

COMMERCIAL BUILDING FORM

The Downtown Historic District gains its distinct character from the similarity of the buildings located there. Commercial facades of differing styles, ages, and size use certain basic components in a coordinated manner to achieve a cohesive appearance. These basic components together create a store front at ground level and, for two story structures, an upper facade.

Whether one or two story, historic commercial buildings have a distinctive shape created by parapets and cornices. The parapet and building cornice serve to visually cap the building.

The upper facade is usually fairly solid in appearance pierced by windows at regularly spaced intervals. Ornament may surround the windows or divide the vertical bays.

The storefront is much more open in character compared to the relatively solid upper facade. This division between the ground floor and the upper stories scales the streetscape to a pedestrian level. The continuous line of display windows, often with awnings, create the feeling of an outdoor room.

COMMON FEATURES OF HISTORIC COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

*tops of buildings, known as
the cornice, are often
ornamented*

*roofs, usually a low slope shed or
gable, are hidden behind a short
wall known as a parapet*

*upper windows,
usually double-
hung sash placed
symmetrically and
regularly placed,
may have
decorative arches,
hoods, or
brickwork*



signboard area, traditional location for signage

*cornice
above
storefront*

*transom
windows*

*awnings shelter
sidewalk and storefront*

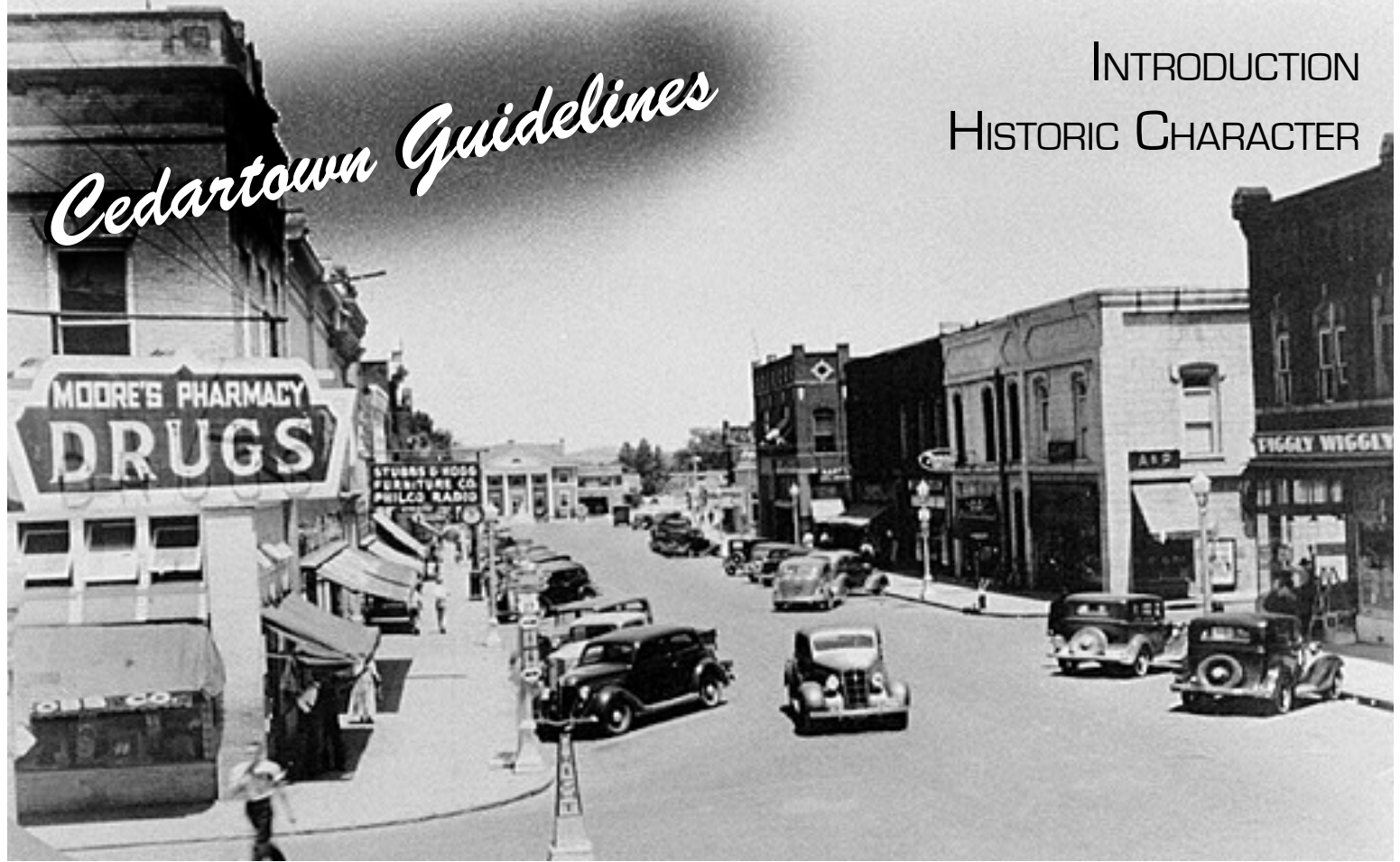
*display
windows*

*bulkheads beneath
the display windows;
generally wooden*

*full or three
quarter glazed
doors, sometimes
double doors*

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RESIDENTIAL BUILDING FORM

Unlike historic commercial areas, building forms in historic residential areas evolved with changing tastes and styles. Consequently, development patterns have more impact on the dominant forms within neighborhoods than do the use of the buildings as residences. Context may change from street to street or as one travels further along a street.

Nonetheless, there are common elements among houses that create their form. These should be prime considerations when working on a historic house or designing a new house within a historic area.

A building's verticality, symmetry, and solid-to-void ratio are created by its various components such as the roof, main body, secondary blocks, openings, porches, etc.

COMMON FEATURES OF HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

roofs:

- ▲ *increase or lessen verticality through pitch and shape*
- ▲ *create symmetry or asymmetry through shape and secondary roof forms*

main body/secondary blocks:

- ▲ *increase or lessen verticality through story height*
- ▲ *create symmetry or asymmetry through placement of secondary blocks*

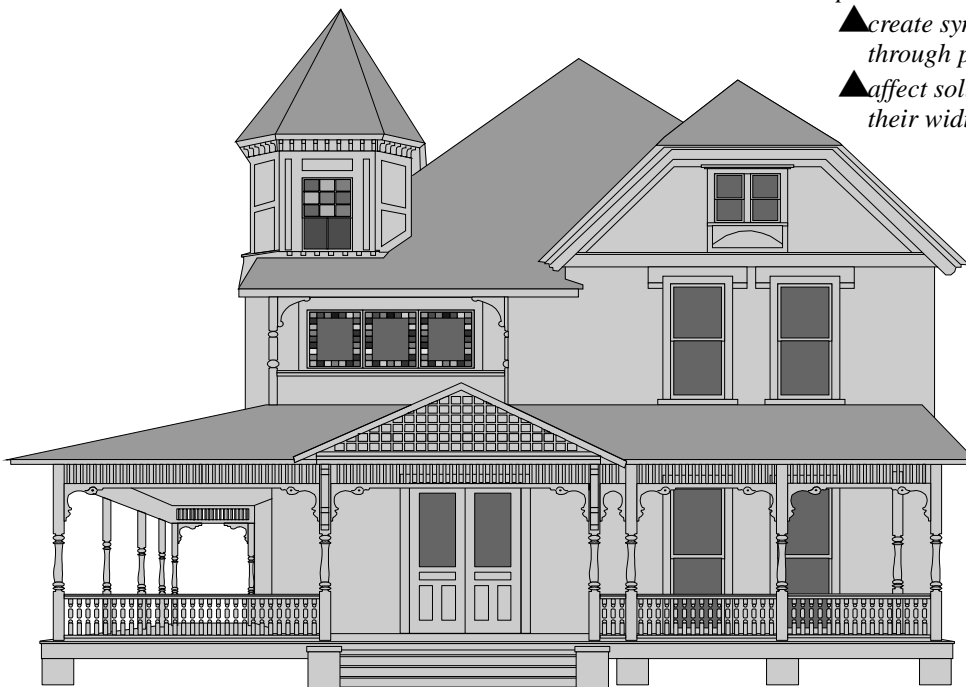


windows and doors:

- ▲ *increase or lessen verticality through shape and placement*
- ▲ *create symmetry or asymmetry through placement*
- ▲ *affect solid-to-void ratio by their size and number*

porches:

- ▲ *create symmetry or asymmetry through placement*
- ▲ *affect solid-to-void ratio by their width and depth*



foundations:

- ▲ *increase or lessen verticality through their height*
- ▲ *affect solid-to-void ratio by their construction (pier vs. solid)*