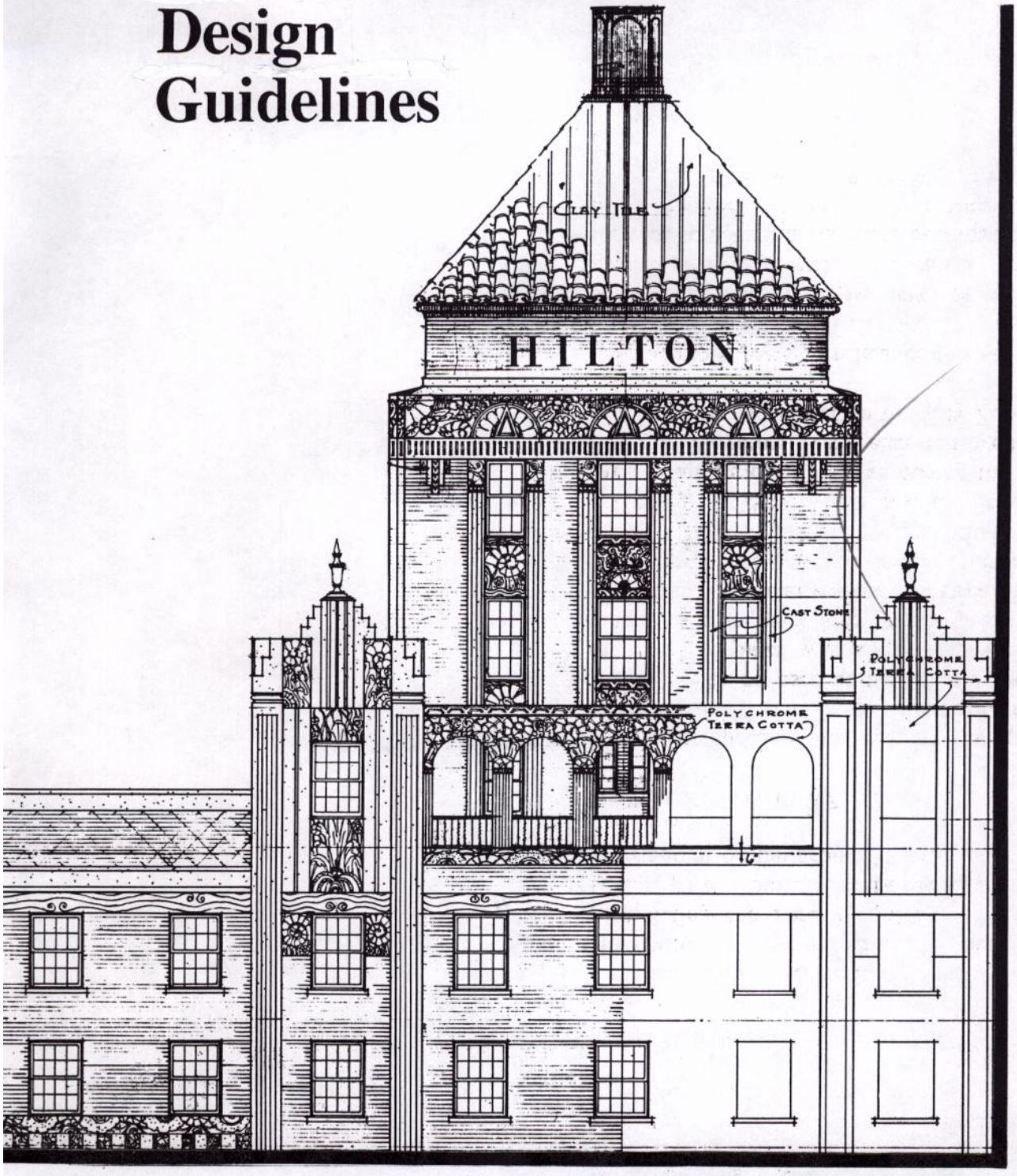
Design Guidelines



DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
URBAN DESIGN DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS

THIS BROCHURE WAS PREPARED WITH THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

SPECIAL THANKS TO MORRIS BROWN AND THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, EL PASO CHAPTER, FOR THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES 1
Purpose . . . 2
Enabling Legislation . . . 2
History . . . 3

THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT 5
Downtown Historic District Map . . . 6
Landmarks . . . 7
Zones of Development . . . 17

GUIDELINES 23
General Considerations . . . 24
Site Development . . . 24
Height and Scale . . . 24
Setbacks . . . 25
Proportion . . . 25
Pattern and Rhythm . . . 26
Site Details:
Sidewalks . . . 27
Lighting . . . 27
Landscaping . . . 28
Fencing . . . 28
Parking . . . 29
Building Elements:
Roofs . . . 29
Cornices . . . 30
Openings:
Windows . . . 30
Awnings and Canopies . . . 32
Modernization:
Security . . . 33
Materials and Finishes: 34
Masonry . . . 34
Wood . . . 34
Metal . . . 35
Street Furniture . . . 36
Mechanical Equipment . . . 37
Storefronts . . . 37
Signs . . . 39

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION 43
Infill Construction . . . 44
Additions . . . 44

MAINTENANCE . . . 45
Cleaning Masonry . . . 46
Cleaning Wood . . . 46
Cleaning Metal . . . 46

BIBLIOGRAPHY/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . 47

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

Purpose
Enabling Legislation
History

"The Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic District are a set of recommendations for the rehabilitation and/or new construction of structures throughout the Downtown Historic District, but should not be construed as to preclude growth and flexibility. The Historic Landmark Commission has a duty to consider all request for exceptions based upon not only historical significance, but also the economic significance to the Downtown Historic District and the City of El Paso and the economic impact that each property will encounter in meeting the suggested guidelines.

Generally, design guidelines serve to improve the quality of physical change, protect investments, protect existing architectural characteristics, and prevent incompatible new construction. Specifically, these guidelines have been established to preserve the unique character an identity of Downtown historic landmarks and their environments. They are also intended to serve as an outline for new construction, so that future development will harmonize and support existing structures.

Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic District are meant to be utilized not only by professional, but by property owners who aspire to participate in the revitalization of their community.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the ordinance are:

To protect, enhance and perpetuate historic landmarks which represent of reflect distinctive an important elements for the city's, state's, or nation's architectural, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, ethnic and political history and to develop appropriate settings for such places;

To safeguard the city's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such historic landmarks by appropriate regulations;

To stabilize and improve property values in such locations;

To foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;

To protect and enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors and provide incidental support and stimulus to business and industry;

To strengthen the economy of the city;

To promote the use of historic landmarks for the culture, prosperity, education and general welfare of the people of the city and visitors to the city.

ENABLING LEGISLATION

The City of El Paso made a commitment to historic preservation in 1978, when City Council passed the El Paso Landmark Preservation Ordinance Number 6243. City Council found and declared that as a matter of public policy:

The protection, enhancement, preservation and use of historic landmarks is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the culture, prosperity, education and general welfare of the people.

HISTORY

In 1854, El Paso (then called Franklin) was a small village of adobe houses. They were scattered along an old trail called the Alameda, stretching from the plaza to the river crossing, a segment of the ancient Camino Real highway from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Acequias (irrigation ditches) ran along the dirt streets beside cottonwoods to fields and orchards of grapes, peaches, and apricots.

The Mexican side of the Rio Grande (Ciudad Juarez) had an estimated population of 10,000 people. There was active commerce between the two communities by ferry.

In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Mail service arrived in El Paso. Four times a week the sound of the conductor's horn announced the arrival of the mail and up to nine passengers. The Overland Stage used the corner of Overland and S. El Paso streets for its corrals and offices.

Anson Mills came to El Paso before the Civil War, and platted, in June of 1859, what is now the downtown area.

The El Paso City Government was established in 1873. During the same time frame, Pioneer Plaza was considered the center of town. Nearby, a bar owned by El Paso's future first mayor, Ben Dowell, served as the town's social center. An acequia ran just below San Francisco Street and cut across the front of Pioneer Plaza where the Mills Building currently stands. On the north bank of the acequia (on South El Paso Street) there were several cottonwood trees, one of which was used as a "newspaper tree" -- residents posted notices on a board nailed to it.

In 1880 Fisher Satterthwaite began the landscaping of San Jacinto Plaza. It was he who also built the fountain and put alligators in it. The Southern Pacific railroad arrived in El Paso May 26, 1881 bringing with it developers and capitalists. Construction materials changed from adobe to wood and brick as downtown tried its best to look Eastern instead of like an old pueblo.

The original downtown commercial district in 1885 began at Second Street (Paisano) and extended north on El Paso Street to Pioneer Plaza. By 1990, this business core began to migrate north and east, around San Jacinto Plaza and on to San Antonio, Texas, and Mills streets. The 1910s, 20s, and 30s were the decades of constructing major buildings which are still part of the El Paso skyline.

Through World War II and into the 50s, downtown remained secure as El Paso's business and financial center.

After the war several factors contributed to the decline of downtown. The city limits greatly expanded to keep up with the doubling of the population. In the 1960s construction of Interstate 10 began together with the rapid growth of the city away from downtown. The new bridges built as a result of the Chamizal treaty, the termination of the international streetcar service and the peso devaluation of the 70s all contributed to the shrinking of the retail market.

In a move to strengthen downtown's hold as a financial and governmental center, new buildings were erected during the 60s and 70s. New bank high rises were constructed at the corner of Main and Mesa, and Mills,

Stanton, and Texas. A new City Hall and Civic Center took several blocks between W. Missouri, Santa Fe, Durango, and San Antonio streets. An 18 story office building was erected in the half-block between Stanton, Kansas and Myrtle streets. A new Federal building, a County Jail, and current construction on the County building, all on east San Antonio Street, complete this building phase. Although these buildings were designed in the architectural idiom of their time, none are compatible with their neighbors of the last part of the 19th and early 20th century. These buildings stand in isolation to each other and to the historic downtown core.

In the 1980s several historic landmarks were restored or rehabilitated. Taking advantage of liberal Federal tax credits and UDAG grants, the El Paso del Norte Hotel, the Cortez Hotel, the old White House department store, the State National Bank, the W.S. Hills building, the Singer Sewing Machine building, the U.S. Post Office, the Robert Banner building, and the First National Bank building, were restored.

The Palace Theatre, the El Paso National Bank building, the Mills building and the Popular Dry Goods Company were so altered as to have lost a signifcant level of architectural integrity.

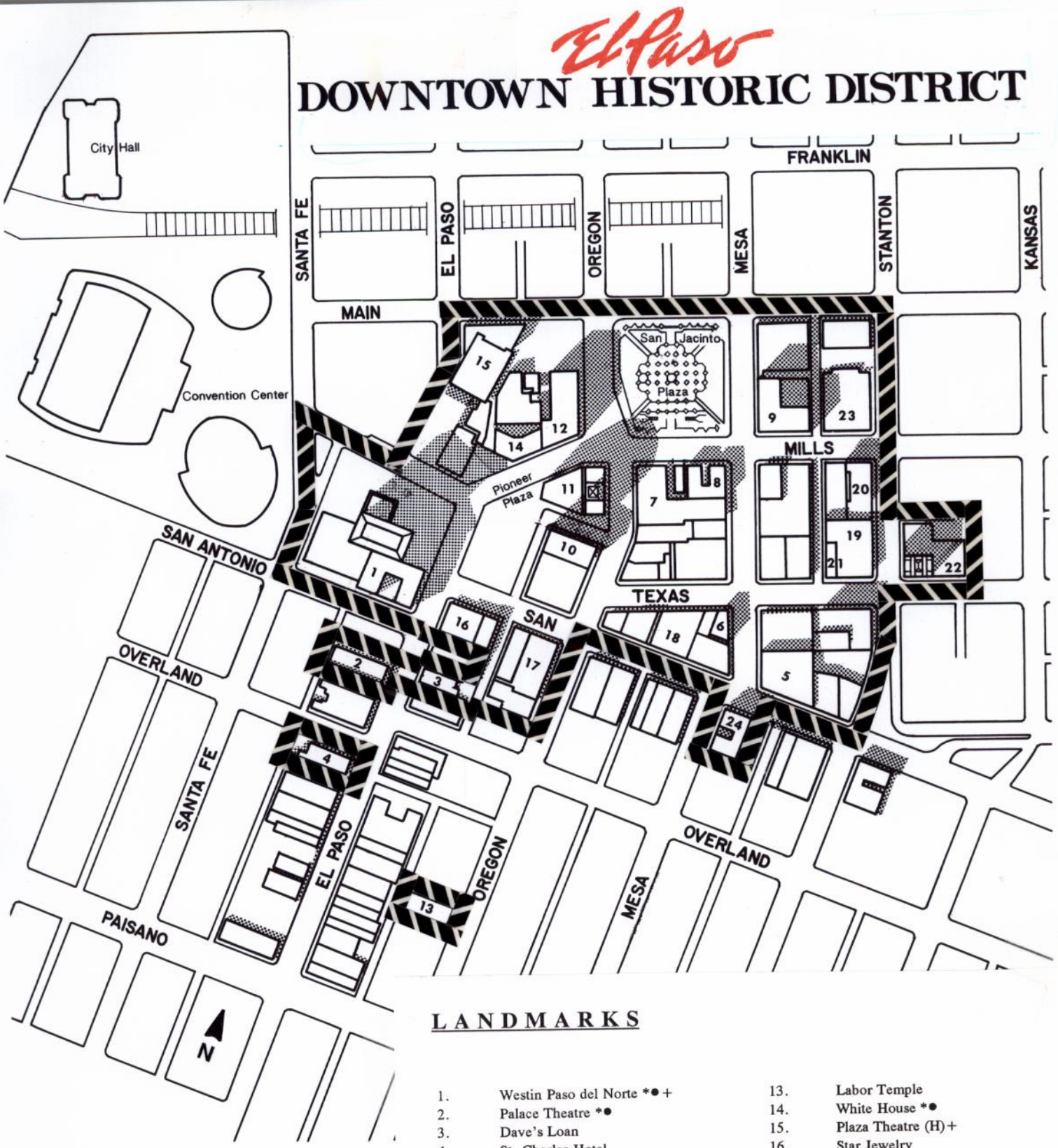
Other important historic landmarks remain to be restored, including the Bassett Tower, the Kress building, the former Hilton Hotel, the St. Charles Hotel, the Robert Banner building, the Plaza Theatre, and the Star Jewelry building.

THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Downtown Historic District Map
Landmarks
Zones of Development

In an effort to protect and preserve El Paso's most important historic landmarks and, with them, an urban environment, the Historic Landmark Commission and the City Plan Commission both recommend the creation of a Downtown Historic District. These Design Guidelines are intended to be part of this Downtown Historic District.

El Paso
DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



LANDMARKS

1. Westin Paso del Norte *● +
2. Palace Theatre *●
3. Dave's Loan
4. St. Charles Hotel
5. Popular Dept. Store *●
6. Abdou Bldg. *●
7. Kress Bldg.
8. Robert Banner Bldg. *●
9. Cortez Bldg. *● +
10. 1 Texas Tower *●
11. Plaza Hotel *●
12. Mills Bldg. ●
13. Labor Temple
14. White House *●
15. Plaza Theatre (H)+
16. Star Jewelry
17. State National Bank *● +
18. W.S. Hills Bldg. *●
19. J.J. Newberry Bldg. *●
20. Martin Bldg. *
21. Singer Sewing Machine Bldg. *●
22. Bassett Tower *● +
23. U.S. Post Office *+
24. Caples Bldg. ●

* National Register of Historic Places
● Henry Trost
\+ Significant Interiors

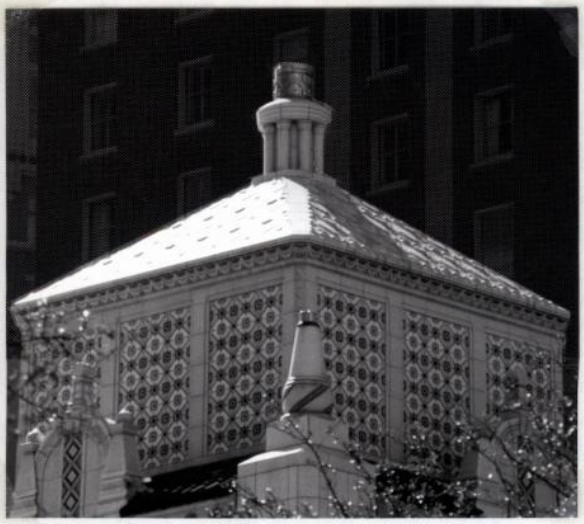
LANDMARKS

El Paso grew in spurts during different time periods. Consequently, there exists a wide variety of architectural styles within the downtown district. Since South El Paso Street was the beginning of downtown, here are found the wooden 'false front' facades, ornamented Victorian Queen Anne, and the Beaux Arts styles that reflect the 1880s and the gay 90s. The turn of the century saw the emergence of the Chicago School of architecture represented by mid-rise concrete office buildings, department stores, and hotels. The 1930s introduced the first skyscrapers to El Paso. These structures were supported by reinforced concrete or steel frames with exteriors decorated with Art Deco accents. What follows is a brief discussion of these distinct architectural styles present within the district.

ART DECO

Art Deco emerged as a new architectural style during the late 1920s. It is marked by linear, hard edged, or angular geometric forms, and by the use of setbacks in the building facade. Art Deco buildings were ornamented with stylized decoration in the same material as the building itself or in metals, colored glass, or decorative ceramic tiles. Art Deco tends to dramatize rather than actually reflect the structure beneath.

In the Downtown Historic District there are three Art Deco landmarks.



Kress Building

The Kress Building was designed by Edward Sibbert in 1937. It has three street elevations: Mesa, Mills and Oregon. It also has an eighty foot tower on the corner that faces San Jacinto Plaza. The Kress Building is a dramatic display of terra-cotta in oyster white with red, blue, green and gold ornamentation. Design is generally Moorish with Spanish touches in the wrought iron balconies. The Kress Building was added to the El Paso Historic Sites Inventory in 1978.

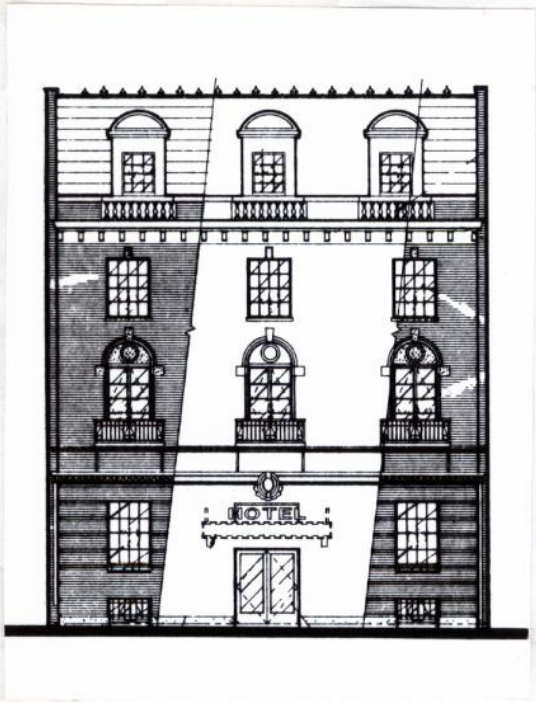
O.T. Bassett Tower

The Bassett Tower was built by Charles N. Bassett in honor of his father, O.T. Bassett, a prominent El Pasoan who was also one of the founders of the State National Bank.

Bassett Tower was once the tallest building in El Paso, rising 15 stories. There is a basement and mechanical rooms are located in the tower. Ornamentation is limited to the ground and uppermost level. The building's entrance is an elaborate display of Art Deco design elements and is the focal point of the southeast facade of the ground floor. Included in the composition are facial expressions, one of which is believed to be a likeness of Henry Trost. Terra-cotta, art stone, marble and granite ornamentation are found on the first uppermost floors. Ten eagle sentries guard the 15th floor and the tower is topped with a steep copper hip roof.

Plaza Hotel

The Plaza Hotel is significant for it is one of El Paso's early steel frame, high-rise structures built and designed by Trost & Trost. The building was the eighth Hilton Hotel constructed in the U.S. in 1930 for Conrad Hilton. Elizabeth Taylor briefly lived in the penthouse of the hotel after she married Conrad's son Nickey.



The Plaza Hotel is composed of a two story "trapezoidal" base supporting a rectangular fifteen story tower. Construction is of red brick and vertical and horizontal concrete bands create contrast. Ornamentation extending around the entire building is limited to the first two floors consisting of simple pilaster, geometric Art Deco spandrels and multicolored roundels. The finishing touch is the green terra-cotta tile roof on the tower.

SECOND EMPIRE

The Second Empire style was borrowed from France, and became popular in the U.S. during 1860-70s. The main characteristic of this style is the mansard roof which can be described as a steeply-pitched roof which serves as the walls of the top floor. The mansard roof is pierced with dormers in order to provide light. Besides the shape of the roof, coloring became an important part of the ornamentation. Mansard roofs were covered with multicolored slates or pressed tin plates. Ornamentation of the Second Empire includes quoins and cornices. Other characteristics of this style are columns and pedimented windows.

First National Bank (Star Jewelry)

The First National Bank building was constructed in 1882-83 for Joshua Raynolds, then president of the First National Bank in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The upper floors of the structure were originally leased for professional offices. The first National vacated the property when it merged with the American National Bank in 1914. Since that time, the property has exchanged hands at least six times, and today it houses Star Jewelry.

Originally constructed as a two-story Italianate structure, a mansard was added during 1884-88, transforming the building into the Second Empire style. Three stories high, the building is of masonry construction and has a modern storefront. Original double hung windows have since been blocked in, but semi-circular arches and decorative tin hood molds (on the second story) still exist.

The dormers of the mansard roof are pedimented and once contained semi-circular arched windows. An oval-shaped cupola rests on the mansard at the northwest corner of the building and a tin cornice with medallions overhangs below the mansard.

MEDITERRANEAN

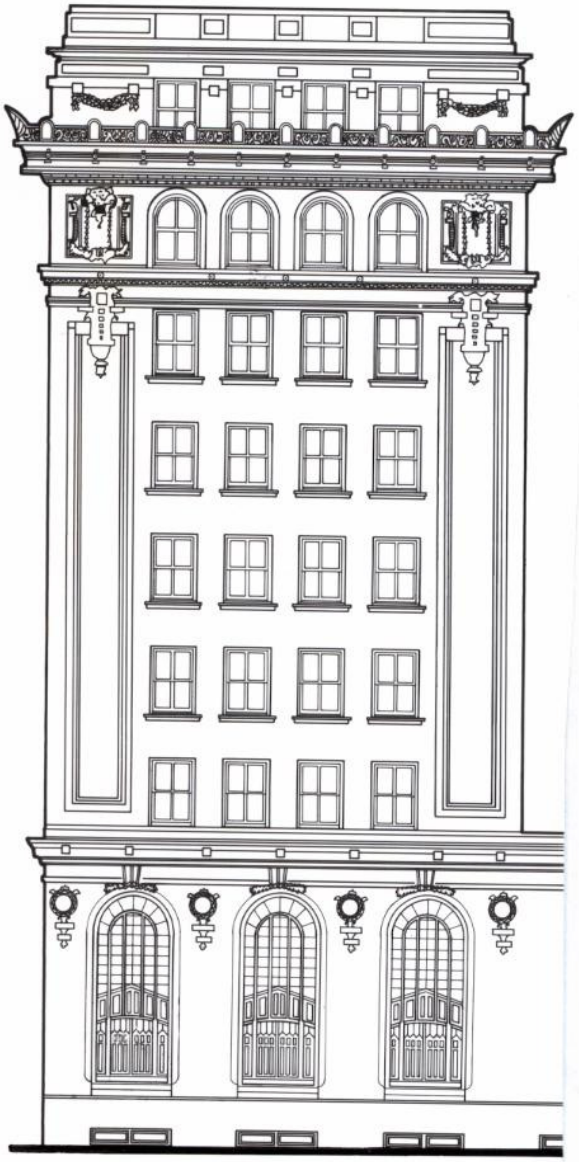
Mediterranean architecture developed during the 1600s through the 1840s. Traditionally, the Mediterranean style structure was a one or two-story building with a covered porch extending along the facade. Walls were originally built of stone or brick with a white lime or plaster finish, and the roofs are covered with red clay tile. Other traditional structural characteristics include: exposed roof beams, patios/porches, corbels, columns and pilasters. Windows covered with ornamental wrought iron were introduced later.

The Singer Building is the only existing structure in the Downtown Historic District that illustrates Mediterranean architectural features.

Singer Building

The Singer Sewing Company occupied the Trost & Trost building from 1928 until 1980. The building contributes to the architectural diversity of downtown El Paso for it is a handsome example of the Mediterranean style. The ground floor was used for display and sales, while the second floor serviced a sewing school and a manufacturing trade department. The building was approved for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Singer Building is a two story, rectangular structure. The building is constructed of poured concrete with a plaster finish, and it shares a common wall with the J.J. Newberry department store. The storefront is divided into two bays of different sizes, one of which takes on a tower like appearance and is topped with a red-tiled, pyramidal roof. A broad arched opening, balconies, grillwork and concrete quoins further carry the Mediterranean theme. The Singer crest is implanted in the upper level of the structure.



BEAUX ARTS

The Beaux Arts (Renaissance Revival) style borrowed from Renaissance detail and combined architectural elements from different periods. The style was generally reserved for public and academic buildings. The Beaux Arts style is characterized by massive compositions with great detail and a variety of stone finishes. Elements may include heavy stone bases, grand stairways, columns, enriched moldings and grand arched openings. Additional characteristics are medallions, balustrades, ornamented cornices, balustraded parapets and a flat or low pyramidal roof.

The Paso del Norte Hotel and State National Bank are two excellent examples of the Beaux Art style.

Paso Del Norte Hotel

El Pasoan pioneer Zach T. White first envisioned his hotel in 1892, but it was not until 1906 that White actively began his dream. White chose a steel and concrete frame to ensure the stability and longevity of his hotel. Designed by famed southwest architect Henry Trost, the building was erected in 1912.

The hotel is of masonry construction with white terra-cotta trim. A balustrade surrounds an open deck on the tenth floor and an elaborate cornice encircles the ninth. On the eighth floor, large two-over-two windows are framed in rounded arch openings.

A multicolored stained-glass dome skylight was installed over the lobby of the structure. The stained-glass was created by Tiffany's of New York.

State National Bank

Founded in 1881, the State National Bank was an important financial base throughout the growth and development of El Paso. This was the second building for the bank, which was abandoned in 1971 when construction of the new facility was completed.

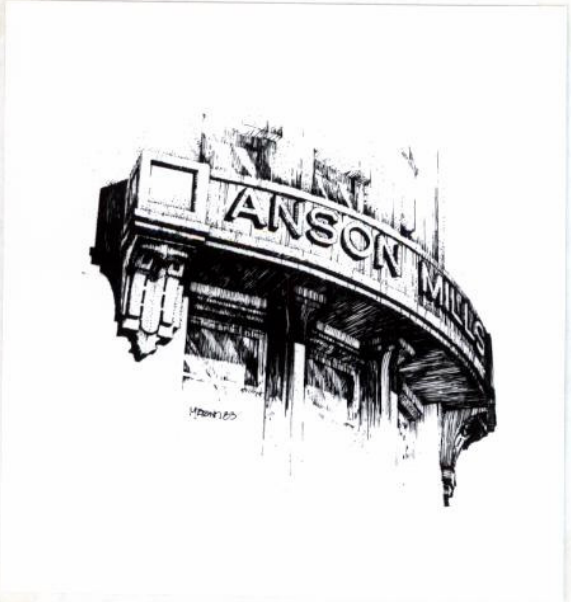
The east facade is composed of a series of two story arched openings that envelope multipaned windows. Decorative grillwork covers the lower third of the windows. The north facade features a prominent two story, arched entrance accentuated with a keystone with the words "State National Bank" cut in stone above it. In addition, a cartouche decorates the parapet over the main entrance and a cornice with projecting dentils supports a balustraded parapet.

CHICAGO SCHOOL

Before 1875, building heights were limited by the massiveness of the masonry walls needed for support. In 1883-85, however, American architect William Le Baron Jenney was the first to use and incorporate a complete iron and steel skeleton. The Chicago School style essentially refers to skyscrapers.

General characteristics of the style are rectangular design, steel skeleton framing, flat roof, ornamented cornice and large areas of glass. Windows make up a great proportion of the wall space and two types of windows are characteristic of the style. One was the projecting oriel type, which ran the full height of the building. The second was the "Chicago window", a large fixed central plane flanked by two narrow casements for ventilation. Large display windows are usually limited to the ground floor level.

Several downtown buildings reflect Chicago School architecture.



The Anson Mills Building

The Mills Building stands on the original site of the Jose Maria Ponce de Leon ranch. Construction of the building began in 1910 and was completed in 1911. General Anson Mills owned the property and had the building constructed for him according to his designs. General Mills was a prominent El Pasoan who was also the first surveyor to plat El Paso. Mills hired architects Henry and Gustavus Trost to help in the construction of the building. The Mills Building is significant for it was the first monolithic concrete building and the second reinforced concrete skyscraper in the nation.

The Mills Building is a 12 story office tower in the shape of an "L", and stands at the corner of Mills and Oregon streets. There is a concrete balcony on the 11th floor and a wide overhanging cornice emphasizes the Chicago Style. The building has long vertical spans of windows that terminate in arches. "Anson Mills" is embossed in concrete on a balcony on the fifth floor.

Martin Building

Built in 1916, the Martin Building is seven stories of steel and concrete construction. The building's foundation is of concrete and the non-bearing walls are of hollow clay tile. the windows are double-hung and have been classified as being three-part "Chicago" type. This structure exemplifies the Chicago school skyscraper and has Beaux-arts architectural ornamentation in the spandrels and cornice.

Hotel Cortez

Henry Trost designed and built the Hotel Cortez for Mrs. Charles Degroff, who died unexpectedly one month before it opened, in 1926. Approximately one year later, the Hussman Hotel Company purchased the business and renamed it Hotel Hussman. In 1935, the West Texas Hotel Corporation purchased the Hussman, and in a contest held to rename it, Hotel Cortez, was chosen. The hotel's most famous guest was

President Kennedy who stayed overnight on June 5, 1963. In 1982, Franklin Land and Resources Inc. purchased the structure, and through the guidance of local architects Carroll, Dusang, Hart and Rand, the hotel was restored and renovated. It currently houses modern office space.

The Cortez has twelve bays facing Mesa and ten bays facing Mills. A band of cast ornament encircles the outer walls of the second story. The entrance is emphasized by a "five-story cast relief portal, flanked by pairs of ornamented windows" on the sixth and seventh levels. The windows on the second and eleventh floors are emphasized through ornamentation. One of the building's distinct features is a series of portrait heads of conquistadors peering out of roundels above the Mesa Street entrance. The portrait heads are also part of the band of ornamentation of the second floor and surround the pairs of windows on the sixth.

First National Bank

First National Bank originated in 1881 out of a one-story adobe building at the corner of South El Paso and San Antonio streets. El Paso's rapid growth eventually forced the bank to construct a building that better satisfied its needs. In 1921, a skyscraper was built and it became the new First National Bank.

The building has a frontage of 54 feet on the North Oregon Street and 125 feet on Sheldon. Brick pilaster begin on the ground floor and continue up all fifteen stories. The building has a cornice of elaborate Classic Revival detailing, with dentils under the overhanging cornice. Just below the cornice there are also egg and dart moldings. Windows are double-hung and are of wood construction.

VICTORIAN QUEEN ANNE

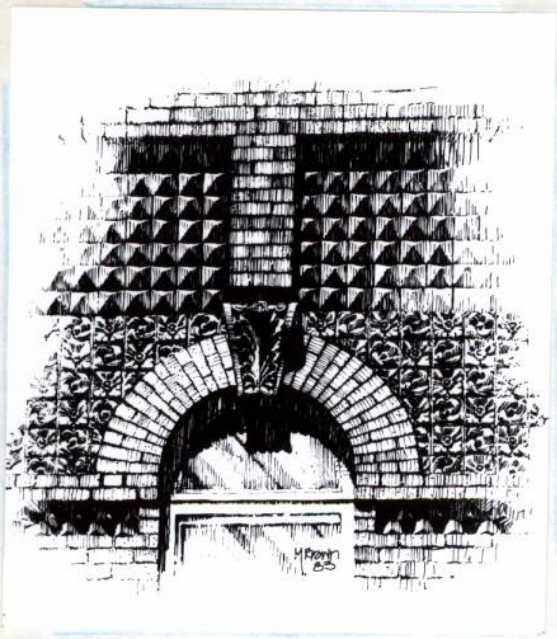
Victorian Romanesque architecture was most popular during the 1850-80s. In the U.S., the style was commonly used for commercial structures. It is a heavy ornamented, massive style of architecture.

The style tended to use decorative cornices for vertical emphasis. It is not uncommon for a building of this style to have cornices in between floors. A major portion of the wall surfaces are usually covered in decorative patterns made from wood, stone, brick or cast iron. Other characteristics such as oriel windows, turrets, towers and gables further generate a picturesque effect.

Merrick Building, St. Charles Hotel (Hollywood Cafe)

The Merrick Building was erected in 1887 by El Paso architects John J. Stewart and William J. Carpenter, for local businessman Charles Merrick. In 1931, it became the Hollywood Cafe and nightclub. The St. Charles Hotel, the oldest hotel in El Paso, has been located on the second and third floors of the building since 1890. The bottom floor of the building was traditionally used for retail purposes, and it originally housed a haberdashery.

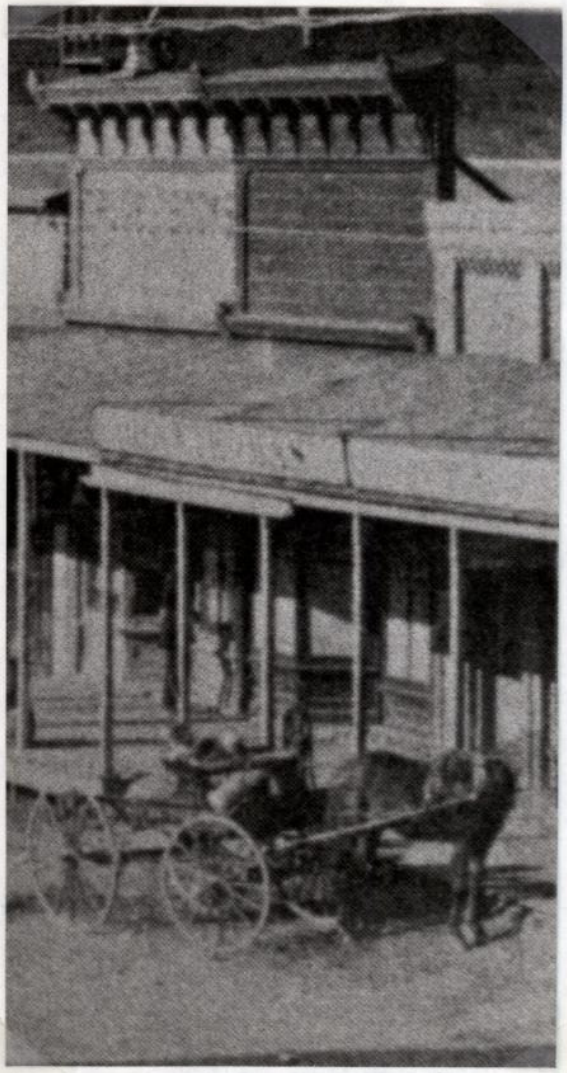
The building has a flat roof with a pediment on the north facade. The pediment is made of brick and has decorative terra-cotta work. A tine circular medallion sit atop the pediment. At the roof line there is an elaborate tin cornice with decorative dentils and medallions. Two projecting tin bays are located on the east and north facades. The windows are narrow double-hung sash, and the third-story windows have brick segmented arches. A concrete-over-brick banding lies above and below the bay windows. Above the central window on the eastern facade of the building there are projecting terra-cotta keystones. Above the storefront and along the northern facade is a cornice of tin simplified acanthus leaf.



The building originally had an 18-foot ceiling on the first floor supported by slender corinthian columns, but sometimes after 1931 the ceiling was lowered to eleven feet. The columns remain, however, and could eventually be restored to view. The original storefront was of cast iron and had dogwood stained glass windows in the clerestory. The transoms above the windows were also originally or stained glass (some of which is still intact behind the aluminum siding that covers it).

FALSE FRONT

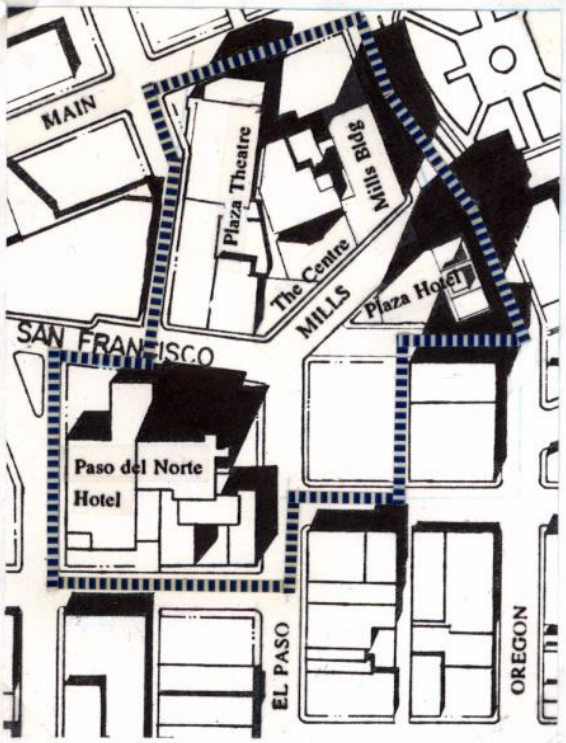
The one-part commercial block is a simple box with a decorated facade. The type developed during the mid 19th century and most of these structures were used as retail stores. In many cases, the facade was simply comprised of display windows on either side of a recessed entry. A large wall area often existed between the windows and cornice. This area provided advertising space and made the building seem larger than what it actually was. This false front arrangement was especially common to small, wooden buildings that created the commercial core of new towns during their initial development.



Dave's Loans

Dave's Loans is El Paso's last surviving false front structure. The building located at 216 and 218 South El Paso Street dates to approximately 1881-82. A sepia photograph taken in 1882 by F. Parker documents the structure.

The false front is the only original feature still in existence, rising about half of a story above the original ceiling which is fifteen feet high. Constructed of wood, the false front is topped with a bracketed cornice. Although the building has undergone several storefront remodelings, it is one of El Paso's few structures that has survived for over a century.



ZONES OF DEVELOPMENT

The Downtown Historic District is comprised of four zones: Pioneer Plaza, San Jacinto Plaza, San Antonio Street and South El Paso Street. The zones are unique in that each has retained an individual identity. The following is a brief analysis of the history, location, historic landmarks and land use within each zone.

PIONEER PLAZA ZONE

Anson Mills plotted Pioneer Plaza as the original town square in 1859. During that time the plaza was the hub of the town's social activities. The local newspaper tree was also once located near the present Plaza. The tree has been documented as early as the 1850s, and it was where locals would hang notices and other items of information.

Pioneer Plaza has remained important for two reasons: as the original town square, major businesses and hotels developed in this area and it also serves as a gateway between San Jacinto Plaza and South El Paso Street. The Plaza is also the location of the original Jose Ponce de Leon ranch, El Paso's first settler.

Although the plaza no longer serves the purpose of town square, it is part of El Paso's history, and it is a vital aspect of El Paso's future downtown redevelopment.

The zone is a concise triangular area including historic landmarks such the Anson Mill's Building, the Centre (the old White House), the Plaza Theatre and the Plaza Hotel (the old Hilton Hotel). Two of the landmarks are skyscrapers which dominate the zone. The Centre is a six-story mid-rise and the Plaza Theater combined with the adjoining building are the only two-story structures. The landmarks are of either brick or concrete construction. Of the four zones discussed, Pioneer Plaza has the most aesthetic appeal. The Centre and the Mills Building were recently rehabilitated.

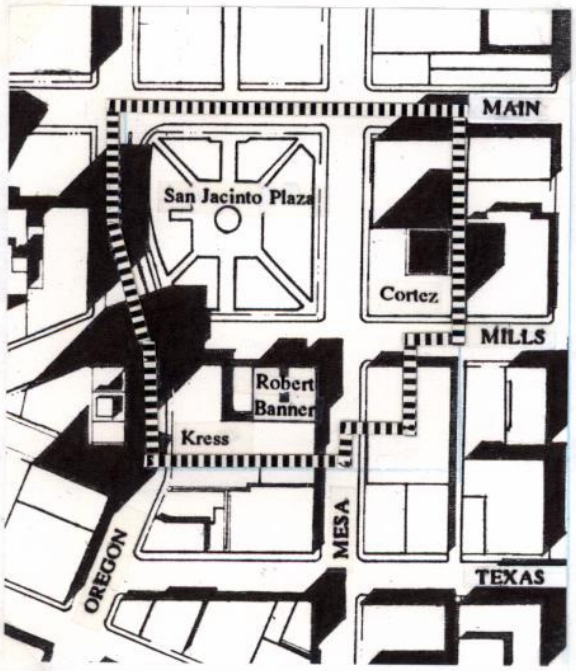
San Francisco, Mills and South El Paso streets intersect one another near the southwestern edge of the zone.

Land usage varies even though the zone is relatively small. The ground floors of the Mill's and the Centre are essentially retail, with the remaining levels housing office space. The Plaza Theatre operated from 1930 to approximately the early '80s, when the El Paso Community Foundation purchased it. Future plans are to restore and rehabilitate the building. Adjacent to the theatre is a popular eatery for downtown employees and tourists. Although a parking lot still operates at the corner of South El Paso and Mills streets, it is the only open space susceptible to new construction within the zone. Completing the zone is the Plaza Hotel, which besides its obvious use, houses retail businesses and a restaurant on the ground floor.

SAN JACINTO PLAZA ZONE

The plaza became El Paso's first park when brothers John S. and H. S. Gillet donated the land to the city to be used as the official town square. In 1883 the plaza was known to have had three alligators in the park's center pond. By 1903, the City Council formally named the area "San Jacinto Square". The plaza has experienced several remodelings since its origination, the latest occurring in 1969 which resulted in the plaza's present appearance. It was during the mid-1960s that the alligators were also removed from the plaza's pond and placed in the City Zoo.

San Jacinto Plaza's significance lies not only in its being the city's first official park, but a stimulus to commercial and economic development that grew around the area as well. Theories differ as to why the area surrounding the Plaza became so attractive. Some believe that businesses shifted to the area when the park was incorporated as the town's public square, combined with the fact that the streets adjacent to the Plaza were the first to be paved. Other's hold the opinion that as South El Paso Street began to decline physically and economically, businesses looked to relocate to a



more attractive setting. San Jacinto Plaza's importance is more than likely a result of both theories combined. Nevertheless, San Jacinto Plaza remains a key element of downtown redevelopment.

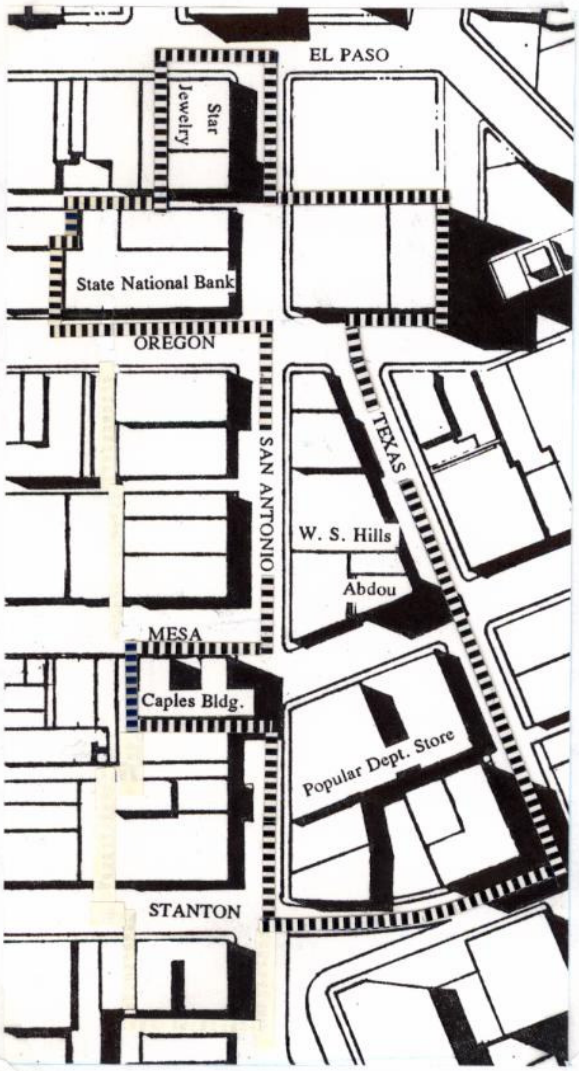
Skyscrapers surrounding the plaza dominate the skyline. Here too, structures are of either brick or concrete materials. The zone, however, shows decay. Of the surrounding landmarks, the Cortez and Mills buildings are the only structures which receive routine maintenance. The facades of the Kress and Banner buildings are encrusted with years of grime and need to be cleaned. San Jacinto Plaza bustles with people and activity.

The plaza is surrounded by four major arterials: Mesa, Main, Oregon and Mills. Consequently, traffic ranges from medium to heavy during the week days and light during weekends (traffic referring to vehicular and pedestrian). During the weekdays the park is full of people waiting to catch their bus and shoppers taking a rest.

With the exceptions of a parking lot and a parking garage, historic landmarks surround the plaza. The Cortez and a parking garage are located along the plaza's east side on Mesa Street. The Banner Building and the Kress define the plaza's south boundary on Texas Street. The Mills Building on Oregon Street borders the plaza's west side.

Land usage varies within the zone. The Cortez, Banner Building and Mills buildings house retail businesses on the ground level and office space on the upper levels. A parking lot owned by Texas Commerce Bank is located on Mills, and the parking garage next to the Cortez is owned by

Franklin, Land and Resources. The garage rents its ground level to Bank of the West. Kress is one of several retail businesses around the plaza.



SAN ANTONIO STREET ZONE

San Antonio Street was an important arterial in the early development of El Paso and downtown. In the early 1900s the street housed a significant number of retail and commercial businesses. Electric cars once brought shoppers to the cluster of stores, and a majority of doctors and lawyers located their offices in the buildings located on this street.

As the center of retail and commercial activity, San Antonio Street was significant to the early development of downtown. In part, this was due to the fact that the street was an off-shoot of South El Paso Street, another heavy retail zone. Shoppers nearing the end of South El Paso Street could turn right, onto San Antonio, and continue their business. It is also important to note that the CityCounty and Federal buildings have always been located on the arterial, further intensifying its use.

The Popular, Caples and American Furniture buildings are the tallest structures within the zone. The rest of the heights range from two to three stories. Construction is either of brick, concrete or stone. But much of the original character of San Antonio Street has been lost. Many of the structures along the arterial have suffered the effects of modernization. Original wood storefront entries have been replaced with metal. Upper level windows have been blocked in with brick or concrete. Original building facades are hidden behind metal sidings. Three historic landmarks which have been successful in maintaining their original appearance are the Popular, the Old State National Bank and the W.S. Hills buildings. Although not yet old enough to qualify as a historic landmark, the Lerner's building makes a positive contribution as well.

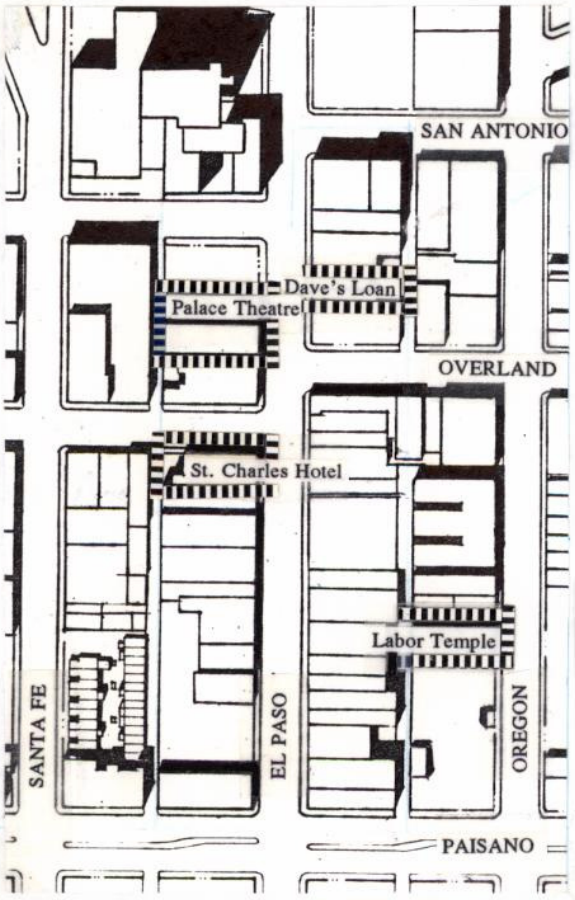
The San Antonio Street Zone is bound by South El Paso Street to the west and Stanton Street to the east. Oregon and Mesa streets intersect the arterial and divide the zone into three blocks.

Although the Caples and the American Furniture Store (the old Raynold's Building) date from the early 1900s, they were so altered as to have lost a significant level of architectural integrity. The Union Bank and Trust, Co. building, although also altered, is still restorable. The building's entry has been "modernized" and the facade is almost completely hidden by wood siding and signage.

Land use within the zone is retail with two exceptions. The Caples' ground floor is rented to a retailer with the remaining leased for office space. The El Paso State Bank (the Old State National Bank building) is the other non-retail exception.

SOUTH EL PASO STREET ZONE

South El Paso Street has a history dating back approximately 150 years. From 1870 through the early 1900s, the street was the town's center of commerce. Hotels, banks, retailers and other commercial enterprises operated from buildings along the corridor. In 1910, however, the Mexican Revolution permanently altered the character of South El Paso Street. As the war broke, Mexican immigrants sought refuge in El Paso. Poverty-stricken immigrants settled in neighborhoods surrounding South El Paso Street and tenements were constructed soon after. Due to residential occupants, retail establishments began seeking more desirable locations. Businesses began to shift northeast towards San Jacinto Plaza.



With the exception of the Paso del Norte Hotel, the structures along South El Paso Street are two or three stories. Most of the buildings are of brick construction and are either one or two-part commercial.

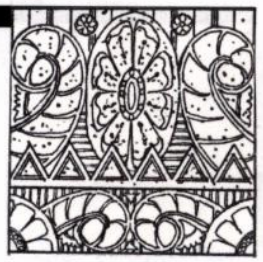
The one-part commercial block is essentially a single story structure with a recessed entry and a decorated facade. Two-part commercial differs from one-part in height only. The two-part commercial block is simply a structure of two to three stories and is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones. Although the overall building was constructed in a particular architectural style, zones may or may not be similar. For example, lower zones (street level) have been altered to the extent that it is no longer in character with the upper zones.

Much of the turn of the century architecture along the arterial has been lost as a result of "progress and modernization". Again, original wood storefront entries have been replaced with metal. Windows on the upper levels have been blocked in with either wood, cinder block or brick. Many architectural features are concealed beneath metal siding and/or cluttered signage. In addition, security grates bolted to the outside of buildings further detract from the building's appearance. Several structures simply suffer from neglect due to a lack of basic maintenance.

Nevertheless, there are historic landmarks and other architecturally important buildings north of Paisano Drive. Historic landmarks within the zone include the Westin Paso del Norte Hotel, Star Jewelry (the old First National Bank) and the Palace (the old Alhambra Theatre). Dave's Loans and the Hollywood Cafe (the Merrick Building/St. Charles Hotel) are also architecturally significant.

Land use within the zone is primarily retail, although restaurants and bars are scattered throughout the street. Upper levels of structures are used for either living space or storage.

GUIDELINES



General Considerations
Site Development
Height and Scale
Setbacks
Proportion
Pattern and Rhythm
Site Details
Building Elements
Openings
Materials and Finishes
Street Furniture
Mechanical Equipment
Storefronts
Signs

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Approval must be obtained from the Historic Landmark Commission prior to making any alterations or changes to a historic property. Apply these questions to propsed plans in order to determine what modifications are acceptable.

Do the plans maintain as much of the original building as possible?

Are exterior alterations and changes kept to a minimum?

Is the proposed design compatible in scale, materials, and style to the original design of the structure?

Are the original building materials maintained or restored?

Are all of the proposed building materials compatible with the surrounding historic buildings as well?

Are architectural elements such as parapet, window and door openings, and roof lines retained?

Are the original architectural details such as scroll work, balcony and porch railings and cornices kept?

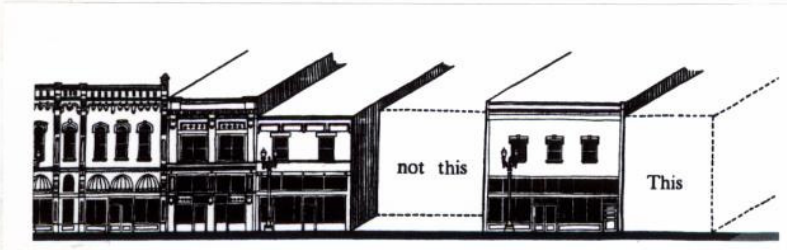
Approval of plans by the HLC will depend on the aplicant's documentation of appropriate actions to address these general considerations.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of reviewing proposed construction is to assure compatibility with existing buildings. This also applies to the way a building is situated on its site. Site development is important in maintaining a building's architectural integrity.

SETBACK

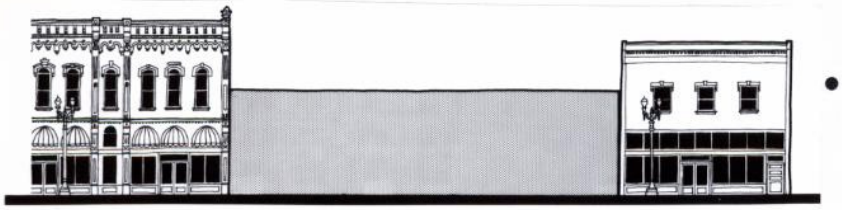
Although setbacks may help to create a unified rhythm along a street, they can also be disruptive.



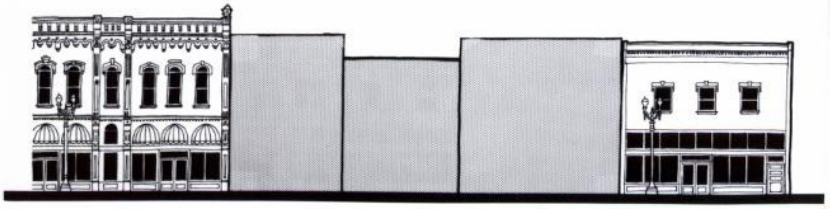
- Setbacks are not present in the historic district; in general all new construction should abutt the property line if it is in keeping with the surroundings.
- Setbacks are permissible, however, if they occur after the first two stories. (The Plaza Hotel illustrates this concept.)
- New development shall comply with the requirements for the underlying residential, apartment, or commercial zone.

PROPORTION

The relationship between the height and width of a building establishes proportion. The proportions of new buildings should be consistent with the dominant proportions of existing buildings (vertically and horizontally).



NO



YES

- Pioneer Plaza Zone: Proportion and spacing of new construction should be similar to that of the Mill's Building or the Plaza Hotel.
- San Jacinto Plaza Zone: Proportion and spacing of new construction should be similar to those existing buildings facing the plaza: Mill's Building, Banner Building and the Cortez.
- San Antonio Zone: Proportion and spacing of new construction should be similar to that of the one or two-part commercial type.

- South El Paso Street Zone: Proportion and spacing of new construction should be similar to that of the one or two-part commercial type.

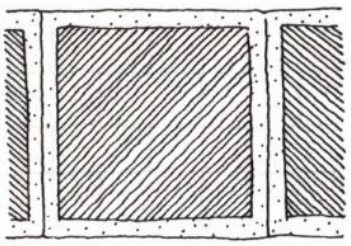
PATTERN AND RHYTHM

Solids and voids (walls to windows and doors) creates a pattern in the facade of a building. The pattern of solids and voids then establishes rhythm.

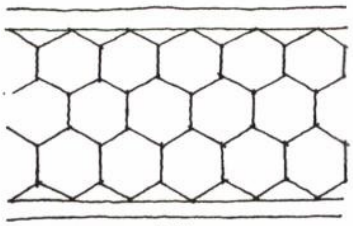
- Windows should be similar in size and spacing to those of the historic landmarks within each zone.*
- Pioneer Plaza Zone: New infill construction and additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the existing pattern of either the Mill's Building, The Centre or the Plaza.
- San Jacinto Plaza Zone: New infill construction and additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the existing pattern of either the Mill's, Banner or Cortez building.
- San Antonio Zone: New infill construction and additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the existing pattern of the Popular.
- South El Paso Street Zone: New infill construction and additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the pattern of the one or two-part commercial type.

*THIS SENTENCE DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

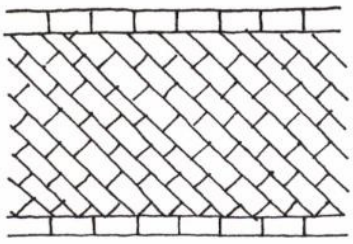
Scored Concrete



Unglazed Tile



Brick



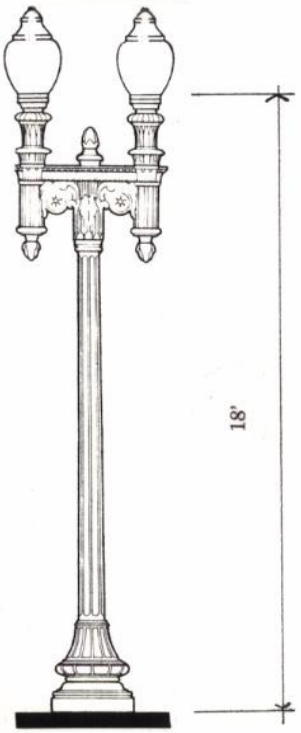
SITE DETAILS: Sidewalks

Treatment of sidewalks should take pedestrian traffic and the need for atheistic improvement into account.

The following recommendations are directed towards all zones.

- Sidewalks should be enhanced by installing brick pavers (or other decorative materials) along the edges and/or at intersections.
- Existing planting boxes should be removed. Planting boxes tend to take excessive space, clutter sidewalks and collect trash. Instead, trees with trees grates should be installed.
- All sidewalks should have handicap accessibility. (Chapters 12.44.200, 13.12.180 and 18.08.130 City Ordinance, criteria for handicap accessibility.)

Sidewalk design, location and construction material specifications are listed in the El Paso Municipal Code Book, Chapter 13.



SITE DETAILS: Lighting

Generally, lighting provides safety and visibility. In addition it serves a number of other purposes:

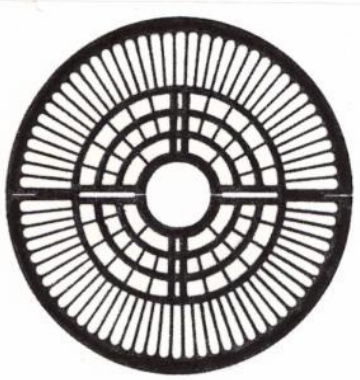
- provides safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- provides security and aids in crime prevention
- can accentuate important features, qualities and landmarks
- allows day or night usage of buildings.

Lighting should consider all of the previously mentioned purposes. The following guidelines apply to all zones.

- Contemporary lighting fixtures should be replaced with period lights found in Pioneer Plaza.
- Lighting should be provided in alleys and parking areas/lots.

SITE DETAILS: Landscaping

Landscaping within the historic district should be consistent.



- Trees should have tree grates and vertical tree guards similar to those at Pioneer Plaza.
- Tree spacing should coordinate with existing and proposed lighting installation.

Landscaping proposed for parkways, right of ways and other areas where vegetation might obscure traffic sight distances, must get approval from the Department of Traffic and Transportation and must comply with City ordinance. (Visibility and Obstructions, Ch. 12.68.)

SITE DETAILS: Fencing

Fencing serves a number of purposes: to identify a property's boundary, to protect a building, and/or to protect items located on the property.

The following guidelines apply to each of the zones:

- Generally, fencing should be of brick and/or wrought iron.
- Chain link fencing is not historic and is considered inappropriate.

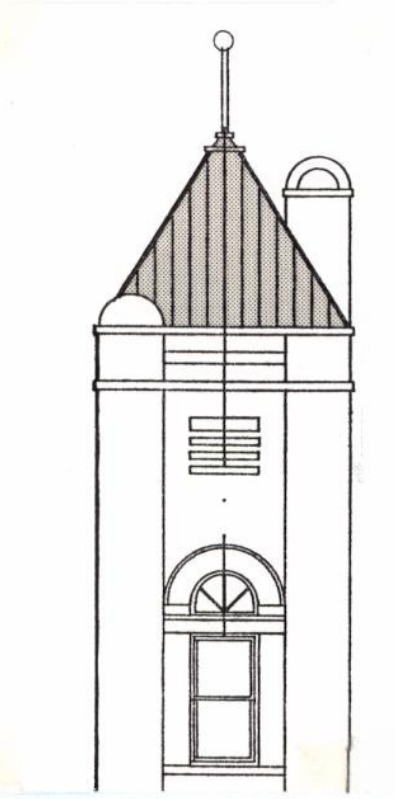
- Solid fencing on commercial properties located on any corner lot, shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. (Chapter 12.68 city ordinance, visibility obstructions.)

Chapter 20.08.300 of the city municipal code book further specifies regulations concerning design and location of fences.

SITE DETAILS: Parking

South El Paso Street is zoned C-4 from the port of entry to Paisano Drive. Off street parking and loading standards for C-4 zoning are contained in the El Paso Municipal Code Book, Chapter 20.64 (Prior code 25-35.10).

South El Paso Street is zoned C-5 from Paisano Drive to the central downtown area. The Pioneer Plaza, San Jacinto and San Antonio zones are zoned C-5 as well. Off street parking and loading standards for C-5 zoning are contained in the El Paso Municipal Code Book, chapters 20.44.090, 20.64.160 and 20.64.180.



BUILDING ELEMENTS: Roofs

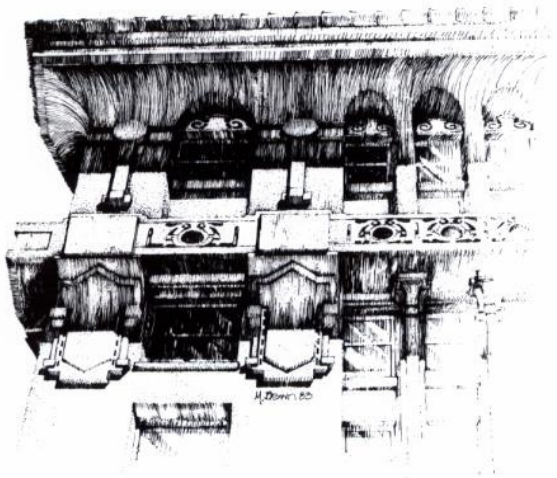
With a few exceptions, the roofs within the historic district are flat and therefore are not visible from the sidewalk. Generally, if the roof of a building is not visible from the street, the use of any appropriate roofing material is acceptable. Where the roof is visible, however, any appropriate material maybe used. The following materials are suggested to enhance the aesthetics of the districts:

- Terra-cotta or ceramic tile
- Copper

- Painted sheet metal with standing or batten seams, or other patterns.

The following guidelines apply to all zones:

- In general, repair roofing and framing to ensure structural integrity and waterproofing.
- Do not change the style or construction of a roof. Altering a roof may destroy the architectural integrity of a structure.



BUILDING ELEMENTS: Cornices

Several of the districts historic landmarks have elaborately designed cornices which contribute to the character of the building.

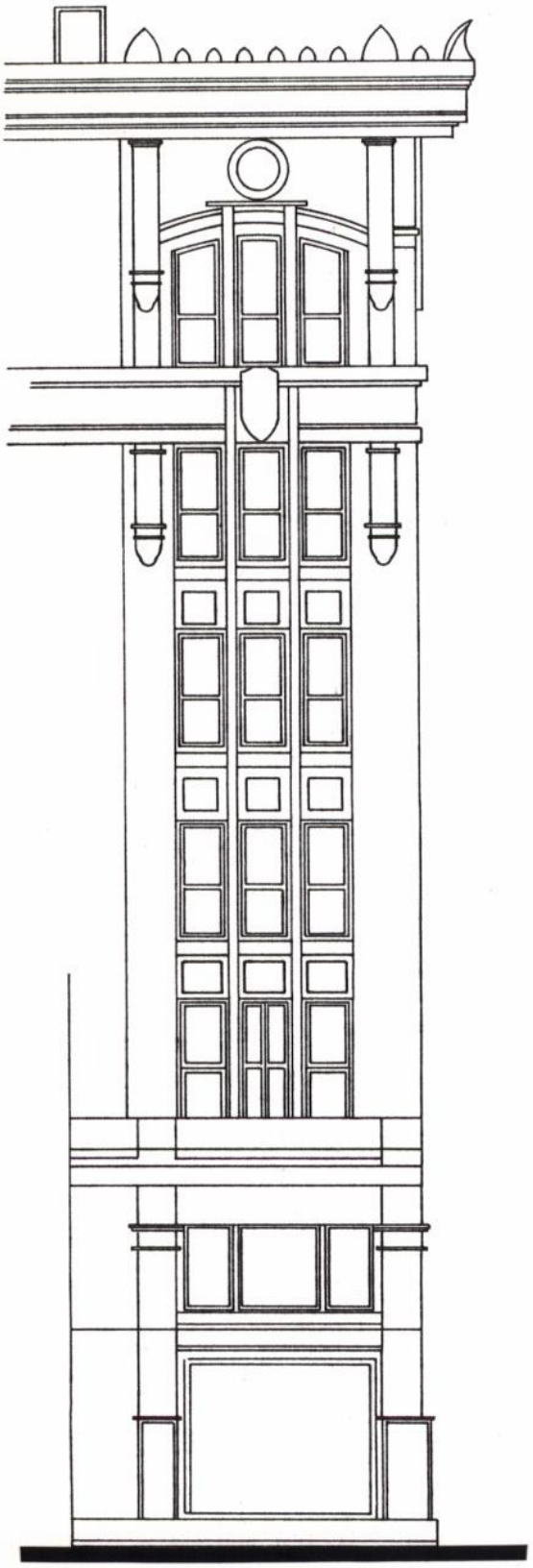
- The preservation and restoration of cornices should have priority over roofing that is not visible from the street.

OPENINGS: Windows*

Generally, windows constitute the major element in creating the character of a building. A window's shape, size, placement and decorative trim are important contributing elements of a building's character. Consequently, windows should be preserved and protected against drastic alteration, such as boarding or blocking up.

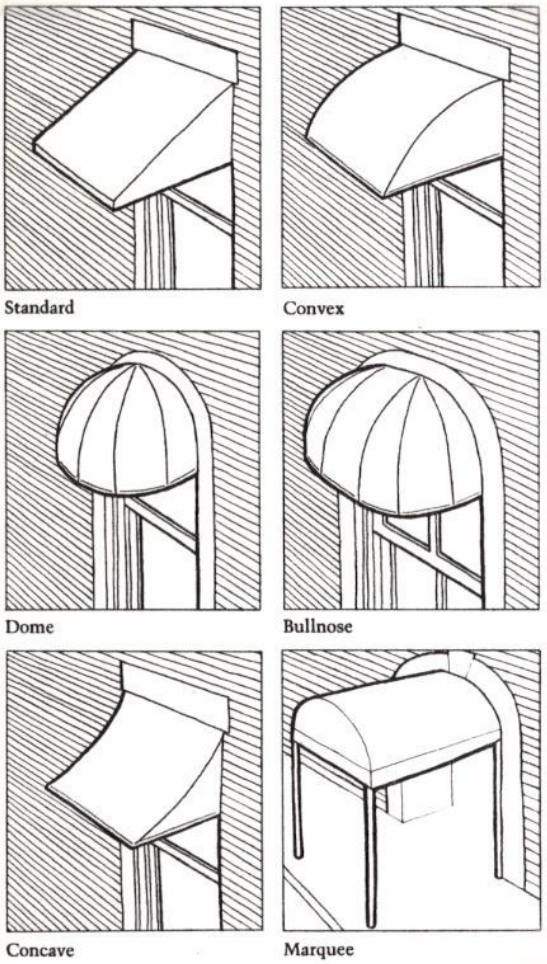
- Windows beyond repair should be replaced to maintain the appearance of the original window.

*THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS.



- Replacement windows should match the same size of the original. In other words, new windows should fill the entire space. The practice of "blocking up" and/or "blocking down" existing window openings to fit a smaller standard sized window should be avoided.
- Painting over windows, blocking in and/or boarding up windows drastically alters a building's character and may result in the loss of its architectural integrity.
- Horizontal, casement or picture windows are not historic and should be avoided.
- Generally, window glass should be clear. Mirrored and reflective glass are not historic and should be avoided. The same is true for any reflective-type window screening.
- Windows should be evenly distributed horizontally and vertically on all floors.
- If windows must be blocked due to interior functional needs, the glass window should still be maintained. Blocking should occur behind the window and the blocking material should be painted grey or black.
- Original window sills and lintels are important window elements. Each should be maintained and care should be taken to clean and preserve them.

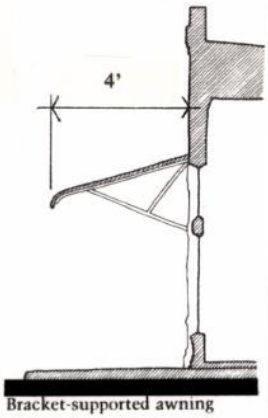
OPENINGS: Awnings and Canopies



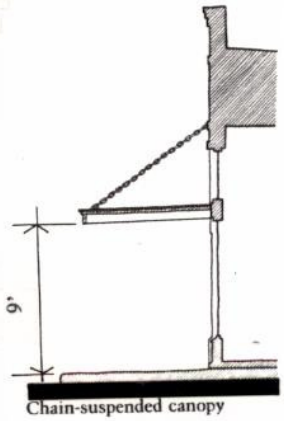
Awnings and canopies are important fixtures that serve a number functions: protecting pedestrians from sun and rain, protecting window displays from fading caused by direct sunlight and they allow reflected light to enter the interior without causing additional heating of the store. Awnings are sloped, while canopies are generally flat. Both project from the building and when properly designed, each can provide additional interest to a structure. In general, awnings will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Historic Landmark Commission in order to determine appropriateness and impact to the structure and its surrounding environment.

The following general guidelines apply to all of the zones.

- Historically, awnings were covered with canvas. Canvas and other synthetics (woven acrylics) should be used on awnings. Shiny fabrics, however, may distract from a building's appearance and should therefore be avoided.
- Prefabricated metal awnings designed for residential use should be avoided.
- Materials should be compatible with the structure and other elements particular to the historic district.
- Awnings and canopies should be placed at the top of openings, but they should not cover important architectural details/elements.
- Awnings and canopies should be of an appropriate size and scale in relation to the building's facade.
- Fixtures should not extend across the facades of several buildings. Instead, fixtures should fit within vertical elements such as columns.



Bracket-supported awning



Chain-suspended canopy

- Awnings should not cover more than one-third of the window opening. Unproportioned awnings may appear awkward.
- Fixtures should always fit within their openings. Attempting to fit a square awning into a round opening (and vice-versa) should be avoided. Generally, the shape of an awning should respect the shape of the window.
- Colors on awnings and canopies should be considered carefully. Generally, colors should relate to a structure's overall color scheme.
- Adjacent awnings should not fight each other for attention by using bright colors that might overwhelm a structure and/or an entire streetscape.
- Graphics on fabric awnings should be placed on the slope or valence. On canopies, signs can be mounted above (along its front edge), or shingle signs can be suspended from the ceiling.

MODERNIZATION: Security

Crime in El Paso has become an important factor for citizens to contend with. The security measure most visible along South El Paso Street and within the downtown area is security bars and/or grates. Regardless of whether bars are used for security and/or decoration, improper design and color can adversely affect the architectural design of a structure.

Exterior rolling shutters have recently emerged as a popular security alternative. The shutters consist of interlocking horizontal elements, such as aluminum or double walled PVC (polyvinyl chloride).

Each element comes in several styles and colors and can be custom-fabricated for any window/door opening. Most shutters are made of a durable design and construction. Consequently, they offer security against vandalism and burglary. Exterior rolling shutters can also be mounted in the interior or exterior of a building. Although these shutters are usually mounted on the exterior, the components can be concealed underneath awnings and/or within the structural walls. Furthermore, exterior rolling shutters can be installed without disturbing the architectural integrity of a structure. In addition, exterior rolling shutters are weather resistant and do not require any painting or maintenance.

- Exterior devices such as roll-up screens/doors/grills should be incorporated and concealed in the storefront ceiling or by a storefront awning.
- Wrought iron security grills are acceptable if installed on the inside of the glass.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES

The way in which materials and finishes are combined determines much of a structure's architectural character. It is important to preserve and complement the character of historic structures through proper design and maintenance.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES: Masonry

Appropriate materials for the Pioneer Plaza, San Jacinto Plaza, San Antonio and South El Paso Zones are brick, stone, terra-cotta, glazed tile, and concrete. Non-contributing buildings may use materials which are compatible in texture and color with the predominant materials in neighboring landmarks or contributing buildings.

The following general guidelines apply to all zones:

- Retain existing masonry and mortar if possible. If masonry must be replaced, match old material with new material as closely as possible (size, color, texture, etc.).
- Repoint mortar joints only when necessary, approximately every 50 to 60 years or when deterioration occurs. Mortar should be duplicated in composition, color and texture.
- Brick surfaces that have previously been stuccoed should probably remain stuccoed since removal may damage the underlying masonry.
- Retain original color and texture of masonry where possible.
- New construction should duplicate some of the masonry detailing found on historic landmarks.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES: Wood

Most of the historic landmarks within the historic district are made of masonry, at least on the exterior. The danger of fire resulted in little wood construction approximately after the turn of the century.

Wood was predominantly used for storefronts, windows and doors.

The guidelines apply to all zones:

- Original wood material should be maintained where possible. If wood has deteriorated beyond repair, replacing materials should match the existing as close as possible.
- Aluminum, vinyl, hardboard, or other synthetic sidings are inappropriate as building materials on historic structures, although some of these may be considered on an individual basis.
- Metal, vinyl, and synthetic materials may be used when a) proposed materials match existing material; b) original detailing is not altered; c) window and door trim is properly detailed; d) unique finishes are not covered or damaged.
- New construction should be compatible with existing historic materials and construction details.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES:

Metal

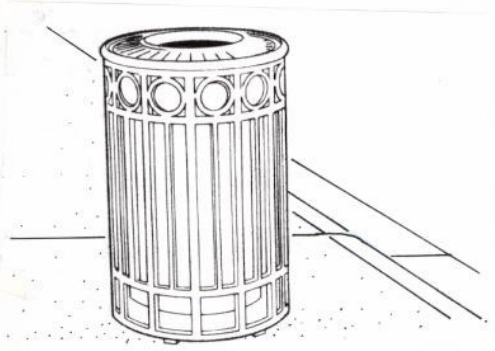
Like wood, metal exists on the exterior of historic buildings. Metal is usually that of cornice moldings, gutters, downspout, roofing or other exterior building details such as decorative grill work on balconies, windows and doors.

- Original metal material should be maintained where possible. If metal must be replaced, new metal should match the design, shape and color (if possible) of the original.
- It is recommended that all shiny metals be painted.

STREET FURNITURE

"Street furniture" usually refers to all outdoor stationary objects except for buildings and vegetation and represents all those manmade objects having the "potential for enlivening and giving variety to streets, sidewalks, plazas and other outdoor spaces open to, and used by, the public." The design guidelines considers lighting, outdoor seating, trash receptacles and sculptures/monuments as street furniture.

Street furniture should make a positive contribution to a street's image and not become another eyesore.
The following general guidelines are for the selection and coordination of all street furniture within the historic district:



- Street furniture should be consistent with the character of the historic landmarks within the district.
- Street furniture should be selected, placed and maintained as part of an overall design scheme.
- Determine whether the furniture is actually needed -- in general and where it is to be placed.
- Furniture should also be chosen with respect to climate and the amounts of exposure it may receive. For example, benches made from metals would be inappropriate considering the city's 90-100° F summer weather. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the intensity of use, vandalism, or any other possible abuse.
- Consolidating existing street furniture should also be considered. Traffic signs, lamp posts, trash receptacles, parking meters and mail boxes can clutter downtown sidewalks.

Where practical, combine equipment into multi-purpose units. Eliminating clutter can enhance valuable pedestrian circulation.

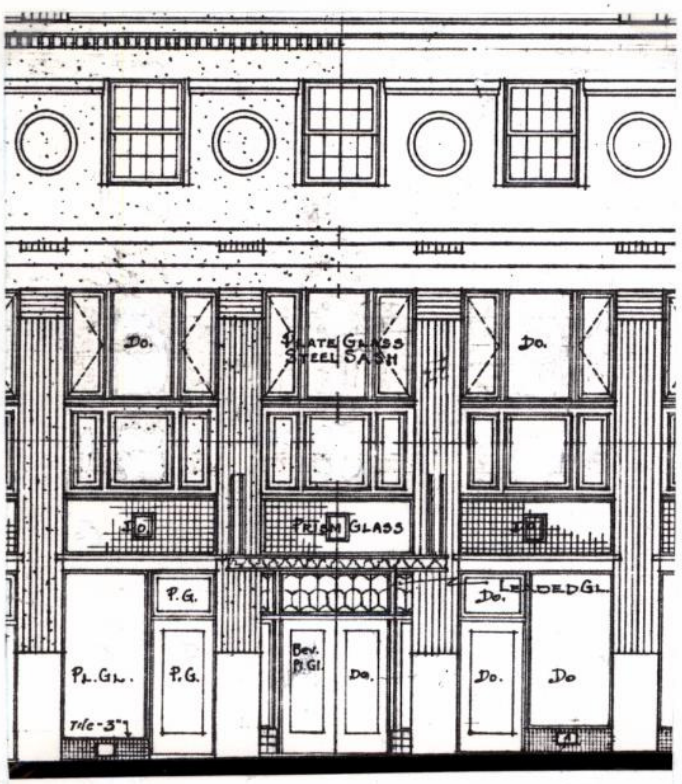
MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

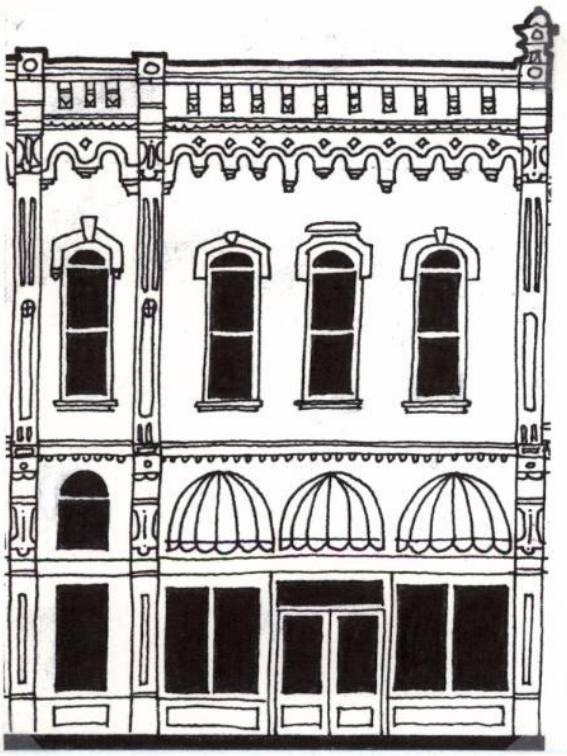
Mechanical, electrical and telephone equipment, as well as other obtrusive elements (such as meters) should be screened from view, or moved to the rear of the building. Obtrusive structures include satellites, air conditioning units and radio and television antennae.

STOREFRONTS

Storefronts are crucial elements of the commercial streetscape. The storefronts in downtown and along South El Paso Street have had to bear the pressure to modernize and/or create a new image as businesses move in and out. In time, the alterations accumulate and result in a drastic change of the original storefront.

- Pioneer Plaza Zone: It is recommended that storefronts be similar to that of the Mills or Center buildings: large display windows, a small wainscot at the bottom and a recessed entry.
- San Jacinto Plaza Zone: It is recommended that storefronts be similar to that of the Cortez. The storefront has a relatively small wainscot with large display windows and the large double entry doors are topped with a transom.





- San Antonio Zone: It is recommended that storefronts reflect the recessed entry typical of the one and two-part commercial type.
- South El Paso Street Zone: It is recommended that storefronts reflect the recessed entry typical of the one and two-part commercial type.

Although a variety of different storefront styles exist within the historic district, the following guidelines are flexible in that they focus towards all storefronts in general:

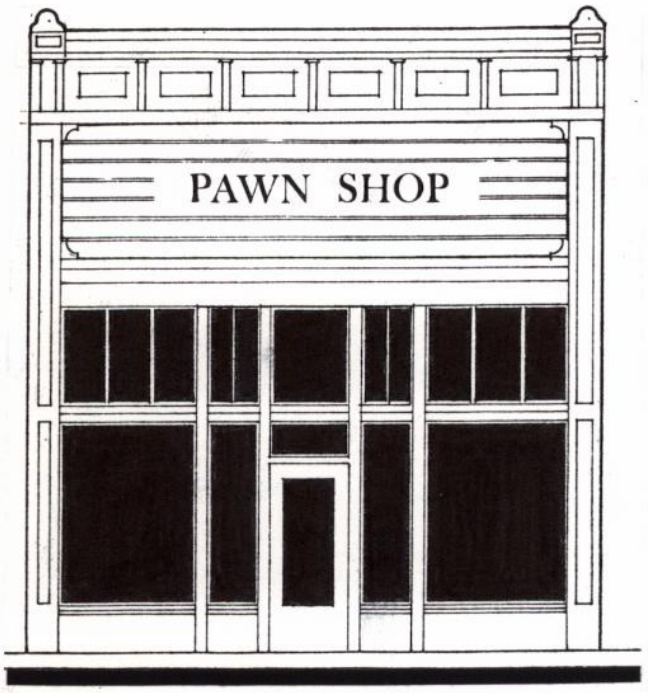
- Determine if the existing storefront is the original or a later alteration. Preserve original materials or details and the shape of original openings (otherwise the proportions of the facade will be lost). Replace missing original elements such as transom windows.
- Storefronts should be fabricated from wood, but metal storefronts will be acceptable provided that:

  the design complements the architectural style of the facade and the surrounding area
  entry doors complement the structure's architectural style

- Solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass should be avoided.

- The original size, division and shape of display windows should be retained. Glass should be transparent for pedestrian viewing.
- Bars or offices in storefronts should use blinds or cafe curtains for privacy.
- The wainscot or panel beneath the display window should be constructed of wood or brick. Plastic and metal sidings are not historic and should be avoided.
- Transom windows should be preserved and/or restored where possible. Transom windows may still be found underneath dropped ceilings and exterior coverups.*

*THIS SENTENCE DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS.



SIGNS

Signs are any public display boards bearing information or advertising. Chapter 20.66 of the El Paso Municipal Code specifically regulates design, color, material, location, and size of signs within the city. There are two types of signs: on-premise (those signs advertising the actual business) and off-premise (billboards).

These guidelines present recommendations for both signage types and cover a few of the basic sign regulations only. A copy of the sign ordinance is included in the Appendix and should be reviewed before making any decisions.

LOCATION

In respect to historic districts, Chapter 20, Section 66.230 of the sign ordinance specifically identifies areas restricted from signage:

- No off-premise signs are permitted within the boundaries of the district and no off-premise signs shall be installed within 250 feet of the center line of streets forming the boundaries of the district. (Existing nonconforming signs should refer to Chapter 20 Section 66.150 of the sign ordinance.)
- Signs should not hide or cover any significant detailing and/or architectural features of the building.
- On-premise signage should not cover windows, doors, or air vents.
- On-premise signs should be located in close proximity to the activity it is identifying. In most cases, the best location is usually above, on, and/or near the front door.

SIZE

- Signs shall not exceed thirty square feet in all commercial and manufacturing districts, and should not exceed six feet in height.

MATERIALS

- Signs constructed for landmark buildings or sites must be made of materials attributed to the era in which the building or site was constructed.
- Plastics are not permitted.

NUMBER

- For single tenant buildings there may be a maximum of one sign for each street frontage per landmark structure or site. For multi-tenant buildings, one sign is allowed for each storefront tenant.

ILLUMINATION/MOTION

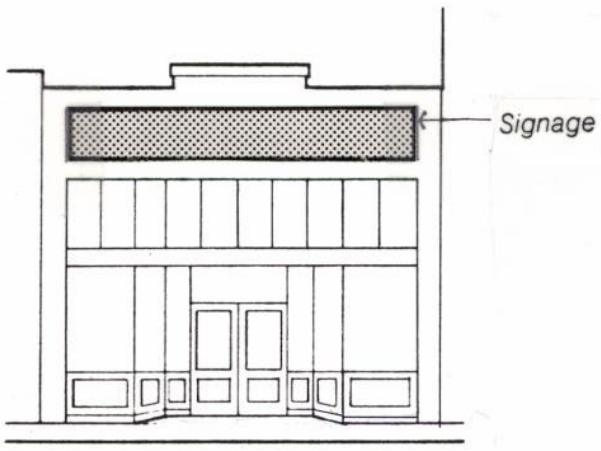
- Neon is permissible if implemented appropriately.
- Flashing, backlit, intermittent of moving light or lights are prohibited.
- Twirling and/or revolving signs are prohibited.

COLOR/DESIGN

- Colors should complement the building and/or the surrounding area.
- Flourescents should be avoided.
- Designs should be innovative and compatible with the building and/or the surrounding area.
- Lettering should not exceed 40% of the total area.

BANNERS/AWNINGS

- Banners are prohibited, with the exception that they may be used for a period not exceeding 10 days for grand openings and charitable functions only.
- Signage should be limited to the drop flaps of the awning.
- Awnings made of fabric are more appropriate to the downtown and the South El Paso Street area, and colors should coordinate and complement the building, adjacent buildings, and the general vicinity.



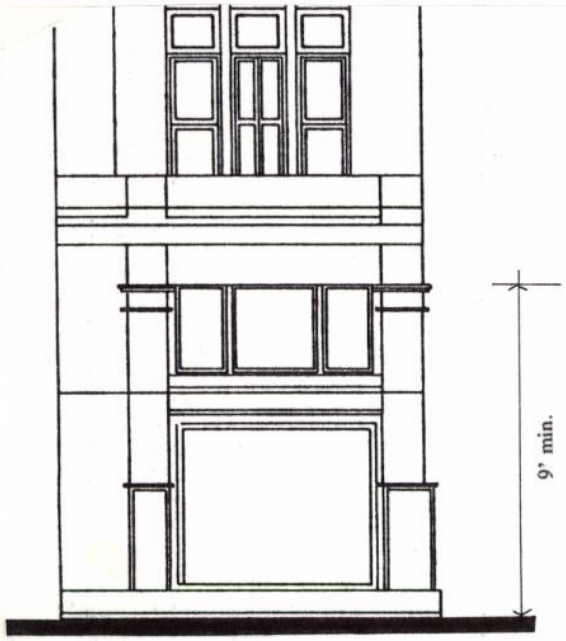
WALL SIGNS

- A minimum border of three feet is required between the sign and the sides and the top of the building wall.
- There must be a minimum clearance of at least eight feet, between the bottom of the sign and the ground level of the building wall.

- Signs mounted perpendicular to the front facade of the building should not be attached above the sill of the top story window.
- Signs may be placed on bland wall surfaces only.

FREESTANDING SIGNS

- These signs may be placed in the front yard no closer than 5 feet to the property line; the setback shall be 15 feet where the property line is located at the curb.
- Signs shall be pedestrian oriented and should not detract from any historic landmarks.
- There must be 35 feet of spacing between freestanding signs.
- Freestanding auxiliary signs should not exceed 2.5 feet in height and 3 square feet in area.



PROJECTING SIGNS

- Double-faced projecting wall signs must have a minimum nine foot clearance between the bottom of the sign and the ground level.
- Projecting signs are prohibited at the intersection of building corners, with the exception if they are at right angles to a building front.

"All signs are subject to review by the El Paso Historic Landmark Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness." (Ord. 8630)

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Infill Construction
Additions

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:
New construction may be defined in two ways; new infill construction on vacant land or the building of additions to an existing building. In either case, all of the general guidelines previously mentioned should be adhered to. Any new construction must be compatible in size, texture, color, design, proportion and detail to adjacent buildings and streetscapes, and must follow the specific architecture styles designated appropriate for that particular zone. Keep in mind however, that incorporating existing architectural features with new design elements can contribute added interest and compatibility.

INFILL CONSTRUCTION

New structures should respect the integrity of existing buildings. Existing historic structures and streetscape need to be taken into consideration **before** designing new infill construction. Setbacks, proportion, rhythm and building elements should all be addressed.

ADDITIONS

"New additions should be planned so that they are constructed to the rear of the property or on a non-character defining elevation." According to the Standards of Rehabilitation, new additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of buildings are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. Do not add on top of an original historic structure. Rather, add to a more recent addition, or start a new one-to-two story addition on the side or rear of the building.

Additions should complement the original structure, but not necessarily attempt to duplicate or copy it. The older structure should be identifiable from the new addition.

MAINTENANCE

Cleaning Masonry
Cleaning Wood
Cleaning Metal

GUIDELINES:
The following guidelines should be followed in regard to the maintenance and repair of existing structure.

CLEANING MASONRY

Masonry requires little maintenance. In general, masonry surfaces should be cleaned every 50 to 60 years. Brick, however, is one of the most easily damaged and/or destroyed materials as a result from improper cleaning methods, such as sand blasting. **Before cleaning any building, consult local experts on restoration who can help to research the surface of the building and determine the safest and most efficient cleaning method.**

- Masonry should be cleaned with low pressure water combined with detergents, and scrubbed with natural bristle brushes. This method is effective for brickwork when the dirt is merely sitting on the surface or is bound to the wall with water-soluble matter. It is not useful for removing heavily encrusted dirt.
- Although there are several chemical cleaners available, all of them pose some risk to the building and to the user. Some chemical cleaners may be highly effective on some surfaces while causing irreparable damage to others. A qualified contractor should be hired to clean a building if chemicals are to be used.
- Buildings should be cleaned with bristle brushes instead of metal brushes since metal can damage the mortar and masonry.
- Brick surfaces should never be sandblasted because it can damage or corrode the building surface.

CLEANING WOOD

- If surface paint must be removed, safe chemical compounds and low pressure washes are available to do so. Observe caution if washes are used. Undetected moisture may penetrate behind the exterior surface of the building causing insect growth. More importantly, undetected moisture may cause rot and lead to eventual wood decay.

CLEANING METAL

- Do not use cleaning methods that may alter the color or texture of the metal.
- Tin, zinc and aluminum should cleaned by the gentlest method possible. Cast iron and steel are usually not affected by mechanical cleaning methods.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Gateway between Two Nations: Migrations of People and River Brought Big Changes to Dirt Road." El Paso Herald Post. August 29, 1988.

"A Short History of South El Paso." Department of Planning, City of El Paso. October, 1967.

Aultman Collection, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

"Awnings and Canopies on Main Street." National Trust for Historic Preservation

Berk, Emanuel, principal author. Downtown Improvement Manual. Illinois Department of Local Government Affairs. May, 1976.

Correa, Frank, author and Patrick Abel, technical advisor. "Guide to the Identification and Preservation of El Paso's Cultural, Historic and Architectural Resources." Prepared by the Office of Historic Preservation, City of El Paso, 1980.

Dossey, Glenda. "The Singer Building."

"Eight: doors and windows." Sweet's Catalog File, Products for General Building and Renovation. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989.

First National Bank Building. El Paso Historic Sites Survey and Inventory, 1978.

Hagans, Betsy. "Hotel Paso del Norte." Cactus Points. El Paso Electric Company, 1982.

Hagans, Betsy. "'Mi casa es su casa... en el Hotel Cortez." Cactus Points. El Paso Electric Company, 1983.

Hirsch, Dena. Landmark Legacy: The Old State National Bank Building, The Eleventh in a Series. El Paso Today. June, 1981.

"Hollywood Cafe recalls glory days." El Paso Herald Post. August 29, 1988.

"In the Public Interest: Design Guidelines." Architectural Record. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

The Kress Store, background information located in the files of the Office of Historic Preservation, City of El Paso.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987.

Maddex, Diane, editor. Built in the U.S.A., American Buildings from Airports to Zoos. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1985.

Martin Building-Roberts Banner Building. El Paso Historic Sites Survey and Inventory, 1978.

Metz, C. Leon. City at the Pass. An illustrated History of El Paso. Windsor Publications, Inc., 1980.

National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Forms. United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980.

"New Building to Cost $150,000." El Paso Herald.

"Old El Paso St.", Sunturians, El Paso, Texas.

O.T. Bassett Tower. El Paso Historic Sites Survey and Inventory. 1978.

O.T. Bassett Tower. National Register of Historic Places, Iventory-Nomination Form, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980.

"Over 50 Years, The First National Bank of El Paso, Texas." El Paso Times. June 11, 1931.

"Paseo De Las Luces." Department of Planning Research and Development, City of El Paso, Direccion Gral. de Obras Publicas, Departamento de Planeacion, Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Plaza Hotel. National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Form, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980.

"Portals at the Pass." El Paso Chapter American Institute of Architects, 1984

Pregaliasco, Janice, AIA. Developing Downtown Design Guidelines. California Main Street Program.

San Jacinto Plaza-Memorandum. To Nestor Valencia, Director of Planning, from Leon Bean, Assistant City Attorney. April 1, 1982.

The Singer Company. Architectural description and statement of significance from the files of the Office of Hisotoric Preservation, City of El Paso.

Singer Sewing Company. National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Form, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980.

"South El Paso Street." Historic American Building Survey, National Architectural and Engineering Record, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1980.

"South El Paso Street Master Plan." Richard L. Hart, Architect.

State National Bank. National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Form, United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR	William S. Tilney
CITY COUNCIL	Gene Finke Jesus Terrazas, Jr. Tony Ponce Stan Roberts Joe C. Pickett Jay J. Armes
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING	Nestor Valencia, Director Nat Campos, Chief Urban Planner Alfonso Tellez, Coordinator Office of Historic Preservation Jim Fraser, Urban Planner Mary Ann B. Flores, Secretary Aliné Herrera Richard Dyer Placido Cano Esther Guerrero
EL PASO HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION	Ricardo Gonzalez, Chairman Sheri Fashing A. N. Garcia Rex Golston Ellen Harrison Constance Hulbert Martin Jorgenson W. E. Kuykendall Johnny Lopez Deborah Martin H.L. Mijares, Jr. Jose Luis Sanchez Susan Schwartz Florence Villareal Pat Webb
EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY	Mary Sarber
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	Paul Dolinsky
ARTISTS' WORK	Morris Brown, AIA Barbara Rochford Henry C. Trost