

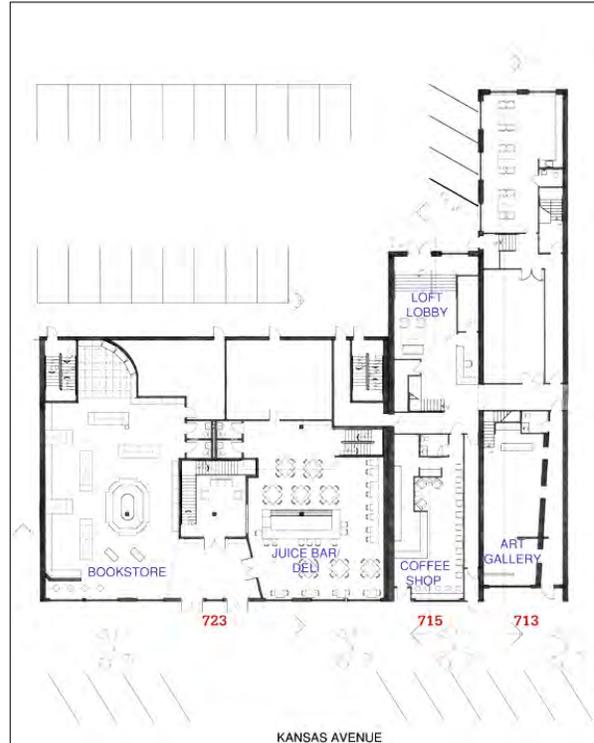
## DOWNTOWN TOPEKA URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES APPLICABLE IN ZONING DISTRICTS D-1, D2, D3

### Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide the regulatory authority to ensure that new construction and renovation of existing structures is consistent with the established urban form of Downtown. These guidelines are to be used as criteria for the design of new public and private projects and to be utilized in the evaluation of new projects. These guidelines seek to balance private property rights against the public interest of protecting the appearance and existing investments Downtown.

The design guidelines offer a vision for an approach to downtown design that can be beneficial both to developers and to the community. The concepts for downtown development encourage the highest level of design quality and creativity while emphasizing key downtown design concepts such as, but not limited to:

- Maintaining the street wall at the front property line;
- enhancing the design of street façades;
- ensuring pedestrian compatibility;
- designing public spaces at a pedestrian-scale;
- creating visual interest; and
- maintaining design integrity and compatibility with surrounding structures.



A mix of uses (including office, retail, housing, or other uses) within a given project is encouraged, whether it is a single building or a redevelopment district.

### Applicability

These guidelines apply to the D-1 Zoning District with the exception of projects located within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District, which must follow the applicable design guidelines for that historic district rather than the D-1 guidelines. Within the boundaries of the D-1 Zoning District's designated National Register Historic Districts, these guidelines are amended by separate design guidelines as adopted. Any project within the D-1 Zoning District requiring a building permit must comply with approved design guidelines.

The guidelines established herein are not intended to restrict creative solutions. The D-1 guidelines describe ways to achieve the stated purpose of the guidelines and offer flexibility in meeting the key concepts for good downtown design. Not all guidelines will or are intended to be met. The "should", "recommended", or "encouraged" statements offer flexibility and indicate

that the city is open to design features that are equal to or better than those stated, so long as the intent is satisfied.

Compliance with the guidelines will be determined in conjunction with the review and approval of a development site plan, all in accordance with adopted City of Topeka Site Plan regulations. Submission of plans for all elevations of a proposed building is required.

### **Waiver/Exception**

Relief from the application of certain design guidelines may be granted by the Planning Director if warranted by public safety, site constraints, and functionality considerations.

### **Definitions**

If in the course of administration of these guidelines, a question arises as to the meaning of any word, phrase, or section, the interpretation thereof shall be given by the Director of the Planning Department.

## **INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

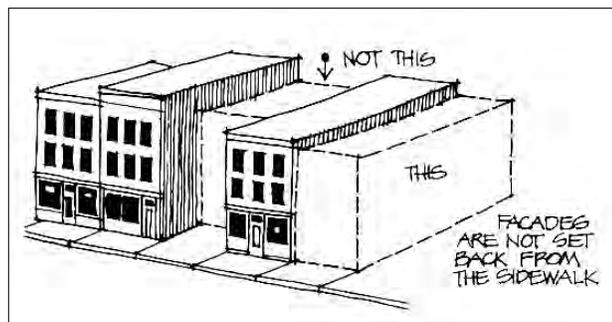
1. Exterior additions to existing buildings or adjacent infill construction should be compatible with the character of the site, and take into account the size, proportions, façade composition, rhythm and proportion of openings, materials, and colors of neighboring buildings.

Techniques to help ensure compatibility with neighboring buildings include:

- Maintaining the street wall by locating the new building at the sidewalk;
  - Ensuring the street level façade fits in contextually with neighboring properties;
  - Differentiating the upper stories of the building from the street level facade by setting back the upper stories at the plane above the street level façade, and;
  - Using different wall materials than the lower facade.
2. New on-site parking, loading docks or ramps should be designed to be unobtrusive and compatible with the primary use of the site. On-site parking should not be located along or adjacent to the street frontage. In those instances where parking is located along a street frontage, efforts to maintain the street wall will be imperative. Options include landscaping, low walls, etc.

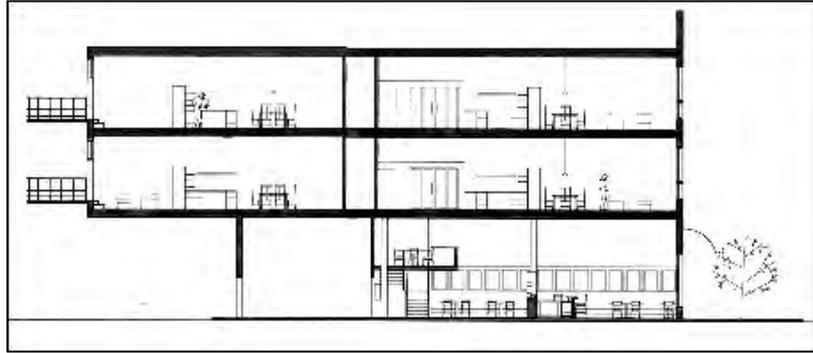
## **STREET ORIENTATION**

1. Buildings should generally be built up to the edge of the sidewalk in a consistent plane with the other buildings on the street.
2. Other street-level setbacks, plazas and widened sidewalks from the building line should be strategically placed in accordance with an overall open space plan. The new open spaces should be located to relate to other land uses such as retail, entertainment and transit routes.



## STREET LEVEL FORM

1. The street frontage of buildings should contain public or semi-public uses such as commercial/office, retail or entertainment uses with direct entry from the street. Non-public/semi-public uses are appropriate on the first floor if located to the rear of the street frontage use.



2. New buildings should express a principal public façade and entrance on the adjacent street, and entries from parking facilities should be considered as secondary.
3. Retail activities within buildings should be oriented towards the street and have direct access from sidewalks through storefront entries.
4. Ground floor storefront restaurants are encouraged to have a strong connection between the interior of the structure and the exterior street environments.
5. Upper floor balconies should not extend structural supports into the public right-of-way below.
6. Sidewalk cafes should not impair pedestrian circulation nor store entrance access. There should be at least a 6-foot contiguous and unobstructed walkway for use by pedestrians.

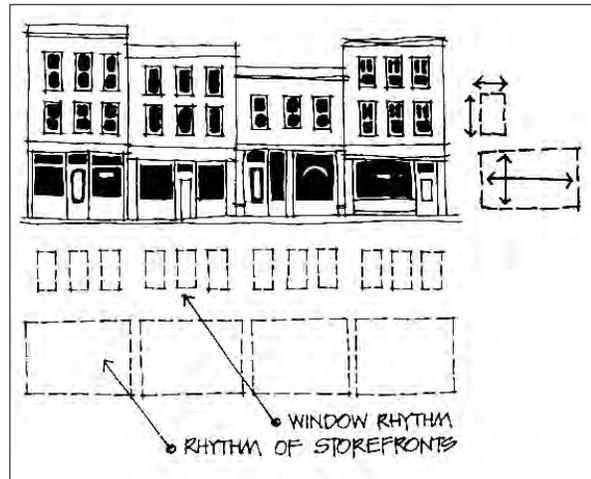
## BUILDINGS FACADES



1. New buildings should be open and inviting in both their principal and secondary facades. Blank walls, or any wall with less than 30% glass, should not be placed along public streets, but may be placed along alleys and service lanes.
2. Entryways should be generously proportioned and visually transparent so as to encourage connections to the public realm.
3. Decorative and functional elements such as signage, awnings, and ornamentation should be used to create human scale elements on the street-level facades to further encourage openness.

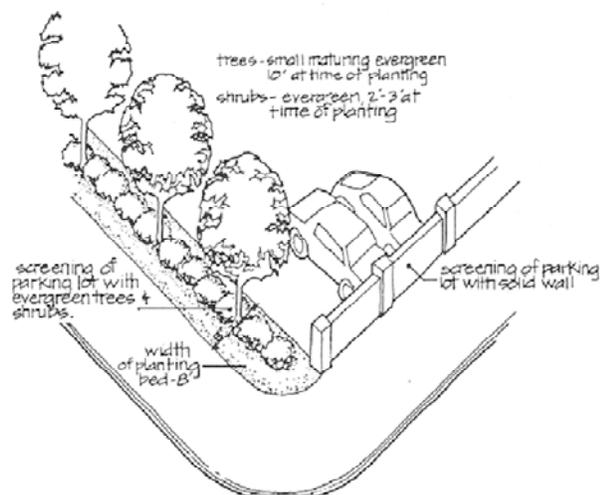


4. Loading docks and garage entrances should not be located on the major pedestrian street side of new buildings.
5. New curb cuts that conflict with safe pedestrian travel and existing on-street parking are discouraged.
6. Retail storefronts are strongly encouraged along the ground floor of all new and renovated buildings. These should be visually transparent to the interior with large areas of window display and should provide for direct entry from the sidewalk. The rhythm of windows and storefronts should be consistent.



## PARKING FACILITY DESIGN

1. Facades of parking facilities should be treated with an architectural finish and given vertical articulation and emphasis. The façade should distinguish a base, middle and top by using different materials, or other methods and also respond to the context of surrounding buildings by using similar materials. The façade should be designed so as to visually screen cars at street level. Sloping interior floors should not be visible or expressed on the exterior face of the building.
2. Retail storefronts or other business uses should be placed at the street level along the principal street and are encouraged along all adjacent streets except service alleys.
3. Pedestrian entries should be clearly visible and architecturally expressed on the exterior of the garage. Expression of the vertical pedestrian circulation (stairs and elevators) on the exterior of the garage is encouraged.
4. Surface parking lots should provide a landscaping in compliance with Topeka's landscape ordinance. Required landscaping should take the form of planter strips, landscaped areas and perimeter landscaping.



5. The existing street setback should be maintained along the principal street frontage in developed areas and established in new districts or developments. Tools for accomplishing this can include walls, fences, row of trees, hedges or any combination of these elements. The height and placement of such features should be balanced against CPTED principles.
6. While it is important to provide adequate interior lighting for safety and comfort, it should be controlled to avoid spill out on the adjacent streets creating excessive glare.

## ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEXT

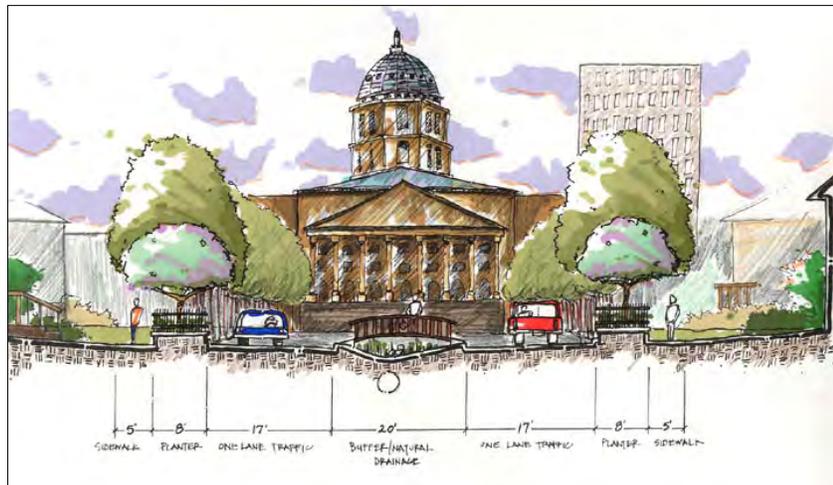
1. The architectural design of new buildings and the rehabilitation of existing buildings should be sensitive to the existing built and natural environment within which they are constructed. The architecture of the existing downtown buildings, should provide examples of architectural themes, rhythm, materials and forms.



2. New construction is not required to implement any particular architectural style, but should be designed to be compatible with the scale, form and materials of surrounding structures, by applying these guidelines.

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

1. All new public infrastructure projects (roads, sidewalks, public buildings, and streetlights) should meet high standards of design quality and provide significant secondary benefits in the form of major public space improvements. These projects should be subject to



the same standards of Downtown design that would be required of all other projects.

2. Public art projects are encouraged to be incorporated into every major public infrastructure project such as bridges, highways and roadways.



## **PUBLIC SPACES**

1. New public spaces should consist of renovated or enhanced streets, or strategically selected places that are directly linked to the street system.

2. Generally, pedestrian ways should not be separated from streets and sidewalks, unless in riverfront parks. They should maintain direct access from the adjacent streets. They should be open along the adjacent sidewalk and allow for multiple points of entry. A passerby should be able to see directly into the space.



3. New public spaces should be developed with pedestrian amenities, such as:

- Landscaping.
- Open space.
- Seating .
- Public art.
- However, walls, fences and dense planting that visually secludes the interior space from the sidewalk should be avoided.



## **HISTORY AND IDENTITY**

1. All projects are encouraged to express local history and identity through functional and ornamental design elements and works of public art.
2. New development projects or renovation of existing structures should be designed



to preserve the historic resources that exist on the site and reinforce the historical context within which they are developed.

3. In the event that it is not possible to preserve the entirety of a historic building the retention of historic facades is encouraged.

## **STREET AND BLOCK ORGANIZATION**

1. New buildings and development should respect the existing organization of the city and the street and block patterns that exist.
2. Superblock developments that join together one or more blocks are discouraged.
3. Where it is feasible, street grids should be extended, reestablished or newly created in areas of large-scale redevelopment.
4. New buildings or pedestrian bridges should not block access to existing streets.

## **ENTRANCES AND VISTAS**

1. Buildings and new development projects should be sensitively designed and sited so as to preserve the key vistas and gateways to downtown and views of the State Capitol.
2. New buildings should not block the view corridors defined by the city streets, either by bridging across streets or the use of pedestrian bridges.

### *Illustrations:*

- P.1 Dawn Wessels & Kim Korphage (top), Draft Lawrence, Kansas Downtown Design Guidelines (bottom)
- P. 2 *Keeping Up Appearances* Storefront Guidelines, National Trust for Historic Preservation (top), Kim Wassels (bottom)
- P. 3 Dave Devore (top), Planning staff (middle), *Keeping Up Appearances* Storefront Guidelines, National Trust for Historic Preservation (bottom)
- P. 4 Planning staff (top), *Design Review*, American Planning Assoc., PAS Report #454 (bottom)
- P. 5 Dawn Wessels & Kim Korphage (top), Charlotte Cox & Ryan Wilt (bottom).
- P. 6 Planning Staff (top, middle), Chris Handzel (bottom)
- P. 7 Bryce Wittenborn (top), Joe Loretta & Aaron Harnden (bottom)
- P. 8 Model and photograph by KSU Studio Students