

# Antigonish

## Design

## Guidelines



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

These Design Guidelines are an attempt, in this case by the community of Antigonish, to provide a framework of aesthetics and functional standards which will guide new development, primarily in the downtown area, with the intent of protecting and enhancing our built heritage as well as being sensitive to our social and economic aspirations.

### WHY DO WE NEED DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Antigonish, as a result of its location and the number of services and amenities locally available, is well positioned to act as a regional services centre as well as a prime tourist destination. However, in today's competitive market, the development of both an attractive and functional commercial core has become increasingly important.

Over the last several decades, many of the buildings which have replaced older building stock along the Main have been unharmonious with the existing fabric of the Town. One of the main drives of these guidelines, then, will be to promote the enhancement of the streetscape through sensitivity to context as well as site specific design considerations.

While an attractive downtown will serve as a drawing card, return trips will be less likely if functional issues are left unaddressed. As an example, providing functional, attractive parking areas which are safe both day and night can significantly enhance the shopping experience.

In addition to its role as a commercial service centre, the downtown also serves as a symbol, representing the heart of the Town. A pedestrian shopping area is well suited to this as it naturally facilitates social interaction. Measures such as the provision of seating, either formal (e.g. benches), or informal (e.g. low walls), and designs which blur the distinction between private and public space such as sidewalk café tables and outdoor displays are means of supporting this role.

### WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES BASED UPON?

These design guidelines are largely derived from the architecture of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period corresponding to the period of most significant growth in Antigonish. The predominant architectural styles tended to be Neoclassical with the Greek Revival style especially popular for commercial buildings. In general, buildings were 1 ½ to 2 ½ stories with the gable end facing the street. There were however a variety of other styles such as Vernacular, Italianate, and Gothic Revival. Various fires and periods of redevelopment have claimed many

of these buildings and those which remain, only a few are architecturally intact, unspoiled by insensitive renovation.

Through these guidelines we hope not only to demonstrate respect for our built heritage and develop a more attractive, functional and competitive commercial area, but also to develop a downtown in which our pride and essence as a community are manifest. Hospitality, vitality, and a sense of looking forward while respecting the riches of our heritage are the messages we wish to portray in the architecture of our downtown.

## **2.0 DESIGN PRINCIPALS**

### THE STREET WALL

Since the Renaissance, architects have pondered the ideal relationship between building height and separation across a street. While it is a somewhat subjective point, a ratio in the range on 1:2 to 1:3 provides a sensation of being in a space which is comforting yet not claustrophobic. Given that Main Street has a right-of-way of 66 feet, buildings should be between 1 ½ and 3 stories high and located at, or very near the street line. In order for the street wall to be effective at providing a sense of enclosure, however, gaps between buildings must be kept to a minimum as well as differences in setback of adjacent buildings. Slight offsets along the street do add surface excitement however. To this end, building facades should be broken into bays with widths no greater than 50 feet. Bays may be defined through modulation of setback, pilasters, fenestrations, entryways or other suitable methods.

### FENESTRATION

Windows do more in buildings than provide ventilation and light. They are major elements in the overall composition of a building providing punctuation and balance as well as offering clues as to whether a space is public or private in nature.

In storefronts at grade, windows are necessarily large. To maintain a sense of enclosure from within, large plate windows can be divided into panes with the use of glazing bars. On upper levels, no more than 50% of the wall should be taken up by bay windows.

Horizontally oriented windows, are often seen in “modern” buildings, can be disconcerting in their tendency to dissociate upper and lower sections of a building. Vertical orientation, on the other hand, suggests that loads are being carried firmly to the ground, the effect being enhanced by pilasters placed at regular intervals. Furthermore, given that windows in older buildings are typically oriented vertically, a similar orientation in new development is useful as a means of addressing context.

## STOREFRONT DOORWAYS

During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “storefront” architecture became popular along the Main. Typically this involved buildings of two to three stories where the street level featured large plate-glass windows and, frequently, recessed, multi-paned doorways. The recess not only defines the entrance and provides some measure of weather protection for window shopping, but also serves to draw those same window shoppers into the store.

## ORNAMENTATION AND FAÇADE DESIGN

Ornamentation on a building can serve many purposes. Cornices above store windows can be used to articulate the different uses associated with the various stories of the building while a cornice along the top of the building can be used to help it relate to the horizontal elements of adjacent buildings. Mouldings around and over windows give them depth and presence, elevating them beyond the utilitarian. The use of pilasters, protruding or recessed bays, dormers, pediments, etc. can help add definition and character to a building and, in many instances, increase function as well. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, ornamentation contributes to a lively streetscape and imparts the notion that the Town is special.

## BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

Building materials in Antigonish have traditionally been stone, brick and wood. These materials are durable, natural and impart a sense of quality and historical continuity to buildings. Metal and plastic siding do not. Color is very important in a downtown commercial setting. A building may seem warm and vibrant, or cool and lifeless, it all comes down to colour. Colour also may be used to accentuate architectural details, entryways and so on.

## LANDSCAPING AND SITE LAYOUT

To maintain a street wall, new buildings should be built as close to the street line as is feasible. Any areas of the site which are not taken up by the building or used for parking should be landscaped or developed as pedestrian linkages and pocket parks for shoppers and residential tenants. Large gaps in the street wall created to accommodate parking are disruptive and should be avoided or, at least, minimized. Rear parking areas should be divide into smaller bays with landscaped dividers and should be interconnected with adjacent parking areas.

## LIGHTING

Lighting should compliment the building design by emphasizing architectural elements and materials as well as illuminating signage. Pedestrian linkages should be lit in warm colours with ground-oriented, pedestrian scale fixtures. Parking areas should be discretely lit in warm colours. Large, glaring single source lights such as pole mounted sodium or mercury vapour lights should be avoided as they are disturbing to neighbouring residential areas and are utilitarian in nature.

### **3.0 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Where policies require consideration of the Antigonish Design Guidelines as part of a development agreement, the following shall apply:

1. The applicant will schedule a pre-submission meeting with Town planning staff in order to familiarize themselves with guidelines and application process.
2. The applicant prepares plans in accordance with the guidelines, completes a development agreement application and submits it to the Development Officer.
3. The application is reviewed by the Antigonish Planning Advisory Committee and subsequently a recommendation is made to Council for approval or rejection.
4. Council sets a date, advertises it, and holds a Public Hearing to receive public comments on the development proposal.
5. Council approves or rejects the proposal following the Public Hearing.
6. A 21 day appeal period follows Council's decision during which time the applicant or an aggrieved person may appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.
7. Once the appeal period has elapsed, and subject to no appeals being lodged, the Development Officer issues the Development Permit. Should an appeal be lodged, and pending the outcome of the Board's decision, Council may be instructed to issue the Development Permit, modify its decision, or reject the application.

The development agreement process takes approximately 12 weeks to complete provided no appeals are lodged.

#### **4.0 DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST**

The following checklist may serve applicants in preparing their applications. Items which are indicated will not necessarily be applicable in all instances but are listed as a reference and are some of the more important considerations.

##### STREET WALL

- Building height between 1.5 and 3 stories.
- Building set at street line.
- Building façade divided into bays.

##### FENESTRATION AND ENTRYWAYS

- Windows vertically oriented.
- Windows on upper stories consist of 50% or less wall area.
- Large windows divide into smaller panes by glazing bars.
- Storefront doorways recessed or otherwise defined.

##### ORNAMENTATION AND FAÇADE DESIGN

- Ornamentation and façade design acknowledge context and present a lively and balanced façade.
- Lighting is artfully used to illuminate building architecture and signage.

##### BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

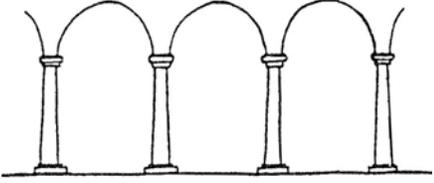
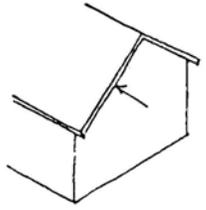
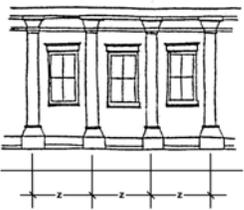
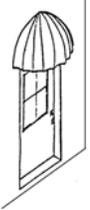
- Building materials are primarily wood, stone or masonry.
- Colours of building and signage are warm and complimentary.

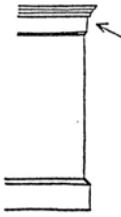
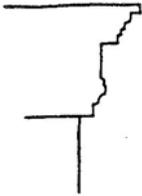
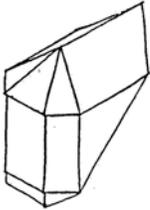
##### LANDSCAPING AND SITE LAYOUT

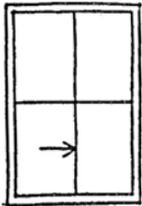
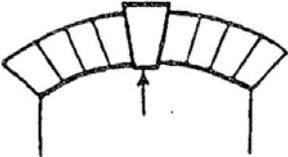
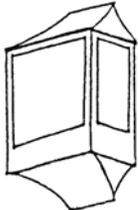
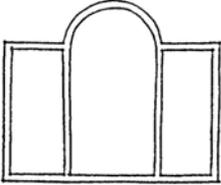
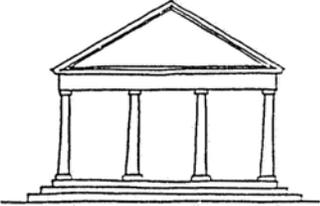
- Parking areas and pedestrian linkages are pleasant and appropriately lit without adversely affecting adjacent buildings.
- Parking areas are interconnected, divided into bays, landscaped and appropriately lit.

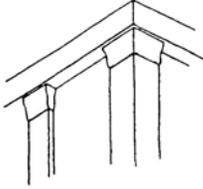
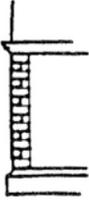
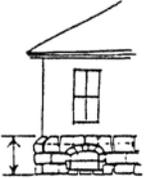
## 5.0 ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Following is a sample of architectural details and design solutions which may be useful in meeting the spirit of these guidelines.

DESIGN SOLUTION	DESCRIPTION	DETAIL
ARCADE	A series of arches	
BARGEBOARD	Board at end of gable, sometimes ornately carved	
BAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bay window</li> <li>• A section of a building repeated several times</li> </ul>	
BRACKET	Support under a wide overhang	
CANOPY	Ornamental roof-like structure, especially over a door or window	

DESIGN SOLUTION	DESCRIPTION	DETAIL
CAPITAL	The top of a column, often decorated	
COLUMN	An upright support, usually circular in plan, comprising a base, shaft and capital	
CORNICE	The projecting finish at the top of a wall or entablature	
ENTABLATURE	A projecting frieze or cornice of several members	
FACETED DORMER WINDOW	Dormer window with more than one face, as is a bay window	
FANLIGHT	Window over a door which is fan-shaped, usually Neoclassical	

DESIGN SOLUTION	DESCRIPTION	DETAIL
FRIEZE	Moulding in the entablature, may be flat or carved	
GLAZING BAR	Rabbeted wood or metal support to hold glass	
KEYSTONE	The top and last stone to be put into an arch, sometimes decorated	
ORIEL	A bay window supported by brackets	
PALLADIAN	Often applied to the shape of a window used by Andrea Palladio (1508-1580)	
PEDIMENT	The triangular gable of a classical temple, often used on Neoclassical designs	

DESIGN SOLUTION	DESCRIPTION	DETAIL
PILASTER	A portion of a wall thickened for stability or ornament, often given mouldings similar to a column	 <p>A line drawing showing a section of a wall with a triangular pediment above it. Two vertical pilasters are attached to the wall, each with a fluted shaft and a decorative capital at the top.</p>
OIOIN	Thickened blocks at the corner of a masonry wall	 <p>A line drawing of a corner of a masonry wall. The corner is reinforced with several courses of thickened blocks, forming a decorative and structural element.</p>
RUSTICATION	In masonry, the exaggeration of the joints and the roughness of the stones, usually at the base of a wall	 <p>A line drawing of a building's base. The lower portion of the wall is rusticated, characterized by large, rectangular blocks with wide, recessed joints. A window is visible above the rusticated section.</p>
STRING COURSE	A flat projecting band of masonry, usually at floor level	 <p>A line drawing of a building facade. A prominent horizontal band of masonry, the string course, runs across the front of the building at floor level, separating the ground floor from the upper story.</p>

## **6.0 REFERENCES**

Antigonish Downtown Development Society and Heritage Canada, A Guide to Building Design Guidelines, 1994

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