



# Longmont Downtown Development Authority

528 Main Street  
Longmont, Colorado 80501  
(303) 651-8484

## LONGMONT DOWNTOWN FACADE IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

### THE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AREA: URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The objective of the guidelines for the Historic Commercial Area are to:

- ✓ Preserve the integrity of the historic architectural features of individual buildings.
- ✓ Minimize alterations and new construction that weaken the historic integrity of individual building and of the area at large.
- ✓ Encourage new development that respects and enhances the visual character of the area.
- ✓ Enhance the business opportunities of the area.
- ✓ Preserve the area as the place of the most intense pedestrian activity.

---

### THE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AREA: DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RENOVATION OF HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

**GUIDELINE: FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS, MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER OF THE FACADE.**

- ◆ Analyze the building for its essential elements.
- ◆ Respect the original design of the building.
- ◆ Don't apply theme designs that alter the original character.

**GUIDELINE: RECOMMEND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HORIZONTAL LINES OF FACADES ON THE BLOCK.**

- ◆ Restore or recreate the historic horizontal alignment of architectural features.
- ◆ Consider the established horizontal lines on facades

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN THE LINE OF THE STOREFRONT AT THE SIDEWALK EDGE.**

- ◆ Preserve the glass at this line where feasible.
- ◆ If the alignment of the storefront wall at the sidewalk is not essential to its historical character, it may be recessed. In these cases, the line at the sidewalk should be retained by the use of other elements such as planters, columns or railings.
- ◆ Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer entries.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE STOREFRONT OPENING.**

- ◆ For most historic buildings, large panes at the display window level are appropriate.
- ◆ In historic buildings, avoid multi-pane designs that divide the storefront window into small components.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN *TRADITIONAL* RECESSED ENTRIES WHERE THEY EXIST.**

- ◆ The rhythm of recessed entrances on the street contributes to visual continuity and is encouraged on all buildings. Recessed entries identify the entrance and provide shelter.
- ◆ Use doors with large areas of glass and a painted frame.
- ◆ Avoid unfinished bright aluminum or stainless steel frames.
- ◆ Avoid residential type doors.
- ◆ Finished frames may be metal with anodized or painted finish or varnished or painted wood.
- ◆ Use materials that reflect the integrity of the sidewalk pavement into their recessed entryway.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN THE KICKPLATE BELOW WINDOW.**

- ◆ For buildings with historic significance restore the original from documentary evidence if possible.
- ◆ If original information is not available, develop a new simplified design that retains the original character of the kickplate.
- ◆ For renovations where there is no documentary evidence, appropriate kickplate materials are: painted wood, glazed tile or painted metal in muted tones.
- ◆ Where adjacent kickplates align in appropriate position, align the kickplate with those of other building in the block. This element is essential on most historic buildings and is encouraged on all other buildings.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN *TRADITIONAL* TRANSOM.**

- ◆ Use glass if possible. Clear glass is generally preferred.
- ◆ Use the panel as a place for a sign or decorative panel if the use of glass is not feasible.
- ◆ Retain the original proportions of the opening.
- ◆ If the framing that defines the transom is now removed, consider re-establishing it in a new design.
- ◆ If the interior ceiling is now lower than the transomline, pull the dropped ceiling back from the window to maintain its historical dimensions.
- ◆ Where adjacent transoms align in the appropriate position, align the transom framing with others on the block.
- ◆ Keep the overall character of the transom area as a dark panel, similar to glass.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN TRADITIONAL SIZE AND SHAPE OF UPPER STORY WINDOWS.**

- ◆ Consider re-opening upper story windows if they are presently blocked.
- ◆ If lowered ceilings are necessary, pull the dropped ceiling back from the window.

**GUIDELINE: CONSIDER AWNINGS TO PROVIDE DEPTH TO THE FAÇADE AND TO SHADE THE STOREFRONT GLASS.**

- ◆ Fit the awning to the dimensions of the storefront opening to emphasize these proportions. It should not obscure important details. An eight-foot clearance from the sidewalk to the awning is required.
- ◆ Align awnings with others on the block where appropriate. This particularly applies to the bottom line of the awning. Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom or to align with the framing that separates the transom from the main display window.
- ◆ The valence may be used for a sign. Symbols are encouraged on the main surface of the awning.
- ◆ Fabric awnings are encouraged. These may be operable or fixed. Metal shed roof awnings may be appropriate materials for awnings or canopies.
- ◆ Coordinate the color for the awning with the color scheme of the entire building front.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN TRADITIONAL ORNAMENTATION AND DETAILS OF THE FAÇADE.**

- ◆ Where portions of details have been removed, refer to photographic evidence of the earlier condition, and look for details that may have been removed and stored in the building.
- ◆ Where exact reconstruction is not practical, simplified contemporary interpretations of the original details are encouraged.
- ◆ Maintain the major lines of the original detail.
- ◆ New trim materials should be visually compatible with the original.
- ◆ Preservation or restoration of ornamental cornices is especially encouraged. Other decorative elements to be respected include belt cornices, pilasters, window arches and frames.

**GUIDELINE: RETAIN THE TRADITIONAL PROPORTIONS OF THE MAIN FAÇADE.**

- ◆ Consider the proportions of the original façade or surrounding buildings when doing additions to building.

**GUIDELINE: USE BUILDING MATERIALS THAT ARE FAMILIAR IN THEIR DIMENSIONS AND THAT CAN BE REPEATED TO HELP ESTABLISH A SENSE OF SCALE FOR NEW BUILDINGS.**

**GUIDELINE: USE STANDARD-SIZED BUILDING COMPONENTS THAT HELP ESTABLISH APPARENT SCALE.**

- ◆ Doors, hardware, roof overhangs, siding, molding, light fixtures and details easily affect the scale of the buildings and should be considered carefully.
- ◆ Avoid attempts to make a small building look larger than it is.

**GUIDELINE: FOR ADDITIONS TO ROOFS OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF TWO STORIES, MAINTAIN THE PERCEIVED BUILDING HEIGHT OF THE MAIN FAÇADE.**

- ◆ If new floors are added to historic structures, they should be set back so that the original building height, as seen from the street, is maintained.

**GUIDELINE: USE MATERIALS FOR AN ADDITION THAT ARE SIMILAR IN COLOR AND TEXTURE TO THOSE ON THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE.**

**GUIDELINE: IMPROVE THE REAR OF BUILDINGS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC ACCESS FROM PARKING LOTS AND ALLEYS.**

- ◆ Design concepts that relate to the building front are encouraged.
- ◆ Courtyards are encouraged.
- ◆ Use signs and lighting to identify rear entrances.

**GUIDELINE: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE COLOR SCHEME FOR THE ENTIRE BUILDING FRONT THAT WILL CONVEY A UNIFIED IMAGE.**

- ◆ Use a muted base color to establish a uniform background.
- ◆ Use color to coordinate façade elements. Use same color on similar elements such as window frames to show that they are all part of the same façade and to reinforce the patterns that the repetition of these elements expresses.
- ◆ Avoid color schemes that visually separate the upper floors from the first floor, or that divide the building into areas that do not reflect architectural divisions.
- ◆ Reserve bright colors for special accents such as to emphasize entryways or to highlight special ornamentation.

---

**THE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AREA: DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND REMODEL OF NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS.**

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN UPPER AND LOWER FLOORS.**

- ◆ This difference is expressed in the proportions of storefront windows to upper story windows. The first floor is primarily transparent, whereas the upper floor is traditionally more solid with smaller openings.
- ◆ On streets where pedestrian orientation is rated high, (street hierarchy categories A and B) a minimum of 65% of the first floor should be glass. See Streetscape Plan.

**GUIDELINE: REINFORCE THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF UPPER STORY WINDOWS.**

- ◆ Use vertically proportioned windows similar in size and shape to those used historically or consider using other architectural elements to establish a similar rhythm.

**GUIDELINE: MAINTAIN THE RHYTHM ESTABLISHED BY THE REPETITION OF STANDARD FAÇADE WIDTHS.**

- ◆ The dominant proportion is a 25-foot façade width, established by the traditional lot dimensions. This should be expressed in new designs.
- ◆ Maintain this rhythm in buildings for a single lot, and for those that extend over more than one lot.
- ◆ Try not to eliminate traditional established breaks that occur between buildings, such as alleys.
- ◆ Direct access to shops and offices from the street can help maintain the established street rhythm, as well as support interesting street activity.

**GUIDELINE: INCORPORATE TRADITIONAL FAÇADE COMPONENTS IN NEW DESIGNS.**

**Consider including some or all of these elements:**

- ◆ Kickplate as a base to the store front. Align the height with others in the block when possible.
- ◆ First floor display window. Align with height of others in the block when others are appropriately placed.
- ◆ Transom. Align with others when others are appropriately placed.
- ◆ Recessed entry.
- ◆ Sign Band.

**GUIDELINE: THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE INAPPROPRIATE IN THE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AREA:**

- ◆ Coarsely finished, “rustic” materials such as wood shakes, shingles, barn wood or stained fir plywood. Poorly crafted or “rustic” woodworking and finishing techniques.
- ◆ Indoor-outdoor carpeting.
- ◆ Corrugated metal.
- ◆ Corrugated fiberglass.
- ◆ Moss rock
- ◆ “Antique” or old brick with partial paint, mottled light variegated brick, oversized brick and white brick mortar.
- ◆ Ornate wrought-iron, “New Orleans” style grille and rail work.
- ◆ Stucco, treated as “hacienda” or “Mediterranean” texture.
- ◆ Astro-turf.
- ◆ Expanded metal
- ◆ Silver or clear anodized aluminum sheets.
- ◆ Silver or clear aluminum extrusions for windows and doorways.
- ◆ Residential type sliding glass doors.

- ◆ Imitation wood siding.
- ◆ Flat or molded plastic sheeting in quantities exceeding five square feet when used as primary façade materials.
- ◆ Imitation metal “rock work”.
- ◆ Imitation masonry of any kind.
- ◆ Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material.
- ◆ Mirror or metallized reflective glass in quantities exceeding ten square feet.

**GUIDELINE: DEVELOP A LIGHTING PLAN THAT WILL ENHANCE THE FRONT AND REAR OF THE BUILDING.**

- ◆ External lighting makes possible the illumination of architectural features
- ◆ The light level should not over power the façade or other signs on the street.
- ◆ Light source should be shielded.
- ◆ Neon is acceptable if it does not obscure architectural details or over illuminate display windows.
- ◆ Use of down lighting or up lighting enhances character of building.