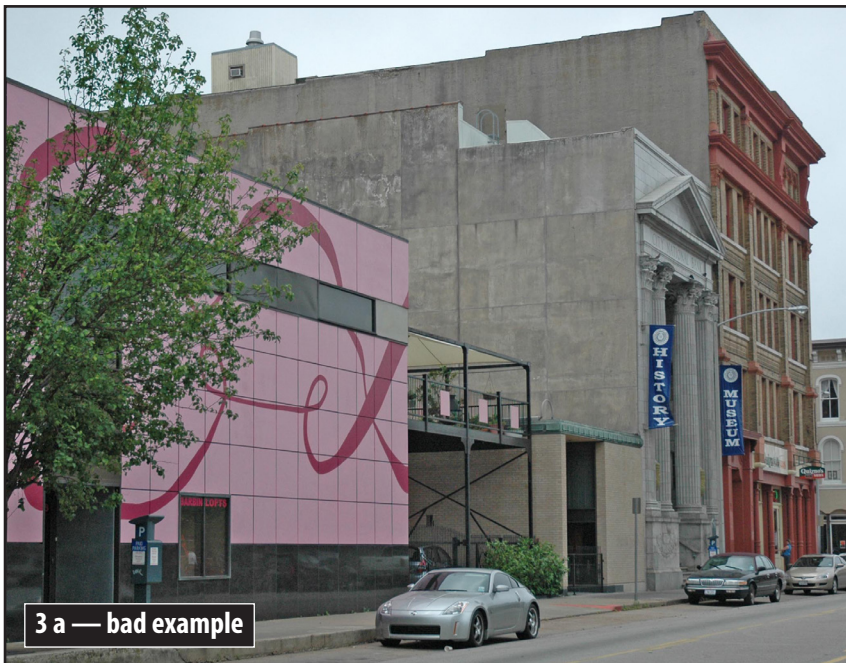
- 2a. Set buildings back five feet in order to provide wider sidewalk space when new construction in non-historic areas is to be more than half the length of the block.
- 2b. Consider using landscape elements to define the sidewalk edge where a building is to be set back from the sidewalk.
- 2c. Maintain sight lines to historic buildings that were originally located in an open setting, providing setbacks for new buildings next to historic structures in order to preserve views.
- 2d. Limit grade separations above or below the sidewalk, generally no more than 3 feet. Allow for clear sightlines into and out of buildings and plazas.
- 2e. Design private plazas to be pedestrian-friendly. Provide human-scale amenities and include landscaping.



## B. PRIVATE REALM

### 3. BUILDING MATERIALS

New building materials should relate to the scale, durability, color, and texture of the predominate building materials in the area.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 3a. Use complimentary materials and elements, especially next to historic buildings.
- 3b. Rehabilitate historic structures in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards (see Appendix A).

## B. PRIVATE REALM

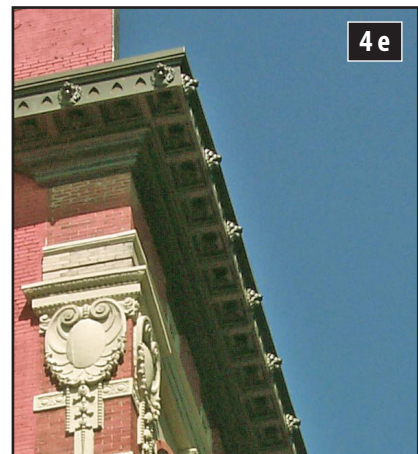
### 4. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Buildings should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. A building should express human scale through materials and forms that were seen traditionally. This is important because buildings are experienced at close proximity by the pedestrian.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 4a. Encourage first floor uses that draw walk-in traffic; businesses that do not require pedestrian traffic should be located on other floors.
- 4b. Enhance pedestrian interest in commercial and office buildings by creating a largely transparent and consistent rhythm of entrances and windows.
- 4c. Scale first floor signs to pedestrians.
- 4d. Differentiate the architectural features of ground floors from upper floors with traditional considerations such as show-windows, transoms, friezes, and sign boards.
- 4e. Design top floors to enhance the skyline of the block through cornices and details that are harmonious with adjacent architecture.
- 4f. Encourage the use of 'green roofs' and other sustainable practices, while minimizing the visual impact from the street.



## B. PRIVATE REALM

### 5. GROUND FLOOR DOORS AND WINDOWS

Entrances and ground floor windows should foster pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation. Not every building in downtown needs to have the same window or entry designs; however, repeating the pattern of historic openings helps to reinforce the character of downtown, differentiating it from suburban areas.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 5a. Use consistent rhythm of openings, windows, doorways, and entries.
- 5b. Orient primary front entrances to the main street; secondary entrances should be clearly defined and oriented to streets or alleys, as appropriate.
- 5c. Design entrances according to the proportions of the building's height and width.
- 5d. Consider corner entrances at the ends of blocks.
- 5e. All windows at the pedestrian level should be clear
- 5f. Recess ground floor window frames and doors from the exterior building face to provide depth to the facade.



continued . . .

## B. PRIVATE REALM

### 5. GROUND FLOOR DOORS AND WINDOWS



## B. PRIVATE REALM

### 6. RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Solely residential buildings, such as townhouses and apartment buildings, are rare in downtown Knoxville. Privacy and safety are concerns with residential units that meet the sidewalk. Mixed use buildings, with apartments above shops or offices, can avoid these challenges and add to downtown vitality.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 6a. Elevate the first floor of townhouses and apartment buildings so that pedestrians cannot look directly into the residence from the sidewalk level.
- 6b. Design entrances to residential buildings so that access is separated from pedestrian flow on the sidewalk.
- 6c. Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings with apartments over lower story commercial uses.
- 6d. Provide yard space for apartment buildings in the Boulevard District.

## B. PRIVATE REALM

### 7. MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICE UTILITIES

Utilities can include telephone and electrical lines, ventilation systems, gas meters, air conditioners, fire protection, telecommunication and alarm systems. Adequate space for these utilities should be planned in a project from the outset and they should be designed such that their visual and noise impacts are minimized.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 7a. Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment through screens or recessed/low-profile equipment.
- 7b. Do not locate units on a primary façade.
- 7c. Screen rooftop vents, heating/cooling units and related utilities with parapet walls or other screens. Consider sound-buffering of the units as part of the design.
- 7d. Locate utility connections and service boxes on secondary walls.
- 7e. Reduce the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas by locating them at the rear of a building or off an alley, when possible.
- 7f. Screen dumpsters from view.
- 7g. Locate satellite dishes out of public view, where possible.
- 7h. Allow solar panels and other technological advances on rooftops and other unobtrusive locations. Solar panels should not be considered on the elevations of historic buildings.



**PLEASE NOTE:**

Guidelines for signs that are appropriate for private or public development are outlined in Section 2: The Districts, see pages 33-42.



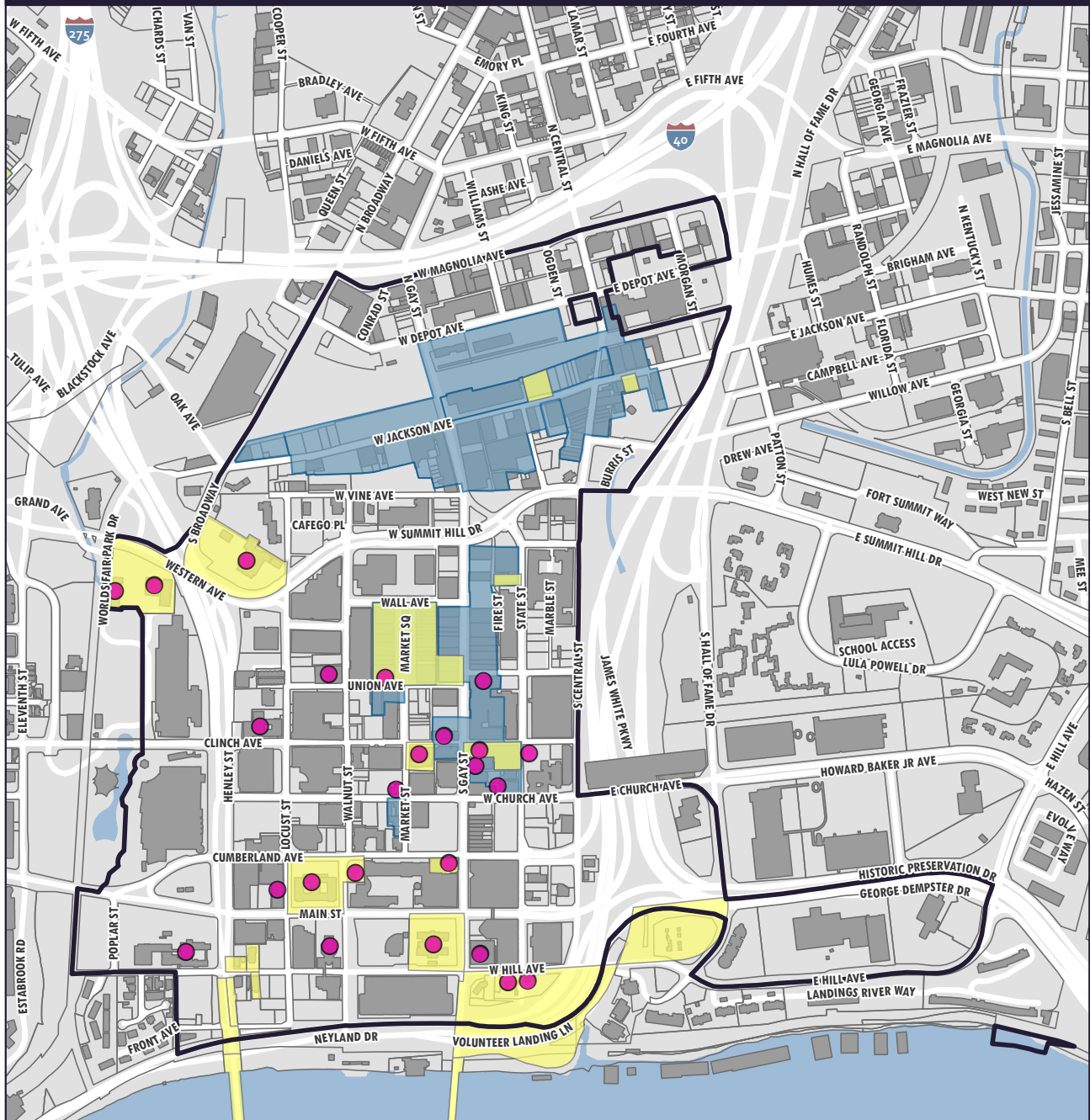


## **C. HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Downtown contains four districts and several individual landmarks which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings differ in ground-floor appearance and architectural details, reflecting their original materials, stylistic era and uses. The guidelines on the following pages apply to National Register properties and do not apply to locally-designated (H) historic resources, which are reviewed by the Historic Zoning Commission.

*NOTE: Design guidelines for historic resources within downtown Knoxville are based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation which are listed in Appendix A, and on design principles that will safeguard the historic integrity of buildings. There are some basic questions to consider before pursuing exterior changes to a historic structure; those questions are addressed in Appendix B. Developers who wish to pursue Preservation Tax Incentives should consult with the appropriate state and federal officials regarding proposed designs.*

# MAP 2: Historic Designations in the Downtown Design Guidelines Boundary



## Map Information

- Design Review Board Boundary
- Listed National Register Site
- National Register Historic District
- Historic (H) Overlay Zoning District (local)\*

\*Any local Historic overlay areas within the Design Review Board boundary are not subject to these Design Guidelines.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 1. ROOFLINES AND ADDITIONS

Alterations of the rooflines of historic buildings are not appropriate. A one-story rooftop addition, including railings, may be possible on taller buildings if it is inconspicuous from the public right-of-way. Additions should be set back from the primary elevation of the building, and should not damage character-defining features, including parapets and side walls. These walls are often topped by coping stones offering contrasting color or texture, or contain cornices, decorative grills, chimneys, corbelled brickwork and other architectural elements. Rooftop additions are almost never appropriate on buildings less than four stories in height.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Preserve or restore historic roofline features, including parapet walls and cornices.
- 1b. Design rooftop additions to be complimentary to the historic building in terms of materials and color.
- 1c. Avoid construction that maintains only the historic facade.
- 1d. Do not alter, obscure or destroy significant features of historic resources when constructing additions.
- 1e. Design rooftop additions so that they are not seen from adjoining streets and sidewalks.

## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 2. STOREFRONTS

Throughout downtown, historic buildings present a front elevation with an individual façade that is usually 25-35 feet wide. The storefronts are divided horizontally into three sections: bulkheads, solid or opaque, usually 18-24 inches tall; a plate glass storefront window 6-8 feet tall; and above it, a clear or patterned glass transom.



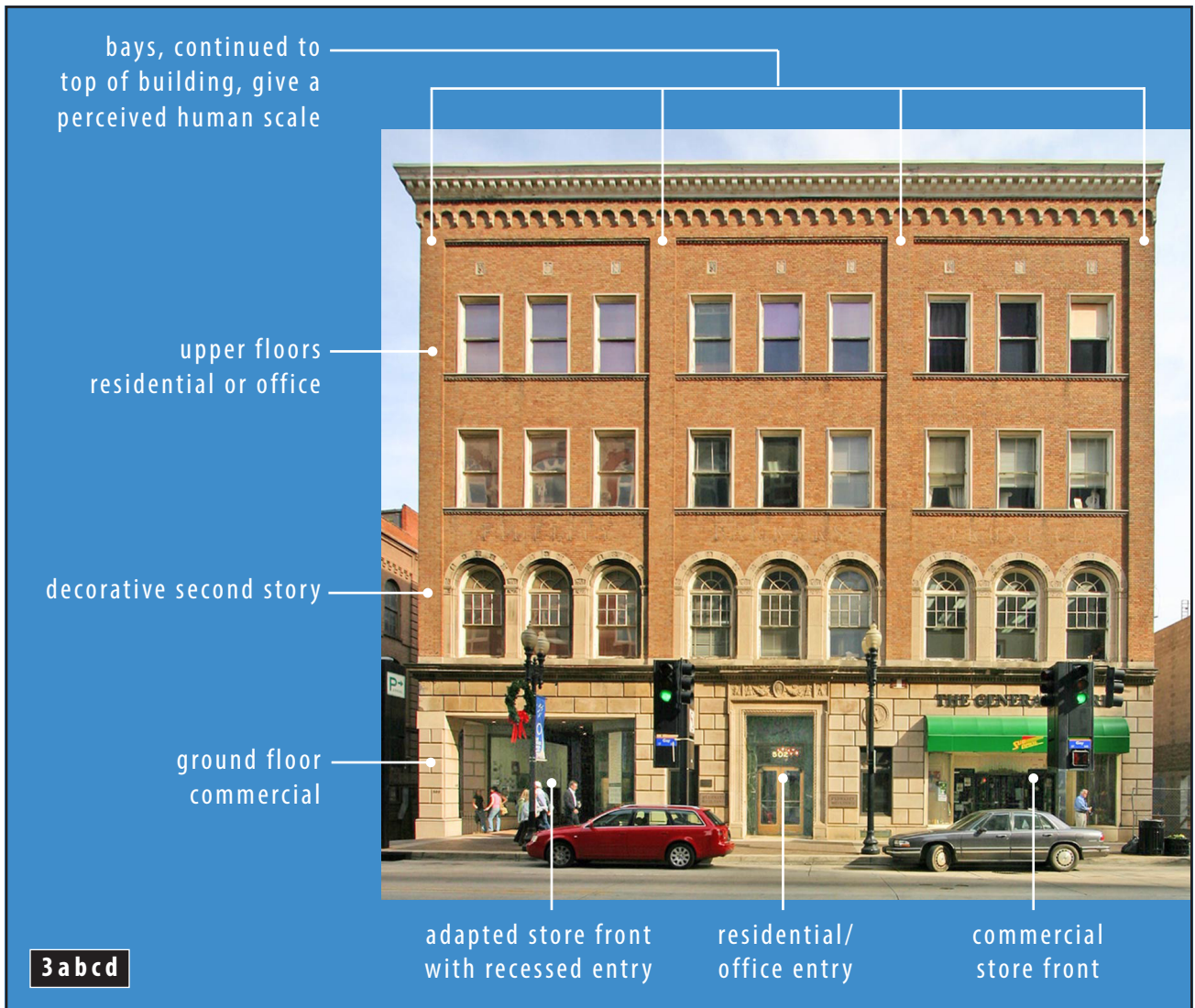
#### GUIDELINES:

- 2a. Restore and maintain storefronts as they were originally.
- 2a. Along Jackson Avenue, retain industrial loading dock or garage doors (usually 10-12 feet wide and constructed of metal); these features may be incorporated in new construction (for example, where a loading dock or parking entrance is needed).

## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 3. ENTRANCES

Formal entrances to front facades should be retained. This includes entrances that are located above street level and accessed by exterior stairs. Altering or removing the main entrance to grant street-level access is not appropriate.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 3a. Establish recessed entries, either rectangular or with slightly canted sides, which are appropriate in storefronts.
- 3b. Allow for multiple entries on the first floor of the building, giving access to commercial space that may be divided into bays.
- 3c. Provide access to upper stories through additional entries.
- 3d. Maintain original height and materials for doors that are consistent with the use of the building, such as residential, commercial, or banking purposes.

## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 4. WINDOWS

Appropriate window appearance is significant in finishing a rehabilitation project. From a preservation standpoint, the first and best answer when determining a treatment for windows is to repair rather than replace them. If that is not possible, replacing only deteriorated portions is the next best alternative to total replacement. It is possible to replace window sills, rebuild all or parts of window sashes, and replace window glass, making original windows energy efficient and functional.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 4a. Repair rather than replace historic windows.
- 4b. Replace windows if repairs are not possible with matching windows, including duplicating design, operation, material, glass size, muntin arrangements, profiles, and trim.
- 4c. Insert windows with the same pane configuration, materials and size as other buildings of the same general construction date, if no original windows are present.
- 4d. Maintain the relationship of solids to voids with new construction that is similar to other buildings in the district, including the typical width, height, spacing, and horizontal alignment of windows.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 5. MASONRY

Masonry features should be retained and repaired; materials, including mortar, should match the original mortar in color and composition. Mortar joints should be sized and struck to match the original. Belt courses, string courses, dripstones, quoins and contrasting brick and stone are common. These features should be preserved and repaired if necessary, and should be introduced on infill buildings.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 5a. Repair masonry with stone or brick and mortar that match the original.
- 5b. Do not paint masonry that has never been painted.



### 6. SANDBLASTING

The use of sandblasting, water blasting, or other abrasive or corrosive methods to clean buildings destroys materials by eroding their hard exterior surfaces, exposing the softer interiors, which are then subject to accelerated deterioration.

#### GUIDELINE:

- 6a. Do not sandblast, water blast, or use other abrasive or corrosive methods to clean or restore historic structures.

## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 7. RECOMMENDED SIGNS

Commercial establishments need to advertise. However, advertising signs should be effective and appropriate to historic areas without contributing to visual clutter. Primary concerns are a sign's location, size, material, and illumination.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 7a. Locate signs above storefront windows, below second-story windows on the sign board, or on the storefront windows themselves (30% is maximum coverage), or off the front of the building as a projecting sign (maximum size: 9 square feet).
- 7b. Create signs that are proportional to the building where they are located.
- 7c. Do not light signs internally.
- 7d. Allow painted signs on building walls in the warehouse area along Jackson Avenue, and in some other locations along Gay Street.
- 7e. Preserve signs that are historic elements of buildings.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 8. AWNINGS

Awnings are allowed on historic buildings when they are appropriate to the building and are designed with traditional shapes, forms, and materials. If awnings are used, their overall size, shape, and projection from the building must be in proper proportion and scale to the building and contained within the window or door they shelter, and not cover adjacent wall surfaces. Canvas is usually the appropriate material for awnings.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 8a. Allow awnings in traditional shapes and materials.
- 8b. Contain signs or advertising only within the valence of the awning.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 9. LIGHTING

Storefront windows may be lit with interior fixtures, entrances may be lit with overhead fixtures, and gooseneck fixtures can be used to highlight signs. Illumination may also be used to wash the building in light, emphasizing its distinctive architectural finishes.



#### GUIDELINE:

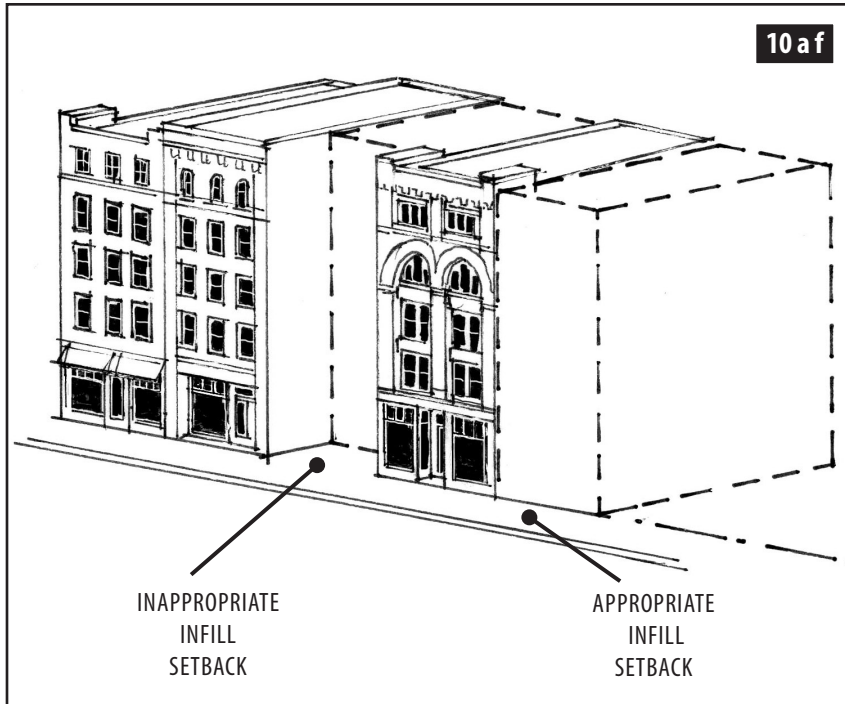
- 9a. Use indirect lighting of the building façade where appropriate.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

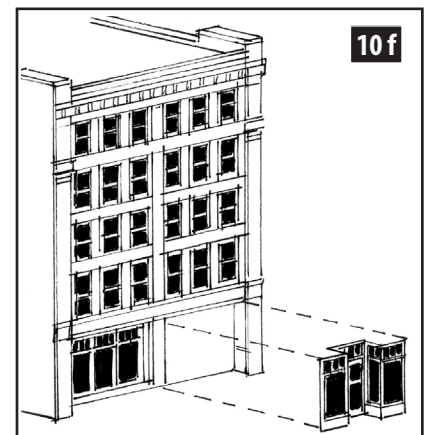
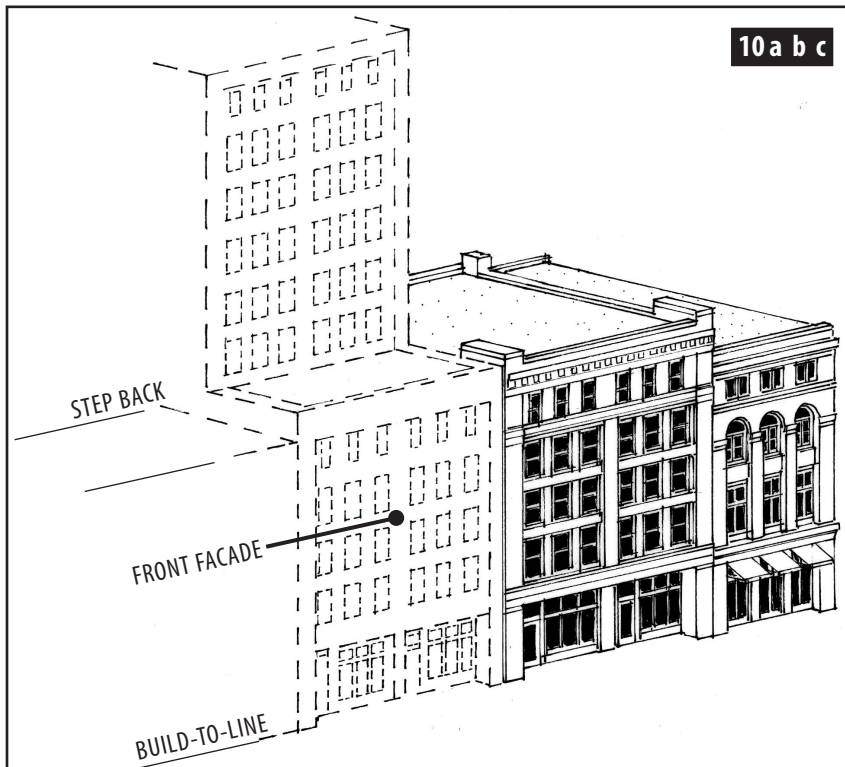
### 10. NEW CONSTRUCTION WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO AN HISTORIC DISTRICT OR BUILDING

Infill construction should be designed to reflect architectural and historic qualities. Designs should not duplicate current buildings. Issues of concern will be the siting, size, shape, proportion, materials, and the relationship of all of those to the prevalent character of the historic district.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 10a.** Maintain the setback of adjacent historic buildings. The height of the lower stories should be similar to adjacent historic buildings. Upper floors may be 'stepped back' behind the front facade.
- 10b.** Duplicate the horizontal floor divisions of existing buildings.
- 10c.** Design windows to be of similar proportions to the adjacent historic building windows.
- 10d.** Use ornamental stone, brick work, and trim appropriate to the style of the infill building.
- 10e.** Recognize the belt courses, strong courses, cornices, and other elements of adjacent buildings.
- 10f.** Incorporate storefronts that complement the openness, bulkheads, and transoms of historic buildings.



## C. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### 11. INAPPROPRIATE PRIOR CHANGES

Buildings may have been altered over time; some of those alterations may be inappropriate. In planning exterior rehabilitation, inappropriate changes should be reversed.

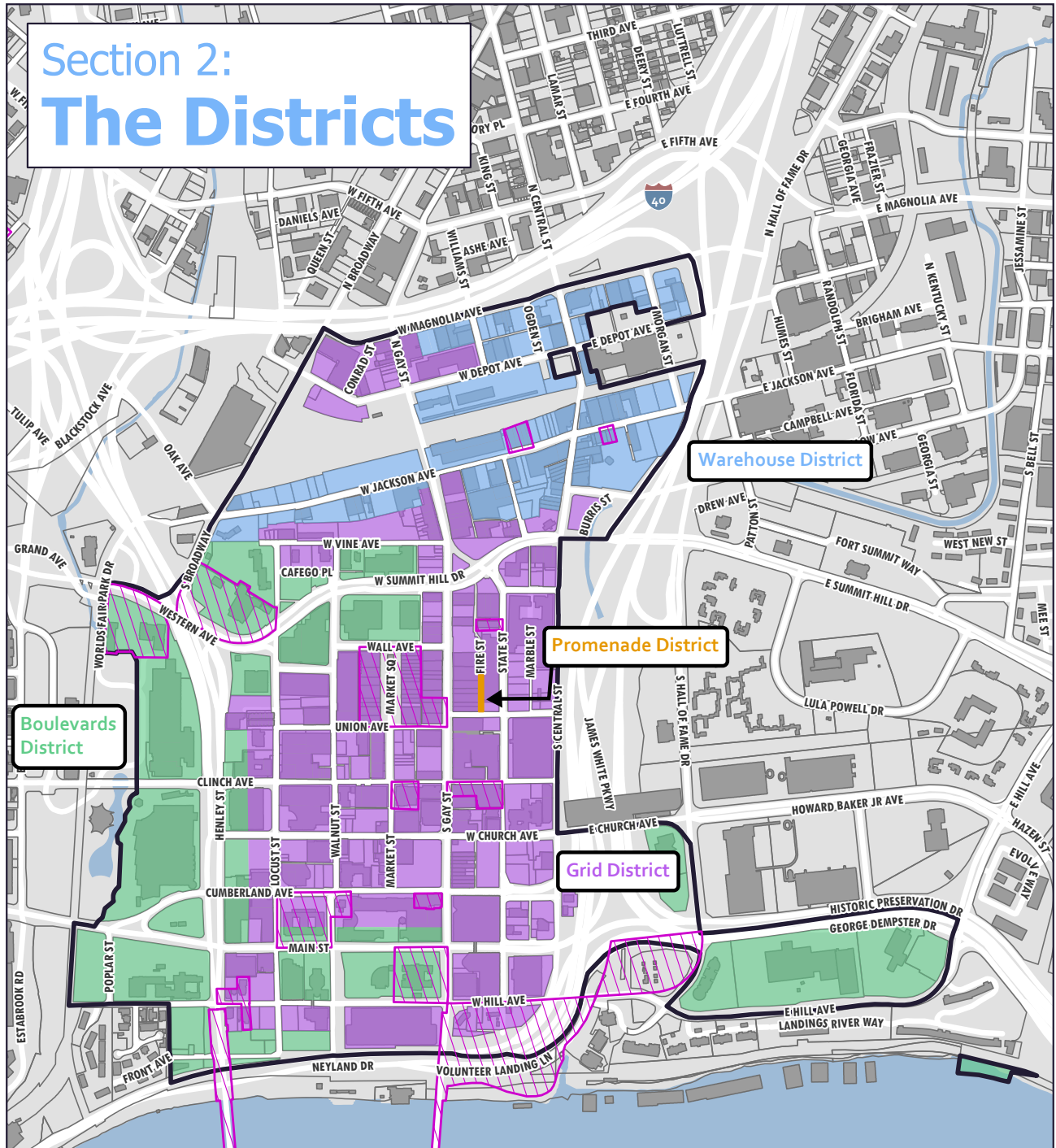


#### GUIDELINE:

- 11a.** During rehabilitation of historic buildings, restore components to the original or an approximate design.



# Section 2: The Districts



The district map shows the unique areas that have developed in downtown. Most of the district boundaries are at mid-block (that is, at the alleys), which helps to keep similar patterns of development on both sides of the street. Districts, while interrelated to each other, have a special identifying character as outlined in this chapter.

- Districts**
- Boulevards
  - Grid
  - Warehouse
  - Promenade
  - Historic (H) Overlay Zoning District (Local)





## A. THE BOULEVARD DISTRICT

There are five areas within the Boulevards District, the development surrounding Summit Hill Drive, Henley Street, Main Street, E. Hill Avenue and Neyland Drive. Its character can be attributed to two basic design features:

- Automobile-oriented thoroughfare designs with Summit Hill and Henley being traditional boulevards with medians and street trees; and Main Street, E. Hill Avenue and Neyland Drive operating as wide conduits through the southern portion of downtown.
- Newer buildings that were generally developed with yard or other substantial open space beyond the street travel lanes. In the case of Main Street, a kind of 'outdoor room' was fashioned and is framed by Bank of America, the First Baptist Church and City-County Buildings on the south side with the Post Office Building and the Howard Baker Jr. Federal Courthouse on the north side.

The open landscape—the 'street yards'—was repeated with lawns, plazas, and variable setbacks as buildings were created. Most of the investment in these areas is relatively new and not likely to appreciably change. Consequently, the design characteristics set a tone for the following guidelines.

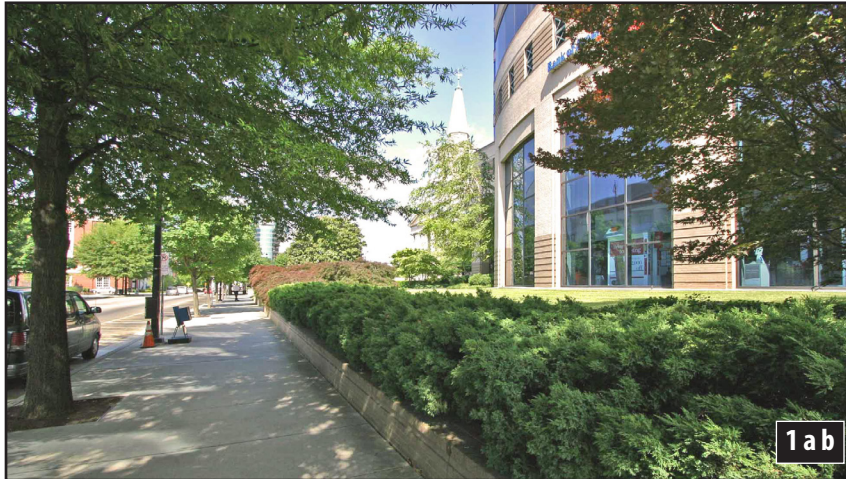




## A. THE BOULEVARD DISTRICT

### 1. YARDS/SETBACKS

Create yards that compliment the green space of adjacent buildings.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Separate new buildings from the sidewalk with lawn or other landscaped area.
- 1b. Plant native or naturalized trees and other landscape materials in the open spaces.
- 1c. Compliment the architecture and landscaping of adjoining property.
- 1d. Allow for plazas or similar quasi-public spaces in a portion of these private open spaces.

### 2. BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

Enhance the architectural harmony of all buildings along the street.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 2a. Design building entrances to be clearly oriented to the street.
- 2b. Encourage building forms that are complimentary to the mass of adjacent buildings.
- 2c. Design building elevations to compliment the buildings along the side or back streets when buildings are to face more than one street.
- 2d. Screen service facilities or incorporate them into the design of new buildings so that they are not obtrusive.

### 3. RECOMMENDED SIGNS

Signs within downtown Knoxville are regulated by Article 13 of the *Zoning Ordinance for Knoxville, Tennessee*. These guidelines for the Boulevard district recognize that certain types of signs are more appropriate to specific areas and should be encouraged within these areas.



#### GUIDELINES:

- 3a. Wall signs, mounted flush to the building facade or on the building's sign board
- 3b. Monument signs



## **B. THE TRADITIONAL GRID DISTRICT**

The Traditional Grid District is formed from the historic Plan of the City of Knoxville. The block pattern was established in part due to the location of the City within the confines of First and Second Creeks and the Holston River, later known as the Tennessee River. These blocks were typically about 300 feet by 300 feet. This area has predominately retained this typical block size. Another pertinent consideration of this grid pattern is the narrowness of the street rights-of-way. This reduced width tends to affect the public realm by minimizing the widths of sidewalks in order to maintain building fronts and travel lane widths. However, the small block size and narrow streets that calm traffic are also what makes downtown Knoxville feel so walkable to pedestrians.

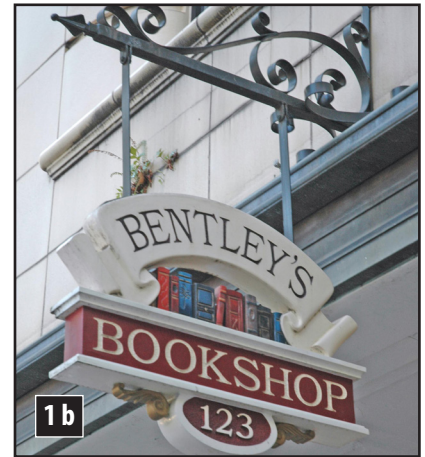
## B. THE TRADITIONAL GRID DISTRICT

### 1. RECOMMENDED SIGNS

These recommendations for signs in the traditional grid district recognize that certain types of signs are more pedestrian-friendly and should be encouraged within the grid district.

### GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Wall signs on sign boards that are above a transom or first story and mounted flush to the building façade
- 1b. Projecting signs of modest size (9 square feet, maximum); a larger sign must be approved by the board
- 1c. Window signs, less than 30 percent coverage, including neon signs
- 1d. Building name sign and/or building directory





## **C. THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT**

The area of Downtown Knoxville thought of as the Warehouse District is composed of three distinct parts, all of which are historically significant. Geographically, it is situated along Jackson Avenue from the intersection with Broadway to approximately 1½ blocks east of Central Street and includes properties on Central Street beginning at Summit Hill Drive and extending north to Depot Avenue. There are three areas with different architectural character in this district; each is eligible to be considered for a local historic zoning overlay. The district has been designated as a Redevelopment Area by the City of Knoxville. The guidelines of this publication should be used in rehabilitation and redevelopment projects within the area, particularly when public funds are utilized.

The following are general considerations for the overall Warehouse District. Specific guidelines should be drafted for each of these areas based on the Secretary of Interiors Standards, listed in Appendix A.

● **Jackson Avenue area, from Broadway to Gay Street:**

This area has a number of vacant parcels, along with several mid-rise brick warehouse buildings. One of the architectural characteristics of this area is that, mixed with the storefront designs of the ground floor are some loading docks that could, with interpretation in new construction, serve as entrances to garage parking without harming the architectural character of the street. Buildings that once formed the parallel building lines fronting W. Jackson Avenue were developed with individually designed facades in 35-foot-wide buildings which retain individual design characteristics on many storefronts.



● **Jackson Avenue area from Gay Street east to Hall of Fame Drive:** This area is composed of masonry buildings ranging in height from one to five stories, with varying street frontages, giving a physical manifestation of the warehousing character that developed in this section of Knoxville. There are a number of vacant parcels in this section, as well, and redevelopment should recognize the masonry, storefront windows, and varying setbacks and ages of construction that make the area unique.



● **Central Street, from Depot Avenue south to Summit Hill Drive:** The Central Street section is composed of one- to two-story buildings that are unremarkable as individual buildings, but draw significance as a collection of commercial buildings that supported warehouse employees and visitors that arrived on the railroad. In the rehabilitation that occurred in the 1980s, details were added that are inappropriate (for instance, wrought iron balconies). Re-creation of the authentic architecture of such buildings is preferred and additional inappropriate details should be avoided. New construction in this area should focus on the storefront designs, masonry, window sizes, setbacks and massing that complement the historic buildings.

## C. THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

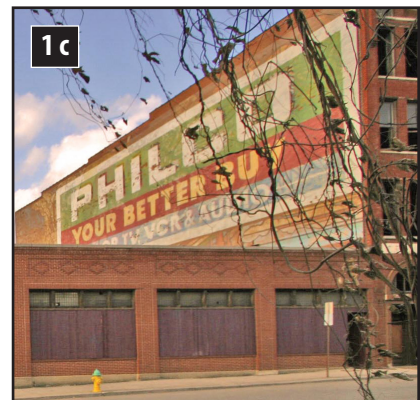
### 1. RECOMMENDED SIGNS

The entire Warehouse district is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and these buildings are also eligible for local overlays. Signs should therefore be governed by historic standards. These recommendations recognize that certain types of signs are dominant in the Warehouse District and should be encouraged in the future.



### GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Projecting signs of modest size (9 square feet, maximum); a larger sign must be approved by the board
- 1b. Wall signs on sign boards mounted flush to the building facade
- 1c. Painted wall signs
- 1d. Painted or new window signs, less than 30 percent coverage, including neon signs
- 1e. Building name sign and/or building directory





## **D. THE PROMENADE DISTRICT**

The Promenade is a unique structure downtown that is located behind the buildings that front on the east side of the 400 block of S. Gay Street. The Promenade was created in the 1950s in an attempt to coordinate business interests to compete with a suburban shopping center. A convenient rear parking lot was created with access to the Promenade, which acts as a secondary entrance/storefront for the buildings. A rear facade covering was installed to give the building a unified look. As the result of changes over time, many of the buildings have been renovated and the rear facade covering was removed to expose windows.

## D. THE PROMENADE DISTRICT

### 1. RECOMMENDED SIGNS

These recommendations for signs acknowledge the uniqueness of the Promenade and needs of the businesses that access the walkway. The signage on the Promenade shall count toward the maximum allowable signage for the associated buildings.

#### GUIDELINES:

- 1a. Arcade signs of modest size (6 square feet, maximum) centered on the Promenade walkway.
- 1b. One Promenade sign per building, located above the concrete support structure and at the bottom edge of the metal awning. The sign should be no wider than the distance between two concrete support structures, no taller than 5 feet and not over 60 square feet. Signs should be located in every other concrete support structure bay.
- 1c. Signs should be lighted externally and the Promenade sign should not have upward facing lights.





# Section 3:

# Administration of the Guidelines



## A. Design Review Board

The Design Review Board makes final decisions on design review applications in the DK District. The guidelines contained in this document are to be administered by the Design Review Board. The board has the following powers and responsibilities:

- Review the designs for all public projects, including, but not limited to, street and sidewalk design, landscaping, park improvements, public facility improvements, and public way-finding systems.
- Review and approve private development plans, based upon adopted design guidelines as set forth at the time of amendments to the Zoning map.
- Advise the Mayor, Council, Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission, and Historic Zoning Commission on means to improve Downtown design, incentives that could be used to foster good design, and programs to foster beautification, safety and related public purposes Downtown.

## B. Purpose of the Design Review Board

Design Review is intended to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation in Downtown Knoxville that reflects the goals of adopted plans, and the principles of the Downtown Design Guidelines. The Design Review Board will review and approve the plans for public and private improvements in the DK District to meet the following objectives:

- Promote Downtown as a place for a viable mix of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses, including street level development that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Create quality publicly-oriented spaces, including streets, pedestrian ways, parks, and squares that are safe and beautiful.
- Create harmony in architectural and landscape architectural elements to provide a pleasing environment and continuous commerce and interest along sidewalks.
- Create efficient processes for the review and approval of Downtown projects..
- Establish a means for design review for public improvements and building development and renovation to protect overall Downtown investments.
- Foster new development that complements adjacent historic resources.

### **C. Zoning and the Relationship to Existing or Future Historic Overlay Districts**

Existing Historic Overlay (H) Zoning Districts are excluded. Separate guidelines and overlays would apply to future Historic overlays; the Historic Zoning Commission would review demolition, rehabilitation and development plans within Historic districts.

### **D. Administrative Procedures**

Developers of major downtown projects (new construction, substantial additions and alterations, planned developments, and parking facilities) are required to obtain a *Certificate of Appropriateness* from the Design Review Board before a building permit is issued. Exemptions from the Board's review include ordinary repairs, interior alterations that do not cover windows, temporary signs or structures and emergency safety repairs. The Executive Director of Knoxville-Knox County Planning or his/her designee may approve signs, replacement of windows and other minor modifications that conform to the guidelines.

#### **Procedures For Major Project Approval:**

- The developer should meet with staff to discuss the proposed development and the implications of the design guidelines. Preliminary drawings or sketches, or renderings or photographs of similar projects are appropriate at this stage.
- To initiate the Board's review, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness must be filed with Knoxville-Knox County Planning, including a site plan, building elevations and a written description, noting the intended uses for the floors of the building(s).
- The Review Board has 30 days following the submittal of a complete application to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with or without conditions or deny the Certificate. Appeals are made to the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission.

### **E. Adoption and Amendment Processes**

The Downtown Design Guidelines text, and subsequent changes, must be submitted to both the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.



## Appendix A

# The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*For more information: [www.nps.gov/tps](http://www.nps.gov/tps)*

## Appendix B

# The Basics of Determining Appropriate Exterior Changes

There are some basic questions that should be answered before pursuing any exterior changes. They can help an owner organize proposed changes and their impact on the building.

### **The Building's Appearance:**

1. Will changes affect the symmetry or asymmetry of the façade or other primary elevations?
2. Will alterations affect the orientation of or public access for the building?
3. Will the amount of the building devoted to openings (entrances, windows) change?
4. Are the proportions of the alterations similar and sensitive to the proportions of the building?
5. Will alterations alter historic design elements?
6. What alterations involve the replacement of historic building elements?
7. Will alterations include new signs or awnings?
8. Will alterations impact any unique characteristics of the site?

### **The Building's Impact on Other Properties:**

1. Will the alterations reduce the integrity of the historic resource or site?
2. Does the proposed alteration make reasonable attempts to respect and integrate with the existing design?
3. Are the alterations designed so they are reversible with minimal impact to historic design and materials if they were removed at a future time?
4. What is the effect of the alterations on the property, on adjacent properties and nearby properties, and on properties in the historic district?

Careful consideration of these questions will assist in designing appropriate details that protect the historic and architectural integrity of the buildings.

# Appendix C

## Meetings Schedule and Public Involvement Opportunities

<b>Meeting 1: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
January 24, 2006 5 p.m. City County Building		Basic Considerations: * Geographic scope * Historic resources * Typical guideline content * Administration
<b>Meeting 2: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
February 8, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center		General Content: * Urban amenities * Connections to outlying areas * Examples from other Cities
<b>Meeting 3: Public Workshop #1</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
March 7, 2006 5:30 p.m. East Tennessee History Center  60+ Attendees		Qualities of Downtown: * Vision statement * Study area * Zoning * Public and private realm * Historic resources
<b>Planning Website</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
Posted comments received from Public Workshop #1		* Allowed for further comment via e-mail.
<b>Meeting 4: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
March 27, 2006 4:30 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center		General Content: * Results of Public Workshop #1 * Creation of districts based on public comment
<b>Meeting 5: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
April 12, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center		General Content: * Guidelines for districts * Examples of public realm guidelines * Public Workshop #2 outline
<b>Meeting 6: Public Workshop #2</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
May 10, 2006 5:30 p.m. City County Building  50+ Attendees		Framing Guidelines: * Proposed districts * Principles * Visual preference survey * Administration
<b>Planning Website</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
Posted Comments received from Public Workshop #2		Allowed for further comment via e-mail
<b>Meeting 7: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>
May 25, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center		General Content: * Identify stakeholders * Discuss results from survey * Review comments

<b>Meeting 8: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
June 14, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center Attendees included representatives from: KUB, City Engineering, and City Public Service		General Content: * Explain process * Review public meetings * Discuss implications of guidelines * Comments/Concerns	
<b>Meeting 9: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
June 21, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center  Attendees included 25+ Stakeholders		General Content: * Explain process * Review public meetings * Discuss implications of guidelines * Comments/Concerns	
<b>Meeting 10: Public Workshop #3</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
June 29, 2006 6:30 p.m. City County Building 15+ Attendees		Framing Guidelines * Proposed guidelines * Administration models * Comments	
<b>Meeting 11: Knoxville City Council Workshop</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
July 13, 2006 5 p.m. City County Building		* Review Content of Public Workshops 1-3 * Discussion of administration and adoption	
<b>Planning Website</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
Posted Draft Guidelines		* Allowed for Public Comment and Review via e-mail	
<b>Meeting 12: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
July 26, 2006 12 p.m. UT-Downtown Design Center		General Content: * Discussion of City Council comment * Recognized need for public meeting on administration of guidelines	
<b>Meeting 13: Public Workshop #4</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
September 18, 2006 5:30 p.m. City County Building 30+ Attendees (600+ Postcards announced meeting)		* Reviewed guidelines and administration * Discussion period	
<b>Meeting 14: Steering Committee</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
January 4, 2007 12 p.m. City County Building		General Content: * Reviewed draft document	
<b>Planning Website</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
Posted Draft Guidelines		* Allowed for Public Comment and Review via e-mail	
<b>Meeting 15: Public Open House</b>		<b>Agenda:</b>	
January 23, 2007 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. City County Building 20+ Attendees (600+ Postcards announced meeting)		* Reviewed guidelines * Discussion period	

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Image: page 6, lower right  
City of Colorado Springs, Colorado  
[www.springsgov.com](http://www.springsgov.com)

Conceptual Drawings by Christopher Illustration  
[www.christopherillustration.com](http://www.christopherillustration.com)







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