

CHAPTER 9.0

Glossary of Terms

The language of historic preservation, architecture, and site planning can often be confusing. This chapter provides definitions and graphic illustrations of some of the more commonly used terms in these subjects as they pertain to design review.

Aesthetics - The science and philosophy of beauty. If something is aesthetic, it is of beauty or artistic.

Alignment (Architectural) - The visual alignment and placement of architectural elements such as windows, cornice elements, soffits, awnings, etc. or structures in order to promote continuity along a block.

Adaptive Reuse – Conversion of a building designed for a specific use to a new use (e.g. a residence converted to office space).

Arcade - An arched roof or covered passageway.

Articulation - The degree or manner in which a building wall or roofline is made up of distinct parts or elements. A highly articulated wall will appear to be composed of a number of different planes, usually made distinct by their change in direction (projections and recesses) and/or changes in materials, colors or textures.

Asymmetry – The balanced arrangement of different elements without a common axis.

Awning - A fixed cover, typically comprised of cloth over a metal frame that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

Balcony – A railed projecting platform found above ground level on a building.

Bay (Structural) - A regularly repeated spatial element in a building defined by beams or ribs and their supports.

Board and Batten – Vertical siding composed of wide boards that do not overlap and narrow strips, or battens, nailed over the spaces between the boards.

Bond – The general method of overlapping the joints of successive courses of bricks or stones, thereby binding them together to form a wall or other surface. Different patterns may be formed by these joints (e.g., common bond, Flemish bond, English bond, herringbone bond.)

Building - Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls for the housing or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels, or property of any kind.

Bulkhead - The space located between the pavement/sidewalk and the bottom of a traditional storefront.

Canopy - A projection over a niche or doorway; often decorative or decorated.

Clapboard - A long thin board graduating in thickness with the thick overlapping the thin edges; also known as weatherboard.

Colonnade - A row of columns supporting a roof structure.

Column - A vertical support, usually cylindrical, consisting of a base, shaft and capital, either monolithic or built-up of drums the full diameter of the shaft.

Cornice - The horizontal projection at the top of a wall; the top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.

Corridor - Provides the principal, occasional or potential means of vehicle and pedestrian movement in the community, interconnecting land uses area of activity.

Cupola – A lookout or similar small structure on the top of a building.

Curb Cuts – The elimination of a street curb to enable vehicles to cross sidewalks and enter driveways or parking lots.

Density - The average number of housing units per unit of land; usually density is expressed “per acre”.

Dormer – A vertically framed window which projects from a sloping roof and has a roof of its own.

Double Hung Window - A window with an upper and low sash arranged so that each slides vertically past the other.

Eaves – The overhang at the lower edge of the roof which usually projects out over the walls.

Eclectic – A composition of elements from different styles.

Emphasis – Describes the use of elements which call attention to themselves. Emphasis is an important feature in creating balance when using dissimilar elements. Canopies and balconies are examples of elements which, when emphasized properly, can assist in presenting a balanced look. Emphasis also can be found within strip developments of malls by the location of a more massive or monumental building, such as a major department store. This emphasis provides a directional guide because it creates a point of reference for the users. Emphasis can also be used as a directional element such as the emphasis at a store entrance or mall entrance.

Facade - The exterior face of a building, which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

Fenestration - The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

Flashing – Copper or other materials used to make weather-tight the joint between a chimney and a roof.

Flat roof - A roof having only enough slope for drainage.

Focal Point - A building, object or natural element in a streetscene that stands out and serves as a point of focus, catching and holding the viewer's attention.

Garish – That which is gaudy, showy, flashing, dazzling or too bright to be aesthetically pleasing.

Hip Roof - A roof with four uniformly pitched sides.

Infill – Newly constructed building within an existing developed area.

Intensity - the degree to which land is used. Intensity is typically used to refer to the levels concentration or activity of land uses.

Joist – Any small timber laid horizontally to support a floor or ceiling.

Landscaping - An area devoted to or developed and maintained with native or exotic planting, lawn, ground cover, gardens, trees, shrubs, and other plant materials, decorative outdoor landscape elements, pools, fountains, water feature, paved or decorated surfaces of rock, stone, brick, block, or similar material (excluding driveways, parking, loading, or storage areas), and sculpture elements. Plants on rooftops, porches or in boxes attached to buildings are not considered landscaping.

Lot - Any number of lettered parcel shown on the a recorded final map, record of survey pursuant to an approved division of land, or a parcel map and abuts a street, alley or recorded access easement.

Masonry - Wall construction of such material as stone, brick and adobe.

Mass - Mass describes three-dimensional forms, the simplest of which are cubes, boxes (or "rectangular solids"), cylinders, pyramids and cones. Buildings are rarely one of these simple forms, but generally are composites of varying types of assets. This composition is generally described as the "massing" of forms in a building. During the design process, massing is one of many aspects of form considered by an architect or designer and can be the result of both exterior and interior designing concepts. Exterior massing can identify an entry, denote a stairway or simply create a desirable form. Interior spaces (or lack of mass) can be designed to create an intimate space or perhaps a

monumental entry. Interior spaces create and affect exterior mass, and exterior mass can affect the interior space. Mass and massing are inevitably affected by their opposite, open space. The lack of mass, or creation of perceived open space, can significantly affect the character of a building. Architects often call attention to a lack of mass, by defining the open space with low walls or railings. Landscape architects also use massing in design such as in grouping of plants with different sizes and shapes. These areas are intended to be perceived as a whole rather than as individual trees or shrubs. Plant masses can be used to fill a space, define the boundary of an open area, or extend the perceived form of an architectural element.

Monolithic - A single large flat surface (facade) without relief. A massive unyielding structure.

Monochromatic – Having only one color.

Movement – The apparent directional emphasis of a building façade as indicated by its proportions. Static movement is based on square proportions, dynamic movement is based on rectangular proportions.

Mullions – The divisional pieces in a multi-paned window.

Nondescript – Without distinctive architectural form or style. Ordinary and without architectural character.

Off-Street Parking Facilities - A site or portion of a site devoted to the off-street parking of motor vehicles, including parking spaces, aisles, access drives, and landscaped areas.

Ornamentation – Details added to a structure solely for decorative reasons (i.e. to add shape, texture or color to an architectural composition).

Parapet - A low wall generally running around the outside of a flat roof.

Pattern - The use of construction materials to add texture, character, scale, and balance to a building.

Pier - A stout column or pillar.

Pilaster - A column attached to a wall or pier.

Pitch - The slope of a roof expressed in terms of ratio of height to span.

Porch – A covered entrance or semi-enclosed space projecting from the façade of a building; may be open sided or screened.

Portal - The principal entry to an area or structure.

Preservation – The treatment of an existing building to stop or slow deterioration, stabilize the structure and provide for structural safety without changing or adversely affecting its fabric or appearance.

Primary Building Façade – The particular façade of a building which faces the street to which the address of the building pertains.

Project - Any proposal for new or changed use, or for new construction, alteration, or enlargement of any structure, that is subject to the provisions of this manual.

Proportion - The ratio between building elements. Proportion can describe height to height ratios, width to width ratios, width to height ratios, as well as ratios of massing. Landscaping can be used to establish a consistent rhythm along a streetscape, which will disguise the lack of proportion in building size and placement.

Public Art - Any sculpture, fountain, monument, mural, or other form of art located in a public space or private space open to public view.

Public Property - Property dedicated through acquisition or easement for public use, which includes but is not limited to streets, alleys, parks, and public rights of ways, landscaped areas, and sidewalks.

Recess - A hollow place, as in a wall.

Rehabilitation/Renovation - The modification of or changes to an existing building in order to extend its useful life or utility through repairs or alterations, while preserving the features of the building that contribute to its architectural, cultural, or historical character.

Remodeling - The upgrade of the interior or exterior faces of a building or structure without altering to any degree the structural integrity.

Restoration – The careful and meticulous return of a building to its appearance at a particular time period, usually on its original site, by removal of later work and/or replacement of missing earlier work.

Reveal - The vertical side section of a doorway or window frame.

Rhythm (Horizontal, Vertical) - The regular or harmonious recurrence of lines, shapes, forms, elements or colors, usually within a proportional system.

Sash - The framework into which windowpanes are set.

Scale (Human) -The relationship of a building, or portions of a building, to a human being. The spectrum of relationships to human scale ranges from intimate to monumental. Intimate usually refers to small spaces or detail which is very much in

keeping with the human scale, usually areas around eight to ten feet in size. These spaces feel intimate because of the relationship of a human being to the space. The distance of eight to ten feet is about the limit of sensory perception of communication between people including voice inclination and facial expression. This distance is also about the limit of an up-stretched arm reach for human beings, which is another measure of human scale. The components of a building with an intimate scale are often small and include details, which break those components into smaller units.

Conversely, monumental scale is used to present a feeling of grandeur, security, timelessness or spiritual well being. Building types, which commonly use the monumental scale to express these feelings, are banks, churches and civic buildings. The components of this scale also reflect this grandness, with oversized double door entries, 18-foot glass storefronts or two-story columns.

Landscape or hardscape elements can bring human scale to a large building by introducing features such as a tree canopy, leaf textures and fragrance. Plants can complement the scale of the architecture, as when large trees are used next to tall buildings, or small trees to accent a building component such as an entry.

Screening - A method of visually shielding or obscuring a structure, or portion of, by a fence, wall, berm, or similar structure.

Setback - A line across the front, side, rear of any property or public property which delineates an area adjoining a property line in which erection of a building, fence, or other structure is prohibited except as otherwise provided in the zoning ordinance.

Shake – Split wood shingles.

Sidewalk adjacent - Storefront or building immediately abuts sidewalk edge. No space exists between building and sidewalk.

Siding - The finish covering on the exterior of a frame building (with the exception of masonry). The term cladding is often used to describe any exterior wall covering, including masonry.

Sign - An object, device display or structure, or part thereof, situated outdoors or indoors, which is used to identify, display, or direct or attract attention to an object, person, institution, organization, business, product, service, event, or location by any means, including words, letters, figures, design symbols, fixtures, colors, illumination, or projected image.

Significant Architectural Style -

Sill - The framing member that forms the lower side of an opening, such as a doorsill. A windowsill forms the lower, usually projecting, lip on the outside face of a window.

Site - A lot, or group of contiguous lots not divided by an alley, street, other right-of-way, or city limit, that is proposed for development in accord with the provisions of this manual, and is in a single ownership or has multiple owners, all of whom join in an application for development.

Slipcover- Any non-traditional covering of a buildings' historical facade.

Storefront - The first floor area of a retail facade, emphasized by the display window or windows.

Story - The portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor or finished undersurface of the roof directly above it.

Street frontage - The total linear dimension of all property lines which coincide with the edge of an adjoining street right-of-way.

Street wall - The edges created by buildings and landscaping that enclose the street and create space.

Stucco - An exterior finish, usually textured, composed of Portland cement, lime and sand, which are mixed with water.

Structure - Anything constructed or erected that requires a location on the ground, excluding swimming pools, patios, walks, access drive, or similar paved area.

Surface materials - Can be used to create texture for a building - from roughness of stone or a ribbed metal screen to the smoothness of marble or glass. Some materials, such as wood, may be either rough (e.g. wood shingles or re-sawn lumber) or smooth (e.g. clapboard siding).

Symmetry – A relationship of characteristic correspondence, equivalence, or identity among constituents of a system or between different systems.

Transom - The horizontal division or crossbar in a window. A window opening above a door.

Texture - Texture refers to variations in the exterior facade and may be described in terms of roughness of the surface material, the patterns inherent in the material or the patterns in which the material is placed. Texture and lack of texture influence the mass, scale and rhythm of a building. Texture can add intimate scale to large buildings by the use of small detailed patterns (e.g. brick masonry patterns).

Trellis - A lattice on which vines are often trained.

Trim - The decorative finish around a door or window; the architrave or decorative casing used around a door or window frame.

Truss – A structure composed of a combination of members, usually in some triangular arrangement so as to constitute a rigid framework.

Veranda – A roofed porch sometimes stretching on two sides of a building.

Vernacular – Pertaining to the style of architecture and decoration peculiar to a specific culture, locality, region.

Window - An exterior opening in a habitable room meeting the area requirements of the Uniform Building Code.

Yard - An open space on the same site as a structure, unoccupied and unobstructed by structures from the ground upward except as otherwise provided in the zoning ordinance, including a front yard, side yard, or rear yard.