

23 MAY 2023 DRAFT

DESIGN TRADITIONS OF CARMEL COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Introduction & Core Design Guidelines

CARMEL BY THE SEA remains beautiful because of the community's rigorous design expectations. These Commercial Design Guidelines are a mandated regulatory tool for the CC, SC, and RC districts that conveys these expectations. They also help explain and illustrate design standards in the City's other regulations. Existing projects never establish precedent for proposed projects. Instead, all projects must meet or exceed the expectations described by and under the community's six Core Design Guidelines. Where uncertainty arises, city officials will interpret guideline adherence on a case-by-case basis. Strict adherence to this document and its related, linked regulations will help ensure that a proposed project will meet community expectations and have a smooth approval process.

1.0.0 PRESERVE, restore, and enhance the forest
in all improvement projects: private, public, and otherwise. p. 01

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continuity of the forest, natural environment, and to the
natural features of its own site. p. 02

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1.0.0 Preserve, restore, and enhance the forest in all improvement projects: private, public, and otherwise.

1.1.0 Convey forest character in landscape designs.

1.1.1 Consult the City Forester to determine viability and preserve all existing healthy trees.

1.1.2 *Replace* missing trees or add new trees in the public rights of way and in courtyards. Consult the City *Arborist Forester* and landscape ordinance for approved types.

1.1.3 Locate street trees informally, not uniformly spaced along a block. Use tree grates consistent in design throughout an area or, alternatively, an open area at the tree base with plantings.

1.1.4 Continue the forest character with surface plantings in the public rights of way.

1.2.0 Design for sustainability.

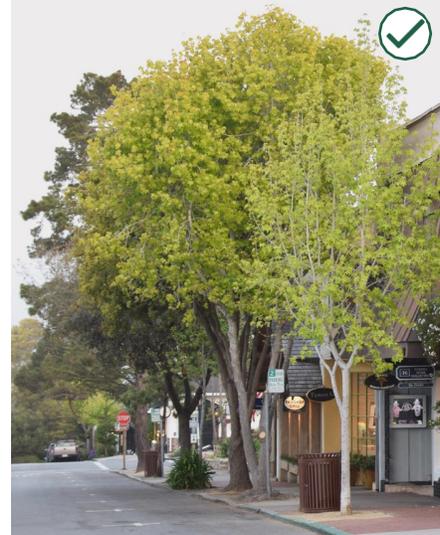
1.2.1 Use native, drought-tolerant species as the predominant palette, with flowering plants as appropriate accents. Consult the zoning code, landscape ordinance, and permitted plant lists for any plant quantities, size, and species requirements.

1.2.2 Incorporate Low Impact Design features, including rain water retention *and green roofs*.

1.2.3 Design windows to maximize daylighting into interior spaces and use exterior shading devices to manage solar gain in summer months. For example, use operable awnings on storefronts to manage changes in light conditions.

1.2.4 Incorporate renewable energy devices *as possible. -including a solar collector or wind turbine.*

1.2.5 Reuse demolition materials and refer to related City regulations.



2.0.0 Subordinate every built structure to the character of the forest, natural environment, and to the natural features of its own site.

2.1.0 Follow the natural contours of the site.

2.1.1 Position building masses and roof forms to avoid cutting into the canopy of established trees.

2.1.2 Where construction is necessary on a steep slope, step the foundation and building forms to follow the contours, minimizing excavation and fill and avoiding abrupt changes in grade both on the site and between adjoining properties.

2.1.3 Avoid a design that requires a tall retaining wall, terracing, or revetments that will be visible from the public way. Minimize the visual impacts of any other retaining walls, garden walls, and foundation structures. Underground parking structures can present exceptions.

~~2.1.4 An exception is for underground parking structures.~~

2.2.0 Minimize the visual impact of surface parking.

2.2.1 Subordinate on-site parking to other uses, minimizing gaps in the continuous building wall of the block. Locate a parking area at the rear or side of a site or to the interior of the block.

~~2.2.2 Locate hotel parking in the rear, off site, or below grade.~~



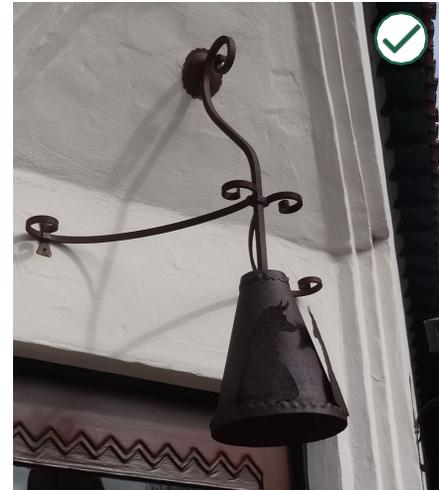
2.2.2 Screen the front of a parking lot, providing a visual buffer where parking abuts a public way with a landscape strip of trees and shrubs and/or *landscaped* low fences and walls.

2.3.0 Minimize the visual impacts of architectural lighting.

2.3.1 Subdue all exterior lights with shielded and focused fixtures of low lumens and *warm white temperatures*, as defined in municipal code. *Do not use fluorescent lighting.*

2.3.2 Subordinate lighting to the building with small-scale, subdued-finish fixtures, stylistically integrated into the architecture.

2.3.3 Place interior lighting so that it cannot spill out into exterior spaces.



3.0.0 Fit every built structure within its neighborhood context.



3.1.0 Locate a new building to reflect established alignment patterns.

3.1.1 Convey the height of traditional buildings in new construction by keeping the apparent height of a new building within the height range established by adjacent and nearby buildings, *especially* at the street frontage.



3.1.2 Use the *Maximum Buildable Envelope* to align the building volumes appropriately.

3.1.3 Where existing buildings are positioned at the sidewalk edge, such as with Limited Commercial, Mixed-Use, Multifamily, and Hotel building types, conform a new building façade to this alignment.

3.1.4 Provide small variations in setbacks for any landscaping.

3.1.5 Where a landscaped foreground is the context, such as with Multifamily Houses, conform a new building façade to this alignment, setting the building back from the front property line to provide more space for landscaping.

3.1.6 Locate one portion of an Inn, or at least one building of a multi-building Inn, at the sidewalk edge along with an active-use area, such as a lobby, cafe, or outdoor gathering space, while ensuring privacy for individual rooms near pedestrian ways.



3.2.0 Clearly identify a primary building entrance.

3.2.1 Orient a primary entrance to face the street or, *if there is no street frontage*, a courtyard with a clearly-identifiable path. For a civic building, orient the primary entrance to face the street or a public space.

3.2.3 Recess entries to commercial storefronts.

3.2.4 Clearly differentiate entrances to upper-floor residences from those of commercial storefronts.



3.3.0 Provide outdoor spaces to enrich the interplay between indoor and outdoor activities and to enhance the pedestrian experience.

3.4.1 For a Forecourt, which is directly facing onto the street, *help* maintain *a continuous urban street-wall* by limiting the proportion of the opening to 30% or less *of each building's street facade*.

3.4.2 For an Interior Courtyard, which is accessed by a narrower opening at the street, limit its entrance to a minor break in the street wall with inviting views to courtyard activities. Keep the size, colors, and materials of the courtyard compatible with its associated buildings.

3.4.3 For an Intra-block Walkway, which indirectly connects from the street through a property to other pedestrian ways and activities, include features that provide visual interest. Commercial, Limited Commercial, and Mixed-Use projects of three or more lots or of 75 feet or more in building width require Intra-block Walkways.

3.4.4 For a Small Park or Plaza, include amenities for pedestrians not necessarily associated with uses in an abutting building.

3.4.5 Locate Yards in front setbacks, such as at Multi-Family buildings, but limit their size and design them to conserve water.



3.4.6 Coordinate Plant Beds, Planters, and Planter Boxes with the building to add pedestrian interest to the base of storefronts, building setbacks, walkways, pass-throughs, and courtyards.



3.4.7 Provide a Civic Space with convenient pedestrian connections, inviting street edges, landscape furnishings (such as lighting, benches, and public art), and maintained view corridors to encourage pedestrian traffic.

3.5.0 Minimize negative *impacts to surrounding properties. ~~conflicts with abutting uses.~~*



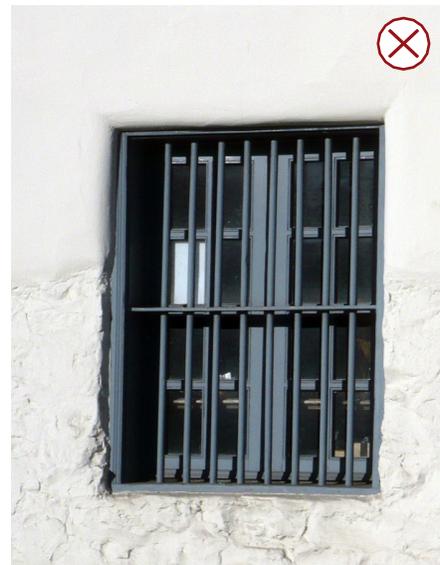
3.5.1 *Fully integrate service areas and equipment into the architectural design of the building.*

3.5.2 *In cases where full architectural integration is not possible, Eliminate the visual impacts of utilities by using low-profile or recessed mechanical units on rooftops and by grouping, ~~screening, and shielding them with architectural and landscape elements such as cabinets, walls, fences, or plantings, and painting it to match the existing background of integrated material and color.~~*



3.5.3 Orient service areas and entrances away from public streets and sidewalks and position them to minimize *visual and* noise impacts on other activities.

3.5.4 Do not locate exposed equipment or utility boxes in public view or in a public passageway or on a primary facade and group utility lines and junction boxes on secondary walls.



3.5.5 Minimize the visual impact of security devices on windows and storefronts by locating them on the interior rather than the exterior and allowing views to the inside. Use only decorative exterior security devices that complement the architectural style of the building and never opaque, roll-down metal screens.

4.0.0 Retain and build upon Carmel's established architectural heritage.

4.1.0 Preserve historic and existing resources.

4.1.1 Re-use existing buildings and their components.

4.1.2 Respect adjacent historic resources by preserving adequate, light, open space, and views of and around the structure.

4.1.3 Respect adjacent historic resources with compatible architectural design.

4.1.4 Follow additional standards for properties recognized as having official historic significance, such as Municipal Code Chapter 17.32 and the Historic Context Statement.

4.2.0 Continue Carmel's tradition of *architectural* diversity.

4.2.1 *To avoid uniformity and the appearance of speculative development and to promote individual artistic expression, differentiate a new building's plan, massing, and overall design and style* from that of nearby and abutting buildings.

4.2.2 *When reproducing historic architecture*, use the same materials and craftsmanship as those of the reproduced period.

4.2.3 *For all architectural languages*, use equivalent materials and craftsmanship as those of historic *architecture*.

4.2.4 Do not *use designs that* resemble those in speculative developments.



4.3.0 Use traditional, natural building materials.

4.3.1 Use the preferred materials traditionally used in Carmel, such as wood, stone, *tile*, brick, *artistically-crafted* concrete, and stucco for walls, *patios, and decking*, as well as wood shingles and shakes, clay, slate, and concrete tiles for roofs. Use metal roofs only if they are detailed simply, have no ribs, *corrugations*, or striations, use genuine, field-installed, standing or flat seams, and are unreflective and either uncoated, like Cor-Ten steel, or of integrated earth-toned color.



4.3.2 Choose materials that will form a desired natural patina over time or that can be maintained in their original condition.

4.3.3 Use materials in their natural conditions, scales, and colors,

4.3.4 *When adding surface treatments*, use matte finishes and muted earth tones, rather than highly polished treatments such as mirrored glass or reflective metals.

4.3.5 Apply materials using methods traditional to Carmel, for example, wood siding in shingles, horizontal clapboard, or board and batten, brick in its traditional modular dimension, or stucco in smooth or lightly textured finishes.



4.3.6 Use unclad wood, solid metal, or *recyclable aluminum-clad wood* windows, doors, and garage doors, *with no* vinyl or plastic elements.

4.4.0 Use *manufactured* materials according to traditional, natural principles.

4.4.1 Use *manufactured* materials only if they are *ecologically sensitive*: able to form a natural patina over time, able to be maintained rather than disposed, able to be fully dismantled and recycled or reused,

biodegradable, and environmentally non-toxic or beneficial.

4.4.2 *Do not use petroleum-based architectural elements.*

4.4.3 *Products that meet or exceed the most current national or international ecological building standards, such as the certified Cradle-to-Cradle standard, meet Carmel standards for manufactured materials.*

4.4.4 Do not use manufactured materials that fake or mimic natural or other materials in their textures or finishes, including machine-stamped faux woodgrains. Use cast concrete only with non-uniform, handcrafted patterns such as that provided by genuine wood formwork.

4.4.5 Apply manufactured materials in a manner that conveys a traditional human scale.



4.5.0 *Maintain the commercial texture of the downtown by providing openly-fenestrated, shopfront architecture at the street level of every building.*

5.0.0 Design every built structure with modesty and restraint.

5.1.0 Restrain building forms, materials, and details.



5.1.1 Design a building consistently, with the design concept extending to all sides of the building and with no mixing of architectural styles.

5.1.2 Avoid visual complexity, “busy” building forms, too many different materials, excessive and overly ornate or ostentatious details, and materials and details that contrast strongly within a single building or with neighboring buildings.

5.1.3 Where a building exceeds more than one lot in width, maintain an integrated overall architecture. *while employing traditional expressions of interior volumes and hierarchies of design features to prevent monumentality.*



5.1.4 For Commercial, Limited Commercial, and Mixed-Use buildings, use a building form a simple, rectangular form, similar to those seen traditionally.

5.1.5 Use a roof form consistent with the style of the building, with flat, pitched, or a variety of roof forms on Commercial, Limited Commercial and Mixed-Use buildings and at least some pitched roofs on Multifamily Houses and Inns. Do not use fake, mansard, or other roof forms that appear tacked on.



5.2.0 Establish a sense of human scale in a building design.

5.2.1 Do not use building elements that are complex, monumental, formal, out-of-scale,

or that increase the visual prominence of the building.

5.2.2 *To reduce the apparent scale of larger buildings, break down exterior volumes by authentically articulating different interior spaces, such as lobbies, circulation, and residences.*

5.2.3 To reduce the apparent mass of a larger building and to create visual interest, use vertical and horizontal articulation techniques such as: horizontal belt courses, moldings, cornices, canopies, wall offsets, columns, pilasters, and changes in window patterns among different modules of a building.

5.2.4 Use appropriately sized, never oversized, building elements, such as windows, doors, entries, balconies, and overhangs to reduce scale within public view.

5.2.5 Keep visible openings subordinate in scale to the building. Do not use "grand", oversized entryways, windows, or doors. *When reproducing historic architecture, limit the dimension of any glass to that which was possible to span using only the original construction techniques of that era.*

5.2.5 Use traditional downtown ratios of windows to walls, with the ground floor more transparent than above and avoiding undivided expanses of glass on upper floors. Use an even lower ratio of window to wall on Limited Commercial than on Commercial and Mixed-Use buildings.

5.2.6 Provide variation in building height when a building will be substantially wider than traditional ones in the area or when constructing more than one building on a site.

5.2.7 Subordinate a rooftop addition to the existing building, setting it back enough to maintain the perceived scale at the front of the property. *Refer to the Maximum Buildable Envelope.*

rooftop addition examples

rooftop addition examples

5.3.0 Keep the overall color scheme muted and devoid of bright or high-intensity colors.

5.4.0 Where existing single-family uses are grandfathered, apply the single family residential design guidelines.



6.0.0 Detail every property authentically and consistently.

6.1.0 Use building materials and features in a manner that conveys authenticity.

6.1.1 Convey a sense of true craftsmanship in architectural details.

6.1.2 *Do not use fake, purely decorative building elements such as dummy chimneys, doors, windows, or shutters. Size any shutters so that they would cover their entire window, whether or not they are in active use.*

6.1.3 Do not use materials or details inauthentic to the architecture or that appear non-structural, gratuitous, or applied as superficial elements, wall "accents" or veneers.

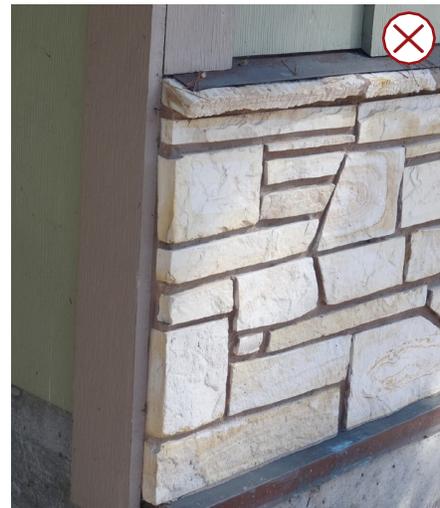
6.1.4 On multi-paned windows and doors, use true dividers that go from inside to outside between the panes of glass.

6.1.5 Where materials do not simply remain uncoated, finish with a plain, uniform, matte varnish, stain or paint, without *texture, mottling, antiqued, or other* faux finishes.

6.1.6 Use details that are, *or appear to be*, true structural elements, such as natural wood exposed rafter tails, beams, or *Carmel Stone stacked stone* foundations. *If costs prove prohibitive, simplify the architectural language rather than mimic more costly methods.*

6.1.7 Use a "hierarchy" of building materials, with heavier coarser materials below lighter materials.

6.1.8 Whether on a building or a landscape element, stack stone traditionally so that it appears, or actually is, structurally load-bearing. Do not "float" stone above lighter materials or use it purely decoratively, such



as framed just around windows or doors, or randomly clustered on corners, walls, or chimneys.

- 6.1.9 Detail new and/or *manufactured* materials in ways authentic to their own composition. For example, carefully plan the woodgrain and modules of formwork for exposed poured concrete or use cement board siding with a smooth, untextured surface, rather than an added, faux woodgrain.



6.2.0 Use building materials or features in a consistent manner.

- 6.2.1 Do not stop wall materials at outside corners, instead wrap them around the entire visible building element.
- 6.2.2 Use one primary material for building *walls* ~~and with at most one additional subordinate material., or at most two, materials on walls. Once a species of wood or stone is selected, do not combine it with other species within a single project.~~
- 6.2.3 Make window and door styles, materials, and finishes uniform wherever publicly visible.

6.3.0 Use architecturally integrated details to provide pedestrian interest.

- 6.3.1 Keep details at a human scale and in scale with the building.
- 6.3.2 Use a functional balcony that is consistent with the building design to provide variety in wall surfaces and visual interest.
- 6.3.3 *Use only awnings or canopies that serve the purpose of shading and that are Mount a functional awning or canopy that is in*



character with the building to accentuate defining features of the facade. Use only matte colors and materials compatible with the structure, such as canvas, other fabric, or a similar, woven material.

- 6.3.4 Locate a simple sign that is compatible with and subordinate to the building to emphasize façade design elements. *Use durable, non-reflective materials with no more than three legible, non-vibrant colors to reinforce the sign's own design integrity. A memorable symbol sign adds interest and can employ a more complex, muted palette. Consult the [Sign Ordinance](#) for more information.*



- 6.4.0 Enhance the pedestrian experience by providing a sense of discovery along the street.

- 6.3.2 Provide amenities in outdoor spaces such as plantings, art, fountains, information kiosks, waste receptacles, seating, and other furnishings.
- 6.3.3 Coordinate the design of *street outdoor* furniture with that of an associated outdoor space or building, keeping it within the design traditions of downtown and of true craftsmanship and high quality materials such as wood and metal in matte finishes.

- 6.3.4 To distinguish public sidewalks from adjacent outdoor spaces like walkways, pass-throughs, and courtyards, provide variety in paving patterns and materials. Do not use asphalt, but instead modular, high-quality materials such as cobblestone, brick, or scored, dyed, and/or pebble aggregate concrete.

