



Design Considerations for Mission Street

Adopted by Resolution of the
Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission
on July 2, 2009

and

Endorsed by the
Mt. Pleasant City Commission
on August 24, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Design Considerations for Mission Street are intended to work in conjunction with the Mission Redevelopment Overlay Zone to promote the redevelopment and rehabilitation of buildings and properties along and adjacent to Mission Street. The objective of the Design Considerations is to help define the design elements that will result in a more preferred form of development than can be achieved through conventional zoning.

The preferred form of development is illustrated on the pages that follow and includes those projects that advance the following objectives:

- Improved building appearance
- Use of durable building materials, such as brick masonry
- Increased pedestrian accommodations and facilities
- Less required parking
- Safe and efficient vehicle circulation
- Appropriate transitions to adjoining single-family residential
- Signs of a compatible size and materials
- Buildings located closer to the street
- Multiple story buildings
- Varied and interesting architectural styles and features
- Increased building transparency on the first floors
- Mixed uses

Under the terms and conditions of the Mission Redevelopment Overlay Zone, the Planning Commission may consider modifying some of the conventional zoning standards to provide flexibility and encourage innovation in design in order to assist applicants in providing projects that meet the Design Considerations.

This document is broken into three parts. The first two describe the Design Guidelines that will accomplish the objectives listed above. Separate guidelines are offered for North Mission Street, which runs between Pickard Street and High Street, and for South Mission Street, between High Street and the southern border of the City. These separate guidelines are intended to address the unique characteristics of the two sections of Mission Street.

While there is some cross-over between the two sections, North Mission is generally characterized by smaller parcels, with buildings closer to single-family residences. The businesses in this area tend to be locally owned. South Mission tends to include more national retailers. The properties are generally larger with greater separation to single-family neighborhoods. Much of South Mission adjoins the campus of Central Michigan University.

The third section of this document includes photographs to help illustrate examples of preferred development types. These photos are contrasted with similar examples of more conventional types of development. The photos are intended to illustrate practical applications of the Design Considerations.

Taken together, these Design Considerations and the Mission Redevelopment Overlay Zone are intended to introduce greater flexibility in the development review process to diversify the economic base of the Mission Street area and to encourage its revitalization.

I. DESIGN GUIDELINES—NORTH MISSION STREET

North Mission Street is defined by Pickard Street on the north and High Street on the south. It is characterized by buildings that tend to be close to the street located on smaller parcels. The buildings are generally close to the adjoining single family homes. Many of the businesses in this area are locally owned. The following design guidelines are intended to address the unique characteristics of properties in the North Mission Street area.

A. Building Height and Setbacks

1. Building heights should generally be limited to no more than 35 feet, provided that structural features and architectural elements that enhance the character of the building may be taller (Figure I-1).
2. Building setbacks from Mission Street may be reduced to match the character of existing buildings in the vicinity of the site (Figure I-2).
3. Reduced building setbacks are especially encouraged near intersections to create an appropriate building presence.

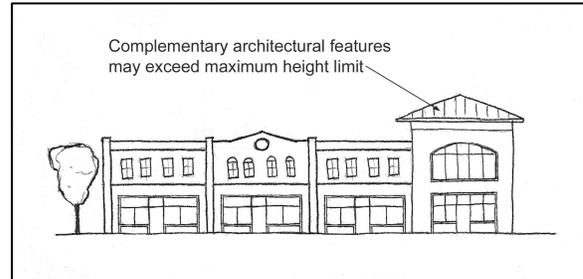


Figure I-1

B. Residential Transitions

1. Building height and massing should relate to adjacent residential properties; building heights should decrease and upper stories stepped back as businesses are placed closer to homes (Figure I-3).
2. High intensity uses, such as national chains with high customer volumes or auto-oriented and drive-through uses, should be placed away from adjoining homes and nearer to Mission St.
3. Well-designed masonry walls should be utilized to limit noise and aesthetic impacts adjacent to homes (Figure I-4).
4. Walls should be supplemented with landscaping that is appropriately designed and installed to limit impacts of light and noise. Landscaping can also enhance privacy and screen views from upper story windows to adjoining homes (Figure I-4).

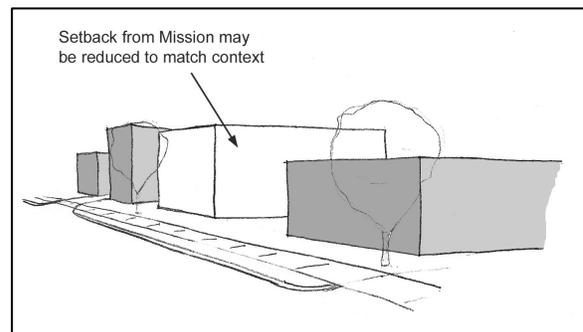


Figure I-2

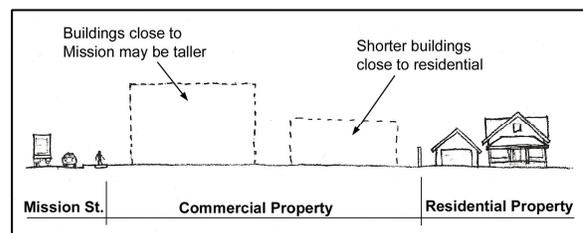


Figure I-3

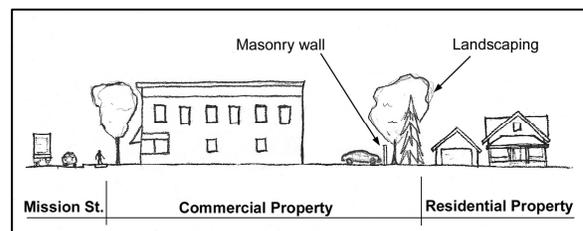


Figure I-4

5. Trash receptacles should be placed and screened to limit the visual, noise, and other potential impacts on existing homes.

C. Building Design

1. Street facades will be constructed primarily of glass, brick masonry and other high quality durable materials, such as cut stone, cast stone, or stucco.
2. Street facades will include architectural features that are designed to a pedestrian scale, such as awnings and canopies (Figure I-5).

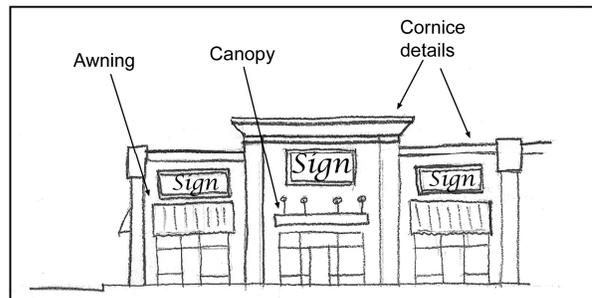


Figure I-5

3. Street facades should include sufficient glass to make businesses welcoming and to increase the “eyes on the street.”
4. Rear building facades in close proximity to single family homes will be appropriately designed with materials and finishes that are consistent with the neighboring properties. Blank walls with concrete block and service doors are not considered compatible.

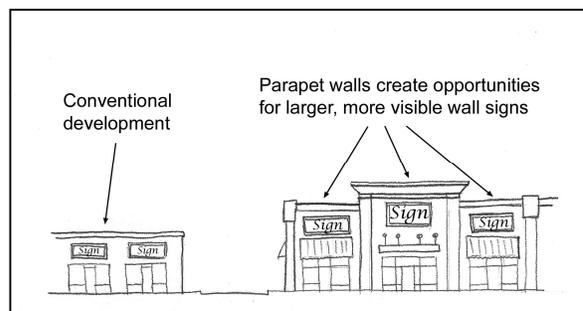


Figure I-6

5. Variation in the elevation of facades is strongly encouraged to help break up long building expanses.
6. Parapet walls along street elevations may be used to create the appearance of height and massing and to create areas for ample wall signs (Figure I-6).
7. Cornice details along the upper portions of walls and variations in building materials improve the appearance and visual interest of buildings (Figure I-5).

D. Parking Design

1. Parking is encouraged in side yards or, when it will not adversely impact adjoining homes, in rear yards.
2. When parking is placed in front yards or along side streets that intersect Mission

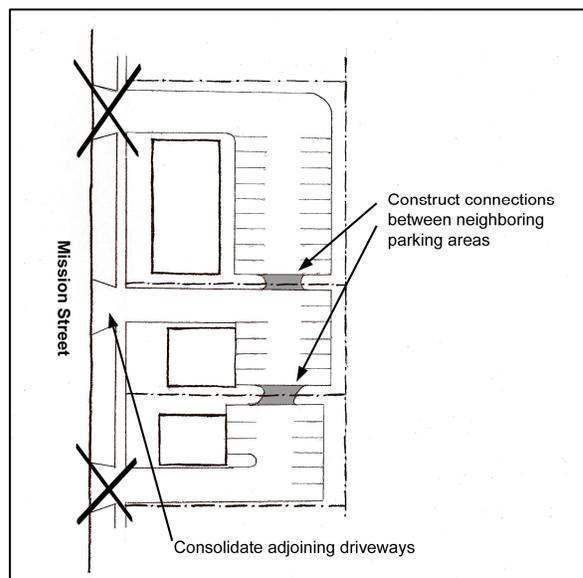


Figure I-7

Street, it should be appropriately screened with decorative masonry and metal walls/fences, combined with landscaping or other effective screening materials.

3. Parking in rear yards should also be screened from adjoining residential uses (Figure I-4).
4. Where possible, curb cuts should be consolidated and eliminated. Also, cross-connections between properties are encouraged (Figure I-7).
5. The use of shared parking areas between adjoining uses is encouraged, especially where it will reduce the overall area devoted to parking (Figure I-8).

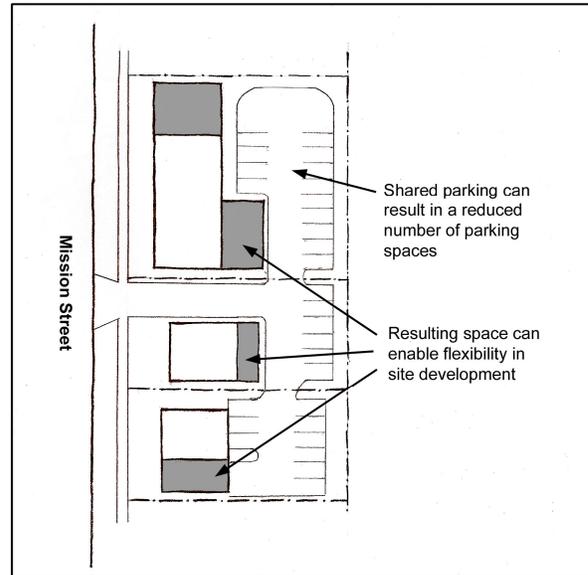


Figure I-8

6. Properly designed on-street parking will be considered along the side streets that intersect Mission Street and may count toward off-street parking requirements. On-street parking should be designed to serve multiple properties and to minimize adverse impacts on adjoining residential properties.
7. Construction of off-site parking on neighboring properties to meet parking needs will be considered (Figure I-9).
8. Mission Street driveways should be eliminated where feasible when properties extend a full block and adjoin side streets on both sides.

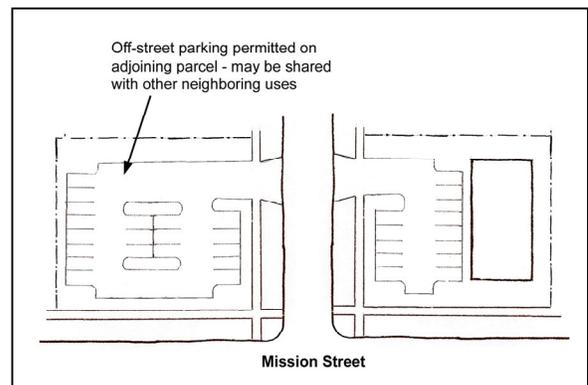


Figure I-9

E. Landscaping

1. Perimeter site landscaping shall be appropriate to the overall design of the site.
2. Greenbelt widths and landscape materials along street frontages may be reduced when buildings are well designed and parking is appropriately screened (Figure I-10).

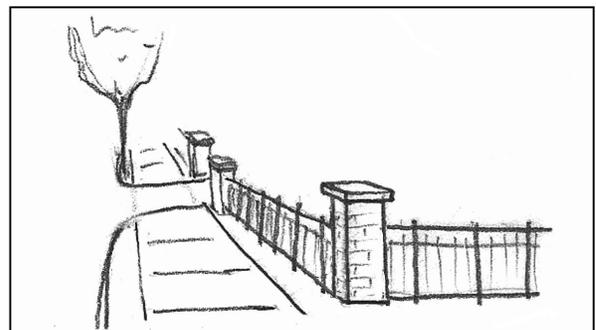


Figure I-10

3. Where greenbelts are reduced landscaping should be provided at the building that is complimentary in type and scale.
4. Rear yard landscaping shall be appropriate to the use of the property, minimizing aesthetic, sound, and light impacts on adjoining residential properties and promoting privacy (Figure I-11).

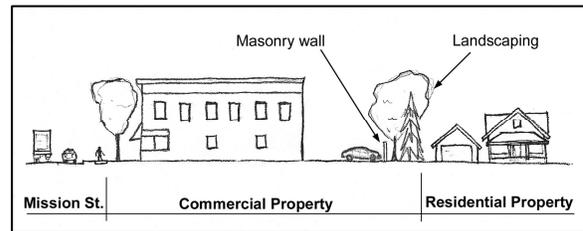


Figure I-11

F. Pedestrian Facilities

1. Sites shall include appropriate and well designed connections to pedestrian and bike facilities in adjacent public rights-of-way and adjoining properties (Figure I-12).
2. Ample sidewalks should be provided on private property to allow pedestrians to safely and directly circulate through commercial developments.
3. Pedestrian connections should be provided between neighboring properties. Connections via public rights-of-way may need to be supplemented with connections between private properties.

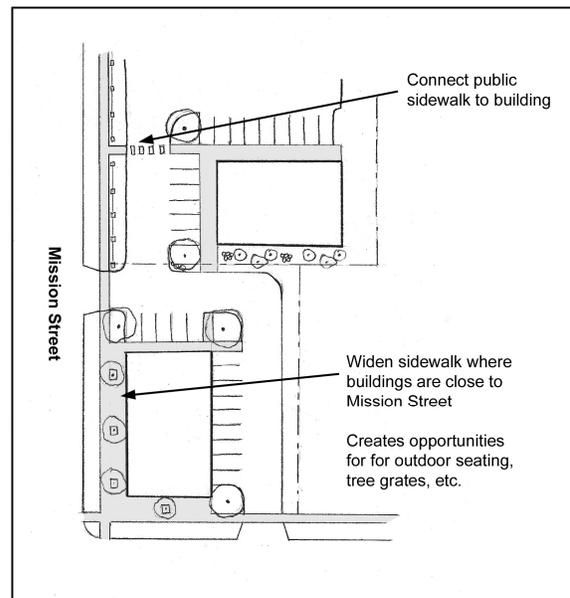


Figure I-12

G. Signs

1. Monument and pedestal style signs are preferred over freestanding pylon signs (Figure I-13).
2. Where practical, freestanding signs should be constructed of similar or compatible materials to those used on the building to promote a cohesive appearance (Figure I-13).
3. Sign height should relate to the height of the building.
4. The size of the sign should have a scale that relates to the development size and the building size.
5. The use of development or branding signs to identify multi-tenant or multi-business projects is encouraged (Figure I-13).

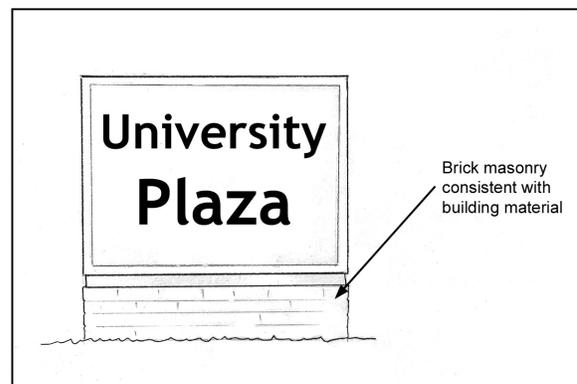


Figure I-13

6. Development and/or shopping center signs should be appropriately designed and avoid overly simplistic design (i.e. a sign face on a single pylon).
7. The use of wall signs is strongly encouraged.
8. The size and scale of wall signs should have a desirable relationship to the building face to which it is attached (Figure I-14).

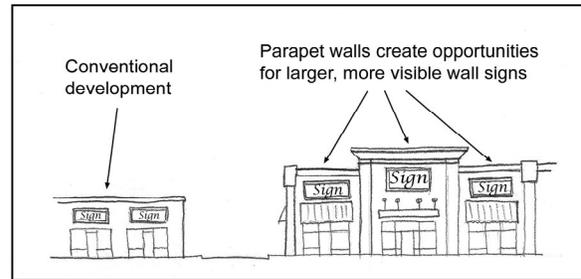


Figure I-14

Note: Additional direction regarding signs can be found in excerpts of the Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission Sign Committee report (pages 3 through 5) found in the attached Appendix 1.

II. DESIGN GUIDELINES—SOUTH MISSION STREET

South Mission Street is defined by High Street on the north and the City boundary at Bluegrass Street on the south. It is characterized by buildings that tend to be close to the street located on smaller parcels. There tends to be a higher concentration of national retailers in this area than along North Mission. In addition, the parcels tend to be larger with greater setbacks from the street. The following design guidelines are intended to address the unique characteristics of properties in the South Mission Street area.

A. Building Height and Setbacks

1. Building heights may be increased to accommodate mixed uses and unique architectural features.
2. Building setbacks from Mission Street may be reduced where building materials and massing are appropriate to the scale of the street and sidewalk (Figure II-1).
3. Reduced building setbacks are especially encouraged near intersections to create an appropriate building presence and to reinforce important intersections (Figure II-1).
4. Increased upper floor setbacks should be utilized as necessary to maintain an appropriate building scale at the street (Figure II-2).

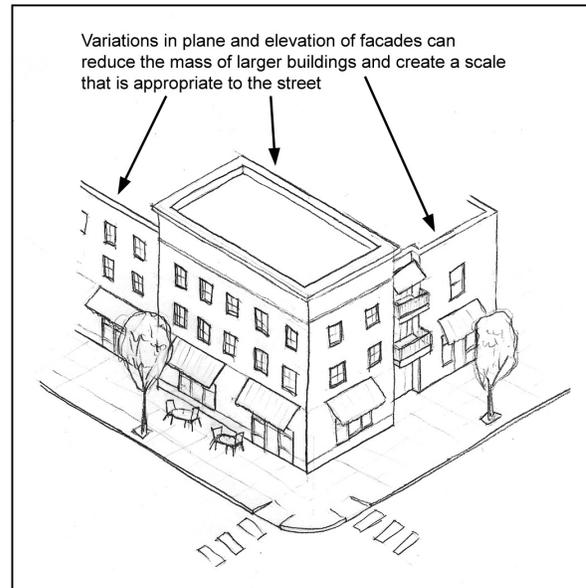


Figure II-1

B. Residential Transitions

1. Building height and massing should relate to adjacent residential properties; building heights should decrease and upper stories stepped back as businesses are placed closer to homes (Figure II-3).
2. High intensity uses, such as national chains with high customer volumes or auto-oriented and drive-through uses, should be placed away from adjoining homes and nearer to Mission St.
3. Well-designed masonry walls should be utilized to limit noise and aesthetic impacts adjacent to homes (Figure II-4).

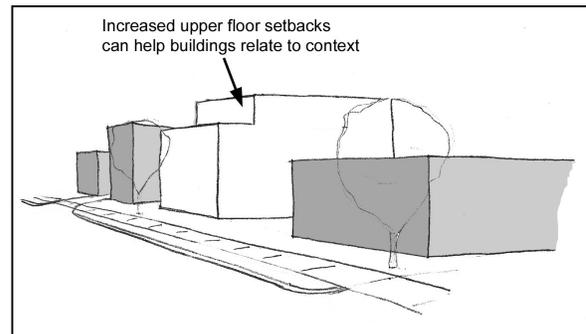


Figure II-2

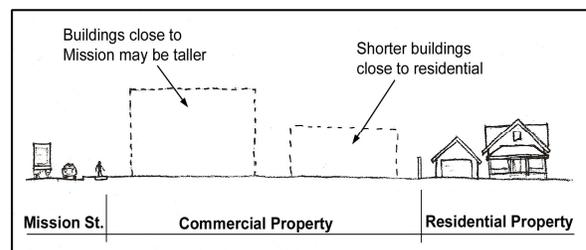


Figure II-3

- 4. Walls should be supplemented with landscaping that is appropriately designed and installed to limit impacts of light and noise. Landscaping can also enhance privacy and screen views from upper story windows to adjoining homes (Figure II-4).
- 5. Trash receptacles should be placed and screened to limit the visual, noise, and other potential impacts on existing homes.

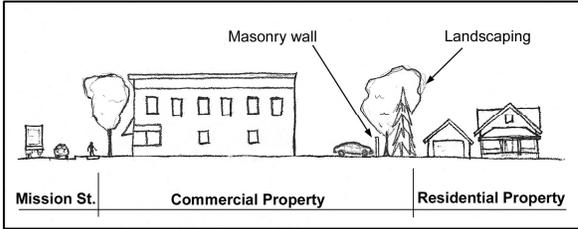


Figure II-4

C. Building Design

- 1. Street facades will be constructed primarily of glass, brick masonry and other high quality durable materials, such as cut stone, cast stone, or stucco.
- 2. Street facades will include architectural features that are designed to a pedestrian scale, such as awnings and canopies (Figure II-5).
- 3. Street facades should include sufficient glass to make businesses welcoming and to increase the “eyes on the street.”
- 4. Rear building facades in close proximity to single family homes will be appropriately designed with materials and finishes that are consistent with the neighboring properties. Blank walls with concrete block and service doors are not considered compatible.
- 5. Variation in the elevation of facades is strongly encouraged to help break up long building expanses.
- 6. Parapet walls along street elevations may be used to create the appearance of height and massing and to create areas for ample wall signs (Figure II-6).
- 7. Cornice details along the upper portions of walls and variations in building materials improve the appearance and visual interest of buildings (Figure II-5).

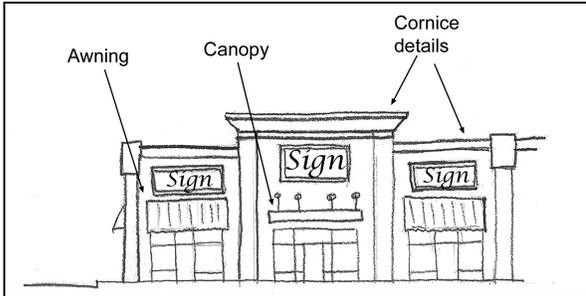


Figure II-5

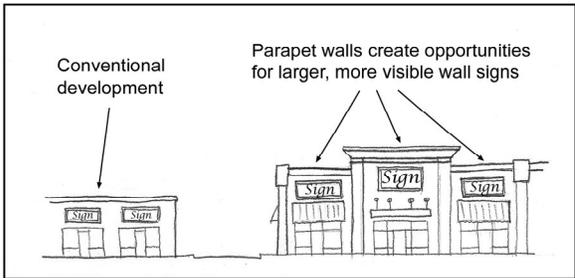


Figure II-6

D. Parking Design

1. Parking is encouraged in side yards or, when it will not adversely impact adjoining homes, in rear yards.
2. When parking is placed in front yards or along side streets that intersect Mission Street, it should be appropriately screened with decorative masonry and metal walls/fences, combined with landscaping or other effective screening materials.
3. Parking in rear yards should also be screened from adjoining residential uses (Figure II-4).
4. Where possible, curb cuts should be consolidated and eliminated. Also, cross-connections between properties are encouraged (Figure II-7).
5. The use of shared parking areas between adjoining uses is encouraged, especially where it will reduce the overall area devoted to parking (Figure II-8).
6. Properly designed on-street parking will be considered along the side streets that intersect Mission Street and may count toward off-street parking requirements. On-street parking should be designed to serve multiple properties and to minimize adverse impacts on adjoining residential properties.
7. Construction of off-site parking on neighboring properties to meet parking needs will be considered (Figure II-9).
8. Mission Street driveways should be eliminated where feasible when properties extend a full block and adjoin side streets on both sides.
9. Whenever feasible, projects should be designed to complement and improve the development of a connected network of

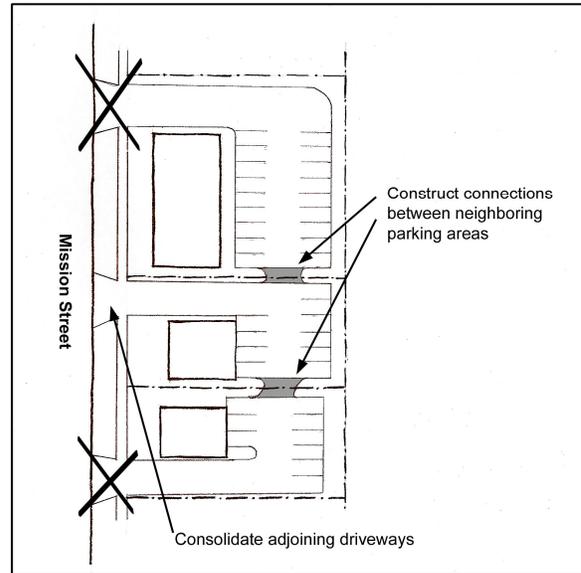


Figure II-7

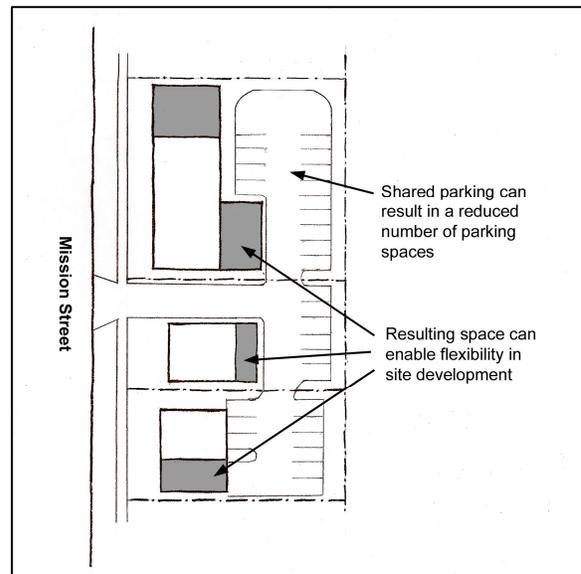


Figure II-8

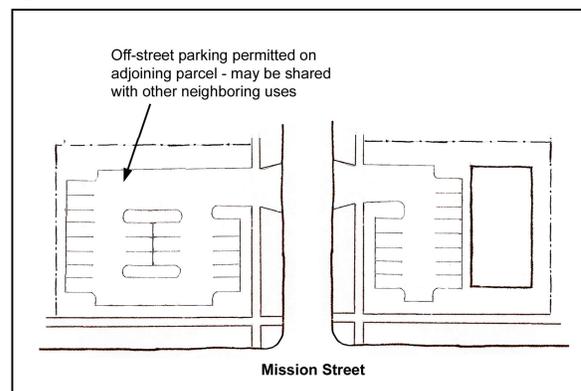


Figure II-9

grid streets along both sides of Mission Street.

E. Landscaping

1. Perimeter site landscaping shall be appropriate to the overall design of the site.
2. Greenbelt widths and landscape materials along street frontages may be reduced when buildings are well designed and parking is appropriately screened and/or when landscaping is placed in the parking lot to effectively eliminate the appearance of large blocks of parking spaces (Figure II-10).
3. Where greenbelts are reduced landscaping should be provided at the building that is complimentary in type and scale.
4. Rear yard landscaping shall be appropriate to the use of the property, minimizing aesthetic, sound, and light impacts on adjoining residential properties and promoting privacy (Figure II-11).

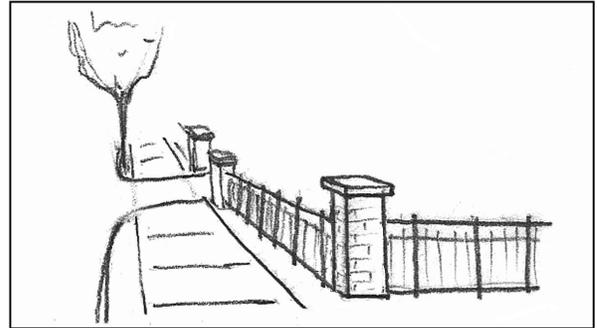


Figure II-10

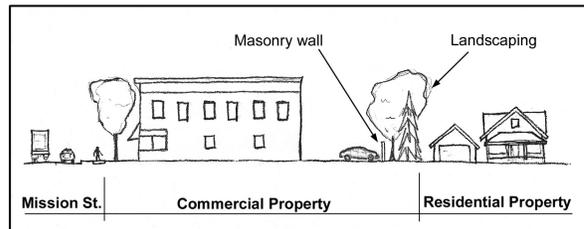


Figure II-11

F. Pedestrian Facilities

1. Sites shall include appropriate and well designed connections to pedestrian and bike facilities in adjacent public rights-of-way and adjoining properties (Figure II-12).
2. Ample sidewalks should be provided on private property to allow pedestrians to safely and directly circulate through commercial developments.
3. Pedestrian connections should be provided between neighboring properties. Connections via public rights-of-way may need to be supplemented with connections between private properties.

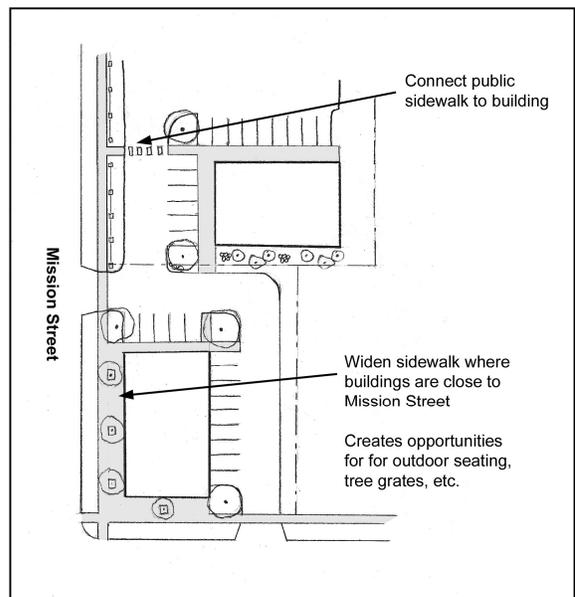


Figure II-12

G. Signs

1. Monument and pedestal style signs are preferred over freestanding pylon signs (Figure II-13).
2. Where practical, freestanding signs should be constructed of similar or compatible materials to those used on the building to promote a cohesive appearance (Figure II-13).
3. Sign height should relate to the height of the building.
4. The size of the sign should have a scale that relates to the development size and the building size.
5. The use of development or branding signs to identify multi-tenant or multi-business projects is encouraged (Figure II-13).
6. Development and/or shopping center signs should be appropriately designed and avoid overly simplistic design (i.e. a sign face on a single pylon).
7. The use of wall signs is strongly encouraged.
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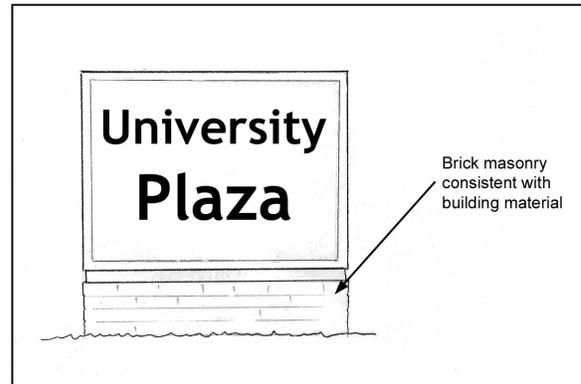


Figure II-13

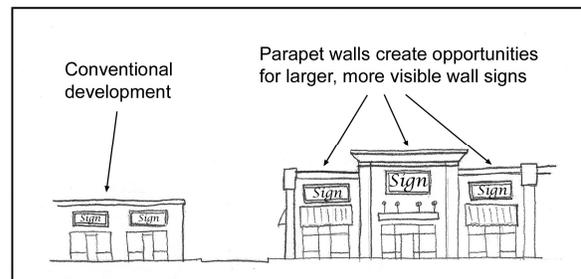


Figure II-14

Note: Additional direction regarding signs can be found in excerpts of the Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission Sign Committee report (pages 3 through 5) found in the attached Appendix 1.

III. PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT TYPES

This section uses photographs and sketches of built and approved projects to illustrate the types of design features that would be preferred under these guidelines. Illustrations of more conventional developments are also shown to provide contrast and to emphasize the types of development that are encouraged.

Preferred Development:

Building Design and Facades



- Masonry construction
- Good transparency, with large windows at the street
- Variation to the street elevation
- Relief and texture to the façade



- Variation in building material, with a predominance of glass and masonry
- Awnings and building massing create a pedestrian scale



- Variation in height of elevation and building materials create visual interest
- Predominance of glass at the pedestrian level
- Architectural features like awnings designed to a pedestrian scale
- Variation in height of elevation
- Primarily brick masonry construction



- Awnings designed to a pedestrian scale
- Large windows provide transparency to street
- Predominantly brick masonry construction; variation in building material creates visual interest
- Good use of cornice details
- Parapet wall creates appearance of building height



- Mixed use building has good articulation of commercial areas on first floor and upper story residential
- Good variation in use and treatment of brick masonry
- Awnings maintain pedestrian scale on large building
- Good transparency at the street
- Public sidewalk is an extension of the outdoor eating area

Conventional Development:
Building Design and Facades



- Large, continuous overhang creates an imposing street presence to pedestrians
- Lacks variation in materials, elevation
- No cornice details
- Lacking pedestrian scale features



- Predominantly block masonry construction
- Lacks features to promote a pedestrian scale (i.e. canopies, awnings)
- Variation in the height of the elevation and/or building materials could break up the length of the street elevation
- Cornice details could add visual interest
- Side street elevation is left blank

Preferred Development:
Landscaping and Screening



- Brick masonry wall and landscaping utilized to screen views of parking placed between the building and the street
- Materials provide some separation between the parking area and the public sidewalk



- Brick masonry wall screens views from the street of parking area placed beside the building.
- Screening should be coordinated with public and private design features such as lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks
- Materials should complement those of the adjoining building(s)



- Screening may be accomplished with decorative fencing used in conjunction with brick masonry



- Dumpster enclosure completely screens views of the containers
- Design and materials complement the design and materials of the building



- Service and loading area design consistent with remainder of building
- Screen wall obscures services and equipment



- Appropriately designed foundation plantings may be considered for reduced greenbelt landscaping

Conventional Development:
Landscaping and Screening



- Parking area unscreened from street
- No separation between vehicle parking and sidewalk
- Vehicles permitted to overhang the sidewalk



- Waste receptacle open to view from property and surrounding properties

Preferred Development:
Pedestrian Facilities



- Pedestrians accommodated from the sidewalk to the building
- Pedestrian connection avoids conflicts with on-site vehicle circulation



- Pedestrian connection between commercial development and neighboring properties
- Gateway feature defines the separation between the commercial area and adjoining uses

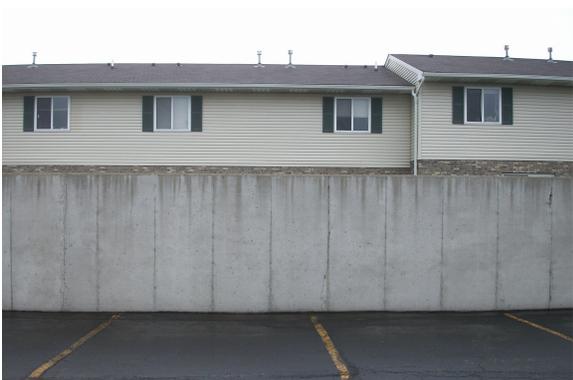


- Facilities like bike stands and shelters incorporated into the site design

Conventional Development:
Pedestrian Facilities



- Pedestrian connection needed but not constructed



- A pedestrian access could encourage increased walking and fewer car trips.
- Pedestrian connection should be designed to coordinate with the design and layout of pedestrian facilities on the neighboring property.
- While concrete is functional and durable, a material like brick would be more compatible.

**Preferred Development:
Signs**



- Monument and pedestal style signs are preferred over pylon signs
- Brick masonry is consistent with preferred building material



- Parapet walls and increased building heights create opportunities for larger, more visible wall signs
- Wall sign is well proportioned to the building face
- The use of wall signs in lieu of large freestanding signs is encouraged



- Where larger shopping center signs are warranted, materials should complement building materials
- Size and scale of larger signs should relate to the development and building size

Conventional Development:
Signs



- Overly simplistic design (i.e. sign faces on a single pole)



- Low elevation leaves wall signs crowded and difficult to read

Mission-Pickard

The signage needs for the Mission-Pickard corridor vary greatly from one location to another. For example, the south end of Mission Street (Preston Street south to the City limits) has a high proportion of franchise and chain locations. The north end of Mission Street (High Street to Pickard Street) has fewer franchise locations and more local/regional businesses. As a general observation the structures housing the businesses located on north Mission Street are also closer to the public right-of-way than those on south Mission Street. On the other hand, Pickard Street has a more uniform and consistent structure to public right-of-way placing.



Both streets also feature several plazas/mini-malls and “big box” commercial developments. Current signage regulation has allowed generous signage between the developed commercial areas and the public right-of-way. These signs often show every business located in the development on large sign complexes. This has resulted in signs of increased height, or multiple sign complexes to accommodate every tenant in the development. These large sign structures in turn require greater lighting, and due to their height can distract a driver’s attention off from the roadway.

In contrast to the signage found around the Mt. Pleasant community, most communities visited handle signage for these type developments in a different manner. By and large our committee found that a common approach taken today by similar communities is to brand the development site.



Branding the development location by either a specific name such as the “Stadium Mall;” or by the primary business “Home Depot Plaza”, fewer signs are required on site. The result is a much cleaner appearance of the development from the public right-of-way. By allowing fewer signs along the public right-of-way, the

individual stores are given greater regulatory flexibility in terms of signage on the structure itself.

When signs for larger development complexes are branded, the resulting change in signage regulation allow for all signs along the right-of-way to in turn be brought closer to the ground. The following examples show how this looks:



In terms of developing future regulations for signage along the Mission-Pickard commercial corridor, the Committee recommends the following goals:

- Overall sign height should be reduced. Maximum height allowed should be reflective on the nature of the public right-of-way (traffic speed, structure placement, sight lines...)
- Overall sign square footage should be reduced.
- Additional lighting should be minimized. Large panels of internally illuminated signs should be dark in color to reduce light pollution.
- Additional emphasis should be given to landscaping, theme, and harmony with the larger development area as part of the sign’s appearance along the public right-of-way.
- Shopping centers, plazas, big box development, and other commercial centers should be “branded,” and signage along the right-of-way minimized while granting greater flexibility for signage physically located on the structures in the development.
- The street address of the location should be incorporated into the sign design.

