

TOWN OF SMITHERS



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

ALPINE THEME



PREPARED BY PENTANGLE DESIGN, 1997

INTRODUCTION TO ALPINE

In Alpine Europe, there is an assortment of architectural styles including Baroque, Rococo, Classical, Neoclassical and Roman. The only style uniquely Alpine, however, is the regional variation of the farmhouse. This distinctive style has incorrectly been called chalet when its true German name is Bauernhaus.

In mid-size to large cities, the sophisticated styles mentioned above predominate, but in villages and small towns, the Bauernhaus was and still is the predominant building style.

Smithers is a small town located in the mountains, so it is logical that architectural forms found in villages in the Alpine or mountainous regions of Europe would be quite appropriate. These architectural forms are different from those in any other region due to heavy snowfall and cold temperatures.

Within the Bauernhaus style there are more than adequate variations to allow for individuality in building designs. This document defines design elements which do or do not conform to the European-Alpine theme.



STARTING POINTS

1

MAKE MAINTENANCE A PRIORITY

Be prepared to routinely clean and repair your building. Its presentation is a selling point not to be underestimated.

2

APPRECIATE WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

Examine your building and preserve its best qualities or features. Some of the most effective improvements will be modest.

3

DESIGN WITH COMPATIBILITY IN MIND

Co-ordinate your design with neighbouring buildings and with downtown as a whole. To best consider options, seek professional design advice.

4

AVOID IMITATION

Seek out original ideas. The whole concept is to create a unique facade that will attract the customers you need.

5

ALWAYS STRESS QUALITY

For lasting results and long-term savings, use the best materials and craftsmanship you can afford.

6

SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Promote your business by taking an interest in co-operative promotional programmes with other downtown businesses.



SUBMISSION MATERIALS

Every submission to the Alpine Advisory Committee is to include the following descriptive materials.

1

SITE PLAN

This must show site coverage, setbacks, dimensions, relationship to adjacent properties, parking, grades and landscaping.

2

FLOOR PLANS

These must indicate type of occupancy, exterior doors, windows, balconies and roof projections.

3

ELEVATIONS

These must identify all materials and finishes, and locate and identify all light fixtures.

4

PERSPECTIVE DRAWINGS

This must show the building in context, with colours rendered as accurately as possible.

5

MATERIALS

Details of all materials shall be indicated on the perspective drawings, (i.e. type of wood, stucco, masonry and paint samples may be required).

6

SIGNS

A full colour rendition of all signage must be submitted.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- 1 **ARTICULATION**
- 2 **AWNINGS & CANOPIES**
- 3 **BALCONIES**
- 4 **COLOUR**
- 5 **CORNER BUILDINGS**
- 6 **DECORATIVE PAINTING**
- 7 **DECORATIVE WOODWORK**
- 8 **DOORS**
- 9 **FASCIA & RAFTERS**
- 10 **FRONTAGE**
- 11 **HALF TIMBERING**
- 12 **HEIGHT**
- 13 **LIGHTING**
- 14 **PROPORTION**
- 15 **REAR FACADES**
- 16 **ROOFING**
- 17 **ROOFLINE**
- 18 **SETBACK**
- 19 **SIDEWALLS**
- 20 **SIGNAGE**
- 21 **WALL MATERIALS**
- 22 **WINDOWS**

1

ARTICULATION

Alpine architecture is typically heavily articulated (the "ins and outs") with such elements as deep overhangs, projecting timbers, balconies, projecting upper levels, bay windows, recessed doors and windows, and flower boxes.

To generate the lively, interesting streetscape of an Alpine village, each facade needs some degree of relief detailing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Each facade should include at least two of the following elements: balcony(s), canopy(s), bay window(s), recessed window(s), recessed door(s), projecting timber work, flower boxes.
- All relief details should be compatible with neighbouring buildings both in height and depth.

2

AWNINGS & CANOPIES

By definition, awnings and canopies are rooflike projections extending over doorways or windows to provide protection from sun or rain. Awnings are constructed of less rigid materials and are frequently removable or retractable.

Awnings and canopies are rare in the Alpine idiom. Sheltering is provided by extensive overhangs, projecting balconies, projecting upper levels, or recessed doorways. With a similar mountain climate, Smithers will manage well with the same design parameters.

In keeping with the Alpine theme, construction of awnings and canopies in downtown Smithers needs to be curtailed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Awnings and canopies should be excluded from new construction.
- In renovating existing buildings, awnings should be removed or rendered neutral in colour and design, and canopies should be retrofitted with

Alpine design elements or disguised as balconies or pitched roofs.

- The minimum height above the sidewalk of any structural member is 9' 2" (2.80m), and 7'10" (2.40m) to 1'0" (0.30m) from the property line. The minimum setback from the curb edge is 2' 0" (0.60m).

3

BALCONIES

Shallow balconies figure significantly in Alpine design, sheltered by the deep overhangs and in turn sheltering doors and windows below. These balconies are a focal point for decoration, as well as the favoured location for flower boxes.

The construction of balconies is necessary to convey an Alpine image, add much-needed relief to the street facade while providing shelter from the elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Balconies, when present, should feature at least one of the following: scrolled heavy beams, scrolled posts, scrolled slats, flower boxes.
- The minimum height of balcony guard rails is 3' 6" (1.07m). The maximum space between slats is 4" (0.10m).
- The minimum height above the sidewalk of any structural member is 9' 2" (2.80m), and 7'10" (2.40m) to 1'0" (0.30m) from the property line. The minimum setback from the curb edge is 2' 0" (0.60m).

4

COLOUR

The traditional Alpine palette is based primarily on timeless, natural earth tones with more exuberant colours limited to accents, ornamental painting and murals. Downtown Smithers, in its own alpine environment, can comfortably adapt these traditional colours to its needs.

Adherence to a specific range of suitable colours is necessary if there is to be a sense of consistency and colour balance in the downtown area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In the true Alpine tradition, roofs should be red, brown, green or grey.
- Stucco should be white or off white. Pastels are appropriate only with white or off white accents on stucco trim.
- Wood elements should be stained with transparent wood-tone stain. A limited use of accent colours is acceptable on architectural features or details such as shutters and flower boxes.
- Brick and stone should not be painted.
- Metal window and door frames should be either a dark anodised finish or painted.
- Except for ornamental painting, murals and signage, no more than three colours should be used on one building.
- The bright or garish colours associated with some retail chains should be reduced to appropriate earth tones.
- All-white colour schemes and iridescent colours are not acceptable.
- A paint chip or colour sample for every element in the design, including signage, is to be submitted along with a colour rendering of the building.
- Encouraged:
living colour achieved by means of flower boxes and other plantings

5

CORNER BUILDINGS

In all towns and villages, corner buildings serve as anchors for the rest of the block, providing scale and presenting opportunities for landmark architectural features.

When viewed from a distance, the two street facades of a corner building become part of a unified design concept, making it necessary to treat both facades with the same care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Corner buildings should be taller than adjacent buildings in the same block.
- Corner buildings should be of a height similar to that of the other corner buildings at that intersection.
- Both street facades of a corner building should adhere fully to the Alpine theme guidelines.
- Encouraged:
landmark architectural features

6

DECORATIVE PAINTING

Ornamental designs, three-dimensional illusions and murals all have a place in the Alpine architectural vocabulary. Downtown Smithers already boasts several examples of such decorative painting.

A tasteful and limited use of decorative painting creates visual interest and a sense of community identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Painted decorative trim is acceptable on shutters and flower boxes and around doors and windows.
- Three-dimensional painting is acceptable around doors and windows when shutters are not present.
- Corner walls may be painted to simulate rectangular stone.
- Murals of any size should be an appropriate part of the overall design of the building, not an obvious attempt to disguise an awkward expanse of concrete block.

- * All decorative painting is subject to design approval.

7

DECORATIVE WOODWORK

Flat or sculpted scrolling at the fascia and around doors and windows is part of the Alpine vocabulary, as is the distinctive style of wood tracery (gingerbread) that originates in the Tyrol.

As with decorative painting, a limited use of high quality, decorative woodwork adds visual interest to the streetscape and helps create a sense of place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Decorative woodwork is encouraged, but any one variety should not be repeated on adjacent buildings.
- * With rare exceptions, decorative woodwork should be finished with transparent wood-tone stain.
- * All decorative woodwork is subject to design approval.

8

DOORS

The traditional Alpine door is solid wood or wood and glass, frequently arched, sometimes carved, and often recessed or appearing to be recessed due to the thickness of the ground level wall. Heavy cast metal hardware or all-wood operators are both common. The creation of such a solid, attractive entrance continues to be a business asset.

To adhere to the Alpine theme as well as to invite pedestrian business, appropriate door treatment needs special attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Doors are encouraged to be solid wood, panelled wood or panelled wood and glass, with real wood mullions.

- * Tinted or reflective glazing is inappropriate.
- * Doorways should be constructed of wood or stucco.
- * Frames of existing non-anodised metal doors should be painted a neutral colour.
- * Encouraged:
 - arched doors and doorways
 - carved doors and doorways
 - interesting hardware

9

FASCIA & RAFTERS

The expansive Alpine overhang usually requires rafter and lookout beams plus fascia. These elements always receive some form of decorative treatment.

The presence of ornamented rafters and fascia are an essential feature that must be retained in the Smithers adaptation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * For climatic reasons, rafters and lookout beams should not extend beyond the fascia.
- * Rafters and lookout beams, together with any accompanying bracing, should be either scrolled or provided with decorative faceplates.
- * Fascia should be either scrolled or multiple profile.
- * Adjacent buildings should not exhibit similar rafter or fascia treatment.

10

FRONTAGE

The creation of a pedestrian friendly environment is an important objective in downtown Smithers - an underlying purpose for the introduction of the Alpine theme.

To reinforce the pedestrian scale and compact

nature of the downtown area, the traditional 50' (15.24m) frontage width needs to be clearly expressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Traditional lot width should be articulated through the appropriate use of architectural details, even when the building will occupy several traditional lots.
- * Infill construction, while defining the traditional lot width, should maintain the continuity of the wall of buildings along the sidewalk.

11

HALF TIMBERING

To avoid possible wind penetration of the gap between timber and infill, exterior walls are generally fully enclosed. Thus wall timbers (half timbering) are rarely visible on the exterior of Alpine buildings and then only on upper stories.

In keeping with true Alpine style, half timbering must be limited appropriately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Half timbering should occur only on upper stories and should be both stylistically appropriate and structurally feasible.
- * Half timbering should be real wood, finished with transparent wood-tone stain.
- * In any given block, a maximum of two buildings may exhibit half timbering, and these should not be adjacent.

12

HEIGHT

Alpine structures are typically between 1 1/2 and 3 1/2 stories in height, with the lower level often set into the slope and the upper level frequently a half storey under exposed rafters. This height range is compatible with the needs of downtown Smithers.

4

To maintain a sense of continuity, the height of new construction needs to be consistent with that of existing adjacent buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * All construction is to be limited to between 1 1/2 and 3 stories with a maximum height restriction of 39'4" (12.00m).
- * Corner site buildings should be of a height similar to that of the other corner buildings at that intersection.
- * Where an existing, flat-roofed, short building is adjacent to a tall building, the visual transition between the two heights should be eased by the addition of a parapet or other roofline features to the lower building.

13

LIGHTING

The purpose of lighting in the traditional village is to illuminate sidewalk areas adjacent to each building as well as to attract evening business. Studies have also indicated that the more appropriate the lighting, the less chance of vandalism and crime.

To enhance the village feel of the downtown area, as well as to alleviate pedestrian safety concerns, building owners and businesses must take special care in choosing the secondary lighting of the street (by signage, facade and window lighting).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Lighting fixtures should be concealed unless they are especially attractive or part of the theme.
- * Track pot lights should be painted a neutral colour.
- * Storefront entrances should be illuminated with adequate, even light that does not create shadows.
- * Fluorescent, neon and coloured lighting are all inappropriate, as are internally lit awnings and blinking or intermittent lighting.

- * Encouraged:
incandescent or halogen lighting
recessed potlights, spotlights
metal-cast fixtures

14 PROPORTION

Certain elements of Alpine design consistently emphasise the vertical, while others always tend to the horizontal. The structure is often taller than its width, but with upper stories embellished with horizontal elements. Windows are usually elongated vertically, but presented in horizontal groupings. Balconies frequently extend the width of the building, but with vertical guard rail slats. The result is a pleasing balance of vertical and horizontal.

In keeping with Alpine design tradition, vertical and horizontal influences need to form a harmonious, balanced whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * There should be an overall balance between the vertical and horizontal, in both the general facade as well as facade elements.

15 REAR FACADES

Rear facades in an Alpine village receive a simplified version of the same treatment as the street facade. This is a suitable approach for Smithers, regardless of the theme.

Given that rear facades are very active and generally visible from sidestreets, buildings need to present a unified, tidy image from all angles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * The rear facade should receive wall treatment similar to that of the street facade. The same limitations with regard to acceptable materials should apply.

↳ Signage should be kept to a minimum.

- * Garbage and recycling bins should be kept tidy.

16 ROOFING

Traditional Alpine roofing materials are designed with the strength and profile to retain snow cover for insulation. The same visual effect can be achieved with modern roofing.

Every effort should be made to achieve the textured appearance of the Alpine roof.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Appropriate pitched roof materials include tile, simulated tile, standing seam metal, high profile asphalt shingles, and heavy wood shakes.
- * Standard overlap metal, low profile asphalt shingles, and plain wood shingles are not appropriate.

17 ROOFLINE

The single most defining shape of Alpine architecture is the low-pitched, gable-end roof with expansive overhangs, regardless of building size. An Alpine roof is designed to hold snow for insulation. The overhangs deal with ice buildup and help keep the area adjacent to the building free of snow. This type of roof is well suited to the Smithers climate.

To create an animated skyline in keeping with the Alpine theme, building profiles need to incorporate the characteristic low-pitched, overhung roof wherever possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * All sloped roofs or roof elements should be pitched between 3 in 12 and 6 in 12.
- * All overhangs on public facades should be 3'0" (0.90m) minimum where allowed by code.
- * Wherever possible, renovations should

incorporate elements of the low-pitched, overhung roof.

- * Mechanical equipment (such as air conditioning and ventilation, antennae and receiving dishes) should not be visible from street level.

18

SETBACK

In traditional town centres, European Alpine models included, commercial buildings form a wall of facades along main shopping streets, creating a comfortable, safe village atmosphere. This tendency to alignment is already evident in the downtown Smithers area.

To facilitate pedestrian access and to create a unified streetscape, setbacks need to be consistent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Renovation or new construction should maintain the consistent building alignment along the sidewalk edge in those blocks where this is already occurring.
- * Where there is no uniform alignment at the sidewalk, new construction should be within a range of 10% of the average setback in the block.
- * Where setbacks occur, the sidewalk material should match or be visually tied to the existing sidewalk.
- * Open spaces should be treated as courtyards with at least one of the following: tree(s), planter(s), decorative lighting, ironwork, bench(es), or landmark such as a clock.

19

SIDEWALLS

The introduction of an Alpine theme to downtown Smithers provides a means to address the sidewalk problems created by the present range of setbacks.

When a setback occurs, it is critical that the transition be attractive in order to draw pedestrian interest and to maintain a sense of cohesion in the streetscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Exposed sidewalls at street level should be finished in a manner that matches or enhances the street facade.
- * Upper sidewalls should be finished with the appropriate material and painted a colour compatible with the adjacent building.
- * Inappropriate materials on sidewalls include: metal cladding, exposed concrete block, obtrusive signage, unsympathetic colours.

20

SIGNAGE

In the traditional village, signage is aimed primarily at pedestrian traffic. As a design and advertising element, it is secondary to the look of the entire building. The downtown Smithers area also wants to see increased pedestrian use and would therefore benefit from this more traditional approach to signage.

To create a village ambience attractive to pedestrian traffic, downtown Smithers needs to advertise the entire area with a tasteful, coordinated approach to signage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Each business should display a maximum of two signs.
- * The total size of all forms of signage should be no more than one square foot for each lineal foot of frontage (one square metre per lineal metre).
- * Upper floor businesses should display no more than one sign per business per window and respect the one square foot for each lineal foot limit.
- * Signage may include business identification, dates and logos but not sub-text, advertising.

product descriptions, or national distributors.

- * Typestyles should be serifed or script. (Serifed styles have smaller lines to finish off main strokes of each letter. Script styles appear handwritten.)
- * Businesses committed to specific corporate typefaces should pay special attention to size of lettering and sign placement.
- * On fascia signs, letter width should not exceed 75% of the facade frontage, and letter height should not exceed 1' 4" (0.40m).
- * Storefront window signs should not exceed 20% of the total storefront glazing.
- * Each business may have one projecting sign, which should not exceed 25% of the signage allowance. Minimum clearance below a projecting sign is 9' 2" (2.80m) and maximum projection is 3' 0" (0.90m).
- * Door signs should be restricted to stating address and days and hours of business. "Open" signs should not be necessary.
- * On canopy signs, letter width should not exceed 75% of the canopy length, and letter height should not exceed 75% of the height of the valance.
- * Where permitted by bylaw, each business may have one sandwich sign, which should not exceed 25% of the signage allowance.
- * Rooftop signs, internally illuminated (backlit) sign boxes, moving or flashing signs, and signs with foam or metallic fish-scale lettering are all inappropriate.
- * Temporary flags or banners are appropriate only during festive community events.
- * Encouraged:
 - painted, carved or sandblasted wood
 - painted, etched or sandblasted glass
 - painted metal
 - iron or wood mounting brackets/bracing
 - 3-dimensional lettering

21

WALL MATERIALS

The walls of Alpine buildings are typically coursed stonework or parging at ground/entry level with upper levels either square logwork or parged. Half timbering is rare. (Square logwork is horizontal log construction done with squared-up logs. Half timbering is post and beam construction with infill walls, exposing the timberwork to the exterior.)

Adherence to this basic wall treatment is essential if an Alpine look is to be achieved in the downtown area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * All facades visible from the street should receive typical Alpine treatment.
- * Ground level walls should be coursed stone, river rock, stucco, wood siding or square logwork (either authentic or quality wood imitation).
- * Upper level walls should be stucco, wood siding or square logwork (either authentic or quality wood imitation).
- * Artificial brick or stone, fibreglass panels, glass block, polished stone, irregular stone slabs, exposed concrete block and exposed cast concrete are all inappropriate on visible facades.
- * Stucco should be rendered flat, without texture, swirls, patterns or glass chips.
- * Metal, plastic or vinyl siding or sheathing should not be used in place of real wood.
- * Mirrored or reflective materials are inappropriate.

22

WINDOWS

The dominant type of window in Alpine architecture is the vertically-elongated double casement with multiple panes. Recessed and/or arched windows are common, as are painted decorative trim, shutters and flower boxes. The Alpine winter limits glazing area, so the tendency is to modestly sized

windows, with those at street level only marginally larger than those above. Enticement to shoppers is offered by the overall effect of the building facade rather than by extensive window displays. This characteristic is readily duplicated in downtown Smithers.

Every building ought to present a well-designed, attractive facade that presents characteristic Alpine windows in place of unsubtle expanses of display glazing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

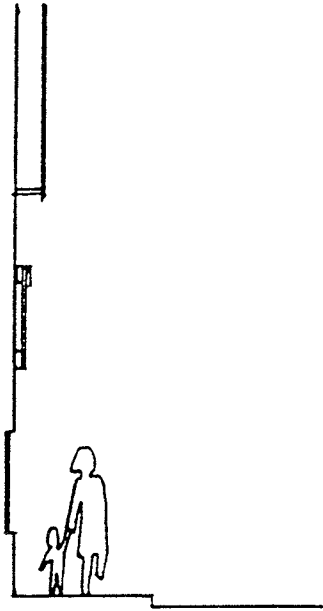
- * The building facade should be more wall than window.
- * Each individual window should be vertically-elongated, even in a horizontal grouping.
- * Windows in new construction are encouraged to be wood frame. Any operating sash should be casement.
- * All windows should receive one or more of the following treatments: recessing, shutters, painted decorative trim, gridded mullions.
- * Tinted or reflective glazing is inappropriate. Solar film to avoid heat gain may be acceptable in certain situations.
- * Existing metal frame windows should be disguised by applying wood trim, painting the metal a neutral colour, and adding either painted signage or false gridded mullions.
- * Encouraged:
 - arched windows
 - flower boxes



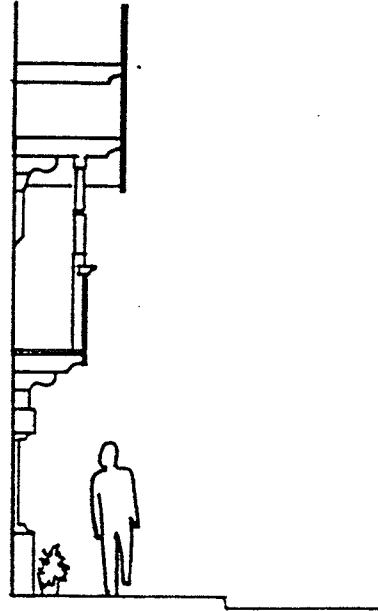
1

ARTICULATION

A well-articulated facade has lots of "ins and outs".



Poorly articulated.

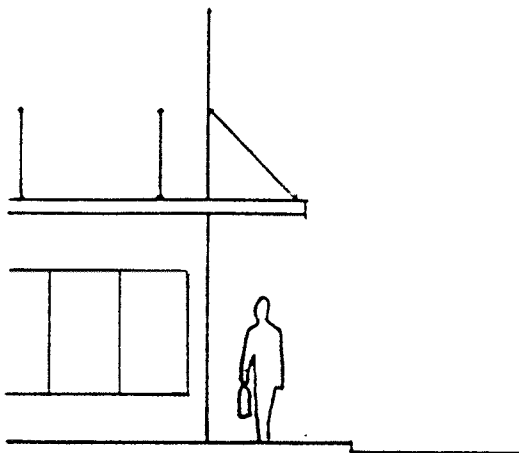


Well articulated.

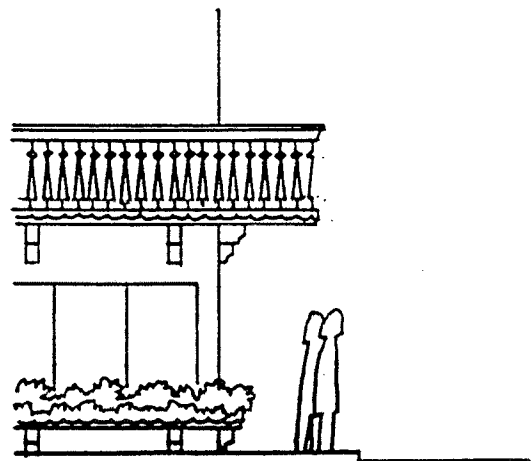
2

AWNINGS & CANOPIES

Effective conversions look realistic.

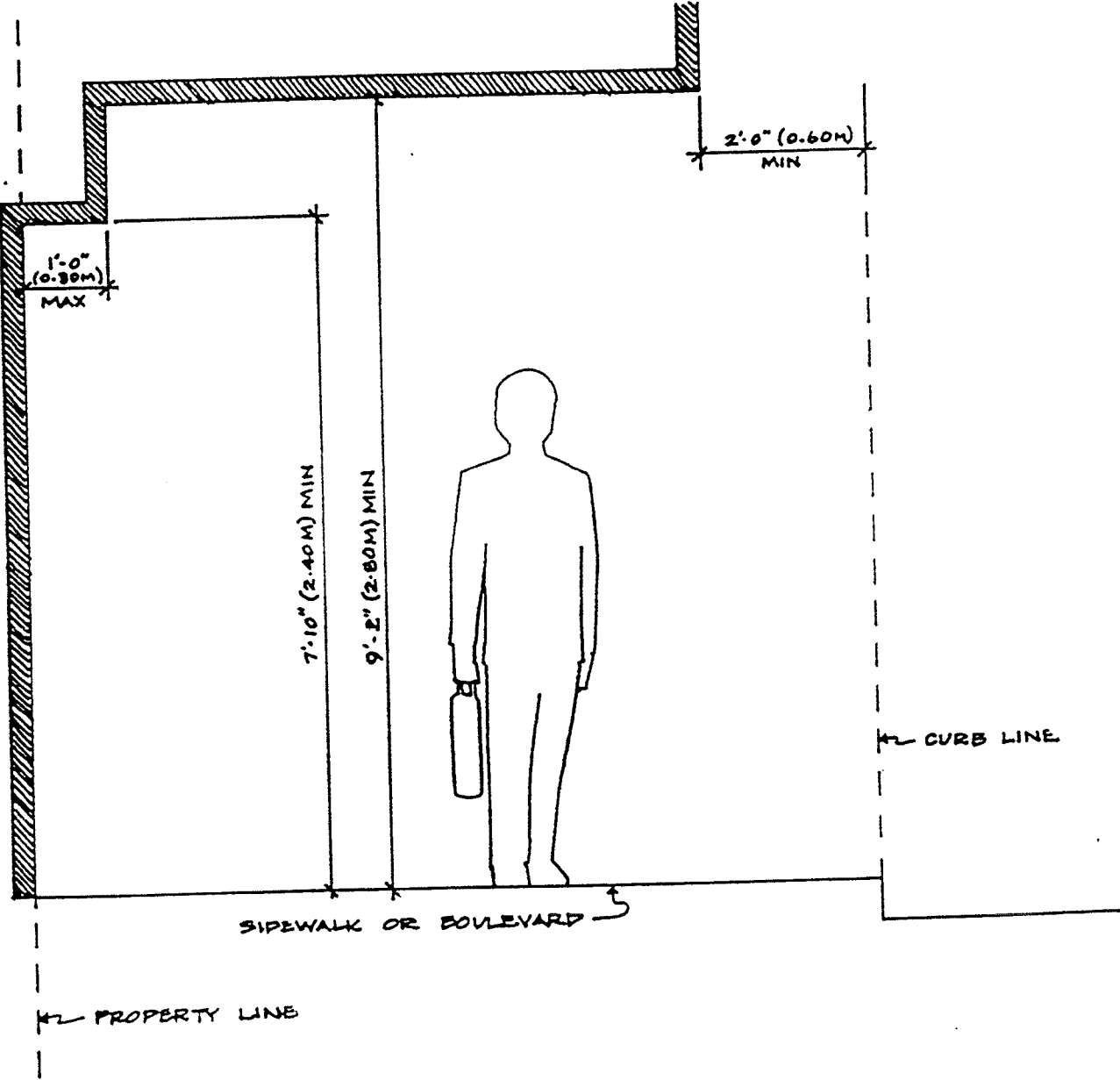


Original canopy.



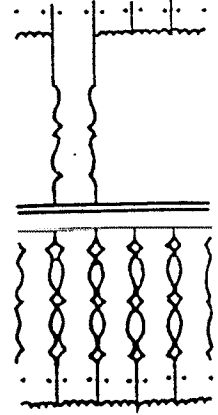
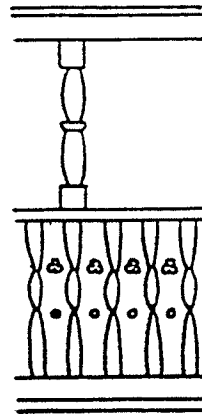
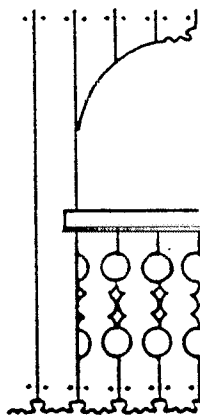
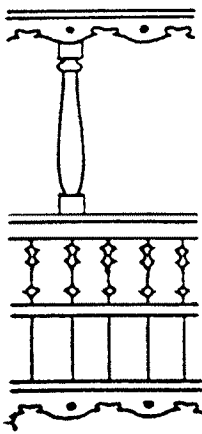
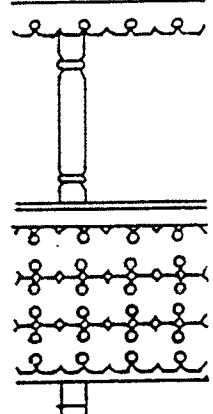
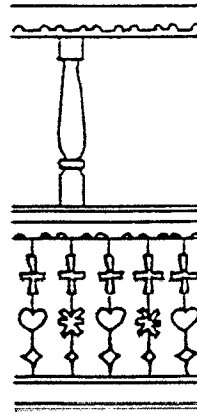
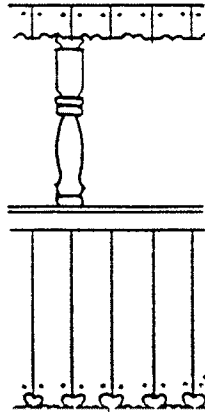
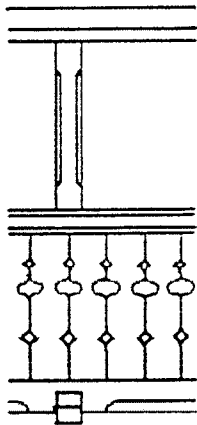
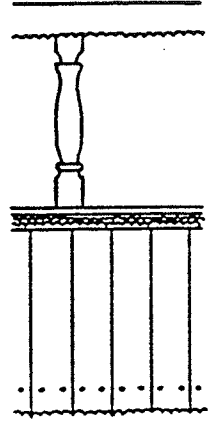
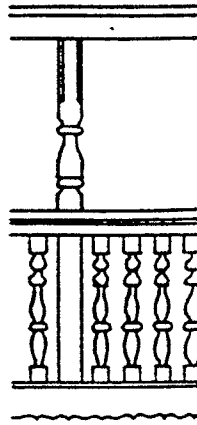
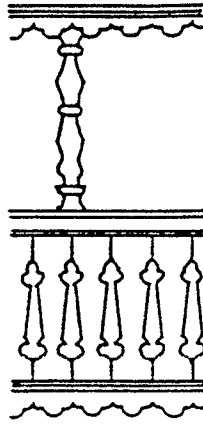
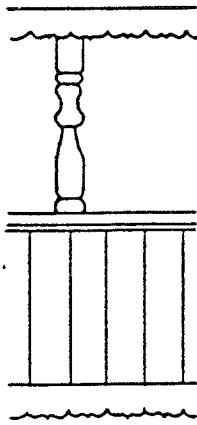
Conversion to balcony.

LIMIT OF PERMISSIBLE ENCROACHMENT

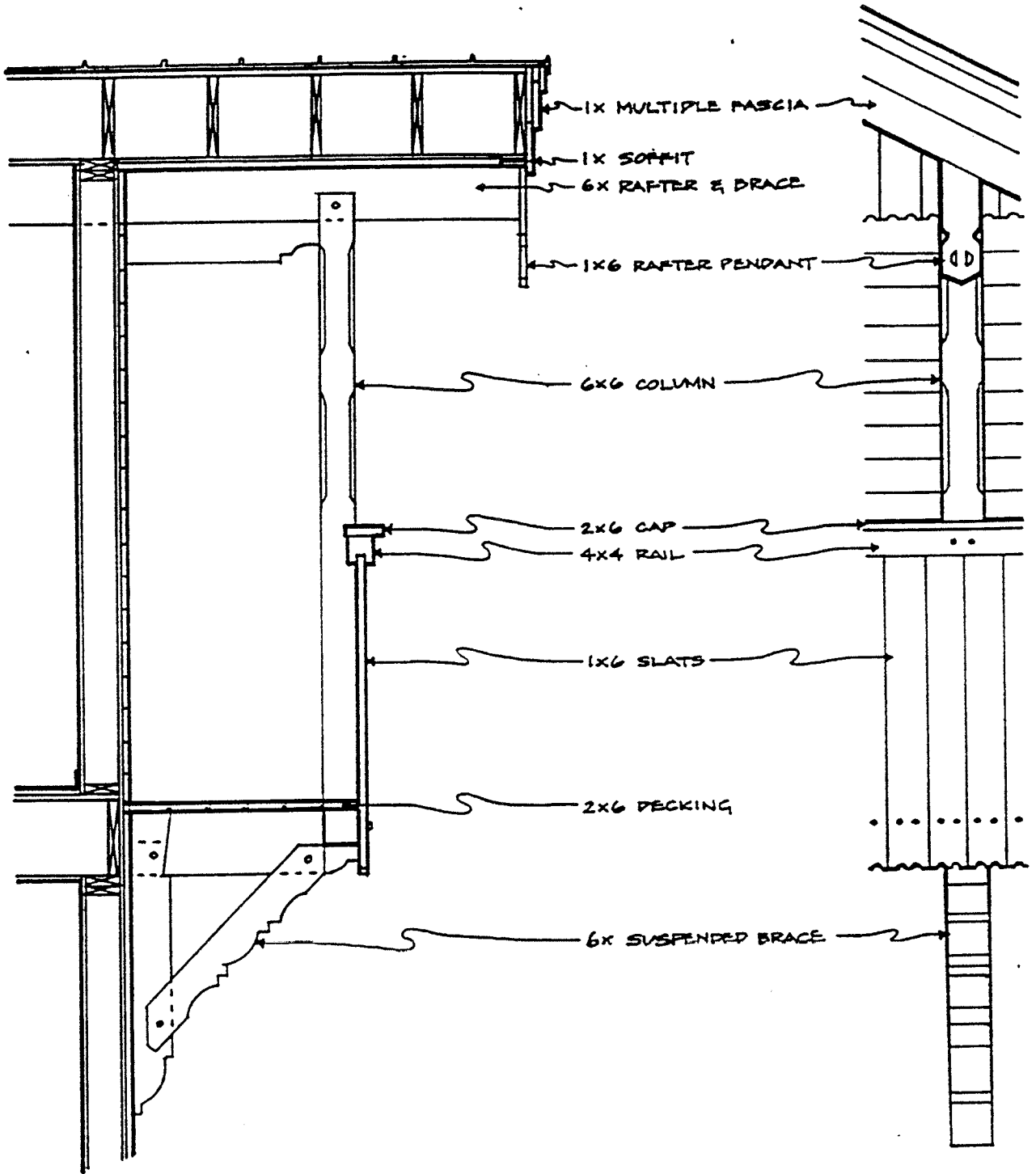


BALCONIES

A selection of columns and guards with fascia or gable trim.



EXAMPLE OF CONSTRUCTION DETAIL



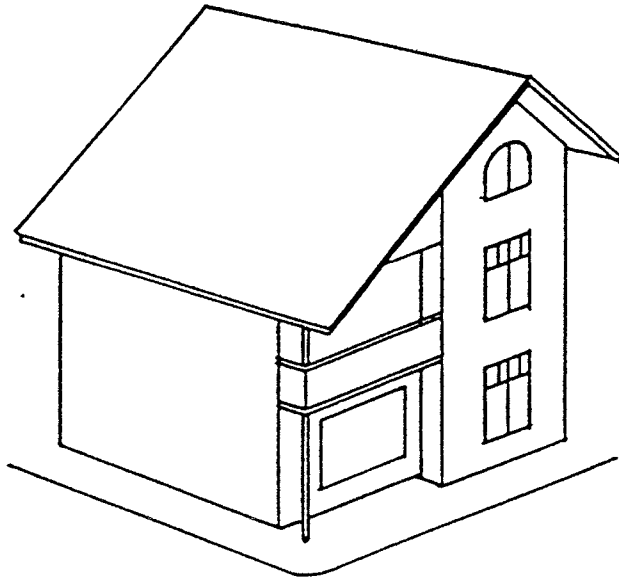
SECTION

ELEVATION

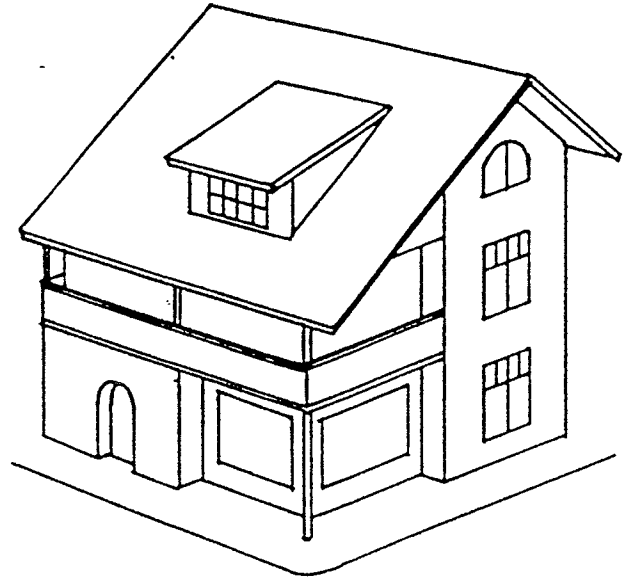
TYPICAL BALCONY

Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

5 **CORNER BUILDINGS**
Good design considers both facades.

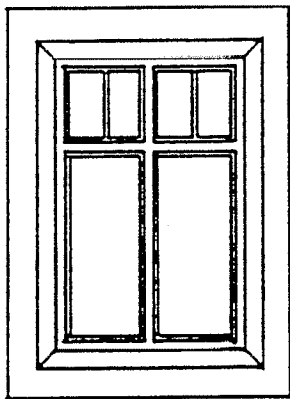


Sidestreet ignored.

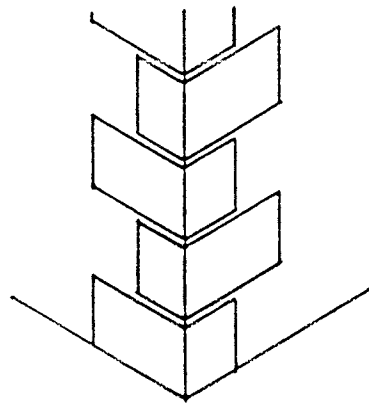


Both streets addressed.

6 **DECORATIVE PAINTING**
Examples of 3D painting:



False window framing.

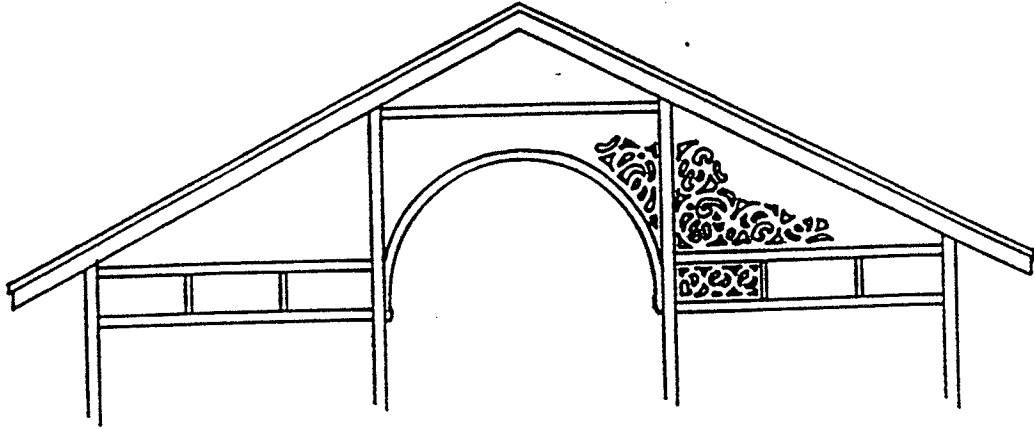


False corner stones.

7

DECORATIVE WOODWORK

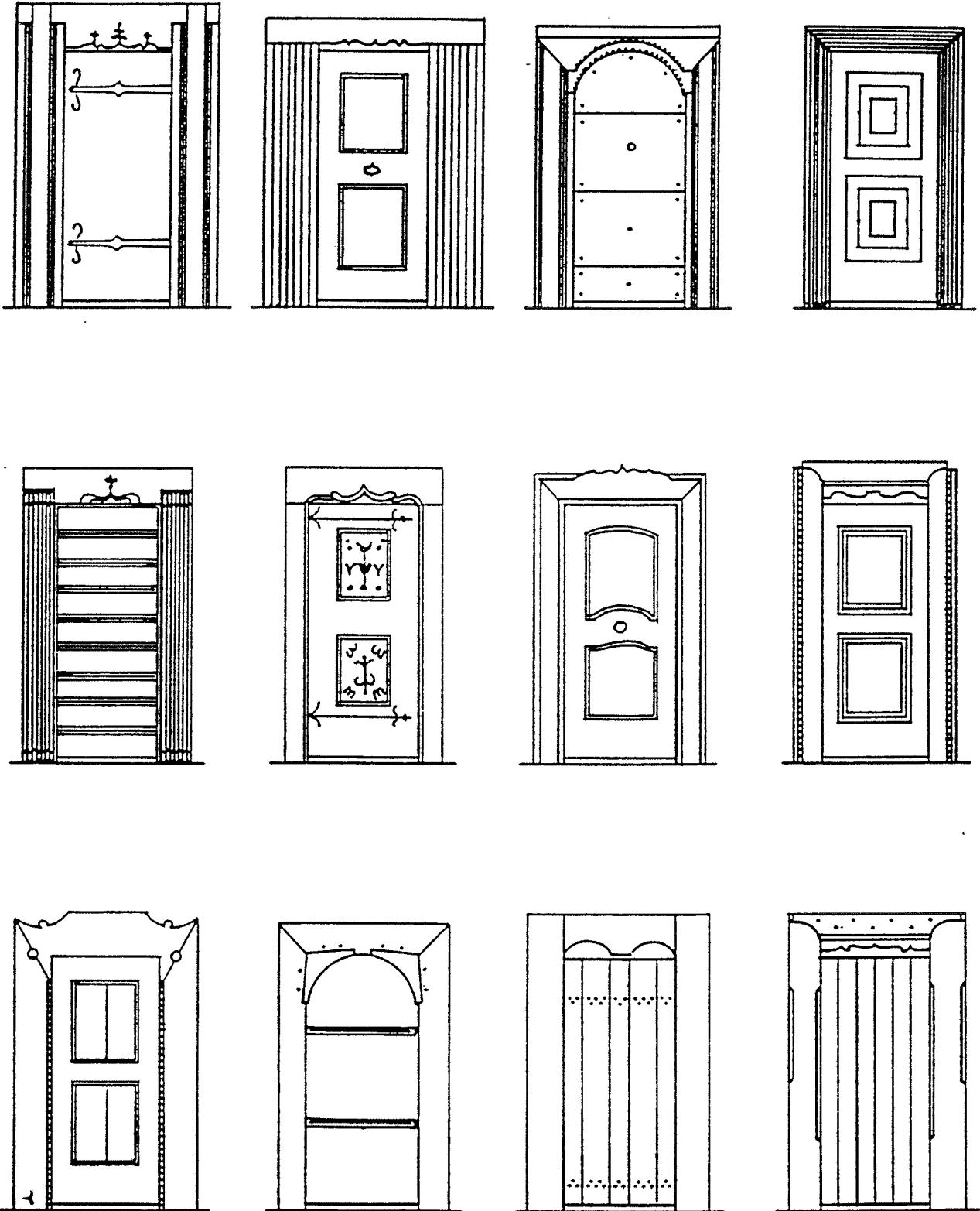
See Balconies (3), Doors (8), Fascia & Rafters (9) and Windows (22)
for a selection of decorative woodwork.



Tyrolean tracery above a gable balcony.

DOORS

A selection of doors with wood relief trim.

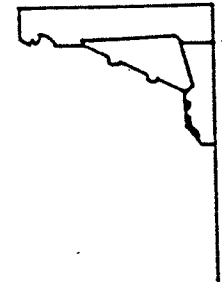
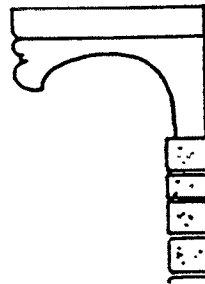
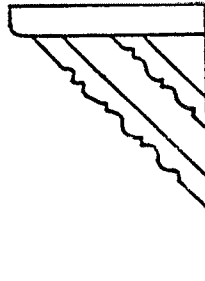
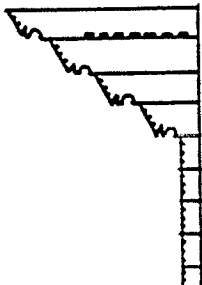
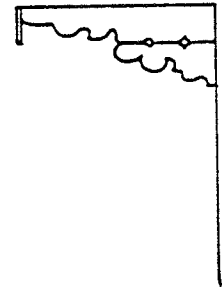
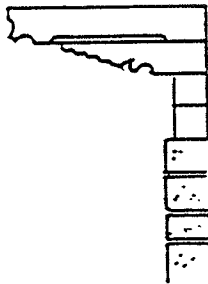
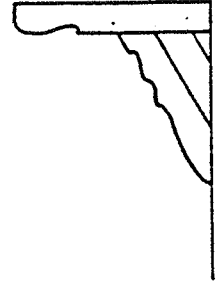
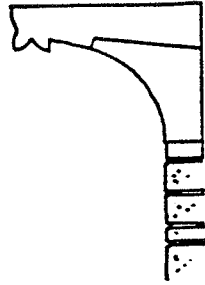
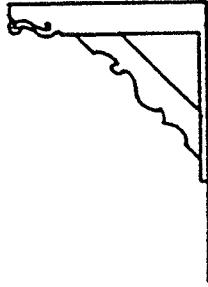
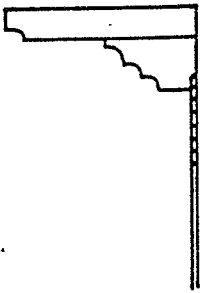


9

FASCIA & RAFTERS

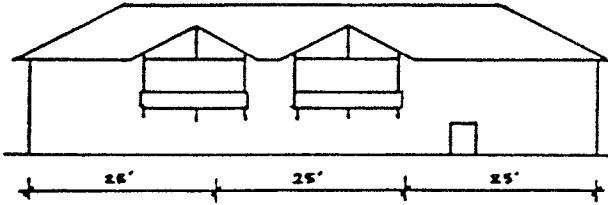
A selection of lookout beams and bracing.

For a selection of fascia treatments, see Balconies (3).

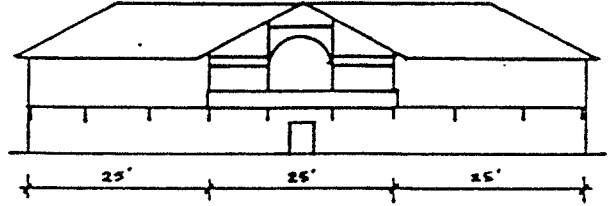


10 **FRONTAGE**

Repetition of traditional lot width creates street harmony.



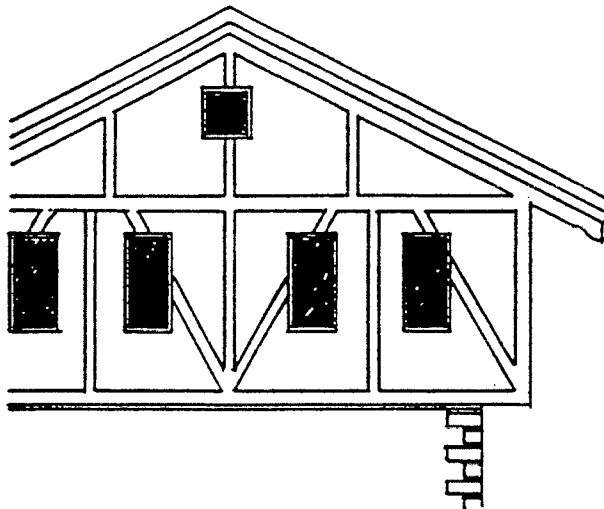
Frontage rhythm ignored.



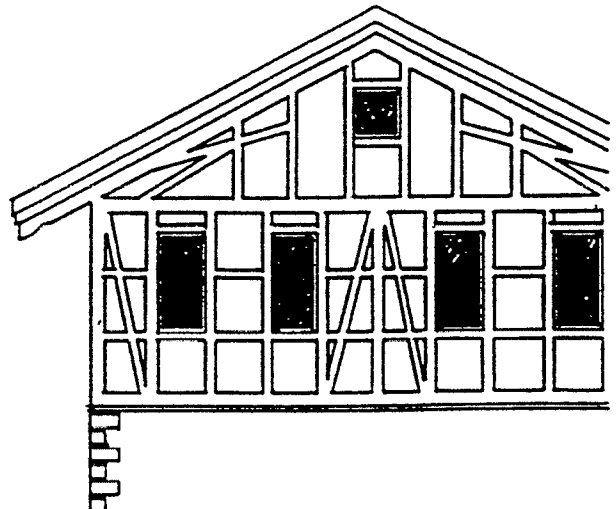
Frontage rhythm evident in the facade design.

11 **HALF TIMBERING**

Effective half timbering looks structural: All columns must appear to be supported.
All timbers must appear to be intact: uninterrupted by other facade elements.
All doors and windows must appear to be framed.



Structurally impossible.

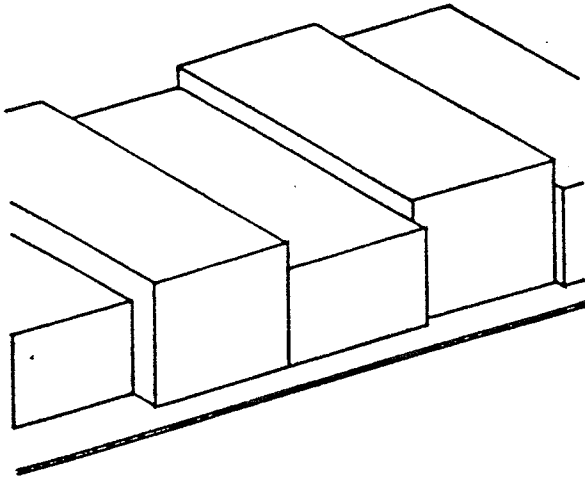


Structurally appropriate.

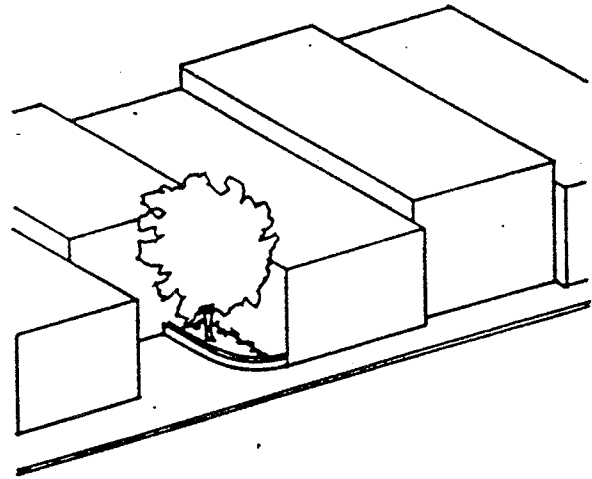
18

SETBACK

Consistent building alignment along the sidewalk edge creates a unified streetscape.



Consistent alignment.

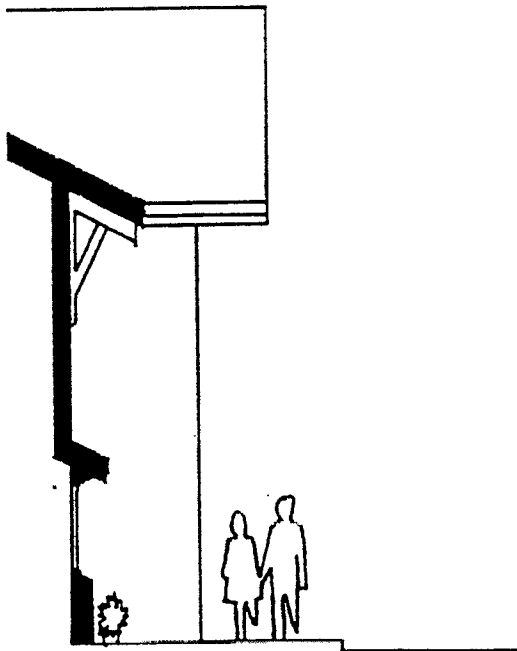


Inconsistent alignment requires courtyard treatment.

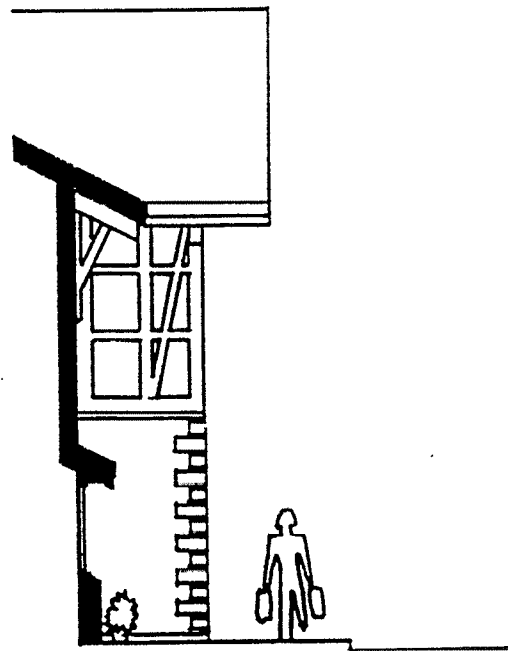
19

SIDEWALLS

Exposed sidewalls are part of the primary facade.



Sidewall ignored.



Sidewall treated as facade.

SIGNAGE

Serifed and script typestyles are acceptable.

Nonserifed

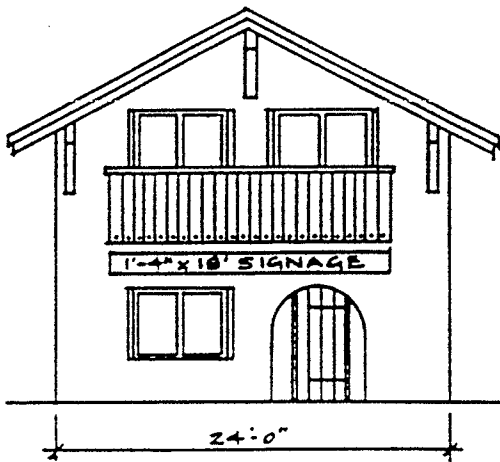
not acceptable

Serifed

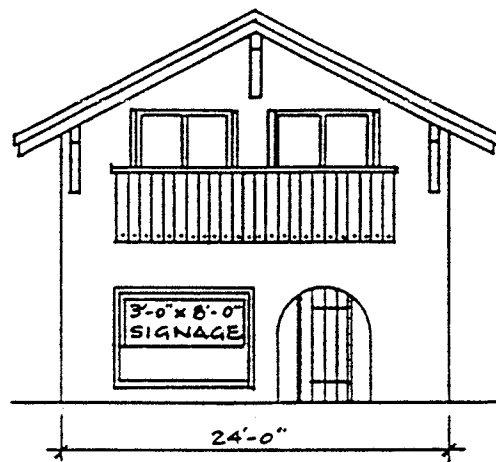
and

Script

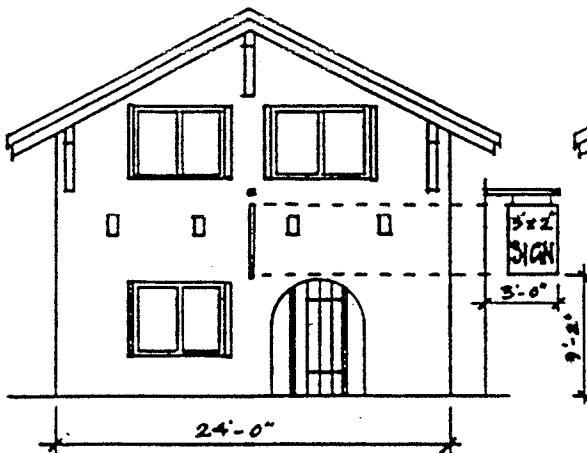
acceptable



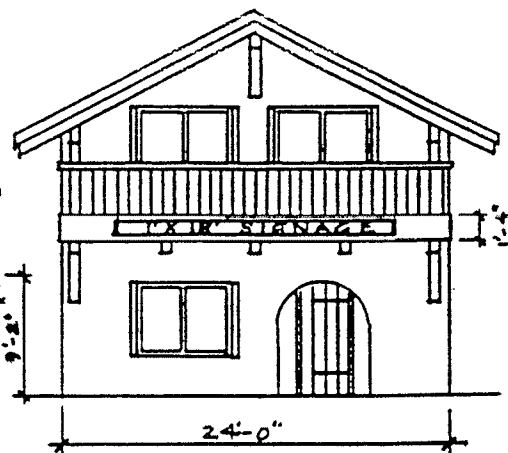
Fascia sign example.



Storefront window sign example.



Projecting sign example.

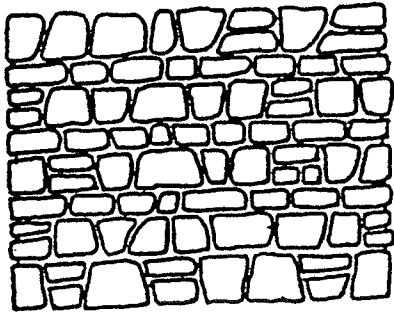


Canopy sign example.

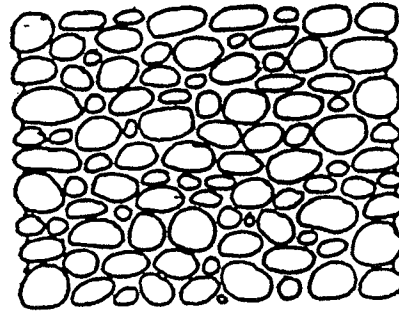
21

WALL MATERIALS

Two types of stonework are appropriate:



Coursed stone.

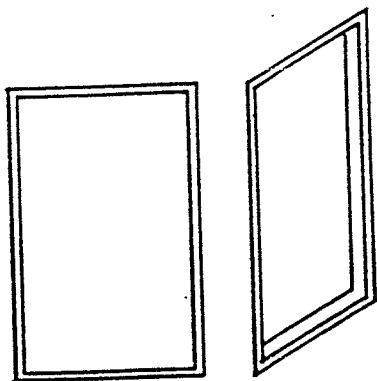


River rock.

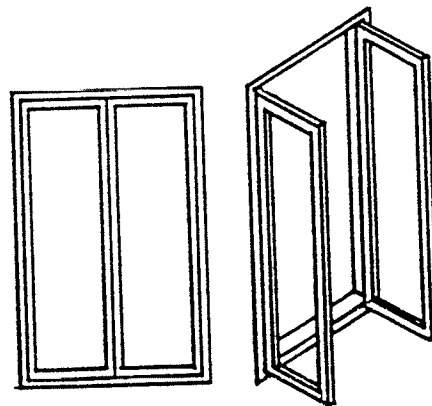
22

WINDOWS

Two types of windows are appropriate:



Fixed.



Casement.

WINDOWS

A selection of windows with wood relief trim.

