



BEACON HILL AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NOTES:

The Midtown Neighborhoods Plan (October 2000) encourages an increase in mixed-use development, which includes increased residential density along these corridors. The mixed-use configuration with small-scale commercial development on first floors with second and higher floors containing residential uses is highly recommended.

The existing character of the primary commercial corridors is identified by typical lot sizes of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre.

The commercial developments east of the western-most Union Pacific Railroad have a smaller scale and are more pedestrian-oriented. The design standard limiting the parcel size in commercial areas is intended to maintain that pedestrian-oriented character.

RECOMMENDATION:

Commercial uses should occupy the ground floor and when feasible, residential uses should occupy the second or more floors of a commercial structure. Increased residential density throughout the commercial corridors is encouraged.

While there are substantially large non-residential structures in the Beacon Hill Area, they do maintain a pedestrian scale that is consistent throughout the NCD Area. A variety of structure heights is also desired and the design standards allow for this flexibility while ensuring the characteristic pedestrian scale.

LOT SIZE

DESIGN STANDARDS

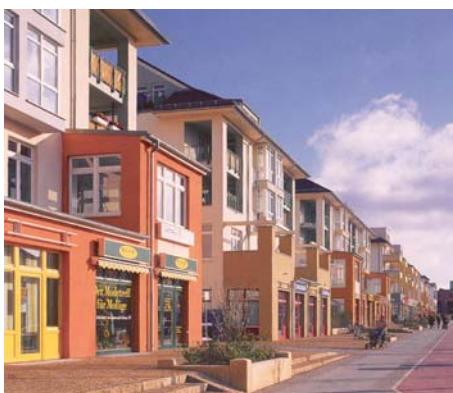
Parcels shall not be aggregated to a size of one half (1/2) acre or greater.

BUILDING HEIGHT

The maximum building height for any new construction or vertical addition on a parcel that abuts Blanco Rd, Hildebrand Ave or Fredericksburg Rd, shall be no greater than 35 feet.

Additional height bonuses allowed through the Unified Development Code due to additional setbacks do not apply.

Properties exceeding one (1) acre in size are exempt from this standard.



Examples of mixed-use development depicting scale (height) desired in this district

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NOTES:

The commercial structures along Blanco and Fredericksburg Roads maintain shallow setbacks that bring the buildings close to the street creating a street edge that is more inviting to the passer-by than typical commercial development in other parts of the city. Maintaining the street edge is the focus of the setback standards. Avoiding the typical suburban condition of street, sidewalk, parking lot, building is the primary goal of the setback requirements. The design standards also allow for head-in parking along the street where it exists on the block faces in the commercial areas.

DEFINITIONS:

Buildings/Structures: A walled and roofed structure or enclosure for persons, animals or property.

SETBACKS

DESIGN STANDARDS

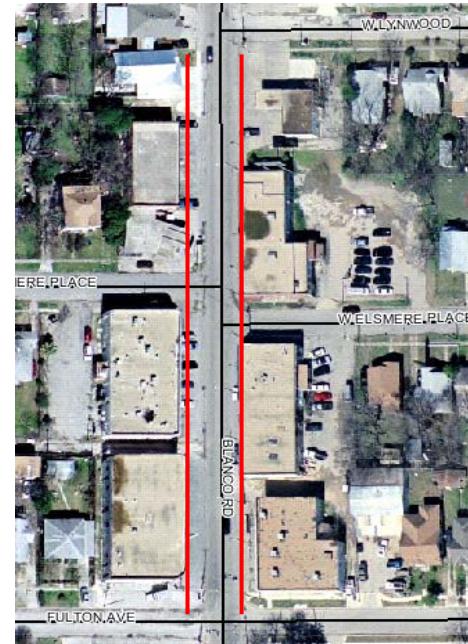
All buildings shall maintain a maximum front setback of fifteen (15) feet.

Any building constructed on a corner lot shall maintain a maximum front setback of fifteen (15) feet along the front and reverse front setbacks.

Properties exceeding one (1) acre in size are exempt from this standard.



Aerial view of Fredericksburg Road, depicting the shallow setbacks, and rear parking configurations.



Aerial view of Blanco Road, depicting the shallow setbacks, and head-in / rear parking configuration.



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NOTES:

Storefronts are a unique feature of urban commercial areas in San Antonio. The NCD area contains many structures that possess this building feature. Within this feature there are several elements that are consistent. One of these elements is the location, depth and composition of the building entrance. The storefront entrances of building and spaces within buildings are typically located along primary street facades, recessed from the plane of the primary façade 0' - 4' and contain some transparent materials in the entrance door(s).

PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES-ENTRANCES

DESIGN STANDARDS

Entrances doors or alcoves shall be located either along the primary street facade or at the corner of a structure facing two primary streets.

Original door openings are to be maintained and no new entrances shall be created unless a space is being reconfigured to increase or decrease the number of tenant spaces in a multi-tenant structure.

Entrance doors shall be recessed no more than eight (8) feet. Entrance doors shall contain transparent glazing and shall not be covered, concealed or filled in with solid building materials.



Example of appropriate entrances and door openings



Example of inappropriate entrance configurations in a commercial area

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PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES- SHADING DEVICES

DESIGN STANDARDS

A shading device shall be incorporated to provide continuous sun protection at the midpoint of the sidewalk width. This may be accomplished through the use of building orientation, minimum 3 ft. deep building canopy or awning (metal, wood or fabric; no back-lit), or street trees (one tree for every 50 linear feet of building façade facing a street is required, if using trees to create shade).

NOTES:

Shading devices such as awnings are good ways of improving the physical environment just outside of building, but also can make these spaces inviting to the passer-by. In addition to improving the environment adjacent to buildings by providing shade and perpetuating a common building technique found in many similar urban commercial areas, the intent of the standards to provide comfort for the pedestrian.



(Above, above right and below) Examples of structures with awnings providing adequate shading for pedestrians along the street





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NOTES:

Celebrating the storefront is a common goal for many of the design standards in this section of the NCD Plan. Using storefront windows and doors in combination with awnings is an effective solution to making buildings and tenant spaces inviting. In contrast, buildings with fewer wall openings and/or no shading devices are substantially under-utilized and frequented less often by pedestrians. The design standards are focused on maintaining window openings and celebrating the storefront on new buildings and buildings that already have this feature.

PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES- WALL OPENINGS AND WINDOWS

DESIGN STANDARDS

The area on a facade dedicated to transparent openings (windows, doors) shall be at least 50% of the first floor front façade (Finished floor to finished ceiling).

When replacing original windows or transoms, the original windows forms / profile shall be retained and utilized, using transparent glass.

Transoms, sidelights, and storefront windows shall not be covered, concealed or filled in with solid building materials.

Use of non-transparent materials, mirrored glass, Plexiglas or Lexan, and burglar bars (exterior only) on storefronts is prohibited.

Storefront window bases bulkheads shall not be removed, altered or expanded. When repairing, a material of the same size, scale, proportion and composition shall be used on this building component.



Example of conforming window and door openings on a commercial structure



Non-conforming example of a commercial building that has window and door openings that have been partially covered with non-transparent materials



Non-conforming example of a commercial building with no window openings

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BUILDING MATERIALS

DESIGN STANDARDS

Covering of original brick or other masonry system details or facing materials on the front facade, with materials such as wood, metal or simulated wood siding or any other textured finish that conceal the original exterior system details is prohibited.

Existing buildings with other types of exterior skin systems shall be maintained and/or repaired or replaced with materials that match in physical composition, size, scale and proportion.

Notes:

Masonry materials are a common material for non-residential structures in this district. The intent of the design standard is to allow for use and creativity with new materials for new structures while maintaining the historical character of buildings that were constructed of masonry. The primary concern is to celebrate the traditional use of masonry by not allowing it to disappear visually by hiding it or covering it.



Example of new materials appropriate for this district



Example of new materials appropriate for this district



Example of traditional exterior material common to the district



Example of traditional exterior material common to the district



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OFF STREET PARKING/LOADING DESIGN STANDARDS

With the exception of head-in and parallel parking, parking shall be completely separated from the streetscape, and located behind buildings. Side-yard parking may be incorporated if a) at least 50% of the street frontage is occupied by the building, and b) the parking lot is no greater than 65 feet wide along the street. Access drives to parking areas shall be placed on secondary streets, where possible.

Surface parking lots shall be designed to screen parked cars from the public sidewalk. Screening shall be continuous on all public frontages using one or a combination of the following: a) building face, b) low wall (3' maximum height), or fence (no wooden) constructed of material similar to the building, c) street furniture, or d) landscaping.



Desired head-in parking configuration

NOTES:

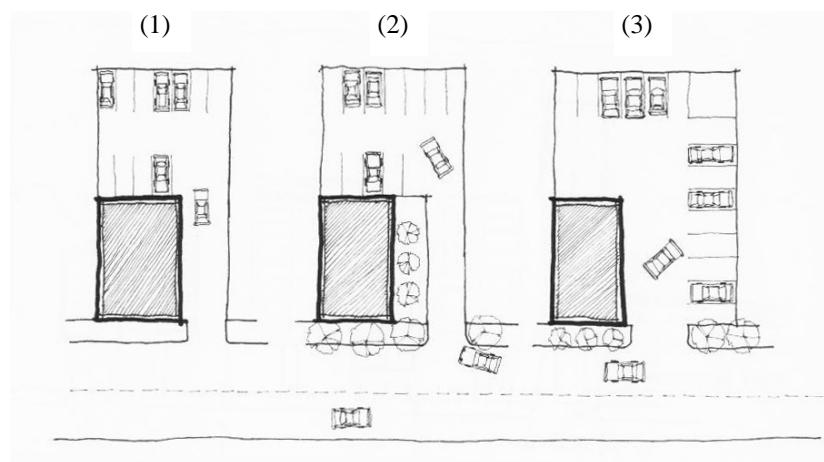
As with other design standards within this section, creating and maintaining pedestrian-oriented environments in commercial areas is the focus of effort in the NCD Plan. The diagrams below depicts ways to configure the spatial arrangement of buildings and parking areas. Figure (1) and (2) show means of minimizing the visual impact of parking areas by confining the parking to the rear of the building. While Figure (3) does place some parking behind the building, it visually exposes the parking areas by placing them on the side of the building, which is less desirable than the other two schemes.

Shared parking arrangements are preferred as a means of reducing the amount of paved surface in the neighborhood.

Head-in and parallel parking along the street shall be encouraged throughout the neighborhood.

Minimum parking standards are encouraged. Parking areas that exceed the minimum space requirements are recommended to be constructed of pervious material.

Maximum parking limitations set forth in the *Unified Development Code* are not relieved by the NCD Standards.



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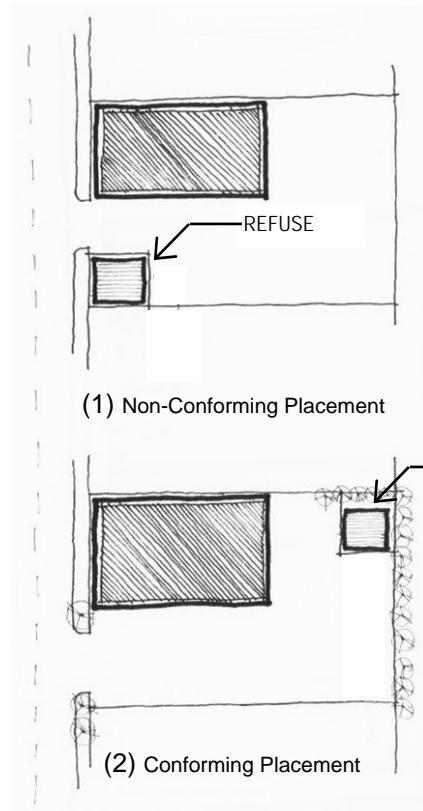


NOTES:

In addition to parking issues, placement and unsightliness of refuse containers is a concern in the commercial areas. While having refuse containers may be a necessity of doing business, concealing the refuse containers from view by placing them behind buildings or screening and/or enclosing the container entirely are good solutions to improving the visual quality of streetscapes in commercial areas. Figure (1) below depicts, in plain view, a non-conforming and undesired placement of a refuse container, while Figure (2) is the opposite, conforming and desired in this area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES

Loading and refuse pick-up/delivery areas shall be located at the rear of the structure (i.e. not within buffer yards), and screened from view of the streetscape.



Example of non-conforming placement and visual exposure of refuse container



Example of conforming concealed refuse container



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NOTES:

Light pollution is a common problem in the NCD area's commercial areas. The design standards are meant to curtail light pollution, improve the quality of lighting along the commercial corridors and allow business owners to illuminate their spaces to announce their business and provide security in low light conditions.

DEFINITIONS:

Glare: The sensation produced by luminance within the visual field that is sufficiently greater than the luminance to which cause annoyance or discomfort to the eyes or loss in visual performance and visibility.

LIGHTING

DESIGN STANDARDS

Site lighting shall be shielded so that light sources are not visible from public right-of-way, or from adjacent residential property; such that any off-site glare is prevented.

No exterior fluorescent lighting shall be used, unless hidden from view from the streetscape (indirect lighting). Lighting pole standards shall not exceed a height of twelve (12) feet.



Example of commercial property with appropriately shielded exterior light fixtures



Example of commercial property with non-conforming lighting that produces glare and 'spill over' light onto adjacent properties

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FENCING

DESIGN STANDARDS

Predominately open fencing within the front yard area shall not exceed a height of four (4) feet, and any solid fencing material shall not exceed a height of two (2) feet.

The use of chain link, fencecrete, sheet metal, plastic, vinyl, barbed wire or horizontal metal pipe larger than 2" diameter is prohibited.



Example of conforming fencing (above and below)



NOTES:

Fencing was deemed as an important feature for several reasons, such as security and signifying spatial relationship to buildings. While the capability to install fencing was important to property owners, the single most problematic characteristic of the existing fencing on properties within the NCD area is the visual quality for the materials used for fencing. The intent of the design standards is to improve the quality of the fencing in the commercial areas while allowing property owners to secure their business or property.



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FENCING

Examples of non-conforming fence transparency



Examples of non-conforming fence material



Examples of non-conforming fence material and height (right and below)



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SIGNAGE

DESIGN STANDARDS

Primary, individual building signage (1 sign per street facade with spacing no less than a 100 ft radius) shall consist of one of the following:

- 1) *one monument sign that is a) no greater than 8 feet in height, b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 40 sf (in surface area per side), or*
- 2) *one pole sign (free-standing) that is a) no greater than 18 feet in height, b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 32 sf (in surface area per side) or 50 sf (in surface area per side) for a multi-tenant building.*

Additional signage may also consist of one of the following:

- 1) *one projecting sign attached to principal structure that a) shall not project more than 3 feet horizontally from the face of the building, b) shall not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 20 sf (in surface area per side)*
- 2) *one (1) wall sign that can consist of a band of lettering on the building's front façade or that may be installed on an existing building's sign board area if the sign board is an integral part of the building's original façade design. The total sign area shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of a building facade.*

Additional individual tenant signage shall not exceed a 8 sq. ft. maximum for each tenant space and shall consist of a) one canopy sign under canopy/awning or b) one wall sign at entrance to tenant space. Permanent lettering (painted or affixed) used on window surfaces shall not obscure more than 25% of the surface area. These signs shall not obscure building details such as transoms, sidelights, or architectural features such as columns, arches, porticos, articulation of fenestrations or exposed structure.

Temporary banner signs are permitted but shall be no greater than 40 square feet and are limited in duration by Chapter 28, Sign Code.

V-Type Signs (such as sandwich boards), shall be no greater than eight (8) sf maximum per side. Only one (1) such sign per business.

Neon signs are permitted. Internally lit signs (reverse cut lettering

Notes:

Visual clutter created by excess signage and lighting was determined to be a issue of great concern of property owners within the commercial areas of the NCD Area. While business advertising is critical to helping maintain the economic health of the commercial areas, specific sign requirements are necessary to improve the visual appeal of individual tenant spaces and buildings as well as the overall appeal of the commercial corridors.

DEFINITIONS:

Sign: any device, fixture, placard or structure that uses any color, form, graphic illumination, symbol, or writing to advertise, announce the purpose, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public.

Sign Area: the entire advertising area excluding any framing, trim, moulding or supporting structure.

Street façade: an exterior wall that faces or is adjacent to a street.

Projecting signs: signs that project perpendicular or any angle other than parallel to a building facade.

Attached sign: signage or lettering or advertisement that is placed on the building façade or any sign structure constructed separately and affixed to a building façade.

Banner Sign: temporary, unframed sign made of various flexible materials.



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DEFINITIONS (cont):

Wall Sign: means a sign fastened to, projected on, or painted on, the wall of a building or structure in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of, the sign and which does not protrude more than twelve (12) inches from the building or structure.

V-type Sign means a structure composed of two (2) signs with the faces oriented in opposing directions and in the shape of the letter "V"; provided, however, that only one (1) face can be viewed from any one (1) direction.

SIGNAGE (CONTINUED)

where only copy can illuminate) with no background illumination are permitted. Flashing signs are prohibited.

Temporary signs (with the exception of Banner Signs and V-Type Signs), inflatable signs, animated signs, pennant flags, feather signs, billboard or off-premise signs, and digital signs are prohibited.

EXAMPLES OF LIT SIGNS WITH NO BACKGROUND ILLUMINATION



EXAMPLES OF NON-CONFORMING SIGNAGE



Example of non-conforming signs (above, above left, right, and above right) with total sign areas and dimensions exceeding district maximums

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