

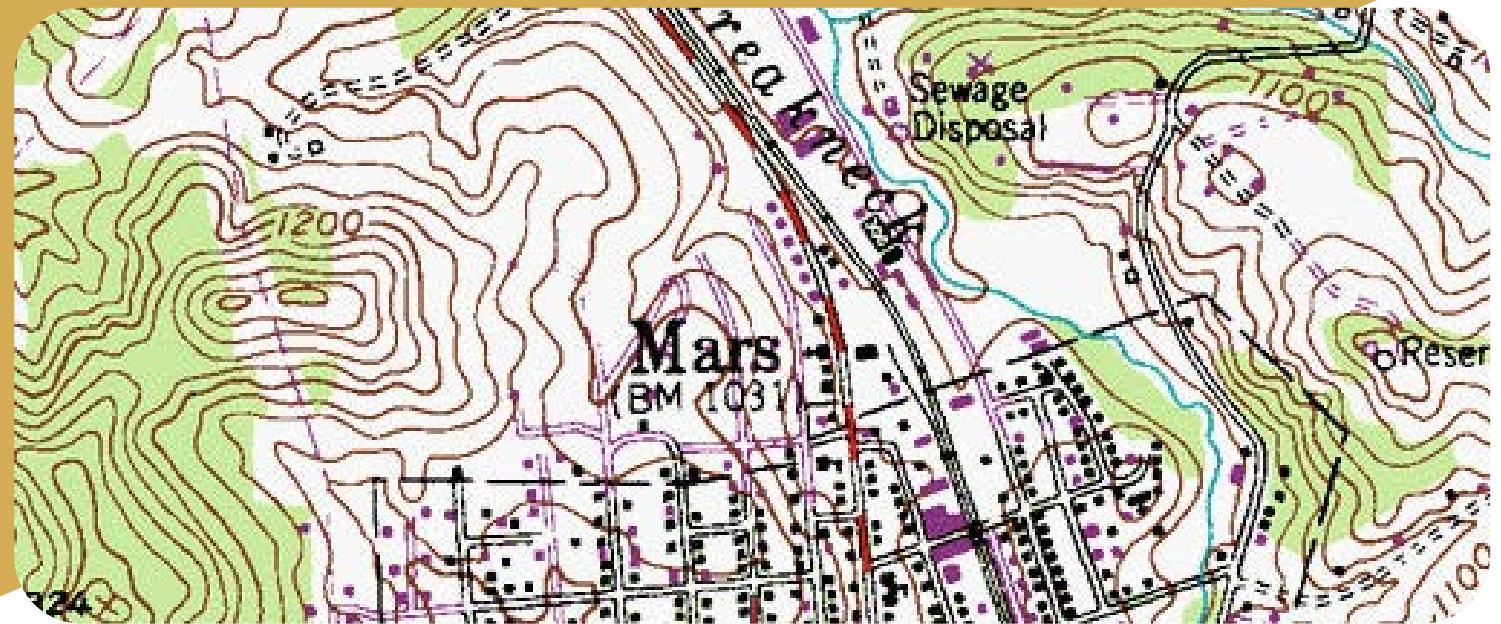
MARS, PA

DESIGN GUIDELINES

FACADE • SIGNAGE • SITE DESIGN



Prepared By:



MARS DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Borough of Mars, beginning in spring of 2014, has undertaken a concerted effort to restore downtown to its rightful place of importance in the community, and in turn help rekindle a sense of place and community that will positively impact the quality of life for all residents. As part of the comprehensive effort to revitalize the heart of the community, Mars has dedicated time and resources to developing a facade improvement program. This unique program is set in place to help offset renovation costs for property/business owners within the corridor looking to complete facade upgrades and beautification. The facade design guidelines, this document will help formalize facade revitalization efforts and provide a framework for proposed enhancements.

The guidelines outlined in this document are to be utilized by existing business and property owners looking for guidance on appropriate and historically accurate facade upgrades, as well as prospective property owners who are interested in preserving or revitalizing a building within the Borough. Information outlined in this document will be utilized by the Borough of Mars as a set of guidelines for review and approvals of proposed facade work within the Borough. While these guidelines are prepared with extensive public input, adapting to the ever-changing need of the community is vital for a thriving community to remain current. These facade design guidelines are not intended to, nor shall they, remove any rights of development or uses of property.

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GUIDELINES INCLUDED



SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

Signage is a vital component of the streetscape and overall unification of character

01



FACADE GUIDELINES

Facades play an integral role in the success of any corridor or civic space

02



SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Appropriate site design will determine the look, feel and use of parcels

03

MARS, PA IS A COMMUNITY IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING A TRANSFORMATIVE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROCESS THAT WILL HELP REACTIVATE THEIR ORIGINAL DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS AND PERSONIFY THEIR UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE; PROMOTING THEIR COMMUNITY AS THE PRIME DESTINATION FOR BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE IN BUTLER COUNTY.

ABOUT MARS

Located approximately 18 miles North of Pittsburgh, Mars is a small town situated in Butler County. Mars is ideally situated along SR228 between I-79 and Cranberry, PA. This location positions Mars as a crossroads for the surrounding communities, including several of the Country's fastest growing areas; Adam' Township and Cranberry Township.

Settlement in the Mars (originally called Marshall) area dates back to 1798 when Isaac Covert purchased 100 acres of land for a homestead. Mars experienced economic growth in the second half of the 1800's with the construction of a local saw mill along Breakneck Creek, increased farming activity, construction of the first general store (1862, by Frank Johnston), construction of Mars' first Post Office by Samuel Parks in 1873, and installation of the Pittsburgh/New Castle/Lake Erie Railroad in 1877.

This economic activity and development created the traditional core business district known as 'Downtown Mars'. The early 1900's saw further economic growth within the Borough of Mars with the introduction of streetcars connecting Mars to Butler (1907). This streetcar line was referred to as the Butler Short Line and allowed residents of Mars to commute to work, as well as bringing regional travelers to the Borough. In 1931, due to national and regional financial hardships, the streetcar system in Mars was stopped. The Mars Public Library was chartered in 1947, and its current building location on Grand Ave. was established in 1953. It was significant in that it was the first library established in the region.

By the 1980's the new economic power house of Cranberry began to emerge adjacent to Mars, causing a once economically viable and thriving downtown district to become distressed. Once vibrant and active, many historic buildings have become vacant and in need of repair; likewise, the physical condition of the downtown streets and infrastructure have also deteriorated and serve to deter economic growth and public activity in the downtown.

Mars has assets that need to be capitalized upon, including its ideal proximity to Cranberry and Pittsburgh, its small town identity (which is lacking in the adjacent communities), its natural assets (rivers and open space), and its unique history.



Currently the image and condition of the infrastructure along the roadway corridors within the downtown district is not of a quality that is inviting, and detracts from the assets found within the Borough. A comprehensive facade upgrade/ renovation program within the downtown district will create a more inviting community image, preserve and enhance existing assets, and support an environment that is conducive to economic development.



IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS

The importance of a quality aesthetic cannot be overstated. Communities seeking to create a sense of place and foster a dynamic economy must take steps to become visibly enticing. In the age of information with photo sharing being so ubiquitous, it's imperative that cities invest in being pleasing to the eye, otherwise, they become nearly impossible to market. When a community takes steps to grow more aesthetically appealing, the effort to market that community becomes considerably easier and often times is done by thousands of visitors with smart phones through social media. First impressions can last a life time and first-time visitors to a town should find a community that is attractive and well maintained. This leads to sharing their experience with all of their social connections and fostering a positive impression of the community. In addition, residents' sense of civic pride is greatly affected by the appearance of the heart of their community.

Historic Images of Mars



AREA MAP

GUIDELINES PURPOSE



Mars Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines Overlay District Map



All guidelines were prepared for implementation within the above outlined geographic area. The boundary description is as follows:

- *CroWE Ave to the West*
- *SR 3015 to the Southeast*
- *The Southern end of parcel 450-S2-B22-0000 to the South*
- *West Railroad Avenue to the East*
- *Clark Street to the North*

PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

As the Borough of Mars looks to help business/property owners transform their facades, guidelines are being prepared to outline an implementable and achievable framework for properties within the project area. Facade Guidelines, this document, will help the Borough achieve the below parameters:

- Maintain and renovate buildings within the historic downtown and immediate project area
- Preserve unique architectural character of the community
- Renovate inaccurately restored buildings within the project area
- Assist in renovation projects, creating a sensitivity to architectural continuity within the community
- Ensure material selections for renovations are accurate, meet community standards and are environmentally sustainable
- Spark an interest in facade upgrades within the community
- Assist local business owners/property owners with transforming buildings into historically accurate representations of local landmarks
- Attractive facilities, further expanding the economic viability of Mars
- Provide direction in terms of architectural detail that foster a more cohesive and attractive business district

NEED FOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

As communities around the Borough of Mars continue to grow and develop, there is a growing need for the downtown corridor to be utilized by local and surrounding community residents. In order to create this regional destination and create a stronger economy within the facade program project area, the community has a need to formalize appropriate facade revitalization parameters. This need has been determined through the increasing amount of real estate transactions and building permits within the downtown core area, subsequently creating a haphazardous and non-historically accurate look for the town. The desire for this document is to provide guidance on appropriate facade elements, including; Signage, Awnings, Windows/Doors, Architectural Elements, Roofing, Materials, Tuckpointing, Historic Preservation, Entrances, Building/Paint Colors and Art Displays. Through increased uniformity of these items, the Borough of Mars is attempting to create a cohesive architectural character that is unique to the Borough and will draw people in for shopping, dining and retail purposes. The purpose of facade guidelines is not a matter of simply telling property owners what to do, but providing a helpful framework for property owners to work from in order to realize the best results. Well executed guidelines are not meant to be proscriptive, but instead to give direction in terms of material and design choices that will benefit the overall aesthetic of the district and in turn benefit the property owner by ensuring the investment fosters a return in value.



Included In This Section

Architectural guidelines are created for a community looking to unify the intensity and timing of development or rehabilitation projects within a project area. That being said the architectural guidelines will dictate the forming, massing and material makeup of architectural work within the proposed area.



ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

DEFINITION OF ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

Architectural Standards are a set of guidelines or guiding principles that help shape the built environment, how buildings are massed and how people interact with the buildings. Items included in the architectural standards are focused around the vertical elements that make up the corridors or help frame the physical spaces in which people interact with one another or enter/exit a building. Architectural standards are important when working within the three (3) below standard downtown renovation or construction styles, specifically:

- Architectural Renovations
- Architectural Infill
- Architectural New Construction

While there are three separate sets of standards for the built environment, they have similar overarching themes that tie them all together. Outlined in the remainder of this section are the common elements between the standard styles and what elements are specific to each.

BUILDING TYPES

Outlined below are several styles of buildings currently within the downtown corridors of Mars, or would complement the current building types:

- Small Scale Main Street Buildings (image to right) – Highlights of these buildings include:
 - One to three stories
 - 3,000 – 7,000 square feet in size
 - Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .75 for primary structure
 - Limited to no accessory structures
 - Singular uses and/or single commercial and supporting residential uses
- Medium Scale Commercial Core Building (image on right) - Highlights of these buildings include:
 - Two to Four stories
 - 5,000 – 9,000 square feet per building
 - FAR of .6-.75 for primary structure
 - Ancillary structures common up to 15% of first floor square footage
 - Up to four tenants common with multiple uses
- Large Scale Rural Buildings - Highlights of these buildings include:
 - Three to six stories
 - 6,000 – 12,000 square feet per building
 - FAR of .65 - .8 for primary structure
 - Ancillary structures common up to 10% of first floor square footage
 - Up to ten tenants common with multiple uses
- Service/Resource buildings - Highlights of these buildings include:
 - One story
 - 1,000 – 2,500 square feet per building
 - FAR of .4 - .5 for primary structure
 - Ancillary structures common up to 25% of first floor square footage
 - Sole purpose tenant on property, no ancillary uses common
- Restaurants (image on right) - Highlights of these buildings include:
 - One story
 - 2,500 – 4,500 square feet per building
 - FAR of .3 - .45 for primary structure
 - Ancillary structures uncommon
 - Parking requirements typically occupy up to 50% of the parcel
 - Sole purpose tenant on property, no ancillary uses common



Sample - Small Scale Main Street Buildings



Sample - Medium Scale Commercial Core Building



Sample - Restaurants

BUILDING USES

Building uses within a community or downtown change over time and many buildings are reused for secondary reasons. While this is a critical design element for downtown buildings, many buildings have primary uses in mind when they are designed. Understanding this we are providing sample building uses currently present within the downtown or that could complement the downtown corridors and support further economic development:

- Restaurants
- Professional offices
- Service industries
- Retail amenities
- Experience services
- Commercial services
- Civic uses
- Office spaces

While these spaces each have unique attributes for their overall space utilization, the above outline building uses can be supported in the current downtown buildings with limited to no major architectural expansions.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

Having common themes or elements among architectural styles in the community will create a unified “architectural character” for the Borough of Mars and the downtown core area. It is through this unified character that the community will be able to create a place or location within the downtown, distinct from other areas of the community and uniquely attractive. Building construction standards will help define the overall community “place”. While building styles, construction method and appearance change per community, the below conceptual building construction standards are prepared to meet the current buildings within Mars and/or the overall community vision. They are as follows:

- Long-life Buildings – Buildings must be designed in a manner to remain useful for multiple styles of tenants and be constructed in a method that will provide a minimum of 50 years of usable life.
- Brick, Stone & Wood – Buildings should be constructed of brick, stone or wood materials that fit into the overall architectural character of the community.

- Architectural Intrigue – Architectural elements should be included in the building in an effort to provide unique elements or attributes for each building
- Out of sight, out of mind - Roofing and downspouts should be out of sight, decreasing their impact to potential users and safe navigation of the downtown
- Unique, yet similar – Buildings in the corridor should have a similar look, feel and forming/massing as other buildings within the community
- Unified Location – Buildings should be constructed in a similar location on each lot, providing a singular or congruent feel among building styles and types
- Retail spaces – All frontage buildings should utilize covered retail or showcase windows. Despite the use of the building, but providing these spaces all buildings will be multi-use over their long life span.

The standards for construction listed above are not comprehensive, yet were prepared to provide a conceptual level of building construction standards. All construction standards should be further vetted by the public and community prior to installation or adoption.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Proper maintenance and upkeep on a building is the sole responsibility of a property owner. Many residents in communities that have witnessed economic distress forget this and in response prefer to keep their buildings at “status quo”. By allowing the community to accept lower than average standards, residents are stating that “good enough” is their new level of standard. This will only serve to create an apathetic nature among tenants and personify the deteriorated state of a downtown corridor. Outlined below are sample MINIMUM building maintained standards for all properties:

- Buildings must be kept “high, tight and dry” – Buildings must be maintained to this standard to retain their occupancy permit and allow for spaces to remain habitable
- Free from broken or damaged surfaces – Buildings must remain free from broken or damaged surfaces that are visually impactful to the overall context of the community. Common deficiencies in this topic include:
 - Broken windows
 - Broken doors
 - Deteriorated paint or wall surfaces
 - Failing awnings or shade structures

- All buildings must be kept up to local building standards – All buildings must be kept up to date with local building standards for the City, County or other governing agencies
- Building exteriors must remain accessible – All entrances must remain accessible and unblocked
- Store frontage must remain open and free of clutter – buildings with store frontage must remain open and free of clutter that would otherwise negatively impact the overall community character

INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

Portions of downtown Mars currently have a dense and compact intensity of development. Buildings are currently spaced closer together, creating a corridor of limited automobile access, improving interaction space and promoting a more walkable atmosphere. Other sections of the downtown (Grand Ave corridor) Lack of adequate density of development is causing the downtown to seem more vacant or devoid of people. Elements of the current intensity of development are:

- Larger lots and limited frontage buildings
- Increased offsets and non-uniform building offsets
- Increased amounts of curb cuts or roadway entrances/exits to support vehicle traffic
- Limited visibility for signage or storefronts
- Increased amounts of ROW or pavement within the downtown
- High frequency of parking facilities immediately adjacent to a building
- Limited alleyway or pedestrian access ways between parking and storefronts

Improving the density of development within the downtown would improve the quality of life for residents and attract new visitors, all while allowing for further economic gain due to increased rental spaces for local business expansion. While the current style of development intensity within the downtown is that of an automobile centric scale, the community has potential for improving the density within the downtown and infilling the “missing teeth” of the Main Street corridor to create a more vibrant downtown.

FORMING AND MASSING

Successful downtown corridors and business districts have a centralized forming and massing of buildings, focusing the most intense development within the community at the center and creating more open space around the periphery of the community. Currently the Borough of Mars does not follow this method of development as illustrated with the ancillary or suburban developments around the periphery of the community. To remedy this, the Borough of Mars should adopt a set of infill or forming and massing developments to correct this problem.

- Buildings are roadway facing – All buildings should have their main entrance facing the Main Street thoroughfare if their parcel has a Main Street side. This will encourage additional store frontage and improvements along the ROW of Main Street.
- Buildings have no additional setback or public space on frontage – Buildings should have a uniform or similar setback off of the roadway. Uniform building setbacks create a sense of enclosure and provide a sense of safety, as well as increase visibility for all buildings
- Parking is located in the rear of buildings – primary parking facilities should always be located at the rear of the property. Limited frontage parking should be provided. No additional setbacks or parking other than on-street parking should be allowed along the Main Street frontage.
- Consistency building massing – Buildings should be located along the corridor to create a consistent look and feel for the vertical plane on the building side. Buildings do not need to all be the same height or construction method yet should be placed in close enough proximity to provide the feeling of enclosure along the back side of the sidewalks.

In order to adequately correct this problem, the community will need to introduce incremental development and become diligent about allowing development and promoting development that works toward the overall community goals. Incremental development is a simple principle that focuses around creating a logical progression or series of development steps for all underutilized spaces. They are as follows:

- Space activation and/or pop-up shop – This increment of development is focused around creating temporary or less permanent uses in the space to test viability.
- Neighborhood scale permanent development – neighborhood scale development is focused around creating a single story development serving a singular use. This development style is quickly outgrown or expanded upon
- Downtown scale development – Downtown scale development is the third step in the progression, focusing on multi-story development for multiple tenants.
- Medium scale development – Medium scale development is for buildings up to 40’ in height and having up to ten (10) tenants. This is the largest scale suitable for the current conditions in Mars
- Urban scale development – Urban scale development is the highest order of development in incremental development, focusing on high density and buildings over 75’ in height. These do not fit into the Mars architectural style currently.

These styles of incremental development should be further reviewed and alerted as the community continues to transform over the coming decades.

MANAGING NEW CONSTRUCTION

As buildings are renovated, torn down or have disaster events take place, it is important to have guidelines in place for accurate construction to meet the desired community feel and appearance. Outlined below are two types of new construction that can affect the Borough:

Infill

Infill construction will take place in currently open voids or unused spaces within the community fabric. Outlined below are proposed guidelines for construction of new buildings to meet the facade guidelines

- Buildings must be located in line or even with the current building facades
- Building facades must be an accurate representation of the architectural styles present within the building street corridor
- Materials used for construction of the storefront/ facade shall be like other street corridor buildings
- Windows and doors shall be constructed of similar materials, size and proportions
- Window placement and spacing shall be like other buildings from the corridor
- Building heights shall be similar to surrounding buildings within the corridor
- Colors (accent and building) shall be congruent with the community

Disaster Situation

When a disaster (natural or man-made) causes a void within the community fabric, buildings shall be constructed to fill any voids. Outlined below are guidelines for the construction of buildings that have been stricken by a disaster

- Buildings shall be constructed to a similar architectural era or character as meets the overall community character or adopted design guidelines
- Building facades shall be constructed similar in character to the remainder of the community or as adopted in community design guidelines, recreating the following:
 - Architectural character
 - Architectural elements (cornices, transoms, etc.)
 - Storefront usage (recessed, window areas, etc.)
- Buildings must be located in line or even with the current building facades
- Windows and doors shall be constructed of similar materials, size and proportions as appropriate for the scale and density of development
- Window placement and spacing shall be no less than 75% of store frontage
- Building heights shall be similar to surrounding buildings within the corridor
- Colors (accent and building) shall be congruent with the community



Included In This Section

Façade guidelines are created to help create a unified vision for the look, feel and construction of downtown or community core store frontage. All façade guidelines elements should focus around providing the community with a singular look and feel for the downtown core area, creating a unique place, as was referenced in the architectural standards section.

FACADE GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND DATA

Façade guidelines are created to help create a unified vision for the look, feel and construction of downtown or community core store frontage. All façade guidelines elements should focus around providing the community with a singular look and feel for the downtown core area, creating a unique place, as was references in the architectural standards section.



Facade Guidelines

DEFINITION OF RENOVATION

Renovations of a building's exterior (facade) includes multiple components, primary of which are focused around architectural unification and preservation, specifically outlined below are several samples:

- Sanitize, repair and replace exterior surfaces (wood, stone, masonry, etc.) in a manner that will preserve and maintain.
- Upgrade exterior components to current code, creating a safe environment for public enjoyment.
- Preserve architectural characters of each individual building, personifying their integration in the community fabric.
- Prioritize necessary projects in order of importance, i.e. structural, code, aesthetic.



Building Cornices



Recessed Entrance



Display Windows



Awnings



Signage

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

In order to preserve the architectural character of Mars, understanding the current historical properties and community fabric is of utmost importance. Historically significant properties within the Borough include various types and construction era of architecture, each significant for their own contributions to the overall community character. Currently within the community there are present one (1) to three (3) story buildings, with multiple roadway setbacks and zoning designations (residential/commercial). While most of the buildings were constructed within the 19th and 20th centuries, there are several newer buildings throughout the project area that add variety to the overall character.

It is the intention of this program, and the Borough of Mars, to accommodate all manners of business, allowed by Borough Code and Zoning, within the project area and facilitate necessary changes to the buildings/facades, while retaining the individual architectural elements of each building. This goal will be achieved through careful planning and restoration of the unique architectural characteristics of each building and creating an overall theme for the community to tie together the architectural feel of the community.

Outlined below are several sample images of historic architectural elements that are on significant buildings within the Borough of Mars:

STOREFRONT TYPES

Within the Borough of Mars, there are multiple building facade types present. This mixture of building types, and uses, provides the Borough with a diverse and eclectic community feel, attractive to residents and regional visitors. Over the years since initial construction, buildings within the project area have undergone multiple renovations, some of which have altered the exterior presence of the building. Due to these historically accurate and non-historically accurate renovations, the community has buildings that fit into the below outlined four (4) categories:

- Historically Accurate Storefront (HAS) – Building with largely intact facade, highlighting architectural elements that are period accurate
- Altered Historically Accurate Storefront (AHAS) – Buildings that have undergone a full/partial renovation to alter the exterior of the building, including updates and enhancements that have altered the architectural elements for the building era
- Non-Historic Storefront (NHS) – Buildings that have been updated and no longer represent original architectural or architectural elements from the building era
- No Storefront Building (NSB) – Buildings that have an altered setback, no storefronts (building rears/sides) or do not have any specific architectural era represented

These building types each require unique and varied renovation guidelines. It is important to understand that the information outlined below in the guidelines is a suggestion for facade renovation and not a mandatory requirement.

Final say for proposed facade enhancement approvals is up to the Borough of Mars Planning Department and Borough Council.



DIVERSITY IN BUILDING TYPES

The most attractive communities have a strong mixture of complementary architectural styles, each offering their unique attributes and architectural features

Historically Accurate Storefront (HAS)

- Repair/Renovate functional and decorative components of the façade
- Restore, where possible, historical elements of the building back to the era of building construction
- Renovate the structure, being historically sensitive, to meet current code and accessibility standards
- If capable and desired, coordinate architectural elements and colors with the Department of Interior Historic Preservation Standards
- Work with historic society and committees to complete adequate research about historic characters from the building



Altered Historically Accurate Storefront (AHAS)

- To the extents possible, construction or repair the original storefront
- Construct a historically accurate representation of the building façade, including
 - Doors
 - Windows
 - Transoms
 - Signage
- Add minimal features to the current storefront, creating an overall continuity of architectural components with the surrounding area, only if the updated storefront is historically significant within the community
- If capable and desired, coordinate architectural elements and colors with the Department of Interior Historic Preservation Standards



Non-Historic Storefront (NHS)

- Repair and renovate the existing storefront, if meets current community standards and/or guidelines
- Remove existing storefront and construct new (historically accurate) storefront, according to façade design guidelines and building construction era
- Work with historic society and committees to complete adequate research for sample storefront components that should be constructed on the building

No Storefront Building (NSB)

- If possible, construct an accurate storefront to match the building construction era and corridor continuity
- If building is historically significant or has meaning within the community, renovate the building exterior, retaining the desired traits
- If no storefront is present and the building is set back, create architectural elements along the corridor to match existing storefronts. These elements shall be designed to code and create a sense of place similar to neighboring buildings. Samples of elements include:
 - Low walls, built of similar materials as found within the corridor, creating space and delineating a corridor
 - Creation of vertical architectural elements to provide the space a sense of enclosure, similar in scale to the surrounding buildings within the corridor
 - Use vegetation to soften impervious spaces between the recessed building face and corridor storefront areas



FACADE ELEMENT GUIDELINES

Key to preserving and/or creating a historically significant façade is utilizing a set of guidelines for all work to be completed. Outlined below are several of the more significant or important guidelines:

- Where possible, retain original materials for re-use, including but not limited to, the below materials:
 - Doors
 - Door handles
 - Window glass
 - Transom window
 - Cornice components
 - Architectural details
 - Decorative woodwork
- Replace and install historically accurate architectural components to recreate or mimic the original design
- Conduct all necessary code or accessibility upgrades in a manner that will cause as little structural or visual impact to the building

For additional guidelines, consult the Department of Interior's renovation standards. The Department of Interior Standards are more extensive and will provide additional information. While not all the guidelines listed on their process will be required or relevant for each property, they can assist the property/business owners in understanding appropriate methods for the important work. Highlights from the Department of Interior's guidelines are as follows:

- To the extents possible, a property shall be utilized for its historic purpose or be placed with a new use that will cause minimal change
- Historic and Architectural character of a property shall be retained
- If renovations to the original property have been made, and the renovations are historically significant, the property/business owners shall determine to which significant era to restore the property
- All distinctive features (finishes, colors, techniques, etc.) shall be preserved
- Physical treatments, including chemical cleaning and sand blasting, which will cause damage to the property shall be kept to a minimum
- New additions or renovations shall be constructed in a manner that will not destroy or alter the appearance of the historical elements
- Each property shall be recognized as a "place in time", meaning that all property changes and renovations shall be period and architectural type specific.

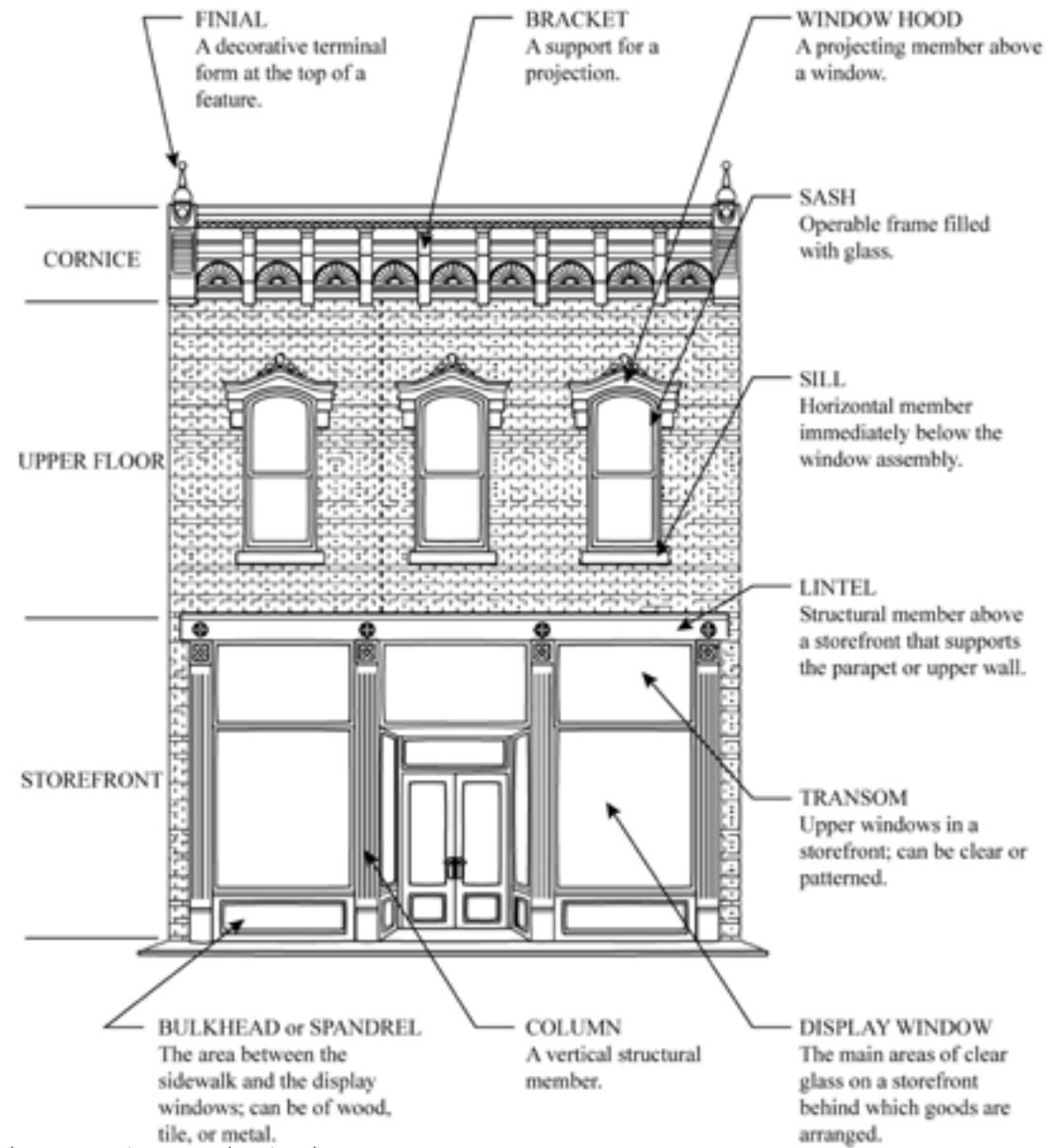
FACADE COMPONENTS

While facade elements are unique for each property, each property has several common structural and non-structural elements that shall be addressed during a renovation or update. These elements will vary by property, but outlined below are guidelines for the most prevalent elements within the Mars façade program project area:

- Setbacks
- Doors
- Recessed Entrances
- Rear Entrances
- Windows
- Cornice
- Signage
- Transom Windows
- Awnings
- Siding

Architectural Elements - Commercial Building

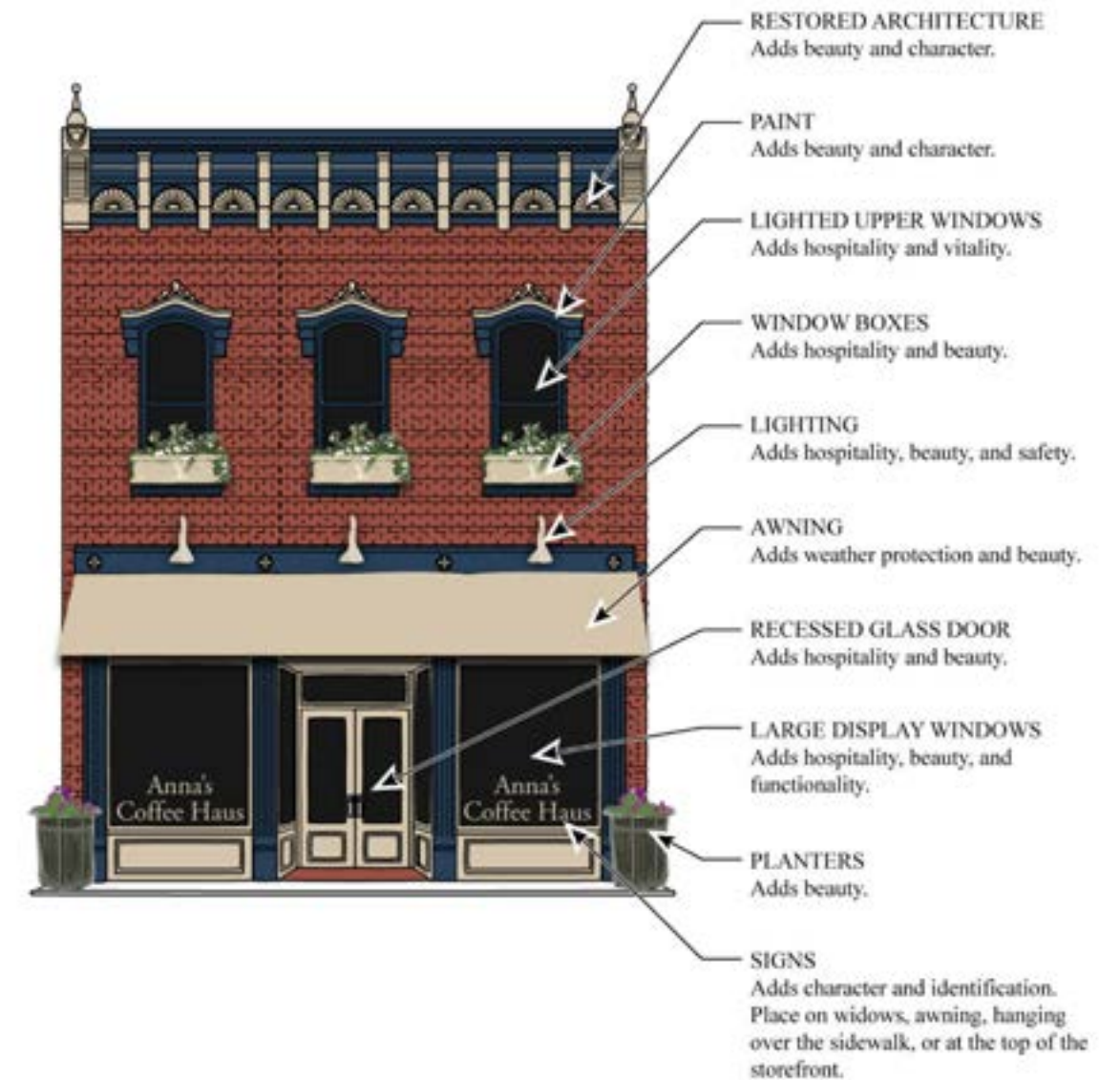
Basic features of a mixed-use building within a traditional main street area



Source: Zelenople and Harmony Joint Comprehensive Plan, June 2010

Facade Improvements - Quick Solution Guide

Simple, low cost improvements that help make a business more attractive



Source: Zelenople and Harmony Joint Comprehensive Plan, June 2010

FACADE ELEMENTS

Building facades illustrate the architectural character and integrity of a community. While building construction and facades can come from any construction period, similar characteristics are prevalent. These similar facade elements are outlined on the below pages.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

While most properties' facade improvements are similar, each property has specific characteristics that are attempting to be preserved and restored accurately for the buildings' construction timeperiod. Sample facade improvements, typical for most buildings, are outlined above.

SAMPLE FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Setbacks

Buildings within the business district and/or residential areas shall have a uniform setback, congruent with the historical setbacks. Buildings may deviate from the typical setback line, plus or minus, with minimal changes, allowing that no large recessed areas are created.

Doors

Entry doors to the building (commercial and retail) shall be period accurate in design and constructed of a material typical for the building's construction era. While doors shall be accurate to the period/era, it is important to incorporate new safety and security into the door. Updated safety features include; safety glass, upgraded locking mechanisms (deadbolts) maintenance free hinges and frames, etc.



Recessed Entrances

Where appropriate, storefronts and retail buildings shall utilize a recessed entrance of no less than three (3) feet. This entrance will allow for space utilization, additional arising and allow for increased gathering areas off the sidewalk. All recessed entrances shall be constructed of period accurate materials and designed to represent the community's architectural character/history.

Rear Entrances

Where applicable, rear entrances shall be made to fit the scale and detail of the building. Awnings and signage shall be placed, similar to store front, on a smaller scale unless the rear entrance is primary for the structure. Structures and appurtenances of the building shall be similar to the front, including window, door and brick/cladding types.



Windows

First floor levels of buildings/store fronts shall maintain a minimum of 75% glass. All glass to be replaced or amended shall be safety glass. Windows with a tint or any glass that filters light shall not be utilized unless expressly allowed for the business use. Windows shall be utilized for business uses (marketing, shopping displays etc.) and kept to standards with no cracks or inclusions.

Cornice/Architectural Adornments

Cornices and architectural elements shall be saved and retained for restoration. These elements, structural and non-structural, shall be refurbished when at all possible. Cornices and architectural elements shall be accurate to the period of building construction, where possible. If re-construction is necessary for the elements, replicas shall be created from items removed from the building or historical photos of the property. Restored and renovated elements shall be installed per local building code or international building code.

Transom

Transom windows shall be saved, whenever possible, and utilized as an accent feature of architectural interest. Transom windows may be decorative or opaque glass. Windows shall always remain functional, i.e. open and close. Spaces can be utilized for unique signage and recognition of the businesses, if desired.

Brickwork/Tuckpointing

Tuckpointing and brickwork shall be maintained in a manner that is congruent with applicable codes within Borough of Mars. Where possible, accurate brick and mortar colors shall be used to repair missing or broken bricks. Contractors looking to complete the work shall provide samples of mortar and prepare multiple samples on site for Borough approval. All tuckpointing shall be completed per the Department of Interior tuckpointing guidelines to ensure similar methods of construction and appearances are created.

Awnings/Canopies

Awnings and/or canopies shall be placed along the storefront, accentuating the architectural components of the property. Such structures shall be of made of a durable and environmentally friendly material consisting of no more than two (2) colors. Final approval of canopies/awnings shall be completed by the Borough of Mars zoning and code compliance. Wood shingle awnings/canopies shall not be allowed within the Borough of Mars. Text shall be limited on awnings/canopies and occupy no more than 25% of front footage



FACADE CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION GUIDELINES

Integral to the success of a storefront or façade renovation is utilizing long lasting and accurate construction methods for all work completed. Outlined below are several guidelines for construction and renovation of typical façade materials. If additional material construction/renovation guidelines are necessary (and not outlined below), please contact the Borough zoning and code officials.

1. Masonry/Tuckpointing

- Masonry shall be repaired and replaced as necessary to ensure a safe, secure and watertight exterior for all floors and exterior surfaces on the building
- Bricks and/or stones used for masonry shall be made of similar size/quality and texture as currently present within the building.
- Masonry surfaces shall be cleaned, per Department of Interior standards, prior to any repair/restoration work
- Re-pointing of masonry shall be done with a mortar of similar color, texture and chemical content
- Sample patches of tuckpointing colors shall be constructed in a conspicuous location for review and approval by Borough zoning/code official prior to use on full building
- No waterproofing materials may be utilized on surface visible to the public
- Masonry surface edges shall be sealed with a "quad 3" (or similar) sealant to ensure no water deteriorated issues
- Masonry surface, if existing, shall remain unpainted

2. Roofing

- Roofing shall meet code compliance for the Borough of Mars
- All visible roofing materials shall be period accurate and not detract from the character of the façade

3. Downspouts/Gutters

- Gutters shall be installed per Borough code to capture roof and awning run-off
- Downspouts shall be installed per Borough code, in locations that will not negatively impact the overall character of the building
- Downspout/gutter materials shall be construction period accurate

4. Wood

- Wood exterior elements shall be repaired and retained, where applicable, and replaced with similar features when necessary
- Historically accurate or original wood siding shall be replaced where necessary
- Wooden trim and ornamental pieces (outlined below) shall be repaired, where possible, or replaced. These pieces shall be an exact replica or as closely matched as possible.
 - Cornice
 - Storefront window/door trims
 - Shutters
 - Brackets
- Wood features shall be stained/sealed to preserve longevity of element. Exact colors or sealants shall be determined by the “paint” section below



5. Stucco/Skim Coat

- Stucco and skim coat walls shall be constructed using period accurate techniques, per Department of Interior standards
- Stucco surfaces shall be colored/tinted to match the accurate colors for the construction period of the building
- Skim coat surfaces shall match other masonry surface colors, such as tuck pointing
- Surfaces shall be sealed (non-visible) to ensure watertight compliance and longevity

6. Opening Re-Configuration (windows/doors)

- Where a window/door has deteriorated past a usable life, replacement materials should be a match for the current building opening.
- Replacement windows shall always fill the entire window void
- Replacement doors shall be constructed to fill the entire void
- No “block in” or expansion of opening shall take place to meet new equipment measurements

7. Paint

- Buildings should use subdued and/or muted colors, such as natural colors of building materials or bricks, unless originally different.
- Paint color selection should correlate to the overall neighborhood character, utilizing similar colors to existing.
- Primary colors (red, green, blue) shall not be used, with the exception of signage
- Colors should be coordinated to provide relation between multiple architectural elements along the façade, including cornice, shutters, windows, doors, etc. This coordination shall be completed by choosing a “base color” to paint the primary surface areas with a “secondary color” for the trims and accent items. Secondary items shall be of a separate hue with similar characteristic, i.e. several shades lighter or darker.
- Facades may utilize a maximum of three (3) colors, excluding signs.
- All non-translucent materials shall be painted or natural surface. Specifically, the following are not allowable to remain an unpainted surface:
 - Metal doors, windows, frames
 - Shutters, where applicable
 - Roof coping



- Where elected to remain in a “natural appearance” proper maintenance and sealant of the surfaces must be completed to ensure no degradation in appearance
- Colors for each property shall match typical colors utilized during the construction era. Please refer to the Department of Interior standard colors for each era.

8. Exterior Building Accent Colors (including signage, shutters, etc.)

- Exterior building accent colors shall be complimentary to the primary building colors
- Accent colors should stand out from the overall colors, but not cause distractions
- Accent colors shall be within the same color family as the building colors, i.e. accent colors shall be several hue shades lighter or darker
- All appurtenances on buildings (trim, shutters, etc.) shall be painted similar colors to encourage uniformity per building
- Color selection should be utilized to tie together entire building

9. Lighting (non-accent)

- Non-accent lighting shall be installed in a manner that will be discreet and not detract from the architectural character of the building
- Where possible, energy efficient lighting shall be utilized

10. Lighting (accent/signage)

- Accent lighting, including signage lighting, shall be period accurate and accentuate the architectural character of the building
- Accent lighting shall be utilized to highlight specific architectural/signage characteristics
- No accent lighting shall highlight areas other than building and signage
- Accent lighting shall comply with Borough building code
- Lighting wiring shall be colored/hidden from public view, to the extent possible
- All accent lighting shall be on timers and photocell sensors to ensure adequate energy use
- All accent lighting requires permit and approval from the Borough
- Clocks and other elements shall be retained where possible

11. ADA Accessibility

- Building storefronts shall be made ADA accessible, where possible and does not detract from the historical character of the building

12. Architectural Elements/Cornices

- Architectural elements and cornices shall be retained/ repaired where possible and reinstalled on the property
- Where not possible, replicas shall be created, utilizing similar architectural styles and construction methods

13. Non-Allowable Items

- Outlined below are items that are strictly prohibited within the Borough of Mars. These items, at time of renovation, shall be renovated to current standards:
 - Wood awnings
 - Metal Awnings
 - Non-permanent sidewalk signage
 - Window decals/vinyl clings
 - Neon/LED signage



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

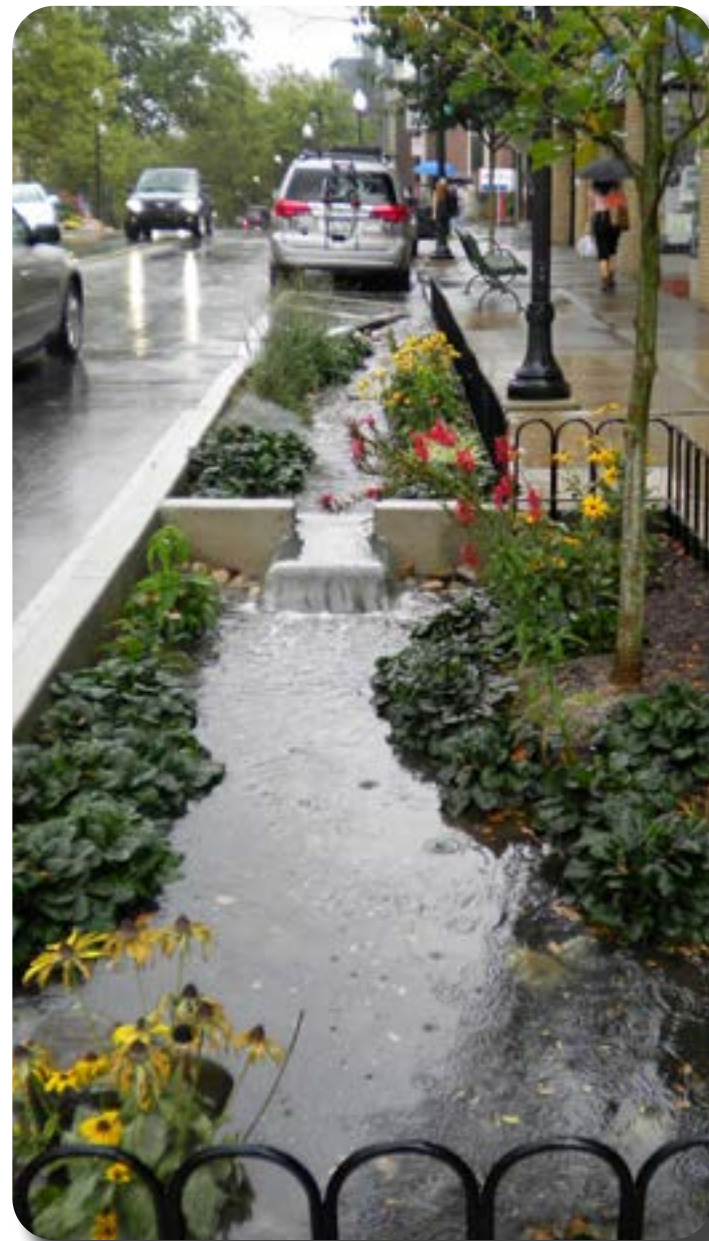
Where possible, it is important to utilize best management practices (BMP) for construction, maintenance and sustainability. By utilizing the items outlined below, property/business owners will be provided with cost savings over time. BMP for the Borough of Mars include:

- Energy efficient doors/windows: Windows shall be repaired where possible, but when not possible, it is important to replace with coated energy efficient fixtures that will allow for increased insulation and reflectivity.

- Stormwater management: New development and reconstruction projects shall utilize rain gardens and rain barrels where possible for water usage. This usage of water collected will reduce the amount of water run-off from each property while providing water for plant and vegetation watering

- Green space: Pervious surfaces, including turf/green space shall be provided for people to utilize. These facilities provide increased water filtration, reduce heat island effect and encourage social interaction

- Street trees and landscaping: Where possible, street trees and plantings shall be provided. These additions will provide needed shade along corridors, while creating an attractive pedestrian scale corridor to encourage increased utilization.



EXAMPLE FACADE IMPROVEMENTS





Outlined above are samples of facade enhancements for various properties and property types in the Borough of Mars. The proposed enhancements are not required to be undertaken by the business/property owner, but merely to serve as an example of possible enhancements and transformations from the facade program.

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES



Included In This Section

A sign is how local businesses or service industries announce their specific goods, services, sales or other amenities. Understanding that signage elements are critical to the success of a business, no matter the size, signage requirements are prepared as a way to ensure that all businesses are required to meet the same standards. By ensuring the same standards are met, the community will be able to accurately and more fairly implement signage requirements across all individuals and businesses within the community.

Contrary to popular belief, signage guidelines are not prepared to limit creativity or negatively impact the freedom of speech for residents. They are prepared to carefully improve the quality of signage and create a unified feel and characteristic between signs. Individual signage design and creativity will remain the sole responsibility of the local business owner or resident, yet the guidelines will serve as a set of guiding principles on how to craft a sign that can be approved and help the community work toward a singular vision and theme of unifying elements within the downtown.

SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS

Signage shall be completed in accordance with the signage guidelines and historical review process set forth by the Borough of Mars. No signs shall be historically inaccurate or cause detriment to the character of the community. Internally lit signage shall be avoided wherever possible. Signage standard shall be adhered to ensure congruency with all signage throughout town.



SIGNAGE IS MORE THAN JUST BUSINESS MARKETING, IT IS BRANDING



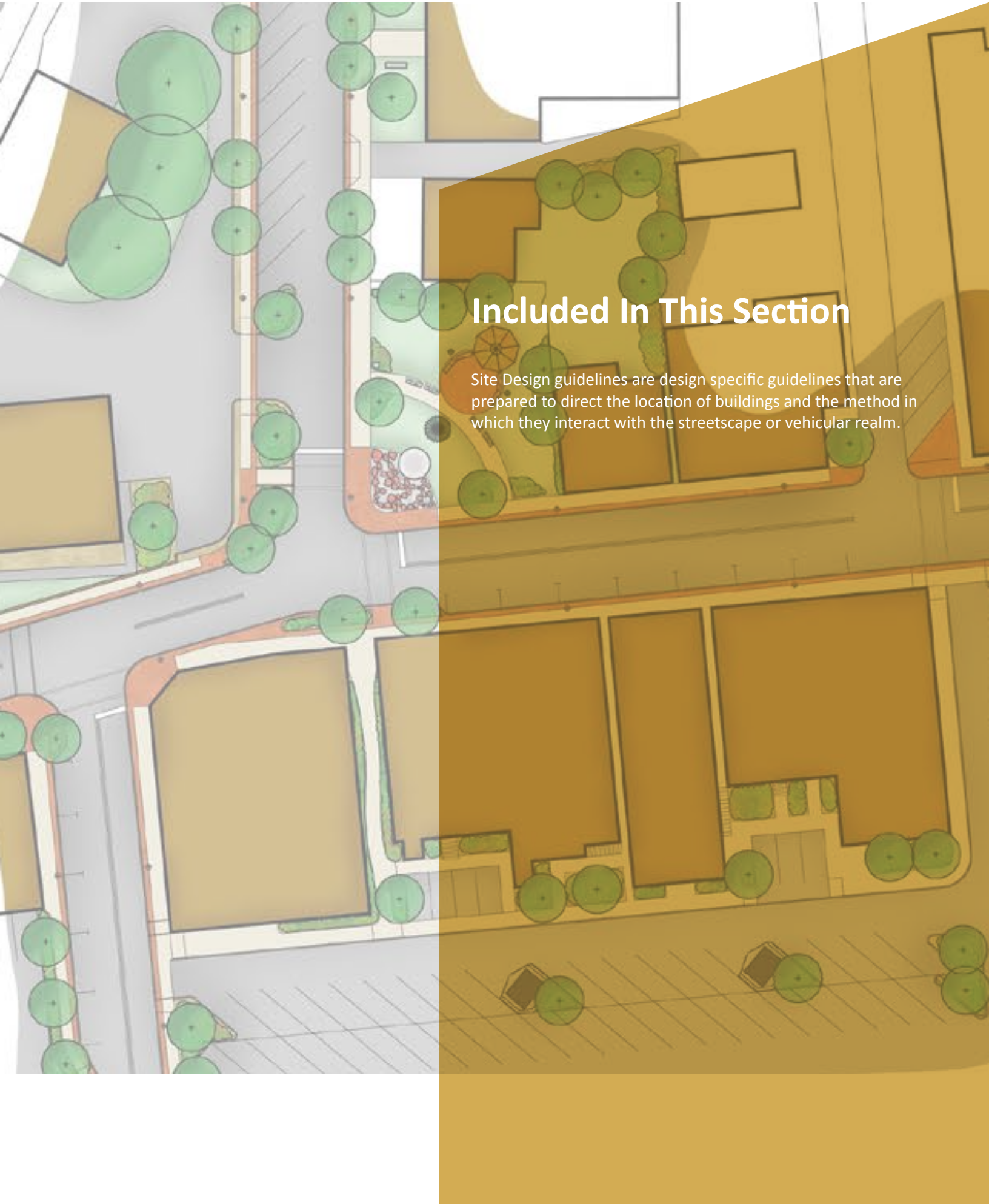
SIGNAGE RENOVATION/ CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

- Signs shall be designed to work in conjunction with the buildings' character, not detracting from the buildings architectural elements or drawing additional attention to the signage.
- Signs shall complement the overall character of the building and community as a whole
- Only signage for businesses shall be permitted. Signage for the following is strictly prohibited:
 - Marketing
 - Solicitation
- Signage shall be simple in design, meeting the architectural and characteristic traits of the building. Outlined below are several types of signage that are strictly prohibited:
 - Neon signs
 - Flashing signs
 - Internally illuminated signs
 - LED signs
- Messages on signage shall be brief. Fewer words are more effective
- Sign colors and materials shall be selected to encourage legibility
- Signs shall use contrasting colors, background to letters, to provide ease of reading
- Signs shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) colors
- Types and fonts for signage shall be accurate to the time period, yet easy to read
- Letters and font items shall make up no more than 75% of the sign area
- Logos and images should be used, where possible, to limit text on signage
- Signage for all buildings shall be of the below types:
- Small projecting signage
 - No more than 5 square feet in size
 - Made of durable materials
 - Provide a "carved" or recessed letter set up
 - Include logo/images where possible

- Wall Signs
 - A maximum of up to two (2) square foot of signage shall be allowed per linear foot of building, with a total maximum size of 40 square feet.
 - Made of simple, non-instructive materials
 - Font types shall be required to match building construction era
 - Logo/images are discouraged
- Window signs are allowed to cover a maximum of 20% of ground floor windows and 40% of upper floor windows
- Window signage shall be simple, historically accurate and non-interruptive. Below are specific window signage types that are strictly prohibited:
 - Neon signs
 - Flashing signs
 - Internally illuminated signs
 - LED signs
 - No signage is to be placed on roofs of buildings
- All signage is required to meet Borough of Mars codes and ordinances
- All signage shall require a permit and approval from the Borough of Mars



SIGNAGE SHOULD BE SUBTLE ENOUGH TO BLEND IN, YET DISTINCT ENOUGH TO ATTRACT ATTENTION FROM A TARGETED CLIENTELE



Included In This Section

Site Design guidelines are design specific guidelines that are prepared to direct the location of buildings and the method in which they interact with the streetscape or vehicular realm.

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND DATA

The Borough of Mars currently has many underutilized parcels within the downtown core area that are not providing buildings or site improvements adjacent to the sidewalk or roadway. These spaces are prime for additional development and/or expansion of businesses. By creating buildings in these spaces the community will be able to provide a more congruent, uniform and attractive downtown corridor. Equally important in both the short and long term future is to promote adaptive re-use of the current building within the community. While not many buildings are currently of outstanding architectural character, it is more sustainable and responsible to further utilize existing facilities (potentially expanding) before tearing down buildings for new establishments. Through a process of adaptive re-use and infill development the community can witness a more vibrant and attractive downtown corridor.



INFILL ANALYSIS

Currently the Borough downtown core area has many “missing teeth” in the overall Grand Avenue corridor. This lack of continuity of buildings with equal setbacks is creating a spotty or patchwork atmosphere for the community. This lack of cohesive atmosphere provides residents and visitors with an unattractive atmosphere and an increased distance between potential destinations. It is through this atmosphere that the community has continued to expand into a vehicle centric downtown and spacing themselves from a pedestrian friendly environment.

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Many parcels within the downtown are currently underutilized or entirely vacant. Often buildings have setbacks that are overly gracious and creating green space or excessive parking lots along the commercial corridors. These spaces can be better utilized as building or civic spaces. By doing so the community will be able to:

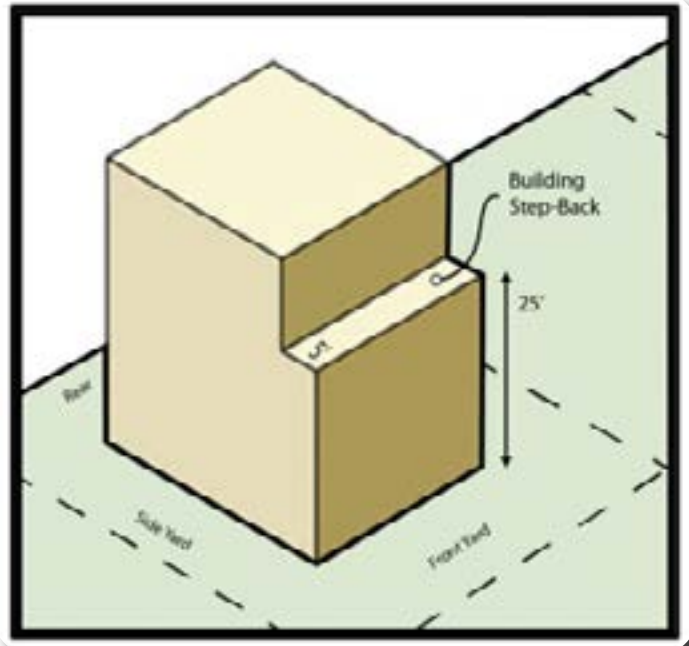
- Increase the amount of rental space
- Increase the variety of rental spaces
- Improve the overall atmosphere and feel of the downtown
- Better capitalize on existing parking available in off street facilities
- Increase tax revenue through additional business creation or expansion

While these spaces are often constructed in the most cost effective manner, it is important to note that new buildings should be built to meet the common building design guidelines and promote the overall community vision. For the Borough of Mars the new buildings should:

- Cap out at no more than 35 feet in height – Placing a cap on building height instead of floors will allow the infill development to be utilized by multiple end users and design styles. This flexibility will also allow for adequate adaptive reuse in the future.
- Offer setbacks above the second floor or 25 vertical feet – Above 25 vertical feet in total building height setbacks should be created to limit the viewable facewall by pedestrians. The efforts of stepping a

building will help the community retain the small form factor of development from a pedestrian or vehicular perspective, yet improve the density and amenities within each building.

- Offer a no less than 5 linear foot setback of upper floors – Setbacks should be no less than 5 linear feet from the facewall. This setback value is provided as a minimum as this will hide the true height of the upper floors from a pedestrian perspective



- Incorporate a mixture of uses – By providing the community with additional spaces, the downtown will be provided with improved rental spaces. These spaces should be designed to meet several groups or services, including:
 - Retail/amenities on the first floor
 - Professional services on the second and third
 - Residential on upper floors
- Limit light on the upper floors or setbacks – By limiting the lighting in upper floors or setbacks the true height of the building can be hidden. Additionally this will improve privacy of residential development on the upper floors.



STYLES OF INFILL

The styles of infill development or architectural features will determine the character of the Grand Avenue Corridor area. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the colonial theme be continued within the downtown corridors. By creating new buildings that capitalize on the available retail space and roadway frontage the community will be able to better create a strong downtown that is attractive and inviting for people to stroll along, shop and visit dining establishments. Creating this style of infill development can be completed by:

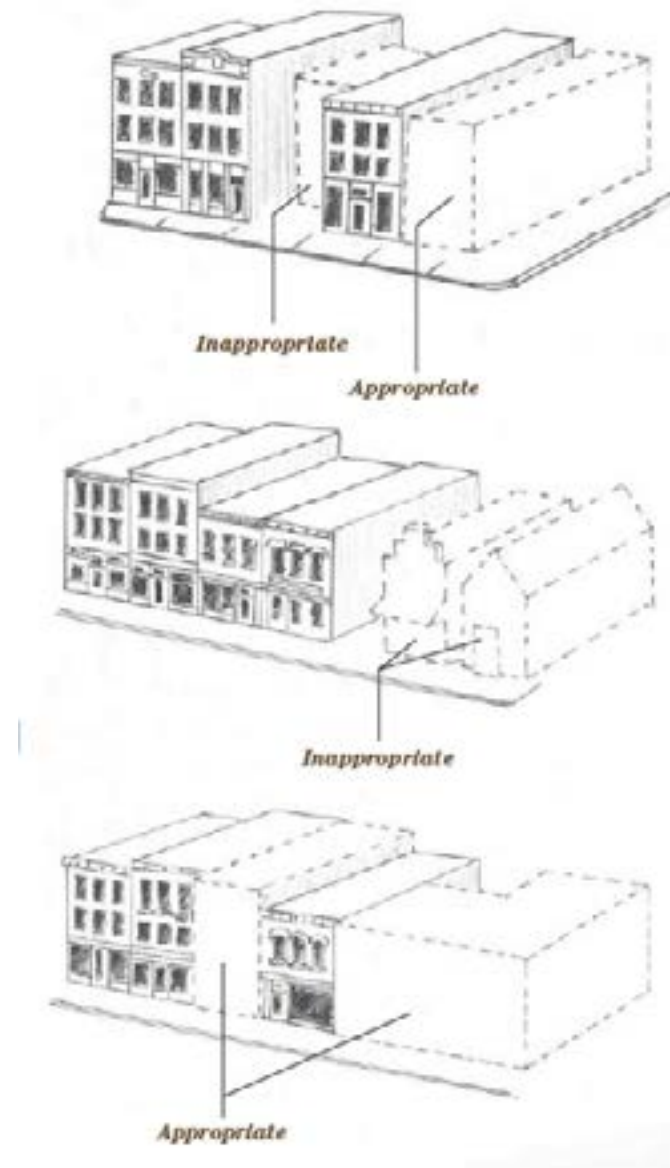
- Utilizing similar materials – By utilizing similar materials and methods of construction the community will be able to bring the unique characteristics that present within the downtown into new buildings. All infill development should have a similar offset as historic buildings and provide a visually appealing façade.
- Matching similar scales of building forming and massing – Matching the forming and massing of the period correct structure within the community will help improve the identity of the downtown. Current buildings cap out at a total of three stories and have an approximate occupiable floor height of 35 feet. This can be increased artificially through setbacks, but the street frontage should continue to resemble this form and massing of development.
- Including architectural elements of local historic buildings – Attempting to recreate elements of the historic or original buildings within the downtown core will help infill buildings tie together with their surrounding properties.

BUILDING PLACEMENT

- Placement - Within an existing context of historic buildings, there is a customary or prescribed building placement. It is important to respect the common setback and placement of buildings in order to maintain the continuity of the streetscape. This should be regarded as a “build to” line, as well as a building setback.

Consideration should also be given to the vistas both along the streetscape or roadway for structures set near the road, and from the road for structures set back away from the road. Carefully consider any new

BUILDING PLACEMENT



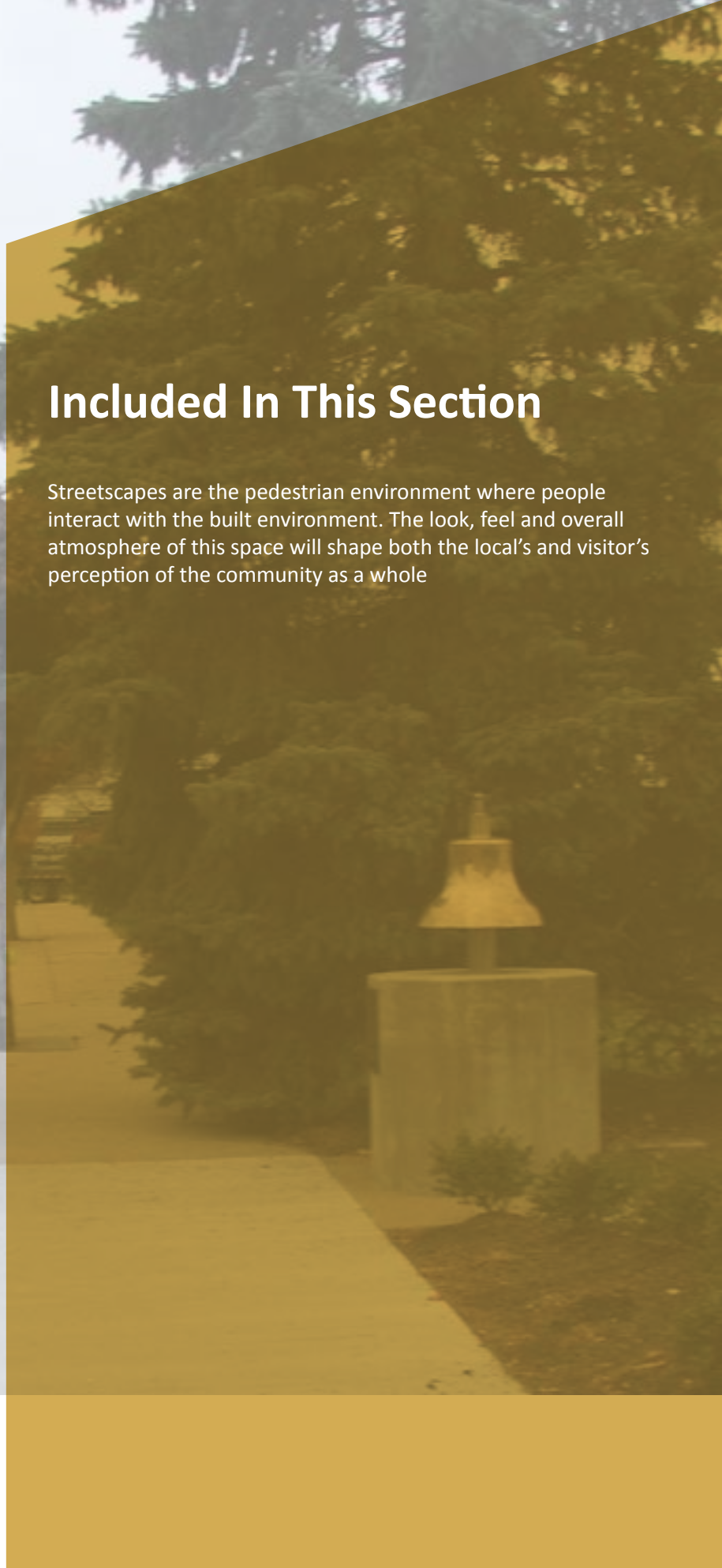
construction adjacent to the existing structures: will the new construction interfere with the views?

- Form - Whenever possible, the existing historic context of the building form should be respected, including the volume of the form in relation to its site. Building height, proportion, and lot coverage should be compatible with the dominant form on the street. Orientation of the form to the street also should be the same as the context. For example, if all of the buildings on a given street are gable-fronted facing the street, new infill buildings should have a similar form and orientation.
- Solid/Void Pattern - The ratio and pattern of wall-to-window openings is common within a given building type and age. Respecting this pattern helps to unify the streetscape.



Included In This Section

Streetscapes are the pedestrian environment where people interact with the built environment. The look, feel and overall atmosphere of this space will shape both the local's and visitor's perception of the community as a whole



STREETSCAPE GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND DATA

The streetscape is where residents and visitors interact with the downtown and the amenities it offers. Ensuring this space is inviting, attractive and safe should be the priority for the Borough of Mars. Within the Borough of Mars there is ample sidewalk space for many new streetscape elements, yet they will require coordination to ensure that the downtown has a cohesive look, feel and atmosphere. Outlined in this section are some design standards for streetscapes that will help the Borough of Mars make wise decisions in regard to streetscapes.



STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

The streetscape realm has many elements that all work together to create the streetscape realm. Outlined below are several of the elements and their purposes:

- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalks are a required element within the downtown, offering safe conveyance between stores and throughout the corridor. Sidewalks should be mostly flat and ADA compliant.
- **Site amenities** – Site amenities are elements such as benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, maps, signage, etc. that allow people to more easily utilize the downtown. These amenities should be placed frequently and use should be strongly encouraged.
- **Lighting** – Lighting within the downtown should be of an adequate scale and duration to alleviate any dark spots. This will increase pedestrian safety and the overall atmosphere after dark
- **Vegetation** – Vegetation should be installed to personify the unique elements of the downtown and provide separation between vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Crosswalks/ADA Accessibility** – Accessibility should be universal throughout the entirety of the downtown. All ramps, crosswalks, etc. should be up to date with the most current standards.



- **Curb Bulb-outs** – Curb bulb-outs should be installed at critical intersections or where higher than average pedestrian activity is present. These will preserve pedestrian space and reduce the roadway crossing distance.

The above elements of a streetscape are common elements that many communities share. Further roadway and streetscape design will be required for the Borough of Mars to better understand how to implement the elements.

STREETSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

As the streetscape design and overall atmosphere is critical to the economic success of a community, there are several requirements that should be met in all design standards. They are as follows:

- **Safety is the first priority** – Pedestrian safety is the number one priority for all streetscape design. Cars and vehicular travel should take a secondary role. If pedestrians do not feel safe, they will not walk down the Main Street corridors.
- **Regular upgrades** – Providing regular upgrades and enhancements to the streetscape will encourage the business owners to continually provide upgrades. Streetscape improvements should focus around continually improving the user experience.
- **Continual maintenance** – Maintenance is a critical element of any streetscape. The surfaces, vegetation and other amenities should be maintained in working order and available during all seasons.
- **Pedestrians first, vehicles second** – Pedestrians are the life blood of a strong downtown. Without pedestrians walking through the community, the businesses will not survive. Focus on providing a user experience for the pedestrians and your return on investment more than doubles that of an automobile centric design.
- **Space for all** – A space should be providing in the streetscape for all potential users and uses. While this seems a common and universal idea, many communities struggle to leave adequate space for dining, walkways, vegetation, etc. Providing adequate spaces will encourage additional users.
- **Flexible space** – Flexible spaces within the downtown will encourage downtown activation. Designing of the streetscape realm should require that wherever possible, spaces are provided to encourage that multiple uses or end users are applicable.



EXAMPLE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



STREETSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS

Providing a set of streetscape design standards will help the Borough of Mars implement a uniform pedestrian realm within the downtown area. Recommendations for conceptual design standards include:

- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalks should be replaced and improved where possible. A strong sense of character or community will be created by unifying sidewalk widths, surfaces, colors and textures. Prior to initiation of this program, the municipality should adopt a formal plan for streetscapes to ensure that all enhancements will meet or exceed the community's needs and limit potential redundant construction costs. Implementation of this program should be undertaken in phases, typically block by block, to reduce upfront construction costs while providing cost savings for complete projects. Sidewalk replacements should be completed to integrate similar characteristics among all blocks, specifically:
 - Colored/stamped concrete bands or inlaid sections
 - Brick or paver surface integration
 - Additional landscape and/or vegetation integration

Utilizing similar themes across multiple blocks will provide pedestrians with an improved corridor by delineating safe pedestrian and alternative transportation spaces as well as increasing resident interaction with local stores and businesses. If possible, it is recommended that sidewalk replacements be completed in conjunction with additional streetscape enhancements to ensure that improvement costs will not need to be duplicated. This comprehensive approach to enhancement construction will provide the greatest return on investment and limit redundant construction costs.

- **Site amenities** – Site amenities are currently not uniformly placed within the downtown core area, creating undue hardship for site users looking to utilize benches, trash receptacles or bike racks.



To help encourage adequate utilization of these features design standards should note amenities be spaced at adequate intervals, below:

- **Trash & Recycling Receptacles** - Spacing should be no more than 75 linear feet apart. Receptacles should be placed within the bulb-out or vegetative spaces, as well as in decorative concrete or brick bands to hide their visual intrusions, yet remain close enough for ease of use. Typically, these amenities are powder coated, ensuring a minimum ten year usable life.
- **Benches** - Benches should be placed within the downtown corridor area at intervals of 100 to 125 linear feet. Locations for benches can be altered to meet needs within the corridor but should be integrated into all curb bulb-outs, as this reclaimed space will not interfere with pedestrian circulation. When not placed in a curb bulb-out, it is important that benches be placed within the decorative brick band or strip of land between parallel parking and high-use pedestrian circulation areas. This location will increase usage while not hindering flow. Benches should be bolted directly to the concrete and constructed from high quality materials. Typically, these amenities are powder coated, ensuring a minimum of a ten year usable life.
- **Bike Racks** - Bicycle racks should be installed no more than 150 linear feet apart and, where possible, integrated into curb bulb-outs. Racks should provide the ability for a minimum of six bicycles to be locked up at any time. Bicycle racks should be bolted directly to the concrete and constructed from high quality materials. Typically, these amenities are powder coated, ensuring a minimum of a ten year usable life.

- **Lighting** – While much of the Grand Avenue corridor has matching and functional site lighting, the remainder of the downtown plan area does not. It is recommended that alternations be made to the site lighting within the corridors and along ancillary roadways to provide a cohesive feel and look for the downtown project area. Recommendations are as follows:
 - **Removal of Outdated Lighting** – Where older lighting is present it is recommended that site lighting be removed and replaced with more appropriate pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures of a similar style and character to the corridor. All installed lighting should comply with International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) lighting parameters
 - **Installation of Additional Lighting** - Where photometrics show a lack of lighting overlap, it is recommended to install additional lighting to ensure that all corridors are 100% lit with little to no dark spots. Ensuring uniformity in lighting distribution will provide pedestrians with a well-lit corridor for utilization during all hours of the day. In addition, the improved lighting will help reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts in all corridors. Light fixtures should be spaced 60 to 85 linear feet apart. All installed lighting is recommended to comply with IDA dark sky lighting parameters.
- **Vegetation** – Vegetation should be installed where possible to add additional visual interest for all residents and visitors. All landscaping should conform to the previously stated vegetation guidelines.



- **Crosswalks/ADA Accessibility** – ADA accessibility and safe crosswalks is one of the primary areas where pedestrians interact with the downtown. TO help encourage this to remain inviting, the following standards should be met:
 - **ADA Accessibility**
 - Ramps should be constructed to current standards
 - Truncated dome pavers should be installed at all ramps
 - Ramps should have full height curb recover between ramps
 - Bollards should be located at the apex of the turn and near ADA ramps at busy intersections
 - **Crosswalks**
 - 8' minimum crosswalk width
 - Minimum traverse distances provided
 - At a minimum, striped crosswalks provided; preferably a different and more distinctive pavement material should be used to create the crosswalks
 - All crosswalks should cross the road at a 90 degree angle
 - Midblock crossings should be installed for blocks longer than 300 linear feet – the farthest the common person is willing to walk to a crosswalk is 150 linear feet
- **Curb Bulb-outs** – Ensuring pedestrian safety along all corridors within the project should be the primary objective for the Borough of Mars. Making people feel safe and welcome to cross the streets will increase sales and drive economic initiatives within the Borough. To meet the goal of improved

pedestrian safety, curb bulb-outs are recommended to reduce the traverse distance for pedestrians crossing the roadway surfaces. It is recommended that curb bulb-outs be constructed in a manner that will maximize pedestrian safety and allow for adequate turning movements, with no impact on vehicular travel.



Included In This Section

Vegetation is what softens the pedestrian realm, making it feel safer and more appropriate for pedestrian use. Additionally, if vegetation is planned appropriately it will help create a necessary vertical plane of separation between the vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern, increasing safety for all users.



VEGETATION GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND DATA

Vegetation is an integral part of an active, attractive and inviting downtown corridor. The vegetation will help soften the harsh automobile centric environment and create the feeling of a safer space for pedestrian uses. For a downtown to effectively implement and maintain a strong landscape plan, the community must understand that it is a partnership between local property owners and the municipality. Vegetation, no matter the size, requires maintenance and continual observation; and to effectively maintain the landscape will require a partnership. This partnership will focus around ensuring proper care and efforts of service are provided by all parties and that open lines of communication remain available.



VEGETATION ELEMENTS

Outlined in this section are the necessary elements of a strong vegetation pallet and standard for a downtown corridor. All elements are crafted to fit within the overall context of the Mars look and feel. Elements of vegetation to be included are:

- Vertical plans for circulation segregation – Providing vertical planes of vegetation softens up a streetscape and makes the downtown more inviting to walk through. While providing vertical planes may not provide an improvement in safety, there is a perception that their placement in locations that will separate auto/pedestrian uses will provide improved safety. It is through this perception that people feel safer while walking downtown.



VEGETATION SOFTENS THE DOWNTOWN, MAKING IT MORE INVITING

- Layered vegetation at periphery of pedestrian spaces – Vegetation within a downtown cannot block or hide any features of the built environment. It must work to personify the unique characteristics that are present and draw attention to the buildings. By layering the vegetation in rows or sections, the vegetation can be carefully crafted to accentuate the architectural elements of the downtown. Special care should be taken to layer plants (perennials, shrubs and trees) at intervals of no less than 33% height difference between sections. This will create a visually appealing and attractive planting buffer.
- Elements of year-round color spaced throughout the downtown – While many plants have a growing season where blooms are an attractive element, many are not flowering year-round. While this is common of plants, a downtown needs to have elements of interest from the vegetation year-round. To achieve this, plant materials should be designed and coordinated together in an effort to create planting beds that will have year round interest from one plant or another.
- Low maintenance and high impact – The secret to a strong plant palette for a downtown is to have low maintenance and high impact plants. This means that

plants utilized will be “showy & attractive” yet require the minimal amount of maintenance. To achieve this, plant materials should be chosen that are:

- Resilient to the climate (wind, rain, etc.)
- Resilient to the traffic and style of use (salt resistant, traffic resistant)
- Impactful in color and other attributes (unique branch styles, different growth patterns, etc.)

The above elements for vegetation in the streetscape are conceptual in design. Final design and planting plans must be prepared by the Borough of Mars prior to implementation of any projects.

VEGETATION REQUIREMENTS

Vegetation requirements are unique to each community and the USDA hardiness zone that the community is located within. General vegetation requirements that are universal among all communities are outlined below:

- Chose the correct plants – Plant materials should be selected for one hardiness zone colder than the climate of the community. This will ensure they are more likely to survive colder climates or upswings in temperature.

- Native plants should be utilized – Where possible native plants should be utilized to create a landscape design that is attractive and resilient. Use of native species will help the community create an identity as well as improve sustainability.
- Vegetation should be mature – Vegetation installed within the downtown should be of adequate size and maturity to survive the use and/or abuse that is common among streetscape uses.
- Layering implementation - Layering should be implemented in all plating areas that are more than 6’ in depth. This will fill the spaces more productively and provide less visual intrusion within larger planting areas.
- Proper maintenance – Similar to vegetation within a residential property, downtown vegetation will require continual and careful maintenance. Required maintenance should be performed to protect the plants as well as the investment of the installation.
- Drought tolerant – Despite being located within a rain heavy state, Mars should work to provide drought tolerant plants within the downtown corridors.
- Add annual color – Adding elements of color should be done annually. This can be completed by planting annuals every spring in the planters, hanging baskets, etc.; or alternatively through careful design of perennials that will require less water or maintenance.



COMMUNITIES SHOULD HAVE A VEGETATION PALETTE FOR DIFFERENT DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS OR NEIGHBORHOODS. THIS WILL HELP ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT CHARACTER AND PROVIDE A UNIQUE LOOK.

VEGETATION DESIGN & PLACEMENT

Vegetation design is tailored to the specific site or location in which the plantings will be located. Understanding that the below are conceptual representation only, the following are recommendations for design and placement of vegetation within the downtown corridor:

- Non-walk surface vegetation – The non-walk surface is the space between the parking stalls and the sidewalk space. This location should be utilized to plant vegetation that will provide a feeling of separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation methods. Vegetation in these areas should be vibrant year round and provide a physical barrier of separation. Tree grates and vertical elements should be included where possible. Ample crossing or breaks in vegetation should be provided to encourage less damage to the vegetation. Utilizing vegetation in this manner, in this location, will help reduce the noise common on streetscape corridors.
- Curb bulb-out – Vegetation within the curb bulb outs should be low in height and provide year round presence; providing no impact to the view-shed of vehicular traffic, yet letting vehicles know where a curb and vegetation is to avoid. The vegetation selected for this area is recommended to be a vine or perennial, offering reduced maintenance costs.
- Seating areas - Seating areas within the downtown streetscape need protection and noise reduction to make them enjoyable. This is completed through careful planning of vegetation to accompany the benches or other site amenities. Both vertical and horizontal elements should be utilized. By using both elements the users utilizing the benches will be provided with reduced sound and provided with the

perception of a safer environment by being enclosed by the vertical plane. Ample space should be provided around the site amenities so that access is provided and growth of the vegetation will not hamper potential users.

- **Building face vegetation** – Vegetation along the building face, otherwise known as foundation plantings, should be utilized where buildings are not immediately adjacent to the sidewalks. By filling this space with vegetation it will provide the sense that the setback of buildings along the corridor are maintained. Vegetation in these areas should be very colorful, providing an attraction or draw toward the building; yet remain low in height as to not detract from the retail windows.
- **Flower/planter baskets** – Flower baskets should be utilized in conjunction with banners along the streetscape. Flower baskets can either be located on the light poles or within the same non-walk surface area. All planter baskets should be made of a material that will withstand year-round use in the climate. Annuals should be planted in these baskets or planters to provide a “pop” of color for the streetscape.
- **Central island/median plantings** – Center islands and medians are utilized to separate traffic patterns. Often these areas are not planted, yet they can very easily be. Plantings in the medians should remain low and provide visual interest.



- **Large planting bed** – Large planting beds within the streetscape or downtown corridors should be layered to provide maximum visual interest and reduce visual intrusion to buildings. Layering should be done in three parts:

- **Layer 1** – closer to sidewalk/roadway – This layer of plantings should be low to the ground and spread in growth format. All plants in this layer should reach no more than 8” in height and be colorful.
- **Layer 2** - middle layer – This layer is an intermediary between foundation plantings and ground covers. This layer should be made up of perennials and other vegetation not to exceed 18” in height.
- **Layer 3** – building face layer – This layer should be evergreen or year round interest plants. Shrubs should be primarily used in this layer, offering maximum height of 30-40”.



Large planting beds should split the planting space as follows:

- **Layer 1** – 25% of space
- **Layer 2** – 30% of space
- **Layer 3** – 45% of space

- **Small planting beds** – Small planting beds should be crafted similar to the large planting beds, yet have a maximum height of 24”. Shrubs should still be utilized exclusively in the final layer, yet smaller shrub varieties should be planned.
- **Canopy and Tree Guidelines** - A strong tree canopy should be maintained within the downtown corridors of Mars. Tree canopy should be made up of mature trees that are properly maintained, limbed up and inspected by an urban forester regularly. When a tree is removed from the canopy, it is important to replace it with a tree similar in size, quality and design.

The above design and placement recommendations are based on an analysis of the Borough of Mars. All vegetation design will require further study and design prior to implementation.



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