

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**Meeting Date:** November 7, 2019

**Subject:** Study Session for New Mixed-Use Development at 343 Main Street

**Prepared by:** Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner

**Initiated by:** Ivan Margaretic, Applicant

**Attachments:**

- A. Area, Vicinity and Notification Maps
- B. Downtown Core District Downtown Design Guidelines
- C. Downtown Vision Plan
- D. Architectural Design Plans

**Recommendation:**

Provide architectural and site design review input to the applicant and staff

**Environmental Review:**

It is anticipated that this project will be categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it is an in-fill development on a site that is under five-acres in size. A more detailed analysis will be conducted prior to formal Planning Commission review. Since this is a discussion item and no formal action will be taken, this study session is covered by the general rule at Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA guidelines. The study session is exempt from CEQA because this discussion will not have a significant effect on the environment.

**Project Description:**

This is a design review study session for a new mixed-use development at 343 Main Street. The proposal includes 1,925 square feet of commercial area and a 498 square-foot carport at the first story, and a 2,118 square-foot two-bedroom condominium unit at the second story. The existing site includes a 1,875 square-foot one-story commercial building to be demolished with no on-site parking.

The following tables summarizes the project’s technical details:

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Downtown Commercial  
**ZONING:** CD (Commercial Downtown)  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 4,517 square feet (0.10 acres)  
**MATERIALS:** Flat roof, stucco and tile siding, aluminum clad wood windows and French doors, precast stone cornice and trim, and wrought iron decorative railings

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Required/Allowed</b>
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front (First Street)	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Rear (alley)	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Exterior side (Lyell Street)	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Interior side	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>			
Top of roof deck	18.5 feet	27.75 feet	35 feet
<b>PARKING:</b>	0 spaces	2 spaces	2 spaces
<b>DENSITY:</b>	-	1 unit (9.6 du/ac)	N/A <sup>1</sup>

## Background

### General Plan

The City’s General Plan provides goals and polices for new development in the Downtown area in a number of different elements. The Land Use Element identifies Downtown as a special planning area with a goal to allow for intensification of development within the Downtown Core in-keeping with the existing character of the area. The specific policies to support this goal include:

- Encourage residential development above the ground floor that includes affordable housing units.
- Consider zoning code incentives to encourage mixed-use development.
- Continue to review development plans to ensure compliance with the Downtown Design Plan.

The Community Design and Historic Resources Element includes a goal to increase the appeal of Downtown to pedestrians and shoppers. Specific policies that support this goal include:

- Retain and enhance the small-town village atmosphere throughout the Downtown.
- Encourage the maintenance, upgrading, and new design of building exteriors, signs, passageways, and streetscape elements that enhance the pedestrian experience, reflect quality

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<sup>1</sup> The CD District does not have a maximum permitted residential density.

design, present a diversity of appearances, and contribute to the architectural and historical interest of the village.

- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle-oriented design in the Downtown.
- Continue to encourage the creative and safe incorporation of street furniture and hardscape into the design of public rights-of-way.
- Encourage the development of affordable housing above the ground floor throughout the Downtown.

The Housing Element also has a number of goals and policies that support and encourage the production of new housing units and below market rate units.

#### Design Review

In order to preserve and protect the City's character and public safety, and enhance the aesthetic qualities and bicycle and pedestrian safety and functionality of its zone districts, design review approval is required for all new development. Specifically, the Planning Commission must make the following findings:

- The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the general plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area;
- The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design;
- Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies;
- Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors have been used in a manner that serves to reduce the perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area.
- Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage;
- Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions;
- Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing; and
- Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

#### Zoning Design Controls

In addition to the general required Design Review findings, the CD District includes specific Design Controls (Section 14.44.130) for all new development as follows:

- Reduction of apparent size and bulk:
  - As a general principle, building surfaces should be relieved with a change of wall plane that provides strong shadow and visual interest.
  - Every building over seventy-five (75) feet wide should have its perceived height and bulk reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components by:
    - A change of plane;
    - A projection or recess;
    - Varying cornice or roof lines;
    - Other similar means.
  - The proportions of building elements, especially those at ground level, should be kept close to human scale by using recesses, courtyards, entries, or outdoor spaces along the perimeter of the building to define the underlying fifty-foot front lot frontage.
  - Rooftop equipment shall be concealed from view and/or integrated within the architecture of the building.
  - Windows should be inset generously from the building wall to create shade and shadow detail; the minimum inset shall be three inches.
- The primary access for all buildings shall be directly to the street.
- Consideration should be given to the relationship of the project and its location in the downtown to the implementation of goals and objectives of the downtown urban design plan, reevaluation of design approval shall consider one or more of the following factors:
  - The project location as an entry, edge, or core site;
  - The ability to contribute to the creation of open space on-site or in designated areas;
  - Enhancement of the pedestrian environment through the use of pathways, plantings, trees, paving, benches or other amenities;
  - Building facade improvements including, paint, signage, service areas, windows and other features;
  - On-site or off-site parking improvements;
  - Public or private landscape improvements.
- Opaque, reflective, or dark tinted glass should not be used on the ground floor elevation. With the exception of ground floor residential units, sixty (60) percent of the ground floor elevation should be transparent window surface.
- Courtyards should be partially visible from the street or linked to the street by a clear circulation element such as an open passage or covered arcade.
- Rooftop mechanical, venting, and/or exhausting equipment must be within the height limit and screened architecturally from public view, including views from adjacent buildings located at the same level.

#### Downtown Design Guidelines

In addition to the required Design Review findings and the CD District Design Controls, the Downtown Design Guidelines provide criteria and requirements for all new projects proposed in the Downtown Triangle. This site is located in the area defined by the Guidelines as the Downtown Core District. For this area, recommended guidelines for new development include designing to maintain

the village scale and character, designing structures to be compatible with adjacent existing buildings, designing for diversity with sensitivity to adjacent development, designing with architectural integrity, minimizing the visual impact of parking, and providing pedestrian amenities. The Downtown Core District section of the Downtown Design Guidelines is included as Attachment B.

#### Downtown Vision Plan

The Downtown Vision Plan (Vision) is a community-based effort to provide the Los Altos community with a vision for the future of the Downtown Triangle to guide growth and development over the next 20 years. For this area, it is recommended that future development within Downtown should respect its existing character and scale; reflect the similar variety, patterns, and arrangements of existing buildings; break up larger buildings into smaller segments or forms; relate the upper stories to the street front; vary roof parapet heights and detailing; create storefronts that are scaled to the pedestrian; and diversify entries through vestibules, recesses, signage, and landscaping. The Downtown Vision Plan is included as Attachment C.

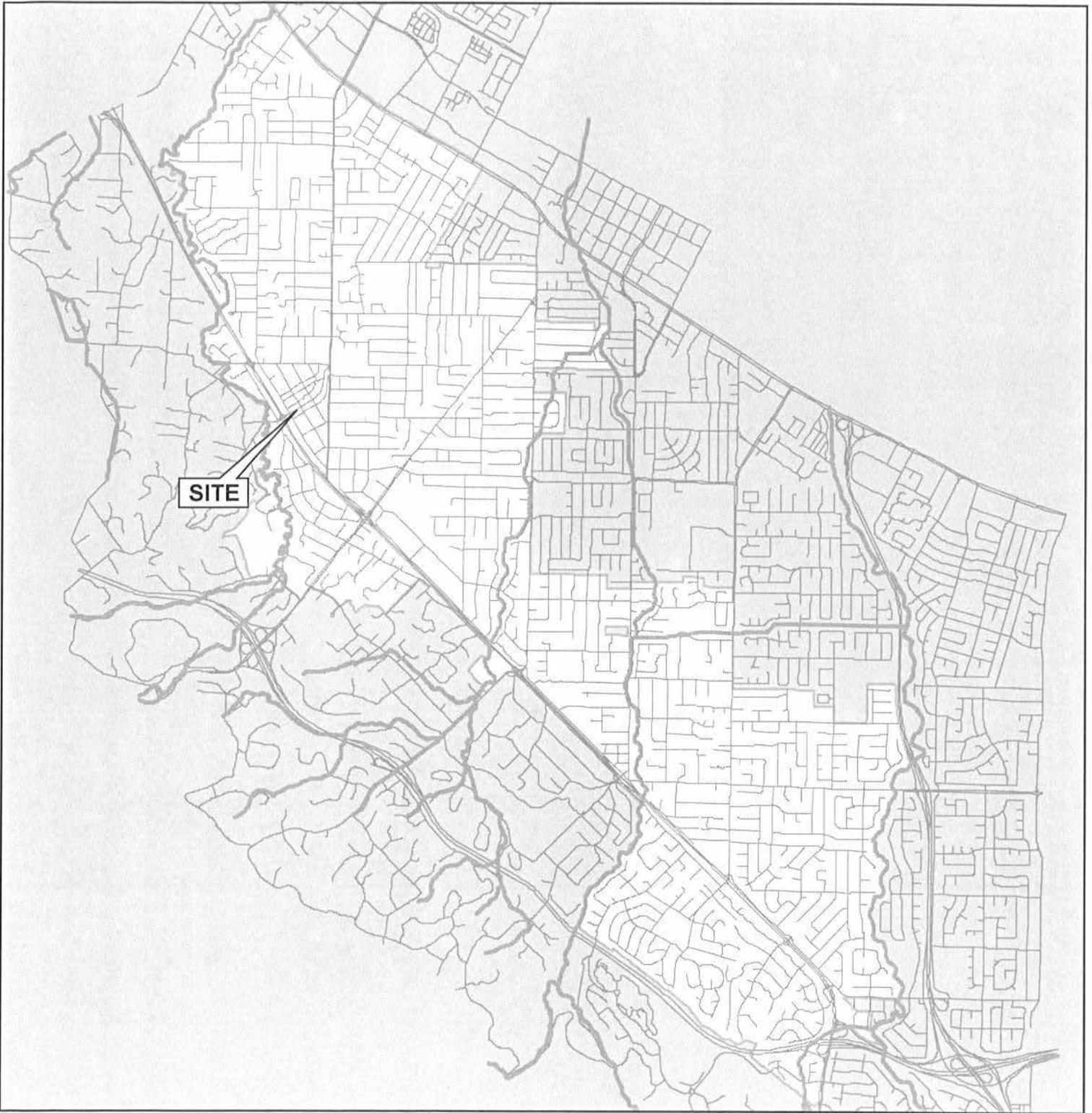
#### **Discussion/Analysis**

This is a pre-application study session and the goal is for the Commission to provide early input to the applicant and staff on the proposed development. Since this is a preliminary review, the Commission should focus on the architecture and site design aspects of the project. In addition to providing feedback on how well the project complies with the General Plan, Zoning Code and Downtown Design Guidelines, the Commission should weigh in on the following policy questions:

- Does the architectural design of the project along Main street frontage create a project that is well-articulated and reduces the appearance of bulk and height?
- Is the architectural design compatible with adjacent existing buildings?
- Are the proportions of building elements, especially those at ground level, kept close to human scale?
- Are the proposed exterior materials and finishes integral to the project's architectural design and do they convey a sense of quality, integrity, permanence and durability?

Next steps for the project include submittal of a formal development application, staff review for technical completeness, environmental review and a public meeting before the Complete Streets Commission. When the application comes back to the Planning Commission for formal review and consideration, it will include all requirements outlined in the City's submittal requirements, which include a density bonus report, photo renderings, a 3D model and appropriate technical reports (traffic, acoustical, etc.). Story poles will also be installed on the project site.

# AREA MAP



## CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 18-PPR-09  
**APPLICANT:** Ivan Margaretic/ Anka Margaretic  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 343 Main Street

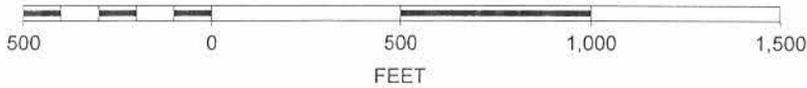


Not to Scale

# VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS**

**APPLICATION:** 18-PPR-09  
**APPLICANT:** Ivan Margaretic/ Anka Margaretic  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 343 Main Street

# 343 Main Street 500-foot Notification Map

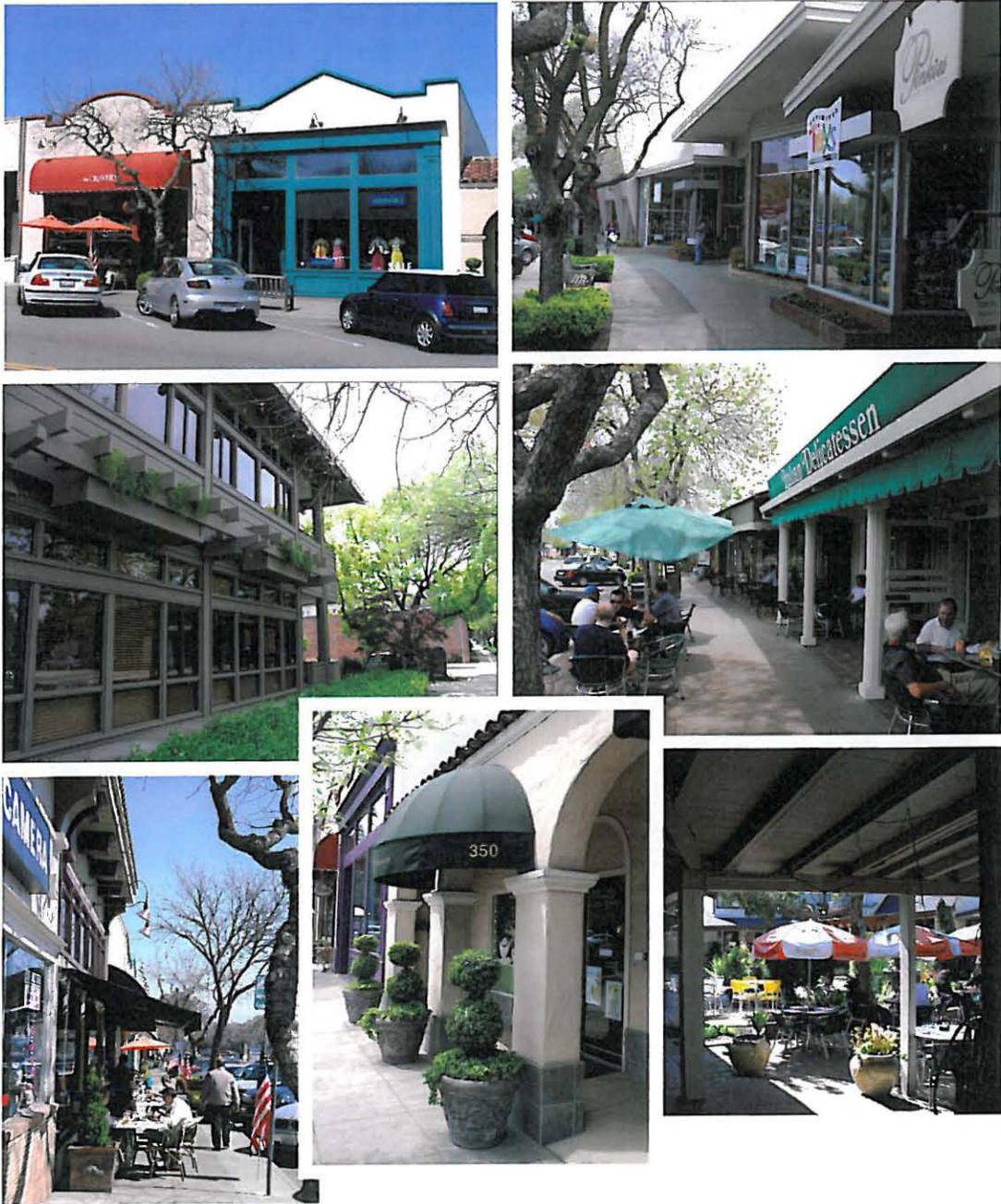


SCALE 1 : 3,000



# Downtown Design Guidelines

## City of Los Altos



Adopted  
December 8, 2009

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## DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

The Downtown Core District is the very heart of the downtown. It contains a wide diversity of retail and other uses, all contained within a strongly pedestrian-oriented environment. The size of the area makes parking once and visiting multiple stores relatively easy. And, street frontages are visually interesting. Individual buildings and shops have unique personalities, and a great deal of attention has been given to landscaping within both the public and private realms.

The goal of these design guidelines is to retain and enhance the uniqueness of the district, and to integrate changes to individual parcels into the fabric of the area – including parcels and buildings, which by historic standards, may be somewhat larger than the current pattern.

### 3.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The compactness of the Downtown Core is such that it lends itself well to parking once, and walking to multiple destinations. For that to be successful, the pedestrian experience at every point from getting out of one's car to moving throughout the downtown must be a pleasant one with clarity of organization and delight to the eye and senses.

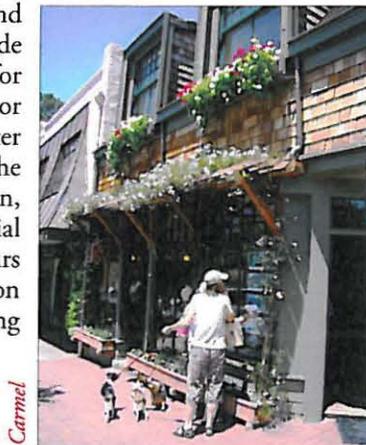
The creation of a successful pedestrian environment is a joint public-private effort. The guidelines below address the major contributors to the creation of a village scale and character.

#### 3.1.1 Provide uses and activities to enhance and complement the Downtown environment

Uses and activities do not normally fall within the purview of design guidelines. However, they are often critical to the success of individual projects and the downtown as a whole. The following are guidelines for the early planning stages of projects within the Downtown Core District.

##### a) Explore opportunities for office and residential uses on the second floor.

Second floor office and residential uses provide valuable support for downtown ground floor uses as well as a greater sense of place for the downtown. In addition, they have the potential for extending the hours of downtown utilization beyond normal retailing hours.



### REQUIRED FINDINGS

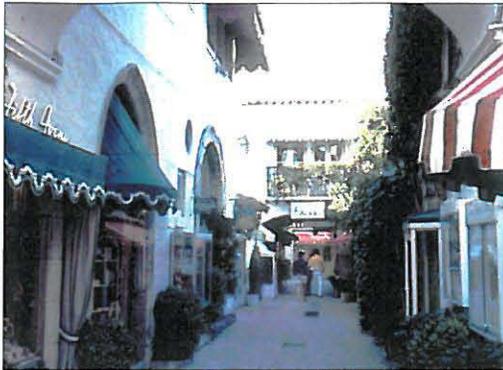
**For any commercial project in the city to receive design review approval, the Planning Commission must be able to make the following findings:**

1. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines, and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
2. The proposal has architectural integrity, and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
3. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
4. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.
5. Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.
6. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
7. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view, and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material, and detailing.
8. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**

*Santa Barbara*



*Courtyards and paseos can increase downtown vitality and economic success through development intensity and tenant variety.*

*Santa Barbara*



*Valencia*



*Clusters of varied dining opportunities can create a distinctive sense of place and an enhanced street environment after normal working hours.*

*Valencia*



*Outdoor dining is strongly encouraged.*

**b) Explore opportunities for additional tenants through the use of courtyards and paseos.**

Current uses are largely contained within one-story structures, often containing only a single tenant. Opportunities for additional retail, service commercial and office tenants, in courtyards or along paseos, abound. They can be especially useful for deep parcels where primary tenants do not need the full depth of the lot. Their use could enhance individual property utilization while supplying additional foot traffic to support other downtown uses. Existing paseos and courtyards should be preserved. Arbors and trellises are encouraged in paseos and courtyards (see example below).

*Irvine*



**Guidelines for Courtyards:**

- Enclose on at least two sides by buildings.
- Remain open to the sky.  
(Arbors and trellises are allowed.)
- Minimum width: 20 feet.
- Minimum area: 400 square feet.

**Guidelines for Paseos:**

- Minimum width: 10 feet for through-block paseos.  
4 feet for entries to courtyards or individual single businesses.
- Courtyards along the paseo are encouraged.

**c) Explore opportunities for active evening uses.**

Consider nearby uses when planning for property design changes. There may be opportunities for adding to an existing cluster of after-hours uses with outdoor dining or complementary uses (e.g., bookstore for browsing near restaurants or coffee houses).

**3.1.2 Design landscaping and open space to enhance the Downtown Village Character**

Downtown open spaces and landscaping are as much responsible for the area's uniqueness as are the buildings. They provide the framework to unify an otherwise potentially chaotic collection of eclectic building designs into a strong sense of place. Some of the main features of Downtown's open space and landscape system include:

- Continuous pedestrian links between uses and between parking and storefront clusters

- Separations between pedestrians and automobiles
- Quiet and intimate open spaces off of main walkway areas
- Varied paving colors and textures
- Multiple and varied pedestrian amenities
- Sheltering Chinese Pistache trees along pedestrian paths
- Individualized landscaping at storefronts and shop entries
- Landscaping with seasonal blooms
- An overall sense of informality and variety

a) **Design storefronts and building walls along pedestrian frontages to accommodate special paving and landscaping.**



Carmel

*Use abundant landscaping to emphasize storefront entries.*



Los Altos

*Use landscaping to soften side walls along pedestrian walks.*



Carmel

*Use special textured paving in open space areas to separate them from high traffic sidewalks and to provide a human scale.*

b) **Utilize textured paving in all paving areas adjacent to the public sidewalks.**

Brick pavers and other modular units are ideal in providing a color and scale change to open space areas that are linked to or adjacent to sidewalk areas. They complement the smaller scale size of the areas, and assist in reinforcing the village scale of the downtown. One example is shown in the photograph to the upper right. Exposed aggregate concrete with brick or wood dividers, or permeable paving, are other acceptable alternatives. Avoid plain or colored concrete paving with scored joints. While less expensive than hand-placed pavers, it lacks the necessary visual quality to enhance the village character.



Carmel

c) **Enhance tree wells with landscaping.**

Planting strips and pockets are effective in adding visual interest to sidewalks and open spaces, and serve well in separating pedestrians from adjacent traffic and parked cars. They also provide infiltration areas for stormwater runoff. Flowering plants or ones with distinctive forms and colors, as shown in the examples to the right, are especially appropriate.



Los Altos

*Landscaped tree wells and planter strips are the desired approach to separating pedestrians and cars.*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**



Carmel

*Courtyard and paseo treatment should be equal in quality and detail to the primary street frontages.*



Santa Barbara



Santa Barbara

*Incorporate fountains and other forms of public art into courtyards, paseos and other open spaces.*

**d) Design courtyards and paseos to invite pedestrian use and enhance adjacent uses.**

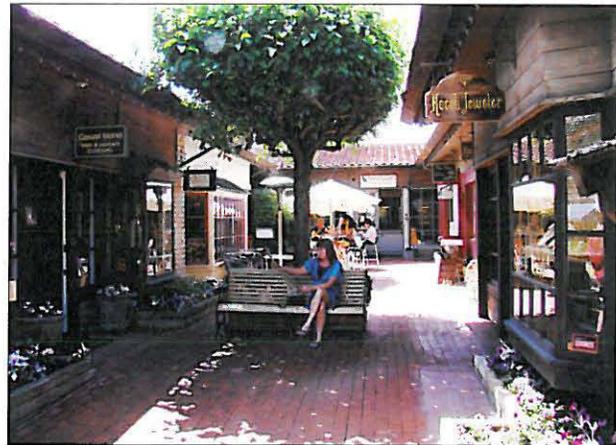
Landscaping, pedestrian amenities, storefront treatments and signage in courtyards and paseos should be equal in quality and detail to the primary street frontages. One example is shown to the left.

**e) Seek opportunities to incorporate fountains and public art into open spaces.**

Fountains and other forms of public art add uniqueness to the downtown pedestrian environment, increase the attractiveness of the area to a wide range of tenants, and encourage longer shopping stays.

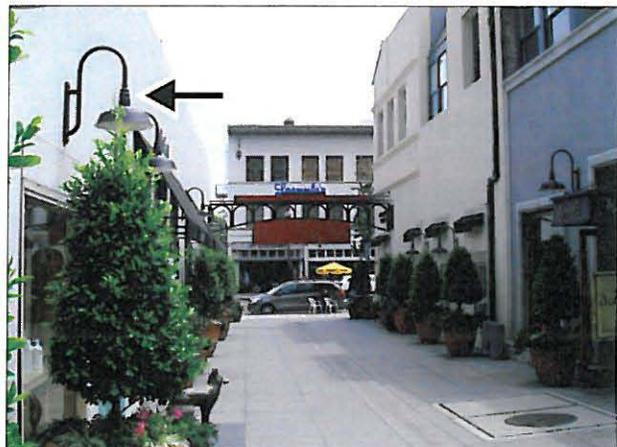
**f) Provide abundant pedestrian amenities.**

Benches and other places to sit, shade from the sun, and other amenities also encourage shoppers to linger and extend their time downtown. These amenities should be supportive of the desired village character and scale. Selection of natural materials, like wood, and high quality metal of a traditional design, rather than concrete, are most likely to be successful. Planter edges can also serve to provide convenient seating near shop fronts.



Carmel

**g) Integrate pedestrian scale lighting into the landscape of open spaces.**



Pasadena

### 3.1.3 Design pedestrian and vehicle crossing points with attention to pedestrian safety

Ingress and egress points for parking lots and parking structures as well as pedestrian crosswalks are potential areas of pedestrian and vehicular movement conflicts.

**a) Provide visual clues to alert drivers that pedestrians have the right of way.**

- Provide special paving textures and/or colors for pedestrian crossings at intersections and parking areas.
- Provide special signage where driver visibility of crossing pedestrians might be limited.

**b) Avoid landscaping and other obstructions that could limit views of traffic and pedestrians at crossing points.**

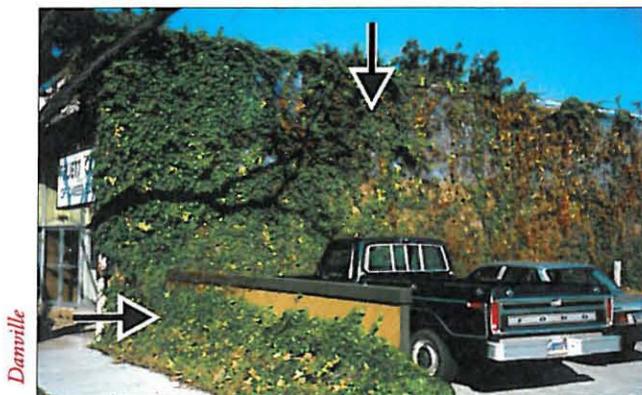
- Keep landscaping below driver eye height.
- Avoid trees and signs that might block drivers' views of pedestrians about to cross their path.

### 3.1.4 Locate and design trash enclosures and private parking areas to be inconspicuous and enhance the visual environment

Adequate parking and trash disposal areas are essential to the success of the downtown. However, accommodating them must be accomplished in a manner that is inconspicuous and enhances the area's village scale and character.

**a) Improve existing private parking lots when conversion to usable commercial space is not possible.**

- Provide low walls and landscaping for parking spaces adjacent to streets and pedestrian ways.
- Soften walls with vine and/or tree landscaping. Two examples are shown below.



*Use low walls to screen the view of cars from adjacent sidewalks and landscaping to soften blank walls.*



*Use trees and architectural features to buffer walls at parking and service areas.*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

3

*Pleasanton*



**b) Integrate trash enclosures into the building.**

- Provide interior trash rooms whenever possible.
- Where trash enclosures are adjacent to buildings, match the trash enclosure building materials, details and colors to those of the building (See examples on page 36).
- Where integration into the building is not possible, provide upgraded trash enclosures with finished and durable materials as well as buffering landscaping. Avoid exposed concrete block unless enhanced split face block textures and colors are utilized, block joints are visually minimized with colored mortar, and extensive vine landscaping is provided to soften the walls' appearance. Three examples are shown below and to the left.

*Mountain View*



*Valencia*



### 3.2 ARCHITECTURE

Downtown Los Altos contains an eclectic mix of architectural styles and forms, indicative of its growth over many decades. While there are individual buildings of architectural merit, the character of downtown owes more to the wide stylistic variety, small scale, and visual richness of its structures than to their architectural distinction. In the future, the emphasis will be on combining individual architectural excellence with building forms and details that reinforce the small scale village character of the Downtown Core District. A diversity of design styles will be encouraged and expected.

Over time, the downtown retail core has evolved as an area with substantial pedestrian/retail continuity and an emphasis upon an expression of the unique personalities of its individual businesses. The following design guidelines are intended to reinforce that existing framework, scale and character.

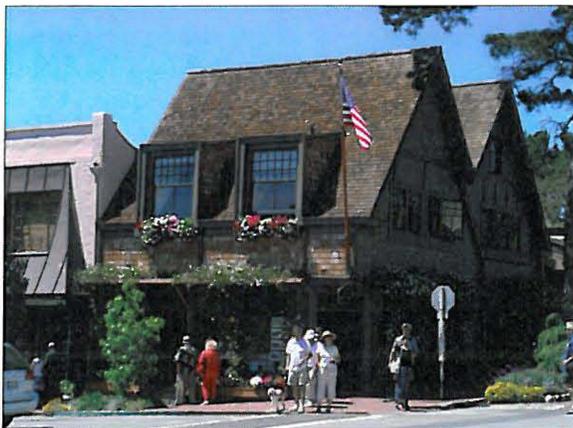
#### 3.2.1 Continue the pattern and scale established by existing buildings

- a) **Maintain and reinforce the underlying downtown 25-foot module along all street frontages. Some techniques for this emphasis include the following:**



Los Altos

*Changing roof parapet height and/or shape.*



Carmel

*Utilizing different building heights, architectural styles, and forms.*

#### ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

These guidelines are not intended to establish or dictate a specific style beyond the desire to maintain Downtown Los Altos' small town character and attention to human scale and detail. In general, diverse and traditional architectural styles that have stood the test of time are preferred.

Designs merely repeated from other cities or without thought to the special qualities of Los Altos are strongly discouraged, and unlikely to be accepted.

#### CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE

The City will work with applicants to adapt critical functional features of prototype plans to their Los Altos sites, but will not accept standard plans, building forms, elevations, materials, or colors that do not relate to the site, adjacent development, or Los Altos' community character.

Applicants are encouraged to meet early in the process with the City's Planning Services Department staff to discuss their plans and building prototypes.

#### SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The City of Los Altos supports sustainable design in the construction of new facilities and the remodeling of existing buildings. Applicants are expected to utilize creativity in adapting sustainable design elements to the unique qualities of Downtown Los Altos' visual environment. City staff will work closely with applicants to achieve this goal.

Special attention will be expected of all applicants in the following areas:

- Use of energy efficient HVAC systems
- Use of solar energy
- Reduction of energy demands through simple techniques such as operable windows and sun control methods
- Minimization of storm water runoff
- Use of recycled materials
- Maximization of insulation and energy efficient lighting

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

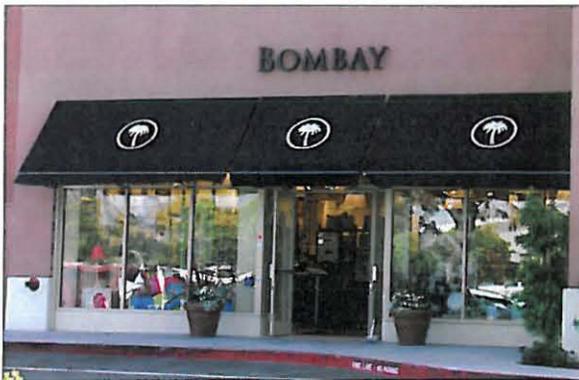
**3**

*Laguna Beach*



*Utilizing different awning forms and/or materials, as shown above and below, matching the predominant building module.*

*Corte Madera*



*Santa Barbara*



*Defining storefronts with projecting piers and emphasizing tenants' unique store personalities.*

*Santa Barbara*



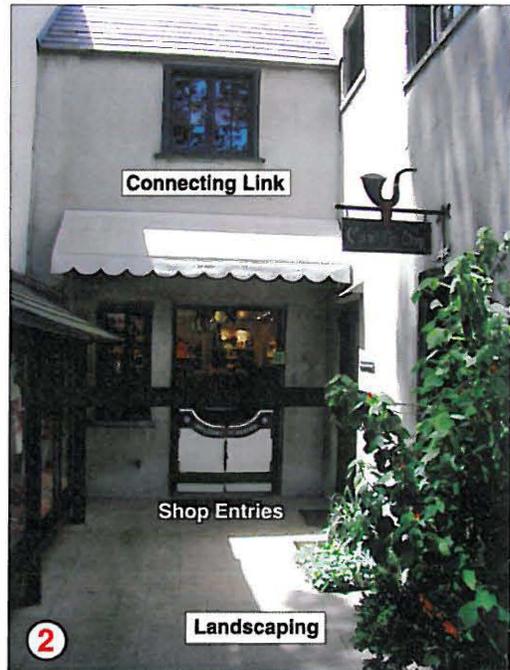
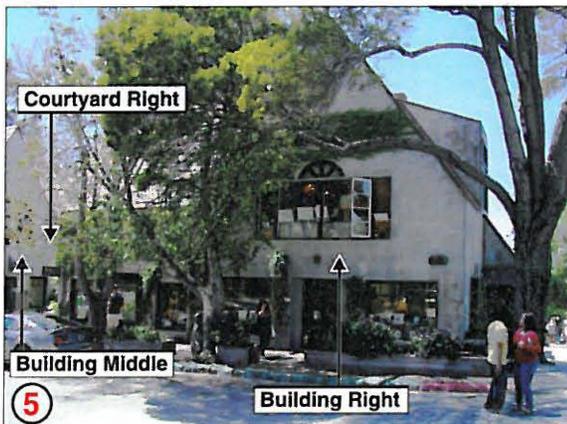
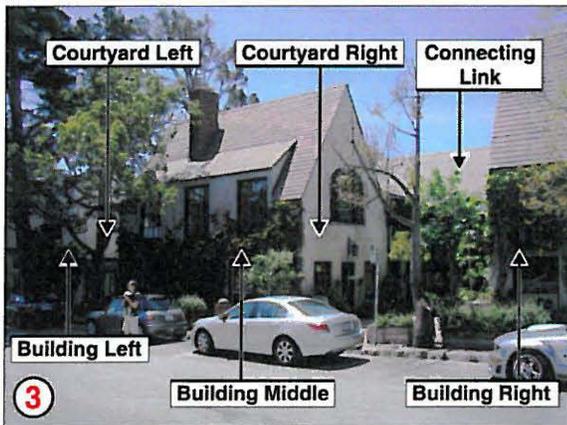
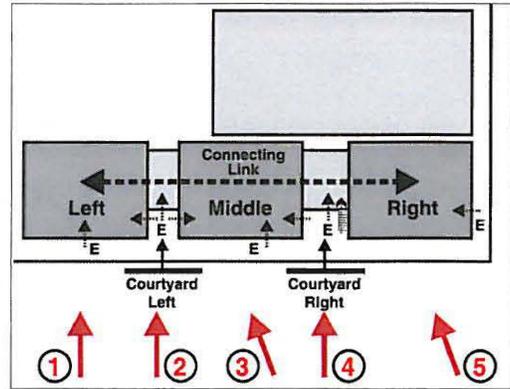
*Changing storefront type and details.*

*Santa Barbara*

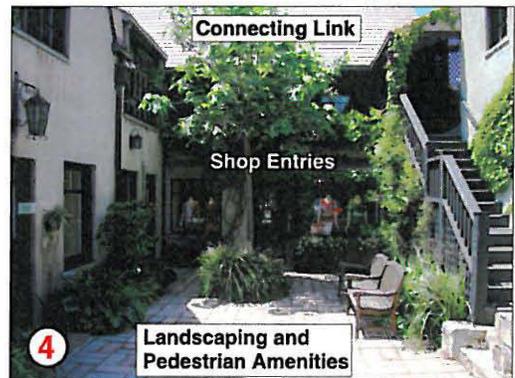


*Reinforcing the module with second floor projections and details.*

- b) **Break larger buildings up into smaller components.**
- Divide longer facades into individual smaller segments with individual design forms and architectural styles. One option is shown on this page. Development incentives may be available.
  - Provide recessed courtyard entries between individualized building segments. These courtyards should be at least 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep with substantial landscaping and pedestrian amenities. These are excellent locations for entries to shops and/or to second floor uses. The example of a larger structure in Carmel which utilized these techniques is shown in the diagram and photos on this page. See also the photo example from Los Gatos at the bottom of page 31.



*Left courtyard features shop entries, display windows, special paving and landscaping.*



*Right courtyard features shop entries, stairs to second floor uses, special paving and landscaping.*

**Differing architectural forms and styles separated by courtyards assist in fitting this large building complex into a village scale.**

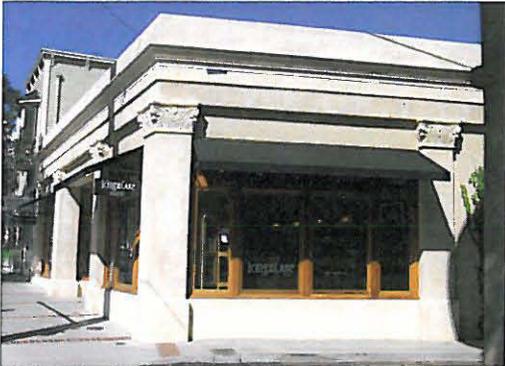
**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**



Los Altos

*Front facades are predominantly display windows and entries.*



Los Altos

*Sidewall display window provides a transition between the primary and secondary frontages.*



Los Altos

*Sidewall piers relate the sidewalk facade to the shop fronts, and landscaping softens the wall.*



Beverly Hills

*These contemporary facades fit into this streetscape due to their small scale, and the use of high quality materials and crisp detailing.*

**c) Create continuous building frontages.**

- Avoid blank walls along sidewalks and paseos. Display windows and entries should occupy at least 60% of the wall areas on primary frontages. Walls along side streets and paseos may have a lesser amount of glazing, but should have display windows – especially near the primary facade. Other non-glazed wall areas should be enhanced with wall plane changes, landscaping (e.g., landscaped trellises and lattices), and/or special architectural detailing (see example to the left).
- Minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts by locating any driveway or loading areas away from main pedestrian routes.

**3.2.2 Design for diversity with sensitivity to adjacent development**

**a) Select traditional architectural styles.**

- Traditional architectural styles have been developed over an extended period of time, and generally fit comfortably with other traditional styles in a downtown commercial environment. Within the traditional styles of building form and facade organization, however, design creativity is encouraged to adapt the style to current needs and a fresh look. Examples of traditional commercial styles may be found in the resources identified in the sidebar on page 27. Adaptations of traditional residential styles may also be appropriate to the village character of Downtown Los Altos.
- The depth and authenticity of detailing found in traditional architectural styles will best harmonize well with current buildings in Downtown Los Altos. However, well designed modern facade designs may be acceptable, depending on location, materials, and the quality of the details. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples are shown below and to the bottom left.

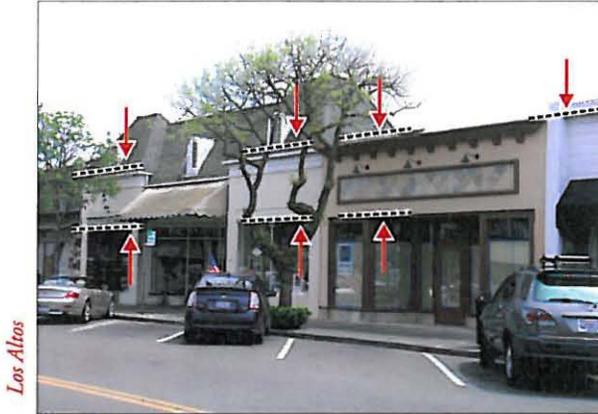


Pasadena

*The warmth of the materials and the variety of smaller scale detailing help this modern facade to fit into a streetscape of diverse architecture.*

b) **Relate the facade designs to adjacent structures.**

- Respect the scale of adjacent buildings.
- Relate the placement of defining elements and details to those on adjacent structures. One example from Downtown Los Altos is shown below.



*Matching parapet and window heights help relate these adjacent buildings.*

c) **Design with architectural integrity and continuity.**

- Exterior details should be authentic to the style. Sources of assistance in understanding traditional architectural design principles and details may be found in the reference sources noted in the sidebar to the right.
- Design buildings as whole units. The design of upper floors and ground level walls, piers and other supporting elements should be designed as a unified whole.
- Preserve historically significant structures, whenever possible. Refer to Appendix B for a list of downtown historic resources.
- Preserve worthy elements of the existing buildings. Recycle and reuse distinctive design elements.
- Where buildings were once architecturally distinctive but have been altered over time, restore the lost integrity of form and details, if possible.



*The upper and lower facades of this building work as one unified structure.*

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND  
DETAILS RESOURCES

- **The Buildings of Main Street:  
A Guide to American Commercial  
Architecture**  
Richard Longstreth  
Rowman Atimira 2000
- **Traditional Construction Patterns:  
Design & Detail Rules of Thumb**  
Stephen A. Mouzon  
McGraw-Hill 2004

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**

Beverly Hills



*Avoid tall entries like the one above in favor of pedestrian scaled entries like the one shown below.*

Los Gatos



**3.2.3 Design to enhance Downtown’s Village Character and pedestrian scale**

**a) Vary storefront treatments.**

A strong feature of Downtown Los Altos’ village character is the variety and individuality of the storefronts.

- Provide significant variations between adjacent storefronts occupied by different businesses, including those within the same building structure. These variations should include display windows, entry doors, awnings and signage. For frontages over twenty-five feet in width with the same tenant, variations should also be provided to avoid long facades of the same storefront design.
- Size store entries to the human figure and normal entry door heights. Avoid over scaled, tall entries such as the one to the above left.
- A wide variety of storefront treatments is desirable. Some may have bulkheads below display windows while others may have larger areas of glass extending to the floor.
- Outdoor dining and operable windows are strongly encouraged for restaurants and cafes. Two examples of operable windows are shown below to the left.

**b) Design storefronts to allow landscaping and special paving.**

Landscaping may occur in a variety of forms as shown in the examples below and on the following page. Flowers are strongly encouraged to add color and interest.

- See also Guidelines 3.1.2 a) on page 19.

Carmel



*Permanent brick planters.*



Carmel

*Operable windows are encouraged for restaurants, cafes and coffee shops.*

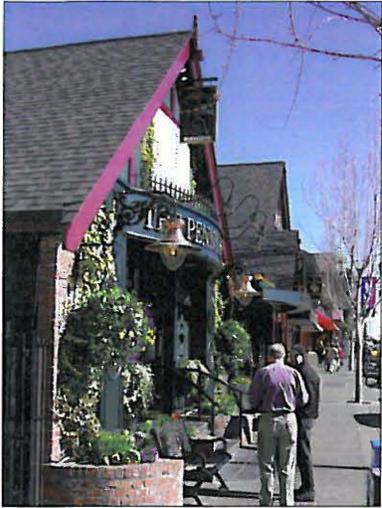
San Anselmo



Carmel

*Planters and climbing vines.*

Victoria, BC



*Built-in planters and hanging pots.*

Pasadena



*Trellises and lattices with climbing vines.*

Los Gatos



*Recessed window boxes.*

Carmel



*Window box planters, paving pockets and climbing vines.*

Los Gatos



*Mixed treatment in larger setbacks.*

Pasadena



*Landscaped setbacks and potted plants.*

Los Gatos



*Planter pots.*



*Wall-mounted pots.*

Carmel

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

3



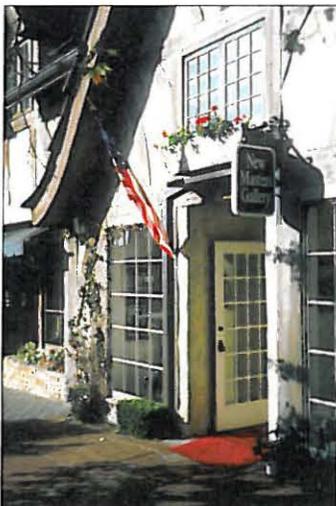
Carmel

*Vestibules need not be rectangular in shape.*



Santa Barbara

*Vestibules with more facets can be used to increase the exposure of goods in storefront windows.*



Carmel

*A simple, narrow vestibule with a well detailed door may work best for narrow store frontages.*

**c) Provide entry vestibules.**

Vestibules emphasize shop entries, and allow ingress and egress to businesses without impeding pedestrian movement on adjacent sidewalks. They also allow for increasing display window exposure.

- Vestibules may have a wide variety of shapes, from simple rectangular indentations to larger and more complex shapes. Some examples are shown in photos to the left.
- Use special paving materials and colors to clearly define the vestibule areas and separate them from the adjacent public sidewalk.
- The use of wood doors with glazing and raised panel details, rather than metal and glass doors, is strongly encouraged to add warmth to the shop entries.
- Dutch doors and doors with divided light windows are encouraged to link the shop interior to passing pedestrian traffic and add visual interest to the entry.



Los Altos

*A wood door and brick paving contribute to this inviting shop entry.*



Oakland

*Dutch doors offer an inviting, friendly entry to passing shoppers.*

d) Utilize awnings and canopies at windows and entries.

- A variety of awning types is encouraged. They may be traditional, as shown to the right, or unique (see the wood shutter awnings below). They should also be distinct to the store's tenant. For multiple tenant buildings, avoid making all of the awnings the same.
- Keep the mounting height at a human scale - with the valence height not more than 8 feet above the sidewalk level.



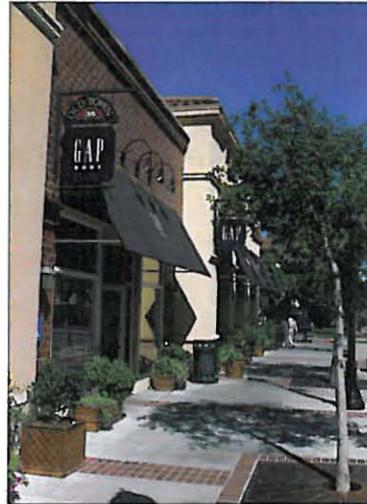
San Jose



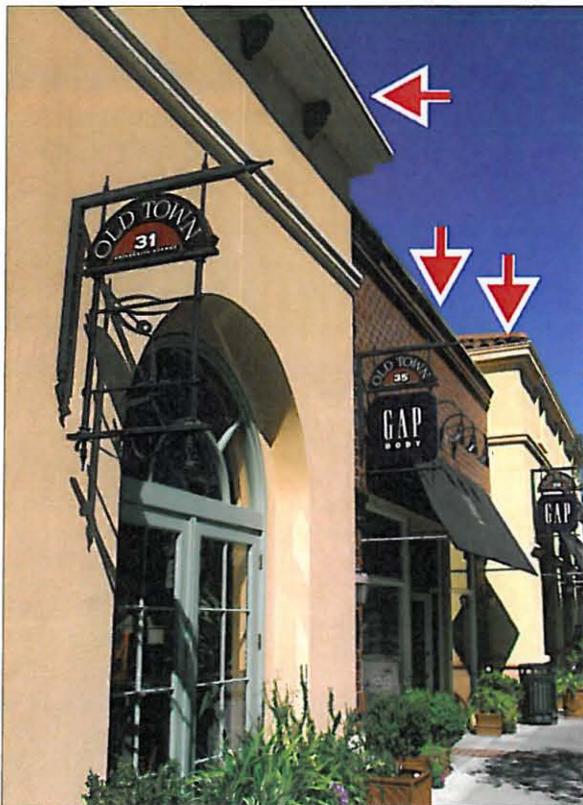
Beverly Hills

e) Provide cornices and building tops consistent with the architectural style.

- Avoid unfinished wall tops in favor of projecting cornice features or roof overhangs. Examples are shown below and to the right.



Los Gatos



Los Gatos



Santa Barbara

*Designing larger buildings to resemble a collection of smaller individual buildings, as shown to the left, is preferred in the Downtown Core. Larger structures with varied store fronts, as shown above, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

3



Carmel

*Architectural features and shop entries are encouraged on corner parcels.*



Carmel

f) Provide special features for buildings located at street corners (See examples to the left).

- g) **Emphasize entries and display windows.**
- Make shop entries as open and inviting as possible.
  - Consider landscaping and special paving to add visual interest.
  - Keep all window glazing transparent. Avoid tinted glass in favor of awnings and other shading devices for sun control.

- h) **Utilize natural materials.**
- Wood, stone, and brick can provide warmth at storefronts, and enhance the feeling of village scale and character.
- Wood doors and window frames are strongly encouraged.
  - Avoid synthetic stone.
  - Tile is discouraged except for bulkheads below display windows and for decorative accents. One good example is shown below.



Ojai



Santa Barbara

*Landscaping and open doors can add great appeal to both individual shops and the street as a whole*



Carmel

*Providing large display windows and inviting entries enliven the street frontage, and encourage shoppers to enter the store.*

i) **Enhance the pedestrian experience with interesting architectural details.**

- Consider bay window displays where walls might otherwise be blank, as shown in the example below.

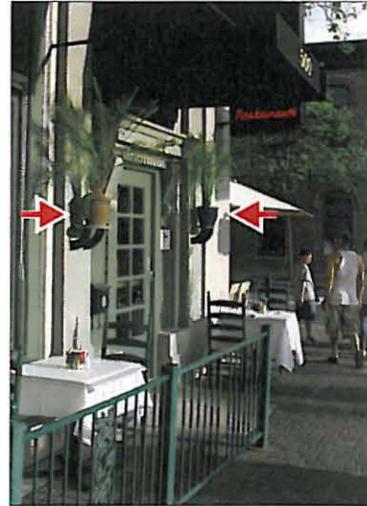
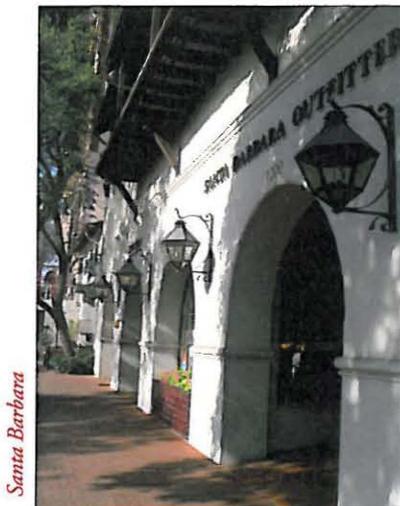


- Architectural details should be high quality and appropriate to the architectural style.
- Individual trim elements should be scaled to be or resemble proportions that could be handled and installed by hand. Elements on any portion of the structure should not be inflated in size to respond strictly to building scale, but should also have a relationship with human scale.

j) **Provide special storefront and facade lighting.**

Nighttime lighting of the building and display windows can add greatly to the downtown's sense of vitality and safety, and can encourage window shopping by those who may be dining in downtown restaurants.

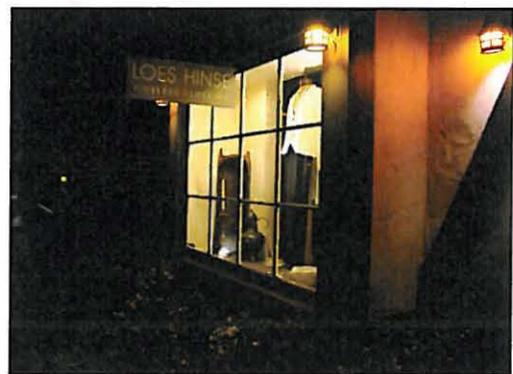
- Lighting should be subtle.
- The use of decorative lighting, concealed fixtures, or pin lights are all possibilities.
- Decorative lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the architectural style of the building and storefront.



*Small details like these pots on shelves at the restaurant entry can add greatly to the village scale and character.*



*True or simulated divided light windows, decorative lights, and landscaping can add special visual interest to a storefront.*



*These small decorative wall-mounted fixtures and the concealed lighting of the display window provide subtle lighting for the building, merchandise and signage.*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**



Carmel

*Tile stairs and business directory sign*



Pasadena

*Awnings and window boxes at the second level help relate those uses to the street level*



Carmel

*Second floor overhang and wrought iron gate at second floor entry*

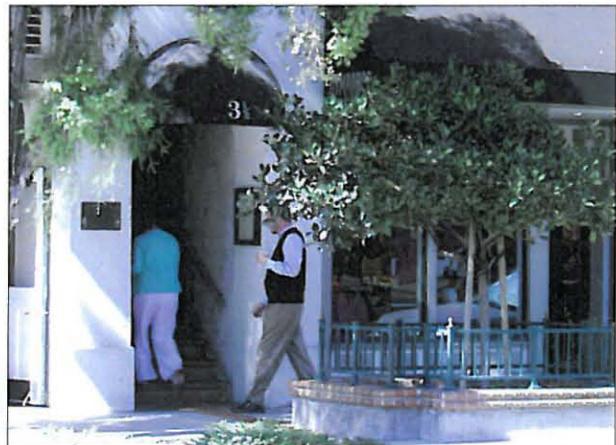
**3.2.4 Design second floor facades to complement the streetscape and Village Character**

**a) Provide second floor entries that are equal in quality and detail to storefront entries.**

Some techniques to accomplish this emphasis include:

*See example to the left and below.*

- Special awning or roof element.
- Wrought iron gate.
- Decorative tile stair treads and risers.
- Special lights.
- Decorative street address numbers or tiles.
- Plaque signs for upper floor business tenants.



Carmel

*Second floor entry awning*

**b) Relate second floor uses to the pedestrian environment on the street level.**

Some methods of achieving this include the following:

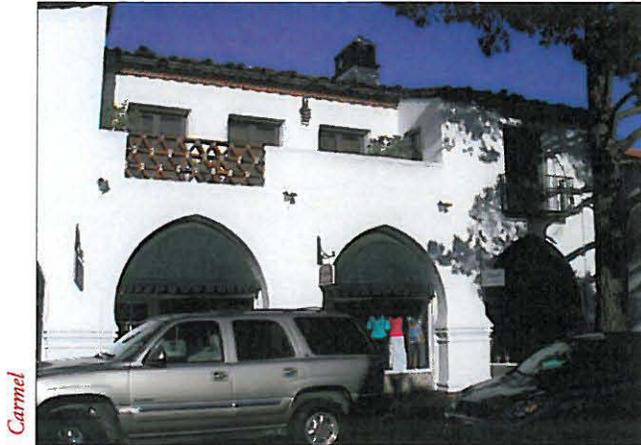
*See examples on this and the following page,*

- Second floor overhangs
- Bay windows
- Decks
- Balconies
- Planters.



Carmel

*Projecting bay windows*



*Upper floor deck*



*Small balcony with landscaping*



*Wide balcony*

- c) **Utilize operable windows in traditional styles.**
- Recess windows at least 3 inches from the face of the wall.
  - Use vertical proportions for individual windows.
  - Separate individual or groups of windows by solid wall masses, and treat windows as punched openings.
  - Avoid ribbon windows and curtain wall treatments.



*Colorful flower pots*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

**3**



Los Altos

*Building facades facing parking lots may be treated the same as street-facing facades, as above, or may be treated in a more simple manner, as below.*



Los Altos

**3.2.5 Design compatible parking plaza oriented entries and facades**

Facades facing parking lots may be treated similarly to street-facing facades if they serve as a second entry, or they may be treated more simply, but will be expected to receive consistent design attention and landscaping. Two current examples in the Downtown Core District are shown below.

**3.2.6 Integrate utilities and building services into the overall building design**

**a) Integrate mechanical and trash rooms into the building whenever possible.**

- Where not feasible, use screen walls to match the design, materials and finish of those of the main building (See examples below).

**b) Add trellises, lattices, and landscaping to screen and soften exterior mechanical equipment and trash enclosures.**

*Two examples are shown below.*



Ojai



Los Gatos

**c) Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be concealed from public view (street or adjacent buildings).**

- Existing rooftop mechanical equipment shall be concealed or relocated out of view whenever a roof is replaced and when equipment is upgraded or replaced to any extent that requires a building permit.
- Locate on a portion of the rooftop that is not visible to the public or locate behind roof forms, parapets or screens that are compatible with the architectural character of the structure.

**3.2.7 Design larger structures to be sensitive to the unique scale and character of Downtown Los Altos**

**a) Adapt corporate prototype designs to relate both in form and scale to the adjacent downtown fabric.**

- An Apple store prototype example in Walnut Creek and its modification for Downtown Los Gatos, shown to the right, illustrates one way in which a corporate prototype design can be modified to fit into a small scale downtown environment.
- The GAP store in Los Gatos, shown below, has been designed to appear as two structures to better fit into the existing downtown fabric.



Walnut Creek

*This store in Walnut Creek illustrates the standard Apple prototype.*



Los Gatos



Los Gatos

*The standard Apple prototype was modified in the Town of Los Gatos to better fit with the existing downtown scale and character.*

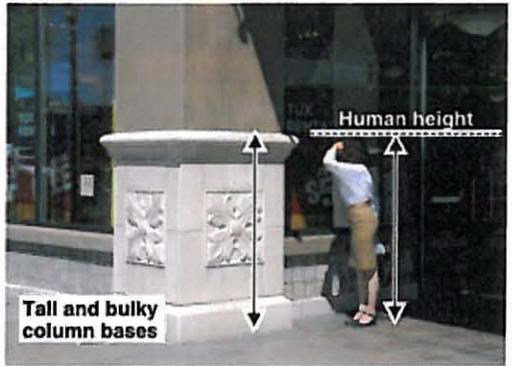
**b) Avoid architectural styles and monumental building elements that do not relate to the small human scale of Downtown Los Altos.**

- The structures shown below and to the right are well designed, but would be out of place in Downtown Los Altos. These are all examples of what should not be done.



Walnut Creek

*Don't use exaggerated tall doors*



Walnut Creek

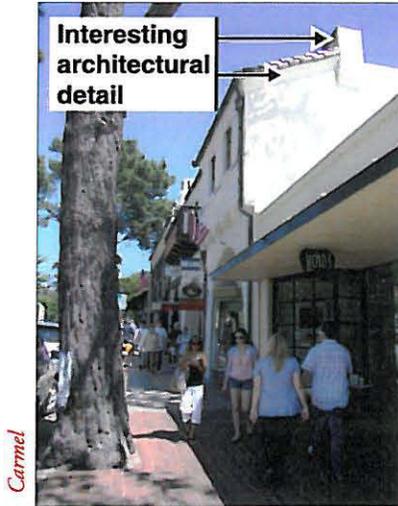
*Don't use over-size building elements*



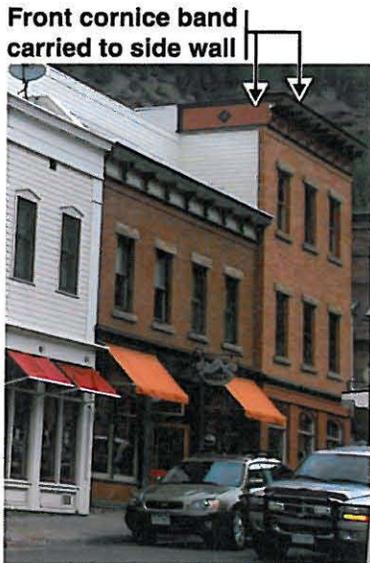
Walnut Creek

*Don't use large arches*

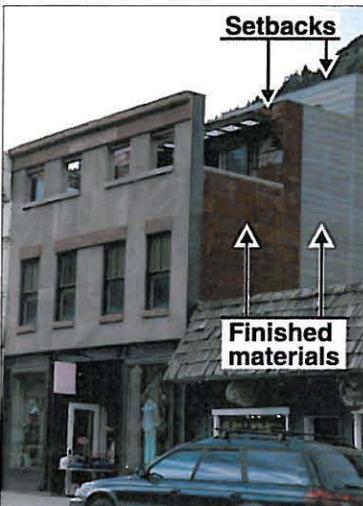
3



Carmel



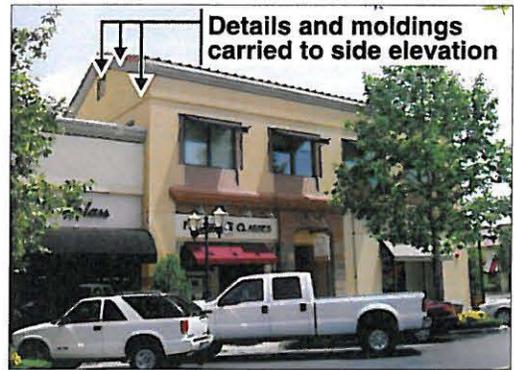
Telluride



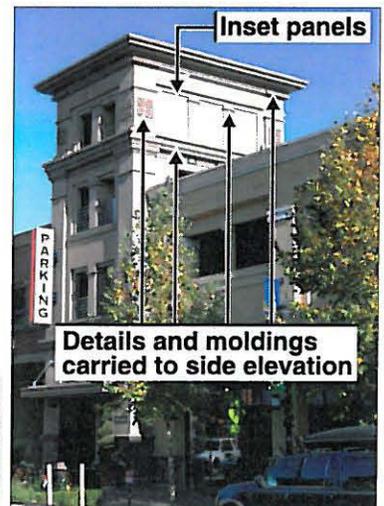
Telluride

c) Provide special design treatment for visible sidewalls of structures that are taller than their immediate neighbors.

- Sidewall windows are encouraged where codes allow and adequate fire protection can be provided.
- Employ design techniques to relate the visible sidewalls to front facades. Some common techniques include the following:
  - \* Repeating front facade finished materials, decorative details and mouldings.
  - \* Carrying front facade cornices and wall top projections around all sides of the upper floor.
  - \* Providing varied parapet heights to avoid a box-like appearance.
  - \* Utilizing gable and hip roofs to vary the height and appearance of side walls.
  - \* Treating side walls with inset panels.
  - \* Integrating interesting architectural details.
  - \* Stepping back the front facade of upper floors to vary the side wall profile.



Valencia



Walnut Creek

**3.2.8 Design and detail parking structures to complement Downtown's Village Scale and Character**

- a) Locate vehicular entries to allow ingress and egress from streets other than Main Street and State Street.
- b) Place as much of the parking below grade as possible.
- c) Provide commercial uses on ground floors facing pedestrian-oriented streets and walkways.
- d) Provide a minimum 5-foot wide landscape strip to accommodate low shrubs, flowering plants, and vertical trees along all edges that do not have active commercial frontages.
- e) Integrate extensive landscaping into the parking structure edges and entries.
- f) Integrate pedestrian entries with adjacent commercial uses.
- g) Provide secondary ground floor pedestrian entries when the structure is adjacent to commercial core service alleys containing rear shop entries or paseo entries.
- h) Design parking structures to be visually compatible with other Downtown Core District commercial buildings.

**Some techniques include:**

- Breaking up the building mass and height to match the predominant 25-foot wide module of the core area.
- Designing the structure as a downtown building, rather than as a parking structure.



Walnut Creek

*Ground floor commercial uses in the parking structure example shown above assist in maintaining retail and pedestrian continuity.*



Walnut Creek

*This parking structure has been designed with pilasters, and with varied facade depths, and details to relate to the module and style of nearby retail shops.*



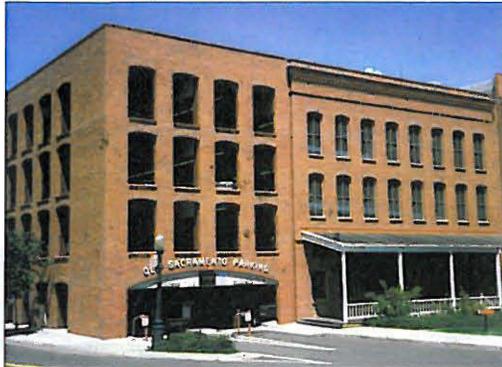
Walnut Creek

*Minimize parking garage entries, and integrate parking structures with adjacent commercial uses, as shown above.*

**DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT**

3

Sacramento



*Facade materials and opening proportions help relate this parking structure to its surrounding neighbors.*

San Mateo



*Ground level commercial uses and upper floor set-backs are techniques that relate parking structures to adjacent smaller scale development.*

- Utilizing finished exterior wall materials (e.g., brick and/or stucco), and decorative trim elements.
- Providing natural light and ventilation with openings that are similar to the proportions of commercial building windows.
- Screening cars from street view.
- Visually screening interior light fixtures from street and adjacent buildings view.
- Incorporating medallions and/or decorative lighting fixtures into exterior ground floor facades.

i) **Step back street-facing facades, if feasible, where they are adjacent to lower buildings (See example to the left).**

j) **Design facades facing the service drives for Downtown Core District commercial buildings as visually attractive neighbors that will be compatible with those adjacent secondary entries and outdoor use spaces. Two multi-use service alley examples are shown below.**

k) **Special attention should be given to landscaping, window fenestration, lighting, variations in alley paving materials and textures, and other elements that add human scale and visual interest.**

Pasadena



Pasadena



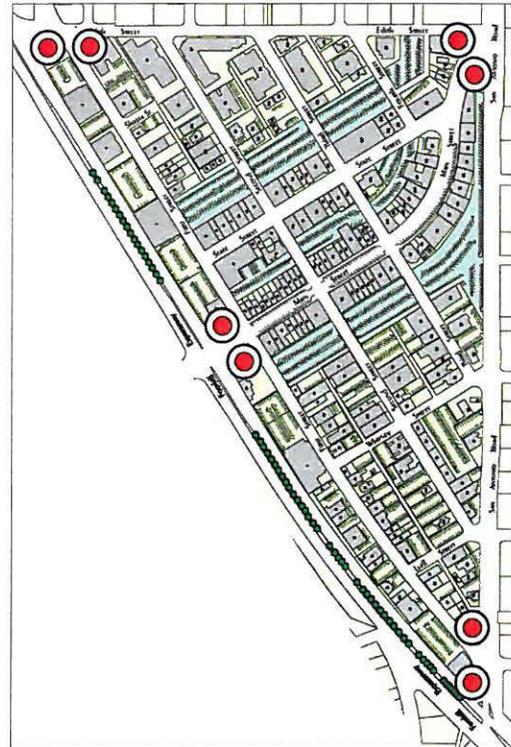
**3.2.9 Reinforce a sense of entry at Downtown Gateways**

**a) Provide special design treatments on sites that mark entries to the Downtown Core District.**

- Sites for special treatment are identified on the adjacent map.
- Relate the improvements to any special public entry improvements at these entry intersections. Broader concepts for these intersections are outlined in the *Los Altos Downtown Design Plan*.

**b) Select design treatments that are appropriate for the site, the architectural style of the structure, and the uses accommodated. Some elements that may be considered include:**

- Tower elements
- Sloped roof structures
- Special uses with outdoor plazas
- Fountains
- Special landscape features
- Special lighting
- Increased architectural details
- City identity signing



*Downtown Gateways*



## ATTACHMENT D

The Downtown Vision Plan is located at the following web link:

[https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community\\_development/page/39021/los\\_altos\\_downtown\\_vision\\_plan\\_document-final-20180828.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_development/page/39021/los_altos_downtown_vision_plan_document-final-20180828.pdf)

