

# CN—COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE DISTRICT

The guidelines contained within this chapter apply to all properties within the CN Zone District.

## Introduction

Traditionally, Oak Street has served as a transition into the heart of the old town residential district. While it has had a mix of uses almost from the start, most early structures were residential in character. That is, buildings were one to two stories in height, with sloping roof forms. Porches defined entries. The primary structures were set back from the street, with lawns in front. Walkways led to the entry and were perpendicular to the street.

While residential structures dominated the scene, institutional structures provided accents along the way. Most notably, several sites were developed for churches. Even though these buildings were somewhat larger than the surrounding houses, they still shared many design elements. This includes: sloping roofs, the use of traditional materials, and a setback from the street which provided space for a front yard.

While many of the buildings within the district share similar forms, architectural details are varied—which makes for a more interesting visual experience. Additionally, most of the buildings are at a human scale which allows pedestrians to better relate to the environment.

The goal is to maintain this residential character visually, while accommodating a mix of uses. New buildings may be somewhat larger than their older neighboring structures, but should strive to convey the traditional scale seen in a residential neighborhood.

## Building Width

People constructed many buildings that were similar in width to nearby structures, and generally in proportion to the lot size. This helped to establish a relatively uniform scale for the neighborhood and, when these buildings were evenly spaced along a block, a sense of rhythm resulted.



In such a case, the perceived width of a new building should appear similar in size to that of traditional buildings in the area in order to help maintain this sense of visual continuity.

## Building & Roof Form

A similarity of building forms also contributes to a sense of visual continuity along Oak Street. In order to maintain this feature, a new building should have basic roof and building forms that are similar to those seen traditionally. Overall facade proportions also should be in harmony with the context.



The character of the roof is a major feature of traditional buildings along the street. When repeated, the similar roof forms contribute to the sense of visual continuity. In each case, the roof pitch, its materials, size and orientation are all important to the overall character of the building. New construction should not break from this continuity. New structures and their roof forms should be similar in character to their traditional neighbors.

#### **Solid-to-Void Ratio**

While several transitional commercial buildings are included within the Oak St. area, most structures are simple wood frame construction. Because of the limited structural spans, most openings are smaller and rectilinear.

#### **Materials**

The predominant use of wood clapboard and shingle siding is another important feature in the

district. Building materials of new structures and additions to existing structures should contribute to this visual continuity of the neighborhood by reflecting the scale and texture of traditional materials. While new materials may be considered, they should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity.

#### **Architectural Details**

Entries are clearly defined on most structures in the neighborhood. Porches, porticos and stoops are elements that typically define entries. These features add a one-story element to the fronts of buildings, helping to establish a uniform sense of human scale along the block. They are essential elements of the neighborhood that should be maintained. Other architectural details also contribute to the sense of character of the street, adding visual interest for pedestrians. Their continued use is strongly encouraged.

#### **Windows & Doors**

The similarity of window and door size and location contributes to a sense of visual continuity along the street. In order to maintain this sense of visual continuity, a new building should maintain the basic window and door proportions and placement patterns seen traditionally in the district.

## **Context & Orientation**

### **CN.1 Respect the traditional settlement patterns of the Oak Street area.**

- Site a new building in a way similar to traditional buildings in the area. This includes consideration of building setbacks, entry orientation and open space.

### **CN.2 Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines, similar to that of traditional building orientations.**

- The front of a primary structure shall be oriented to the street.

### **CN.3 Orient a primary entrance toward the street.**

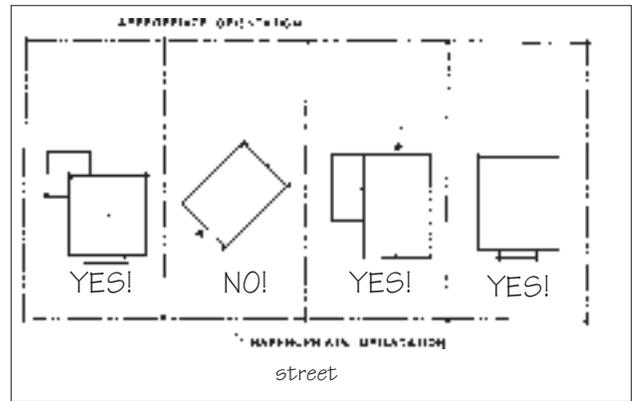
- Buildings shall have a clearly defined primary entrance. For a residential style buildings this shall be a front porch, portico or stoop.
- Do not orient a primary entrance to an interior court.
- Providing a secondary public entrance from the side or rear, is also encouraged on larger buildings.

### **CN.4 Keep the front setback of a new structure in line with the range of residential buildings seen traditionally.**

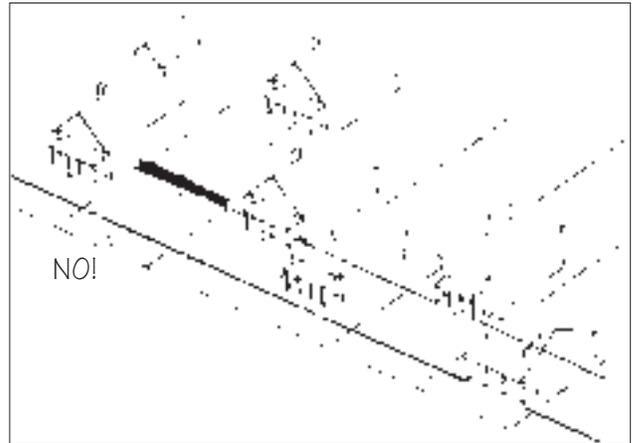
### **CN.5 Maintain similar side yard setbacks of a new structure or an addition to those seen traditionally along the street.**

### **CN.6 Retain the character of the alley as a part of the original town grid.**

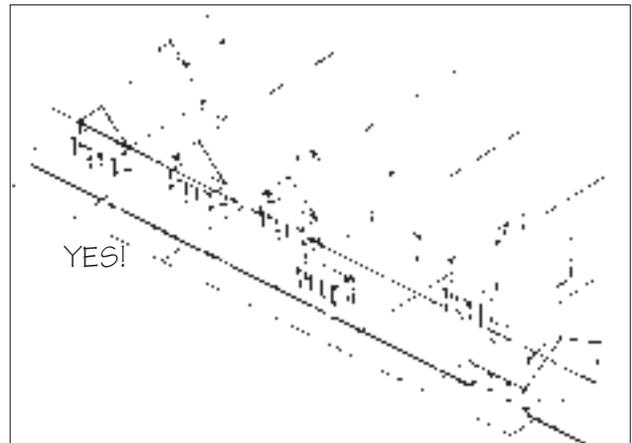
- Maintain the alley as an open space.
- Alleys also may be used as pedestrian ways.



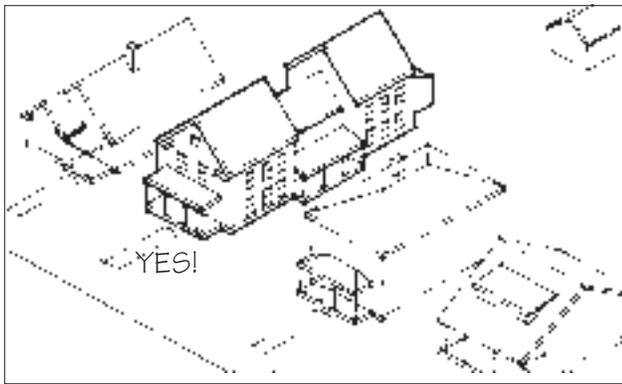
*Orient a building parallel to its lot lines.*



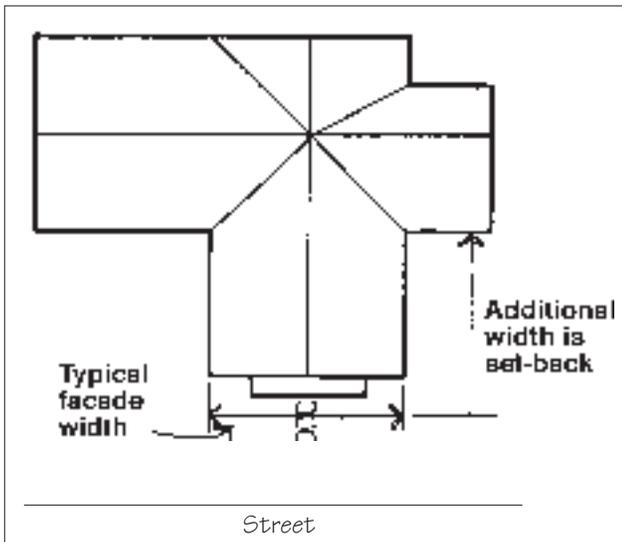
*Inappropriate: Although this building has placed a fence in the typical setback range, the building is set back too far from the street.*



*Appropriate: When constructing a new building, locate it to fit within the range of yard dimensions seen in the block.*



Divide the building into “modules” that express traditional single family house dimensions.



A building module should reflect a typical residential facade width. A typical building module shall not exceed 40 feet in width.



Keep window and door openings similar to those found on traditional residential buildings on Oak Street.

## Site

### CN.7 Maintain the traditional material and position of sidewalks.

- Historically, sidewalks were detached from the curb, and separated by a planting strip.

### CN.8 Provide a walk to the primary building entry from the public-right-of-way.

## Positive Open Space

### CN.9 Develop outdoor open space that promotes pedestrian activity.

- Courtyards shall be accessible and visible from the public way and be designed for public uses.
- The development of first and second floor rooftop-deck is encouraged.
- A sunken plaza on the street side is inappropriate.

## Building Mass and Scale

### CN.10 Maintain the average perceived building scale from the public right-of-way.

- Floor-to-floor heights shall appear to be similar to those seen traditionally. First floor heights measured from floor plate to floor plate were typically 8 to 10 feet high.
- In particular, the windows in new construction shall appear similar in height and proportion to those seen traditionally.

### CN.11 Divide larger buildings into “modules” that maintain the traditional residential building scale.

- Divide the building into “modules” that express traditional single family house dimensions.
- A typical building module shall not exceed 40 feet in width. The building module should be expressed with at least one of the following:
  - A set back in wall planes, a minimum of 12 feet,
  - A change in primary facade material for the extent of the building module.
- The division into modules should be expressed three-dimensionally.
  - Provide a change in roof line that is consistent with the change in wall planes.

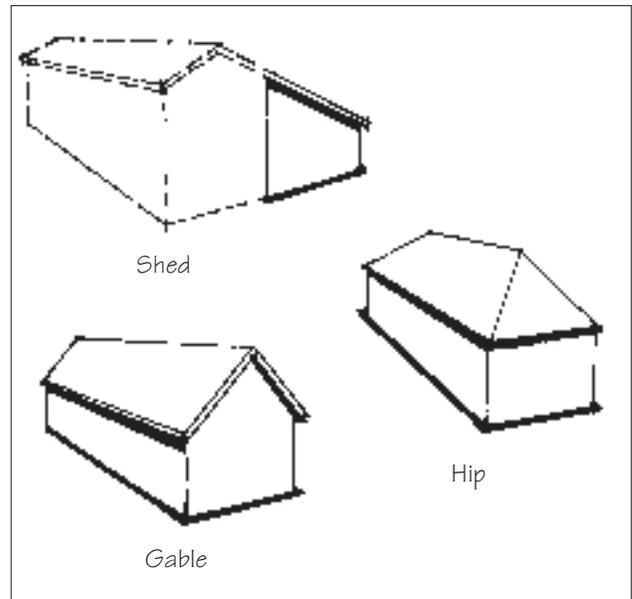
**CN.12 Along a rear facade, using building forms that step down in scale toward the alley is encouraged on the north side of Oak.**

- Step down the principal building to one-story height in order to reduce the perceived scale.
- Use projecting roofs at the ground floor over entrances, decks and for separate utility structures in order to establish a human scale that invites pedestrian activity.

***Building Form***

**CN.13 Use sloping roof forms that are similar to those used traditionally.**

- Use gable, hip or shed roof forms on the primary building form. Flat roofs may be provided on secondary building elements.



*Use sloping roof forms that are similar to those used traditionally.*

***Alley Facades***

**CN.14 Develop alley facades to create visual interest.**

- Use varied building setbacks and changes in materials to create interest and reduce perceived scale.
- Balconies, court yards and decks are also encouraged.
- Providing secondary public entrances is strongly encouraged along alleys. These shall be covered or protected and clearly intended for public use, but subordinate in detail to the primary entrance that faces the street.

***Building Materials***

**CN.15 Use building materials that are similar to those used traditionally.**

- Materials that are appropriate are painted wood clapboard, brick, stone and stucco.
- New products that convey a scale, finish and character similar to traditional materials may be considered.
- A large featureless surface or panelized products that lack a sense of scale are prohibited.



*Porches shall appear similar to those seen traditionally.*



*Minimize the amount of paved surface by using tire tracks or modular paving materials, for example.*

**CN.16 Use roofing materials that are similar in appearance to those seen traditionally.**

- Standing seam metal roof materials are appropriate for most buildings. They should be earth tones and have a matte, non-reflective finish. Seams should be of a low profile.
- Composition or concrete shingle is also appropriate.

***Porches and Awnings***

**CN.17 When converting a building to another use, preserve the traditional location and character of the porch and primary entrance.**

**CN.18 The use of a front porch shall be strongly encouraged and shall appear similar to those seen traditionally.**

- The porch floor and roof height shall appear similar to those seen traditionally on the block.
- Use similar building design elements and materials as those seen traditionally.

**CN.19 The front porch shall be "functional," in that it is used as a means of access to the entry.**

- A front porch shall be covered with a roof.

**CN.20 The use of an awning may be considered.**

- Avoid exotic forms that are not traditionally found in the commercial core area of Steamboat Springs.
- Coordinate the color of the awning with the color scheme for the entire building.
- Operable fabric awnings are appropriate.
- Installing lighting in awnings so they effectively act as an internally lit sign is inappropriate.

## ***Accessory Structures***

### **CN.21 Preserve historically significant alley structures when feasible.**

- Incentives for preservation may be available. Consult with the Town's preservation specialist.

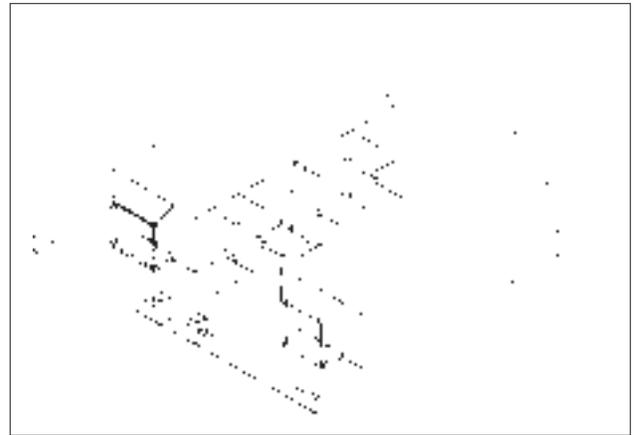
### **CN.22 Locate a new accessory structure in a manner that is similar to those seen traditionally in the district.**

- Place it along the alley edge or to the rear of the primary structure.

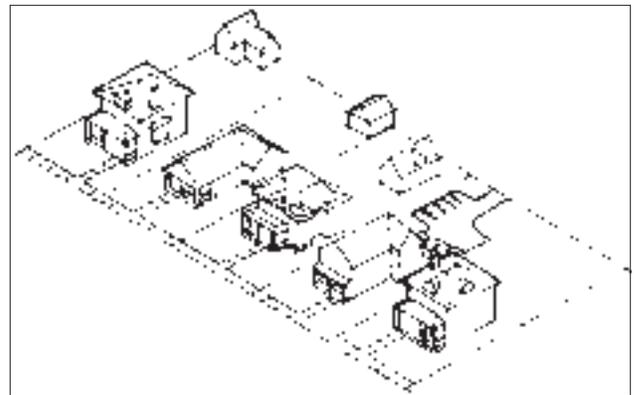
## ***Driveways & Parking***

### **CN.23 Parking areas shall not be visually obtrusive.**

- Locate parking areas to the rear of the property, when physical conditions permit.
- An alley should serve as the primary access to parking when physical conditions permit.
- Parking areas should not be located in the front yard.
- Where a parking area abuts a public sidewalk or street, provide one or more of the following buffers:
  - A landscaped strip or planter that is a minimum of 5' in depth, and is planted with a combination of trees and shrubs,
  - a fence (4' max. height),
  - planter (3' max. height, 3' min. wide),
  - hedge or
  - site wall (4' max. height) that has a decorative finish and details.
- Materials for site walls and planters shall be masonry, with a matte finish and earth tone color. Appropriate materials are:
  - rough cut (ashlar) stone,
  - river rock,
  - textured concrete block,
  - textured formed concrete and
  - brick.
- Divide large parking lots with planting areas.
- Automobile headlight illumination from parking areas shall be screened from adjacent lots and the street.



*For multifamily structures, there shall be at least one primary entrance that is marked by a street-facing porch or other entry element.*



*An alley should serve as the primary access to parking when physical conditions permit.*

**CN.24 Design a new driveway in a manner that minimizes its visual impact.**

- A new driveway shall be located off the alley or side street.
- Plan parking areas and driveways in a manner that utilizes existing access from the street.
- Share a driveway with an adjacent property when feasible.
- Minimize the amount of paved surface by using tire tracks or modular paving materials, for example.

**CN.25 Use a paving material that will distinguish the driveway from the street.**

- Using a change in material, paving pattern or texture will help to differentiate the driveway from the street.
- Porous paving materials will also help to absorb potential water runoff typically associated with impervious surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

***Site Lighting***

**CN.26 Minimize the visual impacts of building lighting.**

- Wall mounted light fixtures shall not extend above the height of the wall to which they are mounted.
- Blinking, flashing lights and exposed strip lighting used to illuminate building facades or to outline buildings are prohibited. (Exception: Temporary decorative lights may be allowed for up to an eight-week period during the calendar year.)

**CN.27 Canopies and awnings shall not be illuminated.**

- Internally illuminated awnings are prohibited.
- Lights shall not be mounted on the tops, sides or fascias of canopies and awnings.
- Luminaires shall be recessed into any canopy structure that is designated for pedestrian use, loading or service, unless a suitable alternative that will minimize impacts is approved.

## ***Signs***

### **CN.28 Consider the building front as part of the overall sign program.**

- A sign shall be in scale and proportion to the building, such that it does not dominate the appearance.
- Coordinate a sign within the overall facade composition. Locate it where it will emphasize design elements of the building facade.

### **CN.29 Indirect lighting is preferred for a sign.**

- Indirect lighting (i.e., that which is directed at a sign from an external, shielded lamp) is preferred.
- A warm light similar to daylight is preferred.

### **CN.30 A window sign may be considered**

- A window sign may be painted on or applied to a window or it may be located to hang just inside the window.

### **CN.31 Using a symbol sign is encouraged.**

- A symbol sign adds interest to the street, can be read quickly and is remembered better than written words.

### **CN.32 Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the primary building facade.**

- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs.
- Highly reflective materials that would be difficult to read are inappropriate.

### **CN.33 A directory sign may be considered.**

- Group small, individual signs on a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.

### **CN.34 A simple sign design is preferred.**

- Use colors for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.
- Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area traditionally are encouraged.

**CN.35 A pole-mounted sign may be considered.**

- The sign area shall not exceed 20 square feet per face.

**CN.36 A monument sign may be considered.**

- The sign area shall not exceed 20 square feet per face.

***Mechanical Equipment & Service Areas***

**CN.37 Minimize the visual impacts of service areas as seen from the street.**

- For properties which are adjacent to an alley, dumpsters shall be located along the alley.
- When it is feasible, screen service areas from view, especially those associated with commercial and multifamily developments.
- This includes locations for trash containers and loading docks.

**CN.38 Minimize the visual impacts of mechanical equipment as seen from the public way.**

- Screen mechanical equipment from view. Screen ground-mounted units with fences, stone walls or hedges. Where rooftop units are visible, provide screening with materials that are compatible with those of the building itself. Avoid locating window air conditioning units in the primary facade.
- Use low-profile mechanical units on rooftops so they will not be visible from the street or alley. Also minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes. Use smaller satellite dishes and mount them low to the ground and away from front yards, significant building facades or highly visible roof planes.
- Use muted colors on telecommunications and mechanical equipment that will minimize their appearance by blending with their backgrounds.