Commercial Character Area

Encompassing portions of the Commercial, Commercial Lodge, Lodge and Neighborhood Commercial Zone Districts

Design Objectives and Guidelines

Location

This area forms the immediate fringe of much of the Commercial Core Historic District. To the east of the Core, the Commercial area is roughly bounded by Spring Street, Cooper Avenue and Original Street, to the south, by Dean Street, and to the west by Aspen Street and Hyman Avenue. (See the Character Area Map in the appendix.)

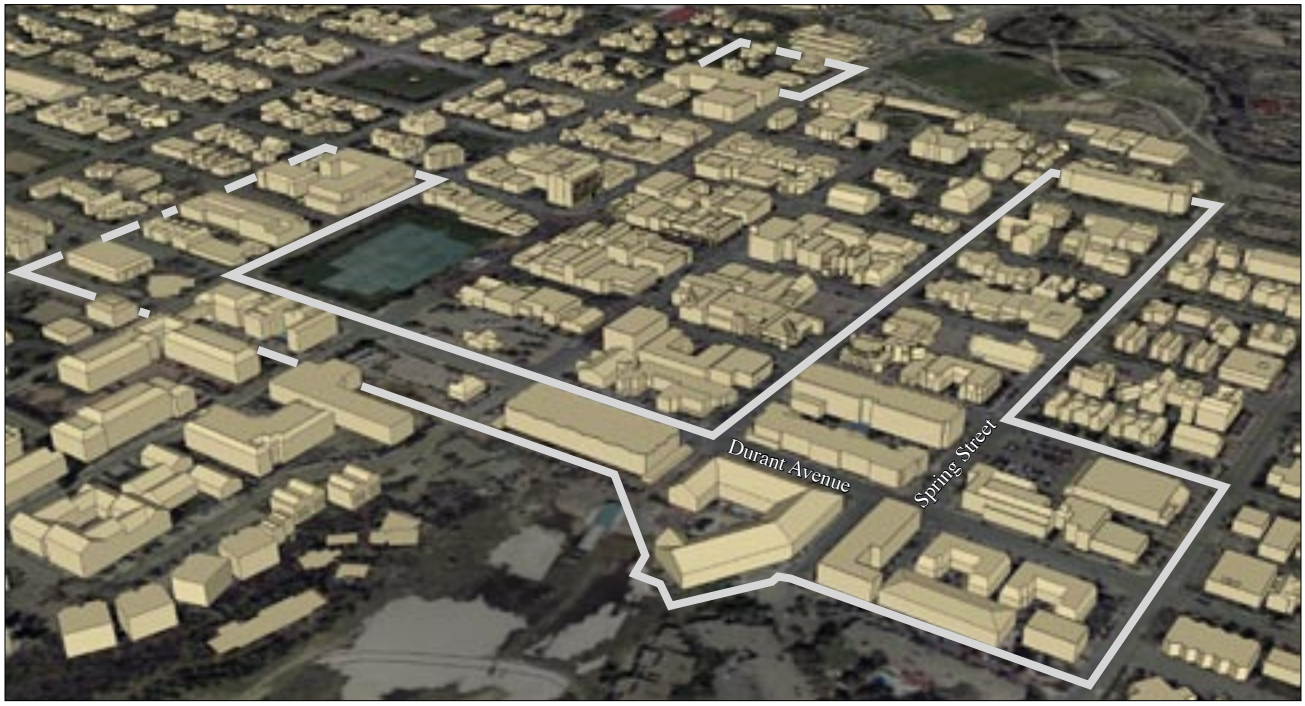
Existing Character

This area is immediately adjacent to the Commercial Core to the south, east and south-east. To the south, towards the mountain base, it is directly influenced by lodge development where the street block is frequently defined by a single building. On several blocks this forms a hard and unrelieved street edge, with little or no variation in height. It is in direct contrast to the smaller, predominant building scale within adjacent areas.

Street Pattern

The street pattern is essential 'infrastructure' for the character of the district. The north/south orientation of the streets accentuates the relationship of the City with its dramatic landscape setting.

The circulation pattern provided by the network of streets, alleys and courts should be retained to ensure maximum public access. Wherever possible pedestrian access to alleys should be enhanced.



The Commercial Area wraps around the core of Downtown Aspen.

Building Character

Building height varies from one story towards the north to four stories in the more intensely developed blocks to the south. Buildings define the street edge to the south, whereas they are increasingly set back and framed by open space, as building height and scale reduces to the north.

Building materials, although varied, are still urban in character with a predominance of brickwork and other masonry. Storefront design and display is much less a characteristic than in the Commercial Core area, and this diminishes the pedestrian experience in some places.

Outdoor Spaces

Moving north from the mountain base, the smaller scale of buildings, combined with increasing areas of open space, either adjacent to the buildings or opening off the street frontage, allows more sunlight to penetrate while creating a varied and fragmented street edge. The greater architectural diversity here lacks the coherence provided by a more consistent block face.

The street wall within this area is less defined than in the Commercial Core, and building façades are sometimes set back or include front yard space, which weakens the street edge.

Design Objectives

These are key design objectives for the Commercial Area. The City must find that any new work will help to meet them:

1. Strengthen the sense of relatedness with the Commercial Core Historic District.
Strengthening the definition of the street edge in a manner similar to the Commercial Core is desired. At the same time, the Commercial Area is a place where more variety in design is encouraged. Imitating historic styles is not an objective, but re-establishing a sense of a stronger fundamental framework will enhance the urban qualities of this area and is a priority.

2. Maintain a retail orientation.
Greater retail presence at the street edge should be achieved to ensure an enhanced street vitality and an enriched and more urban definition of the commercial street frontage.

3. Promote creative, contemporary design.
Designs should seek creative new solutions that convey the community's continuing interest in exploring innovations. At the same time, the fundamental principles of traditional design must be respected. This means that each project should strike a balance in the design variables that are presented in the following pages.

4. Encourage a well-defined street wall.
The intent is to more clearly establish a strongly defined street wall, but with some greater variety than in the Commercial Core Historic District since the historic building edge is not as defined. A stronger street façade definition should be achieved while at the same time recognizing the value of public dining and landscaped space.

5. Reflect the variety in building heights seen traditionally.
It is important that a range and variation in building height and scale in the Commercial Area be recognized in future development. Larger buildings should be varied in height and reflect original lot widths.

6. Accommodate outdoor public spaces while establishing a clear definition to the street edge.
Providing space in association with individual buildings remains important, but should be balanced with much greater building street presence and corner definition.

7. Promote variety in the street level experience.
Display cases, architectural details and landscaping are among the design elements that should be used.

Conceptual Review Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines shall apply at the conceptual review stage.

Street & Alley System

The street pattern is essential 'infrastructure' to the character of the Commercial Area. The network of streets, alleys and courts are key and should be retained for maximum public access. These should not be enclosed by gating and should not be spanned by development above to maintain view corridors and permit sun and light penetration along public ways. Wherever possible pedestrian access to alleys should be enhanced. The creation of additional public walkways to rear alleys and other public spaces enhances the attraction, permeability, intricacy and interest of the area and is encouraged. Improved access creates opportunities for additional commercial space, which is to be encouraged.

The network of streets, alleys and existing pedestrian passageways enhances access in the Commercial Area.

Street Grid

The original arrangement of parcels significantly affects the visual character of the area. The city was platted on a grid system of lots and blocks, and buildings were typically sited parallel with these lot lines. This development pattern should be maintained.

The network of streets, alleys and existing pedestrian passageways should be retained for maximum public access.

1.1 Orient a primary entrance toward the street.

- A building should have a clearly defined primary entrance.
- Providing secondary public entrances to commercial spaces is also encouraged on larger buildings.

1.2 Maintain the established town grid in all projects.

- The network of streets and alleys should be retained as public circulation space and for maximum public access.
- Streets and alleys should not be enclosed or closed to public access, and should remain open to the sky.

Internal Walkways

1.3 Public walkways and through courts should be designed to create access to additional commercial space.

- These may be shops that face onto walkways or courtyards.
- See also: Public Amenity Space design guidelines.

Alleys

Traditionally, alleyscapes were simple and utilitarian in character, with a variety of materials and building scales contributing to the human scale. This traditional character should be maintained, while accommodating compatible new uses. The continued development of visual interest in these alleys is encouraged. Greater variety in form and materials is also appropriate here.

1.4 Develop an alley façade to create visual interest.

- Use varied building setbacks and changes in materials to create interest and reduce perceived scale.
- Balconies, court yards and decks are also appropriate.
- Providing secondary public entrances is strongly encouraged along alleys. These should be clearly intended for public use, but subordinate in detail to the primary street-side entrance.

Parking

The character of the Commercial Area is one which is most appreciated on foot, and the human scale of streets and spaces lies at the heart of the attraction of the town center. Therefore, the visual impact of parking should be minimized. Whenever possible, parking should be placed underground. Where a parking structure might be considered this should have a 'wrap' of commercial and/or residential uses around it. Where it is permitted to be constructed, these guidelines shall apply:

1.5 The visual impacts of structured parking should be minimized. The access shall be:

- Located on an alley when feasible or a secondary street, designed with the same attention to detail and materials as the primary building façade, and integrated into the building design.

1.6 Structured parking should be placed within a 'wrap' of commercial and/or residential uses.

The visual impact of the entry to a parking facility should be minimized, as it is in this building. The opening is subordinate to the overall mass of the façade.

Public Amenity Space

On-site and communal open space has been a long-standing priority and characteristic of the city. Where it is required the form, orientation, quality and use of such open space is of the utmost importance. Well defined public space should be integrated with the traditional streetscape character of a well-defined street wall. The Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the Historic Preservation Commission will decide whether, where and in what form Public Amenity Space will be required.

Public amenity space along the primary street frontage should be an accent within, and exception to, an otherwise well defined street façade. The urban form within this area is however less tightly defined than in the Commercial Core and there will be greater opportunity to create public gathering space. There will be locations within the Commercial Area where either the character and setting of the site or of a historic building will influence the form, location or appropriateness of such a space.

In every case Public Amenity Space should be well defined and carefully designed. The design of public gathering space, its enclosure, layout and content, will be an integral consideration in the proposed form of the space. Although a matter for full review and approval at the Final Stage, its design should be envisioned at the time of conceptual review.

Public Amenity Space should be well-defined and designed to encourage pedestrian activity.

Design Objectives

Where considered to be compatible within the Commercial Area, public amenity space should achieve the following objectives:

- Create street vitality through the promotion of public gathering space.
- Maintain a well-defined street edge and street corner to ensure that such public space creates an accent within the street façade.
- Create an additional commercial frontage and/or space to the side or rear of the site or building
- Create a well defined, localized public space at the street edge, where e.g. additional space for street dining might be beneficial.
- Design a space that maximizes access to sunlight throughout the year.
- Create a second level space, when appropriate, designed to ensure that it is permanently open to the public and provides interest in the form of a scenic or other interpretive marker for the life of its service as a public amenity space.
- Achieve second floor patio space that provides access to affordable commercial uses.

The Downtown Enhancement and Pedestrian Plan should serve as an additional reference.

Amenity space is required in the Commercial Area.

A street facing amenity space shall abut the public sidewalk.

Street facing amenity space should be located to take advantage of solar exposure.

Public Amenity Space Types

Providing public amenity space is a requirement in the Commercial Area. Here particular types of public amenity space would be in character, ensuring that they are well defined and an accent within the street block. These include:

- Street facing amenity space
- Mid-block walkway amenity space
- Alley side amenity space
- Second level amenity space
- Front yard amenity space

Guidelines for the location and design of each of these types follows.

Street Facing Amenity Space

A street facing amenity space, usually located toward the middle of a block, may be considered.

1.7 A street facing amenity space shall meet all of the following requirements:

- Abut the public sidewalk
- Be level with the sidewalk
- Be open to the sky
- Be directly accessible to the public
- Be paved or otherwise landscaped

1.8 A street-facing public amenity space shall remain subordinate to the line of building fronts in the Commercial Area.

- Any public amenity space positioned at the street edge shall respect the character of the streetscape and ensure that street corners are well defined, with buildings placed at the sidewalk edge.
- Sunken spaces, which are associated with some past developments, adversely affect the street character. Where feasible, these should be replaced with sidewalk level improvements.

1.9 Street facing amenity space shall contain features to promote and enhance its use. These may include one or more of the following:

- Street furniture
- Public art
- Historical/interpretive marker

The detailed design of Public Amenity Space with regard to guideline 1.9 will be a matter for approval at the Final Review Stage, although it may be discussed at the Conceptual Stage.

Mid-Block Walkway Amenity Space

The Commercial Area should be highly regarded for its pedestrian character and 'walkability'. The opportunities created by the extension and enhancement of the public circulation network are encouraged. Typically only one such space would occur along a single block face.

New buildings on sites occupying more than one traditional lot width may provide a mid-block walkway or through court within a single development or between two developments. This may also extend only part-way through the parcel if located away from the site boundary. This type of space shall be an extension of and a complement to the street and public circulation network within the center of the city.

This form of Public Amenity Space should be a consideration on larger development sites within the city. It links the potential of additional commercial frontage and access, with human scale space and circulation, enriching the public experience. Situated along the edge of a development site, it should extend to link with the rear alley. Adjacent to a residential type historic building it can provide a respectful break and a space between the two.

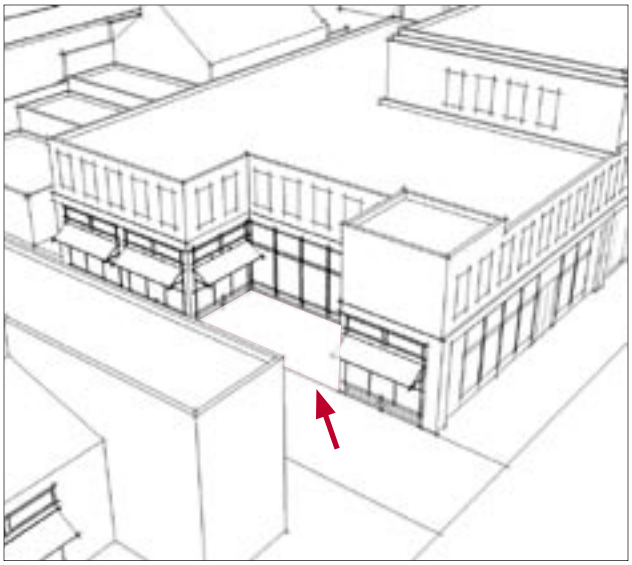
1.10 Mid-block walkways shall remain subordinate in scale to traditional lot widths.

- Mid-block public walkways shall be between 8 ft. and 10 ft. in width.

1.11 A mid-block walkway should provide public access to the following:

- Additional commercial space and frontage within the walkway
- Uses located at the rear of the property that are commercial in nature.

A passageway through a property, or one that leads to a plaza, may be considered for Public Amenity Space. It should remain subordinate to the overall wall plane of the block, and lead to activities within the property or along an alley.



Public amenity space located at an alley should generally be south facing to maximize solar access.

Alleys can be enhanced for public amenity space and commercial use.

Alley Side Amenity Space

Public amenity space may be located to the rear of the site in association with the alleyway. Such a space shall provide access to commercial uses at the street or second floor level. Public amenity space may also be located at the corner of an alley and a street. Such spaces should be designed to enhance the use of alleys for supporting commercial uses.

1.12 An alley side amenity space shall be designed to have these characteristics:

- Direct public access to commercial space at ground or second floor levels
- Maximize solar access to the alley side amenity space
- Enhance the attractiveness and use of the rear alley
- Minimize the adverse impacts of adjacent service and parking areas

Second Level Amenity Space

An outdoor patio space on a second floor, which is directly accessible to the general public, will be considered as a form of public amenity space when it is compatible with the context and is clearly inviting for public use. This will be most successful in association with outdoor dining space. In this respect it may be favorably considered within sites affected by mountain view planes.

1.13 A second floor amenity space should meet all of the following criteria:

- Ensure consistent public access
- Be dedicated for public use
- Provide a public overlook and/or an interpretive marker
- Be identified by a marker at street level

1.14 Second level space should be oriented to maximize solar access and views to the mountains or other landmarks.

1.15 Second level space should provide public access by way of a visible and attractive public stair or elevator from a public street, alley, or street level amenity space.

1.16 Second level dining may be considered.

- If the use changes, the space must remain accessible to the public so long as it is to be considered meeting the Public Amenity Space requirement.

Front Yard Amenity Space

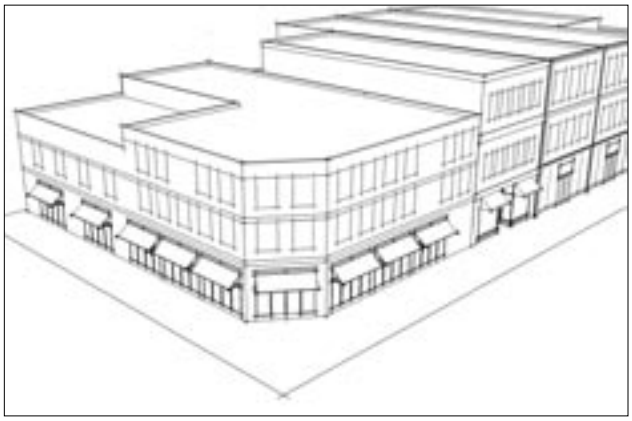
Three historic one-story residential type buildings exist in the Commercial Area. These are often defined by a landscaped front yard and side yard setback. To maintain and enhance this tradition in certain areas, a landscaped front yard amenity space may be considered.

1.17 Front and side yard amenity space should be provided in the context of a historic one story residential type building.

Second level space shall be accessible from a public space such as a sidewalk or street facing amenity space.

Second floor amenity space should be oriented to maximize solar access and views to the mountains.

Front yard amenity space should be provided in the context of a historic one-story residential type building.



Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk's edge.

Building Placement

Street Façades & Corners

Street corners are important elements in the definition of the street block and in the framing of many of the views which characterize the center of the city. Here the buildings should strengthen and define the building wall at the street edge. Façades should be oriented parallel to the street, with variation in front wall setbacks kept to a minimum. Breaks in the street wall should occur as an accent within the street block, not the predominant pattern.

Setbacks

The Commercial Area has a strong and relatively consistent street façade line to the south and a much varied line as building scale reduces to the north. Corner buildings anchor the street block to varying degrees throughout the area.

Setbacks within the Commercial Area should reinforce the objective of enhancing the urban character and a stronger urban edge of the street façade and street corner. Local areas of open space further the objective of the street vitality created by well defined dining space. These should however remain as an accent within the street façade.

Side setbacks are associated with the more traditional small scale development within the area. They also provide the opportunity to enhance public passageways or through courts to the rear alley, with the advantages of improved public permeability, access and additional commercial frontage. See also Street & Circulation Pattern and Public Amenity Space design guidelines. Rear setbacks create the opportunity to achieve more creative and attractive commercial and public space to the rear of the site and alley.

1.18 Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk's edge.

- Place as much of the facade of the building at the property line as possible.
- A minimum of 60% of the front façade shall be at the property line.
- Locating an entire building front behind the established storefront line is inappropriate.

1.19 A building may be set back from its side lot lines in accordance with design guidelines identified in Street & Alley System and Public Amenity Space guidelines.

Building Orientation

Development within the Commercial Area is traditionally oriented with the street grid. This relationship should be maintained.

1.20 Building façades shall be parallel to the facing street(s) and primary entrances shall be oriented toward the street.

1.21 Orient a new building to be parallel to its lot lines, similar to that of traditional building orientations.

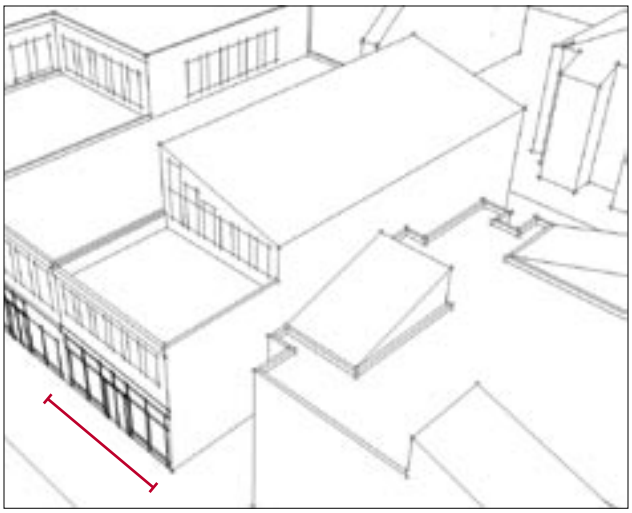
- The front of a primary structure shall be oriented to the street.

Orient a building facade parallel to the facing street.

Building Height, Mass & Scale

The character of the Commercial Area derives in part from the range and variety of building heights. These generally vary from one to three and four stories towards the mountain base. To the north, the building height frequently varies and traditional lot width becomes again evident in the modulation of the block face. This helps to express and maintain the human scale and architectural character of the area. New development should continue this variation while also enhancing the definition of the street facade. A new building should also be sensitive to the setting of an adjacent historic building and the edge of a historic district.

A method of achieving height variation within a single building is to step the building along the primary façade.



Height varied between two and three stories, with the three story portion at the rear of the lot.

Height varied between two and three stories, with the three story portion at the front of the lot.

Height Variation

Variation in height should occur where the site is larger than two traditional lot widths, in order to reduce overall scale of the building. A variation in façade height, often in conjunction with setting back an upper floor, may be required.

1.22 Building façade height shall be varied from the façade height of adjacent buildings of the same number of stories by a minimum of 2 feet.

- If an existing structure is three stories and 38 ft. tall for example, then adjacent new infill may be three stories, but must vary in façade height by a minimum of 2 ft.

1.23 A new building or addition should reflect the range and variation in building height of the Commercial Area.

- Refer to the zone district regulations to determine the maximum height on the subject property.
- A minimum 9 ft. floor to ceiling height is to be maintained on second stories and higher.
- Additional height, as permitted in the zone district, may be added for one or more of the following reasons:
  - In order to achieve at least a two-foot variation in height with an adjacent building.
  - The primary function of the building is civic. (i.e. the building is a Museum, Civic Building, Performance Hall, Fire station, etc.)
  - Some portion of the property is affected by a height restriction due to its proximity to a historic resource, or location within a View Plane, therefore relief in another area may be appropriate.
  - To benefit the livability of Affordable Housing units.
  - To make a demonstrable (to be verified by the Building Department) contribution to the building's overall energy efficiency, for instance by providing improved day-lighting.

1.24 Height variation should be achieved using one or more of the following:

- Vary the building height in accordance with traditional lot width.
- Set back the upper floor to vary the building façade profile(s) and the roof forms across the width and the depth of the building.
- Vary the façade (or parapet) heights at the front.
- Step down the rear of the building towards the alley, in conjunction with other design standards and guidelines.

Height Variation for Larger Sites

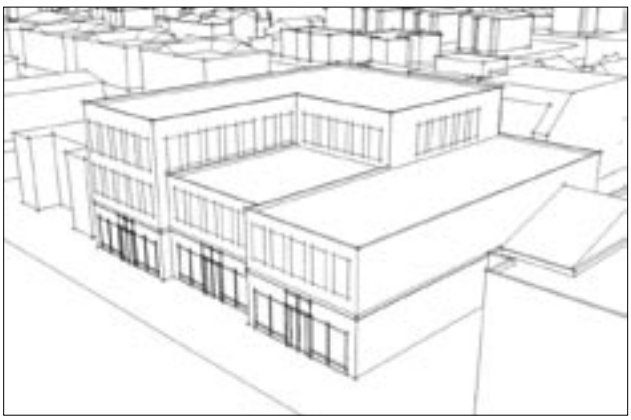
Buildings within the commercial center and historic core of Aspen represent the traditional lot widths of the city (30 ft.), either in building width or the horizontal and vertical design articulation of the street façade. This pattern should be expressed in the Commercial Area. New development occupying a site of more than one traditional lot width should be designed to integrate with the scale created by narrower existing buildings. The architectural rhythm of earlier street façades should also be reflected in new development to retain and enhance the human scale and character of the center of the city.

1.25 On sites comprising more than two traditional lot widths, the façade height shall be varied to reflect traditional lot width.

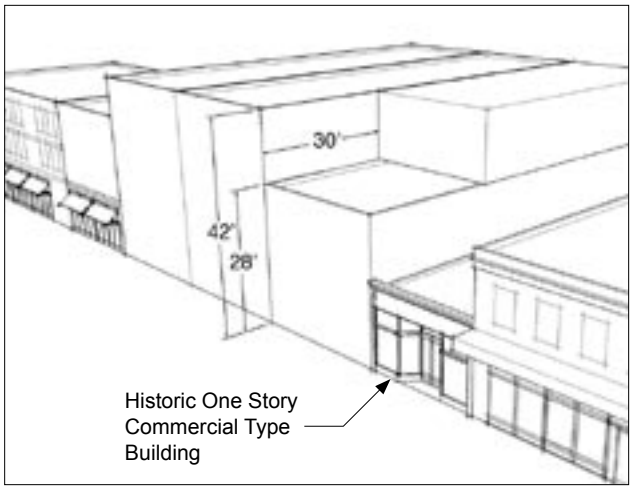
- The façade height shall be varied to reflect traditional lot width.
- Height should be varied every 60 ft. minimum and preferably every 30 ft. of linear frontage in keeping with traditional lot widths and development patterns.
- No more than two consecutive 30 ft. façade modules may be three stories tall, within an individual building.
- A rear portion of a third module may rise to three stories, if the front is set back a minimum of 40 feet from the street façade. (e.g. at a minimum, the front 40 feet may be no more than two stories in height.)

Buildings on sites larger than two traditional lot widths should be designed to reflect the traditional scale of development.

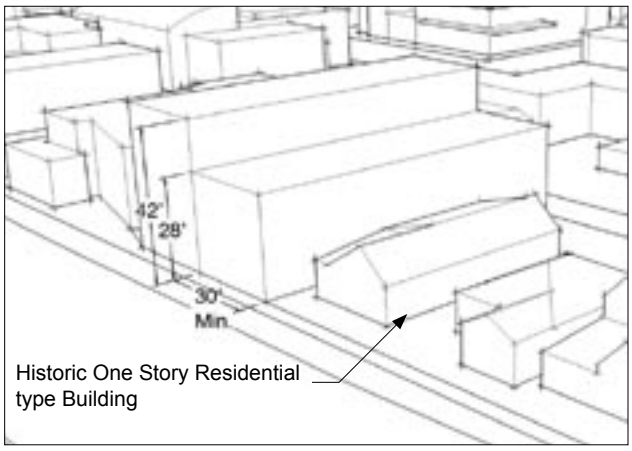
Height varied between one and two stories, in the center of a three-lot building.



Height varied between two and three stories.



Building façade height shall be a maximum of one floor higher within 30 ft. of an adjacent single story historic building.



New infill adjacent to historic miners cottages shall not exceed 28 ft. in height within 30 ft. of the property line adjacent to the historic structure.

Locate amenity space adjacent to a historic residential type site or structure where feasible.

1.26 Buildings on sites comprising more than two traditional lot widths shall achieve a minimum of two of the following:

- Variation in height of building modules across the site
- Variation in massing achieved through upper floor setbacks, the roofscape form and variation in upper floor heights
- Variation in building façade heights or cornice line

Height Adjacent to Historic Structures

Designing a building within the immediate setting of a historic building demands a sensitivity in design analysis and approach which is exacting and which will vary with each situation.

The intent is that a new building or addition to an existing building should be designed to respect the height and scale of historic buildings within the Commercial Area.

1.27 A new building should step down in scale to respect the height, form and scale of a historic building within its immediate setting.

1.28 New development adjacent to a single story historic building that was originally constructed for residential use shall not exceed 28 ft. in height within 30 ft. of the side property line adjacent to the historic structure within the same block face.

Final Review Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines shall apply at the final review stage.

Building Design & Articulation

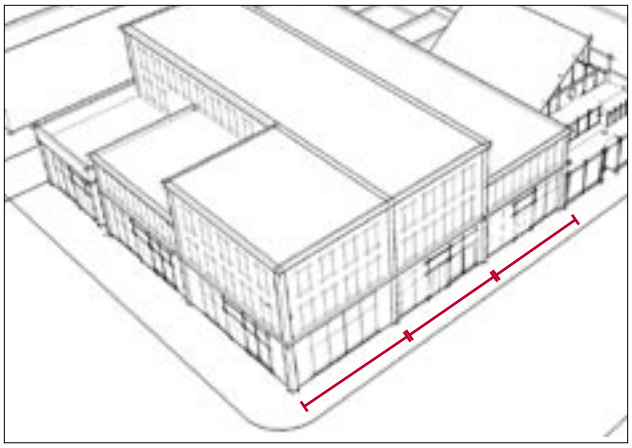
The character of the Commercial Area relies upon a human scale and a variation in building height, massing, design, architectural detail and materials. This in turn is influenced primarily by the articulation of the traditional lot width in the city center. New buildings which occupy more than one traditional lot width should be articulated to reflect these characteristics of city form and scale.

On the other hand, excessive articulation of the street façade in the use of multiple setbacks from the edge of the sidewalk weakens and adversely affects the structure of the street façade, the coherence of the street block and the sense of urban definition and enclosure and should be avoided.

Articulation can be reflected in the height, design and variation in the modules and form of the street façades. It is also reflected in the roofscape. In the city center this is predominantly of flat roof form, often with decorative street façade parapet and cornice. Because buildings are viewed from the mountain slopes, enhancing the roofscape is especially important.

The vertical articulation of the street façade as a 'base, middle and cap' is also important in the composition of a human scale of building and street façade. This is often defined by the first floor storefront, elements of façade composition and hierarchy of the fenestration pattern, as well as the cornice or similar horizontal element. The depth of modeling, texture and detail of the façade is essential to the creation of the light and shadow which define and animate the scale and character of the street façade.

Building modules may be expressed within a single structure using variations in setbacks, materials and height.



A building should be designed to respect the traditional lot width.

A single building with multiple style imitations to break up the facade of the building is inappropriate.

Facade articulation should be accomplished while still maintaining a sense of consistency in design, as this single building does, using variations of masonry colors and fenestration patterns, all within a cohesive framework.

Expression of Lot Widths

The street façade is composed of a sequence of buildings defined either in width or in design arrangement by original lot dimensions. The building façade composition, fenestration pattern, detail and materials will accentuate the diversity of the street façade, and consequently the richness of the street character.

Articulation of the traditional lot width enables larger scaled development to integrate more successfully. It also creates the opportunity to enhance visual vitality and activity in various respects within the building. A new building should be designed to define this unit of scale.

1.29 A new building shall reflect the traditional lot width (30 ft.) as expressed by two or more of the following:

- Variation in height at internal lot lines
- Variation in the plane of the front façade
- Street façade composition
- Variation in architectural detailing and materials to emphasize the building module

1.30 The detailed design of the building façade should reflect the traditional scale and rhythm of the block. This should be achieved using all of the following:

- The fenestration grouping
- The modeling of the façade
- The design framework for the first floor storefront
- Variation in architectural detail and/or the palette of façade materials

Façade Articulation

Traditional architectural composition aligns elements within adjacent street façades, and in doing so creates a sense of cohesion and human scale. These include pilasters, moldings, cornices, window dressings and reveals. Contemporary interpretations of such elements are encouraged. Contemporary design will rely upon the use of high quality materials, architectural modeling and detail to create a sense of both human scale and continuity.

While the emphasis is often placed on the stature and design of the first floor storefront, this visual prominence also depends upon its relationship with the façade above. The hierarchy of proportion in the sequence and pattern of windows and capping cornice help to complete the façade composition and define the height of the building in increments which relate to human scale. The design of a new building should include such articulation to reflect the traditional character of the street façade(s). This is also essential to the visual strength, presence and animation of the street façade, through play of light and shadow.

1.31 A building should reflect the architectural hierarchy and articulation inherent in the composition of the street façade. The following should be addressed:

- The design and definition of the traditionally tall first floor
- The vertical proportions of the upper level fenestration pattern and ratio of solid wall to window area.

1.32 A building should reflect the three-dimensional characteristics of the street façade in the strength and depth of modeling, fenestration and architectural detail.

Creative interpretations of traditional building components are appropriate.

Facade articulation provides a sense of scale and enhances visual interest.

Contemporary design interpretation enhances the vocabulary of architectural options available to design a street façade.

A building should reflect the three dimensional characteristics of the street façade in strength and depth of modeling, fenestration and architectural detail.

A building shall reflect the architectural hierarchy of a traditionally tall first floor and the relationship of transparency to solid wall at the first floor and upper floors.

The alignment of storefronts at the sidewalk edge is a tradition in the Commercial Core that should be extended to the Commercial Area.

Street Level Character

Aspen is widely recognized for its visually vibrant and attractive street character. Several characteristics combine to create this. They include the stature and also the design character of the traditional first floor retail frontage. New development within the Commercial Character Area should be designed to reflect these characteristics. The quality of the design of the first floor is also essential to the creation of an attractive and successful secondary frontage to the side or the rear of the building.

Floor Stature

The design of a new building should respect the heights of traditional building design, in the predominant stature of the first floor and in the hierarchy and the proportion of upper floors as expressed in the building façade. The street level is generally taller than the upper floors. Storefronts of 13 to 15 feet high are typical, whereas second floors of 10 to 12 feet are typical.

The street level features of traditional Aspen commercial buildings are clearly distinguishable from the upper floors. First floors are predominantly fixed plate glass with a small percentage of opaque materials. Upper floors are the reverse; opaque materials dominate, and windows appear as smaller openings puncturing the solid walls. Within the Commercial Character Area this relationship should generally prevail, but can be more widely interpreted, with greater design flexibility than in the Commercial Core.

1.33 Any new building shall be designed to maintain a minimum of 9 feet from floor to ceiling on all floors.

1.34 Maintain the distinction between the street level and upper floors.

- The first floor should be the tallest floor to floor height in the building.
- The first floor of the primary façade should be predominantly transparent glass.
- Upper floors should be perceived as being more opaque than the street level. Upper story windows should have a vertical emphasis.
- Highly reflective or darkly tinted glass is inappropriate.
- Express the traditional distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials and fenestration. The presence of a belt course is an important feature in this relationship.

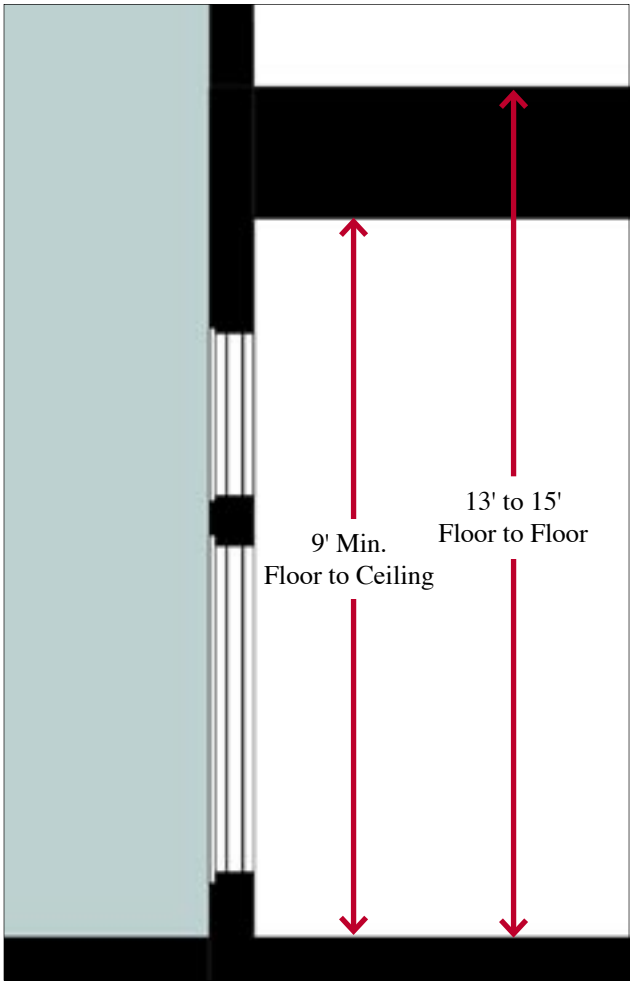
Buildings should be designed to reflect the architectural hierarchy and articulation inherent in the composition of the street façade.

1.35 A new building should be designed to maintain the stature of traditional street level retail frontage.

- This should be 13-15 ft. in floor to floor height on the first floor.
- The minimum required first floor height must be maintained for at least the first 50 foot depth of the lot, and may only be dropped to a lower height beyond that point for areas that are devoted to storage, circulation, offices, restaurant kitchens, alley commercial spaces, or similar secondary uses.

1.36 Minimize the appearance of a tall third floor.

- Where a third floor's floor to ceiling height is in excess of 12 ft., it should be set back a minimum of 15 ft. from the street façade to reduce the apparent height.
- Increase the parapet height to screen the visual impact of a tall top floor.
- The design of a set back third floor shall be simpler in form, more subdued in modeling, detail and color than the primary façade.



A new building should be designed to reflect the traditional stature of the street level retail frontage, which should be 13-15 feet in floor to floor height. .

A building shall be designed to maintain the character and transparency of the traditional street level retail frontage.

First Floor Character

The characteristic street level storefront, the relationship between the retail entrance and sidewalk, the architectural embellishment and detail and the quality of materials combine to create the visual vitality and interest associated with the street level retail frontage.

1.37 The first floor façade should be designed to concentrate interest at the street level, using the highest quality of design, detailing and materials.

- A strong and distinctively designed retail framework for the first floor of the building.
- An entryway designed to use the full height of the storefront.
- A distinct change in the palette of materials used for the first floor design framework.
- The depth and strength of the modeling of elements and details.

Retail Entrance

The close relationship between the level of the shop frontage and entrance with the public sidewalk is critical to a successful retail character. A new building should locate an entrance at sidewalk level. Elevated or sunken entrances shall be avoided.

1.38 The retail entrance should be at the sidewalk level.

- All entrances shall be ADA compliant.
- On sloping sites the retail frontage should be as close to a level entrance as possible.

1.39 Incorporate an airlock entry into the plan for all new structures.

- An airlock entry that projects forward of the primary façade at the sidewalk edge is inappropriate.
- Adding temporary entries during the winter season detracts from the character of the historic district.
- Using a temporary vinyl or fabric "airlock" to provide protection from winter weather is not permitted.

Transparency
The transparency created by large storefront window area and the immediate relationship this creates between public and internal display, interest and attraction, should be an integral part of the design of a new building in the Commercial Area.

1.40 Window area along the first floor shall be a minimum of 60% of exterior street façade area when facing principal street(s).

1.41 Where appropriate a building shall be designed to maintain the character and transparency of the traditional street level retail frontage.

Storefront Design
The traditional storefront, where architectural display was frequently used to draw attention to retail goods display, remains an essential feature of the attractive and vibrant commercial center. The role and relationship of the traditional storefront can readily be interpreted through contemporary design. A new building shall be designed to express these principles.

1.42 Design of the first floor storefront should include particular attention to the following:

- The basic elements and proportions of storefront design
- Depth and strength of modeling
- The palette of materials and finishes used in both the structural framework and the storefront window
- The concentration of architectural detail to ensure a rich visual experience
- The complementary use of signage and lettering to enhance the retail and downtown character
- The use of lighting to accentuate visual presence

The first floor façade and retail frontage should be designed to concentrate interest at the street level, using the highest quality of design, detailing and materials.

A building shall be designed to maintain or create the character and transparency of the traditional street level retail frontage.

Building design along a rear façade should be designed with the same attention to detail and materials, but may have more freedom of design expression than the primary façade.

Reflect the traditional lot width in the roof plane.

A building's roofscape should be regarded as an architectural 'elevation,' given its visibility from nearby buildings and mountain slopes.

Side and Rear Façades

1.43 Retail frontage facing onto side courts or rear alleys should follow similar design principles to the street frontage, adjusted for the scale of the space.

- It should be designed with a similar attention to architectural articulation, detail and materials.
- These should have a richness of detail that is inviting to users.

Roofscape

A building's roofscape should be regarded as an architectural 'elevation', given its visibility from nearby buildings and mountain slopes. Specific attention should be paid to creating a varied and interesting roofscape. The form seen from above should reinforce the rhythm and scale of the street façade.

1.44 A larger building should reflect the traditional lot width in the form and variation of its roof. This should be achieved through the following:

- A set back of the top floor from the front façade
- Reflect the traditional lot width in the roof plane

1.45 The roofscape should be designed with the same design attention as the secondary elevations of the building.

- Group and screen mechanical units from view.
- Locate mechanical equipment to the rear of the roof area.
- Position, articulate and design rooftop enclosures or structures to reflect the modulation and character of the building.
- Use materials which complement the design of the building façades.
- Design roof garden areas to be unobtrusive from the street.
- Use 'green roof' design best practice, where feasible.

Architectural Materials

The Commercial Area of Aspen comprises a rich variety of building materials, some of local origin. Predominant within this palette is the range of generally high quality brick, often used with natural stone accent. In contrast, wood is the material for the construction of early residential buildings. The combination, quality and variation traditionally found in these materials within the Commercial Area conveys a sense of durability and permanence. These qualities should be continued.

A range of façade materials should be used to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building. The immediate setting of a historic building will require particular care in the choice of materials.

High quality durable materials gradually express the maturity of the streetscape and community. The palette of materials adopted for all façades of a building should reflect, complement and enhance the evolving form and character of the center of the city.

1.46 High quality, durable materials should be employed.

- The palette of materials should be specified, including samples of materials as required.

1.47 Building materials should have these features:

- Convey the quality and range of materials seen traditionally
- Reduce the perceived scale of the building and enhance visual interest of the facade
- Convey a human scale
- Have proven durability and weathering characteristics within Aspen's climate

High quality, durable materials should be employed.

Materials used in the Commercial Area should be of high quality in durability and finish, convey a human scale, and be used in combination with a traditional masonry palette.

Public art is a way to both identify and reinforce the sense of identity and individuality of the city.

The site and setting of all development should be enhanced by the design of both paving and landscaping within any proposal.

1.48 A building or additions should reflect the quality and variation in materials seen traditionally.

1.49 Where contemporary materials are used they shall be:

- High quality in durability and finish
- Detailed to convey a human scale
- Compatible with a traditional masonry palette

1.50 Materials used for third floor accommodation set back from the street façade(s) should be more subdued than the primary façades.

Paving & Landscaping

Certain settings and buildings within the city are associated with the quality of design and materials in paving and/or landscaping. It is important that this be recognized and retained where it exists, is of historic relevance, or otherwise successful. The site and setting of all development shall be enhanced by design of both paving and landscaping within any proposal.

Proposed enhancements within the public right of way shall form part of a comprehensive improvement proposal for the street or area, and approval will be required.

1.51 Paving and landscaping should be designed to complement and enhance the immediate setting of the building and area.