Chapter 5

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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CHAPTER 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The Old Town Yucca Valley Design Guidelines are intended to promote high-quality design and to ensure that new development and rehabilitation promote a clear community identity and sense of place. It is not the intent of the guidelines to eliminate design freedom, discourage innovative design, or impose an overriding style, particular color palette, or artificial theme. The design guidelines encourage preservation of the Town's historic core, yet allow creativity in new infill development that is compatible with the character of the area. The design guidelines establish the Town's design philosophy for Old Town and are one of the main elements used to evaluate development projects subject to discretionary review.

Discretionary design review carefully examines the quality of a project's site design, architecture, landscaping, and other important features such as signage and lighting. The purpose is to ensure that plans for new development or rehabilitation carefully consider the community context and make a conscious effort to develop a compatible relationship with neighboring properties.

5.1.2 Application of the Design Guidelines

The Old Town Design Guidelines will be applied as part of the City's review of proposed projects through the Town's design review process or through the review of discretionary land use permits. The design elements of each project (including site design, architecture, landscaping, lighting, and signage) will be reviewed comprehensively by the applicable review authority.

As written, the Design Guidelines apply to all the Old Town land use subdistricts described in this Chapter 5 – Old Town Commercial/Residential, Old Town Highway Commercial, Old Town Mixed Use, and Old Town Industrial. Where a particular guideline or set of guidelines is most applicable to a certain area or project type, it is noted in the text.

During the review process, the review authority may interpret these design guidelines with some flexibility in their application to specific projects, as not all design criteria may be workable or appropriate for each project. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of the design guidelines are followed.

5.1.3 Using the Design Guidelines

The Old Town Design Guidelines are designed to meet the needs of many users, including: property owners, merchants, real estate interests, architects, designers, building contractors, vendors, craftspeople, Town of Yucca Valley, and other interested organizations and persons in the community. Each of these interests has a vital role to play in establishing quality development in Old Town.

When preparing a new project in the Old Town area, or proposing changes to an existing building or site, users of the Old Town Design Guidelines should first consult the map to determine the character area within which the project falls. Secondly, the user should identify any specific design guidelines that are applicable, paying closer attention to guidelines that may be unique to that character area. Lastly, if questions still exist about a particular design issue, the user should refer to the 2001 *Town of Yucca Valley Design Guidelines* for additional guidance.

5.1.4 Organization of Design Guidelines

Each of the remaining sections of this Chapter 5 focuses on a particular design element and its subelements, as follows:

Section 5.2   Site Design
◆ Edge Conditions (5.2.1)
◆ Internal Site Organization (5.2.2)
◆ Relationship to Adjacent Sites and Features (5.2.3)
◆ Parking Lot Design and Configuration (5.2.4)

Section 5.3   Architecture
◆ Architectural Styles (5.3.1)
◆ Building Materials and Color (5.3.2)
◆ Building Mass, Form, and Scale (5.3.3)
◆ Storefront Design (5.3.4)

Section 5.4   Development Details
◆ Landscaping (5.4.1)
◆ Public Space and Site Amenities (5.4.2)
◆ Lighting (5.4.3)
◆ Building Equipment and Services (5.4.4)

Section 5.5   Commercial Signs
◆ Sign Materials and Colors (5.5.1)
◆ Encouraged Sign Types (5.5.2)

5.2 Site Design

As described in Subsections 5.2.1 through 5.2.4, the important considerations for appropriate site design in any area. These include:

◆ The relationship of the project to adjacent public rights-of-way (edge conditions);
◆ The internal relationship of the project's key elements, including buildings, parking, site access, circulation, public spaces, and landscaping;
◆ The design and function of parking areas; and
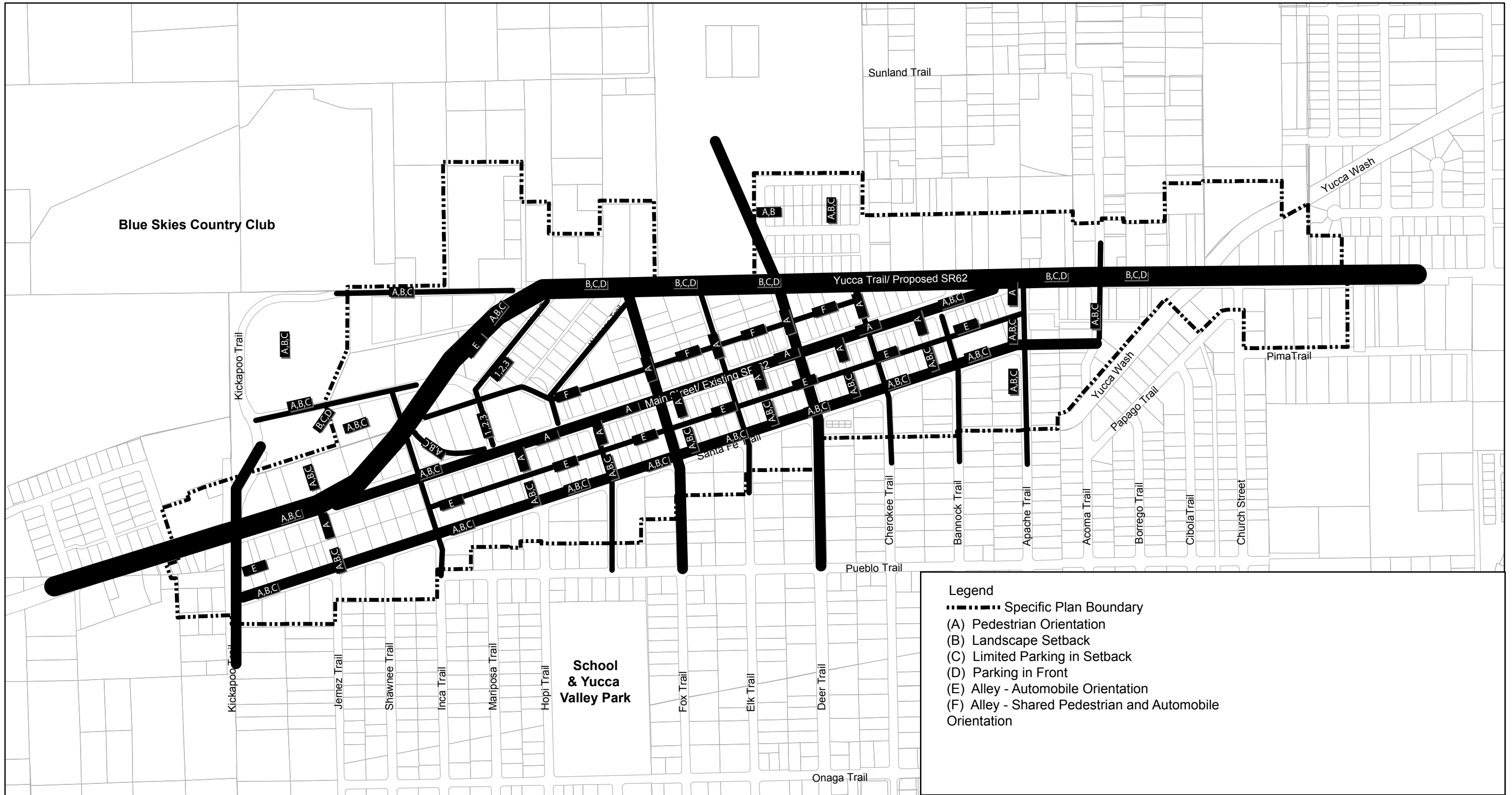◆ The relationship of the project to the neighboring property developments.

5.2.1 Edge Conditions

The "edge condition" of a particular development (existing or proposed) is defined by the relationship of the building(s) and parking area to the street. In Old Town Yucca Valley, essentially six edge conditions are appropriate for new development. The development standards in Chapter 4 provide the minimum setback requirements for buildings and parking areas, while the following edge conditions determine the appropriate locations of buildings, parking, and frontyard landscaping.

1. Street-Adjacent Buildings with Pedestrian Orientation

2. Semi-Street-Adjacent Buildings with Landscaped Setback

3. Buildings Set Back from Street with Limited Parking in Front

4. Buildings Set Back from Street with Parking in Front

5. Alley with Automobile Orientation

6. Alley with Shared Pedestrian and Automobile Orientation

The edge conditions that apply to each street segment are identified in Exhibit 5-1, *Edge Conditions.*

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Blue Skies Country Club

Sunland Trail

Yucca Wash

A,B

A,B,C

Kickapoo Trail

A,B,C

B,C,D   B,C,D   B,C,D   Yucca Trail/ Proposed SR62   B,C,D   B,C,D

A,B,C

PimaTrail

A,B,C

E   A,B,C

Yucca Wash

A,B,C   B,C,D

A,B,C

1,2,3

F

A

F

A

A,B,C

Papago Trail

F

A   Main Street/ Existing SR62   A   F   A   E

A,B,C

E   A,B,C

A,B,C

A,B,C

1,2,3   A

A   A   E   Santa Fe Trail   A,B,C

A,B,C

A,B,C

A,B,C

E   A,B,C

Cherokee Trail

Bannock Trail

Apache Trail

Acoma Trail

Borrego Trail

Cibola Trail

Church Street

A,B,C

A   A,B,C

A,B,C

A,B,C

E

A,B,C

Pueblo Trail

E

A,B,C

Kickapoo Trail

Jemez Trail

Shawnee Trail

Inca Trail

Mariposa Trail

Hopi Trail

School & Yucca Valley Park

Fox Trail

Elk Trail

Deer Trail

Onaga Trail

Legend

— · · — Specific Plan Boundary

(A) Pedestrian Orientation
(B) Landscape Setback
(C) Limited Parking in Setback
(D) Parking in Front
(E) Alley - Automobile Orientation
(F) Alley - Shared Pedestrian and Automobile Orientation

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Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan

Edge Conditions

Exhibit 5-1

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A. Street Adjacent Buildings with Pedestrian Orientation

Buildings should be built to the front and side property lines to form a continuous line of active building fronts (a "street wall") along the street, avoiding gaps, and parking should be in the rear.

◆ Provide corner cut-offs for buildings on prominent intersections.

◆ Place the ground-level front elevation of the building at the sidewalk edge to maintain the continuity of the street wall.

◆ Driveway cuts are discouraged along the street edge.

◆ Avoid setbacks from the sidewalk edge; where small setbacks occur, use the space for pedestrian plazas.

◆ Avoid parking lots that interrupt commercial space; where parking lots exist, create a landscaped buffer along the sidewalk edge.

◆ Avoid blank walls and other dead spaces at the ground level; entrances should generally be spaced no more than 25 to 30 feet apart.

◆ Create pedestrian paseos into parking lots at the rear of buildings.
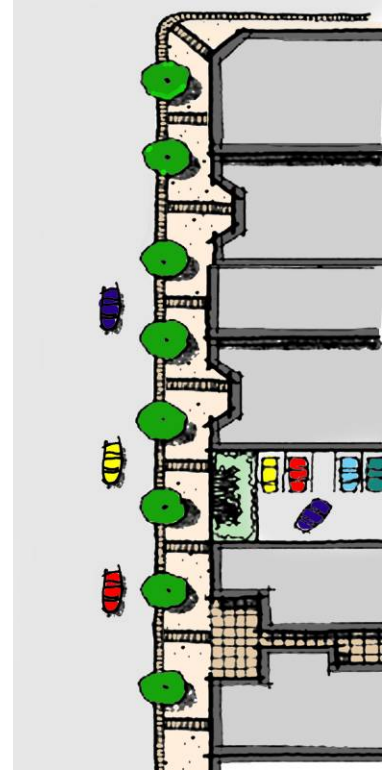
Sidewalk-adjacent buildings create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

B. Semi-Street-Adjacent Buildings with Landscaped Setback

Buildings should be set back from the front and side property line at varying distances. The setbacks are landscaped, and parking should be in the rear or on the sides.

◆ Fully landscape setback areas and interrupt the landscape only with pedestrian areas and sidewalks.

◆ Buildings may be clustered, allowing varying setbacks and orientations.

◆ Parking should not be located in the front yard setback; parking at the rear of the building is encouraged.

◆ Parking lots, if located at the sides of buildings or elsewhere on the site where they may be visible from the street, should be screened from street view by low walls and/or shrubs.

◆ Keep driveways to a minimum number and width, within safety requirements.

◆ Provide vehicular access to adjoining parcels wherever possible.

Landscaped setbacks create a soft edge.

C.   Buildings Set Back from Street with Limited Parking in Front

Buildings should be set back from the property at a distance to allow for a landscaped pedestrian walkway and (at most) two rows of parking in front of the building; locate additional parking in the rear or on the sides.

◆   Only one bay of parking (two rows plus aisle) is encouraged.

◆   Provide landscaped pedestrian areas at the primary building entrances.

◆   Trees, shrubs, and/or low walls are encouraged to screen the parking area from street view.

◆   Accent landscaping and enhanced paving are encouraged to highlight project entries.

◆   Provide vehicular access and pedestrian connections to adjoining parcels wherever possible.

◆   Parking areas located directly off the street without defined edges are discouraged.
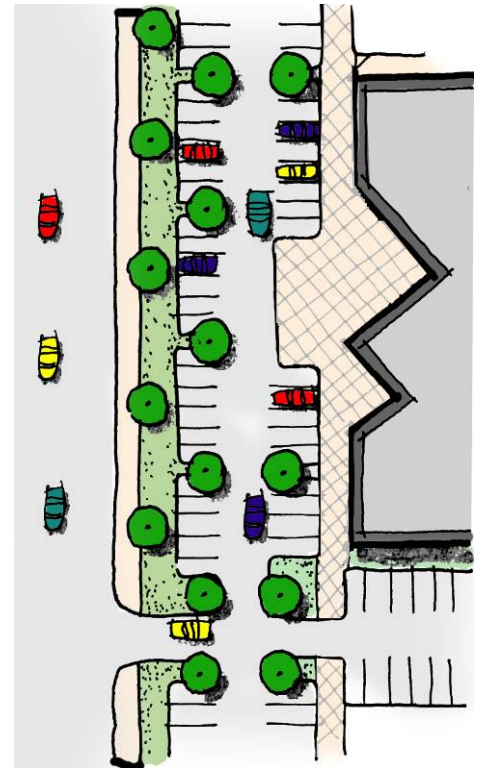
Limited parking in front setback may be appropriate in less pedestrian-oriented areas, such as strip commercial centers or offices.

D.   Buildings Set Back from Street with Parking in Front

Buildings should be set back from the property at a distance that allows the primary parking to be in the front setback.

- ◆ Set buildings back from the street to allow parking between the street and the building(s).

- ◆ Locating smaller buildings closer to the street edge is encouraged.

- ◆ Provide fully landscaped buffers at the street edge of parking areas; trees, shrubs, and/or low walls are encouraged to screen parking areas from street view.

- ◆ Landscaped pedestrian areas are encouraged at primary building entrances.

- ◆ Provide access to adjoining parcels, wherever possible.

- ◆ Arrange parking bays so that pedestrians walk parallel to drive aisles.
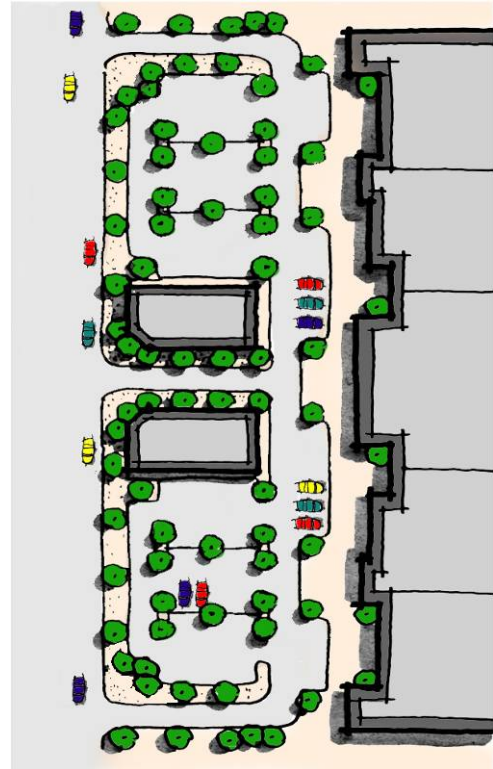
Large parking areas in front setbacks are most appropriate for larger developments and structures, such as shopping centers and industrial buildings.

E. Alley with Automobile Orientation

Alleys that are oriented primarily toward vehicular traffic should accommodate parking, circulation, and deliveries.

◆ Vary the building setbacks on alley edges.

◆ Use setbacks for parking, deliveries, storage, and refuse.

◆ Locate alley parking primarily to accommodate employee and delivery vehicles.

◆ Improvements to rear facades are encouraged.

◆ Screen all refuse containers.
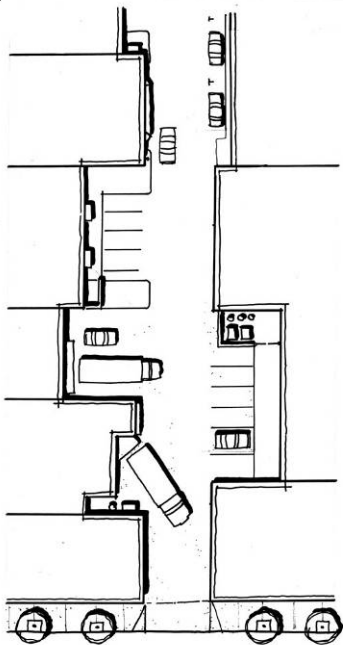
Vehicles are the primary visitors to these alleys.

F. Alley with Shared Pedestrian and Automobile Orientation

Alleys oriented for both pedestrian and automobile traffic should include a variety of pedestrian enhancements.
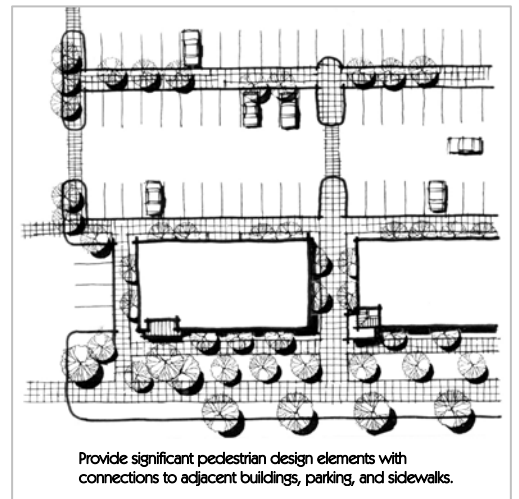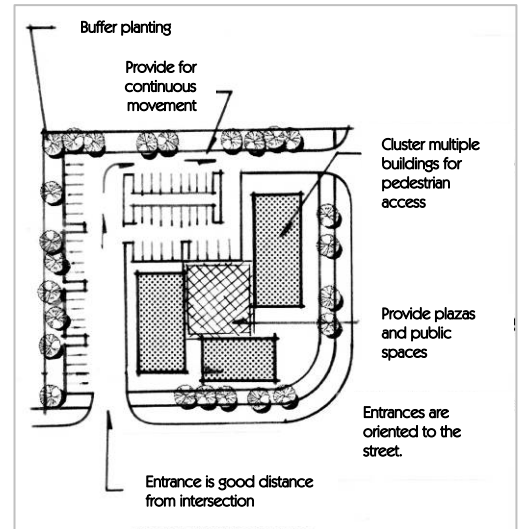
◆ Vary the building setbacks on alley edges.

◆ Setbacks should accommodate outdoor dining and small plazas, while still supporting parking, deliveries, and refuse containers; screen all refuse containers well.

◆ Landscaping, pedestrian-level lighting, special paving, shade structures, benches, and other amentities are encouraged.

◆ Rear entrances to businesses along the alley with improved rear facades (e.g., lighting and awnings) are encouraged.

◆ Delineated pedestrian walkways are encouraged through the use of special paving and/or landscaping.

◆ Pedestrian connections between buildings that create a direct link to the sidewalk are encouraged.

◆ Locate alley parking primarily to accommodate visitors and shoppers; clearly identify parking spaces through signage and striping.
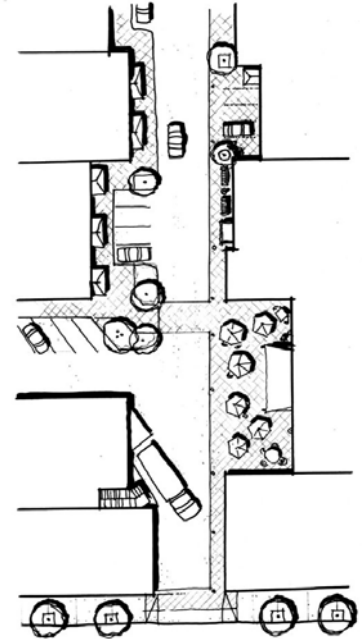
Pedestrian-oriented alleys include amenities and details such as special paving, landscaping, and outdoor dining.

5.2.2 Internal Site Organization

◆ Locate buildings and on-site circulation systems to minimize conflicts between pedestrian and vehicle; wherever possible, link buildings to the public sidewalk with textured paving, landscaping, etc.

◆ For larger projects with multiple buildings, consider clustering buildings around areas of usable open space to provide opportunities for plazas and prevent long "barracks-like" rows of buildings; when clustering is impractical, establish visual links between buildings.

◆ When residential and commercial uses are provided in the same structure (mixed-use), provide separate pedestrian entrances and parking facilities for each use.

◆ Orient primary entrances toward major streets and sidewalks to encourage a high level of pedestrian activity; provide clearly defined pedestrian paths to primary entrances.

◆ Recognize the importance of spaces between buildings as "outdoor rooms" or "paseos" on the site; outdoor spaces should have clear shapes that reflect careful planning and are not simply "left-over" areas between buildings. (See Section 5.4).

◆ Organize landscaped areas to define outdoor spaces and to buffer the visual impact of buildings and parking lots. (See Section 5.4).

◆ Carefully consider the location of all property line walls and fences; show a detail of the property line wall and how it corresponds with existing, adjacent building walls on site plans and drawings, as well as all roof overhangs. (See Section 5.4).


Buffer planting / Provide for continuous movement / Cluster multiple buildings for pedestrian access / Provide plazas and public spaces / Entrances are oriented to the street. / Entrance is good distance from intersection

Provide significant pedestrian design elements with connections to adjacent buildings, parking, and sidewalks.

Entrance enhanced with special paving / Loading, storage, and trash are located to the rear of buildings.

◆ Locate loading facilities, equipment and service areas, and refuse enclosures at the rear of buildings or in areas where they will be the least visible; screen all such facilities from public view by a combination of dense landscaping, walls, and/or berms. (See Section 5.4).

5.2.3 Relationship to Adjacent Sites and Features

◆ Site design should consider the arrangement of buildings, parking, circulation, and landscaping on adjacent sites; locate buildings and open spaces for the mutual advantages of access, circulation, open space, sunlight, and preservation of views.

◆ Wherever possible, connect adjacent projects to promote ease of access by pedestrians and automobiles and to reduce traffic movements on adjacent streets; in some cases, only a sidewalk connection may be necessary, while in other cases, shared access and parking will be appropriate.

◆ When a new project is developed adjacent to a vacant site, consider how future connections will be accommodated.

◆ Show buildings, parking, and other important features on adjacent sites on site plans; consider the site arrangement of adjacent properties and try to create a design that respects the important influences around it.

New buildings set too far back from the street do not relate to existing sidewalk adjacent buildings.
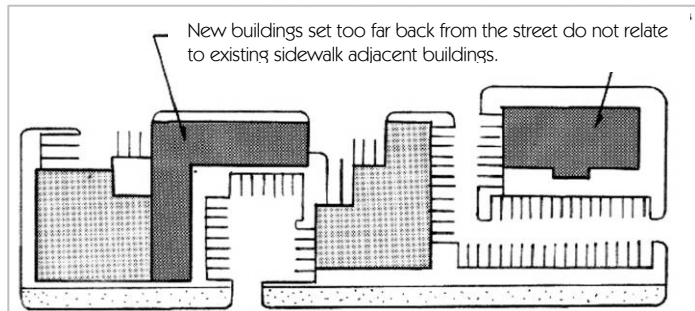
◆ Buffer commercial uses from residential uses as much as possible; use building orientation, landscaping, setbacks, and low walls to provide adequate separation.

◆ Where service and work bays are permitted on site, orient them so that the interiors are not visible or audible from adjacent public streets, residential structures, or active open space.

◆ Make Yucca Valley's natural environment one of the most important considerations in site design; new development should be sensitive to local natural and built features. Scenic views, climate, and natural amenities unique to the site (such as Joshua Trees and scenic views) should be preserved and incorporated into projects.

View preservation is an important consideration in site design.

5.2.4 Parking Lot Design and Configuration

Private parking in Old Town should be located according to the appropriate edge condition, as described in the following guidelines.

◆ Make building and driveway approach (not the parking lot) the primary visual presence along the major street.

◆ If a parking lot is adjacent to a public street, landscape it to screen the visual impact of parked vehicles from the public right-of-way, using planting at the setback line.

◆ Separate parking from the buildings with landscaping to reduce the visual impact of paved surfaces, and to provide shade.

◆ Minimize the number of access driveways to the site and locate them as far as possible from street intersections; parking lot access points should not interfere with the function of adjacent roadways and should minimize potential conflicts with pedestrians.

Landscape defines entry area

Informal edge plantings

Canopy trees create shade in parking area

◆ Common shared-access driveways and shared parking circulation aisles are strongly encouraged in adjacent parking areas.

◆ Provide safe, convenient, pedestrian links between parking areas and businesses; link parking areas directly to public sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, mid-block paths, alleys, or open space areas.

◆ Ensure visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the site by providing unobstructed sight lines at corners and mid-blocks.

Shared parking and access agreements are encouraged.

◆ Position on-site pick-up and drop-off areas adjacent and parallel to streets and/or drive aisles to allow vehicles to easily exit the main flow of traffic, and to stop. Drop-offs include bus stops, loading areas, and pedestrian drop-off areas.
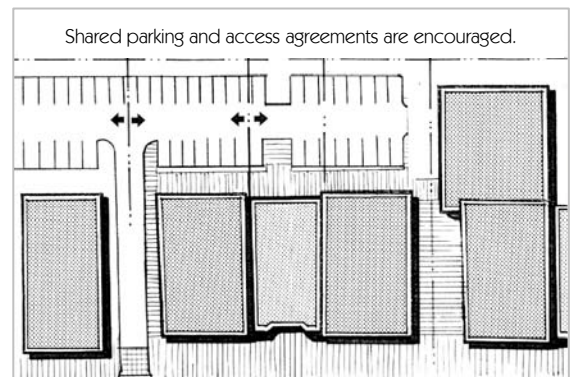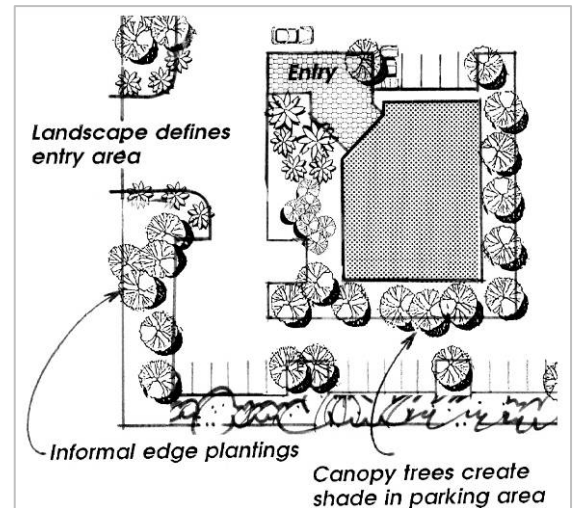
5.3   Architecture

The construction of new buildings and rehabilitation of existing structures are critical to the continued economic vitality of Yucca Valley. These new and rehabilitated buildings should be compatible with the character of the area in which they are located. New structures should be sympathetic and compatible with the surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, facade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, and color and use of materials without feeling that they have to precisely duplicate an architectural style from the past to be successful.

5.3.1 Architectural Styles

The following general principles should be considered in determining an architectural style.

◆   Designers should familiarize themselves with the design elements and details used on older buildings in the Yucca Valley area.

◆   For new infill buildings, select material carefully and use correct architectural detailing to avoid looking like cheap historic imitations; avoid architectural "gimmicks."

◆   Avoid sharp contrasts between architectural styles on adjacent parcels; do not use dramatic visual contrasts from neighboring structures as attention-getters.

◆   For side and rear building facades, provide a level of design detail and finish compatible with that of the front facade, particularly if they are visible from streets, alleys, adjacent parking areas, or residential uses.

◆   Franchise architecture with corporate signatures is strongly discouraged.

◆   Use special architectural features to accent buildings at prominent street corners and at the terminus of a street corridor or pedestrian way.

While a predetermined architectural theme is not required of new and rehabilitated structures, the following architectural styles and forms are most appropriate in Old Town, as described in the following sections.

1.   Territorial/Western

2.   Spanish Eclectic/Mission Revival

3.   Streamlined Moderne/Art Deco

4.   Artisan Industrial

5.   Contemporary

1. **Territorial/Western**

   This style is typified by character-defining elements such as flat or stepped-parapet rooflines and covered walkways, natural wood, board and batten, wood shingles, and heavy timber. This style is primarily recommended in the Old Town Mixed Use Subdistrict, but is appropriate in all the land use subdistricts.
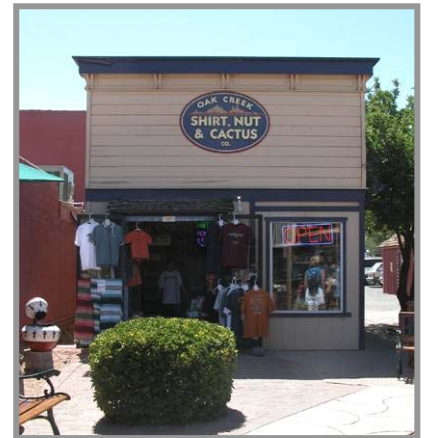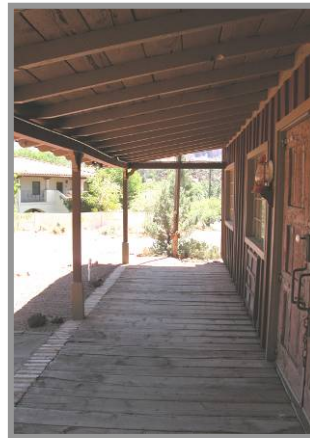
2.   Spanish Eclectic/Mission Revival/Moorish/Desert
Architectures of the World

This style is typified by character-defining elements such as varied rooflines and smooth facades made of stucco, reminiscent of adobe structures; red clay tiles; and wide overhanging eaves. This style also draws from an array of historical Spanish architectural details, such as prominent archways, mission-shaped dormers and parapets, second-story balconies (Monterey influence), and heavy timber. This style is most encouraged in the Old Town Commercial/Residential and Highway Commercial Subdistricts.
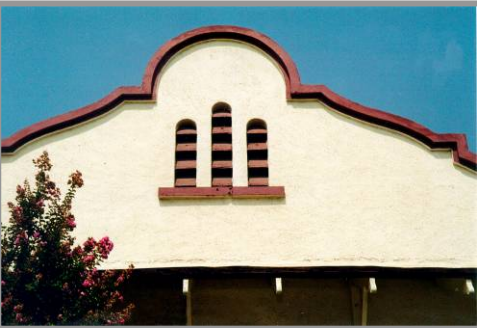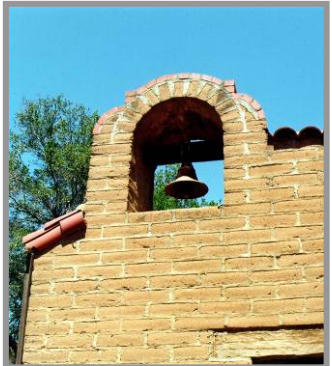
3. ## Streamlined Moderne/Art Deco

Emerging from the 1920s, these styles include curved and rounded corners, smooth wall surfaces, flat roofs, and a strong horizontal emphasis through balustrades, detail, and color. Art Deco emphasizes vertical elements via towers and other projections and often also includes zigzags, chevrons, and other geoemtric and stylized motifs. Elements of these styles are appropriate in all the land use subdistricts, although they are most strongly encouraged in the Old Town Highway Commercial Subdistrict.

4.   Artisan Industrial/Green

While not a recognized architectural style, the intent of Artisan Industrial is to encourage creativity and detail on typical large industrial development. Characterizing elements are steel, concrete, bright accent colors, abstract shapes, and unique signage, as well as pedestrian details and characteristics.

5. Contemporary

Contemporary styles may be appropriate for new construction; however, the use of local materials and design elements from surrounding structures should be considered. Care should be taken to ensure the appropriate use and scale of design elements in contemporary design. Where designed in context with surrounding architecture, contemporary styles are appropriate in all land use subdistricts.
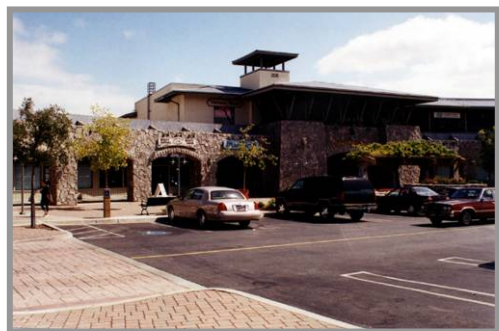
5.3.2 Building Materials and Color

The number of materials, colors, and combinations is unlimited, and the appropriateness of any given material, color, or combination for a particular building depends on a number of factors including architectural style and details, building material, building size, and building context.

◆ Consider exterior materials, textures, and colors that complement the architectural style or theme of a building, as well as those indigenous to the area, as desirable.

◆ Avoid exterior materials such as textured plywood and paneling, fake stone veneer, plastic siding, heavy troweled finishes, and similar materials.

◆ Vary materials to provide architectural interest; however, limit the number of materials and colors and do not exceed what is required for contrast and accent of architectural features.

◆ Relate exterior materials to each other in ways that are traditional and logical.

◆ Colors and materials should be durable and weather-resistant; stain and flat paints are encouraged, while glossy paints and finishes are strongly discouraged.

◆ Where appropriate, building colors should reflect the basic colors of the architectural style or period of the building; historic color palettes based on research, old photographs, and historic records are strongly encouraged.

◆ The use of corporate signature color schemes on buildings is strongly discouraged.

◆ Avoid fluorescent, garish colors.

Recommended Materials

- Dimensioned cut stone (local)
- Board and batten (mainly parapet and upper storefront)
- Ceramic tiles (bulkhead only)
- Stucco
- Horizontal wood siding
- Treated wood shake roofs
- Nonreflective metal roofs
- Clay tile roofs
- Corrugated metal (awnings and architectural details only)
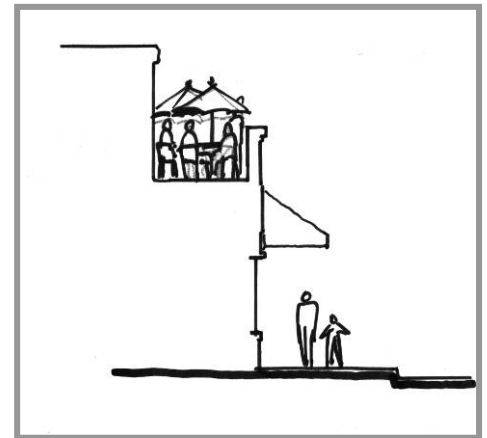- Recycled/Green

Discouraged Materials

- Faux masonry (e.g., concrete block)
- Highly reflective or opaque glass
- Imitation or concrete flagstone
- Used brick with no fired face
- Imitation wood siding
- T-111 siding
- Plastic panels
- Crushed stone roofs
- Shake roofs
- White, black, brightly colored, or reflective roofs
- Brightly colored (orange, blue, etc.) tile roofs
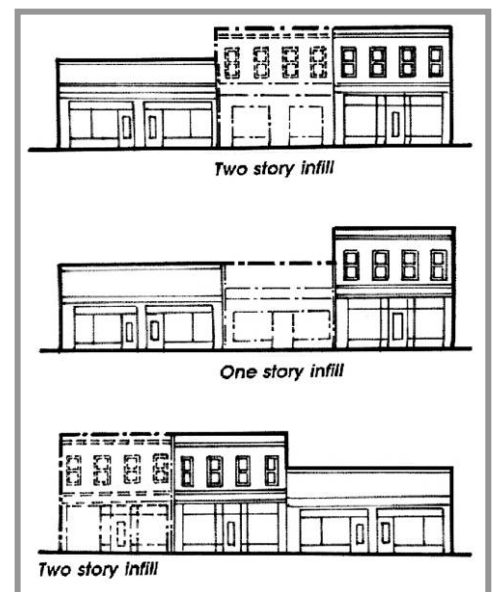- Corrugated fiberglass roofs

5.3.3 Building Form, Mass, and Scale

The building form, mass, and scale are important in maintaining the quality of the built environment and in protecting the scenic views of the natural environment of Yucca Valley. New construction should be compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, and height.

◆ Although building heights will vary, generally, taller buildings are encouraged in the Old Town Mixed-Use Subdistrict to create a stronger presence on the street and to frame the scenic views.

◆ Keep the scale of building elements, especially at the ground level, intimate and close to human scale; reduce building bulk by dividing larger building masses into smaller scale parts.

◆ Reduce building mass on structures with two stories by "stepping back" upper stories, which can provide for attractive balconies and outdoor spaces.

"Stepping back" upper stories reduces building mass and provides for balconies and terraces.

◆ In infill development, respect the relationship of height-to-width proportions of existing facades; "transition" new development from the height of adjacent buildings, and locate window lines and other horizontal elements to achieve a consistent pattern between buildings.

◆ Large, undifferentiated wall planes are strongly discouraged; express significant horizontal and vertical articulation on all sides of a building visible from public right-of-ways through:

- o Variation of roof eave line or roof structure,
- o Changes in the wall plane,
- o Full roofs with overhang,
- o Recessed entries and doors,
- o Covered walkways, trellises, and/or architectural awnings, and
- o Architectural details consistent with architectural style.

Infill development should be compatible with the height of adjacent buildings.

◆ Establish a strong connection between the ground and the site through the use of low planter walls, trees and shrubs, railings, veneer banding, and other materials and textures.

5.3.4 Storefront Design

Although the storefront is only one of the architectural elements of a facade, in large part, it is one of the most important elements. There are a number of design elements that can help achieve a traditional storefront design that enhances the experience of the pedestrian, yet also meets important functional needs.

◆ Treat each storefront like a small building, with its own base, roofline, and door and window pattern.

◆ For buildings on corners, include storefront design features for at least 50% of the wall area on the sidewall.

◆ Generally, base storefronts on modules of approximately 25 feet in width. For new buildings that are wider than existing facades on the street, break them down into a series of "structural bays" or storefronts segmented by a series of columns or piers.

STOREFRONT COMPONENTS
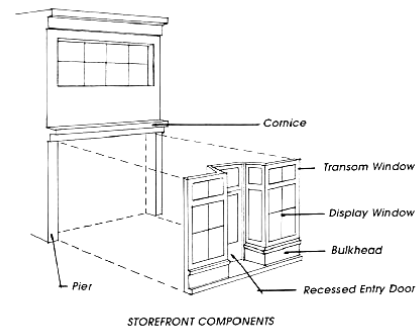
Storefront widths should be based on a consistent module of approximately 25 feet.

◆ Building recesses are encouraged to define entryways and window openings along a building's exterior and to provide weather protection and a transition zone from sidewalk activity into the store. Recommended treatments are special paving materials such as ceramic tile or brick, ornamental ceilings such as coffering, and decorative light fixtures.

◆ To reduce glare, recess windows and large areas of glass in deep shadow, and inset glass a minimum of 3 inches from the exterior wall surface to add relief. Clear glazing is strongly recommended, while reflective glazing and tinting are discouraged.

Building recesses help mark entrances.

◆ Clearly articulate entries to commercial structures, with substantial, well-detailed doors that match the materials, design, and character of the display window framing. Doors to retail shops should contain a high percentage of glass to display retail contents.

◆ Providing rear pedestrian entrances via alleys and parking lots is encouraged. Improvements to rear facades should be subtle and modest, and may include signs, landscaping, and awnings.

Rear entrances should be subtly enhanced.

Awnings

◆ Awnings may be used to protect pedestrians, add interest and color to buildings, and to accommodate pedestrian-oriented signs.

◆ Awning placement should respond to the scale, proportion, and rhythm of the building's design. Awnings should not cover piers, pilasters, transom windows, or other architectural features.

◆ Awnings should be of either canvas or acrylic-coated canvas, and not aluminum, vinyl, or backlit awnings which detract from the character of Old Town. Awning frames and supports should be of painted or coated metal or other noncorroding material.

◆ Projecting metal awnings that are a structural part of a building may also be appropriate.

◆ Retractable awnings are recommended because they are functional with a frame and support structure that can be adjusted up or down, depending upon conditions.
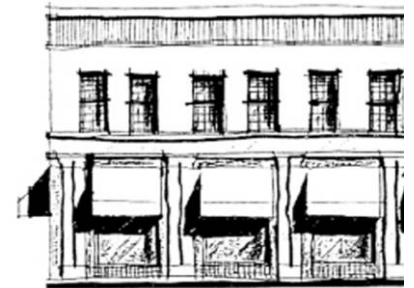
Awnings add visual interest.

Awnings and canopies also provide protection for pedestrians.

5.4   Development Details

5.4.1 Landscaping

Landscaping should be an integral part of the overall design concept.   A carefully planned landscape can serve more than one function for the site as well as for the streetscape.   The landscaping and public spaces within Yucca Valley add character as well as provide a functional purpose.

Landscaping not only softens the built environment but preserves and restores the scenic qualities of the natural landscape by retaining and/or re-vegetating areas with native plant species. The following guidelines will help ensure that landscaping is used appropriately in Old Town Yucca Valley.

Landscaping softens building walls.

◆   Landscaping should enhance the quality of development by framing and softening the appearance of buildings, enhancing the overall image, screening undesirable views, and providing shade and wind protection.

◆   Landscaped parking areas are encouraged to avoid direct views of parked vehicles from public right-of-ways, and to minimize noise, light, exhaust fumes, and other negative effects on pedestrians.

Landscaping can provide attractive buffers.

◆   Place landscaping so that it does not interfere with the lighting of the project area or restrict access to utilities (such as electrical boxes) or emergency apparatus (such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes).   Keep landscaping in scale with adjacent buildings and of appropriate size at maturity.

◆   Use trees and plants appropriate to Yucca Valley and the High Desert Region, and that have low maintenance. Group plants in combinations to support desired design themes and based on common environmental conditions, such as soil type, water, sun, temperature, and precipitation, etc.

Planter pots enhance pedestrian areas.

◆   Placing planters and pots in building recesses and adjacent to blank walls is encouraged as they provide visual interest and color accents, and enrich sidewalks, courtyards, and plazas. Planter and pot materials should complement the building's architectural design.

5.4.2 Public Spaces and Site Amenities

Public spaces include plazas, courtyards, pedestrian paseos, and gardens that are designed with public amenities and landscaping to provide shade, an opportunity to rest, adequate lighting, and relief from traffic noise.

◆ Incorporate courtyards, plazas, outdoor eating areas, mid-block pedestrian paseos, and other amenities into development designs.

◆ Make public spaces visible from the street or link them to the street via a clear circulation element, such as an open passage or covered arcade.

◆ Make site furniture (chairs, tables) simple in design so as to not detract from the surroundings. Design site furniture to maximize shade areas, yet also maintain overall site visibility. Wind-resistant umbrellas are encouraged to create shade areas and to minimize heat build-up.

◆ Decorative paving that adds visual interest and a sense of place is encouraged in public spaces.

◆ Locate ATM machines in an area that does not visually detract from the site or impair pedestrian circulation; incorporate an attractive design in the unit housing the machine.

◆ Interpretive signs may be incorporated as an integral part of the design of pedestrian spaces, using design features that highlight the area's history and historical and natural environment.

◆ Public art and design features (interpretive features and signs, sculptures, etc.) that invite participation and interaction in public spaces are encouraged. Design features should add local meaning; interpret the local culture, environment and/or history; and capture or reinforce the unique character of place.

Opportunities for outdoor dining should be provided for where possible.

Mid-block paseos are encouraged.

Wind-resistant umbrellas offer shade and comfort in public spaces.

◆ Murals may be considered on building walls that do not face the primary sidewalk (e.g., may be appropriate on walls that face alley, rear parking areas, mid-block pedestrian paseos, and select pedestrian plazas).

5.4.3 Lighting

◆ Use low-level, decorative lighting to provide appropriate nighttime visibility for safety and pedestrian movement as well as accent detail.

◆ Where appropriate, design down-directed, exterior lighting as part of the overall architectural style of the building that highlights interesting architectural features. Lighting of full facades or roofs is discouraged.

◆ Lighting should not produce glare or spill over onto adjacent properties; consider the latest technical and operational energy conservation concepts in lighting designs.


Low-level decorative lighting is appropriate.

5.4.4 Building Equipment and Services

◆ Locate refuse, storage, and equipment out of view from the public and/or screen it to the degree possible. Make screening devices compatible with the architecture, materials, and colors of the building(s) and incorporate creativity, art, and landscaping to enhance the desired character of the area.

◆ If all rooftop equipment is visible from the ground or upper stories of adjacent buildings, screen it well from view, using architectural materials and colors that are consistent with related buildings.
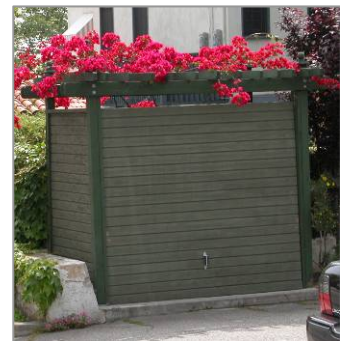
Trash enclosures should be attractively screened.
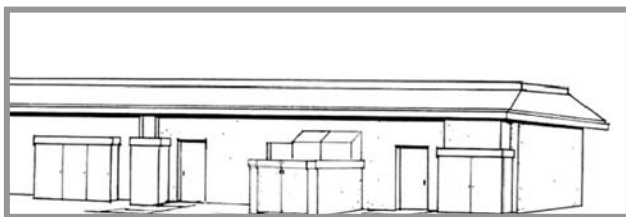
Screening is encouraged.
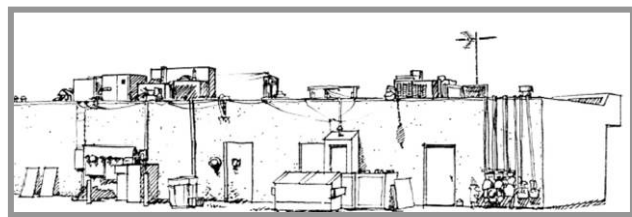
Visible equipment, storage, and refuse are discouraged.

5.5 Commercial Signs

Signs are important, not only because they communicate something about goods and services being offered at a particular establishment, but also because they communicate something about the quality of the businesses and the image of the community in general. Attractive, creative, and pedestrian-oriented signs will help create a more pleasing visual environment in Old Town Yucca Valley. The following section is meant to supplement, not supersede, the adopted City of Yucca Valley Sign Ordinance.

5.5.1 Sign Materials and Colors

Sign materials and colors should complement the materials and colors on the facade and the architectural style of the building.

◆ Appropriate sign materials may include:
  o Wood (carved, sandblasted, etched, properly sealed and painted or stained),
  o Tile (painted, sealed, inlaid tiles),
  o In certain cases, metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed or factory coated to protect against erosion),
  o Stucco, and
  o Decorative iron brackets or wood (preferred for sign hardware support).

◆ The selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign; for example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.

◆ Sign materials should be very durable; paper and cloth signs are not suitable for outside use because they deteriorate quickly.

◆ Neon signs are appropriate if they are consistent with the historical character of the area in which they are located.

◆ Too many colors on a sign overwhelm the viewer's ability to process quickly what the sign is communicating. Limit use of accent colors to increase legibility, and limit colors to no more than three on a single sign.

◆ Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs; the most aesthetic and effective graphics are produced with light-colored letters and images on a dark, contrasting-colored background.

5.5.2 Encouraged Sign Types

Roof signs, pole signs, and internally illuminated box signs are discouraged. The following sign types are encouraged for new projects in Old Town Yucca Valley.

Projecting Signs

◆ The use of small, pedestrian-oriented signs is strongly encouraged.

◆ Use projecting signs for ground floor uses only; on a multi-storied building, suspend the sign between the bottom of the second story windowsills and the top of the doors or windows of the first story. On a one-story building, position the top of the sign in line with the lowest point of the roof.

◆ The scale of projecting signs should not detract from the architectural character of the building.

◆ Hang projecting signs at a 90-degree angle from the face of the building, and use sign supports and brackets that are compatible with the design and scale of the building. Decorative iron and wood brackets are encouraged.
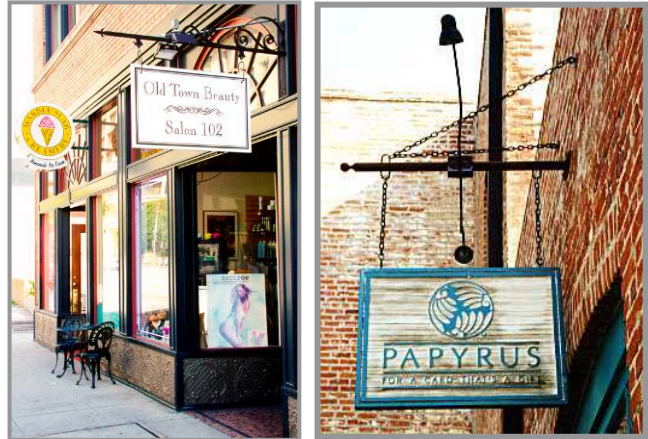
Hanging Signs

◆ Where overhangs or covered walkways exist, pedestrian-oriented hanging signs are encouraged. Hang signs over the pedestrian right-of-way, consistent with the City Code.

◆ Keep hanging signs simple in design and avoid using them to compete with existing signage at the site, such as wall signs.
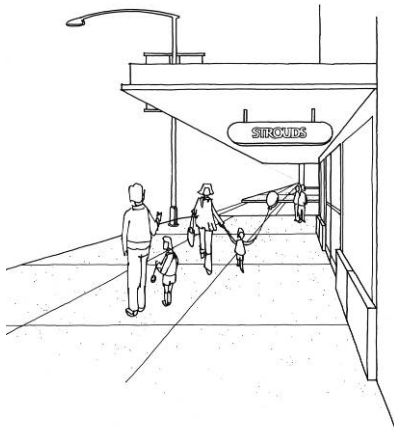
Window Signs

◆ Window signs should be primarily individual letters placed on the interior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside, with white and gold-leaf paint being the recommended colors. Glass-mounted graphic logos may also be applied, as long as they comply with the 25-percent limitation.

◆ Limit the text or sign copy of a window sign to the business name and a brief message identifying the product or service (e.g., "maternity wear" or "attorney") or pertinent information (e.g., "reservations required").

Wall Signs

◆ Locate a wall sign where the architectural features or details of the building suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign. The best location is generally a band or blank area between the storefront and the parapet.

◆ Wall signs should not project from the surface upon which they are attached more than that is required for construction purposes and, in no case, more than 6 inches.

◆ Place new wall signs for individual businesses in a shopping center consistent with the location of signs for other businesses in the center, which will establish visual continuity among storefronts and create a unified appearance for the center.

◆ For a new or remodeled shopping center, develop a comprehensive sign program for all signs in the center.
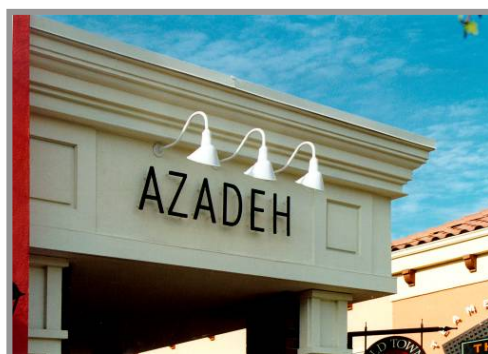
Awning Signs

◆ Awning signs should be placed only on the valance portion of the awning; the use of adhesive/press lettering is strongly discouraged; letter color should be compatible with the awning and the building color scheme.

◆ Carefully design the shape, design, and color of awnings to coordinate with, and not dominate, the architectural style of the building. Where multiple awnings are used on the building, keep the design and color of all sign awnings consistent.

◆ Use only permanent signs that are an integral part of the canopy or awning. To avoid having to replace awnings or paint out previous tenant signs when a new tenant moves in, consider using replaceable valances.

Monument/Freestanding Signs

◆ The sign area and height of the sign should be in proportion to the site and surrounding buildings; signs should not be overly large so as to be a dominant feature of the site.

◆ Place monument and freestanding signs perpendicular to the street so that sight lines at entry driveways and circulation aisles are not blocked. Monument signs are rarely appropriate in the Old Town Mixed Use Subdistrict.

◆ Design monument and freestanding signs to create visual interest and complement their surroundings, incorporating architectural elements, details, and articulation.

◆ Incorporate materials and colors into the sign support structures that match or are compatible with materials and colors of the development the sign serves so it does not appear out of scale with its adjacent building(s).