

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

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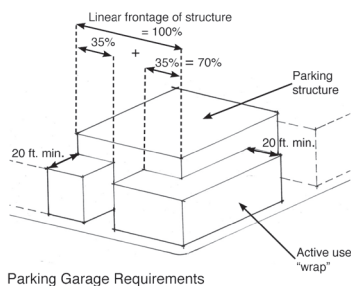


Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines and C-D Zoning Standards

Winter & Company crafted a set of design standards and guidelines documents that applied to the Downtown Overlay District (C-D Zone) and the Downtown Historic District in Athens. The process included active participation with an Advisory Committee, City staff, downtown residents, special interest groups, citizens, property and business owners.

The Downtown Overlay District Design Standards and Guidelines considered the compatibility of new structures within the area context, but not at the same level of detail as is developed to address building in downtown historic districts. The standards addressed basic urban design principles including:

- » Convey a sense of human scale
- » Convey the traditional building scale in the way in which facades are articulated
- » Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge
- » Minimize visual impacts of automobiles and service areas
- » Acknowledge that some areas may be somewhat different in their characteristics



New buildings constructed since adoption of the downtown standards and guidelines



Character-defining features of historic properties should be preserved. Collectively, they establish a sense of place, provide human scale and add rich detail to the street.



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The standards developed were integrated into the existing zoning document, and flexibility was permitted by allowing one to exceed prescriptive standards if they complied with a set of urban design guidelines.

The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines addressed alterations to historic buildings and new buildings within the district. It also addressed local landmarks outside of the district. The Secretary's Standards were adapted and interpreted for application to historic resources in downtown Athens.

SERVICES:

- » Design guidelines for treatment of historic properties
- » Design guidelines for new construction in historic districts
- » Design standards and guidelines for new construction within the Overlay District

CLIENT:

Brad Griffin
Planning Director
City of Athens

DATE:

2006



5.2 Vertical Definition of Building Modules

The Zoning and Development Standards mandate an articulation of vertical elements that reflect the scale of traditional buildings downtown. This encourages a pedestrian-friendly environment by establishing a rhythm of building modules along the street.



Prescriptive measures are defined in the code. However, the intent of the standards may be achieved in other ways. The dimensions of the prescribed options for vertical elements may be modified if the intent of the requirement can be met as described below.

5.2.1. Buildings should appear similar in width to those seen traditionally.

This can be achieved by one or more of the following:

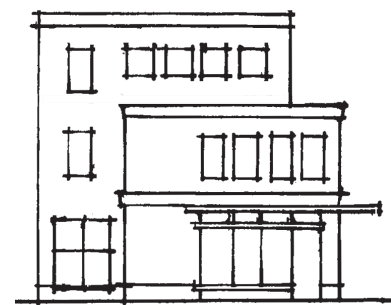
- change in material
- variations in wall planes
- change in color
- change in texture or pattern
- architectural detailing

Vertical definition accomplished in a variety of ways:

Upper photo: varied setbacks in wall planes, emphasized in some cases with decorative trim elements (quoins).

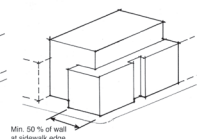
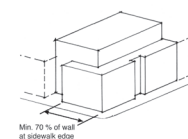
Middle photo: Notches in the building wall establish a definition, even though they do not extend down to the street level.

Right photo: Projecting balconies and windows aligned vertically achieve a vertical definition in this building.



The solid-to-void ratio, that is, the percentage of glass to solid wall surface that is used on a building face, was addressed in the overlay area. The intent of the standard was to maintain a sense of visual continuity, and to provide interest for pedestrians.

Character Area	Min. setback (2)	Max. setback	Min. % of wall (1)
A. Historic Core	0 feet	0 feet	70%
B. West Downtown	0 feet	0 feet	50%
C. East Downtown	0 feet	0 feet	50%
D. Dougherty Street	0 feet	20 feet	50%
E. River Corridor	0 feet	Not required	Not required
F. West End	0 feet	30 feet	50%



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