

NORTH BARSTOW AREA REDEVELOPMENT
Architectural Design Guidelines

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Purpose

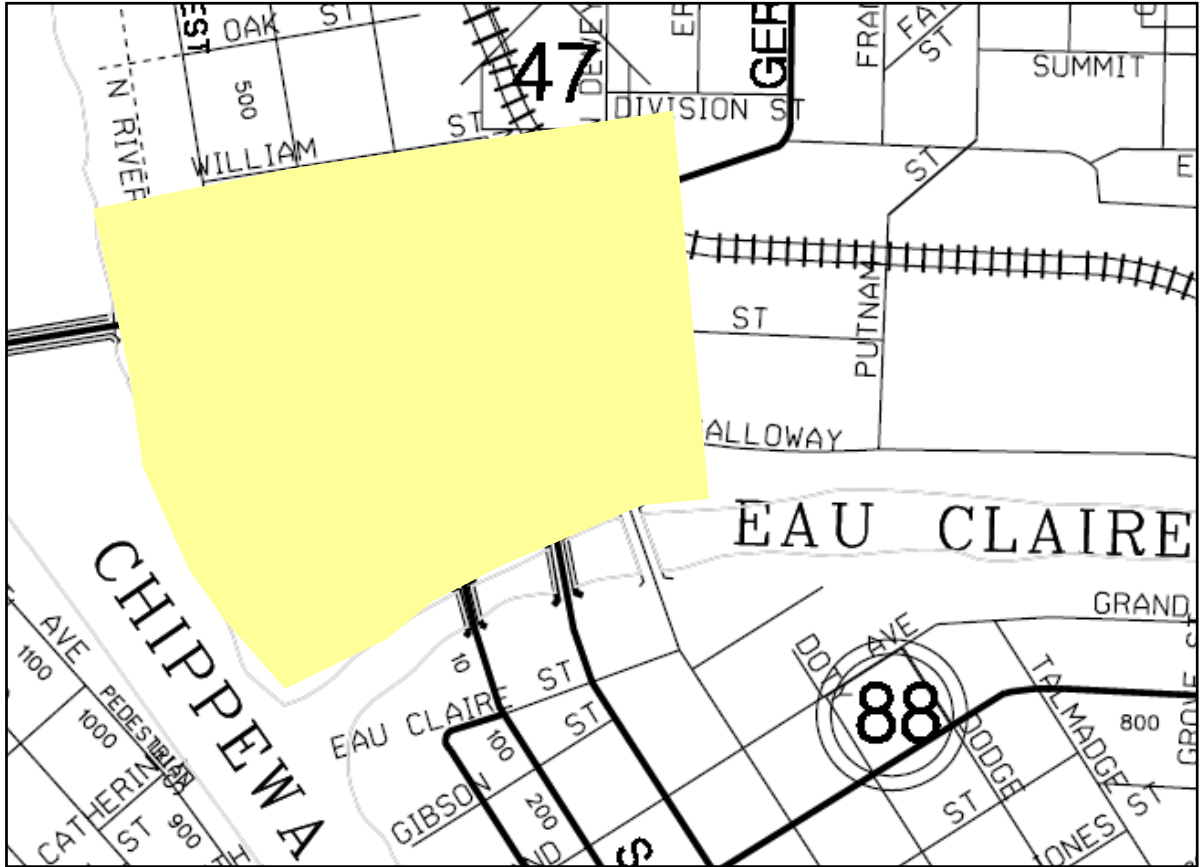
Public and private investment to create a more pleasing downtown image is a key part of Eau Claire's revitalization strategy. It is important for property owners to invest in building and storefront designs that create a stronger sense of place and identity for the North Barstow Area.

The purpose of these design guidelines is to enhance the architectural character, identity and scale of the North Barstow Redevelopment Area. They are intended to help property owners, business owners and developers make sound investment decisions about building designs and improvements. It is not the intent of these guidelines to restrict individual expression but rather direct that expression towards a standard of quality. When applied, these guidelines will ensure against fragmented or incompatible developments and reduce the visual impact of uninformed design decisions.

Implementation of these design guidelines will result in an aesthetically pleasing visual character for the area and instill a sense of community pride. Before any building changes or additions are made, it is important to understand the property's relationship to nearby buildings and open spaces and the property's contribution to the desired downtown character and theme. Property owners and developers are encouraged to restore or reconstruct architectural features that contribute to the historical character of the downtown.

The following sections will provide design guidelines and examples to assist property owners and developers in their revitalization efforts.

North Barstow Redevelopment Area



Summary of Key Guidelines

1. All buildings and their elements (including lighting and signage) must be consistent with the architectural character of the area and compatible with neighboring buildings.
2. Scale should be pedestrian-oriented and appropriate to the orientation of the street (no more than a 10' setback).
3. Buildings should have vertical and horizontal rhythms created by doors, windows and other design elements.
4. Storefronts should be composed largely of glass to expose store activity to pedestrians on the street and allow natural light into stores.
5. New riverfront building development should incorporate enjoyment of the river in its design.
6. Original storefronts, cornices and other architectural details that are intact and consistent with the area's architectural character should be preserved. Deteriorated or boarded-up windows should be replaced with windows that match the original design and fill the entire opening.
7. Infill buildings should fill the entire vacant space between neighboring buildings to create a continuous block of façades. If the vacant space is large, the infill building's façade should be divided into several façades of approximately the same length of neighboring buildings' façades.
8. Rear entries and rear building facades should be finished and decorated using the same colors and materials that are used on the storefront. Trash and utility areas should be screened.
9. Signs should not conceal architectural features. Flashing signs, electronic message boards, and internally lit, plastic signs are not allowed. Projecting signs (up to 6 square feet) are allowed and encouraged. These signs must be installed below second floor windows.
10. No large-scale surface parking is allowed. Any parking adjacent to the street should be screened in some manner.



Building Improvements & Rehabilitation



The historic photos in this section show original building designs in downtown Eau Claire. Since the majority of existing buildings were built in the 1800's and early 1900's, this era gives downtown Eau Claire its unique identity and character. It is important to preserve this architectural character to create a strong visual image for our downtown.

Rehabilitating Existing Buildings

- Any work done on existing buildings in the North Barstow Area should reflect the above architectural themes of the 1800's and early 1900's.
- If the building has an intact and original storefront, preserve the storefront's character.
- Materials that were unavailable when the building was constructed should not be used in renovations. These include: vinyl and aluminum siding, mirrored or tinted glass, artificial stone and brick veneer.
- Choose paint colors based on the building's original appearance.
- Original elements should be preserved where possible (glass, doorway elements, frames, cornice).

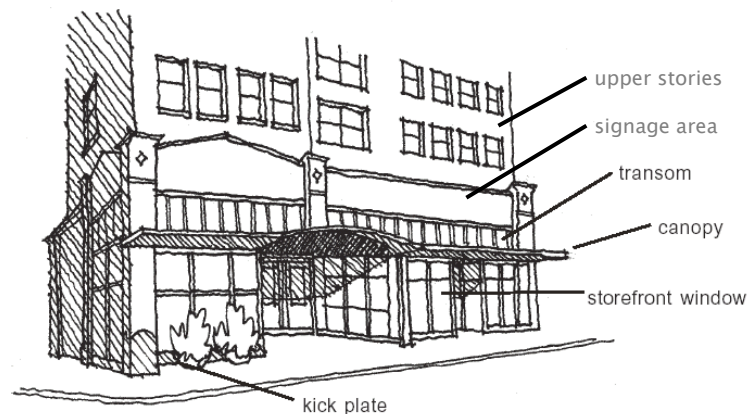
When repair is necessary, it should reflect the original design and materials as closely as possible. If new materials are necessary, they should be sympathetic to the original materials.



Designing Replacement Façades

The most important part of a building's renovation is work done to the façade. Successful improvements treat the entire façade (the storefront, upper façade and cornice) as a single unit. That unit should retain as much of the original building character as possible.

- Any new façade in the North Barstow Area should reflect the architectural themes of the 1800's and early 1900's.
- Maintain the scale and proportion of the original building.
- Maintain original vertical and horizontal rhythms created by doors, windows and other design elements.
- Maintain as much of the original design of upper and lower facades (i.e. storefronts) as possible, including base and cornice details.
- Select construction materials that reflect the building's original materials.
- Maintain the original separation between the storefront and upper floors on the façade.
- Differentiate the primary retail entrance from the secondary entrance to upper floors with different colors and/or materials.
- The storefront should be as transparent as possible. Use glass door panel and glass display areas to allow for visibility.
- Keep secondary design elements such as graphics and awnings simple to avoid visual clutter.
- Fabric awnings are useful to shelter pedestrians and protect window displays and can be visually appealing if they are related to the building. Plastic and metal canopies are not allowed.



The ground level of the building must provide for pedestrian interest and comfort along sidewalks.

Façade Components

The storefront is the street level portion of the building façade and is the most important architectural part of commercial buildings since customers tend to focus their attention on this part of the building first. Storefronts built in the late 1800's and early 1900's like the example shown below should be rehabilitated back to their original character. Rehabilitation of these storefronts is critical to establishing a unique visual character for the North Barstow Area.



The upper façade is the portion of the building façade directly above the storefront. Generally, upper facades have retained their original integrity while the storefronts have been altered. Where upper facades have been altered, the building owner should attempt to bring back the original design elements and materials, even if it is not a "restoration" of the original. The building owner should avoid altering, concealing or removing original details when renovating the upper façade of existing buildings.



Examples of original upper façades with altered storefronts

Upper story windows give buildings an appearance of vitality and create a pattern that ties a whole block of building façades together. Deteriorated or boarded-up windows should be replaced. Replacement windows should match the original design and fill the entire opening. They will look more welcoming and allow people to escape in case of fire.



Good example of intact cornice



Well-maintained upper façade

The cornice is the projected moulding at the uppermost termination of the building façade. Early designers were particularly concerned with how a building met the sky and fancifully created cornices to crown their building designs. Original cornices that are still intact should be repaired and retained, and care should be taken to protect the cornice from deterioration because of the fragile nature of the cornice materials.

Cornices are one of the key design features of buildings in central business districts. The addition of a simple cornice to a building will help the building fit better into the overall context of the street.



Examples of rehabilitated façades

New Structures & Building Additions

The following guidelines are intended to guide the architectural design of new structures and building additions, which affect the function, image, character and visual appearance of the North Barstow Area.

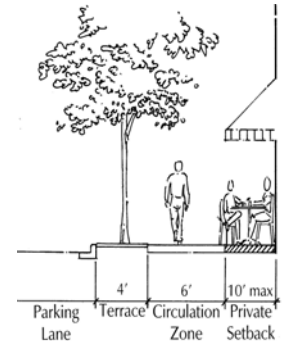
Context

The design of a new structure should be placed in the context of downtown Eau Claire's history and local culture, as well as the immediate neighborhood and architectural scale and character.

Building Siting

The location of a new structure on its site determines its relationship to the street and its neighbors. The siting of a new building should:

- Be conducive to pedestrian use.
- Have no more than a 10' setback.
- Locate service and parking areas to functional, yet, unobtrusive locations.



Building setbacks can provide space for outdoor cafes and landscaping.

Building Scale

The scale of a building has an important influence on the character of a place. Recommendations for the scale of a new structure and its design elements should reflect the goals of the North Barstow Redevelopment Study and the desired character objectives for the area.

Scale should be pedestrian-oriented and appropriate to the orientation of the street. No large-scale surface parking will be allowed.



Pedestrian-friendly scale



OPTIMAL STREET ENCLOSURE
Building Height (H) = 1/3 Right-of Way Width (W)

Form

The shape of the structure in plan and its roof form should reflect the desired character of place and compatibility with its neighbors.

Materials & Color

After scale and form, materials and color create the greatest impression and determine how a building will blend with its neighbors. Buildings that experience pedestrian contact should be constructed of smaller scaled materials such as brick, etc. Limestone and brick are recommended construction materials because of their traditional use in Eau Claire, their durability, and scale. Colors should be chosen from a palette that offers variety, yet, excludes radical deviations.



Craftsmanship

Quality craftsmanship should be used in all building projects. A negative image can be created if low-quality materials are used or if poorly implemented.

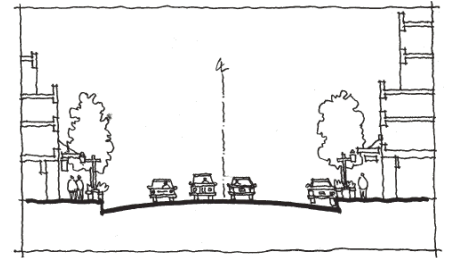
Façade Treatment

Building façades should add to the vitality and pedestrian scale of the area.

The storefront is the street level portion of the building façade and is the most important architectural part of commercial buildings since customers tend to focus their attention on this part of the building first. Storefronts should be composed largely of glass to expose store activity to pedestrians on the street and allow natural light into stores.

The cornice is the projected moulding at the uppermost termination of the building façade. Cornices are one of the key design features of buildings in central business districts. The addition of a simple cornice to a building will help the building fit better into the overall context of the street.





Recessing stories above the 5th floor of developments on arterials maintains natural light on the street and minimizes the impact of height on pedestrians.

Examples of new structures in line with downtown identity



Riverfront Properties

Structures that are located adjacent to either the Chippewa or Eau Claire Rivers should be sited and designed with river exposure in mind. New building development should incorporate riverfront improvements (such as a riverfront path or outdoor seating overlooking the river) and orient active spaces and human-scaled façades toward the riverfront. In some cases, buildings will require a multiple-façade design as they may have entrances on both the river and street sides.

Focal Points

Sites at the end of street vistas, particularly those of major arterial streets, are much more visible than other sites. Design of these sites and structures should create a proper architectural terminus.

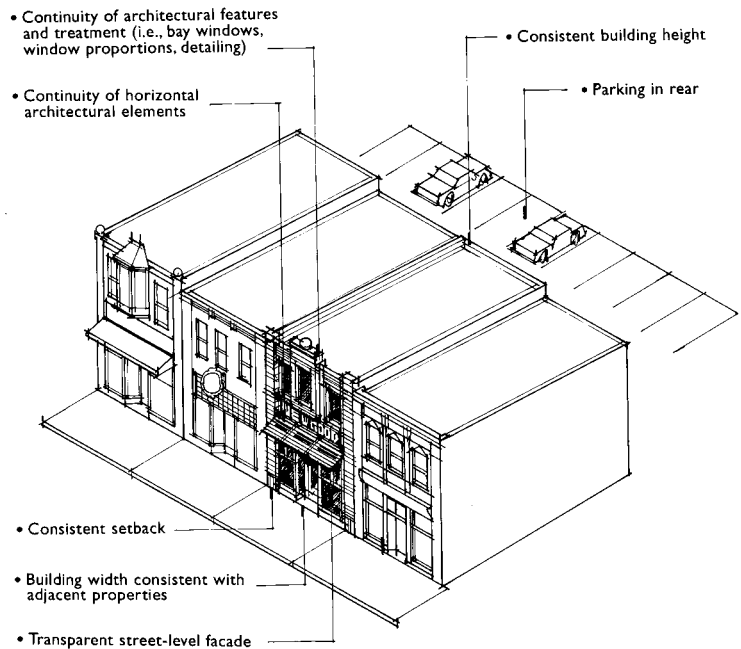


Clock tower design element as focal point

Infill Buildings

Infill buildings should:

- Contribute to the harmony (i.e., materials and color) of the street's appearance.
- Be designed to maintain a unified appearance with adjoining buildings. However, exact duplicates of neighboring buildings are discouraged.
- Contribute to the appropriate existing vertical and horizontal scale of the street. The mass, volume and height of new infill buildings should be compatible with neighboring buildings.
- The proposed facades for new infill buildings should relate to neighboring buildings in terms of window sill or header lines, proportion of window and door openings, horizontal or vertical emphasis and architectural detail.
- New infill buildings should fill the entire vacant space between neighboring buildings to create a continuous block of façades. If the vacant space is large, the infill building's façade should be divided into several façades of approximately the same length of neighboring buildings' façades.



The photos below show new complementary infill development for a historic district in a downtown setting. These are excellent examples of infill development that is in keeping with context, character, scale, material use, etc.



Examples of new development infill in scale with downtown



Other Guidelines

Signage

- Signs should not conceal architectural features.
- Sign lighting should not overpower the façade or streetscape. Flashing signs, electronic message boards, and internally lit, plastic signs are not allowed.
- The sign message should be simple—avoid redundant wording and unnecessary clutter.
- The sign design should be customized to complement the building character and the streetscape environment. No plastic signs.
- Projecting signs (up to 6 square feet) are allowed and encouraged. These signs must be installed below second floor windows.
- Signs should be constructed with long-lasting materials, high quality sign enamel paints and decay-resistant woods.
- Signs should not be placed on upper stories of buildings, as they draw attention away from storefront areas, which are the focal point of a business district.
- All obsolete signs should be removed within 30 days of a business closing. The business owner is responsible for removal of all signs.
- The scale of signage should be proportional to smaller buildings on the block and be consistent with the pedestrian environment.
- For sign regulations, refer to Chapter 16.16 of city code.



Examples of pedestrian-scaled building signage

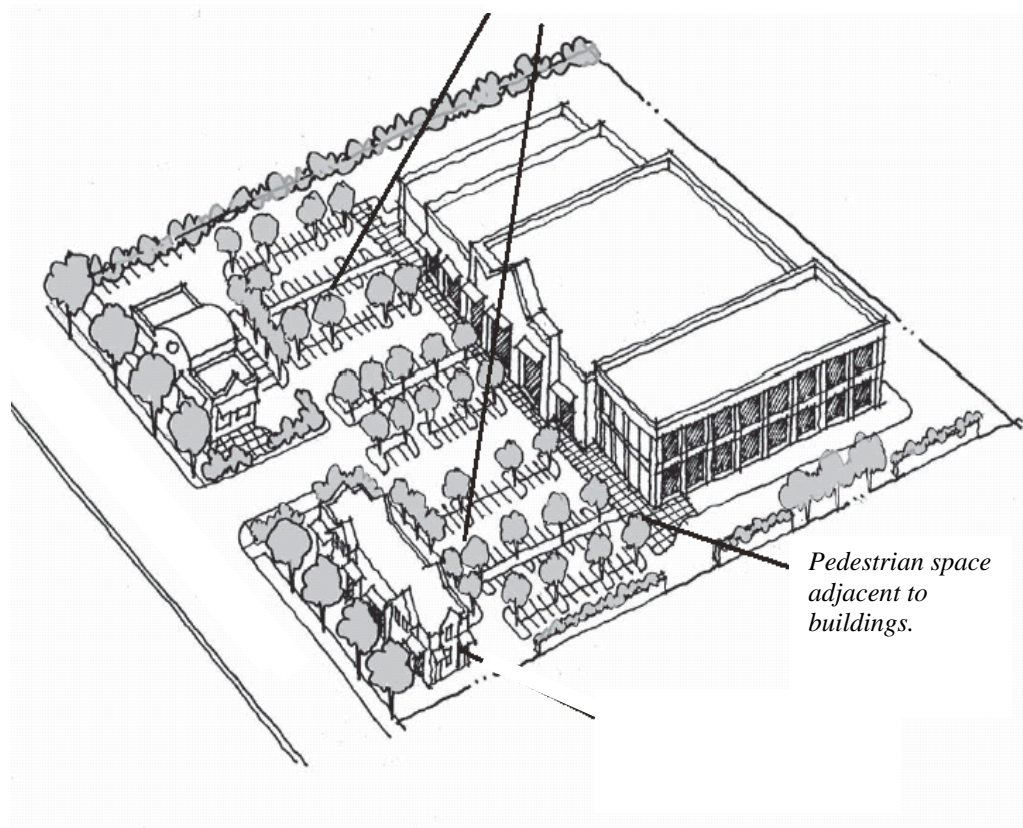
Parking



- Parking lots are discouraged in front of buildings.
- Rear lot parking should be used.
- Any parking adjacent to the street should be screened.
- Any parking adjacent to the street should be perpendicular or angled parking – not parallel.
- Pave, stripe, and light all parking areas.
- Provide attractive entrance signs to parking lots with identifying names or numbers and hours and days of enforcement.
- Provide bicycle parking racks at public lots.

Rear parking areas and entrances should contain pedestrian friendly amenities such as lighting, benches, landscaping, walkways, directory signage, etc.

Multiple walkways through parking lot and landscaping connect the site to the adjacent street(s) and create smaller parking areas in place of one large parking lot.



Lighting

To create a consistent North Barstow Area image, all exterior lighting installed must be appropriate to the area's architectural style.

- Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself.
- Building lighting should provide an even illumination level. Avoid flashing, pulsating, or similar dynamic lighting that poses a hazard to motorists.
- Avoid lights that glare onto streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties.
- Provide indirect lighting whenever possible.

Rear Building Entrances

- Rear entries and rear building facades should be finished and decorated using the same colors and materials that are used on the storefront.
- Pedestrian walkways should be provided to rear entrances and should be lit for pedestrian safety.
- Trash and utility areas should be screened.
- Landscaping should be provided for visual interest.

Building Demolition

- If demolition of an existing building occurs, the resulting void should be landscaped with sod or paved as a parking lot until development plans on the site commence.
- Any walls on neighboring buildings that are exposed because of a demolition must be refinished according to these design guidelines within 90 days of the demolition.