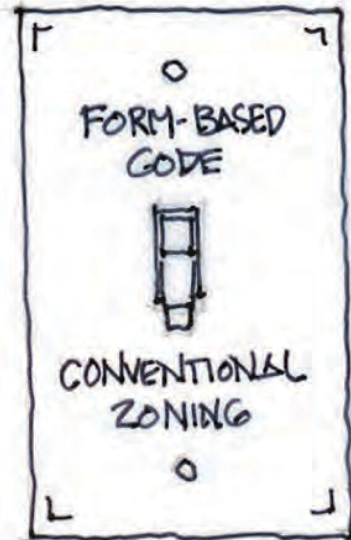


# Form-o-stat

A tool for calibrating form-based codes

A concept by Michael Huston, Arch., LEED-AP  
Civic Plan Studio

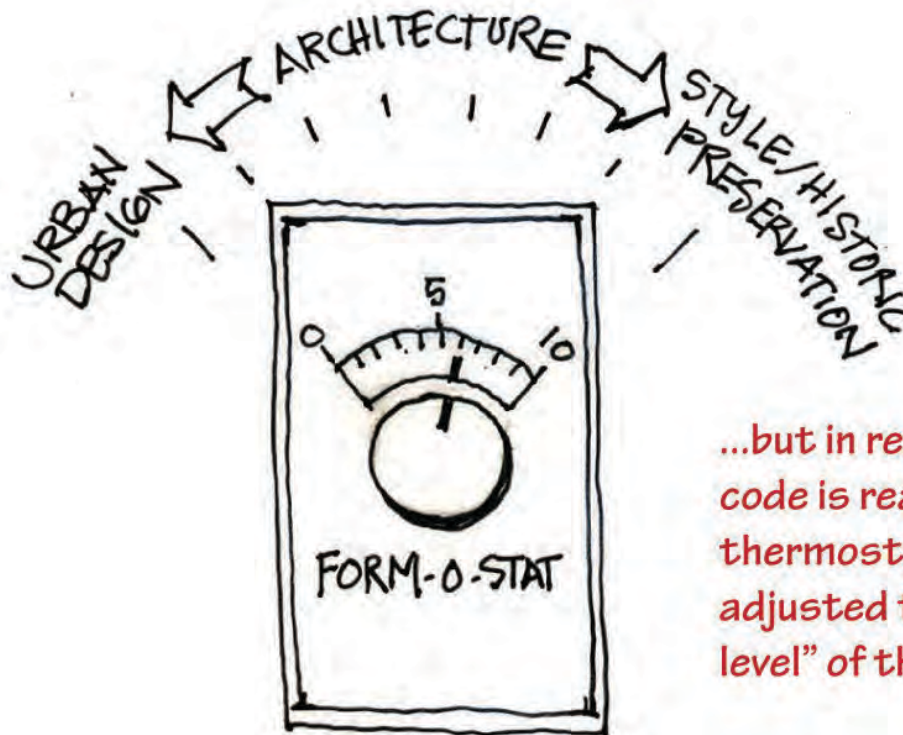
Form-o-stat v2.1  
M. Huston 2013



Many view form-based codes as a kind of all-or-nothing solution.

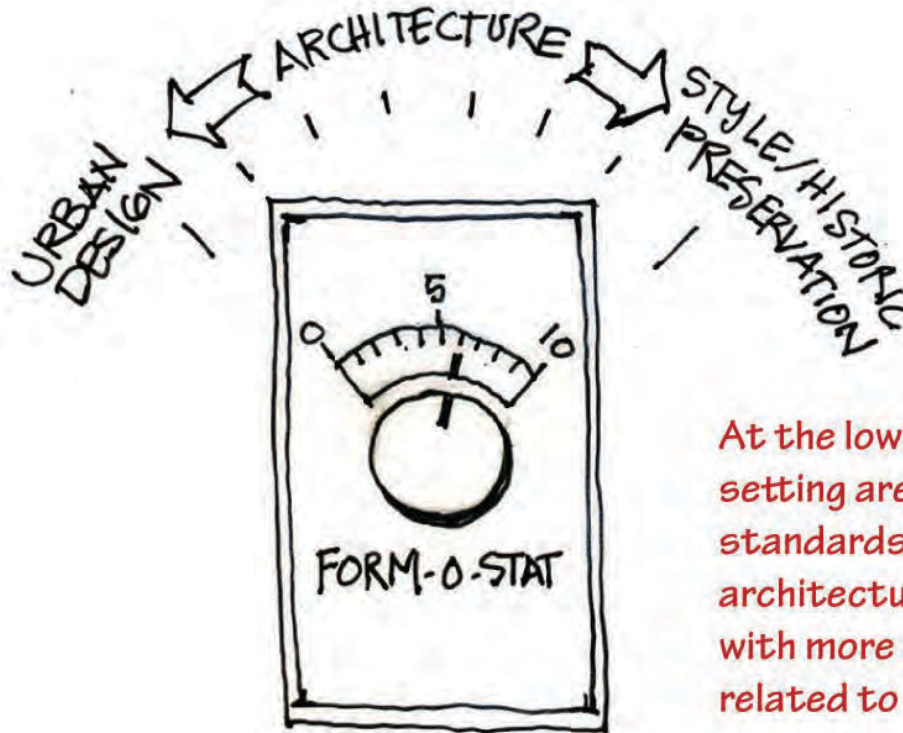
It's either on or off....

## The Assumption



*...but in reality, a form-based code is really more like a thermostat that can be adjusted to suit the “comfort level” of the community.*

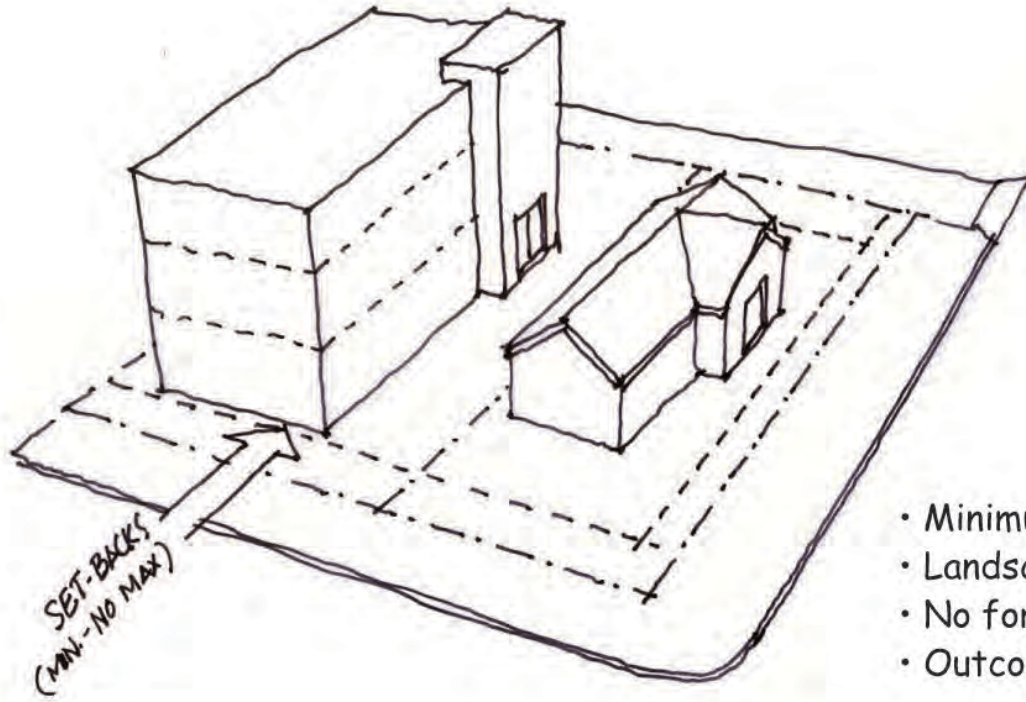
The Reality



*At the low end of the temperature setting are basic urban design standards, followed by general architectural standards, and ending with more nuanced standards related to style and preservation.*

The Reality

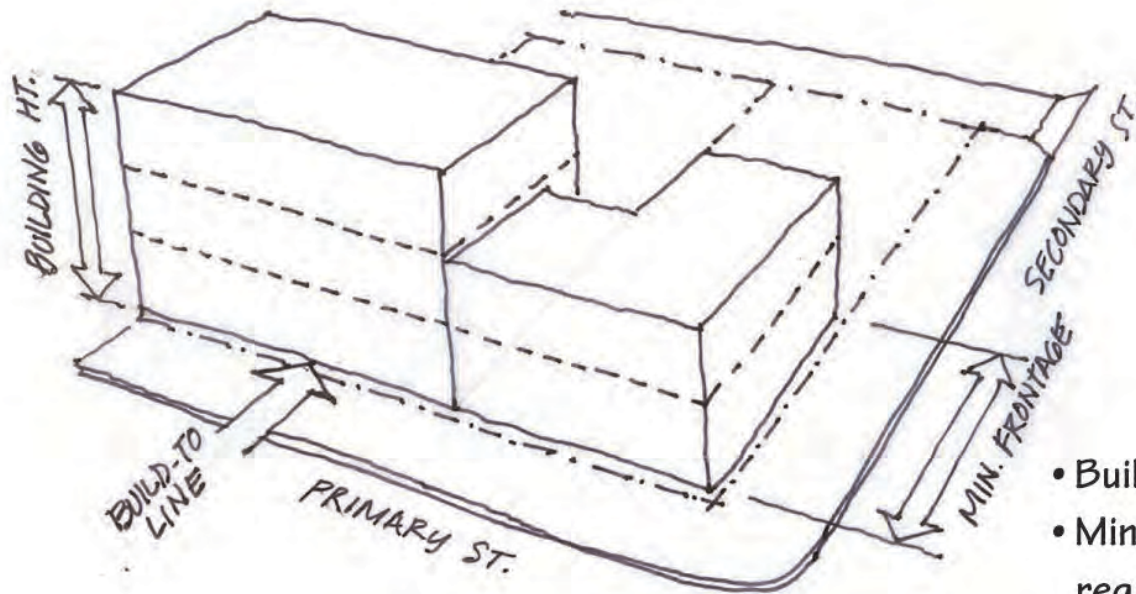
The Form-o-stat has  
10 degree settings...



- Minimum setbacks
- Landscape buffers
- No form standards
- Outcome is unpredictable

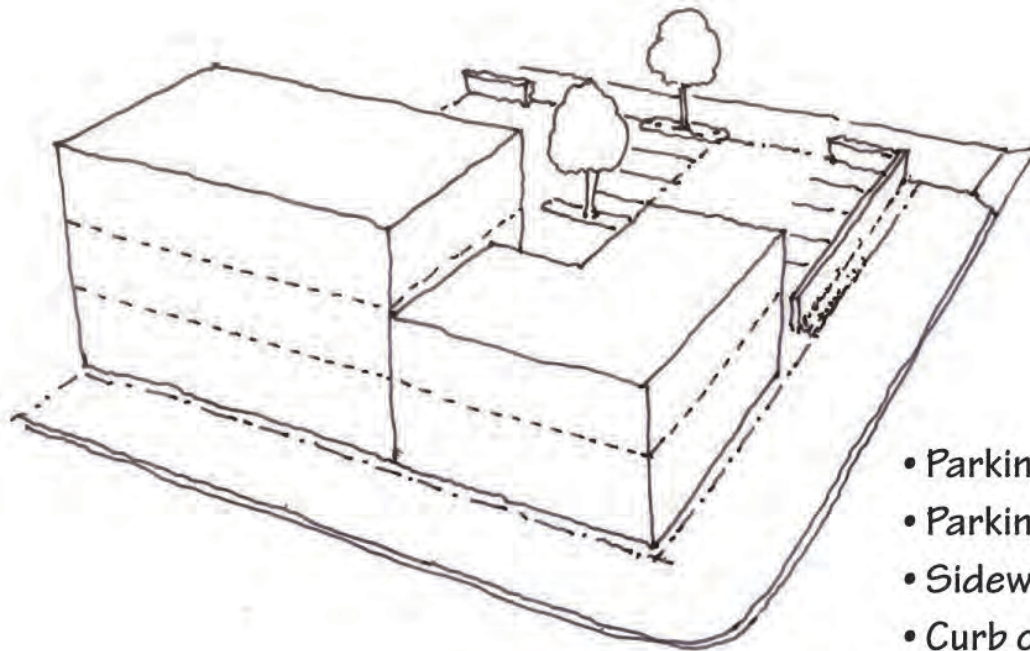
## 0° - Conventional Zoning





- Build-to lines
- Minimum frontage requirements
- Mass & height

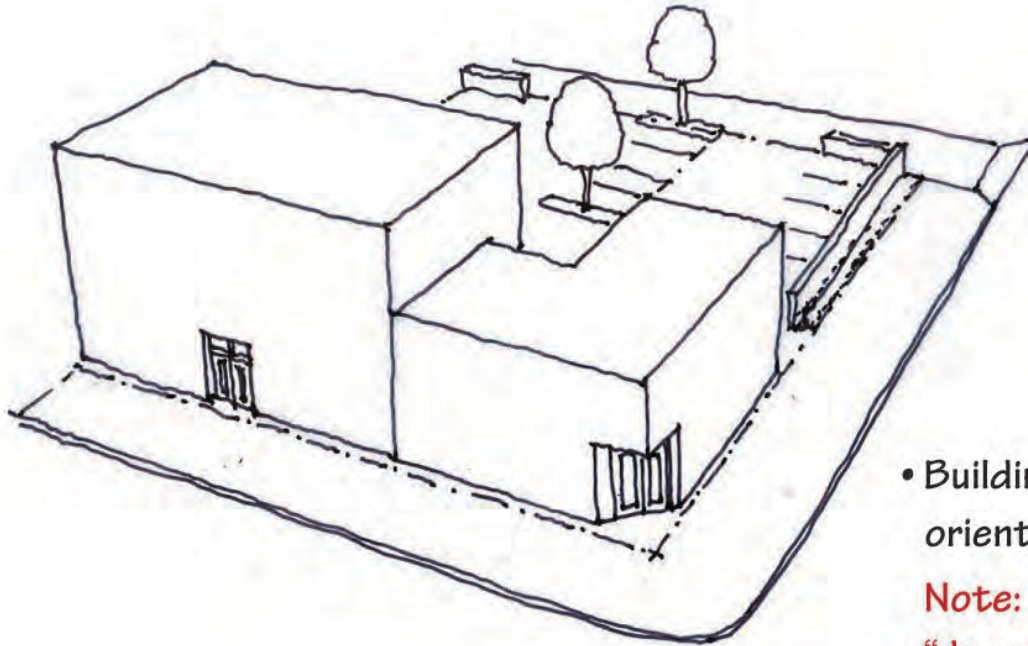
## 1° - Building Mass & Placement



- Parking placement
- Parking screens
- Sidewalk standards
- Curb cuts
- Landscape standards

## 2° - Site Design Standards

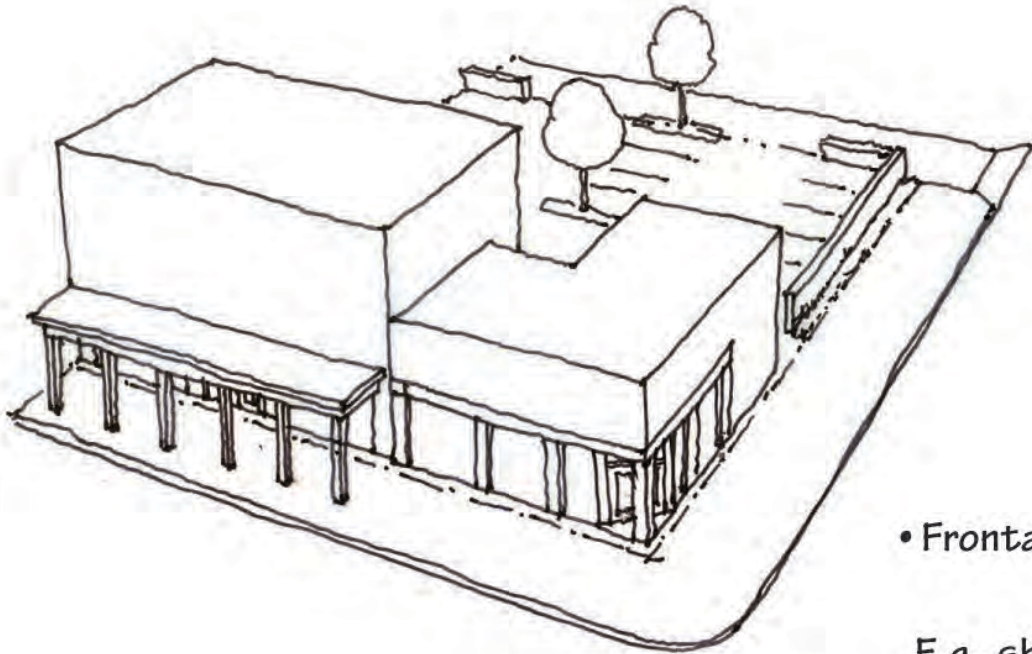




- Building entrance orientation

**Note: Minimum  
“degree” setting for  
Form Based Code**

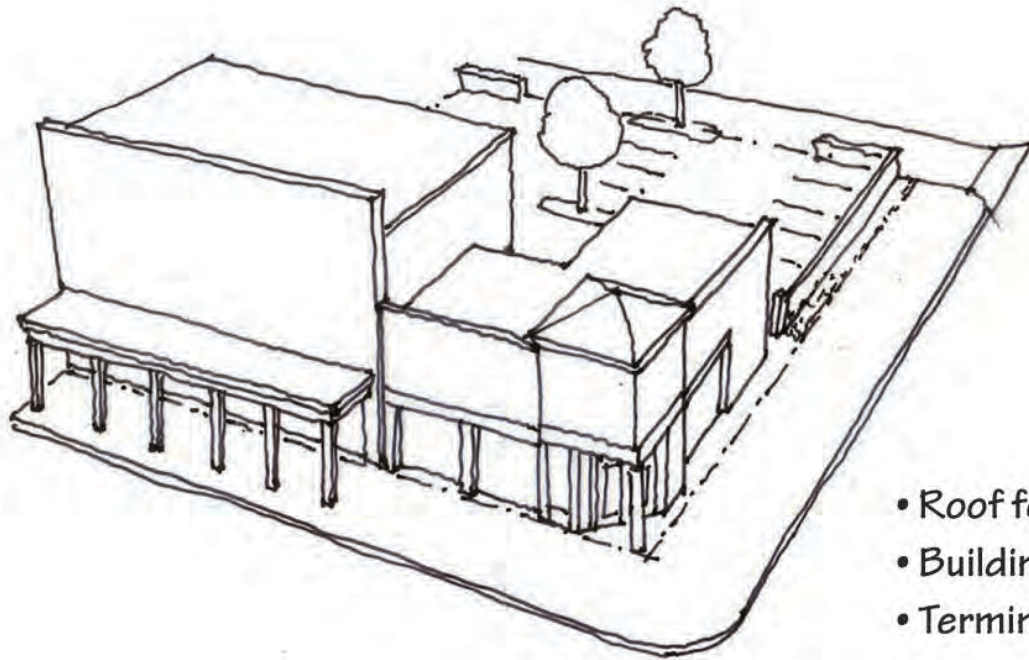
**3° - Entry Orientation**



- Frontage types

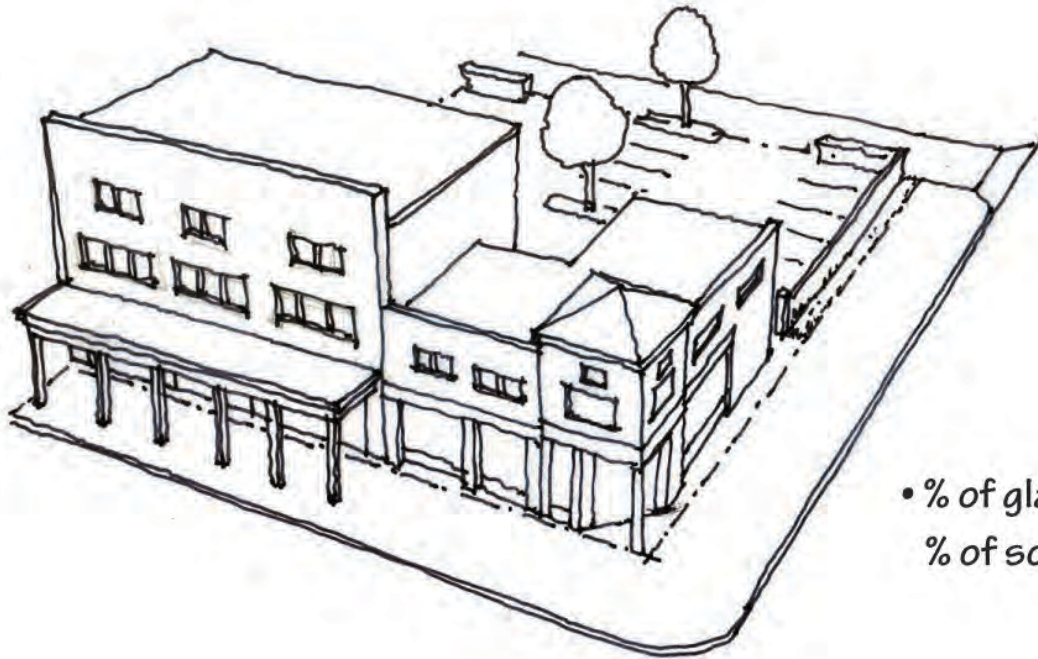
E.g., shop front, arcade,  
gallery, etc.

## 4° - Building Frontage Type



- Roof forms
- Building corners
- Terminated Vistas

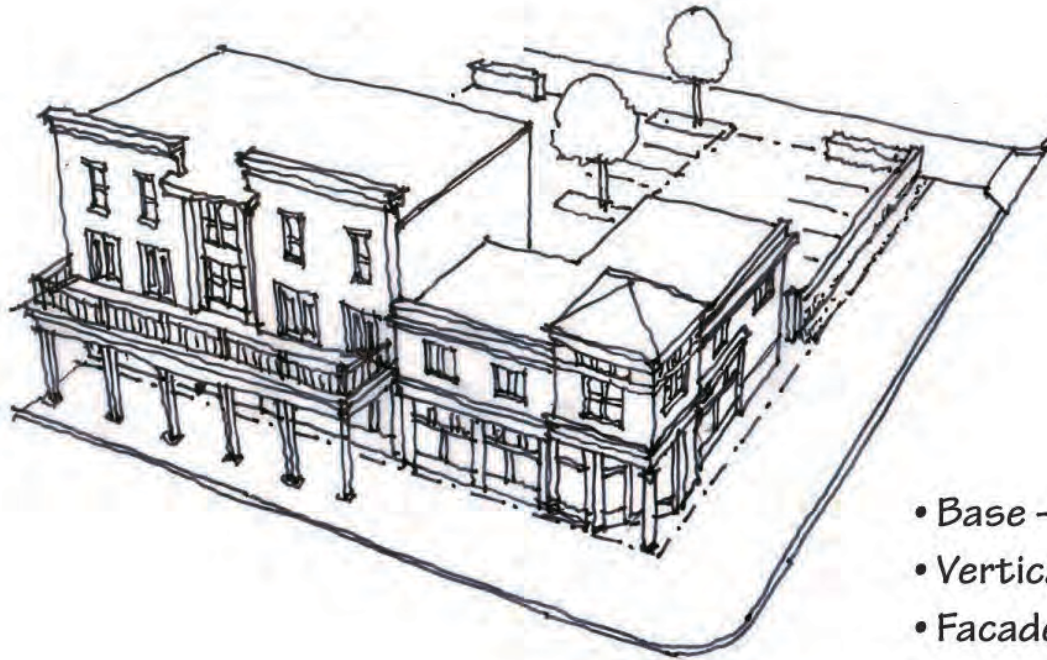
## 5° - Roof Form and Projections



- % of glazing vs.  
% of solid material

## 6° - Solid and Void Ratios





- Base - middle - top
- Vertical rhythm
- Facade proportion

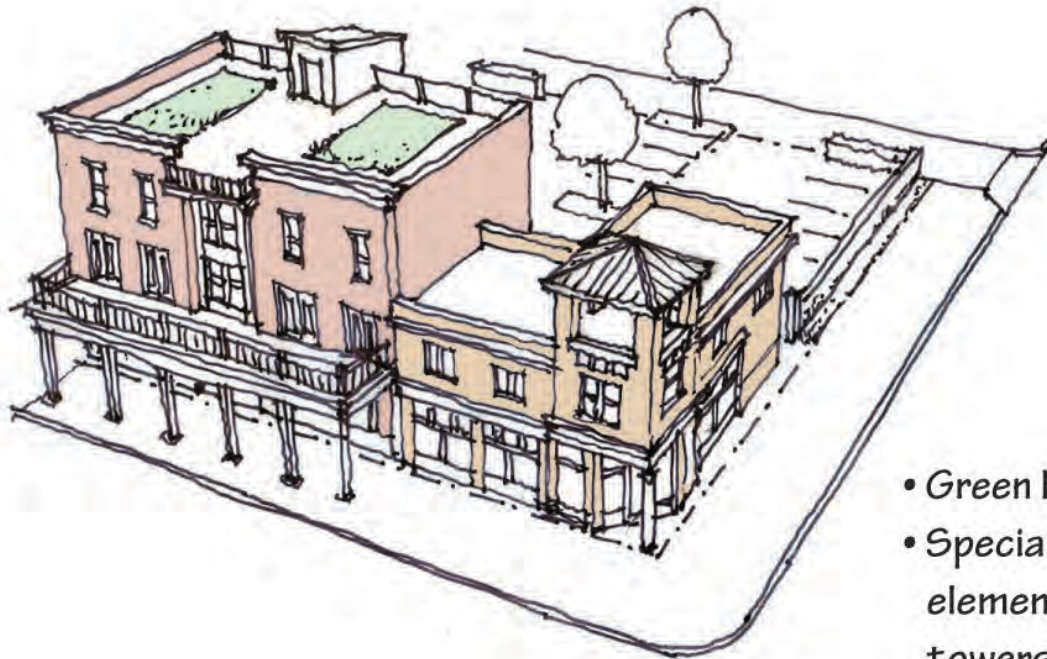
## 7° - Facade Articulation



- Compatible materials
- May vary by street orientation

## 8° - Building Materials





- Green building standards
- Special character-defining elements (e.g., balconies, towers, etc.)

## 9° - Special Requirements - non-style



- Stylistic standards
- Reinforces “branding”
- Implements a more specific vision

## 10° - Architectural Details - Style



- Standards related to historic preservation

## 10° - Architectural Details - Historic Preservation

## SUMMARY

- 1° *Building mass & placement*
- 2° *Site design standards*
- 3° *Building entry orientation*
- 4° *Frontage types*
- 5° *Roof forms & projections*
- 6° *Solid and void ratios*
- 7° *Facade articulation*
- 8° *Materials*
- 9° *Special requirements - non-style*
- 10° *Style or historic preservation*

URBAN  
DESIGN

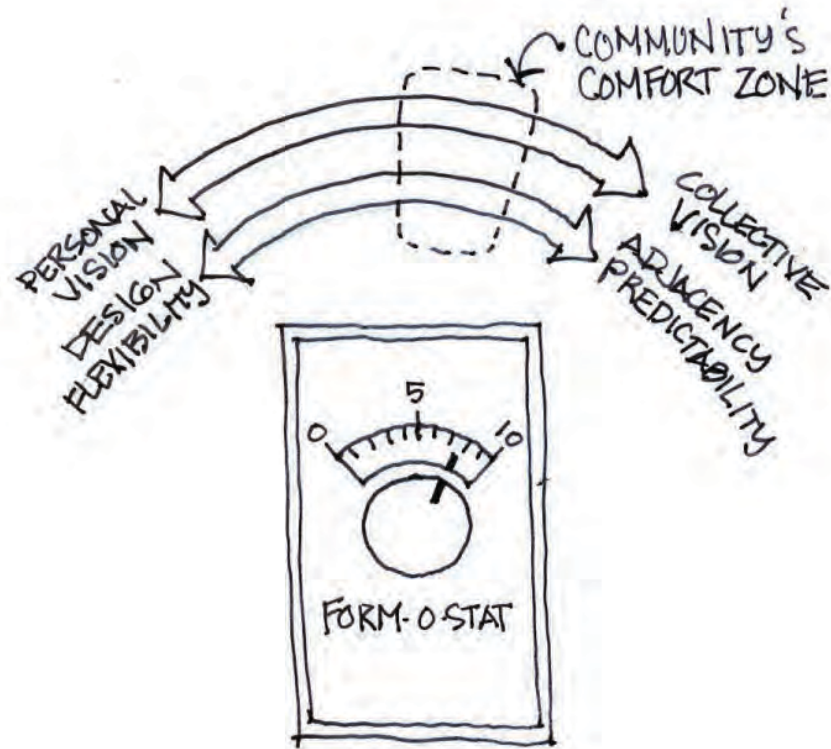


ARCHITECTURE



STYLE &  
PRESERVATION





It's a balance



Miami 21



Prospect

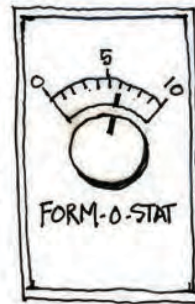


Seaside



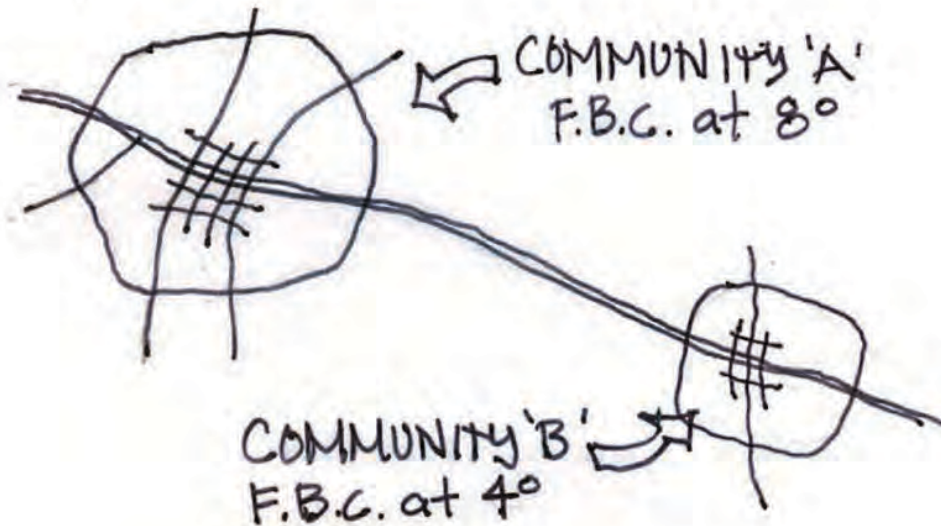
Alys Beach

Low degree code

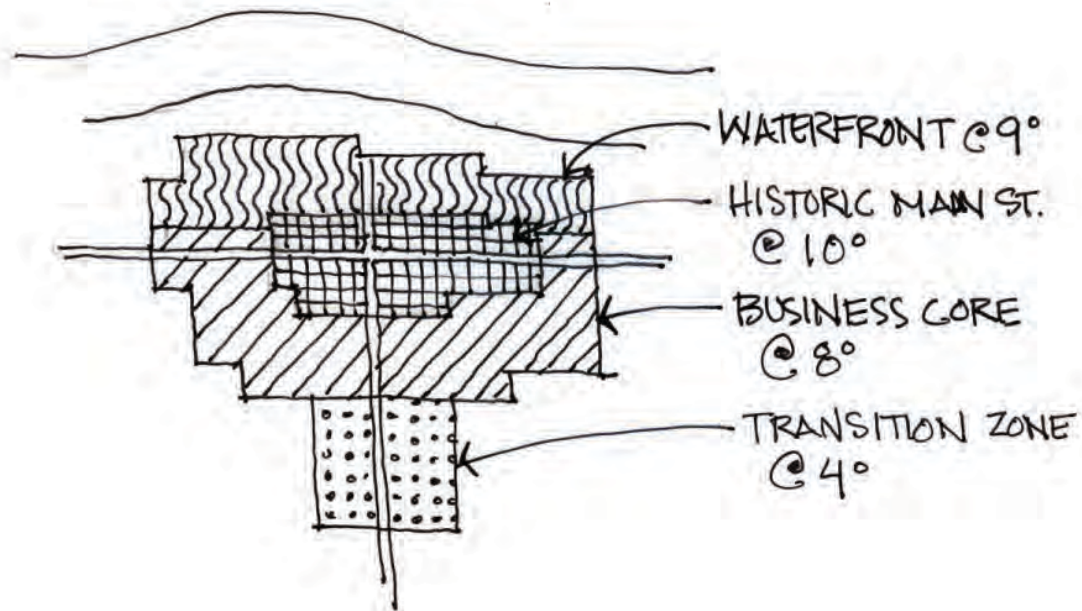


High degree code






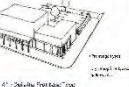








Each community may decide  
their own “temperature” setting



**“Temperature” settings may vary within a  
community or area**

# Example Calibration Matrix

ZONE/DISTRICT	1 - POSITION  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	2 - SITE  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	3 - ENTRY  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	4 - FRONTAGE  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	5 - ROOF SHAPE  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	6 - SOLID/VOID  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	7 - ARTICULATION  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	8 - MATERIALS  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	9 - SPECIAL REQS  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>	10 - STYLE/HISTORIC  <small>1<sup>st</sup> - Building Footprint 2<sup>nd</sup> - Building Height 3<sup>rd</sup> - Building Massing</small>
CORRIDOR	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
GATEWAY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗

## Uses of the Form-o-stat

- *Introduce form-based codes in an incremental and simple way*
- *Give communities more control and a greater comfort level when beginning the code writing process*
- *Communicate the correlation between strong codes and strong visions*

# Form-o-stat

a concept by

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M. Huston 2013