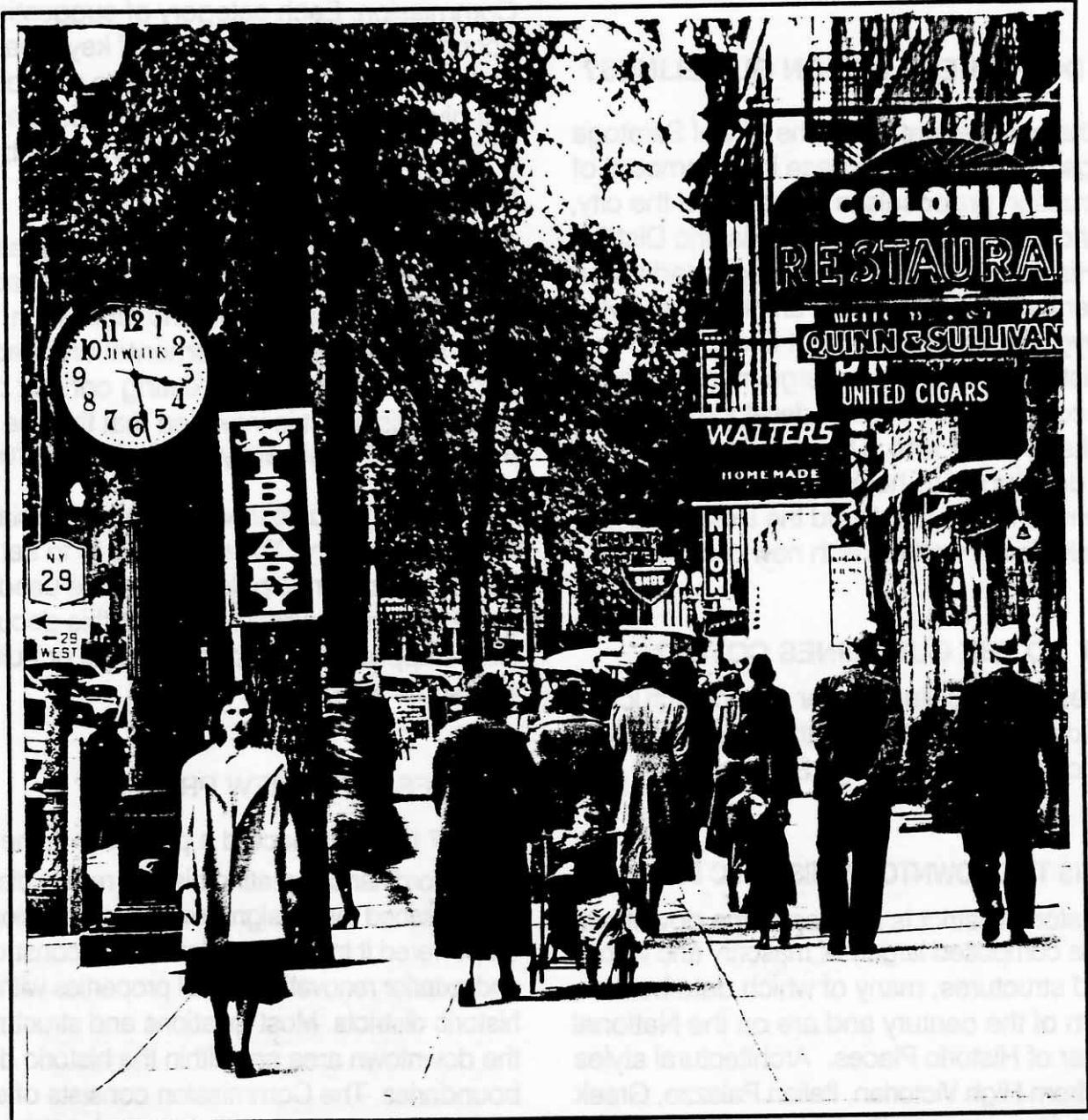


SARATOGA SPRINGS DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Design Guidelines are recommendations for a community to help to direct the way it is developing, and guide it towards a future goal. They also allow the city and its residents to work together more effectively as new developments and construction are proposed in our area.

WHY DO WE NEED DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Over the past several years, the City of Saratoga Springs has seen an increase in the amount of construction proposals in and around the city, most notably in the Downtown Historic District. This Historic District is highly regarded as an excellent example American architectural styles of a bygone era. However, it is expected that this Historic District will undergo many changes in the coming years if future development maintains its present rate. These guidelines have been developed to help preserve the existing built environment, and to aid the Design Review Commission in working with new proposals.

WHAT DO THE GUIDELINES COVER?

The Design Guidelines cover new construction and exterior renovations within the Downtown Historic District of Saratoga Springs.

WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT?

The Historic District is an area of the downtown which is composed largely of masonry and wood-framed structures, many of which date back to the turn of the century and are on the National Register of Historic Places. Architectural styles range from High Victorian, Italian Palazzo, Greek Revival, Renaissance Revival, Georgian as well as Romanesque, just to name a few. Information on many of the buildings within the district, as well as information on the boundaries of the Historic District, are available from the City.

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

The guidelines are available from the City of Saratoga for persons who are seeking to build or renovate a structure within the Downtown Historic District. The suggestions that are contained within are grouped into several architectural categories of interest to the Design Review Commission. Each category of suggestions is accompanied by illustrations of key ideas and concepts. It is intended that these suggestions will give the applicant a better understanding of the concepts which are reviewed by the Design Review Commission.

These guidelines are intended as suggestions only, and are not meant to stifle architectural creativity nor insist on historic replication. They were derived from fundamental architectural principles and the rich existing context of the Historic District. It is intended that they be used as an "ideas book" early in the design process.

These design guidelines are not an official law, they are advisory. Their purpose is to set forth some general principals that can be used as a guide. Some recommendation in this document will be applicable to a particular site or building, and some will not.

THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

In 1977 the city enacted a provision in the local zoning ordinance creating historic review districts. It established the Design Review Commission and empowered it to regulate demolition, construction and exterior renovations of all properties within the historic districts. Most locations and structures in the downtown area are within the historic district boundaries. The Commission consists of seven unpaid volunteers who are knowledgeable about Saratoga's history and architectural styles, as well as design and construction techniques. The Commission meets monthly to review applications that are filed with the City's Building Inspector.

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For further information about the Design Review Process:

CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS, CITY HALL

(518)-587-3550

- Building Inspector, Second Floor
- City Planner, First Floor
- Clerk, Design Review Commission, Accounts Office

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

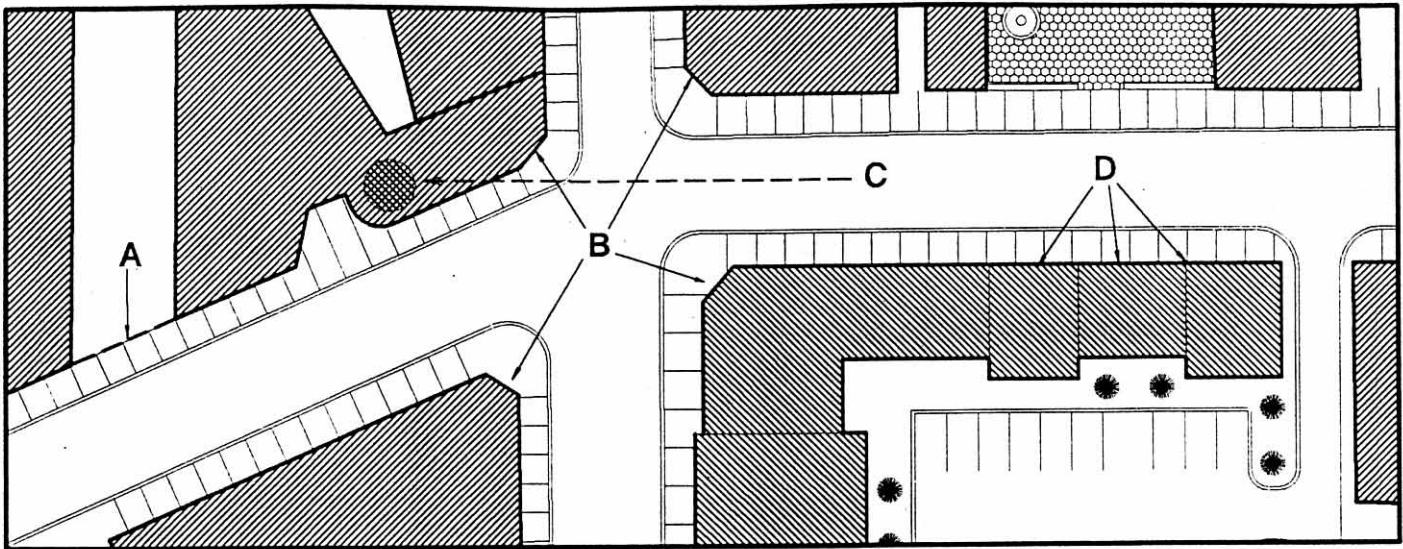


Figure 1: Partial plan of a city intersection.

This section on Neighborhood Context has been developed to promote awareness of the built environment of our area and encourage new construction which is sympathetic to its past.

1. New construction should attempt to maintain the common setback distance of its neighbors. In the case of a discrepancy of setbacks, the new building should align with at least one of the neighboring buildings. (Item 'A' in Figure 1)

2. Proposals should attempt to work with any pre-existing building patterns found in the area. For example, if the neighboring buildings have a special corner condition, then the proposed structure could attempt to work with it. (Item 'B' in Figure 1.)

3. The line of sight down any given street can have an important visual element which catches the viewers eye, such as a small tower, archway, etc. Such sight-lines should not, however end in a blank or seemingly random portion of a wall. (Item 'C' in Figures 1 and 2)

4. Buildings situated at corners should attempt to "wrap" the corner by continuing certain facade elements (such as the cornice or horizontal accent bands) on all street elevations.

5. Main building entrances should attempt to face the street whenever possible. Such entries should be easily identifiable, and scaled to the size of the street which they are on.

6. In the case of large structures, the overall building mass should be made up of smaller components. Large, uninterrupted building masses should be avoided. (Item 'D' in Figures 1 & 2)

7. New construction situated on narrow side streets or courtyards should not be so tall as to create a dark, shaft-like feeling to the public space. (Item 'E' in Figure 3)

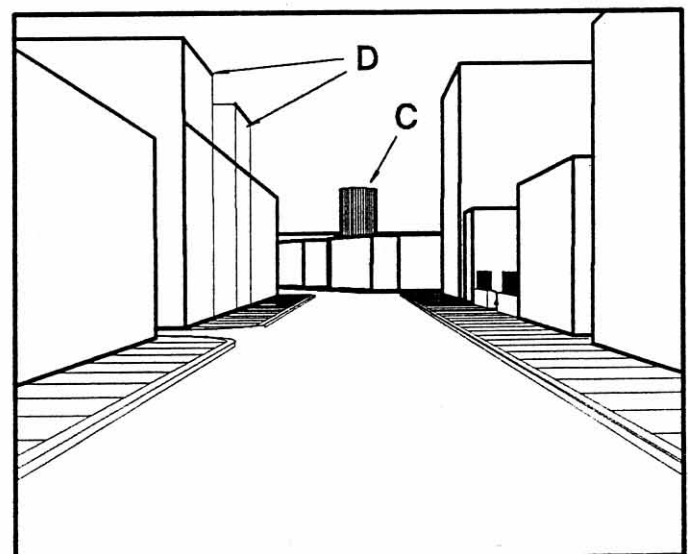


Figure 2: "Sight-line" down street towards tower.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

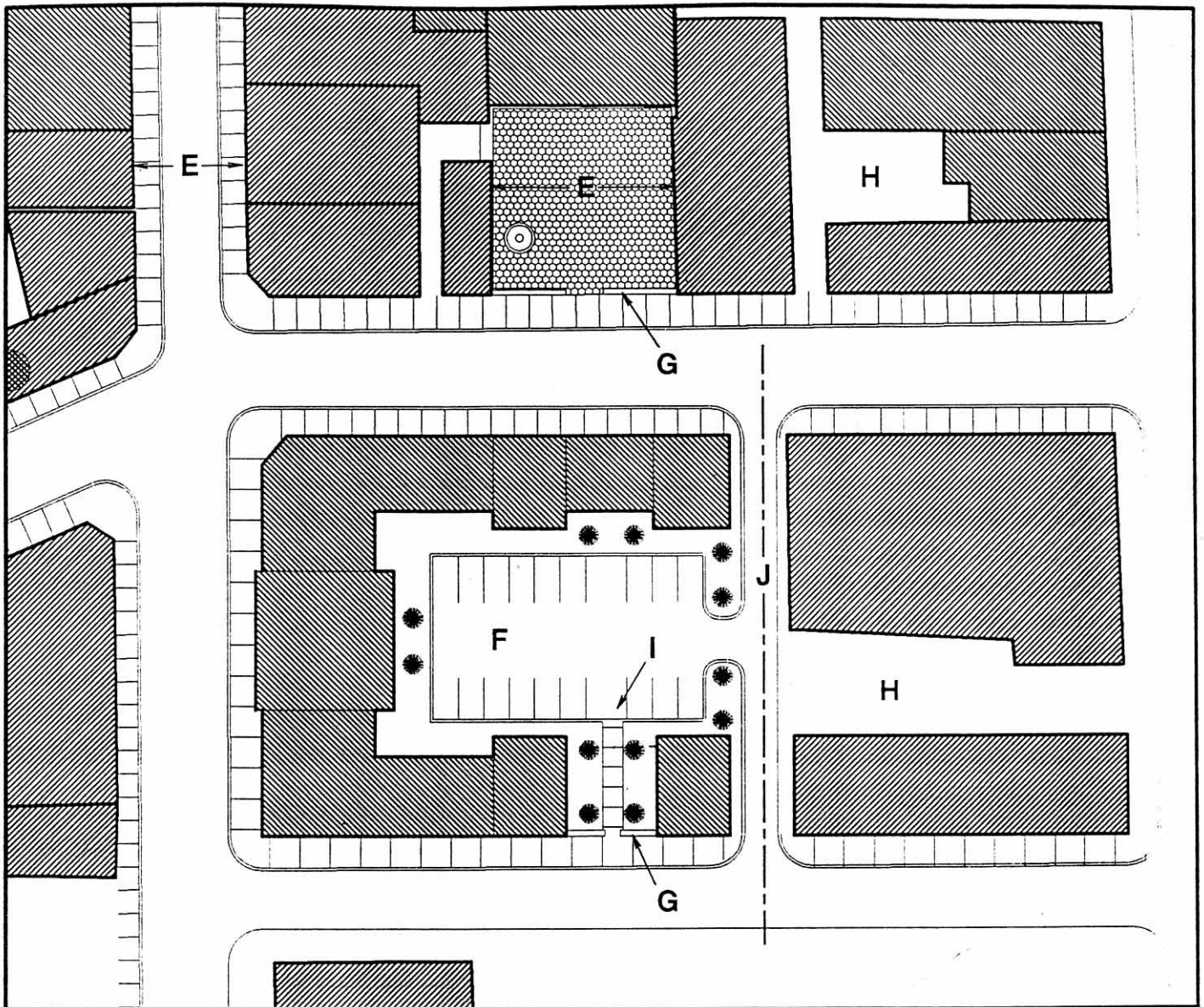


Figure 3: Partial City plan.

8. Whenever possible, additional parking which is required to accommodate a new building should be located in back or in a central courtyard and should be out of sight from the street. (Item 'F' in Figure 3)

9. Parking lots, service areas and courtyards located within sight of the street should attempt to be screened with trees and a low wall or fence to help maintain the street edge. Such parking lots should incorporate a minimum of 10% green space in the parking area. (Item 'G' in Figure 3)

10. Service alleys that allow private off-street access should be incorporated into larger lots whenever possible. (Item 'H' in Figure 3)

11. Pedestrian paths which allow the public to circulate through a site are encouraged in the case of larger developments which may occupy an entire block. (Item 'I' in Figure 3)

12. Off street access roads and driveways are encouraged to be in keeping with the existing grid of the city. (Item 'J' in Figure 3)

BUILDING HEIGHT AND ROOF DESIGN



Figure 4: City street elevation.

This section addresses building heights, roof construction, and other aspects of design which contribute to the overall composition of a new structure.

1. Whenever possible, the height of a building should take into account the heights of buildings in the immediate area. The height of proposed structures should be at least as tall as the lowest of the two neighboring buildings, but no less than two stories overall. (Item 'A' in Figure 4)
2. In areas where more height is desired on the street elevation, the building may place more of its mass in front, and step down to lower levels in the rear. Also, additional height may be implied with the use of strong vertical proportioning elements that make the building appear taller. (See "Building Proportions", page 7.)
3. The height of structures with sloping roofs (with the ridge running parallel to the street) should be measured by the vertical surface height of the facade, not to the peak of the roof. (Item 'B' in Figure 4)
4. Structures with sloping roofs should take measures to ensure that the fall of snow, ice or rain does not create a hazard for pedestrians.

5. Sloping roof structures can employ the use of dormers and gables to give the facade more visual prominence. However, flat roof and parapet construction is encouraged.

6. Whenever possible, new facades should attempt to coordinate heights and "datum lines" with adjacent buildings. (Item 'C' in Figure 4)

7. Facade compositions are most often made up of "base", "middle" and "top" levels that are readily discernible from each other. (Also see "Building Fenestration") (Item 'D' in Figure 4)

8. The "base" level of a facade should sit on a small plinth that creates a subtle transition between it and the ground. (Item 'E' in Figure 4)

9. The "top" level of a facade should be noticeable enough to provide a visual cap to the building overall. (Item 'F' in Figure 4)

10. Longer buildings should provide fluctuations in the roofline which break up the long run of facade and which attract attention to key places such as entryways. (Item 'G' in Figure 4)

11. Air handling equipment, antennas, satellite dishes and other mechanical equipment should be placed in such a manner as not to be visible from the street. (Item 'H' in Figure 4)

BUILDING SCALE



Figure 5: Partial facade elevations.

Building Scale deals with the sizes of various parts of a building relative to each other and to pedestrians.

1. Whenever possible, the overall facade scale should be kept relatively small and should be in scale with the buildings around it.
2. The use of an overall facade composition that breaks the building down into many smaller distinct portions is recommended to provide a small scale impression. (Item 'A' in Figure 5)
3. Facade elements such as windows and bays should complement the size and scale of the neighboring buildings. (Item 'B' in Figure 5)
4. Small scale materials such as brick, stone and wood are encouraged, especially in areas close to pedestrian traffic. The use of larger scale materials such as "panels" is not recommended, and should only be used in non-pedestrian areas.
5. The size and scale of materials should ideally complement the size and scale of a building.
6. Large picture windows should be separated from each other by a strong mullion, and should be further divided into smaller windows whenever possible. (Item 'C' in Figure 5)
7. The use of decorative designs and adornment are encouraged to enliven a facade and create a more "pedestrian" scale. (Item 'D' in Figure 5)
8. Large areas of blank wall in a pedestrian area are strongly discouraged. (Item 'E' in Figure 5)
9. Vehicle entryways and garage doors should not face the street or pedestrian areas. (Item 'F' in Figure 5)

BUILDING PROPORTIONS

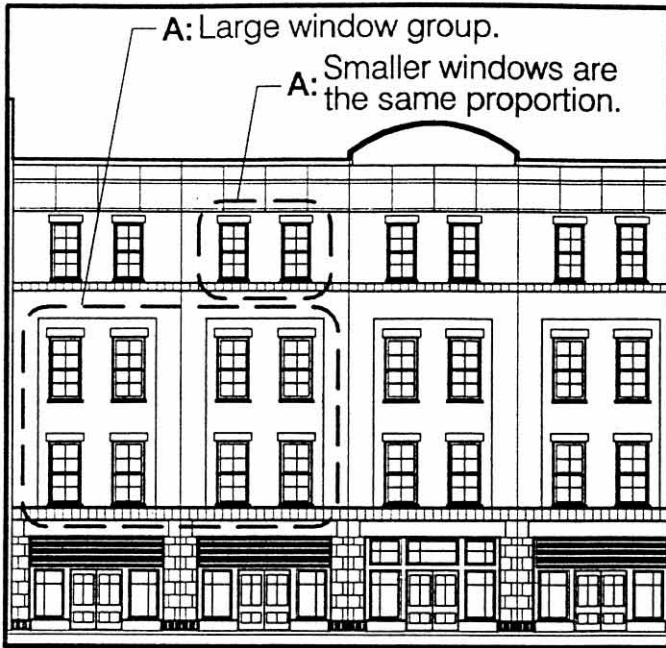


Figure 6: Similar proportions in a facade.

Building Proportion deals with the relative shape of a building and its parts with regards to width and height. Sometimes, this proportion can be understood as a ratio such as 2:1, 5:2, etc. For example, a window which is four times taller than it is wide would have a 4:1 ratio, and would be considered "vertical in proportion".

1. Whenever possible, new construction should attempt to be sympathetic to the proportions of the surrounding buildings.
2. Facade elements such as windows and bays should be of a consistent proportion to each other whenever possible. Elements which share a common area (e.g. : all of the windows at the base level) should be of a consistent proportion and size as well. (Item 'A' in Figure 6)
3. A consistent theme of vertical proportions used in a facade design can help to give the impression that a building is actually taller than it really is, and could be used to heighten an otherwise short building. (Item 'B' in Figure 7)



Figure 7: Vertical proportions in a facade.

4. Buildings which are "squat" in proportion or which have very strong horizontal elements that dominate the facade are discouraged.
5. Long rows of windows across a facade can sometimes create a strong horizontal impression. This effect may be offset by strengthening the relationship of the windows into vertical groups. (Item 'C' in Figure 7)
6. The proportions of columns and posts should be such that they do not appear too "spindly" or thin to carry the weight above them. (Item 'D' in Figure 7)

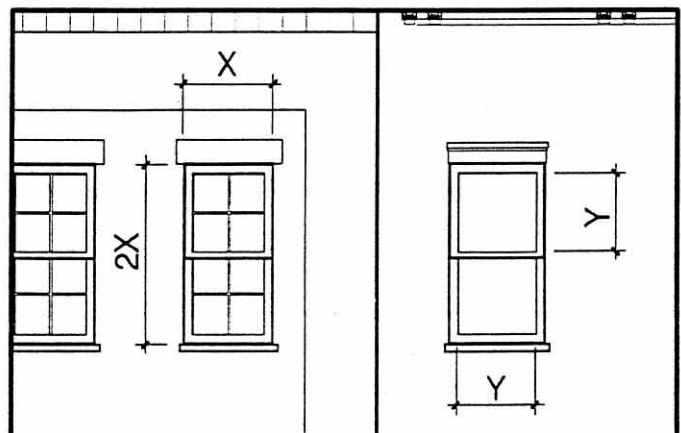


Figure 8: Two windows and their proportions.

FACADE COMPOSITION

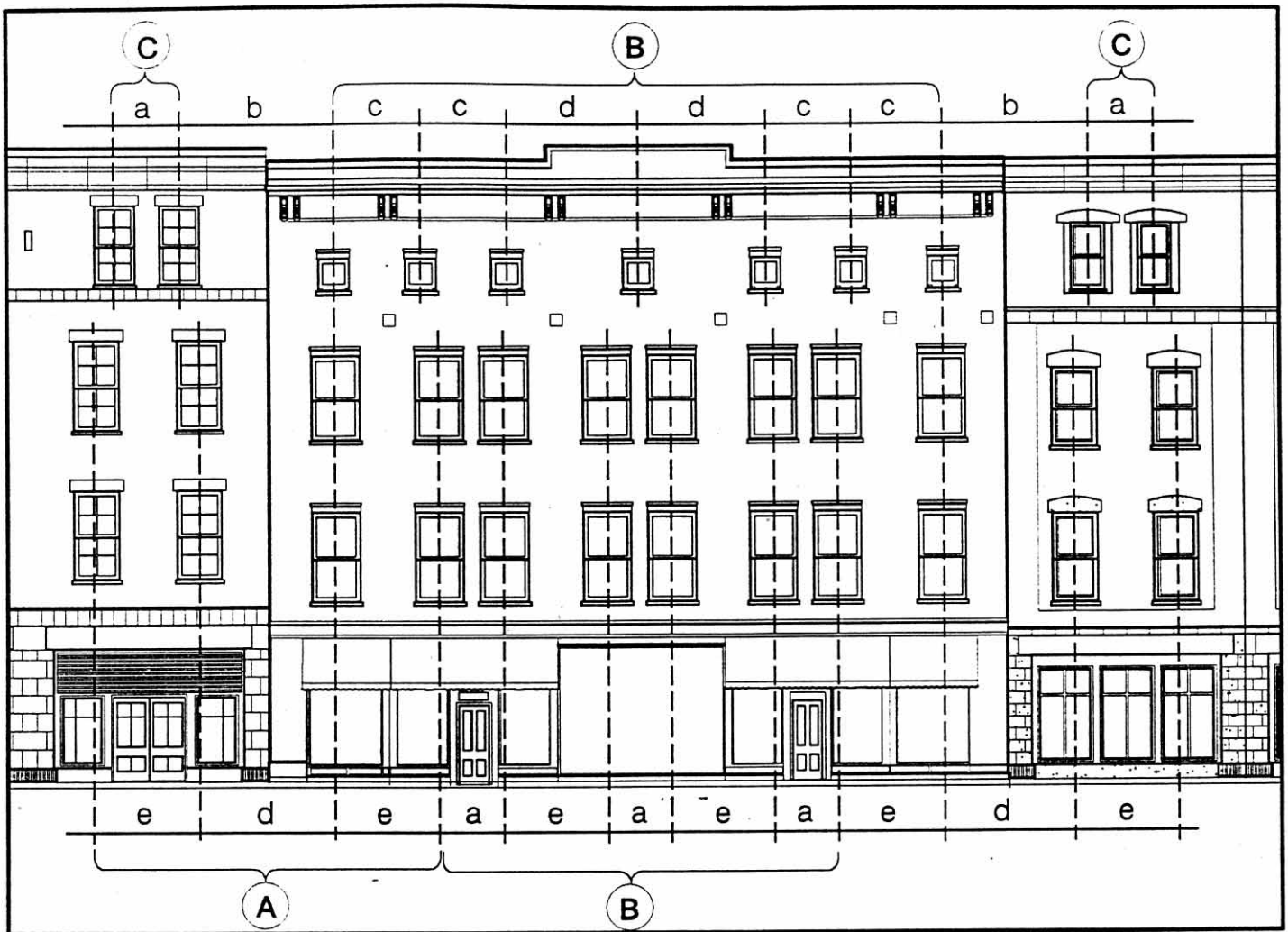


Figure 9: Relative spacings of windows on facades. (a.k.a. "rhythm")

Facade Pattern concerns the arrangement of facade elements, such as windows and bays, in a recognizable and consistent composition. A consistent spacing of elements, also called "facade rhythm", is one example.

be kept relatively consistent whenever possible, but may deviate in places to highlight important locations such as the center or the entry to a building. (Item 'B' in Figure 9)

1. Whenever possible, the rhythm of a facade should attempt to be in keeping with the rhythm of adjacent structures. (Item 'A' in Figure 9)
2. The overall facade composition should be governed by a clear and simple pattern that is easily understandable to the observer. Within this pattern, however, more subtle and interesting patterns may be utilized which further enrich the design. The overall pattern of the facade should

3. Broadway elevations should be kept to a strong and simple pattern. Side street elevations need not be as rigidly structured, and may be more informal in comparison.
4. The use of smaller patterns at the higher floor levels is encouraged to help reinforce a "base", "middle" and "top" facade composition. (e.g. a wide bay at the "base" level would be divided in two at the "middle" levels, and divided again by two at the "top" level. (Item 'C' in Figure 9)

FACADE FENESTRATION



Figure 10: Shadows on elevation show depth in facade.

Building Fenestration measures the amount of depth (such as a recessed entry) and openings (such as window area) on a facade.

1. Whenever possible, the amount of fenestration in a facade should be roughly in keeping with the amount of fenestration in adjacent buildings. (Item 'A' in Figure 10)

2. The ground floor level of a facade should provide the highest amount of facade opening and articulation. It should be very open and inviting to the pedestrian, and employ the strongest use of depth in the facade. (Item 'B' in Figure 10)

3. The use of a decreasing percentage of facade opening on the higher floor levels is encouraged to reinforce a "base", "middle" and "top" facade pattern. (Item 'C' in Figure 10)

4. The use of depth is encouraged to highlight facade openings such as windows. Windows mounted flush to the exterior of the facade are not recommended. (Item 'D' in Figure 12)

5. Openings in the facade should be framed by a lintel or arch above (and a sill at the bottom for windows) which is visible to the observer. Lintels should appear strong enough to support the weight they are carrying. (Item 'E' in Figure 12)

FACADE FENESTRATION



Figure 11: Partial facade elevation.

6. Smaller windows can be framed within a recess to make them appear larger, or to group two sets of windows together so that they may appear to act as a pair. (Item 'F' in Figure 11)

7. Window types above the ground floor should be double hung, awning or transom windows on street elevations. Casement, picture and sliding windows are not recommended. (Item 'G' in Figure 11)

8. Pairs of window shutters may be used, but should be used consistently and should appear to actually cover the entire window opening when closed.

9. The use of rough textured materials or decoration (such as brickwork patterns) to accent portions of the facade is encouraged, but should not be used as a primary theme. If utilized at a high elevation above the street, it should be apparent enough to be noticed at the pedestrian level. (Item 'H' in Figure 11)

10. The design of any storefront construction on the ground floor should be complimentary to the facade layout above.

11. Storefront construction is encouraged to be recessed enough at the point of entry to allow the door to swing out without obstructing the sidewalk. (Item 'I' in Figure 11)

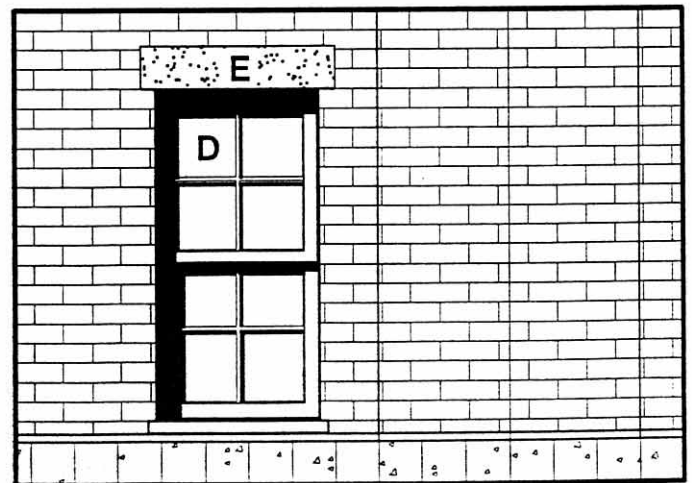


Figure 12: Sample window.

BUILDING MATERIALS



There is a wide variety of materials and colors to be found in the architecture of Saratoga Springs.

1. Whenever possible, attempts should be made to utilize building materials and colors that are complementary to adjacent buildings and are appropriate to the Historic District color chart. The number of selected colors should be kept to a minimum.
2. A single material should be used as the dominant theme in the facade, with secondary materials used only to highlight and accent the design.
3. When using multiple materials, a clear and definable boundary (such as a small ledge) should be used to terminate one material before making the transition to the next.
4. Whenever possible, smaller, natural materials should be used around pedestrian areas.
5. The use of contrasts between the main color theme and an accent color are recommended. (e.g.: dark vs. light)
6. A color chart of historic period colors found in the local architecture is available from the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Recommended:

Not Recommended:

Facade:

Common red brick
 - bare (consistent tone)
 - painted
Special masonry units
 - textured
 - colored
 - painted
Natural stone
Wood
 - clapboard

Beige brick
Multi-tone brick
Imitation brick siding
Plain (bare) Masonry Units
Vinyl siding
Metal siding
Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (E.I.F.S.)
Imitation stone
Asphalt siding

Trim:

Wood
 - "finished" grade
 - painted
 - stained

Bare wood
 - lumber grade (i.e. plywood)

Windows:

Anodized aluminum frame
 - black or dark bronze
 - other approved color
Wood frame
 - painted
 - stained
Vinyl clad
 - approved color
Lintels
 - brick
 - stone
 - colored concrete
Sills
 - brick
 - limestone
 - colored concrete
Clear/ Etched or Frosted glass
Stained glass

Bare aluminum frame

Tinted glass
Mirrored glass

Roof:

Natural slate
Standing seam
 - small seam width
 - approved color
Asphalt shingles
 - black
 - single tone
Parapet caps
 - stone
 - concrete
 - limestone

Imitation slate
Wood shingles

Other:

Canvas awnings
 - 3 color maximum
 - approved colors
Paving
 - brick
 - small colored paving stone
 - patterned concrete

Plastic awnings

Asphalt

SIGNS AND AWNINGS



Figure 13: Sample building signs.

(All signs should be in compliance with the City Sign Regulations found in the Zoning Ordinance.)

1. Street numbers are required on all buildings. They should be located directly above or next to each door. In buildings with multiple addresses, the street numbers should be coordinated to be of a consistent size, font and location. (Item 'A' in Figure 13)
2. Street numbers should be clear, simple, and contrast well with the background they are placed on. They should be at least 4" in height.
3. Primary signs are restricted to displaying the name of the business and some immediate relevant information only. They should be simple, straightforward and easy to read from a distance. Secondary information, such as details about the business, hours of operation, etc., should be reserved for smaller window signs which may be read close-up at the pedestrian level. (Item 'B' in Figure 13)
4. Primary signs should be located directly above the front door, within a vertical band down one side near the door, or on the awning face. They should be within 6" flush of the facade itself. (Item 'C' in Figure 13)
5. Long, continuous lengths of awnings are not recommended. Instead, a series of similar sized smaller ones is preferred. (Item 'D' in Figure 13)
6. Building identification and signs should be incorporated into the design of the facade itself, with a clear and distinguishable portion of the facade reserved solely for the purpose of framing it. It is recommended that lettering be applied directly to the building itself, instead of onto a sign which is tacked on. Colors should be kept to a minimum, and should complement those found on the building.
7. Exterior signs may be illuminated provided that they do not throw off more light than is necessary to show the sign. It is recommended that such lamps be of a clean design, face the facade, and be of an approved color. Bare bulbs should not be visible from the street.
8. Exterior box-type backlit, moving, flashing or neon signs and awnings are discouraged.
9. The use of exterior facade lighting is allowed, provided that the light is directed straight up or down the facade, is of an approved color, and does not cast light onto other areas.
10. The use of small lettering on the inside of the upper floor windows to identify the businesses within is encouraged. (Item 'E' in Figure 13)

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