



MUNDARE

Small Town with a Big Heart

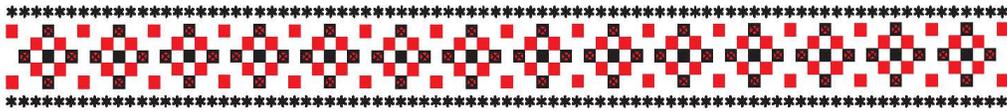


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1.0 The Intent of the Architectural Guidelines

Mundare's Main Street is integral part of the Town's historic fabric and is an important and defining place in the public realm. As a part of revitalization and improvements being made to the streetscape, these Architectural Guidelines will protect the historic form, highlight the pedestrian experience, and promote quality architectural design.

An effective streetscape ensures that all components, such as street furnishings, lighting, architecture, and paving, etc, work in harmony to create a cohesive urban design. This principle also applies to the architectural design and uses of properties within the streetscape. A cohesive use of materials, forms, and structures helps provide continuity from property to property and ensures that buildings have been developed with a strong foundation of design principles. However, this does not mean that the individual business will lose identity. The architectural framework only suggests components, materials, and elements that can be used in different combinations to be unique yet complimentary to the overall streetscape. The strength of a successful set of guidelines is the ability to allow property owners the flexibility to individualize their building while ensuring that the architectural design highlights and integrates with the rest of Mundare's Main Street.

As a predominantly commercial area, these guidelines recognize the need for the architecture to reflect and accommodate the building's uses. Businesses located along the street should be compatible with the civic and pedestrian functions of Main Street. The architecture should incorporate storefronts that welcome and draw pedestrians and clients in, while the unattractive aspects of operations, such as storage, garbage, and loading areas, are hidden from the street view. As well, the guidelines recognize that mixed use properties that accommodate both commercial and residential units will need special architectural consideration.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear architectural design guidelines to property owners who are constructing new buildings or renovating existing buildings. These guidelines will also assist the Town of Mundare in objectively and consistently evaluating designs submitted for approval. **This document provides architectural recommendations for aesthetic design principles only. All development proposals should adhere to appropriate building codes, safety requirements, Land Use Bylaws and other relevant regulations.**



Figure 1: Examples of Inappropriate and Appropriate Architecture

The following sections provides recommendation for the architectural components that are integral to well designed buildings. Though these guidelines will provide information on the fundamentals of strong architectural design, they do not focus on architectural styles or classifications. A range of different building aesthetics is desirable within a streetscape to provide interest and variety. Instead, the focus is on creating a harmonious balance within the architectural streetscape and ensuring that there is compatibility between neighboring properties.

2.0 Scale and Massing

2.1 Building Functions

The permitted and discretionary land uses of Main Street properties are provided in the Land Use Bylaw. It is important to keep in mind when introducing developments along Main Street that the area's main function is as a commercial destination. The ground floor level of all buildings should accommodate street front commercial functions. Residential units in the rear portion and upper stories are permitted and encouraged. Mixed use buildings provide "eyes on the street", encourage live-work environments, and bring people into the downtown area.

2.2 Heights

Guidelines on building heights are not intended to pose limitations on building height or the number of stories but rather propose acceptable building proportions and scale. All buildings should comply with the height regulations set out in the Land Use Bylaw. The following provides additional recommendations for each of the three development scenarios.

a. One-Storey Buildings

Building should be a minimum of 4.88m or 16' in height. If the building does not reach this height, a false front or parapet should be used to make up the difference. False facades should be continuous on all street fronts. False facades should wrap around the front third of side walls and transition down in height along the middle third, unless abutting a building of the same height.

b. Two-Storey Buildings

There are no specific height requirements for two storey buildings, other than the height restrictions outlined in the Land Use Bylaw. Both stories of the building will need to be architecturally articulated as outlined in Section 4.1.

c. Buildings with More than Two-Stories

Buildings with more than two-stories shall be at the discretion of the Town of Mundare. Because the height and massing of larger buildings have the potential to overwhelm the traditional scale of Main Street, additional design considerations need to be addressed. Any stories above the second storey should be setback to provide enough space for an outdoor amenity. This setback is required on all building faces that front streets. All stories of the building will need to be architecturally articulated as outlined in Section 4.1.

2.3 Frontage Widths

This section addresses the visual proportions of building frontages and provides guidance on how to maintain "look" of the traditional narrow frontage of the historical property lines.

The property frontages along Main Street are 9.14m in width and as properties develop, buildings may span multiple properties. In order to maintain the small scale of the traditional Main Street aesthetic, attention to façade articulation will be important. Large building massing should be designed to visually break up long front facades and provide the illusion of multiple buildings that match the traditional frontage widths. This can be accomplished through a various approaches, or combinations of approaches:

- Recess portions of the façade to create the illusion of buildings with different setbacks;
- Use architectural features or vertical design elements that define the properties;
- Introduce additional entrances that define the separate properties;

- Create a rhythm of architectural elements, such as storefront windows, that repeat from one property to the next;
- Create the illusion of multiple buildings by using distinct architectural styles for the facades of each property;
- Vary the roof lines of the building for each property;
- Use distinct, yet complementary, color and/or material palettes for each property.



Figure 2: Example of Maintaining the Appearance of Narrow Frontages Through the Use of Setbacks and Colour

2.4 Setbacks

Maintaining a consistent range of setbacks for street front properties is important in creating a strong “street wall” that creates a sense of enclosure in the streetscape. It is acceptable to have some undulation in setbacks along the street to create variety and allows outdoor business activities; however, buildings too far set back from the property line feel disengaged from street life. Buildings without front property line setbacks are strongly encouraged.

The entire street front building façade must be within 1.5m of the front property line. Buildings that flank two roadways are permitted setbacks on both street fronts. Setbacks are not permitted between buildings.

Setback spaces will need to be developed and designed in a manner that reflects the design of the Main Street public realm. The sidewalk materials, colors, and patterns must be continued up to the face of the building. This space should be intended for use as an outdoor amenity space that extends the function of the building into the public realm, for example outdoor dining spaces.

2.5 Parking Areas

On-site parking areas are only permitted at the rear of the building. Parking requirements and design standards should conform to the regulations provided in Mundare’s Land Use Bylaw. Lots flanking two streets must provide screening for rear parking. Screening colors and materials should complement the architecture. Landscape screens are permitted as long as plant material provides an adequate visual buffer from street. Chainlink fences are not acceptable.

3.0 Roof Articulation

3.1 Roof Pitch

The roof pitch of the functional structure of the building is not as important its relationship to the front façade of the building. Traditionally, a wide variety of roof types have been disguised with western-style false front or parapet. The following outlines the recommendation for pitched, flat, and mansard roofs:

a. Pitched

All pitched roofs, which includes gabled, hipped, and Quonset, roofs should incorporate a parapet or false façade to conceal the pitched roof from street view. The parapet or false façade should be articulated as outlined in Section 4.1.

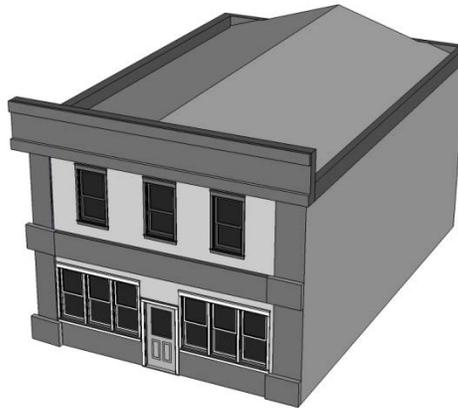


Figure 3: Pitched Roof

b. Flat

This roof style is considered to be the most compatible with the architectural intent of Main Street. Ideally this roof line would be accompanied with an architecturally detailed parapet. This roof line requires the architectural detailing as outlined in Section 4.1.

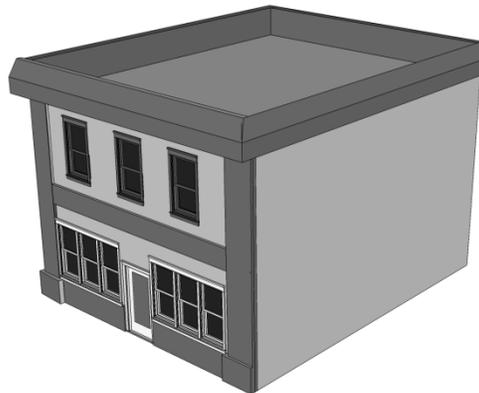


Figure 4: Flat Roof

c. Mansard

This style of roof line is another style that is commonly found on prairie main streets. This style can be used to create a covered area in front of a building as an alternative for an awning or canopy. All Mansard roofs must have an overhang of at least 1.5m. Mansard roof also can provide building owners the opportunity to “dress up” existing flat roof buildings. This style of roof should wrap around all sides of the building that front streets and one-quarter of a side façade that does not front a street.

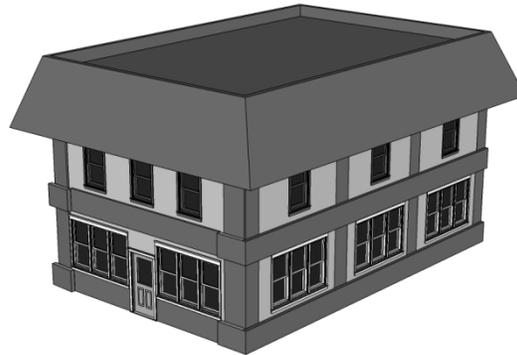


Figure 5: Mansard Roof

3.2 Parapets

Parapets are useful design elements to increase the visual height of building, conceal mechanical equipment, and pitched roofs. Parapets should wrap around the front façade of the building and one-quarter of the side façade of the building and transition thoughtfully with the top of the wall. On buildings that front two streets, the parapet structure should wrap continuously around both street front façades. Parapets should be no more than one-third the overall height of the building and should be aesthetically incorporated into the architecture of the building using compatible detailing, materials, and color. Architectural articulation guidelines are outlined in Section 4.1.

3.3 Rooftop Structures

All rooftop mechanical equipment and structures should not be visible from the street. If these structures are visible from the street, a parapet should be incorporated into the façade and roof design. Screening structures that are not incorporated into the front façade of the building are not acceptable. Buildings fronting two streets must ensure that the structures are not visible from either roadway.

4.0 Facade Articulation

4.1 Horizontal Articulation

In order to create interest at the pedestrian level and provide an appropriate sense of building scale, it is important to understand the value of horizontal articulation. All street front façades of a building should receive horizontal articulation. The horizontal articulation on the front façade should wrap around the side and be continued a minimum of 1.5m.

The front faced of a building can be divided into three main zones; the bottom, the middle, and the top architecturally defining the base, middle, and crown. The following provides recommendations for each of the zones.

a. Base

Articulation in the base zone provides visually anchors the building and provides a transition point between the sidewalk and the building. This area does not need to be highly detailed or complex, but should provide a sense of grounding. Materials or colors that contrast with the middle zone can provide this distinction. This base zone should be articulated to a minimum of 1.2m from ground level. Some middle zone elements, such as windows and entrances, will overlap with this zone.

b. Middle

The middle zone of buildings tends to receive the most architectural focus. This area tends to be the “working” part of the façade where pedestrians are engaged by storefront windows and entrances. The middle zone includes all stories of the building. Though detailed focus may be given to the ground floor, upper stories should have windows, vertical elements, or architectural features that create interest. Each building storey should be fully articulated and architecturally detailed, whether occupied or not.

The architectural style, materials, and colors of buildings stories should be match or be complementary to each other to create thoughtful and well designed transitions. Some building styles use architectural features or banding to define the space between the stories. In this case, the separating element needs to correspond and relate to the elements used in the crown zone.



Figure 6: Horizontal Articulation Zones

c. Crown

The top zone of a building is the proportionally smallest area of the building, but is the central architectural element that tops the façade. This zone should be articulated to a minimum of 0.6m beneath the top of the front façade. This zone is often defined by the use of a cornice.

4.2 Entrances

Main entrances should be well defined and integrate with the architectural aesthetics of the building. The following provides recommendations for the design of entrances:

- Provide weather protection for pedestrians with the use of an awning or recessed entrance.
- Architectural elements, such as overhangs, columns, pilasters, window placements, and/or signage should be used to define the main entry.
- Solid or opaque doors should not be used for entrances on street front facades. Glass doors or solid doors with large glass cutouts are appropriate.
- Buildings may have more than one main entrance to accommodate multiple tenants or functions. Secondary entrances should be of similar style to the main entrance, but should not be as highly detailed or defined.
- Ideally, door casings should be wide and painted a contrasting color to the walls to accentuate the façade.

4.3 Windows

Windows are important architectural features that engage the pedestrian and create interest in the building architecture. The following provides recommendations for the design of windows.

- Windows should cover fifty percent of the ground floor street front façade. On a building that fronts two streets, the windows should cover fifty percent of the primary façade (the façade with the main entrance) and thirty percent of the secondary façade. Windows on upper stories need to cover only thirty percent of the façade.
- The color of window casing should match the casings of the entrances.
- Storefront windows should be used for displays or provide views into the interior space and must not be covered. In the case of a building facing two streets, the windows on the front third of the flankage cannot be covered. On upper stories and the back two-thirds of flankage windows, high quality window treatments or semi-opaque film may be used to obscure views. The design and selection of materials should take in to account their appearance from street level. Windows should not be boarded up or covered with low quality, unattractive materials.

4.4 Signage

Signage and sign placement is a significant aspect of façade design and is important for theme reinforcement. The following provides recommendations for the signage.

- Neon signs are not appropriate. Neon “open” signs are acceptable in windows as long as they are small and do not adversely impact the aesthetics of Main Street.
- Rooftop signs are not allowed
- Signs shall match the character of the building and/or the surrounding area.
- Too much signage or overly large signage lettering will overwhelm the architectural design and viewer’s eye.
- Signage should be simple and low technology.
- Signs should be of professional grade and quality

4.5 Materials and Finishes

Materials used on Main Street are of high quality and should be compatible with the character of the street and the architectural style of the building. The following provides recommendations for materials and finishes.

- Material colors should be generally selected from a palette of earth tones. These colors include, but are not limited to tans, greys, browns, whites, blues, and muted reds. Bright or contrasting colors may be used in small amounts to highlight architectural details or features, but should not dominate the facade.
- Material should be of high quality and allow for ease of maintenance.
- Original façade materials that are in good condition and are important to the heritage or character of Main Street should be retained and restored if feasible. Existing brick or stonework should not be painted.
- The combination and proportions of materials on a building façade should complement the architectural style and contribute to the overall theme and aesthetics of the building.

5.0 Historic Architecture

These architectural guidelines do not specifically address historic preservation. However, property owners should look into the history of existing buildings before renovating or rebuilding. The following outlines a few recommendations and resources for historical architecture.

- If you believe your building may be of historic value, please contact the Town of Mundare to discuss local resources that are available to research property histories and archives.
- Access historic photographs and documents through the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA). The PAA have various databases and archivists to help you with your research.
- The Main Street Program is a provincially funded program that helps municipalities gain funding and expertise to restore the historic architecture of Alberta main streets.
- Contact the Culture and Community Spirit department at the Government of Alberta for information on the Historic Places Designation Program.