Appendix A

Downtown Myrtle Beach Design Guidelines

Adopted by the Myrtle Beach City Council
September 21, 1999
# Downtown Myrtle Beach Design Guidelines

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Downtown Myrtle Beach Design Guidelines

*Broadway, Entry and Civic Districts*

**Introduction**

The image of a downtown is perceived through the design of its buildings and streetscape. Good design as a component of downtown redevelopment creates a working, growing and aesthetically pleasing business center. The economic vitality and values for which the downtown stands are reinforced and rekindled, and the image of downtown as the commercial and social heart of the city is solidified.

Improving the visual appearance of Downtown Myrtle Beach helps to make the area a fun place to visit, shop and dine. Appearance is as critical to the success of the area as economic performance, public participation, new businesses and parking.

Each individual building façade plays an important role in the makeup of Downtown. Storefronts, window displays, signs, color, awnings and architectural details all play an integral part in the successful design of individual buildings. Rehabilitating your personal segment of Downtown Myrtle Beach can be mind-boggling:

- What materials should I use?
- What colors are best?
- Is an awning appropriate?
- What kind of sign would look best?
Property owners or tenants who wish to improve their buildings should begin by assessing the current visual condition of the entire façade:

- How could storefront improvements relate to the entire visual impact of the building?
- How does the building relate to neighboring buildings?
- How will a storefront improvement relate to the upper portion of the building?
- What changes are needed to improve the appearance and integrity of the upper portion of the building?

So many questions, and each one leads to more! Fortunately, many of these questions can easily be answered within the contents of these design guidelines. While local building codes must be complied with, these guidelines can help take the guesswork out of your rehab or new construction project by providing you with examples of challenging areas and possible solutions. Paint, awnings, signs, windows and doors are just some of the areas where information is offered to assist you in your project.

Remember, City Code requires approval by the Community Appearance Board before issuance of all commercial building permits, sign permits and awning permits. Although the Community Appearance Board will be referring to these guidelines when making their decisions, adherence to these guidelines does not guarantee approval by the Board.

The following pages offer ideas and requirements for renovation and new construction in our revitalizing downtown. Detailed guidelines are included for storefronts, entryways, signs, awnings, sidewalks, upper stories, rear façades, color schemes, building placement & dimensions, roof forms, parking areas and landscaping.

The goal of all building improvements should be to make each building the best possible expression of itself that it can be. These design guidelines will steer property owners, developers, tenants and design professionals through various improvement projects while keeping in mind that each building is unique. The guidelines are intended to suggest ways in which property and business owners can take advantage of the unique charm and history of Downtown Myrtle Beach.
Architectural Style

The core of Downtown Myrtle Beach was built primarily in the first two decades of the 20th Century. Architects generally utilized two different architectural styles that blend together nicely in our coastal town. All renovations, improvements and new construction should visually blend with the architectural style of the surrounding buildings.

Mediterranean
The Mediterranean style is a unique adaptation of Spanish and Moorish architecture. The splendor of this architecture can still be enjoyed in the façade of the Chapin Building on Main Street. Elements include prominent main entries, courtyards, balconies, cross ventilation, loggias and towers. Materials include masonry, stucco and terra cotta. Colors are muted pastels and naturals.
Georgian
Typical Georgian structures are symmetrical with gabled roofs, often including dormers, although pyramidal and other roof forms were used. City Hall is a classic example of this formal and dignified style. Materials varied widely from wood to brick and stone. Entrances were emphasized and ornately decorated, with transoms or fanlights over the door and columns or pilasters (piers made to look like columns) frequently taking the form of one or two story porticoes (porches). Elements include a projecting façade, band course, pediment, cornice, modillion course, brick or stone quoin, and dormers. Classical details surround the windows and doors and cornices, columns, pilasters, and quoins (outside corners). Window elements include a double hung sash, muntin, keystone, splayed lintel and louvered shutters. Materials include brick stone, plaster and wood.

Renovation
Consistency in design and proportion is important in conveying how our downtown is perceived by the customer seeking goods and services. The integrity of a building as an individual structure, as part of a series of buildings, and as a part of a neighborhood should be respected. Take care to insure that your design blends well with surrounding buildings, sidewalks and other public improvements. A visually unified downtown is a powerful tool for attracting people to our downtown and to the individual shops and businesses located there.

Step back and look at your property from across the street… from the corner… from nearby intersections. What does the community see? Some things, like air conditioning units and satellite dishes, are more noticeable from a distance.
Traditional Façade

The storefront is a distinct entity that demands a complete design statement, not just the remodeling of a doorway or the addition of a new wall surface. Changes have occurred to our buildings during the years in response to various merchandising trends and changing tenants. In most cases, the changes affected the storefront area while leaving the upper façade intact. In some cases, the original storefronts may still be in place but covered over or in need of maintenance or repair.

The traditional commercial storefront can be the most important element that gives historical significance and character to the downtown. The traditional commercial façade consists of three parts:
- the storefront with an entrance and large display windows;
- the upper masonry façade with regularly spaced windows; and
- the decorative cornice that caps the building.

These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles, but the result is essentially consistent with the traditional façade.

1st Floor Storefront Design

The traditional downtown building façade has a well-defined opening that was filled by the original storefront. The opening is bounded on each side by piers, which were usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded on top by the band course or the storefront cornice (the structural element supporting the upper façade) and bounded below by the sidewalk.

The storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. The large glass opening served to display goods the store or business had to sell. It also allowed natural light deep into the store, thus minimizing the need for an artificial light source.
The visual transparency of the storefront is also important because it is part of the overall proportion system of the façade. The proportion of window - to - wall areas in the traditional façade calls for more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper façade. It is important that these proportions be maintained so that Downtown Myrtle Beach will be unified by consistent design, thus making it an attractive place for customers to do business.

**Improvements**

In considering improvements to the storefront, it is very important that the original opening be recognized and maintained. The remodeled storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond or in front of it.

**Key Points to Consider:**

- The storefront should be composed primarily of glass. If transparency is not appropriate, consider the use of window treatments, such as blinds or drapes.
- Effort should be made to create an inviting entry. The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed with consideration to traditional design themes and their relationship to the overall building façade and symmetry. Where appropriate, recessed entries are encouraged.
- Transom windows that are covered or blocked should be reopened and restored.
- Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated.
- Original elements, such as keystones, cornices, entry doors, and lighting fixtures should be restored.
- Signs should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Lighting should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Awnings, if appropriate, should be integrated into the storefront design.

The storefront design should be true to the time period in which the building was constructed. For example, renovating early 20th century buildings with colonial motifs and mansard roofs would be inappropriate. When planning the storefront renovation, it could be very helpful to contact the Horry County Historic Society for information regarding your building. Old photographs can be valuable tools in determining original design, materials and signs used on your building.

**Storefront Materials**

Build storefronts out of the best materials; after all, their appearance will denote the quality of products and services the customer can expect to find inside. When designing a new storefront or renovating an existing one, remember the goal should be a transparent façade. Keeping the materials simple and unobtrusive will help you achieve this goal. There is no need to introduce additional types of building materials to those that originally existed. Whether building new or renovating existing storefronts, use materials that perform their intended function well, and use them consistently throughout the design. Utilizing this approach will enable you to achieve simplicity in the design and uniformity in the overall storefront appearance.
Utilize existing materials whenever possible, repairing rather than replacing. Typical examples of materials and their location on the storefront include:

- **Storefront Frame:** wood, cast iron, anodized aluminum, steel.
- **Display Windows:** clear glass.
- **Transom Windows:** clear, tinted, stained or etched glass.
- **Entrance:** wood, cast iron or aluminum with a large glass panel.
- **Bulkheads:** recessed wood paneling, polished stone, glass, tile, metal-clad plywood panels, granite, marble, sandstone, pressed metal.
- **Storefront Cornice:** wood, cast iron, pressed metal.
- **Side Piers:** should be the same material as the upper façade, typically brick or stone.

When applied thoughtfully and tastefully, ornately cast metal columns and trim of intricately molded terra cotta, wood or ironwork all contribute to appealing, dignified storefronts.

Certain materials should never be used on the traditional commercial building. Such inappropriate materials may include imitation brick, rough textured wood siding, wooden shingles on mansard roofs, gravel aggregate and vinyl siding. These materials have no relationship to the original design themes and, therefore violate the consistency of the building’s appearance and the downtown area.

**What to Do?**
Depending on the building’s condition and the amount of money you have budgeted, there are three basic approaches you may want to consider:

- **Minimal Rehabilitation:** This preservation approach to rehabilitation requires basic maintenance, necessary replacement, removal of extraneous materials and simple design improvements. Cosmetic treatments like covering a timeworn storefront with an awning or painting a contemporary storefront a dark receding color to minimize its effect, can help to unify the building.

- **Major Renovation:** This approach retains the façade’s existing original elements while using contemporary and traditional design and materials for replacement of inappropriate elements. Technology has led to many advancements in construction materials in the years since our downtown was originally built. Longer lasting synthetic materials are available to replace the more traditional materials of days gone by. When selecting your renovation materials, whether technologically advanced or traditionally sound, choose only those materials high in visual and structural quality. In all major renovations, care must be taken to insure that the design of improvements is understated so as not to compete with the overall character of the façade. For instance, when installing a new storefront, any of these alternatives would be appropriate:
  - A contemporary design in wood or anodized aluminum.
  - A simplified version of a traditional storefront in wood or aluminum.
  - A traditional period storefront constructed in wood.
• Restoration: This approach restores the façade to its original condition. It involves
the exact duplication of the original storefront, including its architectural detail, color
scheme and design placement. If a building has undergone only minor alterations,
restoration may be relatively inexpensive and would be most desirable.

Doors

The entry to a storefront often can be the focus of a building’s façade. Maintaining a
traditional entry door or pair of doors can contribute to the overall character of the façade.
Traditionally, the entrance door was made of wood with a large glass panel. Every effort
should be made to maintain and repair an original door.

Although recessed entries are encouraged, take care to make the recessed space feel safe,
both day and night. Bright lights and ornamental gates can be effective in this regard.

If a door is to be replaced, consideration should be given to one of the following options:
• Have a new door built with the same design and proportions as the original.
• Find a manufactured wood or steel door that resembles the traditional storefront door.
• Use a standard aluminum, commercial door with wide stiles and a dark anodized or
  baked enamel finish.

The transparency of the storefront should be carried through the design of the door.
Avoid doors that are residential in character or decorated with moldings, crossbucks, or
window grills.
Signs

Signs are a vital part of any downtown area, providing businesses with identity and providing customers with direction. Signs also contribute to the overall image of Downtown Myrtle Beach. Because they are such a visible storefront element, signs must be designed, selected and utilized appropriately so as not to detract from the façade or from surrounding buildings. With a little forethought and careful planning, signs can fulfill the business owner’s needs and enhance the image of Downtown Myrtle Beach.

Placement and Number

Each storefront should be limited to two signs: one primary and one secondary. The primary sign should be located on the building façade above storefront display windows, but below the sills of second floor windows. Turn-of-the-century buildings often used a continuous brick ledge, or corbelling, to separate the storefront from the upper stories. This space is ideal for sign placement, as it often was created for this purpose.

The secondary sign can be a small hanging sign that identifies the business for the pedestrian, or a sign painted on a door or display window. This sign is generally oriented toward pedestrians. A sign in a window should not obscure the display area and shall not occupy more than 25 percent of any vision window.

The goal is to create a pedestrian oriented downtown, where shoppers feel comfortable strolling along the sidewalks and traffic flows at a neighborhood pace. Therefore, it doesn’t make a lot of sense to place your signs too high for the pedestrian to easily see. By placing the signs at a more human level, communication effectiveness will be improved. As an added bonus the signs will also be beneath the canopy of shade trees.
**Size**
Big does not necessarily mean powerful. Signs should be visually integrated with the storefront to produce a consistent and unified statement about the business within. A sign that overpowers the storefront does not communicate a positive image to the customer. Signs should always be in scale with their surroundings. Actual size may vary, but in general, a wall mounted sign or signboard should be no more than 2-1/2 feet high or span more than 1/2 of the building width. Lettering should be 8 to 18 inches high and occupy between 50 and 65 percent of the signboard.

**Lettering and Graphics**
There are hundreds of lettering types available from sign contractors and designers. The building owner should select a style that expresses the business message and is compatible with the building and Downtown Myrtle Beach. Decorative, serif and sans serif styles can all be used in the downtown area, but should be selected for compatibility with the type of business and type of building.

In most cases, signs should be limited to a maximum of three colors, two materials and one lettering style. Use available information about the colors, materials, lettering style and placement of the original signs on the building when designing new ones. Sign colors should complement the building colors.

Wooden signs with raised letters, metal signs, painted signs and gold leaf are all appropriate downtown, though not for every building.

Nationally distributed or mass produced signs should be avoided; they typically do not express the character of Downtown Myrtle Beach or its unique businesses.

**Content**
Signs should express an easy-to-read, direct message. Keep it simple! Wording should be minimal, limited to the name of the business and, if necessary, a word or two that expresses its character. Simple wording is easily read by pedestrians and motorists without creating distraction and clutter.

A sign that presents more than 10 “items of information” is lost on its observer. Count one item of information for each
- Syllable
- Symbol, graphic or logo
- Abbreviation
- Broken plane, such as two lines rather than one
- Discontinuous odd shape.

![Image of signs with excessive information](image-url)
Signs should be used primarily for identifying the business, not for subjecting viewers to myriad advertisements.

**Lighting**
Illuminated signs may be appropriate downtown if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the other sign design guidelines. Use lighting that provides a true color rendition. The light source should be designed as part of the sign or hidden from view. Exterior lighting is preferred, but be cautious of exposed lights that produce glare and are unpleasant for customers and neighbors. Unattractive electrical fixtures, conduits and wires should be concealed. Exposed neon letters can be effective, adding color and vitality to the street, only if it is appropriate to the architecture of the building. Plastic, backlit signs should be avoided.

**Tree / Sign Conflicts**
Signs are the lifeblood of most businesses. But so is a friendly, inviting shopping environment. Trees can provide a softened touch to an otherwise harsh downtown area and reduce even the most imposing buildings to human scale. And they can do so without interfering with signs.

Trees can be an important way to provide an interesting, attractive business environment. They do this by giving the area a unified appearance in a place where stores may vary widely in architectural design. They also “soften” hard building materials, sidewalks and streets, and add color, character and seasonal variety. And, of course, they provide cool shade during our hot summers.

When choosing the design and location of your signs, be sure to consider their relation to the sidewalk trees. Make sure your signs are readable between the trees and below their canopy. And remember, trees grow, so plan for the future.

**Design and Construction Services**
Choose a professional sign maker carefully. Quality of workmanship and construction is as vital as quality of design. Ask your neighbors for references, and ask the contractor where you can see examples of previous work.

**City Ordinance Requirements**
In addition to these design guidelines, the City of Myrtle Beach has ordinances that control the size, height and placement of signs. Before investing money in a sign, determine whether it will comply with the applicable requirements and restrictions. A permit, including approval of the Community Appearance Board, is required prior to installation of most types of signs. Please contact the Myrtle Beach Construction Services Department for sign and awning regulations specific to your zoning district.
Awnings & Canopies

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provides shelter, added color and serves as a transition between the storefront and the upper façade. An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront window, but should not cover the piers on either side. It should be attached below the sign panel (the space between the second story window sills and the first story façade.) In some cases, the awning may be mounted between the transom and the display windows, thus allowing light to enter through the transom while shading pedestrians and merchandise. An awning should not be backlit.

Where possible, retain and repair awning fixtures and canopies that originate from the building’s earlier historical periods. When necessary, new awnings should be complementary in placement, proportion and color to the building’s original fixtures and to existing awnings and canopies of adjacent buildings. New awnings should be constructed of cloth material. Vinyl, plastic and metal are inappropriate to traditional façades and generally detract from the historic character of the area. Consideration should be given to replacing inappropriate awnings and canopies with traditional canvas fixtures.

Awnings should be regularly maintained. Rips or tears must be repaired so that the repair is not noticeable from the sidewalk or road. If a tear cannot be inconspicuously repaired, or if the original awning color changes significantly, the awning must be replaced.

A standard street level awning should be mounted so that the lowest point, including any valance, is a minimum of nine (9) feet above grade and projects no further than eight (8) feet into the right-of-way and no closer than twelve (12) inches from the curb.

Remember that our area is prone to high winds (100 miles per hour is not unusual). Awning materials should be chosen carefully and should be strong enough to withstand extreme weather conditions. Metal frames are recommended.

Inappropriate storefront alterations can be effectively disguised by mounting an awning over the alterations while maintaining the proportions of the original storefront.
Sidewalks

Downtown Myrtle Beach has in place a Sidewalk Café / Décor ordinance that allows tables, chairs and plants to be placed on the sidewalk in front of some downtown storefronts. When tastefully designed and cared for, the following elements can add to the friendly, pedestrian image of Downtown Myrtle Beach:

- Tables and chairs where restaurant patrons can enjoy our beautiful weather with their meal.
- Colorful window boxes hanging from storefront windows.
- Terra cotta pots with small tree and flower arrangements.
- Old fashioned Southern rocking chairs where shoppers can sit and relax.
- Park benches where friends can stop for a chat.

A Sidewalk Café / Décor Permit is required for all items placed in the right-of-way, so be sure to apply at the Myrtle Beach Construction Services Department before investing any money.

Upper Stories

While storefront design conveys the image of the business occupying the building, upper story design conveys the image of the town. Design elements of upper stories are often ignored, leaving the top floors plain and bland. Dimension should be added to otherwise flat, hard surfaces through the use of some simple design techniques:

- Place window hoods over the upper level windows.
- Place individual awnings over the windows. This is particularly effective with arched awnings over arched windows.
- Carry the side pier design from the storefront on upward to the roof. This will frame your upper façade the same way it does the lower.
- Place a decorative cornice or parapet along the top edge of the building. After all your hard work below, your façade should not come to an end with a blank wall meeting a flat roof.
Windows

Windows are an important component of the façade; they open the building with light and offer a proportional continuity between the upper floors and the storefront. Deteriorated windows have often been covered over, inappropriately replaced or simply neglected, thereby diminishing the overall character of the building. Every effort should be made to retain and preserve each original window, its function and any decorative details still remaining.

Remove any covering that has been installed over the original windows. Protect and maintain the wood and metal of the windows and their surroundings with appropriate surface treatments, such as cleaning or rust removal. All bare wood should be primed with a high quality, oil-based primer and painted with one or two coats of latex or oil-based paint. A qualified glazier can fix loose or broken windowpanes easily. Make windows weather tight by re-caulking and replacing or installing weather stripping.

Check the overall condition of window materials and window features to determine if repairs are required. Check all wood parts of the window for decay, cracks or splitting. Pay particular attention to the sills and window sash bottoms where water may collect. Repair window frames and sashes by patching, splicing or reinforcing. Replace all parts that are deteriorating or missing. Cracks should be filled with caulk, wood putty or epoxy reinforcement and the surface sanded. Do not replace the entire window when limited replacement of parts is appropriate.
If an original window is missing or deteriorating beyond repair, replace the window with one that matches the original. Use the overall form and any detailing still evident as a guide. Use the same type of material as the original or a compatible substitute. Always fill the entire original window opening, even if part of the original opening had been previously filled in.

All window air conditioning units that are visible from the street or sidewalk should be removed. Air conditioners that drip on the public sidewalk are greatly discouraged.

Rear Façade

Areas behind buildings often are forgotten or neglected. Customers tend to avoid rear entrances because these areas can be unkempt and unattractive. The rears of most buildings are commonly thought of as service areas where deliveries are made or the garbage is picked up. However, a large percentage of existing and developing parking lots are located adjacent to or abutting these entrance. Available parking in Downtown Myrtle Beach, particularly for Superblock businesses, is so often located behind buildings that rear or side entrances are warranted. The rears of the buildings are coming into full and open view.

A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called “double frontage.” There are certain advantages to double fronting, including:
- Enhanced circulation patterns.
- Better access to off-street parking.
- Store identity created on more than one side of the building.

If you don’t have an attractive, customer friendly rear entrance, but are considering improvements, ask yourself these questions:
- Where do my customers typically park?
- Would a rear entrance be an added convenience for my customers?
- What changes would I have to make to my store for an attractive rear entry?
- How would added walk-through traffic help my business?

Like the storefront, the rear entry should respect its neighbors. An attempt to make your entrance compatible with surrounding businesses should be a priority. Look at the back entrances next to yours before you make any changes. Work with your neighbors to create unity in this all-too-often ignored area.
The rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance, but like the front, the back entry requires identification. A rear door window panel is one way to identify and open your store to customers. A small sign on or near the door is another identifier. Be sure to keep it small and do not clutter the area with too many signs. An awning is a pleasant addition and a convenience to shoppers during inclement weather.

Normal service activities, such as trash collection and loading, also must occur with ease. It is possible to accommodate these functions and make the rear spaces enjoyable “people places” at the same time. Pick a central location for trash collection that will serve several stores efficiently. Simple enclosures can be constructed to hide trash receptacles and to prevent clutter. Before construction, be sure you consult the trash collection agency to ensure that your design will not disrupt pick-up services.

Plantings either can add or detract from a rear building area. If there is enough sun, planter boxes should be utilized as an attractive buffering element. Remember that plants require care, so commit to caring for them properly. Weeds are a detracting and visually negative element in unattended areas. Planting ground cover in exposed soil areas can help choke out weeds. For a positive image, keep all plantings under control and consistently well maintained.

With good design and proper maintenance, rear entrances can become attractive and convenient for shoppers and highly beneficial to Downtown Myrtle Beach.

Colors & Paint

The placement of colors - rather than the number of colors - best accentuates the architectural details. Colors are distributed into three categories: base, trim (major and minor) and accent. The base often matches the natural color of building materials, such as brick or stone. The major trim color is used to frame the façade, doors and windows. The major trim color is also the primary color of the cornice and major architectural elements. If a minor trim color is used, it is often a darker shade placed on doors and window sashes. An accent color is used in limited doses to highlight small details. Colors should tie the architectural elements together. The color scheme should be consistent throughout the façade’s upper and lower portions. The colors chosen should be harmonious, not only with the colors on your building, but also with the colors on neighboring buildings.
**Historical Color Scheme**

This color scheme uses body, trim and accent colors from a particular time period. Historical color schemes are appropriate for the style and character of landmark buildings or buildings located in historic areas. The colors should complement the color schemes on adjacent buildings. Colors may be chosen based on paint chip analysis of a building’s original color or based on colors used on other buildings of the period. Color guides of documented historical hues from selected paint manufacturers are an aid in historical color selection. Old photos of the building or a similar one can establish light verses dark color placement.

**Boutique Color Scheme**

This non-historical color scheme uses bright trim and accent colors in dramatic contrast to the base color of a building. A building must have an extremely ornate architecture to pick out details successfully with multiple accent colors, so use this color scheme cautiously. Too many colors on the wrong elements will detract from the building’s character and that of its neighbors. Taken to an extreme, boutique color schemes can create a building that looks as though a carnival is taking place inside.

Playful, exaggerated color schemes and architectural themes can work well in an urban downtown, only if carried through an area as large as one block or more. A wild, Art Deco design may look great in an entire district, but would look silly on a single building sandwiched between two Mediterranean façades.

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**Surface Preparation**

Proper surface preparation of wood, metal and masonry prior to repainting will maximize the longevity of the topcoat. The following steps will help prevent premature paint failure:

- Thoroughly remove dirt, mildew and paint chalk with a mild detergent.
- Remove failing paint on wood with electric heat, scraping or sanding.
- Remove failing paint on metal or masonry with an approved chemical application

Never sandblast! Sandblasting, high pressure washes or other abrasive paint removal methods should never be undertaken. Well-documented evidence shows that these
methods do irreversible damage to wood and masonry surfaces. Sandblasting removes the hard glazed surface from kiln fired masonry and exposes thinner, more porous material to water infiltration and accelerates deterioration. Sandblasting also severely pits the surfaces of masonry and wood, and opens wood grain to moisture, dirt and mildew infiltration.

Significant architectural elements should be retained, repaired or preserved whenever possible. As a last resort, damaged material should be replaced with similar, matching material only. Weathered and cracked wood should be treated with consolidates, preservatives and / or filters, then sanded prior to sealing.

Painting

The purpose of paint is to seal the building surface against the elements and to prevent deterioration of materials from temperature and humidity extremes. Generally, wall surfaces that have not been painted, such as brick, terra cotta, stone and cast concrete should remain unpainted. Soft, porous brick that was originally painted should remain painted. Always select paint that is formulated for the particular surface application planned. A primer coat seals the surface and enhances the bond with the comparable topcoats. On unsealed wood and metal surfaces, use oil or alkyd primers. Unsealed masonry requires a specialized primer / sealer. When repainting over an existing topcoat, continue to use the same paint formulation - oil or latex. If a formula change is necessary, or if the original paint type cannot be determined, then prime with a first coat specifically made for the topcoat planned. Finally, apply two topcoats to provide the most durable finish.

Masonry

Many buildings in Downtown Myrtle Beach consist of brick masonry. Some structures also consist of stone, concrete block and marble. Masonry is a strong, durable building material and, when well maintained, can last for centuries. Masonry cleaning and repointing are two very common methods of masonry repair. While both may improve the appearance of a building, care must be taken to determine the proper techniques used so that no harm is done to the masonry.

Masonry Cleaning

First of all, it should not be assumed that all masonry needs cleaning. Surface stains generally cause few problems and can even enhance the charm of an older building. However, evidence may indicate that heavy dirt and other pollutants are actually harming the masonry. It is reasonable to clean masonry where it is necessary to halt deterioration or to remove unsightly and heavy soiling, but take care not to destroy the natural characteristics that come with age.
Some questions to consider:
• How clean does the surface need to be?
• What is the nature of the soil and how tightly is it adhering to the surface?
• What is the masonry type and what are its characteristics?
• How is the surface constructed? Are there any metal attachments that could rust?
• How can the environment, as well as peoples’ health, best be protected during the cleaning?

Select the gentlest cleaning method possible to achieve an acceptable level of cleanliness. Work with a professional to help ensure that the method chosen is right for your building.

2 Acceptable Cleaning Methods:
• Water: This method ranges from hand scrubbing to pressure washing to steam cleaning. It softens and rinses dirt deposits from the surface. Water cleaning generally is the simplest, gentlest, safest and least expensive method of masonry cleaning.
• Chemical: Chemical cleaners include acidic, alkaline or organic compounds in either liquid or vapor forms. The chemical reacts with the dirt and / or the masonry to hasten the dirt removal process. Be careful! When used improperly, chemical run-off can cause serious damage to the environment, including plants, animals and waterways.

Generally, it is better to clean the masonry with the gentlest method possible. Check with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) before using any chemical cleansers. To select the best cleaning technique perform a patch test. Observe the results for a sufficient time period (all four seasons, if possible) to determine the immediate and long-range effects of the cleaning method. Abrasives, including grit blasting, grinders or sanding disks, can cause great damage to masonry surfaces, and are inappropriate ways to clean old masonry.

Repointing
Repointing is the removal of deteriorating or failing mortar from masonry joints and replacing it with new mortar. Repointing can restore the visual and physical integrity of the masonry. Generally, it is better to clean the masonry before resorting to repointing, unless the mortar is badly eroded. Some obvious signs of deterioration may include:
• Disintegration of mortar.
• Cracks in mortar joints.
• Loose bricks, cornice sections or decorative elements.
As a general rule, only repoint where there is deterioration. Repointing should only be done by an experienced professional.

If you decide to repoint, consider the following:
- Duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
- Rake the joint carefully to an even face and uniform depth, preferably with the use of hand tools.
- Duplicate old mortar joints in width and profile.

Professional Assistance
Wow, there sure is a lot to think about! And each design element, be it the entry door or a second story window, is as important as the others. The renovations you make are not just improvements to your building – they are also improvements to your business and to your neighborhood. Creating a thorough design plan can seem overwhelming, especially if you’ve never done one before. Remember, this is an investment in your future and in your community. Never underestimate the value of hiring a design professional.
New Construction

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots is encouraged. The design of a new downtown building is a special challenge. Its front façade should be designed to be compatible with the surrounding buildings.

The appearance of a new building must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors, without mimicking them. There are several factors that will govern the visual relationship between a new building and its neighbors:

Building Placement
Buildings in Downtown Myrtle Beach should be constructed parallel to streets and in close relationship to the street frontage. The new façade should be flush to its neighbors’ façades, unless a restaurant use is planned. In the case of restaurant construction, it is encouraged that the façade be set back so as to provide an outdoor eating area that extends to the front lot line.
Mixed-use retail and office buildings should abut the sidewalks on at least one side and orient the primary entrance, or entrances, toward the street.

Pedestrian access to and on the site is a primary issue. Harmonious design and functionality should be provided relative to uses on the site and on adjacent rights-of-way and private properties. Aspects of design to be considered include:

- Handicapped Access
- Pavement Material
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Seating

**Dimensions**

When Downtown Myrtle Beach was first constructed, Main Street and Kings Highway were dirt roads! Back then, the roads were narrower and the surrounding building heights provided a comfortable, “human” scale. Over the years, these roads have been widened while the building heights remained the same. As a result, the current downtown views have a “hard” feeling more appropriate for a highway than a downtown. For this reason, new buildings taller than one story are encouraged.

However, very tall building façades can create a “canyon” effect on the sidewalk below. To avoid this, the vertical plane of a façade should not exceed 36 feet in height. Above that, the upper stories should be set back a minimum of five feet from the lower façade. The first three floors should be distinguished from the remainder of the building with an emphasis on design elements that will enhance the pedestrian environment. Elements that add special interest include:

- Cornices
- Belt Courses
- Corbelling
- Molding
- Stringcourses
- Ornamentation
- Changes in Material or Color
Special attention should be given to the design of windows on the first three floors. Recessed windows that are distinguished from the shaft of the building are encouraged. This can be achieved through the use of:

- Arches
- Pediments
- Mullions

The width of the surrounding buildings determines the general width for a new structure. The new building should occupy the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of façades along the street. If the site is large, the mass of the façade should be broken into a number of small bays to maintain a rhythm with the surrounding buildings. The original downtown lot widths provide a natural guide for the width of each bay. See sketch below.

**Special Provisions for Buildings in Focal Point Locations**

Focal points include corner locations and lots located at the termination of a street or where a street changes direction. Particular care should be given to the design of all façades of buildings in these prominent locations. Garage doors, service entrances, and un-ornamented walls should not be placed in highly visible locations. In general, buildings at focal point locations should also be taller than surrounding structures, and focal point locations at the center of a continuous façade should be taller than adjacent portions of the rest of the building. When planned with good design and taste, corner buildings that are taller and have larger features can break up the monotony of a long, straight sidewalk and give the streetscape a more human scale.
Composition
The composition of the new façade - that is, the organization of its parts - should be similar to that of surrounding façades. Rhythms that carry through the block, such as window spacing, should be incorporated into the new façade.

Proportions of the Openings
The size and proportion of window or door openings of a new building should be similar to those on surrounding façades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the façade as a whole. Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new façade.

Doorways should be recessed into the face of the building to provide a sense of entry and to add variety to the streetscape. The entryway should be 1 square foot for each 1,000 square feet of floor area, with a minimum of 15 square feet.

Pedestrian movement is very important to the success of Downtown Myrtle Beach. Although people love to window shop on a beautiful day, most are unwilling to walk long distances between stores. In fact, various studies have shown that shoppers will stop in their tracks and turn around if they cannot easily see the next storefront. For that reason, long, blank walls are greatly discouraged in Downtown Myrtle Beach. Where expanses of solid wall are necessary, they should not exceed 20 feet in length. The use of transparent windows and doors at the street level helps create interest. Detailing of street walls with awnings and a variation of building materials adds to this interest. Multiple entrances from the public sidewalk or open spaces are encouraged.
Structured parking facilities should be designed so that the only garage openings at the street level are those to accommodate vehicle entrances and pedestrian access. The remainder of the street level frontage should be occupied retail or office space. If neither of those options is conducive to your location, then an architecturally articulated façade should be designed to screen the parking area of the structure and to encourage pedestrian activity.

**Detailing**

New architecture should reflect the elements and detailing of surrounding buildings. Emphasize the quality of detail and special form in:

- Window Shapes
- Cornice Lines
- Brick Work
- Window Treatments
- Columns
- Eaves

In the upper stories of structures over four stories, a variety of shapes, angles and reliefs are encouraged.

**Materials**

A new façade should be composed of materials similar to those in adjacent façades. The new building should not stand in opposition to the others. Buildings should be constructed of materials that minimize light reflection and glare. Appropriate materials include:

- Brick
- Stucco
- Smooth Finished Concrete
- Architectural Metals
Color
The colors chosen for a new façade should relate to those on neighboring buildings. Care should be taken to avoid clashing colors on individual buildings and between adjacent buildings.

Roof Forms
The type of roof used should be similar to those found on adjacent buildings. The roofline of buildings should be modulated to avoid large areas of flat roof, and should include interesting architectural features. Preferably, the upper cornice will cover the visibility of a flat roof from the front façade.

Consideration should be given to the appearance from taller buildings nearby. Rooftop mechanical equipment and satellite dish antennas should be screened in a manner that enhances the overall architectural design. Rooftops should be of a color that reduces glare. Rooftop terraces and gardens are encouraged – what a wonderful amenity to a residential apartment or downtown restaurant! Refer to sketch on page 23.

Paving
A paving element in the public space can be repeated in the private space in order to give continuity and transition. However, the paving systems used in private plazas and walkways may be different in color, material and texture from those in the public right-of-way. A contrasting pattern with more detail (such as brick, granite or similar material) offers a unifying element for the plaza or walkway. The contrasting pattern establishes the private boundaries and gives the space an overall pedestrian scale.
The transition between public and private spaces offers a tremendous opportunity to establish a sense of arrival, establish a particular development’s unique character and add an overall liveliness and variety to the pedestrian environment.

**Vehicular Areas**

Vehicular access to and on sites should be designated to minimize interference with pedestrian access and with traffic flow on abutting streets. Drive-up windows are discouraged. The number of access points should be kept to the minimum necessary to prevent undue congestion.

Vehicular use areas should be designed to maximize pedestrian circulation and handicapped accessibility. These areas should be located so as not to detract from the streetscape created by buildings, open spaces and landscaping. Take care to provide safe lighting that blends with the design of the site and adjacent sites. Landscape vehicular areas so as to reduce heat, accentuate pedestrian routes, and buffer the view of vehicles from adjacent street rights-of-way and private properties.
Locate surface parking lots behind the building and away from areas of high public visibility. Parking areas should be designed to minimize long, straight, monotonous rows. The size and location of parking areas should be minimized and related to the group of buildings served. Parking areas should include a clear circulation network to guide pedestrians to the building entrances.

Loading areas should be designed so as not to interfere with pedestrian circulation or vehicular circulation on abutting streets.

Consideration should be given to providing facilities for bicyclists, especially parking, so as to encourage the use of bicycles.

**Landscaping**
Open space and landscaping should be designed to complement the buildings on the site and the streetscape in general. Aspects of landscape design include:

- Location
- Size
- Shape
- Amenities
- Material
- Plant Species
- Intended Use of any Open Space
- Intended Function of the Landscaping

When choosing the type and location of your trees, be sure to consider their relation to all signs. Make sure your signs, your neighbor’s signs, and all public signs are readable between the trees and below their canopy. And remember, trees grow, so plan for the future. Appropriate trees should be selected from the Myrtle Beach Community Tree Planting Plan (see Appendix E).

**Screening**
All structures and facilities for trash, storage, loading, and outdoor equipment should be screened so as not to be visible from the street and pedestrian areas. The most desirable solution is to locate those uses on areas of the site that are not visible from public rights-of-way. A grade separation, when applicable to the site, designed in combination with landscaping, can also be used.
Grade level parking lots should be screened by shrubs and trees in accordance with the Myrtle Beach Landscape Ordinance. It is necessary to accommodate the vehicle overhang when designing landscaped areas in parking lots. Plants are often damaged if a landscape strip is not wide enough to provide for both the plants and the vehicle overhang.
APPENDICES

A. Acknowledgments

The Downtown Design Committee developed these Downtown Myrtle Beach Design Guidelines:

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  Naomi Maguire
  Fred Rourk
  Robert Strauber
  Sharlene Zwing

Sketches by Amanda Johnson
The following references were invaluable in the production of these Guidelines:

- Downtown St. Charles Design Guidelines, Downtown St. Charles Partnership Incorporated, St. Charles, IL, 1996
- History of Commercial Architecture, Main Street Certification Institute in Professional Downtown Management, National Main Street Center.
- Keeping Up Appearances, from the Design section of Revitalizing Main Street, October 8-9, 1998, Roanoke, Virginia. National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Check It Out Preservation Network #15, Spring 1999, SC Department of Archives and History.
- Tree City USA Bulletin How to Prevent Tree / Sign Conflicts, The National Arbor Day Foundation, No. 11.
- Urban Village Development Regulations and Guidelines, prepared for the Myrtle Beach Air Base Redevelopment Authority and the City of Myrtle Beach by Design Works L.C., Charleston, SC, 1998.
B. Definitions

**Alkyd:** Any of numerous thermoplastic or thermosetting synthetic resins made by heating polyhydroxy alcohols with polybasic acids or their anhydrides and used especially for protective coatings.

**Acanthus:** A common plant of the Mediterranean whose stylized leaves form the characteristic decoration of capitals of the Corinthian and Composite orders. In scroll form it appears on friezes and panels.

**Architectural Element:** A permanently affixed or integral part of the building structure, which may be decorative and contributes to the composition of the façade.

**Awning / Canopy:** A framework covered with fabric or metal, located on a storefront or individual window openings, projecting from the façade of a building. Its primary purpose is to shade the interior of the building and provide protection to pedestrians.

**Band Course:** A continuous member, deviation in masonry pattern, deviation in color, or series of moldings encircling a building or along a wall that makes a visual division in the wall.

**Bulkhead / Kick Plate:** The wood or metal panel located beneath the display window in a typical storefront.

**Corbel:** A series of projections, each stepped progressively outward from the vertical surface of a wall to support a cornice or overhanging member; a projecting ornamental stone, which supports a superincumbent weight.

**Cornice:** A projecting horizontal molding that crowns a storefront or façade.
**Courtyard:** An open area within the confines of other structures, sometimes as a semipublic space.

**Dentil:** A small block used in rows, resembling a row of teeth.

**Dormer:** A structure projecting from a sloping roof usually housing a vertical window that is placed in a small gable, or containing a ventilating louver.

**Double Hung Windows:** A window with two sashes that slide up and down.

**Façade:** The face or principal front of a building.

**Fanlight:** A semicircular window, usually over a door with radiating bars suggesting an open fan.

**Lintel:** A horizontal structural element over a window or door opening that supports the wall above.

**Loggia:** An arcaded or colonnaded structure open on one or more sides, sometimes with an upper story; an arcaded or colonnaded porch or gallery attached to a larger structure.
Modillion Course: A horizontal bracket or console, usually in the form of a scroll with acanthus, helping to support the cornice. See Cornice.

Muntin: A secondary framing member to hold panes in a window or glazed door.

Parapet: The portion of the wall of a façade that extends above the roofline. See Cornice.

Pediment: A low-pitched triangular gable above a façade, or a smaller version over porticos above the doorway or above a window; a triangular gable end of the roof above the horizontal cornice, often with sculpture.

Pilaster: A flat column against the face of a wall.

Quoin: One of a series of stones or bricks used to mark or visually reinforce the exterior corners of a building; often through a contrast of size, shape, color or material, which may be imitated in non-load-bearing material.

Sash: A frame designed to hold the glass in a window.

Setback: Distance at which the building is placed from the street curb or property line.

Sheathing: Any durable material covering the original façade of the building.

Sign Board / Fascia: A horizontal panel, either of wood or an inset in a brick wall, located immediately below the cornice. It is usually an ideal location to place a sign.
**Sill:** A horizontal piece that forms one of the lowest members of a framework or supporting structure, like at the base of a window.

**Storefront:** The first story of a façade, usually having display windows.

**Transom Window:** A small horizontal window located above a door or display window.

**Window Hood:** An exterior projecting molding on the top of an upper story window.
C. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

When rehabilitating a historic structure, the following Standards are recommended to be applied in a reasonable manner, while taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired, rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

To learn more about the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and how to apply them, visit www2.cr.nps.gov/e-rehab/ on the internet.
D. Suggestions for Further Reading

**Architecture:**

**General Preservation:**

**Restoration, Rehabilitation and Repair:**
- This Old House by Bob Vila. Dutton 1981.

**Exterior Restoration:**

**Landscaping:**
- Community Tree Planting Plan for Myrtle Beach, SC Constance P. Head, July 1998.
- Supplement to the Community Tree Planting Plan for Myrtle Beach, SC Constance P. Head, July 1998.